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**pre-cept** [pre-sept] [Show IPA](#)

**noun**

- a commandment or direction given as a rule of action or conduct.
- an injunction as to moral conduct; *maxim*.
- a procedural directive or rule, as for the performance of some technical operation.
- Law*.
  - a writ or *warrant*.
  - a written order issued pursuant to law, as a sheriff's order for an election.

**Origin:**  
1300-50; Middle English < Latin *praecipitum* piece of advice, rule, noun use of neuter of *praecipitus*, past participle of *praecipere* to direct, foresee, literally, to take beforehand, equivalent to *prae-* + *-cep-*, combining form of *capere* to take + *-tus* past participle suffix

**Can be confused:** *percept*, *precept*.

**Synonyms**

- directive, order, guide, instruction, prescription.

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