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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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bac·te·ri·um (bak-tîr e-əm)

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n.pl. **bac·te·ri·a** (-tîr e-ə)

1. Any of various prokaryotic microorganisms of the domain Bacteria that may be free-living, saprophytic, commensal, or pathogenic and that vary widely in terms of morphology, oxygen tolerance, nutritional and temperature requirements, and motility. Also called *eubacterium*.
2. Any of the prokaryotic organisms, such as an archaeon. Not in scientific use.

[New Latin *bacterium*, from Greek *bakterion*, diminutive of *baktron*, rod; see **bak-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



(click for a larger image)

bacterium

top: rod-shaped bacterium

Pseudomonas aeruginosa

center: spherical-shaped bacterium

Staphylococcus aureus

bottom: spiral-shaped bacterium

Treponema pallidum



(click for a larger image)

bacterium

(click for a larger image)

bacterium



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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

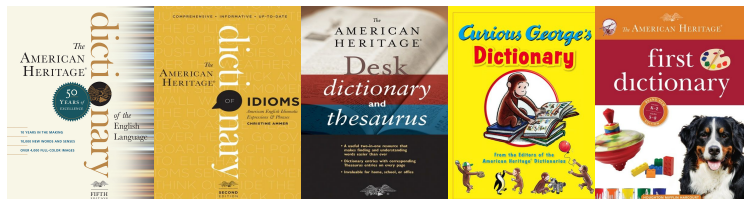
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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