

## Building Blocks of Esperanto

Following is a list of Esperanto building blocks. Along with a list of word stems, it should help to interpret and construct Esperanto words. I should note that some of the prefixes and suffixes quoted here are rather loose in their definition and may also appear in word stems on occasion without the cited meaning. Where an affix is actually a word stem itself I have attempted to list that word stem underneath.

I might also add, that this summary is not intended to teach Esperanto, but to serve as a useful reference for those of us who are learning. Many things are left unsaid.

### Grammatical Endings

One of these grammatical endings should appear on the end of most words, and defines that words role in a sentence. Other suffixes and prefixes may precede this final identifier.

|     |                             |                   |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| -o  | noun                        | amo "love"        |
| -a  | adjective                   | ama "loving"      |
| -e  | adverb                      | ame "lovingly"    |
| -n  | direct object of a verb     | amon "love"       |
| -j  | plural                      | amoj "loves"      |
| -jn | plural of the direct object | amojn "loves"     |
| -i  | verb, infinitive            | ami "to love"     |
| -u  | verb, imperative            | amu "love!"       |
| -is | verb, past tense            | amis "loved"      |
| -as | verb, present tense         | amas "loves"      |
| -os | verb, future tense          | amos "will love"  |
| -us | verb, conditional           | amus "would love" |

### Prefixes

All the prefixes precede the stem of the word, many are in fact word stems themselves. Many may be compounded with other prefixes and suffixes. Many are rather flexible in their definition.

|        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| al-    | approach, towards, bringing closer |
| al     | "towards"                          |
| veni   | "to come" > alveni "to arrive"     |
| iri    | "to go" > aliri "to approach"      |
| porti  | "to carry" > alporti "to bring"    |
| paroli | "to speak" > alparoli "to address" |

See also: for-

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| bo- | relative by marriage                     |
|     | patro "father" > bopatro "father-in-law" |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| cxeft-   | chief                                       |
| cxeft    | "a chief"                                   |
| urbo     | "town" > cxefturbo "capital city"           |
| ministro | "minister" > cxeftministro "prime minister" |

|       |                                     |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| dis-  | separation, dispersal               |
| doni  | "to give" > disdoni "to distribute" |
| sendi | "to send" > dissendi "to transmit"  |

### ek-

|       |                                 |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| ek-   | commencement, suddenness        |
| ek!   | "commence!"                     |
| brili | "to shine" > ekbrili "to flash" |
| iri   | "to go" > ekiri "to set off"    |
| sidi  | "to sit" > eksidi "to sit down" |

See also: ad- re-

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| eks-       | former                                     |
| eksa       | "former"                                   |
| prezidento | "president" > eksprezidento "ex-president" |

|      |                             |
|------|-----------------------------|
| fi-  | shameful or immoral         |
| fi!  | "shame!"                    |
| viro | "man" > fi vido "scoundrel" |

|      |                                  |
|------|----------------------------------|
| for- | away                             |
| for  | "away"                           |
| iri  | "to go" > foriri "to go away"    |
| esti | "to be" > foresti "to be absent" |

See also: al-

|         |                                    |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| ge-     | both sexes together                |
| frato   | "brother" > gefratoj "siblings"    |
| patro   | "father" > gepatroy "parents"      |
| sinjoro | "Mister" > gesinjoroj "Mr and Mrs" |

See also: vir- in-

|       |                               |
|-------|-------------------------------|
| mal-  | opposite                      |
| alta  | "high" > malalta "low"        |
| vero  | "truth" > malvero "falsehood" |
| ami   | "to love" > malami "to hate"  |
| forta | "strong" > malforta "weak"    |

See also: mis- "ne"

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| mis-     | wrongly  |
| kompreni | "to understand" > miskompreni "to misunderstand" |
| pasxo    | "a step" > mispasxo "a blunder"                  |

See also: mal- "ne"

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| pra-  | of great antiquity, remoteness of relationship |
| praa  | "primitive"                                    |
| tempo | "time" > pratempo "the ancient past"           |
| nepo  | "grandson" > pranepo "great-grandson"          |

See also: -id-

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| re- | repetition, return                                    |
| ree | "again"   |
| sxi | vidas "she sees" > sxi revidas "she sees again"       |
| ni  | venas "we're coming" > ni revenas "we're coming back" |

See also: ek- -ad-

|         |                                     |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| sen-    | without                             |
| sen     | "without"                           |
| koro    | "heart" > senkora "heartless"       |
| forta   | "strong" > senforta "strengthless"  |
| helpa   | "helpful" > senhelpa "helpless"     |
| kompara | "merciful" > senkompara "merciless" |

See also: -acx- -eg- -et-

|       |                         |
|-------|-------------------------|
| vir-  | masculine               |
| viro  | "man"                   |
| bovo  | "ox" > virbovo "bull"   |
| porko | "pig" > virporko "boar" |

See also: ge- -in- -icx-

### Suffixes

All these suffixes follow the stem of the word and precede the grammatical ending, which defines the role the word will play. Many may be compounded with other suffixes and prefixes. Some are in fact words stems themselves.

|       |                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| -acx- | disparagement                     |
| acxa  | "awful"                           |
| domo  | "house" > domacxo "hovel"         |
| hundo | "dog" > hundacxo "cur", "mongrel" |

See also: -eg- -et- sen-

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| -ad-   | action, particularly prolonged or repeated      |
| paroli | "to speak" > parladi "to make a speech"         |
| penso  | "thought" > pensado "(the process of) thinking" |

See also: ek- re-

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| -ajx- | A thing, having the quality or substance of ... |
| ajxo  | "a thing"                                       |
| nova  | "new" > novajxo "news", "novelty"               |
| okazi | "to happen" > okazajxo "event"                  |
| arto  | "art" > artajxo "objet d'art"                   |
| porko | "pig" > porkajxo "pork"                         |

See also: -ec- -a -em-

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| -an-     | member of a group; inhabitant                      |
| ano      | "member"   |
| urbo     | "town" > urbano "townsman"                         |
| Novjorko | "New York" > novjorkano "New Yorker"               |
| polico   | "police" > policanino "member of the police force" |
| lando    | "country" > landano "citizen"                      |

See also: -ar- -ul-

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| -ar-      | collective, group                                       |
| aro       | "group", "set"  |
| vorto     | "word" > vortaro "dictionary", "vocabulary"             |
| homo      | "human being" > homaro "mankind"                        |
| studento  | "student" > studentaro "the student body (of a school)" |
| kuracisto | "doctor" > kuracistaro "the medical profession"         |

See also: -an-

|       |                                       |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| -ebl- | possibility                           |
| havi  | "to have" > havebla "available"       |
| ami   | "to love" > amebla "possible to love" |

See also: -ind-

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| -ec-   | having the characteristics of ...              |
| eco    | "a quality", "a characteristic"                |
| infano | "child" > infaneca "childish"                  |
| sola   | "alone" > soleca "lonely" > soleco "lonliness" |
| rugxa  | "red" > rugzeca "reddish"                      |
| libera | "free" > libereco "freedom"                    |
| viro   | "man" > vireco "virility"                      |
| unu    | "one" > unueco "unity"                         |

See also: -ajx- -a -em-

|        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| -eg-   | augmentative                        |
| ega    | "huge"                              |
| bona   | "good" > bonega "excellent"         |
| bela   | "beautiful" > belega "splendid"     |
| urbo   | "town" > urbegi "a large city"      |
| labori | "to work" > laboregi "to work hard" |

See also: -et- -ecx- sen-

|       |                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| -ej-  | place (often collective)         |
| ejo   | "a place"                        |
| dormi | "to sleep" > dormejo "dormitory" |
| lerni | "to learn" > lernejo "school"    |

See also: -a -ec- -ajx-

|        |                                   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| -em-   | tendency                          |
| emi    | "to be inclined to"               |
| paroli | "to speak" > parolema "talkative" |

See also: -a -ec- -ajx-

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| -end- | passive obligation                          |
| enda  | "that must be"                              |
| pagi  | "to pay" > pagenda "payable"                |
| solvi | "to solve" > solvenda "that must be solved" |

See also: -er-

|        |                             |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| -er-   | small particle of a whole   |
| ero    | "a particle"                |
| pano   | "bread" > panero "crumb"    |
| cxeno  | "chain" > cxenero "link"    |
| pluovo | "rain" > pluvero "raindrop" |

See also: -estr-

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| -estr- | leader                                  |
| estro  | "leader"                                |
| stacio | "station" > staciestro "station master" |
| urbo   | "town" > urbestro "mayor"               |
| lerni  | "to learn" > lernestro "schoolmaster"   |

See also: -et-

|        |                                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| -et-   | diminutive                            |
| eta    | "tiny"                                |
| virino | "woman" > virineti "little woman"     |
| bela   | "beautiful" > beleta "pretty", "cute" |

See also: -eg- -ecx- sen-

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| -icx-      | male                                     |
| icxo       | "a male"                                 |
| instruisto | "teacher" > instruisticxo "male teacher" |

See also: vir- in- ge-

|      |               |
|------|---------------|
| -id- | descendant of |
| ido  | "offspring"   |

koko "rooster" > kokido "chick"  
 porko "pig" > porkido "piglet"  
 bovo "ox" > bovido "calf"  
 cxevalo "horse" > cxevalido "colt"  
 regxo "king" > regxido "prince"

See also: *pra-*

**-ig-** causative

igi "to make"  
 granda "big" > grandigi "to enlarge"  
 forta "strong" > fortigi "to strengthen"  
 facila "easy" > faciligi "to facilitate"  
 sci "to know" > sciigi "to inform", "to make known"  
 stari "to stand" > starigi "to set up"  
 kontenta "glad" > kontentiga "satisfactory"

See also: *-igx-*

**-igx-** become ...

igxi "to become"  
 proksima "near" > proksimigxi "to draw nearer"  
 stara "standing" > starigxi "to stand up"  
 viro "man" > virigxi "to become a man"  
 rapida "quick" > rapidigxo "acceleration"

See also: *-ig-*

**-il-** implement, tool

ilo "a tool"  
 labori "to work" > laborilo "tool"  
 veturli "to travel" > veturilo "vehicle"

**-in-** female

ino "a female"  
 knabo "boy" > knabino "girl"  
 viro "man" > virino "woman"  
 patro "father" > patrino "mother"  
 instruisto "teacher" > instruistino "female teacher"

See also: *vir- ge- -icx-*

**-ind-** worthiness

inda "worthy"  
 ami "to love" > aminda "deserving love"  
 vidi "to see" > vidinda "worth seeing"  
 havi "to have" > havinda "worth having"

See also: *-ebl-*

**-ing-** holder

ingo "a holder", "a socket"  
 glavo "sword" > glavingo "scabbard"  
 plumo "pen" > plumingo "pen-holder"

**-ism-** pattern or system

ismo "an ism"  
 protekti "to protect" > protrekismo "protectionism"  
 alkoholo "alcohol" > alkoholismo "alcoholism"

**-ist-** habitual occupation, profession

isto "professional"  
 instrui "to teach" > instruisto "teacher"  
 labori "to work" > laboristo "worker"  
 polico "police" > policisto "policeman"

See also: *-ul-*

**-obl-** multiple

oble "-fold"  
 du "two" > duobla "double"  
 kvar "four" > kvaroble "fourfold"

**-on-** fraction

ono "a fraction"  
 du "two" > duoni "to halve"  
 ses "six" > sesono "a sixth"

**-op-** collective numeral

tri "three" > triopo "triplet"  
 unu "one" > unuope "one by one", "in the manner of one-ness"

**-uj-** container

uko "receptacle"  
 sukerlo "sugar" > sukerulo "sugar basin"  
 papero "paper" > paperulo "wallet"  
 mono "money" > monulo "purse"

**-ul-** a person

ulo "fellow", "chap"  
 juna "young" > junulo "a youth"  
 forta "strong" > fortulo "a hefty guy"  
 drinko "alcoholic drink" > drinkulo "drunkard"  
 trinko "drink" > trinkulo "one who drinks"

See also: *-ist- -an-*

**-um-** related to in some way (no fixed meaning though)

malvarma "cold" > malvarumi "to catch a cold"  
 plena "full" > plenumi "to fulfill"  
 plando "sole of foot" > plandumo "sole of shoe"  
 cerbo "brain" > cerbumi "to puzzle over"

**Participles**

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This is a very brief summary. The participles can form compound verbs when they follow the helper "estii" (where they take the adjectival suffix), or they can take adjectival, adverbial or noun forms on their own (with the appropriate grammatical ending).

|             | PASSIVE | ACTIVE |
|-------------|---------|--------|
| PAST        | -it-    | -int-  |
| PRESENT     | -at-    | -ant-  |
| FUTURE      | -ot-    | -ont-  |
| CONDITIONAL | -ut-    | -unt-  |

**Pronouns**

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A complete list of pronouns. As in English, the plural "you" is identical to the singular and does not take the plural suffix. Possessives take the adjectival form by adding the -a suffix.

|     |      |
|-----|------|
| mi  | I    |
| vi  | you  |
| li  | he   |
| sxi | she  |
| gxi | it   |
| ni  | we   |
| ili | they |

|     |                                    |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| oni | one                                |
| ci  | thou (archaic)                     |
| si  | reflexive - refers back to subject |
| ri  | he or she (genderless)             |

**Correlatives**

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Any combination of the prefix and suffix will form a small word describing something. Remember that movement towards a place is indicated by using the accusative (-n) suffix.

|                       |       |     |             |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|-------------|
| undefined (some-)     | i-    | -o  | thing       |
| demonstrative (that-) | ti-   | -u  | person      |
| interrogative (what-) | ki-   | -es | kind        |
| collective (every-)   | cxi-  | -am | possession  |
| negative (no-)        | neni- | -om | place       |
|                       |       | -al | time        |
|                       |       | -el | quantity    |
|                       |       |     | reason      |
|                       |       |     | way, manner |

**Numbers**

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Numbers follow a consistent pattern, best illustrated by example.

|         |                            |               |                          |
|---------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| nulo    | zero                       | dek uno       | eleven                   |
| unu     | one                        | dek du        | twelve                   |
| du      | two                        | dek tri       | thirteen                 |
| tri     | three                      | dudek tri     | twenty three             |
| kvar    | four                       | kvindek ok    | fifty eight              |
| kvin    | five                       | cent sesdek   | a hundred and sixty      |
| ses     | six                        | sepcent okdek | seven hundred and eighty |
| sep     | seven                      | dek miliono   | ten million              |
| ok      | eight                      |               |                          |
| naux    | nine                       |               |                          |
| dek     | ten                        |               |                          |
| cent    | hundred                    |               |                          |
| mil     | thousand                   |               |                          |
| miliono | million                    |               |                          |
| milardi | billion (thousand million) |               |                          |

Prepositions, Conjunctions and other words with no grammatical ending

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Short words which do not have any grammatical ending are used very often. They are prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and even adverbs, and a real pain to always be looking up in a dictionary. Here is a fairly complete list of all you will likely meet.

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| ajn       | -ever (with a correlative)          |
| al        | to(wards)                           |
| almenaux  | at least                            |
| ankaux    | also                                |
| ankoraux  | still, yet                          |
| anstataux | instead of                          |
| antaux    | before                              |
| apenaux   | scarcely                            |
| apud      | beside, near                        |
| baldaux   | soon                                |
| cxar      | because                             |
| cxe       | at, by, in case of                  |
| cxi       | this- (with a correlative or noun)  |
| cxirkaux  | around                              |
| da        | of (quantinty)                      |
| de        | of, from                            |
| des       | so much the                         |
| do        | then, thus, therefore               |
| dum       | during                              |
| ecx       | even                                |
| ekster    | outside of                          |
| el        | out of                              |
| en        | in                                  |
| for       | away                                |
| gxis      | until                               |
| inter     | between                             |
| ja        | indeed                              |
| jam       | already                             |
| jen       | hereis, behold                      |
| jes       | yes                                 |
| ju        | so much the                         |
| jxus      | just                                |
| kaj       | and                                 |
| ke        | that                                |
| kontraux  | against                             |
| krom      | except, apart from                  |
| kun       | with                                |
| kvankam   | although                            |
| kvazaux   | as if                               |
| laux      | according to, along                 |
| malgraux  | in spite of                         |
| mem       | -self (with a pronoun)              |
| ne        | no                                  |
| nu        | well                                |
| nun       | now                                 |
| nur       | only                                |
| ol        | than                                |
| per       | by means of                         |
| plej      | most                                |
| pli       | more                                |
| po        | at the rate of                      |
| por       | for                                 |
| post      | after                               |
| preter    | past, by, beyond                    |
| pri       | concerning, about                   |
| pro       | on account of, owing to, because of |
| sed       | but                                 |
| sen       | without                             |
| sub       | under                               |
| super     | above                               |
| sur       | on                                  |
| tamen     | however                             |
| tra       | through                             |
| trans     | across                              |
| tre       | very                                |
| tro       | too                                 |
| tuj       | immediately                         |

Credits

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Compiled by Bernd Wechner, with much appreciated advice from Daniel Chung, Donald J. Harlow, David Wolff, Harri Laine, Martin R. Bartel, Jim Kingdon, and Bob Lidral.

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