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to the *COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS*



8

English  
Language  
Arts

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# Lesson 1: Vocabulary

The English language is made up of thousands of words. As a reader, you may wonder how anyone can be expected to keep track of so many words. Do you have to spend your nights reading the dictionary in order to understand all the things you read? The simple answer is: no.

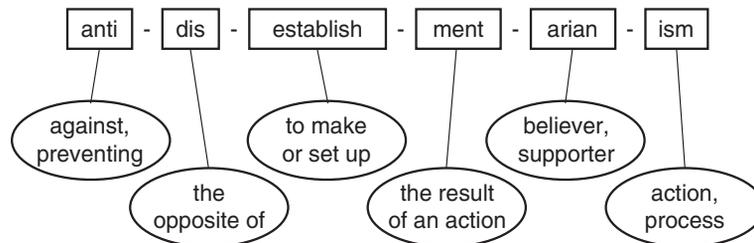
In this lesson, we'll review some of the ways you can figure out the meanings of words as you read. This involves understanding where words come from and how they are built, and analyzing how words are used in context. Your new vocabulary skills will help you navigate even the trickiest text.

## Word Origins and Structures

In English class, one of the things you practice is mastering the conventions of the English language—spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. While it's important to know these rules, it's also good to keep in mind that some of them have not always existed. Knowing a word's origin and structure can help us understand its meaning. **Origin** is the beginning of something. **Structure** is the way words are put together.

Many words are made up of **roots**, or base words with simple meanings. **Affixes** are word parts that are added to roots to change their meanings. There are two kinds of affixes. A **prefix** is a word part that is added to the beginning of a root word to form a new word. Recognizing a prefix can help you figure out the meaning of an unknown word. A **suffix** is added to the end of a root word. Sometimes the spelling of the root word will change when a suffix is added. Learning some common word parts will give you insight into the meanings they create when they are combined.

Take, for example, the word *antidisestablishmentarianism*. (Yes, it's a real word!) At the heart of the word is the root *establish*. You probably know that this word means “to make” or “to set up.” Two prefixes have been added to the beginning of the root, and three suffixes have been added to the end:



All these parts add up to create a word that means “a movement against the people who oppose the established order.”

In this lesson, you will learn to find elements of the history of English in many familiar words. You will also practice breaking unfamiliar words into parts to figure out their meanings. With a little knowledge about word parts—and a little practice—you can take apart thousands of affixed words and work out their meanings.

## A Living Language

Though you might expect it to be dry or dull, the history of English is a stirring tale of the people who have spoken it. The time line that follows gives a sense of the sweeping story of English.

### History of English

**ca. 700 BCE** .....  
Celts settle in England. **Celtic** is spoken.

**55 BCE** .....  
Julius Caesar invades England. His invasion is a failure.

**43 CE** .....  
Roman emperor Claudius conquers England. **Latin** is spoken by military and ruling class for 400 years.

**410** .....  
Roman troops withdraw. Latin influence fades fast.

**450–550** .....  
**Germanic invasion:** Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrive, bringing a language that becomes known as English (**Old English**). They write in runes, alphabetic characters that also have meaning as words. Celts retreat to Wales and Ireland.

**ca. 600** .....  
Christian missionaries arrive in England, bringing the **Roman alphabet**.

**ca. 800** .....  
**Viking invasions** begin, bringing Norse words into the language.

**1066** .....  
**Norman invasion:** William the Conqueror arrives from northern France. Old French, a language close to Latin, is spoken in the court. **Middle English**, containing many French words, emerges among the people.

**1476** .....  
William Caxton brings the printing press (invented around 1440) to England. Birth of **Modern English** and the Renaissance Period.

**1476–1603** .....  
English Renaissance: Revival of **ancient Greek** learning brings Greek words, such as *democracy*, into the language.

**1521** .....  
Spaniard Cortéz conquers Aztecs in Mexico. **Spanish** influence later advances into Texas and California.

**1607** .....  
First permanent English settlement in America at Jamestown, Virginia. English encounter various native tribes and adapt **Native American** place-names.

**1619** .....  
First African slaves arrive in America, bringing a mixture of African tongues that blend with English to develop into **Gullah**.

**1828** .....  
Noah Webster publishes *American Dictionary of the English Language*, defining a distinct American vocabulary. Spelling becomes more standardized.

**1800s–1900s** .....  
Immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, eastern Europe, Italy, China, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Vietnam, and Mexico add words to American English.

**1920s** .....  
“Jazz Age” in New York and Chicago popularizes **African-American dialect**.

**1970s–2000s** .....  
Advances in technology introduce new words into the language. Computers and spell-check programs further standardize English.



### TIP 1: English has Germanic origins.

The first language that could be called English arose around 1,500 years ago. The languages of many groups, including Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Celts, blended together to form English. Many of the words we use today contain prefixes, suffixes, or roots from these languages.

#### Anglo-Saxon Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
be-	make	befriend, bewitch
fore-	before, front	forearm, forego
mis-	badly, wrongly	misconception, misdirect
out-	beyond, outside, more than	outmaneuver, outlandish
un-	not, opposite of	unconstitutional, unavailable
up-	rising, above, high	upswing, upriver, uproar
with-	back, away, against	withdraw, withhold

#### Anglo-Saxon Roots

Root	Meaning	Examples
bind	tie, fasten	binder
drif	carry along	drifter, adrift
fod/fed	food	feed, fodder, foster
kne	joint of the leg	knee, kneel, knicker
lack	to be without	lackadaisical
step	to stamp, to deprive	stepladder, stepmother
ster	guide, direct	steer
tru	faithful	truth, betrothed

## Anglo-Saxon Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-er	comparison, one who does something	stealthier, provider
-ful	full of, characterized by	boastful, woeful
-ish	in the manner of, relating to	brutish, impoverish
-ly	in the manner of	sheepishly, frantically
-ness	condition or state of being	greatness, laziness
-ship	condition, profession, skill	courtship, professorship

Use the previous charts to answer Numbers 1 and 2.

- What does *foretold* mean?
  - not told
  - told before
  - wrongly told
  - faithfully told
  
- Would you want to be friends with someone who is *mistrustful*? Why or why not?

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## TIP 2: Latin and Greek add important prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

Many of the prefixes, suffixes, and root words we use come from Latin or Greek. By keeping in mind what common Latin or Greek affixes and roots mean, you may be able to discover the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

### Latin and Greek Affixes

Prefix	Source
a- (without, not)	Greek
ad-, as- (to, toward)	Latin
anti- (against, opposite)	Greek
auto- (self)	Greek
bi- (two)	Latin
cata- (down)	Greek
com- (with, together)	Latin
contra- (against, opposite)	Latin
de- (reverse, remove)	Latin
di- (two, through)	Greek
dis- (undo, not)	Latin
im-, in- (into, not)	Latin
mal- (bad)	Latin
mid- (middle)	Latin
mono- (one)	Greek
non- (not)	Latin
ob- (in the way, against)	Latin
peri- (around, about)	Greek
post- (after)	Latin
pre- (before)	Latin
pro- (forward, for)	Greek
re- (again, back)	Latin

Suffix	Source
-able, -ible (able to)	Latin
-ance (state, action)	Latin
-ant (agent, receiver)	Latin
-ary (related to)	Latin
-ation, -ion, -tion (state, process, result)	Latin
-cracy (rule of)	Greek
-graphy (writing of)	Greek
-ic (characteristic, relating to)	Latin
-ile (of, relating to)	Latin
-ity (state, quality)	Latin
-ive (quality of)	Latin
-logy, -ology (study of)	Greek
-ment (result, action)	Greek
-phobia (fear of)	Greek

## Latin and Greek Roots

Root	Source	Root	Source	Root	Source
acid, aci (sour)	Latin	helio (sun)	Greek	rect (straight)	Latin
andro (man)	Greek	homo (same)	Greek	sect (cut)	Latin
anthropo (human)	Greek	hydra, hydro (water)	Latin	sede (to sit)	Latin
audi (hear)	Latin	liber (free, book)	Latin	soph (wisdom)	Greek
biblio (book)	Greek	lum (light)	Latin	spect (watch, see)	Latin
bio (life)	Greek	mega (large)	Greek	stas (stand)	Greek
cede (go, yield)	Latin	meter (measure)	Greek	theo (god)	Greek
circum (around)	Latin	morph (shape)	Greek	therm (heat)	Greek
dict (speak)	Latin	omni (all)	Latin	trac(t) (draw)	Latin
duct (lead)	Latin	pater (father)	Latin	vert (turn)	Latin
fac (do, make)	Latin	patho (suffering)	Greek	vis (sight)	Latin
fer (to carry)	Latin	philo (love of)	Greek	vit (life)	Latin
gen (race, stock)	Greek	polis (city)	Greek	voca (call)	Latin
geo (rock)	Greek	pseudo (false)	Greek	vol (to fly)	Latin
gyn (woman)	Greek	psycho (mind)	Greek	volv (to roll)	Latin

And don't forget the Latin numbers:

## Latin Numbers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
uni-	di-	tri-	quad-	quint-	sex-	sept-	oct-	nona-	deca-	cent-	mill-

3. Choose two Greek roots and two Latin roots, and write an English word based upon each.

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4. Which word means “scared of water”?
- A. hydrology
  - B. hydrophobia
  - C. heliographic
  - D. heliolatry

5. What is the meaning of *audible*?

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### **A Global Language**

Since the early seventeenth century, colonization and globalization have spread English around the world. As the language has been transplanted to new continents, it has absorbed new words and grown in different ways in each place. So, even though people in many countries speak English, some of the words they use might be unfamiliar to Americans or used in unfamiliar ways. For example, an American might stand in a *line* to buy a ticket to a concert; people in Great Britain stand in a *queue*. What you call *soccer* many people around the world call *football*. Americans purchase *gas* for their cars, New Zealanders buy *benzine*, and Australians buy *petrol*. Your family might have a *backyard barbecue*; a South African would call it a *braai*.

## Words in Context

Now that you know where words come from and how they are formed, you can start paying attention to how words are used in sentences.

Imagine that your dad sees you trying on your new Philadelphia Eagles jersey. He makes approving sounds and smiles to show that he thinks you look good. You probably expect him to say something like, “Hey, nice shirt!” Instead, he grins and says, “Dude, that shirt is ace. You look rad!” Huh? Did he just compliment you?

Actually, your dad said, in a 1980s sort of way, that your new shirt looks great. All you had to do to understand his message was pay attention to the clues he gave you: his smile, the approving sound he made, and the admiring tone of his voice.

## It’s All about Context

Figuring out the meanings of difficult words in a reading passage is a lot like learning unfamiliar slang. You can learn the meaning of the latest slang (or even your grandma’s out-of-date lingo) by paying attention in a conversation. In the same way, you can learn the meaning of a written word by paying attention to its context. In reading, **context** means the surrounding words and sentences.

To see how this works, read the following sentence, and then answer Number 6.

Never one to give up, Margo worked tenaciously to make the Olympic snowboarding team, and her tireless efforts finally paid off.

6. What is the meaning of the word *tenaciously* as it is used in the sentence?
- A. lazily
  - B. curiously
  - C. hesitantly
  - D. tirelessly

*Tenaciously* is about as hard a word as you are likely to see on a reading test. But even if you’ve never seen the word before, you can figure out what it means. The other words in the sentence give it away.

Which choice would most likely describe the way Margo works? We are told that Margo is “never one to give up” and that her efforts are “tireless.” These details allow you to eliminate choices A (lazily) and C (hesitantly). Of the two choices that are left, which one would most likely lead Margo to success?

As you can see, you don’t have to know the meaning of every word in the dictionary to answer a vocabulary question. However, you do need to know how to use context to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Here are a few tips to help you figure out the meanings of unknown words in a reading passage.



**TIP 3: Look for other words in the passage that have meanings similar to the unknown word.**

The passage often will give plenty of clues about the meaning of an unknown word. For example, read the following passage.

Taylor Swift started writing at a very young age. In the fourth grade, she won a national poetry contest, and eventually she changed her focus to songwriting. Swift has said that she started writing songs to alleviate the pain of not fitting in at school. Music was a way to feel better about herself. These days, Taylor Swift is a phenomenally successful musician, and millions of young fans, many of whom perhaps feel like outcasts themselves, relate to and enjoy her music.

7. Circle any words or phrases in the sentences that have a meaning similar or related to that of the underlined word.

Now read the following question. Choose the answer that is closest in meaning to the word that is underlined.

8. What is the meaning of the word *alleviate*?
  - A. ease
  - B. intensify
  - C. worsen
  - D. refresh

**TIP 4: Look for causes and effects related to the unknown word.**

Cause-and-effect relationships can give hints to the meaning of an unknown word. For example, use the following sentence to answer Numbers 9 and 10.

No one ever thought that LaSalle High would beat City, so when it finally happened, the LaSalle fans were euphoric.

9. How do fans usually feel when their team defeats another that seems hard to beat?

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10. Which word is closest in meaning to *euphoric* as it is used in the example sentence?
- A. satisfied
  - B. overjoyed
  - C. challenged
  - D. embarrassed

**TIP 5: Look for clues showing that the unknown word fits into a category.**

Check to see if a word appears in a list of things or in a description of a scene. If it does, you can guess its meaning by the way it fits into the “world” that contains the other items.

Look at the following example.

Though not as common as the barn owl, sparrow, dove, and blue jay, the towhee is fascinating to watch.

11. The items listed (*barn owl, sparrow, dove, blue jay*) all fit into what category?

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12. What is a *towhee*?
- A. a type of tree
  - B. a television program
  - C. a kind of bird
  - D. a special performance

**TIP 6: Look for clues that point to the opposite meaning of the unknown word.**

Words such as *but*, *despite*, *although*, *surprisingly*, *not*, and *so* tend to signal a shift in the logic of a passage. Such words can hint at what a vocabulary word *doesn't* mean. This can help you make a good guess about what the word *does* mean. For example, read the following sentence and use it to answer Numbers 13 and 14.

When Mr. Carrier first arrived in Pickettsville, the townspeople thought he was a fine, upstanding, honest gentleman, but time soon showed him to be an absolute rogue.

13. Circle any words that describe the opposite of *rogue*.
14. What is the meaning of the word *rogue* as it is used in the passage?
  - A. wise elder
  - B. popular leader
  - C. untrustworthy person
  - D. mysterious newcomer

**TIP 7: Don't be fooled by a word with multiple-meanings.**

Some vocabulary questions will test your knowledge of multiple-meaning words. These are words such as *grate*, which can mean “to scrape into small pieces,” “to be hard on the nerves,” or “the iron bars used to hold fire.”

A multiple-choice question may list four accurate meanings for the vocabulary word. Your job will be to pick the meaning that best fits the way the word is used in the passage. For these questions, it is very important to go back to the passage and check the context before choosing your answer.

To see how this works, read the following sentence, and then answer Number 15.

The reporter would not let the candidate skirt the issue; he asked her repeatedly how she planned to deal with the problem of pollution at Lake Murphy.

15. What is the meaning of the word *skirt* as it is used in the sentence?
- A. a woman's garment
  - B. the outermost parts of a property
  - C. to be on the edge of a border
  - D. to avoid something



### TIP 8: Pay attention to tone.

Every word has a denotative meaning. A word's **denotative meaning** is its basic, agreed-upon definition. Many words also have connotative meanings. A word's **connotative meaning** is an extra meaning or sense it gives the reader when used in certain ways.

For example, the denotative meaning of the word *cheap* is “inexpensive,” but it can also suggest that something is of low quality. This is the word's connotation. If someone says, “That's a cheap MP3 player,” does that mean it doesn't cost much or that it isn't very well made? You'll need to look at the context to know for sure.

One clue that context can provide is tone. A sentence's **tone** refers to the overall emotional content of the words. A positive or negative tone can help you to understand which meaning of a word the writer intends. Read the following sentences to see how this works.

Mom sighed as Roman brought another box to her. They had been shopping for hours, and Mom was tired, but when she saw the sticker on the box, her face lit up. “Finally!” she said. “A cheap MP3 player!”

In this context, Mom is using a positive tone. She is thrilled about the MP3 player's cheapness—its low cost.



## TIP 9: Use vocabulary techniques to answer questions about figurative language and idioms.

If you say that you're so tired that your arms are limp noodles, you don't really mean that your arms are made of a flour and water substance. You are speaking figuratively rather than literally.

**Figurative language** is a comparison of two things with similar qualities.

If you are having trouble understanding a figurative phrase, vocabulary strategies can sometimes help you out.

It was hard work getting a part on the show *Reality Life*, where six born-to-clash stereotypes are placed in a posh designer home in a dream location for six months, all expenses paid. Soon the cameras would begin rolling, and the world would be able to see how young people live and get along in reality. But Nate started to wonder whether he liked the idea of life under a microscope, with someone, somewhere, watching his every squirming movement.

16. What does *life under a microscope* mean in this passage?
- a life in a house with too many other people
  - a life with people who don't get along well
  - a life in a place that is far away from home
  - a life that is filmed and broadcast on television

### Common Word Relationships

Here are some common types of word relationships:

**antonym** ("is the opposite of") *veteran* : *rookie*

**synonym** ("is the same as") *nobility* : *aristocracy*

**characteristic** ("is a characteristic of") *hope* : *optimist*

**classification** ("is a type of") *pastel* : *color*

**degree** ("is a greater/lesser degree of") *elated* : *happy*

**cause/effect** ("is the cause of") *wit* : *laughter*

**effect/cause** ("is an effect of") *devastation* : *hurricane*

**function** ("is used to") *speedometer* : *speed*

**location** ("is a place where") *museum* : *artifacts*

**relative size** ("is bigger/smaller than") *mountain* : *hill*

**whole-to-part or part-to-whole** ("is a part of") *trumpeter* : *band*

**sequence** ("comes before/after") *planting* : *harvest*

An **idiom** is a common expression or saying. You can use vocabulary strategies to answer questions about idioms.

Elwood was down in the dumps after his girlfriend broke up with him. He couldn't eat; he couldn't sleep. He just moped around all day, wondering why he had been such a jerk.

17. What does *down in the dumps* mean in this sentence?
- A. left all alone
  - B. very unhappy
  - C. at the bottom of a hill
  - D. angry and spiteful

You will learn more about figurative language in Lesson 6.



**TIP 10: Build your vocabulary using a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus.**

When you aren't sure about the meaning of a word in your everyday reading, take the time to look it up in a dictionary. A **dictionary** is a very long list of words and definitions. You can't use a dictionary when you take a test, but using a dictionary is a great way to build your vocabulary as you get ready for a test. It's a habit that will help you throughout your life.

A dictionary entry can provide quite a bit of useful information. In addition to the word's correct spelling (and alternate spelling, if there is an accepted one), the entry states the word's pronunciation (including which syllable receives emphasis), its meaning or meanings, its part of speech, and often its etymology. **Etymology** is the history of a word, including where the word originated. Learning a word's etymology is interesting—it can teach you about the different cultures that contribute to the English language and how meanings change over time.

When you come across an unknown word in a nonfiction book, you can often look up the word's meaning without going to a dictionary. Many nonfiction books contain a **glossary**—a list of the difficult or unusual words in a book and definitions for those words. Glossaries are usually found at the end of books. Here is an example of a partial glossary from a book about birds of prey:

***Book of Birds Glossary***

**mantle:** upper surfaces of the wings and back

**migratory:** animals that move to another region when the seasons change

**mottled:** marked with patches of different colors

**nocturnal:** active during the night

**pellets:** small, ball-shaped objects that owls spit out, made from food parts that they cannot digest

**plumes:** large, showy feathers

**predator:** an animal that eats another animal

Another resource that you can use to figure out what a word means is a thesaurus. A **thesaurus** is a list of synonyms. A thesaurus entry may also include antonyms, as well as a brief definition. Here's what you might see if you looked up the word *prey* in a thesaurus:

**Prey:** noun. Definition: target. Synonyms: casualty, chase, fall guy, game, martyr, spoil, sufferer, underdog, victim. Antonyms: hunter, predator.

Even when you look up a word in a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus, you may not always remember its exact meaning the next time you see it. But the more you read, look up words, and practice the tips in this lesson, the more your vocabulary will grow.

**Lesson Practice begins on the following page.**

**Directions:** This passage is about the man who first used the term “rock ’n’ roll.” Read the passage. Then answer Numbers 1 through 4.

## “Moondog” Freed: Rock ’N’ Roll Pioneer

by Hamilton West

Did you know that the term “rock ’n’ roll” was first used by an Ohio deejay named Alan Freed? Freed had a huge influence on the music industry and on music history itself. Perhaps most important, many musicians and historians credit Freed with dismantling racial barriers during the 1950s and paving the way for equality among performers.

Freed had not yet gained celebrity status when he landed his first radio job in Pennsylvania in 1942. After gaining a year of experience, he moved to Youngstown, Ohio, to become the sportscaster on radio station WKBN. But Freed was more interested in music than in sports broadcasting, so he relocated to Akron, Ohio, in 1945 and hosted a jazz and pop show. He soon became a local celebrity.

In 1951, a Cleveland record-store owner named Leo Mintz convinced Freed to be a deejay for a rhythm-and-blues show. Freed gave himself the nickname “Moondog” and began playing music by African American musicians such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry. Though Freed was not the first person to play rock music on the radio, he is credited with coining the term “rock ’n’ roll.” In 1952 he organized the first-ever rock concert, “The Moondog Coronation Ball,” which was attended primarily by African Americans. The concert was such a runaway success that it ended early because of overcrowding.

At a time when America was still stratified along racial lines, Freed promoted the tremendous talents of African American musicians. Many of those musicians have praised Freed for emphasizing the importance of racial harmony to American kids, even as those teens’ parents clung to their old, prejudiced ways. Freed even appeared in several major films about popular African American musicians, including *Rock Around the Clock*, *Mr. Rock and Roll* (which featured Little Richard) and *Go, Johnny, Go!* (with Chuck Berry).

Following the success of these movies, Freed was booked on the European station Radio Luxembourg, where his prerecorded shows were broadcast to a wide audience. Record companies bought air time on Radio Luxembourg to promote the albums of African American musicians. These sounds were heard all across Europe— including in the town of Liverpool, England, where members of a then-unknown group called The Beatles were writing their first songs.

Most people remember Freed for working to bring down racial barriers and promote the talent of African American musicians. American music owes a lot to Alan Freed, from the success of people such as Chuck Berry to the term “rock ’n’ roll” itself.

1. The author credits Moondog Freed with “dismantling racial barriers during the 1950s.” What does *dismantling* mean?

- A. collapsing
- B. building
- C. holding up
- D. taking apart

2. The word *prerecorded* most likely means

- A. recorded before
- B. recorded for
- C. recorded first
- D. recorded again

3. Read the following sentence from the passage.

“Though Freed was not the first person to play rock music on the radio, he is credited with coining the term ‘rock ’n’ roll.’”

What is the meaning of *coining* as it is used in this passage?

- A. speaking
- B. claiming
- C. inventing
- D. imagining

4. In paragraph 4, the author states, “At a time when America was still stratified along racial lines, Freed promoted the tremendous talents of African American musicians.” What is the best definition for the word *stratified* as it is used in this context? Use details from the passage to explain your answer.

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