Negative prefixes

We add a prefix such as in- or un- or dis-, im-, il-, non, ir- etc. to the beginning of adjectives, adverbs and verbs to give them the opposite meaning.

For example,

- Before "r" one has to use "ir" irreparable;
- Before "l", use "il" illogical;
- Before "t", use "dis" distrust; distasteful
- Before "c, b or s" use "un or in" uncomfortable/unbelievable and incomplete/incredible/insanity;
- Before "p", use "im" impossible
- Before "m", use "im" immature, immortal
- Before "h or f", use "un" unhappy/unfettered;
- Before a noun, use "non" non-smoker, etc.

Exercise 1

Write the negative form of these words by adding a negative prefix: "un-", "dis-", "ir-", "il-", "in-", or "im-".

1 ____comfortable 2 ____patient 3 ____honest 4 ____lucky
5 ____formal 6 ____possible 7 ____popular 8 ____lock
9 ____appear 10 ____agree 11 ____legal 12 ____polite
13 ____like 14 ____logical 15 ____convenient

Exercise 2: Write the negative form of these words by adding a negative prefix:

"un-", "dis-", "ir-", "il-", "in-", or "im-".

1 ____frequent 6 ____believable 11 ____relevant
2 ____mature 7 ____approve 12 ____dependent
3 ____legible 8 ____curable 13 ____responsible
4 ____moral 9 ____familiar 14 ____accurate
5 ____regular 10 ____grateful 15 ____resistible
Exercise 3:  Fill in negative prefixes to form the OPPOSITE of each of the adjectives below. In some cases, more than one pre-fix is possible.

___acceptable  ___accurate  ___adequate  ___agreeable  ___approachable
___appropriate  ___bearable  ___compatible  ___complete  ___conscious
___contented  ___convenient  ___credible  ___decisive  ___desirable
___discreet  ___excusable  ___experienced  ___faithful  ___flexible
___frequent  ___grateful  ___healthy  ___helpful  ___hospitalable
___legal  ___legible  ___legitimate  ___literate  ___logical
___mature  ___moral  ___mortal  ___obedient  ___organised
___passive  ___patient  ___perfect  ___personal  ___polite
___probable  ___readable  ___regular  ___resolute  ___responsible
___respectful  ___sane  ___satisfactory  ___satisfied  ___sociable
___sufficient  ___variable  ___visible  ___willing

Exercise 4:  Complete the sentences by adding the correct pre-fix for each word.

1   It's rather ___polite if you don't say 'Please' a lot in English.
2   My parents are extremely generous with their time and money. They are very ___selfish.
3   If the traffic is bad, it'll be ___possible to get to the match on time.
4   It's ___legal to drive along that street; it's for pedestrians only.
5   My mum thought a burglar had been in my bedroom, but it's always really ___tidy.
6   It was completely ___responsible of you to go away for the weekend without telling us.
7   Mike's pretty ___happy about going on holiday with his girlfriend's parents.
8   I never know when to expect the post. It's so ___regular.
9   Taking a large suitcase on a walking holiday is a bit ___practical
ANSWERS:

Ex. 1

1. uncomfortable 2. impatient 3. dishonest 4. unlucky
5. informal 6. impossible 7. unpopular 8. unlock
9. disappear 10. disagree 11. illegal 12. impolite

Ex. 2

infrequent immature illegible immoral irregular unbelievable disapprove
incurable unfamiliar ungrateful independent irresponsible inaccurate irresistible

Ex. 3

unacceptable inaccurate inadequate disagreeable unapproachable
inappropriate unbearable incompatible indecisive undesirable
discontented inconvenient incredible indecisive inflexible
indiscreet inexcusable inexperienced unfaithful inhosptable
infrequent ungrateful unhealthy unhelpful
illegal illegible illegitimate illiterate illogical
immature immoral immortal disobedient disorganised/un-
impassive impatient imperfect impersonal
improbable unreadable irregular irresolute irresponsible
disrespectful insane unsatisfactory dissatisfied/un-
insufficient invariable invisible unwilling

Ex. 4

1. impolite 2. unselfish 3. impossible 4. illegal 5. untidy
6. irresponsible 7. unhappy 8. irregular 9. impractical