

Etymological Origins and Linguistic Roots

Etymology · Practice Test · 20 Questions

1. The word 'salary' derives from the Latin 'salarium', which was an allowance given to Roman soldiers specifically for the purchase of what commodity?

- A) Grain
- B) Salt
- C) Leather
- D) Oil

2. Which language serves as the ultimate etymological root for the word 'alphabet', derived from the first two letters of its script?

- A) Phoenician
- B) Greek
- C) Latin
- D) Sanskrit

3. The English word 'disaster' is etymologically derived from an ancient belief linking misfortune to what?

- A) Witchcraft
- B) Earthquakes
- C) Negative stellar alignment
- D) Plagues

4. The term 'robot' was first introduced in the 1920 play 'R.U.R.' by Karel Capek, and it originates from a Slavic word meaning what?

- A) Worker/Forced labor
- B) Automaton
- C) Metal man
- D) Assistant

5. The word 'candidate' comes from the Latin 'candidatus', meaning 'clothed in white', referring to Roman office-seekers wearing what type of garment?

- A) A wool toga
- B) A silk tunic
- C) A bleached toga
- D) A purple cloak

6. The term 'vaccination' etymologically traces back to the Latin 'vacca', meaning what?

- A) Disease
- B) Cow
- C) Needle
- D) Protection

7. Which language group is the primary source for the vast majority of scientific and medical terminology used in English today?

- A) Old Norse
- B) Greek and Latin
- C) Germanic
- D) Arabic

8. The word 'clue' originally referred to a 'clew', which is a specific object used in mythology to navigate a labyrinth; what was it?

- A) A torch
- B) A ball of thread
- C) A bronze key
- D) A map

9. 'Sherpa' is a word originating from the Tibetan language that translates literally to what?

- A) Mountain guide
- B) Eastern people
- C) High-altitude dweller
- D) Snow climber

10. The word 'quarantine' is derived from the Venetian dialect word 'quaranta giorni', which means what?

- A) Forty days
- B) Strict isolation
- C) A period of sickness
- D) The waiting time

11. The term 'sarcophagus', meaning 'flesh-eater' in Greek, originally referred to a specific type of what?

- A) Limestone
- B) Hardwood
- C) Ivory
- D) Marble

12. What is the etymological origin of the word 'algebra'?

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

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

- A) Powerful
- B) Little mouse
- C) Strong limb
- D) Flexing

14. 'Trivial' etymologically derives from the Latin 'trivium', referring to the place where what met?

- A) Three roads
- B) Three rivers
- C) Three kings
- D) Three temples

15. The word 'umbrella' comes from the Latin 'umbra', which means what?

- A) Rain
- B) Shadow
- C) Shield
- D) Covering

16. The English word 'decimate' originally referred to a military punishment that involved the killing of what percentage of a group?

- A) 5%
- B) 10%
- C) 20%
- D) 50%

17. The word 'synergy' has its roots in Greek, where 'syn' means 'together' and 'ergon' means what?

- A) Force
- B) Movement
- C) Work
- D) Energy

18. The term 'glamour' is an etymological variant of which word, originally referring to magic or enchantment?

- A) Glimmer
- B) Grammar
- C) Glory
- D) Golden

19. The word 'nostalgia' is a compound of the Greek 'nostos' (return home) and 'algos', which means what?

- A) Memory
- B) Pain
- C) Longing
- D) Time

20. The term 'mercury' (as in the element or planet) is derived from the Roman god of trade, but what was his primary role in mythology?

- A) God of war
- B) Messenger of the gods
- C) God of the underworld
- D) God of the sun