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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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hos·tage  (hۆs tĭj)

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n.

1. A person held by one party in a conflict as security that specified terms will be met by the opposing party.
2. One that serves as security against an implied threat: *superpowers held hostage to each other by their nuclear arsenals.*
3. One that is under the constraining control of another: *"In becoming a mother one becomes a hostage to fortune" (Janna Malamud Smith).*

[Middle English, from Old French, probably from *host*, guest, host; see [HOST](#)¹.]

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