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de·gree  (dī-grē)

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n.

1. One of a series of steps in a process, course, or progression; a stage: *proceeded to the next degree of difficulty.*
2. A step in a direct hereditary line of descent or ascent: *First cousins are two degrees from their common ancestor.*
3. Relative social or official rank, dignity, or position.
4. Relative intensity or amount, as of a quality or attribute: *a high degree of accuracy.*
5. The extent or measure of a state of being, an action, or a relation: *modernized their facilities to a large degree.*
6. A unit division of a temperature scale.
7. *Mathematics* A planar unit of angular measure equal in magnitude to $\frac{1}{360}$ of a complete revolution.
8. A unit of latitude or longitude, equal to $\frac{1}{360}$ of a great circle.
9. *Mathematics*
 - a. The greatest sum of the exponents of the variables in a term of a polynomial or polynomial equation.
 - b. The exponent of the derivative of highest order in a differential equation in standard form.
10.
 - a. An academic title given by a college or university to a student who has completed a course of study: *received the Bachelor of Arts degree at commencement.*
 - b. A similar title conferred as an honorary distinction.
11. *Law* A division or classification of a specific crime according to its seriousness: *murder in the second degree.*
12. A classification of the severity of an injury, especially a burn: *a third-degree burn.*
13. *Grammar* One of the forms used in the comparison of adjectives and adverbs. For example, *tall* is the positive degree, *taller* the comparative degree, and *tallest* the superlative degree of the adjective *tall*.
14. *Music*
 - a. One of the seven notes of a diatonic scale.
 - b. A space or line of the staff.

Idioms:

by degrees

Little by little; gradually.

to a degree

To a small extent; in a limited way: *doesn't like spicy food, but can eat a little pepper to a degree.*

[Middle English *degre*, from Old French, from Vulgar Latin **dēgradus* : Latin *dē-*, *de-* + Latin *gradus*, step; see **ghredh-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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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:

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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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