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AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language

  


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[guide to the dictionary](#)



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**di·ag·no·sis**  (dī'æg-nō sīs)

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*n. pl. di·ag·no·ses* (-sēz)

**1. Medicine**

**a.** The act or process of identifying or determining the nature and cause of a disease or injury through evaluation of patient history, examination, and review of laboratory data.

**b.** The opinion derived from such an evaluation.

**2.**

**a.** A critical analysis of the nature of something.

**b.** The conclusion reached by such analysis.

**3. Biology** A brief description of the distinguishing characteristics of an organism, as for taxonomic classification.

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[Greek *diagnōsis*, discernment, from *diagignōskein*, to distinguish : *dia-*, apart; see [DIA-](#) + *gignōskein*, *gnō-*, to come to know, discern; see **gnō-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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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](#)

[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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