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course  (kôrs)

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n.

1.

a. Development in a particular way; progress: *the course of events*.

b. Movement in time; duration: *in the course of a year*.

2.

a. The direction of continuing movement: *The boat took a northern course*.

b. The route or path taken by something that moves, such as a stream or vehicle.

3. *Sports*

a. A designated route or area on which a race is held: *the course of a marathon*.

b. See [golf course](#).

4. A mode of action or behavior: *followed the best course and invested her money*.

5. A typical, natural, or customary manner of proceeding or developing: *a fad that ran its course*.

6. A systematic or orderly succession; a sequence: *a course of medical treatments*.

7. A continuous layer of building material, such as brick or tile, on a wall or roof of a building.

8.

a. A complete body of prescribed studies constituting a curriculum: *a four-year course in engineering*.

b. A unit of such a curriculum: *took an introductory course in chemistry; passed her calculus course*.

9. A part of a meal served as a unit at one time: *The first course was a delicious soup*.

10. *Nautical* The lowest sail on a mast of a square-rigged ship.

11. A point on the compass, especially the one toward which a vehicle, such as a ship, is moving.

12. *Music* A string or set of two or more closely-spaced and usually identically-tuned strings, as on a lute.

v. **coursed, cours-ing, cours-es**

v.tr.

1. To move swiftly through or over; traverse: *ships coursing the seas*.

2.

a. To hunt (game) with hounds.

b. To set (hounds) to chase game.

v.intr.

1. To proceed or move swiftly in a certain direction or along a course: *"Big tears now coursed down her face" (Iris Murdoch)*.

2. To hunt game with hounds.

Idioms:

off course

Away from the planned or intended course.

in due course

At the proper or right time: *Things will get better in due course*.

of course

1. As is to be expected under the circumstances; naturally or obviously: *Of course someone had to clean up the mess*.

2. Used to indicate assent or agreement: *"Do you like her music?" "Of course!"*

on course

Following the planned or intended course.

run/take its course

To follow its natural progression or development: *Should we let the illness run its course?*

[Middle English, from Old French *cours*, from Latin *cursus*, from past participle of *currere*, to run; see **kers-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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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:

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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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