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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Vocabulary

### Prefixes



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### **Finn**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary – if you're serious about vocabulary, we'll show you how to learn it. I'm Finn...

#### **Alice**

And I'm Alice. In today's show we're going to look at a very interesting area of vocabulary – prefixes.

#### **Finn**

We'll look at what they are, what they mean and how to use them.

#### **Alice**

There'll be a quiz...

#### **Finn**

And we'll leave you with a top tip for learning vocabulary.

#### **Alice**

But before all that, we're going to hear from Dave. He's just got back from lunch, but he isn't happy.

#### **Finn**

Now, a question to think about while you listen: what was the problem with Dave's food?

#### **Alice**

What was the problem with Dave's food? Let's find out.

#### **Example**

*I just tried the new seafood restaurant, and I wish I hadn't. It was **intolerable!** To start with, my seat was really **uncomfortable**. I had no room to move. And the menu was very **misleading**. The photos looked nothing like the actual food. When my food came it was **uncooked**. I told the waiter, but he **disagreed**. He said it was fine. He said he'd eat it himself! And I looked in the kitchen – it was really **unhygienic**. There was food all over the floor. It was a **disgrace!***

#### **Finn**

So Dave's pretty unhappy. And what was wrong with his food?

**Alice**

Well, he said that it was uncooked. It was cold and raw because it hadn't been cooked.

**Finn**

Not very nice! Well done if you got that right at home. Now, *uncooked* is an example of the vocabulary area we're looking at today - prefixes.

**Alice**

Yes: prefixes - or as some people say: prefixes. Prefixes, prefixes. A prefix is a small part of a word, usually just a couple of letters, that we put at the front of a base word to change its meaning. For example, the prefix un, spelt u-n, is added to happy, to make unhappy, which means not happy.

**Finn**

And Dave was unhappy about the restaurant.

**Alice**

Yes. He said the seats were uncomfortable – meaning not comfortable, and the kitchen was unhygienic, meaning unclean – not clean.

**Finn**

So that's un, meaning 'not' - and all today's prefixes have the meaning of not. So, Dave said the meal was intolerable. Intolerable. In - spelt i-n - is another prefix that can mean not – and poor Dave couldn't tolerate the meal. Now, let's listen to a bit more of Dave.

**Example**

...I told the waiter, but he **disagreed**. He said it was fine.

**Finn**

The waiter disagreed with him about the food. The prefix dis, spelt d-i-s, means not, or 'to do the opposite', like disagree – to not agree.

**Alice**

Yes, and Dave said it was a disgrace - they should be ashamed of it.

**Finn**

Let's hear today's prefixes again.

**Alice**

The first one was: un.

**Finn**

Unhappy, uncooked, unhygienic, unclean.

**Alice**

In.

**Finn**

Intolerable, inexpensive.

**Alice**

Dis.

**Finn**

Disagree, disgrace.

**IDENT**

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**Finn**

And it's time for a quiz. Try to work out the word that finishes the sentence. Ready? Number 1. *The advert said that the phone was £5 a month, but it didn't say anything about the £50 set-up fee. It was very...* a) unhappy b) inexpensive c) misleading.

**Alice**

The advert made people believe something that isn't true, so it was very... c) misleading.

**Finn**

Now number 2. *This letter has come to the wrong house. There's been a...* a) mistake b) disgrace c) disagreement.

**Alice**

It's not correct so... a) mistake.

**Finn**

Well done if you got those right.

**Alice**

And that brings us almost to the end of today's programme.

**Finn**

Before we go, here's today's top tip for learning vocabulary: if you look up some of today's words in a dictionary, you'll find lots more words starting with the same prefixes. Many of them may be words that you already knew without the prefix. So, when you add a prefix, you get two words for the price of one!

**Alice**

That's brilliant. Sounds like a good way to quickly double your vocabulary. There's more about this at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

**Both**

Bye!