



## Lesson 13

### Vocabulary Enhancement

#### Knowing the Roots or etymology of the word

At least half of the words in the English language are derived from Greek and Latin roots. Knowing these roots helps us to grasp the meaning of words before we look them up in the dictionary. It also helps us to see how words are often arranged in families with similar characteristics.



For instance, we know that *sophomores* are students in their second year of college or high school. What does it mean, though, to be *sophomoric*? The "sopho" part of the word comes from the same Greek root that gives us *philosophy*, which we know means "love of knowledge." The "ic" ending is sometimes added to adjectival words in English, but the "more" part of the word comes from the same Greek root that gives us *moron*. Thus sophomores are people who think they know a lot but really don't know much about anything, and a sophomoric act is typical of a "wise fool," a "smart-ass"!

Let's explore further. Going back to *philosophy*, we know the "sophy" part is related to knowledge and the "phil" part is related to love (because we know that Philadelphia is the City of Brotherly Love and that a philodendron loves shady spots). What, then, is *philanthropy*? "Phil" is still love, and "anthropy" comes from the same Greek root that gives us *anthropology*, which is the study ("logy," we know, means study of any kind) of *anthropos*, humankind. So a *philanthropist* must

be someone who loves humans and does something about it—like giving money to find a cure for cancer or to build a Writing Center for the local community college. (And an *anthropoid*, while we're at it, is an animal who walks like a human being.) Learning the roots of our language can even be fun!

### Some common Greek and Latin roots:

Root (source)	Meaning	English words
aster, astr (G)	star	astronomy, astrology
audi (L)	to hear	audible, auditorium
bene (L)	good, well	benefit, benevolent
bio (G)	life	biology, autobiography
dic, dict (L)	to speak	dictionary, dictator
fer (L)	to carry	transfer, referral
fix (L)	to fasten	fix, suffix, affix
geo (G)	earth	geography, geology
graph (G)	to write	graphic, photography
jur, just (L)	law	jury, justice
log, logue (G)	word, thought, speech	monolog(ue), astrology, biology, neologism
luc (L)	light	lucid, translucent
manu (L)	hand	manual, manuscript
meter, metr (G)	measure	metric, thermometer
op, oper (L)	work	operation, operator
path (G)	feeling	pathetic, sympathy, empathy
ped (G)	child	pediatrics, pedophile
phil (G)	love	philosophy, Anglophile
phys (G)	body, nature	physical, physics

scrib, script (L)	to write	scribble, manuscript
tele (G)	far off	telephone, television
ter, terr (L)	earth	territory, extraterrestrial
vac (L)	empty	vacant, vacuum, evacuate
verb (L)	word	verbal, verbose
vid, vis (L)	to see	video, vision, television

Authority for this chart: *The Little, Brown Handbook* by H. Ramsay Fowler and Jane E. Aaron, & Kay Limburg. 6th ed. HarperCollins: New York. 1995. By permission of Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.

## Learning Prefixes and Suffixes

Knowing the Greek and Latin roots of several prefixes and suffixes (beginning and endings attached to words) can also help us determine the meaning of words. *Ante*, for instance, means *before*, and if we connect *bellum* with *belligerant* to figure out the connection with *war*, we'll know that *antebellum* refers to the period before war. (In the United States, the antebellum period is our history before the Civil War.)

Prefixes showing quantity	
Meaning	Prefixes in English Words
half	<u>semi</u> annual, <u>hemis</u> phere
one	<u>uni</u> cycle, <u>mona</u> rchy, <u>monor</u> ail
two	<u>bi</u> nary, <u>bi</u> monthly, <u>di</u> lemma, <u>di</u> chotomy
hundred	<u>cent</u> ury, <u>centi</u> meter, <u>hecto</u> liter
thousand	<u>milli</u> meter, <u>kilo</u> meter
Prefixes showing negation	
without, no, not	<u>a</u> sexual, <u>a</u> nonymous, <u>il</u> legal, <u>im</u> moral, <u>in</u> valid, <u>ir</u> reverent, <u>un</u> skilled

not, absence of, opposing, against	<u>non</u> breakable, <u>ant</u> acid, <u>anti</u> pathy, <u>contra</u> dict
opposite to, complement to	<u>count</u> erclockwise, <u>count</u> erweight
do the opposite of, remove, reduce	<u>de</u> horn, <u>de</u> vitalize, <u>de</u> value
do the opposite of, deprive of	<u>dis</u> establish, <u>dis</u> arm
wrongly, bad	<u>mis</u> judge, <u>mis</u> deed
<b>Prefixes showing time</b>	
before	<u>ant</u> ecedent, <u>fore</u> cast, <u>pre</u> cede, <u>pro</u> logue
after	<u>post</u> war
again	<u>re</u> write, <u>re</u> dundant
<b>Prefixes showing direction or position</b>	
above, over	<u>super</u> viser, <u>super</u> erogatory
across, over	<u>trans</u> port, <u>trans</u> late
below, under	<u>infr</u> asonic, <u>infra</u> structure, <u>sub</u> terranean, <u>hypo</u> dermic
in front of	<u>pro</u> ceed, <u>pre</u> fix
behind	<u>re</u> cede
out of	<u>er</u> upt, <u>ex</u> plicit, <u>ec</u> stasy
into	<u>in</u> jection, <u>im</u> merse, <u>en</u> courage, <u>em</u> power
around	<u>circum</u> navigate, <u>per</u> imeter
with	<u>co</u> exist, <u>col</u> loquy, <u>com</u> municate, <u>con</u> sequence, <u>cor</u> respond, <u>symp</u> athy, <u>syn</u> chronize

Suffixes, on the other hand, modify the meaning of a word and frequently determine its function within a sentence.

Take the noun *nation*, for example.

With suffixes, the word becomes the adjective *national*, the adverb *nationally*, and the verb *nationalize*.

See what words you can come up with that use the following suffixes.

- Typical **noun suffixes** are -ence, -ance, -or, -er, -ment, -list, -ism, -ship, -ency, -sion, -tion, -ness, -hood, -dom
- Typical **verb suffixes** are -en, -ify, -ize, -ate
- Typical **adjective suffixes** are -able, -ible, -al, -tial, -tic, -ly, -ful, -ous, -tive, -less, -ish, -ulent
- The **adverb suffix** is -ly (although not all words that end in -ly are adverbs—like friendly)