

The Roots of Words

Etymology · Practice Test · 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