Building Medical Terms
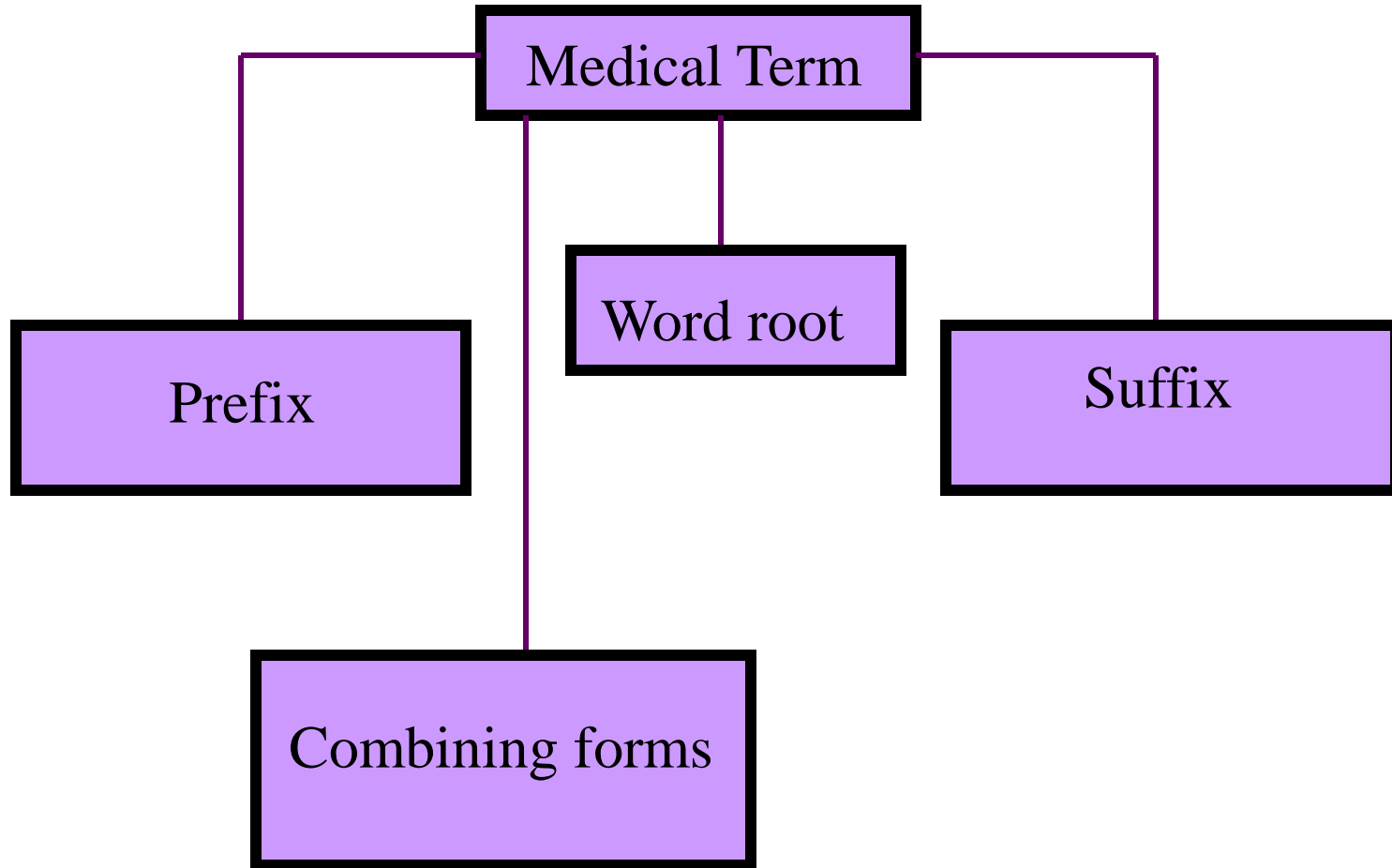
Word Root

Prefix

Suffix

Combining forms

Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define the four word parts used to build medical terms.
- Define common medical combining forms.
- Define common medical prefixes.
- Define common medical suffixes.
- Describe how word parts are put together to form words.

Forming Medical Terms

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                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │   Medical Term   │
                    └──────────────────┘
           ┌──────────────│──────────────┐
           │       ┌──────────────┐      │
           │       │  Word root   │      │
           │       └──────────────┘      │
    ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
    │    Prefix    │              │    Suffix    │
    └──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
           │
    ┌──────────────┐
    │Combining forms│
    └──────────────┘
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Forming Medical Terms

Medical terms are formed from two or more word parts.

Word root

- The main part of a word which contains the basic meaning.

Prefix

- Word parts attached to the beginning of a word that modifies the meaning.

Suffix

- Word parts attached to the end of a word that modifies the meaning.

Combining forms

- The word root and a combining vowel that enable two parts to be connected.

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
acanth (o)	spiny, thorny
actin (o)	light
aer (o)	air; gas
athero	plaque; fatty substance
bacill (i)	bacilli; bacteria
bar (o)	weight; pressure

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
blasto	immature cells
carcin(o)	cancer
chrondro	cartilage
cry(o)	cold
crypt(o)	hidden
cyan(o)	blue

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
cyt(o)	cell
dextr(o)	right
dips(o)	thirst
dors(o)	back
erythr(o)	red
esthesio	sensation, perception

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
galact(o) ➝	milk
gluco ➝	glucose
gero ➝	old age
glyco ➝	sugars
gyn(o) ➝	women
home(o) ➝	same
kin(o) ➝	movement

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
kinesi(o)	motion
lact(o)	milk
leuk(o)	white
lith(o)	stone
mio	smaller; less
narco	sleep; numbness
necro	death; dying

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
noct(i)	night
oncho	tumor
path(o)	disease
phago	eating
phon(o)	sound; voice
pseud(o)	false
pyo	pus

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms		Meaning
pyro	——▶	fever
salping(o)	——▶	tube
schiz(o)	——▶	split; division
scler(o)	——▶	hardening
scolio	——▶	crooked; bent
somato	——▶	body
spiro	——▶	breath; breathe

Word Roots and Combining Forms

Combining Forms	Meaning
tel(o)	distant; end; complete
tono	tension; pressure
tropho	food; nutrition
xanth(o)	yellow
xeno	stranger
Xer(o)	dry

12
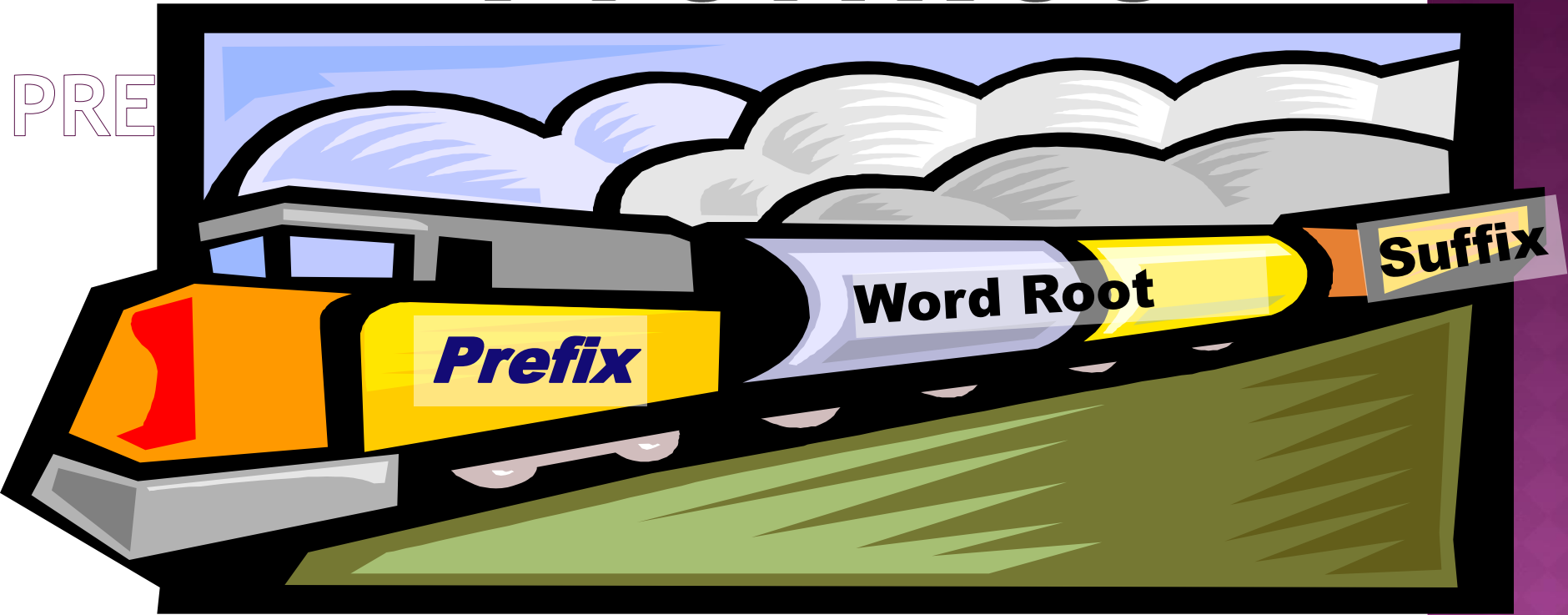
Prefixes

- Prefixes are attached to the beginning of words.

- Modifies the meaning of the word or word root.

- Indicates size, quantity, position of, and location.

Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning
a	without
ab	away from
ambi	both, around
ana	up, toward
ante	before
anti	against
aut(0)	self

14

Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning
brachy	short
brady	slow
contra	against
dys	abnormal; difficult
hemi	half
hyper	above normal
hypo	below normal

15

Prefixes

Prefix		Meaning
inter	←——————→	between
iso	←——————→	equal; same
mal	←——————→	bad; inadequate
meta	←——————→	after
micr(o)	←——————→	small
olig(o)	←——————→	few; little; scanty
peri	←——————→	around; about; near

Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning
pro	before; forward
re	again; backward
retro	behind; backward
semi	half
supra	above; over
tachy	fast
un	not

17

Suffixes

Prefix

Word Root
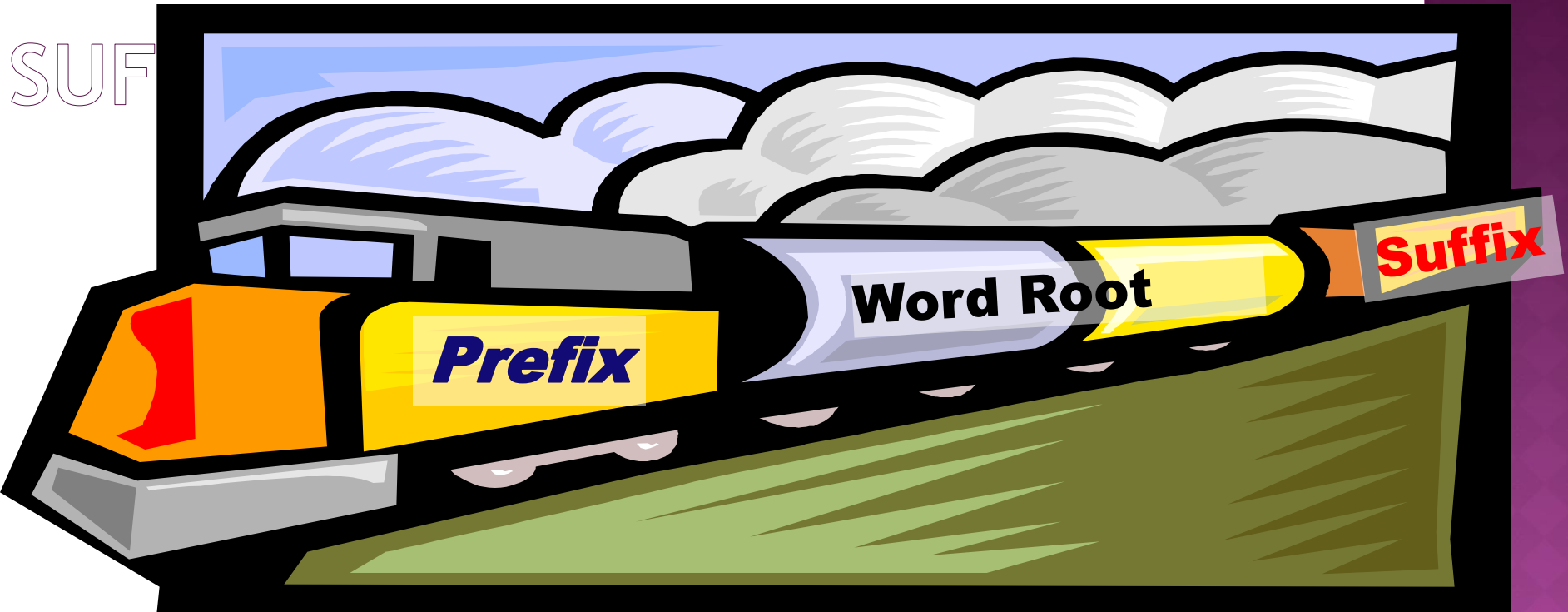
Suffix

•Attaches to the end of the word and carries the underlying meaning of the word.

•Suffixes can also be combining forms.

Suffixes

Suffix   **Meaning**

-ad ———————●———————●——— toward

-algia ——————●———————●——— pain

-asthenia ——●———————●——— weakness

-blast ——————●———————●——— immature; forming

-cidal ——————●———————●——— destroying; killing

-clast ——————●———————●——— breaking

-crine ——————●———————●——— secreting

Suffixes

Suffix		Meaning
-crit	⟶	separate
-cyte	⟶	cell
-cytosis	⟶	condition of cells
-derma	⟶	skin
-dynia	⟶	pain
-ectasis	⟶	expanding; dilating
-ectomy	⟶	removal of

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning
-emesis	→ vomiting
-emia	→ blood
-esthesia	→ sensation
-globin	→ protein
-gram	→ a recording
-graph	→ recording instrument
-graphy	→ process of recording

Suffixes

Suffix		Meaning
-ic	➤	pertaining to
-ism	➤	condition; disease
-itis	➤	inflammation
-kinesia	➤	movement
-logist	➤	one who practices
-lysis	➤	destruction of
-malacia	➤	softening

22

Suffixes

Suffix		Meaning
-mania	⟶	obsession
-megaly	⟶	enlargement
-oid	⟶	like; resembling
-opia	⟶	vision
-ostomy	⟶	opening
-para	⟶	bearing
-pathy	⟶	disease

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning
-penia	deficiency
-pepsia	digestion
-pexy	fixation
-phage	eating; devouring
-phobia	fear
-phonia	sound
-phrenia	of the mind

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning
-phylaxis	protection
-plasty	surgical repair
-plegia	paralysis
-pnea	breath
-ptosis	falling down; drooping
-rrhagia	heavy discharge
-rrhaphy	surgical suturing

25

Suffixes

Suffix	Meaning
-rrhexis	rupture
-spasm	contraction
-stasis	stopping; constant
-stenosis	narrowing
-tomy	cutting operation
-trophy	nutrition
-tropia	turning

Apply Your Knowledge

Using various word parts, build terms for the following meanings.

Meaning	Term
•Absence of blood	anemia
•Bluish color of hands and feet	cyanosis
•Equal vision in both eyes.	isopia
•Fast heart.	tachycardia
•Breakdown of sugar.	glycolysis

Apply Your Knowledge

Using various word parts, build terms for the following meanings.

Meaning	Term
•Lack of white blood cells.	leukopenia
•Softening of bone.	osteomalacia
•Inflammation of a vein.	phlebitis
•Nerve pain.	neuralgia
•Science of skin and its diseases.	dermatology