

am·bi·tion W3

/æm'biʃ n/

noun

1 [countable] WANT a strong desire to achieve something:

an ambition to do something

She had always had an ambition to be a pilot.

somebody's ambitions of doing something

An injury ended his ambitions of becoming a professional footballer.

2 [uncountable] AMBITIOUS determination to be successful, rich, powerful etc:

He was young and full of ambition.

3 have no ambition to do something

used when saying that you definitely do not want to do something:

I have no ambition to go back there again.

COLLOCATIONS – Meanings 1 & 2

verbs

somebody's ambition is to be/do something *My ambition was to be a journalist.*

have an ambition *He had an ambition to be a top cello player.*

achieve/fulfil/realize your ambition (= do what you wanted to do) *It took her ten years to achieve her ambition. |*

He was prepared to go to any lengths to fulfil his ambition. |

I want to thank all those who made it possible for me to realize a lifetime 's ambition.

lack ambition/have no ambition *Many of the students lack ambition.*

nurse/harbour/cherish an ambition (= have it for a long time, especially secretly) *He had nursed an ambition to become a*

writer for many years.

frustrate/thwart somebody's ambitions (formal)

(= prevent someone from achieving them) *The weather threatened to frustrate their ambitions.* |

Her lifelong ambitions had been thwarted again and again.

ADJECTIVES/NOUN + ambition

somebody's main ambition *What's your main ambition in life?*

somebody's great ambition *He didn't achieve his greatest ambition – to be Wimbledon Champion.*

a lifelong/long-held ambition (= one that you have had all your life) *It's been her lifelong ambition to work with horses.*

a personal ambition *Crossing the Sahara was a personal ambition of mine.*

a secret ambition *His secret ambition was to become a pilot.*

a burning/driving ambition (= a very strong ambition) *She had a burning ambition to become a racing car driver.*

career ambitions *The course is designed to help you achieve your career ambitions.*

political/presidential ambitions *His political ambitions were put on hold while he waited for a suitable opportunity.*

phrases

somebody's dreams and ambitions *He told her all about his dreams and ambitions.*

somebody's lack of ambition *I was frustrated by their apparent lack of ambition.*

be full of ambition *She was full of ambition when she joined the company.*

Word origin

Date: 1300–1400

Language: Latin

Origin: *ambitio*, from *ambire*; → AMBIENT

