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dictionary

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Language



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toe  (tō)

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- n.*
1.
 - a. One of the digits of a vertebrate foot.
 - b. The forepart of a foot or hoof.
 - c. The terminal segment of an invertebrate's limb.
 2. The part of a sock, shoe, or boot that covers the digits of the foot.
 3. The lowest, outermost, or endmost part, as:
 - a. The part of the head of a golf club farthest from the shaft.
 - b. The part of a vertical shaft that turns in a bearing.
 - c. The lowest part of an embankment or dam.
 - d. *Geology* A protruding downslope end of an alluvial fan, glacier, or lava flow.
- v.* **toed**, **toe·ing**, **toes**
- v.tr.*
1. To touch, kick, or reach with the toe.
 2. To drive (a golf ball) with the toe of the club.
 3. To set or adjust at an oblique angle. Used with *in* or *out*.
 4.
 - a. To drive (a nail or spike) at an oblique angle.
 - b. To fasten or secure with obliquely driven nails or spikes.
- v.intr.*
- To stand, walk, move, or be formed with the toes pointed in a specified direction: *He toes out.*
- Idioms:**
- on (one's) toes**
Ready to act; alert.
- step/tread on (someone's) toes**
To hurt, offend, or encroach on the feelings, actions, or province of.
- toe the line/mark**
1. To adhere to doctrines or rules conscientiously; conform.
 2. *Sports & Games* To touch a mark or line with the toe or hands in readiness for the start of a race or competition.

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



(click for a larger image)

toe

lava flow from Kilauea Volcano on the Big Island of Hawaii

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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:

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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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