

Grade 3 Playlist: Clues to Unknown Words Using Known Roots

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.C*:

- Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion).

Welcome

A dictionary is not the only way to figure out the meaning of new words. Readers also can look for familiar word parts. These word parts might appear in other words that readers already know. By looking for familiar word parts, including root words, readers can find clues to the meanings of new words.

Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine the meaning of unknown words by using familiar root words.

Review

Key Terms

- A **root word** is a word that does not have an **affix**. Sometimes a root word can stand alone. Other times, it is a Greek or Latin word that cannot be used without the help of an affix.
- One type of affix is a **prefix**. A prefix is added to the beginning of a root word.
- Another type of affix is called a **suffix**. A suffix is added to the end of a root word.

Watch!

Before getting started with the lesson, watch this quick video. It shows how the Latin root “vid” acts as a root word for many other words in the English language today.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jks_Rulr58c

Exploring the Standard

A Closer Look: Root Words that Can Stand Alone

Good readers try to pick apart new words and find familiar word parts. The most important thing to look for when searching for the meaning of a specific word is the root. Sometimes, the root is a word that can stand alone. See the examples below:

action

react

activate

active

actual

activity



What root do all of these words share? By looking closely, a reader can find the root “act” in each of the above words. The word “act” can stand alone. It does not need an affix to make it complete. Notice how the root “act” can fall at the beginning or end of the word. Many of the words above are fairly common, and readers should be able to figure out that they all involve movement or “doing” something. Look at some of these longer, more complicated words that also share the same root, “act.”

radioactive *overreaction* *actuation* *deactivate* *interaction*

Some of these words may not seem so familiar. But, because of the root word, readers can figure out that the meaning of these words has something to do with movement.

Watch!

The characters in this video discover that words with the same root have related meanings.

- <https://www.opened.com/video/roots-prefixes-and-suffixes/117654>

Practice!

Now it is time to start hunting for root words. Take this practice quiz to find the root words within the words given. Start with Level A, and then move on to Level B and Level C for an extra challenge. Some of the words may seem unfamiliar, but look closely to find a root word that you recognize.

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/quiz/en18root-l1-quiz>

A Closer Look: Root Words that Cannot Stand Alone

Sometimes a root word cannot stand alone. An example of this type of root can be seen in the words below:

thermos *thermostat* *thermal* *thermometer*

What root do the words above share? The root word is “therm,” which means “heat.” “Therm” is not a word part that can stand alone. It must have a prefix or suffix to help make it a word. However, it can still give readers a clue that a word is about temperature and heat. Without this knowledge of the root word, a reader might have to look in a dictionary to figure out the word’s meaning.

Practice!

Practice using common root words in this activity. Notice that the same root can be used in multiple words.

- <http://www.tv411.org/vocabulary/understanding-how-words-work/roots-and-their-families/activity/1/1>

Applying the Standard

Now it is time to practice finding known root words in order to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Take this online quiz, which is 15 questions long.

- http://www.softschools.com/quizzes/grammar/root_words/quiz1031.html



Teaching Notes: Clues to Unknown Words Using Known Roots

The goal of L.3.4.C is for students to use knowledge of a root word to help figure out the meaning of an unknown word with the same root. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Do a cross-curricular activity. Look in a science or math textbook and find a paragraph that has good examples of words with Latin or Greek roots. Examine these words carefully with students to show how common roots give clues about what a word might mean.
2. Find lengthy words that students might be unfamiliar with (biosphere, dictation, gratuity, etc.) and then pick them apart as a class. Can students find a root word? What other words might share the same root? How are the meanings of these words related? As you analyze words, create a word map on the board showing connections between words with the same roots.
3. Play “Pass the Root.” Have a piece of paper for each student that lists a common root word at the top. (This works with white boards as well.) Then, give the students 30 seconds to come up with a word that uses that root. Have students pass the paper or whiteboard to their neighbor, who has 30 seconds to come up with a new word using that root. Pass the papers around about six times to see if students can think of six different words. Have students read their papers aloud to get help pronouncing the words. Discuss as a class what the meaning of each word is.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching L.3.4.C:

Root Word Websites: These websites give lists of root words and examples of words that use them.

- <http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-root-words.html>
- https://msu.edu/~defores1/gre/roots/gre_rts_afx2.htm

Prefix/Suffix/Root Worksheets: This resource gives multiple downloadable worksheets that deal with the topic of root words, prefixes, and suffixes.

- http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/language_arts/prefix/

Online Games and Activities about Root Words:

- In this game, students have to identify the root and affixes in each word.
http://www.sadlier-oxford.com/phonics/5_6/fishtanks1/fishtanks1.htm
- In this game, students have to match the word with its root.
<http://www.quia.com/cc/2200.html>

