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Random House Webster's College Dictionary
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unqualified; absolute: *perfect control.* **8.** expert; accomplished; proficient. **9.** unmitigated: *a perfect fool.* **10.** MONOCLINOUS. **11. a.** of or designating a verb tense, aspect, or form typically indicating an action or state extending up to, or having results continuing up to, the present or some other temporal point of reference. **b.** of or designating a verb tense, as in Greek, indicating an action or state brought to a close prior to some temporal point of reference, in contrast to imperfect or incomplete action. **12.** pertaining to or being the consonant musical intervals of an octave, fifth, or fourth. **13.** *Obs.* assured or certain. —*v.t.* **14.** to bring to perfection; make flawless or faultless. **15.** to bring nearer to perfection; improve. **16.** to bring to completion; finish. —*n.* **17.** the perfect tense or aspect. **18.** a verb form or construction in the perfect tense or aspect. [1250–1300; late ME; ME *perfit, parfit* < OF < L *perfectus,* ptp. of *perficere* to finish, bring to completion = *per-* PER- + *-ficere,* comb. form of *facere* to make, DO[1]] —**perfect′er,** *n.* —**perfect′ness,** *n.* —**Usage.** Some usage guides still object to the use of such comparative terms as *most, more,* and *rather* with PERFECT on the grounds that PERFECT describes an absolute condition that cannot exist in degrees. The English language has never agreed to this limitation. PERFECT has been compared since its earliest use, first in the obsolete forms PERFECTER and PERFECTEST and later with *more, most,* and similar words, in most of its general senses in all varieties of speech and writing: *the most perfect arrangement imaginable.* One of the objectives of the writers of the U.S. Constitution was "to form a more perfect union." See also COMPLETE, UNIQUE.

per•fec•ta (pər fek′tə), *n., pl.* **-tas.** EXACTA. [1965–70; ellipsis of AmerSp *quiniela perfecta* perfect quinella]

per′fect game′, *n.* a baseball no-hitter in which no members of the opposing team reach base. [1945–50]

per•fect•i•ble (pər fek′tə bəl), *adj.* capable of becoming or of being made perfect; improvable. [1625–35; < F < ML *perfectibilis.* See PERFECT, -IBLE] —**per•fect′i•bil′i•ty,** *n.*

per•fec•tion (pər fek′shən), *n.* **1.** the state or quality of being or becoming perfect. **2.** the highest degree of proficiency, skill, or excellence, as in an art. **3.** a perfect embodiment of something. **4.** a quality, trait, or feature of the highest degree of excellence. **5.** the highest or most nearly perfect degree of a quality or trait. **6.** the act or fact of perfecting. [1175–1225; ME *perfectiun, perfeccioun* (< AF) < L *perfectiō* completion]

per•fec•tion•ism (pər fek′shə niz′əm), *n.* **1.** any of various doctrines holding that religious, moral, social, or political perfection is attainable. **2.** a personal standard, attitude, or philosophy that demands perfection and rejects anything less. [1830–40, *Amer.*] —**per•fec′tion•ist,** *n., adj.*

per•fec•tive (pər fek′tiv), *adj.* **1.** tending to make perfect; conducive to perfection. **2.** of or designating an aspect of verbal inflection, as in Russian, that indicates completion of the action or state denoted by the verb. —*n.* **3.** the perfective aspect. **4.** a form in this aspect. [1590–1600; < ML *perfectīvus.* See PERFECT, -IVE] —**per•fec′tive•ly,** *adv.*

per•fect•ly (pûr′fikt lē), *adv.* **1.** in a perfect manner or to a perfect degree. **2.** completely; fully; adequately. [1275–1325; ME *parfitly*]

per′fect num′ber, *n.* a positive number that is equal to the sum of all positive integers that are submultiples of it, as 6, which is equal to the sum of 1, 2, and 3. [1350–1400]

per•fec•to (pər fek′tō), *n., pl.* **-tos.** a rather thick, medium-sized cigar tapered at each end. [1890–95, *Amer.*; < Sp: lit., perfect]

per′fect par′ticiple, *n.* PAST PARTICIPLE. [1860–65]

per′fect pitch′, *n.* ABSOLUTE PITCH (def. 2). [1945–50]

per′fect square′, *n.* a rational number that is equal to the square of another rational number. [1935–40]

per•fer•vid (pər fûr′vid), *adj.* very fervent; extremely ardent; impassioned. [1855–60] —**per•fer′vid•ly,** *adv.* —**per•fer′vid•ness,** *n.*

per•fid•i•ous (pər fid′ē əs), *adj.* deliberately faithless; treacherous; deceitful. [1590–1600; < L *perfidiōsus* faithless, dishonest. See PERFIDY, -OUS] —**per•fid′i•ous•ly,** *adv.* —**per•fid′i•ous•ness,** *n.*

per•fi•dy (pûr′fi dē), *n., pl.* **-dies.** **1.** deliberate breach of faith or trust; faithlessness; treachery. **2.** an act or instance of faithlessness or treachery. [1585–95; < L *perfidia* faithlessness = *perfid(us)* faithless, treacherous (*per-* PER- + *-fidus,* der. of *fidēs* faith) + *-ia* -Y[3]]

per•fo•rate (*v.* pûr′fə rāt′; *adj.* -fər it, -fə rāt′), *v.,* **-rat•ed, -rat•ing,** *adj.* —*v.t.* **1.** to make a hole or holes through, as by boring, punching, or piercing. **2.** to pierce through or to the interior of; penetrate. —*v.i.* **3.** to make a way through or into something; penetrate. —*adj.* **4.** PERFORATED. [1530–40; < L *perforātus,* ptp. of *perforāre* = *per-* PER- + *forāre* to BORE[1]] —**per′for•a•ble,** *adj.* —**per′fo•ra′tor,** *n.*

per•fo•rat•ed (pûr′fə rā′tid) also **perforate,** *adj.* **1.** pierced with a hole or holes. **2.** (of a stamp) having closely spaced perforations along its edges. **3.** marked by perforation: *a perforated ulcer.*

per•fo•ra•tion (pûr′fə rā′shən), *n.* **1.** a hole made by or as if by boring, punching, or piercing through something. **2.** one of a series of holes between individual postage stamps on a sheet. **3.** the act of perforating. **4.** the condition or state of being perforated. [1400–50; late ME < ML *perforātiō* hole (L: the act of boring). See PERFORATE, -TION]

per•force (pər fôrs′, -fōrs′), *adv.* of necessity; necessarily; by force of circumstance. [1300–50; ME *par force* < MF; see PER, FORCE]

per•form (pər fôrm′), *v.t.* **1.** to carry out; execute; do: *to perform surgery.* **2.** to execute in the proper, customary, or established manner: *to perform a marriage ceremony.* **3.** to carry into effect; fulfill: *to perform a contract.* **4.** to act (a play, part, etc.), as on the stage. **5.** to render (music), as by playing or singing. **6.** to accomplish (an action involving skill or ability), as before an audience. —*v.i.* **7.** to execute or do something; function. **8.** to carry out or fulfill a command, promise, or contract. **9.** to give a performance, esp. before an audience. **10.** to engage in the performing arts, esp. professionally. [1250–1300; ME *parformen* < AF *parformer,* alter. (by assoc. with *forme* FORM) of OF *parfournir* to accomplish] —**per•form′er,** *n.*

per•for•mance (pər fôr′məns), *n.* **1.** an entertainment presented before an audience. **2.** the act of performing a ceremony, play, piece of music, etc. **3.** the execution or accomplishment of work, acts, feats, etc. **4.** a particular action, deed, or proceeding. **5.** an action or proceeding of an unusual or spectacular kind. **6.** the act of performing. **7.** the manner in which or the efficiency with which something reacts or fulfills its intended purpose. **8.** *Ling.* a person's actual use of language in real situations. Compare COMPETENCE (def. 4). [1485–95]

perfor′mance art′, *n.* an often collaborative art form involving a fusion of several artistic media, as painting, film, video, music, drama, and dance. [1970–75] —**perfor′mance art′ist,** *n.*

per•for•ma•tive (pər fôr′mə tiv), *adj.* **1.** (of an expression or statement) performing an act by the very fact of being uttered, as "I promise," which performs the act of promising. —*n.* **2.** a performative utterance.

perform′ing arts′, *n.pl.* arts or skills that require public performance, as acting, singing, and dancing. [1945–50]

per•fume (*n.* pûr′fyōōm, pər fyōōm′; *v.* pər fyōōm′, pûr′fyōōm), *n., v.,* **-fumed, -fum•ing.** —*n.* **1.** a substance that diffuses or imparts an agreeable or attractive smell, esp. a fluid containing fragrant natural oils extracted from flowers, woods, etc., or similar synthetic oils. **2.** the scent, odor, or volatile particles emitted by substances that smell agreeable. —*v.t.* **3.** (of substances, flowers, etc.) to impart a pleasant fragrance to. **4.** to permeate with a sweet odor; scent. [1525–35; earlier *parfume* (n.) < MF *parfum,* n. der. of *parfumer* (v.) < obs. It *parfumare* (mod. *profumare*). See PER-, FUME] —**per′fume•less,** *adj.* —**per′fum•y,** *adj.* —**Syn.** PERFUME, FRAGRANCE, AROMA all refer to agreeable odors. PERFUME often indicates a strong, rich smell: *the perfume of flowers.* FRAGRANCE is usu. applied to a sweet, delicate, and fresh smell, esp. from growing things: *the fragrance of new-mown hay.* AROMA is usu. restricted to a distinctive, pervasive, somewhat spicy smell: *the aroma of coffee.*

per•fum•er (pər fyōō′mər, pûr′fyōō-), *n.* **1.** a maker or seller of perfumes. **2.** a person or thing that perfumes. [1565–75]

per•fum•er•y (pər fyōō′mə rē), *n., pl.* **-er•ies.** **1.** perfumes collectively. **2.** the art or business of a perfumer. **3.** the place of business of a perfumer. **4.** the preparation of perfumes. [1790–1800]

per•func•to•ry (pər fungk′tə rē), *adj.* **1.** performed merely as a routine duty; hasty and superficial: *perfunctory courtesy.* **2.** lacking interest or enthusiasm; apathetic: *a perfunctory speaker.* [1575–85; < LL *perfūnctōrius* negligent, superficial, der. of L *perfungī* to do one's job, be done = *per-* PER- + *fung-,* base of *fungī* to perform, FUNCTION + *-tōrius* -TORY[1]] —**per•func′to•ri•ly,** *adv.* —**per•func′to•ri•ness,** *n.*

per•fuse (pər fyōōz′), *v.t.,* **-fused, -fus•ing.** **1.** to overspread with moisture, color, etc.; suffuse. **2.** to diffuse (a liquid, color, etc.) through or over something. **3.** to pass (fluid) through blood vessels or the lymphatic system to an organ or tissue. [1520–30; < L *perfūsus,* ptp. of *perfundere* to drench, flood. See PER-, FUSE[2]] —**per•fu′sion** (-fyōō′zhən), *n.* —**per•fu′sive** (-siv), *adj.*

Per•ga•mum (pûr′gə məm), *n.* **1.** an ancient Greek kingdom on the coast of Asia Minor: later a Roman province. **2.** the ancient capital of this kingdom: now the site of Bergama, in W Turkey.

per•go•la (pûr′gə lə), *n., pl.* **-las.** **1.** an arbor formed of horizontal trelliswork supported on columns or posts, over which vines or other plants are trained. **2.** a colonnade having the form of such an arbor. [1645–55; < It < L *pergula* attachment to a building, arbor]

Per•go•le•si (per′gə lā′zē), *n.* **Giovanni Battista,** 1710–36, Italian composer.

perh., perhaps.

per•haps (pər haps′), *adv.* maybe; possibly. [1520–30; See PER, HAP, -S[1]]

pe•ri (pēr′ē), *n., pl.* **-ris.** **1.** one of a large group of beautiful, fairylike beings of Persian mythology. **2.** any lovely, graceful creature. [1770–80; < Pers *perī,* var. of *parī* fairy, MPers *parīk,* Avestan *pairikā* witch]

peri-, a prefix meaning "about," "around" (*perimeter; periscope*), "enclosing," "surrounding" (*pericardium*), "near" (*perigee; perihelion*). [< Gk, prefixal use of *perí* (adv. and prep.)]

per•i•anth (per′ē anth′), *n.* the envelope of a flower, whether calyx or corolla or both. [1700–10; earlier *perianthium* < NL. See PERI-, -ANTHO-, -IUM[2]] —**per′i•an′thi•al,** *adj.*

per•i•apt (per′ē apt′), *n.* an amulet. [1575–85; < Gk *periaptón* amulet, n. use of neut. of *periaptos* hung around = *peri-* PERI- + *(h)aptos,* v. adj. of *háptein* to fasten]

per•i•car•di•tis (per′i kär dī′tis), *n.* inflammation of the pericardium. [1790–1800] —**per′i•car•dit′ic** (-dit′ik), *adj.*

per•i•car•di•um (per′i kär′dē əm), *n., pl.* **-di•a** (-dē ə). the membranous sac enclosing the heart. [1570–80; < NL < Gk *perikárdion,* n. use of neut. of *perikárdios* surrounding the heart = *peri-* PERI- + *kardía* HEART; cf. -CARDIUM]

per•i•carp (per′i kärp′), *n.* the walls of a ripened ovary or fruit, sometimes consisting of three layers, the epicarp, mesocarp, and endocarp. [1750–60; < NL *pericarpium* < Gk *perikárpion* pod. See PERI-, -CARP] —**per′i•car′pi•al,** *adj.*

per•i•chon•dri•um (per′i kon′drē əm), *n., pl.* **-dri•a** (-drē ə). the membrane of fibrous connective tissue covering the surface of cartilages except at the joints. [1735–45; < NL < Gk *peri-* PERI- + *chondr-* + *-ium*]