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hip·po·pot·a·mus 🦘 (hĭp'ə-pŏt ə-məs)

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n. pl. **hip·po·pot·a·mus·es** or **hip·po·pot·a·mi** (-mĭ')

1. A large, chiefly aquatic African herbivorous mammal (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) having thick, dark, almost hairless skin, short legs with four toes, and a broad, wide-mouthed muzzle. Also called *river horse*.
2. The pygmy hippopotamus.

[Latin, from Greek *hippopotamos* : *hippos*, horse; see **ekwo-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *potamos*, river; see **pet-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



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hippopotamus

Hippopotamus amphibius

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online 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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