

# DICTIONARY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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second edition

A & C Black • London

First edition published in 2003 by  
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

This second edition published 2007 by  
A&C Black Publishers Ltd  
38 Soho Square, London W1D 3HB

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A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978 0 7136 8651 7

*Text Production and Proofreading*

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Text processed and typeset by A&C Black  
Printed in Spain by GraphyCems

**power station, power plant** *noun* INDUST a building with machines that make electricity

COMMENT: A power plant makes electricity by using steam to turn turbines which themselves drive generators. High-pressure steam is heated by burning coal, oil or natural gas, or by energy from a nuclear reactor. The steam passes over the turbines as a high-pressure jet, making the turbines rotate. The steam is produced from fresh water which is heated in a boiler, then passed through the furnace again to be superheated. Superheated steam drives the first turbine and then is returned to the boiler again for reheating and then passing over the second and third turbines. The steam is then condensed into water which then passes back through the system again. Although the steam used in power plants is heated several times and is condensed into reusable water at the end of the cycle, much of the energy generated to heat the water and create steam is not translated into electric power and is therefore wasted.

**power supply** *noun* ELEC 1. an electrical circuit that provides certain direct current voltage and current levels from an alternating current source for use in other electrical circuits ○ *If the power supply from the amplifier to the gauge fails, the needle slowly falls to zero.* 2. same as **power supply unit**

**power supply unit, power supply** *noun* ELEC a device that regulates, smooths and reduces the mains voltage level for use in low power electronic circuits. Abbr **PSU**. Also called **power supply**

**power surge** *noun* ELEC a sudden increase in the flow of electricity

**power transient** *noun* ELEC a very short duration voltage pulse or spike

**power up** *verb* ELEC to switch on or apply a voltage to a electrical device

**ppb** *abbreviation* MEASURE parts per billion

**ppm** *abbreviation* MEASURE parts per million

**PPP** *abbreviation* 1. COMPUT point to point protocol 2. ENVIRON polluter-pays principle

**PPTP** *noun* COMPUT a protocol that allows a standard local area network protocol to be sent over the Internet in a transparent manner without the user or operating system noticing. Full form **point-to-point tunneling protocol**

**PPU** *abbreviation* COMPUT peripheral processing unit

**Pr** *symbol* CHEM ELEM praseodymium

**practical extraction and report language** *noun* COMPUT full form of **Perl**

○ *If you want to add a search engine to your website, you will need to write a Perl program.* (NOTE: It is usually used under Unix.)

**prairie** *noun* EARTH SCI a large area of grass-covered plains in North America, mainly without trees (NOTE: The prairies of the United States and Canada are responsible for most of North America's wheat production. In Europe and Asia, the equivalent term is **steppe**.)

**praseodymium** *noun* CHEM ELEM a soft silvery metallic element, used in alloys, arc lights and colouring for glass (NOTE: The chemical symbol is **Pr**; the atomic number is 59 and the atomic weight is 140.91.)

**pre-** *prefix* COMPUT before or in front of

**pre-amplifier** *noun* ELECTRONICS an electronic circuit which amplifies a signal to a particular level before it is fed to an amplifier for output

**prebiotic** *noun* BIOL, ALTERN MED a dietary supplement in the form of nondigestible carbohydrate that favours the growth of desirable microflora in the large bowel

**precautionary approach, precautionary principle** *noun* ENVIRON a decision-making policy to take action to prevent possible environmental damage even before there is scientific evidence that damage will certainly occur

**precede** *verb* to come before something ○ *This instruction cancels the instruction which precedes it.*

**precedence** *noun* COMPUT a set of computational rules defining the order in which mathematical operations are calculated (NOTE: Usually multiplications are done first, followed by divisions, additions and finally subtractions.)

**precession** *noun* ASTRON the tendency of the Earth's axis to wobble in space over a period of 23 000 years (NOTE: The Earth's precession is one of the factors that results in the planet receiving different amounts of solar energy over long periods.)

**precipitant** *noun* CHEM a substance added to a solution to make solid dissolved particles separate from it

**precipitate** CHEM *noun* the mass of solid particles that separate from a solution during a chemical reaction ■ *verb* to make