

WIND FORCE TERMS USED FROM 1700 UNTIL TODAY

KEY TO DICTIONARY ABBREVIATIONS

BF: Beaufort Force

EEIC: English East India Company

IU: infrequently used

NDA: no definition available. This may be because the term refers to wind direction, .e.g. 'fair wind', rather than force, or because of uncertainty or imprecision regarding its point on the Beaufort wind force scale, e.g. 'baffling winds'. Descriptions such as 'variable winds' etc. fall into this same category.

OBT: original Beaufort term, i.e. used in his modified scale proposed in 1807 (English dictionary only)

OED: Oxford English Dictionary

RN: English Royal Navy

DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH TERMS

baffling airs/light winds/winds: IU, NDA, refers to winds of changeable direction

blows fresh (incl. blowing and blew fresh): IU, but popular before 1700. BF 6

blows hard (incl. blowing and blew hard): IU, but popular before 1700. BF 10

blows strong (incl. blowing and blew strong): IU, but popular before 1700. BF 9

breeze: IU, generic term rarely used without an adjectival qualifier. Derived from Castilian *briza* or north-east wind, introduced into English in C16 (OED). Widespread as a wind force term only after 1750.

brisk gale: BF 6

brisk trade: BF 5

calm (incl. dead calm and flat calm): BF 0

constant breeze/gale/trade/wind: IU, NDA without further qualification such as 'strong', 'fresh'

easy breeze: IU, BF 2

easy gale: IU, but popular before 1700. BF 3

faint breeze, gale: see feint

fair winds: IU, NDA. Refers to direction in relation to the vessel's motion, and is a following wind. It makes no presumption of force.

feint breeze: BF 2

feint gale: BF 3

fine breeze: BF 5

fine gale: BF 5

fine trade: BF 5

fresh breeze: BF 5, OBT

fresh gale: BF 8

fresh monsoons: IU, NDA

fresh trade: BF 6

fresh wind: BF 6

gale: IU, an ancient generic term, rarely used without an adjectival qualifier. Of probable Scandinavian origin (OED). Used before 1770 to describe winds of a very wide range of strengths, including those covered today by various 'breezes' of the Beaufort Scale (see Appendix I).

gentle breeze: BF 3, OBT

gentle gale: BF 3

gentle trade: BF 3

great gales: IU, OBT

hard gale: BF 10

heavy gales: IU, BF 9

hurricane: BF 12, OBT. Introduced into English in the C16 by contact with Spanish navigators who, in turn, adopted the term from the indigenous Carib (West Indian) expression *furacan*.

inclinable to calms: BF 1, almost always used with 'light airs, i.e. 'light airs, inclinable to calm'.

increasing breezes/gales/trade/wind: IU, NDA. The term suggests wind rising from a lower to a higher force.

light airs: BF 1, OBT.

light breeze: BF 2, OBT.

light gale: IU, BF 3. Commonplace before 1700, but rare after 1750.

light monsoons: IU, BF 4

light trade: BF 4

light winds: BF 2

little winds: BF 2

moderate: BF 4. Used abundantly until 1838. Francis Beaufort railed against its seeming ambiguity, but employed it frequently until 1806.

moderate breeze: BF 4, OBT

moderate gale: BF 7, OBT

moderate monsoons: IU, BF 5

moderate trade: BF 5

monsoon: IU, generic term rarely used without an adjectival qualifier. Employed widely by EEIC officers, but rarely by those of the RN. To be found only on those occasions when the vessel was in the Indian Ocean or South China Sea. Derived, through Dutch contacts, from the Arabic *mausim*. Not used in English before C17.

pleasant breeze: BF 4

pleasant gale: BF 5

pleasant monsoon: IU, NDA

pleasant trade: BF 5

pleasant wind: BF 4

small airs: BF 1

small gale: IU but popular before 1750, BF 4

squalls (incl. squally and all derivatives): NDA, squalls appear in association with winds of all forces from 1 upwards, and have no correspondence on the Beaufort Scale. Dalrymple (1789) offers this same interpretation.

steady breeze: BF 5

steady gale: BF 6

steady trade: BF 6

stiff breeze: BF 6, OBT, but changed to strong breeze in the 1838 Beaufort scale

storm (incl. stormy): BF 11, OBT. Also used widely in non-scientific writing. Derived from Old High Gothic *sturm*.

strong breeze: see also stiff breeze, BF 6

strong gale: BF 9, OBT

strong gusts: IU, OBT

strong monsoon: IU, BF 7

strong trade: BF 7

strong wind: BF 8

top-gallant gale: IU, BF 5

tempest: BF 11. Also used widely in non-scientific writings. From the Latin *tempestas*.

trades: IU, generic term rarely used without an adjectival qualifier. Employed widely by EEIC officers, but rarely by those of the RN. To be found only on those occasions when the vessel was in the Trade Winds belts immediately north and south of the Equator. Derived from the expression 'blows trade', which is a wind that blows steadily (it has nothing to do with the business of trade). In the C16 and C17 it was used to describe any such persistent wind, but by 1750 it had assumed (as the logbook evidence confirms) its presentday meaning.

tremendous gales: IU, BF 11

typhoon: IU, BF 12, this term is of uncertain origin. It is often suggested to derive from the Chinese term 'tai fung' (great wind), but may also derived from the Arabic 'tufan', or even the Greek 'tuphon' (whirlwind).

unsettled wind: NDA. The nature of such winds forbids conversion to the Beaufort Scale, see also **variable**.

variable: IU, NDA. Its very nature, and that of its compound uses, denies definition in Beaufort force terms.

violent gales: IU, BF 9

violent storm: IU, BF 11

whole gale: BF 10, OBT