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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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pref·ace  (prĕf ĭs)

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n.

1.

a. A preliminary statement or essay introducing a book that explains its scope, intention, or background and is usually written by the author.

b. An introductory section, as of a speech.

2. Something introductory; a preliminary: *An informal brunch served as a preface to the three-day conference.*

3. often **Preface** The words introducing the central part of the Eucharist in several Christian churches.

tr.v. **pref·aced**, **pref·ac·ing**, **pref·ac·es**

1. To introduce by or provide with a preliminary statement or essay.

2. To serve as an introduction to.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *praefātiō*, *praefātiōn-*, from *praefātus*, past participle of *praefārī*, to say before : *prae-*, *pre-* + *fārī*, to speak; see *bhā-*² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

pref ac·er *n.*

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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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