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authority



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authority

noun

au·thor·i·ty | \ ə-ˈthôr-ə-tē  , ó-, -ˈthär-\

plural authorities

Definition of *authority*

- 1a : power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior the president's authority
 b : freedom granted by one in authority : [right](#) Who gave you the authority to do as you wish?
 2a : persons in command specifically : [government](#) the local *authorities* of each state
 b : a governmental agency or corporation to administer a revenue-producing public enterprise the transit authority the city's housing authority
 3a : [grounds](#), [warrant](#) had excellent authority for believing the claim
 b : convincing force lent authority to the performance
 4a(1) : a citation (as from a book or file) used in defense or support
 (2) : the source from which the citation is drawn He quoted extensively from the Bible, his sole authority.
 b(1) : a conclusive statement or set of statements (such as an official decision of a court)
 (2) : a decision taken as a precedent
 (3) : [testimony](#)
 c : an individual cited or appealed to as an expert The prosecutor called the psychiatrist as an authority.

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Synonyms & Antonyms for *authority*

Synonyms

[ace](#), [adept](#), [artist](#), [cognoscente](#), [connoisseur](#), [crackerjack](#) (also [crackajack](#)), [dab](#) [chiefly British], [dab hand](#) [chiefly British], [expert](#), [fiend](#), [geek](#), [guru](#), [hand](#), [hotshot](#), [maestro](#), [master](#), [maven](#) (also [mavin](#)), [meister](#), [past master](#), [proficient](#), [scholar](#), [shark](#), [sharp](#), [virtuoso](#), [whiz](#), [wizard](#)

Antonyms

[amateur](#), [inexpert](#), [nonexpert](#)

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Choose the Right Synonym for *authority*

[influence](#), [authority](#), [prestige](#), [weight](#), [credit](#) mean power exerted over the minds or behavior of others. [influence](#) may apply to a force exercised and received consciously or unconsciously. used her *influence* to get the bill passed [authority](#) implies the power of winning devotion or allegiance or of compelling acceptance and belief. his opinions lacked *authority* [prestige](#) implies the ascendancy given by conspicuous excellence or reputation for superiority. the *prestige* of the newspaper [weight](#) implies measurable or decisive influence in determining acts or choices. their wishes obviously carried much *weight* [credit](#) suggests influence that arises from the confidence of others. his *credit* with the press

[power](#), [authority](#), [jurisdiction](#), [control](#), [command](#), [sway](#), [dominion](#) mean the right to govern or rule or determine. [power](#) implies possession of ability to wield force, authority, or influence. the *power* to mold public opinion [authority](#) implies power for a specific purpose within specified limits. granted the *authority* to manage her estate [jurisdiction](#) applies to official power exercised within prescribed limits. the bureau

having *jurisdiction* over parks [control](#) stresses the power to direct and restrain. you are responsible for the students under your *control* [command](#) implies the power to make arbitrary decisions and compel obedience. the army officer in *command* [sway](#) suggests the extent of exercised power or influence. the empire extended its *sway* over the region [dominion](#) stresses sovereign power or supreme authority. given *dominion* over all the animals

Examples of *authority* in a Sentence

The boss is not popular but his *authority* is unquestioned. She has an air of *authority*.
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Recent Examples on the Web

Two Central Florida women were sentenced to federal prison this week for ripping off elderly people through credit-card fraud and each ordered to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in restitution, *authorities* said.— [Jerry Fallstrom, orlandosentinel.com, "Two women sentenced to federal prison in \\$800K ripoff of elderly," 7 Sep. 2019](#) Edmond had cooperated with *authorities* over nearly two decades, helping them understand the workings of the drug trade and convict some 100 other dealers, prosecutors said.— [Keith L. Alexander, Washington Post, "Prosecutors request '80s drug kingpin Rayful Edmond III's life sentence be reduced to 40 years," 6 Sep. 2019](#)

These example sentences are selected automatically from various online news sources to reflect current usage of the word 'authority.' 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 *authority*

13th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 4a](#)

History and Etymology for *authority*

Middle English *auctorite*, from Anglo-French *auctorité*, from Latin *auctoritat-*, *auctoritas* opinion, decision, power, from *auctor* — see [author entry 1](#)

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More Definitions for *authority*

authority

noun




English Language Learners Definition of *authority*

: the power to give orders or make decisions : the power or right to direct or control someone or something
: the confident quality of someone who knows a lot about something or who is respected or obeyed by other people
: a quality that makes something seem true or real

[See the full definition for *authority* in the English Language Learners Dictionary](#)

authority

noun

au·thor·i·ty | \ ə-ˈthôr-ə-tē \ 
plural authorities

Kids Definition of *authority*

1 : power to exercise control
2 : a person looked to as an expert She's a leading *authority* on fitness.
3 : people having powers to make decisions and enforce rules and laws State *authorities* are investigating the disputed election.
4 : a fact or statement used to support a position What is your *authority* for this argument?

authority

noun

au·thor·i·ty
plural authorities

Legal Definition of *authority*

1 : an official decision of a court used especially as a precedent
2a : a power to act especially over others that derives from status, position, or office the authority of the president also : [jurisdiction](#)

b : the power to act that is officially or formally granted (as by statute, corporate bylaw, or court order) within the scope of the treasurer's authority
police officers executing a warrant... are not required to “knock and announce” their authority and purposes before entering— *National Law Journal*

c : power and capacity to act granted by someone in a position of control specifically : the power to act granted by a principal to his or her agent

— **actual authority**

: the authority that a principal in reality has granted to an agent

— **actual express authority**

: the actual authority of an agent specifically stated or written by the principal

— **actual implied authority**

: the actual authority of an agent that the principal has not specified but has purposely or through negligence allowed the agent to believe has been granted

— **apparent authority**

: the authority that a principal purposely or through negligence allows a third party to believe that the principal's agent has although such authority has not in reality been granted

— called also authority by estoppel, ostensible authority

Note: A principal is bound by the acts of an agent acting with apparent authority.

— **express authority**

: authority that is explicitly granted to an agent by a principal

— called also expressed authority, stipulated authority

— **implied authority**

: the authority to perform acts that are customary, necessary, and understood by an agent as authorized in performing acts for which the principal has given express authority

— **ostensible authority**

: apparent authority in this entry

— **stipulated authority**

: express authority in this entry

3 : a person in a position of power and especially a public office —usually used in pl. the local *authorities*

4a : a government agency or corporation that administers a revenue-producing public enterprise the transit authority

b : a government agency or public office responsible for an area of regulation should apply for a permit to the permitting authority

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labile 

readily or continually undergoing change

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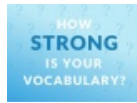
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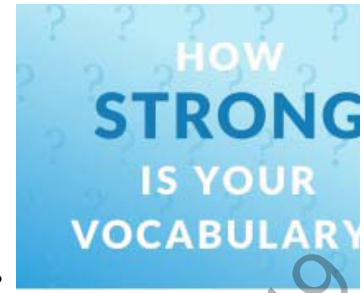
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