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plausible /pləʊ'zi-bl/ *adj* likely, reasonable, seemingly true; seemingly worthy of approval or praise; fair-showing; specious; (of a person) smooth-tongued and ingratiating; that may be applauded (*obs*); acceptable (*obs*). [L *plaudere* to clap the hands]

■ **plausibility** or **plausibleness** *n*. **plausibly** *adv* in a plausible manner; with applause; by acclamation (*Shakesp*); commendably, pleasantly (*obs*). **plausive** /pləʊ'zɪv/ *adj* plausible (*Shakesp*); pleasing (*Shakesp*); applauding.

plaustral /plɒs'trəl/ *adj* (facetious) of a wagon. [L *plaustrum* a wagon]

play /plə/ *vi* (**playing**; **played**) to engage in pleasurable activity; to perform acts not part of the immediate business of life but in mimicry or rehearsal or in display; to amuse oneself; to sport; to make sport; to trifle; to behave without seriousness; to behave amorously or sexually; to take part in a game; (with *for*) to compete on the side of; to proceed with the game, perform one's part in turn; to deliver a ball, etc, in the course of a game; to co-operate (*inf*); to perform on a musical instrument; to produce or emit music; (of music) to come forth; to act a part; to move about irregularly, lightly, or freely; to have some freedom of movement; to flicker, flutter, shimmer, pass through rapid alternations; to appear faintly and fleetingly (*usu* with *round*); to move in, discharge, or direct a succession, stream, or shower (eg of water, light, waves, or missiles); to contend with weapons (*archaic*); to operate (*obs*); to wield a weapon; to gamble; to have a holiday (*Shakesp*; also *Scot*); to be off work (*N Eng*). ♦ *vt* to perform; to ply, wield; to cause or allow to play; to set in opposition, pit; to send, let off, or discharge in succession or in a stream or shower; to give a limited freedom of movement to; hence, to manage; to allow (a fish) to tire itself by its struggles to get away; to engage in (a game or recreative mimicry); to proceed through (a game, part of a game, or an aggregate of games); to stake or risk in play; to gamble on (*inf*); to bring into operation in a game, as by striking (a ball), by throwing (a card) on the table, by moving (a chess piece); to compete against in a game or sport; to compete on the side of (with *for*); to act (eg comedy or a named play); to act the part of, in a play or in real life; to act or perform in (eg a circuit of theatres or halls or a town, etc); to pretend in fun; to perform music on; to perform (a tune, etc) on a musical instrument; to cause (a radio, stereo system, etc) to emit sound; to lead, bring, send, render, or cause to be by playing; (*reflexive*) to amuse (oneself; *obs* and *Scot*); (*reflexive*) to waste time, fool around (*inf*). ♦ *n* activity; operation; action of wielding; light fluctuating movement or change; some freedom of movement, as opposed to absolute tightness or tautness; scope; recreative activity; display of animals in courtship; amusement; fun; dalliance; a game (*Shakesp*); the playing of a game; manner of playing; procedure or policy in a game; holiday (*Shakesp* and *Scot*); a fair or festival (*dialect*); being off work (*N Eng*); gambling; a drama or dramatic performance; manner of dealing, as in *fair play* (*fig*). [OE *pleg(i)an*, verb, *plega*, noun]

■ **playable** *adj* capable (by nature or by the rules of the game) of being played, or of being played on. **player** *n* a person who plays; a person participating in or skilled at *esp* a game or sport; an actor; a trifter; an instrumental performer; a mechanism for playing a musical instrument; an apparatus for playing records, etc, as in *record player*, *CD player*; (in N Ireland) a terrorist, *esp* one who is young and unknown; anyone who has an interest in and who plays a part in, eg formulating a policy, taking a decision, etc (*inf*). **playful** *adj* full of fun, frolicsome, frisky; high-spirited, humorous. **playfully** *adv*. **playfulness** *n*. **play'let** *n* a short play. **play'some** *adj* playful.

□ **play-act** *vi*. **play-acting** *n* performance of plays; pretence. **play action** *n* (*American football*) an attempt to disguise a passing play by simulating a running play. **play'-actor** or **play'-actress** *n* (*usu derog*) professional actor or actress. **playback** *n* the act of reproducing a recording of sound or visual material, *esp* immediately after it is made; a device for doing this (see also **play back** below). **play'bill** *n* a bill announcing a play. **playbook** *n* a printed play or book of plays. **play-box** *n* (*old*) a box for toys and other valued possessions, *esp* in a boarding school. **playboy** or (*rare*) **playgirl** *n* a light-hearted irresponsible person, *esp* rich, leisured and pleasure-seeking; a child-actor (*archaic*). **playbus** *n* a bus equipped with facilities for children's play, driven to districts where no adequate playgroup facilities are available. **play-by-play** *n* (*N Am*) a running commentary on a sporting event (also *adj*). **play-day** *n* a holiday. **play'-debt** *n* a debt incurred in gambling. **played-out** *adj* exhausted; used up; no longer good for anything. **play piano** see under **pianoforte**. **playfellow** *n* a playmate. **playgirl** see **playboy** above. **play-gôer** *n* someone who habitually attends the theatre. **play-gôing** *n*. **playground** *n* an outdoor area for playing in, *esp* one connected with a school; a place of recreation; a holiday region. **playgroup** *n* an informal, sometimes voluntarily run group having morning or afternoon sessions attended by preschool children sometimes with their parents or carers, for creative and co-operative play. **playhouse** *n* a theatre; a child's toy house, *usu* big enough for a child to enter. **play'ing-card** *n* one of a pack (*usu* of fifty-two cards,

divided into four suits) used in playing games. **playing field** *n* a grass-covered space set apart, marked out, and kept in order for games (a *level* or *flat playing field* (*inf*) fair competition). **playleader** *n* a person trained to supervise and organize children's play in a playground, etc. **playlist** *n* those recordings selected to be broadcast regularly by a radio station. ♦ *vt* to include on a playlist. **playmaker** *n* (*sport*) a member of a team who is skilled at initiating moves that might lead to a score. **play-mare** *n* (*Scot*) a hobby-horse, as in the old morris-dance. **play'mate** *n* a companion in play, *esp* child's play. **play-off** *n* a game to decide a tie; a game between the winners of other competitions; see also **play off** below. **play on** or **upon words** *n* a pun or other manipulation of words depending on their sound. **playpen** *n* an enclosure within which a young child may safely play. **playroom** *n* a room for children to play in. **play'school** *n* a nursery school or playgroup. **play'slip** *n* a form on which a participant in a lottery draw indicates his or her chosen numbers. **play'-spell** *n* a time allowed for play. **play'suit** *n* a set of clothes for a child or woman, *usu* shorts and a top or one-piece, for sunbathing, relaxing, etc. **play'thing** *n* a toy; a person or thing treated as a toy. **play'time** *n* a time for play; (in schools) a set period for playing, *usu* out of doors. **play'-way** *n* the educational use of play. **play-world** *n* an imaginary world feigned in play. **playwright** or **play'-writer** *n* a dramatist.

※ **bring, call** or **come into play** to bring, call or come into exercise, operation or use. **hold in play** (or *archaic* **hold play**) to keep occupied, *esp* to gain time or detain. **in (or out of) play** (of a ball, etc) in (or not in) a position to be played. **make a play for** (*inf*) to try to get; to attempt to seduce. **make great play with** or **of** to make a lot of; to treat or talk of as very important. **make play** to keep things going, push on with the game. **play about** to behave irresponsibly, not seriously. **play along** (with *with*) to co-operate or agree with someone, *usu* temporarily. **play a part** (with *in*) to be instrumental in, help in doing something; to act a theatrical role. **play around** to play about; to have amorous affairs with men or women other than one's partner. **play at** to engage in the game of; to make a pretence of; to practise without seriousness. **play back** to play (a sound or video recording) that has just been made. **play ball** (*inf*) to co-operate. **play by ear** see under **ear¹** (see also **play it by ear** below). **play down** to treat (something) as not very important or probable, *esp* less so than it is. **play fair** (sometimes with *with*) to act honestly. **play false** (sometimes with *with*; *archaic*) to act dishonestly towards or betray someone. **play fast and loose** to act in a shifty, inconsistent, and reckless fashion. **play fine** (in billiards) to strike the object ball near the edge (as opposed to **play full**, to strike it nearer the middle than the edge). **play for safety** to play safe. **play for time** to delay action or decision in the hope or belief that conditions will become more favourable later. **play hard to get** to make a show of unwillingness to co-operate with a view to strengthening one's position. **play havoc** or **hell with** to upset, disorganize; to damage. **play into the hands of** to act so as to give, *usu* unintentionally, an advantage to. **play it** (*inf*; *usu* followed by an *adj*) to behave in or manage a particular situation in a stated way, as in *play it cool*. **play it by ear** to improvise a plan of action to meet the situation as it develops (see also **play by ear** under **ear¹**). **play it (or one's cards) close to the (or one's) chest** to be secretive about one's actions or intentions in a particular matter. **play off** to manipulate so as to counteract; to set (one person against another); to take part in a play-off; to play from the tee (*golf*); to have as a handicap (*golf*); to toss off (*Shakesp*); to bring off (eg a hoax). **play on** to strike the ball onto one's own wicket (*cricket*); (also **play upon**) to direct one's efforts to the exciting of, work upon (feelings, emotions, etc). **play out** to play to the end; to wear out, to exhaust; to act out. **play safe** to take no risks. **play the field** (*inf*) to spread one's interests, affections or efforts over a wide range of subjects, people, activities, etc, rather than concentrating on any single one. **play the game** to act strictly honourably. **play up** to strike up, begin the music; to redouble one's efforts, play more vigorously; to show up well in a crisis or emergency; to give (*esp* undue) prominence to, or to boost; to fool; to function faultily (*inf*); to behave unco-operatively (*inf*); (of an impaired part of the body) to give one trouble or pain (*inf*). **play upon** see **play on** above. **play up** to to act so as to afford opportunities to (another actor); to flatter. **play with** to play in the company of, or as partner or opponent to; to dally with; to stimulate (the genitals of), to masturbate (oneself or someone else).

playa /plə'ya/ *n* a basin which becomes a shallow lake after heavy rainfall and dries out again in hot weather. [Sp]

Play-Doh[®] /plə'dō/ *n* a soft reusable modelling material for young children (loosely, and sometimes also of a home-made version, **playdough**).

PlayStation[®] /plə'stā-shən/ *n* a computer games console used with a TV screen.

plaza /plə'za/ *n* a public square or open, *usu* paved, area in a city or town; a shopping centre (*N Am*). [Sp]