

LESSON 8

Base Words

premier
primate

prime
primeval

primordial
posterior

posterity
posthumous

PRIMUS <Latin> “first”

1. premier

adj. First in time or importance.

The winners of the Super Bowl are considered the **premier** football team in the nation.

n. A prime minister or head of state.

Golda Meir sought peace for Israel during her tenure as premier.

Other Forms: **premiership**, n.

NOTA BENE: Don't confuse *premier* with *premiere*, which derives from the same root but means either the first public performance of something (“... the American *premiere*”) or the female star of a theatrical company (She is the *premiere* of the Bolshoi Ballet).

2. primate

n. 1. An archbishop or bishop who ranks highest among others.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is **primate** of England.

2. A member of the order of animals that includes monkeys, apes, and humans.

All **primates** have large-sized brains.

3. prime

n. First in rank, excellence, quality, importance, or time.

People disagree about which stage represents the **prime** of life.

adj. Chief; most important.

Television networks schedule their best programs during **prime** time, when the greatest number of people are watching.

v. To prepare something or someone for use or action.

The coach's pregame talk **primed** the team to play hard.

4. **primeval** [**prime** + *aevum*<Latin> “age”] adj. Belonging to the first ages; ancient.

A **primeval** lake once covered most of California's San Joaquin Valley.

5. **primordial** [**prime** + *ordiri* <L “to begin”]

adj. Primeval; original; fundamental.

Human beings have a **primordial** instinct for survival.

POST<Latin> “after”

6. posterior

adj. Situated behind or at the back.

Many automobiles in the 1920s and 1930s had a “rumble seat,” an extra, **posterior** seat that opened out from what we now call the trunk.

Antonym: **anterior**

7. posterity

n. 1. Future generations.

Will our **posterity** inherit any wilderness lands at all?

2. A person's descendants.

The maker of this lace tablecloth would be glad to know that four generations of her **posterity** have continued to use it.

8. **posthumous** [**post** + *humus* <Latin> “earth”]

adj. Occurring or continuing after death, especially a work published after the author’s death or a child born after the father’s death.

The Diary of Anne Frank, which recounts the young girl’s experiences in the Holocaust, has brought Anne **posthumous** fame.

Other Forms: posthumously, adv.

NOTA BENE: You have been using *ante* and *post* most of your life, perhaps without knowing it. The abbreviations A.M. and P.M. to indicate times before and after noon stand for *ante meridiem*, “before noon,” and *post meridiem*, “after noon.”

Familiar Words

postgraduate	primary	primer	primitive
postscript			

Challenge Words

postlude	prima donna	primal	primogeniture
postmortem	<i>prima facie</i>		
