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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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phase  (fāz)

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n.

1. A distinct stage of development: “*The American occupation of Japan fell into three successive phases*” (Edwin O. Reischauer).

2. A temporary manner, attitude, or pattern of behavior: *just a passing phase*.

3. An aspect; a part: *We must reconsider every phase of the operation*.

4. *Astronomy*

a. One of the cyclically recurring apparent shapes of the visibly illuminated portion of the moon or a planet.

b. The relative configuration, measured in angular units such as degrees or radians, of two orbiting bodies that periodically eclipse.

5. *Physics*

a. A particular stage in a periodic process or phenomenon.

b. The fraction of a complete cycle elapsed as measured from a specified reference point and often expressed as an angle.

6. *Chemistry*

a. Any of the forms or states, solid, liquid, gas, or plasma, in which matter can exist, depending on temperature and pressure.

b. A discrete homogeneous part of a material system that is mechanically separable from the rest, as is ice from water.

7. *Biology* A characteristic form, appearance, or stage of development that occurs in a cycle or that distinguishes some individuals of a group: *the white color phase of a weasel; the swarming phase of locusts*.

v. **phased, phas·ing, phas·es**

v. tr.

1. To plan or carry out systematically by phases.

2. To set or regulate so as to be synchronized.

v. intr.

To become incorporeal so as to be able to move through a solid object: “*He got out of the car without opening the door—just phased through it—and walked up the steps of the church*” (Dean Koontz).

Phrasal Verbs:

phase in

To introduce, one stage at a time.

phase out

To bring or come to an end, one stage at a time.

Idioms:

in phase

In a correlated or synchronized way.

out of phase

In an unsynchronized or uncorrelated way.

[Back-formation from New Latin *phasēs*, phases of the moon, from Greek *phaseis*, pl. of *phasis*, appearance, from *phainein*, to show; see **bhā-**¹ in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

pha sic (fā zīk) *adj.*

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

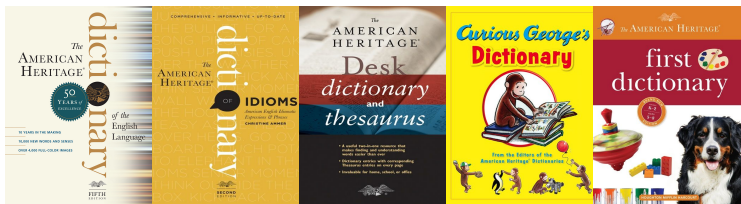
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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