



SINCE 1828 MENU



sanctuary

noun | sanc·tu·ary | \ 'saŋ(k)-chə-,wer-ē \

Popularity: Top 30% of words | Updated on: 17 Apr 2018

Examples: SANCTUARY in a Sentence

Editor's Note: Did You Know?



Definition of SANCTUARY

plural sanctuaries

- 1 : a consecrated place: such as
 - a : the ancient Hebrew temple at Jerusalem or its holy of holies
 - b (1) : the most sacred part of a religious building (such as the part of a Christian church in which the altar is placed) (2) : the room in which general worship services are held (3) : a place (such as a church or a temple) for worship

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- 2 a (1) : a place of refuge and protection (2) : a place where predators are controlled and hunting is restricted
 - b : the immunity from law attached to a



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wildlife where
Trump: Den of Thieves and 'Lowlifes'

See *sanctuary* defined for English-language learners



Examples of SANCTUARY in a Sentence

The house was a *sanctuary* for runaway teens.

The refugees *found sanctuary* when they crossed the border.

The *sanctuary* contains the altar of sacrifice.

A red and white advertisement banner. On the left, the text 'When It's Severe, Come Here.' is written in white on a red background. On the right, a white box contains the text 'See How We're Succeeding in Serious STROKE CASES' in black and red.

Recent Examples of SANCTUARY from the Web

Valdez was among law enforcement officials who opposed the 2017 *sanctuary* cities law championed by Abbott, which some fear will lead to profiling.

— Peggy Fikac, *San Antonio Express-News*, "Gov. Abbott says he'll face
 Valdez, but White hopes to prove him wrong," 9 Apr. 2018

On Good Friday on March 30, those attending as the congregation shares in a Service of Sh...
sanctuary as part of its worship.



Trending:
 Trump: Den of Thieves and Lowlifes
 even Last Words
 tening of the



Ramona Sentinel, "Spirit of Joy congregation prepares for Easter," 21 Mar. 2018

His comments come despite California recently becoming a *sanctuary* state and its politicians speaking out on behalf of undocumented immigrants living in the state, as well as criticising the step-up in ICE raids.

— Harriet Sinclair, *Newsweek*, "Protesters Greet Trump With Giant Message Projected Onto Building In California," 14 Mar. 2018

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

Did You Know?

Historically, churches have been places where fugitives could seek at least temporary protection from the law. In Anglo-Saxon England, churches and churchyards generally provided 40 days of immunity, and neither the sheriffs nor the army would enter to seize the outlaw. But gradually the right of sanctuary was eroded. In 1486 sanctuary for the crime of treason was disallowed, and sanctuary for most other crimes was severely restricted by Henry VIII and later abolished. In the 1980s many U.S. churches provided sanctuary to political refugees from Central America, and the U.S. government mostly chose not to interfere. Today, wildlife sanctuaries provide protection for the species within its boundaries, and farm-animal sanctuaries now rescue livestock from abuse and starvation.

Origin and Etymology of SANCTUARY [LEARN MORE FROM M-W](#)

Middle English *seintuarie*, *sanctuarie*, from Anglo-Norman *sanctuarium*, from Latin *sanctus*

NEW! Time Traveler

First Known Use: 14th century

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Late Latin
Trump: Den of Thieves and 'Lowlifes'





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SANCTUARY Synonyms

Synonyms

asylum, harbor, harborage, haven, refuge, retreat, sanctum, shelter

Related Words

oasis; anchorage, mooring, port; cover, screen; housing, lodging, quarters,

2 sanctuary

adjective

Definition of SANCTUARY

US

: relating to or being a locality that provides limited cooperation to federal officials in the enforcement of immigration laws or policies • a *sanctuary* jurisdiction • *sanctuary* policies

- ... the executive order ... designed to crack down on so-called "*sanctuary cities*," municipalities that do not comply with Immigration and Customs Enforcement ... requests for assistance with identifying and deporting undocumented immigrants. —Euan McKirdy

First Known Use of SANCTUARY

1985

SEE WORDS FROM THE SAME YEAR

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Trump: Den of
Thieves and
'Lowlifes'





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MENU

SANCTUARY Defined for Kids

sanctuary

noun | sanc·tu·ary | \ 'sanʃk-čə-,wer-ē\

Definition of SANCTUARY for Students

plural sanctuaries

- 1 : a holy or sacred place
- 2 : a building or room for religious worship
- 3 : a place that provides safety or protection • a wildlife *sanctuary*
- 4 : the protection from danger or a difficult situation that is provided by a safe place

Word Root of SANCTUARY

The Latin word *sacer*, meaning “holy,” and the related word *sānctus*, also meaning “holy,” give us the roots **sacr** and **sanct**. Words from the Latin *sacer* or *sānctus* have something to do with holiness. A **sanctuary** is a holy place. Anything **sacred** is holy. To **sacrifice** is to dedicate as a holy offering to a god.

Learn More about SANCTUARY

See [words that rhyme with sanctuary](#)

Thesaurus: [All synonyms and antonyms for sanctuary](#)

Spanish Central: [Translation of sanctuary](#)

Nglish: [Translation of sanctuary for Spanish speakers](#)

Britannica English: [Translation of sanctuary for Arabic speakers](#)

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