



The AMERICAN HERITAGE[®]



children's dictionary



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT

center ► ceremony

center (sĕn'tər) *noun* **1.** A point that is the same distance from every point on the outside of a circle or sphere. **2.** The middle position, part, or place: *Put the vase of flowers in the center of the table.* **3.** A place where many things are gathered together or many activities take place: *The town built a new civic center.* **4.** The main or most important person, place, or thing: *You get to be the center of attention on your birthday.* **5.** In certain sports like hockey, a player who plays in the middle of the playing area, especially on offense. ► *verb* To place in or at the center: *Maria centered the picture before gluing it to the page.* ► *verb forms* **centered, centering**

Synonyms

center, core, middle

I shot the arrow into the *center* of the target.

► He cut out the *core* of the apple. ► She swam to the island in the *middle* of the river.

centigrade (sĕn'tī grād') *adjective* Having to do with the Celsius temperature scale.

centimeter (sĕn'tə mē'tər) *noun* A unit of length in the metric system that equals $\frac{1}{100}$ of a meter.

centipede (sĕn'tə pēd') *noun* A small, thin animal that has 30 or more legs. Some centipedes can give a painful bite.

Word History

centipede

Centipede comes from the Latin word *centipeda*, literally meaning "having 100 feet." The Latin word is made up of Latin *centum*, "100," and *pes*, "foot." Many other English words come from Latin *centum*, like *century*, "100 years," and *centimeter*, " $\frac{1}{100}$ of a meter." In the *centigrade* temperature scale, there are 100 degrees between the freezing and boiling points of water.

central (sĕn'trəl) *adjective* **1.** At or near the center: *The bus station is in the central part of town.* **2.** Most important; main: *The central idea of the story is that you shouldn't judge people too quickly.*

century (sĕn'chə rē) *noun* A period of 100 years: *There have been many advances in medicine over the past century.*

► *noun, plural* **centuries**

ceramic (sə rām'ik) *adjective* Made of clay that has been shaped and then baked at a high temperature: *The kitchen floor is made of ceramic tile.*

ceramics (sə rām'iks) *noun* (used with a singular verb) The art or method of making things from ceramic material: *My mom took a class in ceramics and made some bowls.*



■ **ceramics**

cereal (sîr'ē əl) *noun* **1.** The seeds of certain grasses, such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn, that are used as food. **2.** A food, such as oatmeal, that is made from the seeds of these grasses.

► *These sound alike: cereal, serial*

ceremonial (sĕr'ə mō'nē əl) *adjective* Having to do with ceremony: *They performed a ceremonial dance at the festival.*

ceremony (sĕr'ə mō'nē) *noun* **1.** A series of serious acts that are performed in honor of an event or special occasion: *Our school had a graduation ceremony today.* **2.** Very polite or formal behavior: *The ruler was welcomed at the airport with great ceremony.*

► *noun, plural* **ceremonies**

■ **ceremony**



reward (rĭ wôrd') *noun* Something that is offered, given, or received in return for a worthy act, service, or accomplishment: *Our neighbors offered a reward for finding their lost cat.* ► *verb* To give a reward to someone or for something: *We reward our dog with a treat when it obeys our command. Our patience was rewarded when we finally saw a shooting star.*

► *verb forms* rewarded, rewarding

rhinoceros (rĭ nŏs'ər əs) *noun* A large animal of Africa and Asia that has short legs, thick, tough skin, and one or two upright horns on its snout.

► *noun, plural* rhinoceros or rhinoceroses

■ rhinoceros

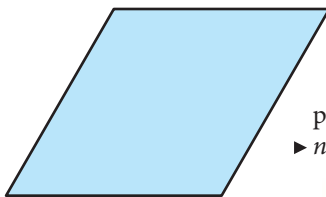


Word History

rhinoceros

Rhinoceros comes from the Greek word for this animal, *rhinokeros*. The *rhino-* in the Greek word means "nose," while *-keros* comes from the Greek word *keras*, "horn." So *rhinoceros* literally means "having a horn on the nose."

rhododendron (rŏ'də dĕn'drən) *noun* A shrub with evergreen leaves and large clusters of white, pink, or purple flowers.



■ rhombus

rhombus

noun A figure that has four equal sides, with opposite sides that are parallel.
► *noun, plural* rhombuses



rhyme (rĭm) *noun* 1. Similarity in the final sounds of two or more words, syllables, or lines of verse. 2. A poem that has the same or similar sounds at the ends of lines: *My mother reads nursery rhymes to my sister.* ► *verb* 1. To be similar in sound: "Hour" rhymes with "power." 2. To use or have rhymes: *Not all poetry rhymes.*

► *verb forms* rhymed, rhyming

Spelling Note

rhyme, rhythm

Rhyme and *rhythm* are both features of poetry, and they have similar spellings, using the cluster *rh* at the beginning and the spelling *y* for the vowel sound. These spelling features are unusual in English, except in words that originally come from Greek, as both of these words do.

rhythm (rĭth'əm) *noun* 1. A movement, action, or condition that repeats in regular sequence: *The rhythm of your heart gets faster when you exercise.* 2. A musical pattern with a series of regularly accented beats: *Hannah clapped her hands to the rhythm of the music.*

rhythmic (rĭth'mĭk) *adjective*

Having a rhythm: *Olivia could hear the rhythmic splash of the boat's oars.*



■ ribs

rib (rĭb) *noun* 1. One of the pairs of long, curved bones that extend from the spine toward the front of the body. The ribs enclose the chest cavity of humans and most other vertebrates. 2. Something that looks or functions like a rib: *Umbrellas have ribs that stick out like spokes.*

■ rhubarb

For pronunciation symbols, see the chart on the inside back cover.

A
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Z

Yy



Each colony of **yellow jackets** is founded by one special type of yellow jacket called a queen. A queen can lay several thousand eggs during the summer.

y or **Y** (wī) *noun* The twenty-fifth letter of the English alphabet.

► *noun, plural y's or Y's*

-y *suffix* **1.** The suffix *-y* forms adjectives and means “characterized by or having.” When you say a sidewalk is *icy*, you mean that it has ice on its surface. **2.** The suffix *-y* also means “like” and “having the qualities of.” When you say the wind is *icy*, you mean that it is cold like ice. **3.** The suffix *-y* also means “tending to” or “inclined to.” When you say that you are *sleepy*, you mean that you are inclined to go to sleep at that moment.

Vocabulary Builder

-y

Many words that are formed with **-y** are not entered in this dictionary. But you can figure out what these words mean by looking up the meanings of the base words and the suffix. For example:

rocky = having many rocks, covered with rocks

swampy = having the qualities of a swamp

clingy = tending to cling

yacht (yät) *noun* A small, graceful ship that is used for pleasure trips or racing.

yak (yäk) *noun* An ox that has long hair and is native to the mountains of central Asia. Yaks are raised for their milk and meat and are used as work animals.

yam (yäm) *noun* **1.** A sweet potato. **2.** A vegetable that is similar to a potato and grows underground as the root of a tropical vine.

yank (yängk) *verb* To pull something with a sudden, sharp movement: *No matter how hard I yanked the door, it still wouldn't open.* ► *noun* A sudden, sharp pull: *Ethan gave a yank on the rope to pull the boat up to the dock.*

► *verb forms yanked, yanking*

yard¹ (yärd) *noun* A unit of length that equals 3 feet or just under 1 meter.

yard² (yärd) *noun* **1.** A piece of ground near a building: *I mowed the grass in the side yard.* **2.** An area, often fenced, that is used for a purpose or business: *We took our old car to the junk yard.* **3.** An area where railroad cars are stored, repaired, or joined together to form a train.



■ **yard sale**

yard sale *noun* A sale of used household items or clothing that is held at the home of the seller.

yardstick (yärd'stik') *noun* A ruler that is one yard long.