

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language



THUNDER BAY
P · R · E · S · S

NF-1012
U.S. Patent 10,726,102

Acknowledgments and Permissions

The "A Dictionary of the English Language" section of this book (*Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*) is based on the second edition of *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, the Unabridged Edition*, copyright 1993, 1987.

First published in 2001 by
Thunder Bay Press

An imprint of the Advantage Publishers Group
5880 Oberlin Drive, San Diego, CA 92121-4794
www.advantagebooksonline.com

Copyright © 1996 by Random House Value Publishing, Inc.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American
Copyright Conventions.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright holder.

All notations of errors or omissions should be addressed to Thunder Bay Press, editorial department, at the above address. All other correspondence (author inquires, permissions) concerning the content of this book should be addressed to Random House Value Publishing, a division of Random House, Inc. 280 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.
<http://www.randomhouse.com/>

ISBN 1-57145-691-0

Printed and bound in the United States of America

ing. crushed ore sufficiently fine to pass through a given screen. Cf. **short** (def. 37a). **b.** Agric. the fine bits of corn kernel knocked off during handling of the grain. [1250-1300; ME *fin* < AF, OF < L *finis* end, utmost limit, highest point]

—Syn. 1. finished, consummate, perfect; select. **FINE**, **CHOICE**, **ELEGANT**, **EXQUISITE** are terms of praise with reference to quality. **FINE** is a general term: a fine horse, person, book. **CHOICE** implies a discriminating selection of the object in question: a choice piece of steak. **ELEGANT** suggests a refined and graceful superiority that is generally associated with luxury and a cultivated taste: elegant furnishings. **EXQUISITE** suggests an admirable delicacy, finish, or perfection: an exquisite piece of lace. 3. powdered, pulverized. 5. acute. —**Ant.** 1. inferior.

fine² (fin), *n.*, *v.*, **fined**, **fin-ing**. —**n.** 1. a sum of money imposed as a penalty for an offense or delinquency: a parking fine. 2. Law. a fee paid by a feudal tenant to the landlord, as on the renewal of tenure. 3. Eng. Law. (formerly) a conveyance of land through decree of a court, based upon a simulated lawsuit. 4. Archaic. a penalty of any kind. 5. In fine, *a.* in short; briefly. *b.* in conclusion; finally: It was, in fine, a fitting end to the story. —**v.** 6. to subject to a fine or pecuniary penalty; punish by a fine: The judge fined him and released him on parole. [1150-1200; ME *fin* < AF, OF < L *finis* end, ML settlement, payment]

fine³ (fēnā), *n.* **Music**. 1. the end of a repeated section, whether *da capo* or *dal segno*. 2. the end of a composition that comprises several movements. [1790-1800; < It < L *finis* end]

fine⁴ (fēn), *n.* ordinary French brandy, usually with no indication of the maker's name or location. [1920-25; short for *Fine (Champagne) de la maison bar brandy*. Cf. **FINE CHAMPAGNE**]

fine-a-ble (fīnəbəl), *adj.* **finable**. —**fine-a-ble-ness**, *n.*

fine art (fin'art), *a*, a visual art considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic purposes and judged for its beauty and meaningfulness, specifically, painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, graphics, and architecture. Cf. **commercial art**. [1760-70]

fine bouche (fēn bōosh'), *French*. refined taste; educated palate. [lit., sensitive mouth]

Fine Champagne (Fr. fēn shān pan'y), a high-quality cognac distilled from grapes grown in the Grande Champagne or Petite Champagne vineyards of western France. [1865-70; < F]

fine comb, a fine-tooth comb.

fine-comb (fin'kōm'), *v.* 1. to use a fine-tooth comb on. 2. to search through thoroughly.

fine-cut (fin'kut'), *adj.* cut into very thin strips (contrasted with *rough-cut*): fine-cut tobacco. [1830-40, Amer.]

fine-draw (fin'drō'), *v.*, **-draw**, **-drawn**, **-draw-ing**. 1. Sewing. to sew together so finely that the joining is not noticeable. 2. to draw out to extreme fineness, tenacity, or subtlety. [1725-35] —**fine-drawer**, *n.*

fine-drawn (fin'drōn'), *adj.* drawn out to extreme fineness or thinness. [1830-40]

fine-grain (fin'grān'), *adj.* **Photog.** 1. (of an image) having an inconspicuous or invisible grain. 2. (of a developer or emulsion) permitting the grain of an image to be inconspicuous or invisible. Also, **fine-grained**. [1925-30]

fine-grained (fin'grānd'), *adj.* 1. being of fine grain or texture, as certain types of wood, leather, etc. 2. **Photog.** fine-grain. [1830-40]

fine-ly (fin'le), *adv.* 1. in a fine manner; excellently; elegantly; delicately; minutely; nicely; subtly. 2. in fine particles or pieces: finely chopped onions. [1275-1325; ME *fineliche*. See **FINE¹**, -LY]

fine nail (fin), a short steel finishing nail from 1 to 1½ in. (2.5 to 3.8 cm) long.

fine-ness (fin'nis), *n.* 1. the state or quality of being fine. 2. the proportion of pure precious metal in an alloy, often expressed in parts per thousand. [1400-50; late ME; see **FINE¹**, -NESS]

fine-ness ra-tio, 1. Aeron. the ratio of the length of a streamlined body, as a rocket or airplane hull, to its maximum diameter. 2. Rocketry. See **aspect ratio** (def. 4a).

fine print (fin'print), 1. printed matter in small-sized type. 2. the detailed wording of a contract, lease, insurance policy, or the like, often set in type smaller than the main body of the document and including general restrictions or qualifications that could be considered disadvantageous: Make sure you read the fine print before signing. Also called **small print**. [1955-60] —**fine-printing**, *adj.*

fin-er (fī'nor), *adj.* **Math.** of or pertaining to a topology or a topological space whose open sets include all the open sets of a second specified topology on the space. Cf. **coarser**. [special use of comp. of **FINE¹**]

fin-er-y (fī'nə rē), *n.* fine or showy dress, ornaments, etc. [1670-80; **FINE¹** + -ERY]

fin-er-y (fī'nə rē), *n.*, *pl.* **-er-ies**. Metalworking, a hearth for converting cast iron into wrought iron; refinery. [1600-10; < MF *finerie*, equiv. to *fin(er)* to refine (see **FINE¹**) + *erie* -ERY]

finer herbes (fēn'erb', ūrb'; Fr. fēn zerb'), *Cookery*. a combination of finely chopped herbs, as parsley, chervil, and chives, used for flavoring soups, sauces, omelets, etc., or as a garnish. [1840-50; < F: fine herbs]

fine-spun (fin'spun'), *adj.* 1. spun or drawn out to a

fine thread. 2. highly or excessively refined or subtle. Also, **fine-spun²**. [1640-50; **FINE¹** + **SPUN**]

fin-esse (fī nēs'), *n.*, *v.*, **-nessed**, **-ness-ing**. —**n.** 1. extreme delicacy or subtlety in action, performance, skill, discrimination, taste, etc. 2. skill in handling a difficult or highly sensitive situation; adroit and artful management: exceptional diplomatic finesse. 3. a trick, artifice, or stratagem. 4. Bridge. Whist. an attempt to win a trick with a card while holding a higher card not in sequence with it, in the hope that the card or cards between will not be played. —**v.** 5. to use finesse or artifice. 6. to make a finesse at cards. —**v.** 7. to bring about by finesse or artifice. 8. to make a finesse with (a card). 9. to force the playing of (a card) by a finesse. [1400-50; late ME: degree of excellence or purity < MF < VL *finitia*. See **FINE¹**, -ICE]

—Syn. 1. 2. tact, diplomacy, savoir faire, circumspection, sensitivity, sensibility.

fin-est (fī'nist), *n.* (used with a plural *v.*) **Informal**. the police: New York City's finest. [1925-30, Amer.]

fin-es-tra (fī nēs'trə), *n.* an aperture, esp. a ventilator in the wall of a tomb. [< It: window < L *fenestra*]

fin-structure (fin), *Physics*. a group of lines that are observed in the spectra of certain elements, as hydrogen, and that are caused by various couplings of the azimuthal quantum number and the angular momentum quantum number. Cf. **hyperfine structure**. [1915-20]

fin-tooth comb (fin'tooth'), 1. a comb having narrow, closely set teeth. 2. go over or through with a fine-tooth comb, to examine in close detail; search thoroughly; fine-comb: The police went over the apartment with a fine-tooth comb. Also, **fine-toothed comb** (fin'tooth', -toothd'). [1830-40]

fine-tune (fin'toon', -tyoon'), *v.*, **-tuned**, **-tuning**. 1. to tune (a radio or television receiver) to produce the optimum reception for the desired station or channel by adjusting a control knob or bar. 2. tune (def. 16). 3. to make minor adjustments in so as to produce stability, improvement, or the precise results desired: to fine-tune the nation's economy. [1920-25] —**fine-tuner**, *n.*

fin-fish (fin'fish'), *n.*, *pl.* (esp. collectively) **-fish**, (esp. referring to two or more kinds or species) **-fish-es**. a true fish, as distinguished from a shellfish. Also, **fin'fish**. [1685-95; **FIN¹** + **FISH**]

fin-foot (fin'fōt'), *n.*, *pl.* **-foots**. any of several aquatic birds of the family *Helionithidae*, of South America, Asia, and Africa, related to the rails and coots and characterized by lobate toes. Also called **sun grebe**. [1885-90; **FIN¹** + **FOOT**]

fin-foot-ed (fin'fōt'id), *adj.* **Ornith.** 1. web-footed. 2. having feet with the toes separately furnished with flaps, as the finfoots and coots. [1640-50]

Fin'gal's Cave (fin'gōlz'), 1. a cave on the island of Staffa, in the Hebrides, Scotland. 227 ft. (69 m) long; 42 ft. (13 m) wide. 2. (italics) an overture, op. 26, composed in 1832 by Felix Mendelssohn.

fin-ger (fīng'gər), *n.* 1. any of the terminal members of the hand, esp. one other than the thumb. 2. a part of a glove made to receive a finger. 3. the breadth of a finger as a unit of measurement; digit. 4. the length of a finger: approximately 4½ in. (11 cm). 5. Slang. an informer or spy. 6. something like a finger in form or use, as a projection or pointer: a finger of land leading out into the bay; the finger on the speedometer. 7. any of various projecting parts of machines. 8. burn one's fingers, to suffer injury or loss by meddling or by acting rashly: If you get involved in the controversy, you may burn your fingers. 9. give (someone) the finger, Slang. to express contempt for by or as by the obscene gesture of pointing the middle finger upward while folding the other fingers against the palm. 10. have a finger in the pie, *a.* to have an interest or share in something, *b.* to meddle in something. 11. keep one's fingers crossed, to wish for good luck or success, as in a specific endeavor: Keep your fingers crossed that I get the job. 12. lay or put one's finger on, *a.* to indicate exactly; remember: I know the name, but I can't put my finger on it. *b.* to discover; locate: I haven't been able to lay my finger on the book you requested. 13. not lift a finger, to make not even a small attempt; do nothing: The house was falling into ruin, but he wouldn't lift a finger to repair it. 14. put the finger on, Slang. finger (def. 22). 15. slip through one's fingers, *a.* to elude one, as an opportunity not taken; escape: She let the chance of a lifetime slip through her fingers. *b.* to pass or be consumed quickly: Money just slips through his fingers. 16. snap one's fingers (at), to exhibit disdain or contempt (for): She snaps her fingers at the local gossip. 17. twist or wrap around one's little finger, to exert one's influence easily or successfully upon: He has a remarkable talent for twisting people around his little finger. —**v.** 18. to touch with the fingers; toy or meddle with; handle. 19. to touch with the fingers so as to mar or spoil: Please don't finger the vegetables. 20. to pilfer; filch. 21. Music. *a.* to play on (an instrument) with the fingers. *b.* to perform or mark (a passage of music) with a certain fingering. 22. Slang. *a.* to inform against or identify (a criminal) to the authorities: He fingered the man who robbed the bank. *b.* to designate as a victim, as of murder or other crime. —**v.** 23. to touch or handle something with the fingers. 24. to extend in or as in the shape of a finger: Landing piers finger out into the river along the city's shoreline. [bef. 900; ME, OE: *c.* G *finger*, D *finger*, ON *finger*, Goth *figgers*] —**fin-ger-er**, *n.* —**fin-ger-less**, *adj.*

fin-ger-board (fīng'gər bōrd', -bōrd'), *n.* 1. (of a violin, cello, etc.) the strip of wood on the neck against which the strings are stopped by the fingers. 2. keyboard. [1665-75; **FINGER** + **BOARD**]

fin-ger bowl, a small bowl to hold water for rinsing the fingers at table. [1855-60]

fin-ger-breadth (fīng'gər bredth', -bretth'), *n.* the breadth of a finger: approximately ¾ in. (2 cm). [1585-95; **FINGER** + **BREADTH**]

fin-gered (fīng'gərd), *adj.* 1. having fingers, esp. of a

specified kind or number (often used in combination): a five-fingered glove. 2. spoiled or marred by handling, as merchandise. 3. Zool., Bot. digitate. 4. (of a musical score) marked to show which fingers should be used in playing the notes. [1620-30; **FINGER** + -ED¹]

fin-ger-flow-er (fīng'gər flou'ər), *n.* See **purple fox-glove**. [1620-30; **FINGER** + **FLOWER**]

fin-ger food, food intended to be picked up with the fingers and eaten.

fin-ger-fuck (fīng'gər fuk'), *v.*, *v.i.* **Slang** (vulgar). to stimulate the genitals of a girl or woman manually.

fin-ger gate, *Metall.* any of a number of small runners radiating from a single gate to distribute metal in several parts of the mold cavity.

fin-ger grass, any of various grasses of the genus *Chloris*, having several narrow spikes in a terminal cluster. Also called **windmill grass**. [1815-25, Amer.]

fin-ger hole, 1. one of a set of holes for the finger on the rotating dial of a telephone. 2. one of two holes or more on a bowling ball for holding the ball. 3. one of a series of holes on a wind instrument for changing the pitch by being opened or closed. [1875-80]

fin-ger-ing (fīng'gər ing), *n.* 1. the act of a person who fingers. 2. Music. *a.* the action or method of using the fingers in playing on an instrument. *b.* the indication of the way the fingers are to be used in performing a piece of music. [1350-1400; ME; see **FINGER**, -ING¹]

Fin'ger Lakes, a group of elongated glacial lakes in central and W New York: resort region.



fin-ger-ling (fīng'gər ling), *n.* 1. a young or small fish, esp. a very small salmon or trout. 2. something very small. [1400-50; late ME: fingerling. See **FINGER**, -LING¹]

fin-ger man, *Slang*. a person who points out someone to be murdered, robbed, etc. [1925-30, Amer.]

fin-ger mark, a mark, esp. a smudge or stain, made by a finger. Also, **fin-ger-mark**. [1830-40] —**fin-ger-marked**, *adj.*

fin-ger-nail (fīng'gər nāl'), *n.* 1. the nail at the end of a finger. 2. Print. a parenthesis. [1200-50; ME; see **FINGER**, **NAIL**]

fin-ger paint, a jellylike paint, used chiefly by children in painting, usually with their fingers. [1945-50] —**fin-ger paint-ing**, *adj.*

fin-ger-paint (fīng'gər pānt'), *v.*, *v.i.* to paint by using finger paints. [1950-55]

fin-ger post, a post with one or more directional signs, terminating in a pointed finger or hand. [1775-85]

fin-ger-print (fīng'gər prīnt'), *n.* 1. an impression of the markings of the inner surface of the last joint of the thumb or other finger. 2. such an impression made with ink for purposes of identification. 3. any unique or distinctive pattern that presents unambiguous evidence of a specific person, substance, disease, etc. —**v.** 4. to take or record the fingerprints of. [1855-60; **FINGER** + **PRINT**]

fin-ger pup/pet, a miniature puppet fitting over and manipulated by one finger.

fin-ger read-ing, the reading of Braille by means of the fingertips.

fin-ger-spell (fīng'gər spel'), *v.*, *v.i.* to communicate by fingerspelling. [**FINGER** + **SPELL¹**]

fin-ger-spelling (fīng'gər spel'ing), *n.* the communication in sign language of a word or other expression by rendering its written form letter by letter in a manual alphabet. [**FINGER** + **SPELLING**]

fin-ger-stall (fīng'gər stōl'), *n.* a covering used to protect a finger. [1425-75; late ME *finger stalle*. See **FINGER**, **STALL**]

fin-ger-tip (fīng'gər tip'), *n.* 1. the tip or end of a finger. 2. a covering used to protect the end joint of a finger. 3. at one's fingertips, *a.* close at hand; easily or immediately available. *b.* at one's command or disposal, as recall of factual information: He has the answer at his fingertips. 4. to one's fingertips, thoroughly; perfectly: She was a politician to her fingertips. —**adj.** 5. extending to the fingertips, as a coat, veil, etc.: a fingertip jacket. [1835-45; **FINGER** + **TIP**]

fin-ger wave, *Hairdressing*. a wave set by impressing the fingers into hair dampened by lotion or water. [1930-35]

fin-ly (fēn'le), *adj.* **French**. finished; done.

fin-ly (fēn'le), *adj.* **French**. finished; done.

fin-ly (fēn'le), *adj.* **French**. finished; done.

fin-ly (fēn'le), *adj.* **French**. finished; done.

CONCISE ETYMOLOGY KEY: <, descended or borrowed from; >, whence; b, blend of; blended; c, cognate with; cf., compare; deriv., derivative; equiv., equivalent; imit., imitative; obl., oblique; r, replacing; s, stem; sp., spelling; spelled; resp., respelling; respelled; trans., translation; ? , origin unknown; * , unattested; † , probably earlier than. See the full key inside the front cover.