

< span



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span 1 of 4

'span ◀▶'

[Synonyms of *span* >](#)*archaic past tense of* [SPIN](#)**span** 2 of 4 **noun (1)**

1 : the distance from the end of the thumb to the end of the little finger of a spread hand
also : an English unit of length equal to nine inches (22.9 centimeters)

2 : an extent, stretch, reach, or spread between two limits: such as

a : a limited space (as of time)

especially : an individual's lifetime

b : the spread or extent between abutments or supports (as of a bridge)

also : a portion thus supported

c : the maximum distance laterally from tip to tip of an airplane

span 3 of 4 **verb****spanned; spanning***transitive verb*

1 a : to measure by or as if by the hand with fingers and thumb extended

b : [MEASURE](#)

2 a : to extend across

a career that *spanned* four decades

b : to form an arch over

a small bridge *spanned* the pond

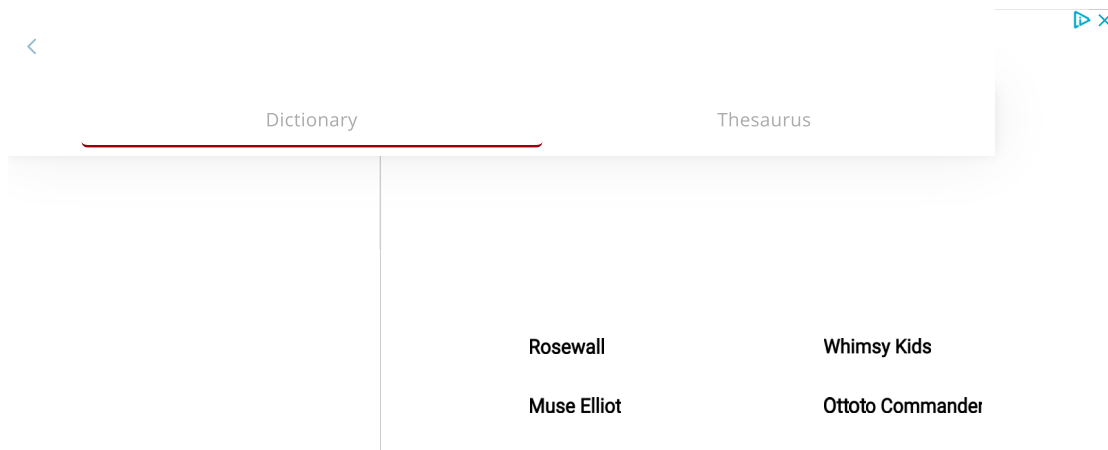
c : to place or construct a span over

3 : to be capable of expressing any element of under given operations

a set of vectors that *spans* a vector space

span 4 of 4 **noun**

: a pair of animals (such as mules) usually matched in appearance and action and driven together

**Verb**

gauge

gage

measure

scale

[See all Synonyms & Antonyms in Thesaurus >](#)**Verb**

His career as a singer *spanned* three decades.

Their empire once *spanned* several continents.

Her academic interests *span* a wide variety of topics.

A bridge *spans* the river.

Recent Examples on the Web**Verb**

Rob Lowe Virtually Surprises Middle School Students Reading 'The Outsiders' on the 38th Anniversary of the Film Virtually every young star of the film would become a massive Hollywood star with careers that have *spanned* decades.

— Keith Langston, *Peoplemag*, 24 Nov. 2023

Other noteworthy discounts *span* across LED teeth-whitening kits, electric toothbrushes, and water flossers — all to support a healthier daily oral-care routine.

— Sarah Han, *Allure*, 24 Nov. 2023

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These examples are programmatically compiled from various online sources to illustrate current usage of the word 'span.' Any opinions expressed in the examples do not represent those of Merriam-Webster or its editors. [Send us feedback](#) about these examples.

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Etymology

Noun (1)
Middle English, from Old English *spann*; akin to Old High German *spanna* span, Middle Dutch *spannen* to stretch, hitch up

Noun
Dutch, from Middle Dutch, from *spannen* to hitch up

First Known Use

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

Verb
1560, in the meaning defined at [sense 1a](#)

Noun
1769, in the meaning defined [above](#)

Time Traveler

The first known use of *span* was before the 12th century

[See more words from the same century](#)

-
- attention span

health span
- span-new

spic-and-span
- life span

spick-and-span



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Style

MLA

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span

1 of 3 noun

'span'

1 : the distance from the end of the thumb to the end of the little finger of a spread hand

also : an English unit of length equal to 9 inches (about 22.9 centimeters)

2 a : a limited portion of time

span of life

b : the spread (as of an arch) from one support to another

c : the portion supported to form a span

span

2 of 3 verb

spanned; spanning

1 a : to measure by or as if by the hand with fingers and thumb extended

b : [MEASURE entry 2 sense 2](#)

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span : to place or construct a span over

span 3 of 3 **noun**

: a pair of animals (as mules) driven together

Etymology

Noun

Old English *spann* "distance measured by the outstretched hand"

Noun

from Dutch *span* "a pair of animals driven together," derived from earlier *spannen* "to hitch up"



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span **noun**

'span 

1 : an extent of distance or of time
especially : **LIFE SPAN**

2 : **MEMORY SPAN**

- Nglish: [Translation of *span* for Spanish Speakers](#)
Britannica English: [Translation of *span* for Arabic Speakers](#)
Britannica.com: [Encyclopedia article about *span*](#)

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 **Quordle**

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P	L	A	Y	S
D	A	I	L	Y

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BRITANNICA ENGLISH - ARABIC TRANSLATION

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