

< back



Dictionary

Thesaurus

back

1 of 4 noun

'bak

plural **backs**

[Synonyms of *back*](#) >

NEW

Simple Definition





Dictionary

Thesaurus

(3) : capacity for labor, effort, or endurance

Put your *back* into it!

(4) : the back considered as the seat of one's awareness of duty or failings

get off my *back*

(5) : the back considered as an area of vulnerability

the police officer's partner always watches his *back*

b : the part of an animal (such as a four-footed mammal) corresponding to the human back

riding on the *back* of an elephant

c : **SPINAL COLUMN**

She had surgery on her *back*.

d : **SPINE sense 1c**

The title is on the book's *back*.

2 a : the side or surface opposite the front or face

I only saw him from the *back*.

: the rear part

the *back* of the head

the *back* of the mirror

also : the farther or reverse side

wrote the number on the *back* of an envelope

b : something at or on the back for support

back of a chair

c : a place away from the front

sat in *back*

3 : a position in some games (such as football or soccer) behind the front line of players



Dictionary

Thesaurus

She placed first in the 100-meter *back*.

'bakt  **adjective**

'bak-ləs  **adjective**

see also: [BACK OF ONE'S HAND](#) | [BACK OF ONE'S MIND](#) | [BEHIND ONE'S BACK](#) | [IN BACK OF](#)

back 2 of 4 **adverb**

1 a : to, toward, or at the rear

asked the crowd to move *back*

b : in or into the past : [backward](#) in time

looking *back* on her youth

an event *back* in the last century

Back then, no one had ever heard of chronic fatigue syndrome.

also : [AGO](#)

several years *back*

met him in the street two days *back*

c : to or at an angle off the vertical

leaned *back* on his chair

d (1) : under restraint

He wanted to fight but his friends held him *back*.

holding *back* a laugh

(2) : in or into a delayed condition

Bad weather set the launch date *back* several days.

The meeting was pushed *back* at the last minute.

Season 2's final episodes were held *back* for a few weeks ... before finally airing.



Dictionary

Thesaurus

FINISHED THREE STROKES BACK

2 a : to, toward, or in a place from which a person or thing cameShe left home and never went *back*.put the book *back***b** : to or toward a former statewent *back* to private life**c** : in return or replyforgot to write *back*

back

3 of 4 **adjective****1 a** : being at or in the **back***back* door**b** : distant from a central or main area*back* roads**c of a speech sound** : articulated at or toward the back of the oral passage :
formed deep within the mouth*back* vowels**2** : having returned or been returned**3** : being in **arrears** : **OVERDUE**is owed several months in *back* pay**4** : moving or operating **backward** : **REVERSE***back* action with oars**5** : not current*back* issues of a magazine



Dictionary

Thesaurus

backed; backing; backs*transitive verb*

- 1 a** : to support by material or moral assistance
backing a candidate for governor
 → often used with *up*
back up a friend in a fight
- b** : **SUBSTANTIATE** → often used with *up*
 needs to *back up* her argument with evidence
- c** : to assume financial responsibility for
back a new company
- d** : to provide musical accompaniment for → often used with *up*
 a singer *backed up* by a guitarist
- 2 a** : to cause to go back (see [BACK entry 2 sense 1a](#)) or in reverse
back the car into the garage
- b** : to articulate (a speech sound) with the tongue farther back : to form deeper within the mouth
- 3 a** : to furnish with a rear part : to furnish with a back (see [BACK entry 1 sense 2](#))
back a skirt with stiff material
- b** : to be at the rear part of : to be at the back (see [BACK entry 1 sense 2](#)) of
 a row of garages *back* the building

intransitive verb



Dictionary

Thesaurus

Let's *back* up a little to clarify what we're saying.

2 of the wind : to shift counterclockwise

→ compare [VEER entry 1 sense 2](#)

3 : to have the rear part facing in the direction of something

The house *backs* onto a golf course.

'ba-kər  **noun**

see also: [BACK AND FILL](#) | [BACK INTO](#)

Noun

[Relevance](#)

rear

Adverb

ago

Adjective

rear

hind

Verb

advocate

endorse 

support



Dictionary

Thesaurus

Choose the Right Synonym for *back*

SUPPORT, UPHOLD, ADVOCATE, BACK, CHAMPION mean to favor actively one that meets opposition.

SUPPORT is least explicit about the nature of the assistance given.

supports waterfront development

UPHOLD implies extended support given to something attacked.

upheld the legitimacy of the military action

ADVOCATE stresses urging or pleading.

advocated prison reform

BACK suggests supporting by lending assistance to one failing or falling.

refusing to *back* the call for sanctions

CHAMPION suggests publicly defending one unjustly attacked or too weak to advocate his or her own cause.

championed the rights of children

RECEDE, RETREAT, RETRACT, BACK mean to move backward.

RECEDE implies a gradual withdrawing from a forward or high fixed point in time or space.

the flood waters gradually *receded*

RETREAT implies withdrawal from a point or position reached.

retreating soldiers

RETRACT implies drawing back from an extended position.

a cat *retracting* its claws

BACK is used with *up, down, out, or off* to refer to any retrograde motion.

backed off on the throttle



Dictionary

Thesaurus

Noun

She was carrying her little daughter on her **back**.

She was carrying her little daughter on her **back**.

[See More](#) ▾

Recent Examples on the Web

 Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. [Read More](#)

Noun

Woods has come **back** to play despite countless surgeries, including several to his right leg that is likely permanently damaged, and now deals with a back that may be bad for the rest of his life.

– Mac Engel april 9, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 9 Apr. 2026

Vaughn-Marcella agreed to speak with police and told an investigator that the child got onto his **back** after being assisted off of the bookshelf, the warrant affidavit said.

– Justin Muszynski, *Hartford Courant*, 9 Apr. 2026

Adverb

After Portland took a 55-35 first-half lead, the Clippers stormed **back**.

– *ABC News*, 11 Apr. 2026

Simply holding the mandolin had transported me **back** fifty years.

– Tim Parks, *New Yorker*, 11 Apr. 2026

Adjective



Dictionary

Thesaurus

James quickly went by a defender on a **back** court lay, took a pass from Luke Kennard and threw down a two-handed, rim-rattling dunk.

– Broderick Turner, *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Apr. 2026

Verb

Even if the financing structure is ring-fenced and **backed** by an investment-grade counterparty, the real risk may lie in whether an equity issue today later evolves into a credit problem over time.

– April Roach, *CNBC*, 6 Apr. 2026

Kirk was inundated with questions on matters such as demographic erasure and how a true conservative could **back** multiculturalism.

– Antonia Hitchens, *New Yorker*, 6 Apr. 2026

[See All Example Sentences for *back*](#)

Etymology

Noun

Middle English, from Old English *bæc*; akin to Old High German *bah* back, Old Norse *bak*

Adverb

Middle English *bac*, aphetic form of *abak* [ABACK](#)

Adjective

Middle English, partly attributive use of *bac*, *back* [BACK entry 1](#), partly derivative of *back* [BACK entry 2](#)

Verb

[Dictionary](#)[Thesaurus](#)

NOON

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a\(1\)](#)

Adverb

13th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

Adjective

15th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

Verb

1548, in the meaning defined at [transitive sense 1a](#)

Time Traveler

The first known use of *back* was before the 12th century

[See more words from the same century](#)

[a monkey on someone's back](#)

[answer back](#)

[answer \(someone\) back](#)

[a pat on the back](#)

[a slap on the back](#)

[at/in the back of one's mind](#)

[baby back ribs](#)

[back and fill](#)

[back-and-forth](#)

[back arrow](#)

[See More](#)



Dictionary

Thesaurus

clack

crack

dak

flack

flak

hack

jack

knack

lac

lack

[See All Rhymes for *back*](#)

[bacitracin](#)

back

Back

[See All Nearby Words](#)

Back Words

Words ending in 'back'

Parts of a Book: Quire, Colophon, and...



Dictionary

Thesaurus

When a meeting is pushed, but you don't know what that means

When Body Parts Are Also Verbs

Head, shoulders, metaphors, and toes

Style

MLA



Dictionary

Thesaurus

back

 1 of 4 **noun**

'bak

- a** : the rear part of the human body especially from the neck to the end of the spine
b : the corresponding part of a four-footed or lower animal
- 2** : the part of something that is opposite or away from the front part
- 3** : something at or on the back for support
back of a chair
- 4 a** : a position in some games (as football or soccer) behind the front line of players
b : a player in this position

'bakt **adjective**'bak-ləs **adjective**

back

 2 of 4 **adverb**

- a** : to, toward, or at the rear
b : in or into the past : **AGO**
c : in or into a reclining position



Dictionary

Thesaurus

3 : in return or replywrite *back*talk *back*

back 3 of 4 adjective

1 a : being at or in the back*back* door**b** : distant from a central or main area*back* roads**2** : not yet paid : **OVERDUE***back* rent**3** : no longer current*back* issues of a magazine

back 4 of 4 verb

1 : to give aid or support to**2** : to move or cause to move back or backward**3** : to shift in a counterclockwise directionthe wind *backed* around**4** : to provide with a back**noun**



Dictionary

Thesaurus

back noun

'bak

- 1 **a** : the rear part of the human body especially from the neck to the end of the spine
 - b** : the corresponding part of a lower animal (as a quadruped)
 - c** : **SPINAL COLUMN**
-
- 2 : the part of the upper surface of the tongue behind the front and lying opposite the soft palate when the tongue is at rest

back adjective

- 1 : being overdue or in arrears
back rent
- 2 : being retroactive especially as compensation
reinstated with *back pay*

Back geographical name



Dictionary

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English: [Translation of *back* for Spanish Speakers](#)

Britannica.com: [Encyclopedia article about *back*](#)

Last Updated: 12 Apr 2026 - Updated example sentences

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MERRIAM-WEBSTER UNABRIDGED



Dictionary

Thesaurus

- 2 **fascism**
- 3 **interdict**
- 4 **curt**
- 5 **how**
- 6 **ex**
- 7 **look**



WORD OF THE DAY

recondite 

[See Definitions and Examples »](#)

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Is it 'further' or 'farther'?



Dictionary

Thesaurus

The Words of the Week - Apr. 10

Quordle

Can you solve 4 words at once?

Play

Blossom

Pick the best words!

Play

The Missing Letter

A daily crossword with a twist

Are You Feeling Lucky? Quiz



Dictionary

Thesaurus

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