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dictionary

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Mad·am  (măd əm)

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n. Abbr. Mdm.

1. *pl. Mes·dames* (mā-dăm , -dăm) Used formerly as a courtesy title before a woman's given name but now used only before a surname or title indicating rank or office: *Madam Ambassador*.
2. Used as a salutation in a letter: *Dear Madam or Sir*.
3. **madam** Used as a form of polite address for a woman: *Right this way, madam*.
4. **madam** The mistress of a household.
5. **madam** A woman who manages a brothel.

[Middle English *madame*, from Old French *ma dame*; see [MADAME](#).]

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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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