
MODERN DESK EDITION

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OF THE
AMERICAN LANGUAGE

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This *Modern Desk Edition* is an abridgment of the popular *Second Edition*, which was published by WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARIES, Inc. and a careful compression of the original, managed to bring together the best of the words they read and

There are more than 72,000 words in this edition, including all the commonly used terms, a selection of the specialized vocabulary of science, medicine, and the like, which are encountered in present-day life. The listing of the dictionary text includes the names, as well as abbreviations

Illustrations, both pictorial and text, shed additional light upon the meaning and usage of the words. When necessary, a considerable amount of etymological information is given for each phrase. Unusual in a dictionary, here, little histories of the words are given for a clearer understanding of the current usage.

Following the dictionary format, the given names with their etymologies

A careful reading of the dictionary will make clear the many kinds of words and their usefulness to the reader.

ED

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am-mo-ni-um (ə mō'nē əm) *n.* the radical NH₄, present in salts produced by the reaction of ammonia with an acid

am-mu-ni-tion (am'yə nish'ən) *n.* [*L. munire*, to fortify] 1. anything hurled by a weapon or exploded as a weapon, as bullets, shells, bombs, grenades, etc. 2. any means of attack or defense

am-ne-sia (am nē'zhə, -zhē ə) *n.* [*Gr. a-*, not + *mnas-thai*, to remember] partial or total loss of memory —*am-ne-siac'* (-zē ək'), *am-ne-sic adj.*, *n.*

am-nes-ty (am'nəs tē) *n.*, *pl. -ties* [*Gr. amnēstia*, a forgetting] a general pardon, esp. for political offenses —*vt. -tied, -ty-ing* to grant amnesty to; pardon

am-ni-on (am'nē ən, -ən') *n.*, *pl. -ni-ons, -ni-a* (-ə) [*Gr. amnos*, lamb] the innermost membrane of the sac enclosing the embryo of a mammal, reptile, or bird —*am'ni-ot'ic* (-ät'ik) *adj.*

a-moe-ba (ə mē'bə) *n.*, *pl. -bas, -bae* (-bē) [*Gr. amē-bein*, to change] a microscopic, one-celled animal multiplying by fission —*a-moe-bic, a-moe-ban adj.*

a-moe-boid (ə mē'boid) *adj.* like an amoeba, as in constantly changing shape

a-mok (ə muk') *adv.* [Malay *amok*] 1. in a frenzy to kill 2. in a violent rage

A-mon (ā'mən) an ancient Egyptian deity, later identified with the sun god, *A'mon-Re'* (-rā')

a-mong (ə mʌŋ) *prep.* [*OE. on*, in + *gemang*, a crowd] 1. surrounded by [*among* friends] 2. in the group of [*among* books] 3. with a share for each of [*divided among* us] 4. by the joint action of

a-mongat (ə mʌŋət) *prep.* same as *AMONG*

a-mon-ti-l-la-do (ə mən'tē lā'dō) *n.* [*Sp. < Montilla*, a town in Spain] a pale, rather dry sherry

a-mor-al (ā mōr'əl, -mār'-) *adj.* 1. not to be judged by moral standards; neither moral nor immoral 2. without moral principles —*a-mor-al-i-ty* (ā'mə rāl'ə tē) *n.* —*a-mor'al-ly adv.*

am-o-rous (am'ər əs) *adj.* [*L. amor*, love] 1. fond of making love 2. full of love 3. of sexual love or lovemaking —*am'o-rous-ly adv.* —*am'o-rous-ness n.*

a-mor-phous (ə mōr'fəs) *adj.* [*Gr. a-*, without + *morphē*, form] 1. shapeless 2. of no definite type 3. *Biol.* without specialized structure 4. *Chem., Mineralogy* not crystalline —*a-morphism n.* —*a-morphous-ly adv.*

am-or-tize (am'ər tīz', ə mōr'-) *vt. -tized', -tiz'ing* [*L. ad*, to + *mors*, death] 1. to put money aside at intervals for gradual payment of (a debt, etc.) 2. *Accounting* to write off (expenditures) by prorating over a fixed period *Brit. sp. am'or-tise', -tised', -tis'ing* —*am'or-ti-za'tion n.*

A-mos (ā'mas) 1. a Hebrew prophet of the 8th cent. B.C. 2. a book of the Bible containing prophecies attributed to him

a-mount (ə maunt') *vi.* [*L. ad*, to + *mons*, mountain] 1. to add up (to a sum) 2. to be equal in meaning, value, or effect —*n.* the sum of two or more quantities; total 2. a principal sum plus its interest 3. a quantity

a-mour (ə moor') *n.* [*Fr. < L. amor*, love] a love affair, esp. an illicit one

amp. 1. ampereage 2. ampere(s)

am-per-age (am'pər ij, am pīr'-) *n.* the strength of an electric current in amperes

am-pere (am'pīr) *n.* [after A. M. *Ampère* (1775-1836), *Fr. physicist*] the standard unit for measuring the strength of an electric current; rate of flow of charge of one coulomb per second

am-per-sand (am'pər sand') *n.* [*and per se and*, lit., (the sign) & by itself (is) *and*] a sign (&), meaning *and*

am-phet-a-mine (am fet'ə mēn', -mīn) *n.* a colorless liquid, C₉H₁₃N, used as a drug to overcome depression, fatigue, etc. and to lessen the appetite

am-phib-i-an (am fib'ē ən) *n.* [see *ff.*] 1. any of a class of vertebrates, including frogs, toads, salamanders, etc., that usually begin life in the water as tadpoles with gills, and later develop lungs 2. any amphibious animal or plant 3. an aircraft that can take off from or come down on either land or water 4. a vehicle that can travel on either land or water —*adj. same as AMPHIBIOUS*

am-phib'i-ous (-əs) *adj.* [*Gr. amphi-*, on both sides + *bios*, life] 1. that can live both on land and in water 2. that can operate on both land and water 3. of or for a military operation involving the landing of troops from boats —*am-phib'i-ous-ly adv.*

am-phi-the-a-ter, am-phi-the-a-ter (am'fē thē'ə tər) *n.* [*Gr. amphi-*, around + *theatron*, theater] a round or oval building with an open space (arena) surrounded by rising rows of seats

am-pho-ra (am'fər ə) *n.*, *pl. -rae* (-ē), -ras [*Gr. amphi-*,

on both sides + *pherein*, to bear] a tall jar with a narrow neck and base and two handles, used by the ancient Greeks and Romans

am-ple (am'pl) *adj. -pler, -plest* [*L. amplus*] 1. large in size, extent, etc. 2. more than enough; abundant 3. adequate —*am-ply adv.*

am-pli-fi-er (am'plē fī'ər) *n.* 1. a person or thing that amplifies 2. an electronic device used to increase electrical signal strength

am-pli-fy (am'plē fī') *vt. -fied', -fy'ing* [*L. amplus*, ample + *facere*, to make] 1. to make stronger; esp., to strengthen (an electrical signal) 2. to expand —*vi.* to expatiate —*am'pli-fi-ca'tion n.*

am-pli-tude (am'plē tōd') *n.* [see *AMPLE*] 1. extent; largeness 2. abundance 3. scope or breadth 4. the extreme range of a fluctuating quantity, from the average or mean to the extreme

amplitude modulation the changing of the amplitude of the transmitting radio wave in accordance with the signal being broadcast: distinguished from *FREQUENCY MODULATION*

am-pul (am'pool) *n.* [*Fr. < L. ampulla*, bottle] a small glass container for one dose of a hypodermic medicine: also *am'pule* (-pyool), *am'poule* (-pōol)

am-pu-tate (am'pyə tāt') *vt. -tated', -tat'ing* [*L. am-*, for *ambi-* + *putare*, to prune] to cut off (an arm, leg, etc.), esp. by surgery —*am'pu-ta'tion n.*

am-pu-tee (am'pyə tē') *n.* a person who has had a limb or limbs amputated

Am-ster-dam (am'star dam') constitutional capital of the Netherlands: pop. 868,000

amt. amount

Am-trak (am'trak') *n.* [*American tr(avel) (tr)a(c)k*] a nationwide system of passenger railroad service

a-muck (ə muk') *adv.* same as *AMOK*

am-u-let (am'yə lit) *n.* [*L.*] something worn on the body as a charm against evil

a-muse (ə myōz') *vt. a-mused', a-mus'ing* [*Fr. a-*, at + *OFr. muser*, to stare fixedly] 1. to keep pleasantly occupied; entertain 2. to make laugh, smile, etc. —*a-mus'a-ble adj.* —*a-mus'er n.*

a-muse-ment (-mənt) *n.* 1. a being amused 2. something that amuses

amusement park an outdoor place with devices for entertainment, as a merry-go-round, etc.

am-yl-ase (am'yə lās') *n.* [*Gr. amylo-*, starch] an enzyme that helps change starch into sugar, found in saliva, etc.

an (ən; stressed ən) *adj. indefinite article* [*OE. an*, one] 1. one; one sort of 2. each; any one 3. per [two an hour] *An* is used before words beginning with a vowel sound [*an eye*, *an honor*, *an ultimatum*]

an, an' (ən) *conj.* [*and*] 1. [*Dial.*] and 2. [*Archaic*] if —*an* [*L. -anus*] *adj. -forming and n. -forming suffix meaning:* 1. (one) belonging to [*diocesan*] 2. (one) born in or living in [*American*] 3. (one) believing in [*Mohammedan*]

a-nab-o-lish (ə nab'ə līz'm) *n.* [*Gr. anabolē*, a rising up + *-ism*] the biological process by which food is changed into living tissue

a-nach-ro-nism (ə nak'rə niz'm) *n.* [*Gr. ana-*, against + *chronos*, time] 1. anything out of its proper time in history 2. the representation of this —*a-nach-ro-nis'tic adj.* —*a-nach-ro-nis'ti-cal-ly adv.*

an-a-con-da (an'ə kən'də) *n.* [*?*] 1. a large S. American snake of the boa family 2. any similar snake that crushes its victim in its coils

a-nae-mi-a (ə nē'mē ə) *n.* same as *ANEMIA*

an-aer-obe (an er'əb, an'ə rōb') *n.* [*Gr. an-*, without + *aero-*, AERO- + *bios*, life] a microorganism that can live where there is no free oxygen —*an-aer-o-bic* (an'er ə'bik, -ə rō'-) *adj.*

an-aes-the-sia (an'əs thē'zhə) *n.* same as *ANESTHESIA* —*an'aes-thet'ic adj.*, *n.* —*an'aes'the-tist n.* —*an'aes'the-tize' vt. -tized', -tiz'ing*

an-a-gram (an'ə gram') *n.* [*Gr. anagrammatizein*, transpose letters] 1. a word or phrase made from another by rearranging its letters (Ex.: *now-won*) 2. [*pl., with sing. v.*] a game of forming words by arranging letters drawn randomly from a stock

An-a-heim (an'ə him') city in SW Calif.: pop. 167,000

a-nal (ā'n'l) *adj.* of or near the anus

an-al-ge-si-a (an'l jē'zē ə, -sē ə) *n.* [*Gr. an-*, without + *algēsia*, pain] a state of not feeling pain although fully conscious

an'al-ge-sic (-zik, -sik) *adj.* of or causing analgesia —*n.* a drug producing analgesia

analog computer a computer that uses volta sent the numerical data of physical quantities

a-nal-o-gize (ə nal'ə jīz') *vi., vt. -gized', -giz'ing* or explain by, analogy —*a-nal'o-gist n.*

a-nal'o-gous (-gəs) *adj.* [see *ANALOGY*] 1. similar in certain respects 2. *Biol.* similar in not in origin and structure —*a-nal'o-gous-ly adv.*

an-a-logue, an-a-logue (an'ə lōg') *n.* a thing is analogous —*adj.* of or by means of an anal. usually analog

a-nal'o-gy (ə nal'ə jē) *n.*, *pl. -gies* [*Gr. ana-* to + *logos*, ratio] 1. similarity in some respect of something point by point with some other 3. *Biol.* similarity in function but not in structure

an-a-lyse (an'ə līz') *vt. -lysed', -lys'ing chiefly ANALYZE*

a-nal'y-sis (ə nal'ə sis) *n.*, *pl. -ses'* (-sēz') [*Gr. + lysis*, a losing] 1. a breaking up of a whole into parts to find their nature, etc. 2. a statement of findings 3. same as *PSYCHOANALYSIS* 4. *Chem.* tion of compounds and mixtures into their components to determine their nature or proportion —*an-a-ly-tic* (an'ə līt'ik) *adj.* —*an'a-lyt'i-cal-ly adv.*

an-a-lyst (an'ə līst) *n.* 1. a person who analyzes as *PSYCHOANALYST*

an-a-lyze' (-līz') *vt. -lyzed', -lyz'ing* 1. to separate so as to find out their nature, etc. 2. carefully so as to determine the nature of something 3. *Chem.* to analyze —*an'a-lyz'a-ble adj.* —*an'a-lyz'er n.*

an-a-pest, an-a-pest (an'ə pest') *n.* [*Gr. + paein*, to strike] a metrical foot of three syllables: first two unaccented and the third accented —*an'a-pest'ic adj.*

an-ar-chism (an'ər kīz'm) *n.* 1. the theory that government should be replaced by voluntary association 2. resistance, sometimes by terrorism, to government 3. a promoter of anarchy —*an'ar-chis'tic adj.*

an-ar-chist (-kīst) *n.* 1. a person who believes in anarchy 2. a promoter of anarchy —*an'ar-chis'ti-cally adv.*

an-ar-chy (-kē) *n.* [*Gr. an-*, without + *archē*, the complete absence of government 2. the absence of order and violence 3. disorder; confusion —*(-ār'kik), an'ar-chi-cal adj.*

anat. 1. anatomical 2. anatomist 3. anatomy

an-a-th-e-ma (ə nath'ə mə) *n.*, *pl. -mas* [*Gr. anathēmē*] 1. a thing or person accused 2. a person greatly detested 3. a formal curse, as in communicating a person 4. any strong curse

a-nath'e-ma-tize' (-tiz') *vt., vi. -tized', -tiz'ing* an anathema (against); curse

an-a-t-o-mize (ə nat'ə mīz') *vt., vi. -mized', -miz'ing* to dissect (an animal or plant) in order to study its structure 2. to analyze in detail —*a-nat'o-mist n.*

an-a-t'o-my (-mē) *n.*, *pl. -mies* [*Gr. ana-*, to cut] 1. the dissecting of an organism to study its structure 2. the science of the structure of animals or plants 3. the structure of an organism as determined by analysis —*an'a-tom'i-cal* (an'ə tām'i-kəl) *adj.* —*an'a-tom'i-cal-ly adv.*

-ance [*L.*] a suffix meaning: 1. the act of [*judging*] 2. a being [*vigilance*] 3. a thing that [*conveyance*] that is [*dissonance, inheritance*]

an-ces-tor (an'ses'tər) *n.* [*L. ante-*, before + *trās*, across] 1. a person from whom one is descended; an early type of animal from which later types have evolved 3. a predecessor —*an'ces'tress* (-trās) *n.*

an-ces-tral (an'ses'trəl) *adj.* of or inherited from ancestors —*an'ces'tral-ly adv.*

an-ces-try (an'ses'trē) *n.*, *pl. -tries* 1. family lineage 2. ancestors collectively

an-chor (an'kər) *n.* [*Gr. ankura*, a hook] 1. a device, as an iron weight with flukes, lowered into the water by cable to keep a ship from drifting 2. anything giving security or stability —*vt.* to hold secure as by an anchor —*vi.* 1. to lower the anchor 2. to become fixed —*at anchor anchored*

an-chor-age (-ij) *n.* 1. money charged for the right to anchor 2. an anchoring or being anchored 3. a place to anchor

an-cho-rite (an'kə rit') *n.* [*Gr. ana-*, back + *chōreia*, retire] a religious recluse; hermit: also *an'cho-ret* (-rit) —*an'cho-*

fat, āpe, cār; ten, ēven; is, bīte; gō, hōrn, tōb; ' as in *able* (ā'b'l); ē, *Fr. coeur*; ō, *Fr. feu*; *Fr.*