NEGATIVE PREFIXES

DISCONTENT

- Discontent: unhappy
- “Uncontent” is not a word, but many Americans use this word in conversation.

DISQUALIFY AND UNQUALIFIED

- Disqualify: to prohibit or exclude; to bar or ban
- Unqualified: without qualifications; untrained or unskilled

NONDiscriminatory and IndiscrIMINATE

- Nondiscriminatory: equal; unbiased; fair
- Indiscriminate: random in selection; uncritical or unselective

Nonspecific and Unspecific

- Nonspecific: general; generic
- Unspecific: undefined; unclear

These two words can be used almost interchangeably.

Valuable and Invaluable

These two words are often confused. “Invaluable” is not a negative term, but actually means that something is so valuable that it doesn’t have a price.

- Valuable: treasured; prized; respected
- Invaluable: priceless

Words with double “s”

- Dissatisfied: unhappy; discontent (or: unsatisfied)
- Dissolution: to break something down or separate
- Dissolve: to melt, soften, or fall apart
- Exceptions: unsavory: disgusting
Words with double “r”

- Irrevocable: synonym with “irretrievable;” cannot be undone or changed
- Irreversible: permanent
- Irretrievable: synonym with “irrevocable;” cannot be taken back
- Irrefutable: convincing; undeniable; cannot be argued
- Irrelevant: unrelated; not connected to the topic
- Irreparable: cannot be fixed or repaired
- Exceptions: disreputable, unreliable, and unregulated

“Im”

Impossible
Impatient
Impotent: not fertile; powerless; helpless
Immutable: absolute; undeniable

“Il”

Illegible
Illegal
Illicit
Illegitimate

Exceptions: unloved; unlucky; unleashed; unlocked
**Irregular Academic Words from Latin and Greek**

Words are color-coded by the academic field that uses them the most often. Words in black have a more general use.

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### Is → es

- Analysis → analyses
- Axis → axes
- basis → bases
- bias → biases
- crisis → crises
- **diagnosis** → diagnoses
- emphasis → emphases
- hypothesis → hypotheses
- neurosis → neuroses
- oasis → oases
- parenthesis → parentheses
- psychosis → psychoses
- synopsis → synopses
- thesis → theses

### Us → “I”

- alumnus → alumni
- cactus → cacti
- focus → foci
- fungus → fungi
- nucleus → nuclei
- octopus → octopi
- **radius** → radii
- rhombus → rhombi
- stratus → strati
- stylus → styli
- syllabus → syllabi
- uterus → uteri
- on/um → “a”
- automaton → automata
- bacterium → bacteria
- criterion → criteria
- curriculum → curricula
- datum → data
- medium → media
- memorandum → memoranda
- millennium → millennia
- ovum → ova
- phenomenon → phenomena
- referendum → referenda
- spectrum → spectra
Writing Center

\[ a \rightarrow ae \]

- alumna → alumnae
- alga → algae
- antenna → antennae
- formula → formulae

\[ \text{Words that don't follow the spelling rules:} \]

- Campus → campuses
- Census → censuses
- Corpus → corpora
- Genus → genera

\[ \text{ix/ex} \rightarrow \text{ices} \]

- appendix → appendices
- matrix → matrices
- index → indices
- vertex → vertices

\[ \text{Other unusual plurals: Always pluralize the primary noun in the phrase.} \]

\[ \text{Example: blackbird} \rightarrow \text{blackbirds (not blacksbird). The birds are plural, not their color.} \]

- Passerby → passersby
  (people walking by, usually on the street)

\[ \text{Hyphenated words:} \]

- Mothers-in-law
- Attorneys-at-law