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# quick medical terminology

## A SELF-TEACHING GUIDE

- Expand your working medical vocabulary with the latest terms
- Master the most up-to-date techniques for learning new words
- Learn all the essential Greek and Latin building blocks

SHIRLEY SOLTESZ STEINER, M.S., R.N., AND NATALIE PATE CAPPS, M.N.Sc., R.N.



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# **Quick Medical Terminology**

**A Self-Teaching Guide**

**5th Edition**

**Shirley Soltesz Steiner, R.N., M.S.**

**Natalie Pate Capps, M.N.Sc., R.N.**

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*For*

*Dorothy Elizabeth Wilson Soltesz, who is my mom and best friend.*

*Mildred Hall, who is my godmother and may not know how much she influenced  
my growing-up years. Mildred assured me I had what it takes to go to college,  
get an education, and create a better life.*

—S. S.

*For*

*My perfect mate, Barry, and remarkable children, Harden, Pate, and Jacqueline Capps*

*My parents and sisters, who shaped me:  
Susie Ashworth, Nick Pate, Amy Bean, and Molly Pate*

*With affection, gratitude, and adoration for you all.*

—N. C.



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# To the Reader

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## What This Book Is and Who It's For

So you want to learn the language of medicine. Great! Everything you need for learning medical terminology is right in your hands. The language of medicine is precise and technically oriented. It is among the great tools of the mind for better understanding and more accurate communication between all practitioners of the life sciences. Learning this special language is your opportunity to be among them. *Quick Medical Terminology* can prepare you for a new job or even a new career in one of the nation's fastest growing job markets, health care and allied health services.

In *Quick Medical Terminology* you'll learn to pronounce, spell, and define medical terms used in today's health care settings. You will use a word-building strategy that helps you discover connections and relationships among word roots, prefixes, and suffixes. You'll learn the meaning of each part of a complex medical term and be able to put the parts together and define the term. Very quickly you'll develop a large repertoire of useful medical terms, much greater than the 500-plus terms presented in this text.

Beginning with Chapter 4, most of the medical terms in each chapter will focus on a particular part of the body. Grouping related terms in this way will help you learn them better. However, the order of the chapters should not be confused with the order of a standard head-to-toe medical evaluation. At the end of the book, there is a Review by Body System Assessment that will walk you through the standard head-to-toe examination medical professionals typically follow. This review will bring together the medical terminology you will learn in the rest of the book.

*Quick Medical Terminology* is an enjoyable way to learn the very special language of medicine by yourself, at your own pace. If you speak and understand English and have a high school education or equivalent, you'll quickly learn the basics and much more.

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## How to Use This Program

We suggest you use the following steps to approach your learning.

### **Step 1. Pre- and Post-Testing**

If it's worth learning, isn't it worth knowing you have succeeded? You will find two Final Self-Tests in the back of your guide. We suggest you take one test before you begin your study and take another after you have completed all your lessons. Pre- and post-testing shows you how much you have learned. Either one of the final tests may be used first.

### **Step 2. Self-Instructional Chapter**

This self-teaching guide lets you proceed at a pace that is right for you. It provides everything you need to complete each of the eleven instructional chapters, which include:

**Introduction and Mini-Glossary.** The first page of each chapter introduces you to what you will cover and provides a Mini-Glossary of the terms and word parts you'll be learning. You may want to refer to it as you proceed through the lesson.

**Numbered frames.** Numbered frames are the building blocks of each chapter. A frame presents a small amount of information and expects you to read and think about that information. Then it asks you to respond to it.

The way you respond may be:

- to select a medical term or definition from a list of suggested answers.
- to write a medical term for a given definition.
- to draw a conclusion and write it in your own words.

#### **Example**

*Emesis* is a term that means vomiting. A term that means excessive vomiting is *hyperemesis*. Underline the part of the medical term meaning excessive.

A gallbladder attack can cause excessive vomiting. Write the term that describes this unpleasant condition. \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Example**

*Myelo / dysplasia* means defective development of the spinal cord.

*Chondro* means cartilage. What does *chondro / dysplasia* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

**Answers.** As you work through the chapter, you'll find the correct answers on the left-hand side of the page. It's a good idea to use a folded piece of paper to cover the answer until you give your own. Your answer will be correct most of the time, but when your answer doesn't match ours, be sure you know why it doesn't. You may need to go back and review a few frames before continuing.

**Pronunciation Guide.** When you work with a medical term for the first time, the answer column guides your pronunciation of the new term. Take the opportunity

to practice pronouncing each new term correctly several times. Say it aloud or subverbally (saying it to yourself).

**Example**

chondrodysplasia (kon'dro dis pla'zhe)

**Review Exercises.** Some chapters are longer than others, so to help you plan your breaks, we designed several short learning sequences into each chapter. A brief Review Exercise occurs at the end of a learning sequence. If you need a break, stop after a Review Exercise. Proceed at a pace that is right for you. We urge you to complete an entire chapter before calling it a day.

**Summary Exercise.** Each of the eleven instructional chapters ends with a Summary Exercise. This final exercise pulls together all the new terms you worked with in the chapter. Using the pronunciation guide alongside each term in the list, take the opportunity to practice pronouncing each term correctly and defining it aloud or subverbally. It really works! You might ask a friend to pronounce each term in the list so you can practice spelling it when you hear it.

[This is a good classroom exercise for instructor-guided spelling practice, pronunciation practice, and defining the terms.]

**Chapter Self-Test.** Each chapter ends with a Self-Test in two parts. Part 1 asks you to match a list of definitions with the correct medical terms. Part 2 asks you to construct the correct medical term for each definition listed. All terms and definitions are covered in the instructional chapter you have just completed. Here's another opportunity to see how you're doing.

**Step 3. Chapter Review Sheet**

Beginning on page 261, you'll find a two-part Review Sheet for each of the eleven chapters of instruction that make up this self-teaching program. We suggest you begin every new chapter (beginning with Chapter 2) by completing a Review Sheet for the previous chapter. These exercises are an important part of the learning program and will help you recall and practice the terms and definitions of the preceding chapter before you begin the next one.

*Part 1:* Given a term, or word part, write the meaning.

*Part 2:* Given the definition of a term, write the correct term.

Correct answers are provided.

You may use these Review Sheets anytime, and as often as you wish. We suggest you make several photocopies of each Review Sheet and use them at any time to practice what you've already covered. There is never enough practice.



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# Objectives of the Program

When you have finished *Quick Medical Terminology*, you will have formed well over 500 medical terms using our word-building strategy combining prefixes, suffixes, and word roots to create complex medical terms.

1. You will learn to understand medical terms by breaking them into their component parts and learning the meaning of the parts.
2. You will learn to construct medical terms from component parts to express given definitions.
3. You will learn to pronounce, spell, and define medical terms used in this book.
4. You will be able to apply this word-building strategy to terms covered in this book and other terms you will come across as you work in a health care setting.



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# Pronunciation Key

The primary stress mark (ˈ) is placed after the syllable bearing the heavier stress or accent; the secondary stress mark (ˑ) follows a syllable having a somewhat lighter stress, as in *com·men·da·tion* (komˈ ən·dāˑ shən).

a	add, map	m	move, seem	u	up, done
ā	ace, rate	n	nice, tin	er	urn, term
air	care, air	ng	ring, song	yōō	use, few
ä	palm, father	o	odd, hot	v	vain, eve
b	bat, rub	ō	open, so	w	win, away
ch	check, catch	ô	order, jaw	y	yet, yearn
d	dog, rod	oi	oil, boy	z	zest, muse
e	end, pet	ou	out, now	zh	vision, pleasure
ē	even, tree	ōō	pool, food	ə	the schwa, an
f	fit, half	oo	took, full		unstressed vowel
g	go, log	p	pit, stop		representing the
h	hope, hate	r	run, poor		sound spelled
i	it, give	s	see, pass		<i>a</i> in <i>above</i>
ī	ice, write	sh	sure, rush		<i>e</i> in <i>sicken</i>
j	joy, ledge	t	talk, sit		<i>i</i> in <i>clarity</i>
k	cool, take	th	thin, both		<i>o</i> in <i>melon</i>
l	look, rule	th	this, bathe		<i>u</i> in <i>focus</i>

Source: Slightly modified “Pronunciation Key” in *Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary*. Copyright © 1977 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

The schwa (ə) varies widely in quality from a sound close to the (u) in *up* to a sound close to the (i) in *it* as heard in pronunciations of such words as *ballot*, *custom*, *landed*, *horses*.

The (r) in final position as in *star* (stär) and before a consonant as in *heart* (härt) is regularly indicated in the respellings, but pronunciations without (r) are unquestionably reputable. Standard British is much like the speech of Eastern New England and the Lower South in this feature.

In a few words, such as *button* (butˑn) and *sudden* (sudˑn), no vowel appears in the unstressed syllable because the (n) constitutes the whole syllable.





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# The Word-Building Strategy

*Quick Medical Terminology* teaches you a strategy for word-building. The vocabulary of medicine is large and complex, but you can learn much of it by breaking down a complex term into its meaningful parts and putting together a word from those meaningful parts. Cover the column on the left and check your answers when you are done. Let's begin.

- |   |  |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
|---|--|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|
| port  | 1.<br>All words have a word root. The <i>root</i> is the base or the foundation of the word, regardless of what other word, unit, or syllable may be attached to it.<br><br>For example: <i>do</i> is the root of <i>undo</i> and <i>doing</i> .<br>What is the root of import, export, transport, and support?<br>_____   |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
| root  | 2.<br>In this example, the words suffix, prefix, affix, and fixation have <i>fix</i> as their _____.   |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
| tonsil  | 3.<br>What is the root in tonsill/itis, tonsill/ectomy, and tonsill/ar?<br>_____   |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
| Some suggestions:<br>overhang<br>overcome<br>understand<br>grandstand<br>outcome,<br>etc. | 4.<br>Two or more words may be combined to form a meaningful compound word. Using two or more of the following words, create some meaningful compound words:<br><table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"><tr><td>over</td><td>stand</td></tr><tr><td>hang</td><td>wear</td></tr><tr><td>under</td><td>come</td></tr><tr><td>grand</td><td>out</td></tr></table><br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ | over | stand | hang | wear | under | come | grand | out |
| over  | stand  |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
| hang  | wear   |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
| under   | come   |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |
| grand   | out  |      |       |      |      |       |      |       |     |

- yes  
Two words are combined to make a meaningful compound term.
5.  
Is teaspoon a compound word? \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- micr  
tel  
micr/o  
tel/e
6.  
A word root and a whole word may form a compound word. But the root must be in its *combining form*. The root plus a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) make the combining form. Here are two compound terms, micr/o/scope and tel/e/cast.  
What are the word roots? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the combining forms? \_\_\_\_\_
- phon/o/graph  
gastr/o/enteric  
laryng/o/spasm
7.  
Underline the combining form in each of the following words:  
phon/o/graph            gastr/o/enter/ic  
laryng/o/spasm
- a word root plus  
a vowel (a, e, i, o, u)
8.  
The combining form in compound words is made up of a \_\_\_\_\_ plus a \_\_\_\_\_.
- a combining form
9.  
In tel/e/graph and tel/e/phone the root plus a vowel are necessary to make these compound words. What is this special form called?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- all three
10.  
Compound terms may be composed of which of the following?  
a) two or more whole words  
b) a whole word and a word root  
c) a word root combining form and a word  
Your answer? \_\_\_\_\_
- combining form
11.  
Two roots may join together but one of them will be in a special form called the \_\_\_\_\_.

compound terms	<p>12. What kind of words are these: microfilm and telecommunication? _____</p>
a combining form (a root plus a vowel) a whole word	<p>What word parts are these terms made of? _____ _____ _____</p>
micr/o -ic micr-	<p>13. Many medical terms are made of a combining form, a word root, and an ending. In the term micr/o/scop/ic, the combining form is _____, the ending is _____, the root is _____.</p>
scop-	<p>Is there another word root? _____ What might it be? _____</p>
vowel	<p>14. There are two word roots in micr/o/scop/ic. The root <i>micr</i> is in the combining form because it is attached to a word that begins with a consonant. There is no need to add a vowel to the root <i>scop</i> because the ending <i>-ic</i> begins with a _____.</p>
electrostatic	<p>15. Build a term from the combining form electr/o, the word root stat, and the ending -ic. _____ / _____ / _____ / _____</p>
word root word ending	<p>16. In the word hydroelectric, electr is the _____, hydro is the _____, -ic is the _____.</p>
ending	<p>17. Endings change the basic meaning of a root or foundation word. Examine the following sentences: Joe's job was blast-ing the rocks. Tejo was blast-ed by the cannon. The meaning of <i>blast</i> is changed by its _____.</p>

yes  
The endings added to the root changed its meaning.

18.  
A *suffix* is a word unit or syllable added to the end of a word or root that alters its meaning and creates a new word. In the words *plant/er*, *plant/ed*, and *plant/ing*, are these endings also suffixes? \_\_\_\_  
Explain your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

porter  
one who carries

19.  
You can change the meaning of a word (or root) by adding a suffix. The suffix *-er* means *one who*. The word *port* means *to carry*. Add the suffix to the word root, *write* the word, and *explain* what it means.  
\_\_\_\_\_

suffix

20.  
When *-able* is added to the end of *read* it forms the new word *readable*. *-able* is a meaningful unit added to the end of a word, creating a new word. So *-able* is a \_\_\_\_\_.

im-, sup-,  
trans-

21.  
A *prefix* is a meaningful unit joined to the beginning of a word or root that creates a new term. In the words *im/plant*, *sup/plant*, and *trans/plant*, the prefixes are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

prefix

22.  
In the word *dis/please*, *dis-* is a meaningful unit that comes before the word and changes the meaning of *please*; *dis-* is a \_\_\_\_\_.

23.  
Meaningful units that go in front of a root are called prefixes. Meaningful units placed after a root are called suffixes.

Label the units in this word:

prefix    root    suffix

un-                      manage                      -able  
\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

meaning  
word

24.  
A suffix or a prefix is called a meaningful unit because when it is attached or added to a root or word it changes the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Our suggestion:  
-itis is a word unit  
added to the end of  
a word altering its  
meaning.

25.  
Explain why *-itis* in tendonitis is called a suffix.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
OK, let's review what you've covered.

root

26.  
The fundamental base from which meaningful terms grow or are  
formed is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

prefix

27.  
A meaningful word or unit placed in front of a root or word is a  
\_\_\_\_\_.

suffix

28.  
A syllable or word part joined to the end of a root or word that  
changes its meaning is a \_\_\_\_\_.

combining form

29.  
When a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) is added to a word root, the word part  
resulting is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

compound word

30.  
When two or more word roots combine to form a meaningful  
word, that word is called a \_\_\_\_\_.



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# List of Illustrations

(All illustrations created by Sakrantip Blazicek of Ocala, Florida.)

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