Root Clue Detectives

See when a known word helps you understand a new word.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.4c "Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

ROOT CLUE

A longer word has a known root word and a related meaning. The known word helps you figure out the new word.

Known word: joy. New word: joyful. Joyful means full of joy.

NO ROOT CLUE

Sometimes a word starts with a known word, but the meanings are not related. The known word does not help you figure out the new word.

Known word: pan. New word: panda. A panda is not related to a pan.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle ROOT CLUE or NO CLUE for each pair, then choose two pairs and explain how the known word did or did not help you.

1.	Known word: help. New word: helpful.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
2.	Known word: farm. New word: farmer.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
3.	Known word: car. New word: carpet.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
4.	Known word: kind. New word: kindness.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
5.	Known word: can. New word: candle.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
6.	Known word: pie. New word: piece.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
7.	Known word: read. New word: reader.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE
8.	Known word: fear. New word: fearless.	ROOT CLUE	NO CLUE

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new ROOT CLUE pair and one new NO CLUE pair.

ROOT CLUE _____

NO CLUE _____

CHALLENGE

Choose your ROOT CLUE pair, write a sentence using the new word, and tell what the root word helped you understand.

ANSWER KEY

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PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Known word: help. New word: helpful.	**ROOT CLUE**	Helpful means able or ready to help, so help is a clue.
2	Known word: farm. New word: farmer.	**ROOT CLUE**	A farmer is a person who farms, so farm is a clue.
3	Known word: car. New word: carpet.	**NO CLUE**	A carpet is not related in meaning to a car.
4	Known word: kind. New word: kindness.	**ROOT CLUE**	Kindness means the quality of being kind, so kind is a clue.
5	Known word: can. New word: candle.	**NO CLUE**	A candle is not related in meaning to a can.
6	Known word: pie. New word: piece.	**NO CLUE**	A piece is not related in meaning to a pie.
7	Known word: read. New word: reader.	**ROOT CLUE**	A reader is a person who reads, so read is a clue.
8	Known word: fear. New word: fearless.	**ROOT CLUE**	Fearless means without fear, so fear is a clue.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **ROOT CLUE**: Known word: rain. New word: rainy.
- **NO CLUE**: Known word: tea. New word: team.

Challenge: The rainy day filled the puddles. The word rain helped me understand that rainy means having rain.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Items 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 are ROOT CLUE. Items 3, 5, and 6 are NO CLUE. Accept proof explanations that name the known word and explain whether the meanings are related.