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AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language

  


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[guide to the dictionary](#)



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**con·sume**  (kən-s m )

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v. **con·sumed**, **con·sum·ing**, **con·sumes**

v.tr.

1. To take in as food; eat or drink up. See Synonyms at [eat](#).

2.

a. To expend; use up: *engines that consume less fuel; a project that consumed most of my time and energy.*

b. To purchase (goods or services) for direct use or ownership.

3. To waste; squander.

4. To destroy totally; ravage: *flames that consumed the house; a body consumed by cancer.*

5. To absorb; engross: *consumed with jealousy.* See Synonyms at [engross](#).

v.intr.

To purchase economic goods and services: *a society that consumes as fast as it produces.*

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[Middle English *consumen*, from Latin *cōnsūmere* : *com-*, intensive pref.; see [COM-](#) + *sūmere*, to take; see **em-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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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](#)

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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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