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bal·last  (băl əst)

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n.

1. Heavy material that is carried to improve stability or maintain proper trim, as on a ship, or to limit buoyancy, as on a balloon.

2.

a. Coarse gravel or crushed rock laid to form a bed for roads or railroads.

b. The gravel ingredient of concrete.

3. Something that gives stability, especially in character.

tr.v. **bal·last·ed**, **bal·last·ing**, **bal·lasts**

1. To stabilize or provide with ballast.

2. To fill (a railroad bed) with or as if with ballast.

[Perhaps from Old Swedish or Old Danish *barlast* : *bar*, mere, bare; see **bhoso-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *last*, load.]

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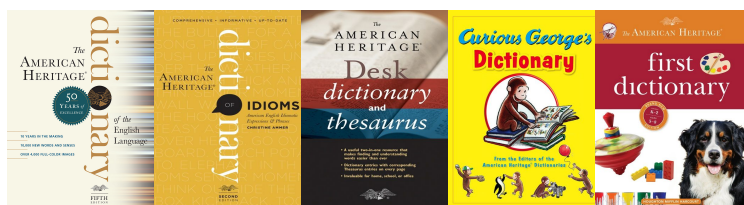
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