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dictionary

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Language



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chap·ter  (chăp tər)

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n.

1.

a. One of the main divisions of a relatively lengthy piece of writing, such as a book, that is usually numbered or titled.

b. One of the main divisions of a video recording, usually accessible through an onscreen menu.

2. A distinct period or sequence of events, as in history or a person's life: *Steamboat travel opened a new chapter in America's exploration of the West.*

3. A local branch of an organization, such as a club or fraternity: *The Chicago chapter is admitting new members this year.*

4. *Ecclesiastical*

a. An assembly of the canons of a church or of the members of a religious residence.

b. The canons of a church or the members of a religious residence considered as a group.

5. A short scriptural passage read after the psalms in certain church services.

[Middle English *chaptre*, variant of *chapitre*, chapter, chapitre, from Old French, alteration of *chapitle*, from Latin *capitulum*, diminutive of *caput*, head; see **kaput-** [in the Appendix of 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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