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Definition of animal in English:

animal

NOUN

- 1 A living organism that feeds on organic matter, typically having specialized sense organs and nervous system and able to respond rapidly to stimuli.

'wild animals adapt badly to a caged life'

'humans are the only animals who weep'

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[Synonyms](#)

- 1.1 An animal as opposed to a human being.

'are humans superior to animals, or just different?'

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[Synonyms](#)

- 1.2 A mammal, as opposed to a bird, reptile, fish, or insect.

'the snowfall seemed to have chased all birds, animals, and men indoors'

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- 1.3 A person without human attributes or civilizing influences,

especially someone who is very cruel, violent, or repulsive.

'those men have to be animals—what they did to that boy was savage'

More example sentences

Synonyms

1.4 *[with adjective or noun modifier]* A particular type of person or thing.

'I am a political animal'

'property development was a different animal altogether'

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Animals are generally distinguished from plants by being unable to synthesize organic molecules from inorganic ones, so that they have to feed on plants or on other animals. They are typically able to move about, though this ability is sometimes restricted to a particular stage in the life cycle. The great majority of animals are invertebrates, of which there are some thirty phyla; the vertebrates constitute but a single subphylum. See also and [higher animals](#) and , and [lower animals](#)

ADJECTIVE

1 Relating to or characteristic of animals.

'the evolution of animal life'

'animal welfare'

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1.1 Of animals as distinct from plants.

'tissues of animal and vegetable protein'

More example sentences

Synonyms

1.2 Characteristic of the physical and instinctive needs of animals; of the flesh rather than the spirit or intellect.

'a crude surrender to animal lust'

More example sentences

Synonyms

2 *Biology*

Relating to or denoting the pole or extremity of an embryo that contains the more active cytoplasm in the early stages of development.

More example sentences

Origin

Middle English the noun from Latin animal, based on Latin animalis 'having breath' from anima 'breath'; the adjective via Old French from Latin animalis.

Pronunciation

animal /'aɪnɪ(ə)l/

WORD OF THE DAY

feckless



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