



The  
AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language


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To look up an entry in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, use the search window above. For best results, after typing in the word, click on the “Search” button instead of using the “enter” key.

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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**cam**  (kăm)

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*n.*

1. A wheel that has a projecting part and is mounted on a rotating shaft to produce variable or reciprocating motion in another part.
2. Any of various similar devices having a rotating part of variable radius that interacts with another part to exert a variable force or resistance.

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[Dutch *kam*, cog, comb; see **gembh-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

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**CAM**

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*abbr.*

1. complementary and alternative medicine
2. computer-aided manufacturing

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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:

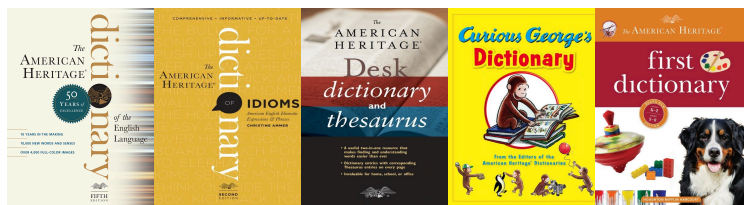
[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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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