

play**1. [pleɪ] n****1. 1) игра; забава**

boy's plays - мальчишеские игры

equestrian plays - *спорт.* конные игры

actual play - *спорт.* игра со счётом (очков) /на счёт/

loose play - *спорт.* свободная игра (без счёта) [*см. тж.* 4)]

to be at play - играть

to bring the ball into play - *спорт.* ввести мяч в игру

children are fond of play - дети любят игры /забавы/

in play! - *спорт.* в игре!

out of play - *спорт.* вне игры! [*см. тж.* 9]

the ball is in [out of] play - *спорт.* мяч в игре [вне игры]

2) *спорт.* манера, стиль игры, игра

fair play - игра по правилам, честная игра

foul play - игра с нарушением правил, грубая игра [*см. тж.* 9,2)]

fine [brilliant, rough] play - красивая [блестящая, грубая] игра

to win a match by good play - выиграть матч благодаря хорошей игре

to see that fair play is observed - следить за соблюдением правил

3) *спорт.* комбинация

tip-off play - комбинация, начинающаяся начальным броском

make plays - разыгрывать комбинации

4) *спорт.* борьба; бой

loose play - учебно-тренировочный бой [*см. тж.* 1)]

2. азартная игра

high play - крупная игра

low play - игра по маленькой

to lose money at play - проигрывать деньги (в карты)

the play runs high - идёт крупная игра

3. 1) шутка

in play - в шутку

out of mere play - ради шутки, в шутку

to do [to say] smth. in play - сделать [сказать] что-л в шутку

he answered part in earnest and part in play - он ответил полушутя, полусерьёзно

I am not in the humour /mood/ for play - я не намерен шутить

2) каламбур

play on words - игра слов, каламбур

play upon the meaning of the word - обыгрывание значения слова

4. 1) пьеса, драма

the plays of Shakespeare - пьесы Шекспира

2) представление, спектакль

broadcast play - радиопостановка

to give a play - давать представление /пьесу/

to go to the play - идти в театр

5. владение, умение обращаться (с оружием, инструментом и т. п.)

sword play - владение мечом

to make play with one's stick - вертеть (свою) трость, играть тростью

his play was very correct, and his parries neat - он очень ловко владел шпагой и точно парировал

6. движение

child full of play - живой /резвый, подвижный/ ребёнок

play of muscles - игра мышц

7. переливы, игра

play of sunlight upon leaves [upon water] - игра солнечных бликов на листьях [на воде]

iridescent play of colours - радужные переливы красок

play of the waves - игра /плеск/ волн

the play of the diamond - игра бриллианта

the play of expression in smb.'s face - смена выражений на чьём-л. лице

8. свобода, простор

to give /to allow/ free play to one's fancy [one's emotion] - дать простор /волю/ (своему) воображению [чувству]

he gave free play to his faculties - его способности полностью раскрылись

give the rope more /let the rope have some/ play! - не натягивай верёвку!

the (lively) play of fancy [of mind] - (живая) игра воображения [ума]

9. 1) действие, деятельность

in full play - в действии, в разгаре

out of play - в бездействии [*см. тж.* 1, 1)]

to come into play - начать действовать

to bring /to call, to put/ into play - приводить в действие, пускать в ход

to bring the guns into play - пустить в ход пушки

2) действия, поведение (в какой-л. ситуации); игра

double play - двойная игра

fair play - а) игра по правилам; б) честная игра; честность; справедливость

foul play - а) нечестная игра; б) подлое поведение; обман; жульничество [см. тж. 1, 2])

to rule out foul play - исключить возможность грубой игры или жульничества

10. **тж. sing** ход, очередь, подача (в игре)

it's your play - ваш ход

11. **диал.**

1) забастовка

2) каникулы, свободное от занятий время

12. ухаживание; свадебный танец (у самцов)

13. проигрывание (пластинки)

the record got scratched after a few plays - на пластинке появились царапины после того, как её несколько раз проиграли

14. «пресса», освещение в прессе

the birth of the baby elephant got a big play - все газеты сообщали о рождении слонёнка

15. **тех.**

1) зазор

2) игра, люфт, свободный ход; шатание (части механизма, прибора)

admissible /permissible/ play - допустимый люфт/ход, зазор/

16. **авт.** болтанка

◇ child's play - пустяк, ерунда; «детские игрушки»

as good as a play - очень забавно /интересно/

gallery play - стремление к дешёвой популярности; «работа на публику»

grandstand play - выступление, рассчитанное на эффект

to keep /to hold/ smb. in play - а) завалить кого-л. работой, не давать кому-л. передышки; б) **спорт.** держать противника в напряжении, не давать противнику передышки

to make play (with) - а) **сл.** действовать; making play with both hands - действуя обеими руками; б) **спорт.** держать противника в напряжении; не давать противнику передышки; в) **спорт.** наносить сильные и точные удары; г) действовать энергично; д) добиваться результатов; е) заострять внимание; обыгрывать (факт, имя и т. п.)

she made great play with his disappointed expectations - она вволю поиздевалась над его несбывшимися надеждами

to make a play for - а) пустить в ход свои чары, очаровывать; б) сделать всё возможное, чтобы добиться своего; в) ухаживать

all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy - **посл.** ≅ Джек в дружбе с делом, в ссоре с бездельем - бедняга Джек не знаком с весельем

turn about is fair play - **посл.** везёт и не везёт всем по очереди

2. [pleɪ] v

1. 1) играть, резвиться, забавляться

to play with a child [a doll] - играть с ребёнком [с куклой]

my daughter will play by herself for hours - моя дочка может часами играть одна

2) сыграть шутку; разыграть

to play a joke /a prank/ on smb. - подшутить над кем-л.

he played a practical joke on us - он здорово подшутил над нами

3) (with) шутить; дурачиться

to play with fire [with one's health] - шутить с огнём [со здоровьем]

I recommend you not to play with the captain - советую вам не шутить с капитаном

4) каламбурить, обыгрывать значение слова

to play upon words - каламбурить

5) поступать, вести себя легкомысленно

6) (with) флиртовать ухаживать, заводить любовную интрижку

7) **австрал. разг.** разыгрывать

2. играть (во что-л.), участвовать в игре

to play (at) tennis [hockey, chess, cards] - играть в теннис [в хоккей, в шахматы, в карты]

to play a game of tennis - сыграть партию в теннис

to play for championship - участвовать в чемпионате

to play smb. for championship - играть с кем-л. за звание чемпиона

to play smb. at chess - играть с кем-л. в шахматы

to play school - играть классически

to play right back [goalkeeper] - играть правым защитником [вратарём]

to play at robbers [at hide-and-seek] - играть в разбойники [в прятки]

to play at shopkeeping - играть в магазин

to play politics - вести политическую игру

to play over - переиграть; сыграть снова

3. 1) делать ход, бросок и т. п.; ходить (картой, шашкой и т. п.)

to play a pawn - пойти пешкой

to play white [black] - **шахм.** играть белыми [чёрными]

to play a stroke - сделать удар

to play one's ball into the pocket - послать шар в лузу

play! - играю! (восклицание подающего в теннисе)

play your cards carefully - **карт.** ходи осторожно

he played the card reluctantly - он неохотно бросил карту

2) **спорт.** отбивать, подавать мяч

3) использовать в игре, выставлать, заявлять (*игрока*)

the team were playing three reserves - команда использовала трёх запасных игроков

4) вводить в игру (*игрока*)

4. 1) притворяться, прикидываться

to play the fool /the idiot/ - валять дурака

to play the host - разыгрывать (из себя) хозяина

to play the great man - строить /корчить/ из себя великого человека

he is merely playing business - он лишь притворяется, что занят делом

2) поступать, действовать (*каким-л. образом*)

to play the man - поступать, как подобает мужчине

to play safe - действовать наверняка

to play fair - поступать честно

to play foul /fouly/ - а) поступать нечестно, жульничать; б) предавать

to play on a hunch - действовать по интуиции

to play smb. false, to play false with smb. - *арх.* обманывать, подводить, предавать кого-л.

if my memory does not play me false - если мне не изменяет память

to play it cool - *амер.* вести себя спокойно, не суетиться; не терять головы; сохранять спокойствие /достоинства/; не проявлять эмоции

to play hard - *амер.* поступать /вести себя/ нечестно *или* жестоко; быть неразборчивым в средствах

3) срабатывать, натравливать (*обыкн. play off*)

to play off one person against another - натравливать одного на другого

4) рассматривать

to play with a new idea - рассмотреть новую мысль /идею/

5. подходить для игры

the lawn /the ground/ plays well - спортивная площадка в хорошем состоянии

the piano plays well - у этого рояля хороший звук

the piece plays well - эта пьеса очень музыкальна

6. 1) играть в азартные игры; быть игроком

to play for money - играть на деньги

to play high [low], to play for high [for low] stakes - играть по большой [по маленькой]

2) играть на тотализаторе *или* на скачках (*мж. to play horses*)

3) делать ставки, ставить

to play 5 dollars - поставить 5 долларов

4) играть (*на бирже*)

7. 1) исполнять (*музыкальное произведение и т. п.*); играть

to play a piece - сыграть музыкальную пьесу

to play a symphony - исполнить симфонию

to play by ear - подбирать мелодию на слух [*ср. мж. ◇*]

2) исполнять, играть роль (*мж. to play a part*)

to play Hamlet - играть (роль) Гамлета

3) сниматься (*в фильме*); участвовать, играть (*в спектакле*)

to play in a film - участвовать /играть/ в фильме

8. 1) играть (*на музыкальном инструменте*)

to play the piano [the violin, the flute] - играть на рояле [на скрипке, на флейте]

2) играть (*о музыке или муз. инструменте*)

the organ was playing - играл орган

just then the music began to play - в этот момент заиграла музыка

3) сопровождать музыкой

the band played them out of town - они уходили из города под звуки оркестра

the organist was playing the congregation out - органист заиграл, и прихожане стали выходить из церкви

9. 1) давать представление; исполнять пьесу

to play a tragedy - ставить трагедию

an old comedy is being played again - снова играют старую комедию

2) *амер.* гастролировать

to play the larger cities - гастролировать в крупных городах

3) *refl, pass* исполняться

a waltz was being played on the radio - по радио передавали вальс

4) демонстрировать (*фильм*)

5) идти (*на экране, в театре*)

a new film is playing tonight - сегодня вечером идёт новый фильм

what's playing at the theatre? - что идёт в театре?

6) играть, работать (*о радио, магнитофоне, пластинке и т. п.*)

his radio is playing - у него работает радио

10. играть (*чем-л.*); вертеть (*что-л. в руках*)

to play with one's stick [with one's fan] - играть палкой [веером]

to play the ball too high - подбросить мяч слишком высоко

11. (on, upon) играть (*на чём-л.*), воспользоваться (*чем-л.*)

to play upon smb.'s credulity [feelings] - играть на чьей-л. доверчивости [чьих-л. чувствах]

the noise played on his nerves - шум действовал ему на нервы

12. 1) порхать, носиться, танцевать

to allow one's fancy to play round smth. - ≅ дать волю своей фантазии

butterflies played among the flowers - среди цветов порхали бабочки

the wind played in her hair - ветер трепал её волосы

2) переливаться, играть; мелькать

lightnings played in the sky - в небе сверкали молнии

a smile played on her lips - на её губах играла улыбка

the searchlight began to play a dazzling ripple - замелькали ослепительные вспышки прожектора

3) дрожать, трепетать

a breeze played on the water - сильный ветер рябил воду

leaves play in the wind - листья трепещут на ветру

13. бить (о струе и т. п.)

the fountains will play on Sunday - в воскресенье будут бить фонтаны/пустят фонтаны

14. 1) (обыкн. on, upon, over) направлять

to play a searchlight upon a boat - направить луч прожектора на лодку

to play a hose on a fire - направить на огонь струю из брандспойта

to play guns upon the fort - обстреливать форт из пушек

to play bullets upon smb. - обстреливать кого-л.

2) стрелять

they continued playing the battery - их батарея продолжала вести огонь

15. приводить в действие, пускать (тж. play off)

to play a record [a tape] - поставить/проиграть/ пластинку [плёнку]

to play the record-player - включить проигрыватель, послушать пластинки

the engine was played off - запустили мотор

16. тех. иметь люфт, шататься

17. диал.

1) бастовать

2) быть на каникулах

18. водить, вываживать (рыбу)

19. амер. сл.

1) опекать, покровительствовать

2) сотрудничать

20. проф. помещать, располагать (статью, фотографию и т. п.) на определённом месте (в газете, журнале)

play it on page 3 - помести это на третьей странице

◇ to play ball - амер. начинать

to play ball with smb., to play catch with smb. - амер. а) вести себя честно; сотрудничать с кем-л.; б) задабривать, умасливать кого-л.

to play the game - поступать честно, порядочно

to play a losing game - вести безнадежную игру

to play a waiting game - выжидать, использовать выжидательную тактику

to play a winning game - играть/бить/ наверняка

to play games with smb. - амер. а) обманывать кого-л., мошенничать; б) натравливать друг на друга

to play the dozens - амер. поносить/порочить/ родителей

to play silly buggers, to play the (giddy) goat - дурачиться, идиотничать

to play the old soldier - а) строить из себя бывшего человека; б) прикидываться больным, немощным; в) клянуть (деньги, выпивку)

to play it by ear - принимать решение на месте; действовать/поступать/ в зависимости от обстоятельств [ср. тж. 7, 1]

to play jackal to smb. - выполнять за кого-л. чёрную работу

to play one's cards well - поступать умно; хорошо использовать (свои) возможности/обстоятельства

to play the wrong card - сделать неверный ход

to play for time - пытаться выиграть время; тянуть/оттягивать/ время

to play into the hands of smb. - сыграть кому-л. на руку

to play havoc/hell, the devil, the deuce, the dickens, Old Harry, the bear, the mischief/ - а) сеять панику/смуту/; причинять вред; б) опустошать, разорять, губить, коверкать, разрушать; ≅ испортить всю музыку; перевернуть всё вверх дном

to play to the gallery - работать на публику, искать дешёвую популярность

to play with edged tools - ≅ играть с огнём

to play a trick on smb. - надуть/обмануть/ кого-л.; скверно поступить с кем-л.

to play tricks with - вмешаться и испортить

to play it low on smb. - поступить по отношению к кому-л. низко/бесчестно, подло/

to play fast and loose - действовать безответственно/быть ненадёжным

to play (a good) knife and fork - уст. есть с аппетитом

to play both ends against the middle - а) натравливать (две) соперничающие группы друг на друга в собственных интересах; б) рисковать

play

play [play plays played playing] verb, noun BrE [pleɪ] * NAmE [pleɪ] *

verb

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 8th Ed.

OF CHILDREN

1. intransitive, transitive to do things for pleasure, as children do; to enjoy yourself, rather than work

- You'll have to play inside today.
 - There's a time to work and a time to play.
 - ~ **with sb/sth** A group of kids were playing with a ball in the street.
 - I haven't got anybody to play with!
 - ~ **sth** Let's play a different game.
2. **transitive, no passive, intransitive** to pretend to be or do sth for fun
- ~ **sth** Let's play pirates.
 - ~ **at doing sth** They were playing at being cowboys.

TRICK

3. **transitive** ~ **a trick/tricks (on sb)** to trick sb for fun

SPORTS/GAMES

4. **transitive, intransitive** ~ **(sth) (with/against sb)** to be involved in a game; to compete against sb in a game
- ~ **sth** to **play football/chess/cards, etc.**
 - ~ **sb** France are playing Wales tomorrow.
 - ~ **sb at sth** Have you played her at squash yet?
 - ~ **for sb** He plays for Cleveland
 - ~ **against sb** France are playing against Wales on Saturday.
 - + **adv./prep.** Evans played very well.
5. **intransitive** to take a particular position in a sports team
- + **adv./prep.** Who's playing on the wing?
 - + **noun** I've never played right back before.
6. **transitive** ~ **sb (+ adv./prep.)** to include sb in a sports team
- I think we should play Matt on the wing.
7. **transitive** ~ **sth** to make contact with the ball and hit or kick it in the way mentioned
- She played the ball and ran forward
 - He played a backhand volley.
8. **transitive** ~ **sth** (in ↑**chess**) to move a piece in ↑**chess**, etc
- She played her bishop.
9. **transitive, intransitive** ~ **(sth)** (in card games) to put a card face upwards on the table, showing its value
- to play your ace/a trump
 - He played out of turn!

MUSIC

10. **transitive, intransitive** ~ **(sth) (on sth)** to perform on a musical instrument; to perform music
- ~ **(sth)** to **play the piano/violin/flute, etc.**
 - In the distance a band was playing.
 - ~ **sth (on sth)** He played a tune on his harmonica.
 - ~ **sth to sb** Play that new piece to us.
 - ~ **sb sth** Play us that new piece.
11. **transitive, intransitive** to make a tape, CD, etc. produce sound
- ~ **sth (for sb)** Play their new CD for me, please.
 - ~ **(sb sth)** Play me their new CD, please.
 - My favourite song was playing on the radio.
 - For some reason this CD won't play.

DVD/VIDEO

12. **intransitive, transitive** (of a DVD or video) to start working; to make a DVD or video start working
- This DVD won't play on my computer.
 - ~ **sth** Click below to play videos.
 - Nothing happens when I try to play a DVD.
 - A short video was played to the court showing the inside of the house.

ACT/PERFORM

13. **transitive** ~ **sth** to act in a play, film/movie, etc; to act the role of sb
- The part of Elizabeth was played by Cate Blanchett.
 - He had always wanted to play Othello.
14. **intransitive** to pretend to be sth that you are not
- + **adj.** I decided it was safer to **play dead**.
 - + **noun** She enjoys playing the wronged wife.
15. **intransitive** ~ **(to sb)** to be performed
- A production of 'Carmen' was playing to packed houses.

HAVE EFFECT

16. **transitive** ~ **a part/role (in sth)** to have an effect on sth
- The media played an important part in the last election.

SITUATION

17. **transitive ~ sth + adv./prep.** to deal with a situation in a way mentioned

- He played the situation carefully for maximum advantage

OF LIGHT/A SMILE

18. **intransitive + adv./prep.** to move or appear quickly and lightly, often changing direction or shape

- Sunlight played on the surface of the lake.

OF FOUNTAIN

19. **intransitive** when a **↑fountain** plays, it produces a steady stream of water

- Two huge fountains were playing outside the entrance.

Rem: Most idioms containing play are at the entries for the nouns and adjectives in the idioms, for example play the game is at game.

Verb forms:

verb forms	
present simple	
I / you / we / they	play
	BrE /pleɪ/
	NAme /pleɪ/
he / she / it	plays
	BrE /pleɪz/
	NAme /pleɪz/
past simple, past participle	played
	BrE /pleɪd/
	NAme /pleɪd/
-ing form	playing
	BrE /pleɪɪŋ/
	NAme /pleɪɪŋ/

Word Origin:

Old English pleg(i)an 'to exercise', plega 'brisk movement', related to Middle Dutch pleien 'leap for joy, dance'.

Culture:

toys and games

Most young children are given toys for their **↑birthday** or at **↑Christmas**. Many regularly spend their pocket money or allowance on smaller toys. Popular toys include building bricks such as Lego, plastic farm animals, toy cars, model railways and dressing-up costumes. Girls especially have **dolls**, and several sets of clothes to dress them in. **↑Action Man** figures are mainly for boys and **↑Barbie dolls** for girls. Babies are given **rattles**, soft **cuddly toys** and a **↑teddy bear**. **Action figures**, small plastic models of characters from television shows or films, are also popular. Some parents do not allow their children to have guns or other 'violent' toys because they do not want them to think it is fun to kill people.

Among traditional games that are still popular are marbles, which is played with small, coloured glass balls, **board games** such as **↑snakes and ladders** and **↑ludo**, **card games** such as **Happy Families**, and **word games** such as **↑hangman**. Board and card games are played with family or friends, but children play alone with **computer games** or video games.

Many children collect objects, such as shells, model animals, stamps or picture cards. In the US baseball cards, cards with a picture of a baseball player on them, are sold with bubblegum. In Britain picture cards are often given free in packets of breakfast cereal.

Children play outside with skipping ropes, bicycles, skateboards and Rollerblades™. In **playgrounds** there are often swings, a slide, a see-saw and a climbing frame (**AmE** jungle gym) to climb on. Traditional games played outside include hopscotch, a game in which children hop oversquares drawn on the ground to try to pick up a stone, and tag, in which one child chases the others until he or she catches one of them and then that child has to chase the rest.

Toys are often expensive and, even if they can afford them, many parents are unwilling to spend a lot of money on something that they know their children will soon get bored with. Children want toys they see advertised on television or in **↑comics**, or toys that their friends already have. There are sometimes crazes for toys connected with characters from a film.

Few people give up toys and games completely when they become adults. Many keep their old teddy bear for sentimental reasons. There are now also **executive toys**, made specially for adults to keep on their desks. Many people play card games like bridge and poker, and board games such as **Scrabble**, **Monopoly**, backgammon and chess.

Thesaurus:

play verb

1. I, T

- There's a time to work and a time to play.

enjoy yourself • • have fun • • celebrate • |informal have a good/great time • • party • • live it up •

Let's play/enjoy ourselves/have fun/celebrate/have a good time/party/live it up.

2. T, I

- He plays football in a local team.

compete • • go in for sth • • enter •

play/compete **in** a competition, etc.

play/compete **against** sb

3. T, I

- Who played the part of Juliet?

- I could hear a band playing in the distance.

perform • • act • |especially spoken do •

play/perform/do a **piece**

play/act a role/part

a **band/musician** plays/performs/does sth

Play or act? When you are talking about drama **act** can be used with an object (**act a part**) as well as without (**He just can't act.**); **play** can only be used with an object (**play a part**) and is more commonly used in this way than **act**.

Synonyms:

entertainment

fun • recreation • relaxation • play • pleasure • amusement

These are all words for things or activities used to entertain people when they are not working.

entertainment • films, television, music, etc. used to entertain people: ▪ There are three bars, with live entertainment seven nights a week.

fun • (rather informal) behaviour or activities that are not serious but come from a sense of enjoyment: ▪ It wasn't serious— it was all done ▪ in fun ▪ ◊ ▪ We didn't mean to hurt him. It was just ▪ a bit of fun ▪ ◊ ▪ The lottery provides ▪ harmless fun ▪ for millions.

recreation • (rather formal) things people do for enjoyment when they are not working: ▪ His only form of recreation is playing football.

relaxation • (rather formal) things people do to rest and enjoy themselves when they are not working; the ability to relax: ▪ I go hill-walking for relaxation.

recreation or relaxation ?

Both these words can be used for a wide range of activities, physical and mental, but **relaxation** is sometimes used for gentler activities than **recreation**: ▪ I play the flute in a wind band for recreation. ◊ ▪ I listen to music for relaxation.

play • things that people, especially children, do for enjoyment rather than as work: ▪ the happy sounds of children ▪ at play

pleasure • the activity of enjoying yourself, especially in contrast to working: ▪ Are you in Paris ▪ for business or pleasure ▪?

amusement • the fact of being entertained by sth: ▪ What do you do for amusement round here?

to do sth **for** entertainment/fun/recreation/relaxation/pleasure/amusement

to **provide** entertainment/fun/recreation/relaxation/amusement

Example Bank:

- Have you ever heard her play?
- He plays for Aston Villa.
- He plays for the Chicago Bears.
- I'm learning to play sax.
- I've never played John at tennis.
- Let's play at pirates!
- She has played in every game this season.
- She was playing cards with her mother.
- The band will be playing live in the studio.
- The little girl was playing with her toys.
- The other children wouldn't let him play.
- These guys make the team very difficult to play against.
- United are difficult to play against.
- a piece that is relatively easy to play
- learning to play the violin
- Do you want to play cards with me?
- Have you ever played her at chess?
- I haven't got anybody to play with!
- I've never played right back before.
- Let's play a different game.
- The part of the Queen was played by Helen Mirren.
- There's a time to work and a time to play.
- They play football on Saturday mornings.
- Who's playing on the wing?
- You'll have to play inside today.

Idioms: ↑ **have a play** ▪ have money/time to play with ▪ ↑ **in of play** ▪ ↑ **make a play for somebody** ▪ ↑ **make much play of something** ▪ ↑ **play on words** ▪ ↑ **play with yourself** ▪ ↑ **what is somebody playing at?**

Derived ↑ **play A off against B** ▪ ↑ **play about** ▪ ↑ **play along** ▪ ↑ **play at at doing something** ▪ ↑ **play away** ▪ ↑ **play itself out** ▪ ↑ **play on** ▪ ↑ **play on something** ▪ ↑ **play somebody up** ▪ ↑ **play something back** ▪ ↑ **play something down** ▪ ↑ **play something out** ▪ ↑ **play something up** ▪ ↑ **play up** ▪ ↑ **play with somebody** ▪ ↑ **play with something**

noun

CHILDREN

1. **uncountable** things that people, especially children, do for pleasure rather than as work

- the happy sounds of children **at play**
- the importance of learning through play
- a play area

IN THEATRE

2. **countable** a piece of writing performed by actors in a theatre or on television or radio

- to **put on** (= perform) a play

- a play by Shakespeare

- a radio play

see also ↑morality play, ↑mystery play, ↑Passion play

IN SPORT

3. uncountable the playing of a game

- Rain stopped play.
- There was some excellent play in yesterday's match.
- The spectators were asked to be quiet during play.

see also ↑fair play, ↑foul play

4. countable (NAMÉ) an action or move in a game

- a defensive play

IN ROPE

5. uncountable the possibility of free and easy movement

- We need more play in the rope.

ACTIVITY/INFLUENCE

6. uncountable the activity or operation of sth; the influence of sth on sth else

- the free play of market forces
- The financial crisis has **brought** new factors **into play** .
- Personal feelings should not **come into play** when you are making business decisions.

OF LIGHT/A SMILE

7. uncountable (literary) a light, quick movement that keeps changing

- the play of sunlight on water

more at call sth into play **at** ↑call _{v.}, child's play **at** ↑child, the state of play **at** ↑state _{n.}, all work and no play (makes Jack a dull boy) **at** ↑work _{n.}

Word Origin:

Old English pleg(i)an 'to exercise', plega 'brisk movement', related to Middle Dutch pleien 'leap for joy, dance' .

Thesaurus:

play **noun**

1. U

- the happy sounds of children at play

fun • • **amusement** • • **entertainment** • • **pleasure** • • **recreation** • • **relaxation** •

do sth **for** fun/amusement/entertainment/pleasure/recreation/relaxation

2. C

- a play by Shakespeare

drama • • **comedy** • • **tragedy** • • **farce** • • **sketch** •

a play/drama/comedy/tragedy/farce/sketch **about** sth

perform a play/drama/sketch

see a play/drama/comedy/sketch

Example Bank:

- At close of play he had scored 38 not out.
- Children spend hours at play.
- He kicked the ball out of play.
- He made several nice defensive plays.
- He was sent off for foul play.
- I only said it in play.
- Rain stopped play 40 minutes into the match.
- The ball is still in play.
- The children always perform a nativity play every Christmas.
- The local council runs some good play schemes.
- The offensive coordinator has called 60 running plays and 44 passes.
- The play is reviewed in most of today's papers.
- There were ten double plays completed.
- They ran 10 plays inside the 30 in the fourth quarter.
- a play about teenage runaways
- the final play of the first half
- the team's ability to execute a play
- Kate's class decided to put on a play for the school.
- The theatre was refused permission to stage the play.
- They are performing a play by Pinter.
- a children's play area

play

I. **play**¹ **S1 W1** /pleɪ/ *BrE* ^ˈ *AmE* ^ˈ *verb*

[**Word Family**: **noun**: ↑play, ↑interplay, ↑replay, ↑player, ↑playfulness; **verb**: ↑play, ↑outplay, ↑replay; **adjective**: ↑playful, ↑playable; **adverb**: ↑playfully]

[**Language**: Old English; **Origin**: plegan]



1. CHILDREN [**intransitive and transitive**] when children play, they do things that they enjoy, often with other people or with toys:

▪ Kids were playing and chasing each other.

play catch/house/tag/school etc

▪ Outside, the children were playing cowboys and Indians.

play with

▪ Did you like to play with dolls when you were little?

▪ Parents need to spend time just playing with their children.

2. SPORTS/GAMES

a) [intransitive and transitive] to take part or compete in a game or sport:

▪ Karen began playing basketball when she was six.

▪ If you feel any pain, you shouldn't play.

▪ Men were sitting in the park, playing cards.

play against

▪ Bristol will play against Coventry next week.

▪ She's playing Helen Evans in the semi-final (=playing against her).

play for

▪ Moxon played for England in ten test matches.

b) [transitive] to use a particular piece, card, person etc in a game or sport:

▪ Harrison played a ten of spades.

▪ The Regents played Eddie at center (=used him as a player in that position) in the game against Arizona.

c) [intransitive and transitive] to take a particular position on a team:

▪ Garvey played first base for the Dodgers.

d) [transitive] to hit a ball in a particular way or to a particular place in a game or sport:

▪ She played the ball low, just over the net.

3.



playing the guitar

MUSIC [**intransitive and transitive**]

to perform a piece of music on a musical instrument:

▪ He's learning to play the piano.

▪ She played a Bach prelude.

▪ Haden has played with many jazz greats.

▪ A small orchestra was playing.

4. RADIO/CD ETC [**intransitive and transitive**] if a radio, CD etc plays, or if you play it, it produces sound, especially music:

▪ The bedside radio played softly.

play a record/CD/tape etc

▪ DJs playing the latest house and techno tracks

5. THEATRE/FILM

a) [transitive] to perform the actions and say the words of a particular character in a theatre performance, film etc:

Streep plays a shy, nervous woman.

play a role/part/character etc

Playing a character so different from herself was a challenge.

b) [intransitive] if a play or film is playing at a particular theatre, it is being performed or shown there:

'Macbeth' is playing at the Theatre Royal in York.

c) [transitive] if actors play a theatre, they perform there in a play

6. **play a part/role** to have an effect or influence on something

play a part/role in

A good diet and fitness play a large part in helping people live longer.

7. **play ball**

a) to throw, kick, hit, or catch a ball as a game or activity:

Jim and Karl were playing ball in the backyard.

b) to do what someone wants you to do:

So far, the company has refused to play ball, preferring to remain independent.

8. **PRETEND** [linking verb] to behave as if you are a particular kind of person or have a particular feeling or quality, even though it is not true:

the accusation that scientists are playing God

Some snakes fool predators by playing dead.

'What do you mean?' 'Don't play dumb (=pretend you do not know something).'

Don't play the innocent (=pretend you do not know about something) with me – we both know what happened.

play the idiot/the teacher etc

Susan felt she had to play the good wife.

He played the fool (=behaved in a silly way) at school instead of working.

9. **BEHAVE** [transitive always + adverb/preposition] to behave in a particular way in a situation, in order to achieve the result or effect that you want:

How do you want to play this meeting?

Play it safe (=avoid risks) and make sure the eggs are thoroughly cooked.

play it carefully/cool etc

If you like him, play it cool, or you might scare him off.

10. **play games** to hide your real feelings or wishes in order to achieve something in a clever or secret way – used to show disapproval:

Stop playing games, Luke, and tell me what you want.

11. **play something by ear**

a) to decide what to do according to the way a situation develops, without making plans before that time:

We'll see what the weather's like and play it by ear.

b) if someone can play a musical instrument by ear, they can play a tune without looking at written music

12. **play a joke/trick/prank on somebody** to do something to someone as a joke or trick

13. **play the game**

a) to do things in the way you are expected to do them or in a way that is usual in a particular situation:

If you want a promotion, you've got to play the game.

b) *British English* to behave in a fair and honest way

14. **play the race/nationalist/environmentalist etc card** to use a particular subject in politics in order to gain an advantage:

a leader who is skilfully playing the nationalist card to keep power

15. **play your cards right** to say or do things in a situation in such a way that you gain as much as possible from it:

Who knows? If you play your cards right, maybe he'll marry you.

16. **play your cards close to your chest** to keep secret what you are doing in a situation

17. **play into sb's hands** to do what someone you are competing with wants you to do, without realizing it:

If we respond with violence, we'll be playing into their hands, giving them an excuse for a fight.

18. **play for time** to try to delay something so that you have more time to prepare for it or prevent it from happening:

The rebels may be playing for time while they try to get more weapons.

19. **play tricks (on you)** if your mind, memory, sight etc plays tricks on you, you feel confused and not sure about what is happening:

It happened a long time ago, and my memory might be playing tricks on me.

20. **play the market** to risk money on the [↑]stock market as a way of trying to earn more money

21. **play the system** to use the rules of a system in a clever way, to gain advantage for yourself:

Accountants know how to play the tax system.

22. **play second fiddle (to somebody)** to be in a lower position or rank than someone else

23. **play hard to get** to pretend that you are not sexually interested in someone so that they will become more interested in you

24. **SMILE** [intransitive always + adverb/preposition] *written* if a smile plays about someone's lips, they smile slightly

25. **play hooky** *American English*, **play truant** *British English* to stay away from school without permission

26. **play with fire** to do something that could have a very dangerous or harmful result:

Dating the boss's daughter is playing with fire.

27. **play to your strengths** to do what you are able to do well, rather than trying to do other things:

It is up to us to play to our strengths and try to control the game.

28. **LIGHT** [intransitive always + adverb/preposition] *written* if light plays on something, it shines on it and moves on it:

the sunlight playing on the water

29. **WATER** [intransitive] *written* if a [↑]fountain plays, water comes from it

30. **play a hose/light on something** to point a [↑]hose or light towards something so that water or light goes onto it

31. **play the field** to have sexual relationships with a lot of different people
32. **play fast and loose with something** to not be careful about what you do, especially by not obeying the law or a rule:
 " They played fast and loose with investors' money.
33. **play happy families** *British English* to spend time with your family, doing normal things, especially so that your family appears to be happy when it is not
- play around** (also **play about** *British English*) *phrasal verb*
- to have a sexual relationship with someone who is not your usual partner
play around with
 " Wasn't she playing around with another man?
 " It was years before I realized he'd been playing around.
 - to try doing something in different ways, to see what would be best, especially when this is fun
play around with
 " Play around with the ingredients if you like.
 - to behave in a silly way or waste time, when you should be doing something more serious **SYN fool around**:
 " When the teacher wasn't looking, we used to play about a lot.
- play around with something** (also **play about with something** *British English*) *phrasal verb*
 to keep moving or making changes to something in your hands **SYN fiddle with**:
 " Will you stop playing around with the remote control!
- play along** *phrasal verb*
- to pretend to agree to do what someone wants, in order to avoid annoying them or to get an advantage:
 " She felt she had to play along or risk losing her job.
 - play somebody along** *British English* to tell someone something that is not true because you need their help in some way
- play at something** *phrasal verb*
- What is somebody playing at?** *British English spoken* used when you do not understand what someone is doing or why they are doing it, and you are surprised or annoyed:
 " What do you think you're playing at?
 - if you play at doing something, you do not do it properly or seriously
play at doing something
 " He's still playing at being an artist.
 - British English* if children play at doctors, soldiers etc, they pretend to be doctors, soldiers etc
play at being something
 " a 14-year-old playing at being a grown woman
- play something ↔ back** *phrasal verb*
 to play something that has been recorded on a machine so that you can listen to it or watch it:
 " He played back his answering machine messages.
- play something ↔ down** *phrasal verb*
 to try to make something seem less important or less likely than it really is:
 " Management has been playing down the possibility of job losses.
play down the importance/seriousness/significance of something
 " The White House spokeswoman sought to play down the significance of the event.
- play off** *phrasal verb*
- British English* if people or teams play off, they play the last game in a sports competition, in order to decide who is the winner:
 " The top two teams will play off at Twickenham for the county title.
 - play off somebody/something** *American English* to deliberately use a fact, action, idea etc in order to make what you are doing better or to get an advantage:
 " The two musicians played off each other in a piece of inspired improvisation.
- play somebody off against somebody** *phrasal verb*
 to encourage one person or group to compete or argue with another, in order to get some advantage for yourself:
 " The house seller may try to play one buyer off against another, to raise the price.
- play on/upon something** *phrasal verb*
 to use a feeling, fact, or idea in order to get what you want, often in an unfair way:
 " The ad plays on our emotions, showing a doctor holding a newborn baby.
- play something ↔ out** *phrasal verb*
- if an event or situation is played out or plays itself out, it happens:
 " It will be interesting to see how the election plays itself out.
 - if people play out their dreams, feelings etc, they express them by pretending that a particular situation is really happening:
 " The weekend gives you a chance to play out your fantasies.
- play up** *phrasal verb*
- play something ↔ up** to emphasize something, sometimes making it seem more important than it really is:
 " Play up your strongest arguments in the opening paragraph.
 - play (somebody) up** *British English informal* if children play up, they behave badly:
 " Jordan's been playing up in school.
 " I hope the kids don't play you up.
 - play (somebody) up** *British English informal* to hurt you or cause problems for you:
 " My knee's been playing me up this week.
 " The car's playing up again.
- play up to somebody** *phrasal verb*
 to behave in a very polite or kind way to someone because you want something from them:
 " Connie always plays up to her parents when she wants money.

play with somebody/something *phrasal verb*

1. to keep touching something or moving it:
 - Stop playing with the light switch!
2. to try doing something in different ways to decide what works best:
 - Play with the design onscreen, moving text and pictures until you get a pleasing arrangement.
3. to consider an idea or possibility, but not always very seriously **SYN toy with**:
 - After university, I played with the idea of teaching English in China.
4. **money/time/space etc to play with** money, time etc that is available to be used:
 - The budget is very tight, so there isn't much money to play with.
5. **play with yourself** to touch your own sex organs for pleasure **SYN masturbate**
6. **play with words/language** to use words in a clever or amusing way

II. play² **S1 W2 BrE** **AmE** *noun*

[Word Family: **noun**: ↑play, ↑interplay, ↑replay, ↑player, ↑playfulness; **verb**: ↑play, ↑outplay, ↑replay; **adjective**: ↑playful, ↑playable; **adverb**: ↑playfully]

[Language: Old English; Origin: plega]

1. **THEATRE** [countable] a story that is written to be performed by actors, especially in a theatre:

- a play by Chekhov
- This is a major theme of Miller's plays.

play about

- Edward Bond's play about class war

2. **AMUSEMENT** [uncountable] things that people, especially children, do for amusement rather than as work:

- Play is very important to a child's development.
- a play area

through play

- The program aims to teach road safety through play.

at play

- the happy shouts of children at play

3. **EFFECT** [uncountable] the effect or influence of something:

- the free play of competition in the building industry

at play

- There are a number of factors at play (=having an effect) in the current recession.

bring/put something into play (=use something or make it have an effect)

- A complex system of muscles is brought into play for each body movement.
- Political considerations do come into play (=have an effect) when making policy.

4. **ACTION IN A GAME OR SPORT**

- a) [uncountable] the actions of the people who are playing a game or sport:

- Rain stopped play after only an hour.

- b) [countable] one particular action or set of actions during a game:

- On the next play, Johnson ran 15 yards for a touchdown.

5. **in play/out of play** if a ball is in play or out of play, it is inside or outside the area in which the rules of the game allow you to hit, kick, catch etc the ball:

- He kicked the ball out of play.

6. **play on words** a use of a word that is interesting or amusing because it can be understood as having two very different meanings **SYN pun**

7. **play of light** patterns made by light as it moves over a surface:

- the play of light on the water

8. **make a play for something** to make an attempt to gain something:

- He made a play for the leadership last year.

9. **make a play for somebody** to try to begin a romantic or sexual relationship with someone:

- It's obvious he was making a play for her.

10. **LOOSENESS** [uncountable] if there is some play in something, it is loose and can be moved:

- There's too much play in the rope.

⇒ ↑fair play, ↑foul play

...

COLLOCATIONS

■ verbs

- **write a play** So far, he has written three plays.
- **go to (see) a play** While we were in New York, we went to a play.
- **see a play** I've never seen the play.
- **watch a play** Some of the audience were talking instead of watching the play.
- **perform a play** The play was performed by Brighton Youth Theatre.
- **act/perform/appear in a play** She acted in many plays on the London stage.
- **be in a play** (=be performing in a play) Michael is currently in a play on Broadway.
- **do a play** *spoken* (=arrange it or perform in it) Bob asked if I would do this play, and I agreed.
- **put on a play** (=arrange for it to be performed) The school puts on a Nativity play every Christmas.
- **direct a play** (=tell the actors what to do) The play is directed by Paulette Randall.
- **produce/stage a play** (=arrange its performance)
- **rehearse a play** (=practise it) We spent weeks rehearsing the play.
- **a play opens** (=its performances start) The play opens in San Francisco on Wednesday for a three-week run.

- **a play runs** (=it continues to be performed) The play ran for five months.
- **a play closes** (=its performances stop) The play closes on Sunday, so don't miss it!

■ ADJECTIVES/NOUN + play

- **a stage play** (=a play in a theatre) I occasionally write reviews of local stage plays.
- **a TV/radio play** (=a play written to be performed on TV/radio) This horror story would make a good radio play.
- **a school play** I got a small part in the school play.
- **a Nativity play** *British English* (=a play about the birth of Jesus, performed by children at Christmas) She was chosen to play Mary in the nativity play.

■ COMMON ERRORS

- ▶ Do not say 'give a play'. Say **put on a play**.

play

Freakuency Pack

12500 **232**^{MCW}
 15000 **112**^{COCA}
 RANGE: **1k** **PLAY** 335199
 play 114872
 played 50724
 player 35159
 players 50217
 playing 53512
 plays 25072
 replay 1233
 replays 299
 replaying 244
 replayed 405
 playable 125
 unplayable 50
 playful 2098
 playfulness 380
 playfully 809
 COCA 500k Unlemmatized
 30897 **697**⁵⁶³²⁶ *vvi*
 17553 **1149**³⁶¹⁵² *nn1*
 15959 **1927**²²²⁹⁵ *vv0*
 47 **109799**⁴⁹ *nnu*
 36 **128816**³⁶ *jj*
 9 **275215**⁹ *np1*
 5 **391059**⁵ *pphis1*