

synchronize

VERB

Etymology

Summary

Formed within English, by derivation.

Etymons: [synchronism](#) *n.*, [-ize](#) *suffix*.

< [synchronism](#) *n.*: see [-ize](#) *suffix*. Compare **French** *synchroniser*.

Meaning & use

1.a. *intransitive*. To occur at the same time; to coincide in point of time; to be contemporary or simultaneous. Const. *with*. **c1624–**

- c1624** The Second Court..synchroniseth with the Times of the Beast.
J. Mede, *Works* (1672) 583
- 1681** To conceive the times of the little Horn to synchronize with all the middle Synchronals of the Apocalypse.
H. More, *Plain Exposition Daniel* ii. 56
- 1791** To make the invasion synchronize with that bankruptcy, might not be so easy.
E. Burke, *Correspondence* (1844) vol. III. 345
- 1847** The birth and the death..synchronise by a metaphysical nicety.
T. De Quincey, *Secret Societies in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* August 516/2
- 1859** The degradation of art which synchronized so curiously with the revival of classical learning.
J. M. Jephson & L. Reeve, *Narrative of Walking Tour in Brittany* viii. 115
- 1892** A King of this dynasty, Khudurhagamar, synchronizes with Abraham.
S. Laing, *Human Origins* 51

1.b. *transitive*. To cause to be, or represent as, synchronous; to assign the same date to; to **1806–**

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Gentleman's Magazine vol. 97 ii. 505/2

- 1862** On 'the 25th day of second month of the seventh year of Ansey',—a date difficult for the historian to **synchronise** with our own era.
M. Hopkins, *Hawaii* 55
- 1869** Nations accordingly, as the desire of exactness or the wish to **synchronise** arose, invented eras for themselves.
G. Rawlinson, *Manual of Ancient History* Introduction 6

2.a. *intransitive*. To occur at the same successive instants of time; to keep time *with*; to go on at the same rate and exactly together; to have coincident periods, as two sets of movements or vibrations. **1867–**

- 1867** So that the movements of Thought may **synchronise** with the movements of Things.
G. H. Lewes, *History of Philosophy* (ed. 3) vol. I. Prolegomena p. xxxiii
- 1869** Waves of ether are absorbed with special energy..by atoms whose periods of vibration **synchronise** with the periods of the waves.
J. Tyndall, *Notes 9 Lectures on Light* §304
- 1871** Small motions which **synchronise** with the appearance and disappearance of solar spots.
J. Tyndall, *Fragments of Science* (1879) vol. II. ii. 31
- 1889** If the double period of the ship coincides with the period of the wave, the motions of each **synchronise**, or keep time, with the other.
J. J. Welch, *Text Book of Naval Architecture* iii. 60

2.b. *transitive*. To cause to go at the same rate; *spec.* to cause (a timepiece) to indicate the same time as another. **1879–**

- 1879** The idea of **synchronizing** the movements of the two instruments..was employed in telegraphy at a very early period.
G. B. Prescott, *Speaking Telephone* (new edition) 249
- 1881** The two cylinders would be driven by clock-work, **synchronised** by an electro-magnetic arrangement.
S. Bidwell in *Nature* 10 February 346/1
- 1882** Unless the clock..was **synchronised** with Greenwich time.
Society 18 November 11/1

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- 1910** The movements of the mouths of the characters on the scene **synchronise** with the utterance of the phonograph.
Chambers's Journal March 206/1
- 1922** De Forest demonstrates his invention for **synchronizing** speech with movies... You..heard the tone which, to a musically trained ear, synchronized perfectly with every movement of the violin bow.
Radio News (U.S.) November 867/1 (heading)
- 1931** So that voice and picture were perfectly **synchronized**.
B. Brown, *Talking Pictures* 3
- 1934** René Clair would not dare to **synchronize** one of his scenes with the sound of a real bal-musette band.
C. Lambert, *Music Ho!* iii. 196
- 1940** Focal-plane shutters can be well **synchronised** with the flash on small cameras.
F. J. Mortimer, *Wall's Dictionary of Photography* (ed. 15) 315
- 1956** The duration of electronic flash discharge is always shorter than the fastest shutter speed with which it can be **synchronized**.
Focal Encyclopedia of Photography 492/1
- 1957** It [sc. a video signal]..must have added to it the timing pulses needed to **synchronize** the receiver.
Encyclopædia Britannica vol. XXI. 912 d/1
- 1962** A recent development which enables the receiver to accelerate from rest and automatically **synchronise** by simply putting the excitation on the selsyns through a three-pole switch.
S. A. Choudhury in G. A. T. Burdett, *Automatic Control Handbook* iv. 39
- 1977** Cheaper cameras which only take bulbs or cubes are **synchronized** at low speeds, usually around 1/25 sec.
J. Hedgecoe, *Photographer's Handbook* 34/2

3. gen. To combine or co-ordinate.

1973–

- 1973** The law is probably the only profession that must be **synchronized** with another profession—writing.
New York Law Journal 3 April 4/5
- 1976** Both media **synchronize** national interests with multinational scope.
Time 27 December facing p. 36 (advertisement)

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Additional sense (2012)

transitive. Computing. To cause (data or files) to remain identical in more than one location, changes made to a copy in one location being propagated to the others.

1988–

1988 Synchronizing three copies of data is very expensive for the other algorithms with this message cost.

Proceedings 14th International Conf. Very Large Data Bases 22/2

1992 Most file-synchronization utilities require that you organize your file structure to group files and folders that you want synchronized.

MacUser November Nov. 25/2

2003 When set up, iTunes will open automatically and your iPod will automatically synchronize its music library with the one on your computer.

Sams teach Yourself Mac OS X Digital Media xi. 229

2011 MobileMe, a..service that allowed people to synchronize their calendar, e-mail and contacts across devices.

International Herald Tribune (Nexis) 8 June (Finance section) 2

computing

Pronunciation

BRITISH ENGLISH

/ˈsɪŋkrənɪz/ 

SING-kruh-nighz

U.S. ENGLISH

/ˈsɪŋkrəˌnaɪz/ 

SING-kruh-nighz

Pronunciation keys

Forms

Variant forms

Also **synchronise**.

Frequency

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Frequency data is computed programmatically, and should be regarded as an estimate.

Frequency of *synchronize*, v., 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 the Google Books corpus of several million books printed in English between 1500 and 2010.

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.

For sets of homographs (distinct entries that share the same word-form, e.g. *mole*, n.¹, *mole*, n.², *mole*, n.³, etc.), we have estimated the frequency of each homograph entry as a fraction of the total Ngrams frequency for the word-form. This may result in inaccuracies.

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 Google Books corpus.

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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

Date (oldest first)

synchronizing, n. & adj.

a1727–

synchronization, n.

1828–

The action of synchronizing, spec. in Electrical Engineering and in other technical uses.

desynchronize, v.

1896–

transitive. The reverse of synchronize, v. (esp. sense 2b).

synchronized, adj.

1919–

That has been synchronized or exhibits synchronism.

synchronized, adj.

1931–

(See quot. 1931).

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A proprietary name for: a type of computer monitor which can automatically detect and adapt to the scanning frequency of an incoming video signal...

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