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com·prise  (kəm-prīz)

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tr.v. **com·prised, com·pris·ing, com·pris·es**

1. To be composed of or contain: *The staff comprises eight physicians, two dozen nurses, and various administrative people.* See Synonyms at [include](#).
2. *Usage Problem* To compose; make up; constitute: *the countries and territories that comprised the British Empire.*

[Middle English *comprisen*, from Old French *compris*, past participle of *comprendre*, to include, from Latin *comprehendere, comprēdere*; see [COMPREHEND](#).]

com·pris a·ble *adj.*

Usage Note: The traditional rule states that the whole *comprises* the parts and the parts *compose* the whole. In strict usage: *The Union comprises 50 states. Fifty states compose (or make up) the Union.* Even though many writers maintain this distinction, *comprise* is often used in place of *compose*, especially in the passive: *The Union is comprised of 50 states.* Our surveys show that opposition to this usage has abated but has not disappeared. In the 1960s, 53 percent of the Usage Panel found this usage unacceptable; by 1996, the proportion objecting had declined to 35 percent; and by 2011, it had fallen a bit more, to 32 percent. See Usage Note at [include](#).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

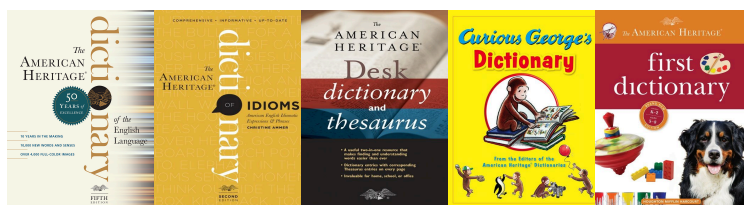
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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