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About the type

The A-Z of this dictionary is typeset in Collins Fedra, a special version of the Fedra family of types designed by Peter Bil'ak. CollinsFedra has been customized specially for Collins dictionaries; it includes both sans serif (for headwords) and serif (entries) versions, in several different weights. Its large x-height, its open 'eye', and its basis in the tradition of humanist letterforms make CollinsFedra both familiar and easy to read at small sizes. It has been designed to use the minimum space without sacrificing legibility, as well as including a number of characters and signs that are specific to dictionary typography. Its companion phonetic type is the first of its kind to be drawn according to the same principles as the regular typeface, rather than assembled from rotated and reflected characters from other types. Peter Bil'ak (born 1973, Slovakia) is a graphic and type designer living in the Netherlands. As well as the Fedra family, he has designed several other typefaces including Eureka. His typotheque.com website has become a focal point for research and debate around contemporary type design.

defibrillate (di'fibri,leit, di'faibri,leit) *vb* (tr) 1 *med* to stop abnormal rhythm of (the heart) and restore it to normal rhythm, usually by administering an electric charge 2 to brush (a textile) in order to separate the fibres into individual strands ■ **defibrillation** (di'faibri'leifən, -fib-) *n* *med* the application of an electric current to the heart to restore normal rhythmic contractions after the onset of atrial or ventricular fibrillation ■ **defibrillator** (di'faibri,leita, -fib-) *n* *med* an apparatus for stopping fibrillation of the heart by application of an electric current to the chest wall or directly to the heart

defibrinate (di'faibri,neit) *vb* (tr) to divest of fibrin or the protein formed in blood during clotting ■ **defibrination** (di'faibri'neifən) *n* the act or process of defibrinating

defibrinize (di'faibri,naiz) or **defibrinise** *vb* (tr) another word for **defibrinate**

deficient (di'fifənt) *adj* 1 lacking some essential; incomplete; defective 2 inadequate in quantity or supply; insufficient [C16: from Latin *deficiens* lacking, from *deficere* to fall short; see **DEFECT**] > **deficiently** *adv* ■ **deficiency** (di'fifənsi) *n* another word for **deficiency** ■ **deficiency** (di'fifənsi) *n*, *pl* -cies 1 the state or quality of being deficient 2 a lack or insufficiency; shortage 3 another word for **deficit** 4 *biology* the absence of a gene or a region of a chromosome normally present ■ **deficiency disease** *n* 1 *med* any condition, such as pellagra, beriberi, or scurvy, produced by a lack of vitamins or other essential substances. Compare **avitaminosis** 2 *botany* any disease caused by lack of essential minerals ■ **deficientness** (di'fifəntnəs) *n* the state or quality of being deficient

deficit ('defisit, di'fisit) *n* 1 the amount by which an actual sum is lower than that expected or required 2 a an excess of liabilities over assets b an excess of expenditures over revenues during a certain period c an excess of payments over receipts on the balance of payments [C18: from Latin, literally: there is lacking, from *deficere* to be lacking] ■ **deficit financing** *n* government spending in excess of revenues so that a budget deficit is incurred, which is financed by borrowing; recommended by Keynesian economists in order to increase economic activity and reduce unemployment. Also called: **compensatory finance**, **pump priming**

de fide Latin (di: 'faidi) *adj* RC Church (of a doctrine) belonging to the essentials of the faith, esp by virtue of a papal ruling [literally: from faith]

defilade (di'fai,leit) *military n* 1 protection provided by obstacles against enemy crossfire from the rear, or observation 2 the disposition of defensive fortifications to produce this protection > *vb* (tr) 3 to provide protection for by defilade [C19: see **DE-**, **ENFILADE**]

defile ('di'fai) *vb* (tr) 1 to make foul or dirty; pollute 2 to tarnish or sully the brightness of; taint; corrupt 3 to damage or sully (someone's good name, reputation, etc) 4 to make unfit for ceremonial use; desecrate 5 to violate the chastity of [C14: from earlier *defouler* (influenced by *filen* to **FILE**), from Old French *defouler* to trample underfoot, abuse, from **DE-** + *fouler* to tread upon; see **FULL**] > **de'filament** *n* > **de'filer** *n*

defile ('di'fai, di'fai) *n* 1 a narrow pass or gorge, esp one between two mountains 2 a single file of soldiers, etc > *vb* 3 chiefly *military* to march or cause to march in single file [C17: from French *défilé*, from *défiler* to file off, from *filer* to march in a column, from Old French: to spin, from *fil* thread, from Latin *filum*]

defiliation (di:fi'li'eifən) *n* the denial of or lack of a male child

define (di'fain) *vb* (tr) 1 to state precisely the meaning of (words, terms, etc) 2 to describe the nature, properties, or essential qualities of 3 to determine the boundary or extent of 4 (often *passive*) to delineate the form or outline of: the shape of the tree was clearly defined by the light behind it 5 to fix with precision; specify [C14: from Old French *definire* to determine, from Latin *definire* to set bounds to, from *finire* to **FINISH**] > **de'finable** *adj* > **de'finability** *n* > **de'finably** *adv* > **de'finer** *n* ■ **defined-benefit** *adj* denoting an occupational pension scheme that guarantees a specified payout, usually based on an employee's final salary and years of service. Abbreviation: **DB**. Also called: **final-salary** ■ **definement** (di'fainmənt) *n* 1 the act of defining 2 another word for **definition** ■ **definition** (di'finitifən) *n* 1 a formal and concise statement of the meaning of a word, phrase, etc 2 the act of defining a word, phrase, etc 3 specification of the essential properties of something, or of the criteria which uniquely identify it 4 the act of making clear or definite 5 the state or condition of being clearly defined or definite 6 a measure of the clarity of an optical, photographic, or television image as characterized by its sharpness and contrast > **de'finitional** *adj*

definiendum (di'finitendəm) *n*, *pl* -da (-də) something to be defined, esp the term or phrase to be accounted for in a dictionary entry. Compare **definiens** [Latin]

definiens (di'finitənz) *n*, *pl* **definientia** (di'finitenja) the word or words used to define or give an account of the meaning of another word, as in a dictionary entry. Compare **definiendum** [Latin: defining]

definite ('definit) *adj* 1 clearly defined; exact; explicit 2 having precise limits or boundaries 3 known for certain; sure: it is definite that they're coming 4 *botany* a denoting a type of growth in which the main stem ends in a flower, as in a cymose inflorescence; determinate b (esp of flower parts) limited or fixed in number in a given species [C15: from Latin *definitus* limited, distinct; see **DEFINE**] > **definiteness** *n* > **definitude** (di'finitju:d) *n* ■ **definite article** *n* *grammar* a determiner that expresses specificity of reference, such as *the* in English. Compare **indefinite article** ■ **definite description** *n* 1 a description that is modified by the definite article or a

possessive, such as *the woman in white* or *Rosemary's baby* 2 a similar plural expression, such as *the kings of Scotland* ■ **definite integral** *n* *maths* a the evaluation of the indefinite integral between two limits, representing the area between the given function and the x-axis between these two values of x b the expression for that function, $\int_a^b f(x)dx$, where $f(x)$ is the given function and $x=a$ and $x=b$ are the limits of integration. Where $F(x) = \int f(x)dx$, the indefinite integral, $\int_a^b f(x)dx = F(b) - F(a)$ ■ **definitely** ('definitli) *adv* 1 in a definite manner 2 (sentence modifier) certainly: he said he was coming, definitely > *sentence substitute* 3 unquestionably: used to confirm an assumption by a questioner

definitive (di'finitiv) *adj* 1 serving to decide or settle finally; conclusive 2 most reliable, complete, or authoritative: the definitive reading of a text 3 serving to define or outline 4 *zoology* fully developed; complete: the definitive form of a parasite 5 a (of postage stamps) permanently on sale b (as noun) a definitive postage stamp > *n* 6 *grammar* a word indicating specificity of reference, such as the definite article or a demonstrative adjective or pronoun > **de'finitively** *adv* > **de'finitiveness** *n*

definitize or **definitise** ('defəni'taiz, di'finitaiz) *vb* (tr) to make (something) definitive, specific, or clear

deflagrate ('defləgreit, 'di-) *vb* to burn or cause to burn with great heat and light [C18: from Latin *deflagrare*, from **DE-** + *flagrare* to burn] > **deflagration** (di'flegre'fən) *n* the state or quality of being deflagrable ■ **deflagrability** (di'flegre'biliti) *n* the state or quality of being deflagrable ■ **deflagrable** ('defləgrebəl) *adj* having the ability to burst into flames quickly ■ **deflagrator** ('defləgreitə) *n* 1 a piece of equipment for bringing about deflagration 2 (of a substance or material) a sudden and quick bursting into flames

deflate (di'fleit) *vb* 1 to collapse or cause to collapse through the release of gas 2 (tr) to take away the self-esteem or conceit from 3 *economics* to cause deflation of (an economy, the money supply, etc) [C19: from **DE-** + (**IN**)FLATE] ■ **deflated** (di'fleitid) *adj* 1 having lost confidence, hope, or optimism 2 voided of air or gas; not inflated ■ **deflator** or less commonly **deflater** (di'fleita) *n* a person or device that causes deflation ■ **deflation** (di'flefən) *n* 1 the act of deflating or state of being deflated 2 *economics* a reduction in the level of total spending and economic activity resulting in lower levels of output, employment, investment, trade, profits, and prices. Compare **disinflation** 3 *geology* the removal of loose rock material, sand, and dust by the wind > **deflationary** *adj* > **deflationist** *n*, *adj* ■ **deflationary gap** *n* *economics* a situation in which total spending in an economy is insufficient to buy all the output that can be produced with full employment

deflea (di'fli:) *vb* (tr) to remove fleas from (an animal or bird)

deflect (di'flekt) *vb* to turn or cause to turn aside from a course; swerve [C17: from Latin *deflectere*, from *flectere* to bend] > **de'flector** *n* ■ **deflectable** (di'flekəbəl) *adj* able to be deflected ■ **deflection** or **deflexion** (di'flekʃən) *n* 1 the act of deflecting or the state of being deflected 2 the amount of deviation caused by a deflection 3 the change in direction of a light beam as it crosses a boundary between two media with different refractive indexes 4 a deviation of the indicator of a measuring instrument from its zero position 5 the movement of a structure or structural member when subjected to a load > **de'flective** *adj* ■ **deflectional** (di'flekʃənəl) or **deflexional** *adj* of or relating to deflection ■ **deflexure** (di'flekʃə) *n* formal the act or condition of deflection or deviation

deflex (di'fleks) *adj* 1 another word for **deflexed** 2 (of the grip of an archery bow) having the theoretical pivot point further from the archer's body than the theoretical pivot point of the limbs of the bow > *vb* (intr) 3 formal to bend backwards or turn downwards ■ **deflexed** (di'flekst, di'flekst) *adj* (of leaves, petals, etc) bent sharply upwards and downwards

deflocculate (di'flɒkjuleit) *vb* (tr) 1 to disperse, forming a colloid or suspension 2 to prevent flocculation of (a colloid or suspension) > **de'flocculant** *n* > **de'flocculation** *n*

deflorate (di'flɔ:ret) *adj* 1 *botany* (of a plant) having lost its flowers > *vb* (tr) 2 *botany* to strip (a plant) of its flowers 3 *archaic* to take the virginity from (a girl or woman) ■ **defloration** (di'flɔ:reifən) *n* the act of deflowering [C15: from Late Latin *defloratio*; see **DE-**, **FLOWER**]

deflower (di'flauə) *vb* (tr) 1 old-fashioned to deprive of virginity, esp by rupturing the hymen through sexual intercourse 2 to despoil of beauty, innocence, etc; mar; violate 3 to rob or despoil of flowers > **de'flowerer** *n*

defluent ('deflu:ənt) *adj* formal running downwards

defluxion (di'flakʃən) *n* 1 anything that flows downwards 2 *archaic* a running downwards 3 *med obsolete* a flow of bodily humours accompanying a disease

defo ('defəv) *interj* Brit informal definitely: an expression of agreement or consent

defoam (di'fəʊm) *vb* (tr) 1 to remove foam from (something) 2 to prevent foam from forming on (something) ■ **defoamer** (di'fəʊmə) *n* anything which removes foam or prevents foam from forming

defocus (di'fəʊkəs) *vb* -cuses, -cusing, -cused or -cusses, -cussing, -cussed formal to go or cause to go out of focus

Defoe (di'fəʊ) *n* Daniel. 1660-1731, English novelist, journalist, spy-master, and pamphleteer, noted particularly for his novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). His other novels include *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)

defog (di'fɒg) *vb* -fogs, -fogging, -fogged (tr) to clear (something) of fog or vapour ■ **defogger** (di'fɒgə) *n* an agent which clears fog from something

defoliate (di'fəʊliet) *vb* to deprive (a plant) of its leaves, as by the use of a herbicide, or (of a plant) to shed its leaves > *adj* (di'fəʊliət) 2 (of a plant)

firmly fixed in place, esp a household appliance **2** a person or thing regarded as fixed in a particular place or position **3** *property law* an article attached to land and regarded as part of it **4** a device to secure a workpiece in a machine tool **5** chiefly Brit **a** a sports match or social occasion **b** the date of such an event **6** rare the act of fixing [C17: from Late Latin *fixura* a fastening (with -t- by analogy with *mixture*)] **>** *fixtureless* *adj* **fix up** *vb* (tr, adverb) **1** to arrange: let's fix up a date **2** (often foll by *with*) to provide: I'm sure we can fix you up with a room **3** informal to repair or rearrange: to fix up one's house **fixure** ('fiksʃə) *n* archaic firmness, fixedness

fixed (fiksɪt) *adj* **1** attached or placed so as to be immovable **2** not subject to change; stable: fixed prices **3** steadily directed: a fixed expression **4** established as to relative position: a fixed point **5** not fluctuating; always at the same time: a fixed holiday **6** (of ideas, notions, etc) firmly maintained **7** (of an element) held in chemical combination: fixed nitrogen **8** (of a substance) nonvolatile **9** arranged **10** astrology of, relating to, or belonging to the group consisting of the four signs of the zodiac Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius, which are associated with stability. Compare *cardinal* (9), *mutable* (2) **11** informal equipped or provided for, as with money, possessions, etc **12** informal illegally arranged: a fixed trial **>** *fixedly* ('fiksɪdli) *adv* **>** *fixedness* *n* **fixed assets** *pl n* nontrading business assets of a relatively permanent nature, such as plant, fixtures, or goodwill. Also called: *capital assets*. Compare *current assets* **fixed charge** *n* 1 an invariable expense usually at regular intervals, such as rent **2** a legal charge on specific assets or property, as of a company **fixed costs** *pl n* 1 another name for *overheads* **2** costs that do not vary with output **fixed-head coupé** *n* another name (esp Brit) for *coupé* (1) **fixed idea** *n* an idea, esp one of an obsessional nature, that is persistently maintained and not subject to change. Also: *idée fixe* **fixed link** *n* Canadian a permanent transport link, esp a bridge, between two geographical areas separated by water **fixed oil** *n* a natural animal or vegetable oil that is not volatile: a mixture of esters of fatty acids, usually triglycerides. Also called: *fatty oil*. Compare *essential oil* **fixed point** *n* **1** physics a reproducible invariant temperature; the boiling point, freezing point, or triple point of a substance, such as water, that is used to calibrate a thermometer or define a temperature scale **2** maths a point that is not moved by a given transformation **fixed-point representation** *n* computing the representation of numbers by a single set of digits such that the radix point has a predetermined location, the value of the number depending on the position of each digit relative to the radix point. Compare *floating-point representation* **fixed-price** *adj* having a price that does not change **fixed satellite** *n* a satellite in a geostationary orbit **fixed star** *n* 1 any of the stars in the Ptolemaic system, all of which were thought to be attached to an outer crystal sphere thus explaining their apparent lack of movement **2** an extremely distant star whose position appears to be almost stationary over a long period of time

fizgig ('fizgɪg) *n* **1** a frivolous or flirtatious girl **2** a firework or whirling top that fizzes as it moves **3** a variant of *fishgig* **4** Austral slang a police informer **>** *vb* **5** (intr) Austral slang to inform on criminals to the police [C16: probably from obsolete *fise* a breaking of wind + *gig* girl]

fizz (fɪz) *vb* (intr) **1** to make a hissing or bubbling sound **2** (of a drink) to produce bubbles of carbon dioxide, either through fermentation or aeration **>** *n* **3** a hissing or bubbling sound **4** the bubbly quality of a drink; effervescence **5** any effervescent drink [C17: of imitative origin] **>** *'fizzy* *adj* **>** *'fizziness* *n* **fizzer** ('fɪzə) *n* 1 anything that fizzes **2** Austral slang a person or thing that disappoints, fails to succeed, etc: the horse proved to be a fizzer

fizzleness ('fɪznəs) *adj* Scot weak, feeble, ineffectual

fizzle ('fɪzl) *vb* (intr) **1** to make a hissing or bubbling sound **2** (often foll by *out*) informal to fail or die out, esp after a promising start **>** *n* **3** a hissing or bubbling sound; fizz **4** informal an outright failure; fiasco [C16: probably from obsolete *fist* to break wind]

fj the internet domain name for Fiji

fjeld or **field** ('fjeld) *n* a high rocky plateau with little vegetation in Scandinavian countries [C19: Norwegian; related to Old Norse *fjall* mountain; see *FELL*]

FJI abbreviation for Fiji (international car registration)

fjord or **fiord** ('fjɔ:d) *n* (esp on the coast of Norway) a long narrow inlet of the sea between high steep cliffs formed by glacial action [C17: from Norwegian, from Old Norse *fjörðr*; see *FIRTH*, *FORD*] **fjordic** ('fjɔ:dɪk) *adj* geography of or pertaining to a fjord, containing fjords

fk the internet domain name for Falkland Islands

Fl the chemical symbol for flerovium

FL abbreviation for **1** Flight Lieutenant **2** Florida **3** Liechtenstein (international car registration) (for sense 3) from German *Fürstentum Liechtenstein* Principality of Liechtenstein

fl. abbreviation for **1** floruit **>** symbol for **2** (formerly in the Netherlands) guild

Fla. abbreviation for Florida

flabbergast ('flæbəɡɑ:st) *vb* (tr) informal to overcome with astonishment; amaze utterly; astound [C18: of uncertain origin] **flabbergasted** ('flæbəɡɑ:stɪd) *adj* informal overcome with astonishment; amazed; astounded

flabby ('flæbrɪ) *adj* **-bier, -biest** **1** lacking firmness; loose or yielding: flabby muscles **2** having flabby flesh, esp through being overweight **3** lacking vitality; weak; ineffectual [C17: alteration of *flappy*, from *FLAP* + *-y*; compare Dutch *flabbe* drooping lip] **>** *'flabbily* *adv* **>** *'flabbiness* *n* **flab** (flæb)

n unsightly or unwanted fat on the body; flabbiness [C20: back formation from *FLABBY*]

flabellum ('flæbələm) *n*, *pl* **-la** (-lə) **1** a fan-shaped organ or part, such as the tip of the proboscis of a honeybee **2** RC Church a large ceremonial fan [C19: from Latin: small fan, from *flābra* breezes, from *flāre* to blow] **flabellate** ('flæbəleɪt, -eɪt) or **flabelliform** ('flæbəleɪfɔ:m) *adj* biology shaped like a fan **flabellation** ('flæbəleɪʃən) *n* surgery the act of fanning a wound to keep it cool

flaccid ('flæsɪd, 'flæksɪd) *adj* lacking firmness; soft and limp; flabby [C17: from Latin *flaccidus*, from *flaccus*] **>** *'flaccidity* or *'flaccidness* *n* **>** *'flaccidly* *adv*

flack¹ ('flæk) *n* chiefly US and Canadian a press or publicity agent [C20: of unknown origin] **flackery** ('flækəri) *n* journalism the action of press agents, promotional activity

flack² ('flæk) *n* a variant spelling of *flak*

flacker ('flækə) *vb* archaic, dialect to flap (one's wings)

flacket¹ ('flæktɪ) *n* a flagon, bottle, or flask for holding alcohol

flacket² ('flæktɪ) *vb* (intr) dialect to flap, flutter about, esp of women with fluttering clothing

flacon (French *flakɔ̃*) *n* a small stoppered bottle or flask, such as one used for perfume [C19: from French; see *FLAGON*]

flaff ('flæf) *n* **1** Scot a flapping or fluttering **>** *vb* **2** Scot to flap (one's wings)

flaffer ('flæfə) *vb* (intr) Northern English and Scot to flutter

flag¹ ('flæg) *n* **1** a piece of cloth, esp bunting, often attached to a pole or staff, decorated with a design and used as an emblem, symbol, or standard or as a means of signalling **2** a small paper flag, emblem, or sticker sold on flag days **3** computing an indicator, that may be set or unset, used to indicate a condition or to stimulate a particular reaction in the execution of a computer program **4** informal short for *flag officer*, *flagship* **5** journalism another name for *masthead* (2) **6** the fringe of long hair, tapering towards the tip, on the underside of the tail of certain breeds of dog, such as setters **7** the conspicuously marked tail of a deer **8** a less common name for *bookmark* **9** Austral and NZ the part of a taximeter that is raised when a taxi is for hire **10** the pennant-shaped pattern that is formed when a price fluctuation is plotted on a chart, interrupting the steady rise or fall that precedes and then follows it **11** the flag (in Victoria, Australia) the Australian Rules premiership **12** fly the flag to represent or show support for one's country, an organization, etc **13** show the flag **a** to assert a claim, as to a territory or stretch of water, by military presence **b** informal to be present; make an appearance **14** strike the flag or lower the flag **a** to relinquish command, esp of a ship **b** to submit or surrender **>** *vb* **flags**, **flagging**, **flagged** (tr) **15** to decorate or mark with a flag or flags **16** (often foll by *down*) to warn or signal (a vehicle) to stop **17** to send or communicate (messages, information, etc) by flag **18** to decoy (game or wild animals) by waving a flag or similar object so as to attract their attention **19** to mark (a page in a book, card, etc) for attention by attaching a small tab or flag **20** chiefly Austral to draw attention to (something) **21** (foll by *away* or *by*) NZ to consider unimportant; brush aside [C16: of uncertain origin] **>** *'flagger* *n* **>** *'flagless* *adj* **flag captain** *n* the captain of a flagship **flag day** *n* Brit a day on which money is collected by a charity and small flags, emblems, or stickers are given to contributors **Flag Day** *n* June 14, the annual holiday in the US to celebrate the adoption in 1777 of the Stars and Stripes **flag fall** *n* Austral the minimum charge for hiring a taxi, to which the rate per kilometre is added **flag lieutenant** *n* an admiral's ADC **flagman** ('flægmən) *n*, *pl* **-men** a person who has charge of, carries, or signals with a flag, esp a railway employee **flag of convenience** *n* a national flag flown by a ship registered in that country to gain financial or legal advantage **flag officer** *n* 1 an officer in certain navies of the rank of rear admiral or above and entitled to fly its flag **2** the head of a boat or yacht club **flag of truce** *n* a white flag indicating the peaceful intent of its bearer or an invitation to an enemy to negotiate **flag out** *vb* (adverb) to register (a commercial vehicle) in a country other than the one in which it operates, usually in order to take advantage of favourable rates of taxation **flagpole** ('flæg,pəʊl) or **flagstaff** ('flæg,sta:f) *n*, *pl* **-poles, -staves** or **-staves** (-steɪvz) **1** a pole or staff on which a flag is hoisted and displayed **2** run something up the flagpole to pursue a tentative course of action in order to gauge the reaction it receives **flag rank** *n* the rank of a flag officer **flagship** ('flæg,ʃɪp) *n* **1** a ship, esp in a fleet, aboard which the commander of the fleet is quartered **2** the most important ship belonging to a shipping company **3** a single item from a related group considered as the most important, often in establishing a public image: the evening news is the flagship of many broadcasters **flagstick** ('flæg,stɪk) *n* in golf, a pole with a flag at the top, used to indicate the position of a hole **flag up** *vb* (tr; adverb) to bring (something) to someone's attention; point out **flag-waving** *n* informal **a** an emotional appeal or display intended to arouse patriotic or nationalistic feeling **b** (as modifier): a flag-waving speech **>** *'flag-waver* *n* **flag**² ('flæg) *vb* **flags**, **flagging**, **flagged** (intr) **1** to hang down; become limp; droop **2** to decline in strength or vigour; become weak or tired [C16: of unknown origin] **flagginess** ('flæɡɪnəs) *n* **1** the state of being tired **2** the condition of being limp or droopy **flaggingly** ('flæɡɪŋli) *adv* in a tired or flagging manner **flaggy** ('flæɡɪ) *adj* **-gier, -giest** drooping; limp **flag**³ ('flæg) *n* **1** any of various plants that have long swordlike leaves, esp the iris *Iris pseudacorus* (**yellow flag**) **2** the leaf of any such plant **>** See also **sweet flag** [C14: probably of Scandinavian origin; compare Dutch *flag*, Danish *flæg* yellow iris]

vaquero (və'keərəu) *n*, *pl* -ros Southwestern US dialect a cowboy

var (vɑː) *n* a unit of reactive power of an alternating current, equal to the product of the current measured in amperes and the voltage measured in volts [from *v(olt)-a(mperes) r(eactive)*]

Var (French var) *n* 1 a department of SE France, in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur region. Capital: Toulon. Pop: 946 305 (2003 est). Area: 6023 sq km (2349 sq miles) 2 a river in SE France, flowing southeast and south to the Mediterranean near Nice. Length: about 130 km (80 miles)

VAR abbreviation for 1 (sometimes vaː) video assistant referee 2 visual aural range

var. abbreviation for 1 variable 2 variant 3 variation 4 variety 5 various

vara ('vɑːrə) *n* a unit of length used in Spain, Portugal, and South America and having different values in different localities, usually between 32 and 43 inches (about 80 to 108 centimetres) [C17: via Spanish from Latin: wooden trestle, from *vārus* crooked]

varactor ('vɛəræktə) *n* a semiconductor diode that acts as a voltage-dependent capacitor, being operated with a reverse bias. Compare **varistor** [C20: probably a blend of *variable* and *reactor*]

Varah ('vɛərə) *n* (Edward) Chad. 1911–2007, British Anglican clergyman, who founded (1953) the Samaritans counselling service

varan ('vɛərən) *n* any carnivorous lizard of the *Varinidae* family found in Asia, Africa, and Australia and ranging in length up to 3 metres. Also known as: **monitor**

Varanasi ('vɑːrənəsi) *n* a city in NE India, in SE Uttar Pradesh on the River Ganges; probably dates from the 13th century BC; an early centre of Aryan philosophy and religion; a major place of pilgrimage for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists, with many ghats along the Ganges; seat of the Banaras Hindu University (1916), India's leading university, and the Sanskrit University (1957). Pop: 1 100 748 (2001). Former names: **Benares**, **Banaras**

Varangian ('vɛərəndʒiən) *n* 1 one of the Scandinavian peoples who invaded and settled parts of Russia and Ukraine from the 8th to the 11th centuries, and who formed the bodyguard of the Byzantine emperor (**Varangian Guard**) in the late 10th and 11th centuries 2 *adj* 2 of or relating to the Varangians [C18: from Medieval Latin *Varangus*, from Medieval Greek *Barangos*, from Old Norse *Væringi*, probably from *vār* pledge]

Vardar (Serbian 'vardar) *n* a river in S Europe, rising in W Macedonia and flowing northeast, then south past Skopje into Greece, where it is called the Axios and enters the Aegean at Thessaloniki. Length: about 320 km (200 miles)

Vardhamana ('vɑːdə'mɑːnə) *n* See **Mahavira**

Vardon ('vɑːd'n) *n* Harry. 1870–1937, British golfer

vardy ('vɑːdi) *n*, *pl* -dies dialect a verdict or opinion

vare¹ ('vɛə) *n* a weasel

vare² ('vɛə) *n* obsolete a rod of authority

varec ('vɛrɛk) *n* 1 another name for **kelp** 2 the ash obtained from kelp [C17: from French, from Old Norse *wrek* (unattested); see **WRECK**]

Varese (Italian va'reːse) *n* a historic city in N Italy, in Lombardy near Lake Varese; manufacturing centre, esp for leather goods. Pop: 80 511 (2001)

Varèse ('vɑːrɛz) *n* Edgar(d) (edgar). 1883–1965, US composer, born in France. His works, which combine extreme dissonance with complex rhythms and the use of electronic techniques, include *Ionisation* (1931) and *Poème électronique* (1958)

varouse ('vɑːrʊːz) *n* a type of loose coat or jacket

Vargas (Portuguese 'vargas) *n* Getúlio Dornelles (ʒe'tulju dɔr'nɛləʃ). 1883–1954, Brazilian statesman; president (1930–45; 1951–54)

Vargas Llosa (Spanish 'baryas 'lɔsa) *n* (Jorge) Mario (Pedro) born 1936, Peruvian novelist, writer, and political figure. His novels include *The City and the Dogs* (1963), *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1969), *The Storyteller* (1990), and *The Notebook of Don Rigoberto* (1998). In 1990 he stood unsuccessfully for the presidency of Peru. He won the Nobel Prize in literature 2010

varguero ('vɑːgɛɪnjəu) *n*, *pl* -nos a Spanish writing and storage cabinet dating from the 16th century

varia ('vɛəriə) *pl* *n* a collection or miscellany, esp of literary works [Latin, neuter plural of *varius* various]

variable ('vɛəriəbəl) *adj* 1 liable to or capable of change: *variable weather* 2 (of behaviour, opinions, emotions, etc) lacking constancy; fickle 3 *maths* having a range of possible values 4 (of a species, characteristic, etc) liable to deviate from the established type 5 (of a wind) varying its direction and intensity 6 (of an electrical component or device) designed so that a characteristic property, such as resistance, can be varied: *variable capacitor* 7 something that is subject to variation 8 *maths* a an expression that can be assigned any of a set of values b a symbol, esp *x*, *y*, or *z*, representing an unspecified member of a class of objects, numbers, etc. See also **dependent variable**, **independent variable** 9 *logic* a symbol, esp *x*, *y*, or *z*, representing any member of a class of entities 10 *computing* a named unit of storage that can be changed to any of a set of specified values during execution of a program 11 *astronomy* See **variable star** 12 a variable wind 13 (*plural*) a region where variable winds occur [C14: from Latin *variabilis* changeable, from *variare* to diversify] > **variability** or **variableness** *n* > **variably** *adv* ■ **variable cost** *n* a cost that varies directly with output ■ **variable-density wind tunnel** *n* a closed-circuit wind tunnel entirely contained in a casing in which the pressure and therefore the density of the working

fluid can be maintained at a preselected value ■ **variable-geometry** or **variable-sweep** *adj* denoting an aircraft in which the wings are hinged to give the variable aspect ratio colloquially known as a swing-wing ■ **variable star** *n* any star that varies considerably in brightness, either irregularly or in regular periods. **Intrinsic variables**, in which the variation is a result of internal changes, include novae, supernovae, and pulsating stars. See also **eclipsing binary**

variant ('vɛəriənt) *adj* 1 liable to or displaying variation 2 differing from a standard or type: a *variant spelling* 3 obsolete not constant; fickle 4 something that differs from a standard or type 5 *statistics* another word for **variate** (1) [C14: via Old French from Latin *variāns*, from *variare* to diversify, from *varius* various] ■ **variance** ('vɛəriəns) *n* 1 the act of varying or the quality, state, or degree of being divergent; discrepancy 2 an instance of diverging; dissension: *our variance on this matter should not affect our friendship* 3 **at variance** a (often foll by *with*) (of facts, etc) not in accord; conflicting b (of persons) in a state of dissension 4 *statistics* a measure of dispersion obtained by taking the mean of the squared deviations of the observed values from their mean in a frequency distribution 5 a difference or discrepancy between two steps in a legal proceeding, esp between a statement in a pleading and the evidence given to support it 6 (in the US and Canada) a licence or authority issued by the board of variance to contravene the usual rule, esp to build contrary to the provision of a zoning code 7 *chem* the number of degrees of freedom of a system, used in the phase rule 8 *accounting* the difference between actual and standard costs of production ■ **variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease** *n* another name for **new-variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease**

variate ('vɛəriət) *n* 1 *statistics* a random variable or a numerical value taken by it 2 a less common word for **variant** (4) [C16: from Latin *variare* to vary]

variation ('vɛəri'eɪʃən) *n* 1 the act, process, condition, or result of changing or varying; diversity 2 an instance of varying or the amount, rate, or degree of such change 3 something that differs from a standard or convention 4 *music* a a repetition of a musical theme in which the rhythm, harmony, or melody is altered or embellished b (as *modifier*): *variation form* 5 *biology* a a marked deviation from the typical form or function b a characteristic or an organism showing this deviation 6 *astronomy* any change in or deviation from the mean motion or orbit of a planet, satellite, etc, esp a perturbation of the moon 7 another word for **magnetic declination** 8 *ballet* a solo dance 9 *linguistics* any form of morphophonemic change, such as one involved in inflection, conjugation, or vowel mutation > **variational** *adj* > **variationally** *adv* ■ **variationist** ('vɛəri'eɪʃənɪst) *linguistics* *n* 1 a person who studies variations in the use of a language by its speakers 2 *adj* 2 of or relating to variation in usage by speakers of the same language ■ **variative** ('vɛəriətɪv) *adj* of or relating to variation

variceal ('vɛəri:si:əl) *adj* of or relating to a varix

varicella ('vɛəri:sɛlə) *n* the technical name for **chickenpox** [C18: New Latin, irregular diminutive of *variola*] > **varicellar** *adj* ■ **varicelloid** ('vɛəri:sɛləɪd) *adj* resembling chickenpox ■ **varicellous** ('vɛəri:sɛləs) *adj* of or relating to varicella or chicken pox

varicellate ('vɛəri:sɛlɪt, -eɪt) *adj* (of certain shells) marked on the surface with small ridges [C19: from New Latin *varicella*, diminutive of Latin *varix* dilated vein, *VARIX*]

varices ('vɛəri:sɪz) *n* the plural of **varix**

varico- or before a vowel **varic-** combining form indicating a varix or varicose veins: *varicotomy* [from Latin *varix*, *varic-* distended vein]

varicocele ('vɛəri:kəʊsɪl) *n* *pathol* an abnormal distension of the veins of the spermatic cord in the scrotum

varicoid ('vɛəri:kɔɪd) *adj* another term for **cirroid**

varicoloured or **US varicolored** ('vɛəri:kələd) *adj* having many colours; variegated; motley

varicose ('vɛəri:kəʊs) *adj* of or resulting from varicose veins: a *varicose ulcer* [C18: from Latin *varicosus*, from *VARIX*] ■ **varicose veins** *pl* *n* a condition in which the superficial veins, esp of the legs, become tortuous, knotted, and swollen: caused by a defect in the venous valves or in the venous pump that normally moves the blood out of the legs when standing for long periods ■ **varicosity** ('vɛəri:kəʊsɪtɪ) *n*, *pl* -ties *pathol* 1 the state, condition, or quality of being varicose 2 an abnormally distended vein ■ **varicotomy** ('vɛəri:kəʊtəmi) *n*, *pl* -mies surgical excision of a varicose vein

varied ('vɛəriəd) *adj* 1 displaying or characterized by variety; diverse 2 modified or altered: *the amount may be varied without notice* 3 varicoloured; variegated > **variedly** *adv* > **variedness** *n*

variegate ('vɛəri:geɪt) *vb* (tr) 1 to alter the appearance of, esp by adding different colours 2 to impart variety to [C17: from Late Latin *variegare*, from Latin *varius* diverse, *VARIOUS* + *agere* to make] > **variegation** *n* ■ **variegated** ('vɛəri:geɪtɪd) *adj* 1 displaying differently coloured spots, patches, streaks, etc 2 (of foliage or flowers) having pale patches, usually as a result of mutation, infection, etc ■ **variegator** ('vɛəri:geɪtə) *n* someone or something which variegates

varier ('vɛəriə) *n* 1 a person who varies 2 a wanderer who seeks variety **variety** ('vɛəriəti) *n*, *pl* -ties 1 the quality or condition of being diversified or various 2 a collection of unlike things, esp of the same general group; assortment 3 a different form or kind within a general category; sort: *varieties of behaviour* 4 *taxonomy* a race whose distinct characters are