



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Recognizing Word Parts

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You can sometimes figure out the meaning of a word you don't know by using your prior knowledge. Many words are composed of parts, and if you know the meanings of the parts of a word, you can figure out the meaning of the whole.

The ground shifted during the earthquake, causing a 30-degree *declination* of the stretch of Highway 23 near Exit 5A.

Declination is an uncommon word, one that probably is unfamiliar to you. However, if you recognize that it is made up of two parts, the base word *decline* and the suffix *-ation*, which is used to make nouns, you can guess that *declination* means something like *turndown*.

Common word parts include the following:

1. Prefixes are parts added to the beginning of words.
Predetermined
Underappreciated
2. Suffixes are parts added to the ends of words.
Merriment
Underling
3. Base words are ordinary words that can be combined into compound words or to which prefixes and suffixes may be added.
Moon + walk = **moonwalk**
Sub + zero = **subzero**
4. Roots, like base words, can be compounded or can be expanded with prefixes or suffixes; however, roots cannot stand alone.
In + spec + tion = **inspection**

Common Prefixes and Suffixes

ante = before	-archy = form of rule
anti = against	-ate = become, like
contra = against	-able = capable of
inter = between	-cide = killing
intra = within	-ism = doctrine, belief
multi = many	-itis = inflammation
post = after	-less = without
pseudo = false	-logy = science of
trans = across	-tude = state, quality

Common Roots and Word Families

anthro = human
arche = old, ancient
biblio = book
chron = time
cogn = to know
cred = faith, believe
crypto = hidden, secret
demo = people
duc = lead
geo = earth
gnos = know, knowledge
graph = write
homo = same
logy = word, thought, study
lum = light
mand = command
mit/mis = send
path = suffering, sadness
phil = love
port = carry
scrib = write
scope = see, look
tact/tang = touch
tele = far, across distance
therm = heat