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or reinforcement: bullets volleyed into the backstop of a flood-control canal.

■ Baseball a high fence or similar structure behind the home plate area. ■ Baseball, informal a catcher: he tore the chest protector completely off the big Yankee backstop.

■ figurative an emergency precaution or last resort: the human operator has to act as the ultimate backstop when things go badly wrong.

►v. [trans.] support or reinforce: the founding banks were backstopping the loans.

■ Hockey act as goaltender for: the man who backstopped the Edmonton Oilers.

backstreet |'bæk,streɪt| ►n. a minor street remote from a main road: the fetid backstreets of the shanty town | [as adj.] a backstreet garage.

►adj. [attrib.] operating or performed secretly, and typically illegally: a loophole that allowed backstreet chemists to make methamphetamine.

backstretch |'bæk,streɪtʃ| ►n. the part of a racecourse that is farthest from the grandstand and parallel to the homestretch.

■ the area adjacent to a racetrack where the horses are stabled and stable employees have temporary living accommodations.

backstroke |'bæk,stroʊk| ►n. [in sing.] a swimming stroke performed on the back with the arms lifted alternately out of the water in a backward circular motion and the legs extended and kicking: I concentrated on the backstroke most of the time | [as adj.] I won the backstroke and breaststroke events | [as adv.] they would swim freestyle and then backstroke.

■ (the backstroke) a race, typically of a specified length or kind, in which such a style of swimming is used: he was fifth in the 200-meter backstroke.

-DERIVATIVES **backstroke**er n.

backswipe |'bæk,sweɪp| ►adj. swept, slanted, or sloped backward: his backswipe hair.

backswimmer |'bæk,swɪmə| ►n. a predatory aquatic bug that swims on its back using its long back legs as oars. It is able to capture large prey such as tadpoles and fish. See also **WATER BOATMAN**.

■ Family Notonectidae, suborder Heteroptera: *Notonecta* and other genera.

backswing |'bæk,swɪŋ| ►n. a backward swing, esp. of an arm or of a golf club when about to hit a ball.

backsword |'bæk,sɔːd| ►n. a sword with only one cutting edge.

back talk ►n. informal rude or impertinent remarks made in reply to someone in authority: no back talk, I'm warning you.

back-to-back ►adj. consecutive: back-to-back homers in a major league baseball game.

►adv. (back to back) 1 (of two people) facing in opposite directions with backs touching: they sat on the ground, leaning back to back.

2 consecutively, in succession: the games were played back to back.

back-to-nature ►adj. [attrib.] advocating or relating to reversion to a simpler way of life: a back-to-nature lifestyle.

backtrack |'bæk,treɪk| ►v. 1 [intrans.] retrace one's steps: she had to bypass two closer farms and backtrack to them later | figurative to backtrack a little, the case is a complex one.

2 figurative reverse one's previous action or opinion: the unions have had to backtrack on their demands.

2 [trans.] pursue, trace, or monitor: he was able to backtrack the back to a ridge nearby.

back-up |'bæk,ʌp| ►n. 1 help or support: no police backup could be expected.

2 a person or thing that can be called on if necessary; a reserve: I've got a security force as backup | the filter is an excellent backup to other systems | [as adj.] a backup generator.

2 Computing the procedure for making extra copies of data in case the original is lost or damaged: automatic online backup | [as adj.] a backup system.

3 a copy of this type.

3 an overflow caused by a stoppage, as in water or automobile traffic: there are long backups on all routes.

backup light ►n. a light at the rear of a vehicle that comes on when the vehicle is in reverse gear.

backward |'bækwəd| ►adj. 1 [attrib.] directed behind or to the rear: she left the room without a backward glance | a gradual backward movement.

2 looking toward the past, rather than being progressive; retrograde: he said the decision was a backward step.

2 (of a person) having learning difficulties: a lively child but a bit backward.

■ having made less than normal progress: economically backward countries.

►adv. (also backwards) 1 (of a movement) away from one's front; in the direction of one's back: he took a step backward | Harry suddenly fell backward into a somersault.

■ in reverse of the usual direction or order: counting backward | baseball caps turned backward. ■ with the rear facing forward: the canoe turned around backward.

2 toward or into the past: a loving look backward at his early life.

■ toward or into a worse state: a giant step backward for child-centered education.

-PHRASES **backward and forward** in both directions alternately; to and fro. **bend (or lean) over backward** to do something informal make every effort, esp. to be fair or helpful: Jensen bent over backward to be fair.

know something backward (and forward) be entirely familiar with something.

-DERIVATIVES **backwardly** adv.; **backwardness** n.

-ORIGIN Middle English: from earlier *abackward*, from **ABACK**.

USAGE: In British English, the spelling **backwards** is more common than **backward**. In US English, the adverb form is sometimes spelled **backwards** (the ladder fell backwards), but the adjective is almost always **backward** (a backward glance). Directional words using the suffix *-ward* tend to have no *s* ending in US English, although **backwards** is more common than **afterwards**, **towards**, or **forwards**. The *s* ending often (but not always) appears in the phrases **backwards and forwards** and **bending over backwards**.

backward compatible (also **backwards compatible**) ►adj. (of computer hardware or software) able to be used with an older piece of hardware or software without special adaptation or modification.

-DERIVATIVES **backward compatibility** n.

backwash |'bæk,wɒʃ; -wəʃ| ►n. the motion of receding waves.

■ a backward current of water or air created by the motion of an object through it: the backwash of a truck on the highway. ■ figurative repercussions: the backwash of the Cuban missile crisis.

►v. [trans.] clean (a filter) by reversing the flow of fluid through it.

backwater ►n. |'bæk,wɔːtə; -wətə| a part of a river not reached by the current, where the water is stagnant: the eels inhabit backwaters.

■ an isolated or peaceful place: a sleepy Midwest backwater. ■ a place or condition in which no development or progress is taking place: the country remained an economic backwater.

backwind |'bæk,wɪnd| ►v. [trans.] (of a sail or vessel) deflect a flow of air into the back of (another sail or vessel).

►n. a flow of air deflected into the back of a sail.

backwoods |'bæk,wʊdz| ►plural n. [often as adj.] remote uncleared forest land: backwoods homesteads.

■ a remote or sparsely inhabited region, esp. one considered backward.

-DERIVATIVES **backwoodsman** |'mæn| n.

backyard |'bæk,jɑːd| ►n. 1 a yard at the back of a house or other building, typically surrounded by a fence: a tree-shaded succession of backyards | [as adj.] a casual backyard party.

2 the area close to where one lives, or the territory close to a particular country, regarded with proprietary concern: anything was preferable to a nuclear dump in their own backyard.

Baccolod |'bæk,ləd| ►n. a city in the central Philippines, a port on the northwestern coast of the island of Negros; pop. 364,180.

Bacon |'bækən|, Francis, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans (1561–1626), English statesman and philosopher. As a scientist he advocated the inductive method. Notable works: *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) and *Novum Organum* (1620).

Bacon², Francis (1909–92), Irish painter. His work chiefly depicts human figures in grotesquely distorted postures, their features blurred or erased.

Bacon³, Roger (c. 1214–94), English philosopher, scientist, and Franciscan monk. Most notable for his work in the field of optics, he emphasized the need for an empirical approach to scientific study.

bacon |'bækən| ►n. cured meat from the back or sides of a pig.

-PHRASES **bring home the bacon** informal 1 supply material provision or support; earn a living. 2 achieve success. **save someone's bacon** see **SAVE**¹.

-ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French, from a

Germanic word meaning 'ham, flitch'; related to **BACK**.

Baconian |'bæ,kəniən| ►adj. of or relating to Sir Francis Bacon or his inductive method of reasoning and philosophy.

■ relating to or denoting the theory that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare.

►n. an adherent of Bacon's philosophical system.

■ a supporter of the theory that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare.

bacteraemia |'bæktə'remɪə| (Brit. **bacteraemia**) ►n. Medicine the presence of bacteria in the blood.

-DERIVATIVES **bacteremic** |-'mɪk| adj.

-ORIGIN late 19th cent.: from **BACTERIUM** + **-EMIA**.

bacteriophage |'bæktəri'feɪ| plural form of **BACTERIOPHAGE**.

USAGE: See **usage** at **BACTERIUM**.

bactericide |'bæktəri'sɪd| ►n. a substance that kills bacteria.

-DERIVATIVES **bactericidal** |-'tɪrɪ'sɪd| adj.

bacterio- (also **bacteri-**; also **bacter-** before a vowel) ►comb. form representing **BACTERIUM**.

bacteriocin |'bæktəri'ʃaɪn| ►n. Biology a protein produced by bacteria of one strain and active against those of a closely related strain.

-ORIGIN 1950s: from French *bactériocine*, from Greek *baktērion* 'small cane' + a shortened form of **COLICIN**.

bacteriologic |'bæktəri'ɒləjɪk| ►adj. [attrib.] of or relating to bacteriology or bacteria.

■ relating to or denoting germ warfare.

-DERIVATIVES **bacteriologic** |-'jɪk| adj.; **bacteriologically** |-'ɪk(ə)lə| adv.

bacteriology |'bæktəri'ɒləjɪ| ►n. the study of bacteria.

-DERIVATIVES **bacteriologist** |-'jɪst| n.

bacteriolysis |'bæktəri'ɒləsɪs| ►n. Biology the rupture of bacterial cells, esp. by an antibody.

-DERIVATIVES **bacteriolytic** |-'tɪrɪə'li:tɪk| adj.

bacteriophage |'bæktəri'feɪ| ►n. Biology a virus that parasitizes a bacterium by infecting it and reproducing inside it.

-ORIGIN 1920s: from **BACTERIUM** + Greek *phagein* 'eat.'

bacteriorhodopsin |'bæktəri'ɒrə'dɒpsɪn| ►n. a protein pigment in the bacterium *Halobacterium halobium* that when illuminated transports protons across the cytoplasmic membrane in large numbers.

bacteriostat |'bæktəri'stæt| ►n. a substance that prevents the multiplying of bacteria without destroying them.

-DERIVATIVES **bacteriostasis** |-'tɪrɪə'stæsɪs| n.; **bacteriostatic** |-'tɪrɪə'stætɪk| adj.; **bacteriostatically** |-'tɪrɪə'stætɪk(ə)l| adv.

-ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from **BACTERIUM** + Greek *statos* 'standing.'

Bacterium |'bæktəri'əm| ►n. (pl. **bacteria** |-'tɪrɪə|) a member of a large group of unicellular microorganisms that have cell walls but lack organelles and an organized nucleus, including some that can cause disease.

Bacteria are widely distributed in soil, water, and air, and on or in the tissues of plants and animals. Formerly included in the plant kingdom, they are now classified separately (as prokaryotes). They play a vital role in global ecology, as the chemical changes they bring about include those of organic decay and nitrogen fixation. Much modern biochemical knowledge has been gained from the study of bacteria because they grow easily and reproduce rapidly in laboratory cultures.

-DERIVATIVES **bacteriologist** |-'tɪrɪə'jɪst| adj.

-ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek *baktērion*, diminutive of *baktēria* 'staff, cane' (because the first ones to be discovered were rod-shaped). Compare with **BACILLUS**.

USAGE: **Bacteria** is the plural form (derived from Latin) of **bacterium**. Like any other plural, it should be used with the plural form of the verb: *the bacteria causing salmonella are killed by thorough cooking, not the bacteria ... is killed* However, the unfamiliarity of the form means that **bacteria** is often mistakenly treated as a singular form, as in the example above.

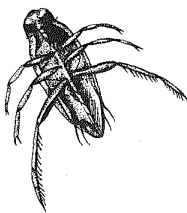
bacteriuria |'bæktəri'ʊəriə| ►n. Medicine the presence of bacteria in the urine.

bacterize |'bæktəri'z| ►v. [trans.] (usu. **be bacterized**) treat with bacteria.

-DERIVATIVES **bacterization** |-'bæktəri'zəʃən| n.

bacteroid |'bæktəri'ɒɪd| ►adj. of the nature of or resembling a bacterium.

See page xxxviii for the **Key to Pronunciation**



backswimmer
Notonecta glauca

■ n. an act of melting: *the precipitation falls as snow and is released during the spring melt.*

■ metal or other material in a melted condition. **■** an amount melted at any one time. **■** [with adj.] a sandwich, hamburger, or other dish containing or topped with melted cheese: *a tuna melt.*

—PHRASES **melt in the (or your) mouth** (of food) be deliciously light or tender and need little or no chewing: *my shortbread melts in the mouth* | [as adj.] *melt-in-your-mouth chicken livers.*

—DERIVATIVES **melt-able** adj.; **melter** n.; **melt-ing-ly** adv.

—ORIGIN Old English *meltan*, *mieltan*, of Germanic origin; related to Old Norse *melta* 'to melt, digest,' from an Indo-European root shared by Greek *meldein* 'to melt,' Latin *molis* 'soft,' also by **MALT**.

meltdown |'melt,daʊn| **■** n. an accident in a nuclear reactor in which the fuel overheats and melts the reactor core or shielding.

■ figurative a disastrous event, esp. a rapid fall in share prices: *the 1987 stock market meltdown.*

mel-temi |'mel'tem-i| (also **meltemi wind**) **■** n. a dry northwesterly wind that blows during the summer in the eastern Mediterranean. Also called **ETESIAN WIND**.

—ORIGIN from modern Greek *meltemi*, Turkish *meltem*.

melting point **■** n. the temperature at which a given solid will melt.

melting pot **■** n. a pot in which metals or other materials are melted and mixed.

■ figurative a place where different peoples, styles, theories, etc., are mixed together: *a melting pot of disparate rhythms and cultures.*

mel-ton |'meltən| **■** n. heavy woolen cloth with a close-cut nap, used for overcoats and jackets.

—ORIGIN early 19th cent.: named after Melton Mowbray, a town in central England, formerly a center of manufacturing.

melt-water |'melt,wōtər; -wā-tər| **■** n. (also **meltwaters**) water formed by the melting of snow and ice, esp. from a glacier.

Melville |'melvəl; -vil|, Herman (1819–91), US novelist and short-story writer. His experiences on a whaling ship formed the basis of several novels, notably *Moby Dick* (1851). Other notable works: *White-Jacket* (1850), *The Confidence Man* (1857), and *Billy Budd* (first published in 1924).

mem. **■** abbr. **■** member. **■** memoir. **■** memorandum. **■** memorial.

member |'membər| **■** n. 1 an individual belonging to a group such as a society or team: *a member of the drama club* | *interest from members of the public.*

■ an animal or plant belonging to a taxonomic group: *a member of the lily family.* **■** (also **Member**) a person formally elected to take part in the proceedings of certain organizations: *members of Congress* | *Member of Parliament.* **■** a part or branch of a political body: [as adj.] *member countries of the Central African Customs Union.*

2 a constituent piece of a complex structure: *the main member that joins the front and rear axles.*

■ a part of a sentence, equation, group of figures, mathematical set, etc.

3 archaic a part or organ of the body, esp. a limb.

■ (also **male member**) the penis. Compare with **MEMBRUM VIRILE**. **■** Botany any part of a plant viewed with regard to its form and position, rather than to its function.

—DERIVATIVES **mem-bered** adj. [in combination] (chiefly Chemistry) *a six-membered oxygen-containing ring.*

—ORIGIN Middle English: via Old French from Latin *membrum* 'limb.'

mem-ber-ship |'membər,ʃɪp| **■** n. the fact of being a member of a group: *Taiwan has applied for membership in the World Trade Organization* | [as adj.] *a membership card.*

■ [in sing.] the number or body of members in a group: *our membership has grown by 600,000 in the past 18 months.*

mem-brane |'mem.brən| **■** n. Anatomy & Zoology a pliable sheetlike structure acting as a boundary, lining, or partition in an organism.

■ a thin pliable sheet or skin of various kinds: *the concrete should include a membrane to prevent water seepage.* **■** Biology a microscopic double layer of lipids and proteins that bounds cells and organelles and forms structures within cells.

—DERIVATIVES **mem-brane-ous** |'membərə'næʃəs| adj.; **mem-brane-ous** |'membərə'næʃəs| adj.; **mem-branous** |'membərə'nəs; mem'brənəs| adj.

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *membrana*, from *membrum* 'limb.'

mem-branous lab-y-rinth |'membərə'nəs; mem'brənəs| **■** n. see **LABYRINTH**.

mem-brum vir-ile |'membərəm 'vɪrəl; vɪ'rɪl| **■** n. archaic the penis.

—ORIGIN Latin, literally 'male member.'

meme |mēm| **■** n. Biology an element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, esp. imitation.

—DERIVATIVES **mem-etic** |mē'metɪk; mē-| adj.

—ORIGIN 1970s: from Greek *mimēma* 'that which is imitated,' on the pattern of *gene*.

Me-mel |'mæməl| **1** German name for **KLAIPEDA**.

■ a former district of East Prussia, centered on the city of Memel (Klaipeda).

2 the Neman River in its lower course (see **NEMAN**).

mem-en-to |mə'men,tō| **■** n. (pl. **-os** or **-oes**) an object kept as a reminder or souvenir of a person or event: *you can purchase a memento of your visit.*

—ORIGIN late Middle English (denoting a prayer of commemoration): from Latin, literally 'remember,' imperative of *meminisse*.

mem-en-to mor-i |mə'men,tō 'mōr-i| **■** n. (pl. same) an object serving as a warning or reminder of death, such as a skull.

—ORIGIN Latin, literally 'remember (that you have) to die.'

mem-o |'memō| **■** n. (pl. **-os**) informal a written message, esp. in business.

—ORIGIN early 18th cent.: abbreviation of **MEMORANDUM**.

mem-oir |'mem,wä; -wör| **■** n. 1 a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources: *in 1924 she published a short memoir of her husband.*

■ (memoirs) an autobiography or a written account of one's memory of certain events or people.

2 an essay on a learned subject: *an important memoir on Carboniferous crustacea.*

■ (memoirs) the proceedings or transactions of a learned society: *Memoirs of the Horticultural Society.*

—DERIVATIVES **mem-oir-ist** |-'ist| n.

—ORIGIN late 15th cent. (denoting a memorandum or record): from French *mémoire* (masculine), a special use of *mémorie* (feminine) 'memory.'

mem-o-ra-bil-i-ty |'mem(ə)rə'bɪlə| **■** plural n. objects kept or collected because of their historical interest, esp. those associated with memorable people or events: *World Series memorabilia.*

■ archaic memorable or noteworthy things.

—ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Latin, neuter plural of *memorabilis* 'memorable.'

mem-o-ra-ble |'mem(ə)rəbəl| **■** adj. worth remembering or easily remembered, esp. because of being special or unusual: *this victory was one of the most memorable of his career.*

—DERIVATIVES **mem-o-ra-bil-i-ty** |'mem(ə)rə'bɪlə| n.; **mem-o-ra-bly** |-'blɪ| adv.

—ORIGIN late 15th cent.: from Latin *memorabilis*, from *memorare* 'bring to mind,' from *memor* 'mindful.'

mem-o-ran-dum |'memərə'ændəm| **■** n. (pl. **memoranda** |-'dɑ| or **memorandums**) a note or record made for future use: *the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation.*

■ a written message, esp. in business or diplomacy: *he told them of his decision in a memorandum.* **■** Law a document recording the terms of a contract or other legal details.

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin, literally 'something to be brought to mind,' gerundive of *memorare*. The original use was as an adjective, placed at the head of a note of something to be remembered or of a record made for future reference.

mem-o-ri-al |mə'mōrɪəl| **■** n. 1 something, esp. a structure, established to remind people of a person or event: *a monument built as a memorial to those who fell in the Civil War.*

■ [as adj.] intended to commemorate someone or something: *a memorial service in the dead man's honor.*

2 chiefly historical a statement of facts, esp. as the basis of a petition: *the council sent a strongly worded memorial to the chancellor.*

■ a record or chronicle: *Mrs. Carlyle's Letters and Memorials.* **■** an informal diplomatic paper.

—ORIGIN late Middle English: from late Latin *memorialis* 'record, memory, monument,' from Latin *memoralis* 'serving as a reminder,' from *memoria* 'memory.'

Mem-o-ri-al Day **■** n. (in the US) a day on which those who died in active military service are remembered, traditionally observed on May 30 but now officially observed on the last Monday in May. Also called (esp. formerly) **DECORATION DAY**.

■ (also **Confederate Memorial Day**) (in the Southern states) any of various days (esp. the fourth Monday in April) on which similar remembrances are observed.

mem-o-ri-al-ist |mə'mōrɪəlɪst| **■** n. a person who gives a memorial address or writes a memorial.

■ a writer of biographical or historical memorials; a memoirist.

mem-o-ri-al-ize |mə'mōrɪə'lɪz| **■** v. [trans.] preserve the memory of; commemorate: *the novel memorialized their childhood summers.*

—DERIVATIVES **mem-o-ri-al-i-za-tion** |mə'mōrɪə'lə'zæʃən| n.; **mem-o-ri-al-ize-r** n.

mem-o-ri-al park **■** n. a cemetery: *Pine View Memorial Park.*

■ a park designed for contemplation or recreation, commemorating the death of an individual or of many people through a natural or other disaster, or through military action: *United States Air Force Memorial Museum* | *Fort Griswold Memorial Park* | *Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park.*

mem-o-rize |'memə,rɪz| **■** v. [trans.] commit to memory; learn by heart: *he memorized thousands of verses.*

—DERIVATIVES **mem-o-riz-able** |-'rɪzəbəl| adj.; **mem-o-riza-tion** |'memərə'zæʃən| n.; **mem-o-riz-er** n.

mem-o-ry |'mem(ə)rɪ| **■** n. (pl. **-ies**) 1 a person's power to remember things: *I've a great memory for faces* | *my grandmother is losing her memory.*

■ the power of the mind to remember things: *the brain regions responsible for memory.* **■** the mind regarded as a store of things remembered: *he searched his memory frantically for an answer.* **■** the capacity of a substance to return to a previous state or condition after having been altered or deformed. See also **SHAPE MEMORY**.

2 something remembered from the past; a recollection: *one of my earliest memories is of sitting on his knee* | *the mind can bury all memory of traumatic abuse.*

■ the remembering or recollection of a dead person, esp. one who was popular or respected: *clubs devoted to the memory of Sherlock Holmes.* **■** the length of time over which people continue to remember a person or event: *the worst slump in recent memory.*

3 the part of a computer in which data or program instructions can be stored for retrieval.

■ capacity for storing information in this way: *the module provides 16Mb of memory.*

—PHRASES **from memory** without reading or referring to notes: *each child was required to recite a verse from memory.* **in memory of** intended to remind people of, esp. to honor a dead person. **take a trip (or walk) down memory lane** deliberately recall pleasant or sentimental memories.

—ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *mémorie*, from Latin *memoria*, from *memor* 'mindful, remembering.'

mem-o-ry bank **■** n. the memory device of a computer or other device.

mem-o-ry board **■** n. Computing a detachable board containing memory chips, which can be connected to a computer.

mem-o-ry book **■** n. a scrapbook.

mem-o-ry cell **■** n. Physiology a long-lived lymphocyte capable of responding to a particular antigen on its reintroduction, long after the exposure that prompted its production.

mem-o-ry map-ping **■** n. a technique in which a computer treats peripheral devices as if they were located in the main memory.

mem-o-ry trace **■** n. a hypothetical permanent change in the nervous system brought about by memorizing something; an engram.

Mem-ph-is |'memfəs| **1** an ancient city in Egypt, whose ruins are situated on the Nile River about 10 miles (15 km) south of Cairo. It is the site of the pyramids of Saqqara and Giza and the Sphinx.

2 a river port on the Mississippi River in extreme southwestern Tennessee; pop. 650,100. Founded in 1819, it was the home of blues music in the late 19th century and the scene of the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. It is also the childhood home and burial place of Elvis Presley.

mem-sa-hib |'mem,sə(h)ɪb; -səb| **■** n. Indian, dated a married white or upper-class woman (often used as a respectful form of address by nonwhites).

—ORIGIN from *mem* (representing an Indian pronunciation of **MA'AM**) + **SAHIB**.

men |men| plural form of **MAN**.

men-ace |'menəs| **■** n. a person or thing that is likely to cause harm; a threat or danger: *a new initiative aimed at beating the menace of drugs* | *the snakes are a menace to farm animals.*

■ a threatening quality, tone, or atmosphere: *he spoke the words with a hint of menace.* **■** often humorous a person or thing that causes trouble or annoyance: *his kid sister, that chatty little menace, had become the knockout of the neighborhood.*

■ v. [trans.] (often **be menaced**) threaten, esp. in a malign