

|   |  |
|---|--|
| abducens – L <i>ab</i> , away + <i>duco</i> , lead  | aphasia – G <i>a</i> without + <i>phasis</i> , speech                  |
| actin – G, <i>aktis</i> , ray   | apathy – G <i>a</i> , without + <i>pathos</i> , emotion                |
| adrenalin – L <i>ad</i> , to + <i>ren</i> , kidney  | aplysia – G <i>a</i> , without + <i>pluno</i> , wash                   |
| afferent – L <i>ad</i> , to + <i>fero</i> , bring   | apnea – G <i>a</i> , without + <i>pneo</i> , breathe                   |
| agnosia – G <i>a</i> , without + <i>gnosis</i> , knowledge                                  | aqueduct – L <i>aqua</i> , water + <i>duco</i> , lead                  |
| agonist – G <i>agon</i> , contest   | arachnoid – G <i>arachne</i> , spider, cobweb                          |
| agrammatism – G <i>a</i> without + <i>gramma</i> ,<br>writing (modern use is absent syntax) | arcuate – L <i>arcus</i> , bow, curve                                  |
| agraphia – G <i>a</i> without + <i>graphein</i> , write                                     | astrocyte – G <i>astron</i> star + <i>kytos</i> , hollow,<br>cell      |
| alexia – G <i>a</i> without + <i>lexis</i> , word, speech<br>(or L <i>legere</i> , read)    | ataxia - G <i>a</i> , without + <i>taxis</i> , order                   |
| amnesia – G <i>a</i> without + <i>mneme</i> , memory  | atrophy – G <i>a</i> , without <i>trophe</i> , nourishment             |
| amplify – L <i>amplus</i> , large + <i>facere</i> , make                                    | audiogram – L <i>audire</i> , hear + G <i>gramma</i> ,<br>record       |
| ampulla – L small bottle  | aura – L breeze (before the storm?)                                    |
| amygdala – G <i>amygdale</i> , almond   | autism – G <i>autos</i> , self   |
| amyloid – G <i>amylon</i> , starch  | automatic – G <i>autos</i> , self + <i>matos</i> , mind                |
| amyotrophy – G <i>a</i> (negative) + <i>mys</i> , muscle<br>+ <i>trophe</i> , nourish       | autonoetic – G <i>autos</i> , self + <i>noiesis</i> ,<br>understanding |
| anatomy – G <i>ana</i> , apart + <i>tome</i> , cutting                                      | autonomic – G <i>autos</i> , self + <i>nomos</i> , law                 |
| anesthesia – G <i>an</i> , without + <i>aesthesia</i> ,<br>feeling                          | axon – G axle  |
| aneurysm – G <i>ana</i> , up + <i>eurynein</i> , dilate                                     | ballistic – G <i>ballein</i> , throw                                   |
| anomia – G <i>a</i> , without + L <i>nomen</i> , name                                       | basal – G <i>basis</i> , base, foundation                              |
| antagonist – G <i>anti</i> , against + <i>agon</i> , contest                                | basilar – G <i>basis</i> , foundation                                  |
| anterograde – L <i>anterior</i> , ahead+ <i>gradior</i> ,<br>step                           | calcarine – L <i>calcar</i> , cock's spur                              |
| antidromic – G <i>anti</i> , against + <i>dromos</i> ,<br>running                           | calvaria – L skull (roof of skull)                                     |
| aperture – L <i>aperire</i> , open  | capillary – L <i>capillaris</i> , like a hair                          |
| apex – L peak   | carotid – G from <i>karoo</i> , put to sleep                           |
|   | carpal – G <i>carpos</i> , wrist                                       |
|   | cauda equina – L horse's tail  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| caudate – L <i>cauda</i> , tail  | coronal – G <i>korone</i> , garland, wreath,<br>(became L <i>corona</i> , crown)   |
| cerebrum – L, head, brain, skull   | corpus callosum – L hard body  |
| cerebellum – L diminutive of <i>cerebrum</i> ,<br>brain  | corpus striatum – L grooved body   |
| cervical – L <i>cervix</i> , neck  | cortex – L bark (of tree), shell   |
| chiasm – G crossing (from letter <i>chi</i> $\chi$ )   | cupula – L little barrel   |
| choroid – G <i>choron</i> , membrane   | cytoplasm – G <i>kytos</i> , vessel + <i>plassein</i> , mold   |
| choroid plexus – G <i>choron</i> , membrane + L<br><i>plexus</i> , braid                               | decerebrate – L <i>de</i> , away from + <i>cerebrum</i> ,<br>brain   |
| ciliary – L <i>cilium</i> , eyelash  | declarative – L <i>declarare</i> , explain ( <i>de</i> ,<br>intensive + <i>clarus</i> , clear)   |
| cingulate – L <i>cingulum</i> , girdle   | decussation – L <i>decusso</i> (make like X, the<br>Roman numeral for ten)   |
| circadian – L <i>circa</i> , about + <i>dies</i> , day   | dendrite – G <i>dendron</i> , tree   |
| clonus – G <i>klonos</i> , tumult  | depolarization – G <i>de</i> , away from + <i>polus</i> ,<br>pole, end of an axis  |
| cochlea – L snail shell  | dermatome – G <i>derma</i> , skin + <i>tome</i> , cutting  |
| cognition – L <i>cognoscere</i> know (from G<br><i>gnosis</i> , knowledge)                             | desynchronized – G <i>de</i> , away from + <i>syn</i> ,<br>together + <i>chronos</i> , time  |
| collateral – L <i>com</i> , together + <i>latus</i> , side   | diplopia – G <i>diploous</i> , double + <i>ops</i> , eye   |
| colliculus – L diminutive of <i>collis</i> , hill  | dura mater – L hard mother   |
| coma – G <i>koma</i> , deep sleep  | dysfunction – G <i>dys</i> , difficult, bad + L<br><i>fungor</i> , perform   |
| commissure – L <i>cum</i> , with + <i>mitto</i> , send<br>(joining together)                           | dyslexia – G <i>dys</i> , difficult + <i>lexis</i> , word,<br>speech (or L <i>legere</i> , read)   |
| comprehension – L <i>cum</i> , with/together +<br><i>pre</i> , in front of + <i>hendere</i> , get/hold | echoic – no etym., onomatopoeic “echo”   |
| confabulation – L <i>con</i> , with + <i>fabula</i> , story  | efferent – L <i>ex</i> , from + <i>fero</i> , bring  |
| conjunction – L <i>cum</i> , with + <i>unctio</i> , join   | electroencephalogram – G <i>electron</i> , amber<br>(static electricity) + <i>encephalon</i> , brain<br>( <i>kephale</i> , head) + <i>grapho</i> , write |
| consolidation – L <i>con</i> , with + <i>solidus</i> ,<br>firm/whole                                   | embolus – G plug, stopper  |
| contralateral – L <i>contra</i> , against + <i>latus</i> , side  | emergent – L <i>emergere</i> , rise up   |
| convulsion – L <i>con</i> , with + <i>vellere</i> , pull   |  |
| cornea – L <i>cornu</i> , horn   |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| emotion – L <i>ex</i> , out + <i>movere</i> , move  | fovea – L pit, dip   |
| endoplasmic reticulum – G <i>endo</i> , inside + <i>plastos</i> , formed + <i>reticulum</i> , net | fundamental – L <i>fundare</i> , lay the basis   |
| engram – G <i>en</i> , in + <i>gramma</i> , mark  | fundoscopic – L <i>fundus</i> , bottom + G <i>skopein</i> , examine  |
| enzyme – G <i>zyme</i> (leaven) organic catalyst  | fusiform – L <i>fuscus</i> , spindle   |
| epiglottis – G <i>epi</i> , upon + <i>glotta</i> , tongue   | ganglion – G knot, swelling  |
| epilepsy – G <i>epi</i> , upon + <i>lambanei</i> , seize  | geniculate – L diminutive of <i>genu</i> , knee  |
| epinephrine – G <i>epi</i> , upon + <i>nephros</i> , kidney                                       | Gestalt – German, configuration (past participle of <i>stellen</i> , arrange), ultimately from Greek <i>stellein</i> ) |
| epiphenomenon – G <i>epi</i> , upon + <i>phanein</i> , appear                                     | gland – L <i>glans</i> , acorn   |
| episodic – G <i>epi</i> , upon + <i>eis</i> , in + <i>odos</i> , way (something coming in)        | glia – G glue  |
| esophagus – G <i>oisein</i> , carry + <i>phagein</i> , eat  | globus pallidus – L pale sphere  |
| excitable – L <i>excitare</i> – arouse, call up ( <i>citare</i> – summon)                         | glossopharyngeal – G <i>glossa</i> , tongue + <i>pharynx</i> , throat  |
| executive – L <i>ex</i> , out + <i>sequor</i> , follow  | gyrus – G <i>gyros</i> , circle (rounded elevation)  |
| exocytosis – G <i>exos</i> , outside + <i>kytos</i> , vessel                                      | habituate – L <i>habitus</i> , customary dress or behavior ( <i>habere</i> , have)                                     |
| experience – L <i>ex</i> , out + <i>peria</i> , trial (cf peril)                                  | harmonic – G <i>harmonia</i> , music   |
| explicit – L <i>explicare</i> , unfold, explain ( <i>ex</i> , out of + <i>plicare</i> fold)       | hedonic – G <i>hedone</i> , delight  |
| extra-ocular – L <i>extra</i> , outside + <i>oculus</i> , eye                                     | hemianopsia – G <i>hemi</i> half + <i>a</i> without + <i>opsis</i> , vision  |
| fasciculation – L diminutive of <i>fascis</i> , bundle  | hernia – L rupture (from <i>hira</i> , intestine)  |
| femur – L thigh   | herpes zoster – G <i>herpes</i> rash + <i>zoster</i> , girdle  |
| fissure – L <i>fissura</i> , cleft  | hippocampus – G seahorse ( <i>hippos</i> , horse + <i>campos</i> , sea monster)  |
| frontal – L <i>frons</i> , forehead   | histology – G <i>histos</i> , web, tissue + <i>logos</i> , study   |
| fontanelle – L diminutive of <i>fontana</i> , fountain  | homunculus – L diminutive of <i>homo</i> , man   |
| foramen magnum – L opening from <i>foro</i> , pierce + <i>magnum</i> , great                      | hydrocephalus – G <i>hydor</i> , water + <i>kephale</i> , head   |
| fornix – L arch   |  |

hydrophilic/phobic – G *hydor*, water +  
*philos* fond or *phobos*, fear

hyperpolarization – G *hyper* above + *polus*,  
pole, end of an axis

hemorrhage – G *haima*, blood + *rhegnunai*,  
burst

hypersynchrony – G *hyper*, above+ *syn*,  
together + *chronos*, time

hypnagogic – G *hypnos*, sleep + *agogos*,  
leading to

hypnogram – G *hypnos*, sleep + *grapho*,  
write

hypoglossal – G *hypo*, under + *glossa*,  
tongue

hypothalamus – G *hypo*, under + *thalamus*,  
bed

hypothesis – G *hypo*, under + *thesis*, placing

iconic – G *eikon*, image, likeness

ictal – L *ictus*, blow, stroke

illusion – L *in* + *ludere*, play, trick

implicit – L *implicitus*, entangled (*in*, into +  
*plicare*, fold)

incus – L anvil

inertia – L *in*, without + *ars*, skill

insula – L island

intelligence L *inter*, between + *legere*, read ,  
choose

interictal – L *inter*, between + *ictus*, blow,  
stroke

insula – L island

invagination – L *in* + *vagina*, sheath

ion – G going

ipsilateral – L *ipse*, self + *latus*, side

iris – G rainbow

ischemia – G *ischo* keep back + *haima*,  
blood

larynx – G voice-box

lateral – L *latus* side

lens – L lentil bean

lesion – L *laedere*, injure

ligand – L *ligo*, bind

limbic – L *limbus*, edge, border

lipid – G *lipos*, fat

lobe – G *lobos*, lobe, hanging

locus ceruleus – L blue place (*caelum*, sky)

lumbar – L *lumbus*, loin

luminance – L *lumen*, light

macula – L stain

malleus – L hammer

mammillary – L *mammilla*, nipple

medulla – L marrow (from *media*, middle)

melatonin – G *melas*, black + *tonos*, tension

membrane – L *membrana*, skin, covering

memory – L *memoria*, memory meninges –  
G plural of *meninx*, membrane

metabolism – G *metabole*, change (*meta*,  
over+ *ballein*, throw)

microscopy – G *micros*, small + *skopein*,  
examine

migraine – G *hemi*, half + *kranion*, skull

mitochondrion – G *mitos*, thread + *chondros*  
granule (energy producing organelle)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| mnemonic – G <i>mneme</i> , memory   | orthodromic – G <i>orthos</i> , right + <i>dromos</i> , running   |
| modulate – L <i>modulus</i> , diminutive of <i>modus</i> , measure, part (to modulate is to regulate the proportions)          | ossicle – L <i>ossiculum</i> , diminutive of <i>os</i> , bone   |
| monitor – L <i>monere</i> , warn   | otic – G <i>otikos</i> from <i>ous</i> , ear  |
| motor – L <i>movere</i> , move   | otolith – G <i>ous</i> , ear + <i>lithos</i> , stone  |
| myasthenia gravis – G severe muscular weakness   | oxytocin – G <i>oxys</i> , sharp, swift + <i>tokos</i> , birth  |
| myelin – G <i>myelos</i> , marrow (white matter of cerebrum is inside the cortex)  | parietal – L <i>paries</i> , wall   |
| myoclonus – G <i>mys</i> , muscle + <i>klonos</i> , tumult   | paralysis – G <i>para</i> , beside + <i>lyein</i> , loosen/untie  |
| myosin – G <i>mys</i> , muscle   | paraphasia – G <i>para</i> , beside + <i>phasis</i> , speech  |
| neocortex – L <i>neo</i> , new + <i>cortex</i> , bark (of tree), shell   | parasympathetic – G <i>para</i> , beside + <i>syn</i> , together + <i>patheo</i> , feel   |
| neuron – G sinew, cord, nerve  | paresis – G <i>para</i> , beside + <i>hienai</i> , let go/throw (a partial paralysis)   |
| nucleus – L diminutive of <i>nux</i> , nut (means either the DNA containing part of a cell or a group of neurons in the brain) | paroxysmal – G <i>paroxynein</i> , sharpen ( <i>para</i> , beside + <i>oxys</i> , sharp)  |
| nystagmus – G <i>nystagmos</i> , nodding   | patella – L small plate   |
| occipital – L <i>ob</i> + <i>caput</i> , back of head  | pathology – G <i>pathos</i> , suffering + <i>logos</i> , word, knowledge, study   |
| oculomotor – L <i>oculus</i> eye + <i>motorius</i> , moving  | pharmacology – G <i>pharmakon</i> , drug  |
| olfactory – L <i>olfactus</i> , sniffed  | pharynx – G throat  |
| oligodendrocyte – G <i>oligos</i> , few + <i>dendron</i> , tree + <i>kytos</i> , cavity or cell                                | phoneme – G <i>phonein</i> , speak  |
| operculum – L cover ( <i>operio</i> , close + diminutive <i>culus</i> )  | phonological – G <i>phone</i> , sound, voice + <i>logos</i> , word, reason  |
| ophthalmoscope – G <i>ops</i> , eye+ <i>thalamus</i> , chamber + <i>skopein</i> , examine                                      | photon – G <i>phos</i> , light  |
| opponent – L <i>ob</i> , against + <i>ponere</i> , place   | photoreceptor – G <i>phos</i> , light + L <i>re</i> back + <i>capere</i> , take   |
| orbital – L <i>orbis</i> , circle (eye-socket)   | phrenology – G <i>phren</i> , mind+ <i>logos</i> , study (originally <i>phren</i> meant diaphragm muscle – the seat of the heart) |

physiology – G *physis*, nature (physics is the study of inanimate nature; physiology is the physics of animate nature)

pia mater – L tender mother

pineal – L *pinus*, pine(cone)

pinna – L feather

pituitary – L *pituita*, mucus (from idea that gland channeled mucus to nose)

plaque – Dutch *plakken*, patch

plasticity – G *plassein*, mold form

polysomnography – G *polys*, many + L *somnus*, sleep + G *graphein*, record

pons – L bridge

posture – L *positura*, position (*ponere*, place)

presbycusis – G *presbys*, old man + *akousis*, hearing

presbyopia – G *presbys*, old man + *ops*, eye

project – L *pro*, forward + *jacere*, throw

propagation – L *pro*, forward + *pangere*, fasten

prospective – L *pro* forward + *specere* look

prosopagnosia – G *prosopon*, face + *a* without + *gnosis*, knoweldge

psychology – G *psyche*, soul+ *logos*, study

pupil – L *pupilla*

putamen – L *puto*, prune (that which falls off in pruning)

quadriceps – L *quad* four + *caput*, head

quotient – L *quotiens*, how many?

raphe – G seam

receptor – L *re*, back + *capere*, take

reciprocal – L *recus*, back + *procus*, forward

reflex – L *reflexus*, bent back

register – L *registrum* record, list (*re*, back + *gerere*, carry)

reticular – L diminutive of *rete*, net

retina – L *rete*, net

retrograde – L *retro*, back+ *gradior*, step

reverberatory – L *re*, back + *verberare*, lash

ribosome – ribonucleic acid + G *soma* (body)

rostral – L *rostrum* beak

saccule – L diminutive of *saccus*, bag

sacrum – L *os sacrum*, sacred bone

sagittal – L *sagitta*, arrow

saltatory – L *salto* dance

sciatic – G *iskhia*, hip joint

scintillating – L *scintilla*, spark

schizophrenia – G *schizo*, split+ *phren*, mind

sclerosis – G hardness

scotoma – G *scotos*, darkness

semantic – G *sema*, sign, omen

senile – L *senex*, old man

sensory – L *sentire*, perceive

sensitize – L *sensus*, feeling/perception

septum pellucidum – L transparent (*per*, through + *lux*, light) partition

somatosensory – G *soma*, body + L *sentire*, feel

somnambulism – L *somnus*, sleep + *ambulare*, walk  
 sphenoid – G *sphen*, wedge  
 stapes – L *stirrup*  
 stereocilium – G *stereos*, solid + L *cilium* eyelid  
 striatum – L grooved  
 substantia nigra – L black substance  
 sulcus – G furrow  
 suprachiasmatic – L *supra*, above+ G *chiasm*, crossing  
 sympathetic – G *syn*, together + *patheo*, feel  
 synapse – G *syn*, together + *haptein*, clasp  
 synchrony – G *syn*, together + *chronos*, time  
 syntax – G *syn*, together + *tassein*, arrange  
 tectorial – L *tego*, *tectus*, cover(ed)  
 temporal – L *tempus*, temple  
 thalamus – G bed(room)  
 thenar – G palm (of hand)  
 thoracic – G *thorax*, chest  
 thrombosis – G *thrombos*, clot  
 tibia – L shin (also flute since flutes were made from animal shinbones)  
 tinnitus – L *tinnire*, ring  
 tone – G *tonos*, tension  
 trachea – G *trachys*, rough  
 transduction – L *trans*, across + *ducere*, lead  
 transmission – L *trans*, across + *mittere*, send  
 transverse – L *trans*, across + *vertere*, turn.

trichromatic – G *tri*, three + *chroma*, color  
 trigeminal – L *tri*, three + *geminus*, born  
 trochlear – G *trochileia*, pulley (the trochlear nerve innervates the superior oblique muscle, the tendon of which operates through a pulley)  
 tympanic – G *tympanon*, drum  
 ultradian – L *ultra*, more than + *dies*, day  
 uncus – G *onkos*, hook  
 utricle – L diminutive of *uter*, bag  
 uvula – L *uvola* diminutive of *uva*, grape  
 vagus – L wandering  
 vegetative – L *vegetatio*, grow  
 ventral – L *venter* belly  
 ventricle – L diminutive of *venter*, belly  
 vertebra – L *vertere*, turn (hence the jointed bones of the spine)  
 vesicle – L diminutive of *vesica*, bladder  
 vestibule – L antechamber  
 villus – L shaggy hair  
 vocal – L *vox*, voice  
 vowel – L *vox*, voice (through French *voyelle*)  
 zygoma – G *zygon*, yoke

A great source for etymological information is the **Online Etymology Dictionary** at <http://www.etymonline.com/>

A downloadable dictionary (1000+ pp) is: <https://archive.org/details/AComprehensiveEtymologicalDictionaryOfTheEnglishLanguageByErnestKlein>