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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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in·her·it  (in-hĕr ĭt)

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v. **in·her·it·ed**, **in·her·it·ing**, **in·her·its**

v.tr.

1. *Law*

a. To take (property) by law of descent from an intestate owner.

b. To receive (property) by will; receive by bequest or devise.

2. To receive or take over from a predecessor: *The new administration inherited the economic problems of the last four years.*

3. *Biology* To receive (a characteristic) from a parent or ancestor by genetic transmission.

4. To gain (something) as one's right or portion: *"A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (King James Bible).*

v.intr.

To hold or take possession of an inheritance.

[Middle English *enheriten*, from Old French *enheriter*, to make heir to, from Late Latin *inhērēditāre*, to inherit : Latin *in-*, in; see [IN-](#)² + Late Latin *hērēditāre*, to inherit (from Latin *hērēs*, *hērēd-*, heir; see **ghē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)).]

in·her i·tor *n.*

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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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