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let¹  (lět)

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v. let, let·ting, lets

v.tr.

1. To give permission or opportunity to; allow: *I let them borrow the car. The inheritance let us finally buy a house.*

See Usage Note at [leave](#)¹.

2. To cause to; make: *Let the news be known.*

3.

a. Used as an auxiliary in the imperative to express a command, request, or proposal: *Let's finish the job! Let x equal y.*

b. Used as an auxiliary in the imperative to express a warning or threat: *Just let her try!*

4. To permit to enter, proceed, or depart: *let the dog in.*

5. To release from or as if from confinement: *let the air out of the balloon; let out a yelp.*

6. To rent or lease: *let rooms.*

7. To award, especially after bids have been submitted: *let the construction job to a new firm.*

v.intr.

1. To become rented or leased.

2. To be or become assigned, as to a contractor.

Phrasal Verbs:

let down

1. To cause to come down gradually; lower: *let down the sails.*

2. To withdraw support from; forsake.

3. To fail to meet the expectations of; disappoint.

let on

1. To allow to be known; admit: *Don't let on that you know me.*

2. To pretend.

let out

1. To come to a close; end: *School let out early. The play let out at 10:30.*

2. To make known; reveal: *Who let that story out?*

3. To increase the size of (a garment, for example): *let out a coat.*

let up

1. To slow down; diminish: *didn't let up in their efforts.*

2. To become less severe or intense: *The rain let up.*

Idioms:

let alone

Not to mention; much less: *"Their ancestors had been dirt poor and never saw royalty, let alone hung around with them" ([Garrison Keillor](#)).*

let go

To cease to employ; dismiss: *had to let 20 workers go.*

let off on Informal

To cause to diminish, as in pressure; ease up on: *Let off on the gas so that we do not exceed the speed limit.*

let (one's) hair down

To drop one's reserve or inhibitions.

let (someone) have it Informal

1. To beat, strike, or shoot at someone.

2. To scold or punish.

let (someone) in on

1. To reveal (a secret) to someone: *They finally let me in on their plans.*
2. To allow someone to participate in (something).

let up on

To be or become more lenient with: *Why don't you let up on the poor child?*

[Middle English *leten*, from Old English *lĕtan*; see **lē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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let² (lĕt)

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n.

1. Something that hinders; an obstacle: *free to investigate without let or hindrance.*
2. *Sports* An invalid stroke in tennis and other net games that requires a replay.

tr.v. **let-ted** or **let**, **let-ting**, **lets**

Archaic

To hinder or obstruct.

[Middle English *lette*, from *letten*, to hinder, from Old English *lettan*; see **lē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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-let

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suff.

1. Small one: *craterlet*.
2. Something worn on: *armlet*.

[Middle English, from Old French *-elet*, diminutive suff. : *-el* (from Latin *-ellus*) + *-et*, *-et*.]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

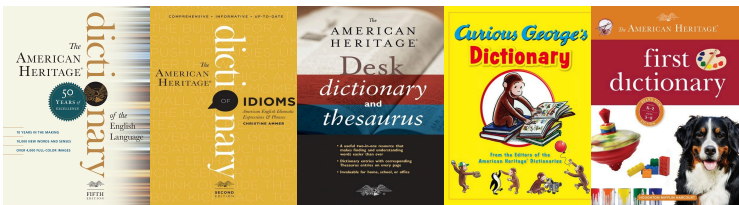
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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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