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dictionary

of the
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Language



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ep·i·thet  (ěp ə-thět')

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n.

1.

a. A term used to characterize a person or thing, such as *rosy-fingered* in *rosy-fingered dawn* or *the Great* in *Catherine the Great*.

b. A term used as a descriptive substitute for the name or title of a person, such as *The Great Emancipator* for Abraham Lincoln.

2. A disparaging or abusive word or phrase.

3. Biology A word in the scientific name of an organism following the name of the genus and denoting a species, subspecies, variety, or cultivar, as *sativa* in *Lactuca sativa*.

[Latin *epitheton*, from Greek, neuter of *epithetos*, added, attributed, from *epitithenai*, *epithe-*, to add to : *epi-*, *epi-* + *tithenai*, to place; see **dhē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

ep'ī-thet īc, ep'ī-thet ī-cal *adj.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots 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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