

# Improve Your Vocabulary and Reading Skills

## Common Root Words and Root Origins



Root	Root Meaning	Example Words
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

<b>Root</b>	<b>Root Meaning</b>	<b>Example Words</b>
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

<b>Root</b>	<b>Root Meaning</b>	<b>Example Words</b>
nym, onym	<b>word, name</b>	synonym, acronym, anonymous, pseudonym
odonto	<b>tooth</b>	orthodontist—one who straightens teeth
ortho-	<b>straight, correct</b>	orthodox, orthodontist, orthopedic
pac	<b>peace</b>	pacify, Pacific Ocean, pacifist
pater	<b>father</b>	paternal, paternity, patricide, patrilineal, patriotic
path	<b>feeling, suffering</b>	sympathy, apathy, empathy, telepathy, pathology
ped, pod	<b>foot</b>	pedal, pedometer, centipede, gastropod
pel, puls	<b>push</b>	pulsate, repulsive, impulse, compel, propel
pend	<b>hang, weigh</b>	pendulum, pendant, suspend, pending
phon-, phono-	<b>sound, voice</b>	telephone, euphony, cacophony, phonograph
plan	<b>flat</b>	planar, plantation, plane
pneum	<b>lung</b>	pneumatic
pod	<b>feet</b>	podiatrist
port	<b>carry</b>	portable, transport, portage, report,
pot	<b>power</b>	potent, omnipotent, potentate
psych-	<b>soul, spirit, mind</b>	psychology, psychic, psychobiography
pugna	<b>fight</b>	pugnacious, pugilist
quer, quis	<b>ask</b>	query, inquisition,
scent, scend	<b>climb</b>	ascend, ascent
schizo, schiz	<b>division, split</b>	schizophrenic
sci	<b>know</b>	scientific
sciss	<b>cut</b>	scissors
scrib, script	<b>write</b>	manuscript, scribe, proscribe, scripture
sec, sect	<b>cut</b>	dissect, section
sed, sess	<b>sit</b>	sedentary, session
sens, sent	<b>feel, be aware</b>	sensible, sentient
sequ, secu	<b>follow</b>	sequence, sequel, consecutive
serv	<b>serve, protect</b>	service
simil	<b>same</b>	similar, assimilate, simile, facsimile (fax)
siphon	<b>tube</b>	siphon
sol	<b>sun</b>	solar
son	<b>sound</b>	sonar, resonate, unison
soph	<b>wisdom, knowledge</b>	philosophy, sophisticated, sophomore (wise fool)
spec, spic	<b>look, see</b>	spectacles, spectator, inauspicious, prospect
spir	<b>coil</b>	spiral
spir	<b>breathe</b>	inspire, respiration, conspire, perspiration
spond, spons	<b>promise, answer for</b>	respond, responsible
spont	<b>by one's own force</b>	spontaneous
stat	<b>stay, position</b>	station
tang, tact	<b>touch</b>	tactile, tangible

<b>Root</b>	<b>Root Meaning</b>	<b>Example Words</b>
temp	<b>time</b>	<b>temporary, temporize</b>
ten, tent	<b>hold</b>	<b>tentative, tenable, tenuous</b>
terr	<b>earth</b>	<b>subterranean, terrain, terrestrial, disinter</b>
theo	<b>god, deity</b>	<b>theology, polytheism, atheist, monotheism</b>
therm-	<b>heat</b>	<b>thermal, thermos, thermometer</b>
trophy	<b>nutrition, food</b>	<b>atrophy—without nutrition</b>
uro	<b>urine</b>	<b>urologist</b>
vac	<b>empty</b>	<b>vacation, vacuum, vacuous, vacant</b>
ven, vent	<b>come, go</b>	<b>intervene, convene, contravene</b>
ver	<b>truth</b>	<b>veracity, verify, verity</b>
vert	<b>turn</b>	<b>introvert, irreversible, vertigo</b>
vit	<b>life</b>	<b>vital, revitalize, vitamin</b>
voc	<b>call</b>	<b>revoke, invocation, vocal, evocative, convocation</b>
zoo	<b>animal</b>	<b>zoo, zoology, zoolatry</b>

## Common Prefixes

Prefix	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
im-	into	imbibe (drink in, take in)
in-	not	indiscreet, invisible

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Prefix Meaning</b>	<b>Examples</b>
in-	<b>into</b>	<b>incorporate (take into the body)</b>
inter-	<b>between</b>	<b>intervene (come between), interstate</b>
intra-	<b>within</b>	<b>intrastate, intramural</b>
ir-	<b>not</b>	<b>irregular, irrational, irredeemable</b>
macro-	<b>large</b>	<b>macrocosm, macroeconomics</b>
mal, male-	<b>bad, evil</b>	<b>malediction malevolent, malnutrition</b>
meta-	<b>beyond</b>	<b>metaphysical</b>
micro-	<b>small</b>	<b>microscope, microcosm, microeconomics</b>
mono-	<b>one, single</b>	<b>monologue, monotheism, monarchy, monogamy</b>
neo-	<b>new, recent</b>	<b>neologism, neo-liberal, neonatology. neolithic</b>
ob-	<b>against</b>	<b>object, obstruct (build against)</b>
palin-, pali-	<b>back, again</b>	<b>palindrome</b>
pan-	<b>all, every</b>	<b>pantheism, Pan-Hellenic, panorama, pandemic</b>
para-	<b>FALSE</b>	<b>paramilitary, paralegal, parachute</b>
per-	<b>through</b>	<b>percolate (flow through) perforate (punch through)</b>
peri-	<b>around</b>	<b>perimeter, periscope</b>
phil-, philo-	<b>like, lover of</b>	<b>philosophy, Francophile, bibliophile, philanthropy</b>
poly-	<b>many, several</b>	<b>polygon, polygamy, polytechnic, polytheism</b>
post-	<b>after</b>	<b>postgraduate, posthumous postpone</b>
pre-	<b>before</b>	<b>precede, predict (tell before)</b>
pro-	<b>for, forward</b>	<b>promote, project</b>
pros-	<b>toward, in front</b>	<b>prospect—view in front, something coming up</b>
proto-	<b>first</b>	<b>prototype, protoplasm, protobiology</b>
pseudo	<b>FALSE</b>	<b>pseudonym, pseudoscience</b>
re-	<b>again, back</b>	<b>repeat, recede, regress (step back)</b>
retro-	<b>back</b>	<b>retrogression, retroactive</b>
se-	<b>away from</b>	<b>seduce (lead away), secede</b>
sub-	<b>under</b>	<b>submarine, subject, subhuman subterranean</b>
sur-, super-	<b>over, above</b>	<b>superhuman, superego, superintend, surpass</b>
syn-, sym-, syl-, sys-	<b>with, together</b>	<b>symphony, synonym, system, syllable</b>
tele-	<b>distant, far off</b>	<b>telephone, telepathy, television, telegram</b>
trans-	<b>across</b>	<b>transient, Transatlantic, transport (carry across)</b>

## Common Suffixes

Suffix	Suffix Meaning	Examples
-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

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