

# Learning About Derivations

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PURPOSE

Understand words better by learning what word derivations are and how to read and understand them.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE: Do the steps in order. Initial and date each when done. Where there are two sign-off lines, get the step checked and initialed on the second line by another student or, if stated, by the academic supervisor. All written work is turned in to the supervisor.

ESTIMATED TIME: 8 hours

### BOOKS AND REFERENCES:

*The Heron Derivation Dictionary*, Heron Books

*Macmillan Dictionary for Students* (also available as *Macmillan School Dictionary 3*)

World atlas or other access to a world map

## A. HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. READ: *The Heron Derivation Dictionary* (HDD), Appendix 1—What Are Derivations? (Note: A glossary is included in the back of the dictionary.) \_\_\_\_\_
2. ACTIVITY: Appendix 1 states: “a derivation really follows the history of a word back to where it started so you can learn how it got to mean what it does.” Here are some simplified examples of word histories:
  - The name *asterisk* for the symbol \* means “little star” in the language it comes from.
  - The word *astronaut* comes from the old words *astro* for “star” and *naut* for “sailor.” So an astronaut is a “star sailor.”
  - The word *dinosaur* comes from the old words *dino* for “terrible” and *saur* for “lizard.” So a dinosaur is a “terrible lizard.”
  - The word *lunatic* comes from the word *luna* for “moon,” because people once thought that insanity was caused by changes in the moon.

- The word *orangutan* means “man of the woods” in the language of the people who live on the islands where orangutans are found.
- The word *planet* is an old word for “wanderer.” Planets got this name because they appear to wander amongst the stars.
- The word *soldier* was the name of a Roman coin. It came to mean someone paid to be in an army, and then, anyone in an army.
- The word *tadpole* comes from old English words meaning “toad head.”
- The word *vinegar* comes from old words meaning “sour wine.”

Write an essay discussing what a derivation is and how learning a derivation relates to understanding a word.

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3. READ: Appendix 2—A History of the English Language, to section “The Importance of Greek and Latin.” Refer to the time line at the end of Appendix 2 as needed while you read.

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4. ACTIVITY: Compare the Indo-European map to a current map of Europe. Notice the countries where the early Indo-Europeans settled.

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5. ACTIVITY: During this course, you will be creating a time line from 3000 B.C. to the present of the important events and languages that influenced the development of the English language.

Start your time line now. Use butcher paper so you have enough room for your notes, as well as any illustrations you choose to include.

- a) Show the earliest date given for the Indo-European language \_\_\_\_
- b) Show the date given for the start of the Indo-European migration \_\_\_\_
- c) Add a note that all of the languages on the time line originated with the Indo-European language \_\_\_\_

Set your time line aside for later. **Supervisor Pass** up to this point on your time line.

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6. READ: Appendix 2, section “The Importance of Greek and Latin” to the heading “The Development of English After Rome Fell.”

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7. ACTIVITY:

- a) Use books, the internet or both to find pictures of ancient Greece and Rome that show the dress, buildings, sculpture, lands, and other examples of the culture of those times. \_\_\_\_
- b) Find and list at least eight ideas and inventions we have inherited from the Greeks and Romans. For each idea or invention, list one or more words the Greeks or Romans might have had to invent in order to be able to talk about that idea. \_\_\_\_
- c) Write a short essay about how our lives have been affected by those earlier civilizations, and attach your lists to it. \_\_\_\_

8. ACTIVITY: Look at a page of a book and notice how many of the letters on the page are vowels. Imagine what it would be like reading it without the vowel letters. \_\_\_\_\_

9. ACTIVITY: Look at the map in Appendix 2 “Greek Settlements in the 6th Century B.C.” Notice the areas beyond Greece where the culture became somewhat like the Greek culture. \_\_\_\_\_

10. ACTIVITY: Look at the map in Appendix 2, “The Roman Empire of about 100 A.D.” Notice the areas where the Latin language was spoken. \_\_\_\_\_

11. ACTIVITY: Add to your time line these events and their dates (include any pictures or drawings):

- a) introduction of the alphabet to Greece \_\_\_\_
- b) beginning of the creation of the important culture in central Italy \_\_\_\_
- c) when Old Latin words started appearing \_\_\_\_
- d) the birth of Christ \_\_\_\_ (research this if you don’t already know it)
- e) approximate year the Roman Empire ruled from Spain to Asia \_\_\_\_
- f) starting date of Late Latin \_\_\_\_
- g) approximate date Rome was invaded by barbarians \_\_\_\_

Save your time line for later. **Supervisor Pass** up to this point. \_\_\_\_\_

12. READ: Appendix 2, section “The Development of English After Rome Fell” to subhead “The Stage of English Called Middle English.” \_\_\_\_\_

13. ACTIVITY: Using *Macmillan Dictionary for Students*, look up the derivations (at the end of the definitions) for the following words. Notice the spelling of the Old English word in the derivation.

night \_\_\_\_ frost \_\_\_\_ yellow \_\_\_\_

child \_\_\_\_ king \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. ACTIVITY: On a world map, find Denmark and Norway. Trace a sailing route the Vikings may have taken to get to England.

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15. ACTIVITY:

a) Tell another student about the importance of the years 450 A.D., 800 A.D. and 1066 A.D. to the development of English. \_\_\_\_

b) Explain to another student the reasons why English “won out” as the language of England. \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. ACTIVITY: Using *Macmillan Dictionary*, look up the derivations for the following:

leg \_\_\_\_ bag \_\_\_\_ loose \_\_\_\_

anger \_\_\_\_ clear \_\_\_\_ panel \_\_\_\_

fort \_\_\_\_ receive \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. ACTIVITY: Add to your time line these events and their dates:

a) the invasion of the British Isles by three Germanic tribes \_\_\_\_

b) the beginning and ending dates for Old English, Old Norse and Old French \_\_\_\_

c) first Viking invasion of England \_\_\_\_

d) the Norman invasion \_\_\_\_

e) the Black Plague \_\_\_\_

Save your time line for later. **Supervisor Pass** up to this point.

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18. READ: Appendix 2, subsection “The Stage of English Called Middle English.”

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19. ACTIVITY: Look up in HDD the derivations of the following words.  
(Language abbreviations are given at the front of the dictionary and the end of the glossary includes symbols used in derivations.)

alone \_\_\_\_          brake<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_          afraid \_\_\_\_

brick \_\_\_\_          hurry \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. READ: Appendix 2, subsection "Modern English."

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21. ACTIVITY:

a) To help you understand this period of history, do some research on the Renaissance. Find examples of how the people of Renaissance times revived the knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome. Look for examples of Renaissance art, sculpture, buildings, etc. that might have been copied from ancient Greece and Rome. \_\_\_\_

b) Write a short essay about a few of the ways our lives have been affected by the Renaissance. \_\_\_\_

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22. ACTIVITY: Find out how books were made before the printing press was invented and how this invention made it possible for many more people to learn to read and write. Then talk to another student about how our lives have been affected by the invention of the printing press.

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23. ACTIVITY: Explain to another student how the Renaissance and the invention of the printing press might have affected the development of the English language.

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24. ACTIVITY: Add to your time line these events and their dates:

a) the beginning and ending dates for Middle English, Middle French, Medieval Latin, Middle Dutch \_\_\_\_

b) invention of the printing press \_\_\_\_

c) the beginning date for Modern English, Latin and Greek \_\_\_\_

**Supervisor pass.**

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## B. UNDERSTANDING DERIVATIONS

1. READ: Appendix 3—Reading Dictionary Derivations, section “Finding Word Derivations.” \_\_\_\_\_

2. ACTIVITY:

- a) Make up and write down at least five root words. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Decide on your own definitions for them and write them down. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Add some simple English prefixes or suffixes (or prefixes *and* suffixes) that you already know to change the meanings of your words. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Write down the new meanings of the words. \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Write a short story that contains each of your new words at least once. \_\_\_\_\_

Turn all the written work for this activity in to your supervisor.

**Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

3. ACTIVITY: Get a book you have read recently. Look through it and find six words that have a prefix, a suffix, or both. Write down the words. Figure out what the root is for each and write that down.

**Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

4. READ: Appendix 3, section “How to Read Derivations” to heading “The Use of the + Symbol and Small Upper Case Words.” \_\_\_\_\_

5. ACTIVITY: Explain fully the following derivations:

- a) comb: < ME < OE *camb* toothed object \_\_\_\_\_
- b) heavy: < OE *hefig* \_\_\_\_\_
- c) park: < OFr *par* < ML *parricus* \_\_\_\_\_
- d) integer: < L whole \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor pass.** \_\_\_\_\_

6. READ: Appendix 3, section “The Use of the + Symbol and Small Upper Case Words.” \_\_\_\_\_

7. ACTIVITY: Look up in HDD the derivations of the following words:

automobile \_\_\_\_ hippopotamus \_\_\_\_

bandage \_\_\_\_ metric \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. READ: Appendix 3, section “More Symbols in Derivations.”

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9. ACTIVITY: Look up in HDD the derivations of the following words:

beret \_\_\_\_ cone \_\_\_\_

ecology \_\_\_\_ quiche \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. READ: Appendix 3, section “Terms in Derivations.”

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11. ACTIVITY: Look up in HDD the derivations of the following words:

passel \_\_\_\_ thow \_\_\_\_ boom \_\_\_\_

click \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. READ: Appendix 3, section “Kinds of Derivation Dictionaries.”

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## C. FINAL ACTIVITY

1. ACTIVITY: Using HDD, look up eight of the following words or word parts. Write down in your own words what the full derivation of the word is, and tell how knowing it helps you understand the meaning of the word. Where spellings or definitions are omitted for a language, explain what that means, as well as any symbols used.

celery	success	inter-record
example	repeat	unbelievable
reply	coffee	mask
submarine	miniature	vanish
choir		

**Supervisor pass.**

\_\_\_\_\_

I have completed the steps of this course. I understand what I studied and can use it.

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The student has completed the steps of this course and knows and can apply what was studied.

Academic Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The student has passed the exam for this course.

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### FOR FACULTY

##### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT [HERONBOOKS.COM](http://HERONBOOKS.COM)

Exam and answers

Materials list