

# constantly

ADVERB

## ETYMOLOGY

### Summary

Formed within English, by derivation.

**Etymons:** **constant** *adj.*, **-ly** *suffix*<sup>2</sup>.

< **constant** *adj.* + **-ly** *suffix*<sup>2</sup>.

## MEANING & USE

In a constant manner.

- 1.a.** With mental constancy or steadfastness; steadfastly, steadily, resolutely; with loyal attachment, faithfully. *Obsolete or archaic.* **1534–**

**1534** Preceptes of luyngē **constauntly** and honestely.

R. Whittington, translation of Cicero, *Thre Bookes of Tullyes Offyces* iii. sig. P.5

...

**a1803** And wow! but they were lovers dear, And loved fu **constantlie**.

*Ballad 'Young Benjie' ii*, in F. J. Child, *English & Scottish Popular Ballads* (1886) vol. II. iv. 282/1

archaic

- 1.b.** † With assurance or certitude; confidently, firmly, assuredly. *Obsolete.* **a1538–1632**

**a1538** The Jue **constantly** wyl affyrme hys law to be above al other.

T. Starkey, *Dialogue Pole & Lupset* (1989) 8

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**1651** The same Fact, if it have been **constantly** punished in other men, etc.

T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* ii. xxvii. 158

...

**1776** In our North American colonies the plantations have **constantly** followed either the sea coast or the banks of the navigable rivers.

A. Smith, *Inquiry Wealth of Nations* vol. I. i. iii. 24

**3.a.** Continually, perpetually, incessantly, always.

1682-

**1682** **Constantly** intent upon his goodness.

J. Norris, translation of Hierocles, *Golden Verses* 2

...

**1880** The quantity of vapour in the atmosphere is **constantly** varying from day to day.

A. Geikie, *Elementary Lessons in Physical Geography* (new edition) ii. §8. 55

**3.b.** † Continuously, permanently, for a permanence.

1567-1616

**1567** Where as lust & treasur in time is come to nought Just possessing Trust, remayneth **constantly**.


*Triall of Treasure* sig. Eiv<sup>v</sup>

**1616** The diu'll a Puritane that hee is, or any thing **constantly** but a time-pleaser.

W. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (1623) ii. iii. 142


## PRONUNCIATION

### BRITISH ENGLISH

**/ˈkɒnst(ə)ntli/** 

KON-stuhnt-lee

### U.S. ENGLISH

**/ˈkɑnst(ə)n(t)li/** 

KAHN-stuhnt-lee

It typically occurs about 30 times per million words in modern written English.

*constantly* is in frequency band 6, which contains words occurring between 10 and 100 times per million words in modern written English. More about OED's frequency bands

### Frequency of *constantly, adv.*, 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 a corpus of several million books printed in English between 1500 and 2010. The Ngrams data has been cross-checked against frequency measures from other corpora, and re-analysed in order to handle homographs and other ambiguities.

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.

### Frequency of *constantly, adv.*, 2017–2023

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\* Occurrences per million words in written English

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.

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