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- light-less** \līt-ləs\ *adj* (bef. 12c) 1: receiving no light: DARK 2: giving no light
- light-ly** \līt-lē\ *adv* (bef. 12c) 1: in a light manner: as a: with little weight or force: GENTLY b: with indifference or carelessness: UNCONCERNEDLY (the problem should not be passed over ~ —Shelly Halpern) c: with little difficulty: EASILY d: GAILY, CHEERFULLY e: in an agile manner: NIMBLY, SWIFTLY (the cat leapt ~ onto the table) f: in a small degree or amount (~ salted food)
- light meter** n (1921): a small and often portable device for measuring illumination; *esp*: EXPOSURE METER
- light-minded** \līt-mīn-dəd\ *adj* (1575): lacking in seriousness: FRIVOLOUS — **light-minded-ly** *adv* — **light-minded-ness** n
- light-ness** \-nəs\ n (bef. 12c) 1: the quality or state of being illuminated: ILLUMINATION 2: the attribute of object colors by which the object appears to reflect or transmit more or less of the incident light — compare BRIGHTNESS 2, HUE 2c, SATURATION 4
- lightness** n (12c) 1: the quality or state of being light *esp*. in weight 2: lack of seriousness and stability of character often accompanied by casual heedlessness 3 a: the quality or state of being nimble b: an ease and gaiety of style or manner 4: a lack of weightiness or force: DELICACY
- light-ning** \līt-nīŋ\ n [ME, fr. gerund of *lightenen* to lighten] (13c) 1: the flashing of light produced by a discharge of atmospheric electricity; *also*: the discharge itself 2: a sudden stroke of fortune
- lightning** *adj* (1576): having or moving with or as if with the speed and suddenness of lightning (a ~ assault)
- lightning** *vi* **light-ninged**; **lightning** (1903): to discharge a flash of lightning
- lightning arrester** n (1860): a device for protecting an electrical apparatus from damage by lightning
- lightning bug** n (1778): FIREFLY
- lightning rod** n (1773) 1: a grounded metallic rod set up on a structure (as a building) to protect it from lightning 2: one that serves to divert attack from another 3: one that is a frequent target of criticism or focus of controversy (she has become a convenient lightning rod for voters' discontent with law-and-order issues —Aric Press *et al.*)
- light-o'-love** \līt-ə-'lāv\ *also* **light-of-love** \-əv-'l\ n, pl **light-o'-loves** *also* **lights-of-love** (1589) 1: PROSTITUTE 2: LOVER, PARAMOUR
- light opera** n (1858): OPERETTA
- light out** *vi* [*light*] (1866) 1: to leave in a hurry (*lit out* for home at once) 2: SET OFF
- light pen** n (1958): a pen-shaped device for direct interaction with a computer through a cathode-ray tube display
- light pipe** n (1950): an optical fiber or a solid transparent plastic rod for transmitting light lengthwise
- light-plane** \līt-'plān\ n (1923): a small and comparatively lightweight airplane; *esp*: a privately owned passenger airplane
- light pollution** n (1971): artificial skylight (as from city lights) that interferes *esp*. with astronomical observations
- light-proof** \līt-'prūf\ *adj* (1923): impenetrable by light
- light quantum** n (1910): PHOTON; *esp*: one of luminous radiation
- light-rail** \līt-'rāl\ n, *often attrib* (1975): a means of urban railway transportation using trolley cars
- light reaction** n (ca. 1929): the phase of photosynthesis that requires the presence of light and that involves photophosphorylation
- lights** \līts\ n pl [ME *lightes*, fr. *light* light in weight] (12c): the lungs *esp*. of a slaughtered animal
- light-ship** \līt-'shīp\ n (1837): a ship equipped with a brilliant light and moored at a place dangerous to navigation
- light show** n (1966): a kaleidoscopic display of colored lights, slides, and film loops
- light-some** \līt-'səm\ *adj* (14c) 1: free from care: LIGHTHEARTED 2: AIRY, NIMBLE — **light-some-ly** *adv* — **light-some-ness** n
- lightsome** *adj* (15c) 1: well lighted: BRIGHT 2: giving light
- lights-out** \līts-'aūt\ n (1868) 1: a command or signal for putting out lights 2: a prescribed bedtime for persons living under discipline
- light table** n (ca. 1948): a device that projects even light through a flat translucent surface over which films or tracings may be spread out and viewed
- light therapy** n (1936): the treatment of medical or psychiatric conditions (as seasonal affective disorder) by the controlled application of light — *called also* **light treatment**, **phototherapy**
- light-tight** \līt-'tīt\ *adj* (1884): LIGHTPROOF
- light trap** n (1906) 1: a device that allows movement of a sliding part or passage of a person (as into a darkroom) but excludes light 2: a device for collecting or destroying insects that consists of a bright light in association with a trapping or killing medium
- light water** n (1933): WATER 1a — compare HEAVY WATER
- light-weight** \līt-'wāt\ n (1773) 1: one of less than average weight; *specif*: a boxer in a weight division having a maximum limit of 135 pounds for professionals and 132 pounds for amateurs — compare FEATHERWEIGHT, WELTERWEIGHT 2: one of little consequence or ability (a political ~)
- lightweight** *adj* (1809) 1: lacking in earnestness, ability, or profundity: INCONSEQUENTIAL (a ~ painter) (a ~ TV series) 2: having less than average weight (~ fabrics) 3: of, relating to, or characteristic of a lightweight (the ~ championship)
- light-wood** \līt-'wūd\, \līt-'təd\ n (1685) *chiefly Southern*: wood used for kindling; *esp*: coniferous wood abounding in pitch
- light-year** \līt-'yīr\ n (1888) 1: a unit of length in astronomy equal to the distance that light travels in one year in a vacuum or about 5.88 trillion miles (9.46 trillion kilometers) 2: an extremely large measure of comparison (as of distance, time, or quality) (seems like ~s ago) (has ~s more talent) (two minutes and yet ~s away from the crowded village —Suzanne Paterson)
- lign-** or **ligni-** or **ligno-** *comb form* [L *lign-*, *ligni-*, fr. *lignum*]: wood (*lignin*) (*lignocellulose*)
- lig-nan** \līg-'nan\ n [ISV *lign-* + *-an*] (1944): any of a class of propyl phenolic dimers including many found in plants and noted for having antioxidant and estrogenic activity
- lig-ne-ous** \līg-nē-'əs\ *adj* [L *ligneus*, fr. *lignum* wood, prob. fr. *legere* to gather — more at LEGEND] (1626): of or resembling wood
- lig-ni-fy** \līg-'nā-'fī\ *vb* -fied, -fy-ing [F *lignifier*, fr. L *lignum*] *vt* (ca. 1828): to convert into wood or woody tissue ~ *vi*: to become wood or woody — **lig-ni-fi-ca-tion** \līg-'nā-'fī-'kā-shən\ n
- lig-nin** \līg-'nīn\ n (1822): an amorphous polymer related to cellulose that provides rigidity and together with cellulose forms the woody cell walls of plants and the cementing material between them
- lig-nite** \līg-'nīt\ n [F, fr. L *lignum*] (ca. 1808): a usu. brownish black coal intermediate between peat and bituminous coal; *esp*: one in which the texture of the original wood is distinct — *called also* **brown coal** — **lig-nit-ic** \līg-'nī-'tik\ *adj*
- lig-no-cel-lu-lose** \līg-'nō-'sel-'yā-'lōs, -lōz\ n [ISV] (1900): any of several closely related substances constituting the essential part of woody cell walls of plants and consisting of cellulose intimately associated with lignin — **lig-no-cel-lu-los-ic** \-sel-'yā-'lō-'sīk, -zīk\ *adj*
- lig-no-sul-fo-nate** \-'sāl-'fā-'nāt\ n (1908): any of various compounds produced from the spent sulfite liquor in the pulping of softwood in papermaking and used *esp*. for binders and dispersing agents
- lig-num vi-tae** \līg-'nəm-'vī-'tē\ n, pl **lignum vitae** [NL, lit., wood of life] (1594) 1: the very hard heavy wood of any of several tropical American guaiacums 2: a tree yielding lignum vitae
- lig-u-la** \lī-'gyā-'lā\ n, pl **-lae** \-'lē, -lā\ *also* **-las** [NL] (ca. 1760) 1: LIGULE 2: the distal lobed part of the labium of an insect
- lig-u-late** \lī-'gyā-'lāt\ *adj* (1760) 1: furnished with ligules, ligulae, or ligulate corollas 2 [L *ligula*]: shaped like a strap (~ corolla of a ray flower)
- lig-u-le** \lī-'gyūl\ n [NL *ligula*, fr. L, small tongue, strap, fr. *lingere* to lick — more at LICK] (ca. 1847): a scalelike projection *esp*. on a plant: as a: a thin appendage of a foliage leaf and *esp*. of the sheath of a blade of grass b: a ligulate corolla of a ray floret in a composite head
- lig-ure** \lī-'gyūr, -gyər\ n [ME *lygure*, fr. LL *ligurius*, fr. Gk *ligrion*] (13c): a traditional precious stone that is prob. the jacinth
- lik-able** or **like-able** \lī-'kə-'bəl\ *adj* (1730): having qualities that bring about a favorable regard: PLEASANT, AGREEABLE — **lik-abil-i-ty** \lī-'kə-'bī-'lə-'tē\ n — **lik-able-ness** n
- like** \līk\ *vb* **liked**; **lik-ing** [ME, fr. OE *līcan*; akin to OE *gēlic* alike] *vt* (bef. 12c) 1 *chiefly dial*: to be suitable or agreeable to (I like onions but they don't ~ me) 2 a: to feel attraction toward or take pleasure in: ENJOY (~s baseball) b: to feel toward: REGARD (how would you ~ a change) 3: to wish to have: WANT (would ~ a drink) 4: to do well in (this plant ~s dry soil) (my car does not ~ cold weather) ~ *vi* 1 *dial*: APPROVE 2: to feel inclined: CHOOSE, PREFER (leave any time you ~)
- like** n (1851) 1: LIKING, PREFERENCE 2: something that one likes
- like** *adj* [ME, alter. of *ilich*, fr. OE *gēlic* like, alike, fr. *ge-*, associative prefix + *lic* body; akin to OHG *gilih* like, alike, Lith *lygas* like ~ more at CO-] (13c) 1 a: the same or nearly the same (as in appearance, character, or quantity) (suits of ~ design) — formerly used with *as*, *unto*, of (it behoved him to be made ~ unto his brethren —Heb 2:17(AV)) b *chiefly Brit*: closely resembling the subject or original (the portrait is very ~) 2: LIKELY (the importance of statistics as the one discipline ~ to give accuracy of mind —H. J. Laski)
- like** *prep* (13c) 1 a: having the characteristics of: similar to (his house is ~ a barn) (it's ~ when we were kids) b: typical of (was ~ him to do that) c: comparable to: APPROXIMATING (costs something ~ fifty cents) 2: in the manner of: similarly to (acts ~ a fool) 3: as though there would be (looks ~ rain) 4: such as (a subject ~ physics) 5: used to form intensive or ironic phrases (fought ~ hell) (~ fun he did) (laughed ~ anything)
- like** n (13c) 1 a: one that is similar: COUNTERPART, EQUAL (have ~ never seen the ~ before —Sir Winston Churchill) b: KIND 4a — *usu.* used with a preceding possessive (put him and his ~ to some job —J. R. Tolkien) 2: one of many that are similar to each other — used chiefly in proverbial expressions (~ breeds like) — and the like: ET CETERA — the likes of *also* the like of 1: such people as: such things as (reads the likes of Austen and Browning) 2: such a one as and perhaps others similar to — *usu.* used with disparaging overtones (have no use for the likes of you) 3: the kind or sort of (a fantastic celebration the likes of which had never been seen before —Joseph Heller)
- like** *adv* (14c) 1 *archaic*: EQUALLY 2: LIKELY, PROBABLY (you'll try it, some day, ~ enough —Mark Twain) 3 a: to some extent: RATHER, ALTOGETHER (saunter over nonchalantly ~ —Walter Karig) b — used interjectionally in informal speech often to emphasize a word or phrase (as in "He was, like, gorgeous") or for an apologetic, vague, or unassertive effect (as in "I need to, like, borrow some money") 4: NEARLY: APPROXIMATELY (the actual interest is more ~ 18 percent) — used interjectionally in informal speech with expressions of measurement (it was, ~, five feet long) (goes there every day, ~) — **as like as not** or **like as not**: PROBABLY
- like** *conj* (14c) 1 a: AS IF (middle-aged men who looked ~ they might be out for their one night of the year —Norman Mailer) b — used in intensive phrases (drove ~ mad) (hurts ~ crazy) 2: in the same way that: AS (they raven down scenery ~ children do sweetmeats —John Keats) 3 a: in the way or manner that (the violin sounds ~ an old masterpiece should) (did it ~ you told me) b — used interjectionally in informal speech often with the verb *be* to introduce a quotation, paraphrase, or thought expressed by or imputed to the subject of the verb, or with *it's* to report a generally held opinion (so I'm ~, "Give me a break") (it's ~, "Who cares what he thinks?") 4: such as (a bag ~ a doctor carries) (when your car has trouble ~ when it won't start) — used interjectionally in informal speech (often stays up late, until ~ three in the morning)
- usage** *Like* has been used as a conjunction since the 14th century. In the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries it was used in serious literature, but not often; in the 17th and 18th centuries it grew more frequent but less literary. It became markedly more frequent in literary use again in the 19th century. By mid-century it was coming under critical fire, but not from grammarians, oddly enough, who were wrangling over whether it could be called a preposition or not. There is no doubt that, after 600 years of use, conjunctive *like* is firmly established. It has been used by many prestigious literary figures of the past, though perhaps not in their most elevated works; in modern use it may be found in literature, journalism, and scholarly writing. While the present objection to it is perhaps more heated than rational, someone writing in