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no·to·ri·ous  (nō-tôr ē-əs)

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adj.

Known widely and usually unfavorably: *a notorious pirate; a region notorious for floods.*

[From Medieval Latin *nōtōrius*, well-known, from Latin *nōtus*, known, past participle of *nōscere*, to get to know; see **gnō-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

no·to ri·ous·ly *adv.*

no·to ri·ous·ness *n.*

Usage Note: Although *notorious* and *notoriety* have been used in negative, positive, and neutral contexts since the 1500s, over the years, *notorious* (and to a lesser extent *notoriety*) has come to be used primarily in negative contexts, often with a connotation of wickedness or undesirability. In our 2011 survey, 81 percent of the Usage Panel accepted the sentence *The region is notorious for its seismic disturbances*, whereas only 26 percent accepted a sentence that used *notorious* in a situation where the circumstances for fame are positive: *She is notorious for her excellent standup comedy routines*. The Panel is somewhat more willing to accept *notoriety* in a positive context: almost half (45 percent) approved of the sentence *His success on college campuses brought him enough notoriety to release a greatest hits CD*.

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

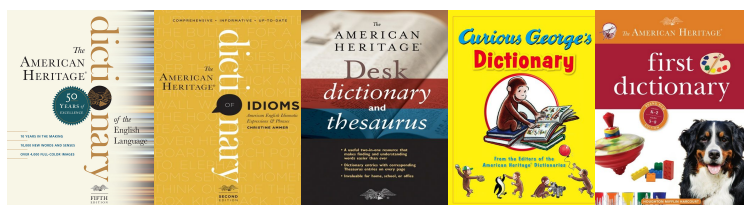
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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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