



Bk Latin and Greek Roots in Academic Vocabulary

Latin Roots

Most modern English words originated in other languages. Many of our words come from Latin, the language of Ancient Rome and its empire. Learning the meaning of some of these common Latin roots will help you with English academic vocabulary.

Common Root	Meaning	Examples
act	<i>do</i>	actor, action, react, transact, enact
anim	<i>life, spirit</i>	animal, animate, animated, inanimate
aqua	<i>water</i>	aquarium, aquatic, aquamarine, aquifer
aud	<i>hear</i>	audience, auditorium, audiovisual, audible
cap	<i>head</i>	cap, captain, capital, decapitate, caput
dent	<i>tooth</i>	dentist, dental, denture, trident, indent
man	<i>hand</i>	manual, manufacture, manipulate, manuscript
mot, mov	<i>move</i>	motor, motion, motive, mobile, automobile, movie
ped	<i>foot</i>	pedal, pedestrian, biped, pedestal
port	<i>carry</i>	transport, import, export, portable, airport, seaport
ques	<i>ask, seek</i>	question, quest, conquest, request
rupt	<i>break</i>	rupture, erupt, disrupt, interrupt, abrupt, bankrupt
san	<i>health</i>	sanitary, sanitation, sanitarium, sane, insane, insanity
scrib	<i>write</i>	scribe, scribble, prescribe, describe
spec	<i>see, watch</i>	spectacles, spectator, inspect, suspect, respect
spir	<i>breathe</i>	spirit, inspire, respiration, perspire, conspire
tain, ten	<i>hold</i>	attention, contain, container, maintain, tenant, retain
vid, vis	<i>see</i>	video, visual, vision, revision, supervision
voc	<i>voice</i>	voice, vocal, advocate, evoke, vociferous
vol	<i>wish, will</i>	volition, volunteer, voluntary, benevolent

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Greek Roots

Most modern English words originated in other languages. Many of our words come from Greek, the language of Ancient Greece. Learning the meaning of some of these common Greek roots will help you with English academic vocabulary.

Common Root	Meaning	Examples
ast	<i>star</i>	astronaut, astronomy, asteroid, disaster, asterisk
biblio	<i>book</i>	bibliography, Bible, bibliophile
bio	<i>life</i>	biology, biography, biopsy, biosphere
chron	<i>time</i>	chronic, chronological, synchronize, chronicle
cycle	<i>circle, ring</i>	cycle, bicycle, recycle, cyclone, encyclopedia
gram	<i>letter, writing</i>	telegram, diagram, grammar, epigram, monogram
graph	<i>draw, write</i>	photograph, phonograph, autograph, biography
hydr	<i>water</i>	fire hydrant, dehydrate, hydroplane, hydraulic
mechan	<i>machine</i>	mechanic, mechanical, mechanism, mechanize
mega	<i>large, great</i>	megabyte, megaphone, megachurch
meter	<i>measure</i>	thermometer, centimeter, diameter, barometer
oid	<i>like</i>	droid, asteroid, humanoid, factoid
path	<i>feel, hurt</i>	pathetic, sympathy, empathy, empathetic
phon	<i>sound</i>	phonograph, symphony, telephone, microphone, phonics
photo	<i>light</i>	photograph, photosynthesis, photogenic
scop	<i>look at, observe</i>	scope, microscope, telescope, horoscope, stethoscope, kaleidoscope
sym, syn	<i>with</i>	sympathy, sympathetic, symphony, synonym
tele	<i>far, end</i>	telephone, telepathy, television, telegram, telegraph
therm	<i>heat</i>	thermometer, thermal, thermostat, Thermos

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Common Core State Standard Language 6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.