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ar·ti·fice  (är tə-fīs)

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n.

1.

a. Deception or trickery: *The purchaser believed that the product was new only by artifice of the seller.*

b. Something contrived or made up to achieve an end, especially by deceiving; a stratagem or ruse: *"From the beginning, 'compassionate conservatism' was an artifice designed to mask Bush's conservatism from an electorate that did not want a sharp rightward turn" (Jonathan Chait).* See Synonyms at [wile](#).

2.

a. Cleverness or ingenuity in making or doing something; art or skill: *"Literary artifice is the only means that a writer has at his disposal. How else can he convey his impression of life?" (Harry Levin).*

b. An artistic device or convention: *artifices such as conceits and puns.*

[French, from Old French, craftsmanship, from Latin *artificium*, from *artifex*, *artific-*, craftsman : *ars*, *art-*, art; see [ART](#)¹ + *-fex*, maker; see **dhē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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