

Etymology & Word Origins

Etymology

A technique you can use to unlock a word's meaning is to analyze the prefixes, suffixes, base words and roots. These are all word parts from which words are made.

4 Types of Word Parts

- 1) **Prefix** = a word part that is added to the beginning of another word or word part.
- 2) **Suffix** = a word part that is added to the end of another word or word part.
- 3) **Base Word** = a complete word to which a prefix and/or a suffix can be added.
- 4) **Root** = a word part that can never stand alone but to which a prefix and/or a suffix is added. This is the part of a word that contains its basic meaning.

In addition, there are two other vocabulary terms you should know in relation to etymology:

- 5) **Noun Suffix** = a type of suffix which is added to a base word or root to form a noun.
- 6) **Word Family** = a group of words with a common root

Example: *voc* – vocal, vocalist, vocalize, vocation

Word Origins

Some words come into our language from a variety of ways. Below, you will learn of eight different ways words can come into our language.

1) **Jargon** = words related to specialized fields.

Examples: the computer industry, medical fields, gaming

2) **Compound Words** = words that are formed by joining words that people already use.

Three ways to form compound nouns :

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| a) Two words joined as one | Example: doghouse |
| b) Words joined with hyphens | Example: mother-in-law |
| c) Words separated with a space | Example: ice cream |

3) **Blends** = two words that are combined but some of the letters are dropped .

Examples: smoke + fog = smog	lion + tiger = liger
Spoon + fork = spork	Brad + Angelina = Brangelina

4) **Clipped Words** = shortened forms of words

Examples: promenade = prom mathematics = math

5) **Acronyms** = words made by combining the first letters of a group of words. You pronounce the acronym as a word (otherwise it's an abbreviation).

Examples: UNICEF (United Nation's Children's Emergency Fund)
AIDS (Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome)

6) **Borrowed Words** = words that come from other languages or from the names of famous people and places

- a. **Eponyms** = proper names which become new words; a type of borrowed word

Examples: siesta, Braille, sandwich, déjà vu

7) **Echoic Words** = words that imitate the sounds of what they describe; onomatopoeic words

Examples: buzz, babble, zap, moo

Word Origins Practice

List all of the examples you can of the following types of words and show how they are formed. (An example of each has been provided for you.)

Blends	Clipped Words	Acronyms
Example: smoke + fog = smog	Promenade = prom	Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome = AIDS

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More Word Origins Practice

- 1) Write a sentence using a compound word that is formed by putting two words together. Circle the compound word.

- 2) Write a sentence using a compound word that is formed by hyphenating words. Circle the compound word.

- 3) Write a sentence using a compound word that is formed by separating two words with a space. Circle the compound word.

- 4) Write a sentence which incorporates at least one jargon. Circle the jargon word.

- 5) Write a sentence using a borrowed word. Circle the borrowed word.

- 6) Write a sentence using an eponym. Circle the eponym.

- 7) Write a sentence using an echoic word. Circle the echoic word.
