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English Wikipedia has an article on:Wikipedia From Middle English why, from Old English hwȳ (“why”), from Proto-Germanic *hwī (“by what, how”), from Proto-Indo-European *kʷey, instrumental case of *kʷís (“who”), *kʷid (“what”). Cognate with Old Saxon hwī (“why”), hwiu (“how; why”), Middle High German wiu (“how, why”), archaic Danish and Norwegian Bokmål hvi (“why”), Norwegian Nynorsk kvi (“why”), Swedish vi (“why”), Faroese and Icelandic hví (“why”), Latin quī (“why”), Doric Greek πεῖ (peî, “where”), Ukrainian чи (čy, “if”), Polish czy, Czech či (“or”), Serbo-Croatian či (“if”). Compare Old English þȳ (“because, since, on that account, therefore, then”, literally “by that, for that”). See thy. why (not comparable) (interrogative) For what cause, reason, or purpose. Introducing a complete question. I don’t know why he did that Tell me why the moon changes phase. With a negative, used rhetorically to make a suggestion. Why don't you ask her out for dinner? Introducing a verb phrase (bare infinitive clause). Why spend money on something you already get for free? Why not tell him how you feel? Introducing a noun or other phrase. Why him? Why not someone taller? (relative) For which cause, reason, or purpose. That's the reason why I did that. (fused relative) The cause, reason, or purpose for which. That is why the sky is blue. 2013 July 20, “Welcome to the plastisphere”, in The Economist, volume 408, number 8845:Plastics are energy-rich substances, which is why many of them burn so readily. Any organism that could unlock and use that energy would do well in the Anthropocene. Terrestrial bacteria and fungi which can manage this trick are already familiar to experts in the field. how come, wherefore, to what end, what for, why so, (obsolete) for why why (plural whys or why's or whies) Reason. A good article will cover the who, the what, the when, the where, the why and the how. 2022 May 11, Sandra E. Garcia, “Butt Lifts Are Booming. Healing Is No Joke.”, in The New York Times Magazine[1]:Within months of leaving, she became the new owner of Dream Body Recovery in Miami, which has three rooms that can accommodate up to six clients. “Being a part of this journey with other ladies, knowing how it changed my life, that’s my why,” she told me. why (dated or literary) An exclamation used to express pleasant or unpleasant mild surprise, indignation, or impatience. why (third-person singular simple present whys or whies, present participle whying, simple past and past participle whyed or whied) why (plural whies) (Yorkshire, obsolete) A young heifer. 1796, William Marshall, The Rural Economy of Yorkshire:At two years old, also, the HEIFERS - provincially, “whies,” are generally put to the bull. why Alternative form of wye; the name of the Latin-script letter Y/y. 1881 April, J. B. Rundell, “The Irregularities of English Spelling: what they Cost and what they are Worth”, in The Spelling Reformer, and Journal of the English Spelling Reform Association, volume I, number 10, London, page 147: 1996, Sycamore Review, volume 8, page 116:eff you see kay why oh you. 2009, Eric Barnes, Shimmer, Denver, Colo.: Unbridled Books, →ISBN, page 91:I hear you. But hear me out, all right? Because I mean what I’m about to say. Eff-you-see-kay-why-oh-you. Fuck you. 2016, Daniel DiPrinzio, “Come Quickly”, in The Great Stone Robbery or A Parade of Idiots, →ISBN, page 184:Like many folks do when taking medicine past its expiration date, Jerry had questioned its effectiveness. The pill had answered with a resounding why ee ess, and Jerry couldn’t tell between the Custom Costume in his pocket and himself. 2016, Rachel Cohn, David Levithan, The Twelve Days of Dash & Lily, Electric Monkey, →ISBN, page 73:Miss said, “Love your outfit, bee-tee-double-u.” It took me a second to realize she meant “btw.” “Is it vintage?” / I looked down at my school uniform. Fudgsicles. “Tee-why,” said Jahna, for “ty.” “And why-ee-ess yes!” “why, v.”, in OED Online , Oxford: Oxford University Press, launched 2000. “why”, in Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary, Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam, 1913, →OCLC. William Dwight Whitney, Benjamin E[li] Smith, editors (1911), “why”, in The Century Dictionary […], New York, N.Y.: The Century Co., →OCLC. hwi (Standard Written Form) From Proto-Celtic *swīs (compare Breton c’hwi, Welsh chi, Old Irish síi), from Proto-Indo-European *wos. why (Standard Cornish, Standard Written Form with Traditional Graphs) you (formal or plural) WordReference Random House Learner's Dictionary of American English © 2025why /hwaɪ, waɪ/USA pronunciation adv., conj., n., pl. whys, interj. adv. (used to introduce a question) for what cause or reason or purpose?:Why do you ask? Why are you here? conj. for what cause or reason:I don't know why he left. on account of which:the reason why she refused. the reason for which:That is why he returned. n. [countable] the cause or reason:to figure out the whys and wherefores. interj. (used to express surprise, hesitation, or impatience):Why, go right ahead! Why, what do you mean? WordReference Random House Unabridged Dictionary of American English © 2025why (hwī, wī),USA pronunciation adv., conj., n., pl. whys, interj. adv. for what? for what reason, cause, or purpose?:Why did you behave so badly? conj. for what cause or reason:I don't know why he is leaving. for which; on account of which (usually after reason to introduce a relative clause):the reason why he refused to go. the reason for which:That is why he returned. n. a question concerning the cause or reason for which something is done, achieved, etc.:a child's unending hows and whys. the cause or reason:the whys and wherefores of a troublesome situation. interj. (used as an expression of surprise, hesitation, etc., or sometimes a mere expletive):Why, it's all gone! bef. 900; Middle English; Old English hwī, hwȳ, instr. case of hwæt what; cognate with Old Norse hvī Collins Concise English Dictionary © HarperCollins Publishers:: why /waɪ/ adv for what reason, purpose, or cause?: why are you here? (used in indirect questions): tell me why you're here pron for or because of which: there is no reason why he shouldn't come n (pl whys) (usually plural) the reason, purpose, or cause of something (esp in the phrase the whys and wherefores) interj an introductory expression of surprise, disagreement, indignation, etc: why, don't be silly!Etymology: Old English hwī; related to Old Norse hvī, Gothic hveileiks what kind of, Latin quī (redirected from Why?)Also found in: Thesaurus, Acronyms. (wī, hwī)adv. For what purpose, reason, or cause; with what intention, justification, or motive: Why is the door shut? Why do birds sing?conj.1. The reason, cause, or purpose for which: I know why you left.2. Usage Problem On account of which; for which.n. pl. whys 1. The cause or intention underlying a given action or situation: studying the whys of antisocial behavior.2. A difficult problem or question.interj. Used to express mild surprise, indignation, or impatience.[Middle English, from Old English hwȳ; see kwo- in Indo-European roots.]Usage Note: A traditional rule states that why is redundant in the expression reason why, as in The reason why he accepted the nomination is not clear. It is true that why could be eliminated from such examples with no loss to the meaning, and that that could be used instead of why, but reason why has been used by reputable English writers since the Renaissance, and a majority of the Usage Panel accepts the construction. In our 2009 survey, 55 percent accepted the example quoted above. Higher percentages accepted examples in which reason is modified by a, any, or another instead of the.. For instance, 67 percent accepted the example Is there any reason why this drug enforcement program should work? While there is certainly no harm in observing this rule in one's own writing, insisting on it in the writing of others may seem petty. See Usage Note at where.American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2016 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. (waɪ) adva. for what reason, purpose, or cause?: why are you here?. b. (used in indirect questions): tell me why you're here. pronfor or because of which: there is no reason why he shouldn't come. n, pl whys (usually plural) the reason, purpose, or cause of something (esp in the phrase the whys and wherefores)interjan introductory expression of surprise, disagreement, indignation, etc: why, don't be silly!. [Old English hwī; related to Old Norse hvī, Gothic hveileiks what kind of, Latin quī]Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition 2014 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014 (ʰwaɪ, waɪ) adv., conj., n., pl. whys, interj. adv. 1. for what? for what reason or purpose?: Why do you ask? conj. 2. for what cause or reason: I don't know why he left. 3. for which; on account of which (usu. after reason to introduce a relative clause): the reason why she refused to go. 4. the reason for which: That is why he returned. n. 5. a question concerning the cause or reason for which something is done, achieved, etc.: a child's unending whys. 6. the cause or reason: the whys and wherefores of the Cold War. interj. 7. (used as an expression of surprise, hesitation, etc., or sometimes a mere expletive): Why, it's all gone! [before 900; Middle English; Old English hwī, hwȳ, instr. case of hwæt what; c. Old Norse hvī] Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved.1. used in questionsYou use why when you are asking a question about the reason for something.'I had to say no.' – 'Why?'Why did you do it, Marta?2. used when no answer is expectedYou sometimes use why in questions without expecting an answer. For example, you can make a suggestion by asking a question beginning with Why don't.Why don't you write to her yourself?You can emphasize that there is no reason for something to be done by asking a question beginning with Why should.Why would he be angry with you?'Will you say sorry?' – 'No, why should I?'You can emphasize that there is no reason why something should not be done by asking a question beginning with Why shouldn't.Why shouldn't he go to college?You can suggest that an action is pointless by using why followed by an infinitive without to.Why tell the police? It won't do any good.3. used in reported clausesWhy is often used in reported clauses.He wondered why she had come.You never really told me why you don't like him.Why can be used on its own instead of a reported clause, if it is clear what you mean. For example, instead of saying 'She doesn't like him. I don't know why she doesn't like him', you can say 'She doesn't like him, I don't know why'.They refuse to come – I don't know why.He's certainly cheerful, though I can't think why.4. used in relative clausesWhy is sometimes used in relative clauses with the word reason.That is one reason why they were such a successful team.Collins COBUILD English Usage © HarperCollins Publishers 1992, 2004, 2011, 2012 Noun1.why - the cause or intention underlying an action or situation, especially in the phrase `the whys and wherefores'reason, ground - a rational motive for a belief or action; "the reason that war was declared"; "the grounds for their declaration"Based on WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection. © 2003-2012 Princeton University, Farlex Inc.noun2. A fact or circumstance that gives logical support to an assertion, claim, or proposal:argument, ground (often used in plural), proof, reason, wherefore.Idiom: why and wherefore.3. What one intends to do or achieve:aim, ambition, design, end, goal, intent, intention, mark, meaning, object, objective, point, purpose, target, view.Idioms: end in view, why and wherefore. The American Heritage® Roget's Thesaurus. Copyright © 2013, 2014 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. ؟لماذاالذي بِسَبَبِهِـمَا :ضَمير صِلَه بِمَعْنى warumwiesoweshalbweswegenaf hverjuaf hverju, hvers vegnaástæðahvers vegna, af hverjunúperchédiamine!il perchper quale ragioneperchpor quepor que motivoporquêPorquê?почемуотчегопричинаа как жеа то как жеniçinniye-in sebebi/nedenineden [waɪ]B. EXCL → ¡toma!, ¡and ¡toma, eres tú!, ¡anda, eres tú!why, what's the matter? → bueno, ¿qué pasa?why, there are 8 of us! → ¡si somos 8!why, it's easy! → ¡vamos, es muy fácil!C. N the whys and (the) wherefores → el porqué• Why can usually be translated by por qué: Why didn't you come? ¿Por qué no viniste? They asked her why she hadn't finished her report Le preguntaron por qué no había terminado el informe! Remember the difference in spelling between por qué (why) and porque (because).• To ask specifically about the purpose of something, you can translate why using para qué: Why go if we are not needed? ¿Para qué vamos a ir si no nos necesitan?• In statements, you can translate (the reason) why using por qué, la razón (por la que) or el motivo (por el que): Tell me (the reason) why you don't want to accept the proposal Dime por qué or la razón por la que or el motivo por el que no quieres aceptar la propuesta• Translate that's why using por eso: That's why they wouldn't pay Por eso no querían pagar• Like all question words in Spanish, porqué can function as a masculine noun. Note that in el porqué, porqué is written as one word: I'd like to know why he's absent or the reason for his absence Me gustaría saber el porqué de su ausenciaCollins Spanish Dictionary - Complete and Unabridged 8th Edition 2005 © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1971, 1988 © HarperCollins Publishers 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005 ['hwaɪ] adv (in questions) → pourquoiWhy did you do that? → Pourquoi avez-vous fait ça?Why is he late? → Pourquoi est-il en retard?Tell me why → Dis-moi pourquoi.I've never been to France. - Why not? → Je ne suis jamais allé en France. - Pourquoi?All right, why not? → D'accord, pourquoi pas? (in relative clauses) → pourquoiThat's why he did it → Voilà pourquoi il a fait ça.the reason why sb did sth → la raison pour laquelle qn a fait qchShe never told me the reason why she left → Elle ne m'a jamais dit pourquoi elle était partie.She left, and nobody knows the reason why → Elle est partie et personne ne sait pourquoi.Collins English/French Electronic Resource. © HarperCollins Publishers 2005 adv → warum, weshalb; (asking for the purpose) → wozu; (= how come that …) → wieso; why not ask him? → warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? → warum or wozu (noch) warten?; why do it this way? → warum denn so?; that’s why → darum, deshalb, deswegen; that’s exactly why … → genau deshalb or deswegen … interj why, of course, that’s right! → ja doch or aber sicher, das stimmt so!; are you sure? — why yes (of course/I think so) → sind Sie sicher? — aber ja doch; why that’s easy! → na, das ist doch einfach!; take the bus! why, it’s only a short walk → den Bus nehmen? ach was, das ist doch nur ein Katzensprung; why, if it isn’t Charles! → na so was, das ist doch (der) Charles!; who did it? why it’s obvious → wer das war? na or also, das ist doch klar n the whys and (the) wherefores → das Warum und WeshalbCollins German Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged 7th Edition 2005. © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1980 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2007 [waɪ]1. adv & conj → perchéwhy is he always late? → perché è sempre in ritardo?I wonder why he said that → mi chiedo perché l'abbia dettowhy not do it now? → perché non farlo adesso?why don't you come too? → perché non vieni anche tu?there's no reason why ... → non c'è motivo per cui...+ subwhy (ever) not? → perché no?so that's why he did it! → ecco perché l'ha fatto!3. n the whys and (the) wherefores → le ragioni or i motivithe why and the how → il perché e il percomeCollins Italian Dictionary 1st Edition © HarperCollins Publishers 1995 (wai) adverb for which reason (?). `Why did you hit the child?'; `He hit the child.' `Why?'; Why haven't you finished?; `I haven't finished.' `Why not?'; `Let's go to the cinema.' `Why not?' (= Let's!); Tell me why you came here. hoekom ؟لماذا защо porquê proč warum hvorfor γιατίpor qué miks زیرا miksi pourquoiלמה, מדוע □□□□□ zašto miért? mengapa af hverju, hvers vegna perché なぜ , kodėl kāpēc; kādēļ mengapa waaromhvorfordlaczego دخه دپاره ولې، څله، په کومه توګه، له څه کبله، porquê de ce почему; зачем prečo zakaj zašto varf neden, niçin, niye 為何 чому? کیوں tại sao 为什么 relative pronoun for which. Give me one good reason why I should help you! hoekom الذي بِسَبَبِه :ضَمير صِلَه بِمَعْنى защо porque proč warum hvorfor ο λόγος που, γιατίpor qué mispärast برای چه minkä tähden pour lequel, pour laquelle למה □□□□□ zašto, zbog čega ami miatt mengapa hvers vegna, af hverju perché, per cui, per il quale ～するとこ kādēļ kenapa waaromhvorfordlaczego دخه دپاره porque pentru care почему prečo zaradi česar zašto varför □□□□□ ...-in sebebi/nedeni 為何 чому □س جس وجہ tại sao 为什么Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary © 2006-2013 K Dictionaries Ltd. → لماذا proč hvorfor warum γιατί por qué miksi pourquoi zašto perché なぜ □ waarom hvorfor dlaczego por que motivo, Porquê? почему varf tại sao 为什么Multilingual Translator © HarperCollins Publishers 2009 Want to thank TFD for its existence? Tell a friend about us, add a link to this page, or visit the webmaster's page for free fun content. Link to this page: But there was nothing that really got to grips with the question of why? I did find an interesting book on the truth behind common myths and I was horrified further...But twice now, when I have come to visit her, she has said to me only one word: why? It is like a piece of Talmud you thought you understood and then realize you didn't understand at all.These blessings don't tell me why I'm gay, but they make me understand that "Why?" is not a question I need to ask.His is a theater of the antiliterate, where the answer to the question "Why?" always seems to be "Why not?" Why not have a figure with a red veil draped over the head, why not have Kachina clowns, why not have androgynous costuming by Donna Karan, why not have some big black rocks?Why? Because when government number-crunchers collect trade data they ignore the sale of U.S. ▲Why the sky is blue Why there are no extraterrestrials Why These Finalists Why Things Sink and Float Why This Kolaveri Why This Kolaveri Di Why Today Doesn't Suck Why Waste Jack Daniels? why we can't have nice things Why we have a food Chain Why we have a food Chain Why we have a food Chain Why we have a food Chain Why Why Love Why Won't You Die? Why Worry Hounds Why Would Anyone Care Why Would You Say This/That? Why You Little... why'll why're why's why's and wherefore's why, oh why Why, oh why? Why, Oh, Why Why, Thank You Why, What, When, Who, Where, How, How Much Why-not why-oh-why Why?Why? (band) Whyalla Whyalla Whyalla Economic Development Board Whyalla, South Australia Whyalla, South Australia Whyalla, South Australia, Australia - Whyalla WHYB WHYC WHYCOS WHYD whyda whydah Whydah bird Whydahs whydas whydunit whydunnit WHYED whyever WHYF WHYG WHYH WHYHA Whylie Animal Rescue Foundation WHYLINE whyll WHYLO WHYMAP Whymper Edward ▼ 1. Why (adverb): For what reason or purpose. 2. Why (noun): A reason or explanation for something. 3. Why (interjection): Used to express surprise or emphasis. 4. Why (conjunction): The cause or reason that explains something. The word "why" serves as a fundamental tool in language for seeking explanations, expressing surprise, or delving into the reasons behind actions or phenomena. This small but powerful word is central to inquiry, understanding, and conversation. "Why" Definition: What Does "Why" Mean? The term "why" is versatile, functioning as a question, reason, or expression in different contexts. Let’s explore its definitions in depth. Definition of "Why": Reason or Purpose As an adverb, "why" is used to inquire about the reason or purpose behind something, such as "Why did you do that? Definition of "Why": A Reason or Explanation When used as a noun, "why" refers to the reason or explanation for a particular action, event, or situation, e.g., "The why behind his decision remains unclear. Definition of "Why": Expression of Surprise As an interjection, "why" conveys surprise, disbelief, or emphasis, such as "Why, I never thought you'd ask!" Definition of "Why": Cause or Reason in Context As a conjunction, "why" explains the reason something happens, often used in phrases like "the reason why." Parts of Speech The word "why" serves multiple grammatical roles, demonstrating its versatility in the English language. As an adverb, "why" is used to question reasons or purposes, allowing speakers to inquire about the underlying motives behind actions or events. When functioning as a noun, it refers to a cause or reason, encapsulating the essence of rationale in a single term. Additionally, "why" acts as an interjection, emphasizing surprise or disbelief in a conversation, often conveying strong emotional reactions. Furthermore, it serves as a conjunction, introducing the cause or reason for something. How to Pronounce "Why"? Pronunciation of "why" is straightforward, with a single syllable. Begin with a soft "wh" sound, as in "where," followed by a long "i" sound, as in "high." The pronunciation is quick but clear. Phonetic Pronunciation: /waɪ/ Synonyms of "Why": Other Ways to Say "Why" Here are synonyms or alternative expressions for "why," depending on its use: Reason Purpose Cause Explanation Justification Antonyms of "Why": Other Ways to Say "Why" Antonyms for "why" are rare but include terms that imply the absence of inquiry or reasoning: Acceptance Ignorance Unquestioning Examples of "Why" in a Sentence Here are ten examples that showcase the flexibility of "why" across contexts: 1. Why are you late to class again? 2. The why behind her actions remains a mystery. 3. Why, I didn’t expect to see you here! 4. He questioned why they needed to leave so early. 5. The report doesn’t explain the why of the situation. 6. Why do birds migrate in the winter? 7. Why not take a break and relax for a while? 8. She was curious why the project failed to meet its goals. 9. Why, that’s the best idea I’ve heard all day! 10. The teacher asked them to think about the why behind their conclusions. Frequency of Use The word "why" is one of the most commonly used words in English, essential in questioning, reasoning, and exploring concepts. Its prevalence spans everyday conversation, academic settings, and formal inquiries, making it a cornerstone of communication. Variants of "Why" Though "why" itself remains largely unchanged, some related expressions or forms include: Whys: The plural form referring to multiple reasons or explanations. Why not: An expression often used to suggest or propose something. Related Terms to "Why" Several related terms help frame questions or reasons, complementing the use of "why": How What Reason Because Explanation Etymology: History and Origins of "Why" The word "why" originates from Old English hwī or hwy, meaning "for what reason." It shares roots with other interrogative words like "who" and "how," stemming from the Proto-Germanic and Proto-Indo-European languages. Its usage has remained consistent over centuries, reflecting humanity's innate desire to seek explanations. Derivatives and Compounds of "Why" Here are derivatives and compounds of "why" that extend its utility: Whys: Plural form for multiple reasons or causes. Why-ever: An emphatic variation of "why." Common Misspellings of "Why" Misspellings of "why" are rare due to its simplicity but can include: 10 Idioms Similar to "Why" Idioms and expressions that carry similar themes of inquiry or reasoning include: 1. What’s the big idea? 2. For what purpose? 3. What’s the deal? 4. What gives? 5. To what end? 6. What’s up with that? 7. What’s the story? 8. Why the long face? 9. Why in the world 10. What’s it all about? I would like to work at Google, the reason why I believe I could develop my skills.The adjective clause 'why I believe I can develop my skills' modifies the noun 'reason.'Page 2Despite all their efforts, the team failed to score.Here too, "failed" is the finite verb and "to score" is non-finite because it does not show tense.Page 3While many stative verbs cannot be used in the passive voice because they do not represent an action, some stative verbs referring to mental processes, perception, and opinion, can be used in the passive voice; for example: think, understand, believe, love, hate, consider, know, expect, assume, etc. The difference between the active and passive is that the passive does not present the idea as a personal opinion or belief. Look at the examples:ExampleI love this book. ➔ This book is loved.We expect her to arrive soon ➔ She is expected to arrive soon.Page 4ShareIn this lesson, master verb complements, which are essential parts of a sentence that complete the meaning of a verb. Clear explanations and practice exercises to help you learn.HomeGrammargrammatical functionsverb complementsdirect objectsindirect objectsobject pronounsobjectsobjects of prepositionsPage 5In the simplest terms, adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns. They provide essential details that help us understand the size, color, shape, quantity, or other qualities of a noun. For instance, in the sentence "She wore a beautiful red dress," both beautiful and red are adjectives, describing the noun dress.

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