**Cambridge Dictionary’s Word of the Year 2021**

[**https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2021/11/17/cambridge-dictionarys-word-of-the-year-2021/**](https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2021/11/17/cambridge-dictionarys-word-of-the-year-2021/)

2021 is almost at an end, and here at Cambridge Dictionary we have been looking back on the past year and what it has meant for you. We wanted to choose a word that represented your experiences as learners of English, and we are happy to announce that our Word of the Year 2021 is… [**perseverance**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/perseverance)!

*Perseverance* is defined as ‘continued effort to do or achieve something, even when this is difficult or takes a long time’. It is related to the verb persevere. We often talk about showing perseverance [**in the face of**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/in-the-face-of-sth)[**adversity**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/adversity) (= despite a difficult or unlucky situation or event). In 2021, people all over the world have had to show perseverance in the face of challenges and disruption to our lives from COVID-19 and other problems.

*Perseverance* is almost always a positive word that expresses our admiration for people who keep going in difficult situations. The readers of this blog have definitely shown perseverance in improving their knowledge of English by regularly reading, sharing and responding to posts. You might find it encouraging to learn that we usually use perseverance to talk about an effort that is eventually successful. We certainly hope that your perseverance has [**paid off**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pay-off) (= been successful) this year!

The word *perseverance* is not usually used by learners of English, but our data showed that our users across the globe looked it up over 243,000 times in 2021. 30,487 of these searches were between February 18 and February 24, after NASA’s Perseverance [**Rover**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rover#cald4-1-2) landed on Mars on February 18. When people read or heard the rover’s name in the news, they came to the Cambridge Dictionary to learn what it meant. This is a great example of how the language we use is influenced by current events.

Did you know that the Cambridge Dictionary doesn’t just give you the definitions of words like perseverance, and examples of how these words can be used in a sentence, but lots of extra information as well? If you want to learn about synonyms of perseverance, you can look it up in our [**Cambridge Thesaurus article**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/articles/the-ability-to-keep-doing-something-difficult), which explains the differences in meaning between *perseverance*, *determination*, *persistence*, *doggedness*, *single-mindedness*, *tenacity*, *resolve*, *will*, and the US term *stick-to-it-iveness*.

*Thesaurus article:****the ability to keep doing something difficult***

the ability to keep doing something difficult

These words all refer to the ability to keep doing something or trying to achieve a goal even if it is difficult.

One common positive word for this quality is [perseverance](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/perseverance). If someone shows perseverance, they continue to make an effort to do something despite it being difficult or taking a long time.

*A years-long political scandal broke last week thanks to the dogged perseverance of local reporters.*

*Her patience and perseverance with the stray dog were rewarded when it finally let her pet it.*

[Determination](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/determination) is used when someone has made a decision to keep trying to achieve a goal even though they may face difficulties.

*After years of hard work and determination, she was finally promoted to CEO.*

If someone continues to do something again and again even though it is difficult or they have failed before, you say that they show [persistence](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/persistence). **Persistence** is also sometimes used when someone continues to do something in a way that can be annoying.

*He was known for his persistence in the pursuit of justice.*

*I told her I was too busy to help, but her persistence wore me down.*

In informal US English, the ability to keep doing something in spite of difficulties you may face can be called [stick-to-it-iveness](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/stick-to-it-iveness).

US*This type of work requires a long-term commitment and a lot of stick-to-it-iveness.*

[Single-mindedness](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/single-mindedness) can be used when a person is focused on achieving a specific goal and thinks only about achieving that goal.

*Her single-mindedness helped her win six US Open singles titles.*

A very strong desire to keep doing something that is very difficult to do, or to keep trying to achieve something that is very hard to achieve, is called [doggedness](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/doggedness).

*Their sheer doggedness and ambition helped them ignore criticism and carry on.*

[Tenacity](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/tenacity) is similar to **doggedness**, though it is more often used to refer to continuing to do something that you are already doing, whether you are trying to achieve a goal or not.

*The tenacity of oil lobbyists is what persuaded politicians to open up protected waters for oil drilling.*

In formal language, a person with [resolve](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/resolve) often has a strong and serious desire to keep doing something to achieve a goal even if it is difficult or people oppose it.

*The prime minister's steely resolve and strong leadership after the economic crash helped unite the nation.*

*Her resolve to live a quiet life in the country was put to the test when she was summoned to court.*

[Will](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/thesaurus/will) refers to the mental power someone has to do something or achieve a goal that is difficult or which others oppose. It is often used in phrases like **force of will**, **strength of will**, and **the will to** do something.

*Through sheer force of will, he was eventually able to get both parties to agree to the compromise.*

*My mum's a brilliant baker, so it took great strength of will to stay on my diet during the holidays.*

*Her coach commended her for her will to win.*