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Webster's New World Dictionary®

OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

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*Dedicated
to David B. Guralnik
lexicographical mentor
and friend*

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supersonic (-sän'ik) *adj.* [SUPER- + SONIC] 1 designating, of, or moving at a speed in a surrounding fluid greater than that of sound in the same fluid 2 ULTRASONIC — **supersonically** *adv.*

supersonics (-sän'iks) *n.pl.* [see prec. & -ICS] [with sing. v.] the science dealing with supersonic phenomena: specif., the study of the aerodynamics of supersonic speeds

superstar (sū'pər stār') *n.* a very prominent performer, as in sports or the entertainment industry, considered to have exceptional skill and talent

superstation (-stā'shən) *n.* a local TV station whose broadcasts are relayed via electronic satellite to cable TV systems over a large geographical area

superstition (sū'pər stish'an) *n.* [ME *supersticion* < MFr < L *superstitio*, excessive fear of the gods, superstition, orig., a standing still over < *superstare*, to stand over < *super-*, SUPER- + *stare*, to STAND] 1 any belief, based on fear or ignorance, that is inconsistent with the known laws of science or with what is generally considered in the particular society as true and rational; esp., such a belief in charms, omens, the supernatural, etc. 2 any action or practice based on such a belief 3 such beliefs collectively

superstitious (-əs) *adj.* 1 of, characterized by, or resulting from superstition 2 having superstitions — **superstitiously** *adv.* — **superstitiousness** *n.*

superstratum (sū'pər strāt'əm, -strāt') *n., pl. -strata* (-ə) or *-stratums* a stratum lying over another

superstring (sū'pər strīŋ') *n.* *Physics* a theoretical object analogous to an elementary particle, consisting of a curve of finite length but only one dimension, which vibrates within a framework of ten dimensions

superstructure (-struk'chər) *n.* 1 a structure built on top of another: sometimes used figuratively 2 that part of a building above the foundation 3 that part of a ship above the main deck

super-subtle (sū'pər sū'tl') *adj.* extremely subtle or too subtle — **super-subtlety** (-tē) *n.*

supertanker (sū'pər tən'kər) *n.* an extremely large tanker, of about 300,000 tons or more

super-tax (sū'pər taks') *n.* an additional tax; esp., a surtax

super-titile (-tī'tl') *n.* one or more lines of a translation of the lyrics of an opera, oratorio, etc. in a foreign language, displayed above the stage during a performance

super-tonic (sū'pər tōn'ik) *n.* *Music* the second tone of a diatonic scale, next above the tonic

super-vene (sū'pər vēn') *vi. -vened', -ven'ing* [L *supervenerē*, to come over or upon, follow < *super-* (see SUPER-) + *venire*, to COME] 1 to come or happen as something extraneous or unexpected 2 to take place; ensue — **super-ven'ient** (-vēn'yent) *adj.* — **super-ven'ion** (-vēn'shən) or **super-ven'ience** (-vēn'yens) *n.*

super-vise (sū'pər viz') *vt., vi. -vised', -vis'ing* [L *supervisus*, pp. of *super-videre* < L *super-* (see SUPER-) + *videre*, to see; see VISION] to oversee, direct, or manage (work, workers, a project, etc.); superintend — **super-vi'sion** (-vizh'ən) *n.*

super-vi-sor (sū'pər vī'zər) *n.* 1 a person who supervises; superintendent; manager; director 2 in certain school systems, an official in charge of the courses of study for a particular subject and of all teachers of that subject — **super-vi'sory** *adj.*

supi-nate (sū'pə nāt') *vt., vi. -nat'ed, -nat'ing* [L *supinatus*, pp. of *supinare*, to lay backward < *supinus*, SUPINE] to rotate (the hand or forearm) so that the palm faces upward or forward — **supi-na'tion** *n.*

supi-na-tor (sū'pə nāt'ər) *n.* the muscle in the forearm by which supination is effected

supine (sū'pīn'; also, for *adj.*, sū'pīn') *adj.* [L *supinus*, prob. akin to *sub-*: see SUB-] 1 lying on the back, face upward 2 with the palm upward or away from the body: said of the hand 3 [Old Poet.] leaning or sloping backward 4 mentally or morally inactive; sluggish; listless; passive — *n. Gram.* 1 a Latin verbal noun formed from the stem of the past participle and having only an accusative and an ablative form 2 an infinitive in English preceded by *to* — **SYN.** PRONE — **supi-nely** *adv.* — **supi-neness** *n.*

supp or suppl 1 supplement 2 supplementary

supper (sū'pər) *n.* [ME *supper* < OFr, orig. inf., to SUP²] 1 an evening meal; specif., a) dinner, when eaten in the evening b) a late, usually light, evening meal, as one eaten after attending the theater 2 an evening social affair at which a meal is served [church supper]

supper club an intimate, expensive nightclub

sup-plant (sə plant', -plānt') *vt.* [ME *supplantare* < OFr *supplanter* < L *supplantare*, to put under the sole of the foot, trip up < *sub-*, under (see SUB-) + *planta*, sole of the foot: see PLANT] 1 to take the place of; supersede, esp. through force or plotting 2 to remove or uproot in order to replace with something else — **SYN.** REPLACE — **sup-plan-tation** (sū'plan tā'shən) *n.* — **sup-plan'ter** *n.*

sup-ple (sū'pəl) *adj. -pler, -plest* [ME *souple* < OFr < L *supplex*, humble, submissive, akin to *supplicare*: see SUPPLICATE] 1 easily bent or twisted; flexible; pliant 2 able to bend and move easily and nimbly; lithe; limber [a supple body] 3 easily changed or influenced; compliant 4 yielding too easily; obsequious 5 adaptable, as to changes [a supple mind] — *vt., vi. -pled, -pling* to make or become supple — **SYN.** ELASTIC — **sup-plely** *adv.* — **sup-ple-ness** *n.*

supple-jack (-jak') *n.* 1 a twining, woody, North American vine (*Berchemia scandens*) of the buckthorn family, with tough stems, greenish-white flowers, and dark-purple fruit 2 a) a tropical American woody vine (*Paullinia curassavica*) of the soapberry family, the wood of which is used for walking sticks b) such a walking stick

sup-ple-ment (sū'plə mant; for *v.*, -ment') *n.* [ME < L *supplementum* < *supplere*: see SUPPLY] 1 something added, esp. to make up for a lack or deficiency 2 a section added to a book or the like to give additional information, correct errors in the body of the work, etc.

3 a separate section containing feature stories, comic strips, or the like, issued with a newspaper 4 the amount to be added to a given angle or arc to make 180° or a semicircle — *vt.* to provide a supplement to; add to, esp. so as to make up for a lack or deficiency — **sup-ple-men'tal** *adj.* — **sup-ple-men'ta'tion** (-men tā'shən) *n.*

sup-ple-men-tary (sū'plə men'tar ē) *adj.* supplying what is lacking; additional — *n., pl. -ries* a supplementary person or thing

supplementary angle either of two angles that together equal 180°

sup-ple-tion (sə plē'shən) *n.* [ME *supplecioun* < ML *suppletio* < L *suppletus*: see fol.] *Linguistics* 1 a) the occurrence of an allomorph of a morpheme which has no phonological similarity to the other allomorphs (Ex.: the -en of *oxen*, as opposed to a form ending in -s) b) the use of an unrelated word (*suppletive form*) in a paradigm (Ex.: *went* for the past tense of *go*) 2 the morphological process by which such replacement occurs — **sup-ple-tive** (sū'plə tiv, sə plēt'iv) *adj.*

sup-ple-to-ry (sū'plə tōrē) *adj.* [LL *suppletorius* < L *suppletus*, pp. of *supplere*, to SUPPLY] 1 SUPPLEMENTARY

sup-ple-ance (sū'plə əns) *n.* [L *supplicatio*] SUPPLICATION

sup-ple-ant (sū'plə ənt) *n.* [ME *suppliant*: see the *adj.*] a person who supplicates; petitioner — *adj.* [MFr, pp. of *supplier* < L *supplicare*, to SUPPLICATE] 1 asking humbly; supplicating; entreating 2 expressing supplication [suppliant words] — **sup-ple-ant-ly** *adv.*

sup-ple-cant (sū'plə kənt) *adj.* that supplicates; supplicating — *n.* a person who supplicates; suppliant

sup-ple-cate (sū'plə kāt') *vi. -cat'ed, -cat'ing* [ME *supplicatus* < L *supplicatus*, pp. of *supplicare*, to kneel down, pray < *sub-*, SUB- + *plicare*, to fold, double up: see PLY] 1 to ask for humbly and earnestly, as by prayer 2 to make a humble request of; petition earnestly — *vi.* to make a humble request or supplication, esp. in prayer — **SYN.** APPEAL — **sup-ple-ca-to-ry** (-kā tōrē) *adj.* — **sup-ple-ca'tor** *n.*

sup-ple-ca-tion (sū'plə kā'shən) *n.* 1 the act of supplicating 2 a humble request, prayer, petition, etc.

sup-ply (sə pli') *vt. -plied', -ply'ing* [ME *supplien* < MFr *supplier* < L *supplere*, to fill up < *sub-*, SUB- + *plere*, to fill: see FULL] 1 to give, furnish, or provide (what is needed or wanted) [to supply tools to workers] 2 to meet the needs or requirements of; furnish, provide, or equip with what is needed or wanted [to supply workers with tools] 3 to compensate for; make good [to supply a deficiency] 4 to act as a substitute in; fill or serve in temporarily [to supply another's pulpit] — *vi.* to serve as a temporary substitute — *n., pl. -plies* 1 the act of supplying 2 an amount or quantity available for use; stock; store 3 [pl.] materials, provisions, etc. for supplying an army, expedition, a business, etc.; sometimes, specif., provisions for an army other than materiel, vehicles, etc. 4 [often pl.] (Chiefly Brit., etc. (exc. Cdn.)) an amount of money granted for government expenses; appropriation 5 a temporary substitute, as for a minister 6 [Obs.] a) aid; assistance b) reinforcements 7 Econ. the amount of a commodity available for purchase at a given price: opposed to DEMAND — *adj.* 1 having to do with a supply or supplies 2 serving as a substitute — **sup-plier** *n.*

sup-ply-2 (sū'plē) *adv.* in a supply manner; supplely

supply-side (sə pli'sid') *adj.* designating or of an economic theory that an increase in money for investment, as supplied by lowering taxes, will increase productivity

supply-sider (-sid'ər) *n.* one who advocates or puts into practice supply-side economic theory

sup-port (sə pōrt') *vt.* [ME *supporten* < MFr *supporter* < LL(Ec) *supportare*, to endure, bear < L, to carry, bring to a place < *sub-*, SUB- + *portare*, to carry: see PORT] 1 a) to carry or bear the weight of; keep from falling, slipping or sinking; hold up b) to carry or bear (a specified weight, strain, pressure, etc.) 2 to give courage, faith, or confidence to; help or comfort 3 to give approval to or be in favor of; subscribe to; uphold 4 to maintain or provide for (a person, institution, etc.) with money, or subsistence 5 to show or tend to show to be true; help prove, vindicate, or corroborate [evidence to support a claim] 6 to bear; endure; submit to; tolerate 7 to keep up; maintain; sustain; specif., to maintain (the price of a specified commodity) as by government purchase of surpluses 8 Theater to act a subordinate role in the same play with (a specified star) — *n.* 1 a supporting or being supported 2 a person or thing that supports; specif., a) a prop, base, brace, etc. b) a means of subsistence c) an elastic, girdlelike device to support or bind a part of the body — **sup-port-able** *adj.* — **sup-port-ably** *adv.*

SYN. — **support**, the broadest of these terms, suggests a favoring of someone or something, either by giving active aid or merely by approving or sanctioning [to support a candidate for office]; **uphold** suggests that what is being supported is under attack [to uphold civil rights for all]; **sustain** implies full active support so as to strengthen or keep from failing [sustained by his hope for the future]; **maintain** suggests a supporting so as to keep intact or unimpaired [to maintain the law, a family, etc.]; **advocate** implies support in speech or writing and sometimes connotes persuasion or argument [to advocate a change in policy]; **back** (often **back up**) suggests support, as financial aid, moral encouragement, etc., given to prevent failure [I'll back you up in your demands]

sup-port-er (-ər) *n.* 1 a person who supports; advocate; adherent; partisan 2 a thing that supports; esp., a) an elastic, girdlelike device worn to support the back, abdomen, etc. 2b) JOCKSTRAP (in full **athletic supporter**) 2c) GARTER 3 Heraldry either of a pair of figures, as of animals or men, standing one on either side of a shield — **SYN.** FOLLOWER

sup-port-ing (-in) *adj.* Theater, Film designating or of an actor at, āte, cār; ten, ēve; is, ice; gō, hōrn, look, tōōl; oil, out; up, fur; a for unstressed vowels, as a in ago, u in focus; ' as in Latin (lat'ın); chin; she; zh as in azure (azh'ər); thin, the; ŋ as in ring (rīŋ) In etymologies: * = unattested; < = derived from; = from which * = Americanism See inside front and back covers