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*By Chris at 10:30 am, Oct 15, 2020*

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rigor mortis



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# rigor mortis

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ri·gôr mor·tis | \ ,ri-gər-'môr-təs also chiefly British ,rī- ,gô-'mò-təs 

## Definition of *rigor mortis*

: temporary rigidity of muscles occurring after death

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## Did You Know?

*Rigor mortis*, which translates from Latin as "stiffness of death", sets in quickly and usually ends three or four days after death. The condition results from a lack of certain chemicals in the muscles; it may be affected by muscular activity before death as well as the external temperature. Mystery writers frequently make use of rigor mortis as a means by which the detective or the examiner can determine the time of the victim's death, which often turns out to be all-important in solving the case.

## Examples of *rigor mortis* in a Sentence

Recent Examples on the Web On Tuesday, in his postmortem for a season that entered *rigor mortis* five weeks ago, Rangers general manager Jon Daniels laid out in some detail a plan for the future. — [Evan Grant, Dallas News, "If Rangers are truly committed to youth movement, they need to make decisions on Roughton Odor, Elvis Andrus," 30 Sep. 2020](#) He is frozen in the beginning stages of *rigor mortis* — his eyes are stuck open and blood is pouring out of his skull into the water. — [Ariana Romero, refinery29.com, "Wait — Is Steve Actually Dead On Dead To Me?," 8 May 2020](#)

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

1847, in the meaning defined [above](#)

## History and Etymology for *rigor mortis*

New Latin, stiffness of death

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Time Traveler for *rigor mortis*



**The first known use of *rigor mortis* was in 1847**

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7 Oct 2020

Look-up Popularity

Top 4% of words

Cite this Entry

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More Definitions for *rigor mortis*

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[noun](#)



## English Language Learners Definition of *rigor mortis*

: a temporary stiffness of the body that happens soon after death

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

rigor mortis

[noun](#)

rig·or mor·tis | \ ,rig-ər-'mōrt-əs also chiefly British ,rī-,gò(ə)r-\

## Medical Definition of *rigor mortis*

: temporary rigidity of muscles occurring after death

More from Merriam-Webster on *rigor mortis*

English: [Translation of \*rigor mortis\* for Spanish Speakers](#)

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**elders**

**unwritten laws**

**animals**

**soothsayers**

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We have the floor.

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Does it have to be between two  
things?

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Words from the week of 10/9/2020

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By land, sea, or air

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**'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 pe...

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**Is Singular 'They' a Better Choice?**

The awkward case of 'his or her'

## WORD GAMES

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