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dictionary

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English
Language



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re·duce  (rĭ-d ūs , -dy ūs)

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v. re·duced, re·duc·ing, re·duc·es

v.tr.

1. To bring down, as in extent, amount, or degree; diminish. See Synonyms at [decrease](#).
 2. To bring to a humbler, weaker, difficult, or forced state or condition; especially:
 - a. To gain control of; subject or conquer: "*a design to reduce them under absolute despotism*" (*Declaration of Independence*).
 - b. To subject to destruction: *Enemy bombers reduced the city to rubble.*
 - c. To bring to a specified undesirable state, as of weakness or helplessness: *disease that reduced the patient to emaciation; teasing that reduced the child to tears.*
 - d. To compel to desperate acts: *The Depression reduced many to begging on street corners.*
 - e. To lower in rank or grade; demote.
 3. To thicken or intensify the flavor of (a sauce, for example) by slow boiling.
 4. To lower the price of: *The store has drastically reduced winter coats.*
 5. To decrease the viscosity of (paint, for example), as by adding a solvent.
 6. To put in a simpler or more systematic form; simplify or codify: *reduced her ideas to a collection of maxims.*
 7. To turn into powder; pulverize.
 8. *Chemistry*
 - a. To decrease the valence of (an atom) by adding electrons.
 - b. To remove oxygen from (a compound).
 - c. To add hydrogen to (a compound).
 - d. To change to a metallic state by removing nonmetallic constituents; smelt.
 9. *Mathematics* To simplify the form of (an expression, such as a fraction) without changing the value.
 10. *Medicine* To restore (a fractured or displaced body part) to a normal condition or position.
 11. *Linguistics* To pronounce (a stressed vowel) as the unstressed version of that vowel or as schwa.
- v.intr.**
1. To become diminished.
 2. To lose weight, as by dieting.
 3. *Biology* To undergo meiosis.

[Middle English *reducen*, to bring back, from Old French *reducier*, from Latin *reducere* : *re-*, *re-* + *dūcere*, to lead; see [deuk-](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

re·duc *er n.*

re·duc'i·bil *i·ty n.*

re·duc *i·ble adj.*

re·duc *i·bly adv.*

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

Semitic Roots

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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