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to·ken  (tō kən)

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n.

1.

a. Something serving as an indication, proof, or expression of something else; a sign: *"His lifelong refusal to allow bigots to truly bother him was often considered, unfairly, a token of his weakness"* (Jeremy Schaap).

b. Something that signifies or evidences authority, validity, or identity: *The scepter is a token of regal status.*

c. A specific instance of a phenomenon or a class of things, as of a linguistic feature in a sample of a person's speech, that can be isolated for study or analysis.

2. A person who is considered as representative of a social group, such as a lone individual or one of a small number of employees hired primarily to prevent an employer from being accused of discrimination.

3. A keepsake or souvenir.

4. A piece of stamped metal used as a substitute for currency: *subway tokens.*

5. Computers

a. A small electronic device issued to a user to serve as proof of identity, as for the purpose of accessing a network.

b. A piece of software that serves as proof of the user's identity.

tr.v. **to·kened, to·ken·ing, to·kens**

To betoken or symbolize; portend.

adj.

1. Done as an indication or pledge: *a token payment.*

2.

a. Perfunctory; minimal: *a token gesture of reconciliation; token resistance.*

b. Being a product of tokenism; merely symbolic: *refused to be the token woman on the committee.*

Idioms:

by the same token

In like manner; similarly.

in token of

As an indication of: *a ring given in token of love.*

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

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

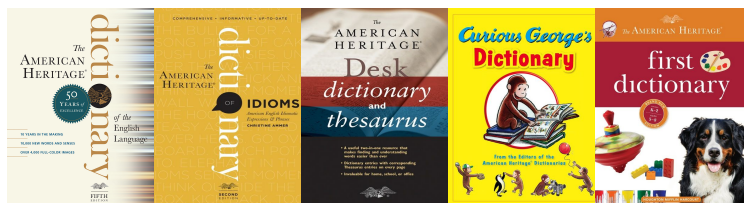
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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