

1. What does it mean?

Honour is a polysemic word in the English Language (“poly” and “semic” are both derivations of Greek words meaning “many” and “meanings”).

Choose one of the following websites to visit to learn the many meanings of “honour”.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/honour>

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/honour>

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/honour>

How many different meanings have you found?

How many of your uses of “honour” from box 1 were correct, in light of your findings?

2. Your experiences of the word “honour”

- Have you heard of the word before?
- How might you define the word to somebody else?
- Write a sentence including the word “honour”.
- Within that sentence, what type of word is “honour”?

3. Etymology (where the word comes from)

The first recorded use of “honour” as a noun and as a verb appears to be during the thirteenth century (1200s) in old French. Lots of the meanings included the idea of glory, importance, victory, triumph, showing respect, a gesture displaying respect, and nobleness. The meaning referring to a woman’s chastity appeared later in the fourteenth century. Later still, “honours” in the academic sense did not appear until the 19th century.

4. A sense of honour

One of the meanings of “honour” is concerned with the notion of both knowing and doing what is morally right. Honour is a social construct, one which is usually determined by stories and cultural ideals and expectations passed on through different generations. What may be deemed honourable by one generation or social group may not be similarly regarded by another.

If you want to be viewed as an *honourable* student, what qualities do you think you should embody? How might it be different if you wanted to be seen as an *honourable* student 150 years ago, or an *honourable* student in a country where many children are not allowed to go to school?

5. To honour (verb)

To *honour* someone means to show great respect or admiration. Sometimes this can be done by giving a title, a prize, a public mention, or an act carried out in someone’s *honour*. For example, in traditional wedding vows, both parties agree to ‘love and *honour*’ each other as long as they both ‘shall live’. Another example might be where a tree has been planted to honour the life of somebody special or important.

- As a country, how do we honour those who have fought in wars, protecting our country?
- As a nation, how do we honour Roald Dahl on his birthday?

6. Root word

Complete the table below to match the words that contain the root word “honour”, ensuring they fit in the correct linguistic category:

honourably
honour
honourable
to honour / honouring (as an act)

Noun	
Verb	
Adjective	
Adverb	



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7. Codes of honour

A code of *honour* is a set of rules or principles that bind communities together. In some communities, and in literature, honour can mean more to people and characters than the law. To be viewed as honourable by other characters is to be respected and is a true honour in itself. If any rules from the honour code are broken, the consequence of being seen as dishonourable would be unimaginable. In literature, one of the biggest ways to dishonour someone is to betray someone. Can you think of any examples in stories you have read where a character betrays another and loses the respect of them?



8. Synonyms and Antonyms

Complete the table below with a list of synonyms and antonyms for both the noun and verb forms of the word.

	Synonyms	Antonyms
Noun		
Verb		

9. Honour in Shakespeare

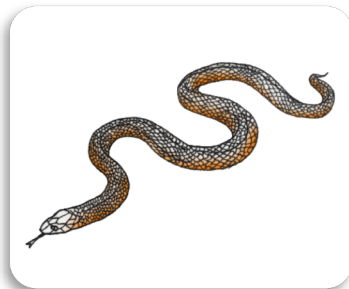
During the period that Shakespeare was writing, it was very common for men to be concerned about the way they would be judged. *Honour* here is understood to be a strong sense of what is right or due. Many of Shakespeare's plays involve the theme of *honour* and interestingly these fall into the three main categories of his plays: comedies, tragedies and histories.

10. Honour in Greek mythology

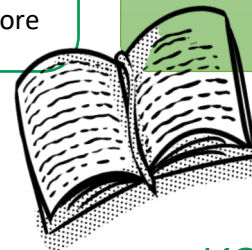
In ancient Greek culture, honour was incredibly important to everyday life. Homer's epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are believed to mark the beginnings of Greek literature. *Honour* was determined by man's ability to perform in battle. *The Iliad* is based on the battles fought by the great warrior Achilles. *Honour* was valued as more important than life itself in ancient Greek culture.

Activities:

1. Research the plot of *The Iliad* and read a summary of the epic poem from one of the links below:
https://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_homer_iliad.html#Synopsis
<https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/iliad/summary/>
<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-iliad/summary>
2. Reduce these ideas to a picture or 5-8 bullet points.
3. What arguments could you make to support the view that Achilles is an honourable character?
4. Why might people argue that Hector is more honourable than Achilles?



Key word	Definition
Glory	Very great praise or honour that is won by notable achievements.
Victory	The successful defeat of an enemy during battle.
Triumph	A great achievement or success over someone or something.
Betray	Giving information to an enemy which would put your country or group in explicit danger.
Respect	Feeling deep admiration for someone or something as a result of their abilities, qualities or successes.
Honourable	A person or act that deserves high respect or great esteem.
Judgement	An opinion or conclusion usually made in response to considered decisions.



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