

COMMON ROOT WORDS AND WORD ORIGINS

ROOTS	MEANING	WORD
alter	other	alternate, alter ego
ami, amic-	love	amiable, amicable
amphi	both ends or all sides	amphibian
ann, enni	year	anniversary, annual, biennial, perennial
anthrop	human, man	anthropology, anthropomorphic, misanthrope
aqua, aque	water	aquatic, aquarium, aqueduct
arch	chief, leader, ruler	archangel, monarch, archaic, archenemy
arthro	joint	arthritis
aud	sound	auditorium, audible, audiologist, audiotape
bell	war	belligerent, bellicose
biblio	book	bibliography, bibliophile
bio-	life	biography, autobiography, biology, antibiotic
brev	short	brief, abbreviate
cap	take, seize	capture, captivate, capacity
carn	meat	carnivorous, chili con carne
ced	yield, go	recede, secede, proceed, intercede, concession
chrom-	color	chromatic, monochrome, polychrome
chron-	time	chronicle, chronology, chronometer, synchronize
cogn	know	recognize, cognitive, incognito
cord/chord	cord	harpsichord
corp	body	corpus, corpse, corporal
crac, crat	rule, ruler	autocrat, democracy, bureaucrat, democracy
cred	believe	credible, credulous, credibility, credit, credo
cruc	cross	crucifix, crucial
crusta	shell	crustacean
crypt	hidden	cryptogram, cryptology, cryptic
culp	guilt	culpable, culprit
dei	god	deity, deify
demo-	people	demography, democracy, epidemic
dent	tooth	dentist, dentifrice, dentin
derm-	skin	dermatology, epidermis, hypodermic
dic	speak, say	dictate, predict, diction, indict
dox	belief, opinion	orthodoxy, paradox, heterodoxy
duc, duct	lead	induce, deduce, seduction, conduct, abduct
duo	two	duo
dynam-	power	dynamo, hydrodynamics
ego	self	egotist, egomania
equ	equal	equal, equity, equanimity, equate, equidistant
fac	make, do	manufacture, factory, benefactor
fil	threadlike	filament
frater	brother	fraternal, fraternize

gam-	marriage	monogamy, polygamy, bigamy
geo-	earth	geopolitical, geology, geography, geothermal
glyph	vertical groove	Hieroglyphics—Egyptian “sky writing”
grad, gress	step	gradual, progression, transgression
graph-	writing, printing	graphology, biography, telegraph, geography
gym	naked	gymnasium
gyn-	woman	gynecologist, androgynous
hemo, hema, hem	blood	hemophilia, hematology, hemoglobin
holo	whole, entire	holograph
hydro, hydr	water	dehydrate, hydraulics, hydroelectric, hydroplane
iso	equal, identical	isolate
ject	throw	inject, reject, subject, projection
jud	judge	judicial, judge, adjudicate
leg, lect	read, choose	legible, lectern, lecturer, election
liter	letter	literature, illiterate, literal
loc	place	local, location
log	word	monologue, epilogue
luc	light	lucid, elucidate
magn	large	magnify, magnate, magnificent
man	hand	manufacture, manual, manuscript
mar	sea	marine, mariner
mater	mother	maternal, maternity, matriarchy, matricide
mere	part, segment	mere
meta, met	behind, between	metacognition—behind the thinking
metri, meter-	measure	geometric, thermometer, odometer
min	small	minority, minuscule, minute
mit, miss	send	permit, submission, mission, emit,
mob, mot, mov	move	mobile, automobile, motion, promote, movie
mon	warn	premonition, admonition
mor, mort	death	mortal, mortician, immortality
morph	form, structure	metamorphosis, amorphous, morphology
mut	change	mutant, mutability, mutate
neuro	nerve	neurology, neurosis, neurobiology
nomen /nomin	name	nominal, nominate, nomenclature
nov	new	novel, renovate, innovation, novella
nym, onym	word, name	synonym, acronym, anonymous, pseudonym
odonto	tooth	orthodontist—one who straightens teeth
ortho-	straight, correct	orthodox, orthodontist, orthopedic
pac	peace	pacify, Pacific Ocean, pacifist
pater	father	paternal, paternity, patricide, patrilineal, patriotic
path	feeling, suffering	sympathy, apathy, empathy, telepathy, pathology
ped, pod	foot	pedal, pedometer, centipede, gastropod
pel, puls	push	pulsate, repulsive, impulse, compel, propel
pend	hang, weigh	pendulum, pendant, suspend, pending
phon-, phono-	sound, voice	telephone, euphony, cacophony, phonograph

plan	flat	planar, plantation, plane
pneum	lung	pneumatic
pod	feet	podiatrist
port	carry	portable, transport, portage, report,
pot	power	potent, omnipotent, potentate
psych-	soul, spirit, mind	psychology, psychic, psychobiography
pugna	fight	pugnacious, pugilist
quer, quis	ask	query, inquisition,
scent, scend	climb	ascend, ascent
schizo, schiz	division, split	schizophrenic
sci	know	scientific
sciss	cut	scissors
scrib, script	write	manuscript, scribe, proscribe, scripture
sec, sect	cut	dissect, section
sed, sess	sit	sedentary, session
sens, sent	feel, be aware	sensible, sentient
sequ, secu	follow	sequence, sequel, consecutive
serv	serve, protect	service
simil	same	similar, assimilate, simile, facsimile (fax)
siphon	tube	siphon
sol	sun	solar
son	sound	sonar, resonate, unison
soph	wisdom, knowledge	philosophy, sophisticated, sophomore (wise fool)
spec, spic	look, see	spectacles, spectator, inauspicious, prospect
spir	coil	spiral
spir	breathe	inspire, respiration, conspire, perspiration
spond, spons	promise, answer for	respond, responsible
spont	by one's own force	spontaneous
stat	stay, position	station
tang, tact	touch	tactile, tangible
temp	time	temporary, temporize
ten, tent	hold	tentative, tenable, tenuous
terr	earth	subterranean, terrain, terrestrial, disinter
theo	god, deity	theology, polytheism, atheist, monotheism
therm-	heat	thermal, thermos, thermometer
trophy	nutrition, food	atrophy—without nutrition
uro	urine	urologist
vac	empty	vacation, vacuum, vacuous, vacant
ven, vent	come, go	intervene, convene, contravene
ver	truth	veracity, verify, verity
vert	turn	introvert, irreversible, vertigo
vit	life	vital, revitalize, vitamin
voc	call	revoke, invocation, vocal, evocative, convocation
zoo	animal	zoo, zoology, zoolatry

PREFIXES

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
a-, an-	not, without	amoral, anesthetic, apolitical, asocial
ab-	away from	abduction, abstain, abnormal
ad-	to, toward	adjoin, adjacent (lying near to)
ambi-	both	ambidextrous, ambivalent
ana-	up, back, again	analogy, anatomy, anagram
anti-	against	antipathy, antiwar, antisocial
apo-	from, away from	apology, apologize
auto-	self	autobiography, automobile, autocracy, automaton
bene-	good	benediction benevolent benefactor
cata-, cat-	down, against	catastrophe--a turning down
centro, centri-	around, center	concentric, centrifugal
circum-	around	circumlocution circumference, circumvent
com-	with, together	communal, community
con-	with, together	connect, confide conspire
contra-	against	contradict, contravene
de-	down, away	descend, deject (cast down)
dia-, di-	through, across	diameter, division
dis-	apart, not	disengage, discord, discomfort
dys-	ill, difficult, bad	dysfunctional, dysentery
e-	out of, from	elect (choose out of), eject (throw out)
ecto-	on the outside	ectoderm--outer skin
en-, em-	in	empathy--feeling in
endo-	within, inside	endoscope--instrument for observing inside
epi-	upon	epitaph epidermis, epicenter
eso-	inward, within	esoteric--more inward, esophagus
eu-	well, good	euthanasia--good death
ex-	out of, from	exhume, exhale, exodus
hetero-	other, different	heterosexual, heterodoxy, heterodox heterogeneous
homo-	same	homosexual, homogeneous, homogenized
hyper-	over	hypertension, hypersensitive, hyperactivity
hypo-	under	hypotension, hypodermic
il-	not	illegitimate, illicit, illegal, illegible
im-	not	imperfect, impolite, impossible
in-	into	imbibe (drink in, take in)
in-	not	indiscreet, invisible
in-	into	incorporate (take into the body)
inter-	between	intervene (come between), interstate
intra-	within	intrastate, intramural
ir-	not	irregular, irrational, irredeemable
macro-	large	macrocosm, macroeconomics
mal, male-	bad, evil	malediction malevolent, malnutrition
meta-	beyond	metaphysical

micro-	small	microscope, microcosm, microeconomics
mono-	one, single	monologue, monotheism, monarchy, monogamy
neo-	new, recent	neologism, neo-liberal, neonatology. neolithic
ob-	against	object, obstruct (build against)
palin-, pali-	back, again	palindrome
pan-	all, every	pantheism, Pan-Hellenic, panorama, pandemic
para-	false	paramilitary, paralegal, parachute
per-	through	percolate (flow through) perforate (punch through)
peri-	around	perimeter, periscope
phil-, philo-	like, lover of	philosophy, Francophile, bibliophile, philanthropy
poly-	many, several	polygon, polygamy, polytechnic, polytheism
post-	after	postgraduate, posthumous postpone
pre-	before	precede, predict (tell before)
pro-	for, forward	promote, project
pros-	toward, in front	prospect—view in front, something coming up
proto-	first	prototype, protoplasm, protobiology
pseudo	false	pseudonym, pseudoscience
re-	again, back	repeat, recede, regress (step back)
retro-	back	retrogression, retroactive
se-	away from	seduce (lead away), secede
sub-	under	submarine, subject, subhuman subterranean
sur-, super-	over, above	superhuman, superego, superintend, surpass
syn-, sym-, syl-, sys-	with, together	symphony, synonym, system, syllable
tele-	distant, far off	telephone, telepathy, television, telegram
trans-	across	transient, Transatlantic, transport (carry across)

SUFFIXES

SUFFIX	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
-agog, -agogue	leader	demagogue, pedagogue
-cide	kill(ing)	patricide, infanticide, herbicide. suicide
-ectomy	cutting	appendectomy, splenectomy
-ia, -y	act, state	amnesia, mania, democracy, anarchy
-ic, -tic, -ical, -ac	having to do with	anthropomorphic, dramatic, biblical, cardiac
-ics	things having to do with	optics, physics
-isk, -iscus	small	asterisk--a little star
-ism	the belief in	pacifism, terrorism, socialism, communism
-ist	one who believes in	pacifist, terrorist, socialist, communist
-ite	one connected with	meteorite, polite, cosmopolite
-logy	study field of	biology, geology, etymology, cardiology
-oid	resembling, like-shaped	asteroid, spheroid

-or, -er	one who takes part in	doctor, actor, teacher, driver
-phobia	exaggerated fear	photophobia, claustrophobia, agoraphobia
-sis	act, state, condition of	analysis