

equity

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English

Alternative forms

- [æquity](#) (*archaic, poetic*)
- [equitie](#) (*archaic*)

Etymology

Attested in 14th century; from the 13th century [Old French](#) *equite*, from [Latin](#) *aequitas* (“uniformity; impartiality; fairness”). [Doublet](#) of [equality](#).

Pronunciation

- [Audio \(UK\)](#) ([file](#))
- ([US](#)) [IPA](#)^{([key](#))}: /ˈɛk.wɪ.ti/

Noun

equity (*countable and uncountable, plural [equities](#)*)

1. Fairness, impartiality, or justice as determined in light of "natural law" or "natural right".

- **1599**, [Thomas] Nashe, *Nashes Lenten Stuffe*, [...], London: [...] [Thomas Judson and Valentine Simmes] for N[icholas] L[ing] and C[uthbert] B[urby] [...], OCLC 228714942 (<http://worldcat.org/oclc/228714942>), page 2 (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k3140333/f14>):

Sufficeth what they in their graue wifedoomes fhall profcribe, I in no forte will feeke to acquite, nor presumtuouly attempte to dilpute againft the **equity** of their iudgementes, but humble and profrtrate appeale to their mercies.

2. (*law*) *Various related senses originating with the Court of Chancery in late Medieval England*

1. (*law*) The power of a court of law having extra-statutory discretion, to decide legal matters and to provide legal relief apart from, though not in violation of, the prevailing legal code; in some cases, a court "sitting in equity" may provide relief to a complainant should the code be found either inapplicable or insufficient to do so.

- **1800**, Lloyd Kenyon, 1st Baron Kenyon in *Mayor, &c. of Southampton v. Graves* (1800), 8 T. R. 592.

A Court of **equity** knows its own province.

- **1851**, Edward Sugden, 1st Baron St Leonards in *Birch v. Joy* (1851), 3 H. L. C. 598:

"A Court of **equity** interposes only according to conscience."

- **1848-55**, Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter IX:

Equity had been gradually shaping itself into a refined science which no human faculties could master without long and intense application.

2. (*law*) A right which accrues to a party in a transaction because of the nature of the transaction itself, and which is exercisable upon a change of circumstances or conditions; in other words, an equitable claim.

- **1999**, *In Re Fitzgerald*, 237 B.R. 252, 261 (Bkrcty. D.Conn. 1999):

"...the mortgagor retains 'equitable title' or the 'equity of redemption'The equity of redemption permits the mortgagor to regain legal title to the mortgaged property upon satisfying the conditions of the mortgage..."

- **1826**, James Kent, *Commentaries on American Law*

The wife's **equity** does not, according to the adjudged cases, attach, except upon that part of her personal property in action which the husband cannot acquire without the assistance of a court of **equity**

3. (*law, England*) The body of law which was developed in the English Court of Chancery, which Court had extra-statutory discretion, and is now administered alongside the common law of Britain.

3. (*finance*) Various senses related to net value

1. (*law, finance*) Value of property minus liens or other encumbrances.

I have a lot of **equity** in my house.

2. (*business*) Ownership, especially in terms of net monetary value of some business.

- **2013** June 22, “Engineers of a different kind (<http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21579879-buy-out-firm-really-does-focus-operational-improvements-engineers>)”, in *The Economist*, volume 407, number 8841, page 70:

Private-**equity** nabobs bristle at being dubbed mere financiers. Piling debt onto companies’ balance-sheets is only a small part of what leveraged buy-outs are about, they insist. Improving the workings of the businesses they take over is just as core to their calling, if not more so. Much of their pleading is public-relations bluster.

3. (*accounting*) Ownership interest in a company as determined by subtracting liabilities from assets.

4. (*poker*) A player's expected share of the pot.

4. (*nonstandard*) Equality

- **2020** July 22, Ben Bradley, “Low-income Families: Equity of Opportunity”, in *parliamentary debates* (House of Commons)^[1] (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-07-22/debates/3542FC37-BF51-4009-A1A9-2EE84CCEA3F2/Low-IncomeFamiliesEquityOfOpportunity>), column 2139:

What steps the Government are taking to help ensure **equity** of opportunity for people from low-income families.

Translations

justice, impartiality and fairness

- Armenian: արդարութիւն ([hy](#)) (*ardarut’yun*)
- Bulgarian: справедливост ([bg](#)) *f* (*spravedlivost*), безпристрастие ([bg](#)) *n* (*bezpristrastie*)
- Czech: spravedlnost ([cs](#)) *f*
- Danish: rimelighed *c*, retfærdighed *c*
- Esperanto: justeco, senpartieco, egaleco
- Finnish: oikeudenmukaisuus ([fi](#))
- French: impartialité ([fr](#)) *f*, solidarité ([fr](#)) *f*
- Galician: equidade ([gl](#)) *f*
- German: Gerechtigkeit ([de](#)) *f*, Gleichheit ([de](#)) *f*, Fairness ([de](#)) *f*, Billigkeit ([de](#)) *f*
- Greek: δικαιοσύνη ([el](#)) *f* (*dikaíosýni*)
- Hungarian: méltányosság ([hu](#)), jogosság ([hu](#))
- Irish: cóir *f*, cothromas *m*.
- Latin: aequitās *f*
- Maori: mana taurite
- Portuguese: equidade ([pt](#)) *f*, equanimidade ([pt](#)) *f*
- Romanian: imparțialitate ([ro](#)) *f*, echitate ([ro](#)) *f*, nepărtinire ([ro](#)) *f*
- Russian: справедливость ([ru](#)) *f* (*spravedlívost’*), беспристрастность ([ru](#)) *f* (*bespristrástnost’*), беспристрастие ([ru](#)) *n* (*bespristrástije*)
- Serbo-Croatian:
 - Roman: (please verify) pravičnost *f*
- Spanish: equidad ([es](#)) *f*
- Vietnamese: sự bình đẳng

legal tradition

- Catalan: equitat *f*
- Danish: billighedsret *ç*
- German: Billigkeitsrecht *η*
- Irish: cothromas *m*
- Russian: право справедливости *η* (právo spravedlívosti) (*foreign context*)

the value of property minus liens or other encumbrances

- Bulgarian: нетен капитал *m*. (neten kapital)
- Danish: friværði *ç*
- Esperanto: neta kapitalo
- German: Aktienkapital *(de)* *η*
- Irish: cothromas *m*
- Portuguese: valor líquido *m*.

ownership, especially in terms of net monetary value of some business

- Danish: aktie *ç*
- Dutch: aandeel *(nl)*
- Esperanto: akcio
- Finnish: oma pääoma *(fi)*
- French: action *(fr)* *f*
- Galician: accións *f pl*
- Georgian: კაპიტალი (kapitáli)
- German: Aktienkapital *(de)* *η*, Aktienanteil *m*., Aktien *(de)* *f pl*, Unternehmensbeteiligungen *f pl*
- Greek: μετοχικό κεφάλαιο *η* (metochikó kefálaio)
- Hungarian: részesedés *(hu)*, részvény *(hu)*, törzsrészvény
- Maori: mana taurite
- Norwegian:
 - Bokmål: aksje *(no)* *m*.
 - Nynorsk: aksje *m*.
- Portuguese: valor real *m*.
- Romanian: capital propriu *η*
- Russian: капитál *(ru)* *m*. (kapitál), собственный капитал *m*. (sóbstvennyj kapitál), собственные средства *η pl* (sóbstvennyje srédstva), áкция *(ru)* *f* (ákcija) (*share*)
- Spanish: acciones *(es)* *m. pl*

ownership interest in a company

- Bulgarian: нетен капитал (neten kapital)
- Catalan: patrimoni net *m*.
- Danish: egenkapital *ç*
- Faroese: eginogn *f*
- Finnish: oma pääoma *(fi)*
- French: capitaux propres *(fr)* *m. pl*
- German: Eigenkapital *(de)* *η*, Reinvermögen *m*.
- Hungarian: saját tőke, tiszta haszon/nyereség
- Japanese: 自己資本 *(ja)* (じこしほん, jiko shihon), 純資産 *(ja)* (じゅんしさん, junshisan)
- Norwegian:
 - Bokmål: egenkapital *m*., eigenkapital *m*.
 - Nynorsk: eigenkapital *m*.
- Spanish: patrimonio neto *m*.
- Swedish: eget kapital *η*

References

- Douglas Harper (2001–2021) , “equity (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/equity>)”, in Online Etymology Dictionary

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