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dictionary

of the  
English  
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**mis·chief**  (mĭs chĭf)

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*n.*

1. Behavior that causes annoyance or difficulty: *tried to keep the kids from engaging in any mischief.*
2.
  - a. Damage, destruction, or injury caused by a specific person or thing: *the mischief done by a faulty gene.*
  - b. *Archaic* A specific injury or harm done: *"Instead of doing them a service, you meant to do them a mischief?" (Charles Dickens).*
3. The inclination or tendency to play pranks or get into trouble: *eyes that gleamed with mischief.*

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[Middle English *miscief*, from Old French *meschief*, misfortune, from *meschever*, to end badly : *mes-*, badly; see [MIS](#).<sup>1</sup> + *chever*, to happen, come to an end (from Vulgar Latin *\*capāre*, to come to a head, from *\*capum*, head, from Latin *caput*; see [kaput-](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)).]

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## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

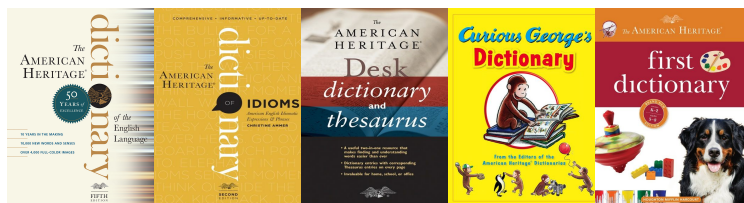
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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