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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* (disambiguation).

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.<sup>[1]</sup> The word 'train' comes from the **Old French** *trahiner*, from the **Latin** *trahere* 'pull, draw'.<sup>[2]</sup>

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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