



The
AMERICAN
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the
English
Language



HOW TO USE THE DICTIONARY

To look up an entry in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, use the search window above. For best results, after typing in the word, click on the “Search” button instead of using the “enter” key.

Some compound words (like *bus rapid transit*, *dog whistle*, or *identity theft*) don’t appear on the drop-down list when you type them in the search bar. For best results with compound words, place a quotation mark before the compound word in the search window.

[guide to the dictionary](#)



THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY APP

The new American Heritage Dictionary app is now available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).



THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY BLOG

The articles in our [blog](#) examine new words, revised definitions, interesting images from the fifth edition, discussions of usage, and more.

THE 100 WORDS®

See word lists from the best-selling 100 Words Series!

[Find out more!](#)



INTERESTED IN DICTIONARIES?

Check out the Dictionary Society of North America at <http://www.dictionariesociety.com>

drench  (drĕnch)

Share: [Tweet](#)

tr.v. **drenched**, **drench·ing**, **drench·es**

1. To wet through and through; soak.
2. To administer a large oral dose of liquid medicine to (an animal).
3. To provide with something in great abundance; surfeit: *just drenched in money.*

n.

1. The act of wetting or becoming wet through and through.
2. Something that drenches: *a drench of rain.*
3. A large dose of liquid medicine, especially one administered to an animal by pouring down the throat.

[Middle English *drenchen*, to drown, from Old English *drencan*, to give to drink, drown; see **dhreg-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

drench *er n.*

Word History: *Drink* and *drench* mean quite different things today, but in fact they share similar origins, and, historically, similar meanings. *Drink* comes from a prehistoric Germanic verb **drinkan*, from the Germanic root **drink-* meaning "drink." Another form of this root, **drank-*, could be combined with a suffix **-jan* that was used to form causative verbs, in this case **drankjan*, "to cause to drink." The descendant of the simple verb **drinkan* in Old English was *drincan* (virtually unchanged), while the causative verb **drankjan* was affected by certain sound shifts and became Old English *drencan*, pronounced (drĕn chŏn), and, in Middle and Modern English, *drench*. In Middle English *drench* came to mean "to drown," a sense now obsolete; the sense "to steep, soak in liquid" and the current modern sense "to make thoroughly wet" developed by early Modern English times. *Drink* and *drench* are not the only such pairs in English, where one verb comes from a prehistoric Germanic causative; some others include *sit* and *set* ("to cause to sit"), *lie* and *lay* ("to cause to lie"), and *fall* and *fell* ("cause to fall").

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition copyright ©2022 by HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved.

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

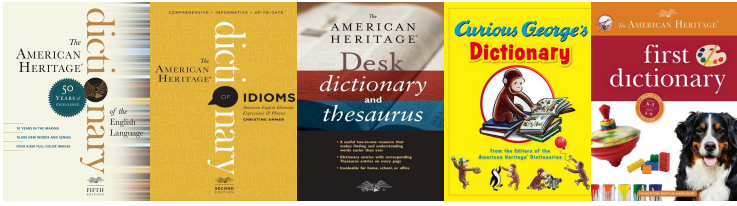
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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](#).

American Heritage Dictionary Products



[The American Heritage Dictionary, 5th Edition](#) • [The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms](#) • [The American Heritage Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus](#) • [Curious George's Dictionary](#) • [The American Heritage First Dictionary](#)

• CONTACT US

- [Customer Service](#)
- [Make Me An Author](#)
- [Ebooks Help with Glose Reader](#)

• ABOUT US

- [Company Profile](#)
- [Leadership Team](#)
- [Corporate Social Responsibility](#)
- [HarperCollins Careers](#)
- [HarperCollins Imprints](#)
- [HarperGreen](#)
- [Social Media Directory](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

• FOR READERS

- [Browse Reading Guides](#)

• FOR AUTHORS

- [Submit a Manuscript](#)
- [Report Piracy](#)
- [Agent Portal](#)

• MEDIA

- [Publicity Contacts](#)
- [Press Room](#)

• SERVICES

- [HarperCollins Speakers Bureau](#)
- [Library Services](#)
- [Academic Services](#)
- [Desk & Exam Copies](#)
- [Review Copies](#)
- [OpenBook API](#)
- [Marketing Partnerships](#)

• COVID-19 RESOURCES & PERMISSIONS

- [Permissions for Adult Online Readings](#)
- [Permissions for Kids Online Readings](#)

• SALES & RIGHTS

- [Booksellers & Retailer Ordering](#)
- [HarperCollins Catalogs](#)
- [Permissions](#)
- [Subsidiary Rights](#)

- [Media Rights and Content Development](#)

• GLOSE APP

- [iPhone](#)
- [Android](#)

• GLOBAL DIVISIONS

- [HarperCollins US](#)
- [HarperCollins Canada](#)
- [HarperCollins Christian](#)
- [HarperCollins Australia](#)
- [HarperCollins India](#)
- [HarperCollins UK](#)

 HarperCollins Publishers

News Corp.

[Terms of Use](#) • [Terms of Sale](#) • [Your Ad Choices](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [California Privacy Policy](#)
[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright 2022 HarperCollins Publishers All rights reserved.

*This website is best viewed in Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Safari. Some characters in pronunciations and etymologies cannot be displayed properly in Internet Explorer.