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fig·ure  (fig yər)

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n.

1.
 - a. A written or printed symbol representing something other than a letter, especially a number.
 - b. **figures** Mathematical calculations: *good at figures*.
 - c. An amount represented in numbers: *sold for a large figure*.
 - d. **figures** One of the digits specified as making up a larger number: *a salary in the six figures*.

2.

- a. *Mathematics* A geometric form consisting of any combination of points, lines, or planes: *A triangle is a plane figure*.

- b. The outline, form, or silhouette of a thing: *saw the figure of a cat in the window*.

- c. The shape or form of a human body: *a fashion model with an attractive figure*.

- d. An indistinct object or shape: *The figures in the mist turned out to be lampposts*.

3. A person, especially a well-known one: *a famous historical figure*.

4. Impression or appearance made: *cut a dashing figure at the reception*.

5. A person, animal, or object that symbolizes something.

6. A pictorial or sculptural representation, especially of the human body.

7.

- a. A diagram: *drew a figure of the office layout*.

- b. A design or pattern, as in a textile: *silk with a paisley figure*.

- c. An illustration printed from an engraved plate or block.

8.

- a. A configuration or distinct group of steps in a dance.

- b. A pattern traced by a series of movements, as in ice skating.

9. *Music* A brief melodic or harmonic unit often constituting the basis of a larger phrase or structure.

10. *Logic* Any one of the forms that a syllogism can take, given one of the four possible arrangements of the middle term.

v. **fig·ured, fig·ur·ing, fig·ures**

v. tr.

1. *Mathematics* To calculate with numbers: *figured the sum to be nearly a million*.

2. To make a likeness of; depict.

3. To adorn with a design or figures.

4. *Music*

- a. To write a sequence of conventionalized numbers below or above (the bassline) to indicate harmony.

- b. To embellish with an ornamental pattern.

5.

- a. To conclude, believe, or predict: *I never figured that this would happen*.

- b. To consider or regard: *figured them as con artists*.

v. intr.

1. *Mathematics* To calculate; compute.

2.

- a. To be or seem important or prominent: *a key fact that figures in our understanding of what happened*.

- b. To be pertinent or involved: *His advice barely figured in my decision*.

3. *Informal* To seem reasonable or expected: *"I found my keys in the sofa." "Well, that figures, given that you were sitting there last night."*

Phrasal Verbs:

figure in

To add in or include, as in making an account: *figured in travel expenses when estimating the cost.*

figure on Informal

1. To depend on: *We figured on your support.*
2. To take into consideration; expect: *I figured on an hour's delay.*
3. To plan: *We figure on leaving at noon.*

figure out

1. To discover or decide: *Let's figure out a way to help.*
2. To solve or decipher: *Can you figure out this puzzle?*

Idiom:

go figure

Used in the imperative to indicate the unexpectedness or absurdity of something.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *figūra*; see **dheigh-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

fig ur·er *n.*

Synonyms: [figure](#), [design](#), [device](#), [motif](#), [pattern](#)

These nouns denote an element or arrangement of elements in a decorative composition: *a tapestry with a floral figure; a rug with a geometric design; a brooch with a fanciful and intricate device; a scarf with a heart motif; fabric with a plaid pattern.* See Also Synonyms at [calculate](#), [form](#).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

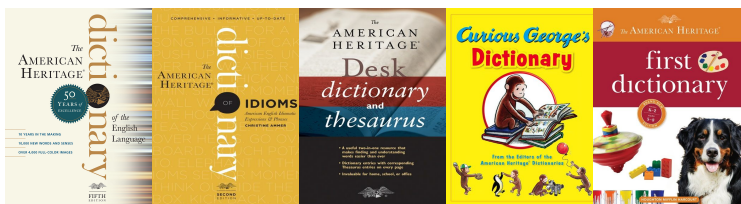
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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