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bit·ter  (bīt əɹ)

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adj. **bit·ter·er**, **bit·ter·est**

1. Having or being a taste that is sharp, acrid, and unpleasant.
2. Causing a sharply unpleasant, painful, or stinging sensation; harsh: *enveloped in bitter cold; a bitter wind.*
3. Difficult or distasteful to accept, admit, or bear: *the bitter truth; bitter sorrow.*
4. Proceeding from or exhibiting strong animosity: *a bitter struggle; bitter foes.*
5. Resulting from or expressive of severe grief, anguish, or disappointment: *cried bitter tears.*
6. Marked by resentment or cynicism: *"He was already a bitter elderly man with a gray face" ([John Dos Passos](#)).*

adv.

In an intense or harsh way; bitterly: *a bitter cold night.*

tr.v. **bit·tered**, **bit·ter·ing**, **bit·ters**

To make bitter.

n.

1. That which is bitter: *"all words ... / Failing to give the bitter of the sweet" (Tennyson).*
2. **bitters** A bitter, usually alcoholic liquid made with herbs or roots and used in cocktails or as a tonic.
3. *Chiefly British* A sharp-tasting beer made with hops.

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

bit ter·ly *adv.*

bit ter·ness *n.*

Synonyms: bitter, acerbic, acrid

These adjectives mean unpleasantly sharp or pungent in taste or smell: *a bitter cough syrup; a cheap, acerbic wine; acrid smoke.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

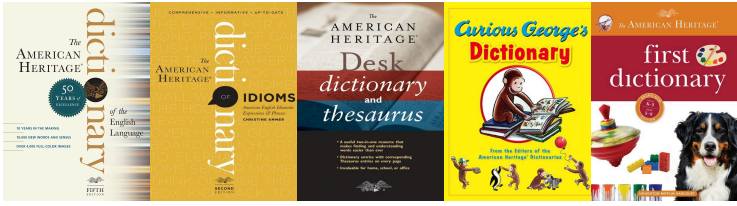
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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