



The  
AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language

  


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**bulge**  (bŭlj)

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*n.*

1. A protruding part; an outward curve or swelling.

2. *Nautical* A bilge.

3. A sudden, usually temporary increase in number or quantity: *The baby boom created a bulge in school enrollment.*

*v. bulged, bulg-ing, bulg-es*

*v.intr.*

To swell, protrude, or curve outward: *a wall bulging after a flood; muscles bulging under a shirt.*

*v.tr.*

To cause to bulge.

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[Middle English, pouch, from Old French *bulge*, *bouge*, from Latin *bulga*, bag, of Celtic origin; see **bhelgh-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**bulg i-ness** *n.*

**bulg y** *adj.*

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**Synonyms:** bulge, balloon, belly, jut, project, protrude

These verbs mean to curve, spread, or extend outward past the normal or usual limit: *a wallet bulging with money; a clown's pants that ballooned at the waist; a sail bellying in the wind; a boulder jutting from the hillside; a deck that projected from the house in back; eyes protruding from their sockets in astonishment.*

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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:

[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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