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ber·serk·er  (bər-sûr kər, -zûr -)

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n.
One of a band of ancient Norse warriors legendary for their savagery and reckless frenzy in battle.

[Old Norse *berserkr* : perhaps *ber-*, bear (akin to *björn*, bear, and *bera*, she-bear, from the bear-skins perhaps worn by the warriors ; see **bher-**² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)) or *berr*, bare (from the fact that ancient European warriors often fought nude ; see **bhoso-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)) + *serkr*, shirt.]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

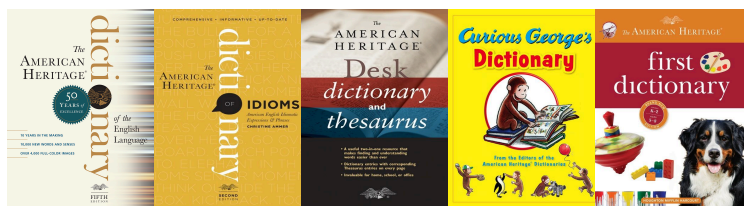
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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