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force  (fôrs)

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n.

1. The capacity to do work or cause physical change; energy, strength, or active power: *the force of an explosion.*

2.

a. Power made operative against resistance; exertion: *use force in driving a nail.*

b. The use of physical power or violence to compel or restrain: *a confession obtained by force.*

3.

a. Intellectual power or vigor, especially as conveyed in writing or speech.

b. Moral strength.

c. A capacity for affecting the mind or behavior; efficacy: *the force of logical argumentation.*

d. One that possesses such capacity: *the forces of evil.*

4.

a. A body of persons or other resources organized or available for a certain purpose: *a large labor force.*

b. A person or group capable of influential action: *a retired senator who is still a force in national politics.*

5.

a. Military strength.

b. A unit of a nation's military personnel, especially one deployed into combat: *Our armed forces have at last engaged the enemy.*

6. *Physics*

a. A vector quantity indicating the strength and direction of the capacity to accelerate a body. Newton's second law of motion states that a free body accelerates in the direction of the net force and that its acceleration is directly proportional to the force and inversely proportional to its mass.

b. See [fundamental force](#).

7. *Baseball* A force play.

tr.v. **forced**, **forc·ing**, **forc·es**

1. To compel through pressure or necessity: *I forced myself to practice daily. He was forced to take a second job.*

2.

a. To gain by the use of force or coercion: *force a confession.*

b. To move or effect against resistance or inertia: *forced my foot into the shoe.*

c. To inflict or impose relentlessly: *He forced his ideas upon the group.*

3.

a. To put undue strain on: *She forced her voice despite being hoarse.*

b. To increase or accelerate (a pace, for example) to the maximum.

c. To produce with effort and against one's will: *force a laugh in spite of pain.*

d. To use (language) with obvious lack of ease and naturalness.

4.

a. To move, open, or clear by force: *forced our way through the crowd.*

b. To break down or open by force: *force a lock.*

5. To rape.

6. To induce change in (a complex system) by changing one of its parameters: *greenhouse gases that force the earth's climate.*

7. *Botany* To cause to grow or mature by artificially accelerating normal processes.

8. *Baseball*

a. To put (a runner) out on a force play.

b. To allow (a run) to be scored by walking a batter when the bases are loaded.

9. *Games* To cause an opponent to play (a particular card).

Idioms:

force (oneself) on(or upon)

To rape.

force (someone's) hand

To force to act or speak prematurely or unwillingly.

in force

1. In full strength; in large numbers: *Demonstrators were out in force.*

2. In effect; operative: *a rule that is no longer in force.*

[Middle English, from Old French, from Medieval Latin *fortia*, from neuter pl. of Latin *fortis*, strong; see **bhergh**-² in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

force a·ble *adj.*

forc er *n.*

Synonyms: [force](#), [compel](#), [coerce](#), [oblige](#), [obligate](#)

These verbs mean to cause one to follow a prescribed or dictated course against one's will. *Force*, the most general, usually implies the exertion of physical power or the operation of circumstances that permit no options: *The driver was forced from his car at gunpoint. A downturn in the market forced us to sell.* *Compel* has a similar range but applies especially to the exertion of legal or moral authority: *The official was compelled to testify under the committee's subpoena power. I felt compelled by my conscience to return the money.* *Coerce* implies the application of pressure or threats in securing compliance: *"The technology exists to reduce or eliminate these emissions, but industry will not apply it unless coerced"* (Andrew Weil).

Oblige implies the operation of authority, necessity, or moral or ethical considerations: *"Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do"* (Mark Twain).

Obligate applies when compliance is enforced by a legal contract or by the dictates of one's conscience or sense of propriety: *I am obligated to repay the loan.* See Also Synonyms at [strength](#).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

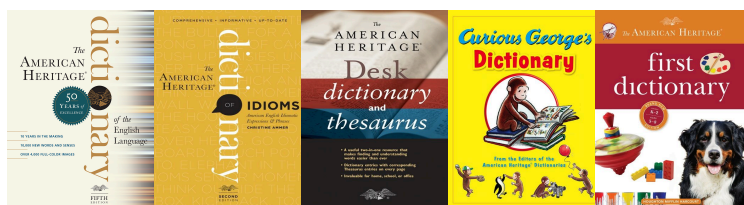
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