

ac·tion¹

S1 W1

/ˈækʃn/

noun

1 | doing something [uncountable] the process of doing something, especially in order to achieve a particular thing:

*The government must **take action** (= do something) **now to stop the rise in violent crime.***

action on

Environmental groups want tougher action on pollution from cars.

*She was looking forward to **putting her ideas into action** (= doing the things she had planned) .*

*Ambulance crews are ready to **spring into action** (= suddenly start doing something) **if anything goes wrong during the race.***

2 | something done DO [countable] something that someone does:

quick/swift/prompt action

*Her **prompt actions** probably saved my life.*

*The child could not be **held responsible for his actions** (= he was too young to be blamed for them) .*

defend/justify your action(s)

The chief of police tried to justify his actions.

3 in action DO

someone or something that is in action is doing the job or activity they are trained or designed to do:

photos of ski jumpers in action

see/watch something/somebody in action

I'd like to see the new computer system in action.

4 **out of action** BROKEN

a)

broken and not working:

The photocopier is out of action again.

b)

injured and unable to do anything:

put/keep somebody out of action

The injury will keep him out of action for a month.

5 **fighting** WAR[uncountable] fighting during a war:

*There have been reports of widespread **enemy action** in the area.*

killed/wounded in action (= killed or wounded while fighting)

His father was killed in action in Vietnam.

*530 servicemen were reported **missing in action** (= they were never seen again after a battle) .*

*The men were **sent into action** with little or no training.*

*He had **seen action** (= been involved in fighting) in Korea.*

6 **legal** [uncountable and countable] a legal or formal process to decide whether someone has done something wrong:

*They are threatening to **take legal action** against the hospital (= start a court case against them) .*

*The director faces **disciplinary action** (= official action to punish him) .*

*The matter is now the subject of a **court action** (= a court case) .*

*The students agreed to **drop their action** (= decided not to continue with a court case or an official complaint) .*

*The sisters **brought a libel action** against the newspaper*

(= started a court case) .

7 | excitement [uncountable]

a) (informal)

exciting things that are happening:

There hasn't been much action around here for months.

*New York **is where all the action is**.*

b)

an action film has a lot of exciting scenes in it, in which people fight, chase, and kill each other:

Gibson became famous in action movies.

*a TV **action hero***

8 | the events in a story/film etc the action STORY

the events in a story, film, play etc:

*Most of **the action takes place** in San Francisco.*

***The action opens** (= starts) in a barbershop.*

9 | movement MOVE/CHANGE POSITION [uncountable and countable] the way something moves or works:

action of

the action of the heart

a smooth braking action

10 | effect EFFECT/INFLUENCE [uncountable] the effect that a substance, especially a chemical, has on something:

action of

The drug blocks the action of the cancer gene.

action on/upon

the action of alcohol on the liver

11 action group/committee etc

a group formed to change a social or political situation – often used in names:

the Child Poverty Action Group

12 SHARE a piece/slice of the action (informal)

an opportunity to be involved in an event or activity, especially one that will be enjoyable or will make money:

If you want a slice of the action, tickets may still be available.

13 actions speak louder than words DO

used to say that you are judged by what you do, and not by what you say

14 action!

used by film DIRECTORS to give the instruction to begin filming:

Lights, camera, action!

→ AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 1 verbs

take action (= do something to deal with a problem) *The government must take action to control inflation.*

demand/call for action (= ask forcefully) *Voters are demanding tougher action on gun crime.*

swing/spring/leap into action (= suddenly start doing something) *The fire crew immediately swung into action.*

put something into action (= start doing something you have planned to do) *She was looking forward to putting her plans into action.* |

The committee uses the expertise of local organisations to put these ideas into action.

adjectives

immediate/prompt/swift action *The public wants immediate action to stop the terrorists.*

urgent action (= that needs to be done immediately) *The Opposition called for urgent action to reduce unemployment.*

firm/tough action *We need firm action to deal with the*

problem.

decisive action (= that has a big effect on the way something develops) *We are urging the international community to take decisive action on debt relief.*

drastic action (= that has a very severe effect) *The President decided to take drastic action.*

further action *No further action is necessary.*

direct action (= that is aimed at making a government or company do something) *In a bid to stop whale hunting, Greenpeace have threatened direct action.*

political action *Some forms of political action are more effective than others.*

industrial/ strike action (= that workers take in order to protest about pay, working conditions etc) *The miners voted in favour of industrial action.*

joint action (= that two or more countries, organizations etc take together) *Community leaders agreed to take joint action on scientific, social and environmental issues.*

phrases

a course of action *Have you decided on a course of action?*

a plan of action *The General outlined his plan of action for the campaign. |*

Environmental groups have put forward an action plan.

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 5

phrases

be killed/wounded in action (= killed or wounded while fighting) *Four of her sons have been killed in action.*

be missing in action (= used to say that a soldier has not returned after a battle and their body has not been found) *A further 9,000 allied military personnel are still officially listed as missing in action.*

verbs

see action (= be involved in fighting) *By the time he was 20 he'd seen action in the Gulf War and Bosnia.*

go into action *American soldiers are going into action against the Mujahadin.*

be sent into action *He declared that French soldiers will not be sent into action in Iraq.*

adjectives

military action *America is not ruling out military action against Iran.*

enemy action *The ship was damaged by enemy action.*

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 6

adjectives

legal action *The singer threatened legal action against the magazine.*

court action *The couple are still considering whether to take court action.*

a libel action (= taken against someone who has written or printed untrue statements about you) *Judge Johan Kreigler dismissed a libel action brought against two newspapers.*

a civil action (= involving business or property, rather than a crime) *The victim can seek damages in a civil action.*

verbs

take legal action *He is within his rights to take legal action.*

face legal action *The council demanded that we remove the posters, or face legal action.*

bring a legal action *Justice Mayor ruled that she cannot bring a legal action for damages against the plaintiff.*

THESAURUS – Meaning 2

action **noun** [countable] something that someone does: *He is responsible for his own actions.* | *They refused to give a reason for their actions.*

act **noun** [countable] a particular type of action: *violent acts* | *act of violence/kindness/defiance etc: I believe the killing was an act of desperation.*

activities **noun** [plural] things that people do, especially for enjoyment or to achieve an aim: *leisure activities* | *political activities* | *Surveys may not give a true picture of people's activities.*

behaviour (BrE), / **behavior** (AmE) **noun** [uncountable] the things that someone does and the way they behave: *Do you think that advertisements really influence people's behaviour?* | *The man's behaviour seemed rather odd.*

move **noun** [countable] something that you do in order to achieve something: *Her decision to sell the shares had been a smart move.* | *It's a bold move to start a business in the current economic climate.* | *He needed time to figure out his next move.*

step **noun** [countable] one of a series of things that you do in order to deal with a problem or to succeed: *The first step is to make sure we have got funding for the project.* | *We must **take steps** to make sure that this does not happen again.* | *This is an important step towards peace.*

measure **noun** [countable] an official action that is intended to deal with a particular problem: *There are increased security measures at airports.* | *The school was closed as a precautionary measure following a chemical leak.*

gesture **noun** [countable] something that you do to show how you feel about someone or something: *Do you think it would be a nice gesture to send her some flowers?* |

gesture of goodwill/solidarity/defiance: *The company gave us £100 as a gesture of goodwill.*

deed **noun** [countable] (especially literary) an action, especially one that is very good or very bad: *evil deeds* | *heroic deeds* | *This is my **good deed for the day**.*

exploits **noun** [plural] (formal) exciting or brave actions: *daring exploits* | *His exploits were legendary.*

feat **noun** [countable] something someone does that people admire because you need a lot of skill, courage, or strength to do it: *Completing a marathon is a remarkable feat for a six-year-old.* | *The bridge is a great feat of engineering.*

action²

verb

[transitive] (formal)

to do a specific thing that needs to be done, especially after discussing it:

How are we actually going to action these objectives?

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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