LESSON 5 THE ROOT *-GEN-*

5

The root *-gen-* has ancient origins and can be found in various forms in many Indo-European languages. As you will learn in this lesson, *-gen-* conveys many meanings, such as kind, type, class, family, race, origin, birth, or source. When it is combined with prefixes and/or suffixes, it produces many words that you will find useful when speaking or writing about the origins of things or about their classifications and types.

WORD LIST

congenial
degenerate
gender
genealogy
generic
genesis
gentry
primogeniture
progeny
regenerate

DEFINITIONS

After you have studied the definitions and example for each vocabulary word, write the word on the line to the right.

1. **congenial** (kən-jēn′yəl) *adjective* **a.** Having the same tastes, habits: *congenial friends.* **b.** Sociable; agreeable; amiable. (From the Latin *com-*, meaning "together," and *genialis*, meaning "festive") 1. _____

   Related Word **congeniality** *noun*
   Example Adrian and Anastasia are very *congenial* and spend most of their spare time together.

2. **degenerate** (dĭ-jĕn′ə-rāt) *verb* To sink into a much worse or lower condition; deteriorate. *adjective* (dĭ-jĕn′ər-ĭt) Having deteriorated from a previous state. (From the Latin *de-*, meaning "down," and *genus*, meaning "family" or "ancestry") 2. _____

   Related Words **degeneration** *noun;* **degenerative** *adjective*
   Example Houses often *degenerate* after decades of exposure to the elements.

3. **gender** (jĕn′dər) *noun* One of the categories—masculine, feminine, or neuter—into which words and the people, animals, or objects they denote are divided. 3. _____

   Example A deer, rabbit, or kangaroo of the female *gender* is called a doe.

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4. **genealogy** (jē′nē-ŏl′ə-jē) *noun* **a.** A record of the descent of a family or person from an ancestor or ancestors. **b.** Direct descent from an ancestor; lineage. **c.** The study of ancestry and family histories. (From the Greek words *genea*, meaning "family," and *logos*, meaning "speech") 4. _____

Related Words **genealogical** *adjective*; **genealogist** *noun*
Example David traced his *genealogy* back to Charlemagne, the ninth-century Frankish ruler.

5. **generic** (jə-nĕr′ĭk) *adjective* **a.** Of, including, or indicating an entire group, class, category; general rather than specific. **b.** Not protected by a trademark: *generic aspirin*. (From the Latin word *genera*, meaning "kinds") 5. _____

Related Word **generically** *adverb*
Example The word "cats" is a *generic* term for tigers, jaguars, and house cats.

6. **genesis** (jĕn′ĭ-sĭs) *noun* The coming into being of anything; origin. (From the Greek word *genesis*, meaning "birth") 6. _____

Example The *genesis* of Paul's short story was an experience that he had when he was ten.

7. **gentry** (jĕn′trē) *noun* **a.** Well-bred people of good family and high social standing. **b.** A social class ranking next below the nobility. (From the Latin word *gens*, meaning "race" or "clan") 7. _____

Example In that country the *gentry* has large holdings of private property

8. **primogeniture** (prī′mō-jĕn′ĭ-chŏor′) *noun* **a.** The condition of being the first-born child in a family. **b.** In law, the right of the eldest child—especially the eldest son—to inherit all of his parents' estate. (From the Latin words *primus*, meaning "first," and *genitura*, meaning "birth") 8. _____

Example Because of Jonathan's *primogeniture*, he assumed many responsibilities for his younger brothers.

9. **progeny** (prŏj′ə-nē) *noun* Children; descendants; offspring. (From the Latin *pro-*, meaning "forward," and *gignere*, meaning "to beget") 9. _____

Related Word **progenitor** *noun*
Example Several of the *progeny* of the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach were also composers.

10. **regenerate** (rĭ-jĕn′ə-rāt′) *verb* **a.** To give new life to; revive. **b.** To reform spiritually or morally. **c.** To replace (a damaged or lost part or organ) by growing new tissue. (From the Latin *re-*, meaning "again," and *generare*, meaning "produce") 10. _____

Related Words **regeneration** *noun*; **regenerative** *adjective*
Example The astonishing success of the Alamo High School football team has *regenerated* interest in the game.

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EXERCISE 1 WRITING CORRECT WORDS

On the answer line, write the word from the vocabulary list that fits each definition.

1. Agreeable; sociable; having the same tastes
2. Classification as male or female
3. To create anew or revive
4. Descendants; offspring
5. General; relating to an entire class or group
6. Origin, source, or birth
7. To deteriorate or decline
8. People of high social position and good breeding
9. A record of ancestry
10. The condition of being first-born; the custom or law by which the eldest child receives property or inheritance

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

EXERCISE 2 USING WORDS CORRECTLY

Decide whether the italicized vocabulary word or related form has been used correctly in the sentence. On the answer line, write *Correct* for correct use and *Incorrect* for incorrect use.

1. My grandmother's *progeny* include her sisters, Mary and Martha, and her cousin Simeon.
2. Most plant life *degenerates* during a drought.
3. The Earl of Wessex, following the law of *primogeniture*, left his estate to his eldest son.
4. Christina looked in the family *genealogy* and learned that her great-grandfather had nine brothers and sisters.
5. The *gender* of a cardinal is red.
6. The *genesis* of a novel may lie in the author's imagination.
7. Our *congenial* neighbor offered to help me with the heavy suitcases.
8. In the supermarket the paper towels with specific brand names are *generic*.
9. Weakened muscles can be *regenerated* through exercise.
10. A story about the *gentry* would be about poor people with no education.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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EXERCISE 3 CHOOSING THE BEST WORD

Decide which vocabulary word or related form best expresses the meaning of the italicized word or phrase in the sentence. On the answer line, write the letter of that word.

1. Some scientists think that the *origin* of nuclear theory lay in the philosophy of Aristotle. 1. —
   a. progeny b. degeneration c. genesis d. primogeniture
2. The diplomats believe that relations will *deteriorate* between the two countries. 2. —
   a. gender b. degenerate c. regenerate d. gentry
3. Some people do not consider the *classification as male or female* of the President to be an important issue. 3. —
   a. gender b. progeny c. genealogy d. primogeniture
4. The *descendants* of the famous author helped to restore his estate. 4. —
   a. primogeniture b. regeneration c. gender d. progeny
5. As a result of his *moral reformation,* my friend Tyrone has become very thoughtful. 5. —
   a. congeniality b. regeneration c. genealogy d. degeneration
6. Some of the *well-bred, upper-middle class* maintain estates in Virginia. 6. —
   a. primogeniture b. progeny c. gender d. gentry
7. While looking at our *record of ancestry,* I discovered names like Ezekiel and Ebenezer. 7. —
   a. genealogy b. primogeniture c. progeny d. gentry
8. When the king died, his throne was to be taken over by his eldest son according to the law of *inheritance by the eldest child.* 8. —
   a. genesis b. regeneration c. primogeniture d. gender
9. The *unnamed, general type of* canned tomatoes are cheaper. 9. —
   a. degenerate b. generic c. regenerative d. congenial
10. My friend James is so *sociable and friendly* that most people like him. 10. —
    a. generic b. degenerate c. regenerative d. congenial

EXERCISE 4 USING DIFFERENT FORMS OF WORDS

Decide which form of the vocabulary word in parentheses best completes the sentence. The form given may be correct. Write your answer on the line.

1. Only peafowl of the male _____ have beautiful tail feathers. *(gender)* 1.
2. The healing of a wound is an example of the _____ power of the human body. *(regenerate)* 2.
3. The biologist gave a lecture on the _____ of amphibians. *(genesis)* 3.
4. The term *gentrification,* which refers to the upgrading of urban neighborhoods, comes from the word _____. *(gentry)* 4.
5. *Cheaper by the Dozen* tells the story of the crusty but lovable _____ of twelve children. *(progeny)* 5.
6. Our neighbors were known for their _____. *(congenial)* 6.

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7. Carmen is a ____ and is an authority on the ancestry of early settlers in Arizona. *(genealogy)* 7.

8. Mr. Van Allen was concerned about the ____ of the muscles in his right arm. *(degenerate)* 8.

9. By right of ____, the title of Prince of Wales falls to the eldest son of the British sovereign. *(primogeniture)* 9.

10. In ancient Greece, the ____ term for people who did not speak Greek was *barbarians*. *(generic)* 10.

READING COMPREHENSION