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The Oxford College Dictionary

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tissue surrounding a bundle (fascicle) of nerve fibers within a nerve. — **per·i·neu·ri·al** /-ˈn(y)o͝orēəl/ **adj.** [19th C.: mod. L., from Gk. *peri-* 'around' + *neuron* 'sinew.']

pe·ri·od /ˈpi(ə)rēəd/ ▶ **n.** **1** a length or portion of time. ■ a portion of time in the life of a person, nation, or civilization characterized by the same prevalent features or conditions: *the medieval period.* ■ one of the set divisions of the day in a school allocated to a lesson or other activity. ■ [with adj.] a set period of time during which a particular activity takes place: *the training period.* ■ each of the intervals into which the playing time of a sporting event is divided. ■ a major division of geological time that is a subdivision of an era and is itself subdivided into epochs, corresponding to a system in chronostratigraphy. **2** a punctuation mark (.) used at the end of a sentence or an abbreviation. ■ informal added to the end of a statement to indicate that no further discussion is possible or desirable: *he is the sole owner of the trademark, period.* **3** Physics the interval of time between successive occurrences of the same state in an oscillatory or cyclic phenomenon, such as a mechanical vibration, an alternating current, a variable star, or an electromagnetic wave. ■ Astron. the time taken by a celestial object to rotate around its axis, or to make one circuit of its orbit. ■ Math. the interval between successive equal values of a periodic function. **4** (also **menstrual period**) a flow of blood and other material from the lining of the uterus, lasting for several days and occurring in sexually mature women (who are not pregnant) at intervals of about one lunar month until the onset of menopause. **5** Chem. a set of elements occupying a horizontal row in the periodic table. **6** Rhet. a complex sentence, esp. one consisting of several clauses, constructed as part of a formal speech or oration. ■ Music a complete idea, typically consisting of two or four phrases. ▶ **adj.** [attrib.] belonging to, or characteristic of, a past historical time, esp. in style or design: *period furniture.* [ME: from OFr. *periode*, via L. from Gk. *periodos* 'orbit,' from *peri-* 'around' + *hodos* 'course.']

pe·ri·od·ic /ˌpi(ə)rēˈädik/ ▶ **adj.** **1** appearing or occurring at intervals. **2** Chem. relating to the periodic table of the elements or the pattern of chemical properties that underlies it. **3** of or relating to a rhetorical period. See PERIOD (sense 6).

pe·ri·od·ic ac·id /ˌperēˈädik/ ▶ **n.** Chem. a hygroscopic solid acid, H_5IO_6, with strong oxidizing properties. — **per·i·o·date** /pəˈrīəˌdāt/ **n.** [19th C.: from PER- + IODIC ACID.]

pe·ri·od·i·cal /ˌpi(ə)rēˈädikəl/ ▶ **n.** a magazine or newspaper published at regular intervals. ▶ **adj.** [attrib.] occurring or appearing at intervals; occasional. ■ (of a magazine or newspaper) published at regular intervals. — **pe·ri·od·i·cal·ly** **adv.**

pe·ri·od·i·cal ci·ca·da ▶ **n.** an American cicada (genus *Magicicada*) whose nymphs emerge from the soil in large numbers periodically. The nymphs of the northern species (**seventeen-year locust**) emerge every seventeen years; those of the southern species emerge every thirteen years.

pe·ri·od·ic func·tion /ˌpi(ə)rēˈädik/ ▶ **n.** Math. a function returning to the same value at regular intervals.

pe·ri·o·dic·i·ty /ˌpi(ə)rēəˈdisitē/ ▶ **n.** esp. tech. the quality or character of being periodic; the tendency to recur at intervals: *the periodicity of the sunspot cycle.*

pe·ri·od·ic ta·ble /ˌpi(ə)rēˈädik/ ▶ **n.** Chem. a table of the chemical elements arranged in order of atomic number, usually in rows, so that elements with similar atomic structure (and hence similar chemical properties) appear in vertical columns.

pe·ri·od·ize /ˈpi(ə)rēəˌdīz/ ▶ **v.** [trans.] formal divide (a portion of time) into periods. — **pe·ri·od·i·za·tion** /ˌpi(ə)rēədəˈzāsHən/ **n.**

per·i·o·don·tics /ˌperēəˈdäntiks/ (also **per·i·o·don·tia** /ˈdänsHə/) ▶ **plural n.** [treated as sing.] the branch of dentistry concerned with the structures surrounding and supporting the teeth. — **per·i·o·don·tal** /-ˈdäntl/ **adj.** **per·i·o·don·tist** /-ˈdäntist/ **n.** [1940s: from PERI- + Gk. *odous, odont-* 'tooth.']

per·i·o·don·ti·tis /ˌperēədänˈtītis/ ▶ **n.** Med. inflammation of the tissue around the teeth, often causing shrinkage of the gums and loosening of the teeth.

per·i·o·don·tol·o·gy /ˌperēədänˈtäləjē/ ▶ **n.** another term for PERIODONTICS.

pe·ri·od piece ▶ **n.** an object or work that is set in or strongly reminiscent of an earlier historical period.

per·i·os·te·um /ˌperēˈästēəm/ ▶ **n.** (pl. **-os·te·a** /-ˈästēə/) Anat. a dense layer of vascular connective tissue enveloping the bones except at the surfaces of the joints. — **per·i·os·te·al** /-ˈästēəl/ **adj.** [16th C.: mod. L., from Gk. *periosteon*, from *peri-* 'around' + *osteon* 'bone.']

per·i·os·ti·tis /ˌperēäˈstītis/ ▶ **n.** Med. inflammation of the membrane enveloping a bone.

per·i·pa·tet·ic /ˌperipəˈtetik/ ▶ **adj.** **1** traveling from place to place, esp. working or based in various places for relatively short periods. **2** (**Peripatetic**) Aristotelian. ▶ **n.** **1** a person who travels from place to place. **2** (**Peripatetic**) an Aristotelian philosopher. — **per·i·pa·tet·i·cal·ly** **adv.** **per·i·pa·tet·i·cism** /-ˈtetəˌsizəm/ **n.** [ME: ult. from Gk. *peripatētikos* 'walking up and down,' from v. *peripatein.*]

per·i·pe·tei·a /ˌperipəˈtēə; -ˈtīə/ ▶ **n.** formal a sudden reversal of fortune or change in circumstances, esp. in reference to fictional narrative. [16th C.: from Gk., from *peri-* 'around' + stem of *piptein* 'to fall.']

pe·riph·er·al /pəˈrifərəl/ ▶ **adj.** of, relating to, or situated on the edge or periphery of something. ■ of secondary or minor importance; marginal. ■ [attrib.] (of a device) able to be attached to and used with a computer, although not an integral part of it. ■ Anat. near the surface of the body, with special reference to the circulation and nervous system. ▶ **n.** Comput. a peripheral device. — **pe·riph·er·al·i·za·tion** /pəˌrifərəliˈzāsHən/ **n.** **pe·riph·er·al·ize** **v.** **pe·riph·er·al·ly** **adv.**

pe·riph·er·al nerv·ous sys·tem ▶ **n.** Anat. the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord.

pe·riph·er·al vi·sion ▶ **n.** side vision; what is seen on the side by the eye when looking straight ahead.

pe·riph·er·y /pəˈrifərē/ ▶ **n.** (pl. **-er·ies**) the outer limits or edge of an area or object. ■ a marginal or secondary position in, or part or aspect of, a group, subject, or sphere of activity. [16th C.: via late L. from Gk. *periphereia* 'circumference,' from *peripherēs* 'revolving around,' from *peri-* + *pherein* 'to bear.']

pe·riph·ra·sis /pəˈrifrəsis/ ▶ **n.** (pl. **-ses** /-ˌsēz/) the use of indirect and circumlocutory speech or writing. ■ an indirect and circumlocutory phrase. ■ Gram. the use of separate words to express a grammatical relationship that is otherwise expressed by inflection, e.g., *did go* as opposed to *went* and *more intelligent* as opposed to *smarter.* [16th C.: via L. from Gk., from *periphrazein*, from *peri-* 'around' + *phrazein* 'declare.']

per·i·phras·tic /ˌperəˈfrastik/ ▶ **adj.** (of speech or writing) indirect and circumlocutory. ■ Gram. (of a case or tense) formed by a combination of words rather than by inflection (such as *did go* and *of the people* rather than *went* and *the people's*). — **per·i·phras·ti·cal·ly** **adv.**

pe·riph·y·ton /pəˈrifiˌtän/ ▶ **n.** Ecol. freshwater organisms attached to or clinging to plants and other objects projecting above the bottom sediments. — **per·i·phyt·ic** /ˌperəˈfitik/ **adj.** [1960s: from Gk. *peri-* 'around' + *phuton* 'plant.']

pe·rique /pəˈrēk/ ▶ **n.** a strong dark tobacco from Louisiana. [19th C.: Louisiana Fr., appar. from the nickname of Pierre Chenet.]

per·i·scope /ˈperəˌskōp/ ▶ **n.** an apparatus consisting of a tube attached to a set of mirrors or prisms, by which an observer (typically in a submerged submarine or behind a high obstacle) can see things that are otherwise out of sight.

periscope

per·i·scop·ic /ˌperəˈskäpik/ ▶ **adj.** of or relating to a periscope. ■ (of a lens or an optical instrument) giving a wide field of view. — **per·i·scop·i·cal·ly** **adv.**

per·ish /ˈperisH/ ▶ **v.** [intrans.] suffer death, typically in a violent, sudden, or untimely way. ■ suffer complete ruin or destruction. ■ (of rubber, a foodstuff, or other organic substance) lose its normal qualities; rot or decay.

– PHRASES **perish the thought** informal used, often ironically, to show that one finds a suggestion or idea completely ridiculous or unwelcome. [ME: from OFr. *periss-*, stem of *perir*, from L. *perire* 'pass away,' from *per-* + *ire* 'go.']

per·ish·a·ble /ˈperisHəbəl/ ▶ **adj.** (esp. of food) likely to decay or go bad quickly. ■ (of something abstract) having a brief life or significance; transitory. ▶ **n.** (**perishables**) things, esp. foodstuffs, likely to decay or go bad quickly. — **per·ish·a·bil·i·ty** /ˌperisHəˈbilitē/ **n.**

Pe·ris·so·dac·ty·la /pəˌrisəˈdaktələ/ Zool. an order of mammals that comprises the odd-toed ungulates. Compare with ARTIODACTYLA. — **pe·ris·so·dac·tyl** **n.** & **adj.** [mod. L. (pl.), from Gk. *perissos* 'uneven' + *daktulos* 'finger, toe.']

per·i·stal·sis /ˌperəˈstôlsis; -ˈstal-/ ▶ **n.** Physiol. the involuntary constriction and relaxation of the muscles of the intestine or another canal, creating wavelike movements that push the contents of the canal forward. — **per·i·stal·tic** /-ˈstôltik/ **adj.** **per·i·stal·ti·cal·ly** /-ˈstôltik(ə)lē/ **adv.** [19th C.: mod. L., from Gk. *peristallein* 'wrap around,' from *peri-* + *stallein* 'to place.']

per·i·stome /ˈperəˌstōm/ ▶ **n.** Zool. the parts surrounding the mouth of various invertebrates. ■ Bot. a fringe of small projections around the mouth of a capsule in mosses and certain fungi. [18th C.: from mod. L. *peristoma*, from Gk. *peri-* 'around' + *stoma* 'mouth.']

per·i·style /ˈperəˌstīl/ ▶ **n.** Archit. a row of columns surrounding a space within a building such as a court or internal garden or edging a veranda or porch. ■ an architectural space such as a court or porch that is surrounded or edged by such columns. [17th C.: ult. from Gk. *peristulos* from *peri-* 'around' + *stulos* 'pillar.']

per·i·the·ci·um /ˌperəˈTHēsH(ē)əm; -sēəm/ ▶ **n.** (pl. **-the·ci·a** /-ˈTHēsH(ē)ə; -sēə/) Bot. (in some fungi) a round or flask-shaped fruiting body with a pore through which the spores are discharged. [19th C.: mod. L., from PERI- + Gk. *thēkē* 'case.']

per·i·to·ne·um /ˌperitnˈēəm/ ▶ **n.** (pl. **-ne·ums** or **-ne·a** /-ˈnēə/) Anat. the serous membrane lining the cavity of the abdomen and covering the abdominal organs. — **per·i·to·ne·al** /-ˈēəl/ **adj.** [ME: via late L. from Gk. *peritonaion*, from *peritonos* 'stretched around,' from *peri-* + *-tonos* 'stretched.']

per·i·to·ni·tis /ˌperitnˈītis/ ▶ **n.** Med. inflammation of the peritoneum, typically caused by bacterial infection either via the blood or after rupture of an abdominal organ.

pe·ri·tus /pəˈrētōōs/ ▶ **n.** (pl. **-ti** /-tē/) a theological adviser or consultant to a council of the Roman Catholic Church. [1960s: from L.]

per·i·wig /ˈperiˌwig/ ▶ **n.** a highly styled wig worn

periwig

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