

EL CAMINO COLLEGE LIBRARY



02002497558

A
HERITAGE®

dictionary

MORE THAN **70,000** ENTRIES

THOROUGHLY REVISED
AND UPDATED

2,500 NEW WORDS
AND MEANINGS

MORE THAN **400** PHOTOGRAPHS
AND ILLUSTRATIONS

EXPERT GUIDANCE
ON CORRECT USAGE



FIFTH
EDITION

The
AMERICAN
HERITAGE®

dictionary

FIFTH
EDITION



Dell

REF
PE =
1628
AL23
2012

Sale of this book without a front cover may be unauthorized. If this book is coverless, it may have been reported to the publisher as "unsold or destroyed" and neither the author nor the publisher may have received payment for it.

2012 Dell Mass Market Edition

Copyright © 2012 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company
All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Dell, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York.

Dell is a registered trademark of Random House, Inc., and the colophon is a trademark of Random House, Inc.

AMERICAN HERITAGE and the eagle logo are registered trademarks of American Heritage Inc. Their use is pursuant to a license agreement with American Heritage Inc.

Derived from the hardcover edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*, originally published in the United States by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in November 2011.

Words are included in this dictionary on the basis of their usage. Words that are known to have current trademark registrations are shown with initial capital and are also identified as trademarks. No investigation has been made of common-law trademark rights in any word, because such investigation is impracticable. The inclusion of any word in this dictionary is not, however, an expression of the publisher's opinion as to whether or not it is subject to proprietary rights. Indeed, no definition in this dictionary is to be regarded as affecting the validity of any trademark.

ISBN 978-0-553-58322-9

Cover design: Stoltze Design
Cover photograph: Getty Images

Printed in the United States of America

www.bantamdell.com

19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10

Dell mass market edition: July 2012

ing to cause damage, injury, or death. 2. Caused by unexpected force or injury rather than by natural causes: a *violent death*. 3. Very forceful: A *violent squall*. 4. Having or showing great emotional force. 5. Intense; extreme. [*< Lat. violentus < vis, force.*] —**vi'o-lent-ly** *adv.*

vi-o-let (vi'ə-lit) ► *n.* 1a. A low-growing herb having spurred irregular flowers that are characteristically purplish-blue but sometimes yellow or white. b. Any of several similar plants. 2. The hue of the short-wave end of the visible spectrum; reddish blue. [*< Lat. viola.*]

vi-o-lin (vi'ə-lin') ► *n.* A small stringed instrument held horizontally at the shoulder and played with a bow, having an unfretted fingerboard and four strings tuned at intervals of a fifth. [Ital. *violino*.] —**vi'o-lin'ist** *n.*

vi-o-lon-cel-lo (vē'ə-lən-chēl'ō, vi'ə-) ► *n., pl. -los* A cello. [Ital.]

VIP (vē'l-pē') ► *n.* Informal A very important person.

vi-per (vi'pər) ► *n.* 1. Any of several venomous snakes having a single pair of long hollow fangs. 2. A harmless but supposedly venomous snake. 3. A malicious or treacherous person. [*< Lat. vipera, snake < viviparus, viviparous.*] —**vi'perous** *adj.*

vi-ra-go (və-rā'gō, -rā'-, vir'ə-gō') ► *n., pl. -goes or -gos* A noisy, domineering woman. [Lat. *virago < vir, man.*]

vi-ral (vi'rəl) ► *adj.* 1. Of or caused by a virus. 2. Of or relating to the propagation of ideas or information by means of social networks rather than mass media. —**vi'rally** *adv.*

vir-e-o (vir'ē-ō') ► *n., pl. -os* Any of various small songbirds having grayish or greenish plumage. [Lat. *vireo*, a kind of bird.]

Vir-gil also **Ver-gil** (vîr'jəl) 70–19 B.C. Roman poet. —**Vir-gil'i-an** (-jîl'ē-ən) *adj.*

vir-gin (vîr'jîn) ► *n.* 1. A person who has not experienced sexual intercourse. 2. A female virgin. Used chiefly in historical contexts. 3. Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. ► *adj.* 1. Of or being a virgin; chaste. 2. In a pure or natural state. [*< Lat. virgō, virgin-.*] —**vir-gin'i-ty** *n.*

vir-gin-al' (vîr'jə-nəl) ► *adj.* 1. Of or befitting a virgin. 2. Untouched or unsullied; fresh.

vir-gin-al' (vîr'jə-nəl) ► *n.* A small legless harp-sichord popular in the 16th and 17th cent. [*< VIRGIN.*]

Vir-gin-ia (vər-jîn'yə) A state of the E US on Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic. Cap. Richmond. —**Vir-gin'ian** *adj. & n.*

Virginia creeper ► *n.* A North American climbing vine having compound leaves with five leaflets and bluish-black berries.

Virginia reel ► *n.* An American country-dance in which couples perform various steps together to the instructions of a caller.

Virgin Islands 1. A group of islands of the NE West Indies E of Puerto Rico; divided politically into the British Virgin Islands to the NE and the Virgin Islands of the United States to the SW. 2. Officially **Virgin Islands of the United States** A US territory constituting the SW group of the Virgin Is. Cap. Charlotte Amalie.

Vir-go (vîr'gō) ► *n.* 1. A constellation in the region of the celestial equator between Leo and Libra. 2. The 6th sign of the zodiac.

vir-gule (vîr'gyool) ► *n.* See **slash** (sense 2). [*< Llat. virgula.*]

vir-ile (vîr'əl, -il') ► *adj.* 1. Of or having the characteristics of an adult male, esp. the ability to have sexual intercourse. 2. Robustly manly. 3. Energetic or forceful. [*< Lat. vir, man.*] —**vir-il'i-ty** (və-rîl'i-tē) *n.*

vi-rol-o-gy (vî-rôl'ə-jē) ► *n.* The study of viruses and viral diseases. —**vi-rol'o-gist** *n.*

virtu-al (vîr'chō-əl) ► *adj.* 1. Existing in essence or effect though not in actual fact or form: the *virtual extinction of the buffalo*. 2. Created, simulated, or carried on by means of a computer or computer network: *virtual conversations in a chatroom*. [*< Lat. virtūs, excellence; see VIRTUE.*] —**vir'tu-al'i-ty** (-ăl'i-tē) *n.*

virtu-ally (vîr'chō-ə-lē) ► *adv.* In effect: The city was *virtually paralyzed by the transit strike*.

virtual reality ► *n.* A computer simulation of a real or imaginary system in real time.

vir-tue (vîr'chōō) ► *n.* 1a. Moral excellence and righteousness; goodness. b. An example or kind of moral excellence. 2. Archaic Chastity, esp. in a woman. 3. A particularly efficacious or beneficial quality; advantage. 4. Effective force or power. —*idiom:* by virtue of On the basis of. [*< Lat. virtūs < vir, man.*]

vir-tu-osi-ty (vîr'chōō-ōs'i-tē) ► *n., pl. -ties* The technical skill or style of a virtuoso.

vir-tu-o-so (vîr'chōō-ō'sō, -zō) ► *n., pl. -sos or -sî (-sē)* 1. A musician with masterly ability, technique, or style. 2. A person with masterly skill or technique in any field, esp. the arts. [Ital.] —**vir'tu-o'sic** *adj.*

vir-tu-ous (vîr'chōō-əs) ► *adj.* 1. Having or showing virtue, esp. moral excellence. 2. Archaic Chaste. —**vir'tu-ous-ly** *adv.*

vir-u-lent (vîr'yə-lənt, vir'ə-) ► *adj.* 1. Causing or promoting the rapid onset of severe illness, as an infection or toxin. 2. Extremely hostile or malicious. [*< Lat. virulentus.*] —**vir'u-lence** *n.* —**vir'u-lent-ly** *adv.*

vi-rus (vî'rəs) ► *n.* 1a. Any of various submicroscopic agents that infect living organisms, often causing disease, and that consist of a single or double strand of RNA or DNA surrounded by a protein coat. b. A disease caused by a virus. 2. Comp. A self-replicating program that copies itself into other programs on a computer, usu. having negative effects. [Lat. *virus, poison.*]

vi-sa (vē'zə) ► *n.* An official authorization appended to a passport, permitting entry into and travel within a particular country or region. [*< Lat. visa < p.part. of videre, see.*]

vis-age (vîz'ij) ► *n.* 1. The face or facial expression of a person. 2. Appearance; aspect. [*< OFr. < Lat. visus, appearance < videre, see.*]

vis-à-vis (vē'zə-vē') ► *prep.* 1. Compared with. 2. In relation to. ► *adv.* Face to face. ► *n., pl. vis-à-vis* (-vēz', -vē') One opposite or corresponding to another; counterpart. [Fr., face to face.]

Vi-sa-yan Islands (vi-sî'ən) An island group of the central Philippines in and around the Visayan Sea between Luzon and Mindanao. —**Vi-sa'yan** *adj. & n.*

vis-cer-a (vis'ər-ə) ► *pl.n.* The internal body organs, esp. those contained within the abdomen and thorax. [*< Lat. viscus, viscera.*]

vis-cer-al (vis'ər-əl) ► *adj.* 1. Of, situated in, or affecting the viscera. 2. Arising from impulse or sudden emotion rather than from thought

- ing to cause damage, injury, or death. 2. Caused by unexpected force or injury rather than by natural causes: *a violent death*. 3. Very forceful: *A violent squall*. 4. Having or showing great emotional force. 5. Intense; extreme. [*< Lat. violentus < vis, force.*] —**vi'o-lent-ly** *adv.*
- vi-o-let** (vī'ə-līt) ► *n.* 1a. A low-growing herb having spurred irregular flowers that are characteristically purplish-blue but sometimes yellow or white. b. Any of several similar plants. 2. The hue of the short-wave end of the visible spectrum; reddish blue. [*< Lat. viola.*]
- vi-o-lin** (vī'ə-līn') ► *n.* A small stringed instrument held horizontally at the shoulder and played with a bow, having an unfretted fingerboard and four strings tuned at intervals of a fifth. [*Ital. violino.*] —**vi'o-lin'ist** *n.*
- vi-o-lon-cel-lo** (vē'ə-lən-chēl'ō, vī'ə-) ► *n., pl. -los* A cello. [*Ital.*]
- VIP** (vē'i-pē') ► *n. Informal* A very important person.
- vi-per** (vī'pər) ► *n.* 1. Any of several venomous snakes having a single pair of long hollow fangs. 2. A harmless but supposedly venomous snake. 3. A malicious or treacherous person. [*< Lat. vipera, snake < viviparus, VIVIPAROUS.*] —**vi'per-ous** *adj.*
- vi-ra-go** (və-rā'gō, -rā'-, vir'ə-gō') ► *n., pl. -goes or -gos* A noisy, domineering woman. [*Lat. viragō < vir, man.*]
- vi-ral** (vī'rəl) ► *adj.* 1. Of or caused by a virus.
- vir-gule** (vûr'gyool) ► *n.* See **slash** (sense 2). [*< L.Lat. virgula.*]
- vir-ile** (vîr'əl, -îl') ► *adj.* 1. Of or having the characteristics of an adult male, esp. the ability to have sexual intercourse. 2. Robustly manly. 3. Energetic or forceful. [*< Lat. vir, man.*] —**vir-il'i-ty** (və-rîl'i-tē) *n.*
- vi-rol-o-gy** (vî-rôl'ə-jē) ► *n.* The study of viruses and viral diseases. —**vi-rol'o-gist** *n.*
- vir-tu-al** (vûr'chōō-əl) ► *adj.* 1. Existing in essence or effect though not in actual fact or form: *the virtual extinction of the buffalo*. 2. Created, simulated, or carried on by means of a computer or computer network: *virtual conversations in a chatroom*. [*< Lat. virtūs, excellence; see VIRTUE.*] —**vir'tu-al'i-ty** (-ăl'i-tē) *n.*
- vir-tu-al-ly** (vûr'chōō-ə-lē) ► *adv.* In effect: *The city was virtually paralyzed by the transit strike.*
- virtual reality** ► *n.* A computer simulation of a real or imaginary system in real time.
- vir-tue** (vûr'chōō) ► *n.* 1a. Moral excellence and righteousness; goodness. b. An example or kind of moral excellence. 2. *Archaic* Chastity, esp. in a woman. 3. A particularly efficacious or beneficial quality; advantage. 4. Effective force or power. —**idiom: by virtue of** On the basis of. [*< Lat. virtūs < vir, man.*]
- vir-tu-os-i-ty** (vûr'chōō-ôs'i-tē) ► *n., pl. -ties* The technical skill or style of a virtuoso.
- vir-tu-o-so** (vûr'chōō-ô'sô, -zô) ► *n., pl. -sos or -si* (-sē) 1. A musician with masterly ability, technique, or style. 2. A person with mas-