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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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grasp 🗣️ (grăsp)

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v. grasped, grasp-ing, grasps

v.tr.

1. To take hold of or seize firmly with the hand, the foot, another body part, or an instrument: *The elephant grasped the branch with its trunk.*

2. To hold with the arms; embrace.

3. To take hold of intellectually; comprehend. See Synonyms at [understand](#).

v.intr.

1. To make a motion of seizing, snatching, or clutching.

2. To show eager and prompt willingness or acceptance: *grasps at any opportunity.*

n.

1. The act of grasping.

2.

a. A firm hold or grip.

b. An embrace.

3. The ability or power to seize or attain; reach: *Victory in the election was within her grasp.*

4. Understanding; comprehension: *"only a vague intuitive grasp of the meaning of greatness in literature" (Gilbert Highet).*

Idioms:

grasp at straws

To search in desperation for a solution to a difficulty.

grasp the nettle

To take on a difficult problem directly and energetically.

[Middle English *graspen*; see **ghrebh-**¹ [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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