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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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cri·te·ri·on  (krī-tîr ē-ən)

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n. pl. cri·te·ri·a (-tîr ē-ə) or *cri·te·ri·ons*

A standard, rule, or test on which a judgment or decision can be based.

[Greek *kritērion*, from *kritēs*, judge, from *krīnein*, to separate, judge; see **krei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

cri·te ri·al (-əl) *adj.*

Usage Note: Like *phenomenon*, *criterion* comes directly from Greek and is singular. In standard usage, the plural is generally *criteria*, although *criteria* is sometimes used as well. Properly speaking, the form *criteria* should never be a singular noun, and phrases like *this criteria* and *single criteria* are widely viewed as erroneous. Similarly, the plural *crieterias* is also viewed as a mistake and is usually edited out of published prose.

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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:

[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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