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pe·riph·er·y  (pə-rĭf ə-rē)

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n. pl. **pe·riph·er·ies**

1. A line that forms the boundary of an area; a perimeter.
2. The outside surface of an object.
3. The area along a boundary; the margin. See Synonyms at [circumference](#).
4. An area of secondary status or lesser importance: *works that have been relegated to the periphery of literary studies*.

[Middle English *periferie*, from Medieval Latin *periferia*, from Late Latin *peripherĭa*, from Greek *periphēreia*, from *periphērēs*, carrying around : *peri-*, *peri-* + *pherein*, to carry; see **bher-**¹ [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:

[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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