

## Paper Clip Word Chains

### Needed:

- ~ at least 10-15 paperclips per student
- ~ paper, pens, scissors and tape to attach to paperclips

### Instructions for Students:

Many words share common roots. For instance, asterisk and asteroid both share the root "aster", which means "star". Philosophy means, literally, "love of knowledge", and philanthropy "love of man". They share the Greek root "phil-" which means, of course, "love". There are thousands of other pairs out there! Can you link these pairs together to make a chain of words? For instance, philosophy would link to philanthropy, and philanthropy could link to misanthrope ("hater of man"). How far can you make your chain go?

### Notes:

- \* I've found the best way to do this activity is to create a set of diverse words and have students work cooperatively or competitively to link them through this method. However you can also have students work to build chains that are as long/complex as possible.
- \* Matching roots and prefixes is challenging but by no means impossible. Allowing suffixes to be matched makes the game much easier. An option, if students need a little more help, is to allow all suffixes but "ed", "ing", "s" and "ly", which compose 97% of all suffixes. Similarly, if you want to make the game *more* challenging, don't allow the very common prefixes "re", "un" and "dis".
- \* If possible, give students access to etymological dictionaries (paper or online) that allows them to check if the words actually have the same roots. (You may want to hold onto the dictionaries so they don't use it as a way to bypass brainstorming pairs.) In a competition, you can give teams the ability to "challenge" the others' pairs.
- \* Final note: when attaching paperclips, it is far easier to link the paperclips and then tape the word onto the new one. Demonstrate this method to students so they don't run into trouble.