

# Getting to the Root of Vocabulary: Teacher Tips

I have always used root words as a quick class opener. I have even used them when my school sprang for the Sadlier-Oxford books as the two work well together.

The list of root words originally developed as part of a comprehensive 7-12 vocabulary program. We divided an extensive list of roots between grade levels and expected kids to be taught and to master about 50 at every grade level.

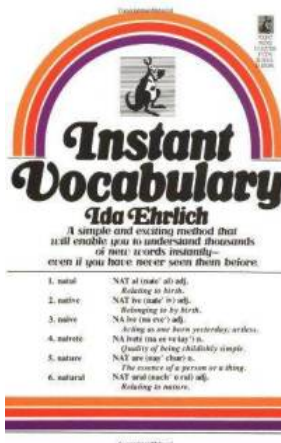
For my part I went with a core 100 and have added more over the years. I teach them very simply, taking only a few minutes a day.

I write 2 or 3 on the board every day and we go over derivatives. If the kids don't suggest enough words, I always have 2 or 3 for each root that I mention. I have a derivative worksheet the kids use to record at least three words that use the root. Then when we cover 10, I test them over those 10.

I am very proud of the tests since I use a big list of roots that I call *My Root Dictionary*. I construct tests using words we did NOT discuss in class. The definitions used on the matching test always include the meaning of the root. So...kids can make a 100% on the test over words they have never seen before, just by knowing the roots. Very empowering, as it gives kids the ability to figure words out.

The kids tell me that knowing roots consciously is very helpful on the ACT and SAT.

## Teacher Resources



### *Instant Vocabulary* by Ida Ehrlich

Organized around 259 keys to word building, this book is an amazing resource if you want to teach root words to your students. Each key is a root, prefix, or suffix for which Ehrlich provides 20 examples showing how the key is used in word building.

Check out NEO below:

**KEY NO. 248****NEO**new  
recent

is the Root *NEO* which comes from the Greek word *neos*, meaning NEW; RECENT. Many old things become of interest again; people often will believe in something, come to accept it as everyday, and then a new interest awakens and it is revived.

1. neoblastic      NEO blastic (nee o blas' tik) adj.  
*Having the nature of new growth.*
2. Neocene      NEO cene (nee' o sene) adj.  
*Belonging to the tertiary period.*
3. neocosmic      NEO cosmic (nee o kos' mik) adj.  
*Relating to the present known world and races.*
4. neocracy      NEO cracy (nee ok' ra si) n.  
*Government by new, inexperienced officials.*
5. neocriticism      NEO criticism (nee o krit' i siz um) n.  
*The new philosophy, rejecting Kant.*
6. neo-Darwinism      NEO Darwinism (nee o dar' wi niz um) n.  
*A new form of Darwin's theory.*
7. neofetus      NEO fetus (nee o fee' tus) n.  
*The embryo in the very early stages of development.*
8. neogenesis      NEO genesis (nee o jen' e sis) n.  
*A new formation or regeneration of tissue.*
9. neo-Gothic      NEO Gothic (nee o goth' ik) adj.  
*Art based on study of medieval Gothic.*
10. neogrammarian      NEO grammarian (nee o gra mar' i an) n.  
*A new, scientific direction to linguistics.*
11. neo-Hellenism      NEO Hellenism (nee o hel' en iz um) n.  
*The practice of ancient Greek ideals in modern life and art.*
12. neolatry      NEO lathy (nee ol' a tri) n.  
*The worship of the new, the novelty.*
13. neolithic      NEO lithic (nee o lih' ik) adj.  
*Relating to the era when polished stone implements were used.*
14. neology      NEO logy (nee ol' o jee) n.  
*The use of new words in the language.*
15. neomenia      NEO menia (nee o mee' ni a) n.  
*The festival of the new moon.*
16. neomorph      NEO morph (nee' o morf) n.

## Useful Websites

### [English-Word Information](#) Word Info about English Vocabulary

[English-Word Information](#) is a searchable site with extensive words and definitions for hundreds of roots.

[Learn That Word](#) is a quick reference to more than [350 Roots](#), with at least one example for each and a good reference for [Suffixes](#) as well.

