

Language Root: *wer*

Language Builder

- Teacher's Insights -

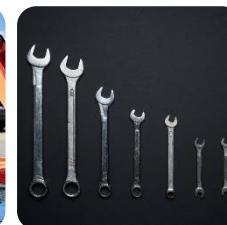
🕒 ≈45 minutes

👤 B2 – C1+

🎧 vocabulary, etymology, speaking

Introduction:

Can you find any relationship between the following six images?



The relationship is both that the words start with 'wr' and their relationship with twisting, as described below. The main focus of this class is to learn the vocabulary, to identify the 'twist' link between the words, and to put them to use in speaking. The answers to the exercises are given below.

Vocabulary Focus:

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions.

Coming from the ancient language Proto-Indo-European and later via Proto-Germanic, the word root *wer-* has made it to modern English. We find it in words that start with 'wr'. Once upon a time, the initial 'w' was pronounced; now, however, it is silent. But, how can this help us to learn English? Well, *wer-* originally meant to **turn**, **twist**, or **distort**. This is reflected in the words derived from it. Here, we see it in (same order as above)

1. **wring** (wring, wrang, wrung), meaning to twist and squeeze so as to extract liquid;
2. **wreath**, meaning something intertwined (or twisted) into a circular shape;
3. **wrestle**, meaning both the sport (where you struggle to control the other by force and twisting) and the verb, which is to struggle to control with the hands or struggle to handle a situation;
4. **wrap**, meaning to cover by folding (in a sense, turning or twisting) a material—and the food made by wrapping a filling with a tortilla, etc.;
5. **wreck**, meaning to damage or destroy by force, especially when twisted; and
6. **wrench**, meaning to move with a violent twist, and also the hand tool shown in the picture (known in British English as a 'spanner').

Vocabulary Extension:

Can you guess the following words starting with 'wr'?

1. twisted or distorted truth (incorrect) **wrong**
2. twist the wrist holding a pen or similar to mark letters and words etc. on a surface **write**
3. (of the face) twisted into an expression of disgust **wry**
4. mark or cause lines or folds in something; slight lines or folds in something **wrinkle**
5. the part of the body that joins the hand to the forearm and can twist easily **wrist**
6. mostly used with 'havoc': cause a large amount of damage or harm **wreak (havoc)**
7. extreme, "twisted" anger or rage **wrath**
8. twist and turn the body with quick movements, especially in discomfort or to escape **wriggle**

Speaking:

Fill the gaps with the 'wr' words. Then, answer the questions.

1. Have you ever sprained or twisted your **wrist**, and if so, how did you do it?
2. Do you move around or **wriggle** much when you sleep?
3. When is it traditional to hang a **wreath** on your door?
4. Do you find that you spend a lot of time **wrestling** with difficult decisions, and what helps you to decide?
5. Do you **wring** your clothes out before hanging them to dry?
6. What do you prefer: a **wrap** or a sandwich?
7. Do you have to use a spanner (or **wrench**) at work?
8. Do you find it easy to admit when you have made a mistake or you are **wrong**?

Extension: Find and list five additional 'wr' words in a 3-minute race against your classmates.