Building a Strong Vocabulary: A Twelve-Week Plan for Students.

This book presents 12 strategies (focusing on one strategy a week) for students to increase vocabulary and boost communication skills, suggesting that these techniques can easily double the average person's vocabulary. After an introduction, the book presents the following 12 techniques: (1) "Expand on What You Know: Synonyms, Antonyms, and Homophones"; (2) "Build through Word Structure: Base Words and Prefixes"; (3) "Build through Word Endings: Base Words and Suffixes"; (4) "Find Related Words and Grow"; (5) "Gain Meaning from Context"; (6) "Say Exactly What You Mean"; (7) "Play the Analogies Game"; (8) "Create Word Maps and Word Webs"; (9) "Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses"; (10) "Learn More about Word Structure: Roots and Affixes"; "Discover Latin and Greek Word Families"; and (12) "Take a Foreign Tour: Words from Other Languages." An epilogue, "Keep Building Your Vocabulary: An Ongoing Process," is attached.
Building a Strong Vocabulary

A 12 Week Plan for Students

Carl B. Smith, Ph.D.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

A Twelve-Week Plan for Students

Carl B. Smith, Ph.D.
ERIC (an acronym for Educational Resources Information Center) is a national network of 16 clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for building the ERIC database by identifying and abstracting various educational resources, including research reports, curriculum guides, conference papers, journal articles, and government reports. The Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication (ERIC/REC) collects educational information specifically related to reading, English, journalism, speech, and theater at all levels. ERIC/REC also covers interdisciplinary areas, such as media studies, reading and writing technology, mass communication, language arts, critical thinking, literature, and many aspects of literacy.

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Diane Lapp
San Diego State University
San Diego, California

Robert Pavlik
Cardinal Stritch University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Charles Suhor
National Council of Teachers of English
Champaign, Illinois
About the Author

Carl B. Smith is a leading authority on reading and children's writing. A parent of four and a grandparent, he has had a lifelong commitment to helping children and families develop their literacy skills in order to live more fulfilling lives.

Dr. Smith is founder and director of the Family Literacy Center, director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, and professor of education at Indiana University in Bloomington. He has written more than thirty books for teachers and parents. His recent titles include *Help Your Child Read and Succeed: A Parents' Guide; Connect! How to Get Your Child to Talk to You;* and *Elementary Grammar: A Child's Resource Book.*
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Introduction
Building Vocabulary for Success

By focusing on one area—vocabulary—can you

- raise your IQ,
- boost your success in school, and
- improve your job opportunities in the future?

The answer is yes! Although many things are involved in reaching your goals, studies have shown that IQ test scores, school grades, and job success are closely linked to vocabulary.

These studies should not surprise us. Ideas are expressed with words. The more words you have at your fingertips, the more precise you can be in communicating your ideas to others. In school and in the business world, you are usually evaluated on your ability to express yourself clearly. For jobs in an increasingly information-intense society, the demand for precise expression will increase.

Building vocabulary, then, becomes the most concrete means you have to improve your ability to express your ideas clearly. By sharpening your vocabulary skills, you gain
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

control over school subjects, workplace issues, and the world of ideas in general. That’s why the strategies in this book are so important!

**Double Your Vocabulary**

Each of the techniques discussed on the following pages can help you expand your vocabulary, and taken altogether they can easily double the average person’s vocabulary.

If we were to boil this book down into one word, it would be *curiosity*. Set your mind to become more curious about words, their meanings, their power, and their ability to give you control over the world of information.

Why don’t you talk with your teachers and ask for advice on ways to connect vocabulary development in school with the informal work done at home? You will probably find that many of the techniques used in this book are also used in the classroom.

Extensive reading provides the best way to build a rich vocabulary. By reading every day, using the techniques in this book, and working with teachers, you can greatly increase your vocabulary skills. The combination of your curiosity and these skills will ensure significant dividends now and in the future.
How to Use This Book

One Skill a Week

1. This book is organized so that you can focus on one word-building skill each week.

Do you have to spend a week on each skill? No, but we think a week on each one makes it manageable. We all learn best if we do a little each day. Then end the week with a quick checkup, using the activities that are provided.

2. Talk with a partner. Words need to be used to become part of your vocabulary.

Explore new words and practice using them with a friend or a parent. Let them work with you and let them learn with you. Your parents will be impressed with your newfound word power.

3. Start a vocabulary notebook. It takes only a few minutes a day.

4. Become aware of words. Learn to play with them.
Week 1

Expand on
What You Know

Synonyms, Antonyms and Homonyms

Always use words you already know; then search for synonyms and antonyms.

We will begin this first week by looking at ways to build your vocabulary by searching your memory.

A. Synonyms and Antonyms: Words That Mean the Same, Words That Mean the Opposite

Synonyms are groups of words that have the same or almost the same meaning. For example, big, large, huge, and enormous are closely related in meaning.
Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. For example, **big** and **little** mean the opposite, as do **fast** and **slow** or **up** and **down**.

These two terms suggest ways of organizing words into logical groupings:

- Synonyms are related by their *similarity* of meaning.
- Antonyms stand in *contrast* to one another.

Synonyms and antonyms can also help to define unfamiliar words. When we encounter a new word, we can often understand it more fully if we relate it to a familiar word whose meaning is similar or is the opposite. For example, if someone makes a *colossal* mistake, it is not just a **big** mistake; it is **huge**, **enormous**, or even **gigantic**. Furthermore, something that is *colossal* is the opposite of **small**, **tiny**, or **insignificant**.

Here are some examples of familiar synonyms and antonyms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Synonyms</strong></th>
<th><strong>Antonyms</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>start, begin</td>
<td>off - on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad, unhappy</td>
<td>up - down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odd, unusual</td>
<td>stop - start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask, request</td>
<td>slow - fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answer, reply</td>
<td>bright - dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calm, still</td>
<td>light - heavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jump, leap</td>
<td>question - answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look for synonyms and antonyms as you read, and select those that you would like to pay attention to.

List some other pairs of synonyms and antonyms as you find them in your reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonyms</th>
<th>Antonyms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Putting Synonyms to Work

The search for synonyms and antonyms provides an excellent way to increase your vocabulary because it helps you discover several different ways of expressing a single thought or idea. For example, instead of just saying “I was mad at him,” you might say “I was angry (or furious or annoyed or exasperated) at him.”
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Can you think of different situations in which you would use each word? What would make you annoyed but not really angry? What would make you so angry that you would become furious?

Now look at some sentences that tell about different ways of running. Notice that each sentence uses a different verb which is exactly suited to its specific situation. We could say that all these verbs are synonyms, but each sentence is much more interesting and precise than it would have been if we had used the word ran in every case.

*Synonyms for ran*—Can you picture the difference?

Two squirrels *scampered* around, looking for acorns.

The chipmunk *skittered* through the dead leaves.

A herd of zebras *loped* across the plain in search of food.
Synonyms and antonyms don’t always have to be individual words. For example, if you *like* something, you can say that you *enjoy* or *admire* it, but you can also say that you *find it agreeable* or you *are fond of it* or you *are partial to it*. These are all synonyms; it’s just that some of them are longer, more elaborate ways of saying that you *like* something.

Keep a vocabulary notebook. Write synonyms and antonyms every time you are searching for just the right word.

Look back over this section on synonyms and antonyms. Which words do you want to keep in your notebook?

________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
________________________  __________________
B. Homophones: Words That Sound the Same

In English there are many sets of words that have the same sound but that have different spellings and meanings: *here* and *bear* or *to*, *too*, and *two*, for example. These groups of words are called homophones, which means “the same sound.”

As we move from simple homophones to more challenging ones, we encounter new words that sound like more familiar ones: *seen* and *scene* or *complement* and *compliment*, for example.

Use these homophones in sentences of your own.

Have you *seen* my umbrella?

We looked out on a *scene* of incredible beauty.

This hat will *complement* the rest of your outfit.

We should *compliment* her on her excellent performance.

---

*Watch Out for Tricky Homophones*

Some homophones are more troublesome than others. This is especially true of the words *to*, *too*, and *two*. We can clarify the meanings of these words by looking at the ways in which they are most often used.
To is often used as a *preposition* followed by a noun. It usually means “toward” or “in the direction of something.”

Dad gave me a ride to school today.

To can also be used before a verb to tell about doing something.

I like to ride my skateboard.

Too can mean “more than enough.” It is often followed by a word such as many or much.

Don’t try to carry too many boxes.

I ate too much pizza and got sick.

Too can mean “also” or “in addition.” Notice how the commas are used with the word too in the following sentences.

These words, too, need to be defined more clearly.

When I left for school, my dog wanted to come, too.

Two is the spelling for the numeral 2. It is never used in any other way. When you use this numeral in a sentence, it is usually spelled out.

Two of my friends met me at the game.

We have two puppies and two kittens.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

The words *their*, *there*, and *they’re* make up another challenging group of homophones.

**There** is often used as an adverb that tells *where* something is located. It means “in that place” or “in that direction.”

Look for the ball over *there* in the bushes.

We ran *there* to see what had happened.

**There** can also be used to begin a sentence. It is usually followed by a verb such as *is* or *are*.

*There is* no more milk in the refrigerator.

*There are* two more cookies left.

**Their** is a plural possessive noun. It is used to show that something belongs to two or more people or things.

Two of my friends left *their* books on the bus.

These are difficult words. I’m not sure about *their* meanings.

**They’re** is a contraction of the words *they* *are*. The first letter of the verb *are* is dropped and an apostrophe is put in its place. The two words are then joined and pronounced as one.

*They’re* going to the game tomorrow.

Do you know if *they’re* planning to attend?
Week 1. Expand on What You Know

Try writing your own sentences using *there*, *their*, and *they’re*.

Two other pairs of homophones may also cause trouble if you are not careful.

**Its** is a possessive pronoun that shows ownership.
- The school is proud of *its* team.
- The little town finally received *its* new fire truck.

**It’s** is a contraction of the words *it is*.
- *It’s* going to be cold today.
- Do you know if *it’s* eight o’clock yet?

**Your** is a possessive pronoun that shows ownership.
- Be sure to bring *your* own chairs.
- Did you forget *your* gloves?

**You’re** is a contraction of the words *you are*.
- *You’re* going to be late if you don’t leave soon.
- I hope *you’re* able to find your gloves.
Try writing your own sentences using *it's*, *you're*, and *your*.

*Familiar Homophones*

Here are some of the homophones you encounter fairly often. Can you use each word correctly? Share this activity with your partner. Point to each word and use it in a sentence, or write sentences on a separate piece of paper. You can check each other.

**NOTES**

ate, eight
bare, bear
base, bass
blew, blue
brake, break

buy, by
flour, flower
hole, whole
hour, our
knew, new
NOTES

knight, night
know, no
one, won
peace, piece
right, write

sail, sale
sea, see
son, sun
waist, waste

wait, weight
way, weigh
weak, week
wood, would
your, you’re

More Challenging Homophones
The following homophones may not be quite as familiar as the ones you just saw. Consult your dictionary if you’re not sure about the meaning of some of these words. Use each one in a sentence and share your sentences with a partner. Between you, can you give a meaning for each word?

NOTES

aisle, I'll, isle
bolder, boulder
bridal, bridle
cereal, serial
NOTES

choral, coral
chorale, corral
cite, sight, site
course, course
complement, compliment

core, corps
council, counsel
dual, duel
foreword, forward
loan, lone
manner, manor
miner, minor
patience, patients

principal, principle
rain, reign, rein
scene, seen
stationary, stationery
vain, vane, vein

When you are reading, notice how these words are used. Also practice writing groups of two or three sentences containing each of these sets of homophones. Your sentences can help you understand these words by providing a context that clarifies each meaning.

In your vocabulary notebook, list the homophones that you want to work on. Write sentences that help you clarify their meanings.
Week 1. Check Yourself

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Pick some familiar verbs and adjectives and think of as many synonyms as you can. Use each word in a sentence. Here are some suggestions:

   - **watch** (verb): look at, stare, observe, peep, notice
   - **fast** (adjective): speedy, swift, rapid, quick, fleet

2. Pick some familiar adjectives and think of as many antonyms as you can. Use each word in a sentence. Here are some suggestions:

   - **good**: bad, evil, wicked, corrupt, worthless, false
   - **easy**: hard, difficult, laborious, exhausting
3. Look at each of the following sentences and then write another sentence using a homophone that matches the sound of the word in italics.

Look *through* these magazines for pictures of giraffes.

How much longer do we have to *wait*?

I'd like to take a *course* in jewelry making.

Now think of some more groups of homophones and use them in sentences.

**Notes**
This week we will begin to explore the important subject of word structure. When we talk about word structure, we mean that many words are made up of two or more separate parts. If we understand how these parts fit together, we can better understand the meaning of the word itself.

**Base words** are the simplest and most familiar words we have in the English language. They are complete in themselves and don't need anything else to make their meanings clear. For example, *dog, cat, rabbit, elephant, run, walk,* and *stumble* are all base words. So are *and, the, fast, slow, up,* and *down.* Whether base words have one syllable or several, they are always complete and make sense as independent words.
Prefixes are syllables that can be added to the beginning of many words. Prefixes are not complete in themselves, but they do serve an important function: They change the meaning of the word to which they are added.

A. Prefixes That Mean "Not"

- One of the most commonly used prefixes is un-, which means "not" or "the opposite" of something. It is often added to adjectives to create pairs of descriptive words with opposite meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fair</th>
<th>unfair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>equal</td>
<td>unequal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certain</td>
<td>uncertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even</td>
<td>uneven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usual</td>
<td>unusual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Structure

The words in the preceding list show how a knowledge of prefixes can help you understand word structure. For example, the word fair is a base word that can stand on its own. When we add the prefix un-, we form a word that has two parts, a prefix and a base: un + fair. This is the type of two-part word structure we will see throughout this week.
Can you think of other descriptive words to which you can add the prefix *un*-?

[Blank lines]

The prefix *un*- can also be added to verbs. In the following examples, the second verb in each pair means “to do the opposite” of the first verb.

- fold, unfold
- load, unload
- lock, unlock
- tie, untie
- wrap, unwrap
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

See if you can think of other verbs that can take the prefix *un*-

________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________

The prefix *dis*- also means “not” or “the opposite of something.” It can be used with verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

- like       dislike
- obey       disobey
- appear     disappear
- order      disorder
- comfort    discomfort
- loyal      disloyal
- honest     dishonest
Write some other words that can begin with the prefix \textit{dis}-. Use the dictionary if you need to. Make sure that the words you look up actually do begin with the prefix \textit{dis}- used to mean "not." Some words such as \textit{display} and \textit{distress} begin with \textit{dis}-, but this syllable is not used in quite the same way as the prefix in \textit{dislike} or \textit{disorder}.

\begin{itemize}
\item Finally, the prefix \textit{non-} also means "not" or "the opposite." It is often used to form adjectives and nouns.
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item nonstop, nonviolent, nonprofit, nonskid, nonfiction
\end{itemize}

As you read, notice words with prefixes. Place interesting ones in your vocabulary notebook.
B. Prefixes With a Variety of Meanings

- The prefix *re-* is added to some verbs to show that something is done again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>New Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>play</td>
<td>replay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use</td>
<td>reuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heat</td>
<td>reheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>start</td>
<td>restart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td>remake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same prefix can be used to suggest the idea of moving back or of returning something to its former state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recollect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that a word such as *recollect* does not mean “to collect again.” Instead, it means “to bring something back to memory after a period of time.” The word *restore* does not mean “to store again”; it means “to put something back in its former location or condition.” You already know that *reverse* means to turn around and go back in the direction you came from.
Look at the following definitions and then write the word beginning with *rr*- that fits in each case.

**To make extensive changes or repairs to a structure:**

To catch a basketball that bounces off the backboard:

To revive and restore strength:

To strengthen with additional support:

- The words *over*, *under*, and *out* can also be used as prefixes. They often create verbs that mean "going beyond something."
  - *overtake*, *overthrow*, *overflow*, *overheat*, *overlook*
  - *undertake*, *undersell*, *underplay*, *undergo*, *underrate*
  - *outgrow*, *outsmart*, *outspend*, *outhit*, *outweigh*
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

You can probably think of still more words that begin with these prefixes. In fact, some of them aren’t verbs. After each of the following definitions, write the word beginning with over- or under- or out- that fits.

The outer garment you wear when it’s cold:

The player or team that is not favored to win:

Where you go when the weather is nice:

To put too much stuff in the car:

The way you pitch a softball:

To beat everybody else in a race:
The words *off* and *on* can also be used as prefixes. When they are used this way, *off* means "from, out of" and *on* means "on, toward."

offshore, offside, offset, offstage, offshoot, offbeat
onshore, onside, onset, onstage, onrush, onboard

Here are some other prefixes you encounter fairly often:

*mid-* means "in the middle."
midday, midnight, midyear, midway, midfield

*mis-* means "wrong" or "bad."
misquote, mispronounce, misbehave

*pre-* means "before."
prewar, precook, prejudge

*post-* means "after."
postwar, postdate, postmodern

Look in your dictionary and find other words beginning with these prefixes that you might want to use. Write these words in your vocabulary notebook.
C. Absorbed Prefixes

The prefix *in-* often means “not” or “without.”

incorrect, informal, infrequent, inconvenient

Sometimes the prefix *in-* has to be written with other spellings so that it can be pronounced more easily before certain consonants. When this happens, *in-* becomes an *absorbed prefix*.

For example, *in-* changes to *im-* before the letters *m* and *p*:

imperfect, immortal

The prefix *in-* changes to *il-* before the letter *l*, and it changes to *ir-* before the letter *r*:

illegal, illiterate
irregular, irrational
Look at the sentences given below. Write the word beginning with *in-* or *im-* or *il-* or *ir-* that fits in each case.

Something that is not proper is

______________________.

Something that is not logical is

______________________.

Something that is not mature is

______________________.

Something that is not human is

______________________.

Someone who is not responsible is

______________________.
Week 2. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Think of some familiar words and then add as many prefixes as you can to each word. Here are a few examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Words</th>
<th>Possible Prefixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cover</td>
<td>uncover, recover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locate</td>
<td>dislocate, relocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run</td>
<td>outrun, overrun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand</td>
<td>overhand, underhand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many prefixes can you add to the following words?

place __________________________

connect __________________________

qualified __________________________

26 3
Now think of other words that use the same prefixes. Use each word in a sentence.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

2. Think of a sentence that uses a familiar verb or adjective. Then write another sentence using the same word with a prefix added. Here are some examples:

a. I agree with most of the things you said.
   However, I disagree with your opinion of that movie.

b. Let's use new materials for this part of the house.
   We can reuse the bricks and boards for the garage.

c. Most of the answers are correct.
   Two of the answers are ________.

d. This word is hard to pronounce.
   ________________________________.
This week we will continue to find out more about word structure. Once again we will add something to base words to form new words.

Suffixes are syllables added at the end of words: help, helper; quick, quickly; and so on. Suffixes are not complete words in their own right, but they do have meaning and they affect the way a word is used in a sentence by changing it from one part of speech to another. For example, the verb help is changed to the noun helper by the addition of the suffix -er.

A. Adjective-Forming Suffixes

- The suffix -ful means "filled with something" or "able to do something." It is often added to nouns or verbs to change them to adjectives.
help    helpful
power   powerful
hope    hopeful
peace   peaceful
use     useful
forget  forgetful

List some more words that can take the suffix -ful.

thank    _______
wish     _______
         _______
         _______
         _______
         _______

Word Structure

The words in the preceding list show how suffixes affect word structure. For example, the word *help* can stand on its own. When we add a suffix, we form a word that has two parts, a base word and a suffix: *help* + *ful*. This is the type of two-part word structure we will see throughout this week.
• The suffix -less can also be added to nouns or verbs to form adjectives. This suffix means “without” or “something that does not.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cloud</td>
<td>cloudless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear</td>
<td>fearless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spot</td>
<td>spotless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weight</td>
<td>weightless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worth</td>
<td>worthless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you think of other words that can take the suffix -less?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fault</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some cases, either -ful or -less can be added to the same base word. When this is done, we get pairs of adjectives that have the opposite meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>careful</td>
<td>careless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fearful</td>
<td>fearless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joyful</td>
<td>joyless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hopeful</td>
<td>hopeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>useful</td>
<td>useless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Think of some other words that can end with both of these suffixes.

restful

The following adjective-forming suffixes are used very often. Notice that most of the base words are nouns or verbs. In fact, a number of words such as love or use can be either nouns or verbs. Also notice that the final e in some base words is dropped when the suffix begins with a vowel.

- The suffixes -able and -ible mean “capable of being.” For example, something that is usable is capable of being used.

love, lovable
use, usable
read, readable
break, breakable

sense, sensible
collapse, collapsible
permit, permissible
respond, responsible

Notice words that you will want to use in your own writing. Add these words to your vocabulary notebook as you go along.
The suffixes -ic and -ish mean “resembling in form; derived from; in the manner of.” For example, someone who is childish is acting like a child.

hero, heroic  girl, girlish
graph, graphic  boy, boyish
strategy, strategic  fool, foolish

Can you think of some other words that end with the suffixes -ic or -ish?

metal ______________ child ______________

__________________ ____________________

__________________ ____________________

A number of other words that end with -ic are also adjectives: basic, civic, classic, frantic, and hectic, for example. Here the suffix -ic is not always added to clear base words, but the words are adjectives none the less.

With a partner, practice using these words in sentences. In your vocabulary notebook, write those words that you want to discuss or study further.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

- The suffix -ive means "leaning toward" a certain action. For example, someone is selective if he or she tends to be careful when choosing things. This suffix is often used to change verbs to adjectives.

act, active select, selective
express, expressive decide, decisive
progress, progressive extend, extensive

Write a sentence using each of the -ive words listed above.

He is a very active person.
She is very __________ when she chooses a new hat.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

He is a very expressive person.
The suffix -ous means "possessing" or "full of." For example, something that is dangerous is full of danger. This suffix is often used to change nouns to adjectives.

- fame, famous
- joy, joyous
- hazard, hazardous
- nerve, nervous
- peril, perilous
- rigor, rigorous

Can you think of phrases in which these adjectives could be used? If necessary, look up the meanings of the base words and the adjectives in your dictionary.

a famous person

a ________________ occasion

a ____________ curve in the road

- The letter -y can be used as a suffix that means "showing, suggesting." This suffix is often used to change nouns to adjectives. (Drop the final e before adding -y, as in easy.)

- fun, funny
- ease, easy
- luck, lucky
- mud, muddy
- grime, grimy
- slime, slimy
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

In your reading in books, magazines, and newspapers, find other adjectives that end with -y and list them here.

-----------------------

-----------------------

-----------------------

-----------------------

-----------------------

A number of adjectives end with the suffixes -ant and -ent. These adjectives mean "performing a certain action or being in a certain condition."

abundant       competent
elegant        consistent
ignorant        excellent
pleasant        innocent
relevant        persistent

See if you and your partner can use these words in sentences. Look in the dictionary to check any words you're not sure of.
B. The Adverb-Forming Suffix -\textit{ly}

- The suffix -\textit{ly} means “in a certain way.” It is often added to adjectives to change them to adverbs. When an adjective such as \textit{easy} ends with \textit{y}, the final \textit{y} is changed to \textit{i} before the suffix is added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quick</td>
<td>quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slow</td>
<td>slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>badly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy</td>
<td>easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>careful</td>
<td>carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>happily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add -\textit{ly} to change each of the following adjectives to an adverb. Use each adverb in a sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dreary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>calm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>warm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dreamy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In your reading, notice adverbs that end with -ly. Copy the sentences to show how they are used, and add the words to your vocabulary notebook.

NOTES
C. Verb-Forming Suffixes

- The suffix *-en* means “to cause to be” or “to cause to have.” This suffix can be added to some adjectives to change them to verbs. For example, if we say *soft* *a* something, we cause it to become *soft*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dark</td>
<td>darken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bright</td>
<td>brighten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard</td>
<td>harden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thick</td>
<td>thicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>sharpen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think of some descriptive words that you often use. Can you think of any that can be changed to verbs by adding the suffix *-en*? Write these words as verbs ending with *-en*.

| _____ | weaken |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

---
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

- The suffix *-ify* means “to cause or make.” For example, if we *purify* something, we cause it to become *pure*. This suffix is often added to nouns or adjectives to change them to verbs.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>just</td>
<td>justify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear</td>
<td>clarify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beauty</td>
<td>beautify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>false</td>
<td>falsify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terror</td>
<td>terrify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intense</td>
<td>intensify</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Look at the following words. Write each one with the suffix *-ify* added to change it to a verb, and then define the word or use it in a sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horror</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The suffix -ize means “to make or cause to become.” For example, if we memorize something, we cause it to be committed to our memory. This suffix can also be added to some nouns or adjectives to change them to verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>critic</th>
<th>criticize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apology</td>
<td>apologize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>central</td>
<td>centralize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil</td>
<td>civilize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>item</td>
<td>itemize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memory</td>
<td>memorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>popular</td>
<td>popularize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add the suffix -ize to each of the following words to make it a verb. Can you use each verb in a sentence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vapor</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>normal</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

.................................................................
D. Noun-Forming Suffixes

- The suffixes -er and -or are often used change verbs to nouns. These two suffixes specify the person or thing that performs the action of the verb. For example, someone who swims is a swimmer and someone who sails is a sailor.

begin, beginner  
follow, follower  
lead, leader  
run, runner  
swim, swimmer

act, actor  
elevate, elevator  
govern, governor  
invent, inventor  
sail, sailor

Add -er or -or to each of the following verbs to change it to a noun.

start ___________ reflect ___________
creep ___________ conduct ___________
stroll ___________ protect ___________

In some cases the -or suffix is found in words that are not base words in their own right. However, these words still name someone who does something or is something.

ancestor, author, doctor, mayor, pastor, sponsor
• The suffix -ion is one of the most important noun-forming suffixes in the English language. It changes verbs to nouns that name the act or result of doing something. In particular, there are many verbs that end with -ate. With these verbs, just drop the final e and add -ion to form nouns. When the verb ends with ss, just add -ion with no further change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>locate</th>
<th>location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dictate</td>
<td>dictation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elevate</td>
<td>elevation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migrate</td>
<td>migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rotate</td>
<td>rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss</td>
<td>discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>express</td>
<td>expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impress</td>
<td>impression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other verbs have to undergo even greater changes before the suffix -ion can be added to form nouns. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>admit</th>
<th>admission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extend</td>
<td>extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe</td>
<td>description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accuse</td>
<td>accusation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify</td>
<td>identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilize</td>
<td>civilization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes the final consonant of the first word changes when the suffix is added, as in admit and admission. Often the letter t is added before -ion to form a suffix that is spelled -tion and is pronounced like the word shun. This is the case in describe and description. In some cases another syllable is added to form the suffix -ation, as in accuse and accusation.
Often you can figure out the meaning of a word that ends with the suffix -ion if you look carefully at the original word on which it is constructed. See if you can do that with these words:

**Original Word and Its Meaning**

- calculation
- confession
- donation
- permission
- prescription

Discuss with a partner.
In Section A we saw the adjective-forming suffixes *-able* and *-ible*, which meant “capable of being.” The suffixes *-ability* and *-ibility* are closely related and are used to form nouns that mean “the tendency to act or to be acted upon in a certain way.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>usable</td>
<td>usability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readable</td>
<td>readability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breakable</td>
<td>breakability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>sensibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsible</td>
<td>responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visible</td>
<td>visibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In your reading, watch for any other words ending with *-ability* and *-ibility* and add them to your vocabulary notebook.

The suffix *-ment* means “the act or result of doing something.” It is often used to change verbs to nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>employ</td>
<td>employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>govern</td>
<td>government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertain</td>
<td>entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amaze</td>
<td>amazement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Add the suffix -ment to the following words to change them to nouns.

align
enjoy
resent
punish

- The suffix -ness means “the condition or state of being.” It can be used to change adjectives to nouns. When the adjective ends with y, this letter changes to i before the suffix is added.

dark
bright
hard
soft
weak
happy
darkness
brightness
hardness
softness
weakness
happiness

Always challenge yourself to use words in a sentence, especially when you feel uncertain about word meaning. Discuss them with your partner.
Look at each of the following words ending with -ness and give a brief definition of each one.

emptiness

goodness

weariness

lightness

- The suffixes -ant and -ent can be added to verbs to name the person or the thing that performs an action.

assist, assistant  
depend, dependent  
attend, attendant  
correspond, correspondent

The suffixes -ance and -ence are related to -ant and -ent. The suffixes -ance and -ence name the quality of something or the process of doing something.

assistance  
attendance  
dependence  
correspondence
In your vocabulary notebook, write the words you want to remember that end with the suffixes we have seen.

As you practice writing suffixes, check a dictionary to be sure that the base words and the suffixes you choose are correct and can be combined to form new words. Most dictionaries list suffixes as separate entries, preceded by a hyphen (-ness, -ly). In this way, you can distinguish between individual words (such as able or less) and suffixes that are spelled the same way (-able or -less). Also remember that the suffix -ful is spelled with one l; the word full is spelled with two l's.

**less** Not as much. I have less work to do today than I had yesterday. Adjective.
—To a smaller extent or degree. This watch is less expensive than that one. Adverb.
—A smaller number or quantity. I finished less of the work than I had planned. Noun.
—With the subtraction of; minus. 10 less 7 is 3. Preposition.
less (les) adjective; adverb; noun; preposition.

-less A suffix that means: 1. Having no; without. Hopeless means having no hope.
2. That cannot be. Countless means that cannot be counted.

E. Affixes and Roots

The term affixes includes both prefixes and suffixes. In later weeks we will use this term as we see how prefixes and suffixes can be used to form an ever-increasing number of words.

Last week we saw prefixes added to base words. This week we have seen that many suffixes can also be added to base words. Remember that base words have their own meaning and are complete in themselves.

However, affixes can also be added to other word parts called roots. These are parts of words that have been borrowed from other languages such as Latin and Greek. For example, in the words import and portable, the root port- is taken from the Latin word portare, which meant "to carry."

Although word roots are important in English, they are not complete in themselves and cannot be used as independent words. Their meaning becomes clear only when they are joined with affixes. This subject will be discussed more fully when we talk about word roots and word families in weeks to come.
Week 3. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Choose some familiar words and see how many suffixes you can add. Notice how the suffix changes the way the word can be used in a sentence, and then write sentences of your own. For example:

   - use → useful, useless, usable
   - communicate → communication
   - hazard → hazardous
   - combine → combination
   - happy → happily, happiness

   Now pick some words of your own and write them below:
2. Select some words that already have suffixes. Explain how the word is constructed and show what the parts of the word mean. Use each word in a sentence. Here are some examples:

**employment**: The suffix *-ment* is added to the verb *employ*. The suffix changes the verb to a noun meaning “the state of being employed.”

My uncle’s employment with that company lasted for fifteen years.

**continuous**: The suffix *-ous* is added to the verb *continue*. The suffix changes the verb to an adjective which describes something that goes on without stopping.

After the storm there was a continuous flow of water that lasted for hours.

Challenge yourself. Can you use these words?

enormous, frivolous, momentous, ominous, pompous, stupendous, tremendous

*Vocabulary Notebook*: List at least one new word each day in your notebook. Come back to these words once a week to review them.
This week we turn our attention to groups of words that share something in common. By searching for similarities, we can better understand the effect that prefixes and suffixes have on base words. We can also discover that words which appear to be different may share a common meaning.

**Related words** are built on the same base. This means that they share some common element of meaning no matter how many affixes are added. For example, look at this group of words:

- act
- action
- active
- activity
- activate
- react
- reaction
- inaction
- deactivator
Several affixes are used here, but the word *act* can always be seen clearly in each example. Although we can change the verb *act* to nouns (*action, activity, reaction*), to adjectives (*active, inactive*), and even to other forms of the verb (*activate, react, deactivate*), the meaning of *act* is present in all these words. For example, *react* means "to act against something," *inactive* simply means "not active," and *deactivate* means "to make inactive."

**Word Structure**

This week you see that it is possible to add several affixes to the same base word. When we do this, we can construct words that consist of three or more parts. For example, the base word *act* can have both a prefix and a suffix added, as in the word *reaction*, which is made up of three parts: *re + act + ion*. We can add two suffixes, as in the word *activate*, which has three parts: *act + iv + ate*. We can even add a prefix to this to form the word *deactivate*, which has four parts: *de + act + iv + ate*. You can see that an awareness of word structure helps you understand that words are put together in logical ways and that each part of the word contributes to its meaning.
How many words can you think of that are related to the word \textit{direct}? \\

direction \hspace{1cm} \\

--- \hspace{1cm} \\

--- \hspace{1cm} \\

--- \hspace{1cm} \\

--- \hspace{1cm} \\

--- \\

Suffixes are especially important in creating groups of related words. Because they change the part of speech and the way a word is used in a sentence, suffixes allow us to form several words that share a common meaning. Sometimes we can add suffixes without changing the spelling of the original word.

detect, detective \hspace{1cm} connect, connection \hspace{1cm} \\
break, breakage \hspace{1cm} govern, government \hspace{1cm} \\
comfort, comfortable \hspace{1cm} joy, joyful \hspace{1cm} \\

As we saw in the preceding week, a number of other words do change their spelling when suffixes are added. Often the final \textit{e} is dropped or some other letter is changed at the end of the base word to make pronunciation easier. Here are some examples:

use, usable \hspace{1cm} decide, decision \hspace{1cm} \\
locate, location \hspace{1cm} simple, simplify \hspace{1cm} \\
pure, purify \hspace{1cm} persuade, persuasive
A. Choosing the Right Suffix

One good way to practice creating groups of related words is to start with some verbs and then add the suffix that will change each verb to a noun. First look at these suffixes:

SUFXIES: -er, -ion, -ance, -ment, -or

Now choose the suffix that will change each of the following verbs to a noun. (For now, use only one suffix with each verb). Write your answers on a separate piece of paper if you prefer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>NOUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>elect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Can you think of any other words that end with these suffixes? As you read, write down words that you want to add to your vocabulary.
# B. Thinking of Suffixes on Your Own

Here is another list of verbs to change into nouns, but this time you won’t have a list of suffixes to choose from. If necessary, refer to the noun-forming suffixes discussed in Week 3, Section D. In some cases you should be able to find two nouns that are related to a particular verb. Write your answers in the spaces below or on a separate piece of paper if you prefer. Work with a partner whenever possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>invent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consume</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In your reading, notice any nouns that are formed by adding suffixes to verbs: act and action or swim and swimmer, for example. Write down these nouns as you encounter them.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Choosing Adjective Suffixes

In the following pairs of related words, see if you can change nouns and verbs into adjectives using suffixes such as 
-y, -ous, -ful, -able, or -ive. Write your answers on a separate piece of paper if you prefer.

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<tr>
<th>Nouns or Verbs</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>foam</td>
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<td>break</td>
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<td>fame</td>
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<td>create</td>
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As you read, take note of adjectives that end with these suffixes. If the adjective is built on a noun or verb, make sure you understand the original word (as in fame and famous).

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**D. Groups of Related Words**

Finally, see how many related words you can think of on your own. Use each of the given words as the starting point and write two or three related words, using the prefixes and suffixes we have seen so far. The first example is already given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given Word</th>
<th>Related Words</th>
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<tr>
<td>connect</td>
<td>disconnect, connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>law</td>
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<td>organize</td>
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<td>honor</td>
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<td>construct</td>
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<tr>
<td>locate</td>
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Week 4. Check Yourself

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at each of the following examples. Notice the word in italics in the first sentence in each pair. In the second sentence in each pair, decide on the related form of the word that will fit in the blank. Write the word in the blank space. The first example is already given.

   a. This design is not simple enough.

      We must simplify it even more.

   b. There were no clouds in the sky.

      The sky was ______________.

   c. Anna is interested in science.

      She wants to be a ___________ someday.

   d. This machine will help us on our next project.

      It will be _____ ____ when we record information.
e. Be sure to *measure* each piece carefully.

We must have precise ________
if everything is going to fit together.

2. Look at each sentence given below. Write another sentence using a related form of the word in italics. The second sentence in each example should reinforce the meaning of the first sentence, just as you saw in Section 1.

a. How can we *improve* the quality of our work?

__________________________

b. Does this map *indicate* the location of the building?

__________________________

c. We need some place to *store* all this stuff.

__________________________

d. I'm afraid this trip will be a *disaster*.

__________________________

e. He is sure his plan will *work*.

__________________________
Gain Meaning from Context

In almost any story or selection in a textbook you may encounter words that are unfamiliar. Often these are key words that are very important and must be understood clearly. Clues to the meaning of such key words are sometimes provided by context. This means that information in the surrounding sentences often helps to clarify the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Although context will not always provide a complete definition of such a word, it can give important information that helps you understand what you are reading.

A. Look for Signals

Writers often use certain cues or signals to indicate that an important word is going to be defined. In the preceding paragraph you saw one of these signals: the word context was written in italics to highlight its importance and show that it is the key word in the paragraph. Then a definition was given in the very next sentence.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Clues to the meaning of such key words are sometimes provided by context. This means that information in the surrounding sentences often helps to clarify the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

- Particularly in textbooks, important words may be written in **boldface**. This darker print also helps these words stand out. Often such key words are defined in context.

- The colon (:) is another signal that can be used to introduce a passage which explains a word mentioned earlier in the sentence. The following example uses both boldface and the colon.

  In the microscope we saw that the drop of water contained many **bacteria**: one-celled organisms that are too small to be seen by the eye alone.

  The colon may also be used to introduce a list of things that help to define or elaborate on a key word. In such cases, the colon can represent the words "as follows."

  Three things made the new engine particularly **efficient**: its light weight, its low fuel consumption, and its high energy output.

- Other signals are given by words such as "that is" or "for example" or "for instance." These words let you know that more information about an important word is going to follow.
One symptom of the disease is *lethargy*; that is, a feeling of sluggishness and a lack of alertness.

Several of the replacement parts were found to be *defective*. For example, some had been broken in shipment and others were poorly constructed.

*Find the Cues in These Examples*

In subject areas such as science or social studies, you will often find that important words are emphasized and defined as soon as they are introduced. Look at the following examples and then answer the questions about each one.

Scientists warned that the volcanic eruption might cause a *tsunami*: a powerful ocean wave that can do great damage.

What is the key word? _____________________________

What cue lets you know that a definition will follow? _____________________________

What is the definition? _____________________________
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Centuries ago, people believed that the earth was the center of the universe. They also believed that the earth was stationary in space because they never detected any movement.

What is the key word?

What cue lets you know that the word is important?

What is the definition?

The drought had caused enormous damage. After months without rain, all the crops had withered and died.

What is the key word?

What cue lets you know that the word is important?

What is the definition?
B. Use Inference

You won’t always find obvious cues to let you know that a word is going to be defined in context. In the next example there is a clear connection between the two sentences even though no signal is given.

The small animal was startled by the noise. It ran back into its lair until the danger passed.

By combining the information in these sentences, you can tell that a lair is a place in which an animal can hide when it is frightened. We can understand the word better if we think of a lair as a kind of den or hiding place.

In the preceding example we had to use the thought process called inference in order to figure out the meaning of the word lair.

When we use inference, we take the information we are given and then rely on our own knowledge and thinking ability to find relationships that may not be apparent at first glance. We have to analyze what we are reading and then rearrange it in our own mind.

In effect, we say to ourselves, “The sentences about the small animal tell me that a lair is a place in which an animal can hide when it is frightened or in danger.”
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Earlier we saw an example which showed how the colon provided a signal indicating that we would find more information defining a key word:

Three things made the new engine particularly efficient: its light weight, its low fuel consumption, and its high energy output.

If we stop to think about this sentence and rearrange the information so that it is more meaningful for us, we might say that “The engine is efficient because of its light weight, low fuel consumption, and high energy output.” We can also take another step by formulating a more general definition such as this: “Something is efficient if it works well and gives the best possible results for the smallest amount of effort.”

This points up one of the greatest values of inference. It also emphasizes one of the most worthwhile things you can do as you develop your own vocabulary.

Analyze the information you find in context and use it to develop your own definition of an unfamiliar word. If this definition is not as complete as you would like, then write down the questions that remain. These can guide you as you search for more information.
Practice Using Inference Yourself

Let's begin with an example that does not contain any obvious signals, but it does provide a definition of the word festive if we know how to use inference. Read the paragraph and then answer the questions that follow.

Susan's birthday party was the best she had ever had. There were lots of hats and noisemakers, and the room was filled with balloons and streamers. Everyone had a great time on this festive occasion.

• What specific things made this the best party Susan had ever had?

• What definition of festive can you give, based on the information in the paragraph?

These sentences tell of an enjoyable party and of a room filled with balloons and decorations. This context suggests that festive means "joyful, happy, glad, merry." You may already know the word festival and be able to connect the two related words. Even though there is no obvious signal such as a colon to let you know that a definition is coming, you should realize that the second sentence contributes to the meaning of the word festive in the last sentence.
The following paragraph does clarify the meaning of the word *paleontologist* if we analyze the information and make the necessary connections. Read the paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

Ed has always been interested in prehistoric animals. He especially likes to read about the ways scientists figure out the age of extinct animals by studying fossils. He wants to be a paleontologist when he grows up.

- What is Ed interested in?

- What does he like to read about?

- By putting all this information together, how would you define the word *paleontologist*?

Check your definition by looking in a dictionary. You will probably find that the main entry is *paleontology*: the area of science that studies life in earlier periods by examining fossil remains. Notice that *paleontology* is the branch of science and a *paleontologist* is someone who specializes in that branch.
C. Discover the Variety of Meanings in a Single Word

It is easy to get the idea that “a word” has “a meaning” that can be found in “the dictionary.” Often, however, this is not the case. Many words in the English language have more than one meaning, and there are also many kinds of dictionaries (as you will see in Week 9). Only by paying close attention to context can we be sure which meaning applies in a particular situation.

Even simple, familiar words can have a variety of meanings. Look at the different uses of the word run in the following sentences.

run (verb)

They run every morning for exercise.  
(to move quickly—faster than a walk.)

The machine will run better if you oil it.  
(to operate or work)

Buses run every hour from here to Boston.  
(to travel regularly)

They run a gift shop in the mall.  
(to operate, be in charge of)

run (noun)

I took the dog for a long run this morning.  
(the act of running)
The play had a **run** of almost a year. (a period of time during which something happens repeatedly)

There was a big **run** on purple socks at the store. (a sudden demand)

The ski **run** is very popular. (a steep path or track)

If you look in a collegiate or unabridged dictionary, you will find that *run* has an enormous number of uses in addition to the ones given here. The important thing is that you must see how the word is used in context before you can have any idea of its meaning. In fact, you can't even look it up in a dictionary without considering how it is used in a particular sentence. How else will you know which definition to look at?

The word *walk* can also be a verb or a noun. Write several sentences using *walk* in different ways. If you run out of ideas, look in a dictionary.
Different Pronunciation and Meanings

In the preceding section, the word run did not change its spelling or pronunciation, even though it was used in a number of different ways. There are other words that keep the same spelling but change their pronunciation when they are used in different ways with different meanings. Look at the following sentences containing the word bow.

He is very skillful with the bow and arrow.
She tied an elaborate bow on the package.

The actor returned to bow at the end of the play.
The bow of the ship cut through the choppy water.

In the first two sentences, bow rhymes with snow. It is used as a noun in both sentences, but the meaning is very different in each case. In the next two sentences, bow rhymes with bow. It is used as a verb in the first sentence and as a noun in the second. Once again, both meanings are different from those found in the first pair of sentences.

The word use rhymes with loose when it is a noun; it rhymes with fuse when it is a verb. Write a sentence showing the word use as a verb and as a noun.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Some words with more than one syllable actually shift the accent when they are used in different ways, even though spelling remains the same. Here are some examples of words of this type.

They kept a record of all their expenses.
I want to record that program so I can watch it again.

We may have to get a permit before we can fish here.
Do they permit fishing in this area?

In the first sentence in each pair, the italicized word is used as a noun with the accent on the first syllable: RECORD, PERmit. In the second sentence in each pair, the same word is used as a verb with the accent on the second syllable: reCORD, perMIT. Once again, it is important to pay attention to context in order to know which form of each word is being used.

The word complex has the accent on the first syllable when it is used as a noun, but the accent usually shifts to the second syllable when it is used as an adjective. Write sentences showing each use of the word complex.
The Importance of Context

Although context will not always clarify an unfamiliar word completely, it does provide an important starting point. Furthermore, when a word has a number of meanings, we must look closely at context before we consult a dictionary. This is the only way to tell which definition fits the passage we are reading.

Even if we do use context to figure out the meaning of a new word, this does not mean that the word will be remembered or will become a part of everyday vocabulary. If words encountered in reading are important enough to be added to your vocabulary, they should be studied more extensively using the strategies discussed in the following weeks.
Week 5. **Check Yourself**

Carefully read the sentences given in the boxes. Then use the information in each example to answer the questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

**Example One**

The storm's *turbulence* caused the small plane to bounce up and down wildly. It looked like a cork bobbing in a swiftly moving stream.

1. Give a definition of *turbulence* based on the information contained in these two sentences.

2. Can you think of a broader definition that might apply to other situations?
3. Which of the following pieces of information can be inferred from the example? Mark T (True) or F (False) after each one. (Notice that the sentences use both the noun turbulence and the adjective turbulent.)

a. Turbulence can be encountered in air or water. _____

b. Turbulence affects only airplanes. _____

c. The direction of turbulence is often up and down. _____

d. A turbulent sea is calm and placid. _____

**Example Two**

After beginning her study of zoology, Anne decided to focus her attention on ornithology because of her strong interest in birds.

1. Give a definition of ornithology based on the information in this sentence.
2. Two pieces of information are important in defining this word. Look closely at the information given before and after the term ornithology appeared in the sentence, and then answer the following questions:

a. Ornithology is a branch of study contained under what broader subject?

b. Ornithology is specifically the study of what?

Example Three

They looked out across the broad panorama, letting their eyes wander across the endless prairie and then up into the cloudless sky.

1. Give a definition of panorama based on the information provided in the sentence.

2. Make up your own sentence using panorama to refer to some other scene, not just to the endless prairie.
Example Four

We could hardly understand the guttural sounds of the language spoken by the native people. Every word seemed to have a harsh, throaty quality that was unpleasant to our ear.

1. How is the word guttural used in this sentence? Is it a noun that names something, a verb that tells what someone does, or an adjective that describes something?

2. Look at the following statements. Each one is supposed to give a definition of guttural, but only one is correct.

   a. Words that are hard to understand because they are in a foreign language.

   b. Characterized by a harsh quality that makes words difficult to understand because sounds are produced in the throat.

   c. Hard to understand because words are spoken by natives.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Which statement gives the most accurate definition of *guttural*? Explain why you chose one definition and why the other two cannot be correct.

Example Five

The next example provides a chance to combine the information in Week 1 with the material presented this week. In the following sentence, the word in italics is defined in context. After you have read it, answer the questions that follow.

Ellen tried to *mitigate* the damaging effect of the report by explaining that the situation was not as bad as it seemed and that many of the problems could be fixed very easily.

1. Which is the best synonym: *describe*, *lessen*, or *exceed*?

2. Which is the best antonym: *imply*, *reveal*, *increase*, or *notice*?
3. How did you make your choices? What information in the original sentence helped you reach a decision?
During this week we will emphasize words that have clear meanings. Such words are important in the middle and upper grades because writing often requires specific words that have fairly narrow definitions and thus give precise information. Let's begin by looking at two student compositions that show how words can be used effectively.

**Student Writing: Example One**

The following student composition provides a good example of the effective use of specific words.
Should English Be the Official Language of the U.S.?

English should be the official language. It always has been the official language. A lot of people know English and are comfortable with it. They should keep it that way. A lot of people want it to be the official language, and would feel unhappy and protest if it was changed.

It would be very hard on teachers. Trying to teach the kids the language. It would also mean larger classes. Everything would be very confusing!

It would be difficult and expensive for the schools. It would cost a lot of money to buy all the extra supplies. You would have to put signs up everywhere. For restaurants, for street signs, and for signs on almost everything.

My Summary is that things should stay the way they are. It is a waste to change. Most people want and talk English so they would have to learn a different language. It is foolish to change.
Look at the number of words in this composition that have specific meanings:

- official
- language
- comfortable
- protest
- confusing
- expensive
- supplies
- restaurants
- summary
- difficult

You can get a good idea of the importance of these words if you compare the student’s composition with another version that has been intentionally rewritten to weaken the effect. This is typical of the kind of thing that might be written by someone who has a more limited vocabulary or who doesn’t think that precision is important.

---

English should be the only language because it has always been that way. Everybody speaks English and they wouldn’t like it if it changed.

It would be hard to teach another language because it would be hard for teachers and it would be confusing.

It would cost a lot of money for extra stuff and you would have to change a lot of signs in different places.

Most people want to talk English so it should not change.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

You can see that this version is very weak compared with the student's composition. The only significant words left from the original version are *language* and *confusing*. The rest of it is mush: "It has always been that way . . . Everybody speaks English . . . They wouldn't like it . . . It would be hard because it would be hard . . . A lot of money for extra stuff . . . Most people . . ." All of this is so vague that the argument has no impact compared with the original version.

Some of the solid, specific words in the actual composition may not be used very often in everyday conversation (*official*, *protest*, *summary*), but they are valuable here because of the topic. The important thing is that these words are used correctly (even if the original spellings were not always accurate). The author shows a clear understanding of the *meaning* of these words, and these meanings are used effectively to build a fairly logical argument in favor of making English the "official language," as the student calls it. Even if you don't agree with the author's position, the use of specific words does make her writing effective.
Look again at a few of the words used in the student composition about making English the official language.

expensive  comfortable  summary  protest

Now rewrite each of the following sentences, using one of the preceding words to make each sentence stronger. Make any other changes needed to accommodate each word.

A lot of people feel OK about speaking English.

__________________________________________

It would cost a lot to buy extra supplies

__________________________________________

A lot of people wouldn't like it if things changed.

__________________________________________

My statement at the end is that things should not change.

__________________________________________
**Warfare**

Why? What entered the human brain to make us senselessly destroy lives and property? Ever since the civilized world existed, they have torn lives apart, murdered, and destroyed for what reasons? We have been frightened, tormented, and destroyed to the limit. Even those of us who choose not to engage in combat still live in fear of bombing raids, insane killers, and terrorist attacks on our innocent selves.

The reasons for fighting range from religious problems to greedy dictators wanting the earth for themselves. And now, a single button or turn of a key can destroy us all.

If we cannot prosper peacefully, there is no hope for our children.

A few excerpts from this composition are given below. Look back at the student’s writing to see what strong verb or precise descriptive term was used in each case. Write the missing word in each blank space.

... to make us _______________ destroy lives and property?

Ever since the _______________ world existed ...
We have been frightened, ____________, and destroyed . . .

. . . insane killers, and ____________ attacks . . .

. . . from religious problems to ________________

Here are some more of the most important words in this composition:

destroy    property    innocent    prosper

Use each one of these words in a sentence that makes a precise statement about something you feel very strongly.

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

Descriptive Words in the Writing of Charles Dickens

Let's close by reading a passage from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Notice how the author uses words that give us a clear picture of a small coastal town in England.
Now look back at the passage to find the following examples of precise words and strong descriptive terms. (The number of each sentence is given in parentheses.)

1. In the first sentence, Dickens does not simply say that Mr. Lorry walked along the beach. What word does he use to give us a picture of exactly how Mr. Lorry walked?

2. In the second sentence, Dickens does not just tell us that Dover was near the chalk cliffs, away from the beach. Instead, he describes the town as though it were a person or an animal. Supply the missing words in this sentence:
Week 6. Say Exactly What You Mean

The town of Dover _______ _______ away from
the beach, and ______ ______ ______ into the
chalk cliffs.

3. At the end of the second sentence, Dickens com-
pares the town to a

______________________________

What do you suppose this means? You may not un-
derstand this term at first, but you can figure things out from
context. You do know that an ostrich hides its head in the
sand; Dickens uses the comparison to suggest that the town
did the same thing. You can also tell from context that
marine must have something to do with the sea because the
whole passage describes what Mr. Lorry saw in his stroll
along the beach. From this, we can infer that Dickens is
describing the town as an ostrich that lives on the shore
near the sea.

4. In the third sentence, Dickens describes the beach
as “a

__________________________

________ _______ tumbling wildly about.”

This creates a strong image. Few of us would ever
think of a desert as having anything to do with the seacoast.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

5. In the fourth sentence, Dickens emphasizes the sound of the sea by saying:

“It __________ at the town and __________ at the cliffs.”

If you’ve ever heard the ocean pounding against rocks on the coast, you know what a good description this is.

6. In the fifth sentence, Dickens says that the air had a strong__________________ flavor.

You may not know this word, but you should be able to tell that it is an adjective which describes the flavor of the air. (Notice that Dickens makes the description even stronger by saying that the air actually had a “flavor,” not just a smell.)

If you pay close attention to the rest of the sentence, context will tell you that piscatory must have something to do with what?

A look at a dictionary will confirm your answer. In other words, Dickens is using a vivid description to tell us that the air had a fishy “flavor.”
"Finding Your Own Descriptive Terms"

In the paragraph by Dickens, you saw that the author used many unusual comparisons: the town hid itself like an ostrich; the beach was a desert; the air had a strong flavor. Now write some sentences of your own using imaginative descriptions and comparisons.

a. If a town is small and quiet, what kind of animal might you compare it to? Write a sentence making this comparison.

b. Now write a sentence comparing a large, busy city to some other kind of animal.

c. What strong, unusual verb could you use in a sentence telling about a fierce wind that blew up with a storm?

d. What strong, unusual verb could you use in a sentence telling about a gentle stream flowing along?
e. Write a sentence comparing the smell of something cooking to the feel of something smooth or something rough.

f. Write a sentence comparing the flavor of one thing to the sound of something else.
Week 6. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Here are some mushy sentences using vague, everyday words.

   I thought it was a *good* movie.

   We saw some *stuff* at the museum.

   Did you *like* that program?

   We *went* to a lot of different places.

   Now look at some words which would bring more precision and clarity to each of the preceding sentences.

   enjoy  exhibits  traveled  wonderful

   Rewrite each sentence using the new word you have chosen.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

I thought it was a ______________ movie.

We saw some ______________ at the museum.

Did you ______________ that program?

We ______________ to a lot of different places.

Now make up your own sentences, first using general words such as go or nice and then revising each sentence to use more specific ones.

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
2. Write a paragraph describing a pleasant vacation trip. Use the words that are most appropriate for the topic. Then write another paragraph describing a dangerous sea voyage that might have been undertaken by an explorer such as Christopher Columbus. Use descriptive words that are most appropriate to this topic, and see how these words differ from those used in the first paragraph.
3. Read the following passage from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain and then answer the questions.

The two boys flew on and on, toward the village, speechless with horror. They glanced backward over their shoulders from time to time, apprehensively, as if they feared they might be followed. Every stump that started up in their path seemed a man and an enemy, and made them catch their breath; and as they sped by some outlying cottages that lay near the village, the barking of the aroused watchdogs seemed to give wings to their feet.

a. What three different words or phrases does Twain use to describe what the boys were doing? What makes these words much more effective than simply saying that they ran fast?
b. The author also uses three effective ways to tell us that the boys were *frightened*. What words or phrases does he use for this purpose?


c. How does context help you determine the meaning of the word *apprehensively* in the second sentence?


Week 7

Play the Analogies Game

This week we move in a more imaginative and challenging direction by creating word analogies. What word would you add to complete the following statement?

Babe Ruth was to baseball as

Michael Jordan is to ____________.

Of course you know the last word is basketball. Babe Ruth was a famous baseball player of the past, so it makes sense to complete the comparison by saying that Michael Jordan is a famous basketball player of the present.

This sentence is an example of an analogy: a statement that shows a particular relationship between two pairs of words. When you encounter an analogy, you will see that the last word is missing. This is what makes it interesting: You have to figure out what that word should be. This means that you must know the meanings of all the words.

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and you must also think about the way in which the words are related.

A. Analogies Based on Synonyms

Analogies can be constructed by comparing pairs of synonyms. The first two words represent one pair of synonyms; the next two words follow the same pattern and present another pair of synonyms. You have to figure out what the missing word should be.

Word A is to Synonym of A as Word B is to Synonym of B.

Here is an example of an analogy using synonyms:

Big is to large as little is to ______________.

Big and large mean basically the same thing, so you must find a word that means the same as little. Logical choices for the missing word would be small or perhaps tiny.

Analogies aren’t always written out as complete sentences. Here is another way the last analogy can be presented:

big : large :: little : ______________

The colon (:) represents the words “is to” and the double colon (::) represents the word “as.”
Here are some more analogies that involve synonyms. How would you complete each one?

1. happy : glad :: sleepy : _____________

2. easy : simple :: hard : ______________

3. begin : start :: end : _______________

B. Analogies Based on Antonyms

The same pattern works for analogies using *antonyms*, but these can be a little trickier than synonyms. The first two words mean the opposite of each other, so the other two words must do the same. For example:

Big is to little as fast is to ____________.

What word is an antonym for *fast*? Obviously, *slow* would be a good choice. Here is the same analogy using the colon and double colon.

big : little :: fast : _______________

Now add the missing words in the following analogies:

4. top : bottom :: front : ______________

5. up : down :: in : ________________

6. first : last :: hot : ________________
C. Analogies That Show Other Relationships

Analogies can be used to demonstrate relationships that are more involved than those we have already seen. What relationship is established by the first pair of words in each of the following examples? What word would establish the same relationship in the second pair of words?

7. glass : smooth :: rock :

8. glove : hand :: shoe :

9. time : clock :: date :

10. fish : water :: bird :

The next pattern is even more challenging than the last one.

**General word A** is to **specific example A** as
**General word B** is to **specific example B**.

Here is an example of this kind of analogy:

tool : hammer :: food :

You can think this through by stating the problem in sentences if it will help you. “*Tool* is a general term, and a *hammer* is a specific type of tool. *Food* is also a general term, so the missing word in the second pair must be a specific kind of food.” A great many choices could be made here: carrot, banana, bread, fish, etc.
Here are some more analogies involving general words and specific examples. What word would complete each one? (There are many possibilities in each example, as you see.)

11. color : red :: flavor : ________________
12. bird : robin :: dog : ________________
13. animal : bear :: fish : ________________

D. Using Analogies to Expand Your Vocabulary

Analogies can help you explore words that you might not ordinarily think of. For example, instead of choosing just one word to complete an analogy, try to think of a number of different words that might be used, especially when synonyms and antonyms are involved. This works especially well with verbs and with descriptive words. For example:

big : little :: slow : fast (swift, speedy, quick, rapid, hasty, brisk)

You can see that the various synonyms for fast can be very useful in certain situations. For example, it would sound odd to say “A fast wind was blowing” but it would be very clear to say “A brisk wind was blowing.” Also, it would be awkward to say “They made a fast decision that they later regretted”; it would be more precise to say “They made a hasty decision that they later regretted.”
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Another possibility is to take the complete analogy and replace all the terms with more precise synonyms. For example, here is a simple analogy:

good : bad :: cold :

The obvious answer is bot, of course. Now look at the same analogy using more specific terms.

excellent : terrible :: frigid :

In this case you would want a word that is more precise and descriptive than the word bot. Possibilities could include sweltering, torrid, steamy, scalding, or searing.

As you work with analogies, there are two important things to keep in mind.

The second pair of words must maintain the same relationship that was established in the first pair. If the first two words are antonyms, for example, then you must use antonyms to complete the second pair.

You must be absolutely sure of the meaning of each word that you encounter in an analogy. This is why practice in using analogies can help you master and use new words.
Week 7. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at these five words.

   occupied heroic apprehend mackerel broad

Now use one of these words to fill each of the blank spaces in the analogies given below. If you're not sure of the meaning of some of the words, consult your dictionary.

   a. immense : majestic :: gallant : ____________

   b. careful : sloppy :: narrow : ________________

   c. get: receive :: catch : _________________

   d. empty : vacant :: full : _________________

   e. bird : ostrich :: fish : _________________

After you complete each analogy, explain the principle on which it is constructed: antonyms, synonyms, general word compared with specific word, and so on.
2. Make up your own analogies. Try to think of examples that fit the various categories given in the chapter; don't just stick to synonyms and antonyms. Include some that name a type of object and then name a specific example (dog : collie). Also include some that name a thing and then identify what it does (saw : cut).
Create Word Maps and Word Webs

Many people are visual learners: They grasp ideas more readily if they can see them represented in words or pictures. This week we will use word maps not only to define words but also to discover relationships among them.

A. Word Maps

A word map is a diagram that focuses on three important things we need to know about any word:

1. What is it? (definition)

2. What is it like? (synonyms; descriptive terms)

3. What are some examples? (specific representatives)

Example 1 shows one type of diagram that can be used to make a word map.
Example 1

Definition

What is it like?

WORD

Examples

The word itself goes in the middle box marked WORD. Just above it we give a dictionary definition, and just below we give some specific examples. In the boxes on the right we can list some synonyms or some descriptive words that help clarify the term.

Let's look at a specific example based on this model. If the word *owl* is encountered in a story, most of us would have a general idea of what an owl is. However, by using a word map like the one in Example 2 we can expand and clarify our understanding of the word.
Example 2

Definition

A bird that hunts mice, frogs, and insects. Its good eyesight allows it to hunt at night.

What is it like?

- round head
- large eyes
- soft feathers

Examples

Now we get to one of the most important benefits of word maps: They should cause us to ask questions to find out why the words in the boxes are important. For example:

- What is the significance of the owl's round head?
- What is the value of the soft feathers?
- If owls hunt at night, what do they do in the daytime?

The example we just saw was concerned with a definition of the noun *owl*, but the same approach can help to clarify the meaning of words that describe rather than name things. For instance, if you encounter the adjective *swift*,

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you probably know it has something to do with rapid movement. A word map like the one in Example 3 helps to expand your understanding of the word.

**Example 3**

**Definition**

Moving with great speed; responding very quickly.

**WORD**

**SWIFT** (adj.)

- fast
- agile
- alert

**Examples**

By listing other words that tell “what it is like,” we become better acquainted with synonyms. Although synonyms rarely mean *exactly* the same, a combination of synonyms can help to define a word. By referring to the word *agile*, we see that *swift* describes not only the ability to move rapidly but also the ability to move easily from one direction to another. This helps us see that a tennis player must move *swiftly* (the adverb form of the adjective *swift*) even in a small area, not just when he or she is running across the court. Also, if firemen make a *swift* response to a call, it means that they are *alert* and *ready* to move right away.
Word maps can also help with words we may recognize but don't know very well. The next two examples highlight the similarities and differences between *reptiles* and *mammals*.

**Example 4**

**Definition**

Cold-blooded animals with backbones. They move by crawling on their stomachs or on short legs.

**What is it like?**

- do not give milk
- usually lay eggs
- scales or horny plates

**Examples**

- turtles
- snakes
- alligators
- lizards
- dinosaurs
- crocodiles
Example 5

**Definition**

Warm-blooded animals with backbones. Most of them move by walking on fully developed legs.

**What is it like?**

- give milk
- young are born alive
- most or covered with fur

**WORD**

**MAMMALS**

- dogs
- humans
- elephants
- cats
- whales
- cows

**Examples**

These word maps can also help you discover why a *whale* is a mammal and how it differs from various kinds of fish. You will also discover that the *platypus* is one of the few mammals that lays eggs.
Week 8. Create Word Maps and Word Webs

Now practice making your own word web using the following diagram as a guide. The word in the center can be a general term such as DOGS or BIRDS, or it can be some other topic that interests you.

Definition

What is it like?

WORD

Examples
B. Use Word Webs to Expand Vocabulary

Another device that can be used to expand vocabulary is the word web. This is a diagram that helps to organize related words whose meanings contribute to our understanding of a central term or topic. Just like a spider’s web, a word web has basic strands and linking fibers. You can see this in the following example, which focuses on African animals.

Example 6

zebra                giraffe
baboon ──── AFRICAN ANIMALS ──── lion
           elephant        chimpanzee

In this example you see the strands connecting the general term African animals with the names of specific kinds of animals. The next step is to get more information about each of these animals. We will find out more about this in the next section.

Word webs can be very effective because they help us grasp new information by relating it to things we already know. Word webs are especially valuable in subject areas such as science and social studies. As you saw in Example 6, a word web is constructed by grouping related words around a central term.
Here is the procedure to follow as you construct word webs:

1. Choose a word or topic of interest.

2. Write the word in the center of a page.

3. Think of other words that are related to the topic. As these words are written, they should be grouped in logical categories around the central term.

4. Talk about the words, focusing especially on the reasons for grouping certain words into categories.

The last step is the most important. The word web itself is only a guide, not an end in itself. It is important not only to become aware of new words but also to discover relationships among words and new meanings of familiar words. It is the follow-up discussion that makes word webs so valuable because it requires us to become actively involved in learning, not merely to fill in blanks on a worksheet.

Practice making a word web using the following diagram as a guide.
C. Use Word Webs for Reading

Word webs can be used before we read a selection to help organize our knowledge of the subject. Then, after the selection is read, the word web can be checked for accuracy and can be expanded to relate new information to old. For example, if you are going to read a selection about wild animals in Africa, you might begin with a simple web such as the one given earlier in Example 6. Then, after reading more about the subject, you should be able to add more details about each animal. Example 7 shows how the word web can be expanded.

Example 7

- **zebra**
  - looks like a horse
  - black & white stripes
  - stiff mane

- **giraffe**
  - long neck
  - short coat with dark blotches
  - tallest four-legged animal

- **baboon**
  - large monkey
  - dog face
  - gray coat

- **AFRICAN ANIMALS**
  - **elephant**
    - largest land animal
    - thick grey hide
    - long trunk
  - **lion**
    - large cat
    - short hair
    - male has mane
    - meat-eater
  - **chimpanzee**
    - medium-sized ape
    - brownish-black
    - very intelligent
Example 8 deals with the solar system. Some of the words included here are appropriate for students in the early grades, while others are better suited for the later grades. Choose the words that are best for your situation.

Example 8

**Sun**
- temperature
- size and distance
- helium
- solar flares
- hydrogen

**Planets**
- Mercury
- Venus
- Earth
- Mars
- Jupiter
- Saturn
- Uranus
- Neptune
- Pluto

**SOLAR SYSTEM**

**Earth**
- inner core
- outer core
- mantle
- crust
- hydrosphere

**Related Terms**
- orbit
- light year
- star
- moon
- celestial

Word maps and word webs are valuable because they require you to work with words and definitions and to form your own conclusions. When you make the effort to understand words and to find relationships among them, you will remember much more than you would if you simply memorized words and definitions.
Week 8. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at your textbooks in subject areas such as science and social studies. Pick some important terms that are discussed in the text and then arrange a Word Map around each topic you choose. Refer to Examples 1 and 2 as models.

Here is the outline of a Word Map. Make more photocopies so you can use them for your own examples.
When you construct a Word Map, you will have to think about the information in the textbook and find a way to organize it so that it becomes meaningful. Consult the glossary in your textbook whenever important or unfamiliar words are encountered.

2. After you have picked some important terms and found specific examples in your Word Map, develop a Word Web like the ones given in Examples 7 and 8. Each of the specific examples should be surrounded by more detailed information that helps to explain or clarify the meaning and importance of the examples.
Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

At some point in our reading we all encounter unfamiliar words that can't be figured out by using the techniques discussed earlier in this book. When we are writing, we may want a word that is more specific and precise than the one we have used. When this happens, it is time to turn to the dictionary and the thesaurus. These reference books provide a wealth of information about words, and they can add much to our quest for continued vocabulary development. They clarify and refine our understanding of word meanings, and they open up a range of possibilities for using words that are closely related in meaning.

Dictionaries

When you look at most dictionaries, you quickly see that many words have more than one meaning. Also, many
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words can be used as more than one part of speech: noun, verb, adjective, and so on. This immediately broadens your awareness of the range of possibilities of words in the English language. Also, some dictionaries show how words originated in older languages and were gradually adapted to English. Finally, dictionaries can help you understand that words are made up of individual units and that each unit contributes to the meaning of the word.

The example on the next page is from a dictionary designed for students in the elementary grades. The Guide Words at the top show that words from avalanche to away are included on this page.

See if you can find

- multiple meanings
- pronunciation guide
- parts of speech
avalanche The swift, sudden fall of a mass of snow, ice, earth, or rocks down a mountain slope. The avalanche completely covered the village with mud.

av-a-la-nche (əvˈə lən ch) noun, plural avalanches.

Ave. An abbreviation for Avenue used in a written address.

avenue A street. Avenues are often wider than other streets.

av-e-nue (əvˈə nə) noun, plural avenues.

average 1. A number found by adding two or more quantities together, and then dividing the sum by the number of quantities; mean. The average of 2, 4, 6, and 8 is 5.
2. The usual amount or kind. This year’s rainfall came close to the average. Noun.
   —1. Found by figuring an average. The average grade on the test was 81. 2. Usual; typical; ordinary. You are of average height and weight. Adjective.
   —1. To find the average of. I averaged my three bowling scores and got 126.
   2. To have as an average. That basketball player averages twenty points a game. Verb.

av-e-raj (ə və raj) or av-rəj noun, plural averages; adjective; verb; averaged, averaging.

avert 1. To turn away or aside. Avert your eyes from the glare of the sun. 2. To prevent; avoid. The driver averted a crash by steering carefully to the side of the road.

av-ert (ə vərt) verb, averted, averting.

aviation The science or techniques of flying aircraft.

a-vi-a-tion (ə vēˈə shən) noun.

aviator A person who flies an airplane or other aircraft; pilot.

a-vi-a-tor (ə vēˈə tər) noun, plural aviators.

avid 1. Very eager or enthusiastic. I am an avid fan of mystery novels.
2. Having a great desire; greedy. Some people are so avid for wealth that they commit crimes to get it.

avid (ə vid) adjective.

avocado A tropical fruit that is shaped like a pear. It has a dark green skin, a large seed, and yellowish green pulp. Avocados grow on trees.

av-o-ca-do (ə vōˈ kā dō) noun, plural avocados.

avoid To keep away from. We took a back road to avoid the heavy highway traffic.

avoid (ə void) verb, avoided, avoiding.

await 1. To wait for. The parents had long awaited the day of their children’s graduation from college.
2. To be ready for; be in store for. Many changes await you in your new school.

a-wait (ə wāt) verb, awaited, awaiting.

awake To wake up. The barking of the dog woke everyone in the house.

awake (ə wāk) verb, woke or awakened, waking; adjective.

awaken To wake up. I awakened at dawn.

awak-en (ə wāˈkən) verb, awakened, awakening.

award 1. To give after careful thought. The judges awarded my dog first prize at the dog show.
2. To give because of a legal decision. The jury awarded money to the people who had been injured in the accident.

award (ə wārd) verb, awarded, awarding; noun, plural awards.

aware Knowing or realizing; conscious. We were not aware that you were planning a party for us.

a-wa-re (ə wār) adjective.

away 1. From this or that place. The frightened rabbit hopped away.
2. At a distance. They stood far away from us.
3. In another direction; aside. I turned away to hide my tears.
4. From or out of one’s possession or use. Throw away that old coat.
5. At or to an end; out of existence. The sound of footsteps faded away.
6. Without interruption; continuously. I worked away at my typewriter for two hours.

away (ə wā) adverb; adjective.

at: ape, far, care, end, me, it; lee, pierce; hat, oíd, sing, fish, oil, out, up, ess, rule, pull, turn, thin; sing, shop, thin, this, hw in white; zh in treasure.
The symbol stands for the unstressed vowel sound in about, taken, pencil, lemon, and circus.
Each Main Entry is given in boldface. The first main entry, avalanche, is followed by a Definition and an Example Sentence. Next, the syllable division of the word is shown, followed by its pronunciation (in parentheses) and then the indication that it is a noun whose plural form is avalanches. A Pronunciation Guide or Pronunciation Key is given at the bottom of the page. By matching the symbols in this guide to the ones used in the word you are looking at, you can determine the correct pronunciation.

Also notice that some words can be used as several different parts of speech and can have more than one meaning. For example, average has two meanings when used as a noun, two when used as an adjective, and two more when used as a verb.

**average** 1. A number found by adding two or more quantities together, and then dividing the sum by the number of quantities; mean. The average of 2, 4, 6, and 8 is 5. 2. The usual amount or kind. This year’s rainfall came close to the average. Noun.

—1. Found by figuring an average. The average grade on the test was 81. 2. Usual; typical; ordinary. You are of average height and weight. Adjective.

—1. To find the average of. I averaged my three bowling scores and got 126. 2. To have as an average. That basketball player averages twenty points a game. Verb.

**averages** (av'sur ij or av'r ij) noun, plural averages; adjective; verb, averaged, averaging.

Week 9. Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Look at the entry for the word *aviator* and answer the following questions.

What definition is given for *aviator*?

What synonym is given for this word?

What part of speech is the word *aviator*?

Compare the word *aviation* with the word *aviator*. Both are nouns. What is the important distinction in the meaning of these words?
Now look at the word *away* and answer the following questions.

How many definitions are given for *away* as an adverb?

How many definitions are given for *away* as an adjective?

Does the pronunciation change when the word is used as different parts of speech?

The example on the next page is from a dictionary designed for high-school students. The guide words show that this page covers words from *complex* through *composite*.

This dictionary gives more information. Can you find references to the language roots of some words?

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Here you can see some of the most prominent features found in dictionaries specifically designed for the upper grades. For example, the first entry for the word complex has three definitions as an adjective and four definitions as a noun. Also notice the etymology given in brackets, which shows how the word entered English from other languages. In this case, the English word complex originated in the Latin complexus, meaning "entwined around." At the end of the definition you see that the adverb form is complexly and that the adjective can be changed to the noun complexness. (Notice that another noun form, complexity, is given as a separate entry.) After the definitions, a separate section is devoted to a discussion of the slight differences in meaning of the synonyms complex, complicated, and intricate. In many dictionaries, synonyms and antonyms are often given to clarify and elaborate on the meaning of certain words.

Now look at some of the other entries and answer the following questions.
The word *complexion* has two meanings, one specific and one more general. Write each meaning below.

**specific:**

__________________________

**general:**

__________________________

At the end of the entry you see that *complexion* was taken into English from Old French, but the French word itself was taken from a word in an even earlier language. In what language did *complexion* originate, and what was its meaning?

__________________________

__________________________

As you see, the original meanings were much broader than the ones we use today. Many words have changed meaning over the centuries, some becoming broader, others more specific.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Look at the entry for the word *complicate*.

In what language did the word originate?

What was the original meaning of the word?

Look at the entry for the word *compliment*.

How many definitions are given for the noun?

How many definitions are given for the verb?

List the languages in which *compliment* was used before it appeared in English:
Week 9. Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Look at the entry for the word *compose*.

**How many definitions are given for compose as a transitive verb (v.t.)?**

How is it possible for the same word to be used in sentences that talk about the makeup of a jury, the organization of a debate, the creation of a musical work, and the process of setting type on a page? You may be able to get a clue if you look at the etymology of the word *compose*. Give the meanings for the word in the two languages that are cited as sources.

**French:**

**Latin:**

Now you see that all the definitions of *compose*, as it is used in English, have something to do with putting things together and arranging them. All these various shades of meaning can be traced back to the Latin original. This will not be true of every word you look up, but often you find that some part of the original meaning of a word is still present in the word today.
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In the entry for *composite* you find several definitions of the word as an adjective as well as a noun. There is also an illustration to supplement the specific term *composite plant*, which was given as the second noun form of the word. At this level, dictionaries usually give illustrations only when a particular entry can be clarified by a picture.

Finally, there is one other detail worth noticing on this page. Every word begins with the first syllable *com-*, which originated in a Latin word meaning “together” or “with.” You can see that all the words on this page have something to do with joining one thing *with* another thing (or with several things). This knowledge not only helps you spell each word correctly; it also helps you understand the meaning more fully.

*composite* (kam poz'it) adj. 1. made up of various parts or elements. 2. belonging to the family Compositae, one of the largest and most highly evolved groups of flowering plants. Composite plants bear dense flower heads composed of many tiny disk flowers, ray flowers, or both. Daisies and chrysanthemums are composite flowers. —n. 1. something that is composed of various parts or elements. 2. a composite plant. 3. composite photograph. [Latin *compositus*, past participle of *componere* to put together, arrange. Doublet of *compost.*] —com'pos'te·ly, adv.

Thesauruses

The word *thesaurus* originated in the Greek language and was later taken into Latin before entering English. (The Latin form of the plural is *thesauri*; the English plural is *thesauruses*.) A thesaurus was originally a treasure or a storehouse, and this gives us a good idea of what the word means today: a storehouse of words that are matched with synonyms and antonyms.

A thesaurus can help you avoid the overuse of certain words such as *nice* or *fun* or *go*, and it can help you find a word that may be more precise than the one you used in the first place. For example, we often say that something is *funny*, but it is much more interesting to use a precise word such as *amusing, humorous, witty, comical, hilarious, or ridiculous*. Each word is ideally suited to fit a particular situation.

Two basic designs are used in thesauruses today. You may find either type for younger or older students, but those we have looked at usually follow one plan for the early grades and another for the upper grades.

*Groupings under Main Entries*

Thesauruses for younger students often contain a limited number of main entries which are usually important words that are very general and are frequently used. These are often familiar verbs such as *ask, go*, and *look* or adjectives such as *bad and good* or *fast and slow*.

After each main entry, many thesauruses provide a definition and example sentences showing how that word is
used. Then there are several synonyms, each with its own
definition and example sentences. Here is the beginning of
the information for the word *break* in a thesaurus for the
early grades:

*break*  *Break* means suddenly come apart
or force something to come apart.
Some dishes *break* if you drop
them. A cook breaks an egg to
open it . . . .

*crack*  *Crack* means to break, but not into
pieces. A stone may *crack* a win-
dow, but the glass will stay in one
piece. A piece of wood can *crack*
without falling apart. Be careful
not to *crack* a plate.

*shatter*  *Shatter* means to break into many
small pieces. *Smash* means break
by force, too, but not always into
pieces. A driver who hits a tree
might *shatter* or *smash* the wind-
shield. The driver might *smash* a
fender, but he or she would not
*shatter* it.

From *Roget's Children's Thesaurus*. New York:
Week 9. Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Several more synonyms such as crush, split, and fracture are listed as well.

If you want synonyms for smash or shatter, you simply look for these words in their normal places in the alphabetical listing. In each case you will find a message directing you to look under the main entry, break. In some thesauruses, all words are listed in alphabetical order in the book itself. In others, you may have to look for smash or shatter in an index at the back of the book; there you will be told to look for the main entry.

The idea here is that certain words such as break or go or big are used very often because their meanings are very general. By organizing main entries around such words, these thesauruses show you that there can be several other possibilities that mean almost the same but may be more precise or colorful. Often you will find some antonyms at the end of the listing as well.

*All Entries in Alphabetical Order*

In many thesauruses designed for older students, all words are treated as equally important and are listed in alphabetical order. Each main entry is usually followed by a brief definition and sometimes a phrase or sentence showing how the word is used. Then several synonyms are listed, and the entry may end with a few antonyms as well. For example, if you look at the entry for laugh, you may find something like the following:
**laugh** vb to show mirth, joy, or scorn with a smile and a usually explosive sound
<laughed> at all the funny things that happened
**syn** chortle, chuckle, giggle, guffaw, hee-haw, snicker


If you look at the entries for *chortle* or *chuckle*, you will usually find that the complete entry for *laugh* is repeated. Also, the information may show that *laugh* is the main term but that other words such as *giggle* and *guffaw* are also possible. This means that you can find all the information you need under any word you look up; you don’t have to turn back to the main entry.

Each type of thesaurus has its merits; you can choose the one you like best. In any case, a thesaurus can be a valuable tool that makes you aware of the wide range of possibilities as you strive for more precise or colorful words to use in your own writing.
Week 9. Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Week 9. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Look at the introduction to your dictionary and read the information explaining how to use the book. Make sure you understand how the page is set up and how information is presented. Get a feel for all the information that may help you later. For example, is there a pronunciation key? How will that help you? Is there an illustration that clarifies a certain word? Are there different entries for a single word that may be used as more than one part of speech?

As you look through the introduction to your dictionary, check off the features that you find. Not all of these features may be present in every dictionary.

- Guide Words _______________
- Main Entries _______________
- Syllable Division ____________
2. Look up the word *ground* in your dictionary. There should be several definitions, and some of them should specify the word *grounds* as well. Read the following sentences and then write the definition of *grounds* that fits in each case.

The building was surrounded by beautiful *grounds*.

Definition:

What *grounds* do you have for believing their story?

Definition:
Week 9. Search for Treasure in Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Who threw the coffee *grounds* in the sink?

*Definition:

3. See if your dictionary includes synonyms or antonyms as part of the definitions for some words, especially adjectives and verbs. Do you find some synonyms or antonyms that are unfamiliar? If so, look them up.

You might begin by looking for synonyms and antonyms for the following words. Then look for others that interest you.

fast:

__________________________

easy:

__________________________

fly (verb):

__________________________

climb:

__________________________
4. Notice that some words can be used in phrases called *idioms*. These are expressions which have meanings that apply in specific situations or that have unusual characteristics.

Verbs and nouns are often used in idioms. For example, a familiar word such as *wash* can be used in idioms such as “to come out in the wash” or “to wash out” or “to wash your hands of something.”

Look in your dictionary and see if it includes any idioms for the following words. Write each idiom and its definition.

*close*: to close in__________________________

to close out_______________________________

*drop*: to drop off_________________________

_______________________________

_______________________________

*fill*:______________________________

_______________________________

_______________________________
5. Think of some everyday words that you use very often: *nice*, *fun*, *good*, *do*, and so on. Look in your thesaurus to find synonyms that are more precise than these general words. Use each synonym in a sentence that suits its particular meaning. If definitions or example sentences are not provided in your thesaurus, look up the words in your dictionary to find enough information to make each meaning clear. Which words will you try to use to replace some of these common words?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Words</th>
<th>Replacements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learn More about Word Structure

Roots and Affixes

Today's English contains thousands of words that originated in other languages. In fact, most of the words we use today have been borrowed from other languages, especially Latin, Greek, and French.

Although some complete words have been borrowed from these languages, many more English words are built on roots taken from Latin and Greek in particular.

A root is a part of an English word that has been borrowed from a word in another language. Each root retains the meaning of the original word, but a root is not a complete word in itself. It must be combined with affixes or other roots in order to make sense in the English language.
This week we will look at a few of the many English words that are built on Latin and Greek roots. Also remember that in Week 9 we mentioned the term etymology, the study of the history of words as they have entered English from other languages over the centuries. In dictionaries designed for high-school and college students, you will often find information about the etymology of many words, showing how they originated in Greek or Latin or other languages. Take advantage of this information in your dictionary; it will be most helpful as you look at the words on the following pages.

**A. English Words Built on Latin Roots**

An enormous number of English words can be traced back to the Latin language, which was originally spoken throughout the Roman Empire more than 2000 years ago. Here are some of these Latin words and their original meanings, followed by English words built on each of the Latin roots.

*Latin Verbs*

`capere, cept-` (to take, seize): **capture**, **accept**

`dicere` (to speak): **dictate**

`ducere` (to lead): **conduct**

`facere` (to make or do): **factory**

`migrare` (to move from one place to another): **migrate**
mittere, miss- (to send): transmit, mission

portare (to carry): transport

scribere, script- (to write): describe, subscription

spectare (to watch): spectator

**Latin Nouns**

caput (head): captain

equus (horse): equestrian

manus (hand): manual

mare (the sea): marine

navis (ship): navigate

pes, ped- (foot): pedal

terra (the earth): territory

**Latin Adjectives**

bene (good): benefit

brevis (small, short): brevity

magnus (large): magnitude

mal (bad): malady

tardus (slow): retard
**Word Structure**

In earlier weeks we saw that affixes could be added to base words that had clear meanings in English: *fair* and *unfair* or *hope* and *hopeful*, for example. This week we see that affixes can be added to word roots taken from other languages. For example, the word *accept* is made up of the prefix *ac-* and the root *-cept*, which is taken from the Latin verb *capere* meaning "to take or seize."

Neither the prefix *ac-* nor the root *-cept* has any meaning in the English language if it is viewed by itself. However, both word parts did have meaning in Latin. Most importantly, when they are joined they form the word *accept*, which does have meaning in English: "to approve of something or receive it willingly." Now you see how the principles of word structure introduced in Weeks 2 and 3 can be applied to affixes and roots taken from ancient languages and adapted to today's English.
Here are a few English words that are built on Latin roots:

captive  portable  beneficial  inspect  pedestal

Next you see some Latin roots and meanings. After you look at each root, refer to the five words given above and write the English word that is derived from the Latin root.

*bene* (good): ____________  ____________

*capere* (to seize, take): ______________

*pes, ped-* (foot): ______________

*portare* (to carry): ______________

*spectare* (to watch): ______________

B. English Words Built on Greek Roots

The Greek language is even older than Latin. In fact, many Latin words were borrowed from Greek. Greek words also play important roles in the formation of many English words. These Greek words are especially valuable because their meaning usually remains constant: We often have a good idea of the meaning of an English word if we know the meaning of its Greek components.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Here are some Greek words that are important in the formation of English words. With a partner see how many words you can think of based on these Greek roots.

*astr- (aster, astron, star): astronomy*

*auto- (autos, same, self): autobiography*

*bio- (bios, life): biology*

*circ- (kirkos, circle or ring): circular*

*geo- (gē, the earth): geography*

*graph- (graphein, to write): graphic*

*hydro- (hydor, water): hydroelectric*

*metr- (metron, measure): metric*

*micro- (mikros, small): microscope*

*naut- (nautēs, sailor): nautical*

*phon- (phonē, sound): telephone*

*photo- (phōs, light): photograph*

*tech- (technē, craft or skill): technical*

*tele- (tēle, far off): telegraph*

*therm- (thermē, heat): thermometer*
Word Structure

The word *thermometer* shows how two Greek word parts can be combined to form a word we use in English today. As you saw in the preceding list, the Greek word *thermē* meant "heat" and the Greek word *metron* meant "measure." When they are combined, they form the word *thermometer*, which of course did not exist in the original Greek language but is used today to name a device that measures heat.

---

Here are a few English words that are built on Greek roots:

- circulate
- technology
- microphone
- photocopy
- astronaut

Next you see some Greek roots and meanings. After you look at each root, look back at the five words given above and write the English word that is derived from the Greek root.

*astr-* (*aster, astron, star*):

---

*circ-* (*kirkos, circle or ring*):

---
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

micro- (mikros, small):

-----------------------------------------

photo- (phōs, light):

-----------------------------------------

tech- (technē, craft or skill):

-----------------------------------------

The Greek Suffix -logy

A most important Greek word is logos, which originally meant "word, thought, reason." This Greek word forms a part of English words such as dialogue and logic and apologize. It is also the source of the suffix -logy, which means "the study of a subject or the body of knowledge about that subject." This suffix is found in many words that name various branches of science such as biology, zoology, paleontology, and psychology.

Also notice that the suffix -logy identifies specific areas of study, while the suffix -ist identifies the person who studies a certain subject:

A biologist studies biology.
A zoologist studies zoology.
A paleontologist studies paleontology.
A psychologist studies psychology.
A Word of Caution

Whenever we look at English words built on Latin and Greek roots, we often find that knowledge of the meanings of these roots can help us understand the meanings of English words. For example, when we looked at the Latin word *facere* we could see that its meaning was clear in the word *factory* (a place in which we *make* things), and the meaning of *spectare* was clear in the word *spectator* (someone who *watches* something).

However, even though Latin and Greek words are important in English, we should not *always* expect to find a clear connection between the original word and its modern counterpart. Often this is because the meanings of some English words have changed over the centuries, sometimes becoming broader than the original word and sometimes becoming narrower. However, even when the meaning of a particular Greek or Latin word is not immediately apparent, it helps to be aware that it is part of an English word. This is especially valuable when we analyze word structure and search for ways to understand the spellings of difficult words.
Week 10. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. Listed below are some English words that have developed from Latin or Greek. In your dictionary, find the language in which each word originated. Also notice what the word originally meant, if such information is provided. The first example is given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Original Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accident</td>
<td><em>Latin</em>  <em>chance, happening, going back to</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cosmic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>galaxy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Language Original Meaning

method ______________
predict ______________
revolve ______________
transfer ______________

2. As you encounter new words and look for information in your dictionary, notice the etymology of each word (if this information is provided). How does an understanding of the original form of the word help you understand it more fully? Is the original meaning of the word still relevant to today’s word, or has the meaning changed over the centuries? Does the word have a more specific meaning today, or has it become more general. Use the following outline to guide you.

Word: ____________________________

Original meaning: ____________________________

__________________________

Today’s meaning: ____________________________

__________________________

How has it changed? ____________________________

__________________________
Discover
Latin and Greek
Word Families

As we saw last week, Latin and Greek roots must be combined with other word parts in order to create words that have meaning in the English language. In many cases, these roots are combined with prefixes and suffixes to create English words. We will begin by looking at some of the most important Latin prefixes that have been combined with roots to form complete words.

A. Some Important Latin Prefixes

In earlier weeks we saw that certain affixes are encountered over and over in English words. In addition to familiar prefixes such as un- and dis, we also find a number of Latin words that are often used as prefixes.

Two of the most important Latin words are in (meaning “in, into”) and ex (meaning “out of, away from”). These
words are prepositions in their own right, but they are also often used as prefixes. When this happens, they are sometimes absorbed into the following roots to make pronunciation easier. This means that the spelling of the prefix in- changes to im- and the spelling of ex- changes to e- before certain consonants.

\[
in-: \text{include, ingest, insert, involve} \\
im-: \text{import, immerse, implant, immigrate} \\
ex-: \text{export, exhale, exclude} \\
e-: \text{emigrate, elude, eject}
\]

The Latin prepositions *ad* (to, toward) and *cum* (with, together) are used as prefixes as well. These are also absorbed prefixes with a variety of spellings.

\[
ad (ac-, af-, ap-, as-, at-) \\
\text{advance, admit, admire, adjust} \\
\text{accomplish, account, acquire, accommodate} \\
\text{afford, affect, affirm, afflict} \\
\text{appear, appoint, apply, approach} \\
\text{assume, ascend, assemble, assign} \\
\text{attain, attend, attract, attempt}
\]

\[
cum (com-, col-, con-) \\
\text{combine, commit, complex, compute} \\
\text{collect, collapse, collaborate, collide} \\
\text{connect, conserve, consider, consist}
\]

Several other Latin prepositions are also used as prefixes. Most of these words are not absorbed into the
following root and their spellings remain unchanged. The only exception in the following list is sub-, which changes to sup- before roots beginning with the letter p. (The Latin word prae is consistently spelled pre- when it is used as a prefix in English words.)

extra (outside, beyond): extraordinary, extracurricular, extravagant, extrasensory

inter (between, among): interfere, intercept, interior, internal, international, intervene

post (after): postpone, posterior, posterity, postmortem

praee, pre- (before, in front of): prefix, premature, preview, prefer, prepare, precede

sub, sup- (under, beneath): submarine, subdue, subject, subvert, substitute, subordinate, subdivide, supply, support, supplement

super (above): superior, supervise, superlative, supersonic

trans (across, over): transport, transact, transform, transmit, translate, transplant
Here are a few words that involve the prefixes you just saw. Give the definition for each word and explain how the prefix affects the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to. The first example is already given.

**extradite**: to send someone *beyond* the boundaries of one state to face prosecution in another state.

*predict*:

________________________________________________________________________

*submerge*:

________________________________________________________________________

*inhale*:

________________________________________________________________________

*transfer*:

________________________________________________________________________

*intersect*:

________________________________________________________________________
B. Word Families Built on Latin Roots

Here are some of the Latin words included in the list given last week. Each word provides the root for a family of related words. Notice that each root is combined with prefixes or suffixes or sometimes both.

Roots from Latin Verbs

cap-, cept- (capere, to take, seize): capture, captive, capable, capacity, accept, except, perception, intercept, reception

dic- (dicere, to say, speak): dictate, dictator, predict, contradict, edict, diction

duc- (ducere, to lead): conduct, induct, product, produce, production

fac- (facere, to make or do): factory, factor, manufacture, benefactor, facile, facility, facsimile

migr- (migrare, to move from one place to another): migrate, immigrate, emigrate, immigration, migratory

mit-, miss- (mittere, to send): transmit, permit, admit, commit, emit, mission, dismiss, comission, transmission

port- (portare, to carry): transport, import, export, portable, deport, opportunity, support, report
scrib-, script- (scribere, to write): scribe, scribble, describe, prescribe, subscribe, transcribe, script, description, prescription, subscription

Here are a few words built on the roots you just saw. Give the meaning for each word and explain how the root contributes to the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

**captivate:**

**conductor:**

**migration:**

**omission:**

---

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Roots from Latin Nouns

capit-, capt- (caput, head): capital, decapitate, captain

manu- (manus, hand): manual, manufacturer, manuscript

mar- (mare, the sea): marine, maritime, submarine

nav- (navis, ship): navy, naval, navigate, navigator

ped- (pes, foot; pl. pedis): pedal, pedestrian, pedestal

terr- (terra, earth): terrace, territory, terrestrial, extraterrestrial

Here are a few words built on the roots you just saw. Give the meaning for each word and explain how the root contributes to the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

terrain:

__________________________
caption:

__________________________
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

mariner:

pedicure:

Roots from Latin Adjectives

bene (good): benefit, beneficial, beneficiary, benevolent

brevis (small, short): brevity, abbreviate, brief

magnus (large): magnitude, magnanimous, magnificence

mal (bad): malady, malice, malevolent, malignant

tardus (slow): retard, tardy
Here are a few words built on the roots you just saw. Give the meaning for each word and explain how the root contributes to the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

beneficent:

malicious:

retardation:

abbreviation:

C. Number Words Built on Latin Roots

Many English words that have to do with numbers are based on Latin words. Here are some of the most familiar prefixes that denote number, followed by the complete Latin word and several other words that are related.

uni- (L unum, one): unit, union, universe, unify, uniform
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

*bi-* (L *bini*, two): bicycle, binary, biannual, biceps, bifocals

*tri-* (L *tres*, three): triangle, tricycle, triple, triathlon, triceratops, trilateral

*quad-, quar-* (L *quattuor*, four): quadrangle, quadruplets, quadrant, quart, quarter, quartet

*quin-* (L *quinque*, five): quintet, quintuplets, quintile

*sex-* (L *sex*, six): sextet, sextuplets, sextant

*sept-* (L *septem*, seven): September, septet, septuagenarian

*oct-* (L *octo*, eight): October, octet, octagon, octopus, octogenarian, octosyllable

*nov-* (L *novem*, nine): November

*dec-* (L *decem*, ten): December, decade, decathlon, decennial

*cent-* (L *centum*, hundred): cent, century, centennial, centigrade,

Originally, the Roman calendar contained only ten months, so September, October, November, and December were in fact the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth months of the year. When the twelve-month calendar was introduced, the original names were retained although the location of these four months changed.
Here are some words built on the roots you just saw. Give the definition for each word and show how the root affects the meaning.

*bicentennial:*

---

*unity:*

---

*triplicate:*

---

*quadruped:*

---

*centimeter:*

---

**D. Word Families Built on Greek Roots**

The following word families are built on Greek roots that were introduced last week. With a partner see if you can think of other words that build on these roots.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

astr- (aster, astron, star): astronomy, astronaut, asteroid, astronomical, astrophysics

auto- (autos, same, self): autobiography, automatic, automobile, autocratic, autonomous

bio- (bios, life): biology, biography, biophysics, biosphere, biochemistry, biodegradable

circ- (kirkos, circle or ring): circle, circular, circulate, encircle

geo- (gē the earth): geography, geology, geologic, geometry, geophysics, geochemistry

graph- (graphein, to write): graph, graphic, graphite, biography, autobiograpy

hydro- (from hydor, water): hydroelectric, hydraulic, hydrology, hydroplane, hydrogen

metr-, meter (metron, measure), meter, metric. speedometer, altimeter, chronometer, kilometer.

micro- (mikros, small): microscope, microphone, micrometer, microcomputer, microdot, microsurgery, microbe

naut- (nautēs, sailor): astronaut, cosmonaut, nautical
Week 11. Discover Latin and Greek Word Families

phon- (phonē, sound): phonics, phonetic, phonograph, microphone, homophone, telephone

photo- (phōs, light): photograph, photoelectric, photocopy, photocjournalism, telephoto

tech- (technē, craft or skill): technical, technique, technology

tele- (tēle, far off): telephone, television, telegraph, telescope, telecommunication

therm- (thermē, heat): thermometer, thermal, thermonuclear, thermodynamics, hypothermia

Some words appear more than once because they combine two of the roots included in this list. For example, the word biography combines bio- (life) with graph- (write): a biography is a book written about someone’s life. Also remember that the suffix -logy comes from the Greek word logos and refers to the study of a subject or the body of knowledge about a subject (as in biology and geology).
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Here are some words involving the Greek roots you just saw. Give the definition for each word and explain how the root affects the meaning. Use your dictionary whenever you need to.

*circuit:*

*astrology:*

*photochemical:*

*thermography:*

*phonology:*

Place words that you want to remember in your vocabulary notebook.

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E. Words in Modern Science and Technology

You have seen that Latin and Greek roots provide the basis for an enormous number of words we use every day in the English language. There is one particular area in which these roots are especially important: the world of modern technology.

Here are some familiar technical words built on Greek roots. Most of the roots were given earlier; a few others are explained as they appear. Notice how the basis for the modern scientific meaning of these words is often found in their roots.

**astronaut:** literally, a “star-sailor”; someone who sails (-naut) among the stars (astro-).

**cryosurgery:** a type of surgery in which the tissue to be operated on is first made very cold (cryo). In fact, the words *surgeon* and *surgery* originated in the Greek words *cheir ergon*, which meant “to work or do something by hand.”

**cyclone:** a storm in which winds rotate in a circle (cyclo-).

**geometry:** literally, measuring (metr-) the earth (geo-).

**helicopter:** a machine whose propeller blades move in a spiral. The Greek word *heliko* meant “spiral” and *pteron* meant “wing.” A “heliko pteron” is a “spiral-winged” machine.
microscope: an instrument used to look at (-scope) things that are very small (micro-).

technology: the body of knowledge (-logy) about the craft or skill needed to do things (techno-).

telegraph: an instrument that allows you to send writing (-graph) over a long distance to people far away (tele-).

telephone: an instrument used to carry sound (-phone) over long distances to people far away (tele-).

telescope: an instrument used to look at (-scope) things that are far away (tele-).

Words That Combine Latin and Greek

The following words combine Greek and Latin roots. Some of the Latin words that have not been discussed earlier will be explained as they appear.

automobile: a machine that is able to move (-mobile) by itself (auto-). The word mobile originated in the Latin mobilis, which is a form of the verb movere meaning “to move.”

microcomputer: a small (micro-) machine that is able to make calculations (-computer) very quickly. The Latin verb computare means “to count or make calculations; to consider.”
television: a device that allows you to see (-vision) pictures that originate far away (tele-). The word vision is a form of the Latin verb videre, which meant "to see."

Here are a few words that relate to technology. Give the definition for each word and explain how the Latin or Greek roots contribute to the meaning.

telemetry: ____________________________

______________________________

photosensitive: _______________________

______________________________

microelectrode: _______________________

______________________________

autoimmune: __________________________

______________________________
**F. Conclusion**

As you have probably noticed, the search for Latin and Greek roots in English words can be almost endless. This week we have focused on roots that clearly contribute to the meaning of words we use today. Other English words are built on roots whose significance is less obvious because spellings and meanings have changed as English combined words from different sources over the centuries. In any case, an awareness of the role of word roots can contribute much to our understanding of word structure as well as to meaning.

Let’s end by looking at a large family of words built on roots from the Latin verb *spectare*, which means “to watch, observe, look at.” As you see, the spelling of the root varies slightly from *spec-* and *spect-* to *spic-*. This is because Latin verbs are themselves very complicated and exist in a number of forms to show different tenses (present, past, future) and voices (active or passive, for example).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix/Root</th>
<th>Root/Suffix</th>
<th>Prefix/Root/Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expect</td>
<td>specter</td>
<td>inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspect</td>
<td>spectacle</td>
<td>respectable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect</td>
<td>spectacular</td>
<td>perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suspect</td>
<td>spectator</td>
<td>prospector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prospect</td>
<td>spectrum</td>
<td>expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disrespect</td>
<td>special</td>
<td>especially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retrospect</td>
<td>specimen</td>
<td>respecitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circumpect</td>
<td>specialize</td>
<td>disrespectful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>speculate</td>
<td>suspicious</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specify</td>
<td>auspicious</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specific</td>
<td>conspicuous</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>despicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 11. Check Yourself

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

1. The Greek word *graphein* meant "to write." From this word we get the roots *graph-* and *gram*-. You have already seen some words built in the root *graph*-. See if you can think of any others that were not listed earlier. Also see how many words you can find that are built on the root *gram*-. Remember that the root does not always appear at the beginning of the English words that are built on it.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

2. Listed below are some words that are important in modern technology and science. If necessary use a dictionary to find out where these words came from and what their roots originally meant. Explain how the roots contribute to the modern meaning of each word. In some cases you may have to look up each root independently and put them together to form your own interpretation.

aeronautics ____________________________

amphibious ____________________________

asteroid ______________________________

cryogenics _____________________________

entomology ____________________________

geophysics _____________________________

palaeontology __________________________

physiologist ____________________________

supersonic ______________________________

thermonuclear __________________________
Take a Foreign Tour

Words from Other Languages

We have already seen a number of Latin and Greek words that contributed roots used in many English words. This week we will look at complete words that have been taken directly into English, sometimes with minor changes in spelling or pronunciation.

A. Latin Words

Many of the following words have been taken into English directly from Latin. Most of their original spellings and meanings have been retained, although a few have changed to some extent. When the Latin spelling differs from the modern English word, the original spelling is given in italics. When the meaning of the original word differs somewhat from the present meaning, it is shown in parentheses. Check yourself or work with a partner to see how many of these words you can use in a sentence.
abdomen
actor (anyone who does something or takes action)
animal
campus (any flat, open space)
census
color
credit (credere: to believe, entrust)
doctor (teacher)

error (a wandering about, wavering)
exit (exitus: going out)
favor
formula (shape, beauty, form)

genius (guardian spirit)
gladiator
honor
horror

index
instructor (supervisor, preparer)
major (larger, greater)
minor (smaller, less)

plus (more)
radius (stick; spoke in a wheel)
refrigerate (refrigerare: to cool off, chill)
Senator

stadium (race track)
superior (higher, upper; past, preceding)
terror
video (literally "I see" - from videre, to see)
We still use the Latin term *vice versa* to mean “with the order reversed.” We also use the Latin word *versus* (abbreviated *vs.*) to mean “against”; it originally meant “towards, in that direction.”

Look up the following words in a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. After each English word write the original Latin word, which sometimes differs from the English spelling. Also write the original meaning of the Latin word.

- calendar: ________________________________
- circus: ________________________________
- elevate: ________________________________
- fortune: ________________________________
- item: ________________________________
- prior: ________________________________
- vacuum: ________________________________
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

Look up the Latin term *et cetera*. What does it mean?

Why is it incorrect to say "and et cetera?"

B. Greek Words

We have seen a number of Greek roots that provided the bases for many English words. A smaller number of Greek words have been taken directly into the English language, and even these have often undergone changes in spelling and pronunciation. Some of these changes were made when Greek words were adapted to the Latin language over 2000 years ago; others were made when these words were taken into English. Here are a few examples:

*atomos* (indivisible): atom  
*chorde* (string): chord  
*gala* (milk): galaxy ("Milky Way")  
*gramma* (writing): grammar  
*polis* (city, state): police, politics

Words that use the *ch* spelling for the /k/ sound often originated in Greek. The *ch* spelling was added when the words were adapted for the Latin language.

choir, mechanic, archive, architect, chemistry, monarch, technical, technology, archaic, chemistry

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Week 12. Take a Foreign Tour

The Greek word psyche originally meant “breath, principle of life, soul.” It forms the root for modern words such as psychology, psychiatry, psychic, and psychosomatic.

Singular nouns that end with s often originated in Greek and were taken into Latin before making their way into English:

politics, economics, statistics, genetics, physics

Look up the following words in a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. After each English word, write the original Greek word and its meaning.

chaos: ________________________________
charisma: ______________________________
chasm: ________________________________
chlorine: _______________________________
chorus: ________________________________
C. French Words

Many English words have been borrowed from French over the centuries, especially after the Duke of Normandy conquered the English in 1066 and became King William I of England.

The following words are found in both French and English. In many cases the spelling is the same, although pronunciation is different. When the French word has a different spelling, it is shown in parentheses. Can you use them?

**NOTES**

- amateur
- animal
- attention
- avenue
- baton
- boulevard
- catalogue
- certain
- chandelier
- clear (*clair*, light)
- cruel
- force
- garage
- gratitude
- honor (*honneur*)
- importance
NOTES

journal
justice
limousine
piece

possible
reason (raison)
reservoir
silhouette

soup (soupe)
table
taxi
technique

If you’re not sure of some of these words, look them up in your dictionary and add them to your vocabulary notebook.
Look up the following words in a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. After each English word, write the French spelling. Also give the meaning of the French word if it differs from the English version. (Keep in mind that many French words originated in even older Latin words; some dictionaries may show only the original Latin words, not the French words derived from them.)

active: ___________________________________________

dinner: _________________________________________

marriage: _______________________________________

subtle: _________________________________________

Conclusion

By looking at all the words presented this week, you can see why some of them are spelled in ways that may seem puzzling at first. Words such as psychology and silhouette are not "spelled the way they sound" in English simply because they originated in other languages and usually were not pronounced the way we pronounce them today. In fact, some spellings such as that found in psychology actually do represent the original pronunciation, because both the letters p and s were sounded in the Greek spoken more than 2000 years ago.
Week 12. **Check Yourself**

Answer the following questions. Use a separate piece of paper when you need more space.

You will need a dictionary designed for high-school or college students. It must show the etymology of words borrowed from other languages. Although dictionaries intended for high schools will give some etymologies, a collegiate dictionary is more likely to provide all the information you will need. (Etymology was explained in Week 9 in the section on Dictionaries.)

Here are some words taken from Latin, Greek, or French. Some of them are spelled in English just as they were spelled originally; others have changed over the centuries. Look up each word and find the language in which it originated. Also find as much information as you can about the original meaning of each word. Can you use these words?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Other Language and Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>abundant</td>
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<td>synthetic</td>
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Keep Building
Your Vocabulary

An Ongoing Process

A twelve-week program in vocabulary building is not an end in itself. Instead, it is only a beginning. The strategies presented in this book should encourage you to see the opportunities you have for expanding your vocabulary. By applying these strategies regularly, you will develop the habit of thinking about words and of shining the light of your curiosity on the world of words around you. To make this twelve-week effort pay off, you need to think of it as a way to expand opportunities for vocabulary development in the future. You are now alert to numerous ways in which you can pique your curiosity about words.

No matter how large your storehouse of words, you can always increase and refine your ability to communicate by focusing on some words and using them quickly and often.

Try to learn one new word each day. The teacher who introduces one new word each day actually turns that word into many other new words. As the class discusses a word and its uses, other words begin to enter the picture. You can do the same in your family and among your friends.
BUILDING A STRONG VOCABULARY

For example, one class found the word *galvanized* in a science text. Although this word had a technical meaning that related to a procedure for protecting metal, the students discovered other ways to use it and they also learned still more words as they examined the word *galvanized*:

The dynamic speaker galvanized the thinking of his entire audience. They listened with rapt attention to his plea for action.

By looking at other ways to use *galvanized*, this class expanded its knowledge of that word and learned two others in the process: *rapt* and *plea*. The same thing will happen in your family as you ask questions about words, explore shades of meaning, and play with words for their power and beauty.

In all you do, remember that you are not simply trying to build your stack of words higher than your neighbor's. Instead, you are searching for ways to make life more comprehensible and to make it easier to communicate with others. Success in school and in future employment will be greatly enhanced by your ability to use words skillfully and effectively.

In order to make curiosity about words a natural part of your thinking, you can't stop with a single twelve-week effort. You want to make that curiosity a habitual part of your thinking. There are many ways to accomplish this: listen to vocabulary tapes; buy other books on vocabulary; go back through this book after waiting for a month or so.
Each week of this program presented a different strategy for learning about words. Some techniques were quite simple; others were more complex. The point here is not to give a list of words to define but to show how you can think about words in ways that make them more meaningful. You may even want to paste a copy of the table of contents from this book on your refrigerator as a reminder: Here are twelve ways to expand your vocabulary:

1. **Expand through synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms**
2. **Build through word structure—prefixes**
3. **Build through word structure—suffixes**
4. **Find related words**
5. **Gain meaning from context**
6. **Say exactly what you mean**
7. **Play the analogies game**
8. **Create word maps and webs**
9. **Search dictionaries and thesauruses**
10. **Learn through roots and affixes**
11. **Discover Latin and Greek word families**
12. **Take a foreign tour**

Grow your vocabulary every day.
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In our twelve powerful strategies to increase your vocabulary and boost your communication skills, these vocabulary-building tactics will keep working for you over the years—long after school, at work, and in every area of life.

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