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taper



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taper 1 of 4 verb

ta-per ('tā-per)

tapered; tapering ('tā-p(ə-)rɪŋ)

[Synonyms of taper](#)

intransitive verb

- 1 : to become progressively smaller toward one end
- 2 : to diminish gradually

transitive verb

: to cause to taper

taper 2 of 4 noun (1)

- 1 a : a slender candle
b : a long waxed wick used especially for lighting candles, lamps, pipes, or fires
c : a feeble light
- 2 a : a [tapering](#) form or figure
b : gradual diminution of thickness, diameter, or width in an elongated object
c : a gradual decrease

taper 3 of 4 adjective

- 1 : progressively narrowed toward one end
- 2 : furnished with or adjusted to a scale : [GRADUATED](#)
taper freight rates

taper 4 of 4 noun (2)

tap-er ('tā-per)

: one that applies or dispenses tape

Synonyms

Verb

abate	de-escalate	decline
decrease	die (away or down or out)	diminish
drain (away)	drop (off)	dwindle
ease	ebb	fall
fall away	lessen	let up
lower	moderate	pall
phase down	ratchet (down)	ratchet (down)
recede	relent	remit
shrink	subside	taper off
wane		

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

Examples of taper in a Sentence

Verb

- leaves that **taper** to a point
- you'll find the symptoms begin **tapering** gradually about 24 hours after you take the medicine

Recent Examples on the Web

Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. Opinions expressed in the examples do not represent those of Merriam-Webster or its editors. [Send us feedback](#).

Verb

Quordle



Can you solve 4 words at once?

Play



WORD OF THE DAY

beleaguer

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Snowfall will begin to **taper** overnight and into Wednesday morning.

— Nina Turner, *Newsweek*, 29 Oct. 2024

But the pandemic and a drop in prices depressed oil revenues, and the city has passed a Climate Action Plan to **taper** its reliance on oil.

— Thomas Curwen, *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Oct. 2024

Noun

Elevate every dinner party with these **taper** candle holders, made with white marble and a gold finish.

— Mia Meltzer, *Rolling Stone*, 10 Dec. 2024

The skirt of the dress starts high with a shorter hemline at the front, and **tapers** symmetrically into a longer skirt at the sides and back of the gown.

— Shelby Wax, *Vogue*, 6 Dec. 2024

Adjective

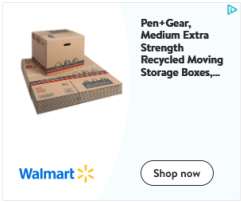
To embrace the color further, try incorporating soft pink linen napkins, **taper** candles, or chargers to your tablescape.

— Shelby Wax, *Vogue*, 26 June 2024

Instead, grab a few pairs of these **taper** candles that are hand painted with tiny bows.

— Anne Loreto Cruz, *Bon Appétit*, 8 Feb. 2024

[See all Example Sentences for taper >](#)



Word History

Etymology

Noun (1)
Middle English, from Old English *tapor* candle, wick, perhaps modification of Latin *papyrus* papyrus

Noun (2)
[TAPE entry 1](#)

First Known Use

Verb
1610, in the meaning defined at [intransitive sense 1](#)

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

Adjective
15th century, in the meaning defined at [sense 1](#)

Noun (2)
circa 1920, in the meaning defined [above](#)

Time Traveler

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

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

Phrases Containing *taper*

[taper off](#)

Dictionary Entries Near *taper*

[tape punch](#)
taper
[tape reading](#)

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Kids Definition

taper ^{1 of 2} noun

ta·per ^(tā·pər)

- a** : a long waxed wick used especially for lighting lamps, pipes, or fires
b : a slender candle
- a** : a tapering form or figure
b : gradual lessening of thickness, diameter, or width in a long object
c : a gradual decrease

taper ^{2 of 2} verb

tapered; tapering ^{(tā·p(ə-)rɪŋ)}

- : to make or become gradually smaller toward one end
- : to become gradually less and less

More from Merriam-Webster on *taper*

Nglish: [Translation of taper for Spanish Speakers](#)

Last Updated: 3 Jan 2025 - Updated example sentences

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- Point A
- Point B
- Point C

Using Bullet Points (•)



'Gray' vs. 'Grey': What is the difference?



Why is '-ed' sometimes pronounced at the end of a word?



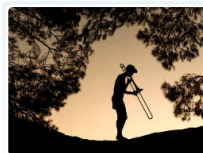
What's the difference between 'fascism' and 'socialism'?

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10 Words from Taylor Swift Songs (Merriam's Version)



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