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Cont

pit viper ► n. a venomous snake found in both America and Asia, distinguished by visible sensory pits on the head which can detect prey by heat. [Numerous genera and species, including the rattlesnakes.]

pity ► n. (pl. **pities**) **1** a feeling of sorrow and compassion caused by the sufferings of others. **2** a cause for regret or disappointment: *what a pity*. ► v. (**pities**, **pitying**, **pitied**) feel pity for.

– PHRASES **for pity's sake** informal used to express impatience or make an urgent appeal. **more's the pity** informal used to express regret.

– DERIVATIVES **pitying** adj. **pityingly** adv.
– ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *pite* 'compassion', from L. *pietas* 'piety'.

psoriasis /ˈpsɪrɪəzɪs/ ► n. Medicine a skin disease characterized by the shedding of fine flaky scales.

– ORIGIN C17: mod. L., from Gk *psoriasis* 'scurf'.
più mosso /pjuː ˈmɒsəʊ/ ► adv. & adj. Music more quickly.
– ORIGIN from Ital.

pivot ► n. **1** the central point, pin, or shaft on which a mechanism turns or oscillates. **2** a person or thing playing a central part in an activity or organization. ■ (also **pivotman**) chiefly N. Amer. a player in a central position in a team sport. **3** the person or position from which a body of troops takes its reference point when moving or changing course. ► v. (**pivots**, **pivoting**, **pivoted**) **1** turn on or as if on a pivot. ■ provide with or fix on a pivot. **2** (**pivot on**) depend on.

– DERIVATIVES **pivotable** adj.
– ORIGIN ME: from Fr., prob. from dial. *pue* 'tooth of a comb' and Sp. *pu(y)a* 'point'.

pivotal ► adj. **1** fixed on or as if on a pivot. **2** of crucial or central importance.

pixel /ˈpɪks(ə)l, -sɛl/ ► n. Electronics a minute area of illumination on a display screen, one of many from which an image is composed.

– ORIGIN 1960s: abbrev. of *picture element*.

pixelate /ˈpɪksəleɪt/ (also **pixellate** or **pixilate**) ► v. divide (an image) into pixels, typically for display or storage in a digital format. ■ display (a person's image) as a small number of large pixels, typically in order to disguise their identity.

– DERIVATIVES **pixelation** n.

pixie (also **pixy**) ► n. (pl. **pixies**) a supernatural being in folklore, typically portrayed as small and human-like in form, with pointed ears and a pointed hat.

– DERIVATIVES **pixieish** adj.
– ORIGIN C17: of unknown origin.

pixilated (also **pixillated**) ► adj. bewildered; confused. ■ informal, dated drunk.

– DERIVATIVES **pixilation** n.
– ORIGIN C19: var. of *pixie-led*, lit. 'led astray by pixies', or from **PIXIE**, on the pattern of words such as *elated*.

pizza /ˈpɪtsə, ˈpɪtsə/ ► n. a dish of Italian origin, consisting of a flat, round base of dough baked with a topping of tomatoes, cheese, and other ingredients.

– ORIGIN Ital., lit. 'pie'.

pizzazz (also **pizazz** or **pzazz**) ► n. informal an attractive combination of vitality and style.

– ORIGIN said to have been coined by Diana Vreeland, fashion editor of *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1930s.

pizzeria /ˈpɪtsəˈrɪə, ˈpɪtsə-/ ► n. a place where pizzas are made, sold, or eaten.

– ORIGIN from Ital.

pizzicato /ˈpɪtsɪˈkɑːtəʊ/ Music ► adv. & adj. plucking the strings of a violin or other stringed instrument with one's finger. ► n. (pl. **pizzicatos** or **pizzicati**) this

PL ► abbr. Poland (international vehicle registration code).

pl. ► abbr. **1** (also **Pl.**) place. **2** plate (referring to illustrations in a book). **3** chiefly Military platoon. **4** place.

PLA ► abbr. **1** People's Liberation Army. **2** (in the UK) Port of London Authority.

placable /ˈpləkəb(ə)l/ ► adj. archaic easily calmed or placated.

– DERIVATIVES **placability** n.

placard /ˈplakɑːd/ ► n. a sign for public display, either posted on a wall or carried during a demonstration.

► v. /also ˈplakɑːd/ cover with placards.
– ORIGIN C15 (denoting a warrant or licence); from OFr. *placquare*, from *plaquier* 'to plaster, lay flat'.

placate /pləˈkeɪt, ˈplækət, ˈpleɪ-/ ► v. calm, pacify, or appease.

– DERIVATIVES **placating** adj. **placatingly** adv. **placatory** adj.

– ORIGIN C17 (earlier (C16) as *placation*); from L. *placare* 'appease'.

place ► n. **1** a particular position or point in space: a location. ■ informal a person's home. ■ a point in a book reached by a reader at a particular time. **2** a portion of space available or designated for someone. ■ a vacant or available position: *a place at university*. ■ the regular or proper position of something: *lay each slab in place*. **3** a position in a sequence or hierarchy. ■ a person's rank or status. ■ a specific role or position: *it's not my place to ask*. ■ Brit. any of the first three or sometimes four positions in a race. ■ N. Amer. the second position, especially in a horse race. **4** the position of a figure in a series indicated in decimal notation: *calculate the ratios to one decimal place*. **5** [in place names] a square or short street. ► v. **1** put in a particular position.

2 find an appropriate place or role for. ■ arrange for the implementation of (an order, bet, etc.). ■ order or obtain a connection for (a telephone call). ■ dispose of (something, especially shares) by selling. **3** allocate or award a specified position in a sequence or hierarchy. ■ (**be placed**) Brit. achieve a specified position in a race. ■ be among the first three or four in a race (or the first three in the US). **4** remember the relevant background of: *she eventually said she couldn't place him*. **5** *place* I American Football score (a goal) by a place kick.

– PHRASES **give place to** be succeeded or replaced by. **go places** informal **1** travel. **2** be increasingly successful. **in one's place** in one's appropriate (but inferior) position or status. **in place** **1** working or ready to work; established. **2** N. Amer. on the spot; not travelled any distance. **in place of** instead of. **out of place** not in the proper position. ■ in a setting where one is or feels inappropriate or incongruous. **put oneself in another's place** consider a situation from another's point of view. **put someone in their place** humiliate someone regarded as being presumptuous. **take place** occur. **take one's place** take up one's usual or recognized position. **take the place of** replace.

– DERIVATIVES **placeless** adj.

– ORIGIN ME: from OFr., from an alt. of L. *placatus* 'space', from Gk *plateia* (*hodos*) 'broad (way)'.

placebo /pləˈsiːbəʊ/ ► n. (pl. **placebos**) **1** a medicine or regime prescribed for the psychological benefit of the patient rather than for any physiological effect. ■ a substance that has no therapeutic effect, used as a control in testing new drugs. **2** a measure designed merely to calm or humour another.

– ORIGIN C18: from L., lit. 'I shall be acceptable or pleasing', from *placere* 'to please'.

placebo effect ► n. a beneficial effect produced by a treatment, due to the patient's belief in it.

placement ► n. the act of placing or the place where something is placed. **2** a workplace.

place name ► n. a name for a place, such as a town or village.

placenta ► n. the organ that develops in the uterus during pregnancy and provides the fetus with oxygen and nutrients.

placental ► adj. relating to the placenta.

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