

Common Latin and Greek Roots

ROOT	ORIGIN	MEANING	EXAMPLES
astro	Greek	star	astronaut, astronomy, asterisk, asteroid, astrology
aud	Latin	hear	auditorium, audition, audience, audible, audiovisual
bio	Greek	life	biology, biography, biochemistry
cept	Latin	take	intercept, accept, reception
dict	Latin	speak or tell	dictation, dictate, predict, contradict, dictator
duct	Latin	lead	conduct, induct
geo	Greek	earth	geography, geology, geometry, geophysics
graph	Greek	write	autograph, biography, photograph
ject	Latin	throw	eject, reject, projectile, inject
meter	Greek	measure	thermometer, barometer, centimeter, diameter
min	Latin	little or small	miniature, minimum, minimal
mit or mis	Latin	send	mission, transmit, missile, dismiss, submit
ped	Latin	foot	pedal, pedestal, pedestrian
phon	Greek	sound	telephone, symphony, microphone, phonics, phoneme, phonograph
port	Latin	carry	transport, portable, import, export, porter
rupt	Latin	break	disrupt, erupt, rupture, interrupt, bankrupt
scrib or script	Latin	write	scribble, scribe, inscribe, describe, prescribe
spect	Latin	see	inspect, suspect, respect, spectacle, spectator
struct	Latin	build or form	construct, destruct, instruct, structure
tele	Greek	from afar	telephone, telegraph, teleport
tract	Latin	pull	traction, tractor, attract, subtract, extract
vers	Latin	turn	reverse, inverse

Adapted from Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006; Ebbers, 2005; and Stahl & Kapinus, 2001.

Common Prefixes

PREFIX	% OF ALL PREFIXED WORDS	MEANING	EXAMPLES
un-	26	not, opposite of	unbelievable, unsure
re-	14	again	redo, replay
im-, in-, il-, ir-	11	not	incapable, illogical
dis-	7	not, opposite of	disgraceful, discover
en-, em-	4	cause to	enable, emblaze
non-	4	not	nonfiction, nonexistent
in-, im-	3	in, into	inject
over-	3	too much	overtime, overeat
mis-	3	wrongly	misunderstand, misuse
sub-	3	under	subsurface, subway
pre-	3	before	prepay, preschool
inter-	3	between	international, interact
fore-	3	before	forethought
de-	2	opposite of	decaffeinated, dehydrate
trans-	2	across	transatlantic
super-	1	above	superhero, supermodel
semi-	1	half	semiannual, semicolon
anti-	1	against	antiwar, antisocial
mid-	1	middle	midyear, midnight
under-	1	too little	underweight, underpaid
all others	3		

Adapted from Carroll, Davies, & Richman, 1971.

Common Suffixes

SUFFIX	% OF ALL SUFFIXED WORDS	PART OF SPEECH	EXAMPLES
-s, -es	31	Plural of noun	cats, boxes
-ed	20	Past tense of verb	sailed
-ing	14	Progressive tense of verb	jumping, racing
-ly	7	Usually an adverb; sometimes an adjective	slowly, lovely
-er, -or (agent)	4	Noun (agent)	runner, professor
-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition	4	Noun	action, transition, vacation
-able, -ible	2	Adjective	lovable, incredible
-al, -ial	1	Adjective	global, logical, partial
-y	1	Adjective	funny
-ness	1	Abstract noun	kindness
-ity, -ty	1	Noun	activity
-ment	1	Noun	merriment
-ic	1	Adjective	historic
-ous, -eous, -ious	1	Adjective	hideous, spacious
-en	1	Verb	quicken, thicken
-er (comparative)	1	Adjective	bigger
-ive, -ative, -tive	1	Adjective	alternative, pensive
-ful	1	Adjective	wonderful
-less	1	Adjective	effortless
-est	1	Adjective	strongest
All others	7		

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