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AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language

  


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[guide to the dictionary](#)



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**carve**  (kärv)

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v. **carved**, **carv·ing**, **carves**

v.tr.

1.

a. To divide into pieces by cutting; slice: *carved a roast*.

b. To divide by parceling out: *carve up an estate*.

2. To cut into a desired shape; fashion by cutting: *carve the wood into a figure*.

3. To make or form by or as if by cutting: *carve initials in the bark*; *carved out an empire*.

4. To decorate by cutting and shaping carefully.

5. To make (a turn or turns) smoothly and without skidding, as when skiing or riding a snowboard, by leaning sharply into the direction of the turn.

v.intr.

1. To engrave or cut figures as an art, hobby, or trade.

2. To disjoint, slice, and serve meat or poultry.

3. To carve turns, as when skiing.

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[Middle English *kerven*, from Old English *ceorfan*; see **gerbh-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**carv** **er** *n.*

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[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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