Greek medical word parts

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TEACHER PLAN / 20 MINUTES / FOUR WORD PARTS

Read closely: roots that look alike

High-school or introductory college medical terminology; independent learners can use the same steps. No Greek or Latin reading is required.

Learning aims

Recall four Greek-derived word parts used in English. • Separate a root meaning from the meaning of a complete word. • Explain why similar spellings can carry different meanings.

Teach, apply, check

0-3 min Read the four meanings together. Ask learners to find the root inside each example.

3-7 min Model hyperhidrosis, then contrast hidr/o and hydr/o. Explain that a root is a clue, not a complete definition.

7-15 min Give learners the student sheet. Use the reference for a first attempt; cover it for a recall check.

15-20 min Compare explanations with the answer key. Discuss one spelling error, then use the exit task to check transfer.

Reference: meaning and complete word

Word part	Meaning	Example
cyt/o	Cell	cytology: study of cells
hidr/o	Sweat	hyperhidrosis: excessive sweating
carp/o	Wrist	carpal: related to the wrist
somat/o	Body	somatic: related to the body

Model one example

In hyperhidrosis, hyper- supplies excess, hidr supplies sweat, and -osis marks a condition. The full term means excessive sweating. Hidr/o is a study notation; do not insert its slash or an extra o into the complete word.

Compare before you guess

Compare hidr/o (sweat) with hydr/o (water), and somat/o (body) with stomat/o (mouth). Check each letter before you choose a meaning. In cyt/o, the slash marks the joining vowel; it is not punctuation used in the complete English word.

Print page 2 for recall; add this page for supported practice. Keep page 3 as the separate answer key.

Greek word parts: student sheet

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Write in your own words. Use the reference for a first attempt, or cover it for recall. Keep the answer key separate.

1. Write the meaning of cyt/o.

2. Write the meaning of hidr/o.

3. Write the meaning of carp/o.

4. Write the meaning of somat/o.

5. Break cytology into cyt/o + -logy. Explain both parts and the whole word.

6. Break hyperhidrosis into hyper- + hidr + -osis. Explain the whole word.

7. Compare hidr/o and hydr/o. Which letter changes, and what are the two meanings?

8. A learner writes “stomat/o means body.” Correct the meaning and name the body root.

9. In carpal tunnel, which word supplies the wrist clue? Why is wrist not a full definition?

10. Exit task: explain somatic using somat- and -ic. What can you infer before reading the next word?

Answer key and next steps

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Greek medical word parts / Teacher or self-check copy

Accept equivalent explanations that keep the key distinction. Use errors to choose what to review. This is practice, not a proficiency test.

1. Cell.

2. Sweat.

3. Wrist.

4. Body.

5. Cyt/o identifies cells; -logy supplies study. Cytology studies cells, including their examination with a microscope.

6. Hyper- adds excess, hidr identifies sweat, and -osis marks a condition: excessive sweating.

7. The i changes to y. Hidr/o refers to sweat; hydr/o refers to water.

8. Stomat/o means mouth. Somat/o means body. The extra t after s changes the root.

9. Carpal supplies the wrist clue. Tunnel names the passage; the complete phrase adds information beyond the root.

10. Somat- supplies body and -ic supplies relating to. Somatic describes something related to the body; the next word and sentence identify what is described.

Continue with feedback

Try the eight-question check for this Greek pack. It covers these same four word parts with new questions. Read each explanation and retry missed questions. On paper, open the address below and choose Online check.

Sources and use

Original lesson, prompts and model answers by Word Radicals. Vocabulary checked October 18, 2026. English word study, not diagnosis or treatment.

MedlinePlus: Word Parts and What They Mean

NCI: cytology

NCI: somatic

MedlinePlus: hyperhidrosis

MedlinePlus: carpal tunnel

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