

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.

ROOTS		
BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>act</i>	to do, drive	action, actor, react, transact, enact
<i>alt</i>	high	altitude, altimeter
<i>ann, enn</i>	year	annual, perennial, bicentennial
<i>aqua</i>	water	aquarium, aquamarine, aquanaut
<i>aster, astro</i>	star	astronomy, astronomical, asterisk
<i>aud</i>	to hear	audience, auditorium, audible
<i>biblio, bibli</i>	book	bibliographer, bibliomania, biblical
<i>bio</i>	life	biology, biochemistry, biodegradable
<i>cede</i>	to go; to yield	intercede, supercede, concede
<i>cent</i>	one hundred	percent, bicentennial, centennial
<i>chrono</i>	time	chronology, chronometer, chronoscope
<i>circ, circum</i>	around	circumference, circle, circular
<i>cred</i>	to believe, trust	credibility, incredible, credit, credential
<i>dem</i>	people	democracy, demagogue, epidemic
<i>dent</i>	tooth	dentist, dental, dentifrice
<i>dic, dict</i>	to say, to speak; to assert	diction, dictionary, dictate
<i>dur</i>	hard, lasting	duration, durable, endure
<i>fin</i>	end, limit	finish, finite, infinite, final
<i>gen</i>	race, family, kind	genealogy, general, generation
<i>geo</i>	earth	geology, geocentric, geodynamics
<i>graph, gram</i>	to write, draw, record	autograph, telegram, paragraph
<i>hab</i>	to have, hold; to dwell	habit, habitat, inhabit
<i>hydro</i>	water	hydrogen, hydrodynamics, hydroplane
<i>hypo</i>	under, below	hypodermic, hypotension, hypothermia
<i>jur, jus, judic</i>	law, right, judgment	jurist, justify, judicial
<i>leg</i>	law	legal, legislator, legitimate
<i>loc</i>	place	local, localize, relocate, dislocate

ROOTS (continued)

BASE	MEANING	EXAMPLES
<i>logue, logo</i>	idea, word, speech, reason	dialogue, monologue, epilogue, logical
<i>manu</i>	hand	manual, manufacture
<i>med, medi</i>	middle	mediate, medieval, mediocre
<i>meter, metr</i>	measure	diameter, metric, millimeter
<i>morph</i>	form	pseudomorph, mesomorph, metamorphosis
<i>micro</i>	small	microscope, microorganism
<i>mono</i>	one	monologue, monogamy, monograph
<i>mov, mob, mot</i>	to move	mob, mobile, remove, motion
<i>noc, nox</i>	night	equinox, nocturnal, nocturne
<i>ped</i>	foot	pedestal, pedestrian, pedal
<i>peri</i>	around	perimeter, periscope, periphery
<i>petr</i>	rock	petrify, petroleum, petroglyph
<i>phon</i>	sound, voice	phonetics, phonics, telephone
<i>photo</i>	light	photography, photoflash, photogenic
<i>port</i>	to carry	import, export, portable
<i>pyr</i>	fire	pyromania, pyrotechnic
<i>sci</i>	to know	conscience, science, scientist
<i>scope</i>	to see	kaleidoscope, telescope, microscope
<i>scrib, script</i>	to write	inscribe, subscription, script
<i>sign</i>	mark	signal, signature, insignia
<i>spec, spect, spic</i>	to see, look at, behold	inspect, respect, spectacle, species
<i>syn, sym</i>	together	symphony, synthesize
<i>techn</i>	art, skill	technical, technology, technique
<i>temp</i>	time	temporary, temper
<i>therm</i>	heat	thermometer, thermonuclear
<i>tract</i>	to pull, draw	attract, retract, traction
<i>vis, vid</i>	to see, look	revision, video, visible
<i>volve</i>	roll	involve, revolve, revolution

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, approach
<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, 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	unable, uncomfortable, uncertain, unhappy

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

SUFFIXES *(continued)*

SUFFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-ly	every	daily, weekly, monthly, yearly
-ly	like; characteristic of	fatherly, queenly, deadly
-ly	resembling	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 about the word's meaning. In some cases, *signal words* can act as clues. See pp. 173–174 for further discussion of context clues.

Restatement Clues

Look for words and phrases that define an unfamiliar word or restate its meaning in familiar terms.

EXAMPLE The dried rose was as *fragile* as a butterfly's wing. In **other words**, its delicate petals can be damaged easily.

From the context, readers can tell that *fragile* means "damaged easily." The phrase *in other words* signals that the words *easily damaged* restate the meaning of the word *fragile*.

Restatement Signal Words

in other words that is these

Example Clues

Examples sometimes give us hints to a word's meaning. If an unfamiliar word means a certain type of thing, action, or characteristic, examples of the type can be excellent clues to the word's meaning.

EXAMPLE When our neighbors travel, they always look for comfortable *accommodations*, **such as** a beach cottage, hotel suite, or mountain cabin.

From the context, readers can tell that the word *accommodations* means "a place to stay." The words *such as* signal that the list of places to stay provides examples of *accommodations*.

Example Signal Words

for example such as in that
likewise especially

Contrast/Antonym Clues

Look for words or phrases that are the opposite of a word's meaning.

EXAMPLE Knowledge is a *remedy* for many environmental problems, **but** knowledge without action cannot cure the ill.

From the context, readers can tell that *remedy* means "cure." The word *but* signals that *remedy* contrasts with the phrase "cannot cure."

Contrast/Antonym Signal Words			
but	not	in contrast	on the other hand
however	still	although	some . . . but others

Keyword Clues

Look for words or phrases that modify or are related to the unfamiliar word.

EXAMPLE The two characters in my story believe it is their *destiny* to be enemies. Their elders have taught them that this is **meant to be**.

From the context, readers can tell that *destiny* means "something that necessarily happens to a person." The words *meant to be* signal the meaning of the word.

Definition/Explanation Clues

A sentence may actually define or explain an unfamiliar word.

EXAMPLE Alan will help the woman once she **escapes** and becomes a *fugitive* from her troubled country.

From the context, readers can tell that *fugitive* means "runaway." The word *escapes* signals the meaning of the word.

INTRODUCING MAKING NEW WORDS YOUR OWN

How We Make New Words Our Own

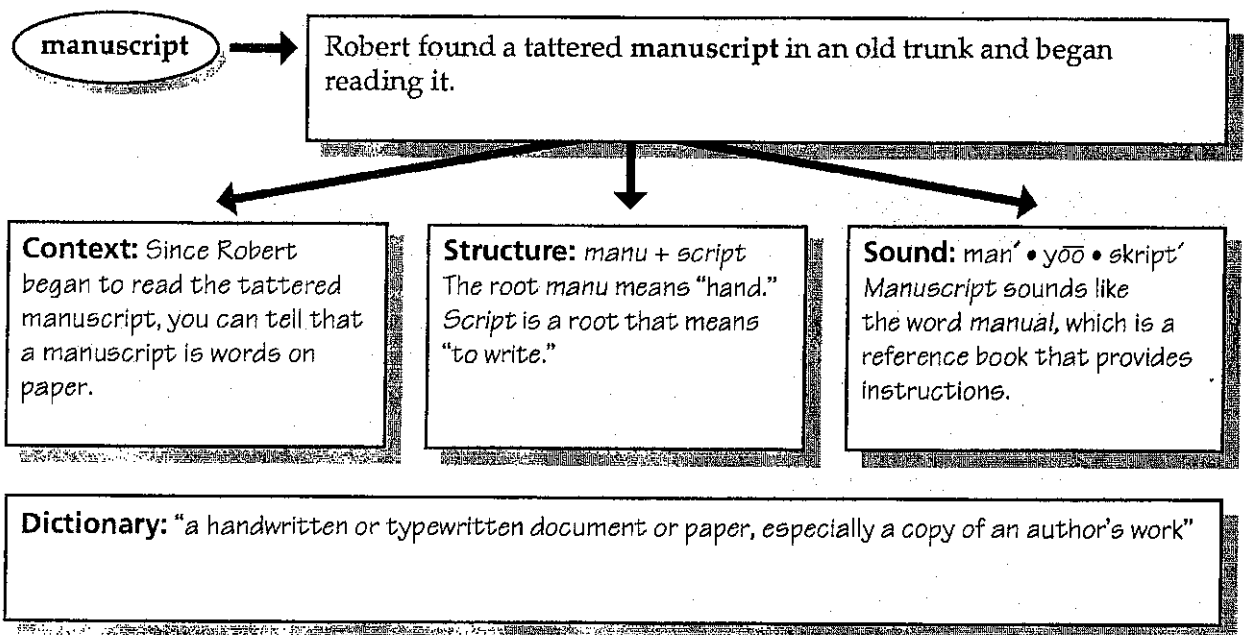
Use the **Context Structure Sound Dictionary (CSSD)** strategy to improve your vocabulary, to make new words your own. Use one or more of the strategies to determine the meanings of each word you do not know. The exercises that follow will show you how to go about making new words your own.

HOW TO DO EXERCISE 1

Wordbusting

In these exercises, you will read the Vocabulary Word in a sentence. You will figure out the word's meaning by looking at its **context**, its **structure**, and its **sound**. Then you will look up the word in a **dictionary** and write its meaning *as it is used in the sentence*.

Here is an example of the Wordbusting strategy, using the word *manuscript*.



Hint #1 Context: Look for clues to the meaning of the word in the sentence. For example, "reading" is a keyword that helps reveal the meaning of *manuscript*.

Hint #2 Structure: Examine the word parts for roots, prefixes, and suffixes that you know. Consult the word-part tables on pages ix–xiv for meanings of parts you do not know.

Hint #3 Sound: Say the word aloud and listen for any word parts you know.

Hint #4 Dictionary: If you cannot determine a word's meaning from applying context, structure, and sound strategies, look up the unfamiliar word in a dictionary. Read all the definitions, and choose one that best fits the given sentence.

HOW TO DO EXERCISE 2

Context Clues

In this exercise, you will again see the new word used in a sentence. This exercise gives you the word's definition, and you must match the word in the sentence with its meaning. The word may be used in the same way as it was used in Wordbusting, or it may be used in a new way.

Here's an example of a Context Clues exercise:

COLUMN A

D 1. word: decrease
v. to become smaller; to lessen;
n. a lessening

COLUMN B

(D) Recent years have seen a steady rise in the number of cat owners. On the other hand, there has been a **decrease** in the number of dog owners.

Hint #1 First, scan the definitions in Column A. Then, read Column B and look for clues to the meaning of the word. Here, the words "on the other hand" tell us that the sentence containing the word **decrease** contrasts with the sentence containing the words "a steady rise." Thus, the correct definition is probably the opposite of "a steady rise."

Hint #2 Read column A and look for a likely definition of the word. In the example, the student chose the definition that contained the meaning "a lessening," which is most nearly the opposite of "a rise."

Hint #3 Write the word in the blank so that later you can find its definition at a glance.

HOW TO DO EXERCISE 3

Like and Opposite Meanings

A synonym is a word that has practically the same meaning as another word. An antonym is a word opposite in meaning to another word. In the Like Meanings part of Exercise 3, you will be asked to find the synonym for (or, in some cases, the phrase that best defines) the Vocabulary Word. In the Opposite Meanings part of Exercise 3, you will be asked to find the antonym for (or, in some cases, the phrase that means the opposite of) the Vocabulary Word.

Here is an example of a Like Meanings item:

21. **decrease** the shedding of fur
- (A) remove
 - (B) make comfortable
 - (C) add to
 - (D) lessen

Hint #1 Don't be fooled by choices that are closely related to the Vocabulary Word. Choice A may be tempting, but the removal of shedding is more extreme than a decrease in shedding.

Hint #2 Don't be fooled by distantly related choices. An animal may be more comfortable when it sheds, but there is no direct link between decrease and Choice B.

Hint #3 Don't be fooled by the opposite of the Vocabulary Word. Choice C would be the correct choice if this were an Opposite Meanings exercise, but here you are looking for a similar meaning.