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AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the  
English  
Language

  


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Some compound words (like *bus rapid transit*, *dog whistle*, or *identity theft*) don’t appear on the drop-down list when you type them in the search bar. For best results with compound words, place a quotation mark before the compound word in the search window.

[guide to the dictionary](#)



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**on·o·mat·o·poe·ia**  (ŏn'ə-măt'ə-pē ə, -mă'tə-)

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*n.*

The formation or use of words such as *buzz* or *murmur* that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.

[Late Latin, from Greek *onomatopoiā*, from *onomatopoiōs*, coiner of names : *onoma*, *onomat-*, name; see **n -men-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *poiein*, to make; see **k<sup>w</sup>ei-** <sup>2</sup> [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

**on'o·mat'o·poe ic**, **on'o·mat'o·po·et ic** (-pō-ĕt ĭk) *adj.*

**on'o·mat'o·poe i·cal·ly**, **on'o·mat'o·po·et i·cal·ly** *adv.*

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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](#)

[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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