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fi·del·i·ty  (fĭ-dĕl ǐ-tē, fĭ-)

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n. pl. fi·del·i·ties

1.

a. Faithfulness to obligations, duties, or observances.

b. The condition or behavior of engaging in sex only with one's spouse or only with one's partner in a sexual relationship.

2. Exact correspondence with fact or with a given quality, condition, or event; accuracy: *the fidelity of the movie to the book.*

3. The degree to which an electronic system accurately reproduces the sound or image of its input signal.

[Middle English *fidelite*, from Old French, from Latin *fidēlitās*, from *fidēlis*, faithful, from *fidēs*, faith; see [bheidh- in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.](#)]

Synonyms: fidelity, allegiance, fealty, loyalty

These nouns denote faithfulness. *Fidelity* implies the unfailing fulfillment of one's obligations and strict adherence to vows or promises: *fidelity to one's spouse; acted in fidelity to religious laws.* *Allegiance* is faithfulness considered as a duty: *"I know no South, no North, no East, no West, to which I owe any allegiance"* (Henry Clay).

Fealty, once applied to the obligation of a vassal to a feudal lord, now suggests faithfulness that one has pledged to uphold: *"[The candidate] pushed his experience as an executive and professed his fealty to Democratic Party principles"* (David Corn).

Loyalty implies a steadfast and devoted attachment that is not easily turned aside: *loyalty to an oath; loyalty to a lifelong friend.*

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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