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con·trar·y  (kŏn trēr'ē)

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adj.

1. Opposed, as in character or purpose: *contrary opinions; acts that are contrary to our code of ethics.*
2. Opposite in direction or position: *Our boat took a course contrary to theirs.* See Synonyms at [opposite](#).
3. *Music* Moving in the opposite direction at a fixed interval: *playing scales in contrary motion.*
4. Adverse; unfavorable: *a contrary wind.*
5. (*also* kən-trâr ē) Given to recalcitrant behavior; willful or perverse.

n. pl. con·trar·ies

1. Something that is opposite or contrary.
2. Either of two opposing or contrary things: *"Truth is perhaps ... a dynamic compound of opposites, savage contraries for a moment conjoined" (A. Bartlett Giamatti).*
3. *Logic* A proposition related to another in such a way that if the latter is true, the former must be false, but if the latter is false, the former is not necessarily true.

adv.

In an opposite direction or manner; counter: *The judge ruled contrary to all precedent in the case.*

Idioms:

by contraries *Obsolete*

In opposition to what is expected.

on the contrary

In opposition to what has been stated or what is expected: *I'm not sick; on the contrary, I'm in the peak of health.*

to the contrary

To the opposite effect from what has been stated or what is expected: *Despite what you say to the contrary, this contract is fair.*

[Middle English *contrarie*, from Anglo-Norman, from Latin *contrārius* : *contrā*, against; see **kom** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *-ārius*, *-ary*.]

con trar'i·ly (kŏn trēr'ə-lē, kən-trâr -) *adv.*

con trar'i·ness *n.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

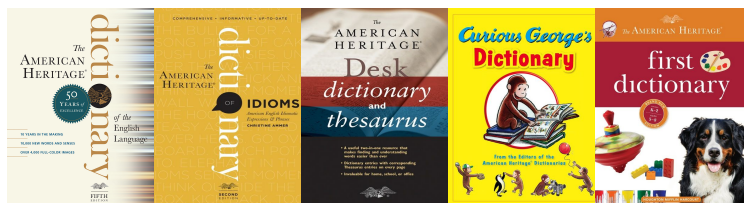
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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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