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dictionary

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English
Language



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read  (rēd)

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v. **read** (rēd), **read·ing**, **reads**

v.tr.

1. To examine and grasp the meaning of (written or printed characters, words, or sentences).
2. To utter or render aloud (written or printed material): *read poems to the students.*
3. To have the ability to examine and grasp the meaning of (written or printed material in a given language or notation): *reads Chinese; reads music.*
4.
 - a. To examine and grasp the meaning of (language in a form other than written or printed characters, words, or sentences): *reading Braille; reading sign language.*
 - b. To examine and grasp the meaning of (a graphic representation): *reading a map.*
5.
 - a. To discern and interpret the nature or significance of through close examination or sensitive observation: *The tracker read the trail for signs of game.*
 - b. To discern or anticipate through examination or observation; descry: *"I can read abandonment in a broken door or shattered window" (William H. Gass).*
6. To determine the intent or mood of: *can read your mind like a book; a hard person to read.*
7.
 - a. To attribute a certain interpretation or meaning to: *read her words differently than I did.*
 - b. To consider (something written or printed) as having a particular meaning or significance: *read the novel as a parable.*
8. To foretell or predict (the future).
9. To receive or comprehend (a radio message, for example): *I read you loud and clear.*
10. To study or make a study of: *read history as an undergraduate.*
11. To learn or get knowledge of from something written or printed: *read that interest rates would continue to rise.*
12. To proofread.
13. To have or use as a preferred reading in a particular passage: *For change read charge.*
14. To indicate, register, or show: *The dial reads 32°.*
15. *Computers* To obtain (data) from a storage medium, such as an optical disc.
16. *Genetics* To decode or translate (a sequence of messenger RNA) into an amino acid sequence in a polypeptide chain.

v.intr.

1. To examine and grasp the meaning of printed or written characters, as of words or music.
2. To speak aloud the words that one is reading: *read to the children every night.*
3. To learn by reading: *read about the storm in the paper today.*
4. To study.
5. To have a particular wording: *Recite the poem exactly as it reads.*
6. To contain a specific meaning: *As the law reads, the defendant is guilty.*
7. To indicate, register, or show a measurement or figure: *How does your new watch read?*
8. To have a specified character or quality for the reader: *Your poems read well.*

n.

Informal

1. Something that is read: *"The book is a page-turner as well as a very satisfying read" (Frank Conroy).*
2. An interpretation or assessment: *gave us her read of the political situation.*

adj. (rĕd)

Informed by reading; learned: *only sparsely read in fields outside my profession.*

Phrasal Verbs:

read out

To read aloud: *Please read out the names on the list.*

read up

To study or learn by reading: *Read up on the places you plan to visit before you travel.*

Idioms:

read a lecture/lesson

To issue a reprimand: *My parents read me a lecture because I had neglected my chores.*

read between the lines

To perceive or detect an obscure or unexpressed meaning: *learned to read between the lines of corporate annual reports to discern areas of fiscal weakness.*

read out of

To expel by proclamation from a social, political, or other group: *was read out of the secretariat after the embarrassing incident.*

[Middle English *reden*, from Old English *rĕdan*, to advise; see *ar-* [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Word History: English is the one of the few western European languages that does not derive its verb for "to read" from Latin *legere*. Compare, for example, *leggere* in Italian, *lire* in French, and *lesen* in German. (Equally surprising is the fact that English is the only western European language not to derive its verb for "to write" from Latin *scribere*.) *Read* comes from the Old English verb *rĕdan*, "to advise, interpret (something difficult), interpret (something written), read." *Rĕdan* is related to the German verb *raten*, "to advise" (as in *Rathaus*, "town hall"). The Old English noun *rĕd*, "counsel," survives in the rare noun *rede*, "counsel, advice" and in the name of the unfortunate King Ethelred the Unready, whose epithet is often misunderstood. *Unready* here does not have its current sense "unprepared"; it is a late 16th-century spelling of an earlier *unredy*, "ill-advised, rash, foolish," from *rede*.

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Read 🗣️ (rĕd), **George** 1733-1798.

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American Revolutionary leader, politician, and jurist. Delaware's delegate to the Constitutional Convention (1787), he championed the rights of small states and later served as a US senator (1789-1793).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

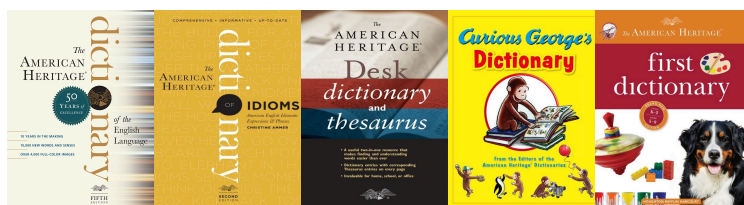
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European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

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