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rea·son  (rē zən)

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n.

1.

a. The basis or motive for an action, decision, or conviction: *There are good reasons to learn a foreign language.* See Usage Notes at [because](#), [why](#).

b. A declaration made to explain or justify action, decision, or conviction: *What reasons did she give for leaving?*

c. A fact or cause that explains why something exists or has occurred: *The reason for the building's collapse is unknown.*

d. Logic A premise, usually the minor premise, of an argument.

2.

a. The capacity for logical, rational, and analytic thought; intelligence: *"Most of us would like to believe that when we say something is right or wrong, we are using our powers of reason alone" (Carl Zimmer).*

b. The limit of what is reasonable: *"It is a curious thing that, when a man hates or loves beyond reason, he is ready to go beyond reason to gratify his feelings" (Rudyard Kipling).*

c. A normal mental state; sanity: *He has lost his reason.*

v. rea·soned, rea·son·ing, rea·sons

v.tr.

1. To determine or conclude by logical thinking: *The doctor reasoned that the patient had a virus.*

2. To persuade or dissuade (someone) with reasons: *"You boast ... of having reasoned him out of his absurd romance" (William Makepeace Thackeray).*

v.intr.

1. To use the faculty of reason; think logically: *What would lead you to reason so?*

2. To talk or argue logically and persuasively: *tried to reason with her son to eat a good breakfast.*

3. Obsolete To engage in conversation or discussion.

Idioms:

by reason of

Because of.

in reason

With good sense or justification; reasonably.

within reason

Within the bounds of good sense or practicality.

with reason

With good cause; justifiably.

[Middle English *resoun*, from Old French *raison*, from Latin *ratio*, *ratio*-, from *ratus*, past participle of *rērī*, to consider, think; see [ar- in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

rea son·er *n.*

Synonyms: reason, intuition, understanding, judgment

These nouns refer to the intellectual faculty by which humans seek or attain knowledge or truth. *Reason* is the power to think rationally and logically and to draw inferences: *"Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its [the Christian religion's] veracity" (David Hume).*

Intuition is perception or comprehension, as of truths or facts, without the use of the rational process: *I trust my intuitions when it comes to assessing someone's character.* *Understanding* is the faculty by which one understands,

often together with the resulting comprehension: "*The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding*" (Louis D. Brandeis).
Judgment is the ability to assess situations or circumstances and draw sound conclusions: "*At twenty years of age, the will reigns; at thirty, the wit; and at forty, the judgment*" (Benjamin Franklin). See Also Synonyms at [cause](#), [think](#).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

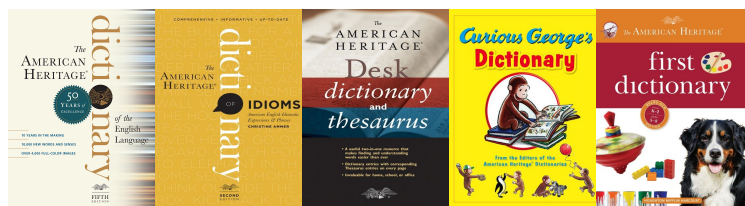
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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