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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. — 10th ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-87779-708-0 (unindexed : alk. paper). — ISBN 0-87779-709-9 (indexed :
alk. paper). — ISBN 0-87779-710-2 (deluxe indexed : alk. paper). — ISBN
0-87779-707-2 (laminated cover, unindexed).

1. English language—Dictionaries. I. Merriam-Webster, Inc.

PE1628.M36 1998

423—dc21

97-41846

CIP

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mind or a manner marked by easy coolness and freedom from uncertainty, diffidence, or embarrassment. **CONFIDENCE** stresses faith in oneself and one's powers without any suggestion of conceit or arrogance (the *confidence* that comes from long experience). **ASSURANCE** carries a stronger implication of certainty and may suggest arrogance or lack of objectivity in assessing one's own powers (handled the cross-examination with complete *assurance*). **SELF-POSSESSION** implies an ease or coolness under stress that reflects perfect self-control and command of one's powers (answered the insolent question with complete *self-possession*). **APLOMB** implies a manifest self-possession in trying or challenging situations (handled the reporters with great *aplomb*).

confidence *adj* (1849): of, relating to, or adept at swindling by false promises (a ~ game) (a ~ man)

confidence interval *n* (1934): a group of continuous or discrete adjacent values that is used to estimate a statistical parameter (as a mean or variance) and that tends to include the true value of the parameter a predetermined proportion of the time if the process of finding the group of values is repeated a number of times

confidence limits *n pl* (1939): the end points of a confidence interval
con-fi-dent \kən-fə-dənt, -dənt/ *adj* [L *confident*, *confidens*, fr. prp. of *confidere*] (1576) 1: characterized by assurance; *esp*: SELF-RELIANT 2 *obs*: TRUSTFUL, CONFIDING 3 *a*: full of conviction; CERTAIN *b*: COCKSURE — **con-fi-dent-ly** *adv*

con-fi-den-tial \kən-fə-dən(t)-shəl/ *adj* (1759) 1: marked by intimacy or willingness to confide (a ~ tone) 2: PRIVATE, SECRET (~ information) 3: entrusted with confidences (~ clerk) 4: containing information whose unauthorized disclosure could be prejudicial to the national interest — compare SECRET, TOP SECRET — **con-fi-den-tial-ity** \-dənt(t)-shē-ə-lə-tē/ *n* — **con-fi-den-tial-ly** \-dənt(t)-sh(ə)-lē/ *adv*

con-fid-ing \kən-ˈfi-dɪŋ/ *adj* (1829): tending to confide in: TRUSTFUL — **con-fid-ing-ly** \-dɪŋ-lē/ *adv* — **con-fid-ing-ness** *n*

con-fig-u-ra-tion \kən-ˈfi-gyā-rā-shən, -kən-, -gə-/ *n* [LL *configuratio*, *configuratio* similar formation, fr. L *configurare* to form from or after, fr. *com-* + *figurare* to form, fr. *figura* figure] (1646) 1 *a*: relative arrangement of parts or elements: as (1): SHAPE (2): contour of land (~ of the mountains) (3): functional arrangement (a small business computer system in its simplest ~) *b*: something (as a figure, contour, pattern, or apparatus) that results from a particular arrangement of parts or components *c*: the stable structural makeup of a chemical compound *esp.* with reference to the space relations of the constituent atoms 2: GESTALT (personality ~) — **con-fig-u-ra-tional** \-shnəl, -shə-nēl/ *adj* — **con-fig-u-ra-tion-al-ly** *adv* — **con-fig-u-ra-tive** \-fi-gyā-rā-tiv, -fi-gə-/ *adj*

con-figure \kən-ˈfi-gyər, *esp* Brit -ˈfi-gər/ *vt* -ured; -ur-ing (1677): to set up for operation *esp.* in a particular way (a fighter plane *configured* for the Malaysian air force)

con-fine \kən-ˈfin, also kən-ˈ-/ *n* [ME, fr. MF or L; MF *confines*, pl., fr. L *confine* border, fr. neut. of *confinis* adjacent, fr. *com-* + *finis* end] (15c) 1 *pl* *a*: something (as borders or walls) that encloses (outside the ~s of the office or hospital — W. A. Nolen); *also*: something that restrains (escape from the ~s of soot and clutter — E. S. Muskie) *b*: SCOPE 3 (work within the ~s of a small group — Frank Newman) 2 *a* *archaic*: RESTRICTION *b* *obs*: PRISON

con-fine \kən-ˈfin/ *vb* **con-fined**; **con-fin-ing** *vi* (1523) *archaic*: BORDER ~ *vt* 1 *a*: to hold within a location *b*: IMPRISON 2: to keep within limits (will ~ my remarks to one subject) *syn* see LIMIT — **con-fin-er** *n*

con-fined \kən-ˈfind/ *adj* (1772): undergoing childbirth
con-fine-ment \kən-ˈfin-mənt/ *n* (1646): an act of confining: the state of being confined (solitary ~); *esp*: LYING-IN

con-firm \kən-ˈfɜrm/ *vt* [ME, fr. OF *confirmer*, fr. L *confirmare*, fr. *com-* + *firmare* to make firm, fr. *firmus* firm] (13c) 1: to give approval to: RATIFY 2: to make firm or firmer: STRENGTHEN 3: to administer the rite of confirmation to 4: to give new assurance of the validity of: remove doubt about by authoritative act or indisputable fact — **con-firm-a-bil-i-ty** \-fɜr-mə-ˈbi-lə-tē/ *n* — **con-firm-a-bil-ly** \-fɜr-mə-bəl/ *adj*

syn CONFIRM, CORROBORATE, SUBSTANTIATE, VERIFY, AUTHENTICATE, VALIDATE mean to attest to the truth or validity of something. **CONFIRM** implies the removing of doubts by an authoritative statement or indisputable fact (confirmed the reports). **CORROBORATE** suggests the strengthening of what is already partly established (witnesses corroborated his story). **SUBSTANTIATE** implies the offering of evidence that sustains the contention (the claims have yet to be substantiated). **VERIFY** implies the establishing of correspondence of actual facts or details with those proposed or guessed at (all statements of fact in the article have been verified). **AUTHENTICATE** implies establishing genuineness by adducing legal or official documents or expert opinion (handwriting experts authenticated the diaries). **VALIDATE** implies establishing validity by authoritative affirmation or by factual proof (validated the hypothesis by experiments).

con-fir-mand \kən-fər-ˈmand/ *n* [L *confirmandus*, gerundive of *confirmare*] (1884): a candidate for religious confirmation

con-fir-ma-tion \kən-fər-ˈmā-shən/ *n* (14c) 1: an act or process of confirming: as (1): a Christian rite conferring the gift of the Holy Spirit and among Protestants full church membership (2): a ceremony *esp.* of Reform Judaism confirming youths in their faith *b*: the ratification of an executive act by a legislative body 2 *a*: confirming proof: CORROBORATION *b*: the process of supporting a statement by evidence — **con-fir-ma-tion-al** \-shnəl, -shə-nēl/ *adj*

priated by the government; **FORFEITED** 2: deprived of property confiscation

con-fis-cate \kən-fə-skāt/ *vt* -cat-ed; -cat-ing (1552) 1: to seize forfeited to the public treasury 2: to seize by or as if by authority
con-fis-ca-tion \kən-fə-skā-shən/ *n* — **con-fis-ca-tor** \kən-fə-skə-tər/ *n* — **con-fis-ca-to-ry** \kən-ˈfis-kə-tōr-ē, -tōr-/ *adj*

con-fit \kən-ˈfē, kən-, kən-/ *n* [F, fr. OF, preparation, preserves, fr. *confire* to prepare — more at **COMFIT**] (1951): meat (as goose, duck or pork) that has been cooked and preserved in its own fat

con-fi-te-or \kən-ˈfē-tē-ōr, -ər/ *n* [ME, fr. L, lit., I confess, fr. the opening words — more at **CONFESS**] (13c): a liturgical form in which sinfulness is acknowledged and intercession for God's mercy requested

con-fi-ture \kən-fə-ˈchūr, -tyūr, -tūr/ *n* [F, fr. MF, fr. *confit*] (18c): preserved or candied fruit: JAM

con-fla-grant \kən-ˈflā-grənt/ *adj* [L *conflagrant*, *conflagrans*, prp. *conflagrare* to burn, fr. *com-* + *flagrare* to burn — more at **BLACK**] (1656): BURNING, BLAZING

con-fla-gra-tion \kən-flā-ˈgrā-shən/ *n* [L *conflagration*, *conflagrare* fr. *conflagrare*] (ca. 1656) 1: FIRE; *esp*: a large disastrous fire — **CONFLICT**, WAR

con-flate \kən-ˈflāt/ *vt* **con-flat-ed**; **con-flat-ing** [L *conflatus*, pp. *conflare* to blow together, fuse, fr. *com-* + *flare* to blow — more at **BLOW**] (1610) 1 *a*: to bring together: FUSE *b*: CONFUSE 2: combine (as two readings of a text) into a composite whole

con-fla-tion \-flā-shən/ *n* (15c): BLEND, FUSION; *esp*: a composite reading or text

con-flict \kən-ˈflikt/ *n* [ME, fr. L *conflictus* act of striking together, *confligere* to strike together, fr. *com-* + *fligere* to strike — more at **PROFLIGATE**] (15c) 1: FIGHT, BATTLE, WAR 2 *a*: competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as divergent ideas, interests, or persons) *b*: mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external, internal demands 3: the opposition of persons or forces that give rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction *syn* see **DISCORD** — **con-flict-ful** \kən-ˈflikt-fəl/ *adj* — **con-flic-tu-al** \kən-ˈflik-cha-wəl, -chəl, -shwəl/ *adj*

con-flict \kən-ˈflikt, -kən-/ *vi* (15c) 1 *archaic*: to contend in warfare 2: to show antagonism or irreconcilability — **con-flic-tion** \kən-ˈflik-shən, kən-/ *n* — **con-flic-tive** \kən-ˈflik-tiv, -kən-/ *adj*

con-flict-ed \kən-ˈflik-təd/ *adj* (1967): having or experiencing an emotional conflict (this unhappy and ~ modern woman — John Updike)

con-flict-ing *adj* (1607): being in conflict, collision, or opposition: incompatible — **con-flict-ing-ly** \-flik-tɪŋ-lē, -flik-/ *adv*

con-flict of interest (1951): a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust

con-flu-ence \kən-ˈflü-ən(t)s, kən-/ *n* (15c) 1: a coming or flowing together, meeting, or gathering at one point (a happy ~ of weather and scenery) 2 *a*: the flowing together of two or more streams *b*: the place of meeting of two streams *c*: the combined stream formed by conjunction

con-flu-ent \-ənt/ *adj* [L *confluent*, *confluens*, prp. of *confluere* to flow together, fr. *com-* + *fluere* to flow — more at **FLUID**] (15c) 1: flowing or coming together; *also*: run together (~ pustules) 2: characterized by confluent lesions (~ smallpox)

con-fluent *n* (1850): a confluent stream; *broadly*: TRIBUTARY
con-flux \kən-ˈfləks/ *n* [ML *confluxus*, fr. L *confluere*] (1606): CONFLUENCE

con-fo-cal \kən-ˈfō-kəl/ *adj* (1867): having the same foci (~ lenses) — **con-fo-cal-ly** \-kəl-/ *adv*

con-form \kən-ˈfɔrm/ *vb* [ME, fr. MF *conformer*, fr. L *conformare*, fr. *com-* + *formare* to form, fr. *forma* form] *vi* (14c): to give the same shape, outline, or contour to: bring into harmony or accord (~ her rows to the slope of the land) ~ *vi* 1: to be similar or identical; *also*: to be in agreement or harmony — used with *to* or *with* 2 *a*: to be obedient or compliant — usu. used with *to* *b*: to act in accordance with prevailing standards or customs *syn* see **ADAPT** — **con-form-er** *n* — **con-form-ism** \-fɔr-mi-zəm/ *n* — **con-form-ist** \-mɪst/ *n* or *adj*
con-form-a-ble \kən-ˈfɔr-mə-bəl/ *adj* (15c) 1: corresponding in form or character: SIMILAR — usu. used with *to* 2: SUBMISSIVE, COMPLIANT 3: following in unbroken sequence — used of geologic strata formed under uniform conditions — **con-form-a-bly** \-blē/ *adv*

con-for-mal \kən-ˈfɔr-məl, (kən-/ *adj* [LL *conformalis* having the same shape, fr. L *com-* + *formalis* formal, fr. *forma*] (1893) 1: having the size of the angle between corresponding curves unchanged (~ transformation) 2 of a map: representing small areas in their true shape

con-for-mance \kən-ˈfɔr-mən(t)s/ *n* (1606): CONFORMITY
con-for-ma-tion \kən-ˈfɔr-mā-shən, -fər-/ *n* (1511) 1: the act of conforming or producing conformity: ADAPTATION 2: formation of something by appropriate arrangement of parts or elements: an assembling into a whole (the gradual ~ of the embryo) 3 *a*: correspondence *esp.* to a model or plan *b*: STRUCTURE *c*: the shape or proportionate dimensions *esp.* of an animal *d*: any of the spatial arrangements of a molecule that can be obtained by rotation of the atoms about a single bond — **con-for-ma-tion-al** \-shnəl, -shə-/ *adj*

con-for-mi-ty \kən-ˈfɔr-mə-tē/ *n, pl* -ties (15c) 1: correspondence in form, manner, or character: AGREEMENT (behaved in ~ with her beliefs) 2: an act or instance of conforming 3: action in accordance with some specified standard or authority (~ to social custom)

con-found \kən-ˈfaʊnd, kən-/ *vt* [ME, fr. MF *confondre*, fr. L *confundere* to pour together, confuse, fr. *com-* + *fundere* to pour — more at **FOUND**] (14c) 1 *a* *archaic*: to bring to ruin; DESTROY *b*: Baffle

“...superb...”

—WILLIAM SAFIRE, *The New York Times*

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ISBN 0-87779-709-9



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CC-009-A01-8910