

bal·ance¹ S2 W2

/ˈbæləns/

noun

- 1 **steady** STEADY[uncountable] BALANCE a state in which all your weight is evenly spread so that you do not fall:
I lost my balance and fell on my face.
- 2 **equal amounts** EQUALITY[singular, uncountable] EQUAL a state in which opposite forces or influences exist in equal or the correct amounts, in a way that is good
OPP
balance between
Try to keep a balance between work and play.
balance of
Pesticides seriously upset the balance of nature.
- 3 **on balance** THINK SO/NOT BE SURE
if you think something on balance, you think it after considering all the facts:
I think on balance I prefer the old system.
- 4 **surprise somebody catch/throw somebody off balance**
to surprise someone and make them confused and no longer calm:
The question caught him off balance.
- 5 **bank** BANK[countable] MONEY the amount of money that you have in your bank account:
My bank balance isn't good.
- 6 **money owed** [countable] the balance of a debt is the amount of money that you still owe after you have paid some of it:
The balance is due at the end of the month.
- 7 **remaining the balance**

the amount of something that remains after some has been used, spent, mentioned etc

SYN the rest

The firm owns about 96% of the portfolio, with the balance belonging to our family.

8 be/hang in the balance UNCERTAIN

if the future or success of something hangs in the balance, you cannot yet know whether the result will be bad or good:

Meanwhile, the fate of the refugees continues to hang in the balance.

9 tip/swing the balance EFFECT/INFLUENCE

to influence the result of an event:

*The dignity and courage shown by the President may **tip the balance** in his party's favour.*

10 for weighing FOR WEIGHING [COUNTABLE] an instrument for weighing things, with two dishes that hang from a bar

SYN scales

11 mental/emotional health [singular] when someone's mind is healthy and their emotional state is normal:

*The death of her friend had disturbed the **balance of her mind**.*

12 the balance of evidence/probability etc PROBABLY

the most likely answer or result produced by opposing information, reasons etc

→ **checks and balances** AT CHECK² (4)

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 1 verbs

keep your balance (= stay steady) *The sea was so rough that it was hard to keep your balance.*

lose your balance (= become unsteady) *She nearly lost her*

balance as the bus suddenly moved forward.

regain/recover your balance (= become steady again) *He held onto Carrie until he regained his balance.*

knock/throw somebody off balance *The blow was hard enough to knock him off balance.*

phrases

a sense of balance *A good sense of balance is always useful when you are sailing.*

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 2

verbs

strike/achieve/find a balance (= succeed in getting the right balance) *It is necessary to strike a balance between the needs of employers and employees. |*

Find the right balance between enough exercise and enough rest.

keep/maintain a balance *Try to keep a balance between your spending and your earnings. |*

A firm must strive to maintain a balance between business and financial risk.

upset the balance (= make it less equal or correct) *The move could upset the delicate balance of power in the Middle East.*

change/alter/shift the balance *Will this alter the balance of power in the EU? |*

His appointment shifted the government's balance decisively to the right.

redress the balance (also restore the balance **BrE**) (= make it equal or correct again) *What can be done to redress the balance in favour of women?*

adjectives

a good/healthy balance *You should eat a good balance of carbohydrates and protein. |*

Are you eating a healthy balance of foods?

a fine balance (= hard to achieve) *Teachers need to strike a fine balance of flexibility and control.*

a delicate balance (= easily damaged) *Too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere upsets the delicate balance of gases.*

the right/ proper/ correct balance *With sport, you have to find the right balance between competition and fun.*

the natural balance *Chemicals will upset the natural balance of the pond.*

the ecological balance *Human activity is ruining the ecological balance of our planet.*

the political/ military balance *By this time, the political balance in the Cabinet had altered.*

phrases

the balance of power *the European balance of power*

the balance of nature *Nothing can justify permanent damage to the balance of nature.*

Word origin

Date: 1200–1300

Language: Old French

Origin: Vulgar Latin *bilancia*, from Late Latin *bilanx* 'having two pans', from Latin *lanx* 'plate'