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e·nor·mous  (ĩ-nôr mäs)

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adj.

1.

a. Very great in size, extent, or amount.

b. Very great in scope or import: *enormous influence*.

2. *Archaic* Very wicked; heinous.

[From Latin *ēnormis*, unusual, huge, monstrous : *ē-*, *ex-*, *ex-* + *norma*, norm; see **gnō-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#). Sense 2, from Middle English *enormious*, from Latin *ēnormis*.]

e·nor mous·ly *adv.*

e·nor mous·ness *n.*

Synonyms: enormous, immense, huge, gigantic, colossal, mammoth, tremendous, gargantuan, vast

These adjectives describe what is extraordinarily large. *Enormous* suggests a marked excess beyond the norm in size, amount, or degree: *an enormous boulder*.

Immense refers to boundless or immeasurable size or extent: *an immense sky*.

Huge especially implies greatness of size or capacity: *a huge tanker*.

Gigantic refers to size likened to that of a giant: *a gigantic redwood tree*.

Colossal suggests a hugeness that elicits awe or taxes belief: *a valley ringed by colossal mountains*.

Mammoth is applied to something of unwieldy hugeness: *"mammoth stone figures in ... buckled eighteenth-century pumps, the very soles of which seem mountainously tall"* ([Cynthia Ozick](#)).

Tremendous suggests awe-inspiring or fearsome size: *a tremendous waterfall*.

Gargantuan stresses greatness of size or capacity and often suggests extravagance or excess: *"Dense schools of menhaden ... slurp up enormous quantities of plankton and detritus like gargantuan vacuum cleaners"* (H. Bruce Franklin).

Vast refers to greatness of extent, size, area, or scope, and is often applied to what inspires a sense of grandeur or awe: *"Another vast mountain of darkness rose, towering up like a wave that should engulf the world"* ([J.R.R. Tolkien](#)).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

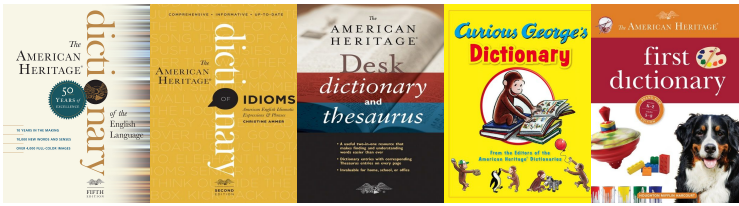
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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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