

blow²

S3 W3

noun [countable]

1 | BAD EFFECT an action or event that causes difficulty or sadness for someone:

*Joe resigned, which was a **severe blow** because we needed him desperately.*

*His mother's death was a **shattering blow**.*

*The election result **dealt a further blow to** the party.*

*The factory closures **came as a blow to** the local economy.*

*The **final blow** for many firms was the government's abolition of import duties.*

2 | hard hit HIT a hard hit with someone's hand, a tool, or a weapon:

*She died from a **heavy blow to** the head.*

*He **struck a blow** which threw her to the floor.*

*Martin **received a blow on** the nose.*

*He had been struck a **glancing blow** (= a blow that did not hit him directly) **by** the car.*

blow to

*He gave her a violent **blow to** the head.*

In everyday English, people usually say that someone **gets hit** or that something **hits** them, rather than using the noun **blow**:

*He **received a blow to** the head.*

→ He **got hit on** the head.

3 | blowing BREATHE an action of blowing:

*One big **blow** and the candles were out.*

4 come to blows (with somebody) FIGHT

if two people come to blows, they start arguing or hitting each other because they disagree about something:

come to blows (with somebody) over

They almost came to blows over the money.

5 soften/cushion the blow ACCEPT

to make something unpleasant easier for someone to accept:

A reduction in interest rates would soften the blow of tax increases.

6 low blow *(AmE)* (informal)

something unkind you say to deliberately embarrass or upset someone

→ **strike a blow for somebody/something** AT STRIKE¹ (13)

COLLOCATIONSense 1

ADJECTIVES/NOUN + blow

a big/ major/ serious/ heavy blow *The earthquake was a serious blow to the area's tourism industry.*

a severe/ terrible/ awful blow *The news was a terrible blow for his family.*

a bitter blow (= extremely disappointing) *Their defeat was a bitter blow.*

a cruel/ devastating/ crushing blow (= extremely hard to bear) *Her loss came as a devastating blow to her father.*

a body blow (= a very serious difficulty which could cause something to fail completely) *A tax on books would be a body blow for education.*

a mortal/ fatal/ death blow (= causing something to end) *When he quit it dealt a mortal blow to the show.*

verbs

be a blow *I can't deny his leaving was a blow.*

deal a blow to somebody/ something *The 1982 drought dealt a devastating blow to the country.*

come as a blow to somebody *His sudden death came as a huge blow to us all.*

deliver a blow *Opinion polls delivered a nasty blow to the Tory leader.*

suffer/ receive a blow *Our team suffered a blow when Paul was sent off the field.*

soften/cushion the blow (= make it easier to deal with) *There are various ways to soften the blow of redundancy among staff.*

phrases

be a bit of a blow (**BrE**) (especially spoken) (= be disappointing or cause problems for you) *The result was a bit of a blow for the team.*

Word origin

Sense 1-2, 4-6:

Date: 1400–1500

Origin: Origin unknown.

Sense 3:

Date: 1600–1700

Origin: → **BLOW**¹

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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