A process is an instance of a program running in a computer. It is close in meaning to [task](http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/task) , a term used in some operating systems. In [UNIX](http://searchenterpriselinux.techtarget.com/definition/Unix) and some other operating systems, a process is started when a program is initiated (either by a user entering a [shell](http://searchenterpriselinux.techtarget.com/definition/shell) command or by another program). Like a task, a process is a running program with which a particular set of data is associated so that the process can be kept track of. An [application](http://searchsoftwarequality.techtarget.com/definition/application) that is being shared by multiple users will generally have one process at some stage of execution for each user.

In computing, a **process** is an instance of a computer program that is being executed. It contains the program code and its current activity. Depending on the operating system (OS), a process may be made up of multiple threads of execution that execute instructions concurrently.