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The AMERICAN HERITAGE® dictionary of the English Language

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**portion**  (pɔr'shən)

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**n.**

1. A section or quantity within a larger thing; a part of a whole.
2. A part separated from a whole.
3. A part that is allotted to a person or group, as:
  - a. A helping of food.
  - b. The part of an estate received by an heir.
  - c. A woman's dowry: *marriage portion*.
4. A person's lot or fate.

**tr.v. portioned, portion-ing, portions**

1. To divide into parts or shares for distribution; parcel.
2. To provide with a share, inheritance, or dowry.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *portiō, portiōn-*; see **per-**<sup>2</sup> in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

**por'tion-a-ble** *adj.*

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