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hi·er·o·glyph·ic  (hī'ər-ə-glīf īk, hī'rə-) also **hi·er·o·glyph·i·cal** (-ī-kəl)

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adj.

1.

a. Of, relating to, or being a system of writing, such as that of ancient Egypt, in which pictorial symbols are used to represent meaning or sounds or a combination of meaning and sound.

b. Written with such symbols.

2. Difficult to read or decipher.

n.

1.

a. A hieroglyph.

b. often **hieroglyphics** (*used with a sing. or pl. verb*) Hieroglyphic writing, especially that of the ancient Egyptians.

2. Something, such as illegible or undecipherable writing, that is felt to resemble a hieroglyph.

[French *hiéroglyphique*, from Late Latin *hieroglyphicus*, from Greek *hierogluphikos* : *hieros*, holy; see **eis-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *gluphē*, carving (from *gluphein*, to carve; see **gleubh-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)).]

hi'ər·o·glyph i·cal·ly *adv.*



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hieroglyphic

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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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