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dive¹  (dīv)

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v. **dived** or **dove** (dōv), **dived**, **div-ing**, **dives**

v.intr.

1.
 - a. To plunge, especially headfirst, into water.
 - b. To execute a dive in athletic competition.
 - c. To participate in the sport of competitive diving.
2.
 - a. To go toward the bottom of a body of water: *We dove down to check the anchor.*
 - b. To engage in the sport of scuba diving.
 - c. To submerge under power. Used of a submarine.
3.
 - a. To fall head down through the air.
 - b. To descend nose down at an acceleration usually exceeding that of free fall. Used of an airplane.
 - c. To engage in the sport of skydiving.
4. To drop sharply and rapidly; plummet: *Stock prices dove 100 points in a single day of trading.*
5.
 - a. To rush headlong and vanish into something: *The fugitive dove into the crowd and escaped.*
 - b. To plunge one's hand into something: *dove into the cookie jar.*
6. To lunge or leap headfirst: *dove for the loose ball.*
7. To plunge into an activity or enterprise with vigor and gusto.
8. *Sports* To exaggerate a fall in an attempt to induce a referee to call a penalty on an opponent.

v.tr.

1. To cause (an aircraft, for example) to dive.
2. To go scuba-diving to or along: *We dove that reef last week.*

n.

1.
 - a. A plunge into water, especially done headfirst and in a way established for athletic competition.
 - b. The act or an instance of going under water, as of a submarine or a skin diver.
 - c. A nearly vertical descent at an accelerated speed through the air.
2. A rapid or abrupt decrease: *Stock prices took a dive.*
3.
 - a. *Slang* A disreputable or run-down bar or nightclub.
 - b. A run-down residence.
4. *Sports*
 - a. A knockout feigned by a prizefighter: *The challenger took a dive.*
 - b. An exaggerated fall, especially by a hockey player, intended to draw a penalty against an opponent.
5.
 - a. A lunge or a headlong jump: *made a dive to catch the falling teacup.*
 - b. *Football* An offensive play in which the carrier of the ball plunges into the opposing line in order to gain short yardage.

[Middle English *diven*, from Old English *dȳfan*, to dip, and from *dūfan*, to sink; see **dheub-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Usage Note: Either *dove* or *dived* is acceptable as the past tense of *dive*. In our 2008 survey 92 percent of the Usage Panel accepted *dove* and 72 percent accepted *dived* in the sentence. *Keeping their New Year's Day tradition, the L Street Brownies dove/dived into Dorchester Bay this morning.* This may seem odd considering that *dived* is actually the older form. In fact, the emergence of *dove* runs against the general tendency of change in English verb forms. Old English had two classes of verbs: strong verbs, whose past tense was indicated by a change in their vowel (a process that survives in such present-day English verbs as *drive/drove* and *fling/flung*); and weak verbs, whose past was formed with a suffix related to *-ed* in Modern English (as in present-day English *live/lived* and *move/moved*). *Dive* comes from one of these weak verbs. Since the Old English period, many verbs have changed from the strong pattern to the weak one; for example, the past tense of *step*, formerly *stop*, became *stepped*. Over the years, in fact, the weak pattern has become so prevalent that we use the term *regular* to refer to verbs that form their past tense by suffixation of *-ed*. However, there have occasionally been changes in the other direction: the past tense of *wear*, now *wore*, was once *werede*, and that of *spit*, now *spat*, was once *spitede*. The development of *dove* is an additional example of the small group of verbs that have swum against the historical tide.

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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