

Junior English  
Latin/Greek Roots: List #1

Vocabulary Words:

1. Root: **fac** – (LATIN facere, factum) - to make do

a. **discomfit** – v – to embarrass and confuse

*Although the presence of a large audience discomfited the violinist, she gave a magnificent performance.*

b. **edification** – n – improvement or enlightenment

*Mrs. Marple, an etiquette expert, often gives hints for the edification of her audience.*

c. **malfeasance** – n – misconduct or wrongdoing, especially by a public official

*The reporter uncovered a complex conspiracy intended to hide the mayor's latest malfeasance.*

d. **feasible** – adj – capable of being accomplished

*The Board of Education could not find a feasible solution to the overcrowding of city schools.*

e. **surfeit** – n – condition of being too full; overabundance

*A surfeit of army boots led to lack of space in the warehouse.*

2. Root: **opus** – (LATIN opus, operas) – work

OR (opus, opis – wealth, power, resource)

a. **magnum opus** – n – the greatest work of an artist, writer, or composer

*Wagner's "Ring Trilogy" is considered by many to be the composer's magnum opus.*

b. **modus operandi** – n – manner of working

*The criminal's modus operandi was one that the police had seen only rarely in the past.*

c. **opulent** – adj – possessing or exhibiting great wealth; affluent

*Having made his fortune in computer sales, Kit retired to an opulent estate on a private island.*

3. Root: **erg** – (GREEK ergon) - work

a. **synergy** – n – the power that results from the combination of two or more forces

*The synergy of the two networks allowed for faster and more powerful transmission of information.*

b. **liturgy** – n – a pattern of prayer or worship

*In a traditional Roman Catholic mass, the priest leads the congregation in the liturgy.*

c. **lethargy** – n – a state of sluggishness, inactivity, and apathy

*As Jack's lethargy increased, he found himself unable to concentrate on his work.*

4. Root: **labor** – (LATIN labor) - work

a. **laborious** – adj – requiring mental or physical effort

*Reading the article was so laborious that I left the library exhausted.*

b. **belabor** – v – 1. To discuss in too much detail

2. to attack

*1. There is no need to belabor this topic; let us talk of other things.*

*2. Movie critics belabored that actor for his terrible movies.*

c. **elaborate** – v – to explain in greater detail

*When asked to elaborate on his proposal for the new park, the mayor said only that it was in the planning stages.*

**Junior English**  
**Greek/Latin Roots: List #1**  
**Practice**

Exercise I. Complete the sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the *italicized* vocabulary word.

1. The amazing *synergy* of the two companies became evident when . . .
2. Donna felt that William was *belaboring* the point when he . . .

Exercise II. Choose the set of words that best completes the sentence.

1. While crossing the river may be \_\_\_\_\_, it will require so much \_\_\_\_\_ preparation it will hardly be worth it.
  - A. feasible; laborious
  - B. opulent; feasible
  - C. elaborate; opulent
  - D. laborious; elaborate
2. Because the comedian was \_\_\_\_\_ by her audience's silence, her mind froze, and she \_\_\_\_\_ one joke for more than five minutes.
  - A. opulent; elaborated
  - B. belabored; feasible
  - C. discomfited; belabored
  - D. laborious; elaborated
3. Seeing the man's \_\_\_\_\_ gardens, fleet of pricey yachts, and multi-million dollar car collection, the inspector immediately suspected him of some kind of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. laborious; magnum opus
  - B. laborious; edification
  - C. opulent; malfeasance
  - D. elaborate; lethargy

Exercise III. Complete the sentence by inferring information about the *italicized* word from its context.

1. If Rob tells the doctor that he has been feeling some *lethargy* lately, the doctor may ask if . . .
2. When the restaurant critic writes admiringly about the *opulent* spread at the restaurant, he may note details like . . .
3. Because Jen is *discomfited* by the silence in the room, she may try to . . .

**Junior English**  
**Greek/Latin Roots: List #1**  
**ACT Review**

**Assignment:** Fill in the blank with the word from the Unit that best completes the sentence, using the root we supply as a clue. Then, answer the questions that follow the paragraphs.

“There is no theory. You only have to listen. Pleasure is the law.” These were the words of Claude Debussy (1862- 1918), French composer and founder of the Impressionist movement in music. What Debussy took pleasure in was the supreme and moving beauty of nature reflected in music. When he composed, he disregarded the harmonic style and \_\_\_\_\_ (LABOR) forms of his predecessors, the post-Wagnerians, such as Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss. He attempted instead a kind of \_\_\_\_\_ (ERG) of music, mind, and nature that had not been heard before.

Debussy began studying piano at the age of nine, and only two years later he entered the Paris Conservatory, where he began studying composition as well as piano. As a young adult, however, he avoided the company of musicians in favor of the leading Impressionist poets and painters, who focused on celebrating the beauty of nature in the works. “Music,” Debussy wrote, “is the expression of the movement of the waters, the play of curves described by changing breezes.”

In many Impressionist paintings, the colors are soft and blended, the shapes barely discernible. In fact, up close, such a painting may seem to be no more than a formless palette of colored dots. Standing back, however, one can see a pleasing image, perhaps of a river or garden. Debussy, like the painters of these works, wished to capture the subtleties of nature. He did not want his work to announce itself as a well-shaped musical composition. Instead, he wanted it to sound like an improvisation that had not been written down at all.

All of this anti-effort resulted in compositions with titles like “What the West Wind Saw,” “Dead Leaves,” “Sounds and Scents Revolve in the Evening Air,” and a \_\_\_\_\_ (OPUS) called La Mer (The Sea). The last has a mysterious dreamlike quality – some have said as puzzling and changeable as the sea itself. One can imagine Debussy descending into a reverie to write it, mimicking the spontaneous, fleeting qualities of nature, as he searched for musical notes and rhythms.

He also enjoyed composing works based on the poems of his friends. His first important orchestral work, “Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun,” was inspired by Stephen Mallame’s poem “L’Après-midi d’un faune.”

Debussy wrote, “Beauty must appeal to the sense, must provide us with immediate enjoyment, must impress or insinuate itself into us without any effort on our part.” Seemingly effortless musical beauty is Debussy’s legacy. One only need hear “Claire de Lune” – a beautiful and understated piano piece – once to be convinced of that and to be grateful that Debussy dedicated his life to translating visual beauty into musical compositions.

1. The main point of this passage is that
  - A. Debussy was an innovator.
  - B. Debussy rejected the musical traditions of his forebears.
  - C. Debussy loved nature and created the Impressionistic style of music to express his feelings about it.
  - D. beauty must appeal to the senses.
  
2. Debussy was most positively influenced by
  - A. his teachers at the Paris Conservatory.
  - B. the Impressionist poets and painters.
  - C. the post-Wagnerians, Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss.
  - D. all of the above.
  
3. Based on this essay, one might conclude that Debussy believed that
  - A. he would be an important influence on twentieth-century music.
  - B. his teachers at the Paris Conservatory disliked his style of music.
  - C. to feel the supreme and moving beauty of nature is almost like prayer.
  - D. to be a great musician he would have to be different.
  
4. The best title for this essay would be
  - A. Why Debussy Rejected his Musical Past.
  - B. Debussy's Influence on the Twentieth Century.
  - C. Debussy: Translating Feeling into Sound.
  - D. What Debussy Discovered.