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de·fense  (dĭ-fĕns)

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n.

1. The act of defending against attack, danger, or injury.
2. A means or method of defending or protecting.
3. *Sports* The act or an instance of defending a championship against a challenger: *will box in his third defense of his title.*
4. An argument in support or justification of something. See Synonyms at [apology](#).
5. *Law*
 - a. The act of defending a case.
 - b. A fact or law that provides a full or partial exoneration of the defendant against the charges or claims made in a lawsuit or prosecution.
 - c. The defendant and the defendant's legal counsel.
6. The science or art of defending oneself; self-defense.
7. (*often* dē fĕns') *Sports*
 - a. The means or tactics used in trying to stop the opposition from scoring.
 - b. The team or those players on the team attempting to stop the opposition from scoring.
 - c. Defending ability or potential.
8. The provision of personnel and resources for military purposes: *proposed spending more on defense.*

tr.v. **de·fensed**, **de·fens·ing**, **de·fens·es**

Sports

1. To attempt to stop (the opposition) from scoring.
2. To play defense against (an opponent or play).

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *dēfēnsa*, from feminine past participle of *dēfendere*, to ward off; see [DEFEND](#).]

de·fense **less** *adj.*

de·fense **less·ly** *adv.*

de·fense **less·ness** *n.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

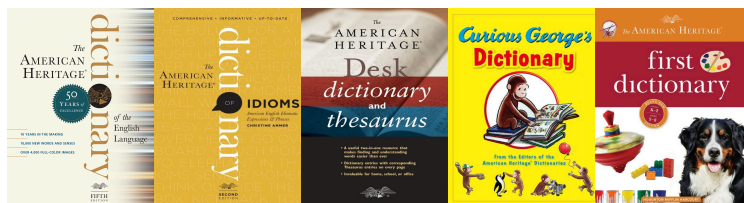
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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