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dictionary

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Language



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pain  (pān)

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n.

1.

a. An unpleasant feeling occurring as a result of injury or disease, usually localized in some part of the body: *felt pains in his chest*.

b. Bodily suffering characterized by such feelings: *drugs to treat pain*.

2.

a. Mental or emotional suffering; distress.

b. An instance of this: *the pains of humiliation*.

3. pains The pangs of childbirth.

4. pains Great care or effort: *taking pains with one's work*.

5. Informal A source of annoyance; a nuisance: *Stuffing all these envelopes is a real pain*.

tr.v. pained, pain·ing, pains

1. To cause physical pain to; hurt: *My feet really pained me after the hike*.

2. To cause mental or emotional distress to: *"It pained him to remember every little thing about her" (John Irving)*.

Idiom:

on/under pain of

Subject to the penalty of (a specified punishment, such as death).

[Middle English, from Old French *peine*, from Latin *poena*, penalty, pain, from Greek *poinē*, penalty; see **k^wei-¹** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Synonyms: pain, ache, pang, stitch, throe, twinge

These nouns denote a sensation of severe physical discomfort: *abdominal pain; aches in my leg; the pangs of a cramped muscle; a stitch in my side; the throes of dying; a twinge of arthritis*.

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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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