

Topic Page: [grenade](#)

Definition: **grenade** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

(1591) : a small missile that contains an explosive or a chemical agent (as tear gas, a flame producer, or a smoke producer) and that is thrown by hand or projected (as by a rifle or special launcher)

Summary Article: **grenade**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Small missile, containing an explosive or other charge, usually thrown (hand grenade) but sometimes fired from a rifle. Hand grenades are generally fitted with a time fuse of about four seconds: a sufficient amount of time for the grenade to reach the target but not enough for the enemy to pick it up and throw it back.

Rifle grenades were developed in World War I to achieve a greater range than was possible with the hand grenade, for use where the trench lines were too far apart for grenades to be thrown. The first models were cast-iron cylinders of explosive, fitted with a simple impact fuse, and attached to a steel rod. The rod was inserted into the barrel of a rifle and the chamber loaded with a blank cartridge. On firing, the explosion of the cartridge blew the rod from the barrel and sent the grenade to a range of about 100–150 yds. This system, however, damaged the rifles and was gradually replaced by a cup which attached to the rifle muzzle and into which a grenade could be placed. A blank cartridge was then fired to blow the grenade out.

Grenades were known in the 15th century, but were obsolete by the 19th, only being revived in the Russo-Japanese War 1905. They were revived once more when trench warfare began in World War I, first as locally-manufactured missiles – empty cans filled with gunpowder and stones, with a primitive fuse – and then as an official, properly-designed weapon.

Many experimental designs appeared, but the three standard patterns which survived World War I were the British Mills bomb and the French 'pineapple' grenade, both ball-like objects easily thrown, and the German stick grenade which carried the metal canister of explosive on the end of a wooden handle.

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Grenade. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/grenade>



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