

The Word Within the Word • List #20

mela	<i>(black)</i>	melanin, melanite, melancholy, Melanesia, melanoma, melanocyte	<i>Greek</i>
vice	<i>(in place of)</i>	vice versa, vice president, vice consul, viceroy, vice-regent	<i>Latin</i>
foli	<i>(leaf)</i>	folio, foliolate, bifoliolate, foliation, defoliate, portfolio, folium	<i>Latin</i>
atom	<i>(vapor)</i>	atomic, atomizer, atomize, atomism, subatomic, diatomic	<i>Greek</i>
orb	<i>(circle)</i>	orbit, exorbitant, orbital, orbicular, orbital decay, supraorbital	<i>Latin</i>
multi	<i>(many)</i>	multifarious, multitudinous, multilateral, multiped, multiply	<i>Latin</i>
ign	<i>(fire)</i>	ignite, igneous, ignis fatuus, ignition, reignite, ignescent, ignitron	<i>Latin</i>
moll	<i>(soft)</i>	mollify, emollient, mollusk, mollescent	<i>Latin</i>
lin	<i>(line)</i>	linear, delineate, lineation, lineal, rectilinear, lineage	<i>Latin</i>
hemi	<i>(half)</i>	hemisphere, hemialgia, hemiplegia, hemipterous, hemicrania	<i>Greek</i>
oo	<i>(egg)</i>	oophyte, oocyte, oology, oogenesis, oogonium, oophorectomy, oospore	<i>Greek</i>
grade	<i>(step)</i>	gradual, grading, retrograde, downgrade, gradualism, degrading	<i>Latin</i>
pneumo	<i>(lung)</i>	pneumogastric, pneumonia, pneumonectomy, pneumobacillus	<i>Greek</i>
radi	<i>(ray)</i>	radiation, radian, radial, radiolarian, radiance, irradiate	<i>Latin</i>
oscu	<i>(mouth)</i>	osculum, osculation, osculant, osculate	<i>Latin</i>
ob	<i>(against)</i>	obloquy, objurgation, obdurate, obsequious, oblique, obsolete, obstinate	<i>Latin</i>
vect	<i>(carry)</i>	convection, vector, invective, vectorial	<i>Latin</i>
digit	<i>(finger)</i>	prestidigitation, digital, digitation	<i>Latin</i>
gymno	<i>(naked)</i>	gymnasium, gymnastics, gymnosperm, gymnosophist	<i>Greek</i>
plasm	<i>(form)</i>	cytoplasm, endoplasm, ectoplasm, plasma, plasmodium	<i>Greek</i>
narco	<i>(sleep)</i>	narcotic, narcolepsy, narcotine, narcotism	<i>Greek</i>
vermi	<i>(worm)</i>	vermin, vermicelli, vermicide, vermivorous	<i>Latin</i>
lign	<i>(wood)</i>	lignite, lignify, ligneous, lignocellulose	<i>Latin</i>
dendr	<i>(tree)</i>	dendrology, dendroid, dendrochronology, dendrite, rhododendron	<i>Greek</i>
lachry	<i>(tear)</i>	lachrymose, lachrymatory, lachrymal	<i>Latin</i>

epi

on • upon • beside • among

The Greek stem *epi* is an important prefix in the English language. We usually define it as meaning *on*, but it can also mean *upon*, *beside*, *among*, *in front of*, or even *over*. In some words, *epi* is altered to *ep* or even *eph*. Here is a small selection of the interesting words that contain *epi*:

- epideictic:** for show. The openly epideictic speech was loudly applauded by the crowd.
- episode:** a complete part. The forfeit was the latest enigmatic episode in Fischer's saga.
- episcopate:** the position of a bishop. Within two years he had ascended to the episcopate.
- epiphytotic:** epidemic in plants. The new virus had an epiphytotic virulence.
- epilogue:** closing comment. Prospero's epilogue was a poignant moment for theater.
- epicene:** effeminate. His manners and tastes manifested an epicene daintiness.
- epitome:** a representative. Nero's evil deeds seemed the epitome of Roman decadence.
- epizoon:** a parasite. The animal's skin had become a paradise for epizoons.
- epoch:** an important period. Gorbachev's rule was an epoch in world history.
- epode:** a poetic form. Short lines follow longer lines in Horace's epodes.
- eponym:** a source-name person. Simon *Bolivar* is the eponym for the nation of *Bolivia*.
- epigeal:** growing on the ground. Larger animals fed on the lush epigeal species.
- epidermis:** outer skin. She specialized in treating diseases of the epidermis.
- epistemic:** concerning knowledge. The debated a range of profound epistemic issues.
- epistle:** a letter. The epistle to the Romans has received a certain fame.
- epigone:** an inferior descendant. The founders were poorly imitated by their epigones.
- epicenter:** center of an earthquake. The devastation was greatest at the epicenter.
- epigenous:** growing on plant surface. Epigenous organisms covered the broad leaves.
- epigraphy:** inscriptions. They needed a specialist in epigraphy to decipher the inscription.
- epexegetis:** additional clarification. The brief epexegetis clarified the obscurity.
- epigraph:** architectural inscription. "Bring to me your tired . . ." began the inscription.

1. The gloomy soul was unable to overcome her **melancholy**.
2. The **vice president** greeted the **vice consul** and **vice versa**.
3. Agent Orange was a toxic **defoliant** used in the Vietnam War.
4. The **atomizer** was filled with a wonderful perfume.
5. **Orbicular** leaves are circular and flat.
6. Her **multifarious** nefarious deeds landed her in prison.
7. The **ignis fatuus** seemed to **ignite** and hover over the swamp.
8. We could do nothing to **mollify** the man's anger.
9. Quickly **delineate** your proposal.
10. **Hemiplegia** is paralysis of one side of the body.
11. The obsessed **oologist** painted his house robin's-egg blue.
12. We gradually became aware of the ship's **retrograde** motion.
13. The **pneumococcus** bacteria gave him **pneumonia**.
14. Skeletons of the microscopic **radiolarians** show **radial** symmetry.
15. The sponge expels water through its **osculum**.
16. The **immense** wall was **impervious** to cannon fire.
17. The **convection** current distributed the heat of the flames.
18. Houdini accomplished feats of **prestidigitation**.
19. The **gymnasium** is the perfect place for **gymnastics**.
20. An Amoeba's **cytoplasm** includes **endoplasm** and **ectoplasm**.
21. The nodding man was a ^{not} **narcotics** addict but a victim of **narcolepsy**.
22. **Vermin** had gotten into the box of **vermicelli**.
23. **Lignocellulose** strengthens woody cells in plants.
24. The **rhododendron** fragments were useful to the **dendrochronologist**.
25. The cadet's **lachrymose** pleadings did not move the drill instructor.

1. The **Mollusca** are a large phylum of invertebrates named after their soft (moll) bodies. The Mollusks include such creatures as snails, squids, and octopi. We use the same stem in the word **mollify**. If a person has fierce anger, **obdurate** anger, then we try to make (fy) soft (moll) the anger that has hardened (dur) against (ob) us.
2. A **Micropoem**: Public blame and disgrace is sometimes called **obloquy**. Obloquy is horrible to experience, as the word implies: to suffer the obloquy of society is to have everyone talk (loquy) against (ob) you.
3. **Objurgation**, like obloquy, is bitterly unpleasant to receive. To be objurgated is to be berated, to be violently denounced, to be actually sworn (jur) against (ob).
4. If you are asked to **delineate** the options, don't drag out every fact and detail you know. Just give a precise summary, an outline. Put the lines (lin) down (de) without painting in the minutia.
5. Archeologists studying Indian ruins in the American Southwest can often date a site to the exact year by using **dendrochronology**, or tree ring dating. Tree rings form a pattern: thick rings in wet years and thin rings in dry years. A careful examination of ring patterns has shown that trees (dendro) contain a record of time (chron) that can be used to study (logy) the past.
6. The circular (orb) paths that satellites follow around the earth are called **orbits**. Unfortunately, a satellite will not permanently follow the path it is placed in. **Orbital decay** refers to the gradual slowing and eventual falling of a satellite as a result of friction from the sparse molecules in the earth's upper atmosphere. Notice that **decay** literally means down/fall (de: down, cad: fall).
7. An **exorbitant** price is one that is outrageously high, unrealistic, completely out (ex) of the sphere (orb) of reason. It is a price that has escaped the gravity of sense that held it down to earth; it is out of orbit, off by itself.
8. **Spanish Cognates**: One of the most important observations to gain from the study of the etymology of English vocabulary is that English and Spanish share thousands of words that are cognates, related words, that have common origins. Often, the English and the Spanish word share not only a stem, but even more than one stem, and often in the same order. As examples, here are some English words from this lesson, and their Spanish cognates:

vice versa : vice versa
atomic : atómico
delineate : delinear
hemisphere : hemisferio
irradiate : irradiar
oblique : obliquo
obstinate : obstinado
digital : digital
gymnasium : gimnasio