



# behest noun

be·hest (bi-'hest) bē-

[Synonyms of behest >](#)

- 1 : an authoritative order : **COMMAND**  
The meeting was called at the senator's *behest*.
- 2 : an urgent prompting  
At the *behest* of her friends, she read the poem aloud.

*Behest* is an ancient word: it is almost a thousand years old. It was formed from the prefix *be-* and the verb *hātan* ("to command" or "to promise"), and its Old English ancestor was used exclusively in the sense of "promise," a now-obsolete meaning that continued on in Middle English especially in the phrase "the land of behest." The "command" meaning of *behest* is also ancient but it's still in good use, typically referring to an authoritative order. *Behest* is now also used with a less weighty meaning; it can refer to an urgent prompting, as in "a repeat performance at the behest of the troupe's fans."

- |                            |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <a href="#">charge</a>     | <a href="#">command</a>    | <a href="#">commandment</a> |
| <a href="#">decree</a>     | <a href="#">dictate</a>    | <a href="#">direction</a>   |
| <a href="#">directive</a>  | <a href="#">do</a>         | <a href="#">edict</a>       |
| <a href="#">imperative</a> | <a href="#">injunction</a> | <a href="#">instruction</a> |
| <a href="#">order</a>      | <a href="#">word</a>       |                             |

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I only made the change at the author's *behest*.

## Recent Examples on the Web

Once again, David Gordon Green and Danny McBride have taken it upon themselves to futz with a 1970s horror classic at the *behest* of horror über-producer Jason Blum.

—Katie Walsh, *Los Angeles Times*, 4 Oct. 2023

Left unpublished, the suite was salvaged first by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov as a solo piano suite, further orchestrated by one of his students, and, decades later at the *behest* of Serge Koussevitzky, properly arranged for orchestra (in its most familiar and enduring form) in 1922 by Maurice Ravel.

—Michael Andor Brodeur, *Washington Post*, 24 Sep. 2023

These include a multitude of investment stakes in cinema chains, publishing operations and film and TV production companies that

**Quordle**

W	O	R	D	Y
L	O	V	E	R
P	L	A	Y	S
D	A	I	L	Y

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**Play**

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WORD OF THE DAY

**circumvent**

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### Etymology

Middle English, promise, command, from Old English *beþæs* promise, from *behātan* to promise, from *be-* + *hātan* to command, promise — more at [HIGHT](#)

### First Known Use

12th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

### Time Traveler

The first known use of *behest* was in the 12th century

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[at the behest of someone](#)      [at someone's behest](#)

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Style

"Behest." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/behest. Accessed 13 Oct. 2023.

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## behest noun

be·hest (bi-'hest)

: ORDER entry 2 sense 5b, COMMAND

built monuments at their ruler's *behest*



English: Translation of *behest* for Spanish Speakers

Last Updated: 7 Oct 2023 - Updated example sentences

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