

Greek Lessons 20 and 21

The goals of Greek Lessons 20 and 21 are, one, to review Latin forms since the final exam is fast approaching and you'll see Latin-based words on it and, two, to give you a glimpse into the plethora of technical and scientific words in English which are based on classical roots, the majority from Greek. First, in this video presentation you'll find a ten-sentence quiz which focuses on the Latin roots we've studied in the first half of the class. That should give you some sense of which Latin forms you need to study as you prepare for the final. In the audio presentation accompanying this video, we'll take our first glimpse into the vast array of scientific terminology which has been created out of classical word roots. When we're done here, please don't forget to listen to that audio presentation.

As you stare down the final, which is cumulative and constitutes almost a third of your final grade, it's time to bring Latin back into the mix. The next three presentations will revive, rehearse and refine your Latin word roots. I'll give you ten sentences here and another set of ten in each of the next two presentations, so you can dust off your Roman "s'words" and sharpen them for the battle. The first decad — I know you know what that means — will feature some straightforward Latinate vocabulary, nothing too weird. We'll crank it up in the next two sets of sentences. After each sentence appears, pause the presentation, etymologize the underlined word and define it to the best of your ability. Then restart the presentation to see the answer. Here's your first sentence.

1. God seposed a seventh of our time for his exterior worship. [Okay, go ahead and pause, etymologize and define. When you're done, restart the presentation to check your answer.]

Welcome back! Let's start at the beginning. Is there a prefix? Yes, *se-*, meaning "aside, away." Another prefix? No. So what about a base? There better be one, huh? That's right, *POSE-*, meaning "place, put." Remember to define the basic word, the way it will be in a dictionary. In this case take off the final *-d*, the English past-tense marker. So what part of speech is "sepose"? A verb, meaning what? "To set aside, to reserve." God "set aside" Sunday and made it a day of rest. Be sure to start your definition with "to..." since this is a verb. Moving on...

2. He never varied his ideas, seldom his expressions . . . he went on stubbornly verbigerating in the face of history. [Pause the presentation now.]

Okay, let's see how you did. Prefix? No. Base? *VERB-*, meaning "word." What's that *-i-* doing there? Oh, it's a sign that two bases are being combined. You could say it was the base *I-/IT-* ("to go"), but don't use that base unless you have to. Remember that *IT-* is rarely ever — and for our purposes, never! — combined with other bases. So what's the second base? *GER-*, meaning "carry (on), produce." Is there a suffix? Yes, *-ate*, but which *-ate*? There are two. Well, what part of speech is this word? It's a verb, so this must be the verb-forming suffix *-ate* which means . . . "to." Or you can just say "verb-forming suffix." How easy is that! So, put an etymological definition together: "to carry on (in/with) words." "Carry on"? Does that sound positive or negative to you? Negative, so it's an example of what type of semantic change? Degeneration. To make the metaphorical leap — and it's not a very big one here — how would you give this word a negative connotation? How about "to repeat a word or sentence endlessly or

meaninglessly”? To verbigerate is to produce words but not sense. Ever been around people who do that? Well, that’s why there’s a word for it.

3. Most frequently this moss is subnascent and found on decaying trees. [Pause.]

Let’s see how you did. Prefix? Yes, *sub-*, meaning “under.” Another prefix? No. What’s the base? *NASC-*, meaning NASCAR. No! “Be born.” Suffix? Yes, *-ent*, meaning “-ing.” Part of speech? Adjective. So what’s the etymological definition? “Being born under.” What does that mean here in this sentence? What’s the moss doing? Yes, “growing underneath.” I’m not sure we really need a word for that, but there it is.

4. Redient birds in spring also add to the glorious array of colors on these wetlands. [Pause.]

Prefix? *Re-*, meaning “back, again.” Base? *DI-*? Wait, there’s not a *DI-* base, at least not in Latin. Alright, if the base isn’t obvious, try working from the back of the word. What’s the suffix? *-ent* (“-ing”). Or it can be *-ient*, but then we’re still left with the problem of the base. There’s no Latin base *D-* or *DI-*, or *REDI-*, but there has to be a base. Words must have bases. Well, whatever it is here, it can’t be a big base, a long one, so let’s think about small bases. What do you go for when you can’t find a base? What about what we just talked about: *I-/IT-* (“go”)? Okay, but then what about the *-d-*? Oh, that’s right! The prefix *re-* has a variant form *red-*, plus the base *I-*, plus the suffix *-ent*. And what part of speech is redient? An adjective. What does it mean literally? “Going back.” How about “coming back”? Meaning birds that are ... “returning.” From a migration, obviously. Migrating on, ...

5. In one type of exorcism, the priest forces the demon out of its victim’s lungs through exsufflation. [Pause.]

Prefix? *Ex-*, meaning “out, from.” Another prefix? Yes, *sub-*, meaning “under,” here in an assimilated form *suf-*. Another prefix? No, two is enough. Base? *FLAT-*, meaning “blow.” Next element? A suffix *-ion*, meaning “the act of.” What part of speech? Noun. So what’s the etymological definition? “The action of breathing upon,” which in this case means “the forcible removal of a demon by pushing it out with breath.” What is this? Holy mouth-to-mouth? Okay. Next sentence.

6. Etymologists often find a substantial difference between the primary and tralatitious meanings of a word. [Pause.]

Prefix? Hmm. Maybe this is another one where’s it good to start at the back. Suffix? *-ous*? If so, what’s the next element going backwards? *-iti*? No. Recognize any base in here? Sure, *LAT-* meaning what? “Side”? No, no, that’s *LATER-* as in “lateral.” What’s *LAT-*? That’s right? “Bear, carry,” a variant of *FER-*. So, if *LAT-* is the base, what’s the suffix? There you go! *-itious*, “tending to.” Then what’s the prefix? *Tra-*, a variant of *trans-* meaning “across.” What part of speech? Adjective. Now the etymological definition: “tending to bear across.” Put that back into the sentence: “Etymologists often find a substantial difference between the primary meaning and the meaning that ‘tends to bear across’ of a word.” “Across” what? Remember that *FER-/LAT-* can sometimes mean “bear yourself somewhere,” that is, “go.” What do you “go

across” when you define a word. That’s right! We’ve been doing it all through this class. The metaphorical barrier. So the meaning of “tralatitious” is “having significance derived from something outside, something ‘brought across’; i.e., metaphorical.” And speaking of metaphor, let’s look at something from Shakespeare.

7. Perpend, my princess, and give ear! [Pause.]

Prefix? *Per-*, meaning “through, thoroughly, completely.” What’s the next word element? The base *PEND-*, meaning “hang, weigh.” What part of speech is *perpend*? A verb, so what word should you begin your definition with? *To*. “*To* ... weigh completely or carefully.” Think metaphorically again. If you “weigh something carefully in your mind,” what are you doing? You’re pondering. So, the definition of *perpend* is “to reflect, to consider.” Now *perpend* this:

8. Children from the youngest age should be encouraged to be omnilegent. Even the back of a cereal box can be instructive. [Pause.]

First word element? *OMN-*, meaning “all.” Is that a prefix? No, it’s base. You need to write it in all CAPS. And the next element? *LEG-*, another base, meaning “choose, read.” What about the *-i-* in between *OMN-* and *LEG-*? Yes, the combining vowel seen often buffering bases. Next element? The suffix *-ent*, meaning “-ing.” Part of speech? Adjective. Etymological definition? “Reading all (things).” And naturally that implies “eager to read.” Let’s look another word with two bases.

9. After a roughly sexennial period, the war was brought to its end with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. [Pause.]

What’s the first word element? The base *SEX-*, meaning “six.” And the second? *ENNI-*, meaning “year.” Where’s the buffering *-i-*? Ah, you don’t need it here because there’s nothing that needs to be buffered; the *-e-* at the front of *ENNI-* can easily follow the *-x-* at the end of *SEX-*. Any suffix here? Yes, *-al* — not *-ial*, the *-i-* is part of the base — and what does *-al* mean? What do you say when you can’t remember the definition of an adjective-forming suffix? What’s your best guess? That’s right. “Pertaining to.” And in this case you’d be right! So what part of speech is *sexennial*? An adjective — remember that the last suffix dictates the part of speech. And then what’s the definition? “Lasting six years.” Don’t forget to put *-ing* on the end of the first word when you’re defining an adjective. And finally, ...

10. Fricatives like *f* and *v* are sometimes termed obstruents. [Pause.]

This time you tell me the word elements, starting from the front of the word. Yes, the prefix *ob-*, meaning “against.” Next? The base *STRU-*, meaning “build.” You probably know this base better in its past-tense form *STRUCT-*, but *construing* and *constructing* are etymologically the same thing. Remember to try adding *-t-* or *-s-* onto the end of a verb base if you can’t recall its meaning. A *-t-* or *-s-* of that sort creates the past-tense form and sometimes that form has produced a derivative you’re more likely to recognize, like *construct* (vs. *construe*). Last element? Good, the suffix *-ent*, meaning “-ing.” See how often that shows up. And what part of speech is this word? Well, from *-ent* you’d guess it’s an adjective, but here it’s clearly a noun.

Look at the plural ending *-s*. Only nouns can be pluralized in English. So it's an adjective acting like a noun. What's the term for that? Yes, good for you! Substantive. So, what's the etymological definition? "(A thing) building against (something else)." If you build something up against something else, what are you doing? You're blocking it, right? So an obstruent is "a speech sound created by the partial or complete closing ('obstruction') of the breathing passage which through friction produces a grating sound." Obstruents are also called "fricatives" from *fricare* the Latin verb meaning "to grate."

Great! That's it for the video presentation for Greek Lessons 20 and 21. Next you should listen to the audio presentation on the scientific forms discussed in these lessons. You'll find a link to that audio presentation on the course web site.

Happy etymologizing!

ASSIGNMENT

This is the audio presentation covering the assignments in Greek Lessons 20 and 21, the first two lessons addressing scientific and medical terminology based on classical roots. Please open your textbook to page 258, where you'll find the assignment for Lesson 20. There Mr. Ayers introduces — or more accurately *reintroduces*, because you've already learned variations of them — three suffixes seen widely in medical terminology: *-itis*, *-oma* and *-osis*.

The first one, *-itis*, meaning "an inflammation of, an inflammatory disease of," is a variant of the *-ite* suffix you learned in Greek Lesson 9, the one that means "one connected with." In a medical context, that suffix has adopted the specialized sense of "inflammation" and occurs broadly — arthritis, bursitis, appendicitis — so broadly, in fact, that its general sense of "trouble relating to" has spread into popular speech, producing monstrosities like vacationitis and televisionitis. Hilari-itis!

The second suffix, *-oma* which has a basic sense of cancer or tumor, is a variant of the *-ma* suffix you know from Lesson 11 where you learned it means "the result of." Here's something you need to become used to about all the medical terms we're studying in these lessons. None of them, or at least very few, mean good news from the doctor. Most of them describe diseases, afflictions, plagues, aches, ailments, infirmities, parasites, rashes, pains and every other imaginable type of physiological horror. Why? Because, well, that's why you go to the doctor. If everything's fine, why go? Only when bad things start happening to you do you seek a doctor's advice, and that means most medical terms are just, well, icky. Degeneration on adrelaine. I have to say that teaching this class has shown me just how much can go wrong with your body. It's terrifying. I've learned things can break down in parts of me where I didn't even know there were parts of me. Now I'm completely paranoid. So fair warning: this last section of the class will not make you a more optimistic person.

The third suffix, *-osis* ("the diseased condition of"), is just one more reason to get depressed. It's what the suffix *-sis* ("the act of") becomes when it checks into a hospital. And note please that, when an *-osis* word is turned into an adjective, it becomes *-otic*, like psychosis and psychotic, as in breakdown.

The second section of the assignment for Lesson 20 reviews some bases seen widely in medical and scientific terminology. I expect you to know these only on a matching basis, so there's no point in my reading them to you, especially since I have nothing to add to what Mr. Ayers says. So please review carefully the bases on pages 259-261, beginning with ARTHR- ("joint, speech sound or articulation") and going through SCLER- ("hard"). When you're done with that, proceed to the matching exercise on page 262. You will see a matching exercise of exactly this sort on the final exam. If you want, you can also do Section 3 of this assignment on the previous page but I will not ask you to define technical terms in this class. Still, it's good practice, and you'll find the answers to this exercise in the homework answers part of the course web site.

So please stop this audio presentation now and take a moment to learn the bases on pages 259-261 and then do the matching exercises on page 262. This should take you a few minutes. When you're done, I'll give you the answers to the matching exercises. If you have any questions, you can always look a word up in the dictionary or email me. Go! Pause! Now!

Okay, all done? Here are the answers to the matching exercise on page 262: 1 f (as in frightening), 2 e (as in electrocute), 3 a (as in anxiety), 4 g (as in ghastly), 5 h (as in horrible), 6 b (as in bronchitis), 7 i (as in intensive care), 8 c (as in cardiac arrest), 9 j (as in just nasty) and 10 d (as in done with that).

In Greek Lesson 21, Mr. Ayers repeats the same pattern he used in the previous lesson, so we'll do the same, too: suffixes first, then bases, then matching.

The first suffix on page 262, *-ectomy* ("the surgical removal of"), should look very familiar to you. It's a combination of the prefix *ec-* ("out") and the base TOM- ("cut"). It means the doctor's cutting something out. Be careful! Here's yet another example in Greek of where a prefix gets trapped in the middle of a word.

The next suffix *-tomy* ("a surgical operation on, a surgical cutting of") is just *-ectomy* without the *-ec-*, so *-tomy*'s happen when the doctor cuts into something but doesn't take it out. And it doesn't have to be doctor necessarily. A lizard can do it to itself. Autotomy is when a lizard casts off (TOM-) its own (AUTo-) body part like its tail when it's trying to escape a predator. So you see a tailless lizard running down the road? Now you know why it's alive. You should also know that there is a medical suffix *-tome* meaning "a surgical instrument for cutting," as in a microtome (an instrument for making small cuts) or an osteotome used for cutting into bone. Lovely.

The final suffix in this lesson *-rrhea* ("an abnormal discharge") is too disgusting to discuss. Just learn it.

As before, please study the bases on pages 263-264, starting with ADEN- ("gland") and going through UR- ("urine"). Then do the matching exercise on page 265. Pause this presentation now and I'll give you the answers where you're done.

Here are the answers to the matching exercise on page 265: 1 f (as in fatigue), 2 j (as in juvenile), 3 i (as in idiocy), 4 g (as in grotesque), 5 h (as in havoc), 6 c (as in conflagration), 7 a (as in absolute zero), 8 e (as in elegiac -- remember what that means? you need to!), 9 d (the grade you'll get if you don't know "elegiac"), and 10 b (as in better learn it).

And that's I as in "it" for this audio presentation.

Happy Etymologizing!