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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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cir·cuit  (sûr kīt)

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n.

1.

a. A closed, usually circular line that goes around an object or area. See Synonyms at [circumference](#).

b. The region enclosed by such a line.

2.

a. A path or route the complete traversal of which without local change of direction requires returning to the starting point.

b. The act of following such a path or route.

c. A journey made on such a path or route.

3. Electronics

a. A closed path followed or capable of being followed by an electric current.

b. A configuration of electrically or electromagnetically connected components or devices.

4.

a. A regular or accustomed course from place to place; a round: *a salesperson on the Detroit–Minneapolis–Chicago circuit; a popular speaker on the lecture circuit.*

b. The area covered by such a course, especially by the judge or judges of a court.

5.

a. An association of theaters in which plays, acts, or films move from theater to theater for presentation.

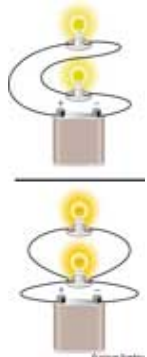
b. A group of nightclubs, show halls, or resorts at which entertainers appear in turn.

c. A series of competitions held in different places.

intr. & tr.v. **cir·cuit·ed**, **cir·cuit·ing**, **cir·cuits**

To make a circuit or circuit of.

[Middle English, circumference, from Old French, from Latin *circuitus*, a going around, from past participle of *circumīre*, to go around : *circum-*, *circum-* + *īre*, to go; see **ei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



(click for a larger image)

circuit

top: Bulbs in a series circuit are dim because electricity has to pass through every bulb in the circuit before returning to the battery.

bottom: Bulbs in a parallel circuit shine brightly because each bulb has its own circuit that connects directly to the battery.

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](#).

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