

# omens - definition of omens by The Free Dictionary

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## omen (redirected from omens)

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## 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.

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[Latin ōmen.]

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## omen ('əʊmən)

*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.*

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

**Gerund:** omening

Imperative

**Imperative**

omen

omen

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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, foretold, 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" **auspice** - a favorable omen **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" **foreshow** - foretell by divine inspiration

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## omen

*noun* ≡ **portent, sign, warning, threat, indication, foreshadowing, foreboding, harbinger, presage, forewarning**, writing on the wall, **prognostication, augury, prognostic, foretold** *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, foretold, portent, prefigurement, presage, prognostic, prognostication, sign.**

**Idiom:** writing on the wall.

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## Translations

Select a language: Spanish / Español

**omen** ['əʊmən] *N* → **augurio** *m*, **presagio** *m*

*it is a good omen that* → es un **buen presagio** que ...

*bird of ill omen* → **ave f de mal agüero**

**Collins Spanish Dictionary** - Complete and Unabridged 8th Edition 2005 © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1971, 1988 © HarperCollins Publishers 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005

**omen** ('əʊmən) *noun*

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

**augurio ; presagio**

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