

**WORD-BUILDING. FIFTY LESSONS,  
COMBINING LATIN, GREEK, AND ANGLO-  
SAXON ROOTS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES,  
INTO ABOUT FIFTY-FIVE HUNDRED COMMON  
DERIVATIVE WORDS IN ENGLISH, WITH A BRIEF  
HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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# WORD-BUILDING

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ROOTS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES, INTO ABOUT FIFTY-  
FIVE HUNDRED COMMON DERIVATIVE  
WORDS IN ENGLISH.

WITH A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

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WITH COMPLIMENTS

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# WORD-BUILDING.

## ELEMENTARY ENGLISH.

ROOTS, OR STEMS, GIVEN UNDER "ELEMENTARY ENGLISH," IN THE SYLLABUS OF THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

### INTRODUCTION.

I. *The Meanings of Root and Stem.*—The word *root* is used by philologists to denote the simplest and most primitive forms which words once had, or to which they can now be traced. In this sense of the word—its rigidly scientific sense—the word *root* names that monosyllabic form which is the origin and source of all verbal derivatives. But usage applies the word as well to *later forms* of these original and primitive words—forms from which, by the use of prefixed and suffixed syllables, *new* words are produced—nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Respectable as is the authority for calling these "later forms" *stems*, what we regard as the prevailing usage leads us to choose *roots* instead.

II. *Definitions.*—A *primitive* word is one not derived from another word in the same language.

A *derivative* word is one derived from another word; as, *unmanly*, *man* being the primitive word.

A *compound* word is one composed of two or more simple words; as, *forty-two*.

*Prefixes* and *suffixes* are, with rare exceptions, relics of words once independent, but now run down into mere formative elements. They are used, each with a meaning of its own, to modify the mean

ing of the root to which in the derivative they are attached ; though, when many of them are used in the same word, it is sometimes difficult to detect in the derivative the distinct force of each. Prefixes precede the root, and suffixes follow it. In the following paragraph the illustrative instance exhibits the root *junct*, the prefixes *con* and *dis*, the suffixes *ion*, *ive*, and *ly*, and the six derivative words formed by combination of the root with these prefixes and suffixes.

III. *Explanation.*—The work below, compacted for the sake of brevity, needs explanation. If, as is usual, two or more prefixes are to be united in succession with the following root,—or with this and the suffix after it,—these prefixes stand unconnected with each other by the + sign. If any two of these are to be taken together and treated as a single prefix, these two are grouped by the + sign. The suffix immediately following the root is to be united with it in its combination with each prefix or group of prefixes. If other suffixes follow, the same thing is to be done with these singly or in groups, the single suffixes or the groups being separated from each other by an *or* in Roman type. The suffix, or the group taken as one, between the first *or* and the second, is to enter into the same combination or combinations as did the first suffix. And so is the suffix or the group between the second *or* and the third, etc., and that which follows the last *or*. For instance, if under *junct* we had *con*, *dis+junct+ion*, or *ive*, or *ive+ly*, this would mean that the pupil had to do as directed with *con+junct+ion*, *dis+junct+ion*, *con+junct+ive*, *dis+junct+ive*, *con+junct+ive+ly*, *dis+junct+ive+ly*; or, dropping signs and the black letters, with the words *conjunction*, *disjunction*, *conjunctive*, *disjunctive*, *conjunctively*, *disjunctively*.

IV. *The Roots and their Order.*—Most of the roots in the Regents' lists are Latin, and are found usually in the Latin verb. We give first the root or roots found in the verb. These stand in the infinitive of the verb and the perfect participle. That in the perfect participle ends usually in *at* or *it* or *t*, and of course denotes the act, expressed by the verb, as completed. The future participle root ending in *ur* follows, if any English words derived from it are to be formed in the paragraph succeeding. The roots which follow in parentheses are mostly those into which the roots just spoken of have changed in their long sojourn in the French language and in English.

If the roots in the Regents' lists are from Latin nouns or adjectives, all that we need to say here is, that the roots in parentheses are modified forms of those which precede them.

**V. The Meanings of the Roots and of English Words derived from them.**—It is easy to ascertain the meaning of the root found in the infinitive and of that found in the perfect participle. These meanings are given or implied in the definition of the Latin infinitive which follows the roots themselves. It is easy to ascertain the meanings of the English words derived from the roots not in parenthesis. It is not so easy to get at the signification of the roots in parentheses, and that of the English words derived from them. Often the etymological sense has faded out of the root; and the words, if metaphorical, do not always suggest the likeness on which the metaphor is based. The pupil will sometimes need a hint from the teacher, sometimes he may profitably consult the dictionary. We have thrown in liberally suggestions in parentheses and in **Helps for the Pupil**; but, where the pupil can seize upon the root idea, and, combining it with the meanings of the modifying prefixes and suffixes, can give the signification of the derivative, he should be allowed to do it. As well do his physical exercise for him as relieve him of the intellectual labor which he can do alone. The main worth of this work consists in the exercise, which it compels, of the pupil's judgment.

**VI. The Lessons.**—The length of the Lessons assigned has been determined by the hope that all the work called for by us can be done. But those teachers able to take up only the root-forms selected by the Regents can perhaps run two or three of our Lessons into one. The root-forms they seek are easily found. They are marked by the asterisk, and are usually the first or the second treated by us in the several paragraphs.

**VII. Direction.**—The roots are printed in black letters, the prefixes and suffixes in italics. The prefixes and suffixes are given and defined on the pages immediately following these Lessons under "Elementary English." Find there the meanings of the prefixes and suffixes used below, find in the Lessons the meanings of the roots with which these prefixes and suffixes combine, and then give the signification of the derivatives formed by the combination. Frame phrases or sentences containing these derivatives properly used. Do not look for the meanings of letters within marks of parenthesis and unitalicized.



Note the changes, if any, which metaphor has wrought in the meanings of words. The literal meaning of a word is not always that which it really bears. From the likeness in position between the upper part of one's body and the top of a nail, we transfer the name of the one object to the other, and speak of the *head* of a nail. From the real or fancied resemblance in function between one's head and Washington city, we may carry over *caput*, the Latin name of the head, and, giving it to the city, call Washington the *capital* of the United States.

**Remark.**—We indicate here the way in which the work required in this *Direction* may be done. The roots we take are *Frang*, *Fract*, and *Fractur*, Lesson IX. Turning to the end of these Lessons in "Elementary English," for the prefixes and suffixes, we combine their meanings, found there, with the meaning of the roots in Lesson IX., give the signification of the derivatives grouped in that Lesson, and illustrate their use.

#### MODEL.

*Frangible*, capable of being broken—a clay pipe-stem is frangible;

*frangibility*, state of being frangible, name of the abstract quality—the frangibility of a pipe-stem;

*infrangible*, incapable of being easily broken—oak is comparatively infrangible;

*infrangibility*, state of being infrangible—the infrangibility of the oak;

*refrangible*, capable of being turned back, or out of a straight course—a ray of light is refrangible;

*refrangibility*, state of being refrangible—the refrangibility of light;

*fragment*, a piece broken off—a fragment of a tea-cup;

*fragmentary*, belonging to a fragment, in fragments—a fragmentary report of the speech;

*aufrage* (a probable explanation given in Lesson IX.);

- irrefragable**, incapable of being easily broken down—A's argument was irrefragable, irrefutable, a metaphorical use of the word;
- irrefragably**, in an irrefragable manner—he irrefragably established his point in the debate;
- infringe**, to break into—one's rights are infringed by the thief;
- infringement**, act of infringing—the infringement of the treaty, a metaphorical use of the word, since a treaty cannot literally suffer a breaking into;
- fraction**, state of being broken, a part—the fraction of an hour;
- fractional**, belonging to a fraction—fractional currency;
- fractions**, not integers, or whole numbers— $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{3}$  are fractions;
- infract**, to break—to infract is to encroach upon;
- refract**, to bend sharply back—water refracts the light;
- infrac-tion**, the breaking—the infrac-tion of the rules, a metaphorical use of the word;
- refrac-tion**, the bending sharply back, half breaking—the refraction of light from the car-blade in the water;
- refrac-tory**, bent away from the proper or natural course—the refrac-tory or stubborn child, a metaphorical use of the word;
- refrac-toriness**, state of being refractory—the refrac-toriness of his child is a grief to the father;
- fracture**, a break—there is a fracture in the plate;
- fragile**, capable of being broken—fragile playthings;
- fragility**, state of being fragile—the fragility of icicles;
- frail**, capable of being broken down, weak, feeble—frail health or constitution, metaphorical;
- frailty** and **frailness**, state of being frail—frailty of character, of the intellect.

## LATIN ROOTS.

### LESSON I.

**To the Teacher.**—This work of word-building may be difficult and slow at first. But it will rapidly become easy. The same prefixes and suffixes are constantly reappearing. The pupil will soon become familiar with their meanings, and ready in combining them with the meaning of the root. If necessary, the opening lessons may be divided.

**To the Pupil.**—You will find the *Model* preceding this Lesson helpful to you. Following that, your work of building up words and illustrating their use would begin and proceed thus: *ent*, one who, + root *ag*, to do, make *agent*=one who does, *e.g.*, the agent of the firm; *ency*, state of being, function, + root *ag*, make *agency*=state or function of an agent, *e.g.*, sold through his agency, or instrumentality; *ile*, capable of, + *ag*, to move, or moving, make *agile*=quick, nimble, *e.g.*, the agile squirrel; *ity*, state of being + *agile*=quickness of movement, *e.g.*, the agility of the squirrel.

The prefixes, suffixes, and their meanings are to be found, as you have been told, at the end of these Lessons in "Elementary English."

**Ag,\* Act, (ag, g, actu), from *agere, áctus, to do, move, urge on, put in motion, drive.***

*Ag + ent or ency or ile or il † + ity; man* (see this root,

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\* Roots thus marked are those given in the Regents' *Syllabus* for the present year.

† The suffixes *able, abile, ance, ate, bulc, cule, ence, ibile, ible, ile, ine, ive, ize, le, ose, tude, and ure* often drop the final *e*, and become *abl, abil, anc, at, bul, cul, enc, ibil, ibl, il, in, iv, iz, l, os, tud, and ur*. *Able, abil, el, er, ery, ibl, ity, ly, or, and tude* sometimes drop the initial letter, and appear as *ble, bil, l, r, ry, bl, ty, y, r, and ude*. *Ary, ly, mony, ory, and y* sometimes change *y* to *i*, and appear as *ari, li, moni, ori, and i*.