Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 5: The Loss of Syllables in Words

• the theme of Chapters 5 and 6 is shorter words created from longer words
  – Back Formation
  – Apheresis/Aphesis

• **BACK FORMATION**: “the creation of simpler forms from more complex forms, usually by the removal of an affix,” e.g.
  – reune < reunion
  – surveil < surveillance
  – lase/lasing < laser
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 5: The Loss of Syllables in Words

GO TO EXERCISE V, p. 51 (Ayers)
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 5: The Loss of Syllables in Words

• **APHERESIS**: “the elimination of the first letter or syllable of a word”
  – e.g. paper the house (< wallpaper)

• a common type of apheresis is *aphesis*
  – “the loss of a short, unaccented first syllable of a word”
  
  • rise < arise
  • bide < abide
  • light < alight, e.g.
    “He lighted down from his chariot” (2 Kings 21)
    “If you deny it, let the danger light / Upon your charter and your city’s freedom.” (*Merchant of Venice*, IV.1.38-9)
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 5: The Loss of Syllables in Words

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Lesson 5: The Loss of Syllables in Words

• syncope: “the loss of a syllable in the middle of a word”
  – curtsy < courtesy
  – fortnight < fourteen(th) night
  – proctor < procurator
  – lord < loafward
  – lady < loafdig (dig = knead)

• words pronounced with syncope, but not spelled with it
  – every = “ev’ry”
  – general = “gen’ral”
  – catholic = “cath’lic”
  – interesting = “int’resting”
Latin and Greek Elements in English

Lesson 5: The Loss of Syllables in Words

• apocope: “the loss of a syllable at the end of a word”
  – good-bye < “god-be-with-thee”
  – hello < “whole-be-thou”

• “whole” in the archaic sense of “healthy,” cf. wholesome