

# ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Layers of Language:  
Latin Morpheme Patterns

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## ~ Module 13, Session 8 ~ Lecture Notes

English words from Latin have numerous prefixes, roots, and suffixes that make thousands of words. Knowing these word parts (or morphemes) and their meanings provides strategies not only for decoding and spelling, but increase vocabulary knowledge as well. By learning the common roots and affixes, students also increase fluency, an important aspect of decoding and reading comprehension. Affixing common Latin roots is the major way of expanding Latin-based words. For example, using the root *struct*, we can make *construct*, *construction*, *reconstruction*, *reconstructionist*, and *reconstructionists*.

### Roots

The root is the primary element in Latin-based words. Roots are relatively easy to read because they follow regular letter-sound correspondence. These roots are bound morphemes because prefixes and/or suffixes are added to them. Teach the Latin roots along with their meanings. Here is a possible sequence based on grade level and frequency. Read across the rows for sequence:

<i>form</i> (to shape)	<i>port</i> (to carry)
<i>rupt</i> (to break)	<i>tract</i> (to pull or draw)
<i>scribe/script</i> (to write)*	<i>spec/spect/spic</i> (to see, watch)*
<i>stru/struct</i> (to build)	<i>dic/dict</i> (to say, tell)
<i>flect/flex</i> (to bend)	<i>mit/miss</i> (to send)*
<i>fer</i> (to bear, yield)*	<i>cred</i> (to believe)
<i>pel/puls</i> (to drive, push)	<i>vert/vers</i> (to turn)
<i>duc/duce/duct</i> (to lead)*	<i>pend/pens</i> (to hand, weigh)
<i>fac, fact, fect, fic</i> (to make, do)*	<i>tend, tens, tent</i> (to stretch)*
<i>ped</i> (foot)	<i>vis/vid</i> (to see)
<i>aud</i> (to hear, listen)	<i>spir/spire</i> (to breathe)
<i>leg</i> (law)	<i>greg</i> (group, crowd, flock)
<i>voc/vok, voke</i> (to call)	<i>ten, tain, tin, tinu</i> (to hold)*
<i>plic/ply</i> (to fold)*	<i>sist, sta, stat, stit</i> (to stand)*
<i>vit, vita, viv, vivi</i> (to live)	<i>lit, liter, litera</i> (letters)
<i>pon, pose, pound</i> (to put, place)*	<i>cap, ceit, ceive, cep, cept, cip</i> (to take, catch, seize, hold, or receive)*

NOTE: This sequence of presentation is a partial list taken from Henry, 2003; and Henry & Redding, 1996.

Notice that many of the common Latin roots contain more than one form. Teach those with only one or two forms first. Brown (1947) found that the roots marked with an asterisk, when affixed with numerous prefixes and suffixes, provide the clues to the meaning of more than 100,000 words (along with the Greek combining forms *graph* and *ology*).

Teach one or two roots during a lesson. Ask students to generate words that contain the target root(s). Provide word lists for students to read. Dictate words individually, in phrases, and in sentences for students to write. Have students read Latin-based words in their social studies books.

For sample lessons see Henry, M. K. (2004) *Unlocking literacy: Effective decoding and spelling instruction* (pp. 112-114). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing; Henry, M. K. (1990). *WORDS: Integrated decoding and spelling instruction based on word origin and word structure* (p. 44). Austin, TX: PRO-ED; and Henry, M. K., & Redding, N. C. (1996). *Patterns for success in reading and spelling* (pp. 251-252). Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

## **Prefixes**

The Latin prefixes are also usually regular. The Anglo-Saxon prefixes taught earlier are also used with Latin roots. In addition, important Latin prefixes, along with their meanings, include:

### **Common Latin Prefixes**

*ad* (to, toward, in) addict, adherence, adjacent, adjective, advantage, advise  
*ante* (before) antebellum, antecedent, antechamber, antefix, anteroom, anteversion  
*anti* (against) antiallergic, antibiotic, anticancer, antidepressant, antihero, antisocial  
*bi* (two) biceps, bicycle, bipolar, biped, bicentennial  
*bene* (good, well) benediction, benefactor, beneficial, benefit, benevolent  
*circum* (around, about) circumference, circumnavigate, circumflex, circumpolar  
*con* (together, with) contend, convince, convene, convention, contraction, continue  
*ex* (out) exceed, escept, exclude, expect, exclaim, expel, expensive, express  
*inter* (between) interstate, interfere, interject, interpose, interpret, intersect, interrupt  
*intra* (within) intrastate, intradermal, intramural, intravenous, intrapersonal  
*intro* (in, inward) introjection, introspective, introvert, intromission  
*multi* (many, much) multiform, multilateral, multilevel, multilingual, multiport  
*per* (through, completely) perceive, percussion, performer, perjure, permissive  
*pro* (forward, earlier) profess, procure, production, procedure, profuse, promote  
*se* (apart, aside) secede, seclusion, security, seductive, segregate, selective  
*sub* (under, beneath) subject, submit, submission, subplot, subscribe, subtraction  
*trans* (across, beyond) transmit, transaction, transcript, transforming, transpose

*ultra* (beyond) ultramodern, ultraliberal, ultrasonic, ultraviolet, ultramicroscopic

Because stress is usually on the Latin word root, many Latin prefixes contain the schwa sound as in *direct* and *convince*. Some Latin prefixes such as *ag*, *as*, *at*, *con*, *col*, and *com* require special treatment and will be discussed in Session 9 under *chameleon prefixes*.

### Suffixes

Latin suffixes are usually unstressed so the schwa sound is common. Important suffixes (given with their part of speech) are listed alphabetically:

-*acy/cy* (noun - state, condition, or quality) democracy, policy, accuracy  
-*al/ial* (adjective – relating to or characterized by) binomial, centennial, doctoral  
-*ar* (adj.) popular, singular, particular, circular, spectacular, rectangular  
-*ance/-ant* (noun or adj.) brilliance/brilliant; abundance/abundant; dominance/ dominant  
-*ary* (adj.- relating to, place) dictionary, contrary, necessary, mementary  
-*ate* (verb or adj.) approximate, associate, alternate, radiate, legitimate  
-*cian* (noun person) magician, musician, mathematician, electrician, politician  
-*cide* (noun – to kill) fratricide, germicide, insecticide, homicide, suicide  
-*ee* (noun – one who receives the action) escapee, deportee, absentee, referee  
-*ence/ent* (noun or adj. – action, state) conference, confidence, dependent, referent *-ible*  
(adj. - variant of *-able*) credible, edible, eligible, possible, reversible  
-*ic* (adj. – of, pertaining to) civic, historic, geometric, scientific, specific  
-*ion* (noun – act of, state of)

[NOTE: usually taught as *sion* and *tion*]

*admission, depression, recession, regression, extension, convulsion  
addition, appreciation, composition, education, location, mediation*

-*ist* (noun person – one who) artist, biologist, bicyclist, jurist, optimist, reformist  
-*ive* (adj. – causing or making) active, depressive, destructive, excessive, offensive  
-*ize* (verb – make) realize, humanize, localize, polarize, socialize, sensitize  
-*logy/-ology* (noun – science or study of) biology, ecology, morphology, phonology

NOTE: *-logy/-ology* are usually considered Greek combining forms but are often taught as suffixes)

-*or* (noun – one who, that which) creditor, calculator, benefactor, moderator, tractor  
-*ous* (adj. – full of, having) coniferous, dextrous, meticulous, nervous, vigorous

Variants include *cious*, *ious*, and *tious*

-*ty/-ity* (noun – state or quality of) capacity, elasticity, facility, humidity, quantity  
-*ure/-ture* (noun – state of, process) figure, failure, procedure, tenure, mature, nature

Suffix addition rules will apply. Because most Latin roots receive the stress, the doubling rule will be needed frequently as in *infer*' – *inferred*, *repel*' – *repelled*, and *transmit*' – *transmitted*.

Advanced readers will want to learn additional Latin word roots once the more common ones are learned. These include:

<i>civ</i> (citizen)	<i>patr, pater</i> (father)
<i>claim, clam</i> (to declare, call out)	<i>pict, picto</i> (paint)
<i>claus, clois, clos, clud, clus</i> (to shut, close)	<i>plac, plais</i> (please)
<i>poten, poss</i> (power)	<i>dent</i> (tooth)
<i>prim, prime</i> (first)	<i>dorm</i> (to sleep)
<i>put</i> (to think)	<i>rect, recti</i> (straight or right)
<i>forc, fort</i> (strong)	<i>sat, satis</i> (enough)
<i>grat, gre</i> (thanks, pleasing)	<i>sign, signi</i> (to sign, mark, or seal)
<i>grav, gravi</i> (heavy)	<i>hab, habit</i> (to have or live)
<i>hum, human</i> (earth, ground, or man)	<i>tempo, tempor</i> (time)
<i>join, junct</i> (to join)	<i>trib</i> (to pay or bestow)
<i>jud, judi, judic</i> (judge)	<i>ultima</i> (last)
<i>jur, jus</i> (law)	<i>vac</i> (empty)
<i>liber, liver</i> (free)	<i>ver, veri</i> (true or genuine)
<i>loc, loqu</i> (to speak)	
<i>luc, lum, lus</i> (light)	
<i>matr, matri</i> (mother)	

Students need to become familiar with each of the common morphemes, and have numerous opportunities to read and spell words containing these morphemes.

**NOTE: For a more thorough list of prefixes, roots, and suffixes, along with extensive word lists, see Henry, 2003, *Unlocking Literacy: Effective Decoding and Spelling Instruction*.**

A useful website contains words and activities related to the SAT. Link to : <http://highschoolhub.org/hub/guidance.cfm>  
SAT vocabulary review in “Colleges and Careers.” Click on Greek and Latin Roots.