

Lesson 13

Latin Roots and Word Families

Teaching

Many English words are made up of word parts that come from other languages, especially Latin and Greek. These word parts are called **roots**, and their meaning is a clue to the meaning of the English word. Roots cannot stand alone, but must be combined with prefixes or suffixes. A group of words with a common root is called a **word family**.

Latin Root	Meaning	Word Family
<i>cred</i> or <i>credit</i>	believe or trust	credible, incredible, discredit, creditable
<i>flect</i> or <i>flex</i>	bend	deflect, reflective, flexible, reflection
<i>funct</i>	perform	defunct, malfunction, nonfunctioning
<i>fract</i> or <i>frag</i>	break	fragment, fraction, refracting
<i>grat</i> or <i>grac</i>	pleasing or thankful	ungrateful, gratify, ingrate
<i>later</i>	side	bilateral, trilateral
<i>loc</i> or <i>locat</i>	place	locally, locale, located
<i>var</i>	different	variable, invariable, various, variant

The following tips can help you use roots to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words such as *unilateral*.

- Break the word into its parts: (prefix) uni- + (root) *later* + (suffix) -al
- Think of other words you know that have the root *later*, such as *lateral* and *multilateral*. Decide the meaning that they share—"side."
- Think about the meaning of any prefixes or suffixes in the word: *uni-* means "one," and *-al* means "relating to."
- Put this information together to predict what *unilateral* means: "being one-sided."
- Check the context and a dictionary or glossary to see if your guess is correct.

A. Identifying Roots and Word Families

Underline the root of each word in Column A. Then match each word with its correct meaning in Column B. Write the letter of the correct meaning in the space provided. Use the chart to help you. You may also use a dictionary if needed.

Column A

- dislocated _____
- inflexible _____
- multilateral _____
- invariable _____
- fragmented _____
- malfunctioning _____
- ingrate _____
- credible _____
- gratify _____
- various _____

Column B

- broken into pieces
- one who is not thankful
- not able to bend
- capable of being believed
- pulled out of place
- to make pleased or satisfied
- having many sides
- not working
- not able to change
- different

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More Practice

B. Roots and Word Families in Action

Predict the meaning of each underlined word following the steps above and using context clues given in the sentences. Check your predictions in a dictionary.

1. Ellen is a gracious host—she always makes sure that the food is delicious and the decorations are beautiful.

meaning: _____

2. Todd did all he could to discredit Ellen's story, but I believed what she said.

meaning: _____

3. The pond was so still that I could see my face reflected in it.

meaning: _____

4. My allowance is variable; if I do more chores, I get a larger amount.

meaning: _____

5. My favorite store is defunct. Maybe another store will move into the empty space.

meaning: _____

6. Tisha could find only a few fragments of the shattered plate.

meaning: _____

C. Vocabulary Challenge

For each item, write the root shared by the two bold-faced words. Then write the meaning of the root, using your knowledge of roots and context clues. Check your answers in a dictionary.

EXAMPLE I knew the dog would growl at me if I **transgressed**, or stepped across, the boundary. The scientist wanted to invent a machine that would let him **regress**, or take a step back, in time.

root: gress meaning: step

1. Sheri has **dental** problems—her teeth are crooked.

A **trident** is a weapon with three spears, which are sometimes called teeth.

root : _____ meaning: _____

2. Dr. Salcedo specializes in **prenatal** care, or taking care of babies before they are born.

"Felicitations on your **natal** day," Edwin said, but what he really meant was "Happy birthday!"

root: _____ meaning: _____

3. There was a **palpable** chill in the air; we could really feel the cold.

A doctor will **palpate**, or feel, a patient's sore stomach to try to find the problem.

root: _____ meaning: _____