

PREFIXES IN GERMAN

German frequently adds Prefixes to verbs, in order to obtain new verbs with different meaning and/or function. While it is not **reliably** possible to guess the meaning of a prefix verb from knowing the meaning of the base verb and the prefix, having a rough idea of the meanings and/or implications of prefixes may help in understanding new vocabulary.

Below is a list of some of the more frequent prefixes and approximate meanings associated with them.

Inseparable prefixes (some meanings/implications)

be-	effecting, evaluating, approaching or grasping object
emp-	upward
ent-	opposition (dis-, de-)
er-	intensifies meaning of base verb, upward/endward direction, effecting, achieving
ge-	(formerly implied collectivity or perfect tense derivative); no recognizable meaning now
miß-	wrong (mis-)
un-	negative (un-)
ver-	wrong; up to a (negative)result
zer-	apart, separating, dissembling, destroying

Separable Prefixes (some meanings/implications)

ab-	away (from), off
an-	on, to, up to
auf-	open, up, finish (aufhören, aufessen)
aus-	out, out of, off
ein-	in, into
her-	hither, toward (the speaker); herab- (down), herauf- (up), heraus- (out), herein- (in), herüber- (over)
hin-	thither, away from (the speaker); hinab- (down), hinauf- (up), hinaus- (out), hinein- (in), hinüber- (over)
mit-	together with, along with
nach-	after, behind
vor-	ahead, before
vorbei-	past, by
zu-	shut, close
zurück-	back