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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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Zeit·geist also **zeit·geist** 🗣️ (tsīt gīst', zīt -)

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n.

The spirit of the time; the taste and outlook characteristic of a period or generation: *"A new cult of technological optimism has deeply embedded itself in the zeitgeist"* (Sebastian Seung).

[German : *Zeit*, time (from Middle High German *zīt*, from Old High German; see **dā-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)) + *Geist*, spirit; see [POLTERGEIST](#).]

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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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