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[guide to the dictionary](#)



THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



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kind ¹ (kīnd)

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adj. **kind·er, kind·est**

1. Having or showing a friendly, generous, sympathetic, or warm-hearted nature.
2. Agreeable or beneficial: *a dry climate kind to asthmatics.*

[Middle English *kinde*, natural, kind, from Old English *gecynde*, natural; see **gena-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.](#)]

Synonyms: **kind**¹, **kindly**, **kindhearted**, **benign**, **benevolent**

These adjectives mean having or showing a tender, considerate, and helping nature. *Kind* and *kindly* are the least specific: *thanked her for her kind letter; a kindly gentleman.* *Kindhearted* especially suggests an innately kind disposition: *a kindhearted teacher.* *Benign* implies gentleness and mildness: *benign intentions; a benign sovereign.* *Benevolent* suggests charitableness and a desire to promote the welfare or happiness of others: *a benevolent contributor.*

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kind ² (kīnd)

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n.

1.

- a. A group of individuals or instances sharing common traits; a category or sort: *different kinds of furniture; a new kind of politics.*
- b. A doubtful or borderline member of a given category: *fashioned a kind of shelter; a kind of bluish color.*

2. Archaic

- a. Underlying character as a determinant of the class to which a thing belongs; nature or essence.
- b. The natural order or course of things; nature.
- c. Manner or fashion.

3. Obsolete

- a. Lineal ancestry or descent.
- b. Lineal ancestors or descendants considered as a group.

Idioms:

all kinds of Informal

Plenty of; ample: *We have all kinds of time to finish the job.*

in kind

1. With produce or commodities rather than with money: *pay in kind.*
2. In the same manner or with an equivalent: *returned the slight in kind.*

kind of Informal

Rather; somewhat: *I'm kind of hungry.*

of a kind

Of the same kind; alike: *My father and my uncle are two of a kind.*

[Middle English, from Old English *gecynd*, race, offspring, kind; see **gena-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Usage Note: The words *kind*, *sort*, and *type* can be troublesome when they are used with plural nouns and modifiers. Sentences like *I hate these kind of movies* may occur with some frequency but are awkward, and some would say, grammatically incorrect. The Usage Panel frowns upon these usages. In our 2005 survey, 81 percent rejected the use of *kind* with a plural modifier and plural noun in the sentence *Those kind of buildings seem old-fashioned*. Fully 88 percent of the Panel found unacceptable the use of *kind* with a singular modifier and plural noun and verb in *That kind of buildings seem old fashioned*. In these examples *kind* would presumably function as a determiner like *number* in *A great number of people have crowded into the lobby*. (Note that *number* here is singular, but the plural verb *have* agrees with the plural noun *people*, so *number* is not really the subject of the sentence). This problem can be avoided by making the phrase entirely singular (as in *That kind of movie is always enjoyable*) or by revising so that the noun is the plural subject (as in *Movies of that kind are always enjoyable*). Bear in mind that plural *kinds* often implies that the phrase refers to a number of different categories of things—more than one genre of movie, for example. Perhaps the best solution is to drop the *kind* phrase entirely (*Those movies are always enjoyable*) or to be specific (*Those spy movies are always enjoyable*).

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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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