

Dividing Syllables

Prefixes & Suffixes | Morphology-Based Division

Grades 3–5

THE RULE

Always look for prefixes and suffixes FIRST! Divide AFTER a prefix and BEFORE a suffix.

Common Prefixes: un-, re-, dis-, pre-, mis-, over-, under-, im-, in-, non-

Common Suffixes: -ly, -ful, -less, -ment, -ness, -tion, -able, -ous, -al, -ive

Examples: un / kind / ly dis / a / gree / ment re / lease pre / view

Why This Matters: Understanding prefixes and suffixes helps students read AND understand the word. Meaning comes first!

SECTION 1 | Circle the prefix. Then divide the word into syllables.

Directions: Find the prefix at the beginning. Circle it. Then divide the rest of the word.

disagree

impossible

rewrite

illegal

preview

inactive

misunderstand

nonfiction

overlook

disappear

underwater

preheat

SECTION 2 | Circle the suffix. Then divide the word into syllables.

Directions: Find the suffix at the end. Circle it. Then divide the base word from the suffix.

careless

adventurous

wonderful

cautious

kindness

relational

payment

education

agreement

inventor

competition

beautiful

SECTION 3 | Prefix AND Suffix — Divide all three parts

Directions: Some words have BOTH a prefix and a suffix. Divide into prefix + base word + suffix.

disagreement	_____	rearrangement	_____
uncomfortable	_____	nontraditional	_____
impossible	_____	overpayment	_____
misunderstanding	_____	underwater	_____

SECTION 4 | Meaning Match — Connect the prefix to its meaning

Directions: Draw a line from each prefix to its meaning. Understanding meaning helps with division.

un-	_____	not / opposite
re-	_____	again
dis-	_____	not / opposite of
pre-	_____	before
mis-	_____	wrongly
over-	_____	too much

TEACHER NOTES

- Morphology-based division is a cornerstone of the Science of Reading. Students who understand prefixes and suffixes can tackle much longer words with confidence.
- Always teach students to look for prefixes and suffixes BEFORE applying other syllable rules.
- This worksheet aligns with structured literacy and morphology instruction.

Answers available in the combined Answer Key PDF at aiwritetkit.com