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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.

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i ¹ or I  (ī)

Share:

n. pl. i's or I's also is or Is

1. The ninth letter of the modern English alphabet.
2. Any of the speech sounds represented by the letter *i*.
3. The ninth in a series.
4. Something shaped like the letter I.



(click for a larger image)

souvenir postcard, Ohio landmarks

Printed in 1937 by Curt Teich & Company of Chicago, Illinois, this postcard celebrates Ohio's architectural attractions.

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I ¹  (ī)

Share:

pron.

Used to refer to oneself as speaker or writer.

n. pl. I's

The self; the ego.

[Middle English, from Old English *ic*; see **eg** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Usage Note: Traditional grammar requires the nominative form of the pronoun following the verb *be*: *It is I* (not *me*), *That must be they* (not *them*), and so forth. Nearly everyone finds this rule difficult to follow. Even if everyone could follow it, in informal contexts the nominative pronoun often sounds pompous and even ridiculous, especially when the verb is contracted. Would anyone ever say *It's we*? But constructions like *It is me* have been condemned in the classroom and in writing handbooks for so long that there seems little likelihood that they will ever be entirely acceptable in formal writing. · The traditional rule creates additional problems when the pronoun following *be* also functions as the object of a verb or preposition in a relative clause, as in *It is not (them/they) that we have in mind*, where the plural pronoun serves as both the predicate of *is* and the object of *have*. Adherence to this rule is waning. In our 1988 survey, 67 percent of the Usage Panel preferred the nominative *they* in the previous example. This percentage fell to 45 just five years later. In our 2009 survey, just 37 percent found *they* to be acceptable in this sentence. Meanwhile, the percent that accepted objective *them* rose steadily from 33 in 1988 to 39 in 1993 to 55 in 2009. Writers who dislike the construction can easily avoid it by saying *They are not the ones we have in mind*, *We have someone else in mind*, and so on. · When pronouns joined by a conjunction occur as the object of a preposition such as *between*, *according to*, or *like*, many people use the nominative form where the traditional grammatical rule would require the objective; they say *between you and I* rather than *between you and me*, and so forth. Some language commentators see this construction as a hypercorrection, in which speakers who have been taught to say *It is I* instead of *It is me* assume that correctness also requires *between you and I* in place of *between you and me*. This explanation of the tendency cannot be the whole story, since the phrase *between you and I* occurs in Shakespeare, roughly three centuries before the prescriptive rule condemning this practice was written. But the *between you and I* construction is nonetheless widely regarded as a mark of ignorance and is best avoided in formal contexts. · There is also a

widespread tendency to use the objective form when a pronoun is used as a subject together with a noun in apposition, as in *Us engineers were left without technical support*. In formal speech or writing the nominative *we* would be preferable here. But when the pronoun itself appears in apposition to a subject noun phrase, the use of the nominative form may sound pedantic in a sentence such as *The remaining members of the admissions committee, namely we, will have to meet next week*. Writers who are uncomfortable about using the objective *us* here should rewrite the sentence to avoid the difficulty. See Usage Notes at [be](#), [but](#), [we](#).

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i²

Share:

1. The symbol for [iodine](#).
2. *Electricity* The symbol for [current](#).
3. also **ı** The symbol for the Roman numeral 1.

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i²

Share: [Tweet](#)

The symbol for [imaginary unit](#).

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I³

Share: [Post](#) [Tweet](#)

- abbr.*
1. incomplete
 2. Independent
 3. inside
 4. interstate
 5. isospin

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I.

Share: [Tweet](#)

- abbr.*
1. island
 2. isle

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i.

Share: [Post](#) [Tweet](#)

- abbr.*
1. *Economics* interest
 2. intransitive

-i-

Share: [Tweet](#)

Used as a connective to join word elements: *setiform*.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin, stem vowel of nouns and adjectives used in combination.]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

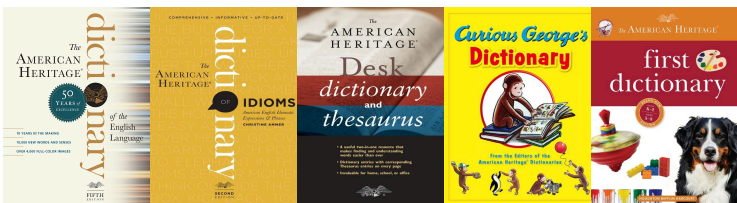
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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