



SINCE 1828 MENU



operate

verb | op·er·ate | \ 'ä-pə-,rāt, 'ä-,prāt \

Popularity: Bottom 50% of words | Updated on: 18 Nov 2017

Examples: OPERATE in a Sentence ▾

Definition of OPERATE

operated; operating

intransitive verb

1 : to perform a function : exert power or influence • factors *operating* against our success

2 : to produce an appropriate effect • the drug *operated* quickly

3 a : to perform an **operation** or a series of **operations** • The refinery is planning to begin *operating* as soon as possible.

b : to perform surgery • The surgeon ha

c : to carry on a military or naval action (*operate* in conjunction with the air force.

4 : to follow a course of conduct that is often irregular • crooked gamblers *operating* in the club



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; all morning.
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positive verb

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: BRING ABOUT, EFFECT

- 2 a : to cause to function : **WORK** • *operate* an automobile
b : to put or keep in operation • *operated* a grocery store
- 3 : to perform an operation on; *especially* : to perform surgery —usually used with *on* • *operate* on a patient • *operating* on a brain tumor

See *operate* defined for English-language learners

See *operate* defined for kids

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Examples of OPERATE in a Sentence



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They hope to have the windmill *operating* again tomorrow.

The camera also *operates* underwater.



machine can *operate* at high speeds.

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Instructions for *operating* the new microwave oven

a license to *operate* a motor vehicle

The café is owned and *operated* by a young couple.

The organization *operates* a recycling program.

It's the only casino *operating* in the state.

The company *operates* from Chicago.

a militant group *operating* against the government



Recent Examples of OPERATE from the Web

For many years, al-Shabab has *operated* among Somalia's fragile political landscape, which has seen chaos since the central government collapsed 25 years ago.

- Isobel Thompson, *vanityfair.com*, "Will the Somalia Bombing Get a Rise out of Trump?," 16 Oct. 2017

Maples lead the fall color lineup in Kentucky this year Yew Dell currently has an annual *operating* budget of about \$1.2 million and a full- and part-time staff of 18.

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- Sheldon S. Shafer, *The Courier-Journal*, "Yew Dell currently has a \$1.2 million in its largest donation ever," 24 Oct.



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Before launching Jar with decorated chef Mark Peet in 2001, Tracht *operated* Asian-fusion pioneer Jozu on Melrose.

—



Patric Kuh, *Los Angeles Magazine*, "Let's Take a Moment to Appreciate The Enduring Brilliance of Chef Suzanne Tracht," 26 Oct. 2017

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

Origin and Etymology of OPERATE

borrowed from Late Latin *operātus*, past participle of *operārī* "to work, be efficacious, effect, produce," going back to Latin, "to busy oneself, be at work," probably back-formation from *operātus* "busy, engaged, occupied with religious observances," from *opera* "activity, effort" + *-ātus* ³-ATE — more at [OPERA](#)

OPERATE Synonyms

Synonyms

handle, run, work

Related Words

use; maneuver, manipulate, ply, wield; command, control, direct, drive,

Phrases Related to OPERATE

Related Phrases

operating room

operating table

operating theatre

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OPERATE Defined for English Language Learners



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operate

verb

Definition of OPERATE for English Language Learners

: to function or behave in a proper or particular way

: to use and control (something)

: to have control of (something, such as a business, department, program, etc.)

OPERATE Defined for Kids

operate

verb | op·er·ate | \ 'ä-pə-,rāt \

Definition of OPERATE for Students

operated; operating

1 : to work or cause to work in a proper or particular way • The machine is *operating* smoothly. • He will learn to *operate* a car.

2 : **MANAGE** 1 • They *operate* a farm.

3 : to perform surgery : do an operation on • The doctors *operated* on the patient.

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Medical Dictionary



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MENU

operate

verb | op·er·ate | \ 'äp-(ə-),rāt\

Medical Definition of OPERATE

operated; operating

intransitive verb

: to perform surgery

transitive verb: to perform surgery on • *operated* the growth

Learn More about OPERATE

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