



The  
AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language

  


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To look up an entry in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, use the search window above. For best results, after typing in the word, click on the “Search” button instead of using the “enter” key.

Some compound words (like *bus rapid transit*, *dog whistle*, or *identity theft*) don’t appear on the drop-down list when you type them in the search bar. For best results with compound words, place a quotation mark before the compound word in the search window.

[guide to the dictionary](#)



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**plu·per·fect**  (pl -pûr fîkt)

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*adj.*

1. Of or being a verb tense used to express action completed before a specified or implied past time.
2. More than perfect; supremely accomplished; ideal: "*He has won a reputation as [a] pluperfect bureaucrat*" (*New York Times*).

*n.*

1. The pluperfect tense, formed in English with the past participle of a verb and the auxiliary *had*, as *had learned* in the sentence *He had learned to type by the end of the semester*. Also called *past perfect*.
2. A verb or form in the pluperfect tense.

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[Middle English *pluperfyth*, alteration of Latin *plūs quam perfectum*, more than perfect : *plūs*, more; see **pel-**<sup>1</sup> [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *quam*, than + *perfectum*, neuter past participle of *perficere*, to complete; see [PERFECT](#).]

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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](#)

[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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