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omen (redirected from omens)

Also found in: Legal, Acronyms, Encyclopedia, Wikipedia.

o·men ◀ (ō'mən)

n.

- 1. A phenomenon supposed to portend good or evil; a prophetic sign.
- 2. Prognostication; portent: birds of ill omen.

tr.v. o·mened, o·men·ing, o·mens

To be a prophetic sign of; portend.

[Latin omen.]

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(nemoe,) uamo

n

- 1. a phenomenon or occurrence regarded as a sign of future happiness or disaster
- 2. prophetic significance

vb

3. (*tr*) to portend

[C16: from Latin]

Collins English Dictionary - Complete and Unabridged © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003

O•men ('oʊ mən)

n.

- 1. any event believed to portend something good or evil; augury; portent.
- 2. prophetic significance; presage.

v.t.

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- 3. to be an omen of; portend.
- 4. to divine, as if from omens.

[1575–85; < Latin]

syn: See sign.

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Omen

handwriting on the wall A portent or prophecy of disaster, a sign of impending and unavoidable doom, an indication or sense of what is to come; often the writing on the wall. The allusion is to the Book of Daniel in the Bible, in which a hand mysteriously appeared and wrote a message on Balshazzar's palace wall foretelling his destruction and the loss of his kingdom.

my little finger told me that Pain or pleasurable sensation in the fingers was considered by the ancient Roman augurs a sign of evil or joy to come. The pricking of one's thumb was considered a portent of evil.

By the pricking of my thumbs Something wicked this way comes. (Shakespeare, Macbeth, IV, i)

Thus, one's finger or thumb can be said to "tell" the future. Sometimes *my little finger told me that* is used to indicate that one has access to certain information, the source of which may be controversial and unscientific.

stormy petrel One whose arrival is seen as a harbinger of trouble. Stormy petrels (*Procellaria pelágica*) are the sea birds which sailors call Mother Carey's chickens. *Petrel* is derived from the Italian *Petrello* 'little Peter,' in allusion to the way these birds appear to walk on the sea, just as St. Peter walked on the Lake of Gennesareth. Stormy petrels are most often observed just prior to and during a storm; thus, their arrival portends deteriorating weather conditions. The expression may now be applied to anyone whose coming is inevitably followed by disaster or tragedy.

Dr. von Esmarch is regarded at court as a stormy petrel, and every effort was made to conceal his visit to the German emperor. (*The World*, April, 1892)

See also Mother Carey is plucking her chickens, WEATHER.

weather breeder See WEATHER.

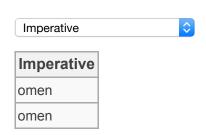
Picturesque Expressions: A Thematic Dictionary, 1st Edition. © 1980 The Gale Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

omen

Past participle: omened

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Gerund: omening



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Thesaurus

Legend: ≡ Synonyms ↔ Related Words ≠ Antonyms

Noun 1. omen - a sign of something about to happen; "he looked for an omen before going into battle"

- = portent, prognostic, prognostication, presage, prodigy
- → augury, foretoken, preindication, sign an event that is experienced as indicating important things to come; "he hoped it was an augury"; "it was a sign from God"
- \longleftrightarrow foreboding an unfavorable omen
- ← death knell an omen of death or destruction
- Verb 1. omen indicate by signs; "These signs bode bad news"
 - = augur, auspicate, bode, foreshadow, portend, presage, prognosticate, predict, prefigure, betoken, forecast, foretell
 - ★ threaten to be a menacing indication of something: "The clouds threaten rain"; "Danger threatens"
 - → bespeak, betoken, indicate, signal, point be a signal for or a symptom of; "These symptoms indicate a serious illness"; "Her behavior points to a severe neurosis"; "The economic indicators signal that the euro is undervalued"
 - $\begin{tabular}{ll} \longleftrightarrow \end{tabular}$ foreshow foretell by divine inspiration

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omen

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noun portent, sign, warning, threat, indication, foreshadowing, foreboding, harbinger, presage, forewarning, writing on the wall, prognostication, augury, prognostic, foretoken *Her appearance at this moment is an omen of disaster.*

Quotations

"May the gods avert this omen" [Cicero Third Philippic]

"omen: a sign that something will happen if nothing happens" [Ambrose Bierce *The Devil's Dictionary*]

Collins Thesaurus of the English Language - Complete and Unabridged 2nd Edition. 2002 © HarperCollins Publishers 1995, 2002

omen noun

A phenomenon that serves as a sign or warning of some future good or evil:

augury, forerunner, foretoken, portent, prefigurement, presage, prognostic, prognostication, sign. *Idiom:* writing on the wall.

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Translations

Select a language: Spanish / Español



Omen ['evmen] $N \rightarrow \text{augurio } m$, presagio m

it is a good omen that \rightarrow es un buen presagio que ... bird of ill omen \rightarrow ave f de mal agüero

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omen ('emuen) noun

a sign of a future event. Long ago, storms were regarded as bad omens.

augurio; presagio

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