Determining the Meanings of Words &
• Write as much as you can about how a good reader might determine the meaning of unknown words encountered in a text.
**Strategy #1: Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots**

- Prefixes = word parts added to the beginnings of words that change the meaning
  - Examples: re, pre, post, in, im, de, dis, a, an,
- Suffixes = word parts added to the ends of words that change the meaning
  - Examples: ly, able, ible, ful, ness, less, ism, ist, ish
- Knowing the meanings of prefixes and suffixes increases your ability to understand new words, especially in science class
- Words that have similar parts often have the same root.
  - Examples: the root “bio” means “life” = biography (book about a person’s life), biome (a large community of plant and animal life), biochemistry (chemistry related to living organisms)
Examples

• Take the science word “aerobic,” which means “requiring oxygen.”
• Adding the prefix “an” (“not”) to “aerobic” (“requiring oxygen”) forms the word “anaerobic,” which means “not requiring oxygen.”
• The suffix “ology,” which means “the science or study of,” can be added to many words:
  • “biology” = “bio” + “ology” = the science or study of life
  • “geology” = “geo” + “ology” = the science or study of the earth
  • “psychology” = “psych” + “ology” = the science or study of the mind
On Your Own!

• Divide into small groups (2, 3, or 4 students).

• You will be given 3 stacks of cards (Prefix Cards, Root Word Cards, and Suffix Cards) and an answer sheet.

• In your group, work to combine the various prefixes, roots, and suffixes into new words. Find as many different words as you can! Write the new words along with their definitions on your answer sheet. Compose definitions based on the meanings of their different parts (EX: in + cred+ible=incredible=unable to be believed)

• The group(s) who find the most words will win a special prize! Prizes will also be given to groups who find the most challenging combinations!

• You will have 7 minutes to complete this task.
Strategy #2: Context Clues

• Context Clues = using surrounding words and phrases to find clues about the meaning of an unknown word

• Types of Context Clues

  • Definition: the text gives a definition of the word

  • EX: The girl was churlish—rude, bad-tempered, and ill-mannered.

  • Example: the text gives examples of the word (without giving a definition)

  • EX: The DriveCam records any unusual driving maneuvers, such as swerves and sudden stops.

  • Synonym: the text gives a word with a similar meaning

  • EX: His pertinacity, or stubbornness, is the cause of most of his trouble.

  • Antonym: the text gives a word with an opposite meaning

  • EX: Rather than be involved in clandestine meetings, the businessmen conducted all their business out in the open.
The man who lives next door spoke **brusquely** to the young children, unlike his wife who is always polite.

- a. courteously
- b. kindly
- c. calmly
- d. impolitely
On Your Own!

- The tornado **annihilated** the whole town to the point that nothing was left standing.
- a. constructed
- b. destroyed
- c. saved
- d. created
On Your Own!

• Terry was **obstinate**; she was being stubborn and refused to see any other movie than the one she wanted.

• a. easily giving in
• b. cannot decide
• c. agreeable
• d. stubborn
On Your Own!

- The departing president of the organization gave his **valediction**; when he was finished, he welcomed the new president to the podium.

  - a. beginning
  - b. farewell
  - c. welcome
  - d. prayer
On Your Own!

• Ashley stared at the newest style of jeans in the catalog. She just had to have them. Her birthday money was not enough to cover the expense. Although she didn’t want to \textit{grovel}, she decided to plead with her parents for the money to buy them.

• a. rebel
• b. network
• c. resist
• d. beg
On Your Own!

• I know that Jeff is very intelligent, so I was confused when he did such a vacuous thing as jump off the roof of our house.

• a. annoying
• b. cowardly
• c. stupid
• d. outstanding
On Your Own!

• The new speaker from the health clinic was so **inarticulate** that all of the listeners left the auditorium wondering what his message was really about.

• a. loudly spoken

• b. conflicted

• c. angry

• d. unclearly spoken
Strategy #2:
Connotation vs Denotation

- **Denotation** = the dictionary definition of a word (no emotions)
- **Connotation** = the positive or negative emotions associated with a word
- **Connotation** can indicate a writer’s tone toward a subject/topic.

**inexpensive vs cheap** = What ideas do you associate with each?

- Would you rather have an inexpensive pair of tennis shoes or a cheap pair of tennis shoes? Why? How would you feel if someone called your shoes “cheap”?

**mentally ill vs lunatic** = What ideas do you associate with each?

- Which person would you rather invite into your home--someone who is mentally ill or someone who is a lunatic? What connotations are associated with each word?

**slender vs skinny AND chubby vs overweight vs fat**

- Which word from each set is MOST insulting? Least insulting? Why?
**On Your Own! Think Pair Share**

- Below are several clusters of words with similar denotations but different connotations. On your chart, record each word into a column based on its connotations—positive, negative, or neutral.
  - mansion, shack, dwelling, residence, house, home, dump
  - spinster, old maid, unmarried woman, maiden lady, career woman
  - snooty, arrogant, conceited, cocky, vain, self-centered, proud
  - giggle, chuckle, laugh, guffaw, snicker, roar, cackle
  - plump, obese, heavyset, fleshy, fat, overweight, roly-poly, pudgy
  - saving, miserly, economical, careful, thrifty, penny-pinching, budget-minded, stingy, selfish
  - intelligent, wise, clever, sly, skillful, calculating
  - glum, shy, withdrawn, silent, timid, untalkative
  - steal, burglarize, rob, hold up, snatch, grab, help oneself to, “borrow”
Exit Slip

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