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bulk  (bŭlk)

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n.

1. Size, mass, or volume, especially when very large.

2.

a. A distinct mass or portion of matter, especially a large one: *the dark bulk of buildings against the sky.*

b. The body of a human, especially when large or muscular.

3. The major portion or greater part: *"The great bulk of necessary work can never be anything but painful" (Bertrand Russell).*

4. See [fiber](#).

5. Thickness of paper or cardboard in relation to weight.

6. A ship's cargo.

v. **bulked, bulk-ing, bulks**

v.intr.

1. To be or appear to be massive in terms of size, volume, or importance; loom: *Safety considerations bulked large during development of the new spacecraft.*

2. To grow or increase in size or importance.

3. To cohere or form a mass: *Certain paper bulks well.*

v.tr.

1. To cause to swell or expand.

2. To cause to cohere or form a mass.

adj.

Being large in mass, quantity, or volume: *a bulk buy; a bulk mailing.*

Phrasal Verb:

bulk up

To gain weight by gaining muscle: *dietary supplements that helped the weightlifters bulk up.*

Idiom:

in bulk

1. Unpackaged; loose.

2. In large numbers, amounts, or volume.

[Middle English, perhaps partly alteration of *bouk*, belly, trunk of the body (from Old English *būc*) and partly from Old Norse *bulki*, cargo, heap; see **bhel**-² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

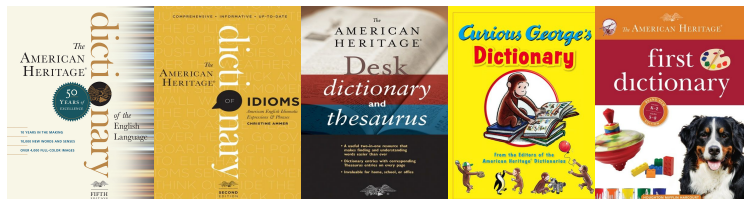
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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