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within the wall of a plant cell. ▶1920s: from **PLASMA** + Greek *lemma* 'rind'. ▶**plasma-mem-lam** /pləˈmæ/ adj.

plasma mem-brane *n.* **Biology** a microscopic membrane of lipids and proteins that forms the external boundary of the cytoplasm of a cell or encloses a vacuole, and that regulates the passage of molecules in and out of the cytoplasm.

plasma-pulse /plazməˈpʊlz/ *n.* **Astronomy** the outer limit of a plasmasphere, marked by a sudden change in plasma density.

plasma-phere-sis /plazməˈfɪzi/ *n.* **Medicine** a method of removing blood plasma from the body by withdrawing blood, separating it into plasma and cells, and transfusing the cells back into the blood stream. It is performed esp. to remove antibodies in treating autoimmune conditions. ▶1920s: from **PLASMA** + Greek *phairesis* 'taking away' (from *apo-* 'from' + *hairein* 'take').

plasma sheet *n.* **Astronomy** a layer of plasma in the magnetotail of the earth (or another planet), lying in the equatorial plane beyond the plasmapause, with two divergent branches that reach the earth at polar latitudes.

plasma-sphere /plazməˈsfɪr/ *n.* **Astronomy** the roughly toroidal region surrounding and thought to reach with the earth (or another planet) at latitudes away from the poles, containing a relatively dense plasma of low-energy electrons and protons.

plasmid /ˈplazmɪd/ *n.* **Biology** a genetic structure in a cell that can replicate independently of the chromosomes, typically a small circular DNA strand in the cytoplasm of a bacterium or protozoan. Plasmids are much used in the laboratory manipulation of genes. Compare with **EPISOME**. ▶1950s: from **PLASMA** + *-id*.

plasma-min /plazməˈmɪn/ *n.* **Biochemistry** an enzyme, formed in the blood in some circumstances, that destroys blood clots by attacking fibrin. ▶19th cent.: from French *plasmine*, from late Latin *plasma* 'mold, image'.

plasm-in-ogen /plazˈmɪnəˈdʒən/ *n.* **Biochemistry** the inactive precursor of the enzyme plasmin, present in blood.

plasma-des-ma /plazməˈdesmə/ *n.* (pl. *-des-mata* /-desmətə/) **Biology** a narrow thread of cytoplasm that passes through the cell walls of adjacent plant cells and allows communication between them. ▶early 20th cent.: from German *Plasmodesma*, from late Latin *plasma* 'mold, formation' + Greek *desma* 'bond, letter'.

plasma-dium /plazməˈdiʊm/ *n.* (pl. *-di-ā* /-diə/) 1 a parasitic protozoan of a genus that includes those causing malaria. • Genus *Plasmodium*, phylum Sporozoa. 2 **Biology** a form within the life cycle of some simple organisms such as slime molds, typically consisting of a mass of naked protoplasm containing many nuclei. ▶late 19th cent.: modern Latin, based on late Latin *plasma* 'mold, formation'.

plasma-mold /plazməˈmɒld/ *adj.*
plasma-moldy /plazməˈmɒli/ *adj.* **Biology** contraction of the protoplasm of a plant cell as a result of loss of water from the cell. ▶late 19th cent.: modern Latin, from *plasma* 'consisting of protoplasm' (from late Latin *plasma* 'mold, formation') + Greek *myk-* 'moistening' (because of the separation of the plasma membrane from the cell wall).

plasma-molybde /plazməˈmɒli/ *adj.* **Physics** a quantum or quasiparticle associated with a local collective oscillation of charge density. ▶1950s: from **PLASMA** + *-molybde*.

plasteel /ˈplæstiəl/ *n.* (in science fiction) an ultra-strong nonmetallic material. ▶1970s: blend of **PLASTIC** and **STEEL**.

plaster /ˈplæstə/ *n.* 1 a soft mixture of lime with sand or cement and water for spreading on walls, ceilings, or other structures to form a smooth hard surface when dried. ■ (also **plaster of Paris**) a hard white substance made by the addition of water to powdered and partly dehydrated gypsum, used for holding broken bones in place and making sculptures and casts. [so called because prepared from the gypsum of Paris, France.] ■ the powder from which such a substance is made. 2 dated a bandage on which a poultice or liniment is spread for application. See **MUSTARD PLASTER**. ■ (also **sticking plaster**) *Brit.* an adhesive strip of material for covering cuts and wounds.

v. [trans] (cover a wall, ceiling, or other structure) with plaster. ■ (plaster something with/in) coat or cover something with (a substance), esp. to an

extent considered excessive: a face plastered in heavy makeup. ■ [trans] make (hair) lie flat by applying a liquid to it: his hair was plastered down with water.

■ apply a plaster cast or medical plaster to (a part of the body). ■ (plaster something with) cover a surface with large numbers of pictures or posters: the store windows are plastered with posters. ■ (plaster something over) present a story or picture conspicuously and sentimentally in (a newspaper or magazine): her story was plastered all over the December issue. ■ informal dated bomb or shell (a target) heavily. ■ Old English, denoting a bandage spread with a curative substance, from medieval Latin *plastrum* (shortening of Latin *emplantum*, from Greek *emplantōn* 'daub, salve'), later reinforced by the Old French noun *plastre*. Sense 1 dates from late Middle English. ▶**plaster-ary** *adj.*

plaster-board /ˈplæstəˌbɔːd/ *n.* a type of drywall made of plaster between two sheets of heavy paper.

plaster cast *n.* See **CAST** (sense 1).

plastered /ˈplæstəd/ *adj.* 1 informal very drunk: I went out and got totally plastered. 2 covered with or made of plaster.

plaster-er /ˈplæstəˌɜː/ *n.* a person whose job it is to apply plaster to walls, ceilings, or other surfaces.

plaster saint *n.* a person who makes a show of being without moral faults or human weakness, esp. in a hypocritical way.

plaster-work /ˈplæstəˌwɜːk/ *n.* plaster as part of the surface of a building, esp. covering the surface of a wall or formed into decorative shapes and patterns.

plastic /ˈplæstɪk/ *n.* a synthetic material made from a wide range of organic polymers such as polyethylene, PVC, nylon, etc., that can be molded into shape while soft and then set into a rigid or slightly elastic form. ■ informal credit cards or other types of plastic card that can be used as money: he pays with cash instead of with plastic.

adj. 1 made of plastic: plastic bags. ■ looking or tasting artificial: long-distance flights with their plastic food / she smiled a little plastic smile. 2 (of substances or materials) easily shaped or molded: rendering the material more plastic. ■ (in art) of or relating to molding or modeling in three dimensions, or producing three-dimensional effects. ■ (in science and technology) of or relating to the permanent deformation of a solid without fracture by the temporary application of force. ■ offering scope for creativity: the writer is drawn to the plastic medium. ■ **Biology** exhibiting adaptability to change or variety in the environment. ▶17th cent. (in the sense 'characteristic of molding'): from French *plastique* or Latin *plasticus*, from Greek *plastikos*, from *plastēs* 'to mold'. ▶**plastic-ity** /-plæstɪk/ *adv.*

plastic arts *pl.* plural *n.* art forms that involve modeling or molding, such as sculpture and ceramics, or art involving the representation of solid objects with three-dimensional effects.

plastic bomb *n.* a bomb containing plastic explosive.

plastic-explosive *n.* a puttylike explosive capable of being molded by hand.

plastic-film /ˈplæstɪkˌfɪlm/ (also **Plastic-film**) *n.* trademark a soft modeling material, esp. by children.

▶late 19th cent.: from the adjective *plastic* + *-film*.
plasticity /ˈplæstɪsɪti/ *n.* the quality of being easily shaped or molded. ■ **Biology** the adaptability of an organism to changes in its environment or differences between its various habitats.

plasticize /ˈplæstɪsaɪz/ *v.* [trans] (often as *adj.*) [**plasticized**] make plastic or moldable, esp. by the addition of a plasticizer. ■ treat or make with plastic: plasticized cotton. ▶**plastic-ization** /ˈplæstɪˈsaɪzən/ *n.*

plasticizer /ˈplæstɪsaɪzə/ *n.* a substance (typically a solvent) added to a synthetic resin to produce or promote plasticity and flexibility and to reduce brittleness.

plastic-like /ˈplæstɪkəl/ *adj.* resembling plastic.

■ seeming artificial or of inferior quality.

plastic surgery *n.* the process of reconstructing or repairing parts of the body, esp. by the transfer of tissue, either in the treatment of injury or for cosmetic reasons. ▶from **PLASTIC** in the sense of being possible to (re-)shape. Compare with **PLASTY**.

plastic wood *n.* a moldable material that hardens to resemble wood and is used for filling cracks in wood.

plastic-wrap *n.* a thin, transparent plastic film that

adheres to surfaces and to itself, used chiefly as a wrapping or covering for food.

plastid /ˈplæstɪd/ *n.* **Botany any of a class of small organelles, such as chloroplasts in the cytoplasm of plant cells, containing pigment or food. ▶late 19th cent.: from German, based on Greek *plastēs* 'shaped'.**

plastique /pləˈstɪk/ *n.* 1 plastic explosive. 2 statuesque poses or slow graceful movements in dancing. ■ the art or technique of performing such movements. ▶20th cent.: French, literally 'plastic' (adjective used as a noun).

plastisalt /ˈplæstɪsɒl/ *n.* a liquid substance that can be converted into a solid plastic simply by heating, consisting of particles of synthetic resin dispersed in a nonvolatile liquid. ▶1940s: from the noun **PLASTIC** + *sol*.

plastron /ˈplæstrən/ *n.* 1 a large pad worn by a fencer to protect the chest. ■ historical a lancer's breast covering. 2 an ornamental front of a woman's bodice or shirt consisting of colorful material with lace or embroidery, fashionable in the late 19th century. ■ a man's starched shirtfront without pleats. 3 **Zoology** the part of a tortoise's or turtle's shell forming the underside. ■ a similar ventral plate in some invertebrate animals. ■ *Entomology* (in an aquatic insect) a patch of cuticle covered with hairs that retain a thin layer of air, acting like a gill for breathing under water. ▶early 16th cent.: from French, from Italian *piastone*, augmentative of *piastre* 'breastplate', from Latin *emplantum* 'medical dressing' (see **PLASTER**). ▶**plastral** /ˈplæstrəl/ *adj.*

plasty *n.* *comb.* form molding, grating, or formation of a specified part, esp. a part of the body: *rhinoplasty*. ▶based on Greek *plastēs* 'formed, molded'. Compare with **PLASTIC SURGERY**.

plat /plæt/ *n.* a plot of land. ■ a map or plan of an area of land showing actual or proposed features. ■ [trans] plan out or make (an area of land), esp. as a proposed site for construction. ▶late Middle English: variant of the noun **PLANT** in the sense 'piece of ground'. The current verb sense dates from the early 18th cent.

plat *n.* *v.* variant spelling of **PLATE**.

plate /ˈplæt/ *n.* **platoon**.

Plataea, **Battle of** /pləˈtɪə/ a battle in 479 BC, during the Persian Wars, in which the Persian forces were defeated by the Greeks near the city of Plataea in Boeotia.

plat du jour /plɑː dʒʊˈr/ *n.* (pl. *plats du jour* *pron.* same) a dish specially prepared by a restaurant on a particular day, in addition to the usual menu. ▶French, literally 'dish of the day'.

plate /plæt/ *n.* 1 a flat dish, typically circular and made of china, from which food is eaten or served.

■ an amount of food on such a dish: a plate of spaghetti. ■ a flat dish, typically made of metal or wood, passed around a church congregation in order to collect donations of money. ■ a course of a meal, served on one plate: I'll have the salad plate, it's an individual meal, with reference to its cost: a gala \$1,000-a-plate dinner. ■ **Biology** a shallow glass dish in which a culture of cells or microorganisms may be grown. ■ dishes, bowls, cups, and other utensils made of gold, silver, or other metal. [from Old French *vasselle* en plate 'dishes and plates made of a single piece of metal'.] ■ a silver or gold dish or trophy awarded to a prize winner or competitor.

■ lifted the plate in victory. ■ [in named Bets] a race or competition in which such a prize is awarded: the final of the Ladies' Plate at Henley. 2 a thin, flat sheet or strip of metal or other material, typically one used to join or strengthen another part of a machine: he underwent surgery to have a steel plate put into his leg. ■ a small, flat piece of metal or other material bearing a name or inscription and attached to a door or other object: a brass plate for his initials.

■ (usu. *plates*) short for **UNIFORM PLATE**, the car had Vermont plates. ■ **Botany** & **Zoology** a thin, flat organic structure or formation: the fused bony plates protect the tortoise's soft parts. ■ **Geology** each of the several rigid pieces of the earth's crust that together make up the earth's surface. (See also **PLATE TECTONICS**).

■ Baseball short for **HOME PLATE**. ■ a piece of lumber laid horizontally along the top of a wall to support the ends of joists or rafters. ■ a light horse shoe for a racehorse. 3 a sheet of paper or card on which other material bearing an image of type or illustrations

Pronunciation Key: a: ego; o: over; u: up; y: yer; er: air; fur: a hat; i: rare; i: car; O: oh; e: let; e: see; e(a): air; i(f): i(y); i(e): ear; no: sing; o: go; o: boy; o: dog; oo: good; ou: out; sh: she; th: thin; th: then; (f)w why; z: vision

from which multiple copies are printed. ■ a printed photograph, picture, or illustration, esp. one on superior-quality paper in a book. ■ a thin sheet of metal, glass, or other substance coated with a light-sensitive film on which an image is formed, used in larger or older types of cameras. ■ a thin piece of plastic molded to the shape of a person's mouth and gums, to which artificial teeth or another orthodontic appliance are attached. ■ a thin, complete denture or orthodontic appliance. ■ a thin piece of metal that acts as an electrode in a capacitor, battery, or cell. ■ the anode of a thermionic tube.

► [trans.] 1 cover (a metal object) with a thin coating of film of a different metal: she had already taken the coin to a jeweler to be plated [as adj., in combination] (plated) the cylinder is nickel-plated. 2 cover (an object) with plates of metal for decoration, protection, or strength. 3 serve or arrange (food) on a plate or plates before a meal: overcooked vegetables won't look appetizing, no matter how they are plated. 3 Baseball score (a run or runs): cause (someone) to score. 4 Biology inoculate (cells or infective material) onto a culture plate, esp. with the object of isolating a particular strain of microorganisms or estimating viable cell numbers. 5 Middle English (denoting a flat, thin sheet, usually of metal): from Old French *plata*, medieval Latin *plata* 'plate armor', based on Greek *platus* 'flat'. Sense 1 represents Old French *plat* 'plate', large dish, also 'dish of meat', noun use of Old French *plat* 'flat'. — *plated* /-ˈpləʊd/ n. (pl. -folds)

► *plateless* adj. — *plater* /ˈplɑːtər/ n.

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plate appearance *n.* Baseball a player's turn at the plate, the total of which for any player includes all official at bats plus appearances that resulted in a walk, sacrifice, etc. Compare with *AT BAT*.

plate armor *n.* protective armor of metal plates, esp. as worn in medieval times by mounted knights.

plate-tau /ˈplɑːtəʊ/ *n.* (pl. -teaus or -teux /-ˈtəʊz/) an area of relatively level high ground. ■ figurative a state of little or no change following a period of activity or progress: the peace process had reached a plateau. [as adj.] denoting a group of American Indian peoples of the plateau country of western Canada and the U.S., including the Nez Percé.

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Plate River /ˈplæt-riːvər/ a wide estuary on the Atlantic coast of South America at the border between Argentina and Uruguay that is formed by the confluence of the Paraná and Uruguay rivers. The cities of Buenos Aires and Montevideo lie on its shores. In 1939, it was the scene of a naval battle in which the British defeated the Germans. Spanish name **Río de LA PLATA**. ▶Plate from Spanish *plata* 'silver', exported from the region in the Spanish colonial period.

plate tectonics *plural n.* (treated as *sing*) a theory explaining the structure of the earth's crust and many associated phenomena as resulting from the interaction of rigid lithospheric plates that move slowly over the underlying mantle. — *plate-tectonic* *adj.*

platform /ˈplɑːtfɔːm/ *n.* 1 a raised level surface on which people or things can stand. 2 a viewing platform where visitors may gaze at the chasm. 3 a raised floor or stage used by public speakers or performers so that they can be seen by their audience or seen by her living on the concert platform. 4 a raised structure along the side of a railroad track where passengers

get on and off trains at a station. 5 a period of structure standing in the sea from which oil or gas wells can be drilled or regulated. [usu. with *adj.*] a raised structure or orbiting satellite from which rockets or missiles may be launched. 6 Computing a standard for the hardware of a computer system, determining what kinds of software it can run. 2 [usu. in *sing.*] the declared policy of a political party or group: seeing election on a platform of low taxes. 3 an opportunity to voice one's views or initiate action: the forum will provide a platform for discussion of communication issues. 3 (platforms) shoes with very thick soles: chunky platforms [as adj.] yellow platform shoes. ▶late 16th cent.: from French *plateforme* 'ground plan', literally 'flat shape'.

platform bed *n.* a bed consisting of a mattress supported by a platform, which sometimes contains drawers for storage.

platform game *n.* a type of video game featuring two-dimensional graphics in which the player controls a character jumping or climbing between solid platforms at different positions on the screen.

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