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WordReference Random House Learner's Dictionary of American English © 2025why /hwai, wai/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? for what? for what reason, cause, or purpose?:Why did you behave so badly? conj. for what cause or reason for which; on account of which (usually after reason to introduce a relative clause):the reason for what? for what? for what? for what? for what? for what reason, cause, or purpose?:Why did you behave so badly? conj. for what? 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 hwi, hwy, instr. case of hwæt what; cognate with Old Norse hvi Collins Concise English Dictionary © HarperCollins Publishers:: why /wai/ 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?: why /wai/ adv for what reason, purpose, or cause?: who /wai/ adv for what reason, purpose, or cause?: who /wai/ adv for what reason, purpose, or cause?: who /wai/ 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 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 hwi; related to Old Norse hvi, Gothic hveileiks what kind of, Latin qui 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. 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" 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 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 is quick but clear. Phonetic Pronunciation: /wai/ 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" 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 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 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 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 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 why behind her actions remains a mystery. 5. 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 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" the w 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." 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 story? 8. Why the long face? 9. Why in the world 10. What's it all about? WhyadverbEtymology: hwi forhwi, Saxon.1. For what reason? Interrogatively. They both deal justly with you; why? not from any regard they have for justice, but because their fortune depends on their credit. Jonathan Swift.2. For which reason. Relatively. Mortar will not have attained its utmost compactness till fourscore years after it has been employed; and this is one reason why, in demolishing ancient fabricks, it is more easy to break the stone than the mortar. Boyle. No ground of enmityWhy he should mean me ill. John Milton. Such, whose sole bliss is eating; who can giveBut that one brutal reason, why they live. Dryden.3. For what reason. Relatively. Shall I tell you why: ———— Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say, Every why hath a wherefore. William Shakespeare. I was dispatch'd for their defence and guard; And listen why, for I will tell you now. John Milton. We examine the why, the what and the how of things. Roger L'Estrange. Turn the discourse; I have a reason whyI would not have you speak so tenderly. Dryden.4. It is sometimes used emphatically. Ninus' tomb, man; why, you must not speak that yet: that you answer to Pyram. William Shakespeare. You have not been a-bed then?Why, no; the day had broke before we parted. William Shakespeare. Whence is this? why: from that essential suitableness which obedience has to the relation which is between a rational creature and his Creator. Robert South, Sermons. Also found in: Thesaurus, Acronyms, Idioms, Wikipedia. (wī, hwī)adv. For what purpose, reason, or cause; with what intention, justification, or motive: 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 is the problem On account of which is th difficult problem or question.interj. Used to express mild surprise, indignation, or impatience. [Middle English, from Old English hwy; 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, as in The reason why he accepted the nomination is not clear. It is true that why is redundant in the expression reason why, as in The 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. (war) 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, 1994, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014 (hwar, war) adv., conj., n., pl. whys, interj. adv. 1. for what? 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 hwi, hwy, instr. case of hwæt what; c. Old Norse hvi] 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 questions You 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 don't 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 clauses Why is often used in reported clauses. He wondered why she had come. You never really told me why you don't like him. I don't know why '. They refuse to come - I don't know why certainly cheerful, though I can't think why.4. used in relative clauses Why is sometimes used in relative clauses with the word reason. That is one reason why they were such a successful team. Collins 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. 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. إستَبِهلِمَاذاا؟ .warumwiesoweshalbweswegenaf hverjuaf hverju motivoporquêPorquê?почемуотчегопричинаа как жеа то как жепіçinniye-in sebebi/nedenineden [war j and alwhy, it's you! $\rightarrow j$ toma, eres tú!, j and a, eres tú!, j and a, eres tú! why, what's the matter? $\rightarrow j$ bueno, j to mos 8! why, it's easy! $\rightarrow j$ toma, eres tú!, j and a, eres tú!, j and j an 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 por qué, la razón translate why using por qué (why) and porque (because). To ask specifically about the purpose of something, you can translate why using por qué, la razón translate why using por qué, la razón translate why using por qué (why) and porque (because). (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 using por eso: That's why they wouldn't pay Por eso no querían pagar. 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 ausencia Collins Spanish Dictionary - Complete and Unabridged 8th Edition 2005 © William Collins Spanish Dictionary - Complete and Unabridged 8th Edition 2005, 2003, 2005 ['hwaɪ] adv (in questions) pourquoiWhy did you do that? \rightarrow Pourquoi avez-vous fait ça?Why is he late? \rightarrow Pourquoi est-il en retard?Tell me why \rightarrow Dis-moi pourquoi est-il la raison pour laquelle qn a fait qchShe never told me the reason why she left \rightarrow Elle ne m'a jamais dit pourquoi. Collins English/French Electronic Resource. © HarperCollins Publishers 2005 adv \rightarrow warum, weshalb; (asking for the purpose) \rightarrow wozu; (= how come that ...) \rightarrow wieso; why not ask him? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why do it this way? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht?; why wait? \rightarrow warum fragst du/fragen wir etc ihn nicht? so) \rightarrow sind Sie sicher? — aber ja doch; why it's obvious \rightarrow wer das war? na or also, das ist doch einfach!; take the bus! why, it's only a short walk \rightarrow den Bus nehmen? ach was, das ist doch einfach!; take the bus! why, it's obvious \rightarrow wer das war? na or also, das ist doch klar n the whys and (the) wherefores \rightarrow 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 [war] 1. adv & conj - perché why 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? \rightarrow perché non vieni anche tu?there's no reason why ... \rightarrow non c'è motivo per cui...+ subwhy (ever) not? \rightarrow perché no?so that's why he did it! \rightarrow ecco perché l'ha fatto!3. n the whys and (the) wherefores \rightarrow le ragioni or i motivithe why and the how \rightarrow il perché e il percomeCollins Italian Dictionary 1st Edition © HarperCollins Publishers 1995 (wai) adverb for which reason (?). `Why did you hit the child.' `Why?'; Why haven't finished.' `Why not?'; `Let's go to the cinema.' `Let's go to the cinema.' `Why not?'; `Let's go to the cinema.' `Le perché なぜ,kodèl kāpēc; kādēļ mengapa waaromhvorfordlaczego ولي، خله، يه كومه توګه، له څه دپاره tại sao 为什么 relative pronoun for which. Give me one good reason why I should help you! hoekom ولي، خله، يه كومه توګه، له څه دپاره غوره الذي بِسَبَيه tại sao 为什么 relative pronoun for which. Give me one good reason why I should help you! hoekom کيوں ξαι sao 为什么 relative pronoun for which. Give me one good reason why I should help you! hoekom کيوں ξαι καταποιρισμένου το καταποιρισμένου το καταποιρισμένου καταποιρισμένου το καταποιρισμέν το καταποιρισμένου το καταποιρισμέν το καταποιρισμένου το καταποιρισμένο το καταποιρισμένο το καταποιρισμένο το καταποιρισμένο το καταποιρισμέ minkä tähden pour lequel, pour laquelle מב של בו שו zašto, zbog čega ami miatt mengapa hvers vegna, af hverju perché, per cui, per il quale ~するところの ... kodėl kādēļ kenapa waaromhvorfordlaczego では、からい はない こうしゅう にない ない こうしゅう にない ない こうしゅう にない ない こうしゅう にない こうしゅう こうしゅう にない こうしゅう にない こうしゅう にない こうしゅう こうしゅう にない こうしゅう こうしゅ K Dictionaries Ltd. → しまり proč hvorfor warum γιατί por qué miksi pourquoi zašto perché なぜ [] waarom hvorfor dlaczego por que motivo, Porquê? почему varför [] niçin 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: I was in such an irritated frame of mind that in rude and abrupt fashion I blurted out a question as to "why our Marquis de Griers had ceased to accompany her for strolls, or to speak to her for days together.""Yes-- and I suppose you want to know why," she replied with dry captiousness. "Then why have you written all this?" you will say to me. The stupid ones die like oxen, they know not why. It is quite funny to see. The embers of the great fire had so far burned themselves out and now glowed so low and duskily that I understood why these conspirators desired a torch. They inflame one another, and know not why! They tinkle with their pinchbeck, they jingle with their gold. She never told me why, and I couldn't make it out no way. Why, if I were a man, I could never care for anyone else after knowing you. "I am not finessing, and I am not in the least afraid of telling you; but I don't see the slightest reason why I should not have written." See here, child, who are you speaking to me every day? "Why had she toyed with the threatening catastrophe? Tikhon scratched his back with one hand and his head with the other, then suddenly his whole face expanded into a beaming, foolish grin, disclosing a gap where he had lost a tooth (that was why he was called Shcherbaty- the gap-toothed). From Middle English, from Proto-Germanic *hwī ("by what, how"), from Proto-Indo-European *kÊ·ey, locative of *kwís ("who"), Latin cui ("to whom", dative case of quÄ« ("who, how, why"), Ancient Greek πει (pei, "where"). Compare Old English þý ("because, since, on that account, therefore, then", literally "by that, for that"). See thy. From Wiktionary Middle English from Old English hwy kwo- in Indo-European roots From American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition

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