

# *Entity*

An **entity** is something that [exists](#) as itself, as a subject or as an object, actually or potentially, concretely or abstractly, physically or not. It need not be of material existence. In particular, [abstractions](#) and [legal fictions](#) are usually regarded as entities. In general, there is also no presumption that an entity is [animate](#), or [present](#).

The term is broad in scope and may refer to animals; natural features such as mountains; inanimate objects such as tables; numbers or sets as symbols written on a paper; human contrivances such as laws, corporations and academic disciplines; or [supernatural](#) beings such as gods and spirits.

The adjectival form is *entitative*.

## Etymology

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The word *entity* is derived from the Latin *entitas*, which in turn derives from the Latin *ens* meaning "being" or "existing" (compare English [essence](#)). *Entity* may hence literally be taken to mean "thing which exists".

## In philosophy

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Ontology is the study of concepts of existence, and of recognition of entities. The words ontic and entity are derived respectively from the ancient Greek and Latin present participles that mean "[being](#)".

In an ontic inquiry... one asks about the properties or the physical relations and structures peculiar to some entity – in the pen's case, for example, we might make the following ontic observations about it: it is black, full of blue ink, and sitting on top of my desk.<sup>[1]</sup>

## In law and politics

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In **law**, a legal entity is an entity that is capable of bearing legal **rights** and **obligations**, such as a **natural person** or an **artificial person** (e.g. business entity or a corporate entity).

In **politics**, *entity* is used as term for territorial divisions of some countries (e.g. **Bosnia and Herzegovina**).

## In medicine

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In medicine, a **disease entity** is an illness due to a particular definite cause or to a specific pathological process. While a disease entity is not defined by a **syndrome**, it may or may not be manifest in one or more particular syndromes.

## In computer science

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In **computer science**, an entity is an object that has an **identity**, which is independent of the changes of its **attributes**. It represents long-lived information relevant for the users and is usually stored in a **database**.

## See also

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Wikiquote has quotations related to **Entity**.

- [Digital identity](#)
- [Entity–relationship model](#)
- [Entity-control-boundary](#)
- [Entity realism](#), a form of [scientific realism](#)
- [Entitativity](#)

- [Everything](#)
- [Html entity](#)
- [Non-physical entity](#)
- [Object \(philosophy\)](#)

## References

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1. *Hubert L. Dreyfus, Mark A. Wrathall, eds., A Companion to Heidegger (2008), p. 3.*

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