

be-neath W2

/bɪ'niːθ/

adverb, preposition (formal)

- 1 UNDER/BELOW in or to a lower position than something, or directly under something

SYN underneath

The dolphins disappeared beneath the waves.

Jo enjoyed feeling the warm sand beneath her feet.

He was standing on the bridge looking at the river beneath.

*Some roofs collapsed **beneath the weight of** (= unable to support the weight of) **so much snow.***

In everyday English, people usually use **underneath** (as an adverb or preposition) or **under** (as a preposition) when talking about position:

*They hid **under** the table.*

*a picture with a caption **underneath***

- 2 covered by something:

Shiona shivered beneath the bedclothes.

- 3 HIDE/NOT SHOW used to say that someone's real character or feelings are not shown because their appearance or behaviour is different

SYN underneath

Dave sensed that something more sinister lay beneath the woman's cheerful exterior.

***Beneath the surface** she was angry.*

- 4 SUITABLE not good enough or suitable for someone:

She acts as if even speaking to us is beneath her.

*He felt it would be **beneath** his **dignity** to comment.*

*His mother felt he was **marrying beneath** him (= marrying someone who was not good enough) .*

*I consider such behaviour to be **beneath contempt** (= so bad that you have no respect for the person involved) .*

5 POSITION/RANK in a lower, less important rank or job than someone else

SYN below

Word origin

Language: Old English

Origin: *beneo* *than*, from *neo* *than* 'below'

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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