

PREFIXES

OBJECTIVE

To help students figure out unfamiliar words by recognizing prefixes

MATERIALS

Any fiction or nonfiction book you are currently reading to students, such as *John Henry* by Julius Lester (4.0); a set of blocks or other construction materials

LESSON

1. Ask a student to use the blocks to build a tower on a desk or table. On the board, write the following:

[Student's name] will build a tower.

Have students read the sentence aloud.

2. Knock down the tower, and ask another student to build a new tower. Write the following on the board:

[Student's name] will rebuild the tower.

Have students read the sentence aloud and ask, "What do you think *rebuild* means in this sentence?" (*to build again*)

3. On the board, write a sentence from the selected book that contains a word with the prefix *re-*, such as the following sentence from *John Henry*:

That day John Henry helped his papa rebuild the porch....

4. Point to the words *build* and *rebuild*. Ask, "What do these two words have in common?" (*They both have build in them.*) Explain that the word *build* is a *base word*—a word to which you can add another word part to make a new word.

5. Tell students that a *prefix* is a word part added to the beginning of a word to make a new word. Ask, "If *re-* means 'again,' what does the word *rebuild* mean?" (*to build again*)

6. Write the following on the board:

repaint, refill, reheat, recount

Place your hand over the prefix *re-* in each word and ask, "What *base word* do you see in this word?" Uncover the prefix and ask, "If the prefix *re-* means 'again,' what does the word *repaint* mean?"

7. Use the same procedure to introduce the prefixes *un-* (not), and *mis-* (wrong).
8. Ask students to find a word that contains the prefix *re-* (or other focus prefix) as they read their books. Tell them that knowing how to break words into prefixes and base words will help them figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words.

STATUS OF THE CLASS FOLLOW-UP

As you check for understanding, ask the following:

- Have you found any words that contain the prefix *re-* (or *un-* or *mis-*)? What does the prefix mean? What does the word mean?
- Have you come to a word with a prefix that you can't figure out? Cover the prefix with your finger. Can you read the base word? How does knowing the base word help you figure out the meaning of the word as a whole?
- Have you run into any prefixes that you don't know the meaning of? What are they?

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ADDED PRACTICE

- Give students old newspapers and magazines. Have them find and cut out words that contain prefixes. On a bulletin board, mount cards labeled with common prefixes. Have students post their words under the appropriate prefixes.
- Make word cards for prefixes that your students have studied, for example, *re-*, *un-*, *mis-*, and *dis-*. Make a separate set of cards with base words, such as *build*, *cover*, *do*, *like*, *make*, *order*, and *take*. Encourage pairs of students to match prefixes and base words and keep a running tally of the new words they make.