



SINCE 1828

# living adjective

liv·ing | \ 'li-viŋ \

## Definition of *living* (Entry 1 of 2)

- 1 a** : having life  
**b** : ACTIVE, FUNCTIONING  
*// living languages*
- 2 a** : exhibiting the life or motion of nature : NATURAL  
*// the wilderness is a living museum ... of natural history*  
— *NEA Jour.*  
**b** : LIVE entry 2 sense 2a
- 3 a** : full of life or vigor  
**b** : true to life : VIVID  
*// televised in living color*  
**c** : suited for living  
*// the living area*
- 4** : involving living persons
- 5** : VERY —used as an intensive  
*// scared the living daylight out of me*

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Decade in Review

Words of the Year

# living

## Definition of *living* (Entry 2 of 2)

- 1** : the condition of being alive
- 2**
  - a** : means of subsistence : LIVELIHOOD  
*//* earning a *living*
  - b** *archaic* : ESTATE, PROPERTY
  - c** *British* : BENEFICE sense 1
- 3** : conduct or manner of life  
*//* the collegiate way of *living*  
— J. B. Conant

### Other Words from *living*

### Synonyms & Antonyms

### More Example Sentences

### Learn More about *living*

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## Other Words from *living*

### Adjective

**livingness** *noun*

## Synonyms & Antonyms for *living*

### Synonyms: Adjective

active, alive, functional, functioning, going, live, on, operating, operational, operative, running, working

### Antonyms: Adjective

broken, dead, inactive, inoperative, kaput (*also* kaputt), nonactivated, nonfunctional, nonfunctioning, nonoperating, nonoperational, nonoperative

[Visit the Thesaurus for More](#)

## Examples of *living* in a Sentence

### Adjective

// I was taught to respect all *living* things.

// His aunt is his closest *living* relative.

[See More](#)

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### Recent Examples on the Web: Adjective

// Palestinians held in Israeli prisons have gone on hunger strikes to demand better *living* conditions — in 2017, more than 1,000 went on strike at once.

— Siobhán O'grady, *Washington Post*, "Hunger strikes tend to work only when governments fear the consequences. Mustafa Kassem's death in Egypt is a grim example.," 18 Jan. 2020

// Palestinians held in Israeli prisons have gone on hunger strikes to demand better *living* conditions — in 2017, more than 1,000 went on strike at once.

— Siobhán O'grady, *BostonGlobe.com*, "Hunger strikes tend to work only when governments fear the consequences," 18 Jan. 2020

These example sentences are selected automatically from various online news sources to reflect current usage of the word 'living.' Views expressed in the examples do not represent the opinion of Merriam-Webster or its editors. Send us feedback.

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## First Known Use of *living*

### Adjective

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1a

### Noun

14th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1

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## Learn More about *living*

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### Share *living*

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### Time Traveler for *living*

Time Traveler **The first known use of *living* was before the 12th century**

See more words from the same century

### Dictionary Entries near *living*

livid purple

livid violet

livier

### Phrases Related to *living*

be living on borrowed time

beat the (living) daylights out of

do for a living

**St**

**La**

25

**Lo**

## living

living death

living embodiment

living fossil

earn a living

honest living

in living color

in the land of the living

[See More Nearby Entries](#)

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## More Definitions for *living*

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### living adjective

#### English Language Learners Definition of *living* (Entry 1 of 2)

: not dead : having life

: currently active or being used

: having the form of a person who is alive

### living noun

## English Language Learners Definition of *living* (Entry 2 of 2)

: a way of earning money : the money that someone needs to pay for housing, food, etc.

: a way of living

: people who are alive

See the full definition for *living* in the English Language Learners Dictionary

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## living adjective

liv·ing | \ 'li-viŋ \

### Kids Definition of *living* (Entry 1 of 2)

**1** : not dead : ALIVE

// We're his closest *living* relatives.

**2** : true to life

// You are the *living* image of your parents.

## living noun

### Kids Definition of *living* (Entry 2 of 2)

**1** : the condition of being alive

**2** : conduct or manner of life

// healthy *living*

**3** : what a person has to have to meet basic needs

// She made a *living* as a cook.

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## More from Merriam-Webster on *living*

Thesaurus: All synonyms and antonyms for *living*

Spanish Central: Translation of *living*

Nglish: Translation of *living* for Spanish Speakers

Britannica English: Translation of *living* for Arabic Speakers

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WORDS AT PLAY



## **How 'Mean' Became Nasty**

It was a perfectly nice word for centuries



## **The One Who Cries, The One Who Interrupts, and more Words for That Certain Person**

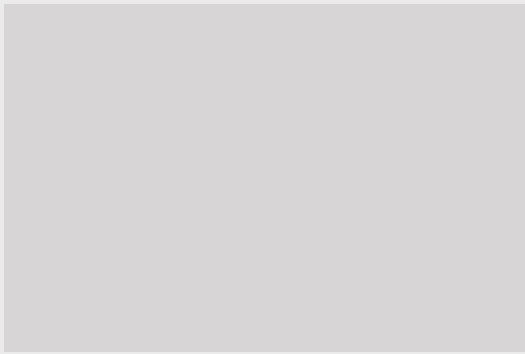
Specific behaviors and those who embody them



## **'Aluminum' or 'Aluminium'?**

A tale of two spellings

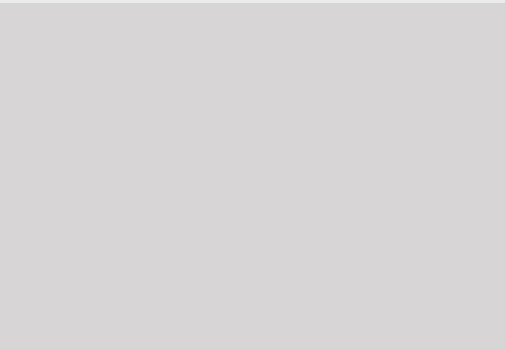




## **Words from Scottish English We Love**

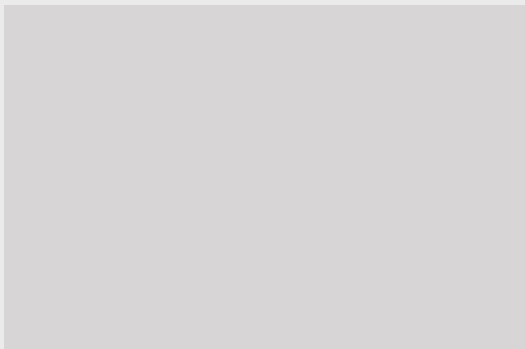
Some of our favorite Scottish English words

### **ASK THE EDITORS**



## **2019 Word of the Year: Behind the Scenes**

How we chose 'they'



## **Is It 'Hanger' or 'Hangar'?**

How to remember which is which



### **Literally**

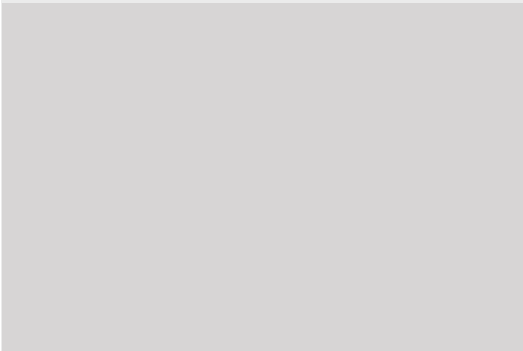
How to use a word that (literally)  
drives some people nuts.



### **Is Singular 'They' a Better Choice?**

The awkward case of 'his or her'

### **WORD GAMES**

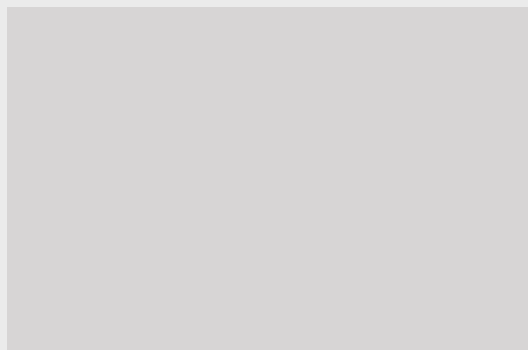


## January 2020 Words of the Day

### Quiz

Word of the Day quiz returns  
(again!)

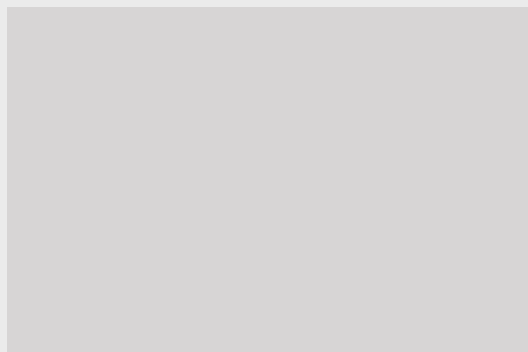
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### Intact Latin Quiz

What did each of these words mean  
to ancient Romans?

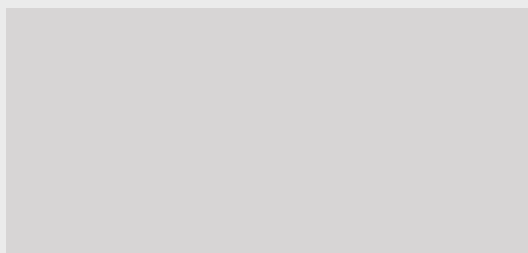
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### Spell It

Can you spell these 10 commonly  
misspelled words?

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