

## Can You Crack the Word Code?



### Mini Fact:

The Latin root for “greatest” is **max**. Can you think of words that include this prefix?

Last week, we explored some of the common sayings that people use. This week, let’s take a closer look at the **foundation**, or basis, of our language.

Many modern languages are made up of words that have come from other languages. In English, most of our words are based on Latin or Greek. That’s also true for Spanish, French and some other languages.



Once we learn how to take some words apart, we can figure out their meanings without looking in a dictionary! Let’s crack the word code.

### Our Latin roots

Latin and Greek are language cousins. Both are part of the same language family, the **Indo-European**. Another cousin, the **Germanic** branch, also added many words to the English language. But experts say that about 65 to 70 percent of English words come from Latin roots.

To figure out the meanings of words, it helps to know three things:

- the **root**, or main word;
- the **prefix**, or part before the main word;
- the **suffix**, or part after the main word.

### Root words

The root word is the base, or main building block, of the new word. It is what

forms the word. For example, **portare** means “to carry” in Latin. The root form is **port**.

Out of this root, we get words such as:

- **Report**, “to carry back”
- **Import**, “to carry in”
- **Export**, “to carry out”
- **Transport**, “to carry across”

### Prefixes

The prefix is a word part that comes before the root. For example, in “prefix,” **pre** comes from the Latin **prae**, meaning “before,” or “in front of.” **Fix** is from the Latin root “to fix in place.” A prefix is fixed before the root.

Some common prefixes include:

- **con-** or **com-**, which means “together,” as in **congregation**, **congress**, **communicate**
- **dis-**, meaning “not,” as in **disrespect** or **disapprove**
- **re-**, meaning “again” or “back,” as in **regain**, **remake**, **redo**
- **sub-**, meaning “close to” or “under,” as in **submarine**.

### Suffixes

Suffixes come after the root and change the meaning. **Suf** comes from “sub.”

Some common suffixes include:

- **-able** or **-ible**, meaning “worthy of” or “able to be,” as in **likable** or **visible**
- **-logy**, “to study,” as in **biology**
- **-or** or **-er**, someone or something doing something, as in **finder** or **keeper**.

### Cracking the code

Now that you know the word code, can you figure out what these words mean?

The Latin word for “new” is **novus**.

- Astronomers discovered a nearby **nova** last week.

- The toy show was full of **novelties**.
- That’s a **novel** idea!



**Astra** and **aster** are the Latin roots for “star.” And **naut** is the root of “sailor.”

- The **astronauts** are returning to Earth today.
- She put an **asterisk** (\*) at the end of her sentence.

The word code works backward, too, from English to Latin. Look at the Great Seal of the United States.



(You can see a small version on the back of a \$1 bill.) In its beak, the eagle is holding a banner that reads **E pluribus unum**.

Because you know words such as “plural,” “unite” and “one,” you can get an idea of what the Latin means. **E pluribus unum** means “Out of many, one.”

### Resources



#### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MProots](http://bit.ly/MProots)
- [bit.ly/MProotgame](http://bit.ly/MProotgame)

#### At the library:

- “In a Word: 750 Words and Their Fascinating Stories and Origins” by Rosalie Baker

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of word origins are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

AFTER, BASE, BEFORE, CODE, DICTIONARY, ENGLISH, FOUNDATION, FRENCH, GERMANIC, GREEK, LANGUAGE, LATIN, MEANING, ROOT, SPANISH, SUFFIX, WORDS.

L A T I N Y E N G L I S H Y M  
X K C R U Q D S D R O W H W Z  
H D I C T I O N A R Y X X N F  
K E E R G G E R M A N I C R Y  
I M X R Y N J G N I N A E M Q  
N O I T A D N U O F R N C M N  
A A F T E R R D L B C E D O C  
E R O F E B I B A H N A Q J A  
S P A N I S H S R O O T H J B  
S U F F I X E G A U G N A L A



### Mini Jokes



- Wendy:** What kind of coat would an octopus wear?  
**Will:** A coat of arms!

### Eco Note



Did you ever wonder why your ears pop when you’re taking off in an airplane or driving up a hill? Air seems light, but there is a lot of it pushing down on Earth’s surface. This is called **air pressure**. You experience high air pressure at sea level because the whole atmosphere is pushing down on you. The air pressure is lower on top of a mountain because there is less atmosphere pushing down on you. The popping results from this change in pressure in your inner ear.

adapted from [climatekids.nasa.gov](http://climatekids.nasa.gov)

### For later:

Look in the newspaper for unfamiliar words that you can de-code.

**Teachers:** For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: [bit.ly/MPstandards](http://bit.ly/MPstandards). And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



## Cook's Corner

### Broccoli and Cheese Quiche

#### You'll need:

- 1 (9-inch) refrigerated piecrust
- 2 cups fresh or thawed frozen broccoli florets
- 1 cup shredded Gruyere or Swiss cheese
- 8 ounces light vegetable cream cheese, softened

#### What to do:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Press piecrust into bottom and up sides of a 9-inch pie plate.
2. Blanch broccoli in small pot of boiling water for 30 seconds (or steam in microwave for 1 minute). Drain and arrange broccoli in bottom of pie plate. Spread shredded cheese over broccoli.
3. Whisk together remaining ingredients and pour over broccoli and cheese. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until filling is set; let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. Serves 8.

Adapted from “The Robin Takes 5 Cookbook for Busy Families” with permission from Andrews McMeel Publishing ([andrewsmcmeel.com](http://andrewsmcmeel.com)).



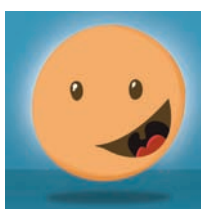
You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

## 7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. path between city buildings (5) \_\_\_\_\_
2. messaging on a phone (7) \_\_\_\_\_
3. brother of D.W. and Kate (6) \_\_\_\_\_
4. water comes out of it (6) \_\_\_\_\_
5. once every 24 hours (5) \_\_\_\_\_
6. coat (6) \_\_\_\_\_
7. far away (7) \_\_\_\_\_

ART	CK	LEY	CET
DA	ANT	ET	TE
XTI	AL	JA	DIST
ILY	HUR	FAU	NG



Answers: alley, texting, Arthur, faucet, daily, jacket, distant.

Books from The Mini Page are wonderful resources and make great gifts! See all of our Mini Page products at [MiniPageBooks.com](http://MiniPageBooks.com), or call 800-642-6480 for more information. Mail payment to: Andrews McMeel Universal, Mini Page Books, 1130 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64106. Include \$4.00 shipping and handling per order.

