

maximize *v*

increase, raise, boost, add to, enhance, advance, further, step up, intensify, strengthen, heighten, develop, build up, accumulate, enlarge, magnify, broaden, widen, deepen, extend, prolong, expand, spread, breed, propagate, scale up

FORMAL augment

COLLOQ. hike up, bump up

☞ decrease, reduce

maximum *adj, n*

♦ *adj*

greatest, highest, largest, biggest, most, utmost, supreme, top, topmost

☞ minimum

♦ *n*

most, top (point), utmost, uttermost, upper limit, peak, pinnacle, summit, zenith, apogee, acme, height, ceiling, extremity

☞ minimum

maybe *adv*

perhaps, possibly, conceivably, for all you know

FORMAL perchance, peradventure

☞ definitely

mayhem *n*

chaos, disorder, confusion, disorganization, tumult, disruption, uproar, riot, bedlam, madhouse, mess, anarchy, lawlessness

maze *n*

labyrinth, network, tangle, jungle, web, mesh, complex, confusion, puzzle, intricacy

meadow *n*

field, grassland, grass, pasture, pastureland, paddock, green, lea, saeter; *dialect* leasow; *Scot* haugh; *Scot & Irish* inch

OLD mead

meagre *adj*

1 SCANTY, sparse, inadequate, insufficient, deficient, skimpy, paltry, negligible, small, poor, slight, stingy, niggardly

FORMAL exiguous

COLLOQ. measly

2 THIN, puny, insubstantial, bony, emaciated, skinny, scraggy, gaunt, scrawny, slight

☞ **1** ample, generous **2** fat, plump

meagreness *n*

scantiness, sparseness, inadequacy, insufficiency, deficiency, smallness, slightness, stinginess, puniness

COLLOQ. measliness

meal *n*

NZ kai

FORMAL repast

Meals include:

afternoon tea	<i>colloq.</i> elevenses	snack
banquet	evening meal	spread
barbecue	feast	supper
<i>colloq.</i> barbie	fork supper	takeaway
<i>colloq.</i> bite	harvest supper	tea
<i>colloq.</i> blow-out	high tea	tea break
breakfast	lunch	tea party
brunch	luncheon	tiffin
buffet	midday meal	TV dinner
cold table	<i>slang</i> nosh-up	wedding
cream tea	picnic	breakfast
dinner	<i>colloq.</i> slap-up	
dinner party	meal	

mealy-mouthed *adj*

hesitant, indirect, mincing, over-squeamish, overdelicate,

reticent, plausible, equivocal, flattering, smooth-tongued, euphemistic, prim, glib

mean¹ *v*

1 SIGNIFY, represent, stand for, symbolize, show, designate, convey, express, suggest, indicate, imply, intimate

FORMAL denote, betoken, purport, connote

2 INTEND, aim, propose, design, purpose, plan, aspire, wish, wont, have in mind, think of

3 CAUSE, give rise to, lead to, bring about, produce, involve, entail, result in, necessitate

FORMAL effect

4 *it was meant to happen*

destine, predestine, fate, design, intend, appoint, ordain

5 *your approval means a lot to me*

matter, be important, have influence, carry weight, make a difference

mean² *adj*

1 MISERLY, niggardly, selfish, grasping, close-fisted/handed

FORMAL parsimonious

COLLOQ. tight, tight-fisted, stingy, penny-pinching, mingy

2 UNKIND, unpleasant, nasty, bad-tempered, cruel,

disagreeable, unfriendly, cross, spiteful

COLLOQ. beastly, crotchety, crabby, grouchy

3 LOWLY, base, poor, humble, ordinary, common, obscure,

wretched, shabby, dirty, miserable, dismal, squalid

4 *she makes a mean rice salad*

excellent, wonderful, brilliant, marvellous, fantastic, first-class/rate, high-quality, very good, prime, superlative, unequalled, unparalleled, matchless, rare, exceptional, outstanding, surpassing, remarkable, perfect, superb, admirable, magnificent, splendid, fine

COLLOQ. top-notch, smashing, stunning, terrific, neat, ace,

brill, boffo, out of this world, second to none, divine,

heavenly, fabulous, sensational, crack, not half bad

SLANG mega, cool, radical, rad, crucial, way-out

☞ **1** generous, liberal **2** kind **3** noble, splendid **4** inferior, second-rate

Synonym nuances

sense 1

Naturally, the synonyms tend to be disapproving in tone.

Miserly can be used disapprovingly of someone with an antipathy to spending money, whereas **niggardly** has

more to do with undertaking expenditure grudgingly:

niggardly payouts. **Selfish**, on the other hand,

emphasizes self-interest, and therefore a reluctance to

give to others, while **grasping** has the negative

implication of greed: *the grasping acquisitiveness of an*

affluent society. Both **tight-fisted** and the less common

close-fisted can be used more informally, and

sometimes more jocularly, to suggest an unwillingness to

spend money: *being tight-fisted, we bypassed the*

museums with entrance fees.

mean³ *adj, n*

♦ *adj*

the mean score

average, intermediate, middle, medium, middling,

halfway, median, normal

☞ extreme

♦ *n*

average, middle, mid-point, norm, median, mode,

compromise, middle course, middle way, medium, happy

medium, golden mean

☞ extreme

meander *v*

1 WIND, zigzag, turn, twist, snake, bend, curve; *Scot*

wimple

2 WANDER, stray, amble, ramble, stroll, roam, rove, ease,

shuffle, inch

COLLOQ. laze, mosey, mooch