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lean¹ (lēn)

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v. leaned, lean·ing, leans

v.intr.

1. To bend or slant away from the vertical.
2. To incline the weight of the body so as to be supported: *leaning against the doorpost*. See Synonyms at [slant](#).
3. To rely for assistance or support: *Lean on me for help*.
4. To have a tendency or preference: *a government that leans toward fascism*.
5. *Informal* To exert pressure: *The boss is leaning on us to meet the deadline*.

v.tr.

1. To set or place so as to be resting or supported: *leaned the ladder against the wall*.
2. To cause to incline: *leaned the boards so the rain would run off*.

n.

A tilt or an inclination away from the vertical.

[Middle English *lenen*, from Old English *hleonian*; see **klei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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lean² (lēn)

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adj. lean·er, lean·est

1.
 - a. Not fleshy or fat; thin.
 - b. Containing little fat or less fat relative to a standard: *lean hamburger*.
2.
 - a. Not productive or prosperous; meager: *lean years*.
 - b. Containing little excess or waste; spare: *a lean budget*.
 - c. Thrifty in management, especially by employing just enough people to accomplish a task or do business: "*Company leaders know their industries must be lean to survive*" (*Christian Science Monitor*).
3.
 - a. *Metallurgy* Low in mineral contents: *lean ore*.
 - b. *Chemistry* Lacking in combustible material: *lean fuel*.

n.

Meat with little or no fat.

[Middle English *lene*, from Old English *hlāne*.]

lean **ly** *adv.*

lean **ness** *n.*

Synonyms: [lean](#)², [skinny](#), [scrawny](#), [lank](#), [lanky](#), [gaunt](#)

These adjectives mean lacking excess flesh. *Lean* emphasizes absence of fat but usually suggests good health: *The*

farmer fattened the lean cattle for market. Skinny and scrawny imply unattractive thinness, as from undernourishment: "His face and belly were so round, and his arms so skinny, that he looked like a dough ball with four sticks stuck into it" (John Green). "He [had] a long, scrawny neck that rose out of a very low collar" (Winston Churchill). Lank describes one who is thin and tall, and lanky one who is thin, tall, and ungraceful: "He was ... exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders" (Washington Irving). The boy had developed into a lanky adolescent. Gaunt implies boniness and a haggard appearance; it may suggest illness or hardship: a white-haired pioneer, her face gaunt from overwork.

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Lean 🗣️ (lēn), Sir **David** 1908-1991. Share: [Tweet](#)

British director noted for such epic films as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), and *A Passage to India* (1984).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

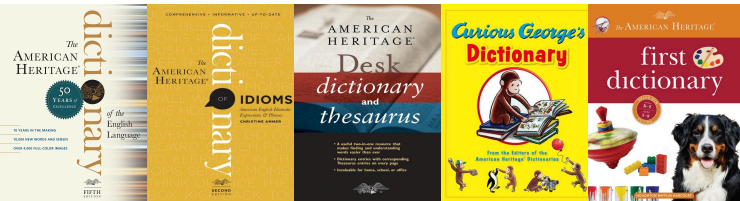
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[Semitic Roots](#)

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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