

# Roots

## "Back to the Roots"

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

### Lyric: roots



Only about a third of English words are English by origin. More than half our words in English come from Latin, and another 5% come from Greek. These words are formed by taking a **root** and

adding combinations of prefixes and suffixes. And it's the root that makes up the main meaning of a word. Some roots are standalone words; they're a word all by themselves. Others need a prefix or suffix to complete the meaning. **Aqua** is an example of a standalone root word.

To see how roots work, let's take a look at the word **aquarium**. The root is **aqua** which means "water" and the suffix **-rium** means "place" or "building." So an **aquarium** is a place or building that holds water. If you've seen a fish tank, you've seen one kind of **aquarium**.

### Lyric: D-I-C-T



The root DICT (from Latin) means "speak" or "say."

**Dictation** is when one person speaks while the other person writes down what is said.

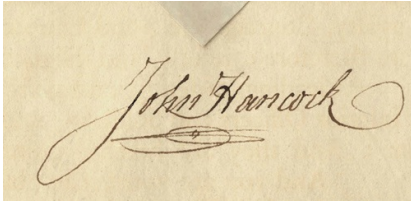
A **dictionary** is a book listing alphabetically the words of one language and showing their meanings.

If the prefix **contra-** means "against" or "opposite," what do you think the word **contradict** means?

Notes

Notes

## Lyric: Aut



The root AUT (from Greek) means "self."

If you're writing a book about yourself, you're writing an **autobiography**.

If this book becomes a bestseller, you might be asked for your **autograph**.

Notice the word **autograph** has two roots: **aut** and **graph**. Which one is a stand alone root word? Now can you guess what **graph** means?

Notes

## Lyric: Ped and pod



The roots PED and POD (from Greek) mean "foot."

**Pedaling** for hours on your bike might make your feet hurt.

A **podiatrist** is a doctor who'll make your feet feel better.

Have you ever walked across a **pedestrian** bridge?

Notes

## Lyric: Port



The root word PORT (from Latin) means "carry."

Almost everyone these days has a **portable** phone.

**Transportation** can take the form of planes, trains, or automobiles.

You've probably seen an **airport**, but can you guess what a **teleport** is?

Notes

## Lyric: Tele



The root TELE (from Greek) means “far.”

Use a **telescope** if you want to look at the moon or stars.

Use a **telephone** if you want to talk to a relative who lives in another state (or even next door).

What does someone do if they **telecommute**?

Notes

## Lyric: Spec



The root word SPEC (from Latin) means “look.”

The officials **inspected** the field before the game began.

**Spectators** are the people sitting in the

stands at the game.

Do you know what **spectacles** are?

Notes

## Lyric: form



The root word FORM (from Latin) means “shape.”

Notice that **form** is another standalone word.

What is the **formula** for success?

In order to be accepted by others, some

people **conform**.

If the prefix non- means “not” and the suffix -ist means “someone who does something,” then what is a **nonconformist**?

Notes

## Lyric: tempo



The root word TEMPO (from Latin) means “time.”

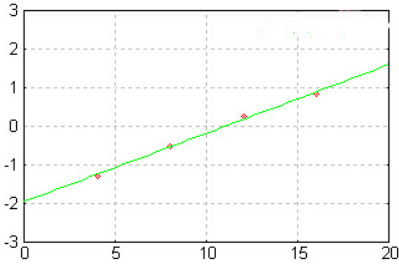
As a standalone root word, **tempo** refers specifically to the speed of music. As a root word in a larger word it refers to things having to do with time.

The **tempo** changed from fast to slow in the middle of the song. A **temporary** solution is something for the time being; it doesn't last.

How fast do you think you'd have to play a piece of music that is **uptempo**?

Notes

## Lyric: Graph



The root word GRAPH (from Greek) means “write” or “draw.”

When you take a **photograph**, you're “writing down” or recording an image. A piece of writing might be accompanied by an illustration or a **graphic**.

If your math teacher asks you to **graph a problem**, what is she asking you to do?

Notes

## Lyric: Photo



The root word PHOTO (from Greek) means “relating to light.”

**Photosynthesis** is a process by which plants convert sunlight into energy. Teachers **photocopy** tests and worksheets.

Can you guess what a **telephoto** lens does?

Notes

## Lyric: Mit or Miss



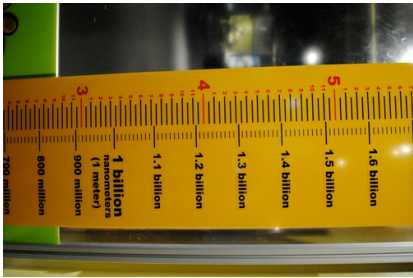
The roots MIT or MISS (from Latin) means “send.”

A **missive** is a form of written communication, usually a letter. You need a **permit** in order to leave the classroom.

What does it mean to **transmit** a message?

Notes

## Lyric: Meter



The root word METER (from Greek) means “measure.”

If you want to measure how hot or cold something is, just use a **thermometer**. If you want to measure how far your car has traveled, check the **odometer**.

The prefix nano- means “extremely small.” So what do you think **nanometers** are used for?

Notes

## Lyric: aster



The root ASTER or ASTR (from Greek) means “stars.”

If you want to study stars, planets and **asteroids**, then you might become an **astronomer**.

Why do you think they call this punctuation mark \* an **asterisk**?

Notes

## Lyric: phono



The root PHONO (from Greek) means “sound.”

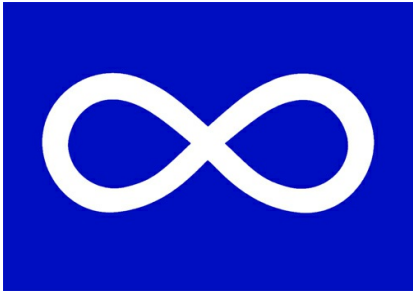
**Megaphones** are used by cheerleaders, police officers or someone speaking to a large crowd.

Long before the days of MP3s and CDs, people listened to music on

**phonographs.**

If the prefix caco- means “bad,” what do you think a **cacophonous** piece of music would sound like?

## Lyric: fin



The root FIN (from Latin) means “end.”

So we've come to the end of this song, the **finale**.

See what all you've learned about roots and their words, **finally**?

think **infinite** means?

If the prefix in- means “not,” what do you

Notes

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