
The New Oxford American Dictionary

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—ORIGIN Middle English: Latin, literally 'magnifies' (from the opening words, which translate as 'my soul magnifies the Lord').

magnification |ˌmægnəfɪˈkæʃən| **n.** the action or process of magnifying something or being magnified, esp. visually: *visible under high magnification*.

■ the degree to which something is or can be magnified: *at this magnification the pixels making up the image become visible*. ■ the magnifying power of an instrument: *this microscope should give a magnification of about 100*. ■ a magnified reproduction of something.

magnificence |ˌmægnɪfɪˈsəns| **n.** the quality of being magnificent.

■ (His, Your, etc., Magnificence) chiefly historical a title given to a monarch or other distinguished person, or used in addressing them.

magnificent |ˌmægnɪfɪˈsənt| **adj.** 1 impressively beautiful, elaborate, or extravagant; striking: *a dramatic landscape of magnificent mountains* | *the interior layout is magnificent*.

2 very good; excellent: *she paid tribute to their magnificent efforts*.

—DERIVATIVES **magnificently** **adv.**

—ORIGIN late Middle English: via Old French from Latin *magnificus* 'making great, serving to magnify,' based on *magnus* 'great.'

magnifico |ˌmægnɪfɪˈkɒ| **n.** (pl. -oes) informal an eminent, powerful, or illustrious person.

—ORIGIN late 16th cent.: Italian, 'magnificent,' originally used to denote a Venetian magnate.

magnify |ˈmægnəfɪ| **v.** (-ies, -ied) [trans.] 1 make (something) appear larger than it is, esp. with a lens or microscope: *the camera's zoom mode can magnify a certain area if required*.

■ [intrans.] be capable of increasing the size or apparent size of something: *a pair of binoculars that magnify about eight power*. ■ increase the volume of (a sound). ■ intensify: *the risk is magnified if there is any dirty material next to the skin*. ■ exaggerate the importance or effect of: *she tended to magnify the defects of those she disliked*.

2 archaic extol; glorify: *praise the Lord and magnify Him*.

—DERIVATIVES **magnifier** |-fɪər| **n.**

—ORIGIN late Middle English (in the senses 'show honor to (God)' and 'make greater in size or importance'): from Old French *magnifier* or Latin *magnificare*, based on Latin *magnus* 'great.' Sense 1 dates from the mid 17th cent.

magnifying glass **n.** a lens that produces an enlarged image, typically set in a frame with a handle and used to examine small or finely detailed things such as fingerprints, stamps, and fine print.

magniloquent |ˌmægnɪlɒkwənt| **adj.** using high-flown or bombastic language.

—DERIVATIVES **magniloquence** **n.**; **magniloquently** **adv.**

—ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *magniloquus* (from *magnus* 'great' + *-loquus* 'speaking') + **-ENT**.

Magnitogorsk |ˌmægnɪtəˈɡɔːrsk| an industrial city in southern Russia, on the Ural River close to the border with Kazakhstan; pop. 443,000.

magnitude |ˈmægnɪtʊd| **n.** 1 the great size or extent of something: *they may feel discouraged at the magnitude of the task before them*.

■ great importance: *events of tragic magnitude*.

2 size: *electorates of less than average magnitude*.

■ a numerical quantity or value: *the magnitudes of all the economic variables could be determined*.

3 the degree of brightness of a star. The magnitude of an astronomical object is now reckoned as the negative logarithm of the brightness; a decrease of one magnitude represents an increase in brightness of 2.512 times. A star with an apparent magnitude of six is barely visible to the naked eye. See also **APPARENT MAGNITUDE**, **ABSOLUTE MAGNITUDE**.

■ the class into which a star falls by virtue of its brightness. ■ a difference of one on a scale of brightness, treated as a unit of measurement.

—PHRASES **of the first magnitude** see **FIRST**.

—ORIGIN late Middle English (also in the sense 'greatness of character'): from Latin *magnitudo*, from *magnus* 'great.'

magnolia |ˌmægnɒliə| **n.** a tree or shrub with large, typically creamy-pink, waxy flowers. Magnolias are widely grown as ornamental trees.

•Genus *Magnolia*, family Magnoliaceae: numerous species, including *M. campbellii*, native to the Himalayas and from which several varieties have been cultivated in North America.

—ORIGIN modern Latin, named after Pierre Magnol (1638–1715), French botanist.

Magnolia State a nickname for the state of Mississippi.

magnum |ˈmægnəm| **n.** (pl. **magnums**) a thing of a type that is larger than normal, in particular:

■ a wine bottle of twice the standard size, normally 1½ liters. ■ (often **Magnum**) [often as adj.] trademark a gun designed to fire cartridges that are more powerful than its caliber would suggest: *his .357 Magnum pistol*.

—ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Latin, neuter (used as a noun) of *magnus* 'great.'

magnum opus |ˈmægnəm ˈɒpəs| **n.** (pl. **magnum opuses** or **magna opera** |ˈmægnə ˈɒpərə; ˈæpərə|) a large and important work of art, music, or literature, esp. one regarded as the most important work of an artist or writer.

—ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Latin, 'great work.'

Magnus effect |ˈmægnəs| **n.** Physics the force exerted on a rapidly spinning cylinder or sphere moving through air or another fluid in a direction at an angle to the axis of spin. This force is responsible for the swerving of balls when hit or thrown with spin.

—ORIGIN 1920s: named after Heinrich G. Magnus (1802–70), German scientist.

Maggog |mæˈgɑːg| see **GOG AND MAGOG**.

maggpie |ˈmæɡpi| **n.** 1 a long-tailed crow with boldly marked (or green) plumage and a raucous voice.

•Family Corvidae: five genera and several species, in particular the black-and-white black-billed magpie (*Pica pica*) of Eurasia and North America.

2 used in similes or comparisons to refer to a person who collects things, esp. things of little use or value, or a person who chatters idly.

—ORIGIN late 16th cent.: probably shortening of dialect *maggot the pie*, *maggoty-pie*; from *Magot* (Middle English nickname for the given name *Marguerite*) + **PIE**².

M.Agr. **abbr.** Master of Agriculture.

Ma·gritte |mæˈgrɪt; mæ-|, René (François Ghislain) (1898–1967), Belgian surrealist painter. His paintings are startling or amusing juxtapositions of the ordinary, the strange, and the erotic, depicted in a realist manner.

mag·uey |mæˈɡə| **n.** an agave plant, esp. one yielding pulque.

—ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: via Spanish from Taino.

magus |ˈmæɡəs| **n.** (pl. **magi** |ˈmæɡi|) a member of a priestly caste of ancient Persia. See also **MAGI**.

■ a sorcerer.

—ORIGIN Middle English: via Latin and Greek from Old Persian *maguš*.

mag wheel |mæɡ wʰiːl| **n.** a motor-vehicle wheel made from lightweight magnesium steel, typically having a pattern of holes or spokes around the hub.

Magyar |ˈmæɡjər| **n.** 1 a member of a people who originated in the Urals and migrated westward to settle in what is now Hungary in the 9th century AD.

2 the Uralic language of this people; Hungarian.

■ **adj.** of or relating to this people or language.

—ORIGIN the name in Hungarian.

Magyarország |ˈmædjər, ɔːr, sɑːɡ| Hungarian name for HUNGARY.

Mah·abad |ˌmæhəˈbæd| a city in northwestern Iran, near the Iraqi border, with a chiefly Kurdish population; pop. 63,000 (1986). Between 1941 and 1946 it was the capital of a Soviet-supported Kurdish republic.

Ma·ha·bha·ra·ta |ˌmæhəˈbærətə| one of the two great Sanskrit epics of the Hindus, existing in its present form since c.AD 400. It describes the civil war waged between the five Pandava brothers and their 100 step-brothers at Kuruksetra near modern Delhi.

—ORIGIN Sanskrit, literally 'great Bharata,' i.e., the great epic of the Bharata dynasty.

ma·hant |məˈhænt| **n.** Hinduism a chief priest of a temple or the head of a monastery.

—ORIGIN Hindi.

ma·ha·ra·ja |ˌmæhəˈræjə; -ˈræzə| (also **maharajah**) **n.** historical an Indian prince.



magnolia
Magnolia campbellii

—ORIGIN from Hindi *mahārājā*, from Sanskrit *mahā* 'great' + *rājā* 'raja.'

ma·ha·ra·ni |ˌmæhəˈræni| (also **maharanee**) **n.** a maharaja's wife or widow.

—ORIGIN from Hindi *mahārānī*, from Sanskrit *mahā* 'great' + *rājñī* 'ranee.'

Ma·ha·rash·tra |ˌmæ(h)əˈræʃtrə| a large state in western India that borders on the Arabian Sea, formed in 1960 from the southeastern part of the former state of Bombay; capital, Bombay.

—DERIVATIVES **Ma·ha·rash·tri·an** |-trɪən| **adj.** & **n.**

Ma·ha·ri·shi |ˌmæhəˈrɪʃi; mæˈhārɪʃi| **n.** a great Hindu sage or spiritual leader.

—ORIGIN alteration of Sanskrit *maharshi*, from *mahā* 'great' + *rishi*.

ma·hat·ma |məˈhætma; -ˈhætmə| **n.** (in the Indian subcontinent) a person regarded with reverence or loving respect; a holy person or sage.

■ (the **Mahatma**) Mahatma Gandhi. ■ (in some forms of theosophy) a person in India or Tibet said to have supernatural powers.

—ORIGIN from Sanskrit *mahātman*, from *mahā* 'great' + *ātman* 'soul.'

Ma·ha·we·li |ˌmæhəˈwəli| the major river in Sri Lanka. Rising in the central highlands, it flows north for 206 miles (330 km) to the Bay of Bengal.

Ma·ha·ya·na |ˌmæhəˈyānə| (also **Mahayana Buddhism**) **n.** one of the two major traditions of Buddhism, now practiced in a variety of forms esp. in China, Tibet, Japan, and Korea. The tradition emerged around the 1st century AD and is typically concerned with altruistically oriented spiritual practice as embodied in the ideal of the bodhisattva. Compare with **THERAVADA**.

—ORIGIN from Sanskrit, from *mahā* 'great' + *yāna* 'vehicle.'

Mah·di |ˈmædi| **n.** (pl. **Mahdis**) (in popular Muslim belief) a spiritual and temporal leader who will rule before the end of the world and restore religion and justice.

■ a person claiming to be this leader, notably Muhammad Ahmad of Dongola in Sudan (1843–85), whose revolutionary movement captured Khartoum and overthrew the Egyptian regime. ■ (in Shiite belief) the twelfth imam, who is expected to return and triumph over injustice.

—DERIVATIVES **Mah·dism** |ˈmædɪzəm| **n.**; **Mah·dist** |ˈmædɪst| **n.** & **adj.**

—ORIGIN from Arabic (*al-*) *mahdī* 'he who is guided in the right way,' passive participle of *hadā* 'to guide.'

Mah·fouz |ˌmæˈfoʊz|, Naguib (1911–), Egyptian novelist and short-story writer. Notable works: *Miramar* (1967) and *Wedding Song* (1981). Nobel Prize for Literature (1988).

Ma·hi·can |ˌmæhɪˈkən| (also **Mohican**) **n.** 1 a member of an American Indian people formerly inhabiting the Upper Hudson Valley in New York. Compare with **MOHEGAN**.

2 the Algonquian language of this people.

■ **adj.** of or relating to the Mahicans or their language.

—ORIGIN the name in Mahican, meaning 'people of the estuary.'

Ma·hi·lyow |ˌmæɡɪlˈjəʊ| an industrial city and railway center in eastern Belarus, on the Dnieper River; pop. 363,000. Russian name **MOGILYOV**.

ma·hi·ma·hi |ˌmæhɪˈmæhi| **n.** an edible marine fish of warm seas, with silver and bright blue or green coloration when alive. Also called **DOLPHIN** or **DORADO**.

•Family Coryphaenidae and genus *Coryphaena*: two species, in particular the large *C. hippurus*.

—ORIGIN 1940s: from Hawaiian.

mah·jongg |mə ˈzhɑŋɡ; -zhŏŋɡ| (also **mah-jong** or **mahjongg** or **mahjong**) **n.** a Chinese game played, usually by four people, with 136 or 144 rectangular pieces called tiles. The object is to collect winning sets of these tiles, as in card games such as gin rummy.

—ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from Chinese dialect *ma-tsang*, literally 'sparrows.'

Mah·ler |ˈmælər|, Gustav (1860–1911), Austrian composer, conductor, and pianist. His works form a link between romanticism and the experimentalism of Schoenberg.

—DERIVATIVES **Mah·ler·i·an** |məˈlerɪən| **adj.**

mahl·stick |ˈmɒlstɪk| (also **maulstick**) **n.** a light stick with a padded leather ball at one end, held against work by a painter or signwriter to support and steady the brush hand.

—ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Dutch *maaltok*, from *malen* 'to paint' + *stok* 'stick.'

ma·hoe |məˈhə; ˈmæhə| **n.** a small bushy New Zealand tree of the violet family, with whitish bark and clusters of small greenish flowers.

•*Melicynis ramiflorus*, family Violaceae.

—ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from Maori.