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dictionary

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coun·cil  (koun səl)

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n.

1.

a. An assembly of persons called together for consultation, deliberation, or discussion.

b. A body of people elected or appointed to serve as administrators, legislators, or advisers.

c. An assembly of church officials and theologians convened for regulating matters of doctrine and discipline.

2. The discussion or deliberation that takes place in such an assembly or body.

[Middle English *counceil*, from Old French *concile*, from Latin *concilium*; see **kela-**² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Usage Note: *Council*, *counsel*, and *consul* are never interchangeable, though their meanings are related. *Council* and *councilor* refer principally to a deliberative assembly (such as a city council or student council), its work, and its membership. *Counsel* and *counselor* pertain chiefly to advice and guidance in general and to a person (such as a lawyer or camp counselor) who provides it. *Consul* denotes an officer in the foreign service of a country.

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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:

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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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