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ex·am·ple  (ĭg-zăm pəl)

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n.

1. One that is representative of a group as a whole: *the squirrel, an example of a rodent; introduced each new word with examples of its use.*
2. One serving as a pattern of a specific kind: *set a good example by arriving on time.*
3. A similar case that constitutes a model or precedent: *a unique episode, without example in maritime history.*
4.
 - a. A punishment given as a warning or deterrent: *saw the boy's suspension as an example to all students considering breaking the rules.*
 - b. One that has been given such a punishment: *made an example of the offender.*
5. A problem or exercise used to illustrate a principle or method.

Idiom:

for example

As an illustrative instance: *Wear something simple; for example, a skirt and blouse.*

[Middle English, from Old French *example*, *essaumple*, from Latin *exemplum*, from *eximere*, to take out : *ex-*, *ex-* + *emere*, to take; see **em-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Synonyms: **example**, **instance**, **case**¹, **illustration**, **specimen**

These nouns refer to what is representative of or serves to explain a larger group or class. An *example* is a typically representative part that demonstrates the character of the whole: "*Of the despotism to which unrestrained military power leads we have plenty of examples from Alexander to Mao*" (Samuel Eliot Morison).

An *instance* is an example that is cited to prove or illustrate a point: *offered the statistics as an instance of why the penal system needed to be overhauled*. A *case* is an example belonging to a particular category: *a case of life imitating art*. An *illustration* clarifies or explains: "*[The author] has provided an illustration of a first-rate experimental mind at work*" (Richard Bernstein).

Specimen often denotes an individual, representative member of a group or class: *This poem is an excellent specimen of her work*.

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

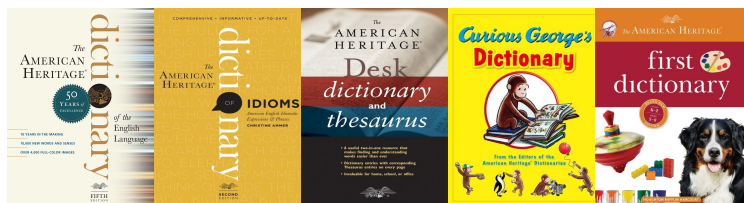
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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