

# ***ROOTS AND FRUITS***

**A Comprehensive Vocabulary Curriculum  
covering Grades K through 12**

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### ROOTS ALPHABETICAL LISTING:

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## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Jill J. Dixon is a homeschooling mother of four, with two now college graduates. She has homeschooled for nineteen years and taught and evaluated children for twenty-nine years. Her teaching experience includes ten years in public school and several years in private school education, including the teaching of the learning disabled and emotionally, physically and mentally handicapped. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in English Education [magna cum laude] and a Master's of Education degree in Special Education [summa cum laude]. She is the published author of numerous titles including educational guides, diagnostic tests, a learning styles assessment, a college and career guide, and a bestselling vocabulary and writing curriculum. Jill founded Jill Dixon's Eclectic Academy of Learning in 1998 for homeschooled students in her home town, and she has spent the last thirteen years teaching and refining the curriculum so that it can be utilized globally by homeschoolers in other locales. The Academy has served over 200 children in its operation since 1998. Jill also conducts workshops, speaks at homeschool conferences, contributes articles to homeschooling publications, and is a consultant for Homeschool Legal Defense Association. Jill teaches high school literature and writing at the local Eclectic Academy of Learning, which presently serves 75 students in grades 4-12.

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## INTRODUCTION

This vocabulary curriculum was devised as a result of two observations in my teaching career. The first one involves my experience as a Middle School and High School teacher, and the second one is based on the teaching of my own children.

Several years ago, while working in a College Preparatory Middle/High School, I was surprised by the poor vocabulary skills of my students. I realized that even though their reading had been extensive, they still did not have an extensive vocabulary, meaning that they did not know what words meant or how to use them. This, in turn, affected every subject area including math, science, history, and reading comprehension. Sadly enough, when it came time to take the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) in eleventh grade, there was no way they were able to learn the meanings of 500 words that would make up three-fourths of the verbal section of that test. I then began to question why vocabulary study was not introduced into the school curriculum until eighth grade. Even when it was introduced, words were taught in isolation so that students forgot them as soon as they took a test. I did some research and realized that the best way to teach vocabulary was through teaching the meanings of Greek and Latin roots and prefixes from which most of our English words derive. I then decided to use this method with my own children (ages five and seven at the time) whom I was homeschooling. I started out with simple roots that they could read. My five year old was an early reader. I introduced one new root a week and tried to use roots that could be combined with other roots to form words such as *tele* and *scope*. The results were phenomenal. Not only did my children learn new vocabulary words and how to use them, but their reading skills also improved immensely by learning to decode multisyllabic words and by reading Greek and Latin roots. We also added

these roots and words to our weekly spelling list, and their spelling skills improved.

Those two children have now gone on to graduate from homeschooling and from college. Both were honors college graduates. They and several of my former students tell me that learning these roots helped them tremendously in their college studies and beyond. My daughter was actually a foreign language major, and my son was able to excel in Greek in High School. They both benefited greatly from their vocabulary studies.

One concern I have had in my observation of homeschooled children has been a weakness in understanding vocabulary, even though many have been voracious readers. I have seen many eight-year-old homeschoolers read on an eighth grade level, yet not comprehend much of what they have read because of poor vocabulary skills. If someone is an avid reader, that does not necessarily mean he also has an adequate vocabulary. The importance of an adequate vocabulary should not be underestimated. It is essential for understanding various subjects that enable us to function in our society today.

This program is designed to help you increase the vocabulary, reading, and spelling skills of your students in just 15 minutes a day. The games and activities have been used by my own children and other homeschooled children I teach. They are also designed to meet the needs of all learners – visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. You can pick out the games and activities that best suit the needs of your child/children. Once I helped a twelfth grade homeschooled student prepare some essays to send to colleges for admission (including Harvard and Vanderbilt). She had a very high SAT score, and I asked her why she thought she did so well on the verbal part of the test. She said that learning the meaning of Latin roots is what helped her understand SAT vocabulary. Whether you are preparing your children for future living

and learning or for future tests, they will certainly benefit from vocabulary study through learning these roots and prefixes.

## **WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THIS PROGRAM?**

1. Most vocabulary programs teach words in isolation, either by assigning random lists or in conjunction with a story or book. Students often forget the meanings once the words are no longer used. *Roots and Fruits* emphasizes English forms of Greek and Latin roots and prefixes from which 80 percent of our language is derived. Because students learn English roots and prefixes they frequently see in the words they read and see, they not only remember the meanings of new words, but are also able to determine meanings of words they have never seen. Similar programs teach the actual Greek and Latin roots which are often difficult for children to read and understand unless they have had extensive Greek and Latin study.
2. Most vocabulary programs do not start until middle school. Several years have been missed by this time. There are no programs available that start vocabulary enrichment at the kindergarten level.
3. Other “root” programs offer limited roots. *Roots and Fruits* offers a thorough list of 797 roots and prefixes with their meanings and 2,449 vocabulary words, as well as teaching activities, games, complete lesson plans, and daily worksheets designed for the three primary learning styles. Roots for elementary students are differentiated from middle and high school students. This one program can be used with all your children.

4. By beginning vocabulary instruction as early as kindergarten, students are able to grasp concepts in the other disciplines of math, science, history, literature, and foreign language because they have been introduced to the vocabulary ahead of time. Vocabulary skills are crucial for the understanding of all academic subjects.
5. Students learn dictionary skills by a “hands-on” method instead of by filling in workbook pages. (One activity utilized in *Roots and Fruits* is the use of the dictionary to determine the origin of roots and prefixes.)
6. Many of the example words listed are tested on either the SAT or ACT college entrance exams and yearly standardized tests. *Roots and Fruits* contains the most commonly tested words on the SAT. These words are in italics and underlined.

## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

1. I recommend *An American Dictionary of the English Language* by Noah Webster or *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*, for those who desire hard copies. These have sample sentences for your words and also give the history of some words and tell whether they derive from Greek or Latin. There are also several excellent online dictionaries that give synonyms and very good sentence samples. The best can be found at [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com), [dictionary30.com](http://dictionary30.com), and [nhd.heinle.com](http://nhd.heinle.com). Younger students in grades K-4 can start off with a children's dictionary until they become accustomed to using the dictionary. Many children's dictionaries, however, do not contain all words, synonyms, or sentences samples, but they will introduce students to dictionary skills.
2. For younger students in grades K through 3, you may want to start with just one (1) root per week at first. All roots and root groups for this age group are marked with an asterisk (\*) and have been chosen so that they can be used with other roots marked with an asterisk. If the corresponding vocabulary words are too difficult, you can easily find less difficult ones in the dictionary. Use your judgment to decide how many vocabulary words to introduce each week and which ones you want to use as spelling words. Younger students should at least be required to spell the new roots. This will aid in increasing spelling skills. As your child progresses, increase the roots to two (2) per week.



3. Older students in grades 4 through 12 should be given two (2) roots a week with vocabulary words. Again, use your judgment about which ones and how many vocabulary words to give to each student. If you desire more vocabulary words, refer to the dictionary. Decide which ones will be used for spelling. For older students (in grades 8 and above) just beginning this program, you may want to introduce 3-4 new roots a week so that all the roots and words can be mastered by the end of high school. Definitely focus on the ones that are in italics and underlined.
  
4. Make sure you keep previous roots posted so that at least some can be reviewed weekly. This insures long-term retention of all the roots. Require students to review corresponding vocabulary words and their meanings when reviewing the roots.
  
5. At the end of each month or four-week segment, you may want to devise a written test for your students to evaluate their retention and use of both the roots and words. A matching test works well with the roots and their meanings and fill-in-the-blank sentences are effective for determining if your students can use the vocabulary words in a sentence. However, you can use many of the activities and games listed to help you do monthly evaluations.
  
6. Encourage your students to use vocabulary words in weekly writing assignments. You can work out a reward system for the number of words used, etc.

7. In choosing roots weekly, teachers can group roots in categories if they choose. Some of the categories are:

- a) roots that deal with body parts
- b) roots that mean "sleep"
- c) roots with number meanings
- d) roots that connote action
- e) roots with medical meanings
- f) roots with scientific meanings
- g) roots that mean "water" or things related to water

These are just a few examples.

8. Older students who are preparing for the SAT or ACT should save their index cards or notebooks with their words and meanings so that they can review these before taking their test. There are several expensive programs with SAT vocabulary flashcards, but *Roots and Fruits* provides this same service.

9. Try to choose activities and methods that appeal to your student's specific learning style or strength. If he is visual, write words and roots in red or highlight with bright highlighters. If auditory, have him make up songs, raps, rhymes, riddles, and poems to help remember roots and word meanings. If solely tactile-kinesthetic, your student will need to play games to retain information and will benefit from typing out roots and words on the computer. For students with visual processing problems or dyslexia, always write the roots and words in red for better visual discrimination. Also note that children with reading and spelling difficulties can greatly benefit from learning the roots and corresponding words. Tutors have told me that they have successfully used *Roots and Fruits* with their students to remediate reading and spelling.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Monday:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Write the roots or prefixes and vocabulary words on a large piece of chart paper or dry erase board, preferably with a wide red marker. (Note: It is very important that the roots and words be displayed where they can be seen daily.)</li><li>2. Introduce new roots and meanings, and discuss their meanings.</li><li>3. Have each student read all of the roots and vocabulary words. (Reviewing sample sentences is helpful for comprehension.)</li><li>4. Assist younger students in looking up the vocabulary words in the dictionary and finding their meanings. Students should write 2 - 3 synonyms for each word when possible. Older students can do this on their own. Each root and vocabulary word with meanings should be written on spiral index cards or kept in a notebook. When a word has more than one meaning, you can choose whether to require the learning of all meanings or just one. I recommend that all meanings be taught, especially for older students.</li><li>5. Optional: Identify whether the root or prefix is Greek or Latin from the dictionary. If it is Greek, write a G and if it is Latin, write an L on the card next to the root or prefix.</li><li>6. Determine the part of speech of each vocabulary word from the dictionary and write this on the front of each card next to the word.</li></ol>
Tuesday: Wednesday: Thursday:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review the roots, meanings, and vocabulary words.</li><li>2. Have the students read them out loud.</li><li>3. Older students can also review their note cards.</li><li>4. Each student should give a sentence with one or two of the vocabulary words. See sample sentences to make sure you are on the right track. Use different words each day.</li><li>5. Choose one or two activities, games, or worksheets each day.</li></ol>
Friday:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students are required to use each word in a sentence. Two or more words may be used in one sentence as long as the words are used appropriately. This may be done orally or by writing. Previous sentences (i.e., of Tuesday through Thursday) may not be used.</li><li>2. Optional: Use one of the games or activities to evaluate your student's knowledge for the week.</li></ol>

## GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Please note that not all activities will appeal to middle and high school students. Choose appropriate games and activities for each age level.

1. **Silly Sentences**: Using your weekly vocabulary words, write a silly sentence that makes sense. Try to use as many words as you can and, even better, use words from previous weeks.  
Example: Using the roots act, amb, and ambul and the vocabulary words, you could write this sentence: The siren in the ambulance was activated by the active boy who ambled into the vehicle.
2. **Silly Sentence Art**: If working with two or more children, have the students exchange silly sentences and require them to draw pictures to illustrate the sentences they are given. If there is only one child, the parent can write the silly sentence and have the child illustrate it.
3. **Silly Sentence Drama**: (a) Give the student a silly sentence and have him act it out. (b) Have the students come up with their own silly sentences from that week's vocabulary words. Then ask each student to act out his sentence. The other students must guess which vocabulary words and roots he is using. Parents and children can also do this together.
4. **Beat The Clock**: Give each child one root or prefix and see who can write the most vocabulary words in an allotted time (2-5 minutes). A kitchen timer works great for this activity.

5. **Matching:** Choose three (3) roots and write them on separate index cards two times each. (You will have 6 index cards with one (1) root written on each card.) Then pick two (2) vocabulary words for each root and write these on six (6) separate cards. Altogether you will have 12 index cards. Mix the cards up and place them face down on the table. Each person takes turns matching a root with a vocabulary word. The person with the most matches wins. You can also require each child to give the meaning of the root and to use the corresponding vocabulary word in a sentence in order to win the game.
  
6. **Word Maker:** Write 4 or more roots on index cards. Use one card per root. (Using many roots is best for this game.) Place them face up on the table. Mix and match to form words. For example: *tele* and *photo* could make the word *telephoto*.
  
7. **Back Trace:** Take turns writing (tracing) roots on each other's backs. Guess the root and tell the meaning.
  
8. **Trick Sentences:** While looking at a chart of roots and vocabulary words, the teacher gives a sentence with an incorrect word. The students must replace the sentence with the correct vocabulary word. Another variation of this game is to give correct and incorrect sentences and have the students decide when the word is used correctly and incorrectly.
  
9. **Twenty Questions:** One person picks a vocabulary word from the posted chart. The other players get to ask up to 20 questions each to determine what the word is. Only questions can be asked and the person who picks the word can only respond with *yes* or *no*.

10. **Draw A Stick Man**: Using the same steps from the old game “Hang Man”, choose a word from the vocabulary word list and have the other players guess the letters to complete the word. Make sure the meaning of the vocabulary word is discussed. To complete the win (when all letters are placed before the man is finished), the players must give the root of the word.
11. **Jell-O Writing**: Using dry Jell-O with a few drops of water as paint, practice writing roots and vocabulary words on white paper. You can also use chocolate pudding or shaving cream for this.
12. **Rooty Fruity Scrabble**: Using a real Scrabble game, give a list of roots and vocabulary words to each player. Each player receives points for each root or vocabulary word made.
13. **Root or Word Bingo**: Take a blank sheet of paper and divide it into 16 squares. You can do this by folding the paper 4 times. Put a root and/or vocabulary word in each square. Call out the meaning and have the students place a game piece (you can use paper squares, cereal, or candy pieces) on the correct word or root.
14. **Riddle Game**: The teacher chooses an example word and gives clues in riddle form to help the students guess the word. For example: “I am a word that shows action”, “I am a word that people use when talking about animals.”
15. **Fill in the Blank**: Make a list of vocabulary words. Pick sample sentences from a dictionary. Read the sample sentence to students, leaving out the vocabulary words. Have students fill in the blanks.

ROOT OR PREFIX	MEANING	VOCABULARY
<b>A</b>		
<b>* a</b>	on	aboard afire aground
<b>a</b>	not	amoral anomaly <u>apathy</u> atheist <u>atrophy</u> atypical
<b>* ab</b> <b>abs</b> <b>a</b>	away from	<u>abdicate</u> abhor <u>abstain</u> <u>abstract</u> <u>absurd</u> , avert
<b>acr</b> <b>acu</b>	sharp, sour	acid <u>acrimonious</u> acrimony, acuity <u>acumen</u> acupuncture acute
<b>* act</b>	do	action activate activism enact
<b>* ad</b> <b>a</b> <b>ac</b>	to toward	abet accelerate accolade adage addict, <u>adulterate</u> <u>affable</u> , allure
<b>aer</b> <b>aero</b>	air	aerial aerobics aeronautics
<b>aesthet</b>	sense	aesthete <u>aesthetic</u> aesthetically

<b>ROOT OR PREFIX</b>	<b>MEANING</b>	<b>VOCABULARY</b>
<b>af</b>	to	affirm, affiliate, affix
<b>ag</b>	to to add to	<u>aggravate</u> aggregate aggression
<b>* agon</b>	contest struggle	agony antagonist <u>antagonize</u> protagonist
<b>agr agri</b>	field	agrarian agribusiness agriculture agronomy
<b>ali altr</b>	another	alias <u>alienate</u> altruism
<b>alter</b>	other	<u>alter</u> alternate alternative
<b>ambi</b>	both	ambidextrous <u>ambiguous</u> <u>ambivalent</u>
<b>* amb ambul</b>	walk	amble ambulance <u>ambulatory</u>
<b>ami amo</b>	love	amiable <u>amicable</u> amity amorous
<b>amp</b>	large	<u>ample</u> amplify <u>amplitude</u> amply
<b>amphi</b>	both	amphibian amphibious
<b>an</b>	not	<u>anarchy</u> anemia anorexia



ROOT OR PREFIX	MEANING	VOCABULARY
<b>an</b>	to toward	annex announce annul annulment
<b>ana</b>	up back again	Anabaptism Anabaptist anatomy
<b>* andro</b>	man	android androgen
<b>* ang</b>	bend	angular triangle quadrangle
<b>* anim</b>	life spirit soul	<u>animate</u> animism <u>animosity</u> inanimate magnanimous
<b>* ann enn</b>	year	annual annuity biennial
<b>ante anti</b>	before	antecedent antiquated <u>antiquity</u>
<b>anthrop</b>	human	anthropology anthropomorphism misanthrope
<b>* ant anti</b>	against	<u>antagonist</u> antibiotics antipathy antislavery antisocial
<b>apt ept</b>	suitable	adept aptitude <u>inept</u> ineptitude
<b>* aqua aque</b>	water	aquanaut aquatic aqueduct aqueous

<b>ROOT OR PREFIX</b>	<b>MEANING</b>	<b>VOCABULARY</b>
<b>arbit</b>	judge	arbitrator <u>arbitrary</u> <u>arbitration</u>
<b>arbor</b>	tree	arboreal arboretum arborist
<b>* arch ap</b>	chief first beginning	<u>apex</u> archbishop archenemy monarchy
<b>archae arch</b>	ancient primitive	archaeology archaic archive
<b>aristo</b>	upper class	aristocracy aristocrat aristocratic
<b>arm</b>	weapons equipment hostility	arm armament armature armistice disarmament disarming
<b>* art ert</b>	skill art	artifact artifice artisan <u>inert</u> inertia
<b>artic</b>	joint division	article <u>articulate</u> articulation
<b>as</b>	to	ascertain aspire assimilate assume
<b>* ast astro</b>	star	asterisk astronomer astronomical astronomy

<b>ROOT OR PREFIX</b>	<b>MEANING</b>	<b>VOCABULARY</b>
<b>alt</b>	high	altimeter altitude alto
<b>* aud</b>	hear	<u>audible</u> audience audit audition auditory inaudible
<b>auda</b>	to be bold to dare	<u>audacious</u> audacity
<b>auster</b>	harsh	<u>austere</u> austerity
<b>* auto</b>	self	autobiography automaton automobile autonomy
<b>ava</b> <b>avi</b>	to covet (greed)	<u>avarice</u> avaricious avid