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met·a·phor  (mĕt ə-fôr', -fər)

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n.

1. A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison, as in "*a sea of troubles*" or "*All the world's a stage*" (Shakespeare).
2. One thing conceived as representing another; a symbol: "*Hollywood has always been an irresistible, prefabricated metaphor for the crass, the materialistic, the shallow, and the craven*" (Neal Gabler).

[Middle English *methaphor*, from Old French *metaphore*, from Latin *metaphora*, from Greek, transference, metaphor, from *metapherein*, to transfer : *meta-*, *meta-* + *pherein*, to carry; see **bher-**¹ [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

met'a·phor ic (-fôr ĭk), **met'a·phor i·cal** *adj.*

met'a·phor i·cal·ly *adv.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

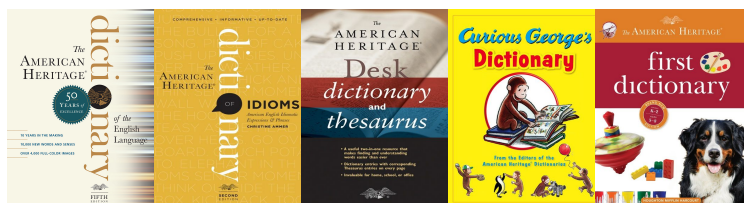
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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