

at·tack¹

S2 W2

/ə'tæk/

noun

1 | **violence against somebody/something** VIOLENCE AGAINST SOMEBODY[countable]

ATTACK an act of violence that is intended to hurt a person or damage a place:

attack on

There have been several attacks on foreigners recently.

*a **bomb attack***

*a **knife attack***

*an **arson attack** (= an attempt to destroy a building using fire)*

*victims of **racial attacks***

2 | **in a war** IN A WAR[uncountable and countable] **ATTACK** the act of using weapons against an enemy in a war:

The attack began at dawn.

attack on

the attack on Pearl Harbor

be/come under attack

Once again we came under attack from enemy fighter planes.

*Rebel forces **launched** (= started) an **attack** late Sunday night.*

air/missile/nuclear etc attack

the threat of nuclear attack

3 | **criticism** CRITICISM[uncountable and countable] **CRITICIZE** a strong and direct criticism of someone or something:

attack on

*The magazine recently published a vicious **personal attack** on the novelist.*

be/come under attack (= be strongly criticized)

The company has come under fierce attack for its decision to close the factory.

go on the attack (= start to criticize someone severely)

- 4 **illness** ILLNESS[COUNTABLE] ILLNESS/DISEASE a sudden short period of suffering from an illness, especially an illness that you have often:

attack of

I had a bad attack of flu at Christmas.

*He died after **suffering** a severe asthma **attack**.*

→ HEART ATTACK

- 5 **emotion** [countable] a short period of time when you suddenly feel extremely frightened or worried and cannot think normally or deal with the situation:

panic/anxiety attack

Her heart began to pound frantically, as if she were having a panic attack.

attack of

a sudden attack of nerves

- 6 **attempt to stop something** ACTIONS TO STOP SOMETHING

[uncountable and countable] GET RID OF actions that are intended to get rid of or stop something such as a system, a set of laws etc:

attack on

The new measures were seen by many as an attack on the Scottish way of life.

- 7 **sport**

a) [uncountable and countable]

an attempt by a player or group of players to score GOALS or win points

b) (BrE)[singular]

the players in a team that are responsible for trying to score GOALS or win points

SYN offense (AmE)

→ defence:

in attack

Heath will play alongside Smith in attack.

8 | damage [uncountable and countable] when something such as a disease, insect, or chemical damages something:

Unfortunately, the carved ceilings have suffered woodworm attack over the years.

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 1

NOUN + attack

a bomb attack (= usually intended to achieve a political aim) *Animal rights activists are believed to have carried out the bomb attack.*

a terrorist attack *The accused men went on trial Monday for America's worst-ever terrorist attack.*

a knife/ gun attack *He was sentenced to nine years in prison for the knife attack.*

an arson attack (= intended to destroy a building by burning it) *Ten classrooms were completely destroyed in the arson attack.*

adjectives

a violent/ vicious/ brutal attack *Police described it as an extremely violent attack.*

a horrific attack *'This was a horrific attack,' said Detective Chief Superintendent Ron Astles.*

a frenzied attack (= very violent and uncontrolled) *The woman was stabbed to death in a frenzied attack at her home.*

a racial attack *Staffordshire police are treating the incident as a racial attack.*

a sexual attack *There was no indication of a sexual attack.*

an unprovoked attack (= in which the victim did nothing to cause the attack) *Their teenage son was knocked to the ground, kicked and punched in an unprovoked attack.*

a motiveless attack (= that happens for no reason) *He was stabbed to death in an apparently motiveless attack.*

verbs

carry out an attack *The man who carried out the attack has been described as white and 25 to 32 years old.*

an attack happens/takes place (also an attack occurs (formal)) *The attack took place at around 10 pm Thursday.*

phrases

a series/spate/wave of attacks (= a number of attacks in a row) *The killing follows a series of brutal attacks on tourists.*

the victim of an attack *She was the victim of an attack in her own home.*

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 2 ADJECTIVES/NOUN + attack

a nuclear attack *They would not risk a nuclear attack on the United States.*

an all-out attack (= that is done with a lot of determination) *General Smith was in favour of an all-out attack on the enemy.*

a full-scale attack (= that uses all the available soldiers and weapons) *German troops launched a full-scale attack on the city.*

an armed attack *Armed attacks against Israeli settlements are on the increase.*

a surprise attack *We launched a surprise attack on their camp just before dawn.*

a missile/rocket/mortar attack *There were 15 dead and 20*

wounded in a missile attack on the capital.

an air/bomb attack (= an attack from a plane using bombs) *Malta was under heavy air attack.*

verbs

launch an attack *In April the French army launched an attack.*

lead/mount an attack *The King now prepared to mount an attack on Granada.*

come under attack *Camps in the south came under attack from pro-government forces.*

be under attack *He arrived when the base was under attack from mortar and small arms fire.*

THESAURUS

attack **noun** [uncountable and countable] an act of using weapons against an enemy in a war: *The US was threatening to launch an attack on Iran. | The men had been carrying out rocket attacks on British forces. | Bombs have been falling throughout the night, and the city is still under attack* (= being attacked) .

invasion **noun** [uncountable and countable] an occasion when an army enters a country and tries to take control of it: *The Allies began their invasion of Europe. | The threat of foreign invasion is very real.*

raid **noun** [countable] a short attack on a place by soldiers or planes, intended to cause damage but not take control: *an air raid | NATO warplanes carried out a series of bombing raids on the city. | The village has been the target of frequent raids by rebel groups.*

strike **noun** [countable] a sudden military attack, especially after a serious disagreement: *Senior Israeli officials warned that they were still considering a military strike. | the possibility of a nuclear strike*

assault **noun** [countable] a military attack intended to take control of a city, area, or building controlled by an enemy: *The final military assault on Kwangju began at 3 am on May 27.* | *Hitler launched an **all-out assault** (= using as many soldiers, weapons, planes etc as possible) on Russia.*

ambush **noun** [uncountable and countable] a sudden attack by people who have been waiting and hiding, especially an attack on a vehicle or people who are travelling somewhere: *Five soldiers were shot in the back and killed in the ambush.* | *Enemy forces waiting in ambush opened fire on the vehicle.*

counterattack **noun** [uncountable and countable] a military attack made in response to an attack by an enemy: *Government forces launched a counterattack against the guerillas.* | *If they successfully occupied the city, they would need to be capable of defending it against enemy counterattack.*

onslaught **noun** [countable] (formal) a large violent attack by an army: *In 1544 there was a full-scale onslaught on France, in which the English took Boulogne.* | *The troops were preparing for another onslaught against the enemy.*