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# expand verb

ex·pand   (ik-'spand ◀▶)

**expanded; expanding; expands**

*Synonyms of expand*

NEW

Simple Definition



*transitive verb*

**1** : to open up : **UNFOLD**

Take our 3 question quiz on **expand**

**2** : to increase the extent, number, volume, or scope of : **ENLARGE**

They *expanded* the business to serve a larger area.

**3 a** : to express at length or in greater detail

**b** : to write out in full

*expand* all abbreviations

**c** : to subject to mathematical expansion

*expand* a function in a power series

*intransitive verb*

**1** : to open out : **SPREAD**

The universe is *expanding*.

**2** : to increase in extent, number, volume, or scope

an *expanding* population

**3** : to speak or write fully or in detail → used with *on* or *upon*

*expanded* on the theme

**4** : to feel generous or optimistic

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develop

supplement

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### Choose the Right Synonym for *expand*

**EXPAND, AMPLIFY, SWELL, DISTEND, INFLATE, DILATE** mean to increase in size or volume.

**EXPAND** may apply regardless of the manner of increase (such as growth, unfolding, addition of parts).

a business that *expands* every year

**AMPLIFY** implies the extension or enlargement of something inadequate.

*amplify* the statement with details

**SWELL** implies gradual expansion beyond a thing's original or normal limits.

the bureaucracy *swelled* to unmanageable proportions

**DISTEND** implies outward extension caused by pressure from within.

a *distended* abdomen

**INFLATE** implies expanding by introduction of air or something insubstantial and suggests a vulnerability to sudden collapse.

an *inflated* ego

**DILATE** applies especially to expansion of circumference.

*dilated* pupils



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His business has **expanded** to serve the entire state.

The coffee shop may **expand** into a full restaurant.

He has **expanded** his business to serve the entire state.

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## Recent Examples on the Web

**i** Examples are automatically compiled from online sources to show current usage. [Read More](#)

Ulbrich envisions Walker **expanding** his leadership role on the defense as well with Elliss and defensive tackle David Onyemata no longer in the building.

– Josh Kendall, *New York Times*, 16 June 2026

The backstory What started as a private project, owned by former TAP Air pilot Gonçalo Pessoa and wife Patrícia Trigo, has **expanded** over the years to become arguably the most talked about resort in Portugal.

– Condé Nast, *Condé Nast Traveler*, 16 June 2026

An Egyptian Film Week marks the 70th anniversary of China-Egypt diplomatic relations, while the festival continues to **expand** its Belt and Road Film Festival Alliance.

– Marcus Lim, *Variety*, 15 June 2026

The adviser said investigators **expanded** their probe as Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche took the helm of the Justice Department.

– Sarah N. Lynch, *CBS News*, 15 June 2026

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## Etymology

Middle English *expaunden*, from Latin *expandere*, from *ex-* +



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15th century, in the meaning defined at [transitive sense 1](#)

## Time Traveler

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**The first known use of *expand* was in the 15th century**

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MLA

"Expand." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/expand>. Accessed 22 Jun. 2026.

[Copy Citation](#)**expand** verbex·pand (ik-'spand)

- 1** : to open wide : **UNFOLD**  
a bird with wings *expanded*
- 2** : to increase in size, number, or amount  
substances *expand* when heated  
the *expanding* universe  
their work *expanded*
- 3** : to work out in greater detail  
*expand* an argument
- 4** : to perform the indicated mathematical operations of : write out in full  
*expand* both sides of an equation

(-'span-də-bəl) adjective

noun

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