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clean accepted or professed rule of action or conduct.a person of good moral principles.a fundamental, primary, or general law or truth from which others are derived.the principles of modern physics.Synonyms: proposition, postulate, axiom, theorema fundamental doctrine or tenet; a distinctive ruling opinion.the principles of the Stoics.principles, a personal or specific basis of conduct or management.to adhere to one's principles; a kindergarten run on modern principles.guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct.Synonyms: honor, rectitude, probity, integrityan adopted rule or method for application in action.a working principle for general use.a rule or law exemplified in natural phenomena, the construction or operation of a machine, the working of a system, or the like.the principle of capillary attraction.the method of formation, operation, or procedure exhibited in a given case.a community organized on the patriarchal principle.a determining characteristic of something; essential quality.an originating or actuating agency or force.growth is the principle of life.an actuating agency in the mind or character, as an instinct, faculty, or natural tendency.the principles of human behavior.Chemistry.a constituent of a substance, especially one giving to it some distinctive quality or effect.Obsolete.beginning or commencement.a standard or rule of personal conduct(often plural) a set of such moral ruleshe'd stoop to anythinghe has no principlesadherence to such a moral code; moralityit's not the money but the principle of the thingtorn between principle and expediencya fundamental or general truth or lawthe essence of somethinga source or fundamental cause; origina rule or law concerning a natural phenomenon or the behaviour of a systemthe principle of the conservation of massan underlying or guiding theory or beliefthe hereditary principlesocialist principleschem a constituent of a substance that gives the substance its characteristics and behaviourin theory or essencebecause of or in demonstration of a principleCollins English Dictionary Complete & Unabridged 2012 Digital Edition William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012Principle and principal are often confused: the principal (not principle) reason for his departure; the plan was approved in principle (not in principal)Origin of principle1First recorded in 13501400; Middle English, alteration of Middle French principe or Latin prncipium, on the analogy of mangle; principiumOrigin of principle1C14: from Latin principium beginning, basic tenetIdiomsin principle, in essence or substance; fundamentally.to accept a plan in principle.on principle, according to personal rules for right conduct; as a matter of moral principle.He refused on principle to agree to the terms of the treaty. according to a fixed rule, method, or practice.He drank hot milk every night on principle.see in principle; on principle.Principle, canon, rule imply something established as a standard or test, for measuring, regulating, or guiding conduct or practice. A principle is a general and fundamental truth that may be used in deciding conduct or choice: to adhere to principle. Canon, originally referring to an edict of the Church (a meaning that it still retains), is used of any principle, law, or critical standard that is officially approved, particularly in aesthetics and scholarship: canons of literary criticism. A rule, usually something adopted or enacted, is often the specific application of a principle: the golden rule.Examples have not been reviewed. "I'm really excited about the principle of GB Energy," she told BBC News.Marcus Rashford, an Old Trafford outcast since the end of last year, is edging ever closer to a dream move to the Nou Camp after a deal in principle was reached.Biden plainly did authorize, in principle, the three large commutations in December and January for home confinement defendants, death row inmates, and nonviolent drug offenders.Senator Rick Scott, a Florida Republican who once served alongside Waltz in the US House of Representatives, called him a "man of integrity, grit, and principle."He affirmed his support for the organisation's common defence principle, and said he was "disappointed but not done" with Russia's Vladimir Putin.Definitions and idiom definitions from Dictionary.com Unabridged, based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, Random House, Inc. 2023Idioms from The American Heritage Idioms Dictionary copyright 2002, 2001, 1995 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.principiumprincipledBrowse#aabbccddeeffghhiiijjklmmnnnooppqrrssttuuvvwxxyzzAboutCareersContact usCookies, terms, & privacyHelpFollow usGet the Word of the Day every day! 2025 Dictionary.com, LLCprinciplesA principle is a proposition or value that is a guide for behavior or evaluation. In law, it is a rule that has to be or usually is to be followed. It can be desirably followed, or it can be an inevitable consequence of something, such as the laws operating in nature or the way that a system is constructed. The principles of such a system are understood by its users as the essential characteristics of the system, or reflecting system's designed purpose, and the effective operation or use of which would be impossible if any one of the principles was to be ignored. A system may be explicitly based on and implemented from a document of principles as was done in IBM's 360/370 Principles of Operation.Examples of principles are, entropy in a number of fields; least action in physics, those in descriptive comprehensive and fundamental law: doctrines or assumptions forming normative rules of conduct, separation of church and state in statecraft, the central dogma of molecular biology, fairness in ethics, etc.In common English, it is a substantive and collective term referring to rule governance, the absence of which, being "unprincipled", is considered a character defect. It may also be used to declare that a reality has diverged from some ideal or norm as when something is said to be true only "in principle" but not in fact. nounsIdioms jump to other results [countable, usually plural, uncountable] a moral rule or a strong belief that influences your actionsHe has high moral principles.Stick to your principles and tell him you won't do it. against your principles I refuse to lie about it; it's against my principles. on principle He doesn't invest in the arms industry on principle.She refuses to allow her family to help her as a matter of principle.Homophones principal | principleprincipal principle principal adjectiveThey were joined on stage by their principal conductor.principal nounThe college is excited to announce the appointment of a new principal.principle nounI'm opposed to the death penalty on principle.Extra ExamplesI refuse to compromise my principles by eating meat.As a man of principle, he would not cover up for his former friend.As a matter of principle she won't be visiting the president.I can't accept his offer without seriously compromising my principles.The group never departed from its principle of non-violence.Topics Personal qualitiesb2Oxford Collocations Dictionaryadjectiveverb + principleprepositionagainst your principleson principlephrasesa matter of principlea man/woman of principleSee full entry [countable] a law, a rule or a theory that something is based onThe same principles apply to both humans and animals.an important legal principleYou learn general principles from studying particular things. he asserts. principle of something the basic principles of car maintenanceThere are three fundamental principles of teamwork.to learn the basic/general principles of somethingthe principles of justice/law principle of doing something the principles and practice of writing reports principle for something draft principles for the management of shared natural resources principle for doing something a document setting out principles for resolving the dispute principle behind something The principle behind it is very simple.Discussing all these details will get us nowhere; we must get back to first principles (= the most basic rules)The court derived a set of principles from this general rule.Extra ExamplesHis novels reject chronology as an organizing principle.She is interested in actual human relationships rather than abstract principles.She went on to explain the principles behind what she was doing.The house incorporates many principles of modern environmentally aware design.This principle applies to all kinds of selling.Topics Scientific researchb2Oxford Collocations Dictionaryadjectiveverb + principleprinciple + verbapplyunderlie somethingunderpin somethingprepositionin principleprinciplebehindphrasethe pleasure principlethe precautionary principlethe uncertainty principleSee full entry [countable] a belief that is accepted as a reason for acting or thinking in a particular wayThe welfare of the child is the guiding principle of the family courts.They were accused of violating the principles of democracy.The principle of equality is enshrined in the Constitution. principle that the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal workThe UN declaration sought to establish the principle that everyone is entitled to the same basic rightsthe principle that free education should be available for all children in accordance with a principle Ethical behaviour entails acting in accordance with established principles of right and wrongExtra ExamplesThe order to show no mercy was contrary to the most basic principles of their religion.Freedom is the founding principle of our Republic.She sticks to the principle that everyone should be treated equally.the principles underlying Western philosophy [countable, uncountable] a general or scientific law that explains how something works or why something happensO'Sullivan was among the first chemists to apply scientific principles to brewing beer. principle that the principle that heat rises in principle A tidal current turbine is similar in principle to a windmill.Topics Scientific researchb2 Word Originlate Middle English: from Old French, from Latin principium source, principia (plural) foundations, from princeps, princip- first, chiefIdioms If something can be done in principle, there is no good reason why it should not be done although it has not yet been done and there may be some difficultiesin principle there is nothing that a human can do that a machine might not be able to do one day. in general but not in detailThey have agreed to the proposal in principle but we still have to negotiate the terms.I agree with you in principle, but we'll need to discuss the details. See principle in the Oxford Advanced American DictionarySee principle in the Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English Meanings Synonyms Sentences The ultimate source, origin, or cause of something. A fundamental truth, law, doctrine, or motivating force, upon which others are based. A natural or original tendency, faculty, or endowment. A rule of conduct, esp. of right conduct. The collectivity of moral or ethical standards or judgments. A decision based on principle rather than expediency. More Noun Definitions (9) With regard to the basics: an idea that is acceptable in principle. According to or because of principle. theoretically or in essence because of or according to a principle

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