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in·fer  (in-fûr)

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v. in·ferred, in·fer·ring, in·fers

v.tr.

1. To conclude from evidence or by reasoning: *"For many years the cerebral localization of all higher cognitive processes could be inferred only from the effects of brain injuries on the people who survived them"* (Sally E. Shaywitz).

2. To involve by logical necessity; entail: *"Socrates argued that a statue inferred the existence of a sculptor"* (Academy).

3. (Usage Problem) To indicate indirectly; imply.

v.intr.

To draw inferences.

[Latin *inferre*, to bring in, adduce : *in-*, in; see [in](#)-² + *ferre*, to bear; see **bher**-¹ [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

in·fer a·ble *adj.*

in·fer a·bly *adv.*

in·fer rer *n.*

Usage Note: *Infer* is sometimes confused with *imply*, but the distinction careful writers make between these words is a useful one. When we say that a speaker or sentence implies something, we mean that it is conveyed or suggested without being stated outright: *When the mayor said that she would not rule out a business tax increase, she implied (not inferred) that some taxes might be raised.* Inference, on the other hand, is the activity performed by a reader or interpreter in drawing conclusions that are not explicit in what is said: *When the mayor said that she would not rule out a tax increase, we inferred that she had consulted with new financial advisers, since her old advisers favored tax reductions.*

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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:

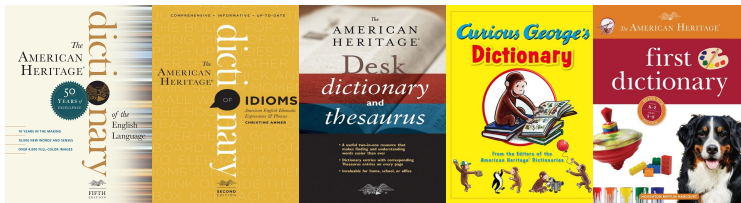
[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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

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