

Second College Edition

The
American
Heritage
Dictionary



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counterproposal (koun'tər-prə-pō'zəl) *n.* A proposal offered to nullify or substitute for a previous one.

counterpunch (koun'tər-pūnch') *n.* A countering attack or blow, esp. a counter in boxing.

counterreformation (koun'tər-rēf'ər-mā'shən) *n.* A reformation in opposition to previous reformation.

Counter Reformation *n.* A reform movement within the Roman Catholic Church in response to the Protestant Reformation.

counterrevolution (koun'tər-rēv'ə-lō'shən) *n.* A movement arising in opposition to a revolution and aiming to restore the prerevolutionary state. —**counterrevolutionary** (-shə-nēr'ē) *adj. & n.* —**counterrevolutionist** *n.*

countershaft (koun'tər-shāft') *n.* An intermediate shaft between the powered and driven shafts in a belt drive.

counter-sign (koun'tər-sīn') *tr.v.* -signed, -signing, -signs. To sign (a previously signed document), as for authentication. —*n.* 1. A second or confirming signature, as on a previously signed document. 2. *a.* A secret sign or signal to be given to a sentry in order to obtain passage; password. *b.* A secret sign or signal given in answer to another. —**counter-signature** (-sīg'nā-cher) *n.*

countersink (koun'tər-sīngk') *n.* 1. A hole with the top part enlarged so that a screw or bolt head will lie flush with or below the surface. 2. A tool for making a countersink. —*tr.v.* -sunk (-sūngk'), -sinking, -sinks. 1. To make a countersink on or in. 2. To drive a screw or bolt into (a countersink).

counter-spy (koun'tər-spī') *n.* A spy working in opposition to enemy espionage.

counterstain (koun'tər-stān') *n.* A stain of a contrasting color used in addition to a principal stain that colors the components in a microscopic specimen that are not made visible by the principal stain.

counter-sunk (koun'tər-sūngk') *v.* Past tense and past participle of **countersink**.

counter-tenor (koun'tər-tēn'ər) *n.* 1. An adult male voice with a range above that of tenor. 2. A singer with a counter-tenor voice.

counter-vail (koun'tər-vāl', koun'tər-vāl') *v.* -valled, -vailing, -valls. —*tr.* 1. To act against with equal force; counteract. 2. To compensate for; offset. —*intr.* To act against an often detrimental influence or power. [ME *contrevaillen* < OFr. *contrevaloir*: *contre*, counter- + *valoir*, to be worth < *valere*, to be strong.]

counterweigh (koun'tər-wā') *intr. & tr.v.* -weighed, -weighing, -weighs. To counterbalance or cause to counterbalance.

counterweight (koun'tər-wāt') *n.* A weight used as a counterbalance. —**counterweight**ed (-wāt'id) *adj.*

counter word *n.* A word, as *nice* or *awful*, commonly used without regard to its precise meaning.

countess (koun'tis) *n.* 1. *a.* In various European countries, the wife or widow of a count. *b.* In Great Britain, the wife or widow of an earl. 2. A woman holding the title of count or earl in her own right. [ME *countes* < OFr. *contesse*, fem. of *conte*, count. —see **COUNT**.]

counting house also **counting-house** (koun'tīng-hous') *n.* An office in which a business firm carries on operations, such as accounting and correspondence.

counting room *n.* A counting house.

countless (koun'tlis) *adj.* Too numerous to be counted; infinite; innumerable. —**countless**ly *adv.*

count noun *n.* A noun, such as *chair* or *pea*, that can form a plural and that can occur in a noun phrase construction with the indefinite article, with such terms as *many*, or with numerals.

count palatine *n.* A palatine¹ (sense 3).

country-fied also **country-fied** (kūn'tri-fīd') *adj.* 1. Resembling or having the characteristics of country life; rural; rustic. 2. Lacking in sophistication.

country (kūn'trē) *n., pl. -tries*. 1. A large tract of land distinguishable by features of topography, biology, or culture. 2. A district outside of cities and towns; rural area. 3. *a.* A nation or state. *b.* The territory of a nation or state; land. *c.* The people of a nation or state; populace. 4. The land of a person's birth or citizenship. 5. *Law.* A jury. —**modifier**: *country life*. [ME *countre* < OFr. *contree* < LLat. *contrata* < Lat. *contra*, opposite.]

country and western *n.* Country music.

country club *n.* A suburban club with facilities for golf and other outdoor sports and social activities.

country cousin *n.* One whose ingenuousness or rustic ways may embarrass or amuse city dwellers.

country-dance (kūn'trē-dāns') *n.* A folk dance of English origin in which two lines of dancers face each other.

country-fied (kūn'tri-fīd') *adj.* Variant of **countryfied**.

country gentleman *n.* 1. The owner of a country estate. 2. Often **Country Gentleman**. A variety of corn with small, sweet white kernels.

country-man (kūn'trē-mən) *n.* 1. A person from one's own country; compatriot. 2. A person from a particular country. 3. One who lives in the country; rustic.

country music *n.* A style of popular music based on folk music of the rural United States, esp. of the southern or southwestern United States.

country-seat (kūn'trē-sēt') *n.* An estate or mansion in the country.

country-side (kūn'trē-sīd') *n.* 1. A rural region. 2. The inhabitants of a countryside.

country-woman (kūn'trē-wōm'ən) *n.* 1. A woman from one's own country; compatriot. 2. A woman from a particular country. 3. A woman who lives in the country.

county (koun'tē) *n., pl. -ties*. 1. In the United States, an administrative subdivision of a state. 2. In Great Britain and Ireland, a territorial division exercising administrative, judicial, and political functions. 3. The people living in a county. 4. The territory under the jurisdiction of a count or earl. [ME *counte*, territorial division < AN *counte* < OFr. *conte*, the territory of a count < Med. Lat. *comitatus* < LLat., an office of state < Lat., retinue < *comes*, companion.]

county palatine *n.* The domain of a count palatine.

county seat *n.* A town or city that is the center of government in its county.

county town *n.* Chiefly *Brit.* A county seat.

coup (kōō) *n., pl. coups* (kōōz). 1. A brilliantly executed stratagem; masterstroke. 2. A coup d'état. [Fr., stroke < OFr. < LLat. *colpus* < Lat. *colaphus* < Gk. *kolaphos*.]

coup de grâce (kōō' də grās') *n.* 1. A death blow or finishing stroke delivered to end the misery of someone who is mortally wounded. 2. A finishing or decisive event or act. [Fr.: *coup*, stroke + *de*, of + *grace*, mercy.]

coup de main (kōō' də mǎn') *n.* A sudden action undertaken to surprise an enemy. [Fr.: *coup*, stroke + *de*, of + *main*, hand.]

coup d'état (kōō' də-tā') *n.* A sudden overthrow of a government by a group of persons in or previously in positions of authority in deliberate violation of constitutional forms. [Fr.: *coup*, stroke + *de*, of + *état*, state.]

coup de théâtre (kōō' də tā-tē-trā) *n.* An unexpected and dramatic event, esp. one that overturns a given situation. [Fr.: *coup*, stroke + *de*, of + *théâtre*, theatre.]

coup d'oeil (kōō' də-ya) *n.* A quick survey; glance. [Fr.: *coup*, stroke + *de*, of + *oeil*, eye.]

coupe¹ (kōōp) *n.* 1. *a.* A dessert of ice cream or fruit-flavored ice, variously garnished and served in a special dessert glass. *b.* The stemmed glass in which a coupe is served. 2. A shallow, bowl-shaped dessert dish. [Fr., cup < LLat. *cuppa*.]

coupe² (kōōp) *n.* Variant of **coupé** (sense 2).

coup-pé (kōō-pā') *n.* 1. A closed four-wheel carriage with two seats inside and one outside. 2. Also **coupe** (kōōp). A closed two-door automobile. [Fr. < p.part. of *couper*, to cut < *coup*, blow. —see **COUP**.]

couple (kūp'əl) *n.* 1. Two items of the same kind; pair. 2. Something that joins or connects two things together; link. 3. (used with *a sing. or pl. verb*). *a.* A man and woman united, as by marriage or betrothal. *b.* Two people together.

4. A few; several: *a couple of days*. 5. *Physics.* A pair of forces of equal magnitude acting in parallel but opposite directions, capable of causing rotation but not translation. —*v.* -pled, -pling, -ples. —*tr.* 1. To link together; connect: *coupled her refusal with an explanation*. 2. *a.* To join as man and wife; marry. *b.* To join in sexual union. 3. *Elect.* To link (two circuits or currents) as by magnetic induction. —*intr.* 1. To form pairs; join. 2. To copulate. 3. To join chemically. [ME < OFr. < Lat. *copula*, bond.]

Synonyms: *couple, pair, duo, brace, yoke*. These nouns denote two of something in association. *Couple* refers to two of the same kind or sort not necessarily closely associated, though often it does apply to close relationship. Less formally the term may mean "few." *Pair* stresses close association and often reciprocal dependence of things (as in the case of gloves or pajamas). Sometimes it denotes a single thing with interdependent parts (such as shears or spectacles). *Duo* refers to partners in a duet. *Brace* refers principally to certain game birds, and *yoke* to two joined draft animals.

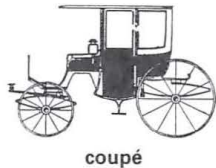
Usage: *Couple*, when referring to a man and woman together, may be used with either a singular or a plural verb, but the plural is more common. Whatever the choice, usage should be consistent: *the couple are spending their honeymoon* (or *is spending its honeymoon*).

coupler (kūp'lər) *n.* 1. One that couples. 2. A device for coupling two railroad cars. 3. A device connecting two organ keyboards so that they may be played together.

couplet (kūp'līt) *n.* 1. A unit of verse consisting of two successive lines, usually rhyming and having the same meter. 2. Two similar things; pair. [OFr., dim. of *couple*, couple.]

coupling (kūp'ling) *n.* 1. The act of forming couples. 2. The act of copulating. 3. Something that links or connects, as a railroad coupler. 4. The part of the body connecting the hindquarters and forequarters of a four-footed animal.

coupon (kōō'pōn', kyōō'-) *n.* 1. A negotiable certificate attached to a bond that represents a sum of interest due. 2. *a.* A detachable part, as of a ticket or advertisement, that entitles the bearer to certain benefits, such as a cash refund or a gift. *b.* A printed form, as in an advertisement, to be used as an order blank or for requesting information. 3. A detachable slip calling for periodic payments, as for merchandise bought on an installment plan. [Fr. < OFr. *colpon*, piece cut off < *colper*, to cut < *coup*, blow. —see **COUP**.]



coupe



coupler