

## UNIT 4 What's in a word?

### A. LOGGING ON

#### 1. GOALS

In this unit:

You will learn the principles of word formation in English

You will practice the use of affixes:

prefixes: e.g. pre-, inter, co-, etc.

suffixes: e.g. -al, -ed. -ment, etc,

roots and their meanings: graph (to write), bio (life), manu (hand), etc.

the parts of speech, e.g. the noun, the verb, the adjective and the adverb

the use of an English-English dictionary

#### 2. VOCABULARY

**INSTRUCTIONS: Drag each first part (1-10) to its second part (a-j). You may use your dictionary.**

1.	a-	a. lingual	bilingual
2.	dis-	b. important	unimportant
3.	non-	c. formal	informal
4.	in-	d. typical	atypical
5.	un-	e. pilot	copilot
6.	inter-	f. national	international
7.	pre-	g. alcoholic	nonalcoholic
8.	bi-	h. connect	disconnect
9.	co-	i. natal	prenatal
10.	para-	j. medics	paramedics

#### 3. WARM-UP

**INSTRUCTIONS: Fill in the blanks of the sentences with the words that you formed in the exercise above.**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ flew the plane for an hour. **copilot**
2. Denisse is \_\_\_\_\_. She speaks English and Spanish very well. **bilingual**
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ arrived immediately after the accident. **paramedics**
4. Ronald studies \_\_\_\_\_ relations at the National University. **international**
5. ICE will \_\_\_\_\_ your telephone line if you don't pay the bill. **disconnect**
6. Don't take notes about the \_\_\_\_\_ parts of the speech. **unimportant**
7. Marie went to the gynecologist for her first \_\_\_\_\_ exam. **prenatal**

8. I had an \_\_\_\_\_ talk with Teacher Emilia after her class. **informal**
9. They only sell \_\_\_\_\_ beverages at the school cafeteria. **nonalcoholic**
10. Today was an \_\_\_\_\_ day for October. No rain, just sunshine. **atypical**

#### 4. Your Turn

**INSTRUCTIONS: Write ten words using each of the prefixes in Exercise 2.**

### B. TURN IT UP

#### 1. Pre-listening

**INSTRUCTIONS: Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. Do you know the meaning of *pre-* in the word *prenuptial*? **before**
2. What do you call something that you pay in advance? **prepaid**

#### 2. While listening

**INSTRUCTIONS: Listen to the following selection about prefixes in English.**

In English, as in many languages of the world, there are some particles that have no meaning but are attached to words. These particles are called *prefixes*. They don't exist by themselves, but they do change the meaning of the words. For example, if you attach the prefix *non-* to the word *existent*, you get *nonexistent*. *Non-* has a negative meaning so *nonexistent* refers to something that is not real. Other prefixes also mean *no*. For example, *a-*, *dis-*, *in-* and *un-* in words like *asymmetry*, *dishonest*, *insensible*, and *undetectable*. Other prefixes are *pre-*, which means *before* in a word like *prehistoric*, *inter-*, which means from one to another in a word like *interface*, *bi-*, which means two, in a word like *bicultural*, *co-*, which means *together*, in a word like *coauthor*, and *para-*, which means similar but not equal, in a word like *paranormal*. Knowledge of prefixes and their meanings can help you to understand, learn and increase your English vocabulary.

**INSTRUCTIONS: Try to remember the words as you heard them in the listening passage and drag the prefix to the root.**

non-	honest (dis)
a-	face (inter)
dis-	normal (para)
in-	cultural (bi)
un-	symmetry (a)
pre-	author (co)
inter-	existent (non)
bi-	historic (pre)
co-	sensible (in)
para-	detectable (un)

### 3. Post-listening

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Drag the prefixes to the words that they modify. You may use your dictionary.

dis-	cultural	intercultural
a-	operate	cooperate
para-	view	preview
non-	usual	unusual
pre-	similar	dissimilar
bi-	political	apolitical
in-	smoker	nonsmoker
inter-	normal	paranormal
co-	offensive	inoffensive
un-	net	internet

### 4. Pronunciation

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Listen to the words. Drag each word to the corresponding prefix in the table.

insane	undo	interstate
interaction	indiscipline	unsatisfactory
unstable	interlocutor	inadmissible

IN-	UN-	INTER-
insane	unstable	interaction
indiscipline	undo	interlocutor
inadmissible	unsatisfactory	interstate

**Sources:** Davies, E. & N. Whitney. 1984. *Study Skills for Reading*. London: Heinemann Educational books.  
 Hornby, A. S. 2000. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
*Spanish College Dictionary*. Third Edition. Harper Collins, 1998.

## C. System tools

### 1. Warm up

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Discuss the following words with your friends. Together identify the affixes (prefixes and suffixes) and the roots. Refer to the suffix to say whether the word is a noun, a verb an adjective or an adverb. Use the word in a sentence.

**Example:**

**uninformed**

**uninformed has two affixes:**

**un-**, which means no,

**-ed** which turns the word into an adjective

The root is inform

**Sentence: A person is uninformed when he or she lacks knowledge or information**

1. imprecisely

imprecisely has two affixes:

im-, a prefix which means no,

-ly, a suffix which turns the word into an adverb

The root is precise

Sentence: The report was presented imprecisely. This means that the report was not very clear and lacked exact details.

2. disagreement

disagreement has two affixes:

dis-, a prefix which means no,

-ment, a suffix which turns the word into a noun

The root is agree

Sentence: The doctors had a disagreement over the success of the treatment. They had a discussion about the treatment.

3. unappreciated

unappreciated has two affixes:

un-, a prefix which means no

-ed, which turns the word into a an adjective

The root is appreciated

Sentence: His discipline at work was unappreciated.. This means that his employers didn't value his job and attitudes.

4. interact

interact has only one affix

inter-, which means from one person or object to another

There is no suffix, so the word interact in this case is a verb

-ed,, which turns the word into a an adjective

The root is act

Sentence: When I work in the computer lab, I interact with other fellow students. This means that I communicate with my classmates when we spend time and work in the computer lab.

## 2. Charts

PARTS OF SPEECH	COMMON CORRESPONDING SUFFIXES
<b>Nouns:</b> words that refer to a person, a place, an object, a quality or an activity	-acy, age, -ance, -ancy, -art, -dom, -er, -hood, -ion, -ism, -ist, -ity, -ment, -ness, -ology, -ship, -ure,
<b>Verbs:</b> a word or group of words that expresses an action, an event, or a state	-ate, -en, -fy, -ize,
<b>Adjectives:</b> a word that describes a person or an object	-able, -ation, -ible. -al, -an, -ant, -ent, -ary, -ful, -ic, -ion, -ish, -ive, -less, -ly, -ory, -ous, -sion, -tion, -y, -zoic
<b>Adverbs:</b> a word that adds more information about place, time manner, cause or degree to a verb, and adjective, a phrase or another adverb	-ly <b>NOTE:</b> -ly appears in <i>friendly</i> , but does not change the word into an adverb; it is an adjective. Other words do not contain -ly, but are still adverbs, e.g. <i>fast, well</i> , and the adverbs of time

Definitions taken from A.S. Hornby. 2000. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: OUP.

## 3. Practice

**INSTRUCTIONS:** You are going to work with a classmate. Each one of you is going to use an English- Spanish/Spanish English dictionary or an English-English dictionary to find the prefixes based on (1) the root, (2) part of speech, and (3) meaning.

ROOT	SUFFIX	PART OF SPEECH	MEANING
manage	<b>-er</b>	noun	a person who is in charge of running a business, a store, or organization
length	<b>-en</b>	verb	to make something long
norm	<b>-al</b>	adjective	typical, usual or ordinary; what you would expect
honest	<b>-ly</b>	adverb	used to emphasize that what you are saying is true
explain	<b>-ation</b>	noun	a reason given for something
agree	<b>-ment</b>	noun	a promise or a contract made with somebody or an organization
real	<b>-ize</b>	verb	understand or become aware of a particular situation
child	<b>-ish</b>	adjective	connected with or typical of a child
friend	<b>-ship</b>	noun	a relationship between friends
artist	<b>-ic</b>	adjective	showing a natural skill in or enjoyment of art

Definitions taken from A.S. Hornby. 2000. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: OUP.

## 4. Your Turn

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Put the ten words in a sentence. Tell each sentence to your partner and then to the class.

## D. Scan it

### 1. Pre reading

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Discuss the following questions with your classmates/teacher.

1. What do you call the people who make dictionaries?
2. Is it possible to tell how many words are there in Spanish? In English? Why?
3. Can you mention some words that recently entered Costa Rican Spanish?
4. What is the first thing you do when you don't know the meaning of a word?
5. Why is it said that languages are constantly changing?

### 2. While reading

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

New words are now entering the English language at an ever-increasing rate. Those who compile dictionaries examine tens of thousands of words of potential entries very carefully for each new edition of a dictionary. In the rapid ebb and flow of language, standard dictionaries cannot list all the words and expressions in frequent use at any one moment: to do so would require that a new dictionary be printed every week and that all the unimportant words and expressions that were coined to live for a day or a few weeks would need to be listed.

Even though the best standard dictionaries may be updated every two years, there is a necessary time lag in collecting and verifying new words and checking their exact pronunciations, meanings, slogans, and terms for a few days or weeks because they are used in a political speech, for example. As a result, words like these are never entered in standard dictionaries. This leaves us with a small number of words and phrases scattered throughout newspapers and magazines, rolling out of radios and television sets. Words and phrases of this type may never need be recorded in any authoritative dictionary.

Thus, there is a need for a small, informal book of new words: one that can be produced quickly and without consideration of the criteria and standards of authoritative dictionaries, a book for those who are interested in the latest words and expressions, whether or not these prove to be important or unimportant, long-lasting or just passing. The authors of this book do not pretend to be professional lexicographers and do not attempt to be arbiters in the world of today's neologisms. They do not promise that their work is based on piles of words, vast collections of files, a staff of experienced dictionary editors and consultants, or years of research, doing careful checking, and painstaking editing to create major dictionaries. They do, however, promise that their dictionary will be interesting to all those who want to keep abreast of our constantly changing language.

Adapted from Leamy, H., S. Lerner & M. Taylor. 1985. *New Words Dictionary*. New York: Random House, Inc.

## 2. While reading

**INSTRUCTIONS: Based on the above reading, discuss the following questions with your teacher and classmates.**

1. Why can't standard dictionaries include every new word that enters the English language?  
**THAT WOULD TAKE A NEW DICTIONARY BE PRINTED EVERY WEEK**
2. What requirements are there for a word to be entered in an authoritative dictionary?  
**PRONUNCIATIONS, MEANINGS, SLOGANS AND TERMS MUST BE VERIFIED AND CHECKED**
3. What is the purpose of the dictionary these people are working on?  
**IT WILL INCLUDE THOSE FEW WORDS WHICH ARE NOT FOUND IN STANDARD DICTIONARIES**
4. Who is this new "informal" dictionary for?  
**FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO KNOW THE ALL THE FACTS ABOUT A NEW WORD**
5. Are the authors of this new dictionary professional lexicographers?  
**NO, THEY AREN'T.**

## 3. Post reading

**INSTRUCTIONS: Click on the words that you don't know.**

exquisite    canvas    digress    finger    exalt    every  
helmet    intact    ad honorem    launch    molecule    Mrs.

**Now tell your classmates and teacher what aspect(s) of your experience as an English student helped you to know the meanings of some of these words.**

## E. Type it up

### 1. Pre writing

**INSTRUCTIONS: Say which dictionaries you use the most and for what purpose. Write a check mark ( ✓ ) in the corresponding box. Share the information with your classmates.**

<b>TYPE OF DICTIONARY</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>English-English</b>		
<b>Dictionary of Idioms</b>		
<b>Dictionary of Quotations</b>		
<b>English Spanish/Spanish English</b>		
<b>Dictionary of Technical Terms</b>		
<b>Picture Dictionary</b>		

Adapted from Davies, E. & N. Whitney. 1984. *Study Skills for Reading*. London: Heinemann Educational books.

## 2. Writing

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Write a paragraph in which you refer to the importance of dictionaries. Refer to the role dictionaries play in your studies in both your English courses and the other courses that you take.

## 3. Post writing

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use any reference material you can to find out the meaning of these abbreviations.

UNO:	United Nations Organization
CAFTA:	Central America Free Trade Agreement
FAQ:	Frequently asked questions
FYO:	For your information
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAS:	Organization of American States
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CSI:	Crime Scene Investigation
ESL:	English as a Second Language
UCLA:	University of California Los Angeles

## F. Logging off

### 1. Team Project for each unit

**Objective:** Design a project based on the use of phrases in English that were taken from other languages.

**Product:** You are going to complete the table with the origin and meaning of ten words and phrases used in English but which come from other languages. You are going to work with a group of classmates and use a monolingual dictionary to find the meanings.

WORD/PHRASE	ORIGIN	MEANING
cerebellum	Latin	The larger part of the hindbrain responsible for the control of muscle tone and balance
déjà vu	French	The illusory feeling of having already experienced the present moment of situation
embargo	Spanish	An official, usually temporary prohibition of a particular commercial activity or of trade in general
frankfurter	German	A seasoned sausage made of smoked beef and pork, originally made at Frankfurt am Main in Germany
goulash	Hungarian	A highly seasoned stew of meat and vegetables
honoris causa	Latin	As a mark of esteem, especially in reference to an honorary degree at a university
igloo	Inuit	an Eskimo dome-shaped hut, usually one built from blocks of snow
jujitsu	Japanese	A Japanese system of unarmed combat using an opponent's strength and weight to his or her disadvantage
kinesis	Greek	movement
lasagna	Italian	Pasta in the form of long wide strips, usually with a sauce

Source: Speake, J. (Ed.) 1997. *Oxford Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases*. Oxford: OUP.

**Dissemination:** Oral report to the whole class. With a team, you will create and present the project to the class.

Roles	Job Description	Student's Name
Student 1 <b>Leader</b>	Sees that everybody uses English Sees that everybody participates Presents the product	
Student 2 <b>Secretary</b>	Writes information about project	
Student 3 <b>Designer</b>	Designs layout and adds artwork	
Student 4 <b>Assistant</b>	Helps secretary and designer with their work	

## Steps

1. Choose roles for each member of your team. Give the project a name.
2. In your group, decide what you are going to do and how you are going to present the information.
3. Create the text for your section according to your role.
4. Create artwork for your section.
5. Put everything together.
6. Present your project to the class.

## 2. Surfing the Net (icon)

Surf the net using <http://www.askoxford.com/dictionaries/?view> to find information about the following words and phrases.

**Alma Mater:** a university as regarded by its past and present students and members (Latin)

**ad valorem :** according to the value (Latin)

**file mignon :** a slice cut from the small end of a fillet of beet ; French

**delicatessen:** cooked meats, cheeses and unusual or foreign prepared foods; German

**fiasco:** a complete failure; Italian

**hatha yoga:** a system of physical exercises and breathing control used in yoga; Sanskrit

**kung fu:** from kung = merit and fu = master; Mandarin

**ombudsman:** person that investigates complaints against maladministration by public officials; Swedish

**piranha:** aggressive freshwater fish from South America; Portuguese

**sushi:** a dish containing rolls of cold boiled rice and garnished with raw fish; Japanese

<b>Other Internet Addresses</b>	http://
<b>Topic(s)</b>	
<b>Information Found</b>	

## PAIR UP AND WORK

**Situation A:** Ask a classmate to identify the four parts of speech in the following sentence: *Calculators solve difficult problems quickly.* You must check that your classmate's responses are correct.

**Situation B:** Ask a classmate to identify the prefix, prefixes, and root in the word *disgracefully.* Ask him/her what part of speech this word is. You must check that your classmate's responses are correct.

Source: Longman's *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics.*

## CULTURE NOTE

Did you know that most new verbs that come into Costa Rican Spanish end in the suffix *-ar*. This is explained by a theory of linguistics in the sense that in the languages of the world certain elements occur more frequently than others. For example, in Costa Rican Spanish all verbs used in colloquial speech (old or new) end in *-ar*, not in *-ir* or *-er*, the other two verb endings. This is true in verbs such as *achantar*, *chochar*, *vinear*, *pachanguear*, *jamar*. Yet, one interesting signal that the Costa Rican culture is greatly influenced linguistically is a phenomenon called *borrowing*. There are many words in present-day Costa Rican Spanish “borrowed” from American English and which reflect such cultural influence. Again, if any of these words is a verb, then the suffix *-ar* will be added. Here are some examples from Costa Rican colloquial Spanish: *chatear* from English *chat*, *taipear* from *type*, *formatear* from *format*, *guachar* from *watch*. You will probably be able to add many others to this list. As was said before, this is part of the influence of one culture over another. Naturally, the “borrowed” words or “loans” are not pronounced as they are in English. *Ticos* pronounce them according to the sound system of Costa Rican Spanish.

## GLOSSARY

**adjective:** a word that describes the thing, quality, state or action which a word refers to. For example, *blue* in *blue jeans* is an adjective.

**adverb:** a word that describes or adds to the meaning of a verb, an adjective, another adverb or a sentence. Most adverbs in English end in *-ly*: *carefully*, *quickly*, *slowly*, *softly*.

**noun:** a word that refers to a person (Jimmy, teacher), a place (San José), a thing (pencil), a quality (honesty), an activity (stamp collecting), a profession or occupation (engineering).

**part of speech:** a traditional term to describe the different types of a word which are used to form sentences: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

**prefix:** a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning such as *un-* in *unimportant*, which indicates the negative form of the word.

**root:** a word that has the main meaning regardless of other forms that are added to it: *learn* is the root of *learns, learning, learned and learner*.

**suffix:** a letter or group of letters added to the end of a word to make another word, such as *-er* in *teacher* or *-hood* in *parenthood*.

**verb:** a word that occurs as part of the predicate of a sentence and marks grammatical categories, for example, tense, person and number. The verb describes an action: Johnny *loves* coffee or a state: Marianne *is* a happy person.

## Review of Unit 4

### 1. VOCABULARY

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use your dictionary to find words according to the (1) roots, (2) their meanings, and (3) the parts of speech given in the table.

ROOTS	MEANINGS	PART OF SPEECH	WORDS
anthrop	human being	noun	ANTHROPOLOGY/IST
bene	good, well	adjective	BENEVOLENT
phys	body, nature	adverb	PHYSICALLY
phot	light	noun	PHOTO/GRAPH/ER
soph	wisdom	adjective	SOPHISTICATED
tele	far off	verb	TELE/TYPEGRAPH
tempor	time	adverb	TEMPORARILY
Ter	earth	noun	TERRITORY
uni	one	adjective	UNIVERSAL
vid	see	noun	VIDEO

### 2. GRAMMAR

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Identify the parts of speech in the following text. Drag them to the corresponding column.

It is very difficult for computers to translate accurately from one language to another as words can have different meanings in different sentences. Even modern computers need a lot of information before it can recognize the difference between *I feel like a cup of tea* and *I feel like an idiot*.

## NOUNS

computers  
language  
words  
meanings  
sentences  
information  
difference  
cup  
tea  
idiot

## VERBS

translate  
have  
need  
recognize  
feel

## ADJECTIVES

difficult  
different  
modern

## ADVERBS

accurately  
even

# SELF ASSESSMENT UNIT 4

In this unit you have learned the principles of word formation in English.

### *Skills*

- I can tell the function of prefixes, suffixes and roots.
- I can tell the difference between nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
- I can use an English-English dictionary.
- I can recognize the pronunciation of the prefixes *-un*, *-in* and *-inter*.
- I can tell the prefixes and suffixes in a word.
- I can identify the suffixes that make nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.
- I can understand information about new words in English.
- I can distinguish between different types of dictionaries.
- I can identify the meanings of different abbreviations.

### *Self reflection*

1. What was the most useful thing you learned in this unit?

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2. How will this help you in real life?

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