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Introduction

In English, the letter *y* can make four different sounds. To a young person attempting to read or spell, complications such as this can be maddening. If *cry* is pronounced /crī/, why isn't *happy* pronounced /happī/? And why isn't *rhythm* pronounced /rīthm/? Fortunately for these young readers, the pronunciation of *y* follows a pattern. Learning this pattern provides a key to reading and spelling the dozens of English words spelled with *y*. Can we call this pattern a rule? No. Too many words, like *rhyme* and *justify*, do not conform. Still, the pattern holds in a vast majority of cases.

Research shows the human brain is a much more effective pattern recognizer than it is a rule memorizer. Given exposure to and practice with a pattern, the brain can quickly apply the pattern to unfamiliar but similar circumstances. Because of the brain's knack for patterns, we are able to cope with new situations, even outside the scope of reading. For example, the brain establishes patterns as it encounters machines such as cars and microwave ovens, and, as a result, people have an idea how to operate other cars and microwave ovens, even if these machines are slightly different than their own. Establishing patterns of language and familiarizing students with them is the exact purpose of this book. Introducing students to the language patterns featured in this book will increase their facility with all aspects of literacy, including reading, writing, vocabulary expansion, and comprehension.

A Discovery Approach

Frequently, explicit, direct phonics instruction ends with the presentation of a phonics concept. Students may then require many separate follow-up experiences to make the concept meaningful and to apply it to real reading. Unfortunately, the limitations of younger students' cognitive abilities and attention spans often necessitate this approach to incite learning. Upper-grade teachers, on the other hand, have the luxury of their students' advanced maturity and cognitive skills and can be more creative in their instructional approach, even when the curriculum is basic or remedial. The discovery approach is one such teaching methodology upper-grade students benefit from and enjoy when learning remedial, basic, or advanced phonics and language patterns. The discovery approach is one of the many key features of this book.

A discovery approach, whether it is applied to science experiments, math concepts, or language patterns, presents students with



raw materials or data and challenges them to discover unifying principles. In the case of this book, students examine words that follow a pattern and draw conclusions about the nature of the pattern. Advantages of this approach include the following:

- Students' active involvement increases their motivation to participate.
- Open-ended investigations invite students to use their strengths as learners and accommodate all learning styles.
- A variety of activity formats keeps student interest high over long periods of time.
- Most importantly, the act of discovering makes the language pattern meaningful and memorable to students.

In many ways, discovering language patterns is similar to solving mysteries. Students must gather informative clues and evidence; avoid distracting, extraneous information; and draw provable conclusions. This book carries through it a mystery theme to highlight the investigative



aspects of learning about language patterns and pique students' interest in the investigations. Bring this highly motivating mystery theme to your classroom as you work with language patterns, and watch your students "devour" the materials provided in these pages.

Who Needs *Upper-Grade Phonics*?

Simply put, all students can benefit from *Upper-Grade Phonics*. Language patterns featured in this book address the needs of students who require remediation of basic concepts to on-grade-level readers to students ready to learn more advanced concepts. Even if students are somewhat familiar with a phonics concept, this book's discovery approach enables them to permanently and meaningfully embed the concept in their brains. To work with the patterns in this book, students should "bring to the table" the following knowledge and abilities:

- letter recognition
- sound/letter matching
- concepts of print such as one-to-one correspondence, reading left to right, and return sweep from line to line
- pronunciation of consonant blends and digraphs
- pronunciation of vowel digraphs and diphthongs
- familiarity with high-frequency words
- basic familiarity with sentence and story structure
- awareness of parts of speech

Once familiar with these concepts, students are ready for the language patterns and activities in this book. They are ready to become "Language Detectives."

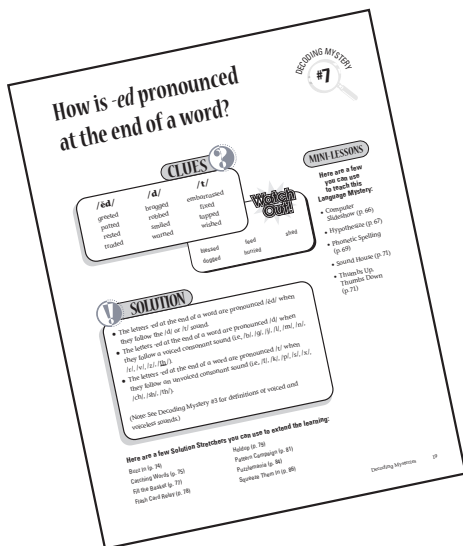
Using This Book

The body of this book is divided into four main sections: Language Mysteries, Mini-Lessons, Solution Stretchers, and Teaching Helpers.

Language Mysteries

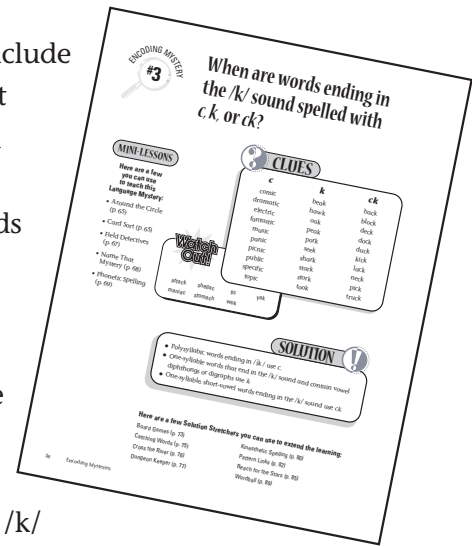
The Language Mysteries are the language patterns—the “raw data”—that fuel this book’s discovery approach. They present the Mystery to be solved phrased as a question. The book features 47 patterns divided into three categories based on the domain of literacy they address: Decoding Mysteries (reading), Encoding Mysteries (spelling), and Word-Solving Mysteries (comprehension and vocabulary).

Decoding Mysteries include patterns that students can apply when reading print. For example, the pattern that tells whether the suffix *-ed* is pronounced /ĕd/, /d/, or /t/ is Decoding Mystery #7. The term *decoding* is often used in reference to sounding out words.

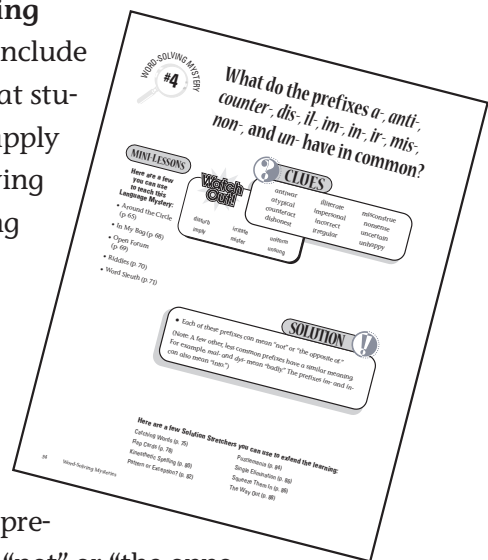


Encoding Mysteries include patterns that students can apply when spelling words they know how to pronounce. For example, the pattern that tells

whether the /k/ sound is spelled *c*, *k*, or *ck* at the end of a word is Encoding Mystery #3. The term *encoding* is often used in reference to transferring words from oral language to written language.



Word-Solving Mysteries include patterns that students can apply when deriving the meaning or usage of unfamiliar words. For example, the pattern that tells which prefixes mean “not” or “the opposite of” is Word-Solving Mystery #4. Word-Solving Mysteries are intended to help students expand their vocabulary and increase their comprehension skills.



The next page explains the structure of a Language Mystery.

Language Mysteries

The Language Mystery question presents the language pattern to be investigated or discovered.

DECODING MYSTERY #4

What vowel sounds can *ea* make?

CLUES

/ē/	/ē/	/ā/
beach	bread	break
lead	deaf	great
peak	lead	steak
read	read	
seat	spread	

Watch Out!

agreeable	beautiful	idea
area	bureau	ocean

SOLUTION

- The letters *ea* can be pronounced /ē/ as in *speak*.
- The letters *ea* can be pronounced /ē/ as in *head*.
- The letters *ea* can be pronounced /ā/ as in *great*.

(Note: The /ē/ is the most common pronunciation, but many words contain the other two. When encountering a new word containing *ea*, try all three pronunciations and see which sounds correct in context.)

Here are a few Solution Stretchers you can use to extend the learning:

Bouquets (p. 74)	Pattern or Exception? (p. 82)
Cross the River (p. 76)	Reach for the Stars (p. 85)
Flap Cards (p. 78)	Word Banks (p. 88)
Language Mysteries Notebook (p. 80)	Wordball (p. 89)

16 Decoding Mysteries

Clues/Watch Out!

The Clues section contains words that follow the language pattern. The Watch Out! section lists words that break the pattern or may cause confusion. Watch Out! words may differ from Clues words in their spelling, their pronunciation, or even their usage. Words in these lists are not complete lists of all English words that follow and break the pattern. Instead, they are a sampling of words that establish evidence of the pattern. Presenting Clues words must be part of teaching every language pattern, but Watch Out! words may or may not be presented, depending on the Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers used.

Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers

Each Language Mystery page lists a few Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers that coordinate with the Mystery. See the Sample Lesson on page 9 for a detailed example of how all these pieces fit together.

Solution

The Solution section explains the answer to the Language Mystery. Solutions cover conditions under which words are spelled, pronounced, or used according to the pattern. Solutions may be followed by notes that provide further insight into the nature of the language pattern.

Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers

Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers are easily adaptable to many language patterns. Each of the three Language Mysteries sections begins with charts detailing exactly which Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers coordinate with the patterns in that section. In addition, each Mystery page specifically lists several Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers that work particularly well with that language pattern. All Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretchers involve generating or presenting Clues words, and some also incorporate Watch Out! words. Use the Mini-Lessons to introduce a language pattern and the Solution Stretchers to provide practice and review.

Mini-Lessons

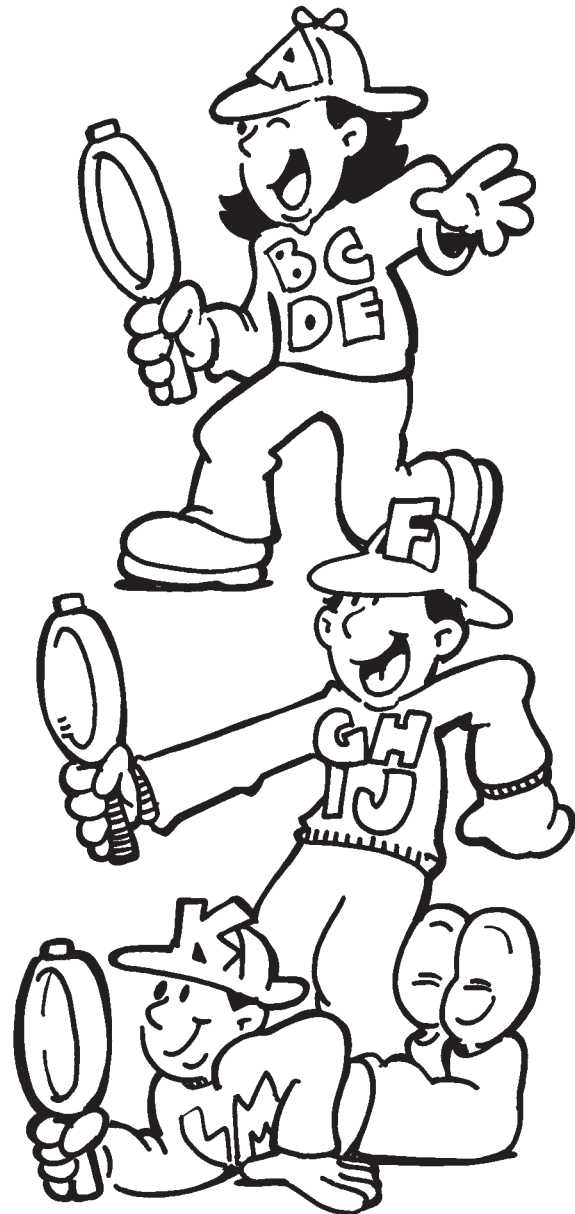
This section contains 15 ideas for presenting Language Mysteries. These ideas are adaptable to most Language Mysteries and afford you a great deal of flexibility. If your students particularly enjoy one Mini-Lesson format, use it to present several Language Mysteries. If your students struggle with a Mystery presented in one format, reteach the Mystery in a different format until they understand the pattern. These activities are intended to take 10-20 minutes.

Solution Stretchers

This section contains 32 independent, small-group, whole-group, and learning-center extension activities that provide further practice with language patterns you introduced through Mini-Lessons. Like the Mini-Lessons, these activities are adaptable to many different Language Mysteries. Unlike the Mini-Lessons, these activities fill larger amounts of time and reinforce, rather than introduce, the application of language patterns.

Teaching Helpers

This section features helpful tools that can be used before and during phonics instruction. The first two sections are pre-assessments to gauge students' phonics knowledge and basic literacy skills. The remaining three sections are word lists you may wish to reproduce for students, convert to wall charts, and/or keep for your own reference. Having these lists of commonly confused words, commonly misspelled words, and homophones gives you and your students a handy resource for solving problems posed by the English language that are not addressed by an identifiable pattern.



Sample Lesson

This section provides an example of how one Language Mystery might be presented to a class using the Mini-Lessons and Solution Stretches in this resource.

1. Select a Language Mystery

The teacher selects Decoding Mystery #2 (the sounds of *y*, page 14) to present to the class.

2. Select and Prepare a Mini-Lesson

Based on the recommendation on the Mystery page, the teacher decides to introduce the pattern using the Card Sort Mini-Lesson activity (page 65). The teacher prepares five sets of twelve index cards. Each set of cards contains the same three examples of words featuring each of the four sounds *y* can make: /ē/, /ī/, /ī/, and the consonant *y* sound (/y/).



3. Present the Mini-Lesson

The teacher divides the class into five groups and gives each group a set of twelve cards. The teacher invites the groups to take a few minutes to sort the cards into any categories they see fit. When some groups appear to struggle, the teacher recommends that they focus on the letter *y* in each word. The groups then share their sorting strategies, and the teacher guides them toward recognizing the four sounds *y* can make and the patterns related to those sounds.

4. Select a Solution Stretcher

Some time has passed, and the teacher decides students need additional practice with the “sounds of *y*” pattern. After scanning the chart on page 12, the teacher chooses to reinforce the pattern using the Holdup Solution Stretcher activity (page 79).

5. Implement the Solution Stretcher

The teacher gives students four index cards each and asks them to write one of the following notations on each of the cards: $y = /ē/$, $y = /ī/$, $y = /ī/$, and $y = /y/$. The teacher displays several words containing *y*, each time challenging students to hold up the card that indicates the sound *y* makes in that word. The teacher continues the activity until students clearly demonstrate understanding of the pattern.

Pronunciation Symbols

Throughout this book, the phonetic pronunciation of letters and words is written enclosed in slashes. The symbols and sounds incorporated in these phonetic spellings are

/ă/ as in bat	/oi/ as in join
/ā/ as in rain	/ōl/ as in cold
/är/ as in farm	/ôl/ as in halt
/au̇/ as in now	/ōr/ as in port
/ch/ as in chip	/sh/ as in shall
/ě/ as in red	/th/ as in that
/ē/ as in weep	/th/ as in thin
/ĭ/ as in tin	/ŭ/ as in run
/ī/ as in hide	/ü/ as in tooth
/kw/ as in quack	/ŭ/ as in wood
/ō/ as in not	/ŭl/ as in pull
/ō/ as in boat	/ŭr/ as in curse
/ô/ as in broth	

Consonant sounds are indicated phonetically by the consonant that most frequently makes that sound. For example, /f/ is used for words spelled with *f* or *ph*, and /s/ is used for words spelled with *s* or *c*.

(Note: English dialects may affect the pronunciation of words. Be sure to consider students' dialects when teaching phonics patterns and phonetic spelling.)

Decoding Mysteries

(Reading)

Decoding Mysteries include patterns that students can apply when reading print. For example, the pattern that tells whether the suffix *-ed* is pronounced /ĕd/, /d/, or /t/ appears in this section (Decoding Mystery #7). The term *decoding* is often used in reference to sounding out words.

This table shows which **Mini-Lessons** can be used to introduce each Decoding Mystery.

DECODING MYSTERY #	Around the Circle (p. 65)	Card Sort (p. 65)	Computer Slideshow (p. 66)	Does It Belong? (p. 66)	Field Detectives (p. 67)	Hypothesize (p. 67)	In My Bag (p. 68)	Name That Mystery (p. 68)	Open Forum (p. 69)	Phonetic Spelling (p. 69)	Riddles (p. 70)	Secret Boxes (p. 70)	Sound House (p. 71)	Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down (p. 71)	Word Sleuth (p. 71)
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
8	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
11	x		x		x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
12	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
14	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
15	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
16		x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x	x	
17		x	x		x	x						x	x		
18		x	x		x	x						x	x		
19		x	x		x							x	x		

This table shows which **Solution Stretchers** can be used with each Decoding Mystery.

DECODING MYSTERY #	Banners (p. 73)	Board Games (p. 73)	Bouquets (p. 74)	Buzz In (p. 74)	Catching Words (p. 75)	Cross the River (p. 76)	Discussion Session (p. 76)	Dungeon Keeper (p. 77)	Fill the Basket (p. 77)	Flap Cards (p. 78)	Flash Card Relay (p. 78)	Highlighter Hunt (p. 79)	Holdup (p. 79)	Kinesthetic Spelling (p. 80)	Lang. Mysteries Notebook (p. 80)	Mystery Montage (p. 81)	Pattern Campaign (p. 81)	Pattern Links (p. 82)	Pattern or Exception? (p. 82)	Pizza Slices (p. 83)	Puzzlemania (p. 84)	Raining Rules (p. 84)	Reach for the Stars (p. 85)	Reference Books (p. 85)	Single Elimination (p. 86)	Squeeze Them In (p. 86)	Swat It! (p. 87)	Tic-Tac-Toe (p. 87)	The Way Out (p. 88)	Word Banks (p. 88)	Word Roots (p. 89)	Wordball (p. 89)			
1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
4	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
5	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
6	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
7	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
8	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
9	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
10	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
11	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
12	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
13	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
14	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
15	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
16		X	X			X		X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X				X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
17		X	X			X	X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X				
18		X	X			X	X	X	X			X		X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X				
19		X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X			X		X				

When does *c* make the /s/ sound and when does it make the /k/ sound? When does *g* make the /j/ sound and when does it make the /g/ sound?



CLUES



c = /s/	c = /k/	g = /j/	g = /g/
acid	acre	age	dog
cent	call	badge	gaze
cider	cane	genius	glad
circus	cap	gentle	goat
citrus	clean	giant	gone
dance	coat	ginger	greet
receive	cut	gym	gutter
source	record	spongy	regal

Watch Out!

cello gear girl
foggy gift tangy

MINI-LESSONS

Here are a few you can use to teach this Language Mystery:

- Card Sort (p. 65)
- Does It Belong? (p. 66)
- Name That Mystery (p. 68)
- Secret Boxes (p. 70)
- Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down (p. 71)



SOLUTION

- *C* is pronounced /k/ and *g* is pronounced /g/ when they precede *a, o, u,* or any consonant. These are known as the “hard *c* and *g* sounds.”
- *C* is pronounced /s/ and *g* is pronounced /j/ when they precede the letter *i, e,* or *y.* These are known as the “soft *c* and *g* sounds.”

Here are a few Solution Stretchers you can use to extend the learning:

Board Games (p. 73)

Pattern Campaign (p. 81)

Dungeon Keeper (p. 77)

Pattern Links (p. 82)

Flash Card Relay (p. 78)

Puzzlemania (p. 84)

Kinesthetic Spelling (p. 80)

Squeeze Them In (p. 86)

How many sounds can the letter y make? When does it make each sound?

MINI-LESSONS

Here are a few you can use to teach this Language Mystery:

- Card Sort (p. 65)
- Open Forum (p. 69)
- Riddles (p. 70)
- Sound House (p. 71)
- Word Sleuth (p. 71)

Watch Out!

justify	myself	rhyme	toy
myrrh	mystify	stay	tray

CLUES

/y/	/ĭ/	/ī/	/ē/
yak	cymbal	cry	any
yawn	cyst	fly	dirty
yell	hymn	sky	every
yes	symbol	try	happy
you	synonym	why	pony

SOLUTION

- Y at the beginning of a word is a consonant. It makes the /y/ sound.
- Y in the middle of a word makes the /ĭ/ sound.
- Y at the end of a one-syllable word makes the /ī/ sound.
- Y at the end of a polysyllabic word makes the /ē/ sound.

Here are a few Solution Stretchers you can use to extend the learning:

Banners (p. 73)

Pizza Slices (p. 83)

Buzz In (p. 74)

Reference Books (p. 85)

Dungeon Keeper (p. 77)

Swat It! (p. 87)

Holdup (p. 79)

Word Roots (p. 89)