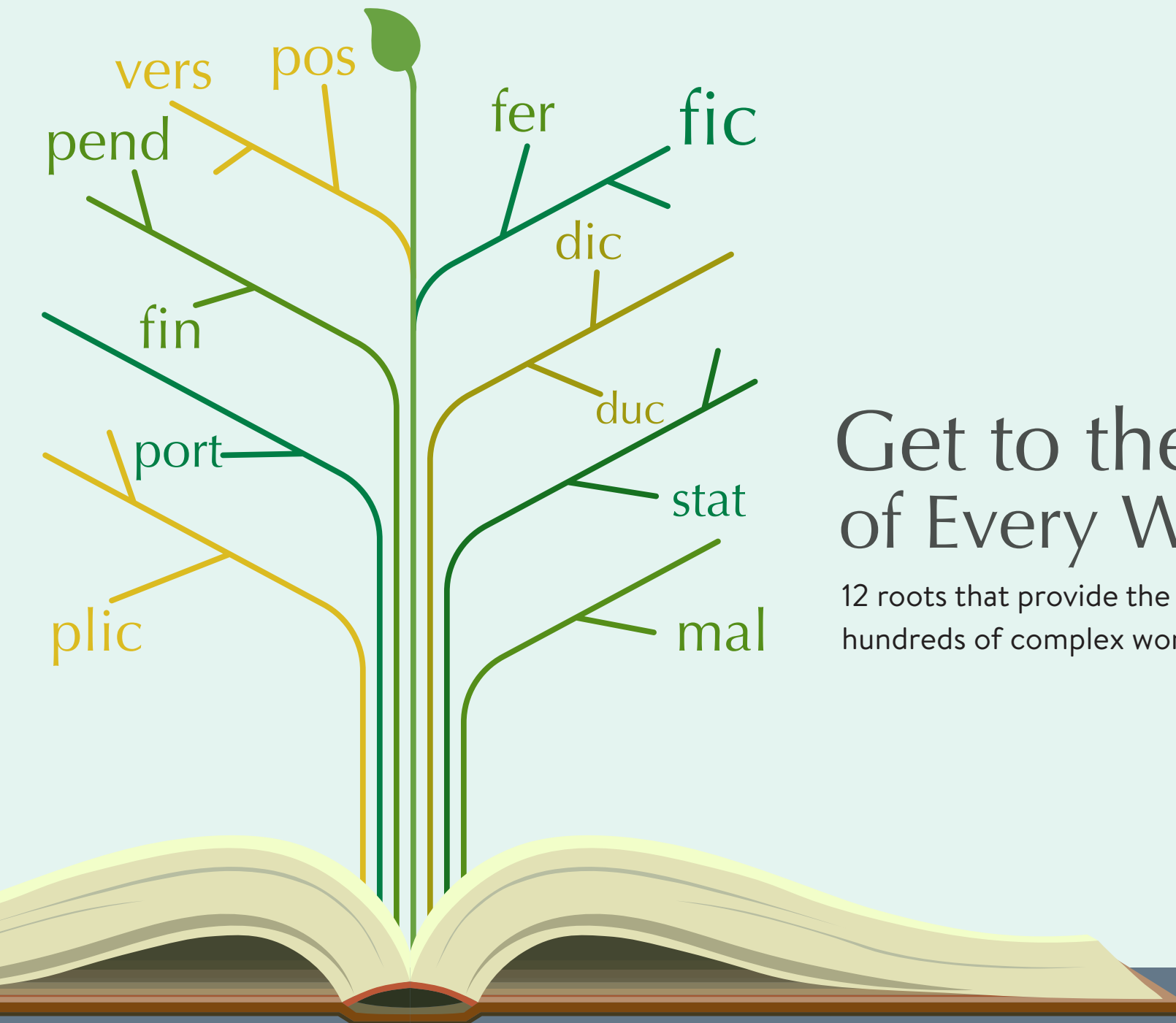




Get to the Root of Every Word

12 roots that provide the keys to understanding hundreds of complex words.

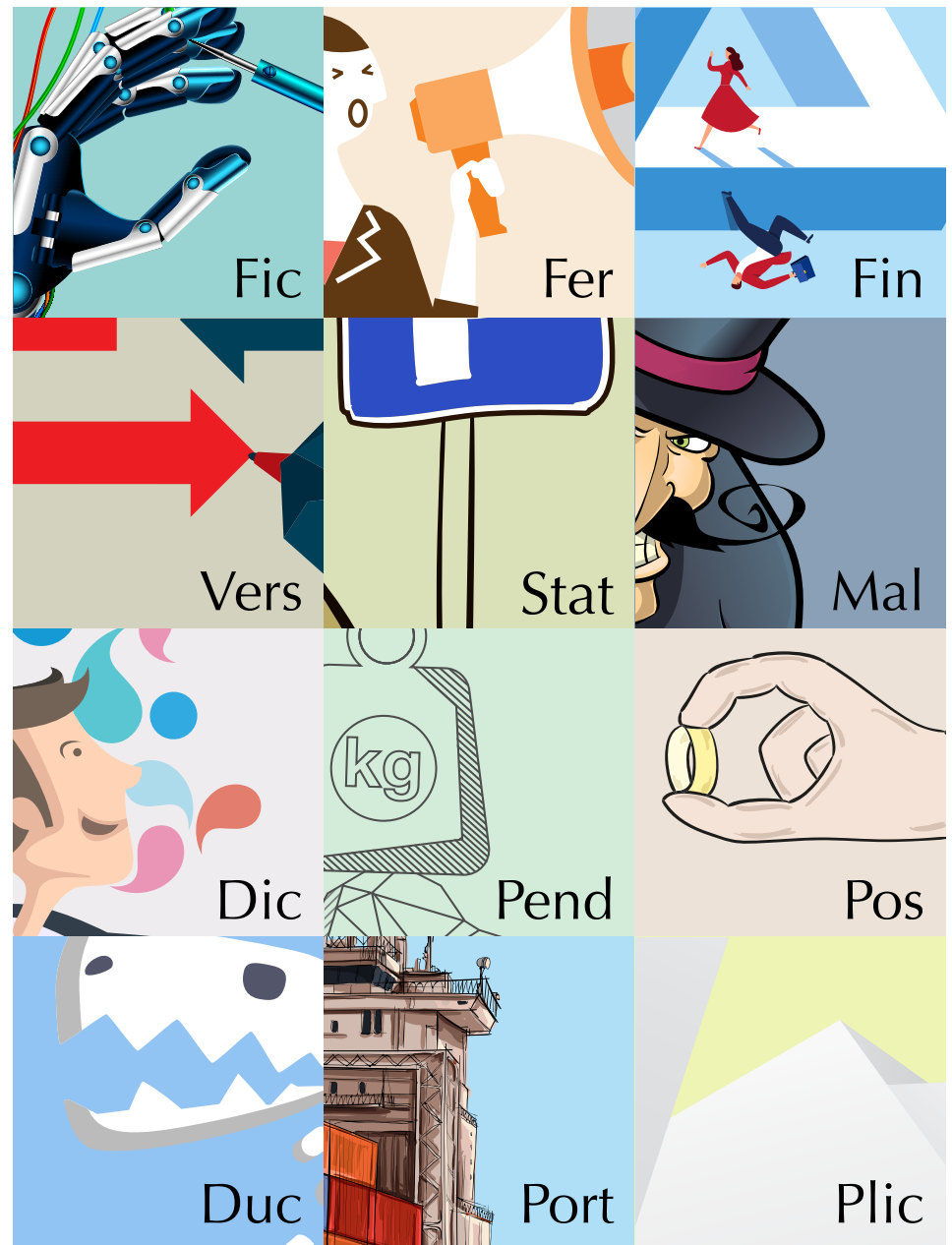
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Welcome

Roots form a key that decodes and demystifies even the most difficult words, cutting them down to size, as it were. Roots also serve as powerful mnemonic enhancers.

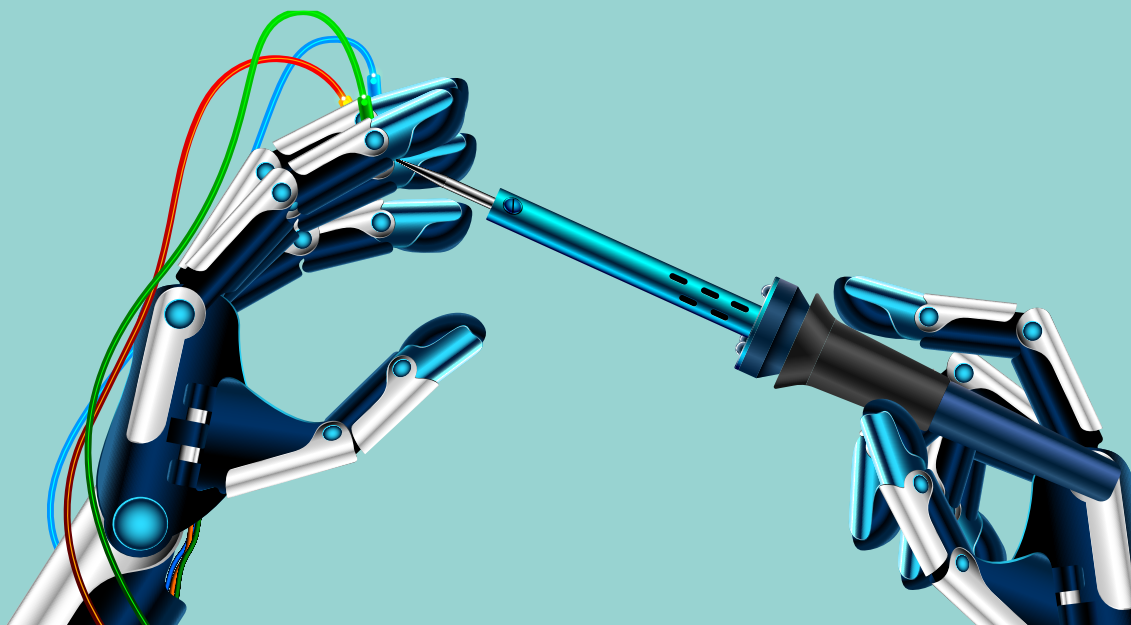
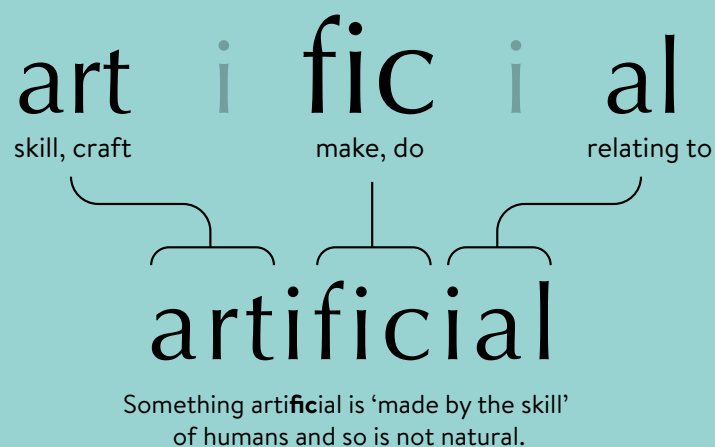
Membean deconstructs each of 3500 words that we teach into their constituent morphemes, clearly showing how those morphemes led to the definition of each word.



WORD ROOT

Fic : make, do

The Latin root word **fic** means to 'make.' A good number of common English vocabulary words come from this root, including magn**ific**ent, diff**ic**ult, and art**ific**ial. One easy word that is helpful in remembering **fic** is eff**ic**ient, for eff**ic**ient people are able to 'make' things happen.



pac**ific**

making peace

magn**ific**ent

made great

sacr**ific**e

make holy

diff**ic**ult

not **made** easily

eff**ic**ient

thoroughly **makes**

Good words with the root **fic**

aficionado, amplification, artificer, beatific, beneficent, beneficial, certificate, certification, coefficient, deficiency, deficient, deficit, disqualification, diversification, edification, efficacious, efficient, falsification, fortification, gratification, honorific, inefficiently, magnification, maleficence, maleficent, modification, mollification, munificent, notification, nullification, office, officiate, orifice, pacific, pacification, personification, pontificate, proficient, prolific, purification, ramification, ratification, revivification, scientific, significant, soporific, specific, specification, specificity, stratification, suffice, sufficient, terrific, unification, versification, vilification

Fer : carry, bring

Just like a ferry carries people across the water, so too does the Latin word root **fer** mean to ‘carry.’ Many different words come from **fer**, including **prefer**, **refer**, and **conference**. Perhaps the easiest way to help remember this root is when you **transfer** money, or ‘carry’ across funds from one bank account to another.



transfer

carry across

refer

carry back

fertile

carry much fruit

infer

carry into

coniferous

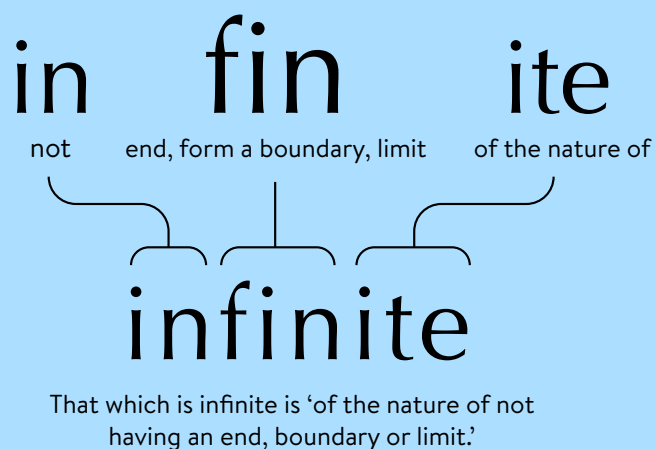
cone **carrying**

Good words with the root **fer**

aquifer, circumference, confer, conference, conifer, defer, deference, deferential, deferment, deferral, differ, difference, differentiate, differentiation, fertile, fertility, fertilize, indifferent, infer, inference, infertile, insufferable, nontransferable, odoriferous, offer, pestiferous, prefer, preferential, proffer, proliferate, proliferation, refer, referee, reference, referendum, referent, referential, referral, suffer, transfer, vociferate, vociferous

Fin : end, form a boundary

The Latin root word **fin** means an 'end,' as in a 'boundary' or 'limit.' Some common English vocabulary words that come from this Latin root word include **final**, **finish**, and **definition**. Perhaps the easiest way to remember that this root means 'end' is through the word **infinite**, since something **infinite** has no 'end!'



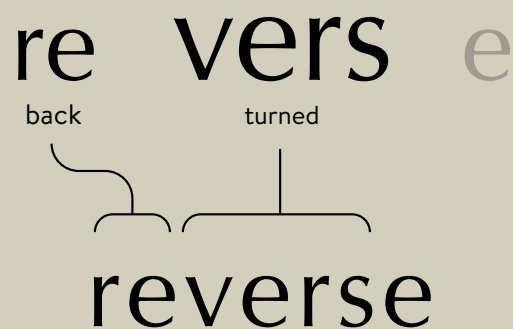
final	pertaining to an end
definition	a boundary for the meaning of a word
refine	to process a raw material thoroughly to a usable end
confines	boundaries beyond which one cannot pass
finicky	someone who has too many limiting boundaries

Good words with the root **fin**

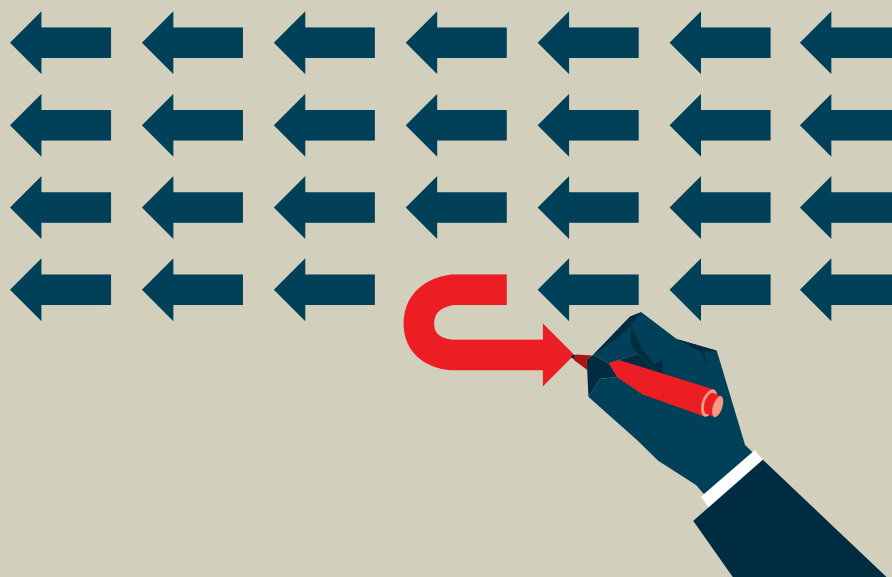
affinity, confine, confinement, confines, define, defining, definite, definiteness, definition, definitive, final, finale, finalize, finally, finance, financial, fine, fineness, finery, finesse, finicky, finish, finite, indefinable, indefinite, infinite, infinitesimal, infinity, quarterfinals, refine, refined, refinement, refinery, semifinal, semifinals, superfine, undefined, unfinished

Vers : turned

The Latin root word **vers** means 'turned.' This root gives rise to many English vocabulary words, including **reverse**, **version**, and **conversation**. Perhaps the easiest way to remember this root is through the English word **anniversary**, a calendrical marker that yet another year has 'turned.'



When you've reversed something you've 'turned back' in the opposite direction.



adversary	one turned against you
diverse	turned apart
anniversary	another year turned
averse	turned away
universe	everything turned into one whole thing

Good words with the root vers

adversary, adverse, adversity, animadversion, anniversary, averse, aversion, controversy, conversation, converse, conversion, diverse, diversion, diversity, extroversion, introversion, inverse, irreversible, obverse, peevish, perverse, reverse, reversion, subversive, transverse, traverse, universe, university, versatile, verse, version

Stat/Stit : stand

The Latin root **stat** and its variant **stit** mean 'stand.' This Latin root is the word origin of a large number of English vocabulary words, including **state**, **statue**, **constitution** and **superstition**. The root **stat** is easily recalled via the word **stationary** or 'standing' still, whereas **stit** can be recalled via **institute**, to make something like an organization 'stand' by creating it.

stat ion ary
stands act, state relating to

stationary

That which is stationary is in the 'act or state of standing' still.



station

one's **standing** or place where one stands

stature

how tall one **stands**; one's societal **standing**

ecstatic

a **standing** outside of normal feelings

destitute

a **standing** from financial health

superstition

of **standing** above belief in everyday things

Good words with the roots stat/stit

apostate, contrast, constitution, constitute, constituency, ecstatic, estate, destitute, instate, institute, interstate, misstatement, obstacle, overstated, reinstate, restitution, state, stateliness, stately, statement, static, station, stationary, stationery, statistician, statistics, statue, statuesque, stature, status, statute, statutory, substitute, superstition, thermostat

WORD ROOT

Mal: bad, evil

The Latin root word **mal** means 'bad' or 'evil.' This root is the word origin of many English vocabulary words, including **mal**formed, **mal**treat, and **mal**ice. You can recall that **mal** means 'bad' through **mal**function, or a 'badly' working part, and that it means 'evil' through **mal**ice, or intentional 'evil' done to another.

mal e vol ent
 bad, evil wish, want state or condition

malevolent

A malevolent person is in a 'state or condition of wishing evil' upon others.



malaria

disease once thought to be caused by **bad** air

malnourished

a condition of **bad** nutrition

dismal

etymologically 'of an **evil** day'

malfunction

when something is functioning **badly**

malignant

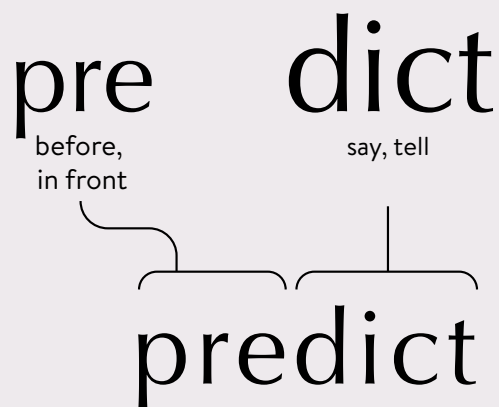
of a **bad** tumor or of one disposed to do **evil**

Good words with the root **mal**

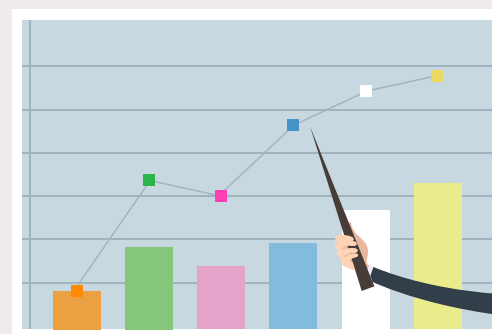
dismal, maladaptive, maladjusted, maladroit, malady, malaise, malapropism, malaria, malcontent, malediction, malefaction, malefactor, maleficent, malevolent, malfeasance, malformation, malformed, malfunction, malice, malign, malignancy, malignant, malingering, malingerer, malnourished, malnutrition, malodorous, malpractice, maltreat

Dic/Dict : say, tell

The Latin root word **dict** and its variant **dic** both mean 'say.' Some common English vocabulary words that come from this root include **dictionary**, **contradict**, and **dedicate**. Perhaps the easiest way in which to remember this root is the word **prediction**, for a **prediction** is 'said' before something actually happens.



When you predict an occurrence, you 'say' what is going to happen 'before' it occurs; of course, you may or may not be correct!



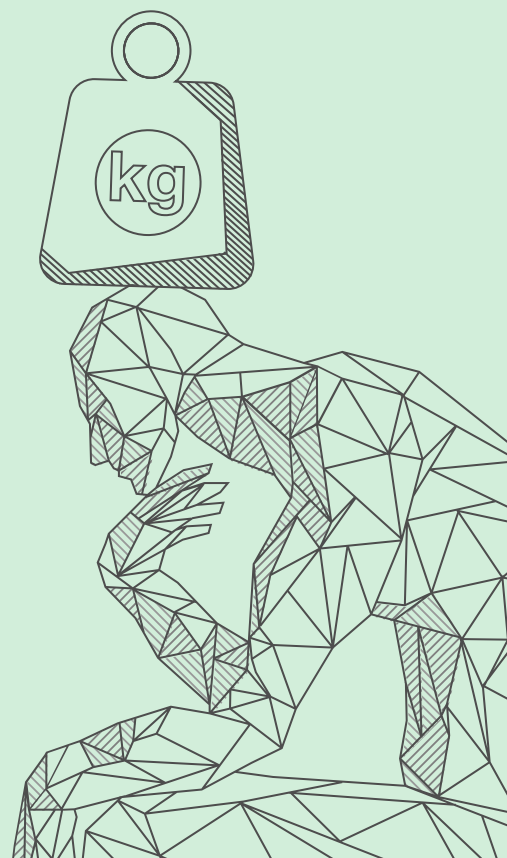
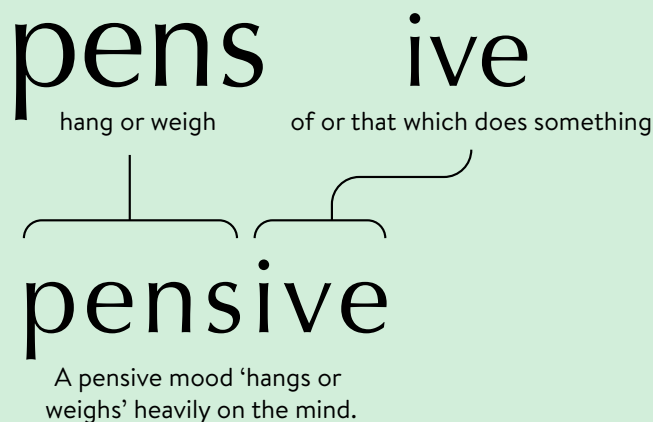
dictionary	tells how to say words
indicate	say to make known
valedictorian	one who says farewell
verdict	speaking of the truth
predicament	result when someone says something too quickly

Good words with the root **dic/dict**

abdicate, addict, addictive, adjudication, adjudicator, benediction, condition, contradict, dedicate, dictate, dictation, dictator, dictatorial, diction, dictionary, dictum, edict, indicate, indication, indicator, indices, indict, indictment, injudicious, interdict, interdiction, judicature, judicial, judiciary, juridical, jurisdiction, malediction, predicament, predicate, predict, predictability, predictor, prejudicial, valediction, valedictorian, valedictory, verdict

Pend/Pens : hang, weigh

The Latin root word **pend** and its variant **pens** both mean 'hang' or 'weigh.' These roots are the word origin of many English vocabulary words, including **pend**, **pendant**, **suspense**, and **expensive**. An easy way to remember these different meanings is that a **pendant** 'hangs' from your neck, whereas you have to 'weigh' out a lot of money if something is **expensive**.



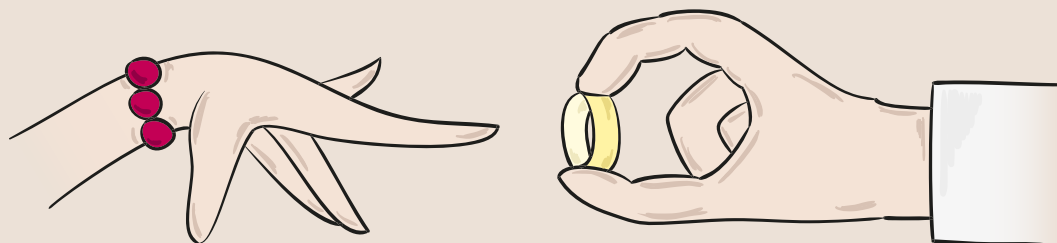
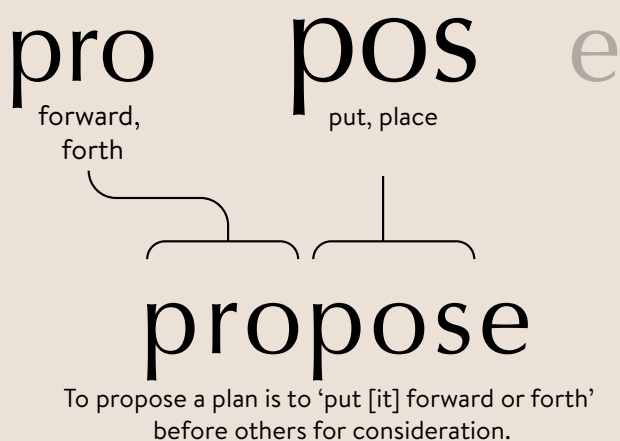
independent	not hanging from
suspend	hang
expensive	of a weighing out a lot
pendant	jewelry item which hangs
pendulum	swinging weight that hangs from a rope

Good words with the roots **pend/pens**

append, appendage, appendectomy, appendices, appendix, compendious, compendium, compensate, compensation, compensatory, depend, dependability, dependable, dependent, dispensable, dispensation, dispense, dispenser, expend, expenditure, expensive, impend, impending, indispensable, inexpensive, interdependent, penchant, pend, pendant, pendent, pending, pendulous, pendulum, pensive, perpendicular, propensity, recompense, spend, spendthrift, stipend, suspenders, suspense, suspenseful

Pos : put, place

The Latin root *pos* means 'put.' This Latin root is the word origin of a large number of English vocabulary words, including **compose** and **expose**. The root **pos** is easily recalled via the word **dispose**, for when you **dispose** of something you 'put' it away, hopefully into a recycling or compost bin.



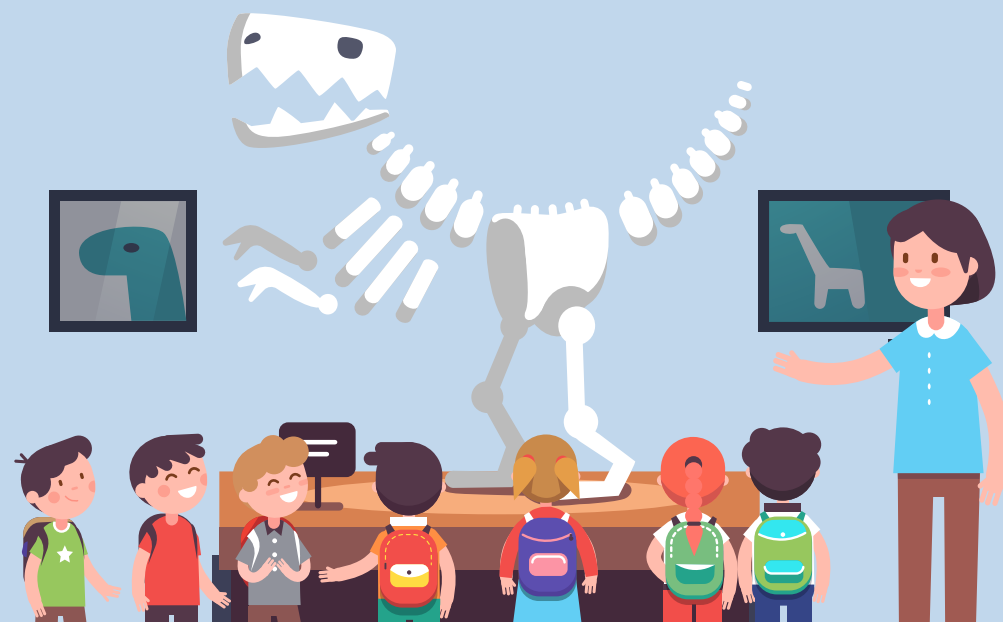
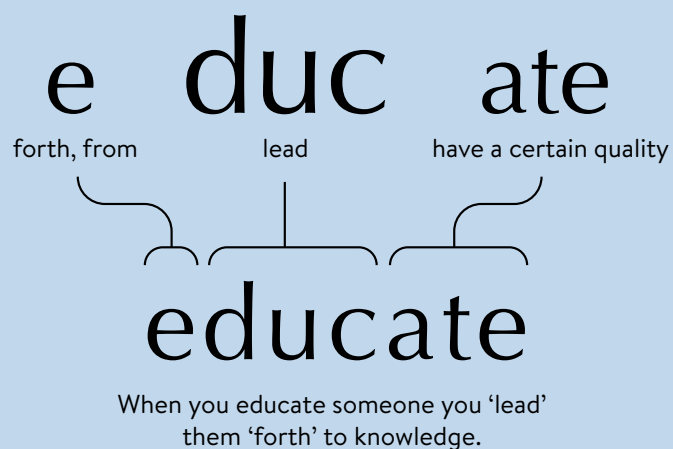
composition	the act of putting together
dispose	to put away
juxtapose	put next to
expose	to put out
opposition	the act of putting against

Good words with the root *pos*

compose, composed, composure, decompose, depose, discomposed, discomposure, disposal, dispose, disposed, expose, exposure, impose, imposing, indispose, indisposed, interpose, juxtapose, oppose, predispose, predisposed, presuppose, proposal, propose, superimpose, superimposed, suppose, supposedly, transpose

Duc/Duct : lead

The Latin root words **duc** and **duct** mean to 'lead.' Some common English vocabulary words that come from these roots include **educate**, **reduce**, **produce**, and **product**. Perhaps the best way to remember this root is to think of someone who is **educated**, or has been 'led' forth into knowledge.



produce

lead forth

duchess

leader

reduce

lead back

conductor

one who thoroughly *leads*

abduct

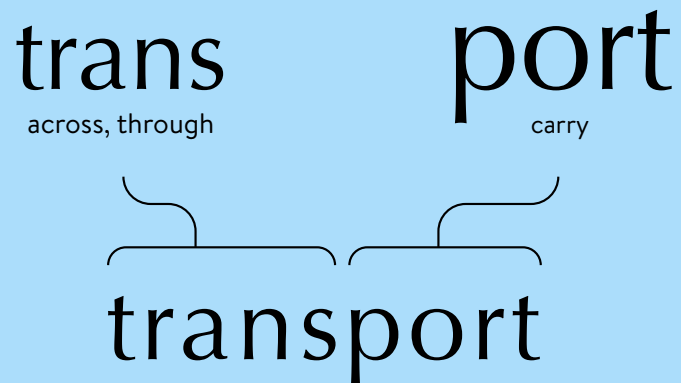
lead away

Good words with the roots **duc/duct**

abduct, adduce, aqueduct, conduce, conducive, conduct, deduce, deducible, deduction, duchess, duchy, duct, educative, educator, educe, induce, inducement, induction, introduce, introduction, irreducible, produce, product, reduce, reduction, reproduce, reproducibility, reproducible, reproduction, traduce, uneducated, viaduct

Port : carry

The **important** Latin root word **port** means ‘carry.’ Some common English words that use this root include **import**, **export**, **deport**, and **report**. An easy way to remember this root is through the word **portable**, which is something that is easily ‘carried’ from one place to another.



When a truck transports goods, such as food or electronics, from one state to another, it ‘carries’ them ‘across’ state lines, or ‘carries’ them from one state ‘through’ to another.



import

carry in

comport

how one *carries* oneself

portfolio

that which *carries* items

portly

one who *carries* much body weight

reporter

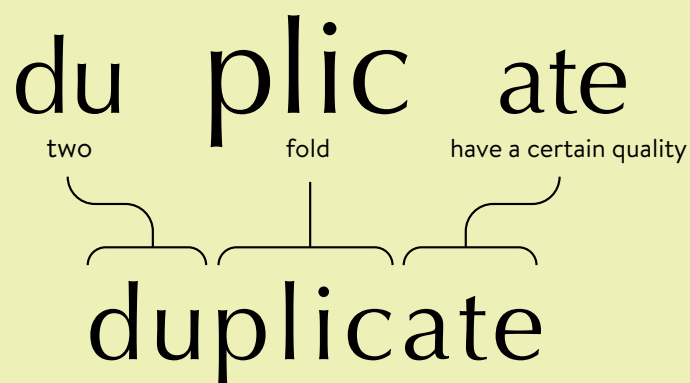
one who *carries* back

Good words with the root **port**

comport, deport, deportation, deportment, disport, export, import, important, insupportable, port, portable, portage, porter, portfolio, portliness, portly, portmanteau, purport, rapport, report, sport, support, supportive, teleportation, transport

Plic : fold

The English root **plic** comes from a Latin root word meaning 'fold.' Some common English words that come from this root include **application**, **multiplication**, and **replicate**. Perhaps the easiest way to remember **plic** is through the word **duplicate**, or to 'fold' twice, thus making two things.



When you have duplicated something, it's as if you have 'folded [it] twice,' hence having 'two' copies of the same thing.



multiplication	act of folding many times
replicate	fold again
accomplice	one folded with another
complicated	thoroughly folded
simplicity	folded but once

Good words with the root **plic**

accomplice, applicant, application, complicate, complicated, complicit, complicity, duplicate, duplicitous, duplicity, explicate, explicit, implicate, implication, implicit, inapplicable, inexplicable, multiplication, multiplicity, replica, replicate, simplicity, suppliant, suplicate, triplicate

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—*Karla Eaton, Woodson High*

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