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HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language


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**in·ert**  (in-ûrt )

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- adj.*
- a.** Incapable of moving or acting: "[Some patients] lingered, unable to breathe on their own, inert and unresponsive even to the most noxious stimulus" (Gary Greenberg).

**b.** Sluggish in action or motion; lethargic. See Synonyms at [inactive](#).
  - 2.** *Chemistry* Not readily reactive with other elements; forming few or no chemical compounds.
  - 3.** Having no pharmacologic, metabolic, or other physiological effect.

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[Latin *iners*, *inert-* : *in-*, not; see [in-](#)<sup>1</sup> + *ars*, skill; see *ar-* [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**in·ert** *ly adv.*  
**in·ert** *ness n.*

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## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

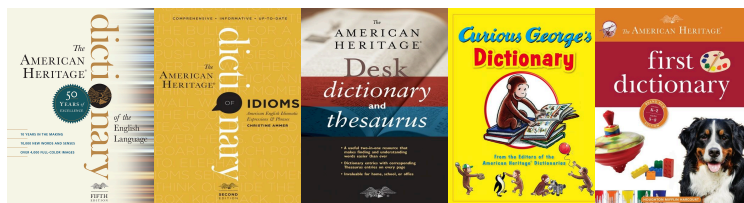
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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