

Derivatives - English Building Blocks from Latin

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Romans built in many lands in more than one way.



Pont du Gard

Humans have throughout their long history combined words they knew to form new ones. Since Latin was the language of a politically powerful nation for well over a thousand years, and as a major language of religion, education and communication is well-launched on its second thousand years, it has had an amazing influence on many languages having ties to the three continents where the Romans or their successors held sway. By some estimates about 70% of English words are ultimately derived from Latin. Knowing the meanings of Latin words and syllables and the ways in which they are used can be of immense help to people hoping to understand English better.

These word studies have been arranged in groups generally progressing from obvious to more difficult. The literal English meaning of the Latin word should first be written down. In some cases, such as “clarify”, the literal meaning provides a dictionary definition—“to make clear.” In some cases, such as “onerous”, the literal meaning—“full of burden”—needs explaining. To all of the units students should be encouraged to add other derivatives which they have found and confirmed in the dictionary.

Influential Latin Irregular Adjectives

Fill in the blank beneath each adjective form with an English word derived from the Latin. Consult a dictionary if necessary. Define each English word; then check in the dictionary.

Positive

1. bonus-good

Comparative

melior-better

Superlative

optimus-best

2. malus-bad

peior-worse

pessimus-worst

3. magnus-great

maior, maius-greater

maximus-greatest

4. parvus-small

minor, minus-smaller

minimus-smallest

5. multus-many

——, plus-more

plurimus-most

6. exterus-outside, out

exterior-outer

extremus-outermost

7. inferus-low

inferior-lower

infimus-lowest

8. posterus-late

posterior-later

postremus-latest

9. superus-high,distinguished

superior-higher

supremus-highest

10.

interior-inner

intimus-innermost

11.

ulterior-further

ultimus-furthest

12.

prior-earlier

primus-earliest

13.

propior-nearer

proximus-nearest

14. novus-new

novissimus-newest

Latin Plurals in English

Many Latin nouns are used in English today in their original form. Often we simply add an "s" in the English manner to make these plural, but formal or exact writing requires that we at least know their correct plurals.

Make the following nouns plural, then define each. Remember:

"ex" or "ix" becomes "ices" "us" becomes "i"; "um" becomes "a"
"is" becomes "es" "a" becomes "ae"

1. radius _____

2. index _____

3. bacillus _____

4. datum _____

5. pontifex _____

6. cervix _____

7. antenna _____

8. vertex _____

9. axis _____

10. alumnus _____

11. appendix _____

12. hippopotamus _____

13. medium _____

14. matrix _____

15. bacterium _____

16. alga _____

17. codex _____

18. nebula _____

19. umbra _____

20. aura _____

Latin Words to English Verbs

Using the Latin words given and their definitions, add “fy” (from the Latin verb “facio”—to do or make) to create English verbs. Define each verb.

Example: *amplus, a, um*—strong, large
 amplify—to make stronger or larger

1. *certus, a, um*—sure, fixed

2. *clarus, a, um*—clear, loud

3. *diversus, a, um*—turned different ways, opposite

4. *falsus, a, um*—mistaken, false

5. *fortis, e*—brave, strong, manly

6. *liquidus, a, um*—fluid

7. *mollis, e*—soft, gentle

8. *nullus, a, um*—none

9. *pacifer, a, um*—peaceful

10. *sanctus, a, um*—holy

11. *fructus, a, um*—fruitful

12. *magnus, a, um*—great

13. *deus*—a god

14. *glorius, a, um*—full of glory

15. *petra*—a stone

16. *solidus, a, um*—firm

17. *purus, a, um*—clean

18. *terreo*—frighten

19. *indemno*—secure from injury

Latin Verbs Whose Conjugation Influences English Spelling

Many seemingly arbitrary English spellings originate in Latin conjugation forms. When the suffix “bilis” (“ble” in English) is added to a verb to create an adjective meaning “able to” or “able to be”, the vowel before this suffix is determined in most cases by the conjugation of the Latin verb.

Examples:

curo, curare—to cure curabilis, curable—able to be cured
audio, audire—to hear audibilis, audible—able to be heard

A. Form and define English adjectives from this suffix and the following Latin verbs:

1. aro, arare—to plough _____

2. administro, administrare—to govern _____

3. commendo, commendare—entrust, commend _____

4. consulto, consultare—discuss, consult _____

5. declaro, declarare—reveal, declare _____

6. explico, explicare—unfold, explain _____

7. laudo, laudare—praise _____

8. muto, mutare—change _____

9. navigo, navigare—to sail _____

10. noto, notare—mark, note _____

11. penetro, penetrare—enter, penetrate _____

12. porto, portare—carry _____

B. Form English adjectives from these verbs (All use the vowel “i.”)

13. credo, credere—believe _____

14. deleo, delere—destroy _____

15. edo, edere—to eat _____

16. lego, legere—read _____

17. reduco, reducere—to lead back, make smaller _____

18. resisto, resistere—stand against, resist _____

19. *converto, convertere*—to turn or change _____

20. *vinco, vincere*—to conquer _____

C. From numbers 13 through 18 form an opposite adjective using the prefix "in." ("In" may assimilate into the first letter of the base verb).

13. *credo, credere*—believe _____

14. *deleo, delere*—destroy _____

15. *edo, edere*—to eat _____

16. *lego, legere*—read _____

17. *reduco, reducere*—to lead back, make smaller _____

18. *resisto, resistere*—stand against, resist _____

Latin Present Participles in English

The genitive singular of a Latin present participle often becomes an English adjective. After that it sometimes becomes a noun. The original conjugation form of the participle determines English spelling.

For each infinitive make the genitive form of the present participle and drop the "is." Define the English word you have made, checking the dictionary if necessary.

Example

accidere—*accidens, accidentis*—accident—(act of) striking or falling upon,
that which strikes or falls upon

1. *errare* _____

2. *migrare* _____

3. *servare* _____

4. *ex(s)pectare* _____

5. *secare* _____

6. *studere* _____

7. *adjacere (iacere)* _____

8. *docere* _____

9. *apparere* _____

10. *crescere* _____

11. antecedere _____
12. agere _____
13. adolescere _____
14. currere _____
15. vincere _____
16. tangere _____
17. solvere _____
18. regere _____
19. repellere _____
20. consequi (consequere) _____
21. incandescere _____
22. diligere _____
23. deponere _____
24. efficere _____
25. sapere _____
26. incipere _____
27. transire _____
28. convenire _____
29. aperire _____
30. sentire _____

Building Adjectives Through Endings

A. "Pertaining to"

As the suffix "bilis" can create a word meaning "able to" or "able to be", so the endings "alis", "ilis", "anus", "icus", and others create adjectives meaning "pertaining to." From the meaning of the Latin word from which they are formed, define each of the following and give its English derivative.

1. formalis _____
2. facilis _____

3. urbanus _____
4. poenalis _____
5. puerilis _____
6. rusticus _____
7. montanus _____
8. civicus _____
9. fidelis _____
10. mortalis _____

B. "osus" words

The ending "osus", which usually becomes "ous" in English, means "full of". Define the following Latin adjectives and give their English derivatives.

1. ponderosus _____
2. verbosus _____
3. malodorosus _____
4. dolorosus _____
5. vitiosus _____
6. timorosus _____
7. taediosus _____
8. litigiosus _____
9. hispidosus _____
10. deliciosus _____

Building Nouns Through Endings

A. "act" or "quality"

The suffixes "tas" (ty), "tia" (ce, cy) and "tudo" (tude) create many nouns meaning "act or quality of." Break each of these nouns in to its Latin parts, give its definition, and then give its English derivative.

- I. libertas _____
2. pulchritudo _____

3. constantia _____
4. veritas _____
5. gravitas _____
6. gratitudo _____
7. malitia _____
8. fortitudo _____
9. levitas _____
10. turpitudō _____

B. "one who"

The ending "tor" or "sor" from the fourth principal part of a verb means "one who." Define the following Latin nouns. Give their English derivatives if different from the Latin.

1. conductor _____
2. cursor _____
3. amator _____
4. malefactor _____
5. imperator _____

C. "act" or "result of act"

The ending "io"(ion) or "tio" (tion) means "the act" or "the result of an act." Define these.

1. oratio _____
2. animatio _____
3. castigatio _____
4. eruptio _____
5. regio _____

Compounding Verbs

A. Compound each of the ten verbs with four of the prefixes to create new Latin verbs.

B. Write the four principal parts of each new verb and give English derivatives.

(Notice that English verbs are often made from the present stem of a Latin verb and nouns from the fourth principal part.)

Prefixes:

ab—away _____

in—in, not _____

ad—to _____

inter—between _____

con—with, together _____

prae—before _____

contra—against _____

per—through _____

de—down _____

pro—for _____

dis—away _____

re—back, again _____

ex, e—out _____

trans—across _____

Base Verbs:

1. duco, ducere, duxi, ductum—lead

2. cedo, cedere, cessi, cessum—move

3. mitto, mittere, misi, missum—send

4. pono, ponere, posui, positum—place, put

5. fero, ferre, tuli, latum—bear, carry

6. eo, ire, ii, iturum—go

7. porto, portare, portavi, portatum—carry

8. venio, venire, veni, ventum—come

9. scribo, scribere, scripsi, scriptum—write

10. verto, vertere, verti, versum—turn

Important Free Spirit Verbs

The two very important First Conjugation irregular verbs, “do” and “sto”, have many compounds and many English derivatives. Becoming aware of these will help students in Latin as well as in English. The compounds of “do”, even such obvious ones as “reddo”, confuse us by moving to the third declension. Their conjugation vowel of course becomes a short “e” and the vowel of their last two principal parts is generally short “i”. Thus such a verb as “perdo” would be easier to learn if we could recognize its relationship to “do”, with which we were burdened early in Latin I. (We can overlook the scholarly arguments about whether “do, dare” really exists as a true verb and whether there was in the dawn of time a phantom verb “do, dere” from which the compounds are derived: we shall simply use the similarity to help us remember the forms.)

“Sto” is easier to deal with, but it is readily confused with “sisto”, so let us carefully consider all three of these “free spirit” major verbs.

A. Making “do” verbs

Make four principal parts for these “relatives” of “do, dare, dedi, datum.” Give English derivatives for three of them.

Example:

condo, condere, condidi, conditum- to “give” or put together

1. perdo _____
2. indo _____
3. condo _____
4. reddo _____
5. edo _____

B. Making “sto” verbs

Make principal parts for these compounds of “sto, stare, steti, statum”-stand. Remember that the short “e” in the third principal part becomes “i” from the rules of the last lesson. Derivatives generally come from the present participle. Make a derivative from three of the verbs.

Example: resto, restare, restiti, restatum—to stand back

1. consto _____
2. insto _____
3. persto _____
4. circumsto _____
(*check forms*)
5. praesto _____

C. Making "sisto" verbs

Make principal parts for these compounds of "sisto, sistere, stiti or steti, statum"-to stand, cause to stand, to establish. Many of these have no fourth principal part. Give derivatives for each verb.

Example: consisto, consistere, constitui, constitum-to stand together

1. insisto _____

2. resisto _____

3. desisto _____

4. subsisto _____

5. persisto _____