

de·rive *verb* \dəˈrīv, dēˈ- \

derived; deriving; derives

transitive verb

1 a : to take or receive especially from a source

<an English loanword *derived* from German>

<the river *derives* its name from a Native American settlement that once thrived along its banks>

<the mills *derive* their power from the falls>

<he *derives* much of his income from investments>

b : to obtain or gain through heredity or by transmission from environment or circumstance

<he *derived* his enthusiasm for the theater from his father>

<*deriving* certain dignity from battles fought and won — Richard Llewellyn>

<the word *girl* is *derived* from Middle English *girle*>

c : to acquire, get, or draw (as something pleasant or beneficial)

<the satisfaction *derived* from a sense of sharing in creative activities — John Dewey>

<the mutual benefits that nations can *derive* from trading which flows in both directions — *Lamp*>

d : [ADAPT](#)

<a movie *derived* from a novel>

e : to obtain (a substance) actually or theoretically from a parent substance (as by substitution or hydrolysis)

—compare [²DERIVATIVE 4](#)

2 *archaic* : to divert (something, such as water) from its source or normal course

3 : to gather or arrive at (as a conclusion) by reasoning and observation:

a : to obtain inductively

<ideas *derived* from nature>

[INFER](#)

b : [DEDUCE](#)

<propositions *derived* from axioms>

4 *archaic* : to pass along : [TRANSMIT](#)

5 *archaic* : to cause to come

<inconvenience that will be *derived* to them from stopping all imports — Thomas Jefferson>

6 : to trace the origin, descent, or **derivation** of

<we can *derive* English *chauffeur* from French>

<*derive* toaster from toast>

<an early theory *derived* speech from involuntary cries>

7 : to be descended or formed from

<all were probably *derived* from the same ancestral stock — M. F. A. Montagu>

: be a **derivative** of

<the plural is normally *derived* from the singular>

intransitive verb

1 *archaic* : **DESCEND** 3

2 : to have or take origin : **ORIGINATE**, **STEM**, **EMANATE** : come as a derivative — usually used with *from*

<all knowledge *derives* from sensations — J. H. Randall>

<half of his income *derives* from wheat>

<the social stratum from which he *derived* — Carl Van Doren>

<stories *deriving* from his experiences in Africa>

— **deriver** *noun*, *plural* **derivers**

Origin of DERIVE

Middle English *deriven* to come (as from a source), receive (as from a source), divert (as water) into a different channel, from Middle French *deriver*, from Latin *derivare* to divert (as water) into a different channel, derive (one word from another), from *de-* + *-rivare* (from *rivus* stream, brook) — more at **RISE**

First Known Use: 14th century (transitive sense 1a)

Related to DERIVE

Synonyms: conclude, decide, deduce, infer, extrapolate, gather, judge, make out, reason, understand

Related Words: assume, suppose; conjecture, guess, speculate, surmise; construe, interpret, read; contemplate, philosophize, rationalize, think; ascertain, dope (out), find out

See Synonym Discussion at spring

Pronunciation Symbols

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