



# Skillswise factsheet

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Ww/L1.1

## What are root words?

A **root word** is a word that has nothing added at the beginning or the end. It stands on its own as a word, it has a meaning. New words can be made from root words by adding beginnings (prefixes) and endings (suffixes).

**A root word is a real word and you make new words from it by adding prefixes and suffixes.**

For example, *clear* is a root word. By adding prefixes and suffixes you can make these new words:

**unclear, clearly, cleared.**

All of these words have **grown** from their **root word**. They share parts of the same spelling and they are linked in terms of meaning. They are known as a **word family**.

**In a word family all the words share parts of the same spelling and have linked meaning.**

Root words are helpful because:

- You can use a root word to help you with other spellings.
- If you recognise the root of a word when you are reading it can help you to work out what the word is and what it means.

There are spelling rules for adding suffixes and prefixes to root words. To find out more visit the Skillswise **Suffixes** and **Prefixes** modules.

Here are some more examples of root words and the word families that grow from them:

**use:** **useless, usable, used, using, user, misuse**

**employ:** **employment, unemployment, employer, employee, employing**

**manage:** **manager, managing, manages, manageable, unmanageable**

**beauty:** beautiful, beautifully, beautician

**faith:** faithful, faithfully, unfaithful, unfaithfully

For more root words look at Factsheet 2.

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