

Quick vocabulary power: a self-teaching guide**Jack S. Romine and Henry Ehrlich***New York: Wiley, 1996. xiii + 242 pp.*

This is the latest in the series of self-teaching guides produced by Wiley (previous books on language in this series have included items on grammar and listening) – a revised edition of a book first published in 1975. Its basic idea is intriguing: because so much English vocabulary is derived from Greek and Latin roots, the more we can learn about those roots the better we shall be able to use English words with authority and confidence. If we know what *micro-* means, for example, we have an immediate clue about the meaning of a wide range of words (*microchip*, *microwave*, etc.), and the same applies to many other forms, such as *pre-*, *-logy*, and *psych-*. Each section consists of an exposition of a particular form, with several examples of the way it turns up in English. The section on *duct/duc* ‘lead’, for instance, includes such forms as *aqueduct*, *conduct*, *ductile*, *seduce*, and *induction*; the use of each item is illustrated, and there is then a brief self-test to check on how much has been grasped. Although aimed at adults, the core idea has an obvious application in working with older children who are trying to get to grips with basic scientific and technical vocabulary.