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dictionary

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Language



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fic·tion  (fĭk shən)

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n.

1.

a. The category of literature, drama, film, or other creative work whose content is imagined and is not necessarily based on fact.

b. Works in this category: *the fiction of Virginia Woolf*.

c. A work within this category: *the shorter fictions of Faulkner*.

2.

a. Narrative, explanatory material, or belief that is not true or has been imagined or fabricated: *The notion that he was at the scene of the crime is pure fiction.*

b. A narrative, explanation, or belief that may seem true but is false or fabricated: *"Neutrality is a fiction in an unneutral world" (Howard Zinn).*

3. Law A verbal contrivance that is in some sense inaccurate but that accomplishes a purpose, as in the treatment of husband and wife as one person or a corporation as an entity.

[Middle English *ficcioun*, from Old French *fiction*, from Latin *fictiō*, *fictiōn-*, from *fictus*, past participle of *figere*, to form; see **dheigh-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

fic tion·al *adj.*

fic'tion·al i·ty (-shə-năl ĭ-tē) *n.*

fic tion·al·ly *adv.*

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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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