

Fer = Carry

The Latin root **fer** means “carry”

Usage:

When you **transfer** funds from one bank account to another, you “**carry**” them across from one to the next. As you do this, you might have to **refer** – or “**carry**” back your eyes – to your financial statements to check out your money supply. If you don’t do this, you might have to **suffer** the consequences, or be “**carried**” under a heavy financial burden.

We all like to cheer for **different** teams at a soccer match since we are all “**carried**” apart to separate likes and dislikes. In other words, when one thing is **different** from another, it is “**carried**” apart from it. Fans find one team to be **preferable** to another, that is, “**carried**” before another. When you **prefer** one team to others, you “**carry**” that team before the other teams in your mind.

Many seemingly unrelated words are related by this root. Consider, for instance, the words **conifer**, **circumference**, and **fertile**:

A **conifer** is a cone-“**carrying**” tree, that is, one that “**bears**” cones.

A **circumference** is how far one must “**carry**” a measurement around a circle.

And a **fertile** apple tree? Its limbs “**carry**” a lot of apples!

How to Remember:

A **ferry** “**carries**” you across a river, sending you on your merry way.



Worksheet

① Select one of the words below to help you remember this root:

- prefer**: "carry" before
- different**: a "carrying" apart
- offer**: a "carrying" towards

Write the word you selected in the "My Word" section of your cheatsheet.

② Why is this image useful to remember that **fer** means "carry"?



- One person is "carrying" a torch that they are giving away.
- The torch is barely "carrying" its flame.
- The flame is "carrying" itself.

③ Underline the root **fer** in the following common words:

transfer

conifer

suffer

referee

Write each of these words in the "Common Words" section of your cheatsheet.

④ Underline the root **fer** in the following challenging words:

proffer

indifferent

proliferate

vociferous

deference

differentiate

Write each of these words in the "Challenging Words" section of your cheatsheet.

Worksheet (continued)

Use this key of morphemes and their meanings to answer the next questions:

circum-: *around*
of-: *towards*
voc: *voice*

con-: *with*
suf-: *under*

dif-: *apart*
trans-: *across*

- ⑤ Draw a line to match each word with its roots definition:

transfer () of a loud voice that "carries"
vociferous () to "carry" under a burden
suffer () to "carry" an opinion apart from another
circumference () the "carrying" around a circle
differ () "carry" across

- ⑥ Can you figure out the meaning of the following words from your knowledge of roots? For example, "prefer" means "to carry before."

Conference: _____

Offer: _____

Cheatsheet

Fer = Carry

The Latin root *fer* means “carry”



My Word:

Common Words:

Challenging Words:

Thinking Like an Expert

As you've seen, roots and prefixes are the building blocks of English words. By combining them, we can create words with different, more complex meanings.

But what if we come across a word that we don't know the meaning of? Roots and prefixes can serve as clues to help us uncover the mystery of what a word means. We can also get clues from how the word is used, and like a detective we can discover the meaning of a word that we don't know.

Let's give it a try with a sentence that contains the word "referendum," which has the root "fer" in it. What clues might help us to understand the meaning of this word?

vote: something is being voted on

Ireland has legalized loans to everyone following a vote held on Saturday where 60 percent of the voters approved the referendum.

re-: back
fer: carry

voters approved: an issue has been decided by voters

Our first clues come from the word "referendum" itself. We know that the root "fer" means "carry," and we also know that the prefix "re-" means "back." By putting these together we can infer that "referendum" means something like "carry back," or "carrying back."

From here, we can look to how the word is used and find other clues in the sentence. We see that something is being voted on and decided by a population of voters—in this case the people of Ireland. We also see that the voters have approved this referendum, which helps us infer that a referendum is something that needs to be decided—in this case "loans for everyone."

With our clues in hand, we can solve the mystery: A referendum is a political issue that is carried back before the people for a vote.