What’s Greek got to do with English?

Some words are from ancient Greek and their spelling helps you spot them. Words beginning with ‘ph-’ like ‘phobia’, ‘ps-’ like ‘psychic’, and ‘ch-’ with a ‘k’ sound like ‘chord’, are all from ancient Greek.

GETTING STARTED

‘Phobia’ comes the Greek word phobos meaning ‘fear’ and describes ‘an extreme or abnormal fear of something’. Use your dictionary to find out what the following phobias are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phobia</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arachnophobia</td>
<td>The fear of spiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agoraphobia</td>
<td>The fear of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrophobia</td>
<td>The fear of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claustrophobia</td>
<td>The fear of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobia</td>
<td>The fear of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MOVING ON

All these words have Greek origins. Match the word with its definition.

- cosmos: the universe
- astrology: the study of how the stars and planets may influence people’s lives
- asterisk: a star-shaped sign
- dogma: a belief or principle that a Church or other authority declares is true and must be accepted
- kleptomania: an uncontrollable urge to steal things
- larynx: the part of your throat that contains the vocal cords
- pathos: a quality of making people feel pity or sympathy
- sceptic: a person inclined to question things
- skeleton: the framework of bones of the body
- thespian: to do with the theatre or acting
- tonic: a medicine that makes a person healthier or stronger
- zeal: enthusiasm or keenness

How many did you get right?

5 = Novice 10 = Expert 15 = Maestro

You can use your Oxford School Dictionary and your Oxford Student’s Dictionary for these activities.