
weigh

VERB¹

Etymology

Summary

A word inherited from Germanic.

A Common **Germanic** strong verb: **Old English** *wegan* (*wæg*, *wægon*, *wegen*) corresponds to **Old Frisian** *wega*, *weia* to move, weigh, **Old Saxon** *wegan* to weigh, (Middle) **Dutch** *wegen* to weigh, **Old High German** *wegan* to move, shake, weigh (**Middle High German** *wegen*; modern **German** has *bewegen* to move, while the simple verb is represented by the two verbs *wägen* transitive, to weigh, *wiegen* intransitive, to weigh, be of a certain weight), **Old Norse** *vega* to lift, weigh (**Swedish** *väga*, **Danish** *veie*, to weigh), **Gothic** *ga-wigan* (only Luke vi. 38 in past participle feminine *gawigana* shaken). The **Germanic** root **weg-*, **wag-*, **wæg-* (for words representing the several grades see [way n.¹](#); [wag v.](#), [wagon n.](#), [wain n.¹](#), [waw n.¹](#), [waw v.¹](#); [weigh n.¹](#), [wey n.¹](#)) is < **Indogermanic** **wegh-*, **wogh-*, **wēgh-*, found in **Sanskrit** *vah*, **Latin** *vehēre* to carry, **Greek** *φοχος*, *ὄχος* vehicle.

Notes

The remarkably early appearance of the weak conjugation was probably due to confusion with [weigh v.²](#); the two **Old English** verbs *wegan* and *wecgan* coincided in the form *weged* of the 3rd singular present (though the former verb had also the more normal *wiged*). The strong inflection of the past tense died out in the 14th century, and that of the past participle in the 15th.

Meaning & use

i. To bear, carry, hold up; to heave up, lift.

i.1. † *transitive*. To bear from one place to another; to carry, transport. *Obsolete*.

Old English–1400

In quot. c1400³? To carry round and serve (wine).

OE He þa frætwe **wæg** ..ofer yða ful.
Beowulf 1207

OE Micel mænigeo elpenda þa þe gold **wægon** & læddon.
Narratiunculæ (1861) 9

c1400 Wyʒeʒ þe walle wyn **weʒed** to hem oft.
(?c1390) *Sir Gawain & Green Knight* (1940) l. 1403

c1400 **Weʒe** wyn in þis won, wassayl, he cryes.
(?c1380) *Cleanness* l. 1508

c1400 So faste þay **weʒed** to him wyne, hit warmed his hert.
(?c1380) *Cleanness* l. 1420

i.2. † To bear (arms); to wear (a robe, etc.). *Obsolete*.

Old English–1275

OE On ðæm selfan hrægle, ðe he on his breostum **wæg**.
K. Ælfred, translation of Gregory, *Pastoral Care* xiii. 77

OE Hæfde he & **wæg** mid hine twiecge handseax geættred.
translation of Bede, *Ecclesiastical Hist* (1890) ii. ix. 123

c1250 He miʒte bet teche ane bore To **weʒe** [*Jes MS.*. bere] boþe sheld & spere.
Owl & Nightingale 1022 (Cotton MS.)

c1275 Ælc **weiede** [*c1300 Otho MS.* caste] an sculdre sceld swiðe godne.
(?a1200) *Lazamon, Brut* (Caligula MS.) (1978) l. 13116

c1275 Heo **weʒe** [*read weʒeden*; *c1300 Otho MS.* beore] on heore honde feouwer sweord of golde.
(?a1200)

costume

weaponry

I.3. † With *up*: To hold up, support. *Obsolete.*

c1200

c1200 He ðe **weigþ** upp mid his fingre heuene and ierðe.
Vices & Virtues 49

I.4.a. † With *up*: To hoist, to lift up. *Obsolete.*

1421–1669

1421–2 Right as a thief þat hath eschapid ones The roop, no dreede hath eft his art to vse, Til þat the trees him **weye** vp,
body and bones.

T. Hoccleve, *Dialog* 402

1570 They tooke the sayd Roode and **weyed** hym vp and set hym in his old accustomed place.

J. Foxe, *Actes & Monumentes* (revised edition) vol. II. 1643/2

1669 With which Tongs you may Beclip the [Hop-]Pole at the bottom, and resting the joynt thereof on a block of wood,
you may **weigh** up the Pole.

J. Worlidge, *Systema Agriculturæ* viii. §1. 132

I.4.b. † *figurative*. To raise up, exalt. *Obsolete.*

c1595

c1595 [God] from want the poore doth **waigh**.

Countess of Pembroke, *Psalme* cvii. 111 in *Collected Works* (1998) vol. II. 174

I.4.c. *Nautical*. To set up (a mast).

1841–

1841 *Weigh*, to lift up; as, to **weigh** an anchor or a mast.

shipbuilding

I.5.a. Nautical. To heave up (a ship's anchor) from the ground, before sailing. Now usually **to weigh anchor** (without article). †Formerly also with *up*, *in*. ?a1400-

- ?a1400** Wyghtly one þe wale thay **wye** up þaire ankers.
Morte Arthure 740
- c1400** **Wigt** at þe wyndas wezen her ankres.
(?c1380) *Patience* l. 103
- c1440** They **weyde** vp þeire ankyrs.
(?a1400) *Morte Arthure* l. 493
- 1492** Compelling of þe saidis Wegeantis seruitouris to **wey** þer ankeris.
in Acts of Lords of Council in Civil Causes (1839) vol. i. 245/1
- 1509** Come to our shyp our ankers ar in **wayde**.
A. Barclay, *Brant's Shyp of Folyes* (Pynson) f. li
- ?1518** Than Cocke **wayed** anker and housed his sayle.
Cocke Lorelles Bote sig. C.ij^v
- 1548** When the wynde was prosperous..they **waied** vp the Ankers.
Hall's Vnion: Henry V f. xliiii^v
- 1582** We **weyed** the anchors.
R. Stanyhurst, translation of Virgil, *First Foure Bookes Æneis* iii. 52
- 1589** We **wayed** our Grapnel and went away.
Voy. W. Towrson in R. Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* i. 101
- 1626** Break ground, or **way** Anchor, heaue a head.
J. Smith, *Accidence Young Sea-men* 27
- 1632** The windes faouoring vs, we **weighed** Ankors.
W. Lithgow, *Total Discourse Trauayles* ii. 45
- 1653** Constantianus **wayed** Anchor from Epidaurus.

H. Holcroft, translation of Procopius, *Gothick Warre* i. 11 in translation of Procopius, *History of Warres of Justinian*

1665 I weighed anchor and sett sayle.

K. Digby, *Journal of Voyage to Mediterranean* (1868) 19

1720 We weighed Anchor the same Tide, and stood out to Sea.

D. Defoe, *Life Captain Singleton* 182

1773 In the mean time, as the ship tended, I weighed anchor.

J. Hawkesworth, *Account of Voyages Southern Hemisphere* vol. III. iii. ix. 651

1815 Cormac Doil..Hoisted his sail, his anchor weigh'd.

W. Scott, *Lord of Isles* iii. iv. 86

1835 We immediately weighed anchor.

J. Ross, *Narrative of Second Voyage North-west Passage* v. 77

1877 It was misty and rainy when we weighed anchor, but we made the buoy on the Narrows Bank without difficulty.

19th Century December 769

1940 The Captain of the *Piccolino* had a carefree habit of weighing anchor according to whim rather than schedule.

M. Dickens, *Mariana* ix. 339

1997 The sun rose as we weighed anchor and headed west.

T. Mackintosh-Smith, *Yemen* (1999) viii. 221

nautical

- 1546** I will streight **waie** anker and hoise vp saile.
J. Heywood, *Dialogue Prouerbes English Tongue* i. ix. sig. Cii
- 1640** Our Author **weighs** up anchors, and once more Forsaking the security of the shore, Resolves to prove his fortune.
P. Massinger, *Guardian* Prologue, in *3 New Plays* (1655)
- 1650** As often as this sacred Anchor [of Religion] is **weighed**, so often the Ship of the Common-Wealth is tossed.
R. Stapleton, translation of F. Strada, *De Bello Belgico* ii. 36
- 1882** He for whom the sexton has tolled the bell has '**weighed** anchor'.
Century Magazine September 707/2

I.5.c. *absol.* = to weigh anchor. Hence, to sail (*from, out of* a port, etc.).

1513-

- 1513** We coud ryd no lenger ther without gret danger,..we **weyd** to get us in to the Downes.
E. Howard, *Letter* in H. Ellis, *Original Letters, Illustrative of English History* (1827) 2nd Series vol. I. 215
- 1550** The maister..bald the marynalis lay the cabil to the cabilstok to veynde and **veye**.
Complaynt of Scotland (1979) vi. 31
- 1589** **Wee** wayed and set saile.
Voy. W. Towrson in R. Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* i. 101
- 1613** The 14th in the morning we **wayed** out of the roade of Bantam for Japan.
J. Saris, *Jrnl.* in *Voyage Japan* (1900) 1
- 1647** On Wednesday..we **weighed** from Limehouse, and anchored right against the Tower.
P. Pette in *Archaeologia* (1796) vol. 12 226
- 1748** On the 3d of November we **weighed** from Madera.
B. Robins & R. Walter, *Voyage round World by Anson* i. iv. 34
- 1808** I found about 60 of the convoy had lost their anchors in attempting to **weigh**.
Duke of Wellington, *Dispatches* (1837) vol. IV. 193
- 1867** It would have been necessary for each ship to **weigh** singly, which would have occupied fifteen minutes each.
Pall Mall Gazette 19 July 9/1
- 1893** In the morning we **weighed** early.

nautical

I.6.a. To raise (a sunk ship, gun, etc.) from the bottom of the water. Also with *up*.

c1503–

a.

c1503 After tyme she was **weyed** and toued to the hauyn at caleis.

R. Arnold, *Chronicle* f. xlix^v/2

1548 Leuyng the gonne (because the master carpenter sayde y^t he woulde shortly **way** it out of the water).

Hall's Vnion: Henry VIII f. xxvj

1578 Then it will **waygh** or lyfte the sunken Shyppe from the bottome.

W. Bourne, *Treasure for Traueilers* iv. viii. f.17

1669 Rules to **weigh** Ships, or Guns, or any thing else in the Water.

S. Sturmy, *Mariners Magazine* v. xii. 81

1726 [The diver] could find but one small gun, which he **weigh'd**, and brought ashore.

G. Shelvocke, *Voyage round World* vii. 239

1777 Should the enemy succeed in **weighing** the chevaux-de-frise, and proceed up the river.

J. Putnam in J. Sparks, *Correspondence of American Revolution* (1853) vol. II. 540

1783 I must beg leave however..to mourn..that the Royal George cannot be **weigh'd**.

W. Cowper, *Letter* 20 October (1981) vol. II. 172

b.

1545 I trust by Monday or Twisday..the Mary Rose shalbe **wayed** upp and saved.

Duke Suffolk in Hooker, *Life Sir Peter Carew* (1857) 129

1598 The Reuenge had in her diuers faire brasse peeces, that were all sunke in the sea, which they of the Island were in good hope to **waigh** vp againe.

W. Phillip, translation of J. H. van Linschoten, *Discours of Voyages East & West Indies* i. xcix. 194/2

1643 A great Gunne..was overthrowne in a deep Pond of water..the Master Carpenter taking with him a hundred labourers, went and **weyed** it up.

R. Baker, *Chronicle of Kings of England* iii. 7

- 1687** A Vast treasure which..being sunk in a Spanish Galioon..was now weighed up, by certaine Gentlemen.
J. Evelyn, *Diary* (1955) vol. IV. 552
- 1735** One of these stakes, entire, was actually weighed up between two loaded barges at the time of a great flood.
S. Gale in *Archaeologia* vol. 1 189 (note)
- 1760** She being effectually sucked in by the heavy sandy bottom, all attempts to weigh her up have been ineffectual.
S. Derrick, *Letters* (1767) vol. I. 16
- 1782** Weigh the vessel up.; Her timbers yet are sound, And she may float again.
W. Cowper, *Loss Royal George* 25
- 1815** If any Boat..shall be sunk in any Part of the said Canal,..and the Owner..shall not, without loss of Time, weigh or draw up the same.
Local Act 55 George III c. lv. §73

nautical

I.6.b. † *intransitive for reflexive*. To be raised up; to admit of being raised. *Obsolete*.

1655–69

- 1655** Onely this difference, that sunk downward, this Weighd up to blisse.
W. Hammond, *Poems* 67
- 1669** If the thing sunk be upon Sands or Rocks, it will weigh the better.
S. Sturmy, *Mariners Magazine* v. xii. 81

II. To balance in the scales; to ascertain the weight of; to consider or compare in this respect.

II.7.a. *transitive*. To ascertain the exact heaviness of (an object or substance) by balancing it in a pair of scales, or on a steelyard, against a counterpoise of known amount. **Old English–**

OE Ælc þæra ðinga, þe man wihð on wægan.
Ælfric, *Grammar* xiii. 84

- OE** Genim geoluwne stan & salt stan & pipor & weh on **wæge**.
Saxon Leechdoms vol. I. 374
- c1200** Gif hit chepinge be, þe me shule meten oðer **weien**.
Trinity College Homilies 213
- c1200** He wile hes habben wel imotet and bi rihte wæize wel **iwæizen**.
Vices & Virtues 17
- 1340** Huanne þo þet zelleþ be wyzte purchaceþ and makeþ zuo moche þet þet þing þet me ssel **weze** sseweþ more heuy.
Ayenbite (1866) 44
- 1382** He **weiede** [*a*1425 *L.V.* *weizide*] the heeris of his heed with two hundred siclis be the comoun weizt.
Bible (Wycliffite, early version) 2 Samuel xiv. 26
- 1393** When..þe woolle worth **weye**, woo ys þe þenne.
W. Langland, *Piers Plowman* C. x. 273
- a1400** Þe kynges by whas wyzte hit be **yweye**.
English Gilds (1870) 356
- c1440** **Wowyn**, or weyyd, *ponderatus, libratus*.
Promptorium Parvulorum 533/1
- 1469** The wheight stone that the wooll was **weyed** with.
in T. Stapleton, *Plumpton Correspondence* (1839) 21
- 1600** Are there ballance here to **weigh** the flesh?
W. Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* iv. i. 252
- 1613** A Beame to **waye** spice with.
J. Saris, *Jrnl.* in *Voyage Japan* (1900) 42
- 1617** They **weigh** the cheese when it is set on Table, and taken away, being paid by the weight.
F. Moryson, *Itinerary* iii. 98
- 1758** Engines should be fixed in proper places to **weigh** chairs as they **weigh** waggons.
S. Johnson, *Idler* 28 October 233
- 1765** We have weighed it green, that is, just after mowing, against all the other pasture grasses, and it out-**weighs** them all.
Museum Rusticum vol. 4 179

1827 A graduated transfer jar containing the gas to be weighed.

M. Faraday, *Chemical Manipulation* xv. 380

1863 While the numbers were going up, and the jockeys being weighed.

M. E. Braddon, *Aurora Floyd* vol. I. xiii. 292

1894 When we weighed their riders after the morning's work, we found that Peter was giving Foxhall two stone and a half.

J. D. Astley, *Fifty Years of my Life* vol. II. 212

measurement

II.7.b. *absol.*

1362-

1362 Furst I leornede to lyȝe a lessun or tweyne, And wikkedliche for to weie was myn oper lessun.

W. Langland, *Piers Plowman A*. v. 118

1390 Libra..hath figure and resemblance Unto a man which a balance Berth in his hond as forto weie.

J. Gower, *Confessio Amantis* vol. III. 122

1474 And by the potte and elle ben signefyed them that haue the charge to weye and mete and mesure truly.

W. Caxton, translation of *Game & Playe of Chesse* (1883) iii. vii. 138

measurement

II.7.c. to weigh (someone) against gold (or silver): to perform the Indian ceremony in which (a rajah, etc.) is weighed and his or her weight in gold (or silver) distributed as largesse.

1696-

1696 The Moguls are sometimes weighed against Silver.

J. Ovington, *Voyage to Suratt* 179

1934 The Maharajah..will be weighed against gold ... The gold-weigh ceremony is usually performed with gold supplied by the person being weighed... This amount will be distributed in charity.

Times 25 August 13/2

1936 At this Durbar the Aga Khan will be weighed against gold, and it is expected that 20,000 guests will attend the function.

Times 14 January 13/6

religion

measurement

II.7.d. In *Horse Racing*. **to weigh out, in:** to take the weight of (a jockey) respectively before and after a race. (Cf. [II.9.](#))

1890-

1890 The Stakeholder shall not allow a jockey to be weighed out for any horse until such horse's stake [etc.] have been paid.

Rules of Racing in Encycl. Sport (1898) vol. II. 224

1890 The Clerk of the Scales..shall in all cases weigh in the riders of the horses., and report to the Stewards any jockey not presenting himself to be weighed in.

Rules of Racing in Encycl. Sport (1898) vol. II. 225

horse racing

II.7.e. **to weigh off:** to punish; to convict or sentence. *slang* (originally *Military*). Now chiefly *Criminals'*.

1925-

- 1925** *Weighed off, to be*, to be brought up before an officer and punished.
E. Fraser & J. Gibbons, *Soldier & Sailor Words* 301
- 1945** P.O. Prune will have to investigate and deal with a charge..and possibly *weigh off* the first delinquent of his service career.
Tee Emm (Air Ministry) vol. 5 54
- 1958** You just got *weighed off* yesterday?
F. Norman, *Bang to Rights* i. 22
- 1963** One young man..commented that he had been '*weighed off*' at X Assizes by some old geezer togged up like Father Christmas'.
T. Morris & P. Morris, *Pentonville* ii. 20
- 1978** Another was in custody..waiting to be *weighed off*.
B. Norman, *To nick Good Body* x. 81

law

military

colloquial and slang

II.7.f. to weigh in: to weigh (an air passenger's luggage) before departure; to subject (a passenger) to this procedure. **1934-**
See [excess luggage](#) at **excess n. 6b**.

- 1934** Left Eaton Place at 4.30 p.m. for Victoria, where we were 'weighed-in', and had our luggage weighed and labelled.
Rhys-Williams, *Diary* 1 August (MS.)
- 1962** She *weighed in* my wardrobe case.
L. Deighton, *Ipcress File* v. 30
- 1970** The porter..takes her bag and follows her to the desk to have it *weighed in*.
New Yorker 16 May 41/2

measurement

aviation

II.7.g. Angling. to weigh in: of an angler, to have (one's catch) officially weighed at the end of a competition. Also *absol*. **1949-**

- [1928]** It is a rule that every fish caught must be kept alive, and after being weighed must be put back into the water by the official weigher-in.
Daily Telegraph 25 September 12/5]
- 1949** The river fished well and the winner weighed-in 6 lb. 4 oz. 12 drm.
Club Anglers' Journal November 14/1
- 1972** No competitor may have his catch weighed in who has litter lying on the banks of his swim.
Match Rules (Nat. Fed. Anglers) in E. Marshall-Hardy, *Angling Ways* (1973) xxxix. 306
- 1976** Only 10..competitors weighed in,..but..Frank Kilbourn..float fished to take 9-2 of good roach.
Wymondham & Attleborough Express 17 December 22/5

fishing

II.8.a. To measure a definite quantity of (a substance) on the scales. Usually with *out*: To portion out (a quantity measured by weight) from a larger mass; to apportion (such a quantity) to (a person or persons); †to measure exactly or to the full weight (*obsolete*). Also with *in*, *into*: To introduce a specified weight of (a substance), to add as an ingredient. **c1386-**

- c1386** And of that copere [he] weyed out [*Cambridge MS.* vp] but an ounce.
G. Chaucer, *Canon's Yeoman's Prologue & Tale* 745
- 1585** We began to way out the bisket vnto the gallie slaues.
T. Washington, translation of N. de Nicolay, *Nauigations Turkie* ii. iii. 33 b
- 1596** For at the first they all created were In goodly measure, by their Makers might, And weighed out in ballaunces so nere, That not a dram was missing of their right.
E. Spenser, *Second Part of Faerie Queene* v.ii. sig. N7^v
- 1615** We wayed out the wax which came in the Hozeander, and fownd it want a tonne.
R. Cocks, *Diary* (1883) vol. I. 88
- 1616** We waid out the pepper to day for the king.
R. Cocks, *Diary* (1883) vol. I. 111
- 1616** He delivered or wayd out much more to Tomo Dono and Cushcron Dono.
R. Cocks, *Diary* (1883) vol. I. 217

- a1646** Never did any skilfull Physitian more carefully weigh out to every dram what the potion should be that is to be given to a child, than God doth weigh out every affliction that he sendeth upon his children.
J. Burroughes, *Exposition of Hosea* (1652) iii. 197
- 1827** No further difficulty will now arise in the way of graduating a tube. The 34.25 grains of mercury are to be weighed in... Another 34.25 grains of mercury are to be weighed into the tube to the metal already contained in it.
M. Faraday, *Chemical Manipulation* iii. 76
- 1827** If it be found that as many parts of the acid have been used as of grains of the carbonate weighed out, the acid is of proper strength.
M. Faraday, *Chemical Manipulation* xii. 278

measurement

II.8.b. † To measure (a sum of money) by weight, in order to pay it to (a person). Chiefly in Biblical renderings. Also **1382–1607** with *out, down*. *Obsolete*. (So Old English *awegan*, German *wägen, dar-, zuwägen*.)

- 1382** And thei weyziden my meede, thritti platis of syluer.
Bible (Wycliffite, early version) Zechariah xi. 12
- a1425** Nether siluer schal be weied [1382 peisid] in the chaungyng therof.
(c1395) *Bible* (Wycliffite, later version) (Royal MS.) (1850) Job xxviii. 15
- 1535** I..weyed him there the money vpon the waighes.
Bible (Coverdale) Jeremiah xxxii. 10
- 1535** So they wayed downe xxx. syluer pens, y^e value that I was prysed at.
Bible (Coverdale) Zechariah xi. 12
- 1585** An officer that weyed out mony for soldiers wages.
J. Higgins, translation of Junius, *Nomenclator* 492/2
- 1607** Some [are] cutting purses, some cheating, some weying out bribes.
T. Dekker & J. Webster, *West-ward Hoe* ii. i. sig. C^v

economics and commerce

II.8.c. *figurative*. To dispense or administer (justice) impartially.

c1400-

c1400 **Weye** o lawe in euenhede, By~twen ffauour and vengeaunce.

26 Political Poems i. 14

1562 **Waye** iustice, equale without discrepance.

A. Scott, *To Q. Mary* in *Poems* i. 29

law

II.9.a. *intransitive* in Horse Racing. Of a jockey: To be weighed in the scales, in order that his or her declared weight may be verified by the clerk. **to weigh out (in)**, to do this before and after a race. (Cf. [II.7d](#)) Similarly in Boxing, **to weigh in**: said of a boxer (turning the scales at a particular weight) before a fight. Hence in general colloquial use.

1805-

1805 That every person who shall ride at Newmarket for Plate, Sweep~stakes, or Match, shall be obliged to **weigh** when he comes in.

Weatherby's Racing Cal. vol. XXXII. p. xxxviii

1858 Jockies are required to **weigh** at the usual place of weighing, before the race,..and every rider is, immediately after the race, to ride his horse to the usual place of weighing,..and to **weigh** to the satisfaction of the person appointed for that purpose.

Rules of Racing §37

1868 Their riders are drinking sherry..preparatory to 'weighing in'.

G. J. Whyte-Melville, *White Rose* vol. I. xiv. 174

1868 Mr. Snipe, returning to **weigh** after an easy victory.

G. J. Whyte-Melville, *White Rose* vol. I. xiv. 182

1877 **Weighing** out and starting.

Rules of Racing §31

1877 **Weighing** in.

Rules of Racing §34

1879 The rider of Musjid..is said to have **weighed** in and **weighed** out with a whip weighing 7 or 9 lbs. and to have exchanged it for a lighter whip before and after the race.

J. Rice, *History of Turf* vol. I. 298

- 1909** He was six feet four and weighed in at 135.
'O. Henry', Roads of Destiny xviii. 307
- 1920** When the clock struck three and the men weighed out.
J. Masefield, Right Royal 33
- 1920** Then the riders weighed-in, and the meeting was over.
J. Masefield, Right Royal 119
- 1931** Both boxers weighed in this afternoon.
Daily Express 13 October 1/7
- 1958** When at last I was able..to 'weigh-in' ..I weighed five pounds more than at the beginning of the day.
S. Wilcox, 3 Days Running vii. 79
- 1966** The complete inertial package weighs in at only 14 pounds.
Aviation Week & Space Technology 5 December 6/1
- 1979** The compact 'Zuiko' 1000mm measures just 26 inches and weighs in at around eight and a half pounds.
SLR Camera March 35/1

horse racing

boxing

measurement

II.9.b. Hence **to weigh in with**: to introduce or produce (something that is additional or extra). *colloquial*.

1885-

- 1885** The journal 'weighs in' with a prismatic Christmas number.
Daily News November in J. R. Ware, Passing English of Victorian Era (1909)
- 1901** Carver..used to sit up and snort a bit when we weighed in with hock and seltzer instead of tea.
Macmillan's Magazine April 464/1
- 1921** A Rhodes scholar weighed in with praise of Greenwich Village.
D. G. Mackail, Romance to Rescue i. 9

colloquial and slang

II.9.c. Fig. **to weigh in**: to bring one's weight or influence to bear; to enter a forceful contribution to a discussion, etc.
Also: U.S. *slang* to meet up. *colloquial*.

1909-

1909 I want you to ask the Chief Rabbi to weigh in.

G. B. Shaw, *Letter* 31 July (1972) vol. II. 854

1919 A few weeks later the Anglo-Indians weigh in. In due course we have the help of our Australian cousins.

M. Beerbohm, *Seven Men* 147

1926 We parted at Pocatello, agreeing to 'weigh in' (meet) at Ogden in the spring.

J. Black, *You can't Win* x. 135

1938 The telephone crisis..had been the moment for Lilian to weigh in.

E. Bowen, *Death of Heart* iii. iii. 378

1956 The Princess Anne, in her constant rôle of fairy godmother to the Marlboroughs, weighed in; nor could it have been done with more tact and good feeling.

A. L. Rowse, *Early Churchills* 221

1976 Sim weighed in with 4-27 off eight overs.

Milton Keynes Express 4 June 38/4

U.S. English

colloquial and slang

II.9.d. To launch into and attack (a person, etc.). Also *figurative. colloquial.*

1941-

1941 *Weigh into someone*, to attack, wade into a person in a fight.

S. J. Baker, *Popular Dictionary of Australian Slang* 81

1976 I survived the war,..and then, if I was a minute after 9.30 in the evening, my Mother would weigh into me.

F. Warner, *Killing Time* i. i. 8

colloquial and slang

II.10.a. *transitive.* To hold (an object) in the hand (or in both hands) in order to observe or estimate its weight; to balance an object in the hand (or hands) as if estimating its weight.

1540-

1540 *Waye* me this gyrdel heuy with moche golde .i. fele me this girdell, howe heuy it is with golde.

J. Palsgrave, translation of G. Gnapheus, *Comedye of Acolastus* ii. iii. sig. Mj^v

- 1781** Who poises and proportions sea and land, **Weighing** them in the hollow of his hand.
W. Cowper, *Expostulation* 343
- 1815** 'But why should he know of it?' said Glossin, slipping a couple of guineas into Mac-Guffog's hand. The turnkey **weighed** the gold, and looked sharp at Glossin.
W. Scott, *Guy Mannering* vol. III. xviii. 340
- 1838** Mr. Bumble..counted the tea-spoons, **weighed** the sugar-tongs.
C. Dickens, *Oliver Twist* vol. II. xxiii. 63
- 1848** He remained before him **weighing** his white hat in both hands by the brim.
C. Dickens, *Dombey & Son* lvi. 569
- 1911** [He] meditatively **weighed** his stick in his hand.
H. W. Fowler & F. G. Fowler, *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (at cited word)

measurement

II.10.b. To keep (the wings) evenly outspread in flight. *poetic*.

1667-

- 1667** Satan..in the emptier waste, resembling Air, **Weighs** his spread wings.
J. Milton, *Paradise Lost* ii. 1046

poetic and literary

II.11. *figurative* (with more or less retention of the literal idea or expression):

II.11.a. To estimate, assess the value of (a person, a condition, quality, etc.), as if by placing in the scales.

a1200-

- a1200** Per me scal ure werkes **weien** biforan þe heuen king.
Moral Ode 63 in *Lambeth Homilies* 163
- 1362** Þe same Measure þat ȝe Meten A-mis oper elles, ȝe schul be **weyen** þer-with whon ȝe wenden hennes.
W. Langland, *Piers Plowman* A. i. 152
- a1382** Wolde God, my synnes weren **weȝed** ..in a balaunce.
Bible (Wycliffite, early version) (Douce MS. 369(1)) (1850) Job vi. 2

- 1387** Pou art i-weye on a balaunce and i-founde þat þou hast lasse [Dan. v. 27].
J. Trevisa, translation of R. Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. III. 129
- 1526** Our sayd lorde..at the houre of our iudgement shall ponder & wey euery mannes encrease or decrease.
W. Bonde, *Pylgrimage of Perfection* ii. sig. lii^v
- 1552** Not weighing our merites, but pardoning our offences.
Boke of Common Prayer (STC 16279) Administr. Lordes Supper sig. N.vii^v
- 1557** God doth not way us as we are, but as we desier to be.
T. North, translation of A. de Guevara, *Diall of Princes* Prologue f. Ai
- 1590** Accursed vsury was all his trade, And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.
E. Spenser, *Faerie Queene* i.iv. sig. D3^v
- 1672** Friendship..weighs by th' lump, and, when the cause is light, Puts kindness in to set the Ballance right.
J. Dryden, *Conquest of Granada* i.iii. i. 22
- 1736** Were all men to be weighed in the exact scale of merit.
G. Berkeley, *Discourse Magistr.* in *Works* (1871) vol. III. 419
- 1744** Where such a cross~grain'd Piece of Stuff is concerned..one should ponder with inward Consultations, to be able to weigh him to a Hair.
M. Bishop, *Life Matthew Bishop* 97
- 1782** That heav'n will weigh man's virtues and his crimes, With nice attention in a righteous scale.
W. Cowper, *Hope* in *Poems* 159
- 1815** He in the balance weighed, Is light and worthless clay.
Lord Byron, *Vision Belshazzar* vi, in *Hebrew Melodies* 36
- 1872** God numbers not the heads, but weighs the hearts Of them that worship.
J. S. Blackie, *Lays of Highlands* 134
- 1897** [She] had mentally weighed him, and found him wanting.
'Ouida', *Massarenes* xxii

II.11.b. To balance *with* or *against* (another object regarded as a counterpoise) in order to obtain a comparative estimate. Also **to weigh together**.

a1535-

- α1535** Waye the good that they dooe, with the hurte that commeth of them.
T. More, *History Richard III in Workes* (1557) 47/1
- 1549** If those men will waye their labor, with the profite in knowlege, whiche dayely they shal obtain by readyng vpon the boke.
Booke of Common Prayer (STC 16267) Preface sig. 60.i^v
- 1596** For by no meanes the false will with the truth be wayd.
E. Spenser, *Second Part of Faerie Queene* v.ii. sig. O
- 1597** But in that Cristall scales let there be waide, Your Ladyes loue, against some other maide.
W. Shakespeare, *Romeo & Juliet* i. ii. 98
- 1609** The old world & the new waighed together.
T. Dekker, *Guls Horne-booke* sig. B3^v
- α1616** Then wisely (good Sir) weigh Our sorrow, with our comfort.
W. Shakespeare, *Tempest* (1623) ii. i. 8
- 1647** Forbid it Heaven my Life should be Weigh'd with her least Conveniency.
A. Cowley, *Love Undiscovered* in *Mistress* ii
- 1782** The fragrant grove, th' inestimable mine, Were light when weigh'd against one smile of thine.
W. Cowper, *Hope* in *Poems* 150
- 1823** While we had been weighing anxiously prudence against sentiment.
C. Lamb in *London Magazine* October 406/1
- 1829** He anxiously weighed his own resources against those at the enemy's disposal.
W. F. Napier, *History of War in Peninsula* vol. II. 265
- 1868** But of what weight was any mere earthly consideration of that kind when weighed against the danger of impiety?
A. Helps, *Realmah* (1876) vi. x. 112
- 1917** They held their lives to be of little price, when weighed against a nation's fidelity to its engagements.
Quarterly Review January 16

Cf. Columella x. 42 Cum..paribus Titan orbem librauerit horis.

- 1697** Now sing we stormy Stars, when Autumn weighs The Year, and adds to Nights, and shortens Days.
J. Dryden, translation of Virgil, *Georgics* i, in translation of Virgil, *Works* 62
- 1720** The Year when Autumn weighs.
A. Pope, translation of Homer, *Iliad* vol. VI. xxii. 39

poetic and literary

II.12.a. To consider (a fact, circumstance, statement, etc.) in order to assess its value or importance; to ponder, estimate, examine, take due account of; to balance in the mind with a view to choice or preference.

c1380-

- c1380** ȝif we weyn aryht dispensis bi lore of þe hooly goost.
J. Wyclif, *Works* (1880) 323
- c1385** And weyen every thyng by equite.
G. Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women* 384 (398)
- c1485 (1456)** Cast all thair counsailis jlkane till othir jn thy mynde, and wey thame as thou thinkis the caus requeris.
G. Hay, *Buke of Gouvernaunce of Princis* (1993) xxxv. 113
- a1500** Ye prudent Iugis..Weieth this mater in your discrecioun.
J. Lydgate, *Horse, Goose & Sheep* 150 in *Political Religious & Love Poems* (1903) 21
- 1533** They wayeing in thaire myndes the force of the saide acte.
in I. S. Leadam, *Select Cases Star Chamber* (1911) vol. II. 300
- 1560** He desyreth them..that they would way the whole case diligently.
J. Daus, translation of J. Sleidane, *Commentaries* f. cclxvj^v
- 1590** She now weighing the decayed plight, And shrunken synewes of her chosen knight.
E. Spenser, *Faerie Queene* i.ix. sig. H7^v
- 1623** W. Shakespeare & J. Fletcher, *Henry VIII* ii. iv. 194.
- 1653** If thou hast seriously weighed the foregoing rules.
W. Ramesey, *Astrologia Restaurata* 181
- 1697** Weigh in your Mind, the various Chance of War.

J. Dryden, translation of Virgil, *Aeneis* xii, in translation of Virgil, *Works* 580

1711 I have well weighed that Matter.

R. Steele, *Spectator* No. 43. ¶2

1742 I weighed the consequences on both sides as fairly as I could.

H. Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* vol. II. iii. iii. 35

1775 I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty.

R. B. Sheridan, *Rivals* iii. i

1847 Let any thinking man weigh this singular circumstance.

J. Yeowell, *Chronicles of Ancient British Church* iii. 34

1849 The jurymen,..being little accustomed to weigh evidence, followed without scruple the directions of the bench.

T. B. Macaulay, *History of England* vol. II. vi. 39

1855 They never came to a decision without duly weighing the pros and cons.

Poultry Chronicle vol. 3 32

1863 The difficulty of the moment was too pressing for him to weigh distant consequences.

'G. Eliot', *Romola* vol. I. xx. 327

1870 The king is wise; his wrath will well be weighed.

W. Morris, *Earthly Paradise: Part III* 390

absolute

1842 Men who are little given to sift and weigh.

W. Wordsworth, *Borderers* ii, in *Poems Early & Late Years* 287

II.12.b. To ponder and examine the force of (words or expressions). **to weigh one's words:** to speak deliberately and in calculated terms. **1340-**

1340 Huo þet ne weþþ his wordes ine þe weye of discrecion.

Ayenbite (1866) 255

1340 Huer me ssel weþe þet word er hit be yzed.

Ayenbite (1866) 256

1576 Words of worth, and worthy to be **wayed**.

G. Gascoigne, *Steele Glas* 215

1579 If we **way** Poetes wordes and not ther meaning, our learning in them wilbe very mene.

T. Lodge, *Protogenes* 16

1627 The old King..thought the Preacher never had thought of his Sermon, till he spoke it... I knew that he had **weighed** every syllable, for halfe a year before.

J. Donne, *Letters* (1651) 309

1636 Then Hope replyde,.. And wisely **weighd** his words.

A. Montgomerie, *Cherrie & Slae* (new edition) 1164

1655 I must.. **weigh** my words before they are sent abroad.

in F. P. Verney & M. M. Verney, *Memoirs of Verney Family 17th Century* (1907) vol. II. 14

1725 His words well-**weigh'd**, the gen'ral voice approv'd.

A. Pope, translation of Homer, *Odyssey* vol. III. xiii. 62

1846 The moralist..has far other work than to **weigh** expressions and analyze definitions.

J. Martineau, *Essays Philosophical & Theological* (1869) 2nd Series 64

1847 Mr. Carker read this slowly: **weighing** the words as he went.

C. Dickens, *Dombey & Son* (1848) xxii. 213

1877 I **weigh** my words when I say that if the nation could purchase a potential Watt, or Davy, or Faraday, at the cost of a hundred thousand pounds down, he would be dirt-cheap at the money.

T. H. Huxley, *Technical Educ. Sci. & Cult.* (1881) 82

II.12.c. With object-clause. Now *rare*.

1526-

Often **to weigh by, with, within oneself**.

1526 Pondering & **weyeng** also, that of all vertues, mercy is moste necessarily requyred to this miserable worlde.

W. Bonde, *Pylgrimage of Perfection* iii. sig. FFFv

1549 Whether any suche thyng..maye hereafter happen, let euery true christen harte..well consyder and **wey** by himselfe.

- E. Allen, translation of L. Juda, *Paraphr. Reuelacion S. John* xi. f. 16, in M. Coverdale et al., translation of Erasmus, *Paraphrase Newe Testament* vol. II
- 1553** They **wayed** also that both the sauegard of them, and of the king lay in the handes of one that was a prisoner.
J. Brende, translation of Q. Curtius Rufus, *Historie* v. f. 81
- 1553** I beseech yow.. **waye** wyth your self, what a good Master our hevenlye Father ys unto yow.
in J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1721) vol. III. App. xi. 30
- 1573** If they would **waye** wyth themselues, that all men..haue the vse of reason.
T. Bedingfield, translation of G. Cardano, *Comforte* (1576) ii. 18 b
- 1578** Good Maddame **way**, by lawe, your Lord doth dye.
G. Whetstone, *Promos & Cassandra: 2nd Part* v. v. Mj
- 1609** And I a tyrant haue no leasure taken To **waigh** how once I suffered in your crime.
W. Shakespeare, *Sonnets* cxx. sig. H2
- 1621** Well **weighing** with my selfe, that it was a Work might yeeld some profit to my Countrie men of England.
T. W. in translation of S. Goulart, *Wise Vieillard* Epistle Ded. sig. A2^v
- 1676** You thought me dead, and prudently did **weigh** Tears were but vain.
J. Dryden, *Aureng-Zebe* v. 80
- 1683** We ye free People of ye Town..of Salem.. **weighing** well in ourselves y^t nothing can more readily conduce to our..Happiness, then a fair and just settlement of our Foundations [etc.].
Pennsylvania Arch. (1852) vol. I. 75
- 1803** The Court ought to **weigh**, whether the doubt is so reasonable and fair, that the property is left in his hands not marketable.
Eldon in Vesey, *Chanc. Cases* (1827) vol. VIII. 427
- 1825** He **weighed** within himself, whether [etc.].
W. Scott, *Talisman* iii, in *Tales of Crusaders* vol. III. 71
- 1841-8** Let any one **weigh** well what it is to translate such a collection of documents as constitute the Bible.
F. Myers, *Catholic Thoughts* vol. II. iii. §42. 161

- 1894** The Liberal delegates were fervid only when 'weighing-up' the House of Peers and insisting upon its disestablishment.
Westminster Gazette 15 February 5/1
- 1897** I will watch him closer for the future. I should have come up earlier now, but that I was weighing up his servant, an arrant Whig and a spy to boot.
'O. Rhoscomyl', *For White Rose of Arno* (U.K. edition) 43
- 1904** 'I knew too much about her,' she said. 'I had weighed her up.'
Daily Chronicle 14 January 7

colloquial and slang

II.13. †

- II.13.a.** To esteem, value, think highly of; to count dear or precious; to ascribe value or importance to. Often with negative: (Not) to care for or regard. *Obsolete.* **?c1225–1681**

- ?c1225**
(?a1200) Cunde of god heorte. is to beon offered of sunne þer as nan nis ofte. oðer weie swiðere his sunne sumchere þenne he þurte weien hit to lutel is as uuel oðer wurse.
Ancrene Riwe (Cleopatra MS. C.vi) (1972) 250
- c1405**
(c1385) That lord hath litel of discrecioun That in swich caas kan no dyuysioun But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.
G. Chaucer, *Knight's Tale* (Hengwrt MS.) (2003) 923
- c1449** Whi therfore schulen we ouer miche weie and apprise his sei yng?
R. Pecock, *Repressor* (1860) 335
- 1496–7** The same Kyng.., not fearyng Almyghty God in breking his seid promys nor weiyng his Honour in the same.
Act 12 Henry VII c. 12 Preamble
- 1567** Take no care for that, for I do not greatly waye it, it was worth but iii.s. iiii.d.
T. Harman, *Caueat for Commen Cursetors* (new edition) sig. Eiii^v
- 1579** Nought weigh I, who my song doth prayse or blame.
E. Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender* June 73

- 1592** Henry the second, that so highly weigh'd mee.
S. Daniel, *Complaint of Rosamond* xxiii
- 1595-7** I, he wayes more his flocke then me.
J. Lyly, *Woman in Moone* iii. ii. 289
- 1598** You waigh me not, O thats you care not for me.
W. Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost* v. ii. 27
- 1633** My deeds nephew Shall speake my loue, what men report, I waigh not.
P. Massinger, *New Way to pay Old Debts* iii. iii. sig. H2
- 1676** The Estates would bee enough inclinable to it as weighing interest more than honour.
W. Temple in C. E. Pike, *Essex Papers* (1913) vol. II. 81
- 1681** I do not weigh you a pin..*Non ego te flocci facio.*
W. Robertson, *Phraseologia Generalis* 1306/2

II.13.b. † With adjective complement (*light, dear, etc.*). *Obsolete.*

1592-1616

- 1592** To let them see how light I wey their words.
Arden of Feversham i. i. 361
- c1595** Thy people all beholding: Who deere their deaths dost weigh.
Countess of Pembroke, *Psalme cxvi.* 39 in *Collected Works* (1998) vol. II. 187
- σ1599** Them all, and all that she so deare did way, Thence-forth she left.
E. Spenser, *Canto Mutabilitie* vi. lv, in *Faerie Queene* (1609) sig. Hh6^v
- σ1616** In cases of defence, 'tis best to weigh The Enemie more mightie then he seemes.
W. Shakespeare, *Henry V* (1623) ii. iv. 43
- σ1616** Let euerie word waigh heaue of her worth, That he does waigh too light.
W. Shakespeare, *All's Well that ends Well* (1623) iii. iv. 32

II.14. † *intransitive.*

II.14.a. To pay heed or deference to. *Scottish*.

1423–85

1423 Myn effectis grete, Vnto the quhich ȝe aughten maist weye.

Kingis Quair cxx

c1485 Suppos thai haue na souerane to quham thai wey bot anerly god allane.

(1456) G. Hay, *Buke of Law of Armys* (2005) 147

Scottish English

II.14.b. † With of: To ponder, consider (something); to judge of, estimate, value, care for. *Obsolete*.

1573–96

1573 God waieth not..Of any vesture, or outward apparance a mite.

New Custome iii. i. sig. D iij^v

1577 But weye of this euery man as pleaseth him.

M. Hanmer, translation of Bishop Eusebius in *Auncient Ecclesiasticall Histories* v. v. 82

1584 Solduvius, not..willing to weigh of the submissiue request of his daughter, interrupted her thus.

T. Lodge, *Delectable Historie of Forbonius & Prisceria* 35

1596 Vnworthy she to be belou'd so dere, That could not weigh of worthinesse aright.

E. Spenser, *Second Part of Faerie Queene* vi.vii. sig. Ee7^v

II.14.c. † With negative: (Not) to hesitate to (do something). *Obsolete*.

?1573

?1573 The women of Scithia called Amazones..wayed not to encounter with Hercules in the fielde.

L. Lloyd, *Pilgrimage of Princes* 14

III. To have heaviness or weight.

III.15. *intransitive*. Of a material object or substance: To have a greater or less degree of heaviness, as measured by the scales.

III.15.a. To be equal to or balance (a specified weight) in the scales.

Old English-

The specifying word is to be regarded as a predicative complement rather than as governed by the verb.

- OE** Se sester sceal **wegan** twa pund be sylfyr gewyht.
Saxon Leechdoms vol. III. 92
- OE** Ælc an hægelstan **wegeð** fif pund.
Wulfstan, Homilies xlv. 228
- c1330** A dede Beues binde to a ston gret, Pat **weg** seue quarters of whet.
(?c1300) *Bevis of Hampton* (Auchinleck MS.) l. 1424
- 1387** Oon of the hameres **weiede** tweie so moche as anoþer.
J. Trevisa, translation of R. Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. III. 207
- c1405** Hir Couerchiefes..I dorste swere they **weyeden** . ten pownd That on a Sondag weeren vp on hir heed.
(c1387-95) G. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales Prologue* (Hengwrt MS.) (2003) l. 456
- 1474** One framosian had promysed to hym as moche weyght of pure gold as the heed **weyed** .
W. Caxton, translation of *Game & Playe of Chesse* (1883) iii. iv. 111
- 1529** Ane silver spune and a masar veand 3 uncis.
Registrum Magni Sigilli Scotorum (1883) 177
- 1553** The fleshe therof **wayed** .xlvij. pound weyght.
R. Eden, translation of S. Münster, *Treatyse of Newe India* sig. Jviiij
- a1616** Here's the note How much your Chaine **weighs** to the vtmost charect.
W. Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors* (1623) iv. i. 28
- 1663** A little..Key, not **weighing** a Shilling.
Marquis of Worcester, *Century of Names & Scantlings of Inventions* §69
- 1675** They'd have it..so as the Pieces of Silver and Gold should **weigh** one the other.
R. Vaughan, *Discourse of Coin & Coinage* viii. 75
- 1774** Some of them [sc. marmots] are found to **weigh** above twenty pounds.
O. Goldsmith, *History of Earth* vol. IV. 44
- 1838** The gum **weighed** 3 per cent of the almonds analyzed.
T. Thomson, *Chemistry of Organic Bodies* 891

1856 In person he was tall and corpulent, weighing something over twenty stone.
J. Richardson, *Recollections* vol. I. vi. 145

measurement

III.15.b. With adverb or pred. adj.

?c1225-

- ?c1225** Hwenne twa beoreð an burðen & þe oðer leaue hit. þenne mai þe þe up haldeð hit felen hu hit **weie**.
(?a1200) *Ancrene Riwe* (Cleopatra MS. C.vi) (1972) 171
- c1290** Heouene geth al aboute þe eorþe, euene it mot **weyge**.
St. Michael 395 in *South English Legendary* 311
- a1300** He lep in [the bucket], and **way** sumdel.
Vox & Wolf 237 in W. C. Hazlitt, *Remains of Early Popular Poetry of England* (1864) vol. I. 66
- c1385** And as she woke, hir bed she felt presse. What best ys that, quod she, that **weyeth** thus?
G. Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women* (Fairfax MS.) 1788
- a1400** The childe swa heuy **woghe** þat ofte-sythes one knees he hym droghe.
St. Cristofer 364 in Horstm., *Altenglische Legenden* (1881) 458
- c1440** A! sir, yhe **whe** wele!
York Mysteries xxx. 136
- c1475** Ther ys to moche cloth, yt **weys** as ony lede.
Macro Plays, Mankind 692
- 1481** They..becam stronge, and delyuer in suche wyse that the armes that they bare **weyed** nothyng as them semed.
W. Caxton, translation of *Siege & Conqueste of Jerusalem* (1893) cxxxviii. 205
- 1581** His shield that waightie **waied**.
A. Hall, translation of Homer, *10 Books of Iliades* x. 174
- 1586** The heauie loade, did **weye** so harde behinde.
G. Whitney, *Choice of Emblemes* 41
- a1616** Heere's sport indeede: How heuy **weighes** my Lord?
W. Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra* (1623) iv. xvi. 33

1779 Like barrels with their bellies full, They only weigh the heavier.

W. Cowper, *Yearly Distress* 48

1819 His fingers fumbled as if..the other [sc. his beaver] had weighed equal with a stone of lead.

W. Scott, *Bride of Lammermoor* ix, in *Tales of my Landlord* 3rd Series vol. I. 266

III.16.a. *figurative* (with more or less retention of the literal idea or expression).

?c1225-

?c1225 *Misericordia super exaltat iudicium* [James ii. 13]:..his merci towart us weizeð eauer mare þe narewe
(?a1200) richte.

Ancrene Riwe (Cleopatra MS. C.vi) (1972) 246

1340 Loue is þe wyzte ine þe balance..uor non oþer þing ne may weze, huanne me comp to nime ech his ssepe,
bote loue and charite.

Ayenbite (1866) 91

c1386 Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at al.

G. Chaucer, *Monk's Tale* 243

1390 Ther ben manye of these Lovers, that thogh thei love a lyte, That scarsly wolde it weie a myte Yit wolde thei
have a pound again, As doth Usure in his bargain.

J. Gower, *Confessio Amantis* vol. II. 275

c1440 For synne is not lyzt, but it is hevy, and weythe more than lede.

Gesta Romanorum xlv. 177

c1450 ʒe weyin now in mennys hertys, in dreed of ʒoure myzt, more þan all þe world, for all þe world dare nozt
wythstonde ʒou.

Jacob's Well (1900) 4

1600 I know them, yea And what they weigh, euen to the vtmost scruple, Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging
boies.

W. Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing* v. i. 94

a1616 One must proue greatest. While they weigh so euen, We hold our Towne for neither: yet for both.

W. Shakespeare, *King John* (1623) ii. i. 332

a1616 Let euerie word waigh heaueie of her worth.

III.16.b. † To amount or be equivalent to. *Obsolete.*

1529–88

1529 Yt gaue hym occasyon to dowl lest Luther ment not al thing so euyl as his wordys seme to way to.

T. More, *Dialogue Heresy* iv. xi. 108 b/2

1588 Whether a man doe actually vse force in his entrie, or doe come so readily appointed, and araid for it,..it seemeth to weigh to a violent (or *Forcible*) entrie.

W. Lambarde, *Eirenarcha* (new edition) ii. iv. 152

III.16.c. † to weigh with (also **even with**): to counterpoise in power, value, etc.; to be of equal value or importance with. *Obsolete.*

1600–56

1600 In euery thing the purpose must weigh with the folly.

W. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2* ii. ii. 168

α1616 Giue him thy Daughter, What you bestow, in him Ile counterpoize, And make him weigh with her.

W. Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens* (1623) i. i. 150

1656 France may vie and weigh even with Greece it self, in point of Learning.

Earl of Monmouth, translation of T. Boccalini, *Ragguagli di Parnasso* (1674) i. iii. 4

III.16.d. to weigh against, †again: to counterbalance, countervail.

c1410–

c1410 [\[see sense IV.20\]](#).

1600 Hee that seeketh to way against his owne will, oftentimes kicketh against the prick.

R. Greene, *Neuer too Late* (new edition) ii. sig. K4^v

α1616 Much more, in this great worke..should we..know our owne estate, How able such a Worke to vndergo, To weigh against his Opposite?

W. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2* (1623) i. iii. 55

- 1833** Such evils..can neither be helped nor be allowed to weigh against the advantages of union.
H. Martineau, *Manchester Strike* (new edition) iv. 47
- 1883** He believes that every sin will weigh against him, and drag him down in the scale of being.
J. Gilmour, *Among Mongols* xviii. 216

III.16.e. Quasi-transitive. To equal (something else) in weight or value; to counterbalance; †to be tantamount or equivalent to.

1583-

1583 So that eyther thou couldest sooth her with a frumpe, or els lay a loading carde on her backe, should wey a scoffe.

R. Greene, *Mamillia* i. f. 6^v

1598 In deede I waigh not you, and therefore light.

W. Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost* v. ii. 26

1623 W. Shakespeare & J. Fletcher, *Henry VIII* i. i. 11.

1623 The heads of all thy Brother-Cardinals..Weigh'd not a haire of his.

W. Shakespeare & J. Fletcher, *Henry VIII* iii. ii. 260

1893 There are difficulties..in the poem. Only they do not weigh the enormous difficulty of a multiplicity of Homers.

Westminster Gazette 21 March 3/2

III.16.f. † absol. Of two things: To balance each other. *Obsolete.*

1523

1523 So that finally the good and the yuell wayed .

Lord Berners, translation of J. Froissart, *Chron.* (1812) vol. I. xlili. 59

III.17. *intransitive.* To be of (much or little) value or account; to be regarded as considerable or important; to have influence *with* (a person) when he or she is forming an estimate or judgement.

c1386-

- c1386** Dedly synne, whan the loue of any thyng **weyeth** in the herte of man as mucche as the loue of god or moore.
G. Chaucer, *Parson's Tale* (Hengwrt MS.) ¶367
- 1597** Why things so light in their owne nature should **waigh** in the opinions of men so much.
R. Hooker, *Of Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* v. lxxv. 158
- a1600** And his command with him richt litill **weyit**.
(1535) W. Stewart, translation of H. Boece, *Buik of Croniclis of Scotland* (1858) vol. III. 313
- 1659** Younge Darby [6th Earl], whoe nowe **weighes** much less then his name formerly hath donn.
in E. Nicholas, *Nicholas Papers* (1920) vol. IV. 179
- 1670** Pleasing to God, or not pleasing, with them **weighed** alike; and the worse most an end was the weightier.
J. Milton, *History of Britain* iii. 107
- a1684** In truth their Testimonie did little **weigh** with me.
J. Evelyn, *Diary* anno 1680 (1955) vol. IV. 230
- 1705** A Wise Man is then best satisfy'd..when he finds..that the same Argument, which **weighs** with Him, hath weigh'd with Thousands..before him.
F. Atterbury, *Sermon St. James's Chapel* 22
- 1766** Nor ought it to **weigh** that Murray run the hazard of his factor's bankruptcy.
Lord Kames, *Remarkable Decisions of Court of Session 1730-52* 79
- 1838** There is another consideration that **weighs** much with me.
T. B. Macaulay, *Letter to Napier* in G. O. Trevelyan, *Life & Letters of Macaulay* (1876) vol. II. vii. 12
- a1853** I have not the vanity to say..that my name had weight with many; but it did **weigh** with some.
F. W. Robertson, *Lectures* (1858) ii. 51
- 1870** Every man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world **weigh** less than a single lovely action.
J. R. Lowell, *Rousseau in Among my Books* 1st Series 338
- 1899** Holland is a sound man, and his opinion would **weigh** with any judge.
A. Conan Doyle, *Duet* xiv. 199
- 1910** The Roman verdict **weighed** much throughout Christendom.
W. E. Beet, *Rise of Papacy* ii. 79

iv. To affect, or be affected, by weight.

IV.18.a. *transitive. to weigh down:* to draw, force, or bend down by pressure of weight; *figurative* to depress, oppress, lie heavy on. Similarly, **to weigh back, †on one side, to the earth.** **a1340-**

- a1340** He..likyd to be seruaunte of syn, swa þat his synn weghe him down, þat he neuer rise til þe rist of heuen.
R. Rolle, *Psalter* vii. 17
- 1565** The vine lodeth and weigheth downe the elme.
T. Cooper, *Thesaurus at Degrauo*
- 1579** The watrie wette weighed downe his head.
E. Spenser, *Shepherd's Calender* February 232
- 1595** O could the mighty but giue bounds to pride And weigh backe fortune ere shee pull them downe.
S. Daniel, *First Fowre Bookes of Ciuile Warres* iv. lxxvi. sig. X4^v
- 1598** Then the rowers thought best to way the gallie on one side [Latin *unum in latus inclinare*], and so to sincke her.
R. Grenewey, translation of Tacitus, *Annales* xiv. ii. 201
- 1600** Ô gentle sleep..how haue I frighted thee, That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-liddes downe..?
W. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2* (2nd issue) iii. i. 7
- 1611** The corruptible body presseth downe the soule, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth downe the minde that museth vpon many things.
Bible (King James) Wisdom ix. 15
- 1712** There are many Excellent Persons, who are weighed down by this habitual Sorrow of Heart.
J. Addison, *Spectator* No. 494. ¶4
- 1783** The plentiful moisture incumber'd the flower, And weigh'd down its beautiful head.
W. Cowper, *Rose* 4
- 1857** The people were weighed down by an insufferable taxation.
H. T. Buckle, *History of Civilization in England* vol. I. xi. 625
- 1858** The Kaffirs returned, almost weighed down by the immense weight of meat.
A. W. Drayson, *Sporting Scenes South Africa* 208
- 1865** Falling and weighed back by clamorous arms Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion.
A. C. Swinburne, *Atalanta in Calydon* 1303

- 1879** Causes other than the inherent faults of the poem long continued to weigh down the reputation of *Paradise Lost*.
M. Pattison, *Milton* xiii. 215
- 1884** What, then, was the *consuetudo carnalis* which thus weighed to the earth this soul of fire, striving to ascend to its true home?
Contemporary Review February 252

IV.18.b. † Without adverb: To depress, dispirit. *Obsolete. rare.*

1640

- 1640** You are light Gentlemen, Nothing to weigh your hearts.
J. Fletcher & J. Shirley, *Night-walker* i. sig. B3

IV.19. † *intransitive.*

IV.19.a. Of the scale of a balance (with *up* or *down*): To rise or sink according as it holds the lesser or greater weight. Also *gen.* (with *down*): To sink through its own heaviness or load. *Obsolete.* **?1566–1626**

- ?1566** That Deuill..doth all that he can to make his parte [of the balance] way downe the heauier.
W. P., translation of C. S. Curio, *Pasquine in Traunce* 65
- 1626** The Cause is the plenty of the Sap, and the Softnesse of the Stalke, which maketh the Bough, being over-loaden, and not stiffely vpheld, weigh downe.
F. Bacon, *Sylua Syluarum* (1627) §610

measurement

IV.19.b. † **to weigh with:** to move with, follow the motion of (something that shifts or varies). **to weigh against:** to strive to make head against (the wind). *Obsolete.* **1553–57**

- 1553** Waying with the worlde, according as the tyme should alter [Latin *semper ex ancipiti mutatione temporum pendens*].
J. Brende, translation of Q. Curtius Rufus, *Historie* iv. f. 34^v

1557 A fainte harted mayster of a shippe..shrinketh from the sterne, and..suffreth the ship alone to waye wyth the waues [Latin *puppim permittit fluctibus*].

M. Basset, translation of T. More, *Treatise upon Passion* in *Wks.* 1372/1

1557 And where thou sekis a quiet port, Thou dost but weigh agaynst the winde.

Earl of Surrey et al., *Songes & Sonettes* (new edition) f. 109

nautical

IV.20. *transitive.* Of an object set in the scales (with *down*, *up*, †*out*; also †**to weigh to the beam**): To turn the scale when weighed against (something else); to outweigh, cause to rise in the scale. Also **to weigh down** (the balance or scale). Often *figurative*. **1387-**

1387 At þe laste þe stoon was leide in a balaunce, and he weieþ [MSS. α, β, γ, weygh, weyȝ, wayȝ] up al þat me myȝte leie aȝenst hym in þe oþer side.

J. Trevisa, translation of R. Higden, *Polychronicon* vol. IV. 7

c1410 Helpe me to weye Ageyn the feend, þat with his handes tweye, And his might, plukke wole at the balance To weye vs doun.

T. Hoccleve, *Mother of God* 21

c1450 Her..euell dedes..weyed downe and ouercame her good dedes.

Knight de la Tour 66

c1450 When alle his synnys wern layde on þe balans and was nygh ouercomyn, then come thylke brennet dekon, and layde a grete pote on þe wey þe which anon weyit vp al togedyr.

Mirk's Festial 221

1596 Hard is the doubt, and difficult to deeme, When all three kinds of loue together meet, And doe dispart the hart with powre extreme, Whether shall weigh the balance downe.

E. Spenser, *Second Part of Faerie Queene* iv.ix. sig. H8

1596 Yet all the wrongs could not a litle right downe way.

E. Spenser, *Second Part of Faerie Queene* v. ii. 46

1597 But in the ballance of great Bullingbrooke, Besides himselfe are all the English peeres, And with that oddes he weighs King Richard downe.

W. Shakespeare, *Richard II* iii. iv. 90

- a1616** We poizing vs in her defectiue scale, Shall weigh thee to the beame.
W. Shakespeare, *All's Well that ends Well* (1623) ii. iii. 156
- 1623** My Friends, They that must weigh out my affilictions.
W. Shakespeare & J. Fletcher, *Henry VIII* iii. i. 87
- 1707** Four Ounces of *Vigo* Dust, shall weigh him down more, than four Tun of Honesty.
E. Ward, *Wooden World Dissected* 14
- 1711** One Whig shall weigh down ten Tories.
J. Swift, *Examiner* No. 26
- 1841** Where all other inducements were wanting, the habitual carelessness of his disposition stepped in and still weighed down the scale on the same side.
C. Dickens, *Old Curiosity Shop* i. vii. 119
- 1902** Whose mistakes..are a thousand times weighed up by his countless individual deeds of true friendship.
Westminster Gazette 27 March 7/3

measurement

IV.21. † *transitive*. To sway or influence (a person); to induce (a person) to (do something). *Obsolete*.

c1571–77

- c1571** When theis wordes weyed him nothings his owne man..began to reprove him for not relenting to so riche a proffer.
E. Campion, *Two Bokes of Histories of Ireland* (1663) ii. v. 91
- 1577** By the procurement as well of the Archbyshoppe as of all the Cleargie, [the legate] was weighed to gyue the Citizens absolution.
R. Stanyhurst, *Hist. Irelande* iii. 79/1 in R. Holinshed, *Chronicles* vol. I

IV.22. *intransitive* with *on* or *upon*.

IV.22.a. Of a thought, feeling, circumstance: To lie heavy on, depress (a person, his or her spirits, etc.). Also in indirect passive.

1794–

- 1794** If either of you had known how each moment of delay **weighs** upon the heart of her who loves.
R. B. Sheridan, *Duenna* (new edition) ii. 46
- 1820** Where am I now? Not in your heart while care **weighs** on your brow.
J. Keats, *Lamia* ii, in *Lamia & Other Poems* 29
- 1832** Why are we **weighed** upon with heaviness?
Lord Tennyson, *Lotos-eaters: Choric Song* ii, in *Poems* (new edition) 111
- 1838** Something seemed to **weigh** upon her spirits.
E. Bulwer-Lytton, *Alice* vol. I. ii. ii. 138
- 1858** This London atmosphere **weighs** on me.
J. W. Carlyle, *Letters* vol. II. 387
- 1863** The sceptre of despotism **weighs** oppressively on all free public life.
M. Howitt, translation of F. Bremer, *Greece & Greeks* vol. II. xii. 47
- 1909** The silence began to **weigh** upon her.
J. L. Allen, *Bride of Mistletoe* v. 147

IV.22.b. To insist or dwell *upon* (a fact, argument, etc.). *rare*.

1817–

- 1817** These facts will be further **weighed** upon as we proceed.
H. T. Colebrooke, *Algebra Notes & Illustr.* p. xlii
- 1818** Without **weighing** upon this surmise.
H. T. Colebrooke, *On Import of Colonial Corn* 70

Additional sense (2015)

† *intransitive*. To go, proceed. Cf. **way** *v.* 1. *Obsolete*.

c1300–1450

[Earlier currency is perhaps shown by the following isolated example (however, emendation has also been suggested especially to supply an object for the verb):

OE Ymb hine wægon wigend unforhte, hare heorawulfas hilde gretton, þurstige þræcwiges, peodenholde.

]

- c1300** Heouene geth al-a-boute þe eorþe, euene it mot **weyȝe**.
St. Michael (Laud MS.) l. 395 in C. Horstmann, *Early South-English Legendary* (1887) 311 (Middle English Dictionary)
- c1350**
(a1333) Children..lbore to schorte lyues..Bote hi arigt icristned be, Fram heuene euere hi **weyep**.
 William of Shoreham, *Poems* (1902) 11
- a1450** Sho **weighed** euyñ down to þe fayr lady.
Revelation of Purgatory (Longleat MS.) (1985) l. 860 (Middle English Dictionary)

Pronunciation

BRITISH ENGLISH

/weɪ/ 

way

U.S. ENGLISH

/weɪ/ 

way

Pronunciation keys

Forms

Variant forms

Past tense and participle **weighed** /weɪd/. Forms: Old English **wegan** (*3rd singular wigeð, wihð; wegeð, wehð*), Middle English **weȝe** (Middle English *3rd singular weihð*), Middle English **weȝe**, **weyȝe**, Middle English **weghe**, 1500s **weygh(e)**, **waygh**, 1500s–1600s **weighe**, **waigh(e)**, 1500s– **weigh**; Middle English–1500s **weie**, Middle English–1600s **weye** (Middle English **wheyhe**, Middle English–1600s *Scottish veye*), Middle English–1600s (1800s *Scottish*) **wey** (Middle English–1600s *Scottish vey*); Middle English–1600s **waie**, Middle English–1600s

waye (Middle English **whaye**), **way**, 1500s–1600s **weay**; Middle English–1500s *northern* and *Scottish* **wye** (Middle English **whye**), 1600s *Scottish* **wie**; Middle English **whe**, 1500s *Scottish* **we-**, **ve-**, 1800s *Scottish* **wee**.

past tense Old English **wæg**, *plural* **wægon**, Middle English **way**, *plural* **weȝe**, Middle English **weȝ**, **wey**, **weyȝ(e)**, **weygh**, **wayȝ**, **weghe**, **weie**, (? **woghe**).

β.
Middle English **weide** (Middle English *plural* **weiden**), Middle English **weiede**, Middle English **we(y)ȝed(e)**, etc., Middle English–1600s **weied**, **weyed**, 1500s–1600s **wayed**, **waied**, **waighed**, etc., 1500s– **weighed**.

past participle Old English **wegen**, Middle English **iwæiȝen**, Middle English **yweȝe**, **weyen**, (**i-**), (**y**)**wey(e)**, (**i**)**weie**; Middle English **wawyn**, **wowyn**, **wowne**.

β.
Middle English **yweid**, (**i**)**weied**, **weȝed**, Middle English–1600s **weyed**, Middle English **weiede**, Middle English–1500s **weyd**, 1500s **wei(e)d**, **wayed**, **wayd(e)**, etc., 1600s– **weighed**.

Frequency

weigh is one of the 5,000 most common words in modern written English. It is similar in frequency to words like *allocation*, *hostile*, *marine*, *reporter*, and *strict*.

It typically occurs about 20 times per million words in modern written English.

weigh is in frequency band 6, which contains words occurring between 10 and 100 times per million words in modern written English. [More about OED's frequency bands](#)

Frequency data is computed programmatically, and should be regarded as an estimate.

Frequency of *weigh*, v.¹, 1750–2010

* Occurrences per million words in written English

Historical frequency series are derived from Google Books Ngrams (version 2), a data set based on the Google Books corpus of several million books printed in English between 1500 and 2010.

The overall frequency for a given word is calculated by summing frequencies for the main form of the word, any plural or inflected forms, and any major spelling variations.

For sets of homographs (distinct entries that share the same word-form, e.g. *mole*, n.¹, *mole*, n.², *mole*, n.³, etc.), we have estimated the frequency of each homograph entry as a fraction of the total Ngrams frequency for the word-form. This may result in inaccuracies.

Frequency of *weigh*, v.¹, 2017–2023

* Occurrences per million words in written English

Modern frequency series are derived from a corpus of 20 billion words, covering the period from 2017 to the present. The corpus is mainly compiled from online news sources, and covers all major varieties of World English.

Compounds & derived words

Sort by

overweigh, v. ?c1225-

transitive. To exceed in weight; to be heavier, weightier, or more significant than; to outweigh; to preponderate over.

again-weigh, v. 1340

transitive to reweigh.

weighing, n. c1380-

The action or process of ascertaining the weight of an object.

weigher, n. a1400-

A person who is employed to weigh commodities; an official appointed to weigh or to supervise weighing, to test weights, etc. Also weigher-in.

weighing, adj. c1400

Heavy. Obsolete. rare.

weighable, adj. 1429-

That can be weighed; heavy enough (or reckoned as heavy enough) to be weighed in scales.

counterweigh, v. c1430-

transitive. To counterbalance, counterpoise.

weighed, adj. c1440-

That has had its weight ascertained by the scales.

misweigh, v. a1475

transitive. To put (scales) off balance.

weigh-balk, n. c1485-

The beam of a pair of scales or steelyard; plural scales.

weigh-beam, n. 1492-

A balance or steelyard.

weigh-gilt, n. 1497-98

A payment for weighing (after Dutch waaggeld, German wage-, wägegeld).

outweigh, v. 1534-

transitive. To weigh more than. Also in extended use.

weighage, n. 1547–1856

A duty or toll paid for the weighing of goods.

veyra, int. c1550

Repeated when raising an anchor, to keep time.

weigh-brods, n. 1578–

plural boards used for the scales of a large balance.

weigh-tree, n. 1578–

= swingletree, n. 2. Also: spec. the largest of the three units of a swingletree; = evener, n. 2b.

upweigh, v. a1593–

transitive to lift up.

weigh-leaf, n. 1593

A board or plate used as a scale.

downweigh, v. 1596–

transitive. Chiefly poetic. To weigh down; to depress, as if with a weight.

aweigh, adv. 1606–

With reference to a ship's anchor: lifted up from the bottom before sailing. Cf. a-trip, adv. 2.

unweighing, adj. a1616

Thoughtless; inconsiderate.

weigh-master, n. 1617–

(Cf. German wagemeister, Dutch waagmeester), the official in charge of a weigh-house or public scales.

re-weigh, v. 1622–

transitive. To weigh again or a further time. Also figurative and intransitive.

weighbridge, n. 1796–

A platform scale, flush with the road, for weighing vehicles, cattle, etc.

fore-weigh, v. 1812-

weigh-lock, n. 1834-

A canal-lock at which barges are weighed and their tonnage is settled.

weigh-bar, n. 1841-

= weigh-shaft, n.

weigh-shaft, n. 1867-

= rock shaft, n.

weighment, n. 1878-

The action of weighing (commodities).

weighman, n. 1883-

A man employed to weigh goods, etc.; in a colliery, one who weighs the tubs of coal as they leave the cage at the pit-mouth (for check-weighman see...

weigh-box, n. 1884-

One of a set of boxes, used in the operation of 'drawing' wool, in which the wool is more accurately weighed.

weigh-out, n. 1886-

The verification of a jockey's declared weight before a race (see weigh, v.¹ II.9).

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