

# Greek Roots and Word Families

Teaching

A **word family** is a group of words that share the same **root**—the part of the word that gives its basic meaning. The meaning of the root, which often is Greek or Latin, can help you figure out the meaning of the English word. This chart shows some of the most common Greek roots, also called **combining forms**.

Root/Combining Form	Meaning	Examples
<i>cosm</i>	world or universe	cosmic, microcosm
<i>graph</i> or <i>gram</i>	write, draw, or record	graph, graphic, telegraph
<i>log</i>	word or study	logic, cosmology
<i>micro</i>	small	microsurgery, microcomputer
<i>phon</i>	sound	phonics, microphone
<i>phot</i>	light	photographer, photocopier
<i>scop</i> or <i>skept</i>	look at, examine	skeptic, skeptical, microscope
<i>tel</i> or <i>tele</i>	far, distant	telephone, telescope

The following tips can help you use roots to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words such as *microscopic*.

- Break the word into its parts: (root) *micro* + (root) *scop* + (suffix) *-ic*
- Think of other words you know that have the root *scop*, such as *telescope* and *periscope*. Decide the meaning they share—"see."
- Think about the meaning of the rest of the word parts: *micro-*, "small" and *-ic*, "relating to."
- Put this information together to predict what *microscopic* means: "relating to things that are too small to see."
- Check the context of the sentence or paragraph and a dictionary to see whether your prediction is correct.

## A. Roots and Word Families in Action

Use the chart above and your knowledge of word parts to match each word in Column A with its correct meaning in Column B. You may also use a dictionary if needed.

### Column A

- telescope \_\_\_\_\_
- cosmic \_\_\_\_\_
- microwave \_\_\_\_\_
- photograph \_\_\_\_\_
- telegram \_\_\_\_\_
- logical \_\_\_\_\_
- skeptic \_\_\_\_\_
- microphone \_\_\_\_\_
- telephone \_\_\_\_\_
- cosmology \_\_\_\_\_

### Column B

- an image recorded by a camera
- a device that carries sound over long distances
- a person who examines things for himself or herself
- the study of the universe
- an oven that uses very short electromagnetic waves
- a device that lets the user look at distant objects
- a device that makes sound louder
- a written message sent over a distance
- relating to the universe
- carefully thought out

# Greek Roots and Word Families

*More Practice*

## B. Roots and Word Families in Action

Predict the meaning of each underlined word following the steps on the previous page and using context clues given in the sentences. Use a dictionary to check your answers.

1. I wish you wouldn't micromanage everything. You aren't responsible for every little detail!

meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please make a graph that shows how much money we have raised this year and last year.

meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Sid made 30 photocopies of his poem to distribute to the class.

meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The astronomer wanted to create a map of the entire cosmos.

meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Ms. Greenberg, a writer, is working on a teleplay for my favorite TV show.

meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Microfiber fabric is often used for winter coats because it doesn't let water through.

meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Vocabulary Challenge

For each item, write the Greek root shared by the two bold-faced words. Then write the definition of the root. Use a dictionary if necessary.

**EXAMPLE** A **geologist** studies the earth's origin, history, and structure.  
In **geography** class, I learned how the continents formed.

root: geo meaning: earth

1. I **reclined** in the chair and enjoyed the sunshine.

I am **inclined** to finish the project now, but Stella wants to wait.

root: \_\_\_\_\_ meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Dr. Mokwunye, a **cardiologist**, carefully listened to my heartbeat.

He ordered a **cardiogram** to find out whether my heart was healthy.

root: \_\_\_\_\_ meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Brenda's **caustic** remarks made my face burn with shame.

The doctor had to **cauterize**, or burn, the wound to prevent infection.

root: \_\_\_\_\_ meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

## The suffixes *ance/ant* and *ence/ent*

Teaching

attend + ance	= attendance	ancient
avoid + ance	= avoidance	science
annoy + ance	= annoyance	conscience
apply + ance	= appliance	efficient
defy + ance	= defiance	sufficient
guide + ance	= guidance	frequent
defend + ant	= defendant	sequence
contest + ant	= contestant	delinquent
inhabit + ant	= inhabitant	adolescent
descend + ant	= descendant	crescent

**Lesson Generalization:** The suffixes **ance** and **ant** are commonly added to complete words. The suffixes **ence** and **ent** are commonly added to roots. They are used after the letters **ci**, **qu**, and **sc**.

### A.

1. Notice that the suffixes in the first column are added to complete words. What are those suffixes?

\_\_\_\_\_

Write the spelling words that are made by joining a complete word with its suffix.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. What suffixes are added to the roots in the second column?

\_\_\_\_\_

Write the spelling words that are made by joining a root and its suffix.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- B.** On a separate sheet of paper write the spelling words and a brief definition for each.

# The suffixes *ance/ant* and *ence/ent*

**Tested List**

- |               |                |                |                |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. attendance | 6. guidance    | 11. ancient    | 16. frequent   |
| 2. avoidance  | 7. defendant   | 12. science    | 17. sequence   |
| 3. annoyance  | 8. contestant  | 13. conscience | 18. delinquent |
| 4. appliance  | 9. inhabitant  | 14. efficient  | 19. adolescent |
| 5. defiance   | 10. descendant | 15. sufficient | 20. crescent   |

**A.** Rewrite each incomplete word with the correct ending.

- |                     |                     |                     |                      |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. defend<br>_____  | 6. guid<br>_____    | 11. cresc<br>_____  | 16. adolesc<br>_____ |
| 2. annoy<br>_____   | 7. delinqu<br>_____ | 12. consci<br>_____ | 17. defi<br>_____    |
| 3. contest<br>_____ | 8. avoid<br>_____   | 13. anci<br>_____   | 18. sci<br>_____     |
| 4. attend<br>_____  | 9. inhabit<br>_____ | 14. appli<br>_____  | 19. frequ<br>_____   |
| 5. suffici<br>_____ | 10. effici<br>_____ | 15. sequ<br>_____   | 20. descend<br>_____ |

**B.** Write the spelling word that is related in some way to each group of words.

1. stove, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner \_\_\_\_\_
2. teen-ager, youth, juvenile \_\_\_\_\_
3. native, resident, citizen \_\_\_\_\_
4. biology, chemistry, physics \_\_\_\_\_
5. heir, grandson, great-granddaughter \_\_\_\_\_
6. first, second, third \_\_\_\_\_
7. competition, judge, winner \_\_\_\_\_
8. pest, bother, irritation \_\_\_\_\_
9. lawyer, judge, jury \_\_\_\_\_
10. modern, antique, futuristic \_\_\_\_\_