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vi·tal  (vīt l)

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adj.

1.

a. Of, relating to, or characteristic of life: *vital strength*. See Synonyms at [living](#).

b. Necessary to the continuation of life; life-sustaining: *a vital organ*; *vital nutrients*.

c. Used or done on a living cell or tissue: *vital dyes*; *vital staining*.

d. Concerned with or recording data pertinent to lives: *vital records*.

2. Full of life or energy; animated: "*The population of the teeming, vital slum ... declined*" (Rick Hampson).

3.

a. Necessary to continued existence or effectiveness: "*Irrigation was vital to early civilization*" (William H. McNeill).

b. Extremely important; essential: "*A vital component of any democracy is a free labor movement*" (Bayard Rustin).

4. Destructive to life; fatal: *a vital injury*.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *vītālis*, from *vīta*, life; see **g^wei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

vi tal·ly *adv.*

vi tal·ness *n.*

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