

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

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GO TO EXERCISE V, p. 51 (Ayers)

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- **APHERESIS**: “the elimination of the first letter or syllable of a word”
 - e.g. paper the house (< wallpaper)
- a common type of apheresis is aphaesis
 - “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)

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- 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”

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- 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