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dictionary

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em·pha·sis  (ěm fə-sĭs)

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n. pl. em·pha·ses (-sēz')

1. Special forcefulness of expression that gives importance to something singled out; stress: *a lecture on housekeeping with emphasis on neatness; paused for emphasis, then announced the winner's name.*
2. Special attention or effort directed toward something: *a small-town newspaper's emphasis on local affairs.*
3. Prominence given to a syllable, word, or words, as by raising the voice or printing in italic type.

[Latin, from Greek, from *emphainein*, to exhibit, display : *en-*, in; see [EN-](#)² + *phainein*, to show; see **bhā**-¹ [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Synonyms: emphasis, accent, stress

These nouns mean special weight placed on something considered important: *an education with an emphasis on science; will study music with an accent on jazz; laid heavy stress on law and order.*

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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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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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