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**par-a-med-i-cal** (pär'ə-méd'i-kəl) *adj.* Of, relating to, or being a person trained to give emergency medical treatment or assist medical professionals.

**par-a-ment** (pär'ə-mənt) *n.*, *pl.* **-ments** or **-men-ta** (-mən'tə) An ecclesiastical vestment or hanging. [*<* Middle English *paramentes*, ornamentation, adornments *<* Old French *parement*, ornament *<* Medieval Latin *parāmentum* *<* *parāre*, to decorate *<* Latin, to prepare; see *PARE*.]

**pa-ram-e-ter** (pā-rām'i-tor) *n.* **1.** *Mathematics* **a.** A constant in an equation that varies in other equations of the same general form, especially such a constant in the equation of a curve or surface that can be varied to represent a family of curves or surfaces. **b.** One of a set of independent variables that express the coordinates of a point. **2a.** One of a set of measurable factors, such as temperature and pressure, that define a system and determine its behavior and are varied in an experiment. **b.** *Usage Problem* A factor that restricts what is possible or what results: "all the parameters of shelter—where people will live, what mode of housing they will choose, and how they will pay for it" (New York). **c.** A factor that determines a range of variations; a boundary: *an experimental school that keeps expanding the parameters of its curriculum*. **3.** *Statistics* A quantity, such as a mean, that is calculated from data and describes a population. **4.** *Usage Problem* A distinguishing characteristic or feature. [New Latin *parametrum*, a line through the focus and parallel to the directrix of a conic: Greek *para-*, beside; see *PARA-* + Greek *metron*, measure; see *-METER*.] —**par'a-met'ric** (pär'ə-mët'rik), **par'a-met'ri-cal** *adj.* —**par'a-met'ri-cal-ly** *adv.*

**USAGE NOTE** The term *parameter*, which originates in mathematics, has a number of specific meanings in fields such as astronomy, electricity, crystallography, and statistics. Perhaps because of its ring of technical authority, people have applied *parameter* more generally in recent years to refer to any factor that determines a range of variations and especially to a factor that restricts what results from a process or policy. In this use, the word *parameter* is used to mean "the particular value of a parameter," and comes close to meaning "a set limit or boundary." For example, a budget can be thought of as a set of parameters that determine a range of activity, much like a set of mathematical parameters that establish the range of effects, or limits, of other variables. The sentence *A budget is a framework that defines the financial parameters within which an organization operates* was considered acceptable by 81 percent of the Usage Panel in our 2004 survey. *Parameter* is sometimes used incorrectly when it does not denote a range of variation, as if it were a technical-sounding synonym for *characteristic*. In 1988, 88 percent of the Usage Panel rejected the sentence *The Judeo-Christian ethic is one of the important parameters of Western culture*. In 2004, 77 percent rejected this same sentence, suggesting that familiarity has not bred tolerance of this usage.

**pa-ram-e-ter-ize** (pā-rām'i-tā-rīz') also **pa-ram-e-trize** (-i-trīz') *tr.v.* **-ized**, **-iz-ing**, **-iz-es** also **-trized**, **-triz-ing**, **-triz-es** To describe in terms of parameters. —**pa-ram'e-ter-i-za-tion** (-tā-rī-zā'shan) *n.*

**parametric equalizer** *n.* An electronic equalizer that adjusts relative frequency levels according to a set of parameters, in particular the value of the central frequency to be adjusted, the gain or loss for that frequency, and the bandwidth of affected frequencies around that central frequency.

**par-a-mil-i-tar-y** (pär'ə-mil'i-tēr'ē) *adj.* Of, relating to, or being a group of civilians organized in a military fashion, especially to operate in place of or assist regular army troops. *n.*, *pl.* **-ies** A member of a paramilitary force.

**par-am-ne-sia** (pär'ām-nē'si-ə) *n.* **1.** A distortion of memory in which fantasy and objective experience are confused. **2.** An inability to recall the meanings of common words.

**pa-ra-mo** (pär'ā-mō', pär'ə-) or **pā-ra-mo** (pā'rā-) *n.*, *pl.* **-mos** A treeless alpine plateau of the tropical Andes. [American Spanish *páramo* *<* Spanish, wasteland *<* Old Spanish *<* Latin *paramus*, probably from a pre-Roman language of the Iberian Peninsula.]

**par-a-morph** (pär'ə-mōrf') *n.* A mineral crystal formed or affected by paramorphism. Also called *allomorph*.

**par-a-mor-phine** (pär'ə-mōrf'fēn') *n.* See *thebaine*.

**par-a-mor-phism** (pär'ə-mōrf'fīz-əm) *n.* Structural alteration of a mineral without change of chemical composition. —**par'a-mor'phic** (-fik), **par'a-mor'phous** (-fəs) *adj.*

**par-a-mount** (pär'ə-mōnt') *adj.* **1.** Of chief concern or importance: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union" (Abraham Lincoln). **2.** Highest in rank, power, or authority: *the paramount leader of the nation*. *n.* **One** that has the highest rank, power, or authority. [Anglo-Norman *paramont*, above: *par*, by (*<* Latin *per*; see *per*<sup>1</sup> in App. I) + *mont*, above, upward; see *AMOUNT*.] —**par'a-mount'cy** *n.* —**par'a-mount'ly** *adv.*

**par-a-mour** (pär'ə-mōör') *n.* A lover, especially a lover of a person who is married to someone else. [Middle English *par amour*, by way of love, passionately *<* Anglo-Norman: *par*, by (*<* Latin *per*; see *per*<sup>1</sup> in App. I) + *amour*, love (*<* Latin *amor* *<* *amāre*, to love).]

**par-am-y-lum** (pā-rām'ə-ləm) also **par-am-y-lon** (-lən) *n.* A carbohydrate resembling starch that is composed of glucose and forms the reserve foodstuff of certain algae.

**par-a-myx-o-vi-rus** (pär'ə-mik'sə-vī-rəs) *n.*, *pl.* **-rus-es** Any of a family of single-stranded RNA viruses including the respiratory syncytial virus, parainfluenza viruses, and viruses that cause measles and mumps.

**Pa-ra-ná** (pär'ə-nā', pär'ā-) **1.** A city of northeast Argentina on the Paraná River north of Rosario. It is a river port accessible for oceangoing vessels. **2.** A river of central South America rising in east-central Brazil at the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Paranaíba and flowing about 2,895 km (1,800 mi) generally southwest to its junction with the Paraguay

River then south and east to join the Uruguay River and form the Río de la Plata estuary in eastern Argentina.

**Pa-ra-na-i-ba** (pär'ə-nā-ē'bā, pär'ā-nā-ē'bā) A river, about 805 km (500 mi) long, of south-central Brazil. It is one of the headstreams of the Paraná River.

**par-a-ne-o-plas-tic** (pär'ə-nē'ə-plās'tik) *adj.* Of or relating to a syndrome or other systemic disturbance associated with but not directly related to a primary tumor or its metastases.

**pa-rang** (pär'räng') *n.* A short, heavy, straight-edged knife used in Malaysia and Indonesia as a tool and weapon. [Malay.]

**par-a-noi-a** (pär'ə-noi'ə) *n.* **1.** A psychotic disorder characterized by delusions of persecution with or without grandeur, often strenuously defended with apparent logic and reason. **2.** Extreme, irrational distrust of others. [Greek, madness *<* *paranoos*, demented: *para-*, beyond; see *PARA-* + *nous*, mind.]

**par-a-noi-ac** (pär'ə-noi'āk', -noi'tik) *n.* A paranoid. *adj.* Of, relating to, or resembling paranoia.

**par-a-noid** (pär'ə-noid') *adj.* **1.** Relating to, characteristic of, or affected with paranoia. **2.** Exhibiting or characterized by extreme and irrational fear or distrust of others: *a paranoid suspicion that the phone might be bugged*. *n.* One affected with paranoia.

**par-a-nor-mal** (pär'ə-nōr'məl) *adj.* Beyond the range of normal experience or scientific explanation: *such paranormal phenomena as telepathy; a medium's paranormal powers*. —**par'a-nor-mal'i-ty** (-nōr-māl'i-tē) *n.* —**par'a-nor-mal-ly** *adv.*

**Par-an-throp-us** (pär-an-thrōp'əs) *n.* A genus of extinct hominins known from fossil remains found in eastern and southern Africa dating from 2.8 to 1.4 million years ago, characterized by very large molars and a large sagittal crest in the male. Several species in this genus were first classified in the genus *Australopithecus*. [New Latin *Paranthropus*, genus name: Greek *para-*, *para-* + Greek *anthrōpos*, human being.]

**par-a-pa-re-sis** (pär'ə-pā-rē'sis, -pār'i-sis) *n.*, *pl.* **-ses** (-sēz) Partial paralysis of the lower limbs.

**par-a-pat-ric** (pär'ə-pāt'rik) *adj.* *Ecology* **1.** Occupying geographic areas that are partially overlapping or have a partial barrier between them. Used of organisms, especially populations of the same or closely related species. **2.** Occurring among populations having such a distribution: *parapatric speciation*. [PARA- + Greek *patrā*, fatherland (*<* *patēr*, *patr-*, father; see *PATER* in App. I) + *-IC*.] —**par'a-pat'ri-cal-ly** *adv.* —**par'a-pat'ry** (pā-rāp'ā-trē) *n.*

**par-a-pet** (pär'ə-pīt, -pēt') *n.* **1.** A low protective wall or railing along the edge of a raised structure such as a roof or balcony. **2.** An earthen or stone embankment protecting soldiers from enemy fire. See *Synonyms* at *bulwark*. [French *<* Italian *parapetto*: *parare*, to shield; see *PARASOL* + *petto*, chest (*<* Latin *pectus*).]

**par-aph** (pär'əf, pā-rā') *n.* A flourish made after or below a signature, originally to prevent forgery. [French *paraphe* *<* Old French *paraffe*, abbreviated signature *<* Medieval Latin *paraphus*, paragraph sign, short for *paragaphus*; see *PARAGRAPH*.]

**par-a-pher-na-lia** (pär'ə-fər-nāl'yə, -fə-nāl'yə) *pl.n.* (used with a *sing.* or *pl. verb*) **1.** The articles used in a particular activity; equipment: *a photographer's paraphernalia*. See *Synonyms* at *equipment*. **2.** *Law* Personal property used by a married woman that, although actually owned by her husband and subject to claims by his creditors, becomes her personal property after his death. [Medieval Latin *paraphernalia*, neuter *pl.* of *paraphernalis*, pertaining to the parapherna, a married woman's property exclusive of her dowry *<* Late Latin *<* Greek: *para-*, beyond; see *PARA-* + *phernē*, dowry; see *ber-*<sup>1</sup> in App. I.]

**par-a-phil-i-a** (pär'ə-fil'ē-ə, -fēl'yə) *n.* A psychosexual disorder in which sexual gratification is obtained through practices or fantasies involving a bizarre, deviant, or highly unusual source of sexual arousal such as an animal or an object. —**par'a-phil'i-ac** *n.*

**par-a-phras-e** (pär'ə-frāz') *n.* **1.** A restatement of a text or passage in another form or other words, often to clarify meaning. **2.** The restatement of texts in other words as a studying or teaching device. **3.** The adaptation or alteration of a text or quotation to serve a different purpose from that of the original. *adj.* **-phrased**, **-phras-ing**, **-phras-es** —*tr.* **1.** To restate using different words, especially to clarify. **2. To adapt or alter (a text or quotation) to serve a different purpose from that of the original: "It's tempting to paraphrase an environmental slogan and say, 'Think globally, pray locally'" (Christian Science Monitor). —*intr.* To compose a paraphrase. [French *<* Latin *paraphrasis* *<* Greek *<* *paraphrazein*, to paraphrase: *para-*, alongside; see *PARA-* + *phrazein*, to show, explain; see *g<sup>W</sup>hren-* in App. I.] —**par'a-phras'a-ble** *adj.* —**par'a-phras'er** *n.***

**par-a-phras-tic** (pär'ə-frās'tik) or **par-a-phras-ti-cal** (-ti-kəl) *adj.* Of, relating to, or having the nature of paraphrase. [Medieval Latin *paraphrasticus* *<* Greek *paraphrastikos* *<* *paraphrazein*, to paraphrase; see *PARAPHRASE*.] —**par'a-phras'ti-cal-ly** *adv.*

**par-a-phy-let-ic** (pär'ə-fī-lēt'ik) *adj.* Of or relating to a group of taxa that includes the common ancestor of all the members but not all descendants of that ancestor. —**par'a-phy-let'i-cal-ly** *adv.* —**par'a-phy-lē** (pär'ə-fī'lē, pā-rāf'ə-lē) *n.*

**pa-raph-y-sis** (pā-rāf'i-sis) *n.*, *pl.* **-ses** (-sēz') One of the erect sterile filaments often occurring among the reproductive organs of certain fungi, algae, and mosses. [New Latin: *PARA-* + Greek *phusis*, nature, growth; see *PHYSIC*.]

**par-a-ple-gia** (pär'ə-plē'jə, -jē-ə) *n.* Complete paralysis of the lower half of the body including both legs, usually caused by damage to the spinal cord. [Greek dialectal *paraplegiē*, hemiplegia *<* *paraplēssēthai*, *paraplēg-*, to be paralyzed *<* *paraplēsein*, to strike on one side: *para-*, beside; see *PARA-* + *plēsein*, to strike; see *plāk-*<sup>2</sup> in App. I.] —**par'a-ple'gic** (-plē'jik) *adj.* *&* *n.*



parallelepiped  
rectangular parallelepiped



parallelogram



paramecium

|    |        |      |        |
|----|--------|------|--------|
| ā  | pat    | oi   | boy    |
| ā  | pay    | ou   | out    |
| ār | care   | ōō   | took   |
| ē  | father | ōōr  | lure   |
| ē  | pet    | ōō   | boot   |
| ē  | be     | ū    | cut    |
| ī  | pit    | ūr   | urge   |
| ī  | bite   | th   | thin   |
| īr | pier   | th   | this   |
| ō  | pot    | zh   | vision |
| ō  | toe    | ə    | about  |
| ō  | paw    | item |        |
| ōr | core   |      |        |

Stress marks: ' (primary);  
' (secondary), as in  
dictionary (dik'sha-nēr'ē)