**ESL 116: Number Prefixes**

English makes use of both Greek and Latin prefixes to express numbers. Below is a list of the most common of these, but there are others that express numbers less commonly used (e.g., oct- for eight).

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| **Prefix** | **Meaning** | **Example** |
| uni- | one | unicycle |
| mono- | one | monoplane |
| bi- | two | bilingual |
| di- | two | dioxide |
| tri- | three | tripod |
| quad- | four | quadruped |
| quint- | five | quintuplets |
| dec- | ten | decade |
| cent- | hundred | century |
| multi- | many | multinational |
| poly- | many | polygon |
| ambi- | both or double | ambidextrous |
| mega- | million or large | megaton |
| omni- | all | omnipotent |
| semi- | half | semisweet |

**Exercise 1:** Analyze the underlined words in the following sentences, identifying the prefix and its meaning as well as the overall meaning of the word. The first one is done for you

1. In a **bipartisan** motion, both Republicans and Democrats showed support of the education bill.

 *Bi= two. Bipartisan= two political parties*

2. It is popular to have a sweater with your **monogram**.

3. The child felt **ambivalent** about the roller coaster ride, which inspired both excitement and fear.

4. Carbon **dioxide** has one carbon and two oxygen atoms.

5. Cheerleaders at college football games use **megaphones** to make their voices heard throughout the stadium.

6. Many large cities in the United States have evolved into **multiethnic** communities.

7. Harvey showed off his talents with languages when he traveled--he was a true **polyglot,** being fluent in at least twelve languages.

8. Training for the athletes that will compete in the **decathlon** in the 2010 Olympics is now taking place on tracks around the world.

9. The **centigrade** scale is based on a scale of water freezing at 0 degrees and boiling at 100 degrees.

10. **Semiconductor** technology is advancing at unprecedented rates.

**Exercise 2:** Complete the sentences below with one of the following words. Use each word only once.

monotheism trilateral quadraphonic omnidirectional

quintet semitransparent unison centenarians

ambidextrous multipurpose binoculars megalopolis

1. The\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ antenna was able to receive signals from all parts of the country.

2. With\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sound a speaker can be placed in each corner of a room, giving superior reproduction of music.

3. Being\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ she was able to write her name with either hand.

4. The protective coating was\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ allowing penetration of a small amount of light.

5. The area stretching from Boston to Washington D.C. has developed into what urban planners call a\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

6. Place both lenses of the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ firmly against your eyes so that extraneous light does not interfere with clear vision.

7. The audience was appreciative as the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sang the song in perfect\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

8. The local newspaper always publishes announcements of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ birthday celebrations.

9. In contemporary home design the great room is a\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_room in which the family can eat, watch TV or entertain.