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dictionary

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pa·ren·the·sis  (pə-rĕn thĭ-sĭs)

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n. pl. par·en·the·ses (-sēz')

1. Either or both of the upright curved lines, (), used to mark off explanatory or qualifying remarks in writing or printing or enclose a sum, product, or other expression considered or treated as a collective entity in a mathematical operation.
2.
 - a. A qualifying or amplifying word, phrase, or sentence inserted within written matter in such a way as to be independent of the surrounding grammatical structure.
 - b. A comment departing from the theme of discourse; a digression.
3. An interruption of continuity; an interval: *"This is one of the things I wasn't prepared for—the amount of unfilled time, the long parentheses of nothing"* ([Margaret Atwood](#)).

[Late Latin, insertion of a letter or syllable in a word, from Greek, from *parentithenai*, to insert : *para-*, beside; see [PARA-](#)¹ + *en-*, in; see [en](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *tithenai*, to put; see [dhē-](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

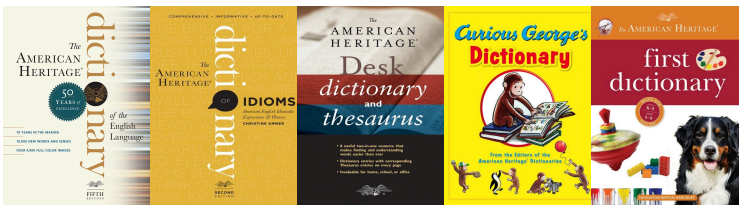
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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