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authorize, *v.***Pronunciation:** Brit. /'ɔːθəraɪz/, U.S. /'ɔθə,raɪz/, /'ɑθə,raɪz/**Forms:** ...**Frequency (in current use):****Origin:** Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from French. Partly a borrowing from Latin. **Etymons:** French *auctorizer*; Latin *auctorizare*.**Etymology:** < (i) Anglo-Norman *auctorizer*, Anglo-Norman and Middle French *autoriser*, *auctoriser*, ...†1. *trans.***a.** To vouch for the truth or reality of; to attest. *Obs.*

- ▶ a1393 GOWER *Confessio Amantis* (Fairf.) VII. l. 2415 This I finde ek of record Which the cronique hath auctorized.
- 1489 CAXTON tr. C. de Pisan *Bk. Fayttes of Armes* III. i. sig. Lv, The more that a werke is wytnessed..the more it is auctorysed and more auctentyke.
- 1581 R. MULCASTER *Positions* iii. 11 The writers credite oftymes authoriseth the thing, and the truth of the thing doth make the man an authoure.
- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Macbeth* (1623) III. iv. 65 A womans story, at a Winters fire, Authoriz'd by her Grandam.
- 1646 SIR T. BROWNE *Pseudodoxia epidemica* 75 Multiplying obscurities in nature, and authorising hidden qualities that are false.
- 1724 *Aquilio Consolo* II. v. 43 Nay, not from me the News, 'Twas Arrenion authoriz'd the Story.
- 1759 C. W. F. WALCH *Compend. Hist. Popes* I. i. 36 The order attributed to him, that a Bishop should be always attended by two priests and three deacons is but slightly authorised.

**b.** With *for* or simple complement. To cause to be regarded as something specified. *Obs.*

- ?1543 tr. Erasmus *Sileni Alcibiadis* sig. Aiii<sup>v</sup>, This foole was onely auctorised a wyse man by the reuelacion of the goddes.
- 1579 W. FULKE *Confut. Treat. N. Sander in D. Heskins Ouerthrowne* 536 Neither is the credite of such late writers, as account them for successors of the Apostles., sufficient to authorise them for such in deed, when their whole life and doctrine is contrarie to the writings of the Apostles.

2. *trans.***a.** To set up or acknowledge (something) as authoritative; to endow with authority. Now *rare*.

- ▶ a1393 GOWER *Confessio Amantis* (Fairf.) VII. l. 1480 (MED), Bot Hermes Above alle othre in this science..hadde a gret experiance..Whos bokes yit ben auctorized.
- c1400 GOWER *Eng. Wks.* (1901) II. 491 Cassodre, whos writinge is auctorized, Seith [etc.].
- c1450 *Jack Upland's Rejoinder* (Digby) l. 239 in P. L. Heyworth *Jack Upland* (1968) 109 Pou autorisest your pride azenes his holi werkes.
- 1579 L. TOMSON tr. J. Calvin *Serm. Epist. S. Paule to Timothie & Titus* 509/2 To the end the word of God may be authorized, and men know that we must be heard.
- 1620 T. SHELTON tr. Cervantes *Don Quixote* III. xvii. 116 Let the Courtier..authorize his Prince's Court with Liveries.
- 1683 S. PATRICK *Disc. about Trad.* II. 35 These two Bibles thus equally authorised, as the onely authentick ones,

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abound..with contradictions, or contrarieties, one to the other.

2000 S. CONNOR *Dumbstruck* iv. 105 They also began to authorize their writings with accounts of their own direct promptings by the divine.

†**b.** To place (a person) in a position of power or authority; to appoint. *Obs.* except as merged with sense 3b.

1440 J. CAPGRAVE *Life St. Norbert* l. 1974 Þei wold not admitte no new prechour Til he was auctorized of Norbert.

a1450 ( ▶ ?c1430) LYDGATE *Daunce Machabree* (Huntington) l. 177 Ful ofte sithe I haue ben auctorised [a1500 *Lansd.* autorised] To hye Emprises & thynges of grete fame.

a1513 R. FABYAN *New Cronycles Eng. & Fraunce* (1516) I. lxxxxvii. f. xxxviii, After that he of this Realme was Auctorysyd for kynge.

1548 N. UDALL et al. tr. Erasmus *Paraphr. Newe Test.* I. Matt. iii. f. 17, Did manyfestly auctoryse his sonne.

1649 MILTON *Tenure of Kings* 16 The Dragon gave to the beast his..authority: which beast so autoriz'd most expound to be the tyrannical powers and Kingdomes of the earth.

1659 J. GAUDEN *Ἱερα Δακρυα* III. xxvii. 357 The Bishops and Ministers of their Christian and Reformed Religion, so much heretofore authorised & revered by the voice of the whole Nation in its Parlements?

1770 'JUNIUS' *Stat Nominis Umbra* (1772) II. xli. 126 Will you..tell the world by what law..you were authorised?

†**c.** *refl.* To base one's authority upon. *Obs.* rare.

a1586 SIR P. SIDNEY *Apol. Poetrie* sig. D1<sup>v</sup>, The Historian..loden with old Mouse-eaten records, authorising himselfe (for the most part) vpon other histories.

†**d.** *refl.* To claim authority for oneself; to exalt oneself. *Obs.* rare.

1590 SIR P. SIDNEY *Covntesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* II. xx. f. 192, Making her self an impudent suter, authorizing her selfe very much with making vs see that all favour & power..depended vpon her.

### 3. *trans.*

**a.** To give official permission for or formal approval to (an action, undertaking, etc.); to approve, sanction.

a1425 ( ▶ ?c1384) WYCLIF *Sel. Eng. Wks.* (1871) III. 357 (*MED*), Whanne þe pope avansiþ a shrewe, he autorisiþ his shrewidnesse.

?c1430 ( ▶ ?1383) WYCLIF *Sel. Eng. Wks.* (1871) III. 326 Crist and alle his seyntis..autoriseden it.

1567 T. DRANT tr. Horace *Arte of Poetrie* sig. Aiiij, Who hath to iudge, autorish, reule, All maner speache at will.

1583 in J. D. Marwick *Extracts Rec. Burgh Glasgow* (1876) I. 106 All that passis to ony derrar brydallis, and auctorizeis the surfetnes thair of..sall pay aucht schillingis.

1609 SHAKESPEARE *Sonnets* xxxv. sig. C4, Authorizing thy trespas with compare.

1673 H. HICKMAN *Hist. Quinq-articularis* 488 He would have prevailed with some of them to authorize his Book.

1749 LD. CHESTERFIELD *Let.* 26 Dec. (1932) (modernized text) IV. 1474 The season in which custom seems..to authorise civil and harmless lies, under the name of compliments.

1775 E. PENDLETON *Let.* 23 Dec. in *Let. & Papers* (1967) I. 140 The Committee Authorise the hiring of labourers for this unlading, to ease the Soldiers from such an increase of duty.

1813–14 *Act 54 Geo. III* c. 147 (*title*), An Act..for authorizing the licensing of a limited Number of Hackney Chariots.

1859 J. S. MILL *On Liberty* 15 The gentlest and most amiable of philosophers..authorised the persecution of Christianity.

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- 1934 *Port Arthur (Texas) News* 23 May 1/2 The federal emergency relief administration today authorized rehabilitation grants to Texas totalling \$200,000.
- 1962 K. KESEY *One flew over Cuckoo's Nest* IV. 303 Every one of these people gave him a look like the whole thing had been planned by him, or at least condoned and authorized.
- 1977 H. G. BURGER in B. Bernardi *Concept & Dynamics of Culture* 458 The Toronto archbishop authorized birth control pills.
- 2013 *New Yorker* 2 Sept. 54/1 The 2001 resolution that authorized the use of military force against terrorists.

**b.** To give (a person or agent) legal or formal authority (*to do something*); to give formal permission to; to empower.

- 1528 *Proclam. Henry VIII maintayninge Archery* (single sheet) (verso), That no person (nat lauffully auctorised to haue and vse Crosbowes) presume to bye the same.
- 1571 in J. Raine *Wills & Inventories N. Counties Eng.* (1835) I. 353, I appoint and auchorische hym to call for and receyue..all suche debts.
- 1571 LD. BURGHELEY *Let.* 15 Sept. in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eng. Hist.* (1824) 1st Ser. II. cc. 261 We will and by warrant herof authoriss you to procede.
- 1602 W. SEGAR *Honor Mil. & Civill* I. i. 1 Iustinianus desiring to vnite Lawes and Armes, authorised one Officer to command both Martially and Ciuilly.
- 1660 R. COKE *Elements Power & Subjection* 249 in *Justice Vindicated* To authorize any forreigne Prince to invade or annoy him or his Countries.
- a1768 J. ERSKINE *Inst. Law Scotl.* (1773) II. IV. iii. §17 691 The Scots privy council..granted letters of fire and sword, authorising the sheriff to..dispossess him by all the methods of force.
- 1796 J. MORSE *Amer. Universal Geogr.* (new ed.) I. 148 His Majesty may authorize the governor to fix the time and place.
- 1828 *Hobart Town Courier* 19 Apr. 1/2 Nothing herein contained shall authorize..any Settler..to make use of force..against any Aboriginal.
- 1855 MACAULAY *Hist. Eng.* IV. 551 A royal message authorising the Commons to elect another Speaker.
- 1937 A. HUXLEY *Let.* 12 July (1969) 423 With regard to the handling of my work, I am prepared to authorize you to take up the matter with film studios.
- 1963 *Ann. Reg.* 1962 27 They duly authorized the B.B.C. to start a second television channel.
- 2012 M. R. GORDON & B. E. TRAINOR *Endgame* xi. 181 They were authorized to wear it on their right sleeve.

†**4.** *trans.* To give legal force to; to make legally valid. *Obs.*

- 1431 *Rolls of Parl.: Henry VI* (Electronic ed.) Parl. Jan. 1431 §32. m. 4, That all manere of enditementz,..juggementz, ordinances and statutz, made..ayeins the saide Owen, mowe be affermed, auctorised and established for lawe.
- 1464 KING EDWARD IV in *Paston Lett. & Papers* (2004) II. 300 Inacted and auctorised in the parlement next holden.
- 1567 T. DRANT tr. Horace *Pistles* in tr. Horace *Arte of Poetrie* sig. Gi, Tables..Deuysed and auctorished By well knowne Romanes ten.
- 1644 *Vindic. Treat. Monarchy* iv. 27 Being authoritative, they authorize the Instrument, and give him an unresistance.
- 1692 tr. C. de Saint-Évremond *Misc. Ess.* 87 New Titles to Authorize a new Power.
- 1785 R. HINDE *Mod. Pract. Chancery* 435 A decree *nisi*, against an infant partakes so far of the nature of an absolute decree, as to authorise proceedings under it, as in ordinary cases.

†**5.** *trans.*

**a.** To regard (a person) as an authority. *Obs.*

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- 1535 W. STEWART tr. H. Boethius *Bk. Cron. Scotl.* (1858) II. 141 He had sic credens of the king, And wes with him auctoreist than so hie.
- 1586 W. WARNER *Albions Eng.* To Rdr. sig. a.iv, Euen Homer was slightly authorised in Greece, but singularly admyred elswhere.

## b. To extend one's approval to (a person); to support, favour. *Obs. rare.*

- 1713 R. STEELE in *Guardian* 23 Mar. 1/2 For this reason I shall authorize and support the Gentleman.

## 6. *trans.* Of a fact, circumstance, etc.

### a. To give good grounds for (an action or behaviour); to justify.

- 1589 T. NASHE *Anat. Absurditie* Ep. sig. ¶.iii, That little alliance which I haue vnto Arte, will authorize my follie in defacing her enemye.
- 1603 J. FLORIO tr. Montaigne *Ess.* III. viii. 559 The issue doth often authorise a simple conduct [Fr. *L'issue autorise souvent une tres-inepte conduite*].
- 1656 A. COWLEY *Davideis* IV. 137 in *Poems* If humane strength might authorize a boast.
- 1660 DRYDEN *Astræa Redux* 10 Till some safe *Crisis* authorise their skill.
- 1748 B. ROBINS & R. WALTER *Voy. round World by Anson* Introd. sig. c4<sup>v</sup>, These reasons alone would authorize the insertion of those papers.
- 1798 *Monthly Mag.* Mar. 190/2 These observations..tend to authorize the segregation of a very fine set of oracles from those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.
- 1831 SCOTT *Castle Dangerous* i, in *Tales of my Landlord* 4th Ser. III. 226 More..than the coldness of the weather seemed to authorize.
- 1862 *Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist.* Dec. 414 Unfortunately, all the specimens were deficient in the operculum, which, when examined, may possibly authorize its transfer to a new genus.
- 1904 *National Rev.* Sept. (Special Suppl.) 4 Its first stage has been all but completed, and circumstances authorise a general review of the whole situation.
- 2000 *N.Y. Rev. Bks.* 10 Aug. 48 Only poetic license authorizes my description of nonleague bowling as 'bowling alone'.

### b. To provide justification or good grounds for (a person) to do something.

- 1750 D. HUME *Philos. Ess. Human Understanding* (ed. 2) xi. 228 Farther Attributes or farther Degrees of the same Attributes, we can never be authoriz'd to infer or suppose, by any Rules of just Reasoning.
- 1794 in R. J. Sullivan *View Nature* I. 73 Nothing which can authorise us to suppose it formed in the sea.
- 1843 J. S. MILL *Syst. Logic* II. III. xxi. §3 Past experience of mortality authorizes us to infer both.
- 1892 O. W. HOLMES *Autocrat of Breakfast-table* iv. 90 Some youthful antic..which..authorizes the intelligent constituency of autograph-hunters to address him as a harlequin.
- 1961 G. DEVEREUX *Mohave Ethnopsychiatry & Suicide* vii. 290 The fact that death can be triggered off by psychic and/or psychosomatic processes does not justify a psychologizing of physiology any more than the influence of brain lesions or of drugs upon our psychic functioning authorizes us to physiologize psychology.
- 2006 *New Yorker* 27 Mar. 83/3 The superiority of our values authorizes us to act toward the rest of the world as benevolent hegemons.

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