

Implementing a “Word of the Week” Greek & Latin Root Routine: Building Academic Vocabulary & Word Recognition in Secondary Classrooms

Big Idea: When students understand word parts, they unlock thousands of academic words. **Morphology instruction = Access to grade-level text.**

Day 1: Predict & Activate Prior Knowledge

Goal: Engage curiosity and activate schema.

- **Teacher Actions:**
 - Introduce the root (post visibly).
 - Ask students to predict the meaning.
 - Have students write what they already know.
 - Invite students to share words they’ve seen with the root.
 - **Why It Matters:**
 - Activates background knowledge.
 - Encourages academic risk-taking.
 - Surfaces misconceptions early.
 - **Instructional Tip:**
 - Capture responses on an anchor chart for comparison on Day 2.
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Day 2: Explicit Instruction & Word Building

Goal: Provide clarity and accuracy.

- **Teacher Actions:**
 - Explicitly teach:
 - Root meaning
 - Language of origin
 - Pronunciation
 - Have students use reference materials to confirm definitions.
 - Compare to Day 1 predictions.
 - Generate a comprehensive list of known words with that root.
 - Analyze how the root contributes to each word’s meaning.
 - **Why It Matters:**
 - Builds morphological awareness.
 - Strengthens decoding of multisyllabic words.
 - Connects structure to meaning.
 - **Instructional Tip:**
 - Model breaking down one academic word from current content.
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Days 3–4: Explore & Engage

Goal: Reinforce through repetition and application.

- **Engagement Options:**
 - Word maps (prefix + root + suffix)
 - Root-based word sorts
 - Drawing visual representations
 - Root “word hunts” in current texts
 - Matching games or root bingo
 - Build new words using affixes
 - **Why It Matters:**
 - Repeated exposure strengthens retention.
 - Application promotes transfer across subjects.
 - Engaging practice increases motivation
 - **Instructional Tip:**
 - Spiral review previously taught roots weekly.
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Day 5: Evaluate & Reinforce

Goal: Assess understanding and promote transfer.

- **Quick Assessment Options:**
 - Write 2–3 sentences using words with the root.
 - Define the root and apply it to an unfamiliar word.
 - Identify the meaning of a new word using root knowledge.
- **Ongoing Practice:**
 - Root mastery develops over time. Plan cumulative review.
- **Why It Matters:**
 - Moves from recognition to application.
 - Supports long-term retention.

WORD OF THE WEEK: Greek & Latin Roots Study Template

Root of the Week: _____

Language of Origin (circle one):

GREEK

LATIN

Day 1 – Predict & Connect

1. My Prediction: What do I think this root means?

2. What I Already Know: Have I seen this root before? What do I know about it?

3. Words I Think Contain This Root

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Day 2 – Learn & Confirm

4. Official Definition of the Root

5. Compare My Prediction: Was I correct? What was similar or different?

6. Word Building

Word	Break It Apart	What Does It Mean?



Days 3–4 – Explore & Engage

7. Draw It: Create a visual that represents the meaning of the root. (Use space below)

8. Root Web: Add as many words as you can that contain this root.

Center Word: _____

Day 5 – Apply & Reflect

9. Use It in Context: Write 2–3 sentences using words that contain this root.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

10. New Word Challenge: Use your root knowledge to figure out the meaning of this word: _____ . What do I think it means? Why?

Remember: Understanding word parts helps you unlock thousands of academic words.