

**Did you know many English words have Greek roots?**

Greek is ranked as the richest language in the world with 5 million words and 70 million word types. It is well-known that languages all across the globe - including English – have borrowed a myriad of words, phrases and expressions from Greek. Here is a short list of English words that are used daily by English speakers that are fully taken from the Greek language.

By [**Paulina Karavasili**](Paulina%20Karavasili) (Source: <https://bit.ly/3uJYLJC> )

**The fact that numerous languages from all across the globe, especially in the Western world, have borrowed words, phrases and expressions from the Greek language, is not news.**

It is also well-known that the English language  –  which is the most spoken language on our planet in terms of its total number of native and foreign speakers  –  has borrowed a myriad of words from Greek.

Although many linguists and glossologists (another Greek word!) from all over the world, have studied for years the influence of ancient and modern Greek on Latin-based languages and especially on English, there are several different estimations about the exact number of English words that derive from Greek.

In his most recent publication ‘Greek Words in the English Language’, Greek linguist and author of numerous dictionaries Aristides Konstantinidis presented a thorough study that used a variety of international sources, including prestigious English dictionaries, such as the Cambridge Dictionary and the Webster International Dictionary.

The study confirmed that out of the total 171,146 English words that are currently in use, 41,214 are Greek.

“English is the lingua franca of our time, which means it is the commonly used language of communication around the world, and that is because of its simplicity, the dominance of the USA today and England in the past,” Mr Konstantinidis writes.

“Greek, on the other hand, is characterised by some as a marginal language, due to the fact that it is spoken and written by the few millions of Greeks and Greek Cypriots.

“However, the effect it has had on the European vocabulary, and especially on English, is immense, but unfortunately, it is not systematically recorded and documented.”

The Oxford Dictionary also explains that even though the influence of classical Greek on English has been largely indirect, through Latin and French, it is largely lexical and conceptual, and out of the 470,000 English words that have been created and used over the years, more than 150,000 have Greek roots.

Even more impressive is the fact that the terminology used in many sciences includes a plethora of Greek words to describe diseases, illnesses and methods.

In particular, in medicine, out of the 43,716 words that exist, almost half the words (20,346 to be exact) are Greek.

Doctor Marianne McDonald, American scholar and [philanthropist](https://greekcitytimes.com/2022/01/20/greek-american-priest-2/), known for her work in the interpretation, sharing, compilation, and preservation of Greek texts, plays and writings, also explained that “in the Greek language we can find implanted all the advanced knowledge that men of the time had acquired.”

“Every Greek word carries a heavy burden of intellect, a burden that the people who came before us spent time on, in order to cognitively conquer the specific meaning and to baptize it with the specific name-word.”

Many people are of course aware that words such as democracy, politics, biology, chronology, thesaurus, geometry, xenophobia, strategy, philanthropy and thousands more are Greek.

But here is a shortlist of English words that are regularly used by English speakers and are fully taken from Greek:

* CAN = from the verb “káno” (κάνω)
* CALL = from the verb “kaló” (καλώ)
* DIFFERENCE = from the word “diforá” (διφορά or διαφορά)
* AFTER = from the word “aftár”, mostly used by the poet Homer and meaning ‘later’ (αὐτάρ)
* BOSS = from the word “póssis”, which means the ‘leader of a house’ (πόσσις)
* BRAVO = Latin term from the word “vravío”, which means ‘award’ (βραβείο)
* CARE = from the verb “karézo” (καρέζω)
* COLONY = from the word “kolónia” (κολώνεια)
* DAY = from the Cretan word “día” (δία)
* DISASTER = from the words “disíonos + astír”, which mean ‘bad star’ (δυσοίωνος + αστήρ)
* DOLLAR = from the word “tállaron”, a type of basket that was used as a measurement unit (τάλλαρον)
* EXCELLENT = from the words “ex + Ellínon”, which means ‘by the Greeks’ (εξ + Ελλήνων)
* FATHER = from the word “páter” (πάτερ)
* FLOWER = from the word “flóos” (φλόος)
* HUMOR = from the word “himór” (χυμόρ)
* KISS = from the verb “kíson” (κύσον)
* MOTHER = from the word “mátir” (μάτηρ)
* RESTAURANT = from the words “rá + ístame”, which mean ‘eat and feeling full’ (ρά + ἵσταμαι)
* SPACE = from the verb “spízo”, which means getting ‘extended constantly’ (σπίζω)
* SPONSOR = from the verbo “spéndo”, which means *to ‘*offer’ (σπένδω)
* TURBO = from the word“tírvi”, which means ‘circular turbulent motion’ (τύρβη)
* YES and NO = from the words “yé”, which means ‘of course’ (γέ) and “né” which means ‘neither’ (νέ)

The Greek language is ranked as the richest in the world with 5 million words and 70 million word types.

According to Dr. MacDonald, only 600,000 Greek words are used today, making the Greek vocabulary the largest in the world and 3.5 times bigger than the English vocabulary.

For more Greek language facts and English words of Greek origin visit [PointGreece.com](https://www.pointgreece.com/greek-language/#:~:text=The%20Greek%20language%20is%20ranked,in%20the%20medicine%20and%20sciences.)

To learn more about Aristides Konstantinidis’ studies on Greek language visit [AKonstantinidis.gr](http://www.akonstantinidis.gr/index.html)

