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dictionary

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English
Language



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prey  (prā)

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n.

1.

a. An animal hunted or caught by another for food: *The leopard carried its prey into a tree.*

b. The collection of animals typically hunted and eaten by a predator: *the acoustic location of prey by barn owls.*

2.

a. An object or victim of attack: *ships that became the prey of pirates.*

b. One that is subjected to or afflicted with something: *was prey to depression.*

c. One that is deceived or taken advantage of by another: *easy prey for swindlers.*

3. *Archaic*

a. The act or practice of preying.

b. Plunder; booty.

intr.v. **preyed**, **prey-ing**, **preys**

1. To hunt, catch, or eat as prey: *Owls prey on mice.*

2. To victimize or make a profit at someone else's expense: *swindlers who prey upon the weak.*

3. To plunder or pillage: *Vikings preying on coastal settlements.*

4. To exert a baneful or injurious effect: *Remorse preyed on his mind.*

[Middle English *preie*, from Old French, from Latin *praeda*, booty, prey; see **ghend-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

prey *er n.*

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