

bit<sup>2</sup>

S1 W1

noun [countable]

1 PIECE **piece** a small piece of something:

**bit of**

*bits of broken glass*

*He wedged the door open with a bit of wood.*

**break/rip/shake etc something to bits**

*The aircraft was blown to bits.*

*He's **taken** the engine **to bits**.*

**fall/come to bits**

*The old house was falling to bits.*

2 PART **part** (BrE) (informal) a part of something larger:

*This is the boring bit.*

**bit of**

*We did **the last bit** of the journey on foot.*

**bit about**

*Did you like the bit about the monkey?*

3 **to bits** (BrE) (informal)

very much or extremely:

*Mark's a darling – I **love** him **to bits**.*

**thrilled/chuffed/pleased to bits**

*I've always wanted a car, so I'm thrilled to bits.*

4 COMPUTER **computer** the smallest unit of information that a computer uses:

*a 32-bit processor*

**5** TOOL **tool** the sharp part of a tool for cutting or making holes:

*a drill bit*

**6** FOR A HORSE **horse** the metal bar attached to a horse's BRIDLE that is put into its mouth and used to control it

→ **be champing at the bit** AT CHAMP<sup>1</sup> (2)

**7** **bits and pieces**

(also **bits and bobs** *BrE*)

THING (*informal*)

any small things of various kinds:

*Let me get all my bits and pieces together.*

**8** **do your bit** WORK THAT SOMEBODY DOES *HELP* (*informal*)

to do a fair share of the work, effort etc that is needed to achieve something good or important:

*Everyone should do their bit for the environment.*

**9** **get the bit between your teeth** (*BrE*),  
**take the bit between your teeth** (*AmE*)

DETERMINED

to do something or deal with something in a very determined way, so that you are not likely to stop until it is done

**10** US MONEY **money**

**a) two bits/four bits** (*AmE*) (*informal*)

25 cents or 50 cents

**b) (BrE)** (old-fashioned)

a small coin

**11** **pull something to bits** (*BrE*) (*informal*)

to criticize something strongly:

*The critics pulled his new play to bits.*

**12** TYPICAL **typical behaviour/experience** (*informal*) used to mean a kind of behaviour or experience that is typical of someone or something:

**the (whole) student/movie star/travelling etc bit**

*Then she gave us the concerned mother bit.*

### 13 be in bits (*BrE*) (spoken) (informal)

to be extremely upset because something unpleasant or disappointing has happened:

*She was in bits after the race, and looked totally gutted.*

## COLLOCATIONSense 1 adjectives

a little/ tiny bit *The floor was covered in tiny bits of glass.*

## verbs

fall/ come to bits (= separate into many different parts because of being old or damaged) *The book was so old that I was afraid it would fall to bits.*

break/ smash to bits *The vase fell and smashed to bits on the concrete floor.*

rip/ tear something to bits *She grabbed the letter and ripped it to bits.*

be blown to bits (= by a bomb) *A bus shelter nearby was blown to bits.*

take something to bits (= separate the parts of something) *Tony loves taking old radios and computers to bits.*

## Word origin

Sense 1-3, 7-12:

**Language:** Old English

**Origin:** *bīta* 'piece bitten off, small piece of food'

Sense 4:

**Date:** 1900–2000

**Origin:** *binary digit*

Sense 5-6:

**Language:** Old English

**Origin:** *bīte* 'act of biting'

