

# corruption noun

Save Word

cor-rupt-ion | \kə-ˈrɒp-shən |

## Definition of corruption

- a** : dishonest or illegal behavior especially by powerful people (such as government officials or police officers) : [DEPRAVITY](#)

**b** : inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means (such as bribery)  
// the **corruption** of government officials

**c** : a departure from the original or from what is pure or [correct](#)  
// the **corruption** of a text  
// the **corruption** of computer files

**d** : [DECAY](#), [DECOMPOSITION](#)  
// the **corruption** of a carcass
- chiefly dialectal** : PUS
- archaic** : an agency or influence that corrupts

- Synonyms
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## Synonyms for corruption

Synonyms  
breakdown, decay, decomposition, festering, putrefaction, putrescence, rot, spoilage

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## Examples of corruption in a Sentence

// There are rumors of widespread **corruption** in the city government.

// the mafia's **corruption** of public officials

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## Recent Examples on the Web

// Leaders in the three countries face allegations of **corruption** or have taken anti-democratic actions that have fueled political instability.  
— *Washington Post*, "Harris-led campaign to stem migration from Central America faces steep challenges," 1 May 2021

// By China Daily Before they were arrested, Parnas and Fruman assisted Giuliani in his quest to connect Biden, then a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, to alleged acts of **corruption** in Ukraine.  
— Simon Shuster, *Time*, "Long Before Raiding Rudy Giuliani's Home, Investigators Sought 'Everything' From His Associates," 29 Apr. 2021

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

14th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

## History and Etymology for corruption

see [CORRUPT](#) entry 1

## Learn More about corruption

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### Time Traveler for corruption

The first known use of **corruption** was in the 14th century

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### Dictionary Entries near corruption

- corrupt
- corruptedly
- corruptedness
- corruption
- corruptionist
- corruption of blood
- corruptio optimi pessima

See More Nearby Entries

### Statistics for corruption

Last Updated  
6 May 2021

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### Cite this Entry

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Style: MLA

## More Definitions for corruption

### corruption noun

English Language Learners Definition of **corruption**  
: dishonest or illegal behavior especially by powerful people (such as government officials or police officers)

: the act of corrupting someone or something

: something that has been changed from its original form

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

### corruption noun

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#### Kids Definition of corruption

- : dishonest or illegal behavior  
// **corruption** in politics
- : the process of causing someone else to do something wrong  
// ... the little scene that I had overheard was the last act in the **corruption** of one of the honest hands ...  
— Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*
- : the act of changing or damaging something  
// the **corruption** of an ancient text  
// the **corruption** of a computer file

### More from Merriam-Webster on corruption

- Thesaurus: All synonyms and antonyms for **corruption**
- Nglsh: Translation of **corruption** for Spanish Speakers
- Britannica English: Translation of **corruption** for Arabic Speakers
- Britannica.com: Encyclopedia article about **corruption**

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### ASK THE EDITORS

 <b>'All Intensive Purposes' or 'All Intents and Purposes'?</b> We're intent on clearing it up	 <b>'Nip it in the butt' or 'Nip it in the bud'?</b> We're gonna stop you right there	 <b>Literally</b> How to use a word that (literally) drives some pe...	 <b>Is Singular 'They' a Better Choice?</b> The awkward case of 'his or her'
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