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true 🔊 (tr)

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adj. **tru·er, tru·est**

1.

- a. Consistent with fact or reality; not false or erroneous: *the true cost*. See Synonyms at [real](#)¹. See Usage Note at [fact](#).
- b. Not counterfeit; real or genuine: *true gold*. See Synonyms at [authentic](#).
- c. Conforming to the characteristics or criteria of a group or type; typical: *a true crab; a true gentleman*.
- d. Properly called: *true value*.

2. Reliable; accurate: *a true prophecy*.

3.

- a. Faithful, as to a friend, vow, or cause; loyal. See Synonyms at [faithful](#).
- b. *Archaic* Truthful, honest, or trustworthy.
- 4. Sincerely felt or expressed; unfeigned: *true grief*.
- 5. Rightful; legitimate: *the true heir*.

6.

- a. Exactly conforming to a rule, standard, or pattern: *trying to sing true B*.
- b. Accurately shaped, fitted, or placed: *Are the wheels true?*
- c. Determined with reference to the earth's axis, not the magnetic poles: *true north*.
- 7. Quick and exact in sensing and responding: *a true ear*.

8. *Computers* Indicating one of two possible values taken by a variable in Boolean logic or a binary device.

adv.

- 1. In accord with reality, fact, or truthfulness.
- 2. Unswervingly; exactly: *The archer aimed true*.
- 3. So as to conform to a type, standard, or pattern.

tr.v. **trued, tru·ing or true·ing, trues**

To position (something) so as to make it balanced, level, or square: *trued up the long planks*.

n.

- 1. Truth or reality. Used with *the*.
- 2. Proper alignment or adjustment: *out of true*.

[Middle English *trewē*, from Old English *trēowe*, firm, trustworthy; see **deru-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

true ness *n.*

Word History: The words *true* and *tree* are joined at the root, etymologically speaking. In Old English, the words looked and sounded much more alike than they do now: "tree" was *trēow* and "true" was *trēowe*. The first of these comes from the Germanic noun **trewam*; the second, from the adjective **treuwaz*. Both these Germanic words ultimately go back to an Indo-European root **deru-* or **dreu-*, appearing in derivatives referring to wood and, by extension, firmness. Truth may be thought of as something firm; so too can certain bonds between people, like *trust*, another derivative of the same root. A slightly different form of the root, **dru-*, appears in the word *druid*, a type of ancient Celtic priest; his name is etymologically **dru-wid-*, or "strong seer."

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

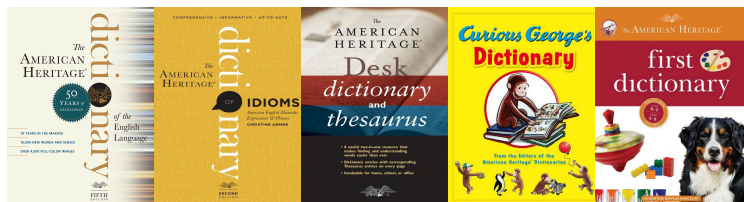
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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