

The New Oxford American Dictionary

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
2001

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

New York Oxford

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The *New Oxford American Dictionary* is based on the *New Oxford Dictionary of English*, published in the United Kingdom in 1998.

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Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.,
198 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York 10016

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www.askoxford.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 0-19-511227-X (thumb index)

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

■ [with *adverbial*] concerned and well-informed about a particular situation or development: *unless everyone becomes more environmentally aware, catastrophe is inevitable* | *a politically aware electorate*.

-DERIVATIVES *awareness* *n*.

-ORIGIN Old English *gawear*, of West Germanic origin; related to German *gawahr*, also to *WARE*.

AWASH ['ɔːwɒʃ; 'ɔːwɒʃ] *v*, *adj*, [*predic*] covered or flooded with water, esp. seawater or rain: *the boat rolled violently, its decks awash* | *figurative the city was awash with journalists*.

■ level with the surface of water, esp. the sea, so that it just washes over: *a rock awash above the reef entrance*.

AWAY ['ɔːwə] *adv*, 1 to or at a distance from a particular place, person, or thing: *the landed badly, and crawled away* | *they walked away from the church in silence* | *Bernice pushed him away* | *we'll be away for four nights* | *there's a river not far away*.

■ at a specified distance: *when he was ten or twelve feet away, he stopped* | *a loud explosion a short distance away* | *we have had patients from as far away as Tromsø*. ■ at a specified future distance in time: *the wedding is only weeks away* | *toward a lower level, downward: in front of them the land fell away to the river* | *conceptually to one side, so as no longer to be the focus of attention: the museum has shifted its emphasis away from research toward exhibitions*.

2 into an appropriate place for storage or safekeeping: *he put away the lawn furniture* | *Philip locked away all the cash every night*.

■ toward or into nonexistence: *the sound of hoofbeats died away* | *Maria felt her distress ebb away*.

3 constantly, persistently, or continuously: *there was little Edgar crooning away* | *have your camera ready and click away when you spot something*.

adj, (of a sports competition) played at the opponents' grounds: *tomorrow night's away game at Yankee Stadium*.

-PHRASES *away with* said as an exhortation to overcome or be rid of something; let us be rid of: *away with poverty*!

-ORIGIN Old English *onweg*, *atweg* 'on one's way' (see *A-3, WAY*).

AWB an extreme right-wing white political party in South Africa violently opposed to majority rule.

-ORIGIN abbreviation from *Afrikaner/Witwatersrand-beveging* 'Afrikaner Resistance Movement'.

awe [ə] *n*, a feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear or wonder: *they gazed in awe at the small mountain of diamonds* | *the sight filled me with awe* | *his staff members are in awe of the president*.

■ archaic capacity to inspire awe: *is it any wonder that Christmas Eve has lost its awe?*

v, [trans] (usu. *be* *awed*) inspire with awe: *they were both awed by the vastness of the forest* | [as *adj*] (*awed*) *he spoke in a hushed, awed whisper*.

-ORIGIN Old English *æge* 'terror, dread, awe', replaced in Middle English by forms related to Old Norse *agi*.

aweigh ['ɔːwaɪ] *v*, *adj*, Nautical (of an anchor) raised just clear of the sea or riverbed.

-ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from *A-2* 'on' + *WEIGH*.

awe-inspiring *adj*, arousing awe through being impressive, formidable, or magnificent: *Michelangelo's awe-inspiring masterpiece*.

awesome ['ɔːsəm] *adj*, extremely impressive or daunting; inspiring great admiration, apprehension, or fear: *the awesome power of the atomic bomb*.

■ informal extremely good; excellent: *the band is truly awesome!*

-DERIVATIVES *awesomely* *adv*; *awesomeness* *n*.

-ORIGIN late 16th cent.: (in the sense 'filled with awe'): from *awe* + *SOME*!

awe-struck ['ɔːstrʊk] (also *awestricken* ['ɔːstrɪkən]) *adj*, filled with or revealing awe: *people were awe-struck by the pictures sent back to earth*.

awful ['ɔːfʊl] *adj*, 1 very bad or unpleasant: *the place smelled awful* | *I look awful in a swimsuit* | *an awful speech*.

■ extremely shocking; horrific: *awful, bloody images*.

■ [attrib] used to emphasize the extent of something, esp. something unpleasant or negative: *I've made an awful fool of myself*. ■ (of a person) very unwell, troubled, or unhappy: *I felt awful for being to angry with him* | *you look awful—you should go and lie down*.

2 archaic inspiring reverential wonder or fear.

adv, [as *submodifier*] informal *awfully*: *we're an awful long way from the main road*.

-PHRASES an *awful lot* a very large amount; a great deal: *we've had an awful lot of letters* | *you've still got an awful lot to learn*.

-DERIVATIVES *awfulness* *n*.

-ORIGIN Old English (see *awe*, *FUL*).

awfully ['ɔːfʊli] *adv*, 1 [as *submodifier*] (used esp. in

spoken English) very: *I'm awfully sorry to bother you so late* | *an awfully nice man*.

2 very badly or unpleasantly: *we played awfully*.

awhile ['ɔː(h)wɪl] *adv*, for a short time: *stand here awhile*.

-ORIGIN Old English *æw hille* '(for) a while'.

USAGE: The adverb *awhile* (*we paused awhile*) should be written as one word. The noun phrase, meaning 'a period of time', esp. when preceded by a preposition, should be written as two words (*Margaret rested for a while*; *we'll be there in a while*). See also *usage* at **WORTHWHILE**.

awhirl ['ɔː(h)wɜːl] *v*, *adj*, [*predic*] in a whirl; whirling: *her mind was awhirl with images*.

awkward ['ɔːkwɜːd] *adj*, 1 causing difficulty; hard to do or deal with: *one of the most awkward jobs is painting a ceiling* | *some awkward questions* | *the wheelchair can be awkward to maneuver*.

■ chiefly Brit. deliberately unreasonable or uncooperative: *you're being damned awkward!* | *I please excuse my daughter—she's at an awkward age*.

2 causing or feeling embarrassment or inconvenience: *he had put her in a very awkward situation*.

3 not smooth or graceful; ungainly: *Luther's awkward movements impeded his progress* | *she was long-legged and rather awkward*.

■ uncomfortable or abnormal: *make sure the baby isn't sleeping in an awkward position*.

-DERIVATIVES *awkwardly* *adv*; *awkwardness* *n*.

-ORIGIN late Middle English (in the sense 'the wrong way around, upside down'): from dialect *awk* 'backward, perverse, clumsy' (from Old Norse *af* 'turned the wrong way')

+ *WARD*.

awkward age *n*, the period of adolescence marked by self-consciousness and moody behavior.

awl [ɔːl] *n*, a small pointed tool used for piercing holes, esp. in leather.

-ORIGIN Old English *awl*, of Germanic origin; related to German *Ähl*.

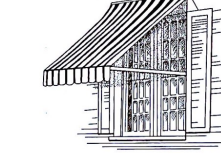
awn [ɒn] *n*, Botany a stiff bristle, esp. one of those growing from the ear or flower of barley, rye, and many grasses.

-DERIVATIVES *awned* *adj*.

-ORIGIN Old English, from Old Norse *agn*; related to Swedish *agn*, Danish *avn*.

awning ['ɒnɪŋ] *n*, a sheet of canvas or other material stretched on a frame and used to keep the sun or rain off a storefront, window, doorway, or deck.

-ORIGIN early 17th cent. (originally in nautical use): of unknown origin.



awning

awoken ['ɔːwɒk] past participle of **AWAKE**.

AWOL ['ɔːwɒl] *adj*, [*predic*] Military absent from where one should be but without intent to desert: *the men have gone AWOL* | *humorous now the parrot has gone AWOL*.

-ORIGIN 1920s: acronym from *absent without (official) leave*.

awry ['ɔːtri] *adv*, *adj*, away from the appropriate, planned, or expected course; amiss: [as *adv*] *many youthful romances go awry* | [as *predic* *adj*] *I got the impression that something was awry*.

■ out of the normal or correct position; askew: [as *predic* *adj*] *he was halter, his silver hair awry*.

-ORIGIN late Middle English: from *A-2* 'on' + *WR*.

aw-shucks *adj*, [attrib] informal (of a personal quality or manner) self-deprecating and shy: *his aw-shucks niceness disguised his cunning nature*.

-ORIGIN late 20th cent.: from *AW* + *shucks* (see **SHUCK**).

axe [æks] (also *axe*) *n*, 1 a tool typically used for chopping wood, usually a steel blade attached to a right angle to a wooden handle.

■ figurative a measure intended to reduce costs drastically, esp. one that involves elimination of staff: *thirty workers are facing the axe in the assembly department*.

2 informal a musical instrument, esp. a jazz musician's saxophone or a bass guitar.

v, [trans] 1 to end, cancel, or dismiss suddenly and ruthlessly: *the company is axing 125 jobs* | *2,500 staff were axed as part of the realignment*.

■ reduce (costs or services) drastically: *the candidates all promised to cut government spending*.

2 cut or strike with an axe, esp. violently or destructively: *the door had been axed by the firefighters*.

-PHRASES have an *axe to grind* have a self-serving reason for doing or being involved in something: *the joined the board because she had an axe to grind with the school system*.

-ORIGIN Old English *æx*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *aks* and German *Axt*.

axel ['æksəl] (also *Axel*) *n*, Figure Skating a jump with a forward takeoff from the forward outside edge of one skate, the backward outside edge of the other, with one and a half turns in the air.

-ORIGIN 1930s: named after Axel R. Paulsen (1885–1938), Norwegian skater.

axiom ['æksɪəm; 'æksɪ] *n*, *adj*, chiefly Botany of, relating to, or denoting a culture that is free from living organisms other than the species required.

-DERIVATIVES *axiomatically* [-ɪk(ə)li] *adv*.

-ORIGIN 1940s: from *a-* 'not' + *Greek* *axiōs* 'alien, strange' + *-ic*.

axes ['æks, æz] plural form of **AXIS**.

axial ['æksɪəl] *adj*, of, forming, or relating to an axis: *the main axial road*.

■ around an axis: *the axial rotation rate of the earth*.

-DERIVATIVES *axially* *adv*.

axial ['æksəl] *n*, Botany the upper angle between a leaf stalk or branch and the stem or trunk from which it is growing.

-ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Latin *axilla* 'armpit' (see **AXILLA**).

axillary ['æksɪlə] *n*, [pl. *axillae*] *n*, Botany a branch or the space below the shoulder through which vessels and nerves enter and leave the upper arm; a person's armpit.

■ Botany an axil.

-ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from Latin, diminutive of *axil* 'wing'.

axillary ['æksɪlə] *adj*, Anatomy of or relating to the armpit: *enlargement of the axillary lymph nodes*.

■ Botany in or growing from an axil: *axillary shoots*. Of-ten contrasted with **TERMINAL**.

axillary bud *n*, a bud that grows from the axil of a leaf and may develop into a branch or flower cluster. Also called **LATERAL BUD**.

axiom ['æksɪəm] *n*, a statement or proposition that is regarded as being established, accepted, or self-evidently true: *the axiom that supply equals demand*.

■ chiefly Mathematics a statement or proposition on which an abstractly defined structure is based.

-ORIGIN late 15th cent.: from French *axiome* or Latin *axioma*, from Greek *axiōma* 'what is thought fitting'.

axiomatic ['æksɪˈɒmɪk] *adj*, self-evident or unquestionable: *it is axiomatic that dividends have to be financed*.

■ [attrib] chiefly Mathematics relating to or containing axioms.

-DERIVATIVES *axiomatically* [-ɪk(ə)li] *adv*.

-ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Greek *axiōmatikos*, from *axiōma* 'what is thought fitting' (see **AXIOM**).

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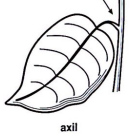
-ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Greek *axiōmatikos*, from *axiōma* 'what is thought fitting' (see **AXIOM**).

axial ['æksəl] *n*, [pl. *axes*] *n*, 1 an imaginary line about which a body rotates: *the earth revolves on its axis once every 24 hours*.

■ Geometry an imaginary straight line passing through the center of a symmetrical solid, and about which a plane figure can be conceived as rotating to generate



ax 1



axil

the solid. ■ an imaginary line that divides something into equal or roughly equal halves, esp. in the direction of its greatest length.

2 Mathematics a fixed reference line for the measurement of coordinates: the variable that is thought of as a cause is placed on the horizontal axis, and the variable that is thought of as an effect on the vertical axis.

3 a straight central part in a structure to which other parts are connected.

■ Botany the central column of an inflorescence or other growth. ■ Zoology the skull and backbone of a vertebrate animal.

4 Anatomy the second cervical vertebra, below the atlas at the top of the backbone.

5 an agreement or alliance between two or more countries that forms a center for an eventual larger grouping of nations: the *Anglo-American axis*.

■ (the Axis) the alliance of Germany and Italy formed before and during World War II, later extended to include Japan and other countries: [as *əʃ*] the Axis Powers.

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin, 'axis, pivot.'

axis deer (also **axis**) *n.* a deer that has lyre-shaped antlers and a fawn coat with white spots, native to India and Sri Lanka.

—ORIGIN early 17th century: *axis* from Latin, the name of an Indian animal mentioned by Pliny.

axisymmetric *adj.* [ˌæksɪsɪ'metrɪk] *adj.* Geometry symmetrical about an axis.

axle *n.* [ˈæksəl] *n.* a rod or spindle (either fixed or rotating) passing through the center of a wheel or group of wheels: [as *æʃ*] axle grease *axle load*.

—ORIGIN Middle English (originally *axle-tree*): from Old Norse *akslr*.

axman *n.* [ˈæks.mən] (also **axeman**) *n.* (pl. *-men*) 1 a person who works with an ax: *he was like an axman at work in a tangled thicket*.

2 informal a rascal; goliardist.

axminster *n.* [ˈæks.mɪnstər] (also **Axminster carpet**) *n.* a kind of machine-woven patterned carpet with a cut pile.

—ORIGIN early 19th cent.: named after the town of Axminster in southern England, noted since the 18th cent. for the production of carpets.

axolotl *n.* [ˌæksəl.ɒl] *n.* a Mexican salamander which in natural conditions retains its aquatic newt-like larval form throughout life but is able to breed.

—ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Nahuatl, from *axtli* 'water' + *xolotl* 'servant'.

axon *n.* [ˈæks.ən] *n.* the long threadlike part of a nerve cell along which impulses are conducted from the cell body to other cells.

—DERIVATIVES **axonal** *adj.* [ˈæks.ənəl]; **ax'nal** *adj.*

—ORIGIN mid 19th cent. (denoting the body axis): from Greek *axōn* 'axis'.

axosome *n.* [ˈæks.ə.səm] *n.* Biology the central strand of a cilium or flagellum. It is composed of an array of microtubules, typically in nine pairs around two single central ones.

—DERIVATIVES **axosomal** *adj.* [ˈæks.ə.sə.məl] *adj.*

—ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from Greek *axōs* 'axis' + *sōma* 'thread'.

axonometric *adj.* [ˌæks.ə.nə'metrɪk] *adj.* using or designating an orthographic projection of an object, such as a building, on a plane inclined to each of the three principal axes of the object; three-dimensional but without perspective.

axoplasm *n.* [ˈæks.ə.plæzəm] *n.* Biology the cytoplasm of a nerve axon.

—DERIVATIVES **axoplasmic** *adj.* [ˈæks.ə.plæz.mɪk] *adj.*

ay *n.* [eɪ] *n.* variant spelling of *aye*.

Ayacucho *n.* [ˌaj.ə'kuːtʃo] a city in the Andes in southern Peru: pop. 101,600.

ayah *n.* [ˈajə] *n.* a native maid or nursemaid employed by Europeans in India.

ayahuasca *n.* [ˌajə'wæskə] *n.* a tropical vine native to the Amazon region, noted for its hallucinogenic properties.

—ORIGIN 1940s: from South American Spanish, from Quechua *ayahuaska*, from *aya* 'corpse' + *wasika* 'rope'.

ayattollah *n.* [ˌaj.ə'toʊlə] *n.* a Shi'ite religious leader in Iran.

—ORIGIN 1950s: from Persian, from Arabic *ʾayātullah*, literally 'token of God'.

Ayattollah Khomeini see **KHOMEINI**.

Ayckbourn *n.* [ˈæk.bɔːn], Sir Alan (1939–), English playwright. Notable plays: *Relatively Speaking* (1967), *Aburd Person Singular* (1973), and *A Chorus of Disapproval* (1985).

aye *1* (also *ay*) *exclam.* archaic or dated said to express assent: *aye, you're right about that*.

aye *2* (also *ay*) *n.* Nautical a response acknowledging an order: *aye, aye, captain*. ■ (in voting) I assent: *all in favor, aye, aye*.

—ORIGIN affirmative answer or assent, esp. in voting: the *House was divided*: *Aye* 211, *Nay* 271.

—PHRASES **the ayes have it** the affirmative votes are in the majority.

—ORIGIN late 16th cent.: probably from *I*, first person personal pronoun, expressing assent.

aye *3* [aɪ] *v.* archaic or Scottish always or still.

—PHRASES **for aye** for ever. *I shall treasure the memory for aye*.

—ORIGIN Middle English: from Old Norse *ei*, *ey*, related to Latin *aeuum* 'age' and Greek *aiōn* 'ever'; *aiōn*; 'aeon'.

aye-aye *1* [ˈiː.ɪ] *n.* a rare nocturnal Madagascan primate allied to the lemurs. It has rodentlike incisor teeth and an elongated twiglike finger on each hand with which it pries insects from bark.

—*Daubentonia madagascariensis*, the only member of the family Daubentonidae.

—ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from French, from Malagasy *Ayer* [er], Sir A. J. (1910–89), English philosopher; full name *Alfred Jules Ayer*. He was an important proponent of logical positivism. Notable works: *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936) and *The Problem of Knowledge* (1956).

Ayers Rock [ˈeɪ.əz. rɒk] a red rock mass in Northern Territory, Australia, southwest of Alice Springs. The largest monolith in the world, it is 1,143 feet (348 m) high and about 6 miles (9 km) in circumference.

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Ayeyasha [ˈeɪ.ɪ.ʃə] the wife of Muhammad.

Aymara *n.* [ˈaj.mə.rə] *n.* (pl. same or *Aymaras*) 1 a member of a South American Indian people inhabiting the high plateau region of Bolivia and Peru near Lake Titicaca.

2 the language of this people, related to Quechua.

—*adj.* of or relating to this people or their language.

—ORIGIN Spanish.

Ayrshire [ˈeɪ.ə.ʃɪə] *n.* an animal of a mainly white breed of dairy cattle.

—ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: named after *Ayrshire*, a former Scottish county where the cattle were bred.

AYT *abbr.* Compiling informal (in e-mail) are you there?

Ayub Khan [ˈaj.ʊb.ˈkæn] *n.* Muhammad (1907–74), Pakistani soldier and statesman; president 1958–69.

Ayurveda [ˌaj.ə.vɜːdə] *n.* the traditional Hindu system of medicine, which is based on the idea of balance in bodily systems and uses diet, herbal treatment, and yogic breathing.

—DERIVATIVES **Ayurvedic** *adj.* [ˌaj.ə.vɜːdɪk] *adj.*

—ORIGIN from Sanskrit *ayus* 'life' + *veda* 'science'.

AZ *abbr.* Arizona (in official postal use).

Azad Kashmir [ˈæzəd kɑːʃmɪr] *n.* an autonomous state in northeastern Pakistan, formerly part of Kashmir; administrative center, Muzaffargarh. It was established in 1949 after Kashmir was split as a result of the partition of India.

—ORIGIN from Urdu, literally 'Free Kashmir'.

azalea *n.* [ˈæzələ] *n.* a deciduous flowering shrub of the heath family with clusters of brightly colored, sometimes fragrant flowers. Technically classified as rhododendrons, azaleas are characteristically smaller than most other rhododendrons.

—ORIGIN mid 18th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek, feminine of *azaleos* 'dry', because the shrub flourishes in dry soil.

azan [ˈæzən] *n.* the Muslim call to ritual prayer, typically made by a muezzin from the minaret of a mosque.

—ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from Arabic *ʾaḍān* 'announcement'. Compare with **MUEZZIN**.

azeo-trope [ˌæzə.ˈtrɒp] *n.* Chemistry a mixture of two liquids that has a constant boiling point and composition throughout distillation.

—DERIVATIVES **azeotropic** *adj.* [ˌæzə.ˈtrɒpɪk] *adj.*

—ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from *azo* 'without' + Greek *ainō* 'to boil' + *tropos* 'turning'.

Azerbaijan [ˌæzəˈbiːdʒən, -dʒən] a country in southeastern Europe, in the Caucasus, on the western shore of the Caspian Sea; pop. 7,219,000; capital, Baku; languages, Azerbaijani (official), Russian.

Historically, the name Azerbaijan refers to a larger region that formed part of Persia. The northern part of this was ceded to Russia in the early 19th century; the southern part remained a region in northwestern Iran. Russian Azerbaijan was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1922 and gained independence on the breakup of the USSR in 1991. Azerbaijan contains the predominantly Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh, over which open conflict with Armenia broke out in 1988. The Azeri autonomous republic of Naxçıvan forms an enclave within the Republic of Armenia and similarly continues to be the subject of armed conflict.



Azerbaijani [ˌæzəˈbiːdʒiːni, -dʒiːni] *n.* *adj.* of or relating to Azerbaijan or its people or their language.

n. (pl. **Azerbaijanis**) 1 a native or national of Azerbaijan or a person of Azerbaijani descent.

2 the Turkic language of Azerbaijan.

Azeri [ˈæzəri] *n.* (pl. **Azeris**) 1 a member of a Turkic people forming the majority population of Azerbaijan, and also living in Armenia and northern Iran.

2 the Azerbaijani language.

adj. of, relating to, or denoting this people or their language.

—ORIGIN from Turkish *azeri*.

azide [ˈæzɪd, -ɪd] *n.* Chemistry a compound containing the anion or the group *N₃⁻*.

—ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from *azo* + *-ide*.

azidothymidine [ˌæzɪdɪˈθɪmɪdɪn, -dɪn; ˌæzɪdɪˈθɪmɪdɪn] *n.* a nucleoside analog for the azo-antitumor drug.

Azikiwe [ˌæzɪˈkiweɪ, -benjɪm] *n.* (1940–96), Nigerian statesman; the first governor-general of independent Nigeria 1960–63 and its first president 1963–66.

azimuth [ˈæzɪməθ] *n.* the direction of a celestial object from the observer, expressed as the angular distance from the north or south point of the horizon to the point at which a vertical circle passing through the object intersects the horizon.

■ the horizontal angle or direction of a compass bearing.

—DERIVATIVES **azimuthal** *adj.* [ˌæzɪməˈθiəl] *adj.*

—ORIGIN late Middle English (denoting the arc of a celestial circle from the zenith to the horizon): from Old French *azimut*, from Arabic *as-samt*, from *al* 'the' + *samt* 'way, direction'.

azimuthal projection [ˌæzɪməˈθiəl] *n.* a map projection in which a region of the earth is projected onto a plane tangential to the surface, typically at a pole or the equator.

azine [ˈæzɪn, ˌæzɪn] *n.* Chemistry a cyclic organic compound having a ring including one or (typically) more nitrogen atoms.

—ORIGIN late 19th cent.: from *azo* + *-ine*.

azo *prefix* Chemistry containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms between carbon atoms: azobenzene.

—ORIGIN from obsolete *azote* 'nitrogen', from French, from Greek *azōs* 'without life'.

azobenzene [ˌæzəˈbenzɪn, -benˈzɪn; ˌæzəˈbenzɪn] *n.* Chemistry a synthetic crystalline organic compound used chiefly in dye manufacture.

—Chem. formula: $C_{12}H_{10}N_2$ or $C_6H_5N=N(C_6H_5)$.

azo dye *n.* [ˌæzə, ˌæzɪ] *n.* Chemistry any of a large class of synthetic dyes whose molecules contain two adjacent nitrogen atoms between carbon atoms.

—ORIGIN [ˌæzə, ˌæzɪ] *adj.* having no trace of life or organic remains.

—(Azole) Geology another term for **ANCHAEA**.

azo *1* [ˌæzə, ˌæzɪ] *adj.* (esp. of soils) having no zonal organization or structure.

azoospermia [ˌæzəˈspermiə] *n.* Medicine absence of sperm (and hence viable) sperm in the semen.

—DERIVATIVES **azoospermic** *1* [ˌæzəˈspermiːk] *adj.*

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[trans] state again as a summary: recapitulate: a may of *recapitulating the story so far* | [trans] to recap, at the end of the Persian Gulf War, he lost control of the northern third of his country.

■ [v] [re]kap + a summary of what has been said; a recapitulation: a quick recap of the idea and its main advantages.

—ORIGIN 1950s: abbreviation.

recapitalize [re'kæpɪtɪz] v. [trans] provide (a business) with more capital, esp. by replacing debt with stock.

—DERIVATIVES **recapitalization** [re'kæpɪtə'leɪʒən] n.

recapitulate [re'kæpɪtə'leɪt] v. [trans] summarize and state again in main points: *he began to recapitulate his argument with care.*

■ Biology repeat (an evolutionary or other process) during development and growth.

—DERIVATIVES **recapitulatory** [re'kæpɪtə'leɪtəri] adj.

—ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from late Latin *recapitulatio* 'gone through heading', from *re-* 'again' + *capitulum* 'chapter' (diminutive of *caput* 'head').

recapitulation [re'kæpɪtə'leɪʃən] n. an act or instance of summarizing and restating the main points of something: *his recapitulation of the argument.*

■ Biology the repetition of an evolutionary or other process during development or growth. ■ Music a part of a movement (esp. one in sonata form) in which themes from the exposition are restated.

recapitulation theory n. another term for BIOGENETIC LAW.

recapitulation [re'kæpɪtə'leɪʃən] n. Law the action of taking back, without legal process, property of one's own that has been wrongfully taken or withheld.

—ORIGIN mid 18th cent.: from Anglo-Latin *recapitulatio* (from *re-* 'back' + Latin *capitulum* 'taking').

recapture [re'kæptʃər] v. [trans] capture (a person or animal that has escaped): *armed police have recaptured a prisoner who's been on the run for five days.*

■ recover (something previously captured by an enemy): *Edward I recaptured the castle.* ■ regain (something that has been lost): *Democrats might recapture both the House and the Senate.* ■ recreate or experience again (a past time, event, or feeling): *the program gives viewers a chance to recapture their own childhoods.*

—[in sing.] an act of recapturing.

recast [ri'kæst] v. (past and past part. *recast*) [trans] 1 give (a metal object) a different form by melting it down and reshaping it.

■ present or organize in a different form or style: *his doctoral thesis has been recast for the general reader.*

2 allocate the parts in (a play or film) to different actors: *there were moves to recast the play.*

recd *verb*, received.

recede [ri'sið] v. [intrans] go or move back or further away from a previous position: *the flood waters had receded* | *his footsteps receded down the corridor.*

■ (of a quality, feeling, or possibility) gradually diminish: *the prospects of an early end to the war receded.*

■ (of a man's hair) cease to grow at the temples and above the forehead: *his dark hair was now receding a little* | [as adj.] (**receding**) *a receding hairline.* ■ (of a man) begin to go bald in such a way: *Fred was receding a bit.* ■ [usu. as adj.] (**receding**) (of a facial feature) slope backward: *a slightly receding chin.* ■ (recede from) *subtle withdrawal* (from an undertaking, promise, or agreement).

—ORIGIN late 15th cent. (in the sense 'depart from (a usual state or standard)'): from Latin *recedere*, from *re-* 'back' + *cedere* 'go'.

receipt [ri'si:t] n. 1 the action of receiving something or the fact of its being received: *I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter* | *this office is already in receipt of your midterm grades.*

■ a written or printed statement acknowledging that something has been paid for or that goods have been received. ■ (receipts) an amount of money received during a particular period by an organization or business: *box-office receipts.*

2 a bill or receipt.

■ [trans] [usu. as adj.] (**receipted**) mark (a bill) as paid: *the receipted hotel bill.*

■ write a receipt for (goods or money): *all fish shall be receipted at time of purchase.*

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from Anglo-Norman French *receite*, from medieval Latin *recepta* 'received', feminine past participle of Latin *receptus*. The *-p-* was inserted in imitation of the Latin spelling.

receivable [ri'seɪvəbl] adj. able to be received.

■ (receivables) amounts owed to a business, regarded as assets.

receive [ri'si:v] v. [trans] 1 be given, presented with, or paid (something): *most businesses will receive a tax cut* | *the receiver her prize from the manager.*

■ take delivery of (something sent or communicated): *he received fifty inquiries after advertising his job.* ■ buy or accept goods in the knowledge that they have been stolen: *a man convicted of receiving stolen property.* ■ detect or pick up (broadcast signals): *Turkish television began to be received in Zaireland.* ■ form (an idea or impression) as a result of perception or experience: *the impression she received was one of unhurried leisure.* ■ (in tennis and similar games) be the player to whom the server serves (the ball). ■ (in Christian services) eat or drink (the Eucharistic bread or wine): *he received Communion and left.* ■ consent to formally hear (an oath or confession): *he failed to find magnificence to receive his oath.* ■ serve as a receptacle for: *the basin that receives your blood.*

2 suffer, experience, or be subject to (specified treatment): *the event received wide press coverage* | *he received an eight-year prison sentence* | *she received only cuts and bruises.*

■ [with obj. and adverbial] (usu. **be received**) respond to (something) in a specified way: *her first poem was not well received.* ■ meet with (a specified response or reaction): *the rulings have received widespread acceptance.* ■ [as adj.] (**received**) widely accepted as authoritative or true: *the myths and received wisdom about the country's past.* ■ meet and have to withstand: *the landward slopes receive the full force of the wind.*

3 greet or welcome (a visitor) formally: *representatives of the club will be received by the Mayor.*

■ be visited by: *she was not allowed to receive visitors.*

■ admit as a member: *hundreds of converts were received into the Church.* ■ provide space or accommodations for: *three lines are reserved for special vehicles, and the remaining lines receive the general rolling stock.*

—PHRASES **be at (or on) the receiving end** be the person to whom a telephone call is made. ■ *reform* be subjected to something unpleasant: *she found herself on the receiving end of a good deal of teasing.*

—ORIGIN Middle English: from Anglo-Norman French *receivre*, based on Latin *receptus*, from *re-* 'back' + *capere* 'take'.

received pronunciation (also **received standard**) n. the standard form of British English pronunciation, based on educated speech in southern England, widely accepted as a standard elsewhere.

receiver [ri'si:vər] n. 1 the part of a telephone apparatus contained in the earpiece, in which electrical signals are converted into sounds.

■ a complete telephone handset: *he picked up the receiver.* ■ a piece of radio or television apparatus that detects broadcast signals and converts them into visible or audible form: *a satellite receiver.*

2 a person who goes or accepts something that has been sent or given to them: *the receiver of a gift.*

■ (in tennis and similar games) the player to whom the ball is served to begin play. ■ Football a player who is eligible to catch a pass. ■ a person who buys or accepts stolen goods in the knowledge that they have been stolen.

3 a person or company appointed by a court to manage the financial affairs of a business or person that has gone bankrupt: *the company is in the hands of the receiver.*

4 Chemistry a container for collecting the products of distillation, chromatography, or other process.

5 the part of a firearm that houses the action and to which the barrel and other parts are attached.

receivewordship [ri'si:vər'shi:p] n. the state of being dealt with by an official receiver: *the company went into receivewordship last week.*

receiving line n. a collection of people who gather in a row to greet guests as they arrive at a formal social event.

reception [ri'seɪʃən] n. a revised edition of a text: *an act of making a revised edition of a text.*

—ORIGIN mid 17th cent. (in the sense 'survey, review'): from Latin *receptio* (from *re-* 'back' + *capere* 'take').

recept [ri'seɪt] n. 1 having happened, begun, or been done not long ago or not long before, belonging to a past period of time comparatively close to the present: *his recent visit to Britain* | *a recent edition of the newspaper.*

2 (Recent) Geology another term for **HOLocene**.

■ (the Recent) Geology the Holocene epoch.

—DERIVATIVES **receptancy** n.; **receptancy** adj.; **receptancy** n.

—ORIGIN late Middle English (in the sense 'fresh'): from Latin *receptus*, *receptus* or *fructus receptus*.

receptacle [ri'seɪptəkl] n. 1 an object or space used to contain something: *trash receptacles.*

■ chiefly Zoology an organ or structure that receives a secretion, eggs, sperm, etc. ■ an electrical outlet into which the plug of an electrical device may be inserted.

2 Botany an enlarged area at the apex of a stem that bears the organs of a flower or the florets of a flower-head.

■ a structure supporting the sexual organs in some algae, mosses, and liverworts.

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *receptaculum*, from *receptare* 'receive back'; frequentative of *receptus* (see **RECEIVE**).

reception [ri'seɪʃən] n. 1 the action or process of receiving something sent, given, or inflicted: *the reception of impulses from other neurons* | *the reception of the sacrament.*

■ the way in which a person or group of people reacts to someone or something: *the proposal continued to get a lukewarm reception on Wall Street.* ■ the receiving of broadcast signals: *a microphone that will allow parents to block reception of violent programs.* ■ the quality of this: *I had to put up with poor radio reception.* ■ the action of admitting someone to a place, group, or institution or the process of being admitted: *their reception into the Church.* ■ the formal or ceremonious welcoming of a guest: *his reception by the Prime Minister.* ■ Football an act of a player's entry.

2 a formal social occasion held to welcome someone or to celebrate a particular event: *a wedding reception.*

3 the area in a hotel, office, or other establishment where guests and visitors are greeted and dealt with: [as adj.] *the reception desk.*

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from Old French, or from Latin *receptio* (from *re-* 'back', from the verb *receptus* (see **RECEIVE**)).

receptionist [ri'seɪpʃənɪst] n. a person employed in an office or other establishment to greet and deal with clients and visitors.

reception room n. a room in a hotel or other building used for functions such as parties and meetings.

receptive [ri'seɪptɪv] adj. able or willing to receive something, esp. signals or stimuli.

■ willing to consider or accept new suggestions and ideas: *receptive audience* | *the institution was receptive to new ideas.* ■ (of a female animal) ready to mate.

—DERIVATIVES **receptively** adv.; **receptiveness** n.; **receptivity** n.; **receptively** n.

receptor [ri'seɪptər] n. Physiology an organ or cell able to receive light, heat, or other external stimulus and transmit it as an action or a sensory nerve.

■ a region of tissue, or a molecule in a cell membrane, that responds specifically to a particular neurotransmitter, hormone, antigen, or other substance.

—ORIGIN early 20th cent.: coined in German from Latin *receptor*, from *recept-* 'taken back', from the verb *receptus* (see **RECEIVE**).

recess [ri'ses; ri'ses] n. 1 a small space created by building part of a wall further back from the rest: *a table set into a recess.*

■ a hollow space inside something: *the concrete block has a recess in its base.* ■ (usu. **recesses**) a remote, secluded, or secret place: *the recesses of the silent pine forest* | *ignatius the dark recesses of his soul.*

2 a period of time when the proceedings of a parliament, committee, court of law, or other official body are temporarily suspended: *talks resumed after a month's recess* | *the Senate was in recess.*

■ a break between school classes: *the mid-morning recess.*

■ [trans.] [often as adj.] (**recessed**) attach (a fitting) by setting it back into the wall or surface to which it is fixed: *recessed ceiling lights.*

2 [trans.] (of formal proceedings) be temporarily suspended: *the talks recessed at 2.15.*

■ [trans.] suspend (such proceedings) temporarily.

■ (of an official body) suspend its proceedings for a period of time.

—ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (in the sense 'withdrawal, departure' from Latin *recessus*, from *recedere* 'go back' (see **RECEDE**)). The verb dates from the early 19th cent.

recession [ri'seɪʃən] n. 1 a period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity are reduced, generally identified by a fall in GDP in two successive quarters.

2 chiefly Astronomy the action of receding; motion away from an observer.

—DERIVATIVES **recessionary** [ri'seɪʃənəri] [adj. or n.]

—ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *recessio* (from *re-* 'gone back', from the verb *recedere* (see **RECEDE**)).

recessionary [ri'seɪʃənəri] [adj. or n.] adj. of or relating to an economic recession: *recessionary times.*

■ chiefly Astronomy relating to or denoting motion away from the observer. ■ Geology (of a moraine or other

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one or something using force: the seizure of the Assembly building | the Nazi seizure of power.
 ■ the action of confiscating or impounding property by warrant of legal right.

2 a sudden attack of illness, esp. a stroke or an epileptic fit: the patient had a seizure.
sejant ['sejənt] *v.* [usu. postpositive] Heraldry (of an animal) sitting upright.

—ORIGIN late 15th cent.: alteration of an Old French variant of *seant* 'sitting', from the verb *seoir*, from Latin *sedere* 'sit'.

sejm [sɛjm] (also *Seym*) *n.* the lower house of parliament in Poland.

—ORIGIN Polish.
Sekhmet ['seksmet] Egyptian mythology a ferocious lioness-goddess, counterpart of the gentle cat-goddess Bastet and wife of Ptah at Memphis.

sekt [sekt] *n.* a German sparkling white wine.
 —ORIGIN German.

Se-kul-povich, *Mladen*, see **MALDEN**.

sel, vabb *n.* select. ■ selection; selections.
selachian [sə'leɪʃən] Zoology *n.* an elasmobranch fish of a group that comprises the sharks and dogfishes.

—The former group Selachii, subclass Elasmobranchii: now treated as one, two, or three superorders.

■ adj. of or relating to the selachians.
 —ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from modern Latin *Selachii* (from Greek *selachios* 'shark') + *-an*.

selarding [sə'laɪdɪŋ] *n.* another term for GAUR.

—ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from Malay.

selaginella [sə'leɪjə'nɛlə] *n.* a creeping mosslike plant of a genus that includes the lesser club mosses. ■ Genus *Selaginella*, family Selaginellaceae.

—ORIGIN modern Latin, diminutive of Latin *selago* 'club moss'.

selah ['selə] *v.* [usu. in the Bible] occurring frequently at the end of a verse in Psalms and Habakkuk, probably as a musical direction.

—ORIGIN from Hebrew *selah*.

Selcrag ['selkræg] see **SELKIRK**.

sel-dorm ['selɔrm] *n.* not in use; rarely: *Idlay is sel-dorm visited by tourists | he was sel-dorm absent | (in combination) an old sel-dorm-used church*.

■ adj. [attrib.] dated not common; infrequent: a great but sel-dorm pleasure.

—ORIGIN Old English *sel-dorn*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *zelden* and German *selten*, from a base meaning 'strange, wonderful'.

select [sɪ'lekt] *v.* [trans.] carefully choose as being the best or most suitable: *students must select their own program | (with obj. and prep.) he has been selected to take part | (with obj.) you can select from a range of quality products*.

■ [trans.] (select for/against) Biology (in terms of evolution) determine whether (a characteristic or organism) will survive: a phenotype can be selected against. ■ use a mouse or keystroke to mark (something) on a computer screen for a particular operation.

■ adj. (of a group of people or things) carefully chosen from a larger number as being the best or most valuable: *he joined his select team of young Intelligence operatives*.

■ (of a place or group of people) only used by or consisting of a wealthy or sophisticated elite; exclusive: *the opera was seen by a small and highly select audience*.

—DERIVATIVES **selectable** *adj.* **selectness *n.***

—ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: from Latin *selectus* 'chosen', from the verb *selegere*, from *se-* 'apart' + *legere* 'choose'.

select-committee *n.* a small legislative committee appointed for a special purpose: (in US) the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

selective [sɪ'lektɪv] *adj.* a person who is selected.
 ■ a descriptor.

selection [sɪ'lekʃən] *n.* 1 the action or fact of carefully choosing someone or something as being the best or most suitable: *she won decided the selection of candidates | they objected to his selection*.

■ a number of carefully chosen things: the publication of a selection of his poems. ■ a range of things from which a choice may be made: *the restaurant offers a wide selection of hot and cold dishes*. ■ a horse or horses tipped as winners in a race or meeting.

2 Biology a process in which environmental or genetic influences determine which types of organism thrive better than others, regarded as a factor in evolution. See also **NATURAL SELECTION**.

—ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from Latin *selectio* '(n-)' from *selegere* 'select by separating off' (see **SELECT**).

selective [sɪ'lekʃənəl] *adj.* Linguistics denoting or relating to the process by which only certain words or structures can occur naturally, normally, or correctly in the context of other words.

—DERIVATIVES **selectively** *adv.*

selection pressure *n.* Biology an agent of differential mortality or fertility that tends to make a population change genetically.

selection rule *n.* Physics a rule that describes whether particular quantum transitions in an atom or molecule are allowed or forbidden.

selective [sɪ'lektɪv] *adj.* relating to or involving the selection of the most suitable or best qualified: the *mini-co* is the result of generations of selective breeding.

■ (of a person) tending to choose carefully: *he is very selective in his reading*. ■ (of a process or agent) affecting some things and not others: *modern pesticides are more selective in effect*. ■ chiefly Electronics operating at or responding to a particular frequency.

—DERIVATIVES **selectively** *adv.*

selective attention *n.* Psychology the capacity for or process of reacting to certain stimuli selectively when several occur simultaneously.

selectiveness [sɪ'lektɪvɪnz] *n.* another term for **SELECTIVITY**.

selective service *n.* service in the armed forces under conscription.

selectivity [sɪ'lektɪvɪti] *n.* the quality of carefully choosing someone or something as the best or most suitable: *precision is organizing on the principle of selectivity*.

■ the property of affecting some things and not others. ■ Electronics the ability of a device to respond to a particular frequency without interference from others.

selectman [sɪ'lektmən] *n.* (pl. -men) a member of the local government board of a New England town.

selector [sɪ'lektər] *n.* a person or thing that selects something, in particular:

■ a device for selecting a particular gear or other setting of a machine or device.

Selene [sɪ'leɪnə] Greek mythology the goddess of the moon who fell in love with Endymion.

—ORIGIN from Greek *selēnē* 'moon'.

selenic acid [sɪ'leɪnɪk] *n.* Chemistry a crystalline acid analogous to sulfuric acid, made by oxidizing some selenium compounds.

—Chem. formula: H₂SeO₄.

Selenites [sɪ'leɪnɪt] *n.* a form of gypsum occurring as transparent crystals or thin plates.

—ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: via Latin from Greek *selēnitis* 'lithos 'moonstone', from *selēnē* 'moon' + *lithos* 'stone'.

selenium [sɪ'leɪnəm] *n.* the chemical element of atomic number 34, a gray crystalline nonmetal with semiconducting properties.

—DERIVATIVES **selenide** [sɪ'leɪnɪd] *n.* a form of gypsum occurring as transparent crystals or thin plates.

—ORIGIN early 19th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek *selēnē* 'moon'.

selenium cell *n.* a photoelectric device containing a piece of selenium.

seleno- *xcomb.* form of rel. of, or shaped like the moon: *selenography*.

selenodont [sɪ'leɪnɔnt] *adj.* Zoology (of molar teeth) having crescent-shaped ridges on the grinding surfaces, characteristic of the ruminants.

■ (of an ungulate) having such teeth.

—ORIGIN late 19th cent.: from **SELENO-** 'moon-shaped' + Greek *odon*, *odon-* 'tooth'.

selenography [sɪ'leɪnɔgrəfi] *n.* the scientific mapping of the moon's lunar geography.

—DERIVATIVES **selenographer** [sɪ'leɪnɔgrəfər] *n.* ■ **selēnographic** [sɪ'leɪnɔgrəfɪk] *adj.* **selenographically** [sɪ'leɪnɔgrəfɪkəl] *adv.*

selenology [sɪ'leɪnɔlədʒi] *n.* the scientific study of the moon.

—DERIVATIVES **selenologist** [sɪ'leɪnɔlədʒɪst] *n.*

Selnes ['selns] Monica (1973–). ■ US tennis player, born in Yugoslavia. She was the youngest woman to win a grand slam singles title (French Open 1990).

She went on to win there again and at the US Open in 1991 and 1992 and at the Australian Open 1991–93 and 1996. Stabbed on the court by a fan of Steffi Graf after she returned to play in 1995.

Selwud [sɪ'leɪwʊd] *adj.* relating to or denoting a dynasty ruled over Syria and a great part of western Asia from 311 to 65 BC. Its capital was at Antioch.

■ a member of this dynasty.

self [self] *n.* (pl. selves [selvz]) a person's essential being that distinguishes them from others, esp. considered as the object of introspection or reflexive action: *our alienation from our true selves | (in spec.) guilt can be turned against the self | language is an aspect of a person's sense of self*.

■ with obj. a person's particular nature or personality; the qualities that make a person individual or

unique: *by the end of the round he was back to his old self*. *Paula seemed to her not self, cheerful self*.

■ one's own interests or pleasure: *to love in an unpossessive way implies the total surrender of self*.

pron. (pl. selves) oneself, in particular:

■ [with obj.] (one's self) used ironically to refer in specified glowing terms to oneself or oneself else: *the only side worth supporting is your own sweet self*.

■ [attrib.] (of a trimming or cover) of the same material and color as the rest of the item: *a dress with self belt*.

vt. [trans.] chiefly Botany self-pollinate; self-fertilize: [as n.] (selfing) the flowers never open and pollination is normally by selfing.

■ [usu. as obj.] (selfing) Genetics cause (an animal or plant) to breed with or fertilize one of the same hybrid or strain: *progeny were derived from selfed crosses*.

—ORIGIN Old English, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *self* and German *selbst*. Early use was emphatic, expressing the sense 'I' (myself), 'he' (himself), etc. The verb dates from the early 20th cent.

self- *xcomb.* form of or directed toward oneself or itself: *self-hatred*.

■ by one's own efforts; by its own action: *self-acting*.

■ on, in, for, or relating to oneself or itself: *self-adhesive*.

self-abandonment (also **self-abandon**) *n.* the action of completely surrendering oneself to a desire or impulse.

—DERIVATIVES **self-abandoned** *adj.*

self-abasement *n.* the belittling or humiliation of oneself.

self-abnegation *n.* the denial or abasement of oneself: *she turned the letter into a groveling form of self-abnegation*.

self-absorption *n.* 1 preoccupation with one's own emotions, interests, or situation.

2 Physics the absorption by a body of radiation which it has itself emitted.

—DERIVATIVES **self-absorbed** *adj.*

self-abuse [sɪ'byʊs] *n.* behavior that causes damage or harm to oneself.

■ used euphemistically to refer to masturbation.

self-accusation *n.* the action of accusing oneself, stemming from feelings of guilt.

—DERIVATIVES **self-accusatory** *adj.*

self-acting *adj.* *archaic* (of a machine or operation) acting without external influence or control; automatic.

self-actualization *n.* the realization or fulfillment of one's talents and potentialities, esp. considered as a goal or need present in everyone.

self-addressed *adj.* (esp. of an envelope) bearing one's own address: *enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope*.

self-adhesive *adj.* coated with a sticky substance; adhering without requiring medium.

self-adjusting *adj.* (chiefly of machinery) adjusting itself to meet varying requirements.

—DERIVATIVES **self-adjustment** *n.*

self-admiration *n.* the admiration of oneself; pride.

—DERIVATIVES **self-admiring** *adj.*

self-advancement *n.* the advancement or promotion of oneself or one's interests: *a positive step in women's self-advancement*.

self-advertisement *n.* the active publicization of oneself: *he turned the group into a vehicle for self-advertisement*.

—DERIVATIVES **self-advertiser** *n.* **self-advertising** *adj.*

self-advocacy *n.* the action of representing oneself or one's views or interests.

self-affirmation *n.* the recognition and assertion of the existence and value of one's individual self.

self-aggrandizement *n.* the action or process of promoting oneself as being powerful or important.

—DERIVATIVES **self-aggrandizing** *adj.*

self-alienation *n.* the process of distancing oneself from one's own feelings or activities, such as may occur in mental illness or as a symptom of emotional distress.

self-aligning *adj.* (of a bearing or machine part) capable of aligning itself automatically.

self-analysis *n.* the analysis of oneself, in particular one's motives and character.

—DERIVATIVES **self-analyzing** *adj.*

self-annihilation *n.* the annihilation or obliteration of self, esp. as a process of mystical contemplation.

self-appointed *adj.* [attrib.] having assumed a position or role without the endorsement of others: *self-appointed experts*.

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