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Edited by

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mixture may be separated according to a physical property such as boiling point or solubility. **4** (usu. **the Fraction**) (in the Christian Church) the breaking of the Eucharistic bread.
– ORIGIN ME: via OFr. from eccles. L. *fractio(n-)* 'breaking (bread)', from L. *frangere* 'to break'.

fractional ● **adj.** **1** of, relating to, or expressed as a fraction. **2** small or tiny in amount. **3** Chemistry relating to or denoting the separation of a mixture into fractions.
– DERIVATIVES **fractionally** adv.

fractionalize (also **-ise**) ● **v.** [usu. as adj. **fractionalized**] divide into separate groups or parts.
– DERIVATIVES **fractionalization** n.

fractionate /'frakʃ(ə)neɪt/ ● **v.** chiefly Chemistry divide into fractions or components.
– DERIVATIVES **fractionation** n.

fractious /'frakʃəs/ ● **adj.** **1** easily irritated. **2** difficult to control.
– DERIVATIVES **fractiously** adv. **fractiousness** n.
– ORIGIN C17: from **FRACTION**, prob. on the pattern of the pair *faction, factious*.

fracture ● **n.** **1** the cracking or breaking of a hard object or material. ➤ a crack or break, especially in a bone or a rock stratum. ➤ the shape of the surface formed by a freshly broken rock or mineral. **2** Phonetics the replacement of a simple vowel by a diphthong owing to the influence of a following sound, typically a consonant. ● **v.** break or cause to break. ➤ (of a group or organization) break up or fragment.
– ORIGIN ME: from Fr., or from L. *fractura*, from *frangere* 'to break'.

frae /freɪ/ ● **prep.** Scottish from.

frag N. Amer. military slang ● **n.** a hand grenade. ● **v.** (**fragged**, **fragging**) deliberately kill (an unpopular officer) with a hand grenade.
– ORIGIN C20: from *fragmentation grenade*.

fragile /'fradʒʌɪl/ ● **adj.** **1** easily broken or damaged. **2** delicate and vulnerable.
– DERIVATIVES **fragilely** adv. **fragility** n.
– ORIGIN C15 (in the sense 'morally weak'): from L. *fragilis*, from *frangere* 'to break'.

fragile X syndrome ● **n.** Medicine an inherited mental disability resulting from an X chromosome that is abnormally susceptible to damage.

fragment ● **n.** /'fragm(ə)nt/ a small part broken off or detached. ➤ an isolated or incomplete part. ● **v.** /frag'ment/ break or cause to break into fragments.
– DERIVATIVES **fragmental** adj. (chiefly Geology). **fragmentarily** adv. **fragmentary** adj. **fragmentation** n.
– ORIGIN ME: from Fr., or from L. *fragmentum*, from *frangere* 'to break'.

fragmentation bomb (or **fragmentation grenade**) ● **n.** a bomb (or grenade) designed to break into small fragments as it explodes.

fragrance /'freɪgr(ə)ns/ ● **n.** a pleasant, sweet smell. ➤ a perfume or aftershave.
– DERIVATIVES **fragranced** adj. **fragrancy** n. (dated).

fragrant ● **adj.** having a pleasant or sweet smell.
– DERIVATIVES **fragrantly** adv.
– ORIGIN ME: from Fr., or from L. *fragrant-*, *fragrare* 'smell sweet'.

frail ● **adj.** **1** weak and delicate. **2** easily damaged or broken. ● **n.** US informal, dated a woman.
– DERIVATIVES **frailly** adv. **frailness** n.
– ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *fraile*, from L. *fragilis* (see **FRAGILE**).

frailty ● **n.** (pl. **-ies**) the condition of being frail. ➤ weakness in character or morals.

fraise /freɪz, freɪz/ ● **n.** (pl. pronounced same) **1** (in cookery) a strawberry. **2** a white brandy distilled from strawberries.
– ORIGIN from Fr.

Fraktur /'fraktʊə, German frak'tuːɐ/ ● **n.** a German style of black-letter type.
– ORIGIN C19: Ger., from L. *fractura* 'fracture' (because of its angularity).

framboesia /fram'biːzɪə/ (US **frambesia**) ● **n.** another term for **YAWS**.
– ORIGIN C19: mod. L., from Fr. *framboise* 'raspberry', so named because of the red swellings caused by the disease.

framboise /frɒm'bwɑːz/ ● **n.** **1** (in cookery) a raspberry. **2** a white brandy distilled from raspberries.
– ORIGIN from Fr.

frame ● **n.** **1** a rigid structure surrounding a picture, door, etc. ➤ (**frames**) a metal or plastic structure holding the lenses of a pair of glasses. ➤ the rigid supporting structure of a vehicle, aircraft, or other object. ➤ a person's body with reference to its size or build. ➤ a box-like structure of glass or plastic in which seeds or young plants are grown. **2** a basic underlying or supporting structure of a system, concept, or text. **3** Linguistics a structural environment within which a class of words or other linguistic units can be correctly used (e.g. *I —— him* is a frame for a large class of transitive verbs). **4** a single complete picture in a series forming a cinema, television, or video film. **5** the triangular structure for positioning the red balls in snooker. ➤ a single game of snooker. ● **v.** **1** place (a picture or photograph) in a frame. ➤ surround so as to create a sharp or attractive image. **2** formulate. ➤ archaic construct by fitting parts together or in accordance with a plan. **3** informal produce false incriminating evidence against (an innocent person).
– PHRASES **be in** (or **out of**) **the frame** be (or not be) eligible. ➤ be wanted (or not wanted) by the police. **frame of mind** a particular mood.
– DERIVATIVES **framable** adj. **framed** adj. **frameless** adj. **framer** n. **framing** n.
– ORIGIN OE *framian* 'be useful', later 'prepare timber for building', 'make the wooden parts of a building': of Gmc origin and rel. to **FROM**.

frame house ● **n.** chiefly N. Amer. a house constructed from a wooden skeleton covered with timber boards.

frame of reference ● **n.** **1** a set of criteria in relation to which judgements can be made. **2** a system of geometrical axes in relation to which size, position, or motion can be defined.

frame saw ● **n.** a saw with a thin blade kept rigid by being stretched in a frame.

frameset ● **n.** the frame and front fork of a bicycle.

frame tent ● **n.** chiefly Brit. a tent supported by a tall frame, giving it nearly perpendicular sides and standing headroom throughout.

frame-up ● **n.** informal a conspiracy to incriminate someone falsely.

framework ● **n.** an essential supporting or underlying structure.

franc /frаŋk/ ● **n.** the basic monetary unit of France, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and several other countries, equal to 100 centimes.
– ORIGIN from OFr., from L. *Francorum Rex* 'king of the Franks', the legend on gold coins struck in the 14th cent.

franchise /'fran(t)ʃʌɪz/ ● **n.** **1** an authorization granted by a government or company to an individual or group enabling them to carry out specified commercial activities. ➤ a business or service granted such authorization. ➤ N. Amer. an authorization given by a professional league to own a sports team. ➤ N. Amer. informal a team granted such authorization. **2** the right to vote in public elections, especially for members of parliament. ● **v.** grant a franchise to. ➤ grant a franchise for the sale of (goods) or the operation of (a service).
– DERIVATIVES **franchisee** n. **franchiser** (also **franchisor**) n.
– ORIGIN ME (denoting a grant of legal immunity): from OFr., based on *franc, franche* (see **FRANK**[1]).

Franciscan /fran'sɪsk(ə)n/ ● **n.** a monk, nun, or lay member of a Christian religious order following the rule of St Francis of Assisi. ● **adj.** of St Francis or the Franciscans.

francium /'fransɪəm/ ● **n.** the chemical element of atomic number 87, an unstable radioactive member of the alkali metal group. (Symbol: **Fr**)
– ORIGIN 1940s: from the country *France* + **-IUM**.

Franco- (also **franco-**) ● **comb. form** French; French and

one in which mail is kept until collected. **2** Brit. a delivery of mail.

mailer ● n. **1** chiefly N. Amer. the sender of a letter or package by post. **2** a piece of advertising material sent out by post. **3** a container used for conveying items by post. **4** *Computing* a program that sends email messages.

mailing ● n. something sent by mail, especially a piece of mass advertising.

mailing list ● n. a list of the names and addresses of people to whom advertising matter or information may be mailed regularly.

maillot /mʌɪˈjəʊ/ ● n. (*pl.* pronounced same) **1** a pair of tights worn for dancing or gymnastics. **2** chiefly N. Amer. a woman's tight-fitting one-piece swimsuit. **3** a jersey or top, especially one worn in sports such as cycling.
– ORIGIN from Fr.

mailman ● n. (*pl.* **-men**) N. Amer. a postman.

mail merge ● n. *Computing* the automatic addition of names and addresses from a database to letters and envelopes in order to facilitate sending mail to many addresses.

mail order ● n. the ordering of goods by post.

mailshot ● n. Brit. an item, especially a piece of advertising material, sent to a large number of addresses.

maim ● v. wound or injure (someone) so that part of the body is permanently damaged.
– ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *mahaignier*, of unknown origin.

main¹ ● adj. chief in size or importance. ● n. **1** a principal pipe carrying water or gas or a cable carrying electricity. ➤ **(the mains)** Brit. the source of public water, gas, or electricity supply through pipes or cables. **2** **(the main)** *archaic or poetic/literary* the open ocean. **3** Nautical short for **MAINSAIL** or **MAINMAST**.
– PHRASES **by main force** through sheer strength. **In the main** on the whole.
– ORIGIN ME: from OE *mægen* 'physical force', reinforced by ON *meginn*, *megn* 'strong, powerful', both from a Gmc base meaning 'have power'.

main² ● n. **1** (in the game of hazard) a number (5, 6, 7, 8, or 9) called by a player before dice are thrown. **2** historical a match between fighting cocks.
– ORIGIN C16: prob. from the phr. *main chance*.

main brace ● n. the brace attached to the main yard of a sailing ship.

main clause ● n. Grammar a clause that can form a complete sentence standing alone, having a subject and a predicate.

main course ● n. **1** the most substantial course of a meal. **2** the mainsail of a square-rigged sailing ship.

maincrop ● adj. Brit. denoting a vegetable produced as a principal crop of the season.

main drag ● n. informal, chiefly N. Amer. the main street of a town.

Maine Coon ● n. a large, powerful cat of a long-haired breed, originally from America.
– ORIGIN 1970s: so named because of a resemblance to the raccoon.

Mainer ● n. a native or inhabitant of the US state of Maine.

mainframe ● n. **1** a large high-speed computer, especially one supporting numerous workstations or peripherals. **2** the central processing unit and primary memory of a computer.

mainland ● n. a large continuous extent of land that includes the greater part of a country or territory, as opposed to offshore islands and detached territories.
– DERIVATIVES **mainlander** n.

main line ● n. **1** a chief railway line. **2** N. Amer. a chief road or street. **3** informal a principal vein as a site for a drug injection. ● v. **(mainline)** informal inject (a drug) intravenously.
– DERIVATIVES **mainliner** n.

mainly ● adv. more than anything else. ➤ for the most part.

main man ● n. **1** informal, chiefly N. Amer. a close and trusted friend. **2** a principal figure in an organization, team, etc.

mainmast ● n. the principal mast of a ship.

mainplane ● n. the principal wing or other supporting surface of an aircraft, as opposed to a tailplane.

mainsail /ˈmeɪnseɪl, -s(ə)l/ ● n. the principal sail of a ship. ➤ the sail set on the after part of the mainmast in a fore-and-aft rigged vessel.

main sequence ● n. Astronomy a series of types to which most stars other than giants, supergiants, and white dwarfs belong.
– ORIGIN 1920s: so named because they occupy a broad band on a graph of magnitude against spectral type.

mainsheet ● n. a sheet used for controlling and trimming the mainsail of a sailing boat.

mainspring ● n. **1** the principal spring in a watch, clock, etc. **2** a prime source of motivation or support.

mainstay ● n. **1** a stay which extends from the mainmast to the foot of the foremast of a sailing ship. **2** the chief support or main part.

mainstream ● n. **(the mainstream)** normal or conventional ideas, attitudes, or activities. ● adj. belonging to or characteristic of the mainstream.

maintain ● v. **1** cause or enable (a condition or state of affairs) to continue. ➤ keep at the same level or rate. **2** keep (a building, machine, etc.) in good condition by checking or repairing it regularly. **3** provide with necessities for life or existence. ➤ archaic give one's support to; uphold. **4** assert something to be the case.
– DERIVATIVES **maintainability** n. **maintainable** adj.
– ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *maintenir*, from L. *manu tenere* 'hold in the hand'.

maintained school ● n. Brit. a school financed from public money.

maintainer ● n. **1** a person or thing that maintains. (also **maintainor**) Law, historical a person guilty of aiding a party in a legal action without lawful cause.

maintenance ● n. **1** the process or state of maintaining or being maintained. **2** a husband's or wife's payment for a spouse after separation or divorce. **3** Law, historical former offence of aiding a party in a legal action without lawful cause.

maintop ● n. a platform around the head of the topmast section of a sailing ship's mainmast.

maintopmast /meɪnˈtɒpməst/ ● n. the second mast of a sailing ship's mainmast.

maiolica /məˈjɒlɪkə, mʌɪˈɒlɪkə/ ● n. fine earthenware with coloured decoration on an opaque white glaze originating in Italy during the Renaissance.
– ORIGIN C16: Ital., from *Maiolica* 'Majorca'.

maisonette /ˌmeɪzəˈnɛt/ ● n. a set of rooms forming typically on two storeys of a larger building and with a separate entrance.
– ORIGIN C18: from Fr. *maisonnette*, dimin. of *maison* 'house'.

mai tai /ˈmʌɪ tʌɪ/ ● n. chiefly US a cocktail made with rum, curaçao, and fruit juices.
– ORIGIN from Polynesian.

Maithili /ˈmʌɪtɪli/ ● n. a Bihari language spoken especially in northern Bihar.
– ORIGIN Sanskrit, from *Mithilā*, a place in Bihar.

maître d'hôtel /ˌmeɪtrə dəʊˈtɛl, French/ (also **maître d'** /ˌmeɪtrə ˈdiː/) ● n. (*pl.* **maîtres d'hôtel** pronunc. same or **maître d's**) **1** the head waiter in a restaurant. **2** the manager of a hotel.
– ORIGIN C16: Fr., lit. 'master of (the) house'.

maize ● n. chiefly Brit. a cereal plant originating in America and yielding large grains (corn) that are set in rows on a cob. [*Zea mays*.]
– ORIGIN C16: from Sp. *maíz*, from Taino.

Maj. ● abbrev. Major.

majestic ● adj. having or showing imposing