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Bal·ance  (băl əns)

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n.

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bal·ance  (băl əns)

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n.

1. A weighing device, especially one consisting of a rigid beam horizontally suspended by a low-friction support at its center, with identical weighing pans hung at either end, one of which holds an unknown weight while the effective weight in the other is increased by known amounts until the beam is level and motionless. Also called *scale*.

2. A state of equilibrium or parity characterized by cancellation of all forces by equal opposing forces.

3. The power or means to decide: *matters that fell outside the judge's balance*.

4.

a. A state of bodily equilibrium: *thrown off balance by a gust of wind*.

b. The ability to maintain bodily equilibrium: *Gymnasts must have good balance*.

5. A harmonious or satisfying arrangement or proportion of parts or elements, as in a design.

6. An influence or force tending to produce equilibrium; counterpoise.

7. The difference in magnitude between opposing forces or influences.

8. *Accounting*

a. Equality of totals in the debit and credit sides of an account.

b. The difference between such totals, either on the credit or the debit side.

9. Something that is left over; a remainder.

10. *Chemistry* Equality of mass and net electric charge of reacting species on each side of an equation.

11. *Mathematics* Equality with respect to the net number of reduced symbolic quantities on each side of an equation.

12. A balance wheel.

v. **bal·anced, bal·anc·ing, bal·anc·es**

v.tr.

1. To determine the weight of (something) in a weighing device.

2. To consider and compare or assess: *balanced the pros and cons before making a choice*.

3. To bring into or maintain in a state of equilibrium.

4. To act as an equalizing weight or force to; counterbalance.

5. *Accounting*

a. To compute the difference between the debits and credits of (an account).

b. To reconcile or equalize the sums of the debits and credits of (an account).

c. To settle (an account, for example) by paying what is owed.

6. To bring into or keep in equal or satisfying proportion or harmony.

7. *Mathematics & Chemistry* To bring (an equation) into balance.

8. To move toward and then away from (a dance partner).

v.intr.

1. To be in or come into equilibrium.

2. To be equal or equivalent.
3. To sway or waver as if losing or regaining equilibrium.
4. To move toward and then away from a dance partner.

Idioms:

in the balance

In an undetermined and often critical position: *Our plans were left hanging in the balance. Resolution of that item is still in the balance.*

on balance

Taking everything into consideration; all in all.

[Middle English *balaunce*, from Old French, from Vulgar Latin **bilancia*, having two scale pans, from Latin *bilānx* : *bi-*, two; see **dwo-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *lānx*, scale.]

bal **ance·a·ble** *adj.*

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

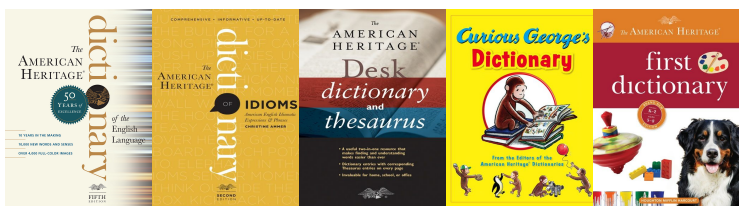
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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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