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de·feat (dĭ-fēt)

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tr.v. **de·feat·ed, de·feat·ing, de·feats**

1. To do better than (another) in a competition or battle; win victory over; beat: *"Whether we defeat the enemy in one battle, or by degrees, the consequences will be the same" (Thomas Paine).*
2. To prevent the success of; thwart: *Internal strife defeats the purpose of teamwork.*
3. *Law*
 - a. To frustrate the enforcement of (a motion, for example).
 - b. To make (an estate, for example) void; annul.
4.
 - a. To dishearten or dispirit: *The last setback defeated her, and she gave up.*
 - b. To be beyond the comprehension of; mystify: *How the children found their way back home defeats me.*
- n.
 1.
 - a. The act of defeating an opponent: *the home team's defeat of their rivals.*
 - b. The state of being defeated; failure to win: *the home team's defeat by their rivals.*
 2. A coming to naught; frustration: *the defeat of a lifelong dream.*
 3. *Law*
 - a. The act of overcoming or frustrating the enforcement of.
 - b. *Law* The act of making null and void.

[Middle English *defeten*, from *defet*, disfigured, from Old French *desfait*, past participle of *desfaire*, to destroy, from Medieval Latin *disfacere*, to destroy, mutilate, undo : Latin *dis-*, *dis-* + Latin *facere*, to do; see **dhē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

de·feat *er n.*

Synonyms: defeat, beat, conquer, rout¹, vanquish

These verbs mean to triumph over an adversary: *defeated the opposing team by fourteen points; beat her competitor in the race for first place; conquered the enemy after a long battle; routed all opposition due to a brilliant strategy; vanquished the marauding army in a surprise attack.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

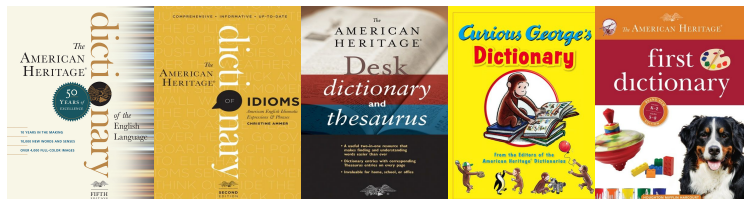
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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