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Train

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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.^[1] The word 'train' comes from the [Old French](#) *trahiner*, from the [Latin](#) *trahere* 'pull, 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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A BNSF intermodal freight train passes through Wisconsin, United States

Part of a series on
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