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dy·na·mite  (dī nă-mīt')

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n.

1. Any of a class of powerful explosives composed of nitroglycerin or ammonium nitrate dispersed in an absorbent medium with a combustible dope, such as wood pulp, and an antacid, such as calcium carbonate, used in blasting and mining.

2. *Slang*

a. Something exceptionally exciting or wonderful.

b. Something exceptionally dangerous: *These allegations are political dynamite.*

tr.v. **dy·na·mit·ed**, **dy·na·mit·ing**, **dy·na·mites**

To blow up, shatter, or otherwise destroy with dynamite.

adj.

Slang

Outstanding; superb: *a dynamite performance; a dynamite outfit.*

[Swedish *dynamit*, from Greek *dunamis*, power; see [DYNAMIC](#).]

dy na-mit'er *n.*

Word History: The Nobel Prizes were established by the Swedish chemist and industrialist Alfred Nobel (1833-1896) with funds from his immense personal fortune, amassed in part through the manufacture of explosives and armaments. Nobel was the inventor of dynamite—he had discovered that the highly explosive chemical compound nitroglycerine could be made easier to transport and handle if it was mixed with an inert substance. To name his mixture, Nobel invented the word *dynamite*. Originally coined in Swedish in the form *dynamit*, the word was compounded from Greek *dunamis*, "power," and the Swedish suffix *-it*, which corresponds to the English suffix *-ite* used to form the names of rocks, minerals, commercial products, and other substances. Greek *dunamis* also gave us words such as *dynamic* and *dynamo*. *Dunamis* is related to the Greek verb *dunasthai*, "to be able," from which comes English *dynasty*, denoting a family or group that wields power over several generations.

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

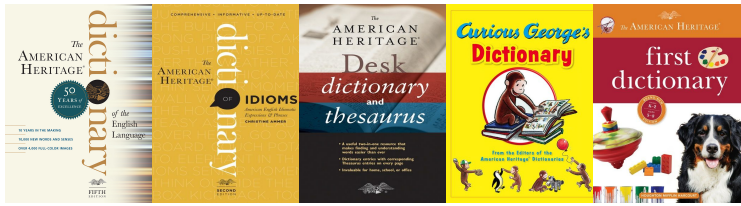
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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