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dictionary

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Language


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**bow**<sup>1</sup>  (bou)

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*n.*

*Nautical*

1. The front section of a ship or boat.
2. Either of the sides of this front section: *the starboard bow*.
3. The oar or the person wielding the oar closest to the bow in a racing shell.

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[Middle English *boue*, probably of Low German origin; see **bheug-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**bow**<sup>2</sup>  (bou)

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*v.* **bowed**, **bow·ing**, **bows**

*v.intr.*

1. To bend or curve downward; stoop.
2. To incline the body or head or bend the knee in greeting, consent, courtesy, acknowledgment, submission, or veneration.
3. To yield in defeat or out of courtesy; submit. See Synonyms at [yield](#).

*v.tr.*

1. To bend (the head, knee, or body) to express greeting, consent, courtesy, acknowledgment, submission, or veneration.
2. To convey (greeting, for example) by bending the body.
3. To escort deferentially: *bowed us into the restaurant*.
4. To cause to acquiesce; submit.
5. To overburden: *Grief bowed them down*.

*n.*

An inclination of the head or body, as in greeting, consent, courtesy, acknowledgment, submission, or veneration.

**Phrasal Verb:**

**bow out**

To remove oneself; withdraw.

**Idiom:**

**bow and scrape**

To behave obsequiously.

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[Middle English *bowen*, from Old English *būgan*; see **bheug-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**bow**<sup>3</sup>  (bō)

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*n.*

1. A bent, curved, or arched object.
2. A weapon consisting of a curved, flexible strip of material, especially wood, strung taut from end to end and used to launch arrows.
3.
  - a. An archer.
  - b. Archers considered as a group.
4.
  - a. *Music* A rod having horsehair drawn tightly between its two raised ends, used in playing instruments of the violin and viol families.
  - b. A stroke made by this rod.
5. A knot usually having two loops and two ends; a bowknot.
6.
  - a. A frame for the lenses of a pair of eyeglasses.
  - b. The part of such a frame passing over the ear.
7. A rainbow.
8. An oxbow.

*v.* **bowed**, **bow-ing**, **bows**

*v.tr.*

1. To bend (something) into the shape of a bow.
2. *Music* To play (a stringed instrument) with a bow.

*v.intr.*

1. To bend into a curve or bow.
2. *Music* To play a stringed instrument with a bow.

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[Middle English *bowe*, from Old English *boga*; see **bheug-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**Bow** 🗣️ (bō), **Clara** Known as "**the It Girl**." 1905-1965.

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American actress whose roles in silent films, such as *Mantrap* (1926) and *It* (1927), made her a symbol of the Roaring Twenties.

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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:

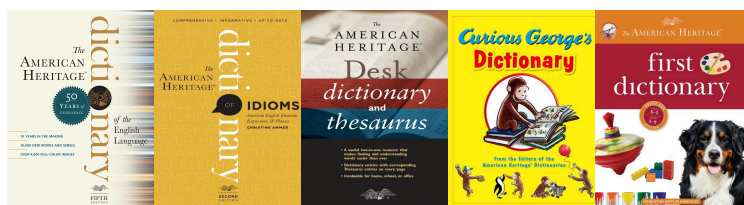
[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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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