

LESSON 9

Special Families

The root *famil* as in *family* means “household or family; closely known.” The word *family* and its root *famil* are similar in spelling and meaning.

The root *speci* as in *special* means “of a particular type or kind.” The word *special* and its root *speci* are similar in spelling and meaning.

All of the following key words start with the root *famil* or the root *speci*. In each key word, circle the root.

Key Words

familiar

familiarize

specialty

specific

familiarity

specialist

species

specify

Using ROOT CLUES

The roots *famil* (closely known) and *speci* (particular kind) give you clues about meaning. When you spot one of these roots in a word, you have a key to the word’s meaning. Use the underlined root clues to help you match the following columns:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ <u>familiar</u> | A. a person with a <u>particular kind</u> of knowledge |
| 2. _____ <u>specialist</u> | B. well <u>known</u> and <u>close</u> |
| 3. _____ <u>familiarize</u> | C. to point out a <u>particular kind</u> |
| 4. _____ <u>specify</u> | D. to get to <u>know</u> |

The root clues did not give you complete definitions as the following dictionary listings will. But they got you started by giving you *part* of the meaning. Sometimes that *part* helps you to figure out the word.

FAMIL (from the Latin word *familia* meaning "household, family")Familiar Words
with Root FAMIL

families
family

Challenge Words
with Root FAMIL

familial
unfamiliar

1. familiar (fə mil' yər)

adj. Often seen or heard before, well known.

For vacation reading, Zaida chose several books by familiar authors.

2. familiarity (fə mi lē yer' ə tē)

n. The condition of easy recognition or close friendship.

Kim treated her visiting cousins with familiarity and affection.

3. familiarize (fə mil' yə rīz)

v. To get to know, to acquaint, to get accustomed to.

After Amir moved, he tried to familiarize himself with the new neighborhood quickly.

**SPECI** (from the Latin word *species* meaning "a particular type or kind")Familiar Words
with Root SPECI

special

Challenge Words
with Root SPECI

specialize
specifically
specification
specimen

4. specialist (spesh' əl ist)

n. A person with special knowledge or experience in a particular area.

At our school, the literacy specialist helps students who are struggling with reading.

5. specialty (spesh' əl tē)

n. A particular subject or area about which a person is an expert.

Bruce's specialty is insects because he draws, collects, and reads about them all the time.



- 6. species** (spē' shēz or spē' sēz)
n. A group of plants or animals that share common features.

The rain forest is home to hundreds of different species of frogs.



NOTA BENE

The English word *species* and the Latin word *species* are exactly the same. The English word *various* and the Latin word *varius* differ by only one letter. Some people call these words from different languages that look similar and come from the same root “cognates.” It is interesting to note that the word *species* has remained exactly the same for over two thousand years.

- 7. specific** (spi sif' ik)
adj. Clearly stated, detailed, exact.

Our soccer coach gave specific directions, telling us just how to keep the ball moving.

- 8. specify** (spes' ə fi)
v. To describe or explain clearly, to name exactly.

Mom did not specify which kind of fruit she wanted for the pie.





EXERCISE A: SYNONYMS

Write the letter of the best **SYNONYM** (the word with the meaning most nearly the same as the word in bold-faced type).

1. _____ to **familiarize** the class with
 a. supply b. attend c. leave d. acquaint
2. _____ visited a **specialist** in coins
 a. writer b. expert c. speaker d. beginner
3. _____ a comfortable **familiarity**
 a. closeness b. friend c. distance d. blanket
4. _____ **specifying** the medicine he wanted
 a. picturing b. remembering c. naming d. forgetting



EXERCISE B: MEANING IN CONTEXT

Use these words to fill in the blanks in the following paragraph.

specific

familiar

specialty

species

Along the river, Agnes spotted a brown bird with a black beak that she thought she had seen before. It looked very (1) _____. But she was not sure what (2) _____ it was. Birds were her (3) _____, so Agnes liked to identify each one she saw. She hunted through her bird guide, which gave (4) _____ information about a variety of birds living in her state. When she found a picture of the brown bird, she quickly learned its name.

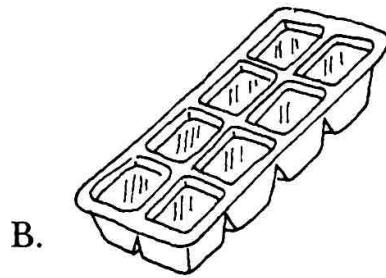


EXERCISE C: EXTEND YOUR VOCABULARY

The verb suffix *-fy/-ify*

The key word *specify* ends in the suffix *-fy*. *Specify* is a verb. You know that some verbs like *run*, *jump*, and *swim* show physical action. Verbs can also show other kinds of action. Examples: *notify* (to tell, to make known), *falsify* (to change so as to make false), *fortify* (to make stronger or more secure).

The underlined verbs in the questions below express three kinds of action. Look at the pictures. Then answer the questions.



1. Which picture makes you think of the verb terrify? Circle your answer. A B C
2. Which picture makes you think of the verb beautify? Circle your answer. A B C
3. Which picture makes you think of the verb solidify? Circle your answer. A B C

Match the verbs that end in *-fy/-ify* with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 4. _____ satisfy | A. to make clear |
| 5. _____ clarify | B. to make united |
| 6. _____ unify | C. to make satisfied |

7. Circle the meaning that best fits the verb suffix *-fy/-ify*.

- | | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| A. to fix | B. to fill | C. to make |
|-----------|------------|------------|

8. Write a sentence using the verb *specify*.
