



SINCE 1828 MENU

willful

adjective | will·ful | \ 'wil-fəl \

variants: or **wilful**

Popularity: Top 40% of words | Updated on: 27 May 2018

[Tip: Synonym Guide](#)

[Examples: WILLFUL in a Sentence](#)

Definition of WILLFUL

- 1 : obstinately and often perversely self-willed • a stubborn and *willful* child
- 2 : done deliberately : [INTENTIONAL](#) • *willful* disobedience

—**willfully** \ 'wil-fə-lē \ *adverb*

—**willfulness** *noun*



[willful defined for English-language learners](#)

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Examples of WILLFUL in a Sentence

a stubborn and *willful* child

He has shown a *willful* disregard for other people's feelings.

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Recent Examples of WILLFUL from the Web

That a single British woman in the game's reveal trailer has Battlefield players so riled up is *willful* ignorance that such a role could have ever existed in history.

—[Megan Farokhmanesh, *The Verge*, "Battlefield V fans who failed history are mad the game has women in it," 24 May 2018](#)



mp's obsession with Bezos and Amazon follows a pattern of *willful* ignorance.

—[Elizabeth Drew, *The New Republic*, "The Number of Trump's Impeachable Offenses Keeps Growing," 22 May 2018](#)

But to refuse taking even commonsense measures to restrict access to guns for people who, history suggests, are more likely to commit these acts, is *willful* blindness, gun control advocates say.

—[Chris Cillizza, *CNN*, "6 GOP talking points that show why the gun control debate isn't changing anytime soon," 21 May 2018](#)

These example sentences are selected automatically from various online news sources to reflect current usage of the word 'willful.' Views expressed in the examples do not represent the opinion of Merriam-Webster or its editors. [Send us feedback.](#)

First Known Use of WILLFUL

13th century

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

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WILLFUL Synonyms

Synonyms

[balky](#), [contrary](#), [contumacious](#), [defiant](#), [disobedient](#), [froward](#), [incompliant](#), [insubordinate](#), [intractable](#), [obstreperous](#), [rebel](#), [rebellious](#), [recalcitrant](#), [refractory](#), [restive](#), [ungovernable](#), [unruly](#)



Synonym Discussion of WILLFUL

UNRULY, UNGOVERNABLE, INTRACTABLE, REFRACTORY, RECALCITRANT, WILLFUL, HEADSTRONG mean not submissive to government or control. UNRULY implies lack of discipline or incapacity for discipline and often connotes waywardness or turbulence of behavior. ⟨• *unruly* children⟩ UNGOVERNABLE implies either an escape from control or guidance or a state of being unsubdued and incapable of controlling oneself or being controlled by others. ⟨• *ungovernable* rage⟩ INTRACTABLE suggests stubborn resistance to guidance or control. ⟨• *intractable* opponents of the hazardous-waste dump⟩ REFRACTORY stresses resistance to attempts to manage or to mold. ⟨• special schools for *refractory* children⟩ RECALCITRANT suggests determined resistance to or defiance of authority. ⟨• acts of sabotage by a *recalcitrant* populace⟩ WILLFUL implies an obstinate determination to have one's own way. ⟨• a *willful* disregard for the rights of others⟩ HEADSTRONG suggests self-will impatient of restraint, advice, or suggestion. ⟨• a *headstrong* young cavalry officer⟩

WILLFUL Defined for English Language Learners

willful

adjective

Definition of WILLFUL for English Language Learners



refusing to change your ideas or opinions or to stop doing something

: done deliberately

WILLFUL Defined for Kids

willful

adjective | will·ful

variants: or **wilful** \ 'wil-fəl\

Definition of WILLFUL for Students

- 1 : STUBBORN 1 • *willful* children
- 2 : INTENTIONAL • *willful* disobedience

—*willfully* \-fə-lē\ *adverb*

—*willfulness* *noun*

Law Dictionary

willful

adjective | will·ful

variants: or **wilful** \ 'wil-fəl\



Central Definition of WILLFUL

: not accidental : done deliberately or knowingly and often in conscious violation or disregard of the law, duty, or the rights of others • *willful* injury

—*willfully* *adverb*

—*willfulness* *noun*

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Thesaurus: [All synonyms and antonyms for *willful*](#)

Spanish Central: [Translation of *willful*](#)

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'merciful treatment of someone who could be given harsh punishme...

2 suborn

'to induce to commit perjury'

3 abhorrent

'causing or deserving strong dislike or hatred'

4 embolization

'the process by which a blood vessel or organ is obstructed by a mat...

5 oleaginous

'marked by an offensively ingratiating manner or quality'

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