
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Prefixes: de- dis- dys-



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Neil...

Finn

And I'm Finn. In this programme we're looking at three prefixes: **de-**, spelt **d-e**, **dys-**, spelt **d-y-s** and **dis-**, spelt **d-i-s**.

Neil

Prefixes – or prefixes, as some people say - are two or three letters that go at the beginning of a word and affect its meaning.

Finn

We'll look at what each prefix means and give you example sentences...

Neil

There'll be a quiz ...

Finn

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

Neil

But first, let's listen to Gladys talking about her husband Bert.

Finn

While you listen, think about this question: Does Gladys agree with Bert's doctor?

INSERT

Gladys

Bert's **dyspepsia**, or indigestion, is quite bad at the moment. It's causing him quite a bit of **discomfort**. The doctor says it's because he eats too much fatty food. She says the symptoms would **disappear** if Bert went on a **detox** diet. No **disrespect** to the doctor, but I **disagree** - I think it's caused by stress.

Neil

So we asked you: Does Gladys agree with the doctor?

Finn

And the answer is: No, she **disagrees**. Gladys thinks her husband's indigestion is caused by stress, but the doctor thinks it's due to a bad diet.

Neil

Disagree is the key word because it has the prefix **dis**, spelt **d-i-s**. This means not. So by adding **dis**, we can turn a word into its opposite. So **dis - agree** means not to agree ...

Finn

...and **dis - respect** means not having respect.

Neil

Gladys says **No disrespect to the doctor** – meaning she doesn't want people to think she doesn't respect what the doctor says. Let's hear another clip from Gladys with more prefixes.

INSERT CLIP I

Bert's **dyspepsia**, or indigestion, is quite bad at the moment. It's causing him quite a bit of **discomfort**.

Finn

So we had **discomfort**. If you know what the word **comfort** means ...

Neil

... then you can work out what **discomfort** means: **dis-** plus **comfort** give us the opposite of comfort: Bert's feeling uncomfortable.

Finn

And in the clip, we heard the word **dyspepsia** – that's the medical word for indigestion, when your stomach feels very full and uncomfortable after you eat.

Neil

This word starts with the prefix **dys**, but this time it's spelt **d-y-s**.

Finn

This prefix is less common than **dis**, spelt **d-i-s**, but it also has a negative meaning – it has the idea of being bad or abnormal.

Neil

So **dyspepsia** is a medical condition when your body can't process food in the normal way.

Finn

Other words with the prefix **dys-**, spelt **d-y-s**, are **dyslexia** and **dysfunctional**. People who have **dyslexia** have difficulty with reading...

Neil

... and if something is **dysfunctional**, it doesn't work properly.

Finn

Let's have another clip with the prefix **dis-**, **d-i-s**. We'll also hear our next prefix.

INSERT CLIP 2

She says the symptoms would **disappear** if Bert went on a **detox** diet.

Finn

So, we had **disappear** - that's **dis-** plus **appear**...

Neil

Yes, and **disappear**, means the opposite of **appear**.

Finn

We also had the word **detox**, which starts with the prefix **de-**, spelt **d-e**.

Neil

Yes, the prefix **de-**, spelt **d-e**, usually means take away or remove something ...

Finn

So, if something is described as a **detox**, **de-tox**, it means it takes away toxins or poisons. A **detox** diet could be one with just fruit and vegetables.

Neil

I like to **detox** at the end of the day with a hot bath.

IDENT

6 Minute Vocabulary from BBC.

Neil

And we're talking about the prefixes **dis-**, spelt **d-i-s**; **dys**, spelt **d-y-s**; and **de-**, spelt **d-e**.

Finn

All these prefixes have a negative meaning.

Neil

And now it's quiz time. Choose the correct word. Number one: One minute the dogs were playing in the garden. The next minute the garden was empty and they'd all a) disagreed b) disappeared c) detoxed.

Finn

Well, the answer to that is b) **disappeared**.

Neil

Number two. People who drink too much alcohol sometimes go to a clinic for a a) dyspepsia b) discomfort c) detox.

Finn

The answer is c) **detox**.

Neil

And number three: My daughter is having problems learning to read. Her teacher thinks she may be a) disrespectful b) dyslexic c) dysfunctional.

Finn

The answer is b) **dyslexic**. And that's the end of the quiz. Well done if you got them right.

Neil

Yes, well done. And now, here's our top tip for learning vocabulary: when you see or hear a new word, see if you can break the word up - if it starts with a prefix that you recognise, it may help you to understand the meaning.

Finn

There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away

detox: removing harmful substances from your body by eating particular foods

I've had a lot of junk food and alcohol recently. I'm going to completely detox for the rest of the week – just fruit and water.

disagree: not to agree

Carrie thinks we should take the car because it's quicker than the bus. I disagree – I think the bus will be quicker as we won't have to find parking.

disappear: to no longer be seen

There were quite a few grey clouds this morning but they've all disappeared and there's a clear blue sky now.

discomfort: feeling of not being comfortable or in slight pain

A hot cup of tea can help ease the discomfort of a stomach ache.

disrespect: rudeness, behaviour that is upsetting or insulting

People think that young people today show total disrespect towards older family members. They sometimes are very rude to them and often totally ignore them.

dysfunctional: not working or behaving normally

The children came from a totally dysfunctional family where everyone argued all the time and the parents were often drunk.

dyslexia: condition that makes reading and spelling difficult

As she has dyslexia, she makes quite a lot of spelling mistakes when she writes essays.

dyspepsia: medical condition that means the body does not digest food properly, causing pain and discomfort

I take tablets after meals to help settle my stomach as I suffer from dyspepsia quite a bit.