

# be·gin

S1 W1

/bi'ɡin/

verb

(*past tense* **began** /-ˈɡæn/, *past participle* **begun** /-ˈɡʌn/, *present participle* **beginning**)

**1 | start doing something** [intransitive and transitive] to start doing something:

*As everybody's here, let's begin.*

*In the third year students begin the study of classical Chinese.*

*The president begins talks with the prime minister tonight.*

**begin to do something**

*She began to feel a sense of panic.*

**begin doing something**

*I began teaching in 1984.*

**2 | start happening** [intransitive and transitive] if something begins, or you begin something, it starts to happen or exist from a particular time:

*It was the coldest winter since records began.*

**begin at**

*The meeting begins at 10.30 am.*

**3 | do first** [intransitive] if you begin with something or begin by doing something, this is the first thing you do:

**begin with**

*Shall we begin with a prayer?*

**begin by doing something**

*I'll begin by thanking you all for being here tonight.*

**4 | book/word etc** [intransitive] if a book, film, or word begins with something, it starts with a particular event or letter:

**begin with**

## *'Psychosis' begins with a P.*

In everyday English, people usually say **start** rather than **begin**:

*The movie **starts** at 7.45.*

*Let's **start** by introducing ourselves.*

*Not many English names **start** with X.*

**5** **speech** [intransitive and transitive] to start speaking:

*'Ladies and gentlemen,' he began. 'I am delighted to be here.'*

**6** **to begin with**

**a)** (spoken)

used to introduce the first and most important point you want to make:

*Well, to begin with, he shouldn't even have been driving my car.*

**b)** NOW

used to say that something was already in a particular condition before something else happened:

*I didn't break it! It was like that to begin with.*

**c)** FIRST

during the first part of a process or activity:

*The kids helped me to begin with, but they soon got bored.*

**7** **can't begin to understand/imagine etc** (spoken) DIFFICULT

used to emphasize how difficult something is to understand etc:

*I can't begin to imagine how awful it was.*

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**begin** (something) **as** something

phrasal verb

to be a particular thing at the start of your existence, working life etc:

*Roger began his career as an office boy.*

## Word origin

**Language:** Old English

**Origin:** *beginn*

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

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