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WEBSTER'S

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RANDOM HOUSE
REFERENCE

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Random House Webster's College Dictionary
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Originally published in 1991. A completely revised edition was subsequently published in 1997, and this updated edition was published in 2005.

New words edited by Barbara Ann Kipfer, Dictionary.com Managing Editor, Lexico Publishing Group.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Random House Webster's college dictionary

p. cm.

ISBN 0-375-42600-0

1. English language--Dictionaries. I. Random House (Firm)

PE1628.R28 1999

423--DC21

99-12620

CIP

Visit the Random House Reference Web site at www.randomwords.com

Typeset and Printed in the United States of America

2005 Updated Random House Edition

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

private eye to probe

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private eye, *n.* Informal. a private detective. [1935-40; *eye*, allusive phonetic rendering of *I*, abbr. of *investigator*]

private first class, *n.* a soldier ranking above a private and below a corporal or specialist fourth class in the U.S. Army, and above a private and below a lance corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps.

private law, *n.* a branch of law dealing with the legal relationships of private individuals. Compare **PUBLIC LAW** (def. 2). [1765-75]

private parts, *n.pl.* the external genital organs. [1765-75]

private school, *n.* a school founded and maintained by a private group rather than the government. [1820-30]

privation (prī vā'shən), *n.* 1. lack of the usual comforts or necessities of life. 2. an instance of this. 3. the act of depriving. 4. the state of being deprived. [1350-1400; ME (< MF) < ML *privatio* deprivation (of office), L: removal (of a condition). See **PRIVATE**, -TION]

privative (prīv'ə tiv), *adj.* 1. causing, or tending to cause, deprivation. 2. consisting in or characterized by the taking away, loss, or lack of something. 3. Gram. indicating negation or absence. —*n.* 4. Gram. a privative element, as *a-* in *asymmetric*. —**privatively**, *adv.*

privatize (prīv'ə tīz'), *v.t.* -tized, -tizing. 1. to transfer from public or government control or ownership to private enterprise. 2. to make private. [1945-50] —**privatization**, *n.*

privet (prīv'it), *n.* any deciduous or evergreen shrubs of the genus *Ligustrum*, of the olive family, esp. *L. vulgare*, having small white flowers and commonly grown as a hedge. [1535-45; orig. uncert.]

privilege (prīv'ə lij, prīv'lij), *n.*, *v.*, -leged, -leg-ing. —*n.* 1. a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed by a particular person or a restricted group of persons. 2. a special right, immunity, or exemption granted to persons in authority or office to free them from certain obligations or liabilities. 3. a grant of a special right or immunity, under certain conditions. 4. the principle or condition of enjoying special rights or immunities. 5. any of the rights common to all citizens under a modern constitutional government. 6. an advantage or source of pleasure granted to a person: *It's my privilege to be here.* —*v.t.* 7. to grant a privilege to. 8. to exempt (usu. fol. by *from*). 9. to authorize or license (something otherwise forbidden). [1125-75; ME; earlier *privilegie* (< OF *privilegium*) < L *privilegium* orig., a law for or against an individual = *privi-* (comb. form of *privus* one's own) + *leg-* (see **LEGAL**) + *-ium* -ium] —*Syn.* **PRIVILEGE**, **PREROGATIVE** refer to a special advantage or right possessed by an individual or group. A **PRIVILEGE** is a right or advantage gained by birth, social position, effort, or concession. It can have either legal or personal sanction: *the privilege of paying half fare; the privilege of calling whenever one wishes.* **PREROGATIVE** refers to an exclusive right claimed and granted, often officially or legally, on the basis of social status, heritage, sex, etc.: *the prerogatives of a king; the prerogatives of management.*

privileged (prīv'ə lij, prīv'lijd), *adj.* 1. belonging to a class that enjoys special privileges. 2. entitled to or exercising a privilege. 3. restricted to a select group or individual: *privileged information.* 4. *Law.* (of statements or communications) a. confidential; not making the participants liable to prosecution for libel or slander. b. protected against being used as evidence in court.

privacy (prīv'ə tē), *n.*, *pl.* -ties. 1. private or secret knowledge. 2. participation in the knowledge of something private or secret, esp. as implying concurrence or consent. 3. *Law.* the relation between privies. [1175-1225; ME *privete*, *privite* < OF. See **PRIVY**, -ITY]

privy (prīv'ē), *adj.*, *privier*, *priviest*, *n.*, *pl.* *privies*. —*adj.* 1. participating in the knowledge of something private or secret (usu. fol. by *to*): *Many people were privy to the plot.* 2. private; assigned to private uses. 3. belonging or pertaining to some particular person, esp. a sovereign. 4. secret, concealed, hidden, or secluded. 5. acting or done in secret. —*n.* 6. outhouse (def. 1). 7. *Law.* a person who participates directly in or has an interest in a legal transaction. [1175-1225; ME *prive* < OF: private (adj.), close friend, private place (n.) < L *privatus* PRIVATE]

privy council, *n.* 1. a board or select body of personal advisers, as of a sovereign. 2. (caps.) a. (in Great Britain) a body of persons who advise the sovereign in matters of state, the majority of members being selected by the prime minister. b. (in Canada) a body of persons who advise the Governor General. [1250-1300] —**privy councillor**, *n.*

privy purse, *n.* a sum from the public revenues allotted to the British sovereign for personal expenses. [1655-65]

prix fixe (prē' fiks', Fr. prē' fēks'), *n.*, *pl.* *prix fixes* (prē' fiks'; Fr. prē' fēks') a fixed price charged for a complete meal chosen usu. from a limited menu. [1880-85; < F]

prize (prīz), *n.* 1. a reward for victory or superiority, as in a contest or competition. 2. something won in a lottery or the like. 3. anything striven for, worth striving for, or much valued. 4. something seized or captured, esp. an enemy's ship and cargo captured at sea in wartime. 5. the act of taking or capturing, esp. a ship at sea. 6. *Archaic.* a contest or match. —*adj.* 7. having won a prize: *a prize play.* 8. worthy of a prize. 9. given or awarded as a prize. [1250-1300; in part continuing ME *prise* something captured, a seizing < MF < L *prehēnsa*, *n.* use of fem. ptp. of *prehendere* to take]

prize (prīz), *v.t.*, *prized*, *prizing*. 1. to value or esteem highly. 2. to estimate the worth or value of. [1325-75; ME *prisen* < MF *priser*, var. of *preisier* to praise] —*Syn.* See **APPRECIATE**.

prize or **prize** (prīz), *v.*, *prized*, *prizing*, *n.* —*v.t.* 1. *PRYZ*. —*n.* 2. **LEVERAGE**. 3. **LEVER** (def. 1). [1350-1400; ME *prise* < MF: a hold, grasp < L *prehēnsa*. See **PRIZE**]

prizefight or **prize fight**, *n.* a professional boxing match. [1695-1705] —**prizefighter**, *n.* —**prizefighting**, *n.*

prize money, *n.* 1. money offered, won, or received in prizes. 2. a portion of the money realized from the sale of a prize, esp. an enemy's vessel, divided among the captors. [1740-50]

PRIM, Puerto Rican male.

p.r.n., (in prescriptions) as the occasion arises; as needed. [< L *prō rē nātā*]

pro (prō), *adv.*, *n.*, *pl.* **pros**. —*adv.* 1. in favor of a proposition, opinion, etc. —*n.* 2. the argument, position, arguer, or voter for something. Compare **CON**. [1350-1400; ME < L *prō* (prep.) in favor of, for; akin to *PER-*, Gk *prō*, Skt *pra*]

pro (prō), *adj.*, *n.*, *pl.* **pros**. professional. [1840-50; by shortening]

PRO or **P.R.O.**, public relations officer.

pro-, 1. a prefix, having **ANTI-** as its opposite, used to form adjectives that have the general sense "favoring" the group, interests, course of action, etc., denoted by the headword: *pro-choice*; *pro-American*; *pro-war*. 2. a prefix occurring in loanwords from Latin, with the meanings "forward," forming esp. verbs denoting forward movement or location (*proceed*; *progress*), advancement (*promote*; *propose*), or bringing into existence (*procreate*; *produce*); "before, outside of" (*propane*); "in place of" (*pronoun*). (< L *prō*, *pro*, comb. form repr. *prō* *pro*)

pro-, a prefix, occurring orig. in loanwords from Greek, with the meanings "before, beforehand, in front of" (*prognosis*; *prophylactic*; *prothesis*), "front part, extremity" (*proboscis*), "primitive or embryonic form," "precursor" (*prodrug*; *pronephros*; *prosimian*). (< Gk, comb. form of *prō* for, before; see **PRO**)

pro-a (prō'ā), *n.*, *pl.* **pro-as**. any of various Indonesian vessels, esp. a swift sailboat with a single outrigger. [1575-85; < Malay *perahu*, *perau* (sp. *perahu*) (< Kannada *padahu*, or a cognate Dravidian word)]

pro-active (prō ak'tiv), *adj.* serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation: *proactive measures against crime.* [1930-35] —**proactively**, *adv.*

pro-am (prō'am), *n.* any sporting event in which professionals play with amateurs. [1945-50; *pro(fessional)-am(ateur)*]

prob., 1. probable. 2. probably. 3. problem.

probabilism (prō'bā liz'am), *n.* 1. the doctrine, introduced by the Skeptics, that certainty is impossible and that probability suffices to govern faith and practice. 2. *Rom. Cath. Theol.* the theory that in cases of moral doubt, a person may follow a sound opinion concerning the lawfulness of an act. [1835-45; < F] —**probabilistic**, *adj.*

probabilistic (prō'bā liz'tik), *adj.*

probability (prō'bā bil'itē), *n.*, *pl.* -ties. 1. the quality or fact of being probable. 2. a probable event, circumstance, etc. 3. *Statistics.* a. the relative possibility that an event will occur, as expressed by the ratio of the number of actual occurrences to the total number of possible occurrences. b. the relative frequency with which an event occurs or is likely to occur. —*Idiom.* 4. in all probability, very probably; quite likely.

probability density function, *n.* 1. a function of a continuous variable whose integral over a region gives the probability that a random variable falls within the region. 2. a function of a discrete variable whose sum over a discrete set gives the probability of occurrence of a specified value. [1935-40]

probability distribution, *n.* a distribution of all possible values of a random variable together with an indication of their probabilities.

probability theory, *n.* the theory of analyzing and making mathematical statements concerning the probability of the occurrence of uncertain events. [1830-40]

probable (prō'bā bəl), *adj.* 1. likely to occur or prove true. 2. having more evidence for than against, or evidence that inclines the mind to belief but leaves some room for doubt. 3. affording ground for belief. [1350-1400; ME < L *probabilis* commendable, plausible, probable = *probā(re)* to commend, examine, prove + *-bilis* -ble]

probable cause, *n.* 1. reasonable ground for a belief that the accused was guilty of the crime. 2. the probability that grounds for the action existed; often used as a defense.

probably (prō'bā blē), *adv.* in all likelihood; very likely. [1525-35]

probate (prō'bā), *n.*, *adj.*, *v.*, -bated, -bat-ing. —*n.* 1. the official proving of a will as authentic or valid in a probate court. —*adj.* 2. of or pertaining to probate or a probate court. —*v.t.* 3. to establish the authenticity or validity of (a will). [1400-50; late ME *probat* < L *probātum*, *n.* use of neut. ptp. of *probare* to examine, prove; see **PRO-**]

probate court, *n.* a special court with power over administration of estates of deceased persons, the probate of wills, etc. [1720-30]

probation (prō'bā'shən), *n.* 1. the testing or trial of a person's conduct, character, qualifications, or the like. 2. the state or period of such testing or trial. 3. the conditional release of an offender under the supervision of a probation officer. 4. the trial period or condition of a student who is being permitted to redeem failures, misconduct, etc. 5. the act of testing. 6. *Archaic.* proof. [1375-1425; late ME < L *probatio* approval, proof. See **PROVE**, -TION] —**probational**, *probationary*, *adj.*

probationer (prō'bā'shə nər), *n.* a person undergoing probation.

probation officer, *n.* an officer who investigates and reports on the conduct of offenders who are free on probation. [1895-1900]

probative (prō'bā tiv) also **probatory** (-tōr'ē, -tōr'ē), *adj.* 1. serving or designed for testing or trial. 2. affording proof or evidence.

probe (prōb), *v.*, *probed*, *probing*, *n.* —*v.t.* 1. to search into or examine thoroughly: *to probe one's conscience.* 2. to explore with a probe. —*v.i.* 3. to examine or explore with or as if with a probe. —*n.* 4. a slender surgical instrument for exploring the depth or direction of a wound, sinus, or the like. 5. any slender device inserted into something in order to explore, test, or examine. 6. the act of probing. 7. an