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mousse (mōos) *n.* 1. Any of various chilled desserts made with flavored whipped cream, gelatin, and eggs: *chocolate mousse*. 2. A molded dish containing meat, fish, or shellfish combined with whipped cream and gelatin. 3. An aerosol foam used to control and style the hair. ♦ *tr.v.* **moussed, mouss-ing, mouss-es** To apply a styling foam to (the hair). [French, foam, *mousse* < Old French, moss, foam, partly of Germanic origin and partly < Latin *mulsa*, hydromel < feminine of *mulsus*, honey-sweet; see *melit-* in App. I.]

mousse-line (mōos-lēn') *n.* 1. A fine sheer fabric resembling muslin, often made of silk, rayon, cotton, or wool. 2. A hollandaise sauce to which whipped cream has been added. 3. An aspic containing whipped cream. [French; see *MUSLIN*.]

mous-tache (mūs'tāsh', mā-stāsh') *n.* Variant of *mustache*.

mous-ta-chio (mā-stāch'ō, -stāsh'ē-ō', -stā'shō, -shē-ō') *adj.* Variant of *mustachio*.

Mous-te-ri-an (mōo-stīr'ē-ən) *adj.* Designating or belonging to a Middle Paleolithic culture following the Acheulian, associated with Neanderthals and characterized by the use of flake tools. [French *moustérien*, after *Le Moustier*, a cave in southwest France.]

mous-y also **mous-ey** (mou'sē, -zē) *adj.* **-i-er, -i-est** 1. Resembling a mouse, especially: **a.** Having a drab, pale brown color: *mousy hair*. **b.** Having small sharp features: *a mousy face*. **c.** Quiet; timid; shy. 2. Infested with mice.

mouth (mouth) *n., pl. mouths* (mouthz) 1a. The body opening through which an animal takes in food. **b.** The cavity lying at the upper end of the digestive tract, bounded on the outside by the lips and inside by the oropharynx and containing in humans and certain other vertebrates the tongue, gums, and teeth. **c.** This cavity regarded as the source of sounds and speech. **d.** The opening to any cavity or canal in an organ or a bodily part. 2a. The part of the lips visible on the human face. **b.** A pout, grimace, or similar expression: *made a mouth when the teacher turned away*. 3a. A person viewed as a consumer of food: *has three mouths to feed at home*. **b.** A spokesperson; a mouthpiece; acts as the mouth of the organization. 4a. Utterance; voice: *gave mouth to her doubts*. **b.** A tendency to talk excessively or unwisely: *is known mainly for his mouth*. **c.** Impudent or vulgar talk: *Watch your mouth*. 5. An opening, especially: **a.** The part of a stream or river that empties into a larger body of water. **b.** The entrance to a harbor, canyon, valley, or cave. **c.** The opening through which a container is filled or emptied. **d.** The muzzle of a gun. **e.** The opening between the jaws of a vise or other holding or gripping tool. **f.** An opening in the pipe of an organ. **g.** The opening in the mouthpiece of a flute across which the player blows. ♦ *v.* (mouth) **mouthe-d, mouthing, mouths** —*tr.* 1. To speak or pronounce, especially: **a.** To declare in a pompous manner; declaim: *mouthing his opinions of the candidates*. **b.** To utter without conviction or understanding: *mouthing empty compliments*. **c.** To form soundlessly: *I mouthed the words as the others sang*. 2. To take in or touch with the mouth: *Small children tend to mouth their toys*. —*intr.* 1. To orate affectedly; declaim. 2. To grimace. —**phrasal verb:** **mouth off** *Slang* 1. To express one's opinions or complaints in a loud, indiscreet manner. 2. To speak impudently; talk back. —**idiom:** **down in (or at) the mouth** Discouraged; sad; dejected. [Middle English < Old English *mūth*; see *men-* in App. I.]

mouth-brood-er (mouth'brōō'dər) *n.* Any of various fishes, especially the tilapias and other cichlids, that hold their eggs and sometimes their developing young in the mouth.

mouth-feel (mouth'fel') *n.* The way that a food or drink feels in the mouth, being primarily a response to texture but also to flavor.

mouth-ful (mouth'fōōl') *n.* 1. The amount of food or other material that can be placed or held in the mouth at one time. 2. A small amount to be tasted or eaten. 3. A long word, name, or phrase that is difficult to pronounce. 4. An important or perceptive remark: *You said a mouthful!*

mouth harp *n.* See *harmonica* (sense 1).

mouth organ *n.* 1. See *harmonica* (sense 1). 2. See *panpipe*.

mouth-part (mouth'pārt') *n.* Any of the parts of the mouth of an insect or other arthropod, especially a part or an organ used for a specific way of feeding.

mouth-piece (mouth'pēs') *n.* 1. A part, as of a musical instrument or a telephone, that functions in or near the mouth. 2. Sports A rubber or flexible plastic protective device worn over the teeth, as by boxers. 3. Informal One, such as a spokesperson, through which views are expressed. 4. *Slang* A lawyer.

mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (mouth'tō-mouth') *n.* A technique used to resuscitate a person who has stopped breathing, in which the rescuer presses his or her mouth against the mouth of the victim and, allowing for passive exhalation, forces air into the lungs at intervals of several seconds.

mouth-wash (mouth'wōsh', -wōsh') *n.* A flavored, usually antiseptic solution used for cleaning the mouth and freshening the breath.

mouth-water-ing (mouth'wō'tā-rīng) *adj.* Appealing to the sense of taste; appetizing: *the mouthwatering aroma of a baking pie*.

mouth-y (mou'thi, -thē) *adj.* **-i-er, -i-est** 1. Annoyingly talkative. 2. Given to ranting or bombast. —**mouth-i-ness** *n.*

mou-ton (mōō'tōn') *n.* Sheepskin that has been sheared and processed to resemble beaver or seal. [French, sheep < Old French; see *MUTTON*.]

mou-ton-née (mōō'tā-nā') also **mou-ton-néed** (-nād') *adj.* Geology Rounded by glacial action into a shape likened to a sheep's back. Used of a rock formation. [Short for French *roche moutonnée*: *roche*, rock + *moutonnée*, fleecy, past participle of *moutonner*, to make fleecy (< *mouton*, sheep; see *MUTTON*).]

mov-a-ble also **move-a-ble** (mōō'vā-bəl) *adj.* 1. Possible to move: *a movable stove*; *a movable rock*. 2. Varying in date from year to year:

a movable holiday. 3. Law Of or relating to personal property (that is, property that can be moved). ♦ *n.* 1. Something, especially a piece of furniture, that can be moved. 2. **movables** Law Personal property. —**mov'a-bil-i-ty, mov'a-ble-ness** *n.* —**mov'a-bly** *adv.*

movable feast *n.* A religious holiday, such as Easter, that changes in date from year to year.

movable type *n.* Printing Type in which separate pieces of hard material, usually metal, are positioned in a rack to compose the lines on a page. Movable type was invented independently in China and Europe and made possible the widespread dissemination of information through the production of large numbers of identical documents.

move (mōōv) *v.* **moved, mov-ing, moves** —*intr.* 1a. To change in position from one point to another: *moved away from the window*. **b. To follow a specified course: *Earth moves around the sun*. **c. To change posture or position; stir: *too scared to move*. **d. To start off; depart: *After waiting for an hour, we decided it was time to move*. **e. Games To change position on a board in a board game. **f. To go from one residence or location to another; relocate: *We moved to a new apartment*. **g. Linguistics To be copied or moved by means of a movement transformation to a new position in syntactic structure. 2a. To progress in sequence; go forward: *a novel that moves slowly*. **b. To progress toward a particular state or condition: *moving up in the company*; *move on to a new subject*. 3. To be disposed of by sale: *Woolens move slowly in the summer*. 4. To be put in motion or to turn according to a prescribed motion. Used of machinery. 5a. To exhibit great activity or energy: *Things were really moving backstage*. **b. To initiate an action; act: *It's time to make a decision and move*. **c. To be active in a particular environment: *moves in diplomatic circles*. 6. To stir the emotions: *words that have the power to move*. 7. To make a formal motion in parliamentary procedure: *move for an adjournment*. 8. To evacuate. Used of the bowels. —*tr.* 1a. To change the place or position of: *moved the chair into the corner*; *could not move his arm*. **b. To cause to go from one place to another: *moved the crowd away*. **c. Games To change (a piece) from one position to another in a board game: *moved a pawn*. 2a. To change the course of: *moved the discussion to other matters*. **b. To cause to progress or advance: *moved the research into new thinking*. 3a. To dislodge from a fixed point of view, as by persuasion: *"Speak to him, ladies, see if you can move him"* (Shakespeare). **b. To prompt to action; rouse: *Anger moved her to speak out*. **c. To arouse the emotions of; affect or stir. 4a. To cause to function: *This lever moves the elevator*. **b. To cause to progress or advance: *moved the project beyond conventional thinking*. 5a. To propose or request in formal parliamentary procedure: *moved that a vote be taken*. **b. To make formal application to (a court, for example). 6. To dispose of by sale: *moved the new merchandise quickly*. 7. To cause (the bowels) to evacuate. ♦ *n.* 1a. The act or an instance of moving. **b. A particular manner of moving: *made some intricate moves on the dance floor*. 2. A change of residence or location. 3. Games **a.** An act of transferring a piece from one position to another in board games. **b.** The prescribed manner in which a piece may be played. **c.** A participant's turn to make a play. 4. An action taken to achieve an objective; a maneuver: *a move to halt the arms race*. —**phrasal verbs:** **move in** To begin to occupy a residence or place of business. **move on** To concentrate one's attention or emotions on other matters in recovering from a setback or difficulty: *After he was laid off, he moved on and started looking for another job*. —**idioms:** **get a move on** Informal To get started; get going. **move in on** 1. To make intrusive advances toward; intrude on. 2. To attempt to seize control of: *moving in on their territory*. **on the move** 1. Busily moving about; active: *A nurse is on the move all day*. 2. Going from one place to another: *troops on the move*. 3. Making progress; advancing: *a technology that is clearly on the move*. [Middle English *moven* < Old French *movoir* < Latin *movēre*; see *meu-* in App. I.]**********************************

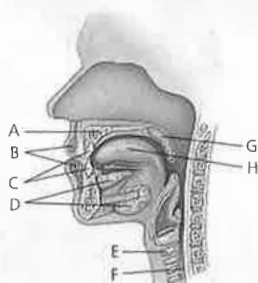
♦ **SYNONYMS** *move, affect, touch* These verbs mean to stir the emotions of a person or group. *Move* suggests a strong or deep emotional impact that is often expressed openly: *a performer who moved the audience to laughter and tears*; *scenes of famine that moved us to pity*. *Affect* can suggest a quieter but more persistent emotional state, as of grief, awe, or sorrow: *"Roosevelt was deeply affected by his loss. One by one, the President's closest companions had fallen away"* (Geoffrey C. Ward). *Touch* implies a personal and often inspirational experience, as of sympathy, admiration, or tenderness: *"Mr. Micawber pressed my hand, and groaned, and afterwards shed tears. I was greatly touched"* (Charles Dickens).

move-a-ble (mōō'vā-bəl) *adj.* & *n.* Variant of *movable*.

move-ment (mōōv'mənt) *n.* 1a. The act or an instance of moving; a change in place or position. **b.** A particular manner of moving. 2. A change in the location of troops, ships, or aircraft for tactical or strategic purposes. 3a. A series of actions and events taking place over a period of time and working to foster a principle or policy: *a movement toward world peace*. **b.** An organized effort by supporters of a common goal: *a leader of the labor movement*. 4. A tendency or trend: *a movement toward larger kitchens*. 5. A change in the market price of a security or commodity. 6a. An evacuation of the bowels. **b.** The matter so evacuated. 7. The suggestion or illusion of motion in a painting, sculpture, or design. 8. The progression of events in the development of a literary plot. 9. The rhythmic or metrical structure of a poetic composition. 10. Music A self-contained section of an extended composition. 11. Linguistics In generative grammar, a transformation in which a constituent in one part of a syntactic structure is copied or displaced into a different location, creating a new structure. 12. A mechanism, such as the works of a watch, that produces or transmits motion.

movement therapy *n.* See *dance therapy*.

mov-er (mōō'vər) *n.* 1a. One that moves: *The old dog is a slow mover*. **b.** One that sets something in motion or initiates something: *a leading*



mouth

the human mouth and its contiguous structures

- A. hard palate
- B. lips
- C. teeth
- D. salivary glands
- E. trachea
- F. esophagus
- G. soft palate
- H. tongue

end of the Lagoa dos Patos near the Atlantic Ocean. It was founded c. 1742 by emigrants from the Azores.

por-to-bel-lo (pôr'ta-bèl'ô) or **por-ta-bel-la** (-bèl'a) or **por-to-bel-la** (-bèl'a) *n.*, *pl.* -los or -las A mature, very large cremini mushroom. [Origin unknown.]

port of call *n.*, *pl.* **ports of call** A port where ships dock in the course of voyages to load or unload cargo, obtain supplies, or undergo repairs.

port of entry *n.*, *pl.* **ports of entry** A place where travelers or goods may enter or leave a country under official supervision.

Por-to-fi-no (pôr'ta-fè'nô, -tô-) A town of northwest Italy on the coast of the Ligurian Sea east of Genoa. It is a popular tourist resort.

Port of Spain or **Port-of-Spain** (pôr'tav-spàn') The capital of Trinidad and Tobago, on the northwest coast of Trinidad on an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. It is a commercial center and major port.

Por-to-No-vo (pôr'tô-nô'vô) The capital of Benin, in the southeast part of the country on an inlet of the Bight of Benin. Probably founded in the 1500s, it was settled as a slave-trading center by the Portuguese in the 1600s.

Port Orford cedar (ôr'fôrd) *n.* A tall evergreen coniferous tree (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) native to southwest Oregon and northwest California, having reddish-brown bark and drooping branches with scalelike leaves. [After *Port Orford*, a town of southwest Oregon.]

Port Philip Bay (fl'p) A large deep-water inlet of Bass Strait on the southeast coast of Australia. The first permanent British settlement on the bay was at Melbourne in 1835.

por-trait (pôr'trît, -trât') *n.* 1. A likeness of a person, especially one showing the face, that is created by a painter or photographer, for example. 2. A verbal representation or description, especially of a person. 3. A dramatic representation of a character: *the actor's portrait of the famous general*. 4. The orientation of a page such that the longer side runs from top to bottom. [French < Old French, image < past participle of *portraire*, to portray; see *PORTRAY*.]

por-trait-ist (pôr'trâ-tîst) *n.* A person who makes portraits, especially a painter or photographer.

por-trai-ture (pôr'trî-chô'r') *n.* 1. The art or practice of making portraits. 2. A portrait. 3. Portraits considered as a group.

por-tray (pôr-trâ') *tr.v.* -trayed, -traying, -trays 1. To depict or represent pictorially; make a picture of: *The painter portrays a typical country scene*. 2. To describe or represent in words: *The author portrays the world of the fantastically wealthy*. 3. To describe or depict in a certain way: *The book portrays her as hardworking and driven*. 4. To represent dramatically, as on the stage: *The actor portrays an obsessed lover in the film*. [Middle English *portraien* < Old French *portraire*: *por-*, forth (< Latin *prô-*, forth; see *PRO-*) + *traire*, to draw (< Latin *trahere*, to drag).]

--por-tray'a-ble *adj.* **--por-tray'er** *n.*

por-tray-al (pôr-trâ'ôl) *n.* 1. The act or process of portraying someone or something: *his brilliant portrayal of the leading role*. 2. A representation or description: *a detailed portrayal of living conditions*.

por-ress (pôr'trîs) also **por-ter-ess** (-tôr-îs) *n.* A woman doorkeeper or porter, especially in a convent.

Port Royal 1. See Annapolis Royal. 2. A village and former city of southeast Jamaica on a promontory southwest of Kingston. Infamous as a haven for pirates in the 1600s when it was Jamaica's colonial capital, it declined in importance after a devastating earthquake in 1692.

port running *n.* The practice of openly evading a customs inspection at a port of entry by refusing to stop one's vehicle when requested. **--port runner** *n.*

Port Sa'id (sâ-éd') A city of northeast Egypt on the Mediterranean Sea at the northern entrance to the Suez Canal. It was founded in 1859 by the builders of the canal and was once an important coaling station.

Port Sa-lut (pôr' sâ-lôd', -lii') also **Port du Sa-lut** (dô) *n.* A mild, semisoft cheese with an orange rind, made originally by Trappist monks in France. [After *Notre Dame de Port-du-Salut*, a Trappist abbey in northwest France.]

Ports-mouth (pôr'tsmôth) 1. A city of southern England on the English Channel near the Isle of Wight. Chartered in 1194, it is a major naval base. 2. An independent city of southeast Virginia opposite Norfolk. It has been a major naval base since pre-Revolutionary times.

Port Stanley See Stanley.

Port Sudan A city of northeast Sudan on the Red Sea northeast of Khartoum. It was established after 1905 as a railroad terminus.

Por-tu-gal (pôr'châ-gâl) A country of southwest Europe on the western Iberian Peninsula and the Madeira Islands and the Azores in the northern Atlantic Ocean. Originally inhabited by the Lusitanians, a Celtic people, the mainland area was subsequently held by the Romans, the Visigoths, and the Moors before the establishment of an independent Christian kingdom in the 1100s. Portugal flourished as a maritime and colonial power in the 1400s and 1500s with holdings in Africa, India, Southeast Asia, and Brazil. Much of its empire was lost to the British and the Dutch in the 1600s and 1700s, and the remaining colonies became independent in the 1800s and 1900s. Lisbon is the capital and the largest city.

Por-tu-guese (pôr'châ-gèz', -gès') *adj.* Of or relating to Portugal or its people, language, or culture. *n.*, *pl.* **Portuguese** 1a. A native or inhabitant of Portugal. b. A person of Portuguese ancestry. 2. The Romance language of Portugal and Brazil. [Portuguese *português* < Vulgar Latin **portugalis*, ultimately < Late Latin *Portus Cale*, the ancient port of Gallaecia (Oporto).]

Portuguese man-of-war *n.* A colonial siphonophore (*Physalia physalis*) composed of numerous specialized zooids, having a bluish bladderlike crested float from which hang numerous long stinging tentacles.

Portuguese water dog *n.* A dog of a medium-sized breed developed in Portugal, having a thick coat and webbed feet and the ability to swim long distances.

por-tu-lac-a (pôr'châ-lâk'a) *n.* Any of various succulent plants of the genus *Portulaca*, especially *P. grandiflora* of South America, cultivated for its showy colorful flowers that open only in sunlight. Also called *moss rose*, *rose moss*. [Middle English < Latin *portulaca*, purslane < *portula*, diminutive of *porta*, gate (from the gatelike covering of the seed capsule); see *per-* in App. 1.]

Port Vi-la (pôr't' vè'l'a, pôr vè-lâ') The capital of Vanuatu, on Efate Island in the southwest Pacific Ocean.

POS *abbr.* 1. parent over shoulder 2. point-of-sale

po-sa-da (pô-sâ'dâ, -dâ) *n.* A Christmas festival originating in Latin America that dramatizes the search of Joseph and Mary for lodging. [American Spanish < Spanish, lodging < *posar*, to lodge, rest < Late Latin *posare*, to rest < Latin *pausa*, pause; see *PAUSE*.]

Po-sa-das (pô-sâ'dâs, pô-sâ'dâs) A city of northeast Argentina on the Paraná River and the Paraguayan border. It is a trade and processing center.

pose¹ (pôz) *v.* **posed**, **pos-ing**, **pos-es** —*tr.* 1. To set forth in words for consideration; propound: *pose a question*. See Synonyms at *propose*. 2. To present or constitute: *a crisis that posed a threat to the country's stability*. 3. To place (a model, for example) in a specific position. —*intr.*

1. To assume or hold a particular position or posture, as in sitting for a portrait. 2. To represent oneself falsely; pretend to be other than what one is: *common posing as police officers*. *n.* 1a. A bodily attitude or position, such as one assumed for an artist or a photographer. See Synonyms at *posture*. b. In yoga, an asana. 2. A studied or artificial manner or attitude, often assumed in an attempt to impress or deceive others. See Synonyms at *affectation*. [Middle English *posen*, to place < Old French *poser* < Vulgar Latin **pausare* < Late Latin *pausare*, to rest < Latin *pausa*, pause; see *PAUSE*.] —**pos'a-ble** *adj.*

pose² (pôz) *tr.v.* **posed**, **pos-ing**, **pos-es** *Archaic* To puzzle, confuse, or baffle. [Short for *appose*, to examine closely (< Middle English *apposen*, alteration of *opponere*; see *OPPOSE*) and < French *poser*, to assume (obsolete) (< Old French; see *POSE*¹).]

Po-sei-don (pô-sid'ôn, pō-) *n.* *Greek Mythology* The god of the waters, earthquakes, and horses, and brother of Zeus.

pos-er¹ (pô'zôr) *n.* 1. One who poses. 2. A poseur.

pos-er² (pô'zôr) *n.* A baffling question or problem.

po-seur (pô-zœr', pô'zôr) *n.* One who affects a particular attribute, attitude, or identity to impress or influence others. [French < *poser*, to pose < Old French; see *POSE*¹.]

posh (pôsh) *adj.* **posh-er**, **posh-est** 1. Fashionable or luxurious: *a posh hotel*. 2. Typical of the upper class, especially in the United Kingdom: *a posh upbringing*. 3. Affectedly imitating characteristics of the upper class; pretentious: *a posh accent*. [Probably < earlier slang *posh*, halfpenny, money, dandy < Romani (dialect of England) *posh-hôrri*, halfpenny: *posh*, half (< Sanskrit *pāśvam*, region of the ribs, flank, side < *pāśuh*, rib) + *hôrri*, *hôrri*, penny.] —**posh'ly** *adv.* —**posh'ness** *n.*

♦ **WORD HISTORY** "Oh yes, Mater, we had a posh time of it down there."

This sentence, found in a 1918 issue of the British satirical magazine *Punch*, contains one of the first known occurrences of the word *posh*. A popular theory holds that *posh* is an acronym of the words *Port Out, Starboard Home* denoting the cooler side of ships traveling from England to India and back again in the 1800s. Cabins on the cooler side of the ship were more expensive, and *POSH* was supposedly stamped on the tickets of first-class passengers traveling on that side of ships owned by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Although this theory of the origin of *posh* has caught the public's etymological fancy, no known evidence supports it. Instead, the likely source of the word is the 19th-century British slang word *posh* meaning "money," specifically "a halfpenny, cash of small value." (In British slang of the period, *posh* could also mean "a dandy"—a sense that also suggests a possible connection with the later *posh*, "fashionable or luxurious.") *Posh* meaning "money" (and perhaps also ultimately the *posh* meaning "a dandy," too) is of Romani origin, like a number of other English slang words such as *nark* ("an informer"), *pal*, and *shiv*. *Posh* originated as a shortening of a Romani word meaning "halfpenny" that is recorded, for example, as *posh-hôrri* in a 19th-century glossary of words from the variety of Romani used by the Romani people of England. *Posh* in this compound word means "half," while *hôrri* is a form of *hôrra*, "penny." The Romani people descend from peoples who originally lived in South Asia but migrated westward, probably after around AD 1000, and the Romani language is descended from Sanskrit just like many of the modern languages spoken in South Asia, such as Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali. English Romani *posh*, "half," descends from the Sanskrit word *pāśvam*, meaning "side." In this way, the word *posh* does in fact have a distant connection to India.

pos-i-grade (pôz'i-grâd') *adj.* Of, relating to, or being an auxiliary rocket on a multistage spacecraft that is fired in the direction of the spacecraft's motion to separate the sections. [*POST(TIVE)* + (*RETRO*)GRADE.]

pos-it (pôz'it) *tr.v.* -it-ed, -it-ing, -its 1. To assume or put forward, as for consideration or the basis of argument: "If a book is hard going, it ought to be good. It *posits* a complex moral situation, it ought to be even better" (Anthony Burgess). 2. To place firmly in position. —**phrasal verb**: **posit on** (or **upon**) To base (something) on an assumption regarding (something else); assume (something) to have (something else) as a basis: "His plan was *posited on* luck and failed to take account of delays caused by adverse weather and disease" (Fergus Fleming). [*Latin positus*, past participle of *ponere*, to place; see *POSITION*.]

po-si-tion (pô-zîsh'ôn) *n.* 1. A place or location. 2a. The right or ap-



Portugal



Portuguese water dog



Poseidon

detail of a late 5th-century
BC Greek red-figure
amphora by the Kleophrades
Painter

appropriate place: *The bands are in position for the parade's start.* **b.** A strategic area occupied by members of a force: *The troops took up positions along the river.* **3a.** The way in which something is placed: *the position of the clock's hands.* **b.** The arrangement of body parts; posture: *a standing position.* **c.** In ballet, any of the five arrangements of the arms and feet in which the legs are turned out from the pelvis. **4.** An advantageous place or location: *jockeys maneuvering for position.* **5.** A situation as it relates to the surrounding circumstances: *in a position to bargain.* **6.** A point of view or attitude on a certain question: *the mayor's position on taxes.* **7.** Social standing or status; rank. **8.** A post of employment; a job. **9a.** Sports The area for which a particular player is responsible. **b.** The arrangement of the pieces or cards at any particular time in a game such as chess, checkers, or bridge. **10a.** The act or process of positing. **b.** A principle or proposition posited. **11a.** A commitment to buy or sell a given amount of securities or commodities. **b.** The amount of securities or commodities held by a person, firm, or institution. **c.** The ownership status of a person's or institution's investments. **tr.v.** **-tioned, -tioning, -tions** **1.** To put in place or position. **2.** To determine the position of; locate. [Middle English *posicion* < Old French *posicion* < Latin *positiō*, *positiō*- < *positus*, past participle of *pōnere*, to place; see *apo-* in App. I.] **—po-si'tion-al** *adj.* **—po-si'tion-al-ly** *adv.* **—po-si'tion-er** *n.*

positional notation *n.* A system of writing numbers in which the position of a digit affects its value.

position effect *n.* Variation in the expression of a gene resulting from changes in its location within a chromosome or genome.

position paper *n.* A detailed policy report that usually explains, justifies, or recommends a particular course of action.

position vector *n.* See **radius vector** (sense 2).

posi-tive (pōz'ī-tiv) *adj.* **1.** Characterized by or displaying certainty, acceptance, or affirmation: *a positive answer; positive criticism.* **2.** Measured or moving forward or in a direction of increase or progress: *positive steps.* **3a.** Desirable, admirable, or beneficial: *a woman with many positive qualities; the positive features of this new software.* **b.** Optimistic or constructive: *a positive attitude.* **c.** Not disparaging or malicious: *ran a positive political campaign.* **4.** Very confident; certain: *I'm positive he's right.* See **Synonyms at** **sure**. **5.** Explicitly or openly expressed or laid down: *a positive demand.* **6.** Admitting of no doubt; irrefutable: *positive proof.* **7.** Concerned with practical rather than theoretical matters. **8.** Philosophy **a.** Of or relating to positivism. **b.** Of or relating to positive law. **9.** Of or relating to religion based on revelation rather than on nature or reason alone. **10.** Informal Utter; absolute: *a positive darling.* **11.** Mathematics **a.** Relating to or designating a quantity greater than zero. **b.** Relating to or designating the sign (+). **c.** Relating to or designating a quantity, number, angle, or direction opposite to another designated as negative. **12.** Physics **a.** Relating to or designating an electric charge of a sign opposite to that of an electron. **b.** Of or relating to a body having fewer electrons than protons. **13.** Chemistry Of or relating to an ion, the cation, that is attracted to a negative electrode. **14.** Medicine Indicating the presence of a particular disease, condition, or organism: *a positive test for pregnancy.* **15.** Biology Indicating or characterized by response or motion toward the source of a stimulus, such as light: *positive tropism.* **16.** Having the areas of light and dark in their original and normal relationship, as in a photographic print made from a negative. **17.** Grammar Of, relating to, or being the simple uncomparative degree of an adjective or adverb, as opposed to either the comparative or superlative. **18.** Driven by or generating power directly through intermediate machine parts having little or no play: *positive drive.* **tr.v.** **1.** An affirmative element or characteristic. **2.** Mathematics A quantity greater than zero. **3.** Physics A positive electric charge. **4.** A photographic image in which the lights and darks appear as they do in nature. **5.** Grammar **a.** The uncomparative degree of an adjective or adverb. **b.** A word in this degree. **6.** Music A division of some pipe organs, similar in sound to the great but smaller and less powerful. [Middle English, having a specified quality < Old French *positif* < Latin *positivus*, formally laid down < *positus*, past participle of *pōnere*, to place; see *apo-* in App. I.] **—pos'i-tive-ly** *adv.* **—pos'i-tive-ness**, **pos'i-tiv-i-ty** *n.*

positive law *n.* A body of laws or principles guiding human conduct established by human authority, often contrasted with natural law. [**<** POSITIVE, explicitly laid down, established by human authority.]

pos-i-tiv-ism (pōz'ī-tī-vīz'm) *n.* **1.** Philosophy **a.** A doctrine contending that sense perceptions are the only admissible basis of human knowledge and precise thought. **b.** The application of this doctrine in logic, epistemology, and ethics. **c.** The system of Auguste Comte designed to supersede theology and metaphysics and depending on a hierarchy of the sciences, beginning with mathematics and culminating in sociology. **d.** Any of several doctrines or viewpoints, often similar to Comte's, that stress attention to actual practice over consideration of what is ideal: "Positivism became the 'scientific' base for authoritarian politics, especially in Mexico and Brazil" (Raymond Carr). **2.** The state or quality of being positive. **—pos'i-tiv-ist**, **pos'i-tiv-is'tic** *adj.* **—pos'i-tiv-ist** *n.*

pos-i-tron (pōz'ī-trōn) *n.* An elementary particle having the same mass and magnitude of charge as an electron but exhibiting a positive charge; the antiparticle of the electron. Also called **antielectron**. [**POS**(ITIVE) + (**ELEC**)TRON.]

positron emission tomography *n.* **Abbr.** PET Tomography in which a computer-generated image of local metabolic and physiological functions in tissues is produced through the detection of gamma rays that are emitted when introduced radionuclides decay and release positrons.

pos-i-tro-ni-um (pōz'ī-trō'nē-əm) *n.* A short-lived association of an electron and a positron bound together in a configuration resembling the hydrogen atom.

po-so-le (pō-zō'lē, -sōl-) or **po-zo-le** (-zōl-) *n.* **1.** Kernels of corn that have been soaked in limewater, hulled, and dried. **2.** A stew or soup

made with posole, pork, chili, and other seasonings. [American Spanish *pozole* < Nahuatl *pozolli*.]

po-sol-o-gy (pō-sōl'ō-jē, pō-) *n.* The study of the dosages of medications. [Greek *posos*, what quantity + **-LOGY**.]

poss. *abbr.* possessive

pos-se (pōs'ē) *n.* **1.** A group of civilians called upon by a sheriff or other law enforcement official to assist temporarily in preserving the peace or pursuing and arresting a fugitive. Also called **posse comitatus**. **2.** A search party. **3.** A gang involved in crimes such as running guns and illegal narcotics trafficking. **4.** Slang A group of friends or associates. [Short for **POSSE COMITATUS**.]

posse com-i-ta-tus (kōm'ī-tā'tas) *n.* See **posse** (sense 1). [Medieval Latin *posse comitatus*: Medieval Latin *posse*, power, body of men (< Latin, to be able; see **POTENT**) + *comitatus*, genitive of *comitatus*, county, territory of a count; see **COUNTY**.]

pos-sess (pō-zēs't) *tr.v.* **-sessed, -sess-ing, -sess-es** **1a.** To have as property; own: *possess great wealth.* **b.** Law To have under one's power or control: *possess illegal drugs.* **2a.** To have as a quality, characteristic, or other attribute: *possesses great tact.* **b.** To have mastery or knowledge of: *possess a knowledge of Sanskrit; possess valuable information.* **3a.** To gain control or power over. Used of a demon or spirit. **b.** To occupy fully the mind or feelings of: *The dancers were possessed by the music.* **c.** Often Offensive To have sexual intercourse with (a woman). **d.** Archaic To control or maintain (one's nature) in a particular condition: *I possessed my temper despite the insult.* **4.** Archaic To cause (oneself) to own, hold, or master something, such as property or knowledge. **5.** Archaic To gain or seize. [Middle English *possessen* < Old French *possesser* < Latin *possidere*, *possess*-: *pos-*, as master; see **POTI-** in App. I + *sedere*, to sit; see **sed-** in App. I.] **—pos-ses'sor** *n.*

pos-sessed (pō-zēs't) *adj.* **1.** Owning or mastering something. Used with *of*: *one who is possessed of great wealth.* **2a.** Controlled by a spirit, demon, god, or other supernatural force. **b.** Controlled by a strong inner drive; obsessed: *a teenager by love possessed.* **3.** Calm; collected: *one who remained possessed in times of great trial.*

➔ **USAGE NOTE** When the adjective *possessed* means "owning a thing, exhibiting an attribute," it is followed by the preposition *of*: *possessed of property; possessed of a sharp tongue.* When *possessed* means "obsessed," *by* or *with* follows: *possessed by (or with) an urge to kill.*

pos-ses-sion (pō-zēs'shən) *n.* **1a.** The act or fact of possessing. **b.** The state of being possessed: *the land's possession by the town.* **2a.** Something owned or possessed: *removed his possessions from the desk.* **b.** A territory subject to foreign control. **3.** Law **a.** Power or control over something: *possession of a firearm.* **b.** Occupation or control of a piece of property, with or without ownership. **c.** A right of occupation and use: *The tenant has possession of the apartment until the end of the lease.* **d.** The crime of possessing an illegal drug. **4a.** The state of being dominated or controlled by a demon or spirit. **b.** The state of being occupied or obsessed with something, such as an idea. **5.** Sports **a.** Physical control of the ball or puck by a player or team. **b.** An instance of this: *Ideally, we would score on each possession.* **—pos-ses'sion-al** *adj.*

pos-ses-sive (pō-zēs'siv) *adj.* **1.** Of or relating to ownership or possession. **2.** Having or manifesting a desire to control or dominate another, especially in order to limit that person's relationships with others: *a possessive parent.* **3.** Grammar Of, relating to, or being a noun or pronoun case that indicates possession. **tr.v.** **1.** The possessive case. **2.** A possessive form or construction. **—pos-ses'sive-ly** *adv.* **—pos-ses'sive-ness** *n.*

possessive adjective *n.* A pronominal adjective expressing possession.

possessive pronoun *n.* One of several pronouns designating possession and capable of substituting for noun phrases.

pos-ses-so-ry (pō-zēs'sō-rē) *adj.* **1.** Of, relating to, or having possession. **2.** Law Depending on or arising from possession: *possessory interest.*

pos-set (pōs'it) *n.* A spiced drink of hot sweetened milk curdled with wine or ale. [Middle English *poshet*, *posset*: perhaps Old French **posce* (Latin *pōsca*, drink of vinegar and water < *potāre*, to drink; see **POTABLE** + Latin *esca*, food < *edere*, to eat; see **EDIBLE**) + Middle English *hot*, hot; see **HOT**.]

pos-si-bil-i-ty (pōs'ā-bīl'ī-tē) *n.*, *pl. -ties* **1.** The fact or state of being possible: *investigating the possibility of life on other planets.* **2.** Something that is possible: *His promotion now seems a possibility.* **3.** One that is capable of being chosen or of being made real: *She is a strong possibility in the senatorial race.* **There are several possibilities for dessert.** **4.** **possibilities** Potentiality for favorable or interesting results: *The idea has great possibilities.*

pos-si-ble (pōs'ā-bəl) *adj.* **1.** Capable of happening, existing, or being true without contradicting proven facts, laws, or circumstances: *Is it possible to move faster than the speed of light?* **2.** Capable of becoming or of being made to be so; potential: *possible suspects in the case; a possible site for the new capital.* **3.** Capable of occurring or being done in accordance with something specified. Used with the superlative: *You'll get the best possible care at this hospital.* **4.** Capable of happening but of uncertain likelihood: *It is possible that you might feel some discomfort after the procedure.* **5.** Permissible: *Is it possible to enter the gallery at this hour?* [Middle English < Old French < Latin *possibilis* < *posse*, to be able; see **POTI-** in App. I.]

➔ **SYNONYMS** *possible, workable, practicable, feasible, viable* These adjectives mean capable of occurring or being done. *Possible* indicates that something may happen, exist, be true, or be realizable: *"I made out a list*



positron emission tomography
scan of a human brain during sleep

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

Stress marks: ' (primary); ' (secondary), as in **dictionary** (dīk'shə-nēr'ē)