

VOCABULARY
FROM
CLASSICAL
ROOTS

▼ Lee Mountain ▼

6

Belonging

The roots *poli* as in *politics*, *gen* as in *generation*, and *nat* as in *nation* are all related to “belonging,” belonging to a political group, a family, and a country. In each of the following key words, underline the root.

Key Words

cosmopolitan

gene

generation

generosity

international

metropolitan

nationality

naturalize

policy

politician



Using ROOT CLUES

The roots *poli* (city/government), *gen* (family/race), and *nat* (birthplace/nation) give you clues about meaning. When you spot one of these roots in a word, you have a key to the word’s meaning. Use the underlined clues to help you match the following columns.

1. _____ international

A. nation of birth

2. _____ nationality

B. years between parent and child

3. _____ generation

C. in or near a city

4. _____ metropolitan

D. between nations

The root clues did not give you complete definitions, as the following dictionary listings will, but they helped you with each word by giving you part of the meaning. In addition, the prefix clue *inter*, meaning “between,” helped with the word *international*.

POLI (from the Greek words *polis* meaning “city” and *polites* meaning “citizen”)

*Familiar Words
with Root POLI*

police
political
politics

*Challenge Words
with Root POLI*

politic
metropolis

1. **cosmopolitan** (kăz mə pä'lə tən)

adj. 1. Representative of many countries.

London is a cosmopolitan city with a population that includes people from all over the world.

2. At home anywhere, not bound by local or national limitations.

Lucien's cosmopolitan attitudes enabled him to fit in well wherever he traveled.

2. **metropolitan** (me trə pä'lə tən)

adj. Having to do with a city and its surrounding communities.

Superhighways run through many metropolitan areas, connecting cities with their suburbs.



3. **policy** (pä'lə sē)

n. A plan for action, a governing principle.

Being a new student, Dwayne was not aware that the school policy required a written excuse for every absence.

4. **politician** (pälə ti'shən)

n. A person who is running for, or serving in, political office.

The politician went from door to door, introducing herself and asking for votes.



GEN (from the Greek words *genos* meaning “race” and *genea* meaning “family” and the Latin word *genus* meaning “birth”)

*Familiar Words
with Root GEN*

general
gentle

5. **gene** (jēn')

n. A unit of the cells of living things that determines which traits are inherited.

Hair color, eye color, and height are qualities determined by our genes.

6. **generation** (je' nə rā shən)

n. 1. The average time from the birth of parents to the birth of their child.

Many hairstyles that were popular a generation ago are not popular today.

Challenge Words with Root GEN

congenial
genealogy
genetic
gentry
progeny

2. The act of producing.

Modern windmills are becoming more widely used for the generation of electricity.

generate, v. **generational**, adj.

7. **generosity** (je nə rä' sə tē)

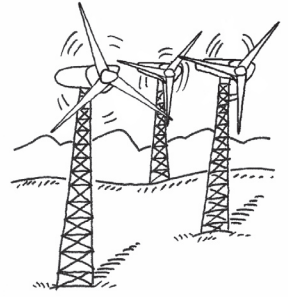
n. The act of giving to others, willingness to contribute.

After a powerful tsunami hit several Asian countries, people all over the world showed great generosity by giving money and materials for rebuilding.

generous, adj.

NOTA BENE

Four groups of words have sprung from the root *gen*: (1) family words, (2) words related to kindness, (3) scientific words, and (4) words that apply to a whole group. Some family words are *generation*, *genealogy*, and *progeny*. Some kindness words are *gentle*, *generous*, and *congenial*. Some scientific words are *gene*, *genetic*, and *genus*. Some words that apply to a whole group are *general*, *generic*, and *generality*. *Gen*, as you can see, is a very generative root.



NAT (from the Latin word *natus* meaning "born")

Familiar Words with Root NAT

nation
nature
native
natural

8. **international** (in tər nash' nəl)

adj. Between, among, or relating to two or more countries
Each summer my family hosts an international student for a few weeks.

internationally, adv.

9. **nationality** (na shə nā' lə tē)

n. The condition of belonging to a particular nation.

Since Claude was born in Paris, his nationality is French.

national, adj.



Challenge Words with Root NAT

innate
nationalism
natal
prenatal

10. **naturalize** (na' chə rə līz)

v. To become a citizen of one country after being born in another country.

After studying the citizenship questions and passing the interview, Fabio was naturalized at a ceremony this morning.

naturalization, n.



NOTA BENE

The root *nat*, like the other roots in this lesson, has branched in a variety of directions. Words like *national*, *nationality*, and *international* spring from the “nation” branch. However, words like *native*, *natural*, *innate*, *natal*, and *prenatal* spring from the “birth” branch.



EXERCISE A: SYNONYMS

Write the letter of the best **SYNONYM** (the word or phrase most nearly the same in meaning as the word in bold-faced type).

1. _____ great **generosity**
 - a. stinginess
 - b. keeping
 - c. giving
 - d. leftovers
2. _____ **metropolitan** police
 - a. national
 - b. state
 - c. city
 - d. school
3. _____ fire safety **policy**
 - a. report
 - b. training
 - c. change
 - d. plan
4. _____ an important **gene**
 - a. cell part
 - b. piece of clothing
 - c. girl's name
 - d. relative
5. _____ former **politician**
 - a. manager
 - b. person elected to government
 - c. scientist
 - d. pilot



EXERCISE B: MEANING IN CONTEXT

Use these words to fill in the blanks in the following paragraph.

naturalized politician international generations nationalities

In a campaign speech, the (1) _____ described her heritage. She held up a photo that showed three (2) _____ of her family—her grandfather, her mother, and herself. “My family comes from different (3) _____,” she told her audience. “My granddad was born in Mexico, and my mom in China. Now both of them are (4) _____ citizens of the United States. My interest in (5) _____ policies is natural because of my family background.”



EXERCISE C: EXTEND YOUR VOCABULARY

The “people” suffixes: *-ician*, *-er*, and *-or*

On the key word *politician* you see the *-ician* suffix. This suffix means “a person who works in.” So a politician is a person who works in politics.

On the line, write down the area in which each of these people works.

1. musician _____
2. beautician _____
3. magician _____
4. statistician _____
5. optician _____

The suffix *-ician* is not the only “people” suffix. Both *-er* and *-or* are also added to many words to name people who work in a particular field. A **teacher** teaches. An **editor** edits.

Use these words that end in *-er* and *-or* to answer the following questions.

biographer spectator governor conductor subscriber

6. Who writes the life story of another person? _____
7. Who waves the baton and leads the orchestra? _____
8. Who sits in the stadium, watching the game? _____
9. Who pays to receive a daily newspaper? _____

10. Who won the election to be head of the state? _____