

# attack<sup>2</sup>

S3 W2

verb

- 1 **use violence** ATTACK SOMEONE [intransitive and transitive] ATTACK to deliberately use violence to hurt a person or damage a place:

*She was attacked while walking home late at night.*

*His shop was attacked by a gang of youths.*

*Snakes will only attack if you disturb them.*

**attack somebody/something with something**

*He needed 200 stitches after being attacked with a broken bottle.*

- 2 **in a war** IN A WAR [intransitive and transitive] ATTACK to start using guns, bombs etc against an enemy in a war:

*Army tanks attacked a village near the capital on Sunday.*

- 3 **criticize** [transitive] CRITICIZE to criticize someone or something very strongly:

*Last year Dr Travis publicly attacked the idea that abortion should be available on demand.*

**attack somebody for (doing) something**

*Newspapers attacked the government for failing to cut taxes.*

**strongly/bitterly/savagely etc attack somebody/something**

- 4 **damage** [transitive] INJURE if something such as a disease, insect, or chemical attacks something, it damages it:

*a cruel disease that attacks the brain and nervous system*

- 5 **begin doing** [transitive] DETERMINED to begin to do something in a determined and eager way:

*She immediately set about attacking the problem.*

*Martin attacked his meal (= started eating) with vigour.*

6 **sport** [intransitive and transitive] to move forward and try to score GOALS or win points → **defend**:

*Brazil began to attack more in the second half of the match.*

## THESAURUS

### to attack a person

**attack** to use violence against someone and try to hurt them: *She was attacked by a man with a baseball bat. | Police dogs are trained to attack.*

**ambush** /'æmbʊʃ/ if a group of people ambush someone, they hide and wait for them and then attack them: *The judge was ambushed by gunmen as he drove to work at the courthouse.*

**mug** to attack someone and take money from them in a public place such as a street: *He was mugged on his way home from school.*

**stab** to attack someone with a knife: *The victim had been stabbed in the neck.*

**assault** to attack and hurt someone – used especially when talking about this as a criminal OFFENCE: *He assaulted a flight attendant who refused to serve him more drinks.*

**be set upon by somebody/ something** (written) to be attacked by a group of people: *He died outside his home after being set upon by a gang of youths.*

**turn on** to suddenly change your behaviour and attack the person you are with, when they do not expect this: *The dog suddenly turned on him, sinking its teeth into his arm.*

### to attack a place

**attack** to use weapons to try to damage or take control of a place: *The village was attacked by enemy warplanes. | We will attack at dawn.*

**invade** to enter a country and try to get control of it using force:

*The Romans invaded Britain 2,000 years ago.*

**storm** to suddenly attack a city or building that is well defended by getting inside it and taking control: *Elite troops stormed the building and rescued the hostages.*

**besiege** /bɪ'si:dʒ/ to surround a city or building with soldiers in order to stop the people inside from getting out or from receiving supplies: *In April 655, Osman's palace was besieged by rebels.*

#### Word origin

**Date:** 1600–1700

**Language:** French

**Origin:** *attaquer*, from Old Italian *attaccare* 'to attach', from *stacca* 'sharp post'

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