

ELL Quick Tip

Do you have an ELL student and wonder how to help him/her in the classroom?
Then the ELL Quick Tip is for you!

Tip #5

Use cognates to build vocabulary

Cognate: *n.* A word related to one in another language

The English language has been influenced by many languages, most significantly Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Greek. Most of the **academic English** students need to be successful in the classroom comes from Latin or Greek.

English learners whose first language is Latin in origin (e.g., Spanish, Romanian, French, Italian) can benefit from recognizing when an English word is related to a word from their native language.

Teaching cognates:

Spend 10 minutes a day (once a week, every other day) and select a Latin root to share with students. Introduce the cognate and what it means. Invite ELL students who speak a related language (e.g., Spanish) to share words from their language that have that root.

Once you have shared the root, have students do a Quick Think and generate as many words in English with that root in 2 minutes. Generate a class list and post it as under the Latin root on a Word Wall. Continue to add to the list as you discover more words.

Some examples of Latin roots include:

aqua – water
terra – Earth
ignis – fire
port – to carry
form – to shape
tract – to pull
rupt – to break
spect, spec – to see, to watch
struct, stru – to build
dic, dict – to tell, to say
flec, flex – to bend
cred – to believe
pels, puls – to drive, push

ject – to throw, to lie
vert – to turn
mit, mis – to send
mort – to die
script, scrib – to write
junct – to join
cide – to kill
press – to force, squeeze
spire, spir – to breathe
grad, gress – to step
cept, capt – take, receive
fact, fac – to make, to do