



Dig Into Root Words

Compare the meaning of words that share the same root, analyzing the root's impact on the meaning of key terms from a reading.

Suggested Time: 20-25 Minutes

Student Tasks:

- Brainstorm words with the same root as the selected vocabulary word
- Compare and analyze the meanings of each
- Summarize the meaning of the root word
- Apply findings to the meaning of a vocabulary term

Online ThinkCERCA Modules:

- ThinkCERCA provides highlighted vocabulary with each reading module as well as Student Guides with graphic organizers for vocabulary exploration and retention.
- ThinkCERCA also provides technology-enabled support for vocabulary.

Rationale/Research Base

Research suggests that students can be taught morphology to determine the meaning of new words. Instruction about word parts is related to improved reading.

Optimal Application Notes:

For best results, focus on meaning-making by selecting a root word that relates well to other words in students' existing vocabulary. Choose words that connect to the larger theme of the unit. Seek opportunities to break words into parts whenever students approach unfamiliar words.

Before:

- Become familiar with the vocabulary in the reading selection and each root's meaning.
- Explain to the students that they will be exploring the meaning of root words by comparing and analyzing the meanings of words that share the same root.

During:

- Give each student, or student group, a list of key terms that you want them to explore. These terms should contain common roots.
- Ask students to brainstorm words with the same root. Students should then compare and analyze the meanings of the terms that contain the same root word, looking for patterns, similarities, or differences in how the root word is used and how it influences the overall meaning of the terms.
- The teacher should model this the first time, verbalizing the thought process in defining the root through comparison and analysis of similar terms and crossing off or eliminating terms that don't seem to correlate with the meaning of the other terms.
- Give time for students to share their findings with the class through presentations, small group discussions, or a gallery walk where students showcase their comparisons. Encourage students to explain their discoveries about the relationships among the terms.

After:

- Lead a discussion to help students understand the impact of the root word on the meanings of the terms. Encourage them to consider how the root word influences the concepts conveyed by the terms.
- Encourage students to use their knowledge to decipher the meanings of new words or make educated guesses about unfamiliar terms based on their familiarity with the root word.

Scaffolds & Supports:

- Provide students with bilingual glossaries and options for recording responses using voice-to-text.
- Provide alternate versions of the activity in which students are provided with a partial brainstorming list or with the meaning of the root word.

Build Your Vocabulary

Dig Into Root Words: _____

Instructions: Understanding how word parts influence the meanings of words and the similarities between these parts or among word groups can help you build the skills to decipher new words. Explore one common word part, root words, in the following activity with a key term from our unit.

Vocabulary word

Common root word

List words with the root

Compare the meanings of words in your list, noting exceptions that break the common strand

Based on your list and comparisons, what does the root word most likely mean?

How does the meaning you created relate to the vocabulary word and how it's used in our unit?

Build Your Vocabulary

Dig Into Root Words: *Speculation*

Instructions: Understanding how word parts influence the meanings of words and the similarities between these parts or among word groups can help you build the skills to decipher new words. Explore one common word part, root words, in the following activity with a key term from our unit.

Vocabulary word

Speculation

Common root word

-spec-

List words with the root

*Spectacles
Introspection
Spectators
Inspect
Respect*

Compare the meanings of words in your list, noting exceptions that break the common strand

Each of the words in our list, except “respect” have something to do with seeing or looking. Glasses are used to see, introspection is a way of looking at yourself, inspect means to look closely, and spectators watch or look at some event.

Based on your list and comparisons, what does the root word most likely mean?

The root word most likely means to look, to see, or to watch.

How does the meaning you created relate to the vocabulary word and how it’s used in our unit?

This relates to the word “speculation” because it means to believe something without much evidence, and the neighbors watch and spy on each other to speculate, or gossip, about each other.