



## Exploring Morphemes: Word Study for Vocabulary Development



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### Guiding Question



In what ways can word study help increase academic skills?

### Today's Agenda



- Why teach morphology
- Overview of the layers of language
- Early morphology concepts and practice activities
- How and when to teach – and to whom

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## Morphology

Gr. form, structure | Gr. study of

- Morphology is the **study of the structure of words** as it relates to meaning.
- It is also known as **structural analysis**.
- Morphology may also include the study of word history or **etymology**.

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## Why teach Morphology ?

### Vocabulary development

- When students come across an unfamiliar word in text, they can break it up and use their knowledge of the root, prefixes, and suffixes to infer the meaning of the whole word.

### Reading accuracy

- Morphological awareness facilitates oral reading accuracy because it helps students with pronunciation. For example, if they can identify the prefix **mis** and the base word **hear**, they will more likely read *mishear* correctly, instead of keeping the sh together and reading it as /sh/.

### Spelling

- Knowledge of morphemes helps students spell more accurately. For example, the words *best* and *dressed* rhyme, but awareness of the past tense suffix helps us know that *dressed* needs the morpheme –ed to spell the final sound /t/.

### Comprehension

- Since morphological awareness increases vocabulary and decoding efficiency, more cognitive resources can be used to process the text as a whole. Further, as vocabulary and word knowledge increase, comprehension increases.

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## Consider syllabication vs. morpheme work

- syllable division
  - gob/lin, nap/kin, in/vite, for/get
  - At/lan/tic
  - res/ted
- morpheme work
  - rested
  - distrust
  - twisting

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## Who Benefits?

- Typically developing learners
- HiSET learners
- Students with language and literacy challenges
- English language learners



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## Basic Terms

**Phoneme:** smallest unit of sound

**Morpheme:** smallest unit of meaning in a word

e.g. *biographers*: 4 morphemes: *bio-graph-er-s*

### Types of Morphemes:

root or combining form: inspector, micro/scope

base word: unlikely

prefix: re-, un-, dis-

suffix: -able, -ed, -ly

} **affixes**

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## Base word vs. Root word

- A base word is of **Anglo-Saxon** origin
- It can stand alone
- Also known as a free morpheme.

look  
read  
make  
bend

bending, bendable

- A root word is of **Latin** origin
- It is unlikely to stand alone
- Also known as a bound morpheme.

spect  
aud  
sens  
cred

incredible, creditor

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### 3 Layers of Language



- **Words of Anglo-Saxon origin ~25%**
  - Common, short, everyday word used frequently in ordinary situations
  - Majority are phonetic for reading (*farm, boat, tree*)
  - Make up the majority of Dolch and Fry lists
  - Non-phonetic words are taught as irregular words (said, enough, was)
- **Words of Latin origin >55%**
  - Sophisticated, academic words (*inspection*)
  - Latin roots are unlikely to stand alone
  - Can have prefix + root + suffix(es)
  - The Latin root usually receives the stress: a - tract' - ive
- **Words of Greek origin ~11%**
  - Specialized words used mostly in sciences, medicine, technology
  - Morphemes are called **combining forms** since they do not predictably function as roots and affixes (*microscope*)

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"Silent letter patterns such as *kn, wr, ough, ould, and igh* are remnants of Anglo-Saxon, in which those 'silent' letters were sounded."



-McCardle & Chhabra, 2004

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### The Structure of English – 3 Layers of Language

HISTORIC STRAND	LETTER-SOUND CORRESPONDENCES		SYLLABLE PATTERNS		MORPHEME PATTERNS	
ANGLO-SAXON AND NORSE  100 AD- Angles and Saxons 700 AD- Vikings	Short vowels	sat let	Closed	bat hundred	Compound Words	thunderstorm toothbrush
	Long vowels	cake spider my	Open	me	Suffix	carted (ed) softly (ly)
	Consonant Digraphs	this which	Vowel-consonant-	make invite	prefix	unlike
	Vowel teams	feed boat	r-controlled	corn	Prefix/suffix	unlikely
	Diphthongs	boy saw	Consonant-le	cradle		
	R-controlled	her car	Vowel team	tree, toy		
	Silent letters	kn, wr				
LATIN – FRENCH (ROMANCE)  1066 - Normans	-tion -sion -cian	station session musician	Multi-syllabic with roots plus prefix and/or suffix		Roots plus prefix and/or suffix	
	-tial -cial	partial special	Prefix	Root	Suffix	refuse dismissive bisect prediction admission disruption
	-tious	cautious	inter-	rupt	-sion	captivity beneficial admission excel malevolent inspector
	Schwa /ə/	competition	re-	spect	-tion	
	ch /ʃh/	machine champagne	ad-	mit	-cial	
	que /k/	antique bouquet	intro-	dict	-ual	
		pre-	port	-or		
GREEKS  1485 - Renaissance	ch /k/	chemist chorus	Combining forms		microscope chronometer phonology physiologist psychology architect symphony	
	ph	physics graph	auto-	-graph		
			micro-	-scope		
			photo-	-meter		
			phon-	-logy/-ology		
	γ /ɣ/ /ɣ/	gym cycle	psych-			

(M. Henry)

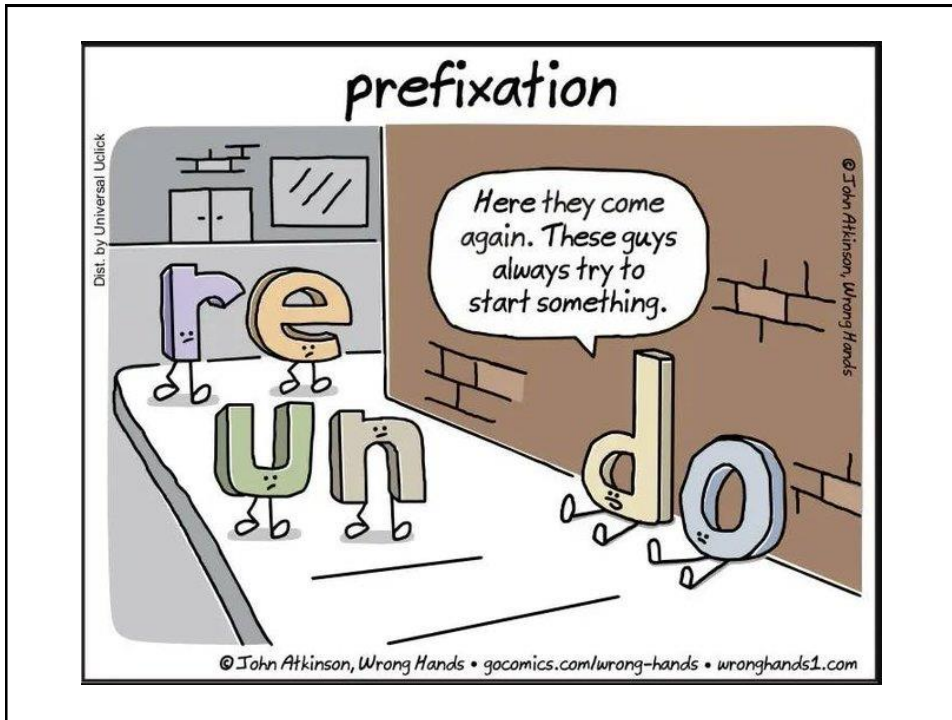
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### Morphology Exercise

Directions: For each word, circle the origin of the word and then explain how you know.

Word	Origin			How do you know?
invasion	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
archaeology	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
frostbite	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
inspection	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
contractor	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
fearless	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
chronometer	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
beneficial	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
flashlight	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
wrought	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
theology	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	
malicious	Anglo-Saxon	Latin-French	Greek	

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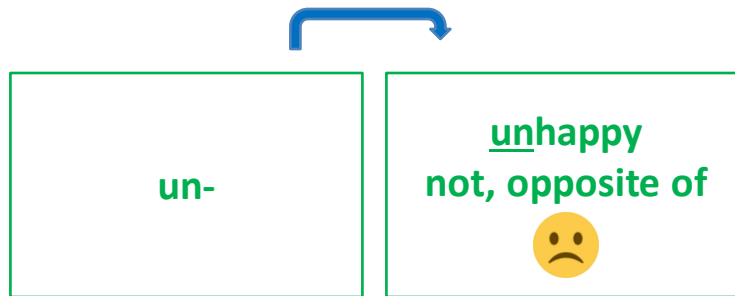
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### Common Prefixes for Initial Instruction

un-	not, opposite of
re-	back, again
mis-	badly, wrongly
dis-	not
in-	not
in-	in
de-	down, apart
pre-	before, ahead
ex-	out
con-	together, with
sub-	under
inter-	between

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## Morpheme cards



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## prefix un-

unlike

unfit

unplug

unsafe

unlock

unpack

Did you \_\_\_\_\_ your bag after your trip?

Do not forget to \_\_\_\_\_ the cord.

It is \_\_\_\_\_ to ride your bike in traffic.

If you \_\_\_\_\_ the gate, the pups will escape.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dan, I like math class.

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Re = back or again

Highlight the prefix and read the words:

refill	reuse	repaint
repay	reheat	refund
reread	reload	return

Fill in the missing word from the list above.

Did you \_\_\_\_\_ the cold chicken?

Did you \_\_\_\_\_ the loan you took?

Did Max \_\_\_\_\_ his walls with a fresh color?

Did you \_\_\_\_\_ the jug with water?

Will the bank \_\_\_\_\_ the fee?

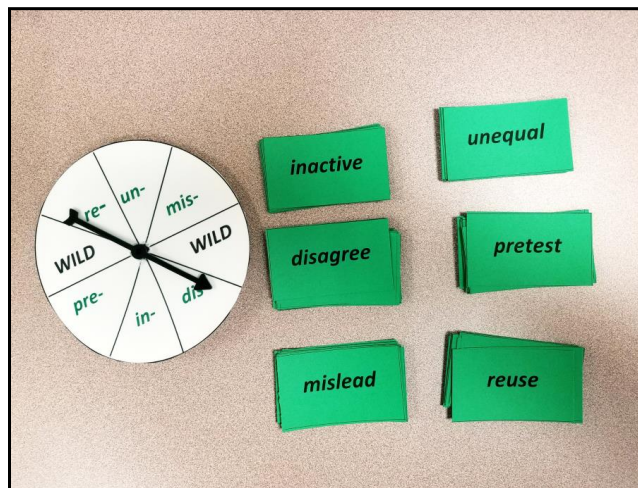
Write a sentence with each word:

return:

reread:

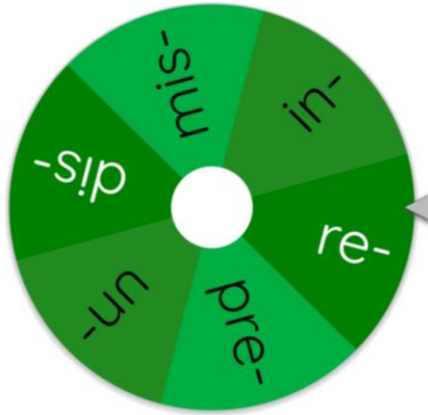
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## Practice – Prefix Spin & Win



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## Virtual spinner – wheelofnames.com



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## Directions

- You will need the circle spinner and word cards. Print them on cardstock.
- You will need a plastic spinner (Amazon sells 4-inch plastic spinners) Cut out the circle and use an Exacto knife to cut a hole to click in your plastic spinner. It is best if you can laminate your spinner circle first, so that it will hold up well. Or use a virtual spinner.
- Cut out and divide the cards into 6 piles, face up.
- Take turns flicking the spinner and then taking and **reading** the words on top of the piles that have your target prefix. If you shuffle the cards up into random piles, this game will move more quickly.
- You can play 10-12 spins, or play until there are no more cards.
- The player with the most cards wins.

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### Practice – Prefix UNO

The diagram shows six cards with words and numbers. The cards are arranged as follows:

- Top center: **reread** (3)
- Bottom left: **retell** (1)
- Bottom left-center: **disable** (4)
- Bottom center: **pretest** (3)
- Bottom right-center: **refill** (2)
- Bottom right: **unkind** (6)

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### Common Anglo-Saxon Suffixes

- **-ing, -er, -ed**
  - helping, helper, helped
- **-s, -es**
  - cats, wishes
- **-ly, -less, -ness, -ful**
  - quickly, blameless, goodness, hopeful
- **-en, -er, -est**
  - wooden, bigger, biggest
- **-y**
  - muddy

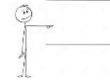
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## Morpheme cards: Suffixes



**-er**

**person who  
teacher**



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## Base Word Matrices

un	<b>help</b>	ful	ness
		s	ing
		ed	
		er	s

out re	<b>grow</b> <i>"flourish, increase"</i>	ing	
		n	
		s	
		th	s

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## Early Latin Prefixes

PREFIX	KEY WORD	MEANING
sub-	submarine	under
con-	connect	with, together
in-	inactive	not
	invade	in, into
ex-	extract	out
con-	connect	together, with
re-	retract	back, again
trans-	transport	across
inter-	interrupt	between, among
ob-	object	against

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## Prefixes

prefix	key word	meaning
un	unhappy	not
sub	submarine	under
re	redo	again, back
De	descend	down, up
Pre	predict	before, ahead
Mis	Misspell	badly, wrong
In	Incorrect	not, (1)
Dis	Dislike	not
Fore	foretell	before, ahead
ex	exit	out
Per	Permanent	throughout completely
trans	transmit	across
Post	Postpone	after
Con/Com	Concrete	together with
inter	Intermediate	between
ad	admit	to add
Pro	Progress	forward
ab	absent	away from
a	asleep	in, into, off



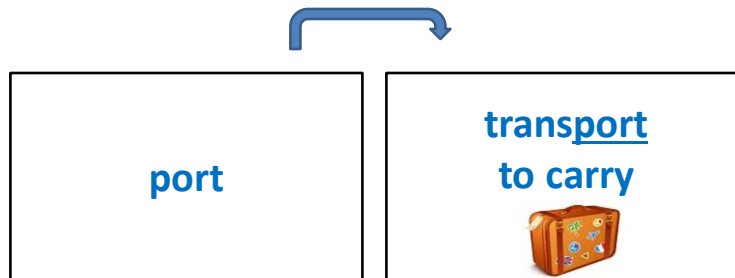
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## Common Latin Roots for Initial Instruction

form	to shape
port	to carry
rupt	to break or burst
ject	to throw
tract	to pull
scrib, script	to write
spec, spect	to see, watch, observe
stru, struc, struct	to build
dic, dict	to say or tell
flect, flex	to bend or curve
mit, mis	to send
fer	to bend or yield
cred	to believe

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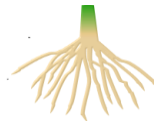
## Morpheme cards: Roots



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## Roots

root	key word	meaning
port	export	to carry
stru, struc	structure	to build
tract	tractor	to pull
act	actor	to do
form	form	to shape
ject	eject	to throw
rupt	erupt	to burst
spec, spect	spectator	to look
scri, scrip	script	to write
Cred	incredible	to believe
flect, flex	flexible	bend



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## Factors to consider in selecting morphemes

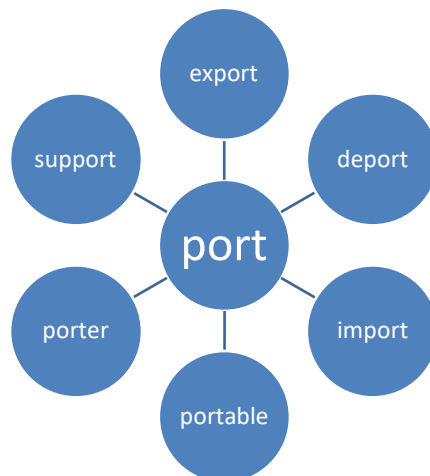
frequency

transparency



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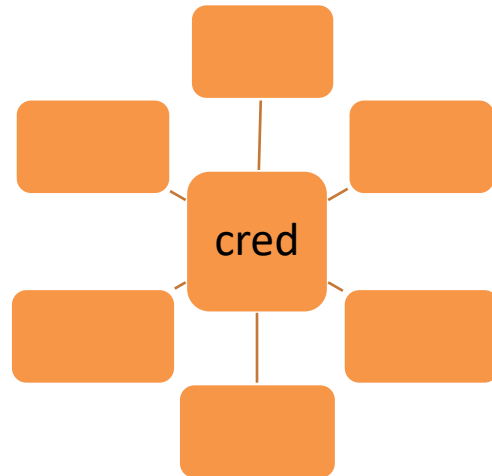
## Ways to practice – word webs Latin Root: port



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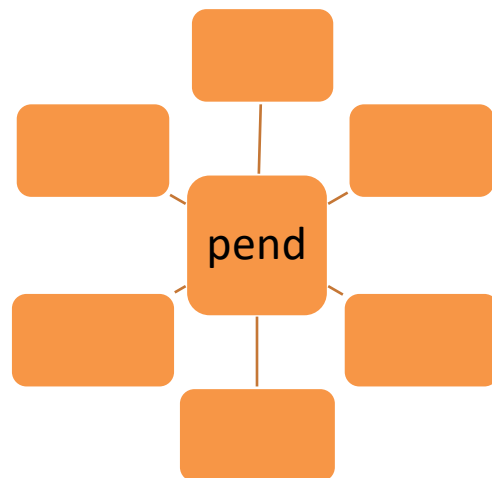


Latin root: *cred* – to believe



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Latin root: *pend* – to hang



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### Concentration/Memory

The diagram shows a concentration/memory game layout. On the left, there are four blue boxes containing the words: tract, spect, ject, and pend. On the right, there are four yellow boxes containing the meanings: to look, to hang, to throw, and to pull. The boxes are arranged in a staggered pattern, suggesting they are to be matched.

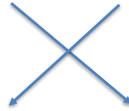
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### Activity: Criss-Cross

The diagram illustrates a criss-cross activity centered on the word "port (carry)". The word is placed in the middle of a grid of horizontal lines. Arrows point from the central word to six other words: transport, support, deport, report, import, and export. Each of these six words is placed on a horizontal line, and a criss-cross pattern of arrows is drawn over each word, indicating a reading or writing exercise.

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## Your Turn



- extract - \_\_\_\_\_
- instruct - \_\_\_\_\_
- reject - \_\_\_\_\_

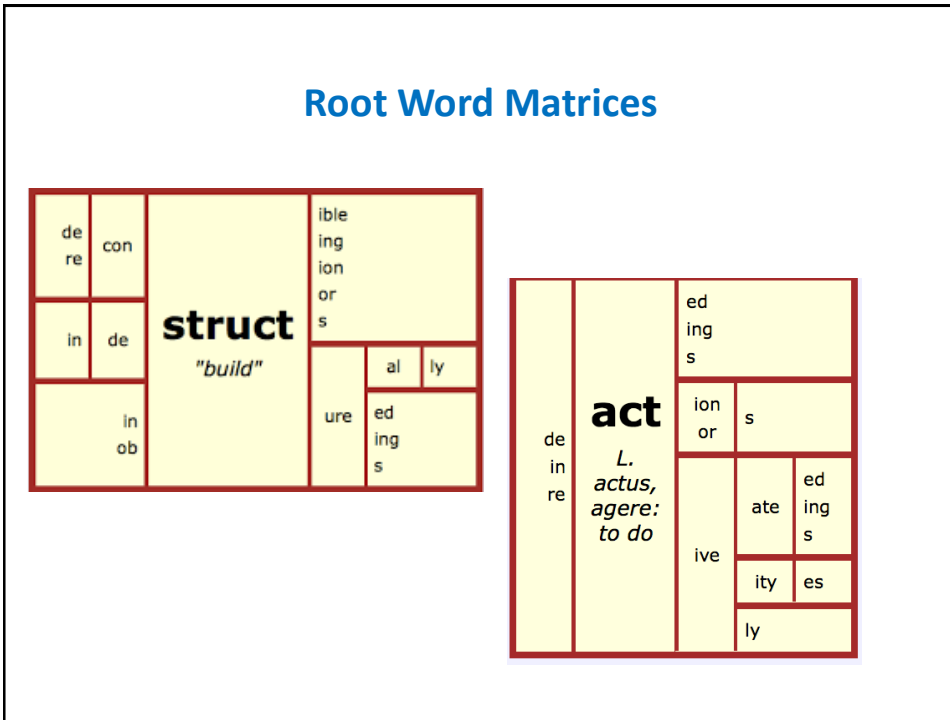
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## Sample word list

transport	deport	destruction
export	dictate	deduct
disrupt	interrupt	erupt
conduct	deportation	induction
report	obstruct	rupture
construct	diction	construction
predict	structure	predictable

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## Root Word Matrices



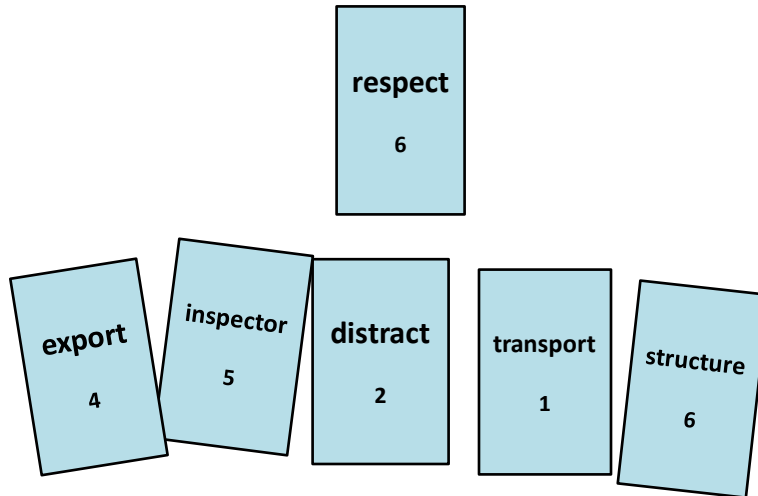
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## Boxing: mixed morphemes

credible	crediting	abrupt	disruptive	eruptive
corrupt	rupture	incredible	corruption	rupturing
disrupt	eruptive	interrupt	credit	accredit
eruption	creditor	credulous	bankrupt	discredit
interrupting	disrupting	creditor	credentials	abruptly

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## Practice – Latin Root UNO



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## Morpheme Phrase Matching

interrupting her  
moment

disruption at the  
movies

eruptive volcano

an abrupt ending



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## Morphology Riddles

**refund**

I mean to break in between.  
I have a prefix and a root.

**disruptive**

I mean unable to be believed.  
My antonym is believable.  
I have 4 syllables.

**interrupt**

I mean to give money back.  
My antonym is pay or penalty.  
My prefix is an open syllable.

**incredible**

I mean a tendency to break away.  
My antonym is well-behaved.  
I have a prefix, root, and suffix.

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## Sentence Reading – Modified Cloze

Did the class \_\_\_\_\_ a survey of lunch preferences?  
conduct      deduct

Does the U.S. \_\_\_\_\_ cars to other countries?  
import      export

We will \_\_\_\_\_ appropriately with the visitors.  
interact      interrupt

Will the expenses \_\_\_\_\_ the city?  
rupture      bankrupt

The bank will issue us \_\_\_\_\_ to purchase the equipment.  
credible      credit

The decision about an extra day off is \_\_\_\_\_.  
pending      appendix

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## Would You Rather Sentences

1. Would you rather have a **ruptured** eardrum or an **eruptive** pimple?
2. Would you rather be a person who is **interrupting** others all the time or someone who never gets **uninterrupted** sleep?
3. Would you rather be a **porter** for Beyonce or get a **portable** television for your kitchen?
4. Would you rather **structure** an essay or **construct** a tower with Legos?
5. Would you rather meeting an **impending** deadline alone or **depend** on the contributions of others?

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## Common Greek Combining Forms

COMBINING FORM	KEY WORD	MEANING
gram, graph	graphic	to write, written
mono	monopoly	one
bio	biology	life
auto	autograph	self
chrono	chronology	time
hydra, hydro	hydrant	water
hyper	hyperactive	over
logy	biology	study of
micro	microscope	small
phon	telephone	sound
phos, phot	photograph	light
dem	democracy	people



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See how many words you can make:

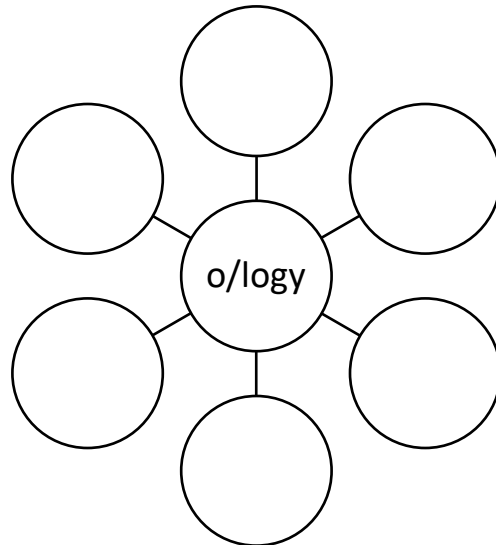


micro	scope	o/logy
graph	morph	gram
phon	photo	bio
therm	auto	chron
tele	meter	path

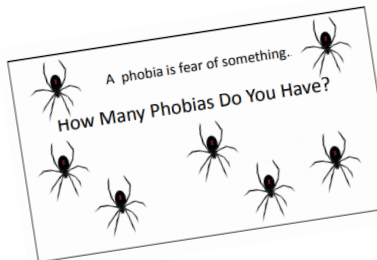
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***o/logy* means the study of**  
**List some ologies that you know...**



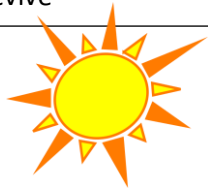
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•[Arachibutyrophobia](#): Fear of peanut butter

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Anglo-Saxon	Latin/French	Greek
water	aquarium	hydrosphere
sun	solar	helium
star	stellar	astronomy
earth	terrain	geography
life	revive	biology



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## How Many?

Word	# of Phonemes	# of Morphemes
mismatched		
icy		
wishes		
unselfish		
extractor		
me		

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## Sample lesson plan

**Objective:** To introduce prefix dis- (not or opposite of)

**Morpheme review:** -s, -es, -ing, -ed, -y, -ly, un-, re-, pre-, in- (inland, inability), mis-

**NEW:** introduce dis- (not or opposite of); add to prefix list with key word (dislike), make morpheme cards

**Words to read:**

dislike, disrespect, disagree, disable, disappear, disassemble, disconnect, discontent

**Words to review:**

misspell, mistreat, misjudge, preheat, predict, restart, reaction, retrain

**Sentences to read:**

Did Jack disassemble the computer to fix the drive?

Did the convict distrust the verdict?

Do not disrespect the judge in this case.

It is unlikely that we can disable the switch.

Can Frank and Lester disagree and still be pals?

Will you disconnect the plug from the outlet?

Did Dad disinfect the drain with bleach?

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dislike	disown	disrespect	disagree
disable	disappear	disassemble	misspell
disconnect	mistreat	misjudge	predict
restart	retrain	preheat	reaction

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**What means drill:**

Tell me:

3 prefixes that mean not or opposite of (un, in, dis)  
 the prefix that means wrongly or badly  
 the prefix that means before  
 the prefix that means back or again  
 the suffix that means happening now.

**Spelling dictation:**

3 prefixes that mean not or opposite of (un, in, dis)

disorder, distrust, disable, dismantle, dislocate, reinvent, recount, unable

Did you disable the car so that it will not start?

Did the clerk file in a disorderly way?

Can you rewire this portion of the cable?

**Read a passage or chapter**

**Exit ticket** – tell me a word that has prefix dis

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**Chameleon Prefixes (Assimilated Prefixes)**

**con (together, with) connect, convene, convince**

col + l: collect, collide, collusion, collate

cor + r: correct, corrupt, corrode, correspond

com + m: commit, commute, commune, comment

+ b: combine, combustible, combat, combattant

+ p: compare, compute, compact, complaint

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## Chameleon Prefixes



**in (in, not) inland, inability**

il + l: illegal, illegible, illustrate, illiterate

ir + r: irregular, irritate, irrigate, irrational

im + m: immune, immortal, immoral

+ b: imbibe, imbalance, imbecile

+ p: impart, import, impress, improve

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## Chameleon Prefixes



**sub (under, from below) subway, submarine, subtract**

suc + c: success, succeed, succulent

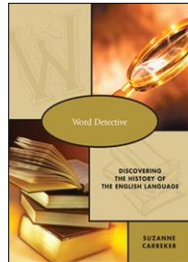
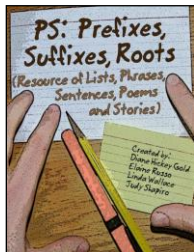
suf + f: suffer, suffuse, sufficient

sug + g: suggest, suggestive

sup + p: support, suppose, suppress

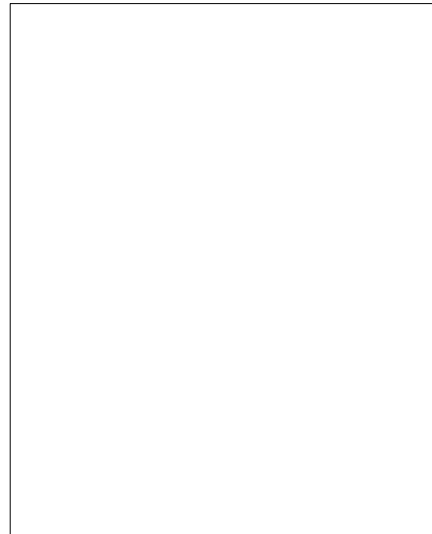
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## Suggested Resources



[etymonline.com](http://etymonline.com)

## Takeaways



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