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illuminate verb

Save Word

ih-lu-mi-nate | \ i- lü-mə-nāt \

illuminated; illuminating

Definition of *illuminate* (Entry 1 of 3)

transitive verb

- (1) : to supply or brighten with light
 - (2) : to make luminous or shining
 - : to enlighten spiritually or intellectually
 - : to subject to radiation
 - archaic* : to set alight
- : to make clear : **ELUCIDATE**
 - : to bring to the fore : **HIGHLIGHT**
// a crisis can *illuminate* how interdependent we all are
- : to make **illustrous** or resplendent
- : to decorate (something, such as a manuscript) with gold or silver or brilliant colors or with often elaborate designs or miniature pictures

illuminate adjective

ih-lu-mi-nate | \ i- lü-mə-nāt \

Definition of *illuminate* (Entry 2 of 3)

- archaic* : brightened with light
- archaic* : intellectually or spiritually enlightened

illuminate noun

ih-lu-mi-nate | \ i- lü-mə-nāt \

Definition of *illuminate* (Entry 3 of 3)

archaic

: one having or claiming unusual enlightenment



- Other Words from *illuminate*
- Synonyms & Antonyms
- Example Sentences
- Learn More About *illuminate*

Other Words from *illuminate*

Verb

illuminator \ i- lü-mə-nā-ter \ *noun*

Synonyms & Antonyms for *illuminate*

Synonyms: Verb

bathe, beacon, emblaze, illumine, irradiate, light, lighten

Antonyms: Verb

blacken, darken, obfuscate

[Visit the Thesaurus for More](#)



Examples of *illuminate* in a Sentence

Verb

// the part of the moon *illuminated* by the sun

// A university study has *illuminated* the problem.

Recent Examples on the Web: Verb

// After a day full of 4th of July apps, drinks, treats and more, grab a seat and a blanket and watch fireworks *illuminate* the sky at any one of these shows near you.
— Annie O'sullivan, *Good Housekeeping*, 10 May 2022

// The artists are inarguably major figures in Modern art's history, and these paintings *illuminate* important aspects of their work; holding them is a prime reason an art museum exists.
— *Los Angeles Times*, 6 May 2022

// The LEDs are south facing which *illuminate* the keyboard better from the typist's point of view.
— Mark Sparrow, *Forbes*, 1 May 2022

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

First Known Use of *illuminate*

Verb

15th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1b

Adjective

15th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1

Noun

1600, in the meaning defined above



History and Etymology for *illuminate*

Verb

Middle English, from Latin *illuminatus*, past participle of *illuminare*, from *in-* + *luminare* to light up, from *lumin-, lumen* light — more at **LUMINARY**

Buying Guide

Our Reviews team has selected the best desk lamps.

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Time Traveler for *illuminate*

The first known use of *illuminate* was in the 15th century

[See more words from the same century](#)

From the Editors at Merriam-Webster

A Paean on the Names of Nature's Light Displays
Artificial light just can't compete.

Dictionary Entries Near *illuminate*

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[illuminated](#)

[illuminati](#)

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19 May 2022

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Style: MLA

More Definitions for *illuminate*

illuminate verb

ih-lu-mi-nate | \ i- lü-mə-nāt \

illuminated; illuminating

Kids Definition of *illuminate*

- : to supply with light
// He clutched Rose as a dazzling blast *illuminated* the lobby...
— Brian Selznick, *Wonderstruck*
- : to make clear : **EXPLAIN**
// His speech *illuminated* the subject.

More from Merriam-Webster on *illuminate*

[Nglsh: Translation of *illuminate* for Spanish Speakers](#)

[Britannica English: Translation of *illuminate* for Arabic Speakers](#)

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ASK THE EDITORS

<p>Literally</p> <p>How to use a word that (literally) drives some pe...</p>	<p>'All Intensive Purposes' or 'All Intents and Purposes'?</p> <p>We're intent on clearing it up</p>	<p>Lay vs. Lie</p> <p>Editor Emily Brewster clarifies the difference.</p>	<p>Why Did Yankee Doodle Call a Feather "Macaroni"?</p> <p>What's with his feathered cap?</p>
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WORD GAMES

<p>The Great British Vocabulary Quiz</p> <p>Make sure you know the difference between a loo a...</p> <p>TAKE THE QUIZ ></p>	<p>Face Your Fears</p> <p>Don't be scared to answer these questions about f...</p> <p>TAKE THE QUIZ ></p>	<p>Yearbook Superlatives Quiz</p> <p>"Most Likely to Use Obscure Words"</p> <p>TAKE THE QUIZ ></p>	<p>Lexigo</p> <p>Find the hidden words by solving the clues</p> <p>TAKE THE QUIZ ></p>
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