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hen  (hĕn)

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n.

1. A female bird, especially the adult female chicken.
2. The female of certain aquatic animals, such as an octopus or lobster.
3. *Often Offensive Slang* A usually older woman, especially one who is engaged in conversation with other women.

[Middle English, from Old English; see **kan-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

hen **nish** *adj.*

hen **nish·ly** *adv.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

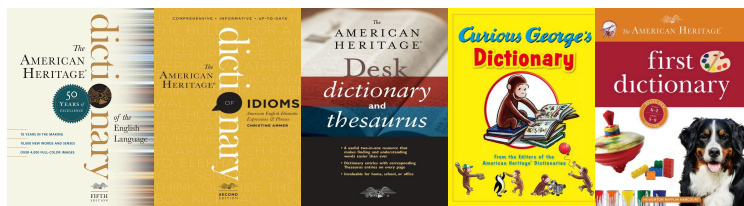
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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