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dictionary

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**bite**  (bīt)

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v. **bit** (bīt), **bit·ten** (bīt n) or **bit**, **bit·ing**, **bites**

v.tr.

1. To cut, grip, or tear with or as if with the teeth.
2.
  - a. To pierce the skin of with the teeth, fangs, or mouthparts.
  - b. To sting with a stinger.
3. To cut into with or as if with a sharp instrument: *The axe bit the log deeply.*
4. To grip, grab, or seize: *bald treads that couldn't bite the icy road; bitten by a sudden desire to travel.*
5. To eat into; corrode.
6. To cause to sting or be painful: *cold that bites the skin; a conscience bitten by remorse.*

v.intr.

1. To grip, cut into, or injure something with or as if with the teeth.
2. To have a stinging effect.
3. To have a sharp taste.
4. To take or swallow bait.
5. To be taken in by a ploy or deception: *tried to sell the Brooklyn Bridge, but no one bit.*
6. *Vulgar Slang* To be highly disagreeable or annoying.

n.

1. The act of biting.
2. A skin wound or puncture produced by an animal's teeth or mouthparts: *the bite of an insect.*
3.
  - a. A stinging or smarting sensation.
  - b. An incisive, penetrating quality: *the bite of satire.*
4. An amount removed by or as if by an act of biting: *Rezoning took a bite out of the town's residential area.*
5. An excerpt or fragment taken from something larger, such as a film.
6.
  - a. An amount of food taken into the mouth at one time; a mouthful.
  - b. *Informal* A light meal or snack.
7. The act or an instance of taking bait: *fished all day without a bite; an ad that got a few bites but no final sales.*
8.
  - a. A secure grip or hold applied by a tool or machine upon a working surface.
  - b. The part of a tool or machine that presses against and maintains a firm hold on a working surface.
9. *Dentistry* The angle at which the upper and lower teeth meet; occlusion.
10. The corrosive action of acid upon an etcher's metal plate.
11. *Slang* An amount of money appropriated or withheld: *trying to avoid the tax bite.*

**Idioms:**

**bite off more than (one) can chew**

To decide or agree to do more than one can finally accomplish.

**bite (someone's) head off**

To respond to a comment in an angry or reproachful way.

**bite the bullet** *Slang*

To face a painful situation bravely and stoically.

**bite the dust** *Slang*

1. To fall dead, especially in combat.

2. To be defeated.
  3. To come to an end.
- bite the hand that feeds (one)**  
To repay generosity or kindness with ingratitude and injury.

[Middle English *biten*, from Old English *bītan*; see **bheid-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

**bit** a·ble, **bite** a·ble *adj.*  
**bit** er *n.*

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## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

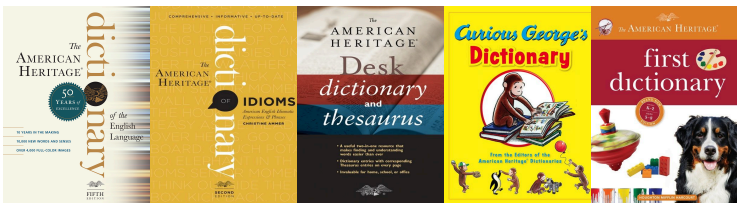
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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