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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



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au·thor  (ô thər)

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n.

1.

a. The writer of a book, article, or other text.

b. One who practices writing as a profession.

2. One who writes or constructs an electronic document or system, such as a website.

3. An originator or creator, as of a theory or plan.

4. **Author** God.

tr.v. **au·thored**, **au·thor·ing**, **au·thors**

1. To write or be the author of (a published text).

2. To write or construct (an electronic document or system): *authored the company's website.*

[Alteration (with *th* influenced by *authentic*, since an authentic document or source is one emanating from its author or reflecting an author's views) of Middle English *auctour*, *autor*, from Anglo-Norman, from Latin *auctor*, creator, from *auctus*, past participle of *augēre*, to create; see **aug-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

au·thor i·al (ô-thôr ē-əl, ô-thör -) *adj.*

Usage Note: The verb *author* was once criticized as an unnecessary or pretentious synonym of *write*. Nowadays, many people aren't aware of this usage proscription at all, and the Usage Panel's sympathy for the traditional view has eroded over the decades. In 1964, 81 percent of the Panel found using *author* as a verb unacceptable in writing. In our 1988 survey, 74 percent of the Panel rejected it in the sentence *He has authored a dozen books on the subject*. In 2001, 60 percent of the Panel rejected it, and in 2017, only 34 percent did. · Journalists frequently use the verb *author* to apply to the creation or sponsoring of legislative acts, as in *The senator authored a bill limiting uses of desert lands in California*. In these cases the lawmaker may not have actually written the bill bearing that lawmaker's name but rather promoted its idea and passage. The Panelists continue to be even more tolerant of this legislative usage: 64 percent rejected this sentence in 1988, 51 percent in 2001, and only 27 percent in 2017.

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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:

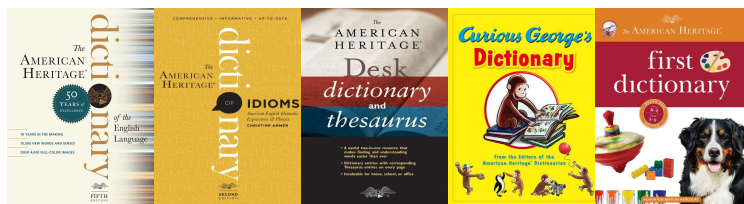
[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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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