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breed  (brēd)

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v. **bred** (brēd), **breed·ing**, **breeds**

v.tr.

1. To produce (offspring); give birth to or hatch.

2. To bring about; engender: *"Admission of guilt tends to breed public sympathy"* (Jonathan Alter).

3.

a. To cause to reproduce, especially by controlled mating and selection: *breed cattle*.

b. To develop new or improved strains in (organisms), chiefly through controlled mating and selection of offspring for desirable traits.

c. To inseminate or impregnate; mate with.

4. To rear or train; bring up: *a writer who was bred in a seafaring culture*.

5. To be the place of origin of: *Austria breeds great skiers*.

6. To produce (fissionable material) in a breeder reactor.

v.intr.

1. To produce offspring.

2. To copulate; mate.

3. To originate and develop: *Mischief breeds in bored minds*.

n.

1. A group of organisms having common ancestors and certain distinguishable characteristics, especially a group within a species developed by artificial selection and maintained by controlled propagation.

2. A kind; a sort: *a new breed of politician; a new breed of computer*.

3. *Offensive* A person of mixed racial descent; a half-breed.

Idioms:

breed a scab/scabs on (one's) nose *Regional*

To stir up trouble for oneself.

breed up a storm *New England*

To become cloudy.

[Middle English *breden*, from Old English *brēdan*; see **bhreu-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

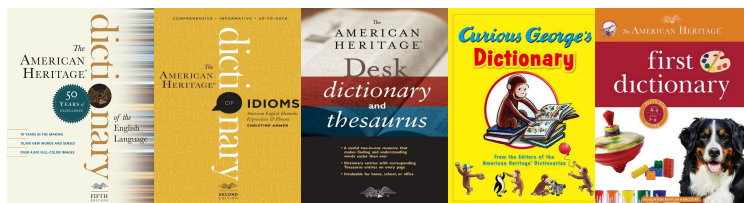
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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