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de·fect  (dē fěkt', dī-fěkt)

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n.

An imperfection or lack that causes inadequacy or failure; a shortcoming or deficiency. See Synonyms at [blemish](#).

intr.v. (dī-fěkt) **de·fect·ed**, **de·fect·ing**, **de·fects**

1. To disown allegiance to one's country and take up residence in another: *a Soviet citizen who defected to Israel.*
2. To abandon a position or association, often to join an opposing group: *defected from the party over the issue of free trade.*

[Middle English, from Latin *dēfectus*, failure, want, from past participle of *dēficere*, to desert, be wanting : *dē-*, *de-* + *facere*, to do; see **dhē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

de·fec tion *n.*

de·fec tor *n.*

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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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