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Did you know that school originally meant “free time”? Or that a gymnasium was originally a “nude practice area”? Or that nachos are named after Ignacio “Nacho” Anaya, who created them? The fascinating stories of these words and over three hundred more are told in More Word Histories and Mysteries: From Aardvark to Zombie.

In this companion to the popular Word Histories and Mysteries: From Abracadabra to Zeus, the most surprising stories in the history of English vocabulary are told as a series of brief notes written in a lively and entertaining style. Conveniently arranged in alphabetical order, the notes explore all corners of the dictionary, from everyday words like flak and sideburns to scientific terms like nitrogen to regionalisms like lagniappe.

The history of many words is traced back to Egypt, India, and other ancient cultures.

A short introduction sketches the history of the English language and American regional dialects. A handy glossary defines special terms for readers who wish to learn more about linguistics and also gives information about the exotic languages that have enriched our vocabulary.

Photographs and drawings enliven the pages and illuminate the understanding of word histories.

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Editorial Review

Review

[More Word Histories and Mysteries]continues an enjoyable series of words with colorful histories.
The Chicago Tribune

The book's informative yet informal writing style ... [appeals] to the amateur enthusiast ... accessibility is further enhanced by a useful glossary.

Library Journal

About the Author

The Editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries are a team of professional lexicographers with advanced degrees in various scholarly fields. The editors familiarize themselves with the vocabulary in specific subject areas, collect materials on new developments and usage, and work with expert consultants to ensure that the content of our publications is as accurate and as up-to-date as possible.

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