

Etymological Explorations: Scientific Roots

Etymology · Answer Key · 8 Questions

1. Which of the following is the primary method used by etymologists to trace the origin and development of words?

- A) Analyzing modern slang usage
- B) Comparing word forms and meanings across related languages**
- C) Consulting fictional literature
- D) Studying grammatical structures only

2. The process by which a word's meaning shifts over time, often becoming more specific or more general, is known as:

- A) Phonetic shift
- B) Lexical borrowing
- C) Semantic change**
- D) Syntactic evolution

3. Cognates are words in different languages that share a common ancestor. Which pair of English words are cognates derived from a Proto-Indo-European root for 'three'?

- A) three and trek
- B) three and tree**
- C) three and thrill
- D) three and through

4. The linguistic principle that describes how sounds change systematically in related languages is called:

- A) Morphological drift
- B) Lautverschiebung (Sound Shift)**
- C) Syntactic amalgamation
- D) Semantic bleaching

5. What does the 'Grimm's Law' describe in historical linguistics?

- A) The evolution of noun declensions
- B) Systematic consonant shifts from Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic**
- C) The development of verb conjugations
- D) The loss of grammatical gender

6. The study of the origin and history of words and the way their meanings have changed throughout history is called:

- A) Phonetics
- B) Semantics
- C) Etymology**
- D) Syntax

7. A 'loanword' is a word adopted from one language into another. Which of the following is a common loanword in English that originated from Arabic?

- A) Ketchup
- B) Chocolate
- C) Alcohol**
- D) Safari

8. The reanalysis of a word or phrase, leading to its division into different morphemes than originally existed, is known as:

- A) Affixation
- B) Back-formation
- C) Folk etymology**
- D) Compounding