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dictionary

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ba·cil·lus  (bə-sĭl əs)

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n. pl. ba·cil·li (-sĭl ɪ')

1. Any of various bacteria, especially a rod-shaped bacterium.
2. Any of various rod-shaped, spore-forming, aerobic bacteria of the genus *Bacillus* that often occur in chains and include *B. anthracis*, the causative agent of anthrax.

[Late Latin, diminutive of Latin *baculum*, rod; see **bak-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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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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