

How to Use Word-Part Clues to Define Words

0:00	Owl: Welcome to How to Use Word-Part Clues to Define Words, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.
0:12	Unfamiliar words can pose a serious problem for reading comprehension.
0:16	Therefore, in order to improve your ability to understand what you read, you will need to expand your vocabulary.
0:22	There are a couple of things you can do when you encounter a word you don't understand.
0:27	You can look it up!
0:29	Sometimes a text will provide definitions for key words, either in the text or in a sidebar or glossary.
0:35	Otherwise, you can look up unfamiliar words in a paper or electronic dictionary.
0:40	Another thing you can do is look for clues in the word or text that can help you decipher its meaning.
0:46	There are two types of clues you can look for: context clues and word-part clues.
0:52	In this video, I'll explain how to look for and use word-part clues to decipher the meaning of unfamiliar words.
0:59	This will help you grow your vocabulary and improve your reading comprehension.
1:04	I'll discuss context clues in another video.
1:08	Word parts are the building blocks that form words.
1:11	If you understand how to identify and make sense of word parts, you can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words while you read.
1:18	There are three different word parts: the Root, the Prefix, and the Suffix.
1:25	The Root is the base word that has its own meaning.
1:28	The Prefix is attached to the beginning of the root and modifies its meaning.
1:33	The Suffix is attached to the end of the root and also modifies its meaning.
1:38	Let's look at an example.
1:40	Here's the word "autobiography."
1:43	If we take it apart into its word parts we have: auto bio graphy.
1:50	The root word is "bio," which means "life."
1:54	The prefix is "auto," which means "oneself."
1:57	The suffix is "graphy," which means "writing."
2:01	We can translate the literal meaning into this working definition: "self-writing about one's life."
2:08	Now, try out your definition in the original sentence.

- 2:11 Replace the original word with your working definition and see if the sentence makes sense:
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- 2:17 In his “self-writing about his life,” Frederick Douglass describes his escape from slavery and transformation into a prominent abolitionist.
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- 2:25 It’s a good idea to check your working definition against the actual definition of the word in a dictionary.
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- 2:32 In this case, the dictionary tells us that the word autobiography means “a history of a person’s life written or told by that person.”
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- 2:41 That’s pretty much the working definition that we discovered using word parts!
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- 2:45 You can improve your ability to identify and interpret word parts by becoming familiar with the most common word parts.
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- 2:51 Use your search engine to find free lists of the most common word parts and their definitions online.
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- 3:01 Thanks for listening to this instructional video on How to Use Word-Part Clues to Define Words!
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- 3:07 Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills.

