

literal Synonyms

literal
modif.

Word for word

verbatim, literatim (Latin), verbal, written, natural, usual, ordinary, apparent, real, not figurative, not metaphorical, not allegorical, strict, following the exact words, unerring, veracious, scrupulous, veritable, accurate, critical, authentic, undeviating; to the letter.

Antonyms free*, interpretive, figurative.

Exact

true, veritable, methodical; see accurate 1.

lit·er·al (lit'ər əl)

adjective

1. of, involving, or expressed by a letter or letters of the alphabet: *literal notation*
2. following or representing the exact words of the original; word-for-word: *a literal translation*
3. a) based on the actual words in their ordinary meaning; not figurative or symbolic: *the literal meaning of a passage*
b) giving the actual denotation of the word: said of the senses of words
c) giving the original or earlier meaning of a word; etymological: *the literal meaning of ponder is "to weigh"*
4. a) habitually interpreting statements or words according to their actual denotation; prosaic; matter-of-fact: *a literal mind*
b) having a literal mind; lacking imagination
5. real; not going beyond the actual facts; accurate; unvarnished: *the literal truth*
6. being so in fact but not in name; virtual: *the chairperson is a literal dictator*

Origin: ME *litterall* < MFr *litteral* < LL *litteralis* < L *littera*, letter

noun

CHIEFLY BRIT. a typographical error

Related Forms:

literalness lit'ər-əl-ness *noun*

lit·er·al (lit'ər-əl)

adjective

1. Being in accordance with, conforming to, or upholding the exact or primary meaning of a word or words.
2. Word for word; verbatim: *a literal translation*.
3. Avoiding exaggeration, metaphor, or embellishment; factual; prosaic: *a literal description; a literal mind*.
4. Consisting of, using, or expressed by letters: *literal notation*.
5. Conforming or limited to the simplest, nonfigurative, or most obvious meaning of a word or words.