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gun 🔊 (gŭn)

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n.

1. A weapon consisting of a metal tube from which a projectile is fired at high velocity into a relatively flat trajectory, especially:

a. A portable firearm, such as a rifle or revolver.

b. A cannon with a long barrel and a relatively low angle of fire.

2. A device resembling a firearm or cannon, as in its ability to project something, such as grease or paint, under pressure or at great speed.

3. A discharge of a firearm or cannon as a signal or salute: *heard the guns honoring the leader.*

4. One who is armed with or skilled in the use of a gun.

5. The throttle of an engine, as of an automobile.

6. **guns** *Slang* The biceps muscles of the arms.

v. **gunned, gun·ning, guns**

v.tr.

1. To shoot (a person): *a bank robber who was gunned down by the police.*

2. To open the throttle of (an engine) so as to accelerate: *gunned the engine and sped off.*

v.intr.

To hunt with a gun.

Phrasal Verb:

gun for

1. To plan or take action to harm or destroy (someone).

2. To go after in earnest; set out to obtain: *gunning for a promotion.*

Idioms:

go great guns

To proceed or perform with great speed, skill, or success.

hold a gun to (someone's) head

To put pressure on someone.

under the gun

Under great pressure or under threat.

[Middle English *gonne*, cannon, short for *Gunilda*, woman's name applied to a siege engine, from Old Norse *Gunnhildr*, woman's name : *gunnr*, war; see **g^when-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *hildr*, war.]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

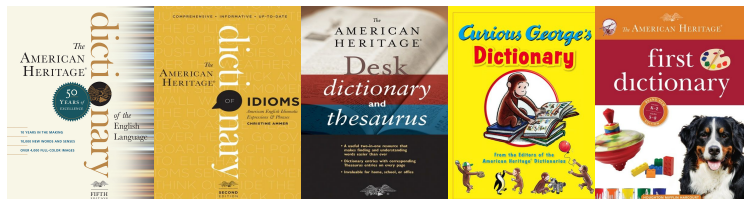
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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