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1 essential

adjective | es·sen·tial | \i-'sen(t)-shəl\

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Tip: [Synonym Guide](#)

Examples: [ESSENTIAL in a Sentence](#)



Definition of ESSENTIAL

- 1 : of, relating to, or constituting **essence** : **INHERENT**
- 2 **a** : of the utmost importance : **BASIC, INDISPENSABLE, NECESSARY** • an *essential* requirement for admission to college
b : being a substance that is not synthesized by the body in a quantity sufficient for normal health and growth and that must be obtained from the diet • a vegetable oil rich in *essential* fatty acids — see also **ESSENTIAL AMINO ACID** — compare **NONESSENTIAL** 2
- 3 : **IDIOPATHIC** • *essential* disease • *essential* hypertension

—**essentially** \i-'sench-lē, -'sen(t)-shə-\ *adverb*

—**essentialness** \i-'sen(t)-shəl-nəs\ *noun*

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Examples of ESSENTIAL in a Sentence

As a fighter pilot, he knows that good vision is *essential*.

Free speech is an *essential* right of citizenship.

The *essential* problem with this plan is that it will cost too much.

There's no *essential* difference between the two products.

Recent Examples of ESSENTIAL from the Web

Cultivating the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation is *essential* in business education today.

— Howard Cohen, Adam H. Beasley And Barry Jackson, *miamiherald*, "H. Wayne Huizenga, billionaire entrepreneur and Miami sports icon, dies at 80 | Miami Herald," 23 Mar. 2018

This powder is *essential* for all outdoorsy dog owners.

— Emily Reed, *Outside Online*, "All the Gear You Need to be a Perfect Dog Owner," 22 Mar. 2018

These tools focus on pollinators, which are *essential* in the making of chocolate.

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

First Known Use of ESSENTIAL

14th century

ESSENTIAL Synonyms

Synonyms

all-important, critical, imperative, indispensable, integral, must-have, necessary, necessitous, needed, needful, required, requisite, vital

Synonym Discussion of ESSENTIAL

ESSENTIAL, **FUNDAMENTAL**, **VITAL**, **CARDINAL** mean so important as to be indispensable. **ESSENTIAL** implies belonging to the very nature of a thing and therefore being incapable of removal without destroying the thing itself or its character. ⟨• conflict is *essential* in drama⟩ **FUNDAMENTAL** applies to something that is a foundation without which an entire system or complex whole would collapse. ⟨• *fundamental* principles of algebra⟩ **VITAL** suggests something that is necessary to a thing's continued existence or operation. ⟨• cut off from *vital* supplies⟩ **CARDINAL** suggests something on which an outcome turns or depends. ⟨• a *cardinal* rule in buying a home⟩

noun

Definition of ESSENTIAL

- 1 : something basic • the *essentials* of astronomy
- 2 : something necessary, indispensable, or unavoidable

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

Examples of ESSENTIAL in a Sentence

the *essentials* for success include a willingness to work and the right attitude

this will be just an introduction to the *essentials* of computer programming

Recent Examples of ESSENTIAL from the Web

Here are the *essentials* for Kansas City area voters: When: Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

— Bill Turque, *kansascity*, "Missouri voters go to polls Tuesday for city council races, taxes | The Kansas City Star," 2 Apr. 2018

What to bring/what not to bring Travel light and pack only the *essentials*: Snacks, water bottles, sunscreen, comfortable shoes.

— Phillip Valys, *Sun-Sentinel.com*, "All you need to know about Parkland's March for Our Lives rally," 22 Mar. 2018

Made of sturdy polyester and nylon, this duffel features an inner zippered pocket, a sneaker holder, and a mesh side pocket to keep all the *essentials* handy at a moment's notice.

— *Indianapolis Star*, "The Perfect Bag," 19 Jan. 2018