

# Webster's II

## New College Dictionary

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**meager** also **meagre** (mē'gər) *adj.* [ME *mege* < OFr. < Lat. *macer*.] 1. Having little flesh : LEAN. 2. Conspicuously deficient in quantity, fullness, or extent <meager crops produced on worn-out land> — **meager-ly** *adv.* — **meager-ness** *n.*

★ **syns**: MEAGER, EXIGUOUS, MEASLY, POOR, PUNY, SCANT, SCANTY, SKIMPY, SPARE, SPARSE, STINGY *adj.* **core meaning**: conspicuously deficient in quantity, fullness, or extent <eked out a meager existence> <a meager increase in salary> **ant**: AMPLE

**meal**<sup>1</sup> (mēl) *n.* [ME *meale* < OE *melu*.] 1. The edible seed or other edible part of a coarsely ground grain. 2. A granular substance made by grinding.

**meal**<sup>2</sup> (mēl) *n.* [ME < OE *mal*.] 1. The food served and eaten in one sitting. 2. A customary time or occasion of eating food.

★ **word history**: The usual current sense of *meal*<sup>2</sup>, "food eaten at one sitting," has existed since the 13th century but it was actually an extension of the Old English sense, "fixed time for eating." *Meal*<sup>2</sup>, descended from an Indo-European root that meant basically "measure" (a meaning recorded for *meal* in medieval times), is related to Latin *metiri*, "to measure," and Greek *metron*, "measure, poetic meter."

**meal-ie** (mē'lē) *n.* [Afr. *milie* < Port. *milho*, millet < Lat. *millum*.] *So. Afr.* 1. An ear of corn. 2. **mealies**. Corn; maize.

**meal ticket** *n.* 1. A card or ticket entitling the holder to a meal or meals. 2. *Slang*. One relied on as a source of financial support.

**meal-time** (mēl'tīm') *n.* The usual time for eating a meal.

**meal-worm** (mēl'wūrm') *n.* The larva of any of several beetles of the genus *Tenebrio* that infest flour and other grain products and are raised for bird feed.

**meal-y** (mē'lē) *adj.* -**i-er**, -**i-est**. 1. Resembling meal in texture or consistency : GRANULAR <meal-y potatoes> 2. a. Made of or containing meal. b. Sprinkled or covered with meal or a similar granular substance. 3. Flecked with spots : MOTTLED. 4. Lacking healthy coloring : PALE. 5. Mealy-mouthed. — **meal-y-ness** *n.*

**meal-y-bug** (mē'lē-būg') *n.* [So called because it is covered with a white powdery substance.] Any of various insects of the genus *Pseudococcus*, some of which are harmful to plants, esp. citrus trees.

**meal-y-mouthed** (mē'lē-mūthd', -mūth') *adj.* Unwilling to state facts or opinions simply and directly : EVASIVE.

**mean**<sup>1</sup> (mēn) *v.* **meant** (mēnt), **mean-ing**, **means**. [ME *menen* < OE *mēnan*, to tell of.] — **vt.** 1. a. To be defined or described as : DENOTE <The word "cat" means a certain species of mammal.> b. To convey the same sense as <The Spanish word "ventana" means "window."> c. To act as a symbol of : SIGNIFY <In this poem, the rose means love.> 2. To intend to indicate or convey <What do they mean by those gestures?> 3. To have as a purpose or intention : INTEND <I didn't mean to make you angry.> 4. To design or intend for a certain purpose or end <a truck meant for light hauling> 5. To have as a consequence : BRING ABOUT. 6. To be attended by or associated with <A rainbow means the storm is over.> — **vi.** 1. To be of a specified significance or importance : MATTER <Wealth meant little to them.> 2. To have intentions of a specified kind <means well but lacks tact> — **mean business**. *Informal*. To be in earnest.

**mean**<sup>2</sup> (mēn) *adj.* -**er**, -**est**. [ME < OE *gemāne*, common.] 1. Low in quality or grade : INFERIOR. 2. Low in social status. 3. Poor or common in appearance : SHABBY <a mean cabin> 4. Ignoble : base <a mean purpose> 5. Low in amount or value : PALTRY. 6. Miserly : stingy. 7. a. Lacking elevating human qualities, as kindness and good will. b. Reluctant to oblige or accommodate. c. Displaying malice : MALICIOUS. 8. *Informal*. Ill-tempered. 9. *Slang*. a. Hard to cope with : DIFFICULT <a mean road to travel in winter> b. Hard to defeat <plays a mean game of tennis> — **mean'ly** *adv.*

**mean**<sup>3</sup> (mēn) *n.* [ME, middle < OFr. < Lat. *medianus* < *medius*.] 1. The middle point between two extremes. 2. The avoidance of extremes of behavior : MODERATION <"Every virtue, as we were taught in youth, is a mean between two extremes" — Max Beerbohm> 3. *Math.* a. A number that represents a set of numbers in any of several ways determined by a rule involving all members of the set : AVERAGE. b. The arithmetic mean. 4. *Logic*. The middle term in a syllogism. 5. **means**. A course of action, method, or instrument by which an act can be accomplished or an end achieved <suggested the end justified the means> 6. **means**. Wealth, as money or property. **usage**: In the sense of "financial resources," *means* takes a plural verb, as in *Our means were more than adequate*. In the sense of "a way to an end," it may take a singular or plural verb, the choice of a modifier such as *any* or *all* generally determines the number of the verb, as in: *Every means available was considered*; *There are several means at our disposal*. — *adj.* 1. Occupying a middle position between two extremes. 2. Intermediate in extent, size, quality, degree, or time : MEDIUM. — **by all means**. Without fail : CERTAINLY. — **by any means**. In any way possible : in any case <not by any means an easy job> — **by means of**. With the use of : owing to <succeeded by means of patience> — **by no means**. In no sense : certainly not.

**mean-calorie** *n.* CALORIE 2.  
**me-an-der** (mē-ān'dər) *vi.* -**dered**, -**der-ing**, -**ders**. [< Lat. *maeander*, circuitous windings < Gk. *maliandros*, after *Maeander*, a river in Turkey noted for its winding course.] 1. To follow a turning and winding course <streams meandering through fields> 2. To wander aimlessly without fixed direction — *n.* 1. **meanders**. Windings or

turns, as of a stream or path. 2. **often meanders**. A circuitous excursion or journey : RAMBLE. 3. The Greek artistic and architectural fret or key pattern. — **me-an' der-er** *n.* — **me-an' der-ing-ly** *adv.* — **me-an' drous** (-drōs) *adj.*

**mean deviation** *n.* The arithmetic mean of the absolute values of deviations from the arithmetic mean, or from the median, in a statistical distribution.

**mean-ing** (mē'nīŋ) *n.* 1. Something signified by a word. 2. Something one wishes to convey, esp. by language. 3. Something interpreted to be the intent, goal, or end. 4. Something regarded as the inner significance <"But who can comprehend the meaning of the voice of the city?" — O. Henry> 5. Functional value : EFFICACY <ceremonies now empty of all meaning> — *adj.* 1. MEANINGFUL 2. 2. Intentioned or disposed in a specified manner <a well-meaning person>

★ **syns**: MEANING, ACCEPTATION, IMPORT, INTENT, MESSAGE, PURPOSE, SENSE, SIGNIFICANCE, SIGNIFICATION, VALUE *n.* **core meaning**: what is signified by a term <synonyms — words with the same meaning>

**mean-ing-ful** (mē'nīŋ-fəl) *adj.* 1. Having meaning, function, or purpose : SIGNIFICANT. 2. Full of meaning : EXPRESSIVE <a meaningful glance> — **mean'ing-ful-ly** *adv.* — **mean'ing-ful-ness** *n.*

**mean-ing-less** (mē'nīŋ-lis) *adj.* Having no significance or meaning : SENSELESS. — **mean'ing-less-ly** *adv.* — **mean'ing-less-ness** *n.*

**mean-ly** (mēn'lē) *adv.* In a mean, poor, or base manner.

**mean-ness** (mēn'nis) *n.* 1. The state of being inferior in quality, value, or character : COMMONNESS. 2. Stinginess : selfishness. 3. A malicious or spiteful act.

**mean solar day** *n.* The period of time between two successive transits of the mean sun; the standard for the 24-hour day, measured from midnight to midnight.

**mean-spir-it-ed** or **mean spir-it-ed** (mēn'spīr'it-ēd) *adj.* Having or characterized by a malicious or petty spirit. — **mean'spir'it-ed-ly** *adv.* — **mean'spir'it-ed-ness** *n.*

**mean square** *n.* The arithmetic mean of the squares of a set of numbers.

**mean sun** *n.* A hypothetical sun defined as moving at a uniform rate along the celestial equator so that it completes its orbit in the same period as the apparent sun, used to compute the mean solar day.

**mean-t** (mēnt) *v.* **pt.** **pp.** OF MEAN.

**mean-time** (mēn'tīm') *n.* The time between one occurrence and another : INTERVAL. — *adv.* During a period of intervening time : MEANWHILE <"Meantime, let wonder seem familiar" — Shakespeare>

**usage**: *Meantime* serves chiefly as a noun: *In the meantime we played cards*. As an adverb, *meanwhile* is more common: *Meanwhile we played cards*.

**mean time** *n.* Time measured with reference to the mean sun, giving equal 24-hour days throughout the year.

**mean-while** (mēn'hwīl', -wīl') *n.* The intervening time. — *adv.* 1. During or in the intervening time. 2. At the same time <The jury is out, meanwhile, we must wait.>

**meas-sles** (mēz'zəl) *n.* [ME *maseles*, pl. of *masel*, measles-spot, of MLG orig.] (used with a *sing. verb*). 1. a. An acute contagious virus disease, usu. occurring in childhood and characterized by eruption of red spots. b. One of several diseases displaying similar but milder symptoms, esp. German measles. 2. A disease of cattle and swine, caused by tapeworm larvae. 3. A plant disease usu. caused by fungi, and producing minute spots on stems and leaves.

**meas-ly** (mēz'lē) *adj.* -**si-er**, -**si-est**. 1. Infected or spotted with measles : MEASLED. 2. *Slang*. Odiously small : MEAGER.

**meas-ur-a-ble** (mēzh'ar-ə-bəl) *adj.* 1. Able to be measured. 2. Of distinguished importance : SIGNIFICANT. 3. Not so great as to escape all comparison or measure : MODERATE. — **meas'ur-a-bil'i-ty** *n.* — **meas'ur-a-bly** *adv.*

**meas-ure** (mēzh'ər) *n.* [ME < OFr. *mesure* < Lat. *mensura* < *metiri*, to measure.] 1. Dimensions, capacity, or quantity as determined by measuring. 2. A reference sample or standard used for the quantitative comparison of properties. 3. A unit specified by a scale, as an inch, or by variable conditions, as a day's march. 4. A system of measurement, as the metric system. 5. A device, as a marked tape or a graduated container, used for measuring. 6. An act of measurement. 7. A basis of comparison : CRITERION <"the final measure of the worth of a society" — Joseph Wood Krutch> 8. The degree or extent of something. 9. A fitting amount <a measure of appreciation> 10. A limited degree or amount. 11. Limit : bounds <wealth knowing no measure> 12. Appropriate restraint : MODERATION <discipline in measure> 13. **often measures**. An action taken as a means to an end : EXPEDIENT. 14. A legislative bill or enactment. 15. Poetic meter. 16. *Mus.* The metric unit between two bars on the staff : BAR. — *v.* -**ured**, -**ur-ing**, -**ures**. — **vt.** 1. To determine the dimensions, quantity, or capacity of. 2. To mark, establish, or lay out dimensions for by measuring. 3. To estimate by comparison or evaluation <"I gave them an account . . . of the situation as far as I could measure it" — Winston Churchill> 4. To bring into opposition <measured our power with the adversary> 5. To

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