



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>

de·ceive (dĭ-sēv)

Share: [Tweet](#)

v. de·ceived, de·ceiv·ing, de·ceives

v.tr.

1. To cause to believe what is not true; mislead.

2. *Archaic* To catch by guile; ensnare.

v.intr.

1. To practice deceit.

2. To give a false impression: *appearances can deceive*.

[Middle English *deceiven*, from Old French *deceveir*, from Vulgar Latin **dēcipēre*, from Latin *dēcipere*, to ensnare, deceive : *dē-*, *de-* + *capere*, to seize; see **kap-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

de·ceiv a·ble *adj.*

de·ceiv er *n.*

de·ceiv ing·ly *adv.*

Synonyms: [deceive](#), [mislead](#), [delude](#), [dupe](#), [hoodwink](#), [bamboozle](#)

These verbs mean to cause someone to believe something untrue, usually with an ulterior motive in mind. *Deceive*, the most general, stresses the deliberate misrepresentation of what one knows to be true: "*We are inclined to believe those whom we do not know, because they have never deceived us*" (Samuel Johnson).

To *mislead* is to direct toward a wrong conclusion, as by the use of half-truths or obfuscation; it is often but not always intentional: "*Writing for young people may tempt authors to oversimplify technical information, which may mislead or confuse the reader*" (Margaret Bush).

Delude can imply a deception so thorough as to foster belief that is not merely misplaced but often irrational; it may also imply a strong dose of wishful thinking: "*I knew, suddenly, in a thunderbolt of awareness, that I had been deluding myself for years, and had madly fancied myself a writer, when I was nothing of the sort*" (Margaret Drabble).

To *dupe* is to play upon another's susceptibilities or naiveté: *The shoppers were duped by false advertising. Hoodwink* and the informal *bamboozle* refer to deception by hoaxing, trickery, or artful persuasion: "*Worst of all ... the orchestra manager ... has somehow hoodwinked me with his courtly southern manner into signing another multiyear contract*" (Arnold Steinhardt). "*Perhaps if I wanted to be understood or to understand I would bamboozle myself into belief, but I am a reporter*" (Graham Greene).

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

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

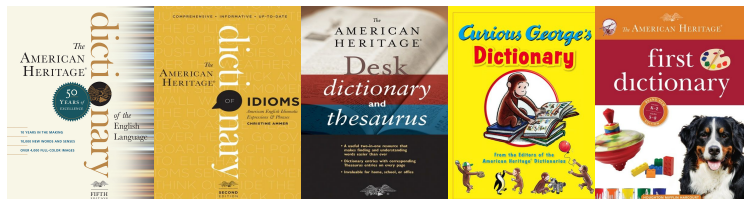
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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 Glose 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](#)
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

 HarperCollins Publishers

News Corp.

[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.