



The  
AMERICAN  
HERITAGE®

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](#)



## AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY APP

The new American Heritage Dictionary app is now available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).



## THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY BLOG

The articles in our [blog](#) examine new words, revised definitions, interesting images from the fifth edition, discussions of usage, and more.

**THE 100 WORDS®**

See word lists from the best-selling 100 Words Series!

[Find out more!](#)



## INTERESTED IN DICTIONARIES?

Check out the Dictionary Society of North America at <http://www.dictionariesociety.com>

**ker·mes**  (kûr mēz)

Share: [Tweet](#)

*n.*

A red dyestuff once prepared from the dried bodies of various female scale insects of the genus *Kermes*.

[French *kermès*, short for *alkermès*, from Arabic *al-qirmiz*, the kermes, probably from Sanskrit *kṛmi-ja-*, (red dye) produced by worms; see **k<sup>w</sup> mi-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

---

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition copyright ©2022 by HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved.

## Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

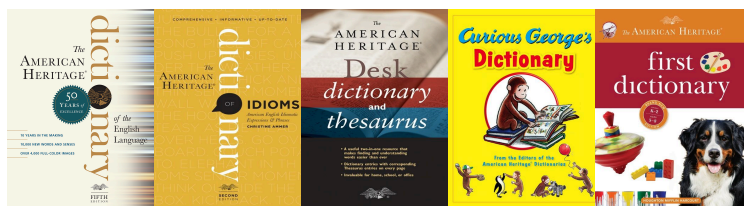
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[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](#).

## American Heritage Dictionary Products



[The American Heritage Dictionary, 5th Edition](#)  
[The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms](#)  
[The American Heritage Roget's Thesaurus](#)

[Curious George's Dictionary](#)  
[The American Heritage Children's Dictionary](#)

• [CONTACT US](#)

• [Customer Service](#)

• [Make Me An Author](#)

- [Ebooks Help with Glose Reader](#)
- **ABOUT US**
  - [Company Profile](#)
  - [Leadership Team](#)
  - [Corporate Social Responsibility](#)
  - [HarperCollins Careers](#)
  - [HarperCollins Imprints](#)
  - [HarperGreen](#)
  - [Social Media Directory](#)
  - [Accessibility](#)
- **FOR READERS**
  - [Browse Reading Guides](#)
- **FOR AUTHORS**
  - [Submit a Manuscript](#)
  - [Report Piracy](#)
  - [Agent Portal](#)
- **MEDIA**
  - [Publicity Contacts](#)
  - [Press Room](#)
- **SERVICES**
  - [HarperCollins Speakers Bureau](#)
  - [Library Services](#)
  - [Academic Services](#)
  - [Desk & Exam Copies](#)
  - [Review Copies](#)
  - [OpenBook API](#)
  - [Marketing Partnerships](#)
- **COVID-19 RESOURCES & PERMISSIONS**
  - [Permissions for Adult Online Readings](#)
  - [Permissions for Kids Online Readings](#)
- **SALES & RIGHTS**
  - [Booksellers & Retailer Ordering](#)
  - [HarperCollins Catalogs](#)
  - [Permissions](#)
  - [Subsidiary Rights](#)
  - [Media Rights and Content Development](#)
- **GLOSE APP**
  - [iPhone](#)
  - [Android](#)
  - 
  - 
  -
- **GLOBAL DIVISIONS**
  - [HarperCollins US](#)
  - [HarperCollins Canada](#)
  - [HarperCollins Christian](#)
  - [HarperCollins Australia](#)
  - [HarperCollins India](#)
  - [HarperCollins UK](#)
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -



*News Corp*

[Terms of Use](#) • [Terms of Sale](#) • [Your Ad Choices](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [California Privacy Policy](#)  
[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright 2022 HarperCollins Publishers All rights reserved.

\*This website is best viewed in Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Safari. Some characters in pronunciations and etymologies cannot be displayed properly in Internet Explorer.