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ball ¹  (bôl)

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n.

1.

a. A spherical object or entity: *a steel ball*.

b. A spherical or almost spherical body: *a ball of flame*.

2. Sports

a. Any of various movable and round or oblong objects used in various athletic activities and games.

b. Such an object moving, thrown, hit, or kicked in a particular manner: *a low ball*; *a fair ball*.

c. A game, especially baseball or basketball, played with such an object.

d. A pitched baseball that does not pass through the strike zone and is not swung at by the batter.

3.

a. A solid spherical or pointed projectile, such as one shot from a cannon.

b. Projectiles of this kind considered as a group.

4. A rounded part or protuberance, especially of the body: *the ball of the foot*.

5. Vulgar Slang

a. A testicle.

b. balls Courage, especially when reckless.

c. balls Great presumptuousness.

v. balled, ball-ing, balls

v.tr.

1. To form into a ball.

2. Vulgar Slang To have sexual intercourse with.

v.intr.

1. To become formed into a ball.

2. Vulgar Slang To have sexual intercourse.

Phrasal Verb:

ball up

To confuse; bungle.

Idioms:

have (someone) by the balls *Vulgar Slang*

To have control over someone; have someone at one's mercy.

on the ball *Informal*

1. Alert, competent, or efficient: *a teacher who is really on the ball*.

2. Relating to qualities, such as competence, skill, or knowledge, that are necessary for success: *a manager who has a lot on the ball*; *a student who has nothing on the ball*.

[Middle English *bal*, probably from Old English **beall*; see **bhel**-² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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ball ²  (bôl)

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n.

1. A formal gathering for social dancing.
2. *Informal* An extremely enjoyable time or experience: *We had a ball during our vacation.*

[French *bal*, from Old French, from *baller*, to dance, from Late Latin *ballāre*, from Greek *ballizein*; see [g^Wela-](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Ball, Lucille Désirée 1911-1989.

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American actress best known as the star of the popular situation comedy *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957).



(click for a larger image)

Lucille Ball

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Ball  (bôl), John Known as "the Mad Priest." Died 1381.

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English cleric and social agitator who was executed for his role in the Peasants' Revolt (1381).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

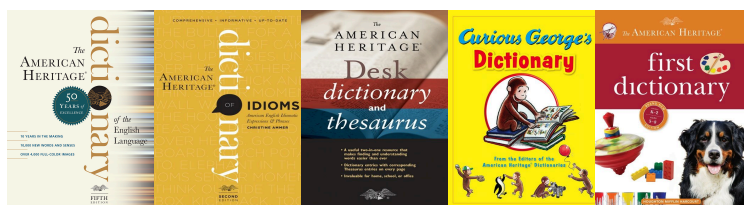
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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