Latin medical word parts

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TEACHER PLAN / 20 MINUTES / FOUR WORD PARTS

Use roots, location and context together

High-school or introductory college medical terminology; independent learners can use the same steps. No Greek or Latin reading is required.

Learning aims

Recall four Latin-derived word parts used in English. • Explain the location added by sub- and intra-. • Use the complete phrase to interpret an ambiguous adjective.

Teach, apply, check

0-3 min Read the four meanings and examples. Ask learners to identify the root in each complete adjective.

3-7 min Model lingual and sublingual. Compare ocular and intraocular. Then show why cervical needs a complete phrase.

7-15 min Give learners the student sheet. Allow the reference for a supported attempt, then cover it for recall.

15-20 min Check each explanation, not only each root label. Use the exit task to test a new root-and-prefix combination.

Reference: meaning and complete word

Word part	Meaning	Example
cutane/o	Skin	cutaneous: related to skin
ocul/o	Eye	ocular: related to the eye
lingu/o	Tongue	lingual: related to the tongue
cervic/o	Neck; cervix in context	cervical: neck-related; context identifies the structure

Model one example

Compare lingual with sublingual. Lingu- identifies the tongue and -al makes an adjective. Sub- adds under, so sublingual points to a location under the tongue. Read the prefix as well as the root.

Compare before you guess

Intra- adds within: intraocular means within the eye. Cervical needs context: cervical lymph nodes are in the neck, while cervical in a phrase about the uterine cervix refers to that structure. The root alone does not resolve every phrase.

Print page 2 for recall; add this page for supported practice. Keep page 3 as the separate answer key.

Latin word parts: student sheet

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Write in your own words. Use the reference for a first attempt, or cover it for recall. Keep the answer key separate.

1. Write the meaning of cutane/o.

2. Write the meaning of ocul/o.

3. Write the meaning of lingu/o.

4. What does cervic/o refer to? Include the context caution.

5. Explain cutaneous as cutane- + -ous. How does its meaning differ from skin alone?

6. Compare lingual and sublingual. Which part adds location, and what location?

7. Explain intraocular using intra- + ocul- + -ar.

8. Do cervical lymph nodes and the uterine cervix identify the same location? Explain.

9. A learner says ocul/o means tears. Correct this using lacrim/o, the tear root.

10. Exit task: combine sub- (under) with cutaneous. Explain subcutaneous in plain words.

Answer key and next steps

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Latin medical word parts / Teacher or self-check copy

Accept equivalent explanations that keep the key distinction. Use errors to choose what to review. This is practice, not a proficiency test.

1. Skin.

2. Eye.

3. Tongue.

4. A neck; in some medical contexts the uterine cervix. Read the complete phrase to identify the structure.

5. Cutane- supplies skin and -ous makes an adjective: related to skin. The whole word describes something rather than simply naming skin.

6. Sub- adds under. Both words contain the tongue root; sublingual points to a location under the tongue.

7. Intra- adds within, ocul- supplies eye and -ar makes an adjective. Intraocular means within the eye.

8. No. Cervical lymph nodes are in the neck. The uterine cervix is the lower, narrow part of the uterus. Use the full phrase to choose the meaning.

9. Ocul/o means eye; lacrim/o refers to tears. Related structures can have different root meanings.

10. Subcutaneous means under the skin. Sub- adds the location to the skin-related adjective.

Continue with feedback

Try the eight-question check for this Latin pack. It covers these same four word parts with new questions. Read each explanation and retry missed questions. On paper, open the address below and choose Online check.

Sources and use

Original lesson, prompts and model answers by Word Radicals. Vocabulary checked October 18, 2026. English word study, not diagnosis or treatment.

MedlinePlus: Word Parts and What They Mean

NCI: cervical

NCI: cutaneous

NCI: intraocular

NCI: subcutaneous

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