

Arts Prefixes and Suffixes

Word parts that help students unlock meaning in arts vocabulary.

Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning/Use	Example Words & Meanings
chrom-/chroma-	color	chromatic : related to color or musical tones; monochrome : one-color image
mono-	one	monologue : speech by one speaker; monochrome : using one color
poly-	many	polyphonic : many musical voices; polychrome : many-colored
sym-/syn-	together	symmetry : balanced parts together; synthesis : putting elements together
photo-	light	photography : art made with light; photogram : image made with light exposure
tele-	distant	television : distant viewing; telephoto : lens for distant subjects
cine-/kin-	motion	cinematography : motion-picture art; kinetic : related to movement
auto-	self	autobiography : self-portrait; automatic drawing : spontaneous drawing method
micro-	small	microtonal : using tiny pitch intervals; micrograph : small-scale image
macro-	large	macro photography : close-up photography; macrostructure : large overall form
neo-	new or revived	neoclassical : new classical style; neo-expressionism : revived expressionist style
post-	after	postmodern : after modernism; postproduction : editing after filming
multi-	many	multimedia : using many media; multicolor : using many colors
inter-	between	interdisciplinary : between fields; interactive : involving action between viewer and work

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning/Use	Example Words & Meanings
-ist	artist or practitioner	pianist : person who plays piano; muralist : artist who paints murals
-ism	style or movement	impressionism : art movement; cubism : style using geometric forms
-esque	in the style of	Romanesque : in Roman-like style; arabesque : ornamental flowing design
-graphy	art or process of recording	photography : recording with light; choreography : designing dance movement
-phonic	sound or voice	symphonic : related to full musical sound; polyphonic : many voices
-tone	sound or color quality	undertone : subtle tone; monotone : one repeated tone
-scape	scene or view	landscape : view of land; soundscape : layered sound environment
-form	shape or type	artform : type of art; waveform : visual shape of sound
-work	made object or method	artwork : made art object; metalwork : art or craft with metal
-craft	skill or art	stagecraft : theater-making skill; craft : skilled making by hand
-ette	small or brief form	statuette : small statue; vignette : brief scene or image
-age	collection or process	collage : artwork from assembled pieces; montage : assembled film sequence
-ure	result or process	sculpture : art made by shaping materials; architecture : design of buildings
-al/-ic	relating to	musical : related to music; artistic : related to art