

*Lesson: The Roots of Words*

*Mrs. Spurlock*

*Pre-AP English 1*

**Objectives:**

**As a result of this lesson the learner will know:**

- **How the Greek language influenced our own.**
- **How to use the dictionary to trace the genealogy of words.**
- **How building a vocabulary can be fun**

*Standards: Reading 1.3 Identify Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology and use the knowledge to understand the origin and meaning of new words (e.g., the word narcissistic drawn from the myth of Narcissus and Echo).*

**Background:**

Many ancient civilizations advanced communication and the written word through the use of symbols and pictures, but the ancient Greeks added *vowels*. More important, the Greeks laid the foundations and established high standards with the writing of the first histories, travel guides, plays, heroic tales, philosophical writings, and mathematical and scientific theorems.

**STEP 1:** *Exploring “roots.”*

Look over this list of Greek root words and their meanings:

**acro** (highest)  
**cracy** (rule by)  
**mono** (one)  
**agra** (farm)  
**demo** (people)  
**nomy** (rules for)  
**anthro** (human)  
**geo** (earth)  
**arch** (chief)  
**graph** (write)

**aristo** (best)  
**hydro** (water)  
**ophy**, (knowledge of)  
**astro** (star)  
**ist** (one who does)  
**optikos** (see)  
**auto** (self)  
**philo** (love)  
**phon** (speak)  
**bio** (life)

**logy** (study of)  
**polis** (city-state)  
**chromo** (color)  
**psyche** (soul)  
**chrono** (time)  
measure)  
**techne** (skill, art)  
**cosmos** (world)  
**micro** (small)  
**tele** (far)

**STEP 2:** Using your whiteboards, see how many words you can put together from the list.

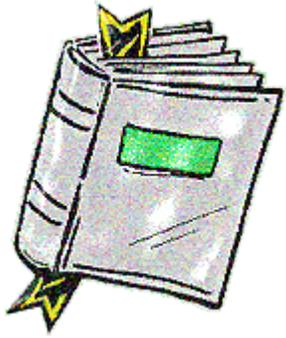
**STEP 3:** Using your handout, create 6 new words.

**STEP 4:** Make a list of 6 words that you created

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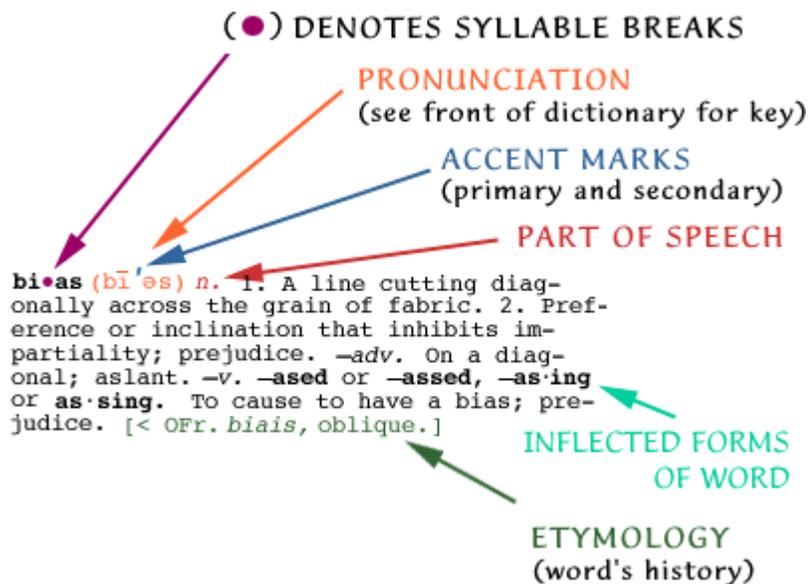
## STEP 5 : Using a dictionary

# NAVIGATING the Collegiate Dictionary: Reading a Dictionary Entry

If you've been clicking on the highlighted and capitalized words in this website, you have a pretty good sense of what a dictionary entry looks like. There is a purpose for each NOTATION, so when you look up new words, you should read the entry carefully and use the tables and charts provided to make sure you understand. Here is the entry for the word **bias**:

**bi·as** (bī'əs) *n.* 1. A line cutting diagonally across the grain of fabric. 2. Preference or inclination that inhibits impartiality; prejudice. —*adv.* On a diagonal; aslant. —*v.* —**ased** or —**assed**, —**as·ing** or **as·sing**. To cause to have a bias; prejudice. [*< OFr. biais, oblique.*]

And here is a little visual which identifies the main parts of the dictionary entry.



1. All entries begin with the word written in bold face type, with the syllables separated by centered dots (·) if the word has more than one SYLLABLE. *Bi·as* has two syllables.
2. Next, in parentheses, is the PRONUNCIATION of the word. If you've taken an ESL class you are probably familiar with this

notation. If you haven't, there's help with understanding the odd marks and symbols used in the pronunciation. In the front of most dictionaries, you will find a **Pronunciation Key** that lists each of the marks, along with examples of common words with the same sound as the one indicated by the symbol. Here's what a **Pronunciation Key** looks like:



### Pronunciation Key

\&\ as <b>a</b> and <b>u</b> in abut	\e\ as <b>e</b> in bet	\o\ as <b>aw</b> in law
\[^&]\ as <b>e</b> in kitten	\E\ as <b>ea</b> in easy	\oi\ as <b>oy</b> in boy
\&r\ as <b>ur</b> and <b>er</b> in further	\g\ as <b>g</b> in go	\th\ as <b>th</b> in thin
\a\ as <b>a</b> in ash	\i\ as <b>i</b> in hit	\[th_]\ as <b>th</b> in the
\A\ as <b>a</b> in ace	\I\ as <b>i</b> in ice	\ü\ as <b>oo</b> in loot
\ä\ as <b>o</b> in mop	\j\ as <b>j</b> in job	\u\ as <b>oo</b> in foot
\au\ as <b>ou</b> in out	\[ng]\ as <b>ng</b> in sing	\y\ as <b>y</b> in yet
\ch\ as <b>ch</b> in chin	\O\ as <b>o</b> in go	\zh\ as <b>si</b> in vision

### Example Etymology Key

It is in your dictionary (usually in the first pages)

## ABBREVIATIONS

**Amer.Eng.** *American English*, the English language as spoken and written in America.

**Anglo-Fr.** *Anglo-French*, the French spoken in England from the Norman Conquest (1066) through the Middle Ages; the administrative and legal language of England 12c.-17c.

**Anglo-L.** *Anglo-Latin*, the form of Medieval Latin used in England during the Middle English period.

**Anglo-Norm.** *Anglo-Norman*, the dialect of Anglo-French spoken by the Norman settlers (French-speaking descendants of Scandinavians who settled in Normandy in the 9c.) in England after the Conquest (1066). Essentially the same as Anglo-French.

**Ar.** *Arabic*, the Semitic language of the Arabs and the language of Islam.

**Arm.** *Armenian*, the Indo-European language of Armenia.

**Assyr.** *Assyrian*, Akkadian dialect spoken in the empire that flourished on the Tigris River 7c. B.C.E.

**Celt.** *Celtic*, Indo-European language branch that includes Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, and Breton. Also the language spoken by the ancestral group during the presumed period of unity.

**Dan.** *Danish*, North Germanic language spoken in Denmark.

**Du.** *Dutch*, West Germanic language spoke in the Netherlands, descended from the Low German dialects of the Franks and Saxons.

in use since c.1500, chiefly scientific.

**N.Gmc.** *North Germanic*, the subgroup of Germanic comprising Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, Old Norse, etc.; also the language spoken by the ancestral group during the presumed period of unity.

**Norm.** *Norman*, the French of the Normans.

**STEP 6: Using your whiteboards. Take 1 of your words and with a partner:**

- 1. Find the definitions for your words.**
- 2. Break your word into syllables.**
- 3. Identify the accent marks for the word.**
- 4. Identify the part of speech.**
- 5. Identify the words Eytymology.**

**REPEAT THE PROCESS FOR YOUR WORDS AND YOUR PARTNER'S REMAINING WORDS!**

**STEP 7: Be prepared for you and your partner to share ALL your words with the class.**

**STEP 8: Place your remaining word with definition, syllable break down, accent marks, part of speech, and etymology here:**

- 1.**