

In class

Resource :

- * Root words

- * Prefixes

- * Suffixes

- * Context Clues

COMMON ROOTS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES

The following tables list some common roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Use these tables to help you determine the meaning of a word by examining its structure.

GREEK ROOTS		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>anthropo</i>	human being	anthropology, anthropoid, philanthropic
<i>aster, astro</i>	star	astronomy, astronomical, asterisk
<i>baro</i>	pressure	barometer, barometric
<i>biblio, bibli</i>	book	bibliographer, bibliomania, biblical
<i>bio</i>	life	biology, biochemistry, biodegradable
<i>chrom</i>	color	chromatic, chromaticity
<i>chrono</i>	time	chronology, chronometer, chronoscope
<i>cosmo</i>	world, order, universe	cosmology, cosmonaut, cosmopolitan
<i>crac, crat</i>	rule, govern	aristocracy, aristocratic, democrat
<i>dem</i>	people	democracy, demagogue, epidemic
<i>derm</i>	skin	dermatitis, dermatology
<i>ethno</i>	nation	ethnic, ethnocentrism
<i>eu</i>	good, well	euphoria, euphony, euphemism
<i>gam</i>	marriage	monogamy, polygamy, bigamy
<i>geo</i>	earth	geology, geocentric, geodynamics
<i>gno, kno</i>	to know	knowledge, gnostic, agnostic
<i>graph, gram</i>	to write, draw, record	autograph, telegram, paragraph
<i>gymno, gymn</i>	athletic	gymnastics, gymnasium
<i>hydro</i>	water	hydrogen, hydrodynamics, hydroplane
<i>hypno</i>	sleep	hypnosis, hypnotic, hypnotize
<i>hypo</i>	under, below	hypodermic, hypotension, hypothermia
<i>lith</i>	stone	monolith, megalith
<i>lógue, logo</i>	idea, word, speech, reason	dialogue, monologue, epilogue, logical
<i>meter, metr</i>	measure	diameter, metric, millimeter
<i>micro</i>	small	microscope, microorganism
<i>mim</i>	to copy, imitate	mimic, mime, mimeograph
<i>miso</i>	hatred of	misoneism, misology

GREEK ROOTS (continued)		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>mono</i>	one	monologue, monogamy, monograph
<i>mor</i>	fool	moron, moronic
<i>morph</i>	form	pseudomorph, mesomorph, metamorphosis
<i>neur, nerv</i>	nerve	neurology, nervous, neuritis
<i>nym, onym, onom</i>	name	acronym, homonym, onomatopoeia
<i>opt</i>	eye	optic, optical, optician
<i>ortho</i>	straight	orthodontics, orthopedics
<i>pan</i>	all	pangenesiis, pangram, pantheism
<i>path</i>	feeling	apathy, sympathy, pathetic
<i>peri</i>	around	perimeter, periscope, periphery
<i>petr</i>	rock	petrify, petroleum, petroglyph
<i>phe</i>	speak, spoken, about	euphemistic, prophet
<i>phil, philo</i>	love	philodendron, philology, philharmonic
<i>phob</i>	fear	phobia, claustrophobia, acrophobia
<i>phon</i>	sound, voice	phonetics, phonics, telephone
<i>photo</i>	light	photography, photoflash, photogenic
<i>pneu</i>	breath	pneumonia, pneumatic
<i>polis, polit</i>	citizen, city, state	metropolis, politician, political
<i>poly</i>	many	polychromatic, polyester
<i>pseudo</i>	false	pseudonym, pseudosalt, pseudomorph
<i>psych</i>	mind, soul, spirit	psychic, psychology, psychoanalysis
<i>pyr</i>	fire	pyromania, pyrotechnic
<i>scope</i>	to see	kaleidoscope, telescope, microscope
<i>soph</i>	wise	philosopher, sophisticated
<i>syn, sym</i>	together	symphony, synthesize
<i>techn</i>	art, skill	technical, technology, technique
<i>tele</i>	at a distance	telescope, telephone, telecommute
<i>the, them, thet</i>	to place, put	epithet, antithesis, theme
<i>thea, theatr</i>	to see, view	theater, theatrical, amphitheater
<i>theo</i>	God	theology, theocracy, theocentric
<i>therm</i>	heat	thermometer, thermonuclear, thermal
<i>topo</i>	place	topography, topology

LATIN ROOTS		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>act</i>	to do, drive	action, actor, react, transact, enact
<i>alt</i>	high	altitude, altimeter, altiplano
<i>anima, anim</i>	life, mind	animal, animated
<i>ann, enn</i>	year	annual, perennial, bicentennial
<i>aqua</i>	water	aquarium, aquamarine, aquanaut
<i>arm</i>	army, weapon	armory, armament
<i>arbitr, arbiter</i>	to judge, consider	arbitrator, arbitrary, arbiter
<i>art</i>	craft, skill	artist, artsy, artisan
<i>aud</i>	to hear	audience, auditorium, audible
<i>bell</i>	war	belligerent, bellicose
<i>cede</i>	to go; to yield	intercede, supercede, concede
<i>cele</i>	honor	celebrate, celebrities
<i>cent</i>	one hundred	percent, bicentennial, centennial
<i>cept, capt, cip, cap, ceive, ceipt</i>	to take hold, grasp	intercept, receive, receipt, capture
<i>cert</i>	to be sure, to trust	certain, ascertain, certifiable
<i>cess, ced</i>	to go; to yield	cessation, concession, accede, procession
<i>cid, cis</i>	to cut off, be brief; to kill	concise, homicide, genocide
<i>circ, circum</i>	around	circumference, circle, circular
<i>clin</i>	to lean, lie, bend	decline, incline, recline
<i>cog</i>	to think, consider	cognition, cognitive, recognize
<i>comput</i>	to compute	computer, computation
<i>cor, cord, card</i>	heart	cardiovascular, coronary
<i>corp</i>	body	corpse, corpulence, corporate
<i>cred</i>	to believe, trust	credibility, incredible, credit, credential
<i>crit, cris</i>	to separate; to discern, judge	criticism, critique, crisis
<i>culp</i>	fault, blame	culprit, culpable
<i>curs, curr, corr</i>	to run	current, occurrence, cursor, corral
<i>custom</i>	one's own	customized, customer, accustom
<i>dent</i>	tooth	dentist, dental, dentifrice
<i>dic, dict</i>	to say, to speak; to assert	diction, dictionary, dictate
<i>duct, duc</i>	to lead; to draw	aqueduct, abduct, conduct, reduce
<i>dur</i>	hard, lasting	duration, durable, endure

LATIN ROOTS (continued)		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>ego</i>	I	egotistical, egocentric, egoism
<i>equ</i>	equal, fair	equality, equation, equator
<i>fac, fic, fect, fact</i>	to make, do	facsimile, facility, defect, efficient
<i>fer</i>	to carry, bear, bring	offer, transfer, aquifer
<i>fid</i>	trust, faith	fidelity, infidel, infidelity
<i>fin</i>	end, limit	finish, finite, infinite, final
<i>flu</i>	to flow	fluid, flux, fluctuate
<i>form</i>	shape, form	formal, formative, inform
<i>fort</i>	strong	fortress, fortify, fortification
<i>frig</i>	cool	frigid, refrigerate, frigorific
<i>fum</i>	smoke; scent	fuming, fumigate, perfume
<i>gen</i>	race, family, kind	genealogy, general, generation
<i>grad, gress</i>	step, degree, rank	grade, gradual, regress
<i>grat</i>	pleasing, thankful	congratulate, gratitude, gratify
<i>grav, griev</i>	heavy	gravitate, gravity, grieve
<i>hab</i>	to have, hold; to dwell	habit, habitat, inhabit
<i>hom</i>	man, human	homage, homicide
<i>hosp</i>	guest	hospital, hospitality
<i>host</i>	enemy, stranger	hostile, hostility, host
<i>init</i>	to begin, enter upon	initial, initiate, initiation
<i>jur, jus, judic</i>	law, right, judgment	jurist, justify, judicial
<i>juven</i>	young	juvenile, juvenility, rejuvenate
<i>labor</i>	work	laboratory, laborer, laborious
<i>lat</i>	lateral, side; wide	latitude, latitudinal
<i>laud</i>	praise	laud, laudable, laudatory
<i>leg</i>	law	legal, legislator, legitimate
<i>lev</i>	to make light, to lift	elevator, lever, levitate
<i>liber</i>	free	liberal, liberate, libertarian
<i>lingu, langu</i>	tongue	language, sublingual
<i>loc</i>	place	local, localize, relocate, dislocate
<i>locu, loqu, locut</i>	word, speak	elocution, eloquent, loquacious
<i>luc, lumin</i>	light	illuminate, lucent, lucid

LATIN ROOTS (continued)

BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>manu</i>	hand	manual, manufacture
<i>mar</i>	sea	marinate, marine, maritime
<i>med, medi</i>	middle	mediate, medieval, mediocre
<i>medic</i>	physician, to heal	medical, medicine, medicinal
<i>memor</i>	mindful	memorial, memory
<i>mon</i>	to remind, advise, warn	admonish, monitor, premonition
<i>ment</i>	mind	mental, mentally, mentality
<i>migr</i>	to move, travel	immigrant, migration, migratory
<i>mit, mis</i>	to send	remission, missive, transmit
<i>mort</i>	death	mortal, mortality, mortify
<i>mov, mob, mot</i>	to move	mob, mobile, remove, motion
<i>mut</i>	change, exchange	mutant, mutate, transmutate
<i>necess</i>	unavoidable	necessary, necessitate, necessity
<i>noc, nox</i>	harm	innocent, innocuous, nocent, obnoxious
<i>noc, nox</i>	night	equinox, nocturnal, nocturne
<i>nomen, nomin</i>	name	nominal, nominate, nomenclature
<i>null, nihil, nil</i>	nothing, void	nihilism, nil, nullify
<i>ord, ordin</i>	to put in order	order, ordinal, ordinary
<i>par, pair</i>	to arrange, get ready, set	parade, prepare, repair
<i>part, pars</i>	portion, part	partial, particle, partner
<i>ped</i>	foot	pedestal, pedestrian, pedal
<i>pend, pond, pens</i>	to weigh, pay; to consider	pension, pensive, ponder
<i>pli, plic</i>	to fold	pliable, plicate, replicate
<i>plur, plus</i>	more	plural, pluralistic, surplus
<i>port</i>	to carry	import, export, portable
<i>pos</i>	to place, put	position, positive
<i>pot</i>	powerful	impotent, potent, potential
<i>prim, prin</i>	first	primary, prime, primitive, principal
<i>priv</i>	separate	deprive, private, privilege
<i>prov, prob</i>	to prove, test	probate, probation, prove
<i>reg, rig, rect</i>	to rule; right, straight	regal, regent, region, rectify
<i>rupt</i>	to break, burst	disrupt, eruption, rupture

LATIN ROOTS (continued)		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>sacr, secr, sanct</i>	sacred	desecrate, sacrifice, sacrilege, sanctify
<i>sat, satis</i>	enough	insatiable, satisfy, satiate
<i>sci</i>	to know	conscience, science, scientist
<i>scrib, script</i>	to write	inscribe, subscription, script
<i>sed, sid, sess</i>	to sit; to settle	sedate, sediment, subside, session
<i>sent, sens</i>	to feel	sense, sentimental, sentinel
<i>sequ, secut</i>	to follow; sequence	consequence, sequel, consecutive
<i>simil, simul, sembl</i>	like, similar	semblance, simulate, simile
<i>sol, soli</i>	alone, lonely	soliloquy, solo, solitary
<i>somn</i>	sleep	somnambulate, somnolent, somniloquy
<i>son</i>	sound	sonic, soniferous, sonnet
<i>spec, spec spic</i>	to see, look at, behold	inspect, respect, spectacle, species
<i>spond, spons</i>	to pledge, promise	sponsor, sponsorship, respond
<i>tac, tic</i>	silent	tacit, taciturn
<i>temp</i>	time	temporary, temper
<i>ten, tain, tent</i>	to hold	contain, tenant, retention
<i>tend, tens</i>	to stretch, strive	tendon, tension, distend
<i>termin</i>	boundary, limit	terminal, terminate, determine
<i>test</i>	to witness, affirm	attest, contest, testify
<i>tract</i>	to pull, draw	attract, retract, traction
<i>trib</i>	to allot, give	attribute, tribute
<i>vac</i>	empty	evacuate, vacuous, vacuum
<i>ven, vent</i>	to come	advent, convene, revenue
<i>ver</i>	truth	veracity, verify, veritable
<i>vers, vert</i>	to turn	adverse, conversion, invert
<i>vest</i>	garment	vest, vestment
<i>vestig</i>	to track	investigate, vestige
<i>via</i>	way, road	via, viaduct
<i>vir</i>	manliness; worth	virile, virility, virtue
<i>vis, vid</i>	to see, look	revision, video, visible
<i>viv, vit</i>	life	vital, vivacious, vivid
<i>voc, vok</i>	voice, call	invocation, revoke, vocal

PREFIXES		
PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>ab-</i>	from; away from	abnormal, abduct, absent, abhor
<i>ad-</i>	to; motion toward; addition to	adapt, addict, adhere, admit
<i>aero-</i>	air	aerobic, aerobiology, aerospace
<i>amphi-</i>	both; around	amphibian, amphitheater
<i>an-</i>	not	anarchy, anesthesia, anonymous
<i>ante-</i>	before	antebellum, antecede, antedate
<i>anti-</i>	against; opposite; reverse	antiaircraft, antifreeze, antibiotics
<i>ap-</i>	to; nearness to	approximate, appoint
<i>auto-</i>	self	automatic, autograph, autobiography
<i>bene-</i>	good	benediction, benefactor, benevolent
<i>bi-</i>	two	bifacial, bifocal, biennial
<i>circum-</i>	around	circumnavigate, circumference
<i>co-, con-</i>	together	coauthor, cooperate, confront, confound
<i>contra-</i>	against	contradict, contradistinguish, contrary
<i>de-</i>	opposite of; away from; undo	deactivate, deform, degrade, deplete, descend
<i>dis-</i>	opposite	disagree, disarm, discontinue, dishonest
<i>ex-</i>	out; beyond; away from; former	excel, exclude, exhale, exile
<i>extra-</i>	outside; beyond; besides	extraordinary, extracurricular
<i>for-</i>	not	forbid, forget, forgo
<i>fore-</i>	before	forecast, foreword, forestall, forethought
<i>hyper-</i>	more than normal; too much	hyperactive, hypercritical, hypertension
<i>il-</i>	not	illegal, illegible, illiterate, illogical
<i>im-</i>	into	immediate, immerse, immigrate, import
<i>im-</i>	not	imbalance, immature, immobilize
<i>in-</i>	not; go into	inaccurate, inactive, indecisive, inhabit
<i>inter-</i>	among; between	interaction, intercede, interchange
<i>intra-</i>	within	intramural, intrastate, intravenous
<i>ir-</i>	not	irredeemable, irregular, irresponsible
<i>mal-</i>	wrong; bad	maladjusted, malfunction, malice
<i>mis-</i>	wrong; bad; no; not	misfire, misbehave, misconduct
<i>non-</i>	not; opposite of	noncommittal, nonconductor, nonpartisan
<i>ob-</i>	against	obstacle, obstinate, obstruct, object

PREFIXES (continued)		
PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>per-</i>	through	percolate, perceive
<i>post-</i>	after	postglacial, postgraduate, posterior
<i>pre-</i>	before	preamble, prearrange, precaution
<i>pro-</i>	before; for; in support of	prognosis, program, prologue, prophet
<i>pro-</i>	forward	proceed, produce, proficient, progress
<i>re-</i>	back; again	recall, recede, reflect, repay
<i>retro-</i>	backward	retroactive, retrospect, retrocede
<i>se-</i>	apart	secure, secede, secession
<i>self-</i>	of the self	self-taught, self-worth, self-respect, selfish
<i>semi-</i>	half; partly	semicircle, semiformal, semitrailer
<i>sub-</i>	under; beneath	subcontract, subject, submarine, submerge
<i>super-</i>	over	superabound, superabundant, superhuman
<i>sur-</i>	over; above	surcharge, surface, surmount, surpass
<i>trans-</i>	across; over	transatlantic, transcend, transcribe, transfer
<i>ultra-</i>	extremely	ultraliberal, ultramodern, ultrasonic
<i>un-</i>	not; lack of; opposite	unable, uncomfortable, uncertain, unhappy

SUFFIXES		
SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-able, -ible	able to be; capable of being	intelligible, probable, inevitable
-ade	action or process	blockade, escapade, parade
-age	action or process	marriage, pilgrimage, voyage
-al, -ial	of; like; relating to; suitable for	potential, musical, national
-ance	act; process; quality; state of being	tolerance, alliance, acceptance
-ant	one who	assistant, immigrant, merchant
-ary	of; like; relating to	customary, honorary, obituary
-ate	characteristic of; to become	officiate, consecrate, activate
-cle, -icle	small	corpuscule, cubicle, particle
-cy	fact or state of being	diplomacy, privacy, relevancy
-dom	state or quality of	boredom, freedom, martyrdom
-ence	act or state of being	occurrence, conference
-ent	doing; having; showing	fraudulent, dependent, negligent
-er	one who; that which	boxer, rancher, employer
-ery	place for; act, practice of	surgery, robbery
-esque	like	picturesque, statuesque
-ess	female	goddess, heiress, princess
-ful	full of	careful, fearful, joyful, thoughtful
-ic	relating to; characteristic of	comic, historic, poetic, public
-ify	to make; to cause to be	modify, glorify, beautify, pacify
-ion	act, condition, or result of	calculation, action, confederation
-ish	of or belonging to; characterized by	tallish, amateurish, selfish
-ism	act, practice, or result of; example	barbarism, heroism, altruism
-ity	condition; state of being	integrity, sincerity, calamity, purity
-ive	of; relating to; belonging to; tending to	inquisitive, active, creative
-ize	make; cause to be; subject to	jeopardize, standardize, computerize
-less	without	ageless, careless, thoughtless, tireless
-let	small	islet, leaflet, owlet, rivulet, starlet
-like	like; characteristic of	childlike, waiflike
-logy	study or theory of	biology, ecology, geology
-ly	every	daily, weekly, monthly, yearly

SUFFIXES (continued)		
SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-ly	like; characteristic of	fatherly, queenly, deadly
-ly	in (a specified manner; to a specified extent)	officially, sincerely, kindly
-ment	action or process	development, government
-ment	state or quality of	amusement, amazement, predicament
-ment	product or thing	fragment, instrument, ornament
-ness	state or quality of being	kindness, abruptness, happiness
-or	one who	actor, auditor, doctor, donor
-ous	having; full of; characterized by	riotous, courageous, advantageous
-ship	state or quality of being	censorship, ownership, governorship
-some	like; tending to be	meddlesome, bothersome, noisome
-tude	state or quality of being	solitude, multitude, aptitude
-y	characterized by	thrifty, jealousy, frequency, sticky

KINDS OF CONTEXT CLUES

CONTEXT

The words, phrases, or sentences around an unfamiliar word often provide clues to the word's meaning. In some cases, *signal words* can act as clues.

Restatement Clues

Words or phrases such as *in other words* or *that is* can signal the restatement of a word.

EXAMPLE The veterinarian treated every animal owner in an *affable* manner; **in other words**, she was gentle and friendly with them.

From the context, readers can tell that *affable* means "gentle and friendly." The phrase *in other words* signals that the words *gentle* and *friendly* restate the meaning of the word.

Restatement Signal Words

in other words that is these

Example Clues

Words or phrases such as *such as*, *for example*, or *likewise* can indicate to readers that an unfamiliar word is being restated in more familiar terms.

EXAMPLE Many types of *fauna*, **for example** the javelina, the coyote, and the peregrine falcon, live in Big Bend National Park.

From the context, readers can tell that *fauna* are the animals of a particular region. The words *for example* signal that the animals listed are examples of the word *fauna*.

Example Signal Words

for example such as in that
likewise especially

Contrast Clues

Words or phrases such as *but*, *by contrast*, or *although* indicate that an unfamiliar word contrasts with another word in the passage.

EXAMPLE Maria was *enthralled* by the new movie, **but** her friend found it dull and uninteresting.

From the context, readers can tell that *enthralled* means "fascinated." The word *but* signals that *enthralled* contrasts with the words *dull* and *uninteresting*.

Contrast Signal Words

but not on the other hand
however still some . . . but others
although despite in contrast

Cause and Effect Clues

Words or phrases such as *lead to*, *cause*, and *because* show how one word may be a cause or effect related to an unfamiliar word.

EXAMPLE *Because* he wanted to marry a divorcée, Edward VIII chose to *abdicate* the British throne in 1936.

From the context, readers can tell that *abdicate* means "to formally give up power." The word *because* signals that abdicating is an effect of Edward VIII's wanting to marry a divorcée.

Cause and Effect Signal Words		
leads to	effect	reasons
cause	as a result	since
because	consequently	why

Definition/Explanation Clues

A sentence may actually define or explain an unfamiliar word.

EXAMPLE The title of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *Tender Is the Night* contains an *allusion*, or *reference*, to a poem by John Keats.

From the context, readers can tell that *allusion* means "reference." The appositive phrase "or reference" signals the meaning of the word.