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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.

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cres·cen·do  (krə-shĕn dō)

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n. pl. **cres·cen·dos** or **cres·cen·di** (-dē)

1. Abbr. cr. Music

a. A gradual increase in the volume or intensity of sound in a passage.

b. A passage played with a gradual increase in volume or intensity.

2.

a. A steady increase in intensity or force: *"insisted [that] all paragraphs ... should be structured as a crescendo rising to a climactic last sentence"* (Henry A. Kissinger).

b. Usage Problem The climactic point or moment after such a progression: *"The attacks ... began in December ... and reached a crescendo during [the president's] September visit"* (Foreign Affairs).

adj.

Gradually increasing in volume, force, or intensity.

adv.

Music

With a crescendo.

intr.v. **cres·cen·doed**, **cres·cen·do·ing**, **cres·cen·does**

To build up to or reach a point of great intensity, force, or volume: *"The designer-name craze crescendoed in the mid-seventies"* (Bernice Kanner).

[Italian, present participle of *crescere*, to increase, from Latin *crēscere*; see **ker-**² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Usage Note: *Crescendo* is sometimes used to refer to a climax or peak, as in noise level, rather than an increase. The Usage Panel has mixed feelings about this usage, though the evidence suggests that acceptance of it is slowly increasing. In our 1988 survey, 55 percent of the Usage Panel rejected it in the sentence *When the guard sank a three-pointer to tie the game, the noise of the crowd reached a crescendo*. In 2006, 55 percent accepted this same sentence.

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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:

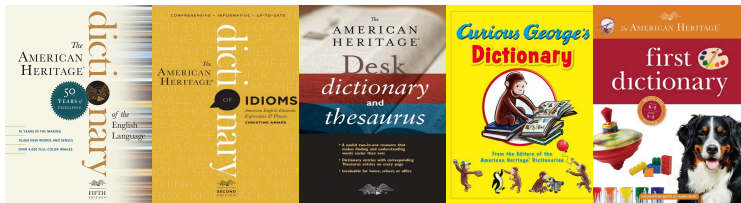
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available

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