**Latin Word Roots**

Latin was the language spoken by the ancient Romans. As the Romans conquered most of Europe, the Latin language spread throughout the region. Over time, the Latin spoken in different areas developed into separate languages, including Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. These languages are considered “sisters,” as they all descended from Latin, their “mother” language.

In 1066 England was conquered by William, duke of Normandy, which is in northern France. For several hundred years after the Norman invasion, French was the language of court and polite society in England. It was during this period that many French words were borrowed into English. Linguists estimate that some 60% of our common everyday vocabulary today comes from French. Thus many Latin words came into English indirectly through French.

Many Latin words came into English directly, though, too. Monks from Rome brought religious vocabulary as well as Christianity to England beginning in the 6th century. From the Middle Ages onward many scientific, scholarly, and legal terms were borrowed from Latin.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, dictionary writers and grammarians generally felt that English was an imperfect language whereas Latin was perfect. In order to improve the language, they deliberately made up a lot of English words from Latin words. Many English words and word parts can be traced back to Latin and Greek. The following table lists some common Latin roots.

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|  **Latin Root** | **Basic Meaning** |  **Example Words** |
|  dict | to say | *dictate, dictator, contradict, predict* |
| duc | to lead, bring, take | *reduce, produce* |
| gress | to walk | *digress, progress, regress, transgress* |
| ject | to throw | *project, eject, interject, reject, inject* |
| pel | to drive | *propel, repel, compel, dispel* |
| pend | to hang | *pendant, pendulum, depend, impend* |
| port | to carry | *transport, support, export, import* |
| scrib, script | to write | *describe, description, prescribe, prescription, subscribe, subscription, transcribe* |
| tract | to pull, drag, draw | *attract, contract, detract, extract, protract, retract, traction* |
| vert | to turn | *convert, divert, invert, revert* |