



**REVIEWED**

*By Chris Tighe at 12:53 pm, Aug 15, 2018*

SINCE 1828

Menu

- 
- 
- 

• [JOIN MWU](#)

[Gain access to thousands of additional definitions and advanced search features—ad free! JOIN NOW](#)

• [GAMES](#)

• [BROWSE THESAURUS](#)

• [WORD OF THE DAY](#)

• [VIDEO](#)

• MORE

[WORD OF THE DAY VIDEO WORDS AT PLAY FAVORITES](#)

• [WORDS AT PLAY](#)

• [FAVORITES](#)

encourage

×

dictionary thesaurus

• [JOIN MWU](#)

• [GAMES](#)

• [THESAURUS](#)

• [WORD OF THE DAY](#)

• [VIDEO](#)

• [WORDS AT PLAY](#)

• [FAVORITES](#)

Follow:

**encourage**

[verb](#) en·cour·age \ in-'kər-ij , -'kə-rij , en-\

Popularity: Top 20% of words |Updated on: 4 Aug 2018

- Trending Now: More Trending:
- [sequacious inadmissible oligarch, pejorative emolument troll](#)
- [SEE ALL](#)

See What's Trending Now See More Trending Words

What's Trending Now More Trending Words

1. [sequacious 'intellectually servile'](#)
2. [inadmissible 'not capable of being allowed'](#)
3. [oligarch, pejorative 'a member a government in which a small group exercises control especially for corrupt and selfish purposes'](#)
4. [emolument 'the returns arising from office or employment usually in the form of compensation or perquisites'](#)
5. [troll 'to harass, criticize, or antagonize especially by disparaging or mocking public statements'](#)

[SEE ALL](#)

[Tip: Synonym Guide](#)

[Examples: encourage in a Sentence](#)

- -
- -
- -
- -
- -
- -
- [Time Traveler! Explore the year a word first appeared](#)

## Definition of encourage

encouraged; encouraging

[transitive verb](#)

1 a : to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope : [hearten](#)

- she was *encouraged* to continue by her early success

b : to attempt to persuade : [urge](#)

- they *encouraged* him to go back to school

2 : to spur on : [stimulate](#)

- warm weather encourages plant growth

3 : to give help or patronage to : [foster](#)

- government grants designed to encourage conservation

---

## encourager

noun

See [encourage](#) defined for English-language learners

See [encourage](#) defined for kids

## Examples of *encourage* in a Sentence

1. They *encouraged* us in our work.
2. *Encourage* each other with kind words.
3. The program is meant to *encourage* savings.
4. Warm weather *encourages* plant growth.
5. He claims the new regulations will *encourage* investment.
6. He claims the new regulations will *encourage* people *to invest*.
7. We want to *encourage* students *to read* more.
8. My parents *encouraged* me *to go* back to college.
9. They *encouraged* her *to go*.

## Recent Examples of *encourage* from the Web

- The seeds stratify over the winter, which *encourages* them to germinate next spring.  
— [anna groves, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "They're beautiful — and in danger. Now, a huge effort focuses on saving monarch butterflies," 13 July 2018](#)
- Remigino had *encouraged* him to run Manchester in 1968, Duggan's sophomore year in high school.  
— [lori riley, courant.com, "Lindy Remigino, Won 2 Olympic Gold Medals, Hartford Icon, Dies At 87," 12 July 2018](#)
- Traditionally, American parents teach children to work hard and *encourage* them to overcome obstacles standing between them and their perfect world.  
— [latimes.com, "Immigrants want what we have: the American Dream," 12 July 2018](#)
- Family friend Brianna Horney, tells PEOPLE that the couple's relationship recently came under pressure after Matthew moved to North Carolina for work, and Julie, believing Matthew suffered from depression, *encouraged* him to seek professional help.

- [harriet sokmensuer, PEOPLE.com, "Murder Victim Pleaded with Husband to Get Therapy Before He Killed Her and Their 3 Kids," 12 July 2018](#)
- Cerf told the Council members Wednesday their move might *encourage* Rauner to sign the bill into law.
  - [mike danahey, Elgin Courier-News, "Elgin moves closer to banning tobacco sales to people under 21; final vote July 25," 12 July 2018](#)
- Freeman said the experiences are meant to strongly immerse people in a sensation of height and then *encourage* them to challenge their reluctance to take part.
  - [NBC News, "Virtual reality helps cure real-life fear of heights, study finds," 11 July 2018](#)
- His mom *encouraged* him to take on an instrument, and Morimoto chose saxophone, inspired by Lisa Simpson.
  - [hannah steinkopf-frank, RedEye Chicago, "Sen Morimoto gets moody with his saxophone," 11 July 2018](#)
- Perhaps even *encourage* them to surpass the luxury tax threshold?
  - [ann killion, SFChronicle.com, "With veterans on the mound and rotation all set, this could be Giants' moment," 8 July 2018](#)

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

## Origin and Etymology of *encourage*

Middle English *encoragen*, from Anglo-French *encorager*, from *en-* + *curage* courage

NEW! Time Traveler

First Known Use: 15th century

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

[See Words from the same year](#)

## *encourage* Synonyms

### Synonyms

[advance](#), [cultivate](#), [forward](#), [foster](#), [further](#), [incubate](#), [nourish](#), [nurture](#), [nurture](#), [promote](#);

### Antonyms

[discourage](#), [frustrate](#), [hinder](#), [inhibit](#);

### Near Antonyms

[ban](#), [bar](#), [enjoin](#), [forbid](#), [interdict](#), [outlaw](#), [prevent](#), [prohibit](#), [proscribe](#);

[repress](#), [snuff \(out\)](#), [squash](#), [squelch](#), [stifle](#), [subdue](#), [suppress](#);

[arrest](#), [check](#), [halt](#), [retard](#);

[encumber](#), [fetter](#), [hobble](#), [impede](#), [interfere \(with\)](#), [manacle](#), [obstruct](#), [shackle](#);

#### Related Words

[advocate](#), [back](#), [champion](#), [endorse](#) (also [indorse](#)), [support](#), [uphold](#);

[endow](#), [finance](#), [fund](#), [patronize](#), [stake](#), [subsidize](#), [underwrite](#);

[abet](#), [aid](#), [assist](#);

[advertise](#), [boost](#), [plug](#), [publicize](#), [tout](#);

[agitate \(for\)](#), [campaign \(for\)](#), [work \(for\)](#);

## Synonym Discussion of *encourage*

[encourage](#), [inspirit](#), [hearten](#), [embolden](#) mean to fill with courage or strength of purpose. [encourage](#) suggests the raising of one's confidence especially by an external agency.

- ○ (the teacher's praise *encouraged* the students to greater efforts)

[inspirit](#), somewhat literary, implies instilling life, energy, courage, or vigor into something.

- ○ (patriots *inspired* the people to resist)

[hearten](#) implies the lifting of dispiritedness or despondency by an infusion of fresh courage or zeal.

- ○ (a hospital patient *heartened* by good news)

[embolden](#) implies the giving of courage sufficient to overcome timidity or reluctance.

- ○ (*emboldened* by her first success, she tried an even more difficult climb)

## ENCOURAGE Defined for English Language Learners

### encourage

*verb*

### Definition of *encourage* for English Language Learners

- : to make (someone) more determined, hopeful, or confident
- : to make (something) more appealing or more likely to happen
- : to make (someone) more likely *to do* something : to tell or advise (someone) *to do* something

## ENCOURAGE Defined for Kids

### encourage

[verb](#) en·cour·age \ in-'kər-ij \

### Definition of encourage for Students

encouraged; encouraging

1 : make more determined, hopeful, or confident : [hearten](#) Cheering fans *encouraged* the team.

2 : to give help or support to : [aid](#)

- Warm weather *encourages* plant growth.

---

### encouragingly

adverb

- “Great job,” she said *encouragingly*.

---

### Learn More about *encourage*

1. See [words that rhyme with encourage](#) Thesaurus: [All synonyms and antonyms for encourage](#) Spanish Central: [Translation of encourage](#) Nglsh: [Translation of encourage for Spanish speakers](#) Britannica English: [Translation of encourage for Arabic speakers](#)

---

### Seen and Heard

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

[SHOW](#)