



SINCE 1828

animal noun

an·i·mal | \ 'a-nə-məl \

Definition of *animal* (Entry 1 of 2)

- 1 : any of a kingdom (Animalia) of living things including many-celled organisms and often many of the single-celled ones (such as [protozoans](#)) that typically differ from plants in having cells without [cellulose walls](#), in lacking [chlorophyll](#) and the capacity for [photosynthesis](#), in requiring more complex food materials (such as [proteins](#)), in being organized to a greater degree of complexity, and in having the capacity for spontaneous movement and rapid motor responses to stimulation
- 2
 - a : one of the lower animals (see [LOWER entry 3 sense 3](#)) as distinguished from human beings
 - b : MAMMAL
broadly : VERTEBRATE
- 3 : a human being considered chiefly as physical or nonrational
also : this nature
- 4 : a person with a particular interest or aptitude
// a political *animal*
// He's a party *animal*.

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also : CREATURE sense 1c

animal adjective

Definition of *animal* (Entry 2 of 2)

- 1 : of, relating to, resembling, or derived from animals
 - // *animal* instincts
 - // *animal* behavior
- 2
 - a : of or relating to the physical or sentient as contrasted with the intellectual or rational
 - b : SENSUAL, FLESHLY
 - // indulged his *animal* appetites
- 3 : of or relating to the animal pole of an egg or to the part from which ectoderm normally develops

Other Words from *animal*

Synonyms & Antonyms

Choose the Right Synonym

Did You Know?

More Example Sentences

Learn More about *animal*

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Other Words from *animal*

Noun

animallike \ 'a-nə-mə(l)-,līk \ *adjective*

Adjective

animally \ 'a-nə-mə-lē \ *adverb*

Synonyms & Antonyms for *animal*

Synonyms: Noun

beast, beastie, brute, creature, critter

Synonyms: Adjective

bodily, carnal, corporal, corporeal, fleshly, material, physical, somatic

Antonyms: Adjective

nonmaterial, nonphysical

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Choose the Right Synonym for *animal*

Adjective

CARNAL, FLESHLY, SENSUAL, ANIMAL mean having a relation to the body. CARNAL may mean only this but more often connotes derogatorily an action or manifestation of a person's lower nature. // a slave to *carnal* desires // FLESHLY is less derogatory than CARNAL. // a saint who had experienced *fleshly* temptations // SENSUAL may apply to any gratification of a bodily desire or pleasure but commonly implies sexual appetite with absence of the spiritual or intellectual. // *fleshpots*

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providing *sensual* delights // ANIMAL stresses the physical as distinguished from the rational nature of a person. // led a mindless *animal* existence //

Did You Know?

Latin *anima* means “breath” or “soul,” and *animalis*, the adjective that comes from it, means “having breath or soul.” An animal such as a cat or dog can be seen to breathe. Plants breathe too, by taking in certain gases from the atmosphere and releasing others. However, this process cannot be observed by the naked eye. So the noun *animal*, which comes from *animalis*, was borrowed from Latin for that group of living beings that breathe visibly.

Examples of *animal* in a Sentence

Noun

// the *animals* in the zoo

// the plants and *animals* of the forest

// She loves all kinds of *animals*.

// Fish, birds, insects, reptiles, mammals, and human beings are all *animals*.

// You're all behaving like a bunch of *animals*.

Adjective

// several different plant and *animal* species

// milk, meat, and other *animal* products

// People were shocked by the *animal* brutality of the attack.

See More 

Recent Examples on the Web: Noun

// The Mayhew, an *animal* welfare charity and a patronage of Meghan's, also received some goodwill.

— Chloe Foussianes, *Town & Country*, "Meghan Markle's Baby Shower Is Going Global, Thanks to a Charity-Minded Fan," 1 Apr. 2019

// Go Green with Your Pillows Just like with mattresses, traditional memory foam pillows can off-gas VOCs and harmful chemicals, while polyfill and down can use environmentally harmful petrochemicals or hurt our *animal* friends.

— Lauren Hubbard, *ELLE Decor*, "A Beginner's Guide to Making Your Home More Sustainable," 1 Apr. 2019

// Twerking Bear comes from novelty toy and inflatables company Gemmy, which already has an entire army of stuffed *animal* twerkers.

— Dami Lee, *The Verge*, "All I want for Christmas is this twerking Alexa-enabled bear," 14 Dec. 2018

// The Danish government is allowing police to seize refugees' cash and valuables to cover their expenses and making preparations for detaining rejected asylum seekers on a remote island once used for *animal* testing.

— Valentina Pop, *WSJ*, "U.N. Pact on Migration Sows Dissent," 8 Dec. 2018

// Just last month California motioned to ban all cosmetic *animal* testing for products sold in the state by 2020.

— Deanna Pai, *Glamour*, "CoverGirl Just Announced It's Now Entirely Cruelty-Free," 5 Nov. 2018

// As of July 2018, Yahoo reports, 80 percent of countries still allow *animal* testing.

— Lauren Rearick, *Allure*, "Unilever Announced Its Support of a Global Ban on Animal-Tested Cosmetics," 12 Oct. 2018

// Working in pharmaceuticals, Winter had grown frustrated with *animal* testing, mice were proving ineffective as incubators for creating antibodies that would work in humans.

— David Grossman, *Popular Mechanics*, "The 2018 Nobels in Chemistry Made Evolution Work For Us," 3 Oct. 2018

// High levels of exposure in *animal* testing has hinted that the chemical could cause cancer, and some small epidemiological studies found a link between cancers and extensive exposure during agricultural work.

— John Timmer, *Ars Technica*, "Lawsuit brings \$289 million verdict against maker of Roundup weed killer," 11 Aug. 2018

Recent Examples on the Web: Adjective

// Many if not most *animal* activists focus on factory farming, which is undoubtedly a huge problem, killing about 9.2 billion animals in the US in 2015 alone.

— Dylan Matthews, *Vox*, "How to be a better carnivore," 14 Nov. 2018

// Looking to eat less *animal* protein, but beans produce too much gas for your comfort?

— *SELF*, "Why This Registered Dietitian Tells (Some of) Her Patients to Avoid Kale Salads," 30 Nov. 2018

// She was also fitted with a satellite tag so *animal* rescuers can monitor her.

— Gabrielle Russon, *OrlandoSentinel.com*, "SeaWorld: Good news animal story — 'Sharkie' the dolphin set free," 2 July 2018

// The portal includes articles from the dozen or so *animal* advocacy groups TripAdvisor consulted with when first introducing its new policy.

— Nancy Trejos, *USA TODAY*, "Animal welfare for travelers: How to enjoy wildlife without harming it," 27 Apr. 2018

// These private groups showcase more than just *animal* parts.

— Issie Lapowsky, *WIRED*, "Tusks, Horns, and Claws: The Fight to Dismantle the Facebook Animal Parts Bazaar," 5 June 2018

// So mushrooms are messing with our minds and probably *animal* minds.

— Recode Staff, *Recode*, "Full transcript: Author Michael Pollan on Recode Decode," 22 May 2018

// Most are *animal* studies; human studies typically have small sample sizes of fewer than 25 people.

— Anne Marie Chaker, *WSJ*, "Collagen, a Wrinkle-Cream Staple, Catches On in Foods," 14 May 2018

// The law also doesn't cover *animal* races, such as horse racing, which many states already allow.

— Associated Press, *sandiegouniontribune.com*, "Supreme Court ruling clears way for legalized sports betting," 14 May 2018

These example sentences are selected automatically from various online news sources to reflect current usage of the word 'animal.' Views expressed in the examples do not represent the opinion of Merriam-Webster or its editors. Send us feedback.

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First Known Use of *animal*

Noun

14th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1

Adjective

1581, in the meaning defined at sense 1

History and Etymology for *animal*

Noun and Adjective

Latin, from *animale*, neuter of *animalis* animate, from *anima* soul — more at ANIMATE

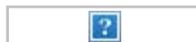
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11 "Problems" Inspired by Animal Names



9 Animal Names That Are Also Verbs



Sly Fox, Fat Cat: Animal Names for People

Dictionary Entries near *animal*

animadversion

animadvert

animae mundi

animal

animal bipes implume

animal black

animal cellulose

Phrases Related to *animal*

different animal

farm animals

no such animal

political animal

put (an animal) off the/someone's scent

put (an animal) out of its misery

social animal

stuffed animal

the human animal

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More Definitions for *animal*

animal **noun**

English Language Learners Definition of *animal* (Entry 1 of 2)

: a living thing that is not a human being or plant

: any living thing that is not a plant

: a person who behaves in a wild, aggressive, or unpleasant way

animal **adjective**

English Language Learners Definition of *animal* (Entry 2 of 2)

: of or relating to animals

: coming from the bodies of animals

: of or relating to the body and not to the mind

See the full definition for *animal* in the English Language Learners Dictionary

animal **noun**

an·i·mal | \ 'a-nə-məl \

Kids Definition of *animal*

1 : any member of the kingdom of living things (as earthworms, crabs, birds, and people) that differ from plants typically in being able to move about, in not having cell walls made of cellulose, and in depending on plants and other animals as sources of food

- 2** : any of the animals lower than humans in the natural order
// the animals in the zoo
- 3** : MAMMAL
// the birds and animals of the forest
-

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Medical Definition of *animal* (Entry 1 of 2)

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Nglish: Translation of *animal* for Spanish Speakers

Britannica English: Translation of *animal* for Arabic Speakers

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