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co·hort  (kō hōrt')

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n.

1.

a. A group or band of people.

b. A companion or associate.

c. A generational group as defined in demographics, statistics, or market research: “*The cohort of people aged 30 to 39 ... were more conservative*” (*American Demographics*).

2.

a. One of the 10 divisions of a Roman legion, consisting of 300 to 600 men.

b. A group of soldiers.

[Middle English, from Old French *cohorte*, from Latin *cohors*, *cohort-*; see **gher-**¹ in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

Usage Note: The English word *cohort* comes from the Latin word *cohors*, which meant “an enclosed area” or “a pen or courtyard enclosing a group of cattle or poultry.” By extension, the word could refer to any group in general and in particular to a company of soldiers or a troop of cavalry in the army of ancient Rome. The group of men forming the bodyguard of a Roman general or the retinue of a provincial governor was also called a *cohors*. Because of this history, some people insist that the English word *cohort* should be used to refer only to a group of people and never to an individual person. But the use of *cohort* in reference to individuals is common, especially in the plural, and enjoys some acceptance; in our 2017 ballot, 52 percent of the Usage Panel accepted the sentence *The cashiered dictator and his cohorts have all written their memoirs*. The traditional usage referring to a group enjoys stronger approval: 69 percent accepted *The gangster walked into the room surrounded by his cohort*, and 84 percent accepted the sentence *Like many in her cohort, she was never interested in kids when she was young*, which uses the word in a more specialized sociological or demographic context.

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

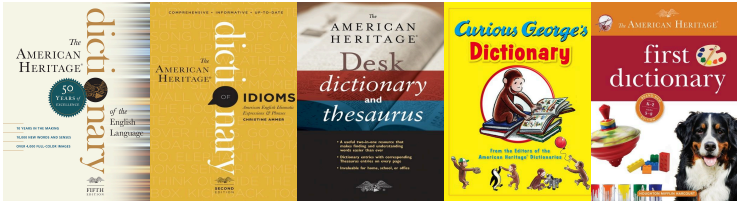
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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