



SINCE 1828

# cost noun

\ 'kɒst \

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

- 1 a** : the amount or equivalent paid or charged for something : PRICE  
// The average *cost* of a college education has gone up dramatically.
- b** : the outlay or expenditure (as of effort or sacrifice) made to achieve an object  
// He achieved fame, but at the *cost* of losing several friends.
- 2** : loss or penalty incurred especially in gaining something  
// the *cost* of lives during war
- 3** **costs plural** : expenses incurred in a judicial process  
*especially* : those given by the law or the court to the prevailing party against the losing party

### **at all costs**

: regardless of the cost or consequences

// was determined to win *at all costs*

### **at cost**

: for the price of production

# cost verb

cost; costing

## Definition of cost (Entry 2 of 2)

*intransitive verb*

**1** : to require expenditure or payment  
// The best goods *cost* more.

**2** : to require effort, suffering, or loss

*transitive verb*

**1** : to have a price of  
// Each ticket *costs* 25 dollars.

**2** : to cause to pay, suffer, or lose something  
// Frequent absences *cost* him his job.

**3** *past costed* \ 'kă-stəd \ : to estimate or set the cost of —often used with *out*  
// The project has yet to be *costed out*.

**Other Words from cost**

**Synonyms**

**More Example Sentences**

**Learn More about cost**

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## Other Words from *cost*

### Noun

**costless** \ 'kɒst-ləs \ *adjective*

**costlessly** *adverb*

## Synonyms for *cost*

### Synonyms: Noun

charge, disbursement, expenditure, expense, outgo, outlay

### Synonyms: Verb

bring, fetch, go (for), run, sell (for)

[Visit the Thesaurus for More](#)

## Examples of *cost* in a Sentence

### Noun

// She attends college at a *cost* of \$15,000 a year.

// The average *cost* of raising a family has increased dramatically.

[See More](#)

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### Recent Examples on the Web: Noun

// There is no *cost* for students taking them at one of the 14 testing sites in state or for those out of state who used the mail-in tests.

— Michael Casagrande | Mcasagrande@al.com, *al*, "Early COVID-19 test results for Alabama college students show low positivity rate," 12 Aug. 2020

// Public art breaks down socioeconomic disparities -- there is no *cost* to view the art like at a museum -- expressing a welcoming spirit to visitors, which has economic and many other benefits.

— Carol Kovach, *cleveland*, "Welcome to Parma mural may be coming to a main corridor in the

city: Sun Postings," 11 Aug. 2020

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

### Noun

14th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1a

### Verb

14th century, in the meaning defined at transitive sense 1

## History and Etymology for *cost*

### Verb and Noun

Middle English, from Anglo-French *custe*, *couster*, from Latin *constare* to stand firm, cost — more at **CONSTANT**

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## Learn More about *cost*

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## Time Traveler for *cost*

Time Traveler **The first known use of *cost* was in the 14th century**

See more words from the same century

## Dictionary Entries near *cost*

Cossidae

Cossus

coassyrite

**cost**

costa

Costa

Costa Brava

[See More Nearby Entries](#)

## Phrases Related to *cost*

at a cost

at cost price

at no cost

at the cost of

closing costs

cost (someone) dearly/dear

cost an arm and a leg

## Statistics for *cost*

### Last Updated

16 Aug 2020

### Look-up Popularity

Top 20% of words

## Cite this Entry

“Cost.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cost>. Accessed 24 Aug. 2020.

Style: MLA



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## More Definitions for *cost*

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**cost** noun

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

: the price of something : the amount of money that is needed to pay for or buy something

: an amount of money that must be spent regularly to pay for something (such as running a business or raising a family)

: something that is lost, damaged, or given up in order to achieve or get something

## **cost** verb

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

: to have (an amount of money) as a price

: to cause (someone) to pay an amount of money

: to cause (someone) to lose something

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

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## **cost** verb

\ 'kɒst \

**cost**; **costing**

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

**1** : to have a price of

// He bought a ticket *costing* one dollar.

**2** : to cause the payment, spending, or loss of

// Being lazy *cost* me my job.

## **cost** noun

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

- 1** : the amount paid or charged for something : PRICE
  - 2** : loss or penalty involved in gaining something  
*//* Losing my friends was the *cost* of moving.
- 

## **cost** noun

### **Legal Definition of cost**

- 1** : the amount or equivalent paid or charged for something
  - 2** *plural* : expenses incurred in litigation  
*especially* : those given by the law or the court to the prevailing party against the losing party
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*Keep scrolling for more*

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### **More from Merriam-Webster on cost**

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Thesaurus: All synonyms and antonyms for *cost*

Spanish Central: Translation of *cost*

Nglish: Translation of *cost* for Spanish Speakers

Britannica English: Translation of *cost* for Arabic Speakers

Britannica.com: Encyclopedia article about *cost*

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## TEST YOUR VOCABULARY

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### Odd Habits and Quirks Quiz



Which of the following best describes an easily irritated person?

**flashy** **superficial**

**tetchy** **gregarious**

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Can you spell these 10 commonly misspelled words?

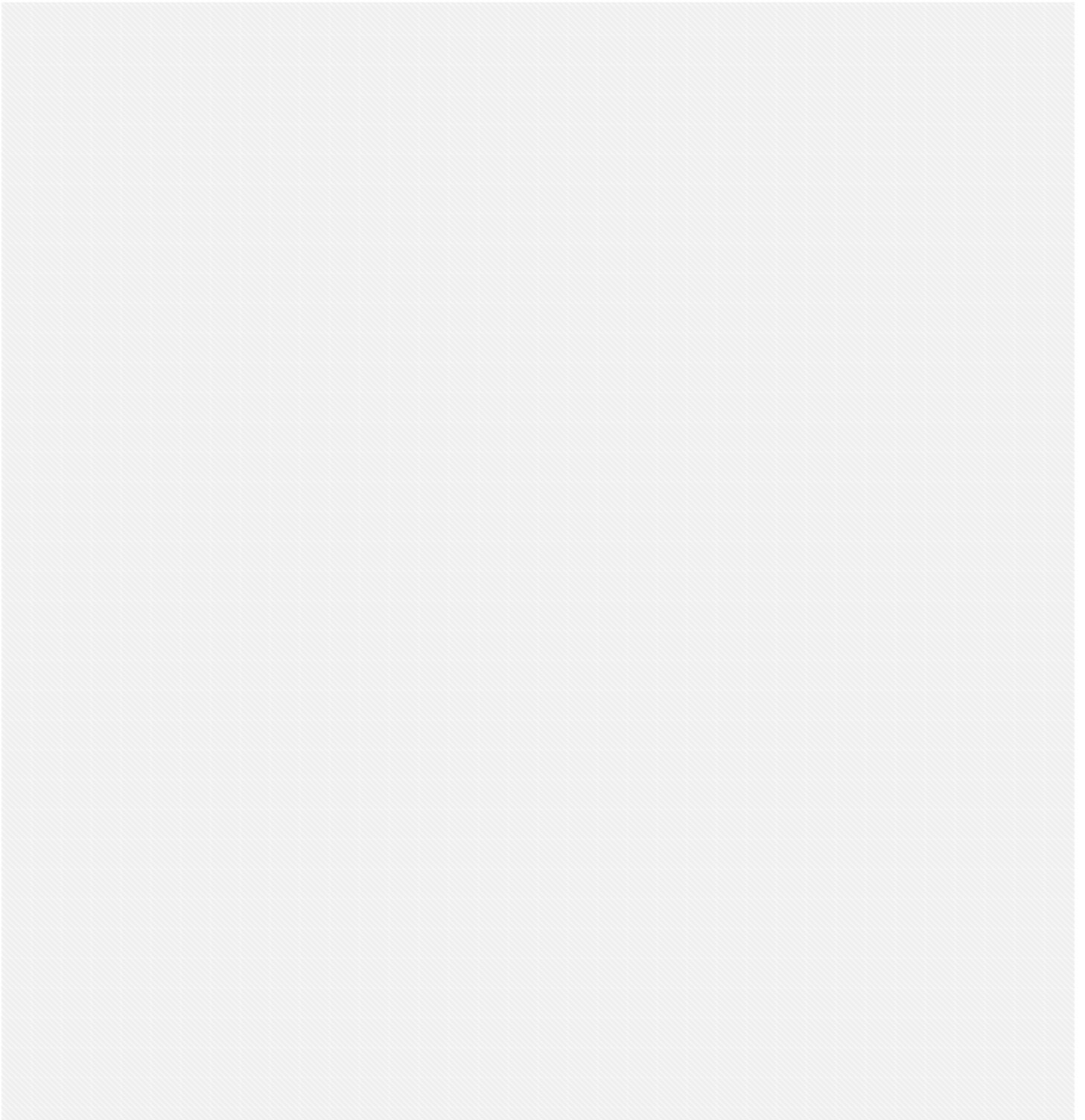
**TAKE THE QUIZ**

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## WORDS AT PLAY

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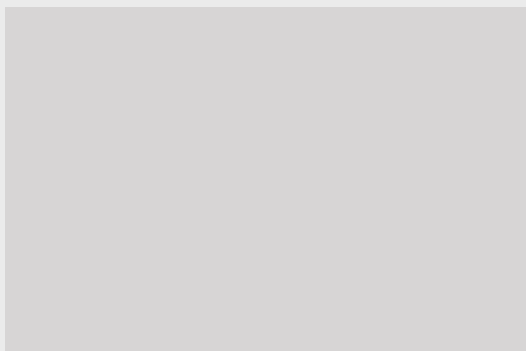
Words from the week of 8/21/2020

### Fun With Sports-Team Names

Or How a Maple Leaf Survives an  
Avalanche

## **6 Words for When You're Not Sure**

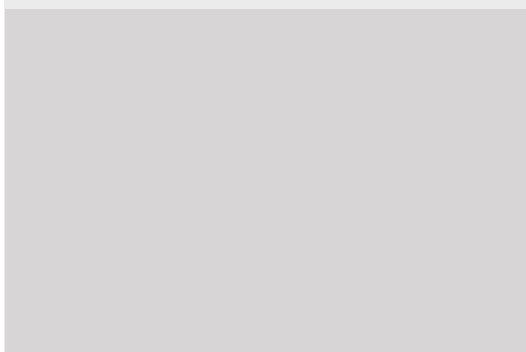
Just a shot in the dark here



## **The New 'Bubble' Popping Up in Sports**

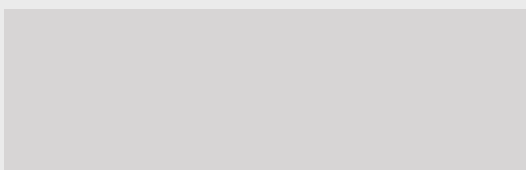
Thinking inside the bubble

### **ASK THE EDITORS**



## **'Intensive purposes': An Eggcorn**

We're intent on clearing it up



## 'Nip it in the butt': An Eggcorn

We're gonna stop you right there

## 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



## Odd Habits and Quirks Quiz

Test your knowledge of strange human behaviors.

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## Name That Thing: Animal Edition

How many animals can you identify?

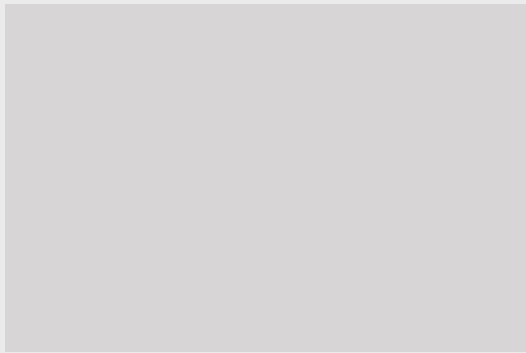
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## Spell It

Can you spell these 10 commonly misspelled words?

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## Dictionary Devil

The dictionary has been scrambled  
—can you put it back together?

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