



The
AMERICAN
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the
English
Language



HOW TO USE THE DICTIONARY

To look up an entry in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, use the search window above. For best results, after typing in the word, click on the “Search” button instead of using the “enter” key.

Some compound words (like *bus rapid transit*, *dog whistle*, or *identity theft*) don’t appear on the drop-down list when you type them in the search bar. For best results with compound words, place a quotation mark before the compound word in the search window.

[guide to the dictionary](#)



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](#)



AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY APP

The new American Heritage Dictionary app is now available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).



THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY BLOG

The articles in our [blog](#) examine new words, revised definitions, interesting images from the fifth edition, discussions of usage, and more.

THE 100 WORDS®

See word lists from the best-selling 100 Words Series!

[Find out more!](#)



INTERESTED IN DICTIONARIES?

Check out the Dictionary Society of North America at <http://www.dictionariesociety.com>

come 🗣️ (kŭm)

Share: [Tweet](#)

intr.v. **came**(kām), **come**, **com·ing**, **comes**

1.
 - a. To advance toward the speaker or toward a specified place; approach: *Come to me.*
 - b. To advance in a specified manner: *The children came reluctantly when I insisted.*
2.
 - a. To make progress; advance: *a former drug addict who has come a long way.*
 - b. To fare: *How are things coming today? They're coming fine.*
3.
 - a. To reach a particular point in a series or as a result of orderly progression: *At last we came to the chapter on ergonomics.*
 - b. To arrive, as in due course: *Dawn comes at 5 AM in June.*
4. To move into view; appear: *The moon came over the horizon.*
5. To occur in time; take place: *The game will be played tomorrow, come rain or shine.*
6.
 - a. To arrive at a particular result or end: *come to an understanding.*
 - b. To arrive at or reach a particular state or condition: *Come to your senses!*
 - c. To move or be brought to a particular position: *The convoy came to an abrupt halt.*
7. To extend; reach: *water that came to my waist.*
8. To have priority; rank: *My work comes first.*
9. To happen as a result: *This mess comes of your carelessness.*
10. To fall to one: *No good can come of this.*
11. To occur in the mind: *A good idea just came to me.*
12.
 - a. To issue forth: *A cry came from the frightened child.*
 - b. To be derived; originate: *Oaks come from acorns.*
 - c. To be descended: *They come from a good family.*
 - d. To be within a given range or spectrum of reference or application: *This stipulation comes within the terms of your contract.*
13. To be a native or resident: *My friend comes from Chicago.*
14. To add up to a certain amount: *Expenses came to more than income.*
15.
 - a. To become: *The knot came loose. This is a dream that has come true.*
 - b. To turn out to be: *A good education doesn't come cheap.*
16. To be available or obtainable: *shoes that come in all sizes.*
17. *Vulgar Slang* To experience orgasm.

n. also **cum** (kŭm)

Vulgar Slang

Semen ejaculated during orgasm.

Phrasal Verbs:

come about

1. To take place; happen.
2. To turn around.
3. *Nautical* To change tack.

come across

1. To meet or find by chance: *came across my old college roommate in town today.*

2. **Slang**

a. To do what is wanted.

b. To pay over money that is demanded: *came across with the check.*

3. To give an impression: "*He comes across as a very sincere, religious individual*" (William L. Clay).

come along

1. To make advances to a goal; progress: *Things are coming along fine.*

2. To go with someone else who takes the lead: *I'll come along on the hike.*

3. To show up; appear: *Don't take the first offer that comes along.*

come around (or round)

1. To recover, revive: *fainted but soon came around.*

2. To change one's opinion or position: *You'll come around after you hear the whole story.*

come at

1. To obtain; get: *come at an education through study.*

2. To rush at; attack.

come back

1. To return to or regain past success after a period of misfortune.

2. To retort; reply: *came back with a sharp riposte.*

3. To recur to the memory: *It's all coming back to me now.*

come between

To cause to be in conflict or estrangement.

come by

1. To gain possession of; acquire: *Mortgages are hard to come by.*

2. To pay a visit.

come down

1. To lose wealth or position: *He has really come down in the world.*

2.

a. To pass or be handed down by tradition: *customs that come down from colonial times.*

b. To be handed down from a higher authority: *An indictment finally came down.*

3. **Slang** To happen; occur: *What's coming down tonight?*

4. **Slang** To experience diminishing effects of a recreational or hallucinogenic drug.

come in

1.

a. To arrive: *Fall clothes will be coming in soon.*

b. To become available for use: *New weather information just came in.*

c. To start producing. Used of an oil well.

2. To arrive among those who finish a contest or race: *came in fifth.*

3. To perform or function in a particular way: *A food processor comes in handy.*

4. To reply in a specified manner to a call or signal: *The pilot's voice came in loud and clear.*

5. To take on a specified role: *When editorial review commences, that's where you come in.*

come into

To acquire, especially as an inheritance: *She came into a fortune on her 21st birthday.*

come off

1. To happen; occur: *The trip came off on schedule.*

2. To acquit oneself: *She is sure to come off badly if challenged to explain.*

3. To turn out to be successful: *a party that came off.*

come on

1. To convey a particular personal image: *comes on as an old-fashioned reactionary.*

2. **Slang** To show sexual interest in someone: *trying to come on to me during the party.*

3.

a. To progress or advance in increments: *Darkness came on after seven.*

b. To begin in small increments or by degrees: *Sleet came on after one o'clock.*

4. To hurry up; move rapidly. Often used in the imperative: *Would you please come on! We'll be late!*

5. To stop an inappropriate behavior; abandon a position or an attitude; be obliging. Used chiefly in the imperative:

You've used the same feeble excuse for weeks. Come on!

come out

1. To become known: *The whole story came out at the trial.*

2. To be issued or brought out: *The author's new book just came out.*

3. To make a formal social debut: *She came out at age 18 in New York City.*

4. To end up; result: *Everything came out wrong.*

5. To declare oneself publicly: *The governor came out in favor of tax breaks.*

6. To reveal one's sexual orientation or gender identity, especially as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

come over

1. To change sides, as in a controversy.

2. To pay a casual visit.

come through

1. To do what is required or anticipated: *I asked for their help, and they came through.*

2.

a. To become manifest: *The parents' tenderness comes through in their facial expressions.*

b. To be communicated: *The coach's displeasure came through loud and clear.*

come to

1. To recover consciousness: *The fainting victim came to.*

2. *Nautical*

a. To bring the bow into the wind.

b. To anchor.

come up

1. To manifest itself; arise: *The question never came up.*

2. To rise above the horizon: *The sun came up.*

3. To rise, as in status or rank: *a general who came up from the ranks.*

4. To draw near; approach: *came up and said hello.*

5. To grow up: *"If they would have had this Internet stuff when I was coming up, I would have been in Harvard by now"* (Shaquille O'Neal).

come upon

To discover or meet by accident.

come with *Informal*

To accompany someone; go along: *I'm going to the store; do you want to come with?*

Idioms:

come a cropper

To fail utterly.

come again

Used as a request to repeat what was said.

come clean

To confess all.

come down on

To punish, oppose, or reprimand severely and often with force: *a district attorney who came down hard on drug dealers.*

come down to

1. To confront or deal with forthrightly: *When you come right down to it, you have to admit I'm correct.*

2. To amount to in essence: *It comes down to this: the man is a cheat.*

come down with

To become sick with (an illness): *came down with the flu.*

come in for

To receive; be subjected to: *came in for harsh criticism.*

come into (one's) own

1. To get possession of what belongs to one.

2. To obtain rightful recognition or prosperity: *a concert pianist who has at last come into his own.*

come off it *Slang*

To stop acting or speaking foolishly or pretentiously. Often used in the imperative.

come out with

1. To put into words; say: *always comes out with the truth.*

2. To reveal publicly: *came out with a new tax package.*

come to blows

To begin a physical fight.

come to grief

To meet with disaster; fail.

come to grips with

To confront squarely and attempt to deal decisively with: *"He had to come to grips with the proposition"* (Louis Auchincloss).

come to light (or *hand*)

To be clearly revealed or disclosed: *"A further problem ... came to light last summer as a result of post-flight inspections"* (John Noble Wilford).

come to terms with

1. To come to accept; become reconciled to: *finally came to terms with his lack of talent.*
2. To reach mutual agreement: *The warring factions have at last come to terms.*

come true

To happen as predicted: *My fondest dreams have at last come true.*

come up against

To encounter, especially a difficulty or major problem.

come up with

To bring forth, discover, or produce: *came up with a cure for the disease.*

[Middle English *comen*, from Old English *cuman*; see **g^wā-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition copyright ©2022 by HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved.

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

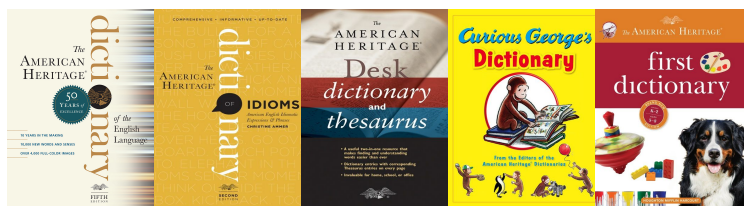
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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](#).

American Heritage Dictionary Products



[The American Heritage Dictionary, 5th Edition](#) [The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms](#) [The American Heritage Roget's Thesaurus](#) [Curious George's Dictionary](#) [The American Heritage Children's Dictionary](#)

• CONTACT US

- [Customer Service](#)
- [Make Me An Author](#)
- [Ebooks Help with Gloze Reader](#)

• ABOUT US

- [Company Profile](#)
- [Leadership Team](#)
- [Corporate Social Responsibility](#)

- [HarperCollins Careers](#)
- [HarperCollins Imprints](#)
- [HarperGreen](#)
- [Social Media Directory](#)
- [Accessibility](#)

• FOR READERS

- [Browse Reading Guides](#)

• FOR AUTHORS

- [Submit a Manuscript](#)
- [Report Piracy](#)
- [Agent Portal](#)

• MEDIA

- [Publicity Contacts](#)
- [Press Room](#)

• SERVICES

- [HarperCollins Speakers Bureau](#)

- [Library Services](#)
- [Academic Services](#)
- [Desk & Exam Copies](#)
- [Review Copies](#)
- [OpenBook API](#)
- [Marketing Partnerships](#)
- **COVID-19 RESOURCES & PERMISSIONS**
- [Permissions for Adult Online Readings](#)
- [Permissions for Kids Online Readings](#)
- **SALES & RIGHTS**
- [Booksellers & Retailer Ordering](#)
- [HarperCollins Catalogs](#)
- [Permissions](#)
- [Subsidiary Rights](#)
- [Media Rights and Content Development](#)
- **GLOSE APP**
- [iPhone](#)
- [Android](#)
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
- **GLOBAL DIVISIONS**
- [HarperCollins US](#)
- [HarperCollins Canada](#)
- [HarperCollins Christian](#)
- [HarperCollins Australia](#)
- [HarperCollins India](#)
- [HarperCollins UK](#)
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



[Terms of Use](#) • [Terms of Sale](#) • [Your Ad Choices](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [California Privacy Policy](#)
[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright 2022 HarperCollins Publishers All rights reserved.

*This website is best viewed in Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Safari. Some characters in pronunciations and etymologies cannot be displayed properly in Internet Explorer.