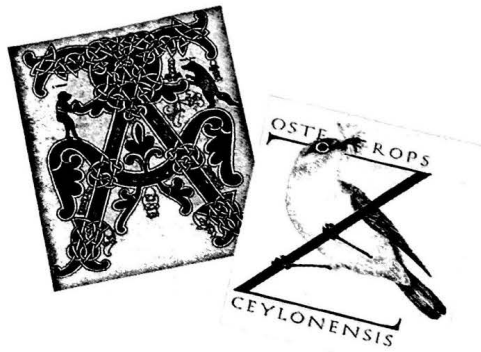


The
**American
Heritage® Dictionary**
of the English Language

FOURTH EDITION



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1. English language—Dictionaries

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—*tr.* 1. To distinguish or identify (a disease, for example) by diagnosis. 2. To identify (a person) as having a particular disease or condition by means of a diagnosis. 3. To analyze the nature or cause of: *diagnose the reasons for an economic downturn.* —*intr.* To make a diagnosis. [Back-formation from DIAGNOSIS.] —*di'ag-nōs'ā-ble* *adj.*

di·ag·no·sis (di'ag-nō'sis) *n., pl. -ses (-sēz)* 1. *Medicine a.* The act or process of identifying or determining the nature and cause of a disease or injury through evaluation of patient history, examination, and review of laboratory data. *b.* The opinion derived from such an evaluation. 2a. A critical analysis of the nature of something. *b.* The conclusion reached by such analysis. 3. *Biology* A brief description of the distinguishing characteristics of an organism, as for taxonomic classification. [Greek *diagnōsis*, discernment, from *diagnōskein*, to distinguish: *dia-*, apart; see *DIA-* + *gignōskein*, *gnō-*, to come to know, discern; see *gnō-* in Appendix I.]

di·ag·no·stic (di'ag-nōstik) *adj.* 1. Of, relating to, or used in a diagnosis. 2. Serving to identify a particular disease; characteristic. *♦ n.* 1. The art or practice of medical diagnosis. Often used in the plural with a singular verb. 2. A symptom or a distinguishing feature serving as supporting evidence in a diagnosis. 3. An instrument or a technique used in medical diagnosis. [Greek *diagnōstikos*, able to distinguish, from *diagnōstos*, distinguished, from *diagnōskein*, to distinguish. See DIAGNOSIS.] —*di'ag-nōs'ti-cā-ly* *adv.*

di·ag·no·stic·ian (di'ag-nōstish'yan) *n.* A person who diagnoses, especially a physician specializing in medical diagnostics.

di·ag·o·nal (di'ag-nəl) *adj.* 1. *Mathematics a.* Joining two non-adjacent vertices of a polygon. *b.* Joining two vertices of a polyhedron not in the same face. 2. Having a slanted or oblique direction. 3. Having oblique lines or markings. 4. Relating to or being the front left and back right feet or the front right and back left feet of a quadruped. *♦ n.* 1. *Mathematics* A diagonal line or plane. 2. Something, such as a row, course, or part, that is arranged obliquely. 3. A fabric woven with diagonal lines. 4. A virgule. [Latin *diagonalis*, from Greek *diagonios*, from angle to angle: *dia-*, *dia-* + *goniā*, angle, corner; see *goni-* in Appendix I.] —*di'ag-o-nā-ly* *adv.*

di·a·gram (di'a-grām') *n.* 1. A plan, sketch, drawing, or outline designed to demonstrate or explain how something works or to clarify the relationship between the parts of a whole. 2. *Mathematics* A graphic representation of an algebraic or geometric relationship. 3. A chart or graph. *♦ tr.v.* -grammed, -gramming, -grams or -gramed, -graming, -grams To indicate or represent by or as if by a diagram. [Latin *diagramma*, figure, from Greek, a figure worked out by lines, plan, from *diagramhein*, to mark out, delineate: *dia-*, *dia-* + *graphein*, to write; see *gerbh-* in Appendix I.] —*di'a-gram'mā-ble* *adj.* —*di'a-gram'mat'ic* (-grā-māt'ik), *di'a-gram'mat'ic-al* *adj.* —*di'a-gram'mat'icā-ly* *adv.*

di·a·ki·ne·sis (di'a-kā-nē'sis, -kī-) *n., pl. -ses (-sēz)* The final stage of the prophase in meiosis, characterized by shortening and thickening of the paired chromosomes, formation of the spindle fibers, disappearance of the nucleolus, and degeneration of the nuclear membrane. —*di'a-kī-net'ic* (-nēt'ik) *adj.*

di·al (di'al, dil) *n.* 1. A graduated surface or face on which a measurement, such as speed, is indicated by a moving needle or pointer. 2a. The face of a clock. *b.* A sundial. 3a. The panel or face on a radio or television receiver on which the frequencies or channels are indicated. *b.* A movable control knob or other device on a radio or television receiver used to change the frequency. 4. A rotatable disk on a telephone with numbers and letters, used to signal the number to which a call is made. *♦ v.* -aled, -aling, -als or -alled, -alling, -als —*tr.* 1. To measure with or as if with a dial. 2. To point to, indicate, or register by means of a dial. 3. To control or select by means of a dial: *dial a radio station.* 4. To call (a party) on a telephone. 5. To signal (a number) in making a telephone call: *The program dials the number and then connects to the file server.* —*intr.* 1. To use a dial. 2. To use a telephone. [Middle English, sundial, clock, from Old French *dial*, from Medieval Latin *diāle*, from neuter of *diālis*, daily, from Latin *diēs*, day. See *dyeu-* in Appendix I.] —*di'al-er* *n.*

di·a·lect (di'a-lēkt') *n.* 1a. A regional or social variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, especially a variety of speech differing from the standard literary language or speech pattern of the culture in which it exists: *Cockney is a dialect of English.* *b.* A variety of language that with other varieties constitutes a single language of which no single variety is standard: *the dialects of Ancient Greek.* 2. The language peculiar to the members of a group, especially in an occupation; jargon: *the dialect of science.* 3. The manner or style of expressing oneself in language or the arts. 4. A language considered as part of a larger family of languages or a linguistic branch. Not in scientific use: *Spanish and French are Romance dialects.* [French *dialecte*, from Old French, from Latin *dialectus*, form of speech, from Greek *dialekto*, speech, from *dialegesthai*, to discourse, use a dialect: *dia-*, between, over; see *DIA-* + *legesthai*, middle voice of *legein*, to speak; see *leg-* in Appendix I.] —*di'a-lēc'tal* *adj.* —*di'a-lēc'tal-ly* *adv.*

Synonyms *dialect*, *vernacular*, *jargon*, *cant*, *argot*, *lingo*, *patois* These nouns denote forms of language that vary from the standard. *Dialect* usually applies to the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation characteristic of specific geographic localities or social classes. The *vernacular* is the informal everyday language spoken by a people. *Jargon* is specialized language understood only by a particular group, as one sharing an occupation or interest. *Cant* now usually refers to the specialized vocabulary of a group or trade and is often marked by the use of stock phrases. *Argot* applies especially to the language of the underworld. *Lingo* is often applied to language that is unfamiliar or difficult to understand. *Patois*

is sometimes used as a synonym for *jargon* or *cant*, but it can also refer to a regional dialect that has no literary tradition.

dialect atlas *n.* See *linguistic atlas*.

dialect geography *n.* See *linguistic geography*.

di·a·lec·tic (di'a-lēk'tik) *n.* 1. The art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments. 2a. The process especially associated with Hegel of arriving at the truth by stating a thesis, developing a contradictory antithesis, and combining and resolving them into a coherent synthesis. *b.* Hegel's critical method for the investigation of this process. 3a. The Marxian process of change through the conflict of opposing forces, whereby a given contradiction is characterized by a primary and a secondary aspect, the secondary succumbing to the primary, which is then transformed into an aspect of a new contradiction. Often used in the plural with a singular or plural verb. *b.* The Marxian critique of this process. 4. *Dialectics* (used with a sing. verb) A method of argument or exposition that systematically weighs contradictory facts or ideas with a view to the resolution of their real or apparent contradictions. 5. The contradiction between two conflicting forces viewed as the determining factor in their continuing interaction. [Middle English *dialectik*, from Old French *dialectique*, from Latin *dialectica*, logic, from Greek *dialektikē* (tekhne), (art) of debate, feminine of *dialektikos*, from *dialekto*, speech, conversation. See DIALECT.] —*di'a-lēc'ti-cā-ly* *adv.*

dialectical materialism *n.* The Marxian interpretation of reality that views matter as the sole subject of change and all change as the product of a constant conflict between opposites arising from the internal contradictions inherent in all events, ideas, and movements.

di·a·lec·ti·cian (di'a-lēk-tish'yan) *n.* 1. One who specializes in the study of dialects. 2. One who practices or is skilled in dialectic.

di·a·lec·to·log·y (di'a-lēk-tōl'ō-jē) *n.* The study of dialects. —*di'a-lēc'tō-log'i-cā-ly* *adv.* —*di'a-lēc'tō-log'i-cā-ly* *adv.*

di·a·log (di'a-lōg', -lōg') *n. & v.* Variant of *dialogue*.

dialog box *n.* A window that appears on a computer screen, presenting information or requesting input.

di·a·log·ic (di'a-lōj'ik) also **di·a·log·ic·al** (-i-kəl) *adj.* Of, relating to, or written in dialogue. —*di'a-log'i-cā-ly* *adv.*

di·a·lo·gist (di'al'ō-jist, di'a-lō'gist, -lōg'ist) *n.* 1. A writer of dialogue. 2. One who speaks in a dialogue. —*di'a-lo-gis'tic* (di'a-lō-jis'tik), *di'a-lo-gis'tic-al* *adj.*

di·a·logue or **di·a·log** (di'a-lōg', -lōg') *n.* 1. A conversation between two or more people. 2a. Conversation between characters in a drama or narrative. *b.* The lines or passages in a script that are intended to be spoken. 3. A literary work written in the form of a conversation: *the dialogues of Plato.* 4. *Music* A composition or passage for two or more parts, suggestive of conversational interplay. 5. An exchange of ideas or opinions: *achieving constructive dialogue with all political elements.* *♦ v.* -logued, -loguing, -logues or -logged, -loging, -logs —*tr.* To express as or in a dialogue. —*intr.* 1. To converse in a dialogue. 2. *Usage Problem* To engage in an informal exchange of views. [Middle English *dialog*, from Old French *dialogue*, from Latin *dialogus*, from Greek *dialogos*, conversation, from *dialegesthai*, to discuss. See DIALECT.] —*di'a-log'uer* *n.*

Usage Note In recent years the verb sense of *dialogue* meaning "to engage in an informal exchange of views" has been revived, particularly with reference to communication between parties in institutional or political contexts. Although Shakespeare, Coleridge, and Carlyle used it, this usage today is widely regarded as jargon or bureaucratese. Ninety-eight percent of the Usage Panel rejects the sentence *Critics have charged that the department was remiss in not trying to dialogue with representatives of the community before hiring the new officers.*

dial tone *n.* A low, steady tone in a telephone receiver indicating that a number may be dialed.

di·al·up (di'al-ūp', dil'-) *adj.* Of or relating to a network connection, as to the Internet, which requires that a telephone number be dialed: *My dial-up connection was interrupted by call waiting.*

di·al·y·sis (di-āl'i-sis) *n., pl. -ses (-sēz)* 1. The separation of smaller molecules from larger molecules or of dissolved substances from colloidal particles in a solution by selective diffusion through a semipermeable membrane. 2. Hemodialysis. [Greek *dialusis*, separating, dissolution, from *dialuein*, to break up, dissolve: *dia-*, apart; see *DIA-* + *luein*, to loosen; see *leu-* in Appendix I.] —*di'a-lyt'ic* (-ā-lit'ik) *adj.* —*di'a-lyt'i-cā-ly* *adv.*

di·a·lyze (di'a-līz') *tr. & intr.v.* -lyzed, -lyzing, -lyzes To subject to or undergo dialysis. [Back-formation from DIALYSIS.] —*di'a-lyz'a-ble* *adj.*

di·a·lyz·er (di'a-līz'ər) *n.* A machine equipped with a semipermeable membrane and used for performing dialysis.

diam. *abbr.* *diameter*

di·a·mag·net (di'a-māg'nēt) *n.* A diamagnetic substance. [From DIAMAGNETIC.]

di·a·mag·net·ic (di'a-māg-nēt'ik) *adj.* Of or relating to a substance that is repelled by a magnet. —*di'a-mag'ne-tism* (-nī-tiz'm) *n.*

di·a·man·te or **di·a·man·tē** (dē'a-mān-tā') *n.* 1. A small, glittering ornament, such as a rhinestone or a sequin, applied to fabric or a garment. 2. Fabric that has been covered with many of these ornaments. [French *diamanté*, decorated with diamonds, from *diamant*, diamond. See DIAMOND.]

