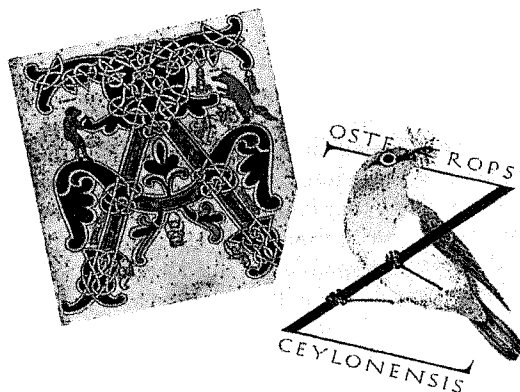


The
**American
Heritage® Dictionary**
of the English Language

FOURTH EDITION



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cially the final game in a baseball double-header. **3.** A cloth cap worn especially in bed.

night•clothes (nīt'klōz', -klōthz') *pl. n.* Clothes, such as pajamas or a nightgown, worn in bed. Also called *nightdress*, *nightwear*, *sleepwear*.

night•club (nīt'klüb') *n.* An establishment that stays open late at night and provides food, drink, entertainment, and music for dancing. Also called *nightspot*. —**night•club•ber** *n.* —**night•club•by** *adj.*

night court *n.* A criminal court holding sessions at night for routine disposition of charges and granting of bail.

night crawler *n.* Any of various large earthworms that crawl out from the ground at night and are often used as fish bait. Also called *nightwalker*.

night•dress (nīt'drēs') *n.* **1.** See *nightgown*. **2.** See *nightclothes*.

night•fall (nīt'fōl') *n.* The approach of darkness; dusk.

night•glow (nīt'glō') *n.* Airglow occurring at night.

night•gown (nīt'goun') *n.* A loose garment worn in bed by women and girls. Also called *nightdress*.

night•hawk (nīt'hōk') *n.* **1a.** Any of several chiefly nocturnal birds of the genus *Chordeiles*, especially *C. minor*, having mottled grayish-brown feathers with a white spot on the wings. Also called *bullbat*, *mosquito hawk*. **b.** The European nightjar. **2.** *Informal* A night owl.

night heron *n.* Any of several nocturnal or crepuscular herons of the genus *Nycticorax*, especially the black-crowned heron, *N. nycticorax*.

night•ie or **night•y** (nīt'tē) *n., pl. -ies* *Informal* A nightgown.

night•in•gale (nīt'n-gāl', nīt'ing-) *n.* **1.** A European songbird (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) with reddish-brown plumage, noted for the melodious song of the male at night during the breeding season. **2.** Any of various other nocturnal songbirds of the genus *Luscinia*. [Middle English, from Old English *nihtegale*: *niht*, night; see **NIGHT** + *galan*, to sing; see **ghel**¹ in Appendix I.]

Night•in•gale (nīt'n-gāl', nīt'ing-), **Florence** Known as "the Lady with the Lamp." 1820–1910. British nurse who organized (1854) and directed a unit of field nurses during the Crimean War and is considered the founder of modern nursing.

night•jar (nīt'jār') *n.* A goatsucker, especially *Caprimulgus europaeus* of Europe, having gray and brown mottled plumage with long, slender white wings and a short bill. [**NIGHT** + **JAR**² (from its harsh call).]

night jasmine *n.* **1.** An Asian shrub or small tree (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*) having opposite leaves and small, fragrant flowers with an orange corolla tube and white corolla lobes. **2.** A West Indian shrub (*Cestrum nocturnum*) having small greenish-white flowers that are very fragrant at night.

night latch *n.* A spring lock that can be opened from the inside by turning a knob but from the outside only with a key.

night letter *n.* *Abbr.* **NLT** A telegram sent at night at a reduced rate for delivery the next morning.

night•life (nīt'lif') *n.* Social activities or entertainment available or pursued in the evening.

night•light (nīt'lit') *n.* A small, dim light left on all night.

night•long (nīt'lōng', -lōng') *adj.* Lasting through the night. ♦ *adv.* Through the night; all night.

night•ly (nīt'le) *adj.* **1.** Of or occurring during the night; nocturnal: *the cat's nightly prowls*. **2.** Happening or done every night: *the physician's nightly rounds*. —**night•ly** *adv.*

night•mare (nīt'mār') *n.* **1.** A dream arousing feelings of intense fear, horror, and distress. **2.** An event or experience that is intensely distressing. **3.** A demon or spirit once thought to plague sleeping people. [Middle English, a female demon that afflicts sleeping people: *night*, night; see **NIGHT** + *mare*, goblin (from Old English; see **mer** in Appendix I).] —**night•mar'ish** *adj.* —**night•mar'ish•ly** *adv.* —**night•mar'ish•ness** *n.*

night owl *n.* *Informal* A person who habitually stays up and is active late into the night.

night•rid•er (nīt'ri'dər) *n.* One of a secret band of mounted, usually masked white men who engaged in nocturnal terrorism for revenge or intimidation in the southern United States especially during Reconstruction.

nights (nits) *adv.* During the nighttime on every day or most days: *She works nights at the restaurant*.

night•scape (nīt'skāp') *n.* **1.** A view or representation of a night scene. **2.** A night scene considered together with all the elements and features constituting it: "a nightscape of black shiny streets and glistening light" (David Denby). **3.** A situation likened to a scene late at night: "His trip... is an eerie nightscape full of rubble and reflexive violence" (Time).

night school *n.* A school that holds classes in the evening.

night•shade (nīt'shād') *n.* **1.** Any of several plants of the genus *Solanum*, such as the bittersweet nightshade, most of which have a poisonous juice. **2.** Any of various similar or related plants, such as belladonna. [Middle English, from Old English *nihtscada*: *niht*, night; see **NIGHT** + *sceadu*, shade.]

nightshade family *n.* A family of plants, the Solanaceae, characterized by alternate leaves, usually five-petaled flowers, and many-seeded fruits and including the eggplant, tomato, potato, and belladonna as well as the nightshades, capsicum peppers, tobaccos, and petunias.

night shift or **night•shift** (nīt'shift') *n.* **1.** A group of employees working during the night in a factory or business. **2.** The period of time

night•stand (nīt'stānd') *n.* See *night table*.

night•stick (nīt'stik') *n.* A club carried by a police officer.

night table *n.* A small table or stand placed at a bedside. Also called *nightstand*.

night terror *n.* A state of intense fear and agitation sometimes experienced, especially by children, on awakening from a stage of sleep not associated with dreaming but characterized by extremely vivid hallucinations.

night•time (nīt'tīm') *n.* The time between sunset and sunrise. ♦ *adj.* Occurring in or appropriate for use during the night: *nighttime activities*; *nighttime attire*.

night vision *n.* Vision in dim light.

Night Vision (nīt) A trademark used for a technology that enables vision at night, as by amplification of low light to create visible images or by detection of infrared wavelengths.

night•walk•er (nīt'wōd'kər) *n.* **1.** One, especially a robber or prostitute, who walks the streets at night. **2.** See *night crawler*.

night watch *n.* **1.** A watch or guard kept during the night. **2.** The person or persons on such a watch.

night watchman *n.* A man who serves as a guard during the night.

night•wear (nīt'wār') *n.* See *nightclothes*.

night•y (nīt'tē) *n.* Variant of *nightie*.

ni•gres•cence (nī-grēs'əns) *n.* **1.** The process of becoming black or dark. **2.** Blackness or darkness, as of complexion. [From *nigrescent*, blackish, from Latin *nigrēscēns*, *nigrēscēt-*, present participle of *nigrēscere*, to become black, from *niger*, *nigr-*, black. See **nek**^{w-t} in Appendix I.] —**ni•gres'cent** *adj.*

ni•gro•sine (nī'grā-sēn', -sīn) *n.* Any of a class of dyes, varying from blue to black, used in the manufacture of inks and for dyeing wool and textiles. [Latin *niger*, *nigr-*, black; see **nek**^{w-t} in Appendix I + **-os(E)**² + **-INE**².]

NIH *abbr.* National Institutes of Health

ni•hil•ism (nī'hil-'līz'əm, nēl-) *n.* **1.** *Philosophy* **a.** An extreme form of skepticism that denies all existence. **b.** A doctrine holding that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated. **2.** Rejection of all distinctions in moral or religious value and a willingness to repudiate all previous theories of morality or religious belief. **3.** The belief that destruction of existing political or social institutions is necessary for future improvement. **4.** also **Nihilism** A diffuse, revolutionary movement of mid 19th-century Russia that scorned authority and tradition and believed in reason, materialism, and radical change in society and government through terrorism and assassination. **5.** *Psychiatry* A delusion, experienced in some mental disorders, that the world or one's mind, body, or self does not exist. [Latin *nihil*, nothing; see **ne** in Appendix I + **-ISM**.] —**ni'hil'ist** *n.* —**ni'hil'is'tic** *adj.* —**ni'hil'is'ti'cal•ly** *adv.*

ni•hil•i•ty (nī-hīl'i-tē, nē-) *n.* Nonexistence; nothingness. [French *nihilité*, from Old French, from Medieval Latin *nihilitas*, from Latin *nihil*, nothing. See **NIHILISM**.]

ni•hil ob•stat (nī'hil ōb'stāt', -stāt', nēl-) *n.* **1.** *Roman Catholic Church* An attestation by a church censor that a book contains nothing damaging to faith or morals. **2.** Official approval, especially of an artistic work. [Latin, nothing hinders: *nihil*, nothing + *obstat*, third person sing. present tense of *obstāre*, to hinder.]

Ni•i•ga•ta (nē'ē-gā'tā, -tā) A city of northwest Honshu, Japan, on the Sea of Japan north-northwest of Tokyo. It is a leading port with a major chemical industry. Population: 490,237.

Ni•i•ha•u (nē'ē-hou', nē'hou') An island of northwest Hawaii west of Kauai Island. It is used mainly for cattle grazing.

Ni•j•in•sky (nī-zhīn'skē, -jīn'-) **Vaslav** or **Waslav** 1890–1950. Russian-born dancer and choreographer noted for his leading roles with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris and for his choreography of *The Rites of Spring* (1913) and other ballets.

Nij•me•gen (nī'mā'gən, -kən) A city of eastern Netherlands on the Waal River near the German border. Founded in Roman times, it flourished under Charlemagne and later became a free imperial city and a member of the Hanseatic League. Population: 147,005.

-nik *suff.* One associated with or characterized by: *beatnik*; *peacenik*. [Yiddish and Russian (Yiddish, from Russian), of Slavic origin.]

Ni•ke (nī'kē) *n.* *Greek Mythology* The goddess of victory.

Ni•k•kei or **Ni•k•kei Stock Average** (nē'kā) A trademark used for an index of the relative price of selected stocks listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Ni•k•ko (nī'kō, nē'kō) A town of central Honshu, Japan, north of Tokyo. It is a pilgrimage center famed for its ornate temples and shrines. Population: 21,705.

Ni•k•o•la•yev (nī'kō-lā'yəf, nyī'kō-) See *Mykolayiv*.

Ni•e•pol (nī-kō'pəl, nyē'kō-) A city of southern Ukraine on the Dneiper River. It is an industrial center in a rich manganese-mining area. Population: 160,300.

nil (nīl) *n.* Nothing; zero. [Latin *nil*, contraction of *nihil*. See **ne** in Appendix I.] —**nil** *adj.*

Nile (nīl) The longest river in the world, flowing about 6,677 km (4,150 mi) through eastern Africa from its most remote sources in Burundi to a delta on the Mediterranean Sea in northeast Egypt. The main headstreams, the **Blue Nile** and the **White Nile**, join at Khartoum in Sudan to form the Nile proper. The river has been used for irrigation in Egypt



Florence Nightingale detail from a portrait by Sir William Blake Richmond (1842–1921)



nightshade bittersweet nightshade *Solanum dulcamara*



Vaslav Nijinsky c. 1911 photograph of Nijinsky in costume for *Pétrouchka*

à pat	oi boy
à pay	ou out
àr care	ōō took
à father	ōō boot
è pet	ù cut
è be	ûr urge
î pit	th thin
î pie	th this
îr pier	hw which
ô pot	zh vision
ô toe	a about, item
ô paw	♦ regionalism

Stress marks: ' (primary); ' (secondary), as in dictionary (dīkshə-nēr'ē)