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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



HOW TO USE THE DICTIONARY

To look up an entry in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, use the search window above. For best results, after typing in the word, click on the “Search” button instead of using the “enter” key.

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](#)



THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



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quote  (kwōt)

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v. quot·ed, quot·ing, quotes

v.tr.

1.

a. To repeat or copy (words from a source such as a book), usually with acknowledgment of the source: *quoted lines from Shakespeare in his lecture.*

b. To repeat or copy the words of (a person or a book or other source): *likes to quote Shakespeare when giving advice.*

c. To cite or refer to for illustration or proof: *quoted statistics to show she was right.*

2. To repeat a brief passage or excerpt from: *The saxophonist quoted a Duke Ellington melody in his solo.*

3. To state (a price) for securities, goods, or services.

v.intr.

To give a quotation, as from a book.

n.

1. A quotation.

2. A quotation mark.

3. Used by a speaker to indicate the beginning of a direct quotation: *"He paused and said, quote, I don't care, unquote."*

4. A dictum; a saying.

[Middle English *coten*, to mark a book with numbers or marginal references, from Old French *coter*, from Medieval Latin *quotāre*, to number chapters, from Latin *quotus*, of what number, from *quot*, how many; see **k^{wo}**- [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

quot **er** *n.*

Usage Note: People have been using the noun *quote* as a truncation of *quotation* for over one hundred years, and its use in less formal contexts is widespread today. Language critics have objected to this usage, however, as unduly journalistic or breezy, but the word appears to have gained acceptance. In our 2009 survey, 80 percent of the Usage Panel accepted the example *He began the chapter with a quote from the Bible*. The same percentage accepted *He lightened up his talk by throwing in quotes from Marx Brothers movies*. These results represent a much higher level of acceptance than in previous surveys. · People sometimes use *quote* as a synonym for "a dictum; a saying," as in *His career is just one more validation of Andy Warhol's quote that "In the future, everybody will be famous for fifteen minutes."* A majority of the Panel (albeit a smaller one) accepts this usage, too. In 2009, 60 percent accepted the Andy Warhol example. This is a dramatic increase over the mere 24 percent that accepted the same sentence in 1988.

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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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