

Appendix IV

ACADEMIC MOVES: ETYMOLOGY

Part of engaging students in rich word study involves teaching them to look at the roots of words to draw out nuances of meaning and connections to other topics. Use the etymological information here both to spur your own thinking about the academic moves and also to introduce students to the concepts these verbs entail.

Analyze

Late 16th century, from Latin and Greek roots meaning “to loosen up, break, or release” or “to loose a ship from its moorings”

What to ask students:

- How is analyzing a text or other work like breaking it into pieces?

Argue

From Latin arguere, “to prove, make clear, assert, demonstrate” (ca. 1300, meaning “to dispute, oppose”)

What to ask students:

- What is the difference between arguing to win a dispute and arguing to prove or demonstrate a point?

Compare/Contrast

From Latin comparare, “to put together, match” and Latin contra- and stare, “to stand against”

What to ask students:

- What is the benefit of combining these two terms so that we both bring works together and place them in opposition within the same academic task?

Describe

From Latin describere (de + scribere), “to write down, sketch”

What to ask students:

- How has the idea of description evolved from its original meaning of merely writing these down?

Determine

From Latin determinare (de + terminare), “to mark an end or boundary, to limit”

What to ask students:

- In what way is making an academic determination like marking a boundary or a limit?

Develop

From French, ca. 1600, developer, “to unwrap, unveil, reveal the meaning of”

What to ask students:

- How is developing a topic or idea like unwrapping or unveiling something hidden?

Evaluate

From French, ca. mid-1800s, evaluer, “to find the value of,” applied to mathematics

What to ask students:

- When we evaluate an idea, text, or issue, how is the process similar to or different from solving a mathematical equation?

Explain

From Latin *explanare*, “to make clear” or “to smooth out, lay on a flat surface”

What to ask students:

- In what ways is explaining something similar to smoothing it out or making it literally clearer in substance?

Imagine

From Latin *imaginari*, “to make a mental picture of, create an image”

What to ask students:

- What is the role of images and pictures in using our imagination?

Integrate

From Latin *integrare*, “to renew, restore” ca. 1600s “to make whole,” ca. 1800 “to put pieces together to make something into a whole”

What to ask students:

- Is integrating always about renewing or restoring something? What other meanings does the term have in an academic setting?

Interpret

From Latin *interpretari*, “explain, understand” and *interpres*, “translator”

What to ask students:

- How are interpretations and explanations similar and different? How does interpreting a language compare to interpreting a text, work of art, or set of data?

Organize

From Latin *organum*, “organ,” and Medieval Latin *organizare*, “to construct, arrange, contrive”

What to ask students:

- Is organizing the same thing as arranging, or does it involve different skills? If so, what are they?

Summarize

From Latin *summa*, “whole, total,” and Medieval Latin *summarius*, “having to do with the total,” ca. 1400s “brief, containing the sum of”

What to ask students:

- How is the idea of the whole or total of a work related to the idea of summary?

Support

From Medieval Latin *supportare*, “to endure, convey,” based on Latin verb *portare*, “to carry, to bear”

What to ask students:

- Notice that a part of support involves the idea of carrying something. How does academic support carry or bear the weight of a response?

Transform

From Latin *transformare*, “to change in shape” (*trans-*, “across,” + *formare*, “to form”)

What to ask students:

- In an academic setting, what else can transformation involve besides simply changing the shape of a response?