



SINCE 1828

fish noun, often attributive

\ 'fish \

plural fish or fishes

Definition of *fish* (Entry 1 of 3)

1 a : an aquatic animal —usually used in combination

// starfish

// cuttlefish

b : any of numerous cold-blooded strictly aquatic craniate vertebrates that include the bony fishes and usually the cartilaginous and jawless fishes and that have typically an elongated somewhat spindle-shaped body terminating in a broad caudal (see CAUDAL sense 2) fin, limbs in the form of fins when present at all, and a 2-chambered heart by which blood is sent through thoracic gills to be oxygenated

// freshwater fish

// tropical fish

2 : the flesh of fish used as food

// We're having fish for dinner.

3 a : a person who is caught or is wanted (as in a criminal investigation)

b : FELLOW PERSON

WI

to c
Ge

WI

// felt sorry for the poor *fish*

4 : something that resembles a fish: such as

a **Fish** or **Fishes** *plural* : PISCES sense 1

also : PISCES sense 2a

b : TORPEDO sense 1b

// The submarine's *fish* hit the freighter.

fish out of water

: a person who is in an unnatural or uncomfortable sphere or situation

// The country boy felt like a *fish out of water* in the big city.

fish to fry

: concerns or interests to pursue —usually used with *other*

// can't deal with that problem now; we've got other *fish to fry* right now

neither fish nor fowl

: one that does not belong to a particular class or category

// The movie is *neither fish nor fowl*—it's not really a comedy, but it's too light-hearted to be called a drama.

fish verb

fished; **fishing**; **fishes**

Definition of *fish* (Entry 2 of 3)

intransitive verb

1 : to attempt to catch fish

2 : to seek something by roundabout means

// *fishing* for a compliment

3 a : to search for something underwater

// *fish* for pearls

b : to engage in a search by groping or feeling

// *fishing* around in her purse for her keys

transitive verb

1 a : to try to catch fish in

b : to fish with : use (something, such as a boat, a net, or bait) in fishing

2 a : to go fishing for

// *fish* salmon

b : to pull or draw as if fishing

// *fished* the ball from under the car

// *fish* wires through a conduit

fish or cut bait

: to make a choice between alternatives

Fish **biographical name**

\ 'fish \

Definition of *Fish* (Entry 3 of 3)

Hamilton 1808–1893 American statesman

Illustration of *fish*

Noun

fish 1b: *1* mandible, *2* nasal opening, *3* eye, *4* cheek, *5* operculum, *6* dorsal fins, *7* lateral line, *8* caudal fin, *9* scales, *10* anal fin, *11* anus, *12* pectoral fin, *13* pelvic fin, *14* maxilla, *15* premaxilla, *16* upper jaw

In the meaning defined above

Te:

cor
ger
cor

Other Words from *fish*

Synonyms

More Example Sentences

Learn More about *fish*

Keep scrolling for more

Other Words from *fish*

Noun

fishless \ 'fish-ləs \ \ *adjective*

fishlike \ 'fish-,lɪk \ \ *adjective*

Verb

fishability \ ,fi-shə-'bi-lə-tē \ \ *noun*

fishable \ 'fi-shə-bəl \ \ *adjective*

Synonyms for *fish*

Synonyms: Noun

baby, being, bird, bod [*British*], body, character, cookie (or cooky), creature,

customer, devil, duck, egg, face, guy, head, human, human being, individual, life, man, mortal, party, person, personage, scout, slob, sort, soul, specimen, stiff, thing, wight

Synonyms: Verb

feel, fumble, grope, scrabble

Visit the Thesaurus for More 

Examples of *fish* in a Sentence

Noun

// We're having *fish* for dinner.

// he's rather an odd *fish*

Verb

// We spent the afternoon *fishing* for trout.

// They *fished* the stream all morning.

// She was *fishing* around in her purse for her keys.

See More 

Recent Examples on the Web: Noun

// Gertrude went into the kitchen, coated *fish* fillets with cornmeal and fried them for everyone.

— Lizzie Presser, *ProPublica*, "The Reels Brothers Spent Eight Years in Jail for Refusing to Leave It.," 15 July 2019

// Fried chicken wings are piping hot, paper-crisp and encased in a salty-sweet *fish* sauce lacquer.

— Dominic Armato, *azcentral*, "The best restaurants in Mesa," 15 July 2019

// The menu includes Nocturnal Nosh (*fish* dip), Shark Bait (tuna poke) and Shark Bites (Fish n' Chips).

— Johnny Diaz, *sun-sentinel.com*, "Discovery Channel's 'Shark Week' dives into Fort Lauderdale beach," 15 July 2019

// Dear Readers: Here are some uses for old *fish* tanks/aquariums: • Use to raise an ant farm. • Use as a planter.

— Heloise, *Washington Post*, "Hints From Heloise: What to do when woman discovers pay inequity?," 15 July 2019

// But decades of space research have allowed India to develop satellite, communications and remote sensing technologies that are helping solve everyday problems at home, from forecasting *fish* migration to predicting storms and floods.

— *Fox News*, "India aborts Moon mission launch, citing technical glitch," 15 July 2019

// Between 2012 and 2017, Chinese *fish* farmers exported nearly 150 tons of caviar.

— Ephrat Livni, *Quartz*, "China produces loads of "black gold," but will caviar lovers bite?," 14 July 2019

// That was before Egg's headless body was found last year decomposed in a *fish* tank.

— Heather Knight, *SFChronicle.com*, "Welcome home: Trips abroad put San Francisco's chaotic streets in perspective," 13 July 2019

// Not just bald eagles, but *fish*-eaters like osprey and blue heron also once died out on the James.

— Tamara Dietrich, *baltimoresun.com*, "Bald eagles have come back from the dead in the Chesapeake Bay," 13 July 2019

Recent Examples on the Web: Verb

// All boats *fishing* in the waters must have an observer, usually someone from one of the island nations who reports what happens on the boat.

— Phillip Molnar, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, "San Diego-based tuna company selling boats, blames U.S. regulations," 10 July 2019

// According to Slate, the city of Oakland had to *fish* 60 electric scooters out of Lake Merritt in just the month of October.

— Andrew J. Hawkins, *The Verge*, "Flash floods in Washington, DC take their toll on dockless bikes and scooters," 8 July 2019

// The surviving three crew members apparently managed to initiate an emergency surfacing that was witnessed by Russian fishermen illegally *fishing* in restricted waters off the coast of the Kola Peninsula.

— Sean Gallagher, *Ars Technica*, "Russian spy sub crew prevented nuclear accident at cost of their lives," 8 July 2019

// Gotta be careful when landing biggins off the bank while *fishing* in the Everglades.

— Joe Mario Pedersen, *orlandosentinel.com*, "Close call: Alligator nearly bites Florida fisherman reaching for his catch," 1 July 2019

// To *fish* in the local bay waters, anyone can buy a fishing license—no questions asked—so of course fish populations decline.

— Jared Diamond, *National Geographic*, "How the pros and cons of city living vary around the world," 22 June 2019

// In retirement, Quatman plans to *fish* in the spring, summer and fall.

— Erika Butler, *baltimoresun.com*, "Darlington school bus driver donates early retirement incentive to school's autism program," 18 June 2019

// And not for nothing, everything comes together in about 25 minutes, which seems to be the magic number for how much time most people are willing to devote to cooking indoors in the summertime, and to *fish* in general.

— Alison Roman, *New York Times*, "Foolproof Fish Isn't a Myth," 17 June 2019

// Merrick Malach, Mike Mrotek and Dan Schuettpelez all of Green Bay and Matt McArdle of Kewaunee – are scheduled to *fish* together in a tournament later this month.

— Paul A. Smith, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "Lake Michigan catch featuring heavier salmon and trout," 15 June 2019

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

See More 

First Known Use of *fish*

Noun

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at sense 1a

Verb

before the 12th century, in the meaning defined at intransitive sense 1

History and Etymology for *fish*

Noun and Verb

Middle English, from Old English *fisc*; akin to Old High German *fisc* fish, Latin *piscis*

Keep scrolling for more

Learn More about *fish*

Share *fish*



Resources for *fish*



Dictionary Entries near *fish*

Fischer-Tropsch process

fiscus

fisetin

fish

Fish

fish-and-chips

fish ball

Phrases Related to *fish*

a big fish in a little pond

a big fish in a small pond

fish for

fish for compliments

fish in the sea

fish slice

ice fishing

odd fish

odd/queer fish

St

La

18

Lo

Keep scrolling for more

More Definitions for *fish*

fish noun

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

: a cold-blooded animal that lives in water, breathes with gills, and usually has fins and scales

: the meat of a fish eaten as food

fish verb

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

: to catch or try to catch fish

: to catch or try to catch fish in (a river, stream, etc.)

: to search for something by feeling : to use your hand to try to find something

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

fish noun

\ 'fish \

*plural fish or fishes***Kids Definition of *fish* (Entry 1 of 2)**

1 : any of a large group of vertebrate animals that live in water, breathe with gills, and usually have fins and scales

2 : an animal that lives in water —usually used in combination

*// starfish**// shellfish***Other Words from *fish*****fishlike** \ -,līk\ *adjective***fish** verb**fished; fishing****Kids Definition of *fish* (Entry 2 of 2)**

1 : to catch or try to catch fish

2 : to search for something by or as if by feeling

// I fished in my purse for change.

Keep scrolling for more

More from Merriam-Webster on *fish*

Thesaurus: All synonyms and antonyms for *fish*

Spanish Central: Translation of *fish*

Nglish: Translation of *fish* for Spanish Speakers

Britannica English: Translation of *fish* for Arabic Speakers

Britannica.com: Encyclopedia article about *fish*

Comments on *fish*

What made you want to look up *fish*? Please tell us where you read or heard it (including the quote, if possible).

Show Comments  Hide Comments 

Love words? Need even more definitions?

Subscribe to America's largest dictionary and get thousands more definitions and advanced search—ad free!

Merriam-Webster unabridged

Words at Play

