

Advanced Etymological Studies

Etymology · Answer Key · 20 Questions

1. The English word 'thug' derives from which historical group of organized criminals in India?

- A) Thuggee cult**
- B) Maratha Raiders
- C) Pindari banditti
- D) Sikh insurgents

2. The term 'salary' is etymologically derived from the Latin 'salarium', which refers to an allowance for what commodity?

- A) Grain
- B) Salt**
- C) Olive oil
- D) Wine

3. Which language serves as the primary etymological root for the word 'algebra'?

- A) Persian
- B) Arabic**
- C) Greek
- D) Sanskrit

4. The word 'sycophant' originates from a Greek compound meaning what literally?

- A) Fig-shower**
- B) Wine-drinker
- C) Bread-beggar
- D) Temple-slave

5. 'Ostracism' originates from the Greek word 'ostrakon', which referred specifically to what object?

- A) A bronze sword
- B) A pottery shard**
- C) A marble column
- D) A wooden chest

6. The term 'avocado' is derived from the Nahuatl word 'ahuacatl', which also translates to what anatomical term?

- A) Heart
- B) Kidney
- C) Testicle**
- D) Stomach

7. Which English word, meaning a person who hates mankind, is derived from the Greek 'misos' and 'anthropos'?

A) Misanthrope

B) Misogynist

C) Misanthropist

D) Misologist

8. The word 'candidate' comes from the Latin 'candidatus', meaning 'clothed in white', worn by men seeking office in which period?

A) Imperial Rome

B) Republican Rome

C) Hellenistic Greece

D) Byzantine Empire

9. The word 'dandelion' is a corruption of the French 'dent de lion', which translates to what?

A) Gold leaf

B) Lion's tooth

C) Sun bloom

D) Field king

10. Which etymological root defines the word 'quarantine', referencing the Venetian practice of isolating ships for how many days?

A) 7

B) 14

C) 30

D) 40

11. The term 'clue' originally referred to a 'clew', which is defined as what?

A) A secret sign

B) A ball of thread or yarn

C) A trail of breadcrumbs

D) A navigational star

12. The word 'muscle' is derived from the Latin 'musculus', meaning what?

A) Little mouse

B) Strong band

C) Inner power

D) Flexible cord

13. 'Narcissism' is derived from the Greek myth of Narcissus, who was cursed to fall in love with what?

- A) A nymph
- B) His own reflection**
- C) A mountain echo
- D) A golden statue

14. The word 'robot' was first introduced in the play 'R.U.R.' by Karel Capek, derived from the Czech word 'robota', meaning what?

- A) Machine
- B) Metal
- C) Forced labor**
- D) Automaton

15. The term 'groggy' originates from Admiral Edward Vernon, nicknamed 'Old Grog', who insisted on diluting the sailors' ration of what?

- A) Water
- B) Ale
- C) Rum**
- D) Wine

16. 'Pecuniary', relating to money, is derived from the Latin 'pecus', meaning what?

- A) Gold
- B) Cattle**
- C) Trade
- D) Weight

17. The word 'lunatic' is etymologically rooted in the belief that mental instability was influenced by what?

- A) The moon**
- B) Bad humors
- C) Solar flares
- D) Malicious spirits

18. The word 'nice' has undergone semantic narrowing; in Middle English, it originally meant what?

- A) Pleasant
- B) Foolish**
- C) Kind
- D) Refined

19. 'Zenith' entered the English language via Old Spanish, originating from the Arabic phrase 'samt ar-ra's', meaning what?

A) Path of the sun

B) Way over the head

C) Highest point

D) Center of heaven

20. The word 'tawdry' is an etymological corruption of 'St. Audrey's' lace, referring to cheap finery sold at which location?

A) Ely

B) London

C) York

D) Canterbury