

Words Are CAtegorical®

Pre-
and Re-
Mis-
and Dis-

What Is a Prefix?

by Brian P. Cleary

illustrated by Martin Goneau



To Maximilian Baraka Cleary

—B.P.C.

To Carol Hinz and all the folks at Lerner
for making these wonderful books possible

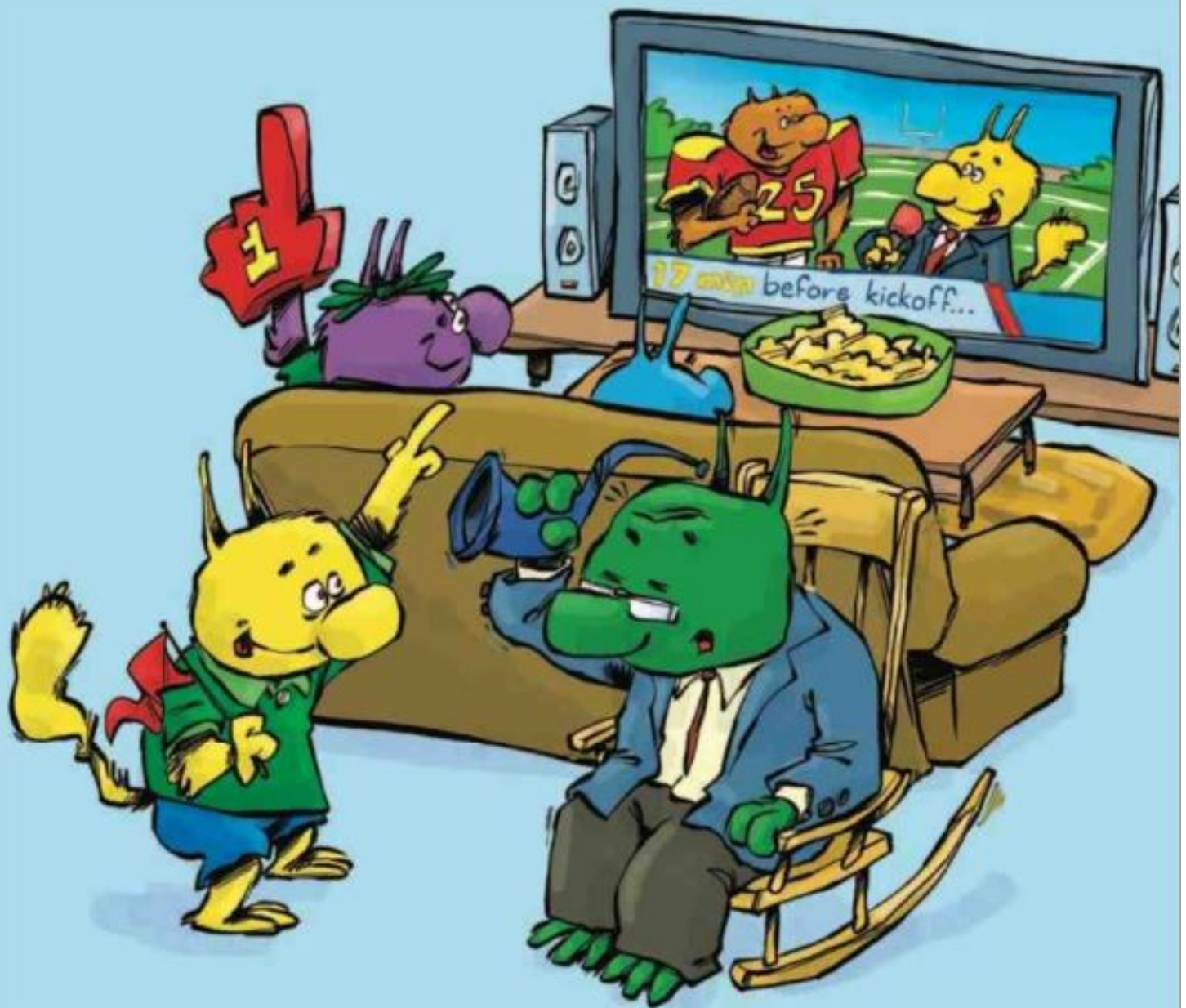
—M.G.



Prefixes are word parts
that we add onto a word.



They're right at the beginning,
just like **pregame** or **unheard**.



These word parts
change the meaning
of the word to which they're added.



Examples might be *underclothes*,
revisit,



The root words are the main words,
as in padded,



visit,



clothes.



The prefixes are letters
that we see in front of those.

Several prefixes will help
to show an antonym:





im- and *un-* and *non-* and *il-*
and *dis-* are some of them.

These prefixes show opposites,
like disagree, unwell,

impossible,
illogical,



defrost,



untie,



misspell.



Anti- means "against," like
antitheft and antifreeze.

Bip Bip Bip Bip



The first part means "opposing."
Are you catching on to these?



Other times, a prefix
serves to give a number clue.



Like **bi**— before a root word,
which hints to us there's two.



Binoculars have two glass lenses;



bicycles, two wheels;





bilingual folks, two languages
to tell us how they feel.

Pre— before a root word
will most often mean “before.”



like preheat

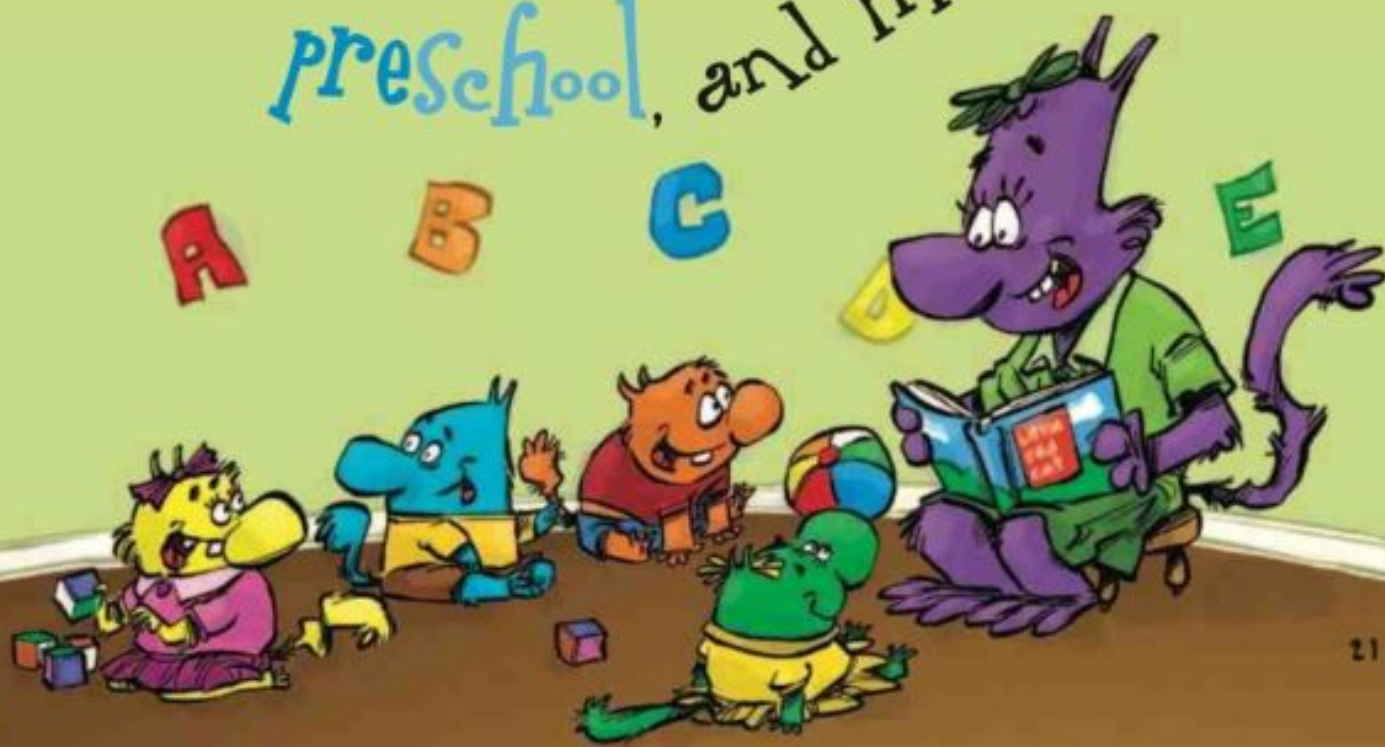


and prepayment,



Pay Now!
Get it when
it ships.

preschool, and many more.



R-E- as a prefix
often means "to do again,"



things to redo today:

- retype letter
- recalculate income tax
- repaint fence
- rebuild birdhouse
- resend package

AS in *retype*,



recalculate,



repaint,



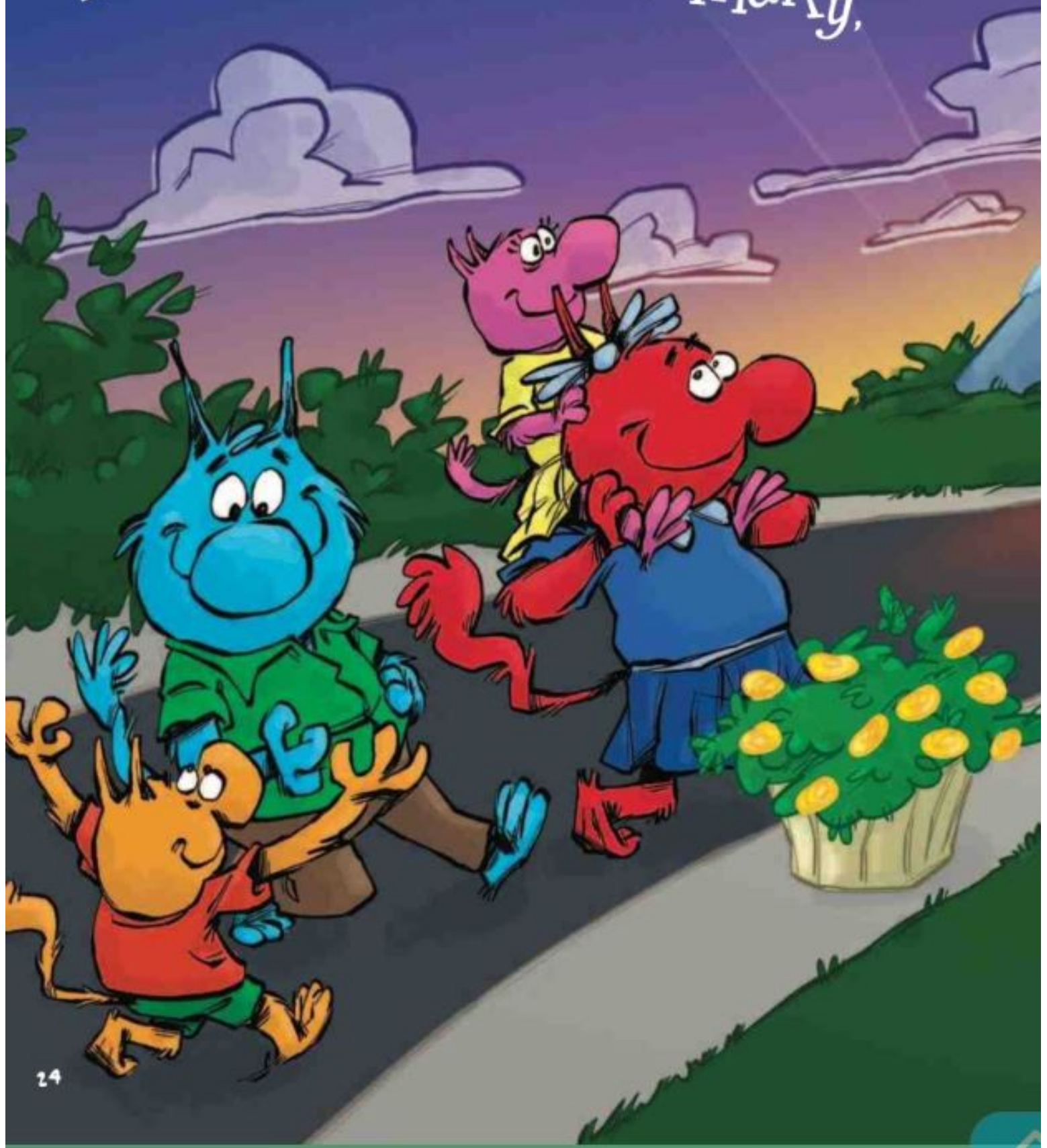
rebuild,



resend.



Multi- is a prefix too.
It means the same as many,

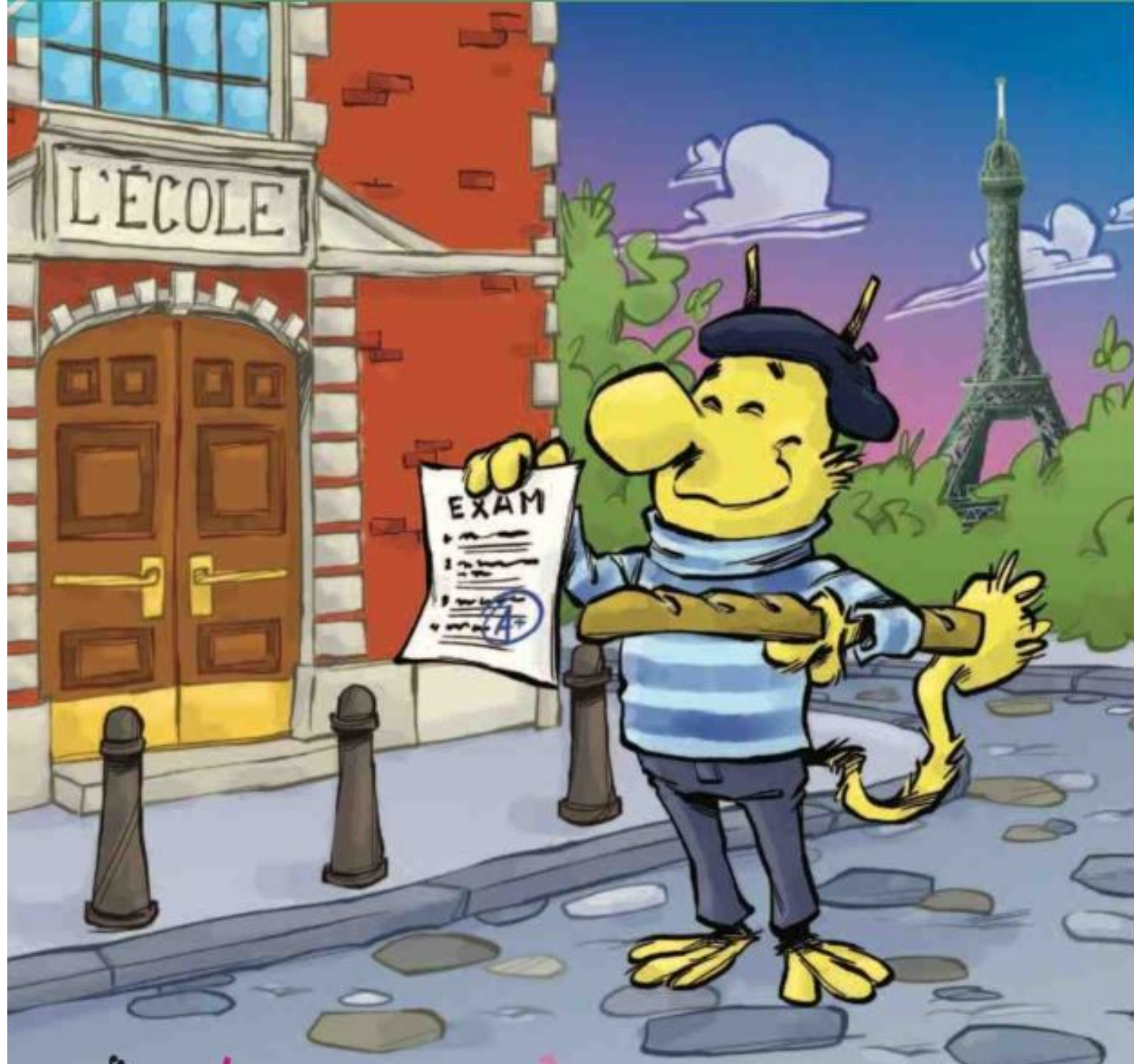




like **multicolor** **multiplex**.
Can you come up with any?



Trans—will sometimes mean “across.”
It often hints at movement.



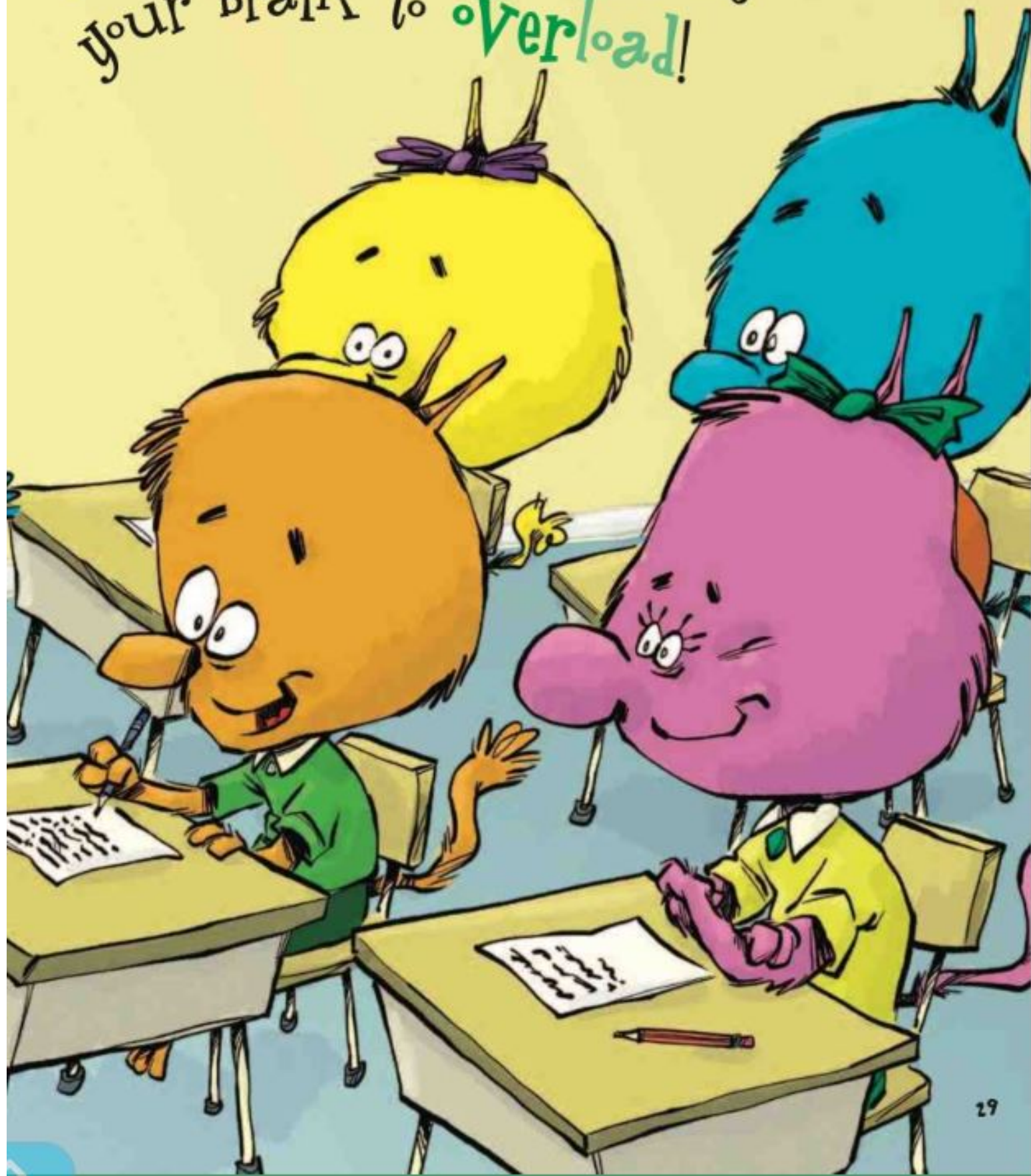
"He transferred
to a transatlantic
school and showed improvement."

Knowing lots of prefixes

can help you to **decode**



So many words, it might just cause
your brain to **overload!**



So what is a prefix?

Do you know?



PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLE
anti-	opposite of; against	antisocial, antiwar
bi-	occurring two times	biannual
de-	away from; opposite of	depart, declutter
dis-	opposite of	dislike
em-/en-	put in or on; to cause	empower, enrage
fore-	at the front; before	forehead, forecast
il-	opposite of (used before roots beginning with l)	illegal
im-	opposite of (used before roots beginning with b, m, or p)	impolite
in-	opposite of	inexpensive
inter-	between, among	international
mis-	wrong, bad; not	misbehave, misunderstanding
multi-	many or much	multimedia
non-	not	nonstop
pre-	before	preview
pro-	forward, going ahead	proactive
over-	over; in excess	overnight, overcook
re-	to do again	rewrite
semi-	half; partly	semicircle, semidarkness
sub-	under, less than	subway, subtract
trans-	across	transport
un-	not; opposite of	unhappy; unlock
under-	under; too little	undersea, underestimate



