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dissyllable (dr'sɪləbəl) or **disyllable** *n* a word of two syllables.

► **dissyllabic** (,drɪsɪləbɪk) or **disyllabic** (,daɪsɪləbɪk) *adj*

dissymmetry (dr'sɪmɪtri, dr'sɪm-) *n*, *pl* dissymmetries. 1 lack of symmetry. 2 the relationship between two objects when one is the mirror image of the other.

► **dissymmetric** (,drɪsɪ'metrɪk, ,drɪsɪ-) or **dissymmetrical** *adj*

dist. *abbrev. for*: 1 distant. 2 distinguish(ed). 3 district.

distaff ('dɪstɑːf) *n* 1 the rod on which flax is wound preparatory to spinning. 2 *Figurative*. women's work. [ORIG] OE *distæf*, from *dis-* bunch of flax + *stæf* STAFF¹

distaff side *n* the female side of a family.

distal ('dɪstəl) *adj* *Anat.* situated farthest from the centre or point of attachment or origin. [ORIG] C19: from DISTANT + -AL

► **distally** *adv*

distance ('dɪstəns) *n* 1 the space between two points. 2 the length of this gap. 3 the state of being apart in space; remoteness. 4 an interval between two points in time. 5 the extent of progress. 6 a distant place or time. 7 a separation or remoteness in relationship. 8 (preceded by *the*) the most distant or a faraway part of the visible scene. 9 *Horse racing*. 9a *Brit.* a point on a racecourse 240 yards from the winning post. 9b *US.* the part of a racecourse that a horse must reach before the winner passes the finishing line in order to qualify for later heats. 10 *go the distance*. 10a *Boxing*. to complete a bout without being knocked out. 10b to be able to complete an assigned task or responsibility. 11 *keep one's distance*. to maintain a reserve in respect of another person. 12 *middle distance*. halfway between the foreground or the observer and the horizon. ♦ *vb* *distances, distancing, distanced.* (tr) 13 to hold or place at a distance. 14 to separate (oneself) mentally from something. 15 to outdo; outstrip.

distance learning *n* a teaching system consisting of video, audio, and written material designed for a person to use in studying a subject at home.

distant ('dɪstənt) *adj* 1 far apart in space or time. 2 (*postpositive*) separated in space or time by a specified distance. 3 apart in relationship: *a distant cousin*. 4 coming from or going to a faraway place. 5 remote in manner; aloof. 6 abstracted; absent: *a distant look*. [ORIG] C14: from L *distāre* to be distant, from *dis-*¹ + *stāre* to stand

► **distantly** *adv* ► **distantness** *n*

distaste (dɪ'steɪst) *n* (often foll. by *for*) a dislike (of); aversion (to).

distasteful (dɪ'steɪstfʊl) *adj* unpleasant or offensive.

► **distastefulness** *n*

distemper¹ (dɪ'stempə) *n* 1 any of various infectious diseases of animals, esp. *canine distemper*, a highly contagious viral disease of dogs. 2 *Arch.* 2a a disorder. 2b disturbance. 2c discontent. [ORIG] C14: from LL *distemperāre* to derange the health of, from L *dis-*¹ + *temperāre* to mix in correct proportions

distemper² (dɪ'stempə) *n* 1 a technique of painting in which the pigments are mixed with water, glue, size, etc.: used for poster, mural, and scene painting. 2 the paint used in this technique or any of various water-based paints. ♦ *vb* 3 to paint (something) with distemper. [ORIG] C14: from Med. L *distemperāre* to soak, from L *dis-*¹ + *temperāre* to mingle

distend (dr'stend) *vb* 1 to expand by or as if by pressure from within; swell; inflate. 2 (tr) to stretch out or extend. [ORIG] C14: from L *distendere*, from *dis-*¹ + *tendere* to stretch

► **distensible** *adj* ► **distension** or **distention** *n*

distich ('dɪstɪk) *n* *Prosody*. a unit of two verse lines, usually a couplet. [ORIG] C16: from Gk *distikhos* having two lines, from *di-*¹ + *stikhos* row, line

distil or **US distill** (dɪ'stɪl) *vb* *distils, distilling, distilled* or *US distills, distilling, distilled*. 1 to subject to or undergo distillation. 2 (sometimes foll. by *out* or *off*) to purify, separate, or concentrate, or be purified, separated, or concentrated by distillation. 3 to obtain or be obtained by distillation. 4 to exude or give off (a substance) in drops. 5 (tr) to extract the essence of. [ORIG] C14: from L *destillāre* to distil, from *de-* + *stillāre* to drip

distillate ('dɪstɪlət) *n* 1 the product of distillation. 2 a concentrated essence.

distillation (,dɪstrɪ'leɪʃən) *n* 1 a distilling. 2 the process of evaporating or boiling a liquid and condensing its vapour. 3 purification or separation of mixtures by using different evaporation rates or boiling points of their components. 4 the process of obtaining the essence or an extract of a substance, usually by heating it in a solvent. 5 a distillate. 6 a concentrated essence.

► **distillatory** *adj*

distiller (dr'stɪlə) *n* a person or organization that distils, esp. a company that makes spirits.

distillery (dr'stɪlərɪ) *n*, *pl* distilleries. a place where alcoholic drinks, etc., are made by distillation.

distinct (dr'stɪŋkt) *adj* 1 easily sensed or understood; clear. 2 (when *postpositive*, foll. by *from*) not the same (as); separate (from). 3 not alike; different. 4 sharp; clear. 5 recognizable; definite. 6 explicit; unequivocal. 7 *Bot.* (of parts of a plant) not joined together; separate. [ORIG] C14: from L *distinctus*, from *distinguere* to DISTINGUISH

► **distinctly** *adv* ► **distinctness** *n*

distinction (dr'stɪŋkʃən) *n* 1 the act or an instance of distinguishing or differentiating. 2 a distinguishing feature. 3 the state of being different or distinguishable. 4 special honour, recognition, or fame. 5 excellence of character; distinctive qualities. 6 distinguished appearance. 7 a symbol of honour or rank.

distinctive (dr'stɪŋktrɪv) *adj* serving or tending to distinguish; characteristic.

► **distinctively** *adv* ► **distinctiveness** *n*

distingué French. (dɪstɛʒ) *adj* distinguished or noble.

distinguish (dr'stɪŋɡwɪʃ) *vb* (*mainly tr*) 1 (when *intr*, foll. by *between* or *among*) to make, show, or recognize a difference (between or among); differentiate (between). 2 to be a distinctive feature of; characterize. 3 to make out; perceive. 4 to mark for a special honour. 5 to make (oneself) noteworthy. 6 to classify. [ORIG] C16: from L *distinguere* to separate

► **distinguishable** *adj* ► **distinguishing** *adj*

distinguished (dr'stɪŋɡwɪʃt) *adj* 1 noble or dignified in appearance or behaviour. 2 eminent; famous; celebrated.

distort (dr'stɔːt) *vb* (tr) 1 (*often passive*) to twist or pull out of shape; contort; deform. 2 to alter or misrepresent (facts, etc.). 3 *Electronics*. to reproduce or amplify (a signal) inaccurately. [ORIG] C16: from L *distortus*, from *distorquere* to turn different ways, from *dis-*¹ + *torquere* to twist

► **distorted** *adj*

distortion (dr'stɔːʃən) *n* 1 a distorting or being distorted. 2 something that is distorted. 3 *Electronics*. an undesired change in the shape of an electrical wave or signal resulting in a loss of clarity in radio reception or sound reproduction.

► **distortional** *adj*

distract (dr'strækt) *vb* (tr) 1 (*often passive*) to draw the attention of (a person) away from something. 2 to divide or confuse the attention of (a person). 3 to amuse or entertain. 4 to trouble greatly. 5 to make mad. [ORIG] C14: from L *distractus* perplexed, from *distrahere* to pull in different directions, from *dis-*¹ + *trahere* to drag

USAGE NOTE See at detract.

distracted (dr'stræktɪd) *adj* 1 bewildered; confused. 2 mad.

► **distractedly** *adv*

distraction (dr'strækʃən) *n* 1 a distracting or being distracted. 2 something that serves as a diversion or entertainment. 3 an interruption; obstacle to concentration. 4 mental turmoil or madness.

distrain (dr'streɪn) *vb* *Law*. to seize (personal property) as security or indemnity for a debt. [ORIG] C13: from OF *destrindre*, from L *distringere* to impede, from *dis-*¹ + *stringere* to draw tight

► **distrainment** *n* ► **distrainor** or **distrainer** *n*

distrain (dr'streɪnt) *n* *Law*. the act or process of distraining; distress.