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**intelligence**   Also found in: [Medical](#), [Acronyms](#), [Encyclopedia](#), [Wikipedia](#), [Hutchinson](#) 0.04 se

**in-tel-li-gence**  (in-tel'ə-jəns)  
n.

1.
  - a. The capacity to acquire and apply knowledge.
  - b. The faculty of thought and reason.
  - c. Superior powers of mind. See Synonyms at [mind](#).
2. An intelligent, incorporeal being, especially an angel.
3. Information; news. See Synonyms at [news](#).
4.
  - a. Secret information, especially about an actual or potential enemy.
  - b. An agency, staff, or office employed in gathering such information.
  - c. Espionage agents, organizations, and activities considered as a group:  
*"Intelligence is nothing if not an institutionalized black market in perishable commodities" (John le Carré).*

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## intelligence

*Noun*

1. the ability to understand, learn, and think things out quickly
2. the collection of secret information, esp. for military purposes
3. a group or department collecting military information
4. *Old-fashioned* news or information [Latin *intellegere* to understand, literally: to choose between]

Collins Essential English Dictionary 2nd Edition 2006 © HarperCollins Publishers 2004, 2006

1. The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign countries or areas.
2. Information and knowledge about an adversary obtained through observation, investigation, analysis, or understanding. See also acoustic intelligence; all-source intelligence; basic intelligence; civil defense intelligence; combat intelligence; communications intelligence; critical intelligence; current intelligence; departmental intelligence; domestic intelligence; electronic intelligence; electro-optical intelligence; foreign intelligence; foreign instrumentation signals intelligence; general military intelligence; human resources intelligence; imagery intelligence; joint intelligence; laser intelligence; measurement and signature intelligence; medical intelligence; merchant intelligence; military intelligence; national intelligence; nuclear intelligence; open-source intelligence; operational intelligence; photographic intelligence; political intelligence; radar intelligence; radiation intelligence; scientific and technical intelligence; security intelligence; strategic intelligence; tactical intelligence; target intelligence; technical intelligence; technical operational intelligence; terrain intelligence; unintentional radiation intelligence.

Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms. US Department of Defense 2005.

## Thesaurus

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**Noun 1. intelligence** - the ability to comprehend; to understand and profit from experience

[ability](#), [power](#) - possession of the qualities (especially mental qualities) required to do something or get something done; "danger heightened his powers of discrimination"

[brainpower](#), [learning ability](#), [mental capacity](#), [mentality](#), [wit](#), [brain](#) - mental ability; "he's got plenty of brains but no common sense"

[breadth](#), [largeness](#), [comprehensiveness](#) - the capacity to understand a broad range of topics; "a teacher must have a breadth of knowledge of the subject"; "a man distinguished by the largeness and scope of his views"

[intellect](#), [mind](#) - knowledge and intellectual ability; "he reads to improve his mind"; "he has a keen intellect"

[nonverbal intelligence](#) - intelligence that is manifested in the performance of tasks requiring little or no use of language

[verbal intelligence](#) - intelligence in the use and comprehension of language

[mental quickness](#), [quick-wittedness](#), [quickness](#) - intelligence as revealed by an ability to give correct responses without delay

[mental dexterity](#), [nimbleness](#) - intelligence as revealed by quickness and alertness of mind; "nimbleness of wit and imagination"

[genius](#), [brilliance](#) - unusual mental ability

[precociousness](#), [precocity](#) - intelligence achieved far ahead of normal developmental schedules

[keenness](#), [sharpness](#), [acuity](#), [acuteness](#) - a quick and penetrating intelligence; "he argued with great acuteness"; "I admired the keenness of his mind"

[brightness](#), [cleverness](#), [smartness](#) - intelligence as manifested in being quick and witty

[astuteness](#), [perspicaciousness](#), [perspicacity](#), [shrewdness](#) - intelligence manifested by being astute (as in business dealings)

[wits](#), [marbles](#) - the basic human power of intelligent thought and perception; "he used his wits to get ahead"; "I was scared out of my wits"; "he still had all his marbles and was in full possession of a lively mind"

[stupidity](#) - a poor ability to understand or to profit from experience

**2. intelligence** - a unit responsible for gathering and interpreting information about an enemy

[intelligence agency](#), [intelligence service](#)

[administrative body](#), [administrative unit](#) - a unit with administrative responsibilities

[military intelligence](#), [military intelligence agency](#) - an agency of the armed forces that obtains and analyzes and uses information of strategic or tactical military value

[United States intelligence agency](#) - an intelligence service in the United States

[IC](#), [Intelligence Community](#), [National Intelligence Community](#), [United States Intelligence Community](#) - a group of government agencies and organizations that carry out intelligence activities for the United States government; headed by the Director of Central Intelligence

[international intelligence agency](#) - an intelligence agency outside the United States

**3. intelligence** - secret information about an enemy (or potential enemy); "we sent out planes to gather intelligence on their radar coverage"

[intelligence information](#)

[info](#), [information](#) - a message received and understood

[military intelligence](#) - information about the armed forces of another country that is useful in planning and conducting military policy or military operations

**4. intelligence** - information about recent and important events; "they awaited news of the outcome"



[news](#), [tidings](#), [word](#)

[info](#), [information](#) - a message received and understood

[good word](#) - good news

[latest](#) - the most recent news or development; "have you heard the latest?"

[update](#) - news that updates your information

**5. intelligence** - the operation of gathering information about an enemy

[intelligence activity](#), [intelligence operation](#)

[undercover work](#), [spying](#) - the act of keeping a secret watch for intelligence purposes

[information gathering](#) - the act of collecting information

[current intelligence](#) - intelligence of all types and forms of immediate interest; usually disseminated without delays for evaluation or interpretation

[combat intelligence](#), [tactical intelligence](#) - intelligence that is required for the planning and conduct of tactical operations

[strategic intelligence](#) - intelligence that is required for forming policy and military plans at national and international levels

[SIGINT](#), [signals intelligence](#) - intelligence information gathered from communications intelligence or electronics intelligence or telemetry intelligence

[clandestine operation](#) - an intelligence operation so planned and executed as to insure concealment

[overt operation](#) - the collection of intelligence openly without concealment

[reconnaissance](#), [reconnaissance mission](#) - the act of reconnoitring (especially to gain information about an enemy or potential enemy); "an exchange of fire occurred on a reconnaissance mission"

[counterintelligence](#) - intelligence activities concerned with identifying and counteracting the threat to security posed by hostile intelligence organizations or by individuals engaged in espionage or sabotage or subversion or terrorism

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## intelligence

**noun 1.** [INTELLECT](#), [understanding](#), [brains](#) (*informal*) [mind](#), [reason](#), [sense](#), [knowledge](#), [capacity](#), [smarts](#) (*slang*), *chiefly U.S.* [judgment](#), [wit](#), [perception](#), [awareness](#), [insight](#), [penetration](#), [comprehension](#), [brightness](#), [aptitude](#), [acumen](#), [nous](#) *Brit. (slang)* [alertness](#), [cleverness](#), [quickness](#), [discernment](#), grey matter (*informal*) brain power << OPPOSITE stupidity

**noun 2.** [INFORMATION](#), [news](#), facts, [report](#), [findings](#), [word](#), [notice](#), [advice](#), [knowledge](#), [data](#), [disclosure](#), [gen](#) *Brit. (informal)* [tip-off](#), [low-down](#) (*informal*) [notification](#) << OPPOSITE misinformation

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## References in classic literature

Now, with us, reason and **intelligence** are the end of nature; our production, therefore, and our manners ought to be accommodated to both these.

[A Treatise on Government](#) by [Aristotle](#) [View in context](#)

The fashionable **intelligence** says so for the comfort of the Parisians, and it knows all fashionable things.

[Bleak House](#) by [Dickens, Charles](#) [View in context](#)

For an instant he seemed to see this unnatural contest between a dead **intelligence** and a breathing mechanism only as a spectator--such fancies are in dreams; then he regained his identity almost as if by a leap forward into his body, and the straining automaton had a directing will as alert and fierce as that of its hideous antagonist.

[Can Such Things Be?](#) by [Bierce, Ambrose](#) [View in context](#)

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