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dictionary

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at·a·vism  (ăt ə-vīz'əm)

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n.

1. The reappearance of a characteristic in an organism after several generations of absence.
2. An individual or a part that exhibits atavism. Also called *throwback*.
3. The return of a trait or recurrence of previous behavior after a period of absence.

[French *atavisme*, from Latin *atavus*, ancestor : *atta*, father + *avus*, grandfather; see **awo-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

at a·vist *n.*

at'a·vis tic *adj.*

at'a·vis ti·cal·ly *adv.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

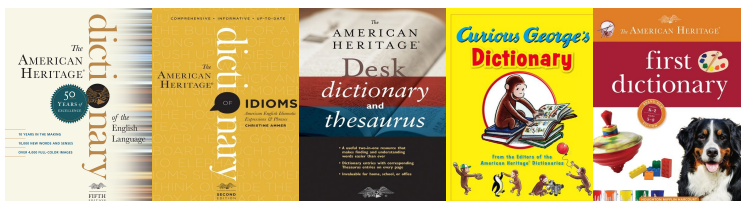
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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