



Vocabulary Development

High School Standard 1.4 – Selectively employ the most effective strategies to recognize words as they construct meaning, including the use of context clues for multiple-meaning words, and etymological study.

High School Language Arts (grades 9 - 12)

Root Words

Most words have Greek or Latin origins which, when learned, help us learn other words. For example:

“**act**” means behave or perform. Knowing this we can understand the following more easily.

English Word	Usage	Meaning
activate	verb	to start something
active	adjective	causing motion or change, lively
actually	adverb	existing in reality
actively	adverb	to be driven to action, do something with involvement

See! By knowing just one word in Latin or Greek, you can easily figure out four more when they are used in a sentence.

The following chart shows examples of Latin root words, their grammatical use in a sentence, and their meaning.

Root Words

“**anim**” is from Latin. Used in English words it means mind, life, spirit or anger.

English Word	Usage	Meaning
animal	noun	a living creature
animated	verb	to come alive, impart interest or zest
anima	noun	the inner soul
animation	noun	given life or motion as in animated cartoons or movies
animosity	noun	long-standing, deep-seated hostility

“**corp**” comes from the Latin word “corpus,” meaning “body.”

English Word	Usage	Meaning
corp	noun	a body associated under common direction, as in the Marine Corps
incorporate	verb	to combine, include or embody
corporation	noun	a group of people organized under a charter granting them as a body some of the legal rights of an individual
corporeal	adjective	of a material or bodily nature, tangible or physical
corpse	noun	a dead body
corpus	noun	a large collection of writing or creative work of one specific kind or on a particular subject
corpulent	adjective	obesity

Let's put our first set of words in sentences to understand them more clearly. Have students try to place the correct word into the sentences.

acts

activate

active

actually

actively

1. Just a slight rise in temperature will _____ the fire alarm.
2. My brother is 13 but he _____ like a child.
3. My mom was _____ pursuing her career as a nurse by going to the university at night.
4. The puppy is so _____ it keeps knocking over all the plants on the deck.
5. The real victim in this story is _____ Miriam, who lost everything.

Answer Key

1. Just a slight rise in temperature will activate the fire alarm.

In sentence one, something is started or set off, so the word is **activate**.

2. My brother is 13 but he acts like a child.

In sentence two, it seems we are talking about behavior so it would be **acts**.

3. My mom was actively pursuing her career as a nurse by going to the university at night.

In sentence three, someone is doing something new – the verb is present participle – so you want an adverb that implies action going on now, **actively**.

4. The puppy is so active it keeps knocking over all the plants on the deck.

In sentence four, there is a lot of action but this requires an adjective, **active**.

5. The real victim in this story is actually Miriam, who lost everything.

In sentence five, you are being very specific about the facts of an act or event, so it would be **actually**.

When you write sentences for your vocabulary words, think about the role the word has in the sentence and use another word that means the same thing, if you can. For example:

Mark is very **hostile** to Steve and their **animosity** is obvious.

The Army does not permit **obese** people because they are too **corpulent** to move with strength and agility.

STEPS FOR STUDENTS

Step 1 – Write the Word

Have students write each vocabulary word on the top corner of a large index card (8 cards total):

animation

animosity

activate

actually

corpse

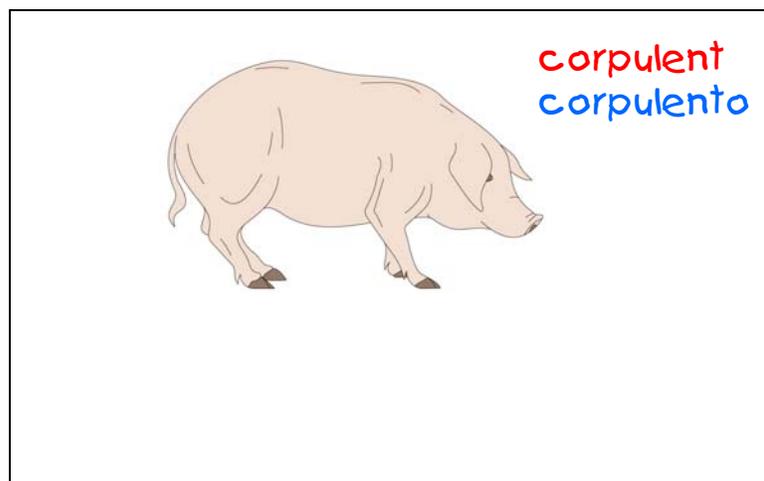
corpulent

corporation

incorporate

Step 2 – Add a Visual

Students now create an imaginative picture depicting the meaning of the word.

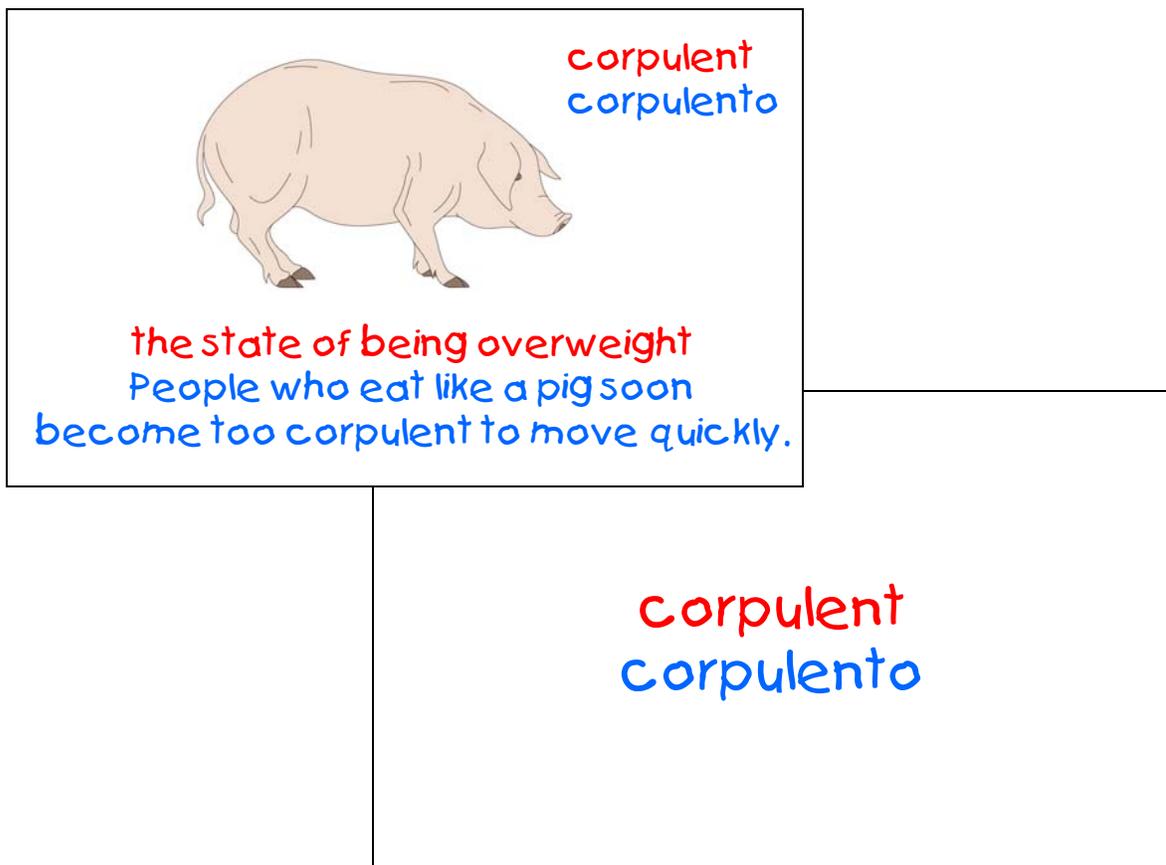


Step 3 – Write a Definition

Students write a definition of the word under their drawing. Use of a dictionary is fine, but have them write the meaning in their own words.

Step 4 – Create a Sentence

Students write the word in a sentence under the definition. They then flip the card over and write just the word in the center.



Creative Use of the Cards

Pair students up and have them test one another using each other's cards as flash cards.