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dictionary

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Language



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THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



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grow  (grō)

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v. **grew** (gr), **grown** (grōn), **grow·ing**, **grows**

v.intr.

1. To increase in size by a natural process.

2.

a. To expand; gain: *The business grew under new owners.*

b. To increase in amount or degree; intensify: *The suspense grew.*

3. To develop and reach maturity.

4. To be capable of growth; thrive: *a plant that grows in shade.*

5. To become attached by or as if by the process of growth: *tree trunks that had grown together.*

6. To come into existence from a source; spring up: *love that grew from friendship.*

7. To come to be by a gradual process or by degrees; become: *grow angry; grow closer.*

v.tr.

1. To cause to grow; raise: *grow tulips.*

2. To allow (something) to develop or increase by a natural process: *grow a beard.*

3. *Usage Problem* To cause to increase or expand by concerted effort: *strategies that grew the family business.*

Phrasal Verbs:

grow into

1. To develop so as to become: *A boy grows into a man.*

2. To develop or change so as to fit: *She grew into her job. He grew into the relationship slowly.*

grow on (or upon)

1. To become gradually more evident to: *A feeling of distrust grew on me.*

2. To become gradually more pleasurable or acceptable to: *a taste that grows on a person.*

grow up

To become an adult.

Idiom:

grow out of

To develop or come into existence from: *an article that grew out of a few scribbled notes.*

[Middle English *growen*, from Old English *grōwan*; see **ghrē-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

grow er *n.*

grow ing·ly *adv.*

Usage Note: *Grow* is most often used as an intransitive verb, as in *The corn grew fast* or *Our business has been growing steadily for 10 years*. This use dates back to the Middle Ages. In the 1700s, a transitive sense arose with the meaning "to produce or cultivate," as in *We grow corn in our garden*. Then, starting in the late 1900s, people began to use *grow* with a nonliving thing or even an abstraction as the direct object, often in the context of politics or business, as in *One of our key strategies is to grow our business by increasing the number of clients*. This trend was widely criticized. In 1992, only 20 percent of the Usage Panel accepted the sentence above, and only 48 percent accepted *We've got to grow our way out of this recession*. These usages remain common, however, and resistance to them has lessened: in 2014, 60 percent of the Panel accepted the *grow our business* sentence, and 65 percent accepted the *grow our way out of the recession* sentence. But Panelists strongly frown upon the phrase *grow down*, probably because it seems oxymoronic: 96 percent of the Panel found it unacceptable.

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](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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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