

High-Frequency Morphemes in Social Studies

The following tables list high-frequency morphemes (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek roots) in the social studies subject area, followed by a brief definition and two example words that include the morpheme. Teachers can use this list to identify high-utility morphemes to explicitly teach during social studies lessons. These lists are based on research conducted by Lane et al. (2019) on high-utility morphemes in academic words.

Note: The most common form of the morpheme is listed in the first column, although there may be other forms (e.g., the morpheme “cap” has the variants “cep” and “cip,” among others).

To learn more about explicit morphology instruction and strategies for teaching morphemes, see the Iowa Reading Research Center’s *Effective Morphology Instruction for Secondary Students Across Content Areas* eLearning module.

References

Lane, H. B., Gutlohn, L., & van Dijk, W. (2019). Morpheme frequency in academic words: Identifying high-utility morphemes for instruction. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 58(3), 184–209.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2019.1617375>



Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example
con	with, joint	conservation, contour
re	again, back	requirement, relative
in	in, on, toward	individual, informed
ad	toward, in, near	address, advertising
de	away from, down	debate, decision
pro	forward, prior to	program, process
dis	not, apart, absence of	disability, district
e	lacking, out	editor, education
ex	out	executive, excise
pre	before, earlier	preamble, precedent
sub	under, below, secondary	subarctic, suburb
ab	able, can do - adjective	absence, abolish
inter	between	international, intermediate
ob	down, facing, against, to	obligation, oblate
a	on/in, to, not, without	atheist, aviation
non	not	nonprofit, nonviolence
trans	beyond, across	transaction, transit
en	to make something X	entitlement, entertainment
se	apart, without	secede, secular
per	through, completely	persecute, perjury

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning	Example
al	relating to, characterized by - noun, adjective	postal, principal
ation	act of, state of - noun	privatization, proclamation
ion	act of, state of - noun	profession, reaction
ic	of, pertaining to, like - adjective	republic, scenic
ism	characteristic, manner, condition - noun	socialism, surrealism
ate	cause, make - verb, adjective	temperate, navigate
ity	state of, quality - noun	tranquility, neutrality
ment	result of, act of - noun	impeachment, parliament
er	one who, that which - noun	newcomer, peacekeeper
ize	to make more like X - verb	mobilize, regionalize
ive	causing, making - adjective	productive, representative
ist	one who - noun	royalist, pacifist
ary	relating to, place where - noun, adjective	salary, reactionary
ure	state of, process, office, function - noun	sculpture, seizure
y	state, condition, quality - noun	treaty, tyranny
or	one who, that which - noun	neighbor, regulator
ial	relating to, categorized by - adjective	official, territorial
logy	science or study of - noun	sociology, archaeology
able	able, can do - adjective	sustainable, charitable
ent	action or state - noun	recurrent, continent

Latin Roots

Latin Root	Meaning	Example
fac	to do, to make	qualification, efficacy
sta	to stand, to set	resistant, establish
cap	to take, to seize, to hold, to receive, to contain	capture, capricious
form	shape	landform, conformity
lect	to choose, to pick, to read	electoral, collective
duc	to lead	induced, aqueduct
mob	to move	mobilize, automobile
serv	to serve, to keep	reservation, conservative
fid	trust	confidence, federal
grad	step, degree, to go	degradation, graduated
nat	to be born	international, native
ven	to come	intervene, convention
centr	center	centralize, incentive
ten	to hold	tenant, sustainable
vert	to turn	converted, advertising
vid	to see, to separate	divided, evident
chart	card, chart	flowchart, cartographer
commun	common, together	community, communism
cult	to care, to cultivate	cultivation, monoculture
gen	race, kind, birth	generational, indigenous
press	to press, to pursue	depression, oppress

Greek Roots

Greek Root	Meaning	Example
graph	to write, to draw	cartographer, telegraph
arch	chief, ruler	anarchy, monarch
auto	self	automation, automobile
cracy	rule, strength	bureaucracy, theocracy
mon	one	hegemony, monarchy
eco	house, home, environment	ecosphere, economics
demo	people	democrat, epidemic
geo	earth	geography, geopolitics
bio	life	symbiotic, bioethics
sphere	circle	hydrosphere, biosphere
pol	city, citizen	policy, metropolis
phil	love, respect	philanthropy, philosopher
tele	distant	telegraph, telephone
the	god	theology, monotheism
anthr	man	anthropology, philanthropist
astr	star	astronaut, astronomy
cycl	circle	bicycle, recycle
ideo	idea	ideology, ideal
nomy	system of rules or laws	economy, autonomy
syn	together	synergy, synthesize
techn	skill, craft, art	technique, technology