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feedback

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**feed-back** [feed-bak] [Show IPA](#)

- noun**
1. *Electronics.*
    - a. the process of returning part of the output of a circuit, system, or device to the input, either to oppose the input (**negative feedback**) or to aid the input (**positive feedback**)
    - b. acoustic feedback.
  2. the furnishing of data concerning the operation or output of a machine to an automatic control device or to the machine itself, so that subsequent or ongoing operations of the machine can be altered or corrected.
  3. a reaction or response to a particular process or activity: *He got very little feedback from his speech.*
  4. evaluative information derived from such a reaction or response: *to study the feedback from an audience survey.*
  5. *Psychology* . knowledge of the results of any behavior, considered as influencing or modifying further performance. Compare biofeedback.

**Relevant Questions**

**Origin:**  
 1915–20; noun use of verb phrase *feed back*

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**World English Dictionary** *Collins*

- feedback** (ˈfiːdˌbæk)
- *n*
1. a. the return of part of the output of an electronic circuit, device, or mechanical system to its input, so modifying its characteristics. In **negative feedback** a rise in output energy reduces the input energy; in **positive feedback** an increase in output energy reinforces the input energy
  - b. that part of the output signal fed back into the input
  2. the return of part of the sound output by a loudspeaker to the microphone or pick-up so that a high-pitched whistle is produced
  3. the whistling noise so produced
  4. a. the effect of the product of a biological pathway on the rate of an earlier step in that pathway
  - b. the substance or reaction causing such an effect, such as the release of a hormone in a biochemical pathway
  5. information in response to an inquiry, experiment, etc: *there was little feedback from our questionnaire*
- *vb*, — *adv*
6. ( *tr* ) to return (part of the output of a system) to its input
  7. to offer or suggest (information, ideas, etc) in reaction to an inquiry, experiment, etc

Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition  
 2009 © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins  
 Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009  
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**Word Origin & History** *Etymonline*

**feedback**  
 1920, in the electronics sense, from [feed](#) + [back](#) (adj.). Transferred

**Example sentences**  
 We're working to solve these problems, and your **feedback** will help us do so.

Positive **feedback** and multiple equilibria have to be taken seriously.  
 His playing isn't prone to **feedback** or scrabbling, and he has little interest  
 As the systems people would say, there is no **feedback** loop.

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- Related Words**
- acoustic feedback
  - closed loop
  - closed-loop
  - feedback loop
  - negative feedback
  - group therapy
  - positive feedback
  - open loop
  - biocybernetics
  - regeneration
  - closed loop
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**Matching Quote**  
*"A family's responses to crisis or to a new situation mirror those of a child. That is to say, the way a small child deals with a new challenge (for instance, learning to walk) has certain predictable stages: regression, anxiety, mastery, new energy, growth, and **feedback** for future achievement. These stages can also be seen in adults coping with new life events, whether positive or negative."*

—T. Berry Brazelton  
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search dictionary



use, information about the results of a process is attested by 1955.

Online Etymology Dictionary, © 2010 Douglas Harper  
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### Medical Dictionary

American Heritage

**feedback** feed-back (fēd'bāk')

*n.*

The return of a portion of the output of a process or system to the input, especially when used to maintain performance or to control a system or process.


The portion of the output so returned.

The return of information about the result of a process or activity.

The American Heritage® Stedman's Medical Dictionary  
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### Science Dictionary

American Heritage

**feedback** [%PREMIUM\_LINK%]  (fēd'bāk') [Pronunciation Key](#)

The supply of an input to some process or system as a function of its output. See more at [negative feedback](#), positive feedback.

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### Cultural Dictionary

American Heritage

#### feedback definition

A process in which a system regulates itself by monitoring its own output. That is, it "feeds back" part of its output to itself. Feedback is used to control machines; a heating system, for example, uses a [thermostat](#) to monitor and adjust its output. Feedback is also used by the human [brain](#) to control various muscles and joints.

**Note** : By extension, "feedback" is any response or information about the result of a process.

**Note** : Feedback is usually a feature of automation.

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### Computing Dictionary

FOLDOC

#### feedback definition *electronics*

Part of a system output presented at its input. Feedback may be unintended. When used as a design feature, the output is usually transformed by passive components which attenuate it in some manner; the result is then presented at the system input. Feedback is positive or negative, depending on the sign with which a positive change in the original input reappears after transformation. Negative feedback was invented by Black to stabilise [vacuum tube](#) amplifiers. The behaviour becomes largely a function of the feedback transformation and only minimally a function of factors such as transistor gain which are imperfectly known. Positive feedback can lead to instability; it finds wide application in the construction of oscillators. Feedback can be used to control a system, as in [feedback control](#). (1996-01-02)

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 The Free Online Dictionary of Computing © Denis Howe 2010 <http://foldoc.org>  
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**Encyclopedia** *Encyclopedia Britannica*  
**feedback**

in biology, a response within a system (molecule, cell, organism, or population) that influences the continued activity or productivity of that system. In essence, it is the control of a biological reaction by the end products of that reaction.

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Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008. Encyclopedia Britannica Online.  
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