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for·give  (fər-gĭv , fôr-)

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v. **for·gave** (-gāv), **for·giv·en** (-gĭv ən), **for·giv·ing**, **for·gives**

v.tr.

1. To give up resentment against or stop wanting to punish (someone) for an offense or fault; pardon.
2. To relent in being angry or in wishing to exact punishment for (an offense or fault).
3. To absolve from payment of (a debt, for example).

v.intr.

To grant forgiveness.

[Middle English *forgiven*, from Old English *forgiefan*; see **ghabh-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

for·giv a·ble *adj.*

for·giv a·bly *adv.*

for·giv er *n.*

Synonyms: forgive, pardon, excuse, condone

These verbs mean to refrain from imposing punishment on an offender or demanding satisfaction for an offense. The first three can be used as conventional ways of offering apology. More strictly, to *forgive* is to grant pardon without harboring resentment: "*Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them*" (Oscar Wilde).

Pardon more strongly implies release from the liability for or penalty entailed by an offense: *After the revolution all political prisoners were pardoned.*

To *excuse* is to pass over a mistake or fault without demanding punishment or redress: "*Valencia was incredibly generous to these deadbeats. She memorized their poetry and excused their bad behavior*" ([David Sedaris](#)).

To *condone* is to overlook an offense, usually a serious one, and often suggests tacit forgiveness: *Failure to protest the policy may imply a willingness to condone it.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

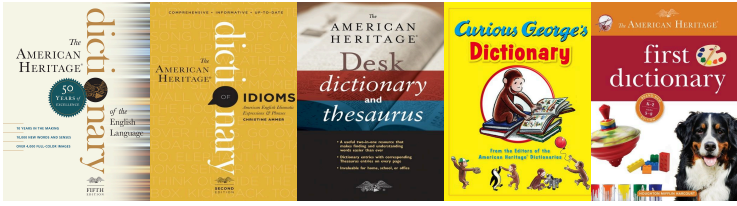
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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