Root Words in English

To understand vocabulary, we need to understand each word and history attached to it. English is considered as a global language because it is a culmination of all the popular languages like Spanish, Latin, Greek etc. Learning the root words will make it easy for the aspirants to work out the meaning of the new words as they encounter them.

**What is a root word?**

A root word is the word that forms the basis of new words by adding affixes (prefixes or suffixes). It is the most basic part of any word.

The basic structure of roots are either affixed or suffixed and then they become a new word. An understanding of the usual root words will help make a good guess about the meaning of newly known words and will in turn strengthen your vocabulary.

# English Root Word List

1. **Root Word** - Mal - a latin word, **Meaning** - bad or evil. English words having ‘mal’ root word -

* Malignment – defame something badly
* Malice – evil intention
* Maltreat. – Treat someone/something badly
* Malfunction – working badly
* Dismal – A gloomy situation
* Maleficent – Someone who deliberately try causing harm to someone

\*All the words having ‘mal’ root word gives a negative connotation.

1. **Root Word** - Phobia, **Meaning** - Fear or dislike English words formed of it -

Demophobia - demo is people so one who fears public speaking have demophobia Zoophobia - people who fear animals.

Theophobia - Thei is God/Religion, so a person who fears religion has theophobia. Pedophobia - Pedo means child, so a person who doesn't like children has pedophobia. Gynophobia - a person who dislikes girls/women because Gyno is a girl/woman.

1. **Root word** - Fin - a Latin word, **Meaning** - to end something, limit, or boundary. English words containing ‘Fin’ in them –

* Infinity - No limit
* Infinitesimal - immeasurably small
* Confinement - concluding state of pregnancy
* Definite - Precise

We can see, the words mean to end or limit something. Examples: We take a final exam at the end of the course. The one who watches reality TV Shows, see the Finale episode or the final episode of the season.In a race, the Finish line is known as the end of it.

1. **Root word** - Phil - a Greek word, **Meaning** - to Love. English word with root word ‘Phil’-

* Bibliophile – the one who loves books
* Philologist – word lover who is a scholar of language
* Philanthropist – is a person who loves mankind.
* Philosopher - A person who will love wisdom
* Philodendron - A tree that curls up while growing and are called love trees.

So we can see all the words with root words are associated with love.. Did you know the city of Philadelphia actually means the city of brotherly love.

1. **Root word** - Logy a Greek word, **Meaning** - to study something Words formed with the root word ‘logy’ are -

* Analogy - study of comparison of two or more things
* Anthropology - study of human beings as ‘anthrop’ means human.
* Theology - ‘theo’ means God/religion so theology is study of religion
* Morphology - the study of structures is morphology. Morph means structures.

1. **Root word** - Thie, a Greek word, **Meaning** - God/Religion English words formed using the root word ‘Thei’ are -

* Theist - ‘ist’ is follower, so theist is one who believes in God
* Atheist - A [person who do not believe in God
* Pantheist - Pan means that is all over, so the person who believes in all God across all religion is Pantheist
* Monotheist - Mono connotes one, so those who believe in one god are monotheists.

1. **Root word** - Fact - coming from Latin language, **Meaning** - something that is “made” or “done”. Let's check the different words with this root word -

* Factory: is a place where something is “made”.
* Manufactured: A place where something is made too. Manufactured originally means something that is made in large scale.
* Artifact – something that is made by human skills
* Factor – is a “maker”. For example: a beautiful painting done by someone is a deciding factor who gained the rank of a master- painter.
* Benefactor – Someone who does good for other people
* Stupefaction – something that made you completely surprised
* Petrifaction – a super power that makes people turn into stones by just gazing at them
* Malefactor – someone that does evil to human
* Satisfaction – done enough

All the words formed of the root word ‘fact’ connotes something done or made.

1. **Root Word** - Dict/Dic - a Latin word - **Meaning**- Say English words containing Dict/Dic in them -

* Prediction – say something beforehand.
* Dictated – say something to someone
* Verdict – speaking or saying the truth
* Indicate – make known about something by saying
* Contradict – say something against
* Dictionary - a book that tells us how to say a certain word correctly.
* Addicted - when we want to say or declare that we are in love with certain things.

1. **Root Word -** Cide, a Latin word, **Meaning** a person or something that kills, Act of killing. There are many word in english language formed with the root word Cide -

* Patricide - Patri means Father, so killing of one's father is Patricide
* Uxoricide - Husband who kills his wife, Uxor means Wife.
* Maritricide - Marit is husband, so Maritricide is killing of one’s husband
* Infanticide - Infant is a child, killing of a child is infanticide.

So, it can be understood that the words with root word Cide connotes killing of someone or something.

1. **Root Word -** Anti, a Greek word, **Meaning** - Opposite or against The english words formed of the root word ‘Anti’ -

* Antiseptic - working against infection
* Antidote - working against the effect of poison
* Antisocial - opposite to social norms
* Antioxidants - compounds that work against the chemical reactions that damage the cells of an organism.

Remember, anything with the root word ‘anti’ is supposed to do against or opposite of something.

# Root Words That are Common English Words

There are certain root words that form a standalone word of its own or as part of other common words in the English language. Given below are some common english words that are root words as well:

* Act - meaning - to move or do, other english words- actor, acting, reenact
* Crypt - Meaning - to hide, other english word - cryptic, apocryphal, cryptography
* Ego - meaning - Self importance, Other words formed of it egotist, egocentric, egomaniac
* Legal - meaning - related to the law, other words in english - illegal, legalities, paralegal
* Form - meaning - shape, words formed from it - conform, reform, formulate
* Phobia - meaning - fear - words formed from this root word are already discussed above.
* Norm - meaning - typical, other english words - abnormal, paranormal, normality.

Given below is the Root words list that originate from either Latin or Greek words and form the basis of different english words.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Root Words from Greek Language** | | |
| **Root Words** | **Meaning** | **Examples** |
| meter/metr | measure | thermometer, perimeter |
| tele | far off | television, telephone |
| psycho | soul; spirit | psychology, psychic |
| therm | heat | thermal, thermometer |
| techno | art; science; skill | technique, technological |
| pseudo | not genuine, false | pseudonym, pseudoscience |
| morph | form; shape | morphology, morphing |
| photo/phos | light | photograph, phosphorous |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| phon | sound | phone, symphony |
| hydr | water | hydration, dehydrate |
| mono | one | monologue, monotonous |
| mis/miso | hate | misanthrope, misogyny |
| micro | small | microbe, microscope |
| hetero | different | heteronym, heterogeneous |
| scope | viewing instrument | microscope, telescope |
| hypo | below; beneath | hypothermia, hypothetical |
| homo | same | homonym, homogenous |
| chron | time | chronological, chronic |
| gram | thing written | epigram, telegram |
| auto | self | autobiography, automobile |
| dyna | power | dynamic, dynamite |
| bio | life | biology, biography |
| dys | bad; hard; unlucky | dysfunctional, dyslexic |
| phobia | fear | claustrophobia, phobic |
| logy | study of | biology, psychology |
| graph | writing | graphic, phonograph |
| nym | name | antonym, synonym |
| anthropo | man; human; humanity | anthropologist, philanthropy |

* The table below gives the english root words taken from Latin :

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| **English Root Words From Latin Language** | | |
| **Root Words** | **Meaning** | **Examples** |
| aqua | water | aquarium, aquamarine |
| bene | good | benefactor, benevolent |
| circum | around | circumference, circumstance |
| duc/duct | to lead | conduct, induce |
| cent | one hundred | century, percent |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| mal | bad | malevolent, malefactor |
| mater | mother | material, maternity |
| form | shape | conform, reform |
| ambi | both | ambiguous, ambidextrous |
| dict | to say | dictation, dictator |
| mit | to send | transmit, admit |
| fort | strength | fortitude, fortress |
| fract | to break | fracture, fraction |
| struct | to build | destruction, restructure |
| scrib/scribe | to write | inscription, prescribe |
| ject | throw | projection, rejection |
| multi | many | multimedia, multiple |
| fac | to do; to make | factory, manufacture |
| aud | to hear | audience, audition |
| sect/sec | to cut | bisect, section |
| jud | judge | judicial, prejudice |
| mort | death | mortal, mortician |
| pater | father | paternal, paternity |
| port | to carry | portable, transportation |
| contra/counter | against | contradict, encounter |
| rupt | to break | bankrupt, disruption |
| voc | voice; to call | vocalize, advocate |
| spect | to look | inspection, spectator |
| vid/vis | to see | video, televise |
| sent | to feel; to send | consent, resent |