VOCABULARY FROM
LATIN AND GREEK ROOTS
A STUDY OF WORD FAMILIES

By: Elizabeth Osborne
Edited by Paul Moliken
Illustrated by Larry Knox

Prestwick House wishes to extend its gratitude to the many contributors whose assistance, comments, and expertise were essential in completing this book.

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Prestwick House developed Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots in response to numerous requests for a solid etymology-based vocabulary program. Because the aim of the program is to increase retention of new words as well as to expand students' vocabulary, we chose to organize the Units by meaning rather than alphabetically. A student who associates a root with an idea will be more likely to correctly assess the definition of that root's English derivative.

Each Unit contains at least three Latin and/or Greek roots; one or more English vocabulary words are provided for each root. Unit Thirteen of this book, for example, includes five roots having to do with fire, burning, and flashing. When a student reads through the Unit, he or she will see the key letters that signal the presence of the root in an English word. The letters in the first root of Unit Thirteen form the stems CEND, CENS. Beneath the key letters is the root word from which the English is derived: CENDERE, CENSUM. Students will notice that there are sometimes two forms of the root, and sometimes one. The inclusion of two forms indicates a Latin verb from which English has taken two different forms. CENDERE, for instance, gives us incendiary, meaning “inflaming; provoking heat or anger,” while CENSUM gives us incense, meaning “to infuriate; to make passionately angry.” When a root comes from a Latin adjective or noun, only one form will generally be included. Greek roots also appear in only one form.

Beneath the definition of the root, the student will find the word, its pronunciation, part of speech, and English definition. In cases in which an English word has multiple meanings, we have chosen to include only the meaning appropriate to the grade level for which the book is intended. The word elaborate in this book, then, is a verb meaning “to explain in greater detail” rather than an adjective meaning “marked by complexity or great detail”; in Level IX, pedestrian means “lacking excitement; ordinary and dull,” rather than “a traveler on foot.” In some instances, students may find it useful to review meanings that do not appear and discuss how they are related to the meaning presented.

If the word has a prefix, or if it is especially difficult to reconcile with its root, the entry will contain an analysis of the parts of the word, followed by a literal definition. Repulsion in Level IX, Unit Five, is explained as re, meaning “back” + pulsum; the literal meaning is “a pushing back.”

Finally, each entry provides a sentence using the word and, when appropriate, introduces pertinent synonyms and/or antonyms. For added visual reinforcement of this understanding, mnemonic cartoons appear in each Unit.

Six different kinds of exercise follow the Unit entries. They include three kinds of practice using words in context, one test of a student’s ability to infer information based on a word’s meaning, one reading comprehension exercise, and one activity in which a student must deduce the meaning of an unfamiliar word based on knowledge of the word’s root. By the end of the exercises in each Unit, students will have had thorough practice using the word in context and will be prepared to make the word part of their working vocabulary.

Note: We have changed the form of some vocabulary words to make the sentences and exercises more interesting, eliminate awkward phrasing, and avoid excessive repetition. For example, a noun (marvel) may be changed to an adjective (marvelous) or a verb (marveled).
# Word List for Level XI

## UNIT 1
- belabor
- discomfit
- edification
- elaborate
- feasible
- laborious
- lethargy
- liturgy
- magnum opus
- malfeasance
- modus operandi
- opulent
- surfeit
- synergy

## UNIT 2
- apropos
- depose
- ecstasy
- entity
- essence
- extant
- quintessential
- restive
- stanch
- stasis
- static
- staunch

## UNIT 3
- appall
- candid
- candor
- denigrate
- incandescent
- livid
- pallid
- pallor
- verdant
- verdure
- viridity

## UNIT 4
- impair
- impeccable
- malaise
- malign
- malinger
- negate
- negligent
- negligible
- peccadillo
- peccant
- pejorative

## UNIT 5
- bacchanal
- bacchic
- elegiac
- elegy
- festoon
- fete
- jocose
- jocular
- plaint
- plaintive

## UNIT 6
- aciesce
- languid
- languish
- languor
- quittance
- requiem
- somnolent
- sopor
- soporific
- vigilant
- vigilante

## UNIT 7
- auspices
- auspicious
- consort
- consortium
- destine
- fortuitous
- fortuity
- predestination
- propitiate
- propitious

## UNIT 8
- conferment
- congested
- euphoria
- gestate
- gesticulate
- importunate
- importune
- insufferable
- periphery
- preferential
- rapport

## UNIT 9
- desolate
- divulge
- hoi polloi
- monosyllabic
- monotone
- monotonous
- polyglot
- polymath
- soliloquy
- solipsism
- vulgar

## UNIT 10
- catholic
- consummate
- holistic
- parcel
- parse
- repartee
- summation
- totalitarian
- totality
- trenchant
- truncate

## UNIT 11
- annex
- ascertain
- assertion
- certitude
- disconcert
- dissertation
- exertion
- liaison
- ligature
- nexus
- obligatory

## UNIT 12
- accede
- adventitious
- ambulance
- antecedent
- circuitous
- contravene
- parvenu
- precedent
- sedition
- transitory
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UNIT ONE

VOCABULARY FROM LATIN AND GREEK ROOTS

FAC
Latin FACERE, FACTUM, “to make; to do”

DISCOMFIT (dis käm´ fit) v. to embarrass and confuse
Although the presence of a large audience discomfited the violinist, she gave a magnificent performance.
syn: perturb

EDIFICATION (ed ə fə kā´ shən) n. an improvement or enlightenment
L. aedis, “building” + factum = to make a building; to build up
Mrs. Marple, an etiquette expert, often gives hints for the edification of her audience.
syn: betterment

MALFEASANCE (mal fēz´ əns) n. misconduct or wrongdoing, especially by a public official
L. mal, “bad” + facere = doing bad
The reporter uncovered a complex conspiracy intended to hide the mayor’s latest malfeasance.
syn: impropriety

FEASIBLE (fēz´ ə bal) adj. capable of being accomplished
The Board of Education could not find a feasible solution to the overcrowding of city schools.
syn: possible, achievable ant: unattainable

SURFEIT (sûr´ fət) n. the condition of being too full; an overabundance
L. sur, “over” + facere = too much made
A surfeit of weapons led to a lack of space in the army’s warehouse.
syn: glut, profusion ant: shortage, dearth

OPUS
Latin OPUS, OPERIS, “work”
Latin OPS, OPIS, “wealth; power; resource”

MAGNUM OPUS (mag´ nam ə´ pəs) n. the greatest work of an artist, writer, or composer
L. magnum, “great” + opus = great work
Wagner’s “Ring Trilogy” is considered by many to be the composer’s magnum opus.
syn: pinnacle

A confit, like a confection, is a kind of dessert. The word comes from the Latin confectum, meaning “that which is prepared” (L. con, “together” + factum = to make together; to prepare). To discomfit originally meant “to ruin someone’s preparations or plans” and now simply means “to embarrass.”

Both feasible and malfeasance are derived from the French faisant, “doing,” which, in turn, comes from facere.
MODUS OPERANDI (mō dus ā po rān´ dī) n. a specific manner of working
L. modus, “way” + operandi, “of working” = a way of working
The criminal’s modus operandi was one that the police had seen only rarely in
the past.
syn: method

OPULENT (o´ pū lənt) adj. possessing or exhibiting great wealth; affluent
Having made his fortune in computer sales, Kit retired to an opulent estate on a
private island.

ERG
Greek ERGON, “work”

SYNERGY (si´ nər jē) n. the power that results from the combination of two
or more forces
G. syn, “together” + ergon = working together
The synergy of the two networks allowed for faster and more powerful
transmission of information.
syn: confluence

LITURGY (li´ tər jē) n. a pattern of prayer or worship
G. leiton, “town gathering” + ergon = public work
In a traditional Roman Catholic Mass, the priest leads the congregation in
the liturgy.

LETHARGY (lā thər jē) n. a state of sluggishness, inactivity, and apathy
G. lethe, “forgetfulness” + a, “without” + ergon = forgetful idleness
As Jack’s lethargy increased, he found himself unable to concentrate on his work.
syn: laziness         ant: activity

LABOR
Latin LABOR, “work”

LABORIOUS (lā bōr´ ē əs) adj. requiring mental or physical effort
Reading the article was so laborious that I left the library exhausted.
syn: tiresome         ant: effortless

BELABOR (bē lā´ bər) v. 1. to discuss in too much detail
                                2. to attack
1. There is no need to belabor this topic; let’s talk about something else.
2. Movie critics belabored that actor for his terrible movies.

ELABORATE (ē la´ bər āt) v. to explain in greater detail
L. e, “out of” + labor = to work out
When asked to elaborate on his proposal for the new park, the mayor said only
that it was in the planning stages.
EXERCISES - UNIT ONE

Exercise I. Complete the sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the italicized vocabulary word.

1. When they reached the *opulent* port city, the sailors saw…
2. Because their work could only be accomplished through many *laborious* tasks, the farmhands…
3. For the *edification* of her students, the sculpting teacher explained that…
4. George was *discomfited* by his parents’ shouting match because…
5. The amazing *synergy* of the two companies became evident when…
6. Gerald would not *elaborate* on his plan to leave town because…
7. When the architect finished her *magnum opus*, she felt…
8. Executives may be involved in corporate *malfeasance* when they…
9. Donna felt that William was *belaboring* the point when he…
10. The farmer’s plan to irrigate his crops twice a week was *feasible* because…
11. Parents can eliminate *lethargy* in younger children by…
12. The train robbers’ *modus operandi* involved…
13. The *liturgy* at the cathedral usually started with…
14. Because they had a *surfeit* of qualified applicants for the position, company managers…

Exercise II. Fill in the blank with the best word from the choices below. One word will not be used.

modus operandi  laborious  feasible  edification  discomfit

1. Liz found organizing her closet such a(n) ___________________ task that she decided she would never do it again.
2. The surgeon’s ___________________ changed along with the advances in technology.
3. The magician revealed some of his secrets for the ___________________ of his audience.
4. Fearing that his large, rowdy St. Bernard would ___________________ his dinner guests, Carl put the dog in its outdoor pen.
Fill in the blank with the best word from the choices below. One word will not be used.

lethargy belabor feasible liturgy elaborate surfeit

5. Although many of her past schemes had not been ________________, this time Rosa's invention seemed sure to work.

6. A printout of the ________________ was available for newcomers unfamiliar with the religious service.

7. Bill attributed his recent ________________ to the rainy weather and lack of excitement at his job.

8. When the quiz-show contestant began to ________________ an issue related to his missed question, the host cut to a commercial.

9. Noticing the ________________ of stray kittens at the shelter, Maureen offered to take some home.

Fill in the blank with the best word from the choices below. One word will not be used.

magnum opus malfeasance lethargy synergy elaborate opulent

10. The acting coach hoped to develop some sort of ________________ among the members of his ensemble.

11. Although Scott hinted that something major would be taking place in the next few days, he would not ________________.

12. The inventor has come up with many spectacular ideas before, but we are still awaiting his ________________.

13. The ________________ committed by government officials will have negative consequences for the future.

14. Captain Porter's ________________ sailboat was decorated in gold and pearls.

Exercise III. Choose the set of words that best completes the sentence.

1. While crossing the river may be _____, it will require so much _____ preparation that it may hardly be worth it.
   A. feasible; laborious
   B. opulent; feasible
   C. laborious; opulent
   D. laborious; feasible
2. Because the comedian was _____ by her audience's silence, her mind froze, and she _____ one joke for more than five minutes.
   A. opulent; elaborated
   B. belabored; discomfited
   C. discomfited; belabored
   D. laborious; elaborated

3. Seeing the man's _____ gardens, fleet of pricey yachts, and multi-million dollar car collection, the inspector immediately suspected him of some kind of _____.
   A. laborious; magnum opus
   B. laborious; edification
   C. opulent; malfeasance
   D. feasible; lethargy

4. The composer's _____ was a composition originally intended to provide musical accompaniment to the prayers beginning the _____.
   A. liturgy; magnum opus
   B. lethargy; edification
   C. modus operandi; liturgy
   D. magnum opus; liturgy

5. Mother would rarely _____ on the brief statements she made regarding our clothing and choice of friends, even though she said such things for our own _____.
   A. elaborate; edification
   B. discomfit; lethargy
   C. belabor; liturgy
   D. elaborate; modus operandi

Exercise IV. Complete the sentence by inferring information about the italicized word from its context.

1. If Rob tells the doctor that he has been feeling some lethargy lately, the doctor may ask if…

2. When the restaurant critic writes admiringly about the opulent spread at the restaurant, he would probably note details like…

3. Because Jen is discomfited by the silence in the room, she may try to…

Exercise V. Fill in each blank with the word from the Unit that best completes the sentence, using the root we supply as a clue. Then, answer the questions that follow the paragraphs.

“There is no theory. You only have to listen. Pleasure is the law.” These are the words of Claude Debussy (1862-1918), French composer and founder of the Impressionist movement in music. What Debussy took pleasure in was the supreme and moving beauty of nature reflected in music. When he composed, he disregarded the harmonic style and ___________ (LABOR) forms of his predecessors, the post-Wagnerians, such as Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss. He attempted instead a kind of ___________ (ERG) of music, mind, and nature that had not been heard before.

Debussy began studying piano at the age of nine, and only two years later he entered the Paris Conservatory, where he began studying composition, as well as piano. As a young adult, however, he avoided the company of musicians in favor of the leading Impressionist poets and painters, who
focused on celebrating the beauty of nature in their works. “Music,” Debussy wrote, “is the expression of the movement of the waters, the play of curves described by changing breezes.”

In many Impressionist paintings, the colors are soft and blended, the shapes barely discernible. In fact, up close, such a painting may seem to be no more than a formless palette of colored dots. Standing back, however, one can see a pleasing image, perhaps of a river or garden. Debussy, like the painters of these works, wished to capture the subtleties of nature. He did not want his work to announce itself as a well-shaped musical composition. Instead, he wanted it to sound like an improvisation that had not been written down at all.

All of this anti-effort resulted in compositions with titles like “What the West Wind Saw,” “Dead Leaves,” “Sounds and Scents Revolve in the Evening Air,” and a ____________ (OPUS) called “La Mer” (The Sea). The last has a mysterious, dreamlike quality—some have said as puzzling and changeable as the sea itself. One can imagine Debussy descending into a reverie to write it, mimicking the spontaneous, fleeting qualities of nature, as he searched for musical notes and rhythms.

He also enjoyed composing works based on the poems of his friends. His first important orchestral work, “Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun,” was inspired by Stéphane Mallarmé’s poem “L’Après-midi d’un faune.”

Debussy wrote, “Beauty must appeal to the sense, must provide us with immediate enjoyment, must impress or insinuate itself into us without any effort on our part.” Seemingly effortless musical beauty is Debussy’s legacy. One only need hear “Clair de Lune”—a beautiful and understated piano piece—once to be convinced of that and to be grateful that Debussy dedicated his life to translating visual beauty into musical compositions.

1. The main point of this passage is that
   A. Debussy was an innovator.
   B. Debussy rejected the musical traditions of his forebears.
   C. Debussy's musical style was inspired by his love of nature.
   D. beauty must appeal to the senses.

2. Debussy was most positively influenced by
   A. his teachers at the Paris Conservatory.
   B. the Impressionist poets and painters.
   C. the post-Wagnerians Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss.
   D. “What the West Wind Saw.”

3. Based on this essay, one might conclude that Debussy believed that
   A. he would be an important influence on twentieth-century music.
   B. his teachers at the Paris Conservatory disliked his style of music.
   C. to feel the supreme and moving beauty of nature is almost like prayer.
   D. to be a great musician, he would have to be different from others.

4. The best title for this essay would be
   A. Why Debussy Rejected His Musical Past.
   B. Debussy's Influence on the Twentieth Century.
   C. Debussy: Translating Feeling into Sound.
   D. What Debussy Discovered.

Exercise VI. Drawing on your knowledge of roots and words in context, read the following selection and define the italicized words. If you cannot figure out the meaning of the words on your own, look them up in a dictionary. Note that in this case, ef, from ex, means “out from.”

Greeling Helicopter Manufacturing is currently in the final stages of testing the new TG-45 helicopter. The designers promise a much more ergonomic seat and dashboard arrangement, which will allow the pilot to maximize attention to in-flight controls. The motor-uptake system in the TG-45 is said to be far more efficacious for short-range flights, delivering reliable bursts of power while minimizing energy use.
Despite its appearance, the word restive has nothing to do with rest. It originally described an animal such as a horse or cow that stood back and refused to move. It now also applies to a person or group of people who are difficult to control.

—Anonymous

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