



The Prefix DE-



110 Common Words (*Definitions-Examples*)

Prefixes and suffixes are like puzzle pieces. They can be used to greatly increase your English vocabulary. I have written this guide to help you use the prefix DE- with confidence using lots of real examples using common words with this prefix. Easy to follow charts, lists, and images too.

The prefix DE- shows that something is the opposite: **decompress** - to have air pressure return to normal. (Opposite - compress)

OR something is removed: **defrost** - to remove frost

OR something is moved to a lower level: **demote** - to move somebody/something to a lower position

I thoroughly researched this prefix and collected 100 words with the prefix DE-. Then I wrote the meaning with example sentences to help you understand and use these words just like a native speaker. Turn words you already know into new words and quickly increase your English vocabulary.

The prefix DE-

The prefix DE- has a few different meanings besides the opposite of the removal. It can also be used to indicate moving to a lower level

The prefix de- must be added to an **already existing word** to change the meaning. Words like delay and demand did not qualify.

I found a huge list on Wiktionary dot-com of almost 2,000 words with the prefix DE- and there are even more words that begin with DE even though it is not a prefix. I sorted through the list and I used two rules for deciding which words made it onto this blog post.

1. I have heard the word used before, used it myself, or seen it written in a book or article. If I haven't heard the word before it may be too strange or too scientific to be useful for ESL students and teachers.

Words from the Wiktionary list like degelify and devascularization didn't make my list.

2. If a word was new to me but sounded natural I entered it into Oxford Learner's Dictionaries dot com. If it didn't have a definition on Oxford Learner's Dictionaries I probably left the word out of the post.

Some exceptions:

If the word has a direct opposite with a different prefix I included it on the list.

- DEflate - INflate
- DEcline - INcline
- DEscend - Ascend

The prefix DE- Verbs

[deactivate](#) - to make something such as a device or chemical process stop working

You need the code to **deactivate** the alarm.

[deauthorize](#) - To revoke permission, sanction or consent.

Before you sell your Apple Mac you should **deauthorize** your computer from Apple Music.

[debase](#) - to make somebody/something less valuable or respected

Gold coins can be **debased** by melting them down and mixing them with cheaper metals/

[debeak](#) - To remove part of the beak of a chicken or other bird to prevent pecking in chicken farms

Chickens in factory farms are **debeaked** to keep them from pecking each other in their small and crowded cages.

[debone](#) - to remove the bone

When I was 8 my grandfather taught me how to **debone** the fish we caught. This made the fish easy to cook and eat.

[debrief](#) - to ask somebody questions officially, in order to get information about the task that they have just completed

The soldiers were **debriefed** after their mission into enemy territory.

[debug](#) - to look for and remove the faults in a computer program

I use my computer a lot so I need to **debug** it every 3 months.

[debunk](#) - to show that an idea, a belief, etc. is false; to show that something is not as good as people think it is

The article **debunks** 5 myths that people believe about cloud computing.

[decalcify](#) - To decrease the quantity of calcium salts

Doctors in Japan have found a new way to **decalcify** clogged heart valves.

[decapitate](#) - to cut off somebody's head

In ancient times criminals were often **decapitated** in public.

[decentralize](#) - to give some of the power of a central government, organization, etc. to smaller parts or organizations around the country

People think that we should **decentralize** energy production and allow private companies to produce it too.

[declassify](#) - to state officially that secret government information is no longer secret

The government has just **declassified** some documents related to the event.

[declaw](#) - to remove the claw from an animal

We are having our cat **declawed** so she will stop scratching people.

[decline](#) - to refuse politely to accept or to do something

The governor **declined** to comment on the allegations.

[declutter](#) - to remove things that you do not use so that you have more space and can easily find things when you need them

I learned 10 ways to **declutter** my closet from this book. It's really helpful.

[decode](#) - to convert something written in code into normal language

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My great-uncle helped **decode** German radio messages during World War II.

[decommission](#) - to stop using a nuclear power station and take it apart safely

The country **decommissioned** eight of its last 10 nuclear power stations after the accident.

[decompose](#) - to be destroyed gradually after death by natural processes

After just a short time the body began to **decompose**.

[decompress](#) - to have air pressure return to normal: ALSO to calm down and relax

After a busy week at work I like to use Saturday to **decompress** and just relax.

[deconstruct](#) - to separate something into the parts from which it is made up and put them together again in a different way

My high school music teacher helped us **deconstruct** classic songs to find the parts that made them special.

[decontaminate](#) - to remove harmful substances from a place or thing

After the nuclear power station accident the area had to be **decontaminated**.

[decontrol](#) - if a government decontrols something, it removes legal controls from it

Rent controls limits how much landlords can increase rental fees, while vacancy **decontrol** allows landlords to increase rents when a rental unit becomes vacant.

[deconvert](#) - to leave a particular religion, faith, or belief

Alan **deconverted** after he graduated from college.

[decrypt](#) - to change information that is in code into ordinary language so that it can be understood by anyone

Computers can encrypt and **decrypt** sensitive information that is being sent over the Internet.

[defame](#) - to harm somebody by saying or writing bad or false things about them

The magazine claims it was not its intention to **defame** the politician.

[de-emphasize](#) - to remove or reduce the emphasis from something; to make something less important

Climate change is causing countries to **de-emphasize** investments in the development of fossil fuels.

[de-escalate](#) - to decrease in intensity or magnitude

The police were called to **de-escalate** the situation which was becoming violent.

[defang](#) - to remove the fangs from (something)

The snake was **defanged** by a veterinarian.

[de-feather](#) - to remove the feathers from

The chickens are **de-feathered** before the meat comes to the supermarket.

[deflate](#) - to let air or gas out of a tyre, balloon, etc.; to become smaller because of air or gas coming out

I looked down and noticed the rear tire on my bicycle was **deflated**. I have to put air in the tire before I ride it.

[defog](#) - to remove the condensation from a car's windows so that you can see clearly

Using your car's heater and opening the windows just a little bit can help you **defog** your windows even faster.

[defoliate](#) - to destroy the leaves of trees or plants, especially with chemicals

Hungry gypsy moths can **defoliate** thousands of trees if their population is not controlled.

[defragment](#) (also defrag - informal) - to organize where data is stored on a computer hard disk in the most efficient way, in order to reduce the time taken to access the data

My computer is getting slow, I think it might be time to **defrag** it again.

[defriend](#) (also unfriend) - to remove somebody from a list of friends or contacts on social media

After too many political posts and comments on social media, many of Carl's connections **defriended** him.

defrost - to remove frost or ice from something

That chicken has been in the freezer for a long time so make sure you **defrost** it before you cook it.

deforest - to cut down and destroy all the trees in a place

People have increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels and **deforesting** land.

deform - to change or damage the usual or natural shape of something; to become changed in shape

The disease **deformed** his spine and made it difficult to walk.

defund - to stop providing money for something, especially something official

Some Americans are calling for the government to **defund** the police while others think that more police training is a better solution.

defuse - to stop a possibly dangerous or difficult situation from developing, especially by making people less angry or nervous

City officials are trying to **defuse** the anger in the city since the recent shooting.

deglaze - to make a sauce by adding liquid to the cooking juices in a pan in which meat has been cooked

Add red wine to the pot and **deglaze** it, absorbing any liquid or small pieces of meat from the bottom of the pan. This will make a tasty sauce for your beef.

degrade - ① to show or treat somebody in a way that makes them seem not worth any respect or not worth taking seriously

If you listen to the lyrics of the song it clearly **degrades** women.

② to make something become worse, especially in quality

The comic book is rare but it has been badly **degraded** so it has lost much of its value.

degrease - to remove grease or oil from something

The company makes a great product to clean and **degrease** your car's engine.

dehumidify - to take the moisture out of the air

I just bought a machine to **dehumidify** my office, it works well but it was quite expensive.

ROOT word **link**

dehydrate - to remove the water from something

Joggers have to be careful in the summer heat. They need to keep drinking water so they don't **dehydrate**.

dehumanize - to make somebody lose their human qualities such as kindness, pity, etc.; to make people seem like objects rather than human beings

Hate speech **dehumanizes** individuals and communities.

de-ice - to remove the ice from something

In the winter, airports use special machines to **de-ice** the wings before takeoff.

demagnetize (demagnetise - UK spelling) - to make something non-magnetic by removing its magnetic properties

Other recycling processes involve heating the e-waste to temperatures above 316°C to **demagnetize** the magnets.

demean - to make people have less respect for somebody/something

I hate music that **demeans** women.

demerge - to separate a company into smaller companies, usually into the companies that had previously been joined together; to be split in this way

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The financial company plans to **demerge** the management section of its business.

[demilitarize](#) - to remove military forces from an area

The border between North and South Korea is a **demilitarized** zone.

[demineralize](#) - to remove salts from water

Demineralizing the water can remove some helpful elements like calcium and fluoride.

[demote](#) - to move somebody/something to a lower position or rank, often as a punishment

After his third blunder, Peter was **demoted** back down to an assistant.

[demotivate](#) - to make somebody less keen to work or study

Repeated low test scores and failures can **demotivate** students and make them less likely to succeed in the future.

[demystify](#) - to make something easier to understand and less complicated by explaining it in a clear and simple way

He wrote a book to try and **demystify** technology but the older generation.

[depoliticize](#) - to remove political activity or influence from something

The governor wants to use the shooting to gain support among the voters. We need to **depoliticize** these kinds of tragedies.

[depopulate](#) - to reduce the number of people living in a place

War leaves vibrant towns and cities broken down and **depopulated**.

[deport](#) - to force somebody to leave a country, usually because they have broken the law or because they have no legal right to be there

As soon as he finished his jail time he was **deported** back to his home country.

[depress](#) - to make somebody sad and without enthusiasm or hope

A lot of the news today **depresses** me, but with a little research, I can find inspiring news on the internet to cheer me up.

[deprogram](#) - to counteract the effects of previous programming or brainwashing, especially in an attempt to persuade (a person) to abandon allegiance to a cult

When people are indoctrinated into a cult, the hope is to **deprogram** them.

[deregulate](#) - to remove regulations

They have been caused to **deregulate** the banking industry for years.

[desalinate](#) - to remove salt from seawater so that it can be used

It is now possible to **desalinate** seawater to make it safe for drinking using renewable energy.

This will make it much easier for smaller countries you have a supply of fresh water.

[descale](#) - to remove the scale (= the hard white material left on pipes, etc. by water when it is heated) from something

Part of Donovan's job is to **descale** the pipes in the city's water system.

[descend](#) - to come or go down from a higher to a lower level

We spent about two hours at the top of Mount Fuji watching the sunrise. After that, we **descended** and took a bus back to Tokyo.

[desensitize](#) - to make somebody/something less aware of something as a problem by making them become used to it

Violent TV shows and video games are **desensitizing** some people to violence.

[deselect](#) - to remove something from the list of possible choices on a computer menu

If you don't need Wi-Fi on the plane please **deselect** that option on your e-ticket so you will not be charged.

[destabilize](#) - to make a system, country, government, etc. become less well established or successful

The attacks were meant to **destabilize** the country.

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[dethrone](#) - to remove a king or queen from power; to remove somebody from a position of authority or power

Stranger Things season 4 could soon **dethrone** Squid Game as the biggest Netflix series ever.

[detox](#) - to stop drinking alcohol or taking drugs; to attempt to remove harmful substances from your body by only eating and drinking certain things

This is a fancy facility where the rich can come to **detox** and get healthy again.

[devalue](#) - to reduce in value when it is exchanged for the money of another country; to reduce the value of money in this way

Without proper maintenance and upkeep, you can seriously **devalue** your home. This can cause a huge loss of money when you sell it later.

[deworm](#) - to cause an animal to excrete any worms in the digestive tract by the administration of drugs

Deworming your dog regularly is a great way to keep them healthy.

The prefix DE- Nouns -

[decomposition](#) - the process of being destroyed gradually after death by natural processes

The **decomposition** of fruit and vegetable food waste turns it into great fertilizer.

[decompression](#) - a reduction in air pressure; the act of reducing the pressure of the air

There was a sudden **decompression** in the cabin of the airplane. Luckily all the passengers were safe.

[deconstruction](#) - the act of separating something into the parts from which it is made up and putting them together again in a different way

Deconstruction of the old airport terminal will begin in May.

[decontamination](#) - the process of removing harmful substances from a place or thing

They have started **decontamination** of the area surrounding the power plant.

[decontrol](#) - the act of removing legal controls from something

There is a belief that businesses will perform much better in an environment of government **decontrol**.

[decryption](#) - the process of changing information that is in code into ordinary language so that it can be understood by anyone

Social media platforms must protect against system flaws that could allow the **decryption** of their users' private data.

[de-escalation](#) - a decrease in scope, extension, or severity

The local police need more **de-escalation** training.

[defamation](#) - the act of damaging somebody's reputation by saying or writing bad or false things about them

Johnny Depp and Amber Heard have been in a long court case with each accusing the other of **defamation**.

[deflation](#) - the action of air being removed from something OR (economics) a reduction in the amount of money in a country's economy so that prices fall or remain the same

After the war the country entered a time of high unemployment and **deflation**.

[defoliant](#) - a chemical that removes the leaves from plants, sometimes used as a weapon in war
Agent Orange was a **defoliant** during the Vietnam War to remove the jungle leaves that were hiding the enemy.

[defoliation](#) - the act of destroying the leaves of trees or plants, especially with chemicals

The **defoliation** caused by Agent Orange was massive.

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[deforestation](#) - the act of cutting down or burning the trees in an area

Deforestation is a huge problem in the Amazon rainforest.

The disease **deformed** his spine and made it difficult to walk.

[deformation](#) - the process or result of changing or damaging the usual or natural shape of something

Scientists think that the **deformations** on the moon were caused by asteroid impacts.

[dehumidifier](#) - an electrical machine for removing water from the air

In July and August, my **dehumidifier** works overtime!

[dehydration](#) - the condition of having lost too much water from your body

During the summer months, it's important to drink water even if you're not thirsty. This way you won't suffer from **dehydration**.

[de-icer](#) - a substance that is put on a surface to remove ice or to stop it from forming

Road salt is used as a **de-icer** in cities where winter driving conditions are made dangerous by ice and snow on the roads.

[demineralization](#) - the process of removing salts from water

First, we collect a large amount of salt water, the next step is **demineralization**.

[demonetize](#) - to demote (published content, or its creator) so that it is no longer eligible to earn money for its publisher

YouTube can **demonetize** any content that does not comply with its rules of conduct.

[demotivation](#) - the feeling of being less keen to work or study

An uncomfortable work environment can cause **demotivation** among employees.

[deodorant](#) - a substance that people put on their bodies to prevent or hide unpleasant smells

It's hot today, so remember to put on **deodorant**.

[depopulation](#) - a reduction in the number of people living in a place

The current trend of remote working is causing **depopulation** in some big cities. People don't want to pay high rent if they don't need to live close to their office.

[deportation](#) - the act of forcing somebody to leave a country, usually because they have broken the law or because they have no legal right to be there

Steve's trouble with the law resulted in his **deportation** from Argentina.

[deportee](#) - a person who has been deported or is going to be deported

Steve is now a **deportee** and he must leave the country by Friday.

[deregulation](#) - the process of making a trade, business activity, etc. free from rules and controls

There has been a call for **deregulation** of the retail fuel industry.

[desalination](#) - the process of removing salt from seawater (a synonym of demineralizing)

The new **desalination** plant will provide 80 new jobs to local residents.

[destabilization](#) - the act of making a system, country, government, etc. become less well established or successful; the fact of being like this

The war is causing widespread **destabilization** across the country.

[detox](#) - the process of removing harmful substances from your body by only eating and drinking particular things

I'm in the middle of a 14-day **detox**.

[devaluation](#) - (finance) a reduction in the value of the money of one country when it is exchanged for the money of another country

The war will cause a significant **devaluation** of the country's currency.

The prefix DE- Adjectives and Adverbs

[decaffeinated](#) - (of coffee or tea) with most or all of the caffeine removed

I only drink **decaffeinated** coffee after 3 PM. Too much caffeine keeps me awake.

[defamatory](#) - (of speech or writing) intended to harm somebody by saying or writing bad or false things about them

The allegations that were made are false and **defamatory**.

[deflationary](#) - causing or affected by a reduction in the amount of money in a country's economy so that prices fall or remain the same

Higher taxes have a **deflationary** effect.

[deformed](#) - not having the usual or natural shape because of having developed wrongly or being damaged

The machine automatically separates damaged or **deformed** pieces of fruit.

[degrading](#) - treating somebody as if they have no value, so that they lose their self-respect and the respect of other people

This prison is known for its **degrading** treatment of prisoners.

[dehydrated](#) - ① (especially of food) having had the water removed, in order to preserve it
Fruit that is **dehydrated** and vacuum-packed will last for a very long time.

② having lost too much water from your body

You look **dehydrated**. Please have some of my water.

[demeaning](#) - putting somebody in a position that does not give them the respect that they should have

I need a job but this work is **demeaning**.

[demotivated](#) - feeling less keen to work or study

My hot and humid dorm room is so uncomfortable. I'm completely **demotivated** here. I think I will go to the library to study.

[demotivating](#) - making somebody less keen to work or study

This poster is funny but also **demotivating**. It's telling us not to try.

[deodorize](#) - to remove or hide an unpleasant smell in a place

Dried or dehydrated flowers can help **deodorize** a smelly room.

[deregulatory](#) - intended to free a trade, a business activity, etc. from rules and controls; connected with this process

A new **deregulatory** committee has been created to find ways to attract new business to the city.

Blog Post LINK: <https://worldenglishblog.com/the-prefix-de/>

