

MILITARY VEHICLES

Lesson Plan

Back to the Root

Lesson Plan for *Military Vehicles*

Grade 4

Objective

To help students explore how a word's etymology affects its meaning.

Things Needed

- *Military Vehicles* book
- Merriam-Webster online dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

Before the Activity

Read the *Military Vehicles* book as a class.

Activity

Choose a volunteer to read the sidebar “By Land and Sea” on page 21 of *Military Vehicles*. This sidebar begins with the following sentence: “Amphibious vehicles can fight on land and in water.” Turn to the glossary on page 31 and choose another volunteer to read the definition for *amphibious*: “able to travel in water and on land.”

Then, look up the word *amphibious* in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, scrolling down to the Kids Definition section. Read the three parts of this Kids Definition out loud to the class:

- “able to live both on land and in water”
- “meant to be used on both land and water”
- “made by land, sea, and air forces acting together”

Next, scroll up to the History and Etymology section. Explain that etymology is the study of a word's origins, as well as how that word's meaning has changed over time. Often, a word's etymology includes the language it originally comes from. For example, the word *amphibious* comes from the Greek language. Read the History and Etymology section out loud to the class:

- “Greek *amphibios*, literally, having a double life, from *amphi-* + *bios*”



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Explain that the prefix *amphi-* means “double,” and the word *bios* means “life.” Each of these pieces helps create part of the meaning of the word *amphibious*. Other words that include these parts often have similar meanings. Use the following prompts to explore this concept, looking up the Kids Definition for each new word in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary:

- What does the word *amphibian* mean? What parts or meaning does it share with *amphibious*? (Answers: Amphibians are animals, such as frogs and toads, that live partly on land and partly in water. *Amphibian* also comes from the Greek words *amphi-* and *bios*. Like *amphibious*, it describes something that can belong in two places.)
- What does the word *amphitheater* mean? What parts or meaning does it share with *amphibious*? (Answer: An amphitheater is “an arena with seats rising in curved rows around an open space.” This word also starts with the Greek prefix *amphi-*. Like an amphibian can live in several places, and amphitheater has seats on several sides.)
- What does the word *biology* mean? What parts or meaning does it share with *amphibious*? (Answers: Biology is “a science that deals with living things and their relationships, distribution, and behavior.” This word also comes from the Greek word *bios*. It also relates to life and living things.)

Evaluation

Could students answer the questions about each word’s etymology and meaning? If they struggle to compare or contrast the new words, point them to the Greek affixes and roots.

Standards

This lesson plan may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ language standards, grade 4 (L 4.4).

