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dictionary

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English
Language



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want  (wŏnt, wŏnt)

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v. want·ed, want·ing, wants

v.tr.

1.

a. To have a strong feeling to have (something); wish (to possess or do something); desire greatly: *She wants a glass of water. They want to leave.* See Synonyms at [desire](#).

b. To desire (someone to do something): *I want you to clean your room.*

2.

a. To request the presence or assistance of: *You are wanted by your office.*

b. To seek with intent to capture: *The fugitive is wanted by the police.*

3. To have an inclination toward; like: *Say what you want, but be tactful.*

4. Informal To be obliged (to do something): *You want to be careful on the ice.*

5. To be in need of; require: *"Your hair wants cutting," said the Hatter" (Lewis Carroll).*

6. To be without; lack.

v.intr.

To be inclined or desirous; wish: *Call me daily if you want.*

n.

1. The condition or quality of lacking something usual or necessary: *stayed home for want of anything better to do.*

2. Pressing need; destitution: *lives in want.*

3. Something desired: *a person of few wants and needs.*

4. A defect of character; a fault.

Phrasal Verbs:

want for

To be in need of: *You shall want for nothing.*

want in Slang

1. To desire greatly to enter: *The dog wants in.*

2. To wish to join a project, business, or other undertaking.

want out Slang

1. To desire greatly to leave: *The cat wants out.*

2. To wish to leave a project, a business, or other undertaking.

[Middle English *wanten*, to be lacking, from Old Norse *vanta*; see [euə-](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

want *er n.*

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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:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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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