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Merriam  
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TENTH EDITION



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**SYN** DICTATORIAL, MAGISTERIAL, DOGMATIC, DOCTRINAIRE, ORACULAR mean imposing one's will or opinions on others. DICTATORIAL stresses autocratic, high-handed methods and a domineering manner (exercised *dictatorial* control over the office). MAGISTERIAL stresses assumption or use of prerogatives appropriate to a magistrate or schoolmaster in forcing acceptance of one's opinions (the *magisterial* tone of his pronouncements). DOGMATIC implies being unduly and offensively positive in laying down principles and expressing opinions (*dogmatic* about what is art and what is not). DOCTRINAIRE implies a disposition to follow abstract theories in framing laws or policies affecting people (a *doctrinaire* approach to improving the economy). ORACULAR implies the manner of one who delivers opinions in cryptic phrases or with pompous dogmatism (a designer who is the *oracular* voice of fashion).

**dic-ta-tor-ship** \dik-tā-tar-ship, -dik-\ n (1542) 1: the office of dictator 2: autocratic rule, control, or leadership 3 a: a form of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a dictator or a small clique b: a government organization or group in which absolute power is so concentrated c: a despotic state

**dic-tion** \dik-shən\ n [L *dictio*, *dictio* speaking, style, fr. *dicere* to say; akin to OE *deon* to accuse, L *dicare* to proclaim, dedicate, Gk *deiknynai* to show, *dikē* judgment, right] (1581) 1 obs: verbal description 2: choice of words esp. with regard to correctness, clearness, or effectiveness 3 a: vocal expression: ENUNCIATION b: pronunciation and enunciation of words in singing — **dic-tion-al** \-shən-, -sha-nəl\ *adj* — **dic-tion-al-ly** \-ə\ *adv*

**dic-tion-ary** \dik-shə-ner-ē\ n, pl **-nar-ies** [ML *dictionarium*, fr. LL *dictio*, *dictio* word, fr. L, speaking] (1526) 1: a reference book containing words usu. alphabetically arranged along with information about their forms, pronunciations, functions, etymologies, meanings, and syntactical and idiomatic uses 2: a reference book listing alphabetically terms or names important to a particular subject or activity along with discussion of their meanings and applications 3: a reference book giving for words of one language equivalents in another 4: a list (as of items of data or words) stored in a computer for reference (as for information retrieval or word processing)

**dic-tum** \dik-təm\ n, pl **dic-ta** \-tə\ also **dictums** [L, fr. neut. of *dicere*, ptp. of *dicere*] (1599) 1: a noteworthy statement: as a: a formal pronouncement of a principle, proposition, or opinion b: an observation intended or regarded as authoritative 2: a judicial opinion on a point other than the precise issue involved in determining a case

**dicty-** or **dictyo-** *comb form* [NL, fr. Gk *diktyō*, *diktyō*, fr. *diktyon*, fr. *diktēn* to throw; net (*dictyosotele*) (*dictyosome*)]

**dicty-*some*** \dik-tē-ə-səm\ n (ca. 1930): any of the membranous or vesicular structures making up the Golgi apparatus

**dicty-*stele*** \dik-tē-ə-stēl-, -dik-tē-ə-stē-lē\ n (ca. 1902): a stele in which the vascular cylinder is broken up into a longitudinal series or network of vascular strands around a central pith (as in many ferns)

**di-cu-ma-rol** also **dicou-ma-rol** \di-k(y)ū-mā-rōl-, -rōl\ n [*di-coumarin* + *-ol*] (1943): a crystalline compound C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>6</sub> orig. obtained from spoiled sweet clover hay and used to delay clotting of blood esp. in preventing and treating thromboembolic disease

**di-cyn-o-dont** \di-'si-nō-dānt-, -sī-\ n [ultim. fr. Gk *di-* + *kyn-*, *kyōn* dog + *odont*, *odont* tooth — *more* at HOUND, TOOTH] (1854): any of a suborder (Dicynodontia) of small herbivorous therapsid reptiles with reduced dentition — **dicynodont** *adj*

**did** \did\ *past* of **do**

**di-dact** \di-'dakt\ n [back-formation fr. *didactic*] (1954): a didactic person

**di-dac-tic** \di-'dak-tik, -də\ *adj* [Gk *didaktikos*, fr. *didaskēin* to teach] (1658) 1 a: designed or intended to teach b: intended to convey instruction and information as well as pleasure and entertainment 2: making moral observations — **di-dac-tic-al** \-ti-kəl\ *adj* — **di-dac-ti-cal-ly** \-ti-k(ə)-lē\ *adv* — **di-dac-tic-ism** \-tə-siz-əm\ n

**di-dac-tics** \-tik-s\ n pl but sing or pl in constr (1644): systematic instruction: PEDAGOGY

**did-dle** \di-'dī-, -dī-\ *vb* **did-dled**; **did-dling** \-dī-līŋ\ [origin unknown] (1786) 1 chiefly *dial*: to move with short rapid motions 2: to waste (as time) in trifling 3: HOAX, SWINDLE 4: to copulate with — often considered vulgar ~ vi 1: DAWDLE, FOOL 2: FIDDLE, TOY — *usu.* used with *with* (*did-dled* with the machine until it broke) — **did-dler** \-dī-lər-, -dī-lər\ n

**did-dly** \di-'dī-, -dī-\ n (1964) *slang*: DIDDLY-SQUAT

**did-dly-squat** \-skwāt\ n [prob. alter. of *doodly-squat*] (1974) *slang*: the least amount; anything at all (didn't know ~ about sports — Sam Toperoff)

**did-ger-i-doo** also **did-ger-i-doo** \di-'jə-rē-dū-, -di-'jə-rē-\ n [Yolngu (Australian aboriginal language group of Arnhem Land) *didjerdju*] (1919): a large bamboo or wooden trumpet of the Australian Aborigines

**didn't** \di-'dnt-, -dnt\ *dial* also \-dnt-'nt\ or \-dnt\ (1705): did not

**di-do** \di-'(d)ō\ n, pl **didoes** or **didos** [origin unknown] (1807) 1: a mischievous or capricious act: PRANK, ANTIC — often used in the phrase *cut didoes* 2: something that is frivolous or showy

**Di-do** \di-'(d)ō\ n [L, fr. Gk *Didō*]: a legendary queen of Carthage in Virgil's *Aeneid* who kills herself when Aeneas leaves her

**didst** \didst-, -dīst\ *archaic* past 2d sing of **do**

**di-dym-i-um** \di-'di-mē-əm\ n [NL, fr. Gk *didymos* twin, fr. *dyo* two — *more* at TWO] (1842): a mixture of rare-earth elements made up chiefly of neodymium and praseodymium and used esp. for coloring glass for optical filters

**die** \di\ *vi* **died**; **dy-ing** \-iŋ\ [ME *dien*, fr. or akin to ON *deyja* to die; akin to OHG *touwen* to die] (12c) 1: to pass from physical life: EXPIRE 2 a: to pass out of existence: CEASE (their anger *died* at these words) b: to disappear or subside gradually — often used with *away*, *down*, or *out* (the storm *died* down) 3 a: SINK, LANGUISH (*dy-ing* from fatigue) b: to long keenly or desperately (*dy-ing* to go) c: to be overwhelmed by emotion (~ of embarrassment) 4 a: to cease functioning: STOP (the motor *died*) b: to end in failure (the bill *died* in committee) 5: to become indifferent (~ to worldly things) — **die hard** 1: to be long in dying (such rumors *die hard*) 2: to continue resistance against hopeless odds (hard-shell conservatism *dies hard*) — **die on the vine**: to fail esp. at an early stage through lack of support or enthusiasm (let the proposal *die on the vine*)

**\*die** \di\ n, pl **dices** \dis\ or **dies** \diz\ [ME *dee*, fr. MF *dē*] (14c) 1 pl

**dice**: a small cube marked on each face with from one to six spots as used usu. in pairs in various games and in gambling by being shaken and thrown to come to rest at random on a flat surface — often used figuratively in expressions concerning chance or the irrevocability of course of action (the ~ was cast) 2 pl **dies**: DADO 1a 3 pl **dies**: any of various tools or devices for imparting a desired shape, form, or finish to a material or for impressing an object or material: as a (1) a: a larger of a pair of cutting or shaping tools that when moved toward each other produce a desired form in or impress a desired device on an object by pressure or by a blow (2) a: a device composed of a pair of such tools b: a hollow internally threaded screw-cutting tool used in forming screw threads c: a mold into which molten metal or other material is forced d: a perforated block through which metal or plastic is drawn or extruded for shaping

**die-back** \di-'bak\ n (ca. 1886): a condition in woody plants in which peripheral parts are killed esp. by parasites

**die-cious** *var* of **DIOECIOUS**

**dief-fen-bach-ia** \di-fən-'ba-kē-ə-, -di-, -bā-\ n [NL, fr. Ernst Dieffenbach †1855 Ger. naturalist] (ca. 1900): any of a genus (*Dieffenbachia*) of the family Araceae of erect poisonous tropical American plants that have oblong usu. variegated leaves and are often used as houseplants

**die-hard** \di-'hārd\ *adj* (1922): strongly or fanatically determined devoted (~ fans); esp: strongly resisting change (a ~ conservative)

**die-hard** n — **die-hard-ism** \-iz-əm\ n

**di-el** \di-'əl-, -el\ *adj* [irreg. fr. L *dies* day + E -al] (ca. 1935): involving a 24-hour period that usu. includes a day and the adjoining night

**diel-drin** \di-(ə)l-drən\ n [*Diels-Alder* reaction (an addition reaction forming a 6-membered ring), after Otto Diels & Kurt Alder] (ca. 1940): a white crystalline persistent chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticide C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>8</sub>Cl<sub>6</sub>O that accumulates in and becomes toxic to vertebrates

**die-lec-tric** \di-'lek-trik\ n [*dia-* + *electric*] (1837): a nonconductor of direct electric current — **dielectric** *adj*

**dielectric** *constant* n (1875): PERMITTIVITY

**dielectric** *heating* n (1944): the rapid and uniform heating throughout a nonconducting material by means of a high-frequency electromagnetic field

**di-en-ceph-a-lon** \di-ən-'se-fə-lān-, -di-(ə)en-, -lən\ n [NL, fr. *di-* + *encephalon*] (ca. 1883): the posterior subdivision of the forebrain called also *metencephalon* — **di-en-ceph-a-l-ic** \-sə-'fə-līk\ *adj*

**di-ene** \di-'ēn\ n [*di-* + *-ene*] (1917): a compound containing two double bonds between carbon atoms

**die-off** \di-'ōf\ n (1936): a sudden sharp decline of a population (of rabbits) that is not caused directly by human activity (as hunting)

**die off** \di-'ōf\ *vi* (1697): to die sequentially either singly or in numbers so that the total number is greatly diminished

**die out** *vi* (1853): to become extinct

**di-er-e-sis** *var* of **DIAERESIS**

**die-sel** \di-'zəl-, -səl\ n [Rudolf Diesel] (1894) 1: DIESEL ENGINE 2: vehicle driven by a diesel engine

**die-sel** *electric* *adj* (1914): of, relating to, or employing the combination of a diesel engine driving an electric generator (a ~ locomotive)

**die-sel** *engine* n (1894): an internal combustion engine in which compressed to a temperature sufficiently high to ignite fuel injected into the cylinder where the combustion and expansion actuate a piston

**die-sel-ing** \di-'zəl-ŋ-, -səl-\ n (ca. 1955): the continued operation of an internal combustion engine after the ignition is turned off

**die-sel-ize** \di-'zəl-iz-, -səl-iz-\ *vi* -ized, -iz-ing (1925): to equip with diesel engine or with electric locomotives having generators powered by diesel engines — **die-sel-iza-tion** \di-'zəl-iz-ə-shən-, -səl-\ n

**Dies Irae** \di-'(ə)s-'rā-, -rā\ n [ML, day of wrath; fr. the first word of the hymn] (1860): a medieval Latin hymn on the Day of Judgment sung in requiem masses

**di-esis** \di-'ē-sis\ n, pl **di-eses** \-sēz\ [prob. fr. It, sharp (in music) symbol for a sharp, fr. ML, quarter tone, fr. L, fr. Gk, fr. *diēsis* send through, fr. *dia-* + *hienai* to send — *more* at JET] (ca. 17c): DOUBLE DAGGER

**di-es-ter** \di-'es-tər\ n (1935): a compound containing two ester groups

**die-stock** \di-'stāk\ n (ca. 1859): a stock to hold dies used for cutting threads

**di-es-trus** \di-'es-trəs\ n [NL, fr. *dia-* + *estrus*] (1942): a period of sexual quiescence that intervenes between two periods of estrus — **di-estrous** \-trəs\ *adj*

**di-et** \di-'et\ n [ME *diete*, fr. OF, fr. L *diaeta*, fr. Gk *diaita*, lit., manner of living, fr. *diaitasthai* to lead one's life] (13c) 1 a: food and drink regularly provided or consumed b: habitual nourishment c: the kind and amount of food prescribed for a person or animal for a special reason 2: something provided esp. habitually (a ~ of Broadway shows and nightclubs — Frederick Wyatt)

**\*diet** *vi* (14c) 1: to cause to take food: FEED 2: to cause to eat sparingly or according to prescribed rules ~ vi: to eat sparingly or according to prescribed rules — **di-et-er** n

**\*diet** *adj* (1969): reduced in calories (a ~ soft drink)

**\*diet** n [ME *diete* day's journey, day set for a meeting, fr. ML *dietia* daily regimen, diet (taken as a derivative of L *dies* day), fr. L *dies* (1565) 1: a formal deliberative assembly of princes or estates 2: any of various national or provincial legislatures

**\*di-et-ary** \di-'ə-, -ter-ē\ n, pl **di-et-ar-ies** (1838): the kinds and amounts of food available to or eaten by an individual, group, or population

**\*dietary** *adj* (1614): of or relating to a diet or to the rules of a diet — **di-et-ary-ly** \di-'ə-, -ter-ē\ *adv*

**dietary** *law* n (ca. 1930): any of the laws observed by Orthodox Jews that permit or prohibit certain foods

**di-e-tet-ic** \di-'et-ik\ *adj* (1579) 1: of or relating to diet 2: adapted for use in special diets — **di-e-tet-i-cal-ly** \-i-k(ə)-lē\ *adv*

**di-e-tet-ics** \-tik-s\ n pl but sing or pl in constr (1799): the science or art of applying the principles of nutrition to the diet

**di-ether** \di-'ē-thər\ n (1950): a compound containing two atoms of oxygen with ether linkages

**di-ethyl-car-bam-a-zine** \di-'e-thal-kār-'ba-mā-zēn-, -zən\ n [*di-* + *ethyl* + *carboxy-* + *amide* + *azine*] (1948): an anthelmintic adjuvant

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