

cylinder

NOUN

MEANING & USE

I. Geometrical and other non-mechanical uses.

- I.1.a.** *Geometry.* A solid figure of which the two ends are equal and parallel circles, and the intervening curved surface is such as would be traced out by a straight line moving parallel to itself with its ends in the circumferences of these circles. 1570-

If the direction of this straight line be perpendicular to the planes of the circles, the figure is a **right cylinder**; if not, an **oblique cylinder**.

1570 A **cylinder** is a solide or bodely figure which is made, when one of the sides of a rectangle parallelogramme, abiding fixed, the parallelogramme is moued about.

H. Billingsley, translation of Euclid, *Elements of Geometrie* xi. f. 317^v

...

1879 A **cylinder** is a solid body of the character of a prism, but its ends are circles.

Cassell's Technical Educator ii. 100

geometry

- I.1.b.** *Geometry.* The solid generated by a straight line moving always parallel to itself and describing any fixed curve (not necessarily a circle). 1877-

1877 When the base..is a closed curve of any form..the surface generated is called a **cylinder**.

B. Williamson, *Elementary Treatise on Integral Calculus* (ed. 3) ix. §168

1877 The axis of a right circular **cylinder**.

B. Williamson, *Elementary Treatise on Integral Calculus* (ed. 3) ix. Ex. 12

geometry

- I.2.a.** Any body or object of cylindrical form (either solid or hollow); in quot. **a1661** applied to a cylindrical jewel worn in the ear. **axial cylinder** = **axis-cylinder** *n.*; **renal** or **urinary cylinder** = renal or urinary cast: see **cast** *n.* IX.30c. 1641-

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Facet Technologies, LLC
Exhibit 2038
LifeScan v. Facet
IPR2023-00712
Ex. 2038-001

...

- 1879** The **axial cylinder** of each nerve being surrounded by medullary matter.
H. Calderwood, *Relations of Mind & Brain* 44

I.2.b. A cylindrical container, *spec.* one for liquefied or compressed gas.

1791–

- 1791** I poured the decoctions into glass **cylinders**.
W. Hamilton, translation of C.-L. Berthollet, *Elements of Art of Dyeing* vol. II. ii.iii. iii. 177
- ...
- 1977** The **cylinder** is often in an airing cupboard.
J. Bowyer, *Central Heating* ii. 13

I.2.c. A cylindrical record for a phonograph. Also *attributive*.

1891–

- 1891** Ask them on what terms they will rent me a phonograph for 3 months and furnish me **cylinders** enough to carry 75,000 words.
'M. Twain', *Letter* 28 February (1920) 297
- ...
- 1967** Booth's wax **cylinder** recording of Othello's speech to the Senate.
American Notes & Queries September 15/1

sound recording

I.3. † A kind of portable sun-dial; = **chilindre** *n.*

1593

- 1593** The making of the Horologicall **Cylindre**.
T. Fale, *Horologiographia* To Readers sig. A3^v

clocks and watches

I.4.a. A cylindrical or somewhat barrel-shaped stone, pierced longitudinally for suspension from the wrist, used as a seal by the Babylonians and Assyrians, and incised with figures,

1849–

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I.4.b. A barrel-shaped, hollow object of baked clay, usually of considerable size, covered with cuneiform writing and buried under the foundations of Babylonian and Assyrian temples.

1857-

1857 This discovery at Múgeyer convinced him that the commemorative cylinders of the founders were always deposited at the corners of Babylonian edifices.

W. K. Loftus, *Travels Chaldaea & Susiana* 130

ancient history

II. In *Mechanics*.

II.5. Applied more or less specifically to many cylindrical parts of machines, etc. (with reference either to the internal chamber or external surface); a revolving roller in a lock.

?a1560-

e.g. The bore of a gun barrel, the part of a revolver which contains the chambers for the cartridges; the barrel of a pump in which the piston works; the glass barrel of an electrical machine; a cylindrical revolving part in a loom, or a carding machine; a revolving roller in a lock, etc.

?a1560 Hauling respecte to the length of the pæce, waighte of the Bullet..proportion of the concaue Cylinders.

L. Digges, *Geometrical Practise: Pantometria* (1571) i. xxx. sig. liv

...

1894 [see cylinder lock *n.*].

...

1972 Another..type of cylinder lock is the disc tumbler lock, in which the locking action is provided..by movable discs which lock the cylinder.

How Things Work vol. I. 234

weaving

gunnery and firearms

mechanics

II.6. The cylindrical chamber in which the steam (or other fluid) acts upon the piston. By extension, applied to the corresponding chamber of rotary engines which is sometimes of an annular form. **to function** (or **click, hit, operate**, etc.) **on all** (or **four, six**, etc.) **cylinders**, of an internal-combustion engine: to be working at full power; hence *figurative*, to function properly, to be in good form; so **to miss on all** (or **four**, etc.) **cylinders**, to be working badly, to be in bad condition.

1697-

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- 1697** He proposes the..turning a small Surface of Water into Vapour, by Fire applied to the bottom of the **Cylinder** that contains it, which Vapour forces up the Plug in the Cylinder.
D. Papin in *Philosophical Transactions 1695–7* (Royal Society) vol. 19 483
...
- 1960** Tries which set the whole of the Lions' backline clicking on all **cylinders**.
T. McLean, *Kings of Rugby* (new edition) 122

steam engines

motoring

II.7. Printing.

II.7.a. The engraved hollow metal roller used in printing calico, etc.

1764–

- 1764** The invention is performed by means of engraved copper **cylinders**.
Fryer, *Specif. Patent 810* [Calico Printing]
- 1790** A is the printing **cylinder** covered with woollen cloth, and B is the inking **cylinder** with its distributing rollers.
Nicholson, *Specif. Patent 1748* 8

engraving and etching

printmaking

printing and typography

calico-printing

II.7.b. A similar roller used in letter-press printing for inking the type (now *inking-roller*), pressing the paper against the type, or carrying the type or printing surface.

1818–

- 1818** Conveying the..paper from one printing **cylinder** to another.
Cowper, *Specif. Patent 4194* 2
- 1858** Comparatively few printing rollers can be arranged round the **cylinder** carrying the type.
Applegath, *Specif. Patent 372*

printing and typography

II.8. Watchmaking. The cylindrical recess on the verge of the balance in a horizontal escapement.

1765–

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1765 Making the **cylinder** of harder materials..would be an advantage.

T. Mudge, *Thoughts on Means of improving Watches* (1772) 23

...

1883 In the best watches the **cylinder** is made of a ruby.

E. Beckett, *Rudimentary Treatise on Clocks* (ed. 7) 320

clocks and watches

ETYMOLOGY

Summary

A borrowing from Latin.

Etymon: Latin *cylindrus*.

< **Latin** *cylindrus* cylinder, roller, < **Greek** *κύλινδρος* roller, derivative of *κυλίνδριν* to roll.

Compare 16th cent. **French** *cilindre*, *cylindre*. There was an earlier form **chilindre** *n.* (in sense [I.3](#)) in **Middle English** and **Old French**.

PRONUNCIATION

BRITISH ENGLISH

/ˈsɪlɪndə/ 

SIL-uhn-duh

U.S. ENGLISH

/ˈsɪləndər/ 

SIL-uhn-duhr

FORMS

Variant forms

Also 1500s–1600s **cylindre**, 1600s **cilinder**, **sillinder**.

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It typically occurs about ten times per million words in modern written English.

cylinder is in frequency band 6, which contains words occurring between 10 and 100 times per million words in modern written English. [More about OED's frequency bands](#)

Frequency of *cylinder, n.*, 1750–2010

* Occurrences per million words in written English

Historical frequency series are derived from Google Books Ngrams (version 2), a data set based on a corpus of several million books printed in English between 1500 and 2010. The Ngrams data has been cross-checked against frequency measures from other corpora, and re-analysed in order to handle homographs and other ambiguities.

The overall frequency for a given word is calculated by summing frequencies for the main form of the word, any plural or inflected forms, and any major spelling variations.

Frequency of *cylinder, n.*, 2017–2023

* Occurrences per million words in written English

Modern frequency series are derived from a corpus of 20 billion words, covering the period from 2017 to the present. The corpus is mainly compiled from online news sources, and covers all major varieties of World English.

Smoothing has been applied to series for lower-frequency words, using a moving-average algorithm. This reduces short-term fluctuations, which may be produced by variability in the content of the corpus.

COMPOUNDS & DERIVED WORDS

Sort by

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cylinder-watch, n. 1765–

A watch with a cylinder or horizontal escapement.

demi-cylinder, n. 1781–**carding cylinder, n.** 1785–

A cylinder or roller in a carding machine, covered with metal teeth or wire pins that comb out impurities from wool, cotton, etc., and separate and...

working cylinder, n. 1787–

(In an engine) a cylinder in which a gas or other fluid acts on a piston, causing it to move; = cylinder, n. II.6.

inking-cylinder, n. 1790–**printing cylinder, n.** 1790–

A revolving cylinder in a printing machine which presses the paper against a flat forme of type or a plate, or on which type or a plate is mounted.

cylinder-escapement, n. 1807–

A form of watch escapement (also called horizontal escapement), invented by Tompion in 1695, or later by Graham.

gas cylinder, n. 1807–

A cylinder filled with gas; esp. a metal one for holding gas at pressure.

pressing cylinder, n. 1810–**cylinder card, n.** 1812–

(See cylinder, n. II.5)

pump cylinder, n. 1825–**cylinder-cover, n.** 1827–

The steam-tight lid at the end of a steam-cylinder.

impression cylinder, n. 1830–

In a printing-machine (see quotes.).

hot water cylinder, n. 1832–

A cylindrical hot water tank; spec. one which contains a heating element and supplies hot water for a building, etc.

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urchin cylinder, n. 1835–

axis-cylinder, n. 1839–

See quotes.

pug cylinder, n. 1839

The cylinder of a pug mill, in which the loam or clay is placed and worked into pug (pug, n.⁴ 1).

type-cylinder, n. 1839–

The cylinder on which the types or plates are fastened in a rotary press.

ginning-cylinder, n. 1843–

A cylinder of toothed metal discs, which rotates to draw cotton through a comb-like grid in a cotton gin.

sheeling cylinder, n. 1844–

twin-cylinder, adj. 1846–

cylinder-glass, n. 1851–

Sheet glass, made by blowing glass into the form of a cylinder which is then cut open and flattened.

cylinder-printing-machine, n. 1851–

cylinder saw, n. 1851–

(See cylinder, n. I.4a)

lap-cylinder, n. 1851–

blanket cylinder, n. 1852–

(Chiefly in offset printing) a cylinder lined with a blanket (blanket, n. A.4) against which paper or other material is passed to receive the...

pressure cylinder, n. 1852–

A cylinder in which a fluid is maintained under pressure.

pattern cylinder, n. 1853–

A revolving cylinder in a loom studded with projections which push the levers that operate the shed.

measuring cylinder, n. 1854–

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= prayer wheel, n. 1; cf. mani, n.²

magnet-cylinder, n. 1866–

A metal cylinder containing magnets that is used for generating electricity.

lime-cylinder, n. 1871–

A cylinder of lime used in the production of limelight.

plate cylinder, n. 1871–

A cylinder to which plates are attached in a rotary printing press.

seal-cylinder, n. 1871–

= cylinder, n. I.4a.

brake-cylinder, n. 1874–

(See brake-pipe, n.).

cylinder-engine, n. 1874–

(See quot.).

double-cylinder, adj. 1874–

stop-cylinder, n. 1874–

A printing press in which the cylinder is stopped to permit the return of the reciprocating carriage.

indicator-cylinder, n. 1875–

The cylinder of a steam engine indicator.

making-cylinder, n. 1875–

(In a cylinder paper-machine) the cylinder on which the pulp is felted into a sheet or web (distinguished from the beating cylinder and the drying...

triple-cylinder, adj. a1877–

treble-cylinder, adj. 1877–

cylinder lock, n. 1878–

A lock (esp. a door-lock) in which a pin tumbler mechanism is contained inside a cylinder barrel.

clavicylinder, n. 1880–

A musical instrument invented by Chladni.

.. . .

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multi-cylinder, adj. a1884–

Esp. of an engine: having several cylinders. Of a vehicle: having such an engine.

cylinder-gauge, n. 1884–

(a) A tool for giving the size of the opening in the cylinder of an escapement; (b) a gauge for testing the diameter of projectiles for rifled...

cylinder head, n. 1884–

(See cylinder, n. II.6)

cylinder-plug, n. 1884–

(See cylinder, n. I.4a)

pith cylinder, n. 1884–**cylinder-epithelium, n.** 1886–

Epithelium consisting of cylindrical cells.

cylinder, v. 1887–

transitive. To act upon with a cylinder, to press under a cylinder.

cylinder seal, n. 1887–

(See cylinder, n. I.4a)

multiple-cylinder, adj. 1888–

= multi-cylinder, adj.

single cylinder, adj. 1888–**cylinder gun, n.** 1892–

(See cylinder, n. II.5)

exhaust-cylinder, n. 1892–**ink-cylinder, n.** 1894–

An inking cylinder or roller in a printing machine.

cylinder stove, n. 1898–**cylinderead, adj.** 1899–

Having a cylinder or cylinders (of a specified number or type).

two-cylinder, adj. 1901–

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cutting cylinder, n. 1909–

platen cylinder, n. 1909–

A cylindrical platen in a typewriter or computer printer.

cylinder block, n. 1923–

(See cylinder, n. II.6)

master cylinder, n. a1929–

perfecting cylinder, n. 1930–

(In a printing machine) a cylinder that facilitates printing on the second side of a sheet.

arm-cylinder, n. 1937–

An ornamental cylinder worn around the arm; an armlet.

blast-cylinder, n.

blowing-cylinder, n.

The air-cylinder of a blast-engine.

cylinder-cock, n.

A cock at the end of the cylinder in a steam engine to allow water of condensation to escape.

cylinder-desk, n.

A writing-desk having a curved revolving top which can be pushed back or drawn forward and locked.

cylinder-paper-machine, n.

A paper-making machine in which the pulp is taken up by a wirecloth-covered cylinder, instead of the flat wire-cloth used in the Fourdrinier machine.

willow-cylinder, n.

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