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dictionary

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**qual·i·ty**  (kwŏl ĭ-tē)

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*n. pl. qual·i·ties*

1.

a. An inherent or distinguishing characteristic; a property: *the medicinal qualities of a plant.*

b. A personal trait, especially a character trait: *"The most vital quality a soldier can possess is self-confidence" (George S. Patton).*

2. Essential character; nature: *"The quality of mercy is not strain'd" (Shakespeare).*

3.

a. Superiority of kind: *an intellect of unquestioned quality.*

b. Degree or grade of excellence: *yard goods of low quality.*

4. Investments that have a low risk of loss or default: *the flight to quality.*

5.

a. High social position: *people of quality.*

b. Those in a high social position: *likes to associate with quality.*

6. *Music* Timbre, as determined by harmonics: *a voice with a distinctive metallic quality.*

7. *Linguistics* The character of a vowel sound determined by the size and shape of the oral cavity and the amount of resonance with which the sound is produced.

8. *Logic* The positive or negative character of a proposition.

*adj.*

Having a high degree of excellence: *the importance of quality health care.*

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[Middle English *qualite*, from Old French, from Latin *quālitās*, *quālitāt-*, from *quālis*, of what kind; see **k<sup>w</sup>o-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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**Synonyms:** quality, attribute, character, property, trait

These nouns signify a feature that distinguishes or identifies someone or something: *explained the qualities of noble gases; knew the attributes of a fine wine; liked the rural character of the ranch; tested the resilient property of rubber; had positive traits such as kindness and generosity.*

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## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

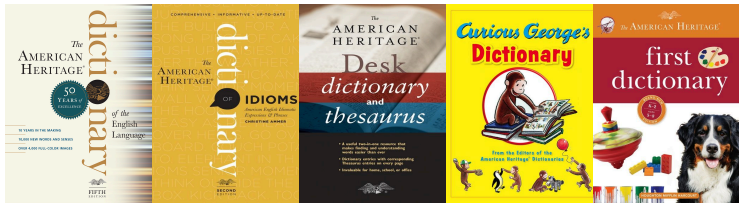
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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