

autos

[ow TŌS] self

autograph - (graph - write) - writing the name of oneself

automobile - ((L.) mobilis - movable) - self moving

autobiography - (bios - life) - life story written by oneself

autocrat - (kratos - power, strength) - power in one person

autonomy - (nomos - law) - being a law to oneself

autodynamic - (dynamikos - power) - supplying its own
power

automatic (matos - think) - a machine that seems to
think for itself; self-acting; self-regulating

Teaching Notes:

Most people think of an auto as a car, and unless the original idea of the person who thought up the word automobile is known (self-moving vehicle), children might be forgiven for thinking that all those other derivatives have something to do with cars instead of self. At the time the automobile was invented, people understood perfectly that the word was intended to mean “horseless carriage” – and, indeed, that name was used for a while. But doesn’t “automobile” sound more streamlined and aerodynamic to you? The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites several of the earliest-known uses of the word. *The Daily News* (London) reports on October 15, 1895, “Signor Cleto Brena has arrived at Naples with his automobile carriage from Milan.” On that very same day, the *Pall Mall Gazette* observed, “Three miles an hour gives the automobile little chance of displaying the powers it doubtless enjoys.” Talk about a speed limit!

Extra Words:

Autopsy (optos - seen) - to see with one’s own eyes what was wrong with a person who has died.

thermos

[TAIR moss] (THAIR moss) heat

thermal - relating to heat

thermos bottle - insulated bottle which keeps the contents hot or cold

thermometer - (metron - measure) - device for measuring heat

thermotropic - (tropos - turn) - turning toward heat

thermogenic - (genos - origin) - causing or originating (generating) heat

thermoplastic - (plastos - shape, mold) - can be molded or formed when heated

Teaching Notes:

An Englishman named Sir James Dewar invented the thermos bottle in 1885 and patented it in 1904. In 1907, he actually had this Greek word THERMOS registered as a trademark in England. He got the idea that a glass bottle of liquid could be kept hot (or cold) by putting it inside another bottle and then creating a vacuum between them to prevent the conduction of heat. It might be worthwhile taking apart a thermos bottle from an old lunch kit to see how it is constructed! Keep in mind, though, that once taken apart, it won't be easily put back together. A thermometer is another device which can open up a discussion of very useful scientific concepts – such as the expansion of materials when they are heated. The predictable degree to which mercury expands is what makes it such a reliable substance to use in mercury thermometers. Galileo invented the first air thermometer in 1597. One hundred twenty-three years later, in 1720, a Dutchman named Fahrenheit came up with a thermometer using mercury, since its expansion in heat could be so reliably measured. Fahrenheit picked a point well below the freezing point of water for his “zero degree temperature”. Twenty-two years later, Celsius came along with his “centigrade thermometer” in which he decided that zero should be the freezing point of water, and 100 degrees its boiling point. Scientists and some other countries use the Celsius centigrade scale, but most of us have Fahrenheit thermometers.

curro cursum

[KOOR rō, KOOR soom] run

current - running, ongoing
 curriculum - study that runs over a period of time
 occur - (ob - against) - run against, happen
 recur - (re - again) - run into again
 incursion - (in - in, into) - a running into
 excursion - (ex - out of) - running out; a trip
 cursive - writing that runs on without lifting the pen or pencil
 cursor - small moving (running) square on a computer screen

Teaching Notes:

Curro, cursum is a good example of why we need to learn two forms of these Latin verbs. Curro means “I run” and is the first person singular, present, active, indicative form of the verb. It is the form you will find listed in a Latin dictionary. Usually it will give you all four principal parts which will enable you to “conjugate” the verb in all its moods and tenses. Curro, currere, cucurri, cursum is actually what you will find. It’s true that some English dictionaries will give the infinitive form of a Latin verb (currere - to run), but usually, curro would be it. Many of our English derivatives, however, come from the fourth principal part (cursum - to run), called the “supine”. It usually has a spelling variation that would keep you from recognizing that “cursive” (from cursum) and “current” (from curro) come from the same word which means “run” unless you had memorized both parts. Look at facio, facere, feci, factum. It has a “t” in the fourth principal part which could make it hard for you to see that “deface” and “factory” come from the same root word/idea - “do, make” unless you learn both facio and factum. I’ve found, though, that children learn two forms of a Latin verb as easily as they memorize one, and if they study some “real Latin” in the future, they will think back and thank you many times for the helpful preparation! See if the children can figure out which words above come from curro, and which ones come from cursum.

ZOON

[ZŌ on] animal

zoo - a zoological park or collection of animals

zoology - (logos - word, study) - study of animals

protozoon - (protos - first) - earliest form of one-celled animal life on earth

cenozoic - (kainos - recent) - recent animal period

mesozoic - (meso - middle) - middle animal period

paleozoic - (paleo - early, archaic) - early animal period
(many fossils)

proterozoic - (protero - earlier) - earlier animal period
(few fossils; worms)

archeozoic - (arche - beginning) - beginning animal period
(carbon traces but no fossils)

Teaching Notes:

A zoo (abbreviation for zoological park) is where exotic animals are kept so people can study them.

Protozoa (plural), or first one-celled animals, are very interesting to study. They reproduced by dividing themselves into two new cells, a process called "mitosis".

The five great divisions in the chart of geologic time are very useful for students to know. They date from the beginning of life on earth and are named and dated according to the animal fossils which have been discovered in rocks which were formed during the various periods. The rock formations laid down during the first period, the archeozoic, had traces of carbon showing animal life too soft to leave fossils. The formations of the other periods are rich in fossils. WE live in the cenozoic era!

Extra Words:

Zodiac comes from the Greek word zodion - a diminutive form of zoon. When the Greeks spoke of zodiakos, you were to understand kyklos, the "zodiac circle". The ancients imagined a belt of constellations in the sky surrounding the earth which extended 8 or 9 degrees on each side of the sun's apparent path around the earth. The original signs of the zodiac were all animals, but they changed over time. The signs: Aries (ram), Taurus (bull), Gemini (twins), Cancer (crab), Leo (lion), Virgo (virgin), Libra (scales), Scorpio (scorpion), Sagittarius (archer), Capricorn (goat), Aquarius (water carrier), Pisces (fish). There are interesting legends about them all.

verto versum

[WAIR tō, WAIR soom] turn

reverse - (re - back, again) - turn back

advertise - (ad - to, toward) - turn people toward a product

universe - (unus - one) - stars all turning as one wheel or cosmos

university - (unus - one) - set of colleges revolving around a central administration

controversial - (contra - against) - two sides turned against each other

conversation - (con - with, together) - taking turns in talking together

diversity - (dis - separate) - turning to separate ways; unlikeness

Teaching Notes:

The Romans had an adjective, universus, meaning “combined in one; whole, entire”. They referred to the whole world as universum. Later in history, scholars began to refer to the earth, sun, moon, stars, and all of space as the universe. It was a natural metaphor for the scholars of the great medieval centers of learning to use to designate the limitless fields of knowledge and wisdom being explored in their scholastic worlds. The oldest university in the world is thought to be the University of Al-Azhar in Egypt (970 A.D.). The University of Bologna, Italy (1170), University of Paris, France (1170), and Oxford University, England (1200) are other great early centers of learning. Harvard University (1636) was first in the United States.

When one is having a conversation, it is good to remember that the word actually means to take turns in talking together!

Extra Words:

We use the Latin word VERSUS (turned toward) in English in speaking of opponents in a contest. We abbreviate it vs. (Huskies vs. Ducks; Sonics vs. Lakers). The Latin VERSUS (also meaning “turning of the plough; a furrow”) gave us the derivative, verse, meaning “a line of poetry”.