Prefix Detective

Use word beginnings to unlock meanings.

10.4.R.3 "Students will use word parts (e.g., affixes, Anglo-Saxon, Greek, and Latin roots, stems) to define and determine the meaning of increasingly complex words."

NAME _____ DATE _____

NEGATIVE PREFIX

A negative prefix can mean "not" or "without." Combine that clue with the rest of the word to find its meaning.

Impossible: im- means "not," so impossible means "not possible."

NUMBER PREFIX

A number prefix tells how many. Combine that number with the rest of the word to find its meaning.

Hexapod: hexa- means "six," so a hexapod has six legs.

1 SORT

8 items

For each word, circle NEGATES or COUNTS to show what its bold prefix tells you.

1.	**non-**essential	NEGATES	COUNTS
2.	**in-**flexible	NEGATES	COUNTS
3.	**multi-**lingual	NEGATES	COUNTS
4.	**dis-**connected	NEGATES	COUNTS
5.	**quadri-**lateral	NEGATES	COUNTS
6.	**poly-**theism	NEGATES	COUNTS
7.	**ir-**regular	NEGATES	COUNTS
8.	**un-**precedented	NEGATES	COUNTS

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

choose one item from each category and explain what its prefix means and how that helps you define the word.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

write one new word with a negative prefix and one new word with a number prefix, then define each word.

NEGATES _____

COUNTS _____

CHALLENGE

Choose a word with both a number prefix and a suffix, identify each part, and explain the whole word.

ANSWER KEY

Prefix Detective

GRADE 10 · 10.4.R.3

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	**non-**essential	**NEGATES**	Non- means "not," so nonessential means not essential.
2	**in-**flexible	**NEGATES**	In- means "not," so inflexible means not flexible.
3	**multi-**lingual	**COUNTS**	Multi- means "many," so multilingual means using or knowing many languages.
4	**dis-**connected	**NEGATES**	Dis- means "not" here, so disconnected means not connected.
5	**quadri-**lateral	**COUNTS**	Quadri- means "four," so a quadrilateral has four sides.
6	**poly-**theism	**COUNTS**	Poly- means "many," so polytheism is belief in many gods.
7	**ir-**regular	**NEGATES**	Ir- means "not," so irregular means not regular.
8	**un-**precedented	**NEGATES**	Un- means "not," so unprecedented describes something not known or done before.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: choose one item from each category and explain what its prefix means and how that helps you define the word. Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **NEGATES**: Illogical: il- means "not," so illogical means "not logical."
- **COUNTS**: Pentathlon: penta- means "five," so a pentathlon has five events.

Challenge: Bilateral: bi- means "two," and -al means "relating to." Bilateral means "relating to two sides."

For Part 2, look for a correct prefix meaning and a whole-word definition for one item in each category. For example, multi- means "many," so multilingual means using or knowing many languages.