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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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ab·sent  (ăb sənt)

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adj.

1. Not present; missing: *absent friends; absent parents.*
2. Not existent; lacking: *a country in which morality is absent.*
3. Exhibiting or feeling inattentiveness: *an absent nod.*

tr.v. (ăb-sənt) **ab·sent·ed**, **ab·sent·ing**, **ab·sents**

To keep (oneself) away: *They absented themselves from the debate.*

prep.

Without: *"Absent a legislative fix, this is an invitation for years of litigation" (Brian E. O'Neill).*

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *absēns*, *absent-*, present participle of *abesse*, to be away : *ab-*, away; see [AB-](#)¹ + *esse*, to be; see **es-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.](#)]

ab sent·ly *adv.*

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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:

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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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