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AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language


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[guide to the dictionary](#)



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**in·er·tia**  (ĩ-nûr shə)

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*n.*

1. *Physics* The tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest or of a body in straight line motion to stay in motion in a straight line unless acted on by an outside force; the resistance of a body to changes in momentum.
2. Resistance or disinclination to motion, action, or change: *an entrenched bureaucracy's inertia.*

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[Latin, idleness, from *iners*, *inert-*, inert; see [INERT](#).]

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**in·er tial** *adj.*

**in·er tial·ly** *adv.*

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## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

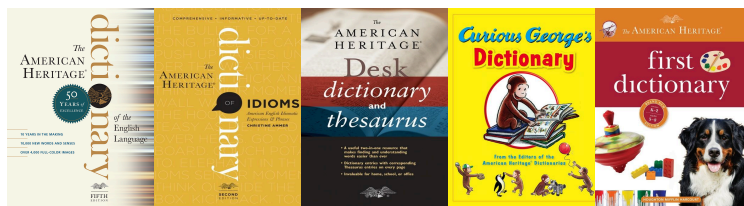
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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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