

## Prefixes

阿 [a33], used with names and kinship terms to denote familiarity:

阿王<sup>1</sup> [a33 vɔŋ225] ah-Wong (familiar, note tone raising for family name)

阿英 [a33 yein33] ah-Ying (familiar, personal name)

阿哥 [a33 gɔ55] elder brother

老 [lɔu55], literally *old*, denoting familiarity:

老婆 [lɔu55 pɔ21] wife, honey

老公 [lɔu55 gɔŋ21] husband, hubby

老表 [lɔu55 biau55] cousin

老板 [lɔu55 ban55] boss

老友 [lɔu55 yiu215] buddy

老民 [lɔu55 min55] old folk (alt: 老敏)

第 [ai32], used in the formation of ordinal numbers, equivalent to the *th* suffix in English:

第一 [ai32 yit55], the first

第五十七区 [ai32 m55 sip32 tit55 kui335], the Fifty-seventh District

初 [tsɔ33], used with numbers (1-10) to name days of the month from the first to the tenth:

初一 [tsɔ33 yit55], the first day of the month

初十 [tsɔ33 sip32], the tenth day of the month

多 [ɔ33], '*poly-*', '*multi-*', *abundant*, *excessive*:

多钱 [ɔ33 tein325], rich (abundant-money)

多嘴 [ɔ33 dui55], blabbermouth (excessive-mouth)

多元文化 [ɔ33 ŋun22 mun22 fa33], multicultural

多谢 [ɔ33 dia32], many thanks

多音字 [ɔ33 yim33 du32], polyphone

双 [sɔŋ33], *duo*, *double*, *two*; 单 [dan33], *mono*, *single*, *one*:

双赢 [sɔŋ33 yiaŋ22], win-win

双程 [sɔŋ33 tsein22], two-way, round trip

双手 [sɔŋ33 siu55], pair of hands

双眼皮 [sɔŋ33 ŋan55 pi22], double eyelid

单程 [dan33 tsein22], one-way

单手 [an33 siu55], one hand, single-handily

单眼皮 [an33 ŋan55 pi22], single eyelid

反 [fan55], '*anti-*', *counter*; 正, *normal*:

反常 [fan55 siaŋ22], abnormal

反面 [fan55 mein32], the reverse side

反坦克 [fan55 han44 hak55], anti-tank

反政府 [fan55 tsein33 fu55], anti-government

正常 [dzein33 siaŋ22], normal

正面 [dzein33 mein32], the right side

反方向 [fan55 fəŋ33 hiaŋ33], the opposite direction  
反击 [fan55 geɪ55], counterattack  
反射 [fan55 sia32], reflection  
反骨 [fan55 gut55], disloyal

负 [fu32], *negative*; 正, *positive*:

负数 [fu32 su33], negative number  
负能量 [fu32 naŋ33 liaŋ32], negative energy  
负离子 [fu32 li22 du55], anion

正数 [dzein33 su33], positive number  
正能量 [dzein33 naŋ33 liaŋ32], positive energy  
正离子 [dzein33 li22 du55], cation

好 [həu55], *good*; 恶 [ək33], *difficult*:

好睇 [həu55 hai55] good to watch, good-looking  
好听 [həu55 hiaŋ335] pleasant to hear  
好吃 [həu55 hiak32] tasty, delicious

恶听 [ək33 hiaŋ335] unpleasant to hear  
恶吃 [ək33 hiak32] unappetizing

翻 [fan33] 're-', used with verbs:

翻炒 [fan33 tsəu55] re-cook. re-use  
翻新 [fan33 lin33] re-model, face-lifting  
翻版 [fan33 ban55] pirated edition

唔 [m22] negative prefix to adjectives and verbs:

唔舒服 [m22 si33 fək32] uncomfortable, sick  
唔及格 [m22 giap32 gak55] not qualify, fail  
唔现 [m22 yian32] not clear  
唔皓 [m22 hau32] not bright  
唔好肚 [m22 həu55 u55] diarrhea, have diarrhea

### **Suffixes**

度 [u32], *degree*:

温度 [vun33 u32], temperature  
高度 [gəu33 u32], height  
难度 [vun33 u32], level of difficulty  
知名度 [dzi33 mein22 u32], name recognition

式 [set55], *style*:

中式 [dzəŋ33 set55], Chinese-style  
西式 [lai33 set55], Western-style  
旧式 [giu32 set55], old-style  
正式 [dzein33 set55], formal, official

法 [fat55], *way*, *method*, and *law*:

讲法 [gəŋ55 fat55], way of speaking, wording

谥法 [nam55 fat55], way of thinking, thought, idea  
睇法 [hai55 fat55], view, opinion  
做法 [du33 fat55], way of doing things  
办法 [ban32 fat55], way out, method  
用法 [yən̩32 fat55], way of using  
文法 [mun22 fat55], grammar (of a language)  
基本法 [gi33 bən̩55 fat55], the Basic Law  
移民法 [yi22 min22 fat55], immigration laws

家 [ga335]/师 [tu33] denotes specialist in a field:

作家 [dək55 ga335], writer  
音乐家 [yim33 ŋək32 ga335], musician  
专家 [dzən33 ga335], specialist, expert  
科学家 [fək33 hək32 ga335], scientist  
工程师 [gən̩33 tsein22 tu33], engineer  
飞机师 [fi33 gi33 tu33], pilot  
军师 [gun33 tu33], military adviser

性 [tein33] denotes the natural state or state of being:

危险 [ŋai22 hiam55] *dangerous* → 危险性 [ŋai22 hiam55 tein33] *danger*  
严重 [ŋiam22 dzən̩32] *serious* → 严重性 [ŋiam22 dzən̩32 tein33] *seriousness*  
毒 [ək32] *poison* → 毒性 [ək32 tein33] *toxicity*  
人 [ŋin22] *human* → 人性 [ŋin22 tein33] *human nature, humane*  
兽 [siu33] *beast* → 兽性 [siu33 tein33] *bestly nature, animal instinct*  
母 [mu21] *mother* → 母性 [mu21 tein33] *motherly nature*  
记 [gi33] *recall* → 记性 [gi33 tein33] *memory*  
弹 [(d)an32] *bounce* → 弹性 [han22 tein33] *elasticity*  
耳 [ŋi55] *ear* → 耳性 [ŋi55 tein33] *the ability to remember*  
慢 [man32] *slow* → 慢性 [man32 tein33] *chronic*

教 [gəu33], forms names of religion or teaching:

佛教 [fut32 gəu33], Buddhism  
基督教 [gi33 ək55 gəu33], (Protestant) Christianity  
邪教 [tia22 gəu33], religious cult  
家教 [ga33 gəu33], family education

主义 [dzi55 ŋi32], '-ism':

社会主义 [sia21 vɔi32(5) dzi55 ŋi32], socialism  
资本主义 [du33 bən̩55 dzi55 ŋi32], capitalism  
三民主义 [lam33 min22 dzi55 ŋi32], Three Principles of the People

社 [sia215], denotes an agency or organization:

合作社 [hap32 dək55 sia215], co-op  
公社 [gəŋ33 sia215], commune  
旅行社 [lui21 haŋ22 sia215], travel agency  
出版社 [tsut55 baŋ55 sia215], publisher

学 [hək32], forms names of fields of study:

数学 [su33 hək32], mathematics  
力学 [let32 hək32], mechanics  
化学 [fa33 hək32], chemistry  
语言学 [ŋui21 ŋun22 hək32], linguistics

化 [fa33], '-ize/-ization' and '-ify/-ification', applies to nouns and adjectives:

国际 [gək55 dai33] *international* → 国际化 [gək55 dai33 fa33] internationalize; internationalization  
人性 [ŋin22 ɬein33] *human nature* → 人性化 [ŋin22 ɬein33 fa33] humanize; humanization  
绿 [lək32] *green* → 绿化 [lək32 fa33] make green; greening  
丑 [tsiu55] *ugly* → 丑化 [tsiu55 fa33] vilify; vilification  
西 [ɬai33] *west* → 西化 [ɬai33 fa33] Westernize; Westernization  
气 [hi33] *air* → 气化 [hi33 fa33] vaporize; vaporization

The 仔 [dɔi55], 女 [nui55], 佬 [lou55], and 婆 [pɔ21] are suffixes designating persons corresponding to young male, young female, adult male, and adult female respectively (although they also take up additional meanings):

鬼仔 [gi33 dɔi55], young male Westerner  
鬼女 [gi33 nui55], young female Westerner  
鬼佬 [gi33 lou55], adult male Westerner  
鬼婆 [gi33 pɔ21], adult female Westerner

四眼仔 [ɬi33 ŋan55 dɔi55], boy wearing eyeglasses  
四眼女 [ɬi33 ŋan55 nui55], girl wearing eyeglasses  
四眼佬 [ɬi33 ŋan55 lou55], man wearing eyeglasses  
四眼婆 [ɬi33 ŋan55 pɔ21], woman wearing eyeglasses

仔 [dɔi55], 'little,' is a diminutive suffix and agent marker for certain occupation dominated by youngsters:

华仔 [va22 dɔi55], little *Wah* (suffix to male personal names, i.e., *little Johnny*)  
细民仔 [ɬam33 min55 dɔi55], children, boy  
猫仔 [miu55 dɔi55], kitten  
凳仔 [aŋ21 dɔi55], small bench  
手仔 [siu55 dɔi55], finger  
剑仔 [giam33 dɔi55], dagger  
水仔 [sui55 dɔi55], light rain  
树仔 [si32 dɔi55], bonsai  
肥仔 [fi22 dɔi55], a young fat person, little fatty  
牛仔 [ŋəu22 dɔi55], calf; (Western) cowboy

马仔 [ma21 dɔi55], colt; a low-ranking gangster  
侍仔 [si32 dɔi55], waiter  
乞米仔 [hat55 mai55 dɔi55], beggar  
打工仔 [a55 gəŋ33 dɔi55], blue-collar wage earner  
卖猪仔 [mai32 dzi33 dɔi55], contracted Chinese coolies to the US and Canada  
败家仔 [bai32 ga33 dɔi55], a prodigal son who recklessly wasted his inheritance  
市仔 [si21 dɔi55], peddler, hawker

女 [nui55], female counter part to 仔 for human terms:

华女 [va22 nui55], little *Wah* (suffix to female personal names, i.e., *little Alice*)  
细民女 [ɦam33 min55 nui55], girl  
妹女 [mɔi21 nui55], housemaid  
孙女 [ɦun33 nui55], granddaughter  
卖花女 [mai32 fa33 nui55], flower girl

佬 [ləu55], '-er', person marker for male:

贼佬 [tak32 ləu55], robber, thief  
财主佬 [tɔi22 dzi55 ləu55], rich man  
割猪佬 [həŋ33 dzi33 ləu55], butcher  
和事佬 [vɔ22 ɦu32 ləu55], peace maker  
大个佬 [ai32 gɔi33 ləu55], adult

婆 [pɔ21], female counterpart to 佬:

覩婆 [saŋ21 pɔ21], witch  
月婆 [ɦut32 pɔ21], woman right after giving birth  
事头婆 [ɦu32 həu22 pɔ21], female owner  
卖菜婆 [mai32 tɔi33 pɔ21], female vegetable peddler