

# breath

S3 W2

/bre θ /

noun

1 AAIR YOU BREATHE

a) [uncountable] BREATHE

the air that you send out of your lungs when you breathe:

*Leo could smell the wine on her breath.**Let your breath out slowly.*

b) [uncountable] BREATHE

air that you take into your lungs:

*When he reached the top of the stairs, his heart was pounding and he was gasping for breath.*

c) [countable]

an amount of air that you take into your lungs:

*Shaun took a deep breath and dived in.*⚠ Do not confuse the noun **breath**

/breθ /

with the verb **breathe**

/bri:ð /

: *She took a breath and continued.* |*I can't breathe in here!*

## 2 a breath of fresh air

a) NEW

something that is new and different in a way you think is exciting and good:

*Osborne's play brought a breath of fresh air to the British theatre.*

b) COLD

clean air outside, that you feel you need after being inside for a long time:

*I'm going outside for a breath of fresh air.*

## 3 don't hold your breath (informal)

used to say that something is not going to happen soon:

*The system's due for an update, but don't hold your breath.*

**4 catch your breath** (also / **get your breath back**)

to start breathing normally again after running or making a lot of effort:

*Slow down, I need to catch my breath.*

**5 don't waste your breath** (also / **save your breath**) (spoken)

used to say that someone will not be able to persuade someone else, so there is no point in trying:

*Save your breath. She's already made up her mind.*

*Will he listen to me or will I just be wasting my breath?*

**6 take somebody's breath away** BEAUTIFUL/GOOD-LOOKING

to be extremely beautiful or exciting:

*The view from the top will take your breath away.*

**7 under your breath** QUIET

in a quiet voice so that no one can hear you:

*'Son of a bitch,' he muttered under his breath.*

**8 in the same breath****a)** TIME/AT THE SAME TIME (also / **in the next breath**)

used to say that someone has said two things at once that are so different from each other they cannot both be true:

*He criticized the film, then predicted in the same breath that it would be a great success.*

**b)** LIKE/SIMILAR

if you mention two people or things in the same breath, you show that you think they are alike or are related:

*I became nervous when the doctor mentioned my mother's name and 'cancer' in the same breath.*

**in the same breath as/with**

*a young poet mentioned in the same breath as T.S. Eliot*

**9 with your last/dying breath** DIE

at the moment when you are dying:

*With his last breath, he cursed his captors.*

**10** [singular] (written) a very small amount or a sign of something:**breath of**

*They did everything they could to avoid the slightest breath of*

*scandal.*

## 11 a breath of air/wind (literary) AIR

a slight movement of air:

*Scarcely a breath of air disturbed the stillness of the day.*

→ with bated breath AT BATED

## COLLOCATIONSense 1

### verbs

take a breath (= breathe in) *Alex took a deep breath, then jumped into the pool.*

let your breath out (= breathe out) *Let your breath out slowly and relax.*

hold your breath (= not breathe out for a few seconds or minutes) *How long can you hold your breath underwater?*

be out of breath (= have difficulty breathing after running, hurrying etc) *Andrew hurried in, slightly out of breath.*

be short of breath (= be unable to breathe easily because you are ill, old etc) *Near the top of the mountain I started to feel short of breath.*

gasp/fight for breath (= have difficulty breathing) *He was lying on the floor gasping for breath.*

get your breath back (also catch your breath) (= start breathing normally again) *He leant against a tree until he had got his breath back.*

pause for breath *She talked solidly for five minutes, hardly pausing for breath.*

draw breath (written) (= breathe) *I hid behind the door, hardly daring to draw breath.*

### adjectives

bad breath (= that smells unpleasant) *Smoking gives you bad breath.*

a deep/long breath (= in which you breathe a lot of air in slowly) *She took a deep breath and knocked on the door.*

a shallow breath (= in which you breathe a small amount of air in) *Shallow breaths are often a sign of nervousness.*

## phrases

shortness of breath (= when you are unable to breathe easily) *Symptoms include dizziness and shortness of breath.*

an intake of breath (= when you breathe in very quickly and suddenly, especially because you are surprised) *He gave a sharp intake of breath. |*

*His first response was a sharp intake of breath.*

### Word origin

**Language:** Old English

**Origin:** *bræth*

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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