

Root Words 1

A *root word* is one to which prefixes and suffixes can be added to form different words. These new words are derived from the root word and are called *derivatives* or *derivations*. The root word *help*, for example, can be built up into the derivatives *helpful*, *unhelpful*, *helpless*, *helper* and more.

Grouping words into families with the same root can help you to remember difficult spellings. For example, the root word *sign* is found in *signal*, *significant* and *signature*. The ‘g’ sound in these three words should help you to remember the silent **g** in *sign*.

The root word *press* is found in *pressure*, *impress*, *depression* and others. Can you think of at least three words derived from each of the following root words?

part			
joy			
pass			
hand			
script			
take			
call			
cover			
claim			

Foreign roots

Many roots come from ancient Greek or Latin words, and so are not whole words in English. For example, the root *spect*, found in *spectacle*, *spectator*, *inspection* and *retrospect*, comes from a Latin verb meaning ‘look at’. You may recognize some roots as French words: for example *fin*, meaning ‘end’, found in *finish*, *final*, *definite* and *infinity*.

Can you work out the roots of the following groups of words and what they mean? Remember that the root might not be a whole word in English. Use a dictionary to help if you get stuck. The first one has been done for you.

dictate, diction, predict, contradict	_____ dict say _____
vocabulary, vocal, vocation, advocate	_____
novelty, innovation, novice, renovate	_____
pedal, pedestrian, impede, expedition	_____
graphic, graphite, autograph, photography	_____
visual, television, invisible, visit	_____
nautical, astronaut, nausea, aeronautical	_____

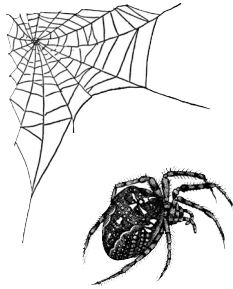
Spelling changes

A root can sometimes change its spelling in different words. For example, the root *ann*, which comes from the Latin word for ‘year’, is found in *annual* and *anniversary* but changes to *enn* in *millennium* and *perennial*.

BE AFRAID...

The word *phobia* comes from the ancient Greek word *phobos*, meaning fear. It is a common root word which has created many English words.

Can you match these phobias with their meanings? The first one has been done for you.



- agoraphobia
- arachnophobia
- claustrophobia
- hydrophobia
- ornithophobia

- great fear of birds
- great fear of water
- great fear of spiders
- great fear of open spaces
- great fear of enclosed spaces



Phobia is added to other roots to make these new words. The roots also come from ancient Greek or Latin words. For example, *arachne* is the ancient Greek word for spider, and *claustrum* is the Latin word for enclosed spaces.

Here are some ancient Greek words with their meanings. Can you match them to the associated phobia, and then to their correct meanings? The first one has been done for you.

triskaideka thirteen
taphe burial
pyr fire
skopeein to view
phone sound, voice
ornithos a bird
ochlos a crowd
graphe writing

pyrophobia
 ochlophobia
 taphephobia
 graphophobia
 ornithophobia
 triskaidekaphobia
 scopophobia
 phonophobia

fear of writing
 fear of the number thirteen
 fear of birds
 fear of being looked at
 fear of noise, or of speaking aloud
 fear of being buried alive
 fear of crowds
 fear of fire

Greek Word and Meaning	Phobia	This phobia is a fear of...
taphe - burial	taphephobia	being buried alive

Can you make up some new phobias of your own? Use *phobia* as a root word to invent new words. Maybe fear of hamburgers might be *burgerophobia*? Or fear of homework might be *studyphobia*. What about fear of brothers? Or fear of exams? Try to make up the oddest phobia words you can.