

bomb¹

S3 W3

/bɒm \$ bɑ:m/

noun [countable]

1 | weapon a weapon made of material that will explode:

The bomb went off at 9.30 in the morning.

Enemy planes dropped over 200 bombs during the raid.

He was killed in a bomb explosion.

→ SMOKE BOMB,
STINK BOMB

2 | bad performance/event (AmE) (informal) a play, film, event etc that is not successful:

This is just another one of Hollywood's bland and boring bombs.

3 be the bomb (informal)

to be very good or exciting:

That new P Diddy CD is the bomb.

4 the bomb

used to describe NUCLEAR weapons, and especially the HYDROGEN BOMB:

Voices of dissent began to rise against the bomb.

5 cost a bomb EXPENSIVE (BrE) (informal)

to cost a lot of money

6 make a bomb EARN (BrE) (informal)

to get a lot of money by doing something

COLLOCATIONSense 1

verbs

a bomb explodes/ goes off *Forty people were injured when the bomb exploded.* |

A 200 pound bomb went off in the car park.

set off a bomb (also detonate a bomb (formal)) (= make a bomb explode) *The area was cleared and the police safely detonated the bomb.*

drop a bomb (= from a plane) *Government forces began dropping*

bombs on rebel positions.

a bomb falls on something *A bomb fell on the cathedral during the war.*

plant a bomb (= put a bomb somewhere) *It is thought that right-wing extremists planted the bomb.*

ADJECTIVES/NOUN + bomb

a nuclear/hydrogen bomb *The North Koreans were developing a nuclear bomb.*

an atom/atomic bomb *Oppenheimer was the father of the atomic bomb.*

a neutron bomb (= that kills people but does not damage buildings much)

a car bomb (= that makes a car explode) *The car bomb killed 21 shoppers.*

a letter bomb (also a parcel bomb **BrE**) (= sent in a letter or parcel) *A second letter bomb was found among the unopened mail.*

a time bomb (= that is set to explode at a particular time) *The terrorists' time bomb was planned to cause the maximum carnage.*

a petrol bomb (**BrE**) (= containing petrol) *A petrol bomb was hurled at police as they chased the car.*

a nail bomb (= containing nails)

a cluster bomb (= that sends out smaller bombs when it explodes)

a dirty bomb (= that spreads radioactive material)

a smart bomb (= that is guided to the right place)

a terrorist bomb *The aircraft was blown apart by a terrorist bomb.*

a suicide bomb (= the person carrying the bomb dies when it explodes) *Each time there is a suicide bomb it is a new blow to peace.*

a homemade bomb *Officers discovered several homemade bombs in the trunk of his car.*

an unexploded bomb *The workmen found an unexploded bomb.*

bomb + NOUN

a bomb blast/explosion *The restaurant was destroyed in a massive bomb blast.*

a bomb attack *No one has yet claimed responsibility for the bomb attack.*

a bomb threat (= when someone leaves a message saying there is a bomb somewhere) *He delayed his flight home because of a bomb threat.*

a bomb scare (= when people think there might be a bomb somewhere) *The building was evacuated after a bomb scare.*

bomb disposal (= the job of dealing with bombs that have not exploded) *a bomb disposal expert*

bomb-making equipment *Police found guns and bomb-making equipment in the house.*

THESAURUS

bomb a weapon that explodes: *The bomb exploded on a bus in Jerusalem during the city's morning rush hour. | Fifty-five people were injured in a **car bomb** attack in Baghdad. | Morrow was convicted in 1998 of sending four **letter bombs** (= a small bomb hidden in a package and sent to someone in order to hurt or kill them) to government officials. | People were worried that terrorists would try to detonate a **dirty bomb** (= a bomb that contains nuclear materials) in the city centre.*

explosives bombs or substances that can cause explosions: *They used explosives to blow the door off the front of the building. | The car was packed with 1,000 lbs of **high explosives** (= powerful explosives).*

device a bomb – used especially in news reports: *Police found the device hidden in a suitcase. | A bomb threat was received and the building was evacuated, but no device was found.*

IED a bomb that has been made using whatever materials are available, especially one used to blow up soldiers travelling through a place. **IED** is short for 'improvised explosive device': *Several soldiers were killed when an IED exploded as their convoy drove by.*

mine a type of bomb that is hidden just below the ground or under water, and that explodes when it is touched: *The fields are still full of **landmines**. | The ship struck a mine and sank.*

grenade (*also hand grenade*) a small bomb that can be thrown by hand or fired from a special gun: *He pulled the pin and threw a grenade toward the enemy's position.*

Word origin

Date: 1600–1700

Language: French

Origin: *bombe*, from Italian *bomba*, probably from Latin *bombus* 'deep sound', from Greek *bombos*, from the sound

bomb²

verb

1 [transitive] to attack a place by leaving a bomb there, or by dropping bombs on it from a plane:

The town was heavily bombed in World War II.

Government aircraft have been bombing civilian areas.

→ [CARPET-BOMB](#),
[DIVE-BOMB](#)

2 [intransitive always + adverb/preposition] MOVE/CHANGE POSITION (*BrE*)(informal) to move or drive very quickly:

Suddenly a police car came bombing down the high street.

3 [intransitive and transitive] FAIL (*AmE*) (informal) to fail a test very badly:

I bombed my midterm.

4 [intransitive] (*AmE*) FAIL if a play, film, event etc bombs, it is not successful:

His latest play bombed on Broadway.

be bombed out

phrasal verb

DESTROY if a building or the people in it are bombed out, the building is completely destroyed:

My family were bombed out in 1941.

