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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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chief·tain  (chēf tən)

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n.

The leader or head of a group, especially of a clan or tribe.

[Middle English *cheftain*, from Old French *chevetain*, from Late Latin *capitāneus*, from Latin *caput*, head; see **kaput-** in the [Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

chief tain·cy *n.*

chief tain·ship *n.*

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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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