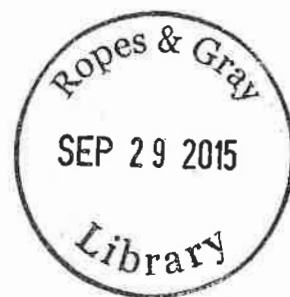


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Edited by
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Elizabeth J. Jewell
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material. ■ the process by which sound waves travel through a medium. ■ the transmission of impulses along nerves. ■ the conveying of fluid through a pipe or other channel.

— **ORIGIN** mid 16th cent. (in the senses 'provision for safe passage' and 'leadership'): from Latin *conductio*(n-), from the verb *conducere* (see **CONDUCT**).

con-duc-tion band ► *n.* Physics a delocalized band of energy partly filled with electrons in a crystalline solid. These electrons have great mobility and are responsible for electrical conductivity.

con-duc-tive /kən'daktiv/ ► *adj.* having the property of conducting something (esp. heat or electricity): *to induce currents in conductive coils.* ■ of or relating to conduction.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-duc-tive-ly** *adv.*

con-duc-tiv-i-ty /kən'daktivitē, kən-/ ► *n.* (pl. **conductivities**) (also **electrical conductivity**) the degree to which a specified material conducts electricity, calculated as the ratio of the current density in the material to the electric field that causes the flow of current. It is the reciprocal of the resistivity. ■ (also **thermal conductivity**) the rate at which heat passes through a specified material, expressed as the amount of heat that flows per unit time through a unit area with a temperature gradient of one degree per unit distance.

con-duc-tor /kən'dəktər/ ► *n.* 1 a person who directs the performance of an orchestra or choir: *he was appointed principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.*

2 a person in charge of a train, streetcar, or other public conveyance, who collects fares and sells tickets. 3 Physics a material or device that conducts or transmits heat, electricity, or sound, esp. when regarded in terms of its capacity to do this: *graphite is a reasonably good conductor of electricity.*

■ another term for **LIGHTNING ROD**.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-duc-to-ri-al** /kən'dəktōrēəl, kən-/ *adj.*, **con-duc-tor-ship** /-ʃɪp/ *n.* (sense 1).

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English (denoting a military leader): via Old French from Latin *conductor*, from *conducere* 'bring together' (see **CONDUCT**).

con-duc-tress /kən'dəktɹəs/ ► *n.* a female conductor, esp. in a bus or other passenger vehicle.

con-duc-tus /kən'dəktəs/ ► *n.* (pl. **conducti** /-ti, -tē/) a musical setting of a metrical Latin text, of the 12th or 13th century.

— **ORIGIN** from medieval Latin, from Latin *conducere* 'bring together' (see **CONDUCT**).

con-du-its /kən'd(ʊ)ts/ ► *n.* 1 a channel for conveying water or other fluid: *a conduit for conveying water to the power plant.* ■ a person or organization that acts as a channel for the transmission of something: *the office acts as a conduit for ideas to flow throughout the organization.* 2 a tube or trough for protecting electric wiring: *the gas pipe should not be close to any electrical conduit.*

— **ORIGIN** Middle English: from Old French, from medieval Latin *conductus*, from Latin *conducere* 'bring together' (see **CONDUCT**).

con-dy-larth /kəndə'lɑrθ/ ► *n.* a fossil herbivorous mammal of the early Tertiary period, ancestral to the ungulates. ■ Order Condylarthra: several families.

— **ORIGIN** late 19th cent.: from modern Latin *Condylarthra* (plural), from Greek *kondulos* 'knuckle' + *arthron* 'joint.'

con-dyle /kən'dīl/ ► *n.* Anatomy a rounded protuberance at the end of some bones, forming an articulation with another bone.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-dy-lar** /kəndələr/ *adj.*, **con-dy-loid** /kəndə'lɔɪd/ *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: from French, from Latin *condylus*, from Greek *kondulos* 'knuckle.'

con-dy-lo-ma /kəndə'lɔmə/ ► *n.* (pl. **condylomas** or **condylomata** /-mətə/) Medicine a raised growth on the skin resembling a wart, typically in the genital region, caused by viral infection or syphilis and transmissible by contact.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-dy-lom-a-tous** /-mətəs/ *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: via Latin from Greek *konduloma* 'callous lump,' from *kondulos* 'knuckle.'

cone /kōn/ ► *n.* 1 a solid or hollow object that tapers from a circular or roughly circular base to a point. ■ Mathematics a surface or solid figure generated by the straight lines that pass from a circle or other closed curve to a single point (the vertex) not in the same plane as the curve. A cone with the vertex perpendicular to the center of a circular base is a **right circular cone**. ■ (also **traffic cone**) a plastic cone-shaped object that is used to separate off or close sections of a road. ■ an edible wafer container shaped like a cone in which ice cream is served. ■ a conical mountain or peak, esp. one of volcanic origin. ■ (also **pyrometric cone**) a ceramic pyramid that melts at a known temperature and is used to

indicate the temperature of a kiln. ■ short for **CONE SHELL**.

2 the dry fruit of a conifer, typically tapering to a rounded end and formed of a tight array of overlapping scales on a central axis that separate to release the seeds. ■ a flower resembling a pine cone, esp. that of the hop plant.

3 Anatomy a light-sensitive cell of one of the two types present in the retina of the eye, responding mainly to bright light and responsible for sharpness of vision and color perception. Compare with **ROD** (sense 5).

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English (denoting an apex or vertex): from French *cône*, via Latin from Greek *kónos*.

coned /kōnd/ ► *adj.* conical. ■ having cones: [in combination] *the big-coned southern California pine.*

cone-flow-er

/kōn,flou(-ə)r/ ► *n.* a North American plant of the daisy family that has flowers with conelike disks that appear to consist of soft spines.

● *Rudbeckia*, *Echinacea*, and other genera, family Compositae: numerous species, including the yellow-flowered **sweet coneflower** (*R. subtomentosa*), the **purple coneflower** (*E. purpurea*) with swept-back reddish-purple petals, and the tall **green-headed coneflower** (*R. laciniata*) with yellow petals and greenish disks.

cone of si-lence ► *n.* 1 an imaginary device that prevents eavesdropping on a private conversation. ■ an electronic device or isolated room intended for the same purpose.

2 a directive that prohibits oral communication about a specified subject. ■ an agreement or conspiracy to maintain secrecy about a subject.

— **ORIGIN** 1960s: originally a fantasy prop in the television series *Get Smart*.

cone shell ► *n.* shell a predatory mollusk of warm seas, with a conical shell that typically displays intricate patterns. It captures prey by injecting venom, which can be lethal to humans, and the shells are popular with collectors. ■ Genus *Conus*, family Conidae, class Gastropoda: numerous species.

Con-es-to-ga wag-on /kən'stəgə/ ► *n.* historical a large covered wagon used for long-distance travel, typically carrying pioneers in the westward migration.

— **ORIGIN** early 18th cent.: named after *Conestoga*, a town in Pennsylvania.

con-ex /kən'eks/ ► *n.* a large, steel-reinforced reusable container for shipping military cargo or, when modified, for use as temporary accommodations: *they told us we'd be staying in luxury air-conditioned conexes.*

— **ORIGIN** acronym from *container express*.

co-ney /kōnē/ (also **cony**) ► *n.* (pl. **coneyes**) 1 Brit. & Heraldry a pika. ■ a rabbit. ■ rabbit fur. ■ (in biblical use) a hyrax.

2 a small grouper (fish) found on the coasts of the tropical western Atlantic, with variable coloration. ■ *Epinephelus fulvus*, family Serranidae.

— **ORIGIN** Middle English: from Old French *conin*, from Latin *coniculus*.

Co-ney Is-land /kōnē/ a resort and amusement park in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, on the southern shore of Long Island.

con-fab informal ► *n.* /kən.fab, kən'fab/ an informal private conversation or discussion: *they wandered off to the woods for a private confab.* ■ a meeting or conference of members of a particular group: *this year's annual American Booksellers Association confab.*

► *v.* /kən'fab, kən'fab/ (**confabs**, **confabbing**, **confabbed**) [no obj.] engage in informal private conversation: *Peter was confabbing with a curly-haired guy.*

— **ORIGIN** early 18th cent.: abbreviation of **confabulation** (see **CONFABULATE**).

con-fab-u-late /kən'fabyə,læt/ ► *v.* [no obj.] 1 formal engage in conversation; talk: *she could be heard on the telephone confabulating with someone.*

2 Psychiatry fabricate imaginary experiences as compensation for loss of memory.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-fab-u-la-tion** /-fabyə'lāshən/ *n.*, **con-fab-u-la-to-ry** /-lə'tōrē/ *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** early 17th cent.: from Latin *confabulatio* 'chatted together,' from the verb *confabulari*, from *con-* 'together' + *fabulari* (from *fabula* 'fable').



purple coneflower

con-fect /kən'fekt/ ► *v.* [with obj.] literary make (something) by putting together various elements: *together they had confected a valiseful of show tunes.* — **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Latin *confect-* 'put together,' from the verb *conficere*, from *con-* 'together' + *facere* 'make.'

con-fec-tion /kən'fekshən/ ► *n.* 1 a dish or delicacy made with sweet ingredients: *a whipped chocolate and cream conffection.* ■ an elaborately constructed thing, esp. a frivolous one: *the city is a classical conffection of shimmering gold.* ■ a fashionable or elaborate article of women's dress: *she was wearing some white conffection with an enormous satin bow.* 2 the action of mixing or compounding something.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-fec-tion-ary** /-nerē/ *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** Middle English (in the general sense 'something made by mixing,' esp. a medicinal preparation): via Old French from Latin *confectio*(n-), from *conficere* 'put together' (see **CONFECT**).

con-fec-tion-er /kən'fekshənər/ ► *n.* a person whose occupation is making or selling candy and other sweets.

con-fec-tion-ers sug-ar (also **confectioner's sugar**) ► *n.* finely powdered sugar with cornstarch added, used for making icings and candy.

con-fec-tion-er-y /kən'fekshənərē/ ► *n.* (pl. **confectioneries**) candy and other sweets considered collectively. ■ a shop that sells such items.

con-fed-er-a-cy /kən'fedərəsē/ ► *n.* (pl. **confederacies**) a league or alliance, esp. of confederate states. ■ (**the Confederacy**) another term for **CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA**. ■ an alliance of people or groups formed for an illicit purpose.

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Old French *confederacie*, based on Latin *confederare* 'join together in league' (see **CONFEDERATION**).

con-fed-er-al /kən'fedərəl/ ► *adj.* relating to or denoting a confederation.

— **ORIGIN** late 18th cent.: from **CONFEDERATION**, on the pattern of *federal*.

con-fed-er-ate /kən'fedərət/ ► *adj.* joined by an agreement or treaty: *some local groups united to form confederate councils.* ■ (**Confederate**) of or relating to the Confederate States of America: *the Confederate flag.*

► *n.* 1 a person one works with, esp. in something secret or illegal; an accomplice: *where was his confederate, the girl who had stolen Richard's wallet?* 2 (**Confederate**) a supporter of the Confederate States of America.

► *v.* /-rāt/ [with obj.] (usu. as *adj.* **confederated**) bring (states or groups of people) into an alliance: *Switzerland is a model for the new confederated Europe.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from late (ecclesiastical) Latin *confoederatus*, from *con-* 'together' + *foederatus* (see **FEDERATE**).

Con-fed-er-ate States of A-mer-i-ca (also **the Confederacy**) the eleven southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) that seceded from the US in 1860–61, thus precipitating the Civil War.

con-fed-er-a-tion /kən'fedərāshən/ ► *n.* an organization that consists of a number of parties or groups united in an alliance or league: *a confederation of trade unions.* ■ a more or less permanent union of countries with some or most political power vested in a central authority: *Canada became a confederation in 1867.* ■ the action of confederating or the state of being confederated: *a referendum on confederation.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Old French *confederacion* or late Latin *confederatio*(n-), from Latin *confoederare*, from *con-* 'together' + *foederare* 'join in league with' (from *foedus* 'league, treaty').

con-fer /kən'fər/ ► *v.* (**confers**, **conferring**, **conferred**) 1 [with obj.] grant or bestow (a title, degree, benefit, or right): *moves were made to confer an honorary degree on her.*

2 [no obj.] have discussions; exchange opinions: *the officials were conferring with allies.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-fer-ment** *n.* (sense 1), **con-fer-ra-ble** *adj.*, **con-fer-ral** /-fərəl/ *n.* (sense 1).

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English (in the general sense 'bring together,' also sense 2): from Latin *conferre*, from *con-* 'together' + *ferre* 'bring.'

PRONUNCIATION KEY ə ago, up; ər over, fur; a hat; ā ate; ā car; e let; ē see; i fit; ī by; ŋc sing; ō go; ō law, for; o toy; ō good; ō goo; ou out; th thin; th then; zh vision

con-tact ► *n.* /kən,takt/ **1** the state or condition of physical touching: *the tennis ball is in contact with the court surface for as little as 5 milliseconds.* **2** the state or condition of communicating or meeting: *Lewis and Clark came into contact with numerous river tribes | he had lost contact with his friends.* **3** [as modifier] activated by or operating through physical touch: *contact dermatitis.* **4** a connection for the passage of an electric current from one thing to another, or a part or device by which such a connection is made: *a one-way electrical contact between a metal and a semiconductor.* **5** (**contacts**) contact lenses.

2 a meeting, communication, or relationship with someone: *they have forged contacts with key people in business.* **3** a person who may be communicated with for information or assistance, esp. with regard to one's job: *Francie had good contacts.* **4** a person who has associated with a patient with a contagious disease (and so may carry the infection).

► *v.* /kən,takt, kən,takt/ [with obj.] communicate with (someone), typically in order to give or receive specific information.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tact-a-ble** /kən,taktəbəl, kən'tak-/ *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** early 17th cent.: from Latin *contactus*, from *con-* 'touched, grasped, bordered on,' from the verb *contingere*, from *con-* 'together with' + *tangere* 'to touch.'

con-tact cen-ter ► *n.* an integrated and usually automated communications system that coordinates all telephone and electronic contacts between an organization and the public.

con-tact-ee /kən,tak'te, kən-/ ► *n.* a person who claims to have been contacted by alien beings, esp. through an abduction.

con-tact flight (also **contact flying**) ► *n.* navigation of an aircraft by the observation of landmarks.

con-tact lens ► *n.* a thin plastic lens placed directly on the surface of the eye to correct visual defects.

con-tact-less /kən,taktləs/ ► *adj.* denoting a smart card that uses radio signals to provide a wireless connection to a card reader, so that no physical contact is necessary.

con-tact met-a-mor-phism ► *n.* Geology metamorphism due to contact with or proximity to an igneous intrusion.

con-tac-tor /kən,taktər, kən'tak-/ ► *n.* a device for making and breaking an electric circuit.

con-tact per-son ► *n.* a person who provides a link for information or representation between two parties.

con-tact print ► *n.* a photographic print made by placing a negative directly onto sensitized paper, glass, or film and illuminating it.

► *v.* (**contact-print**) [with obj.] make a photograph from (a negative) in this way.

con-tact proc-ess ► *n.* the major industrial process used to make sulfuric acid, by oxidizing sulfur dioxide in the presence of a solid catalyst and absorbing the resulting sulfur trioxide in water.

con-tact sheet ► *n.* a piece of photographic paper onto which several or all of the negatives on a roll of film have been contact printed.

con-tact sport ► *n.* a sport in which the participants necessarily come into bodily contact with one another.

con-ta-di-na /kəntə'dinə/ ► *n.* (pl. **contadine** /-də,nə/ or **contadinas**) an Italian peasant girl or peasant woman.

— **ORIGIN** Italian.

con-ta-di-no /kəntə'dinə/ ► *n.* (pl. **contadini** /-də,nə/ or **contadinos**) an Italian peasant or rustic.

— **ORIGIN** Italian, from *contado*, denoting the peasant population around a city.

Con-ta-gem /kəntə'zəm/ a city in Minas Gerais state in southeastern Brazil, west of Belo Horizonte; pop. 608,700 (est. 2007).

con-ta-gion /kən'tajən/ ► *n.* the communication of disease from one person to another by close contact: *the rooms held no risk of contagion.* **2** a disease spread in such a way. **3** the spreading of a harmful idea or practice: *the contagion of disgrace.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English (denoting a contagious disease): from Latin *contagion(n)*, from *con-* 'together with' + the base of *tangere* 'to touch.'

con-ta-gious /kən'tajəs/ ► *adj.* **1** (of a disease) spread from one person or organism to another by direct or indirect contact: *a contagious infection.* **2** (of a person or animal) likely to transmit a disease by contact with other people or animals.

2 (of an emotion, feeling, or attitude) likely to spread to and affect others: *her enthusiasm is contagious.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-ta-gious-ly** *adv.*, **con-ta-gious-ness** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from late Latin *contagiosus*, from *contagio* (see **CONTAGION**).

USAGE Strictly, a contagious disease is one transmitted by physical contact, whereas an infectious one is transmitted via microorganisms in the air or water. In practice, there is little or no difference in meaning between *contagious* and *infectious* when applied to disease or its spread. In figurative senses, *contagious* may describe the spread of good things such as laughter and enthusiasm or bad ones such as violence or panic, whereas *infectious* usually refers to the spread of positive things, such as good humor or optimism.

con-ta-gium /kən'tajəm, -jəm/ ► *n.* (pl. **contagia** /-jə, -jə/) a substance or agent, such as a virus, by which a contagious disease is transmitted.

con-tain /kən'teɪn/ ► *v.* [with obj.] **1** have or hold (someone or something) within: *coffee cans that once contained a full pound of coffee.* **2** be made up of (a number of things); consist of: *borscht can contain mainly beets or a number of vegetables.* **3** (of a number) be divisible by (a factor) without a remainder.

2 control or restrain (oneself or a feeling): *she was scarcely able to contain herself as she waited to spill the beans.* **3** prevent (a severe problem) from increasing in extent or intensity: *a reassuring statement on efforts to contain the disaster.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tain-a-ble** *adj.*

— **ORIGIN** Middle English: from Old French *contenir*, from Latin *continere*, from *con-* 'altogether' + *tinere* 'to hold.'

con-tain-er /kən'teɪnər/ ► *n.* an object that can be used to hold or transport something: *a microwaveable glass container.* **2** a large metal box of a standard design and size used for the transportation of goods by road, rail, sea, or air: *a container ship.*

con-tain-er-ize /kən'teɪnə,rɪz/ ► *v.* [with obj.] (usu. as *adj.* **containerized**) pack into or transport by container: *containerized cargo.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tain-er-i-za-tion** /-təneɪrə'zəʃən/ *n.*

con-tain-er port ► *n.* a port that specializes in handling goods transported in containers.

con-tain-er ship ► *n.* a ship that is designed to carry goods stowed in containers.

con-tain-ment /kən'teɪnmənt/ ► *n.* the action of keeping something harmful under control or within limits: *the containment of the AIDS epidemic.* **2** the action or policy of preventing the expansion of a hostile country or influence: *a policy of containment.*

con-tam-i-nate /kən'təmə,næt/ ► *v.* [with obj.] make (something) impure by exposure to or addition of a poisonous or polluting substance: *the site was found to be contaminated by radioactivity | figurative celebrity has contaminated every aspect of public life | (as *adj.* **contaminated**) contaminated blood products.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tam-i-nant** /-təmənənt/ *n.*, **con-tam-i-na-tion** /-təmə'nəʃən/ *n.*, **con-tam-i-na-tor** /-nætər/ *n.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Latin *contaminare*, from *contamen* 'contact, pollution,' from *con-* 'together with' + the base of *tangere* 'to touch.'

con-te /kɒnt/ ► *n.* a short story as a form of literary composition. **2** a medieval narrative tale.

— **ORIGIN** French, based on Latin *computare* 'reckon, sum up.'

con-té /kɒntə/ (also trademark **Conté**) ► *n.* a kind of hard, grease-free crayon used as a medium for artwork: *powerful drawings in rough red conté.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 19th cent.: named after Nicolas J. Conté (1755–1805), the French inventor who developed it.

con-temn /kən'tem/ ► *v.* [with obj.] archaic treat or regard with contempt.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-temn-er** /-tem(n)ər/ *n.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Latin *contemnere*, from *con-* (expressing intensive force) + *temnere* 'despise.'

con-tem-plate /'kəntəm,plæt/ ► *v.* [with obj.] look thoughtfully for a long time at: *he sat on the carpet contemplating his image in the mirrors.* **2** think about: *the results of a trade war are too horrifying to contemplate.* **3** [no obj.] think profoundly and at length; meditate: *he sat morosely contemplating.* **4** have in mind as a probable though not certain intention: *she was contemplating a gold mining venture.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tem-pla-tor** /-plætər/ *n.*

— **ORIGIN** late 16th cent.: from Latin *contemplatus*, from the verb *contemplari*, based on *templum* 'place for observation.'

con-tem-pla-tion /kəntəm'pləʃən/ ► *n.* the action of looking thoughtfully at something for a long time: *the road is too busy for leisurely contemplation of the scenery.* **2** deep reflective thought: *he would retire to his room for study or contemplation.* **3** the state of being thought about or planned. **4** religious meditation. **5** (in Christian spirituality) a form of prayer or meditation in which a person seeks to pass beyond mental images and concepts to a direct experience of the divine.

— **ORIGIN** Middle English: from Old French, from Latin *contemplatio(n)*, from the verb *contemplari* (see **CONTEMPLATE**).

con-tem-pla-tive /kən'templə'tɪv/ ► *adj.* expressing or involving prolonged thought: *she regarded me with a contemplative eye.* **2** involving or given to deep silent prayer or religious meditation: *contemplative knowledge of God.*

► *n.* a person whose life is devoted primarily to prayer, esp. in a monastery or convent.

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tem-pla-tive-ly** *adv.*

con-tem-po-ra-ne-ous /kən'tempə'reɪnəs/ ► *adj.* existing or occurring in the same period of time: *Pythagoras was contemporaneous with Buddha.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tem-po-ra-ne-i-ty** /-rə'nəɪtɪ, -rə'nəɪtē/ *n.*, **con-tem-po-ra-ne-ous-ly** *adv.*, **con-tem-po-ra-ne-ous-ness** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: from Latin, from *con-* 'together with' + *temporaneus* (from *tempus*, *tempor-* 'time') + *-ous*.

con-tem-po-rar-y /kən'tempə'rerɪ/ ► *adj.* **1** living or occurring at the same time: *the event was recorded by a contemporary historian.* **2** dating from the same time: *this series of paintings is contemporary with other works in an early style.* **3** belonging to or occurring in the present: *the tension and complexities of our contemporary society.* **4** following modern ideas or fashion in style or design: *contemporary art.*

► *n.* (pl. **contemporaries**) a person or thing living or existing at the same time as another: *he was a contemporary of Darwin.* **2** a person of roughly the same age as another: *my contemporaries at school.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tem-po-rar-i-ly** /kən'tempə're(ə)rəlɪ/ *adv.*, **con-tem-po-rar-i-ness** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: from medieval Latin *contemporarius*, from *con-* 'together with' + *tempus*, *tempor-* 'time' (on the pattern of Latin *contemporaneus* and late Latin *contemporalis*).

con-tempt /kən'tem(p)t/ ► *n.* the feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving scorn: *he showed his contempt for his job by doing it very badly.*

2 disregard for something that should be taken into account: *this action displays an arrogant contempt for the wishes of the majority.* **3** (also **contempt of court**) the offense of being disobedient to or disrespectful of a court of law and its officers. **4** the offense of being similarly disobedient to or disrespectful of the lawful operation of a legislative body (e.g., its investigations).

— **PHRASES** **beneath contempt** utterly worthless or despicable. **hold someone in contempt** judge someone to have committed the offence of contempt of court. **hold someone/something in contempt** consider someone or something to be unworthy of respect or attention: *the speed limit is held in contempt by many drivers.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Latin *contemptus*, from *contemnere* (see **CONTEMN**).

con-tempt-i-ble /kən'tem(p)təbəl/ ► *adj.* deserving contempt; despicable: *a display of contemptible cowardice.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tempt-i-bly** /-blɪ/ *adv.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Old French, or from late Latin *contemptibilis*, from Latin *contemnere* (see **CONTEMN**).

con-tem-pu-ous /kən'tem(p)ʃəs/ ► *adj.* showing contempt; scornful: *she was intolerant and contemptuous of the majority of the human race.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tem-pu-ous-ly** *adv.*, **con-tem-pu-ous-ness** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** mid 16th cent. (in the sense 'despising law and order'): from medieval Latin *contemptuosus*, from Latin *contemptus* 'contempt,' from *contemnere* (see **CONTEMN**).

con-tend /kən'tend/ ► *v.* **1** [no obj.] (**contend with/against**) struggle to surmount (a difficulty or danger): *she had to contend with his uncertain temper.* **2** (**contend for**) engage in a competition or campaign in order to win or achieve (something): *the local team should contend for a division championship | (as *adj.* **contending**) disputes continued between the contending parties.*

2 assert something as a position in an argument: *he contends that the judge was wrong.*

— **DERIVATIVES** **con-tend-er** *n.*

— **ORIGIN** late Middle English (in the sense 'compete for (something)'): from Old French *contendre* or