



CSE REVIEWER · STUDY GUIDE

# Verbal Ability

Vocabulary · Grammar & Correct Usage · Reading Comprehension

## VOLUME I

A complete, self-contained study guide to the verbal block of the Philippine Civil Service Exam — Professional level. Built to be the only material you need for this section.

### WHAT THIS GUIDE TEACHES

## **Reason through it. Don't memorize it.**

The verbal exam rewards habits of reasoning — reading evidence, eliminating distractors, and separating what a text says from what it implies. This guide teaches the habits, then drills them.



## **Table of Contents**

|                                                        |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| How to Use This Guide .....                            | 2         |
| <b>Part 1: Vocabulary .....</b>                        | <b>5</b>  |
| 1.1 Word Parts: Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes .....    | 5         |
| 1.2 Context Clues and Sentence Completion .....        | 12        |
| 1.3 Synonyms and Antonyms .....                        | 18        |
| 1.4 Word Analogies .....                               | 24        |
| <b>Part 2: Grammar &amp; Correct Usage .....</b>       | <b>31</b> |
| 2.1 Subject-Verb Agreement .....                       | 31        |
| 2.2 Pronouns, Modifiers, and Parallelism .....         | 36        |
| 2.3 Verb Tense and Idiomatic Usage .....               | 42        |
| <b>Part 3: Reading Comprehension .....</b>             | <b>48</b> |
| 3.1 Main Idea and Author's Purpose .....               | 48        |
| 3.2 Inference and Drawing Conclusions .....            | 54        |
| 3.3 Supporting Details and Vocabulary in Context ..... | 60        |
| Answer Key .....                                       | 66        |
| Final Review .....                                     | 70        |



## TOPIC 1.1

# Word Parts: Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes

No vocabulary list, however long, can cover every word the Civil Service Exam might use. Each administration of the exam includes a handful of words that simply will not appear on any reviewer you have studied. This is by design. The exam is not measuring how many words you have memorized; it is measuring whether you can work out the meaning of a word you have never formally learned.

The single most powerful tool for this is word structure. The English academic vocabulary used on the CSE is built, to a remarkable degree, from a small set of recurring building blocks borrowed from Latin and Greek. Learn the blocks and you gain partial access to thousands of words at once — including words you will meet for the first time on exam day.

## Lesson

### The three building blocks

Most multi-syllable English words can be split into up to three parts. The root carries the core meaning. A prefix, attached to the front, modifies that meaning — often by negating it, reversing it, or pointing it in a direction. A suffix, attached to the end, usually fixes the word's grammatical role: whether it names a thing, describes a thing, or expresses an action.

Take the word 'benevolent'. Split it: bene (a prefix meaning good or well) + vol (a root meaning to wish or to will) + ent (a suffix that forms an adjective). Assembled, the parts say 'characterized by wishing well' — which is exactly what benevolent means: kind, generous, wanting good for others. You did not need to have memorized the word. You needed to recognize its parts.

### High-frequency prefixes

Prefixes are the most reliable of the three parts because a small number of them appear constantly. The table below lists the prefixes most worth knowing for the CSE. Notice how many simply mean 'not' or 'against' — negation is the most common job a prefix does, and spotting it instantly flips a word's meaning.

| Prefix                   | Meaning           | Example         | What the example means |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| un-, in-, im-, il-, ir-  | not               | irrefutable     | cannot be disproved    |
| dis-, mis-               | not, wrongly      | misconstrue     | to interpret wrongly   |
| anti-, contra-, counter- | against, opposite | counterargument | an opposing argument   |



| Prefix          | Meaning        | Example     | What the example means             |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| pre-, ante-     | before         | antecedent  | something that comes before        |
| post-           | after          | posthumous  | occurring after death              |
| sub-            | under, below   | subordinate | lower in rank                      |
| super-, supra-  | above, beyond  | superfluous | beyond what is needed              |
| bene-           | good, well     | benefactor  | one who does good for others       |
| mal-            | bad, badly     | malfunction | to work badly or fail              |
| circum-         | around         | circumvent  | to go around (a rule or problem)   |
| co-, con-, com- | with, together | consensus   | general agreement reached together |

### Roots: the core of the meaning

Roots are harder than prefixes because there are more of them, but a focused set repays study. When you recognize a root, you recover the heart of the word even if the prefix and suffix are unfamiliar. The roots below recur across the formal English of government, law, and public administration — exactly the register the CSE draws on.

| Root          | Meaning          | Example     | What the example means                    |
|---------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| dict          | to say, to speak | indict      | to formally accuse (lit. 'speak against') |
| spec, spect   | to look, to see  | circumspect | cautious; looking around before acting    |
| ten, tain     | to hold          | tenable     | able to be held or defended               |
| ced, cess     | to go, to yield  | concede     | to yield or give in                       |
| voc, vok      | to call, voice   | equivocal   | having two voices; ambiguous              |
| cred          | to believe       | credible    | able to be believed                       |
| scrib, script | to write         | prescribe   | to set down in writing as a rule          |



END OF FREE PREVIEW

# You've seen a sample. Get the full guide.

This is a short, free preview of “Verbal Ability” — the complete guide is a full, self-contained study book with in-depth lessons, worked examples, strategy, and practice sets with a complete answer key.

## HOW TO GET IT

### **Unlock it at [cseexamreview.com](https://cseexamreview.com)**

Buy this single guide, or get a bundle and unlock more — every guide you buy is yours to keep, permanently.  
Visit the library at [cseexamreview.com](https://cseexamreview.com) to get started.