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par-al-lel-er ► *n.* an instrument for drawing parallel lines, consisting of two or more rulers connected by jointed crosspieces so as to be always parallel, at whatever distance they are set.

par-al-lel turn ► *n.* Skiing a turn with the skis kept parallel to each other.

para-log-ical /ˌpærəˈlɒjɪkəl/ ► *adj.* of or relating to a form of reasoning that does not conform to the rules of logic.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-a-log-i-cal-ly** *adv.*

para-o-gism /pəˈrələˌdʒɪzəm/ ► *n.* Logic a piece of illogical or fallacious reasoning, esp. one that appears superficially logical or that the reasoner believes to be logical.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-o-gist** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 16th cent.: from French *paralogisme*, via late Latin from Greek *paralogismos*, from *paralogizesthai* 'reason falsely'.

para-o-gous /pəˈrələˌɡʊs/ ► *adj.* Genetics of or relating to genes that are descended from the same ancestral gene by gene duplication in the course of evolution, esp. when present in different species that have diverged after the duplication.

para-o-gy /pəˈrələˌdʒi/ ► *n.* 1 Genetics the state of being paralogous.

2 paralogical reasoning.

Para-lym-pi-an /ˌpærəˈlɪmpɪən/ ► *n.* a competitor in the Paralympic Games.

Para-lym-pic Games /ˌpærəˈlɪmpɪk/ (also the **Paralympics**) ► *plural n.* an international athletic competition for disabled athletes, held every four years.

— **DERIVATIVES** **Para-lym-pic** /-pɪk/ *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** 1950s: blend of *paraplegic* (see **PARAPLEGIA**) and **OLYMPIC**.

para-ly-sis /pəˈrələsɪs/ ► *n.* (pl. *paralyses* /-sɛz/) the loss of the ability to move (and sometimes to feel anything) in part or most of the body, typically as a result of illness, poison, or injury. ■ inability to act or function in a person, organization, or place: *the paralysis gripping the country.*

— **ORIGIN** late Old English, via Latin from Greek *paralysis*, from *paralueshai* 'be disabled at the side,' from *para* 'beside' + *luein* 'loosen.'

para-ly-sis ag-i-tans /ˌpærəˈlɪzɪtənz/ ► *n.* less common term for **PARKINSON'S DISEASE**.

— **ORIGIN** Latin, literally 'shaking paralysis.'

para-lyt-ic /ˌpærəˈlɪtɪk/ ► *adj.* of or relating to paralysis: *the incidence of paralytic disease.*

► *n.* a person affected by paralysis.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-lyt-i-cal-ly** *adv.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Old French *paralytique*, via Latin from Greek *paralutikos* 'relating to paralysis' (see **PARALYSIS**).

para-lyze /ˌpærəˈlɪz/ (Brit. **paralyse**) ► *v.* [with obj.] cause (a person or part of the body) to become partly or wholly incapable of movement: *Mrs. Burrows had been paralyzed by a stroke.* ■ render (someone) unable to think or act normally, esp. through panic or fear: *some people are paralyzed by the thought of failure* | (as *adj.* **paralyzing**) *her paralyzing shyness.* ■ bring (a system, place, or organization) to a standstill by causing disruption or chaos: *the regional capital was paralyzed by a general strike.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-lyz-ing-ly** /-lɪzɪŋɡli/ *adv.*

— **ORIGIN** early 19th cent.: from French *paralyser*, from *paralyse* 'paralysis.'

para-lyzed /ˌpærəˈlɪzd/ (Brit. **paralysed**) ► *adj.* (of a person or part of the body) partly or wholly incapable of movement: *he became partially paralyzed.*

para-mag-net-ic /ˌpærəˈmæɡˌnetɪk/ ► *adj.* (of a substance or body) very weakly attracted by the poles of a magnet, but not retaining any permanent magnetism.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-mag-net-ism** /-ˈmæɡnəˌtɪzəm/ *n.*

Para-mar-i-bo /ˌpærəˈmərəˌbɒ, ˌpærəˈmer-/ the capital of Suriname, a port on the Atlantic coast; pop. 252,000 (est. 2007).

para-mat-ta /ˌpærəˈmætə/ (also **parramatta**) ► *n.* a fine-quality twill fabric with a weft of worsted and a warp of cotton or silk.

— **ORIGIN** early 19th cent.: named after *Parramatta*, a city in New South Wales, Australia, which was the site of a prison whose inmates manufactured the cloth for clothing supplied to the convict servants of settlers.

para-me-ci-um /ˌpærəˈmɛʃ(ə)m, -sɛəm/ ► *n.* Zoology a single-celled freshwater animal that has a characteristic slipperlike shape and is covered with cilia. ■ Genus *Paramecium*, phylum Ciliophora, kingdom Protista.

— **ORIGIN** mid 18th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek *paramēkēs* 'oval,' from *para-* 'against' + *mēkos* 'length.'

par-a-med-ic /ˌpærəˈmedɪk/ ► *n.* a person who is trained to do medical work, esp. emergency first aid, but is not usually a fully qualified physician.

par-a-med-ical /ˌpærəˈmedɪkəl/ ► *adj.* of or relating to services and professions that supplement and support medical work but do not require a fully qualified physician (such as nursing, radiography, emergency first aid, physical therapy, and dietetics).

para-me-ter /ˌpærəˈmɪtər/ ► *n.* technical a numerical or other measurable factor forming one of a set that defines a system or sets the conditions of its operation: *the transmission will not let you downshift unless your speed is within the lower gear's parameters.* ■ Mathematics a quantity whose value is selected for the particular circumstances and in relation to which other variable quantities may be expressed. ■ Statistics a numerical characteristic of a population, as distinct from a statistic of a sample. ■ (in general use) a limit or boundary that defines the scope of a particular process or activity: *they set the parameters of the debate.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek *para-* 'beside' + *metron* 'measure.'

USAGE Until recently, use of the word *parameter* was confined to mathematics and related technical fields. Since around the mid 20th century, however, it has been used in nontechnical fields as a technical-sounding word for 'a limit or boundary,' as in *they set the parameters of the debate*. This use, probably influenced by the word *perimeter*, has been criticized for being a weakening of the technical sense. Careful writers will leave *parameter* to specialists in mathematics, computer science, and other technical disciplines. As a loose synonym for *limit*, *boundary*, *guideline*, *framework*, it is a vague word that blurs more than it clarifies. *Perimeter* is a different word, meaning 'border, outer boundary, or the length of such a boundary.'

para-me-ter-ize /ˌpærəˈmɪtəˌraɪz/ ► *v.* [with obj.] technical describe or represent in terms of a parameter or parameters.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-me-ter-i-za-tion** /ˌpærəˈmɪtəriˌzəʃən/ *n.*

para-met-ric /ˌpærəˈmɛtrɪk/ ► *adj.* of, relating to, or expressed in terms of a parameter or parameters.

■ Statistics assuming the value of a parameter for the purpose of analysis. ■ Electronics relating to or denoting a process in which amplification or frequency conversion is obtained using a device modulated by a pumping frequency, which enables power to be transferred from the pumping frequency to the signal.

para-met-ric e-qual-izer ► *n.* an electronic device or computer program that allows any specific part of the frequency range of a signal to be selected and altered in strength.

para-mil-i-tar-y /ˌpærəˈmɪlɪˌterɪ/ ► *adj.* (of an unofficial force) organized similarly to a military force: *soldiers and police have been killed in conflicts with the drug cartels and their paramilitary allies.*

► *n.* (pl. *paramilitaries*) a member of an unofficial paramilitary organization.

para-m-ne-sia /ˌpærəˈmɛnzɪə/ ► *n.* Psychiatry a condition or phenomenon involving distorted memory or confusions of fact and fantasy, such as confabulation or déjà vu.

para-mo /ˌpærəˈmɒ/ ► *n.* (pl. *paramos*) a high, treeless plateau in tropical South America.

— **ORIGIN** Spanish and Portuguese, from Latin *paramus*.

Para-mo-tor /ˌpærəˈmɒtər/ ► *n.* trademark a motorized steerable paraglider, powered by a motor and propeller harnessed to the pilot's back.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-mo-tor-ing** *n.*

Para-mount /ˌpærəˈmaʊnt/ a city in southwestern California, southeast of Los Angeles; pop. 55,236 (est. 2008).

para-mount /ˌpærəˈmaʊnt/ ► *adj.* more important than anything else; supreme: *the interests of the child are of paramount importance.* ■ [attrib.] having supreme power: *a paramount chief.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-mount-ry** /-sɛ/ *n.*

para-mount-ly *adv.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 16th cent. (in the sense 'highest in jurisdiction' in the phrases *lord paramount* and *paramount chief*): from Anglo-Norman French *paramont*, from Old French *par* 'by' + *amont* 'above.'

para-mour /ˌpærəˈmɒr/ ► *n.* a lover, esp. the illicit partner of a married person.

— **ORIGIN** Middle English: from Old French *par amour* 'by love'; in English the phrase was written from an early date as one word and came to be treated as a noun.

para-myx-o-vi-rus /ˌpærəˈmɪksəˌvɪrəs/ ► *n.* Medicine any of a group of RNA viruses similar to the myxoviruses but larger and hemolytic, including

those causing mumps, measles, distemper, rinderpest, and various respiratory infections (parainfluenza).

Pa-ra-ná /ˌpærəˈnɑː/ 1 a river in South America that rises in southeastern Brazil and flows about 2,060 miles (3,300 km) south to the Plate River estuary in Argentina. For part of its length it forms the southeastern border of Paraguay.

2 a river port in eastern Argentina, on the Paraná River; pop. 249,500 (est. 2005).

pa-rang /ˌpærəŋ/ ► *n.* a Malayan machete.

— **ORIGIN** Malay.

pa-rang /ˌpærəŋ/ ► *n.* a variety of Trinidadian folk music, traditionally played at Christmas by groups that travel from house to house.

— **ORIGIN** Spanish Creole, based on Spanish *parranda* 'spree, binge.'

para-noi-a /ˌpærəˈnoɪə/ ► *n.* a mental condition characterized by delusions of persecution, unwarranted jealousy, or exaggerated self-importance, typically elaborated into an organized system. It may be an aspect of chronic personality disorder, of drug abuse, or of a serious condition such as schizophrenia in which the person loses touch with reality. ■ suspicion and mistrust of people or their actions without evidence or justification: *the global paranoia about hackers and viruses.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-a-noi-a** /-ˈnoɪ-ak, -ˈnoɪ-ik/ *adj.* & *n.*, **para-a-noi-a-cal-ly** *adv.*, **para-a-no-i-cal-ly** *adv.*

— **ORIGIN** early 19th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek, from *paranoos* 'distracted,' from *para* 'irregular' + *noos* 'mind.'

para-noid /ˌpærəˈnɔɪd/ ► *adj.* of, characterized by, or suffering from the mental condition of paranoia: *paranoid schizophrenia.* ■ unreasonably or obsessively anxious, suspicious, or mistrustful: *you think I'm paranoid but I tell you there is something going on.*

► *n.* a person who is paranoid.

para-nor-mal /ˌpærəˈnɔːrml/ ► *adj.* denoting events or phenomena such as telekinesis or clairvoyance that are beyond the scope of normal scientific understanding: *a mystic who can prove he has paranormal powers* | (as noun the **paranormal**) *an investigator of the paranormal.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-a-nor-mal-ly** *adv.*

Par-an-thro-pus /ˌpærəˈnθrəˌpʊs/ ► *n.* a genus name often applied to robust fossil hominids first found in South Africa in 1938. ■ *Australopithecus robustus* and *A. (or Zinjanthropus) boisei*, family Hominidae. See **AUSTRALOPITHECUS**.

— **ORIGIN** modern Latin, from Greek *para-* (expressing relationship) + *anthrōpos* 'man.'

para-a-pa-re-sis /ˌpærəˈpærɪsɪs/ ► *n.* partial paralysis of the lower limbs.

— **DERIVATIVES** **paraparetic** /-ˈrɛtɪk/ *adj.*

para-pente /ˌpærəˈpænt/ ► *n.* the activity of gliding by means of an airfoil parachute launched from high ground. ■ the parachute used for this purpose.

► *v.* [no obj.] glide using an airfoil parachute.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-pent-er** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** 1980s: from French, from *para(chute)* + *pente* 'slope.'

para-pet /ˌpærəˈpɛt/ ► *n.* a low protective wall along the edge of a roof, bridge, or balcony. ■ a protective wall or earth defense along the top of a trench or other place of concealment for troops.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-pet-ed** *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** late 16th cent.: from French, or from Italian *parapetto* 'breast-high wall,' from *para-* 'protecting' + *petto* 'breast' (from Latin *pectus*).

par-aph /ˌpærəf, ˌpærəf/ ► *n.* a flourish after a signature, originally as a precaution against forgery.

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English (denoting a paragraph): from French *paraphe*, from medieval Latin *paraphus* (contraction of *paraphrasis* 'short horizontal stroke').

para-a-pha-sia /ˌpærəˈfæzɪə/ ► *n.* Psychology speech disturbance resulting from brain damage in which words are jumbled and sentences meaningless.

— **DERIVATIVES** **para-a-pha-sic** /-ˈfæzɪk/ *adj.*

para-pher-na-lia /ˌpærəˈfɛr(ə)nəliə/ ► *n.* [treated as sing. or pl.] miscellaneous articles, esp. the equipment needed for a particular activity: *drills, saws, and other paraphernalia necessary for home improvements* | *drugs and drug paraphernalia that had been discovered on the premises.* ■ trappings associated with a particular institution or activity that are regarded as superfluous: *the rituals and paraphernalia of government.*

PRONUNCIATION KEY ə ago, up; ɔr over, fur; a hat; ā ate; ā car; e let; ē see; ɪ fit; ɪ by; ŋc sing; ō go; ō law, for; oɪ toy; ōō good; ōō goo; ou out; th thin; th then; zh vision