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Train

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This article is about the rail vehicle. For the American rock band, see Train (band). For the act of teaching or developing skills or knowledge, see Training. For other uses, see Train (disamblouation).

A train is a form of rail transport consisting of a series of vehicles that usually runs along a rail track to transport cargo or passengers. Motive power is provided by a separate locomotive or individual motors in self-propelled multiple units. Although historically steam propulsion dominated, the most common modern forms are diesel and electric locomotives, the latter supplied by overhead wires or additional rails. Other energy sources include horses, engine or water-driven rope or wire winch, gravity, pneumatics, batteries, and gas turbines. Train tracks usually consist of two, three or four or five rails, with a limited number of monorails and maglev guideways in the mix.^[1] The word 'train' comes from the Old French *trahiner*, from the Latin *trahere* 'bull, draw.^[2]

There are various types of trains that are designed for particular purposes. A train may consist of a combination of one or more locomotives and attached railroad cars, or a self-propelled multiple unit (or occasionally a single or articulated powered coach, called a railcar). The first trains were rope hauled, gravity powered or pulled by horses. From the early 19th century almost all were powered by steam locomotives. From the 1910s onwards the steam locomotives began to be replaced by less labor-intensive and cleaner (but more complex and expensive) diesel locomotives and electric locomotives, while at about the same time self-propelled multiple unit vehicles of either power system became much more common in passenger service.

A passenger train is one which includes passenger-carrying vehicles which can often be very long and fast. One notable and growing long-distance train category is high-speed rail. In order to achieve much faster operation over 500 km/h (310 mph), innovative Maglev technology has been researched for years. In most countries, such as the United Kingdom, the distinction between a tramway and a railway is precise and defined in law. The term light rail is sometimes used for a modern tram system, but it may also mean an intermediate form between a tram and a train, similar to a heavy rail rapid transit system except that it may have level crossings.

A freight train (also known as a goods train) uses freight cars (also known as wagons or trucks) to transport goods or materials (cargo) – essentially any train that is not used for carrying passengers.

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Part of a series on

Rail transport



First Link Path to Philosophy

beginning with "Train"

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