



# pivot 1 of 3 noun

piv·ot 'pi-vət

## plural pivots

[Synonyms of pivot](#) >

**1** : a shaft or pin on which something turns

**2 a** : a person, thing, or factor having a major or central role, function, or effect

**b** : a key player or position

*specifically* : an offensive position of a basketball player standing usually with back to the basket to relay passes, shoot, or provide a screen for teammates

**3** : the action of [pivoting](#)

*especially* : the action in basketball of stepping with one foot while keeping the other foot at its point of contact with the floor

**4** : a usually marked change

The idea of allowing a [marijuana] dispensary in the city is a *pivot* from the stance previously held by the council, which voted in early 2018 to ban sales in the city.

— Katie Sobko

*especially* : an adjustment or modification made (as to a product, service, or strategy) in order to adapt or improve

A global pandemic strikes a business. The adaptable owner assesses the situation, predicts the future, and starts their *pivot*.

— Jodie Cook



Dictionary

Thesaurus

the *pivot* to remote work in 2020.

— Owen Hughes

The *pivot* to virtual learning impacted income and occupancy rates of hotels at colleges ...

— Melissa Angell

## **pivot** 2 of 3 adjective

1 : turning on or as if on a pivot

2 : **PIVOTAL**

## **pivot** 3 of 3 verb

**pivoted; pivoting; pivots**

*intransitive verb*

1 : to turn on or as if on a pivot

a TV stand that *pivots*

She *pivoted* on her heel and stalked out of the room.

(*figurative*) The plot *pivots* on the discovery that Emily, who had for years been presumed dead, is found alive.

— Debi Enker and Melinda Houston

2 : to adapt or improve by adjusting or modifying something (such as a product, service, or strategy)

In my first product business, I didn't know when to *pivot* and lost everything as a result. When your output (money) exceeds your input, or you can't afford to pay yourself, it's time to *pivot*.

— India Gary-Martin

Restaurateur Jordan Rulloda has been grinding through this pandemic. ... Rulloda says he and his small team have *pivoted* the best they can.

— Lyndsay Morrison



Dictionary

Thesaurus

**transitive verb**

**1** : to provide with, mount on, or attach by a pivot  
a *pivoted* mechanism

**2** : to cause to pivot  
*pivoted* the camera

**3** : to adapt or improve by adjusting or modifying (something, such as a product, service, or strategy)

Pharmacies have *pivoted* their businesses to meet the demands of mass vaccination services ...

— Nick Thayer

... many organizations have *pivoted* their operations by taking services online to adapt to current conditions and strengthen business resiliency.

— Desmond Nair

... sales departments have *pivoted* the way they're restaffing and handling sales meetings—rather than putting 100 workers back out in the field, they're deploying their teams in strategic ways and outsourcing sales until they hire again.

— Zeenath Kuraisha

**'pi-və-tə-bəl**  **adjective**



*Pivot* is a French borrowing that slowly evolved grammatically in the English language. It began as a **noun** in the 14th century designating a shaft or pin on which something turns ("The chair turns on a pivot"). Later it was applied to any central person or thing around which action revolves. The noun then came to denote the action of turning about, oscillating, or balancing on or as if on a point ("the pivot of



Dictionary

Thesaurus

pivots on revenge"). In wider extended use, it can imply a change of direction ("The company pivoted towards marketing remote learning tools and resources").

**Noun**

- |             |                   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| bottom line | bull's-eye        |
| centerpiece | core              |
| crux        | essence           |
| gist        | heart             |
| kernel      | keynote           |
| meat        | meat and potatoes |
| net         | nub               |
| nubbin      | nucleus           |
| pith        | point             |
| root        | sum               |

**Verb**

- |         |       |
|---------|-------|
| revolve | roll  |
| rotate  | spin  |
| swing   | swirl |
| swivel  | turn  |
| twirl   | twist |
| wheel   | whirl |



Dictionary

Thesaurus

## Noun

an issue that is the real **pivot** of the controversy

## Verb

The dancers **pivoted** on their toes and changed direction.

The door hinge **pivots** around the pin.

The quarterback **pivoted** and threw the ball to the running back.

## Recent Examples on the Web

 Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. [Read More](#)

## Noun

Companies like Apple who continuously innovates its product lineup prove that smart **pivots** can lead to massive success.

— Melissa Houston, *Forbes*, 5 Mar. 2025

Trouser Epiphany My 2024 was defined by a sartorial **pivot** via the sublime trouser cut of Studio Nicholson.

— Tom Stubbs, *Robb Report*, 5 Mar. 2025

## Adjective

In time, the shouting match in the Oval Office may turn out to be a **pivot** point in a realignment that moves Washington closer to Moscow and further from European allies who see Russia's territorial ambitions as existential.

— Susan Page, *USA TODAY*, 28 Feb. 2025



Dictionary

Thesaurus

## Verb

Administration officials at all levels are **pivoting** to stress the decline of apprehensions at the southern border and ICE arrests when confronted with questions about the more arduous logistical challenge of deporting tens of thousands of people back to their home countries.

— David Catanese, *Miami Herald*, 7 Mar. 2025

Gas prices in 2025: How Trump's tariffs could bring a spike to gas pump prices and heating bills Moscow pivot Trump has also **pivoted** to a closer relationship with Moscow and shut down military aid to Ukraine which is defending itself from a full-scale Russian invasion.

— Jason Lange, *USA TODAY*, 5 Mar. 2025

[See All Example Sentences for pivot](#)

## Etymology

### Noun

French

## First Known Use

### Noun

14th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

### Adjective

1796, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)



Dictionary

Thesaurus

The first known use of *pivot* was in the 14th century

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

[pivot on/around](#)

[pivot tooth](#)

[civet](#)

[privet](#)

[rivet](#)

[See All Rhymes for \*pivot\*](#)

[piva](#)

**pivot**

[pivotal](#)

[See All Nearby Words](#)



Dictionary

Thesaurus

**pivot**



SUBSCRIBE



DOWNLOAD

ART19



00:00 / 02:56



[Privacy Policy](#)

Theme music by Joshua Stamper ©2006 [New Jerusalem Music/ASCAP](#)

Get Word of the Day delivered to your inbox!

Your email address

[Sign Up](#)

Style

MLA

"Pivot." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pivot>. Accessed 10 Mar. 2025.

[Copy Citation](#)



Dictionary

Thesaurus

# pivot

 1 of 2 noun

piv·ot ('piv-ət ◀▶)

- 1 : a shaft or pin on which something turns
- 2 : something on which something else turns or depends : a central member, part, or point

# pivot

 2 of 2 verb

- 1 : to turn on or as if on a pivot  
the guns are mounted in such a way as to *pivot* easily  
the future *pivots* on what is done today
- 2 : to provide with, mount on, or attach by a pivot

# pivot

 noun

piv·ot ('piv-ət ◀▶)

: a usually metallic pin holding an artificial crown to the root of a tooth



Dictionary

Thesaurus

Love words? Need even more definitions?

Subscribe to America's largest dictionary and get thousands more definitions and advanced search—ad free!

MERRIAM-WEBSTER UNABRIDGED

Quordle

W

O

R

D

Y

L

O

V

E

R

P

L

A

Y

S

D

A

I

L

Y

Can you solve 4 words at once?

Dictionary

Thesaurus

Merriam-Webster

WORD OF THE DAY

imperturbable

See Definitions and Examples »

Get Word of the Day daily email!

Your email address 

SUBSCRIBE

How to Use Em Dashes (—), En Dashes (–) , and Hyphens (-)

13 Unusually Long English Words

9 Superb Owl Words

See More



Dictionary

Thesaurus

### Quordle

Can you solve 4 words at once?

Play

### Blossom Word Game

Pick the best words!

Play

### Missing Letter

A daily crossword with a twist

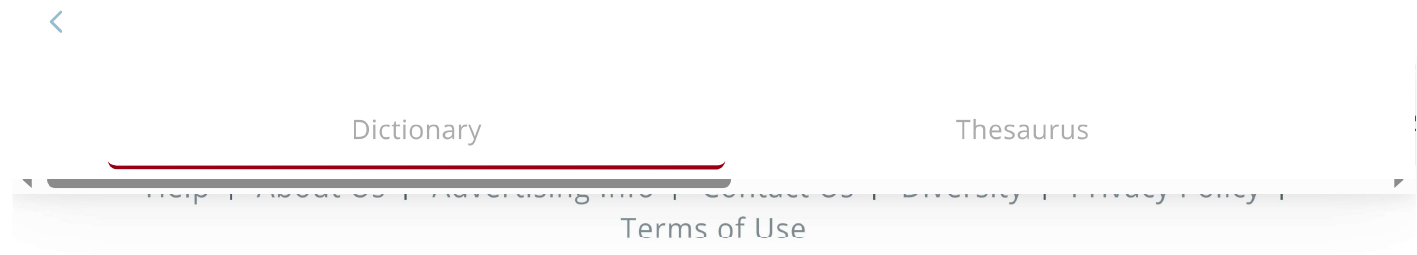
Play

### Challenging Standardized Test Words Quiz Vol. 3

You're on your own for the math  
section.

Take the quiz

See All



© 2025 Merriam-Webster, Incorporated