

*Anglo-Saxon prefix un-*

“not; opposite of; undo”

TABLE 1

<i>EXAMPLE</i>	<i>MEANING</i>	<i>PHRASE</i>
unkind	“not kind”	an <b>unkind</b> word
unsaid	“not said”	unkind thoughts best left <b>unsaid</b>
unfeeling	“not feeling”	an <b>unfeeling</b> , cold-hearted brute
unsure	“not sure”	<b>unsure</b> of the meaning
unlikely	“not likely”	<b>unlikely</b> to happen
unusual	“not usual”	an <b>unusual</b> event
unseemly	“not seemly”	<b>unseemly</b> , inappropriate behavior
unworthy	“not worthy”	an <b>unworthy</b> attitude
unchanging	“not changing”	an <b>unchanging</b> pattern
uncivil	“not civil”	unmannerly, rude, and <b>uncivil</b>
uncertain	“not certain”	<b>uncertain</b> of its location
unbearable	“not bearable”	an <b>unbearable</b> illness
unacceptable	“not acceptable”	an <b>unacceptable</b> action
unwrap	“undo the wrapping”	<b>unwrap</b> the gift
unbuckle	“undo the buckle”	<b>unbuckle</b> your shoes
unbutton	“undo the button”	<b>unbutton</b> your coat
unravel	“undo the string”	<b>unravel</b> the string
unbelief	“opposite of belief”	a heart that is filled with <b>unbelief</b>
unconcern	“opposite of concern”	heartless <b>unconcern</b> for others
unrest	“opposite of rest”	a period of <b>unrest</b> and anxiety
uncomfortable	“not comfortable”	an <b>uncomfortable</b> chair

## Etymology and Word Origins

The prefix **-un** came to us from Old English (Anglo-Saxon), some time before A.D. 1100. At one time, there were at least 1,250 words containing this very common prefix. For example, *una'gin* meant “without beginning.” Today, only about 150 of those original Old English words remain, one of which is **unkind** (*uncynde*).

## Synonyms: Shades of Meaning

**unbending**: firm, unchangeable, uncompromising, resolute, unequivocal, rigid

**unprincipled**: immoral, unethical, dishonest, thievish, lawless, wicked, evil

**uncivil**: rude, unmannerly, barbaric, pig-like, unschooled, impolite, crass