

ensure, *v.*

Pronunciation: ² Brit. /ɪnˈʃʊə/, /ɛnˈʃʊə/, /ɪnˈʃɔː/, /ɛnˈʃɔː/, U.S. /ɪnˈʃʊ(ə)r/, /ɛnˈʃʊ(ə)r/

Forms: Middle English **ensuer**, **ensewer**, Middle English– **ensure**. See also **INSURE** *v.*

Frequency (in current use):

Etymology: < Anglo-Norman *enseurer*, < *en-* (see *EN-* prefix¹) + Old French *seur* ...

†1. *transitive*. To make (a person) mentally sure; to convince, render confident. Followed by *subordinate clause*. Chiefly *passive* and *reflexive*. *Obsolete*.

c1500 *Melusine* (1895) 68 They were ensured that they wold & sought but good.

1569 R. GRAFTON *Chron.* II. 495 The French enemies ensured themselues to gaine..whatsoever before they had lost.

1674 N. FAIRFAX *Treat. Bulk & Selvedge* 147 That the body do not lock up [souls] there for the sake of its hardfastness or closeness, we are ensured.

†2. To give security to, pledge one's faith to (a person) for the execution of a promise. *Obsolete*.

1413 J. LYDGATE *Pilgr. of Sowle* (1859) IV. xxxviii. 63 I ensure you feythfully, I shall brynge you to a place where ye shalle sene hym.

1557 *Malory's Story Noble & Worthy Kyng Arthur* (Copland) II. xiii Here I ensure you by the faithe of my body neuer to departe.

†3. To pledge one's credit to (a person); to tell (a person) confidently *that* (something is true).

c1385 G. CHAUCER *Legend Good Women* Ariadne. 2115 I swere & yow ensure This sevene yer I have youre servaunt be.

c1450 *Why I can't be a Nun* 364 in *Early Eng. Poems & Lives Saints* (1862) 147 So God me spede, I yow ensewer, Ellys yowre habyte ys no trew token.

1483 W. CAXTON tr. *Caton* C iiij I ensure you that it is trouthe.

a1533 LD. BERNERS tr. A. de Guevara *Golden Bk. M. Aurelius* (1546) sig. Z.viiij I ensure the, the worme in the tymbre..doth not so muche damage.

1642 T. FULLER *Holy State* IV. xv. 314 She advised him rather to marry, ensuring him that no Lady in the land..would refuse him.

†4.

a. To guarantee (a thing) to a person; to warrant (a fact). Const. *to* or *dative*. *Obsolete*.

- 1460 in *Polit., Relig., & Love Poems* (1866) 62 Nay, that I you ensure.
- 1483 W. CAXTON tr. J. de Voragine *Golden Legende* 424/1 Testefyeng and ensuryng that the holy man fiacre was ful of wicked & euyl arte.
- 1528 ROY *Satire* I durst ensure the one thyng.
- 1733 D. NEAL *Hist. Puritans* II. 574 All which he ensured upon his royal word.

†b. To guarantee (an expense). *Obsolete*.

- 1738 S. JOHNSON *Let. Apr.* (1992) I. 16 And since the Expençe will be no more I shall contentedly insure it.

†5.

a. To engage (a person) by a pledge or contract.

- c1400 *Rowland & O.* 160 He es ensurede to myn eme & mee.
- 1440 J. SHIRLEY *Cron. Dethe James Stewarde* (1818) 9 Yn the same wise bene ye sworne and ensurid to kepe youre peple.

†b. *esp.* To engage by a promise of marriage, or (rarely) by marriage itself; to betroth, espouse. Cf. ASSURE *v.* 4. *Obsolete*.

- a1450 (▷ c1410) H. LOVELICH *Hist. Holy Grail* lii. l. 1019 So that Ensured thanne bothe they were, And for the Mariages they Ordeyned there.
- 1523 LD. BERNERS tr. J. Froissart *Cronycles* I. cxl. (*heading*) Howe the yonge erle of Flaunders ensured the kynges doughter of Englande.
- a1533 LD. BERNERS tr. *Arthur of Brytayne* (?1560) lxii. sig. Nvi Let vs..sende for my brother the archbyssshop to thentent to ensure you togyther.
- a1557 J. CHEKE tr. *Gospel St. Matthew* (1843) i. 18 After his mother Mari was ensured to Joseph.
- 1558 BP. T. WATSON *Holsome Doctr. Seuē Sacramentes* xxviii. f. clxxiii^v When the two parties..haue sayde these woordes, then bee they ensured and iustly married together.
- 1606 G. W. tr. Justinus *Hist.* 79 b No other maide should be contracted and ensured to any husband, etc.

6. To secure, make safe (*against, from* risks).

- 1692 R. L'ESTRANGE *Fables* ccclxvi. 337 A..Mendicant..contracted with a Country Fellow..to Ensure his Sheep..for that Year.
- 1776 J. REYNOLDS *Disc. Royal Acad.* (1876) vii. 424 Sufficient to ensure us from all error and mistake.
- 1847 L. H. KERR tr. L. von Ranke *Hist. Servia* 426 To ensure her friends against any sort of reaction.
- 1883 *Manch. Examiner* 26 Nov. 5/3 The Swiss lake steamers are..too toylke to ensure their passengers against reasonably probable risks.

†7. *Commerce.* To INSURE *v.* (a person's life, property, etc.). *Obsolete*.

- 1693 E. HALLEY in *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) 17 602 The price of ensuring the Life of a Man of 20.
- 1747 *Scheme Equip. Men of War* 40 'Tis natural for us to ensure our Effects.

8. To make certain the occurrence or arrival of (an event), or the attainment of (a result); = ASSURE *v.* 5.

- 1744 E. YOUNG *Complaint: Night the Seventh* 32 All promise, some ensure, a second Scene.
- 1796 E. BURKE *Two Lett. Peace Regicide Directory France* in *Wks.* (1842) II. 380 Whether the authority..can ensure their execution.
- 1839 C. THIRLWALL *Hist. Greece* (new ed.) II. 339 Having taken no precautions to ensure regular supplies.
- 1879 W. H. WHITE in *Cassell's Techn. Educator* IV. 80/1 By this arrangement it is ensured that there shall be no leak.

9. To make (a thing) sure *to* or *for* a person; to secure.

- 1770 J. LANGHORNE & W. LANGHORNE tr. Plutarch *Lives* (1879) I. 518/2 Ensuring them the victory.
- 1799 DUKE OF WELLINGTON *Dispatches* (1837) I. 48 The only rule, which..can ensure for the officers..the conveniences which they have a right to expect.
- 1847 L. HUNT *Jar of Honey* (1848) x. 138 It ensures us an intercourse with a nation we esteem.
- 1861 T. E. MAY *Constit. Hist. Eng.* (1863) I. i. 12 A constitutional government ensures to the King a wide authority.