

The Roots of Words

Etymology · Answer Key · 18 Questions

1. The word 'Etymology' comes from the Greek word 'etymon'. What does 'etymon' literally mean?

- A) Ancient history
- B) The true sense**
- C) Written record
- D) Secret code

2. The word 'salary' originates from the Latin word 'salarium', which was originally money given to Roman soldiers to buy what?

- A) Shoes
- B) Sword oil
- C) Salt**
- D) Wine

3. Which word, meaning a situation where people refuse to deal with a person or organization, is named after an Irish land agent?

- A) Gerrymander
- B) Boycott**
- C) Lynch
- D) Maverick

4. The word 'quarantine' comes from the Italian word 'quaranta'. What number does this refer to?

- A) Four
- B) Fourteen
- C) Forty**
- D) Four hundred

5. The word 'clue' originally meant a 'ball of thread'. To which mythological story does this origin refer?

- A) Theseus and the Minotaur**
- B) Icarus and the Sun
- C) Hercules' Labors
- D) Pandora's Box

6. The word 'muscle' comes from the Latin 'musculus'. What does 'musculus' literally translate to?

- A) Strong cord
- B) Little mouse**
- C) Hard stone
- D) Iron leaf

7. What is the term for a word formed by combining the sounds and meanings of two different words, such as 'smog' or 'brunch'?

- A) Eponym
- B) Homonym
- C) Portmanteau**
- D) Synonym

8. The word 'trivia' comes from the Latin 'trivium'. What was a 'trivium' in ancient Rome?

- A) A place where three roads meet**
- B) A small coin
- C) A collection of books
- D) A three-legged stool

9. Which English day of the week is named after the Norse god associated with thunder?

- A) Tuesday
- B) Wednesday
- C) Thursday**
- D) Friday

10. The word 'panic' is derived from the name of which Greek god known for causing sudden fear in lonely places?

- A) Zeus
- B) Pan**
- C) Ares
- D) Hermes

11. In the 14th century, the word 'nice' actually had a negative meaning. What did it mean?

- A) Mean
- B) Ignorant**
- C) Noisy
- D) Poor

12. The word 'gymnasium' comes from the Greek word 'gymnos'. What does 'gymnos' mean?

- A) To run
- B) Strong
- C) Naked**
- D) Student

13. Which word for a flower comes from the Old English phrase 'daeges eage', meaning 'day's eye'?

- A) Tulip
- B) Rose
- C) Daisy**
- D) Lily

14. The word 'hazard' is believed to have originated from the Arabic word 'al-zahr'. What does 'al-zahr' mean?

- A) The fire
- B) The die (dice)**
- C) The desert
- D) The trap

15. The word 'malaria' comes from the Medieval Italian words 'mala aria'. What does this literally translate to?

- A) Mosquito bite
- B) Bad air**
- C) Hot swamp
- D) Sickness spirit

16. The term 'avatar' has become common in digital gaming, but it originates from Sanskrit. What was its original meaning?

- A) A king's advisor
- B) A digital image
- C) A deity's descent to Earth**
- D) A mask for a play

17. Which common office item is named after the Latin word 'pendere', meaning 'to hang'?

- A) Stapler
- B) Pencil**
- C) Folder
- D) Pendant

18. The word 'sandwich' was popularized in the 18th century after John Montagu. What was his official title?

A) Duke of Wellington

B) Earl of Sandwich

C) Prince of Wales

D) Count of Monte Cristo