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AMERICAN
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dictionary

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English
Language



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fer·ma·ta  (fěer-mă tə)

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n.

Music

1. The prolongation of a tone, chord, or rest beyond its indicated time value.
2. The sign indicating this prolongation.

[Italian, from feminine past participle of *fermare*, to stop, from Latin *firmāre*, to make firm, from *firmus*, firm; see **dher-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



(click for a larger image)

fermata

from St. Matthew Passion (1729) by
Johann Sebastian Bach

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

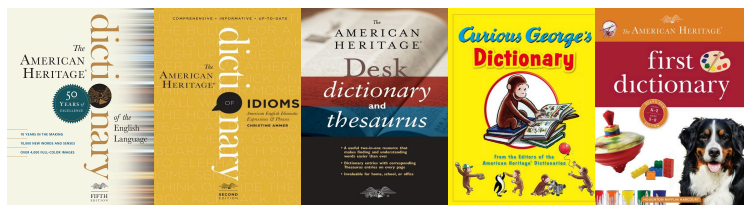
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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