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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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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](#)



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com·mence  (kə-měns)

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v. com·menced, com·menc·ing, com·menc·es

v.tr.

To begin; start. See Synonyms at [begin](#).

v.intr.

To enter upon or have a beginning; start.

[Middle English *commencen*, from Old French *comencier*, from Vulgar Latin **cominitiāre* : Latin *com-*, intensive pref.; see [COM-](#) + Late Latin *initiāre*, to begin (from Latin *initium*, beginning; see **ei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)).]

com·menc **er** *n.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

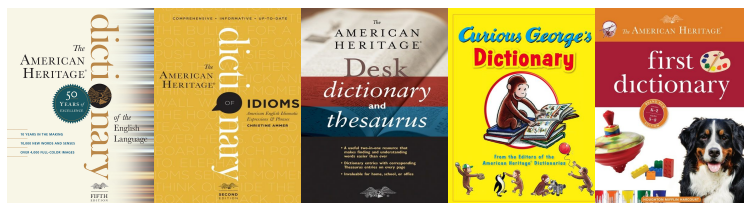
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[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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