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2005

Random House Webster's College Dictionary
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mel-a-nite (mel'ə nīt'), *n.* a deep black variety of andradite garnet. [1800-10; < Gk *melan-*, *s.* of *mēlās* black + *-ite*] — **mel-a-nit/ik** (-nīt'ik), *adj.*

melano- or **melan-**, a combining form meaning "black": *melanocyte*. [*<* Gk. comb. form of *mēlās*]

mel-an-o-cyte (mə lan'ə sīt', mel'ə nā-), *n.* a cell that produces the dark pigment melanin. [1885-90]

melan/ocyte-stim/ulating hor/mone, *n.* See MSH. [1950-55]

mel-a-noid (mel'ə nōid'), *adj.* 1. of or characterized by melanosis. 2. resembling melanin; darkish. [1850-55]

mel-a-no-ma (mel'ə nō'mā), *n., pl. -mas, -ma-ta* (-mə tə), any of several types of skin tumors characterized by the malignant growth of melanocytes. [1825-35]

mel-an-o-phore (mə lan'ə fōr', -fōr', mel'ə nā-), *n.* a connective-tissue cell that contains melanin and is responsible for color changes in many fishes and reptiles. [1900-05]

mel-a-no-sis (mel'ə nō'sis), *n., pl. -ses* (-sēz), 1. abnormal deposition or development of black or dark pigment in the tissues. 2. a discoloration caused by this. [1815-25; < LGk *mēlōnōsis* a becoming black. See MELANO-, -OSIS]

mel-a-not-ic (mel'ə nōt'ik), *adj.* of or having melanosis. [1820-30]

mel-a-to-nin (mel'ə tō'nin), *n.* a hormone secreted by the pineal gland in inverse proportion to the amount of light received by the retina, important in regulating biorhythms. [1955-60; < Gk *mēlā(s)* black + *tonē* + *-in*]

Mel/ba toast, *n.* narrow slices of thin crisp toast. [1920-25; after N. MELBA]

Mel-chior (mel'kyōr, -kē ōr'), *n.* one of the three Magi.

Mel-chite (mel'kit), *n.* a Christian in Egypt or Syria who accepts the definition of faith adopted by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. [1610-20; < ML *melchita* < MGK *Melchitēs* royalist = *melch-* (< Syriac *malḵā* king, or < a der. adj. of apurtenance) + *-itēs* -ite']

Mel-chiz-e-dek (mel'kiz'ē dek'), *n.* 1. a priest and king of Salem. Gen. 14:18. 2. the higher order of priests in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

meld (meld), *v.t.* 1. to announce and display (a counting combination of playing cards) for a score. —*v.i.* 2. to announce and display such a combination of cards. —*n.* 3. the act of melding. 4. any combination of cards to be melded. [1895-1900; < G *melden* to announce]

meld (meld), *v.t., v.i.* 1. to merge; blend. —*n.* 2. a blend. [1935-40, Amer.; perh. b. MELT' and WELD']

me-lee or **mē-lée** (mā'lā, mā'lā, mel'ā), *n.* 1. a confused hand-to-hand fight or struggle among several people. 2. a state of tumultuous confusion. [1640-50; < F *mêlée*. See MEDLEY]

mel-ic (mel'ik), *adj.* 1. of or pertaining to song. 2. of or pertaining to an elaborate form of Greek lyric poetry of the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. [1690-1700; < Gk *melikós* = *mēl(os)* limb, song + *-ikos* -ic]

mel-i-lot (mel'ə lōt'), *n.* a cloverlike plant of the genus *Melilotus*, of the legume family, grown as forage. [1375-1425; ME *melillote* (< MF) < L *mēlilotos* < Gk *mēlilotos* a clover = *mēl(i)* honey + *lōtós* lotus]

mel-i-o-rate (mēl'ya rāt', mē'lē ə-), *v.t., v.i., -rat-ed, -rat-ing*. AMELIORATE. [1545-55; < L *meliōrātus*, ptp. of *meliōrāre* to make better, der. of *melior* better] — **mel-i-o-ra-tion**, *n.* — **mel-i-o-ra-tive** *adj.* — **mel-i-o-ra-tor**, *n.*

mel-i-o-rism (mēl'ya rīz'am, mē'lē ə-), *n.* the doctrine that the world tends to become better or may become better by human effort. [1855-60; < L *meliior* better + *-ism*] — **mel-i-o-rist**, *n., adj.*

mel-is-ma (mī līz'mā), *n., pl. -mas, -ma-ta* (-mə tə), a musical phrase of several notes sung to one syllable, as in plainsong. [1605-15; < Gk *mēlisma* song. See MELODY, -ISM] — **mel-is-mat-ic** (mel'iz-mat'ik), *adj.*

mel-i-f-lu-ent (mə lif'lō'ənt), *adj.* MELLIFLUOUS. [1595-1605]

mel-lif-lu-ous (mə lif'lō'əs), *adj.* 1. sweetly or smoothly flowing: a *mellifluous voice*. 2. sweetened with or as if with honey. [1375-1425; late ME < LL *mellifluus* = L *melli-* (*s.* of *mel*) honey + *-fluus* flowing] — **mel-lif-lu-ous-ly**, *adv.* — **mel-lif-lu-ous-ness**, *n.*

mel-i-o-phone (mel'ə fōn'), *n.* a valved brass band instrument similar to the French horn. [1925-30; MELLO(W) + -PHONE]

mel-low (mēl'ō), *adj., -low-er, -low-est, v. -adj.* 1. sweet and full-flavored from ripeness, as fruit. 2. soft and rich, as sound, lights, or colors. 3. made gentle by age or maturity. 4. friable or loamy, as soil. 5. pleasantly intoxicated. 6. free from tension or discord. —*v.t., v.i.* 7. to make or become mellow. 8. **mellow out**, *Slang*, to relax. [1400-50; alter. of ME *meruw*, OE *mearu* soft] — **mel-low-ness**, *n.*

mel-lo-de-on (mə lō'dē'ən), *n.* a small reed organ. [1840-50, Amer.; < G, formed on *Melodie* melody; see ACCORDION]

mel-lod-ic (mə lōd'ik), *adj.* 1. MELODIOUS. 2. of or pertaining to melody as distinguished from harmony and rhythm. [1815-25; < LL < Gk] — **mel-lod-i-cal-ly**, *adv.*

mel-lod-i-ous (mə lō'dē'əs), *adj.* 1. of the nature of or characterized by melody; tuneful. 2. producing melody; sweet-sounding. [1375-1425; < ML] — **mel-lod-i-ous-ly**, *adv.* — **mel-lod-i-ous-ness**, *n.*

mel-o-dist (mel'ə dist), *n.* a composer or singer of melodies.

mel-o-dize (mel'ə dīz'), *v., -dized, -diz-ing*. —*v.t.* 1. to make melodious. —*v.i.* 2. to compose melodies. [1655-65] — **mel-o-diz'er**, *n.*

mel-o-dra-ma (mel'ə drā'mā, -dram'ə), *n., pl. -mas*. 1. a dramatic form that exaggerates emotion and emphasizes plot or action over

characterization. 2. melodramatic behavior or events. 3. (in the 17th-early 19th centuries) a romantic drama with music interspersed. [1800-10; < F *mélodrame* = *mélo-* (< Gk *mēlos* song) + *drame* DRAMA] — **mel-o-dra-ma-tist** (-dram'ə tist, -drā'mā-), *n.*

mel-o-dra-mat-ic (mel'ə drā mat'ik), *adj.* 1. of, like, or befitting melodrama. 2. exaggeratedly emotional or sentimental; disproportionately intense. —*n.* 3. **melodramatics**, melodramatic writing or behavior. [1810-20] — **mel-o-dra-mat-i-cal-ly**, *adv.*

mel-o-dy (mel'ə dē), *n., pl. -dies*. 1. musical sounds in agreeable succession or arrangement. 2. a rhythmical succession of musical tones organized as a distinct phrase or sequence of phrases. [1250-1300; ME *melodie* < ML *melōdia* < Gk *mēlōidia* (choral) singing = *mel-* (see MELIC) + *-ōid-* (see ODE) + *-ia* -y'] — **mel-o-dy-less**, *adj.*

mel-on (mel'ən), *n.* 1. the fruit of any of various plants of the gourd family, as the muskmelon or watermelon. 2. medium crimson or deep pink. 3. the upper portion of the head of a whale or dolphin. 4. a. a large extra dividend for stockholders. b. a windfall of money. [1350-1400; ME < LL *mēlōn-* (*s.* of *mēlō*), short for *mēlopepō* < Gk *mēlopepōn* = *mēlo(n)* apple + *pēpōn* melon; see *PEPO*]

Mel-pom-e-ne (mel pōm'ə nē'), *n.* the Muse of tragedy. [*<* L *Melpomenē* < Gk *Melpomēnē* = fem. of prp. of *mēlpēsthai* to sing]

melt (melt), *v.i.* 1. to become liquefied by heat. 2. to dissolve: *The lozenge will melt on your tongue.* 3. to diminish to nothing: *His fortune slowly melted away.* 4. to pass; blend: *Night melted into day.* 5. to become softened in feeling. 6. *Obs.* to be subdued or overwhelmed by sorrow, dismay, etc. —*v.t.* 7. to reduce to a liquid state by heat: *Fire melts ice.* 8. to cause to dwindle or dissipate. 9. to cause to change or blend gradually. 10. to soften in feeling: *a story to melt your heart.* —*n.* 11. the act or process of melting or the state of being melted. 12. something that is melted. 13. a sandwich or other dish topped with melted cheese. [bef. 900; ME, OE *meltan* to melt, c. ON *melta* to digest, Gk *mēlein* to melt] — **mel-t-a-ble**, *adj.* — **mel-t-a-bil-ity**, *n.* — **mel-t-ing-ly**, *adv.* — **mel-t'er**, *n.*

melt (melt) also **milt**, *n.* the spleen, esp. of a cow or pig when used for food. [1575-85; dial. (mainly Scots, N England) var. of MILT']

melt-down (melt'doun'), *n.* 1. the melting of a significant portion of a nuclear-reactor core due to inadequate cooling of the fuel elements. 2. any quickly developing breakdown, mishap, or accident. [1960-65]

melt/ing point, *n.* the temperature at which a solid substance melts or fuses. [1835-45]

melt/ing pot, *n.* 1. a container in which metals or other substances are heated until they fuse. 2. a country, locality, or situation in which a blending of races, peoples, or cultures takes place. [1375-1425]

mel-ton (mel'tn), *n.* a heavily fulled woolen cloth tightly constructed and finished with a smooth face concealing the weave. [1815-25; after Melton Mowbray, town in Leicestershire, England]

melt-wa-ter (melt'wō'tər, -wot'ər), *n.* water from melted snow or ice.

mem (mem), *n.* the 13th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. [1895-1900; < Heb *mēm*, akin to *mayim* water]

mem., 1. member. 2. memoir. 3. memorandum. 4. memorial.

mem-ber (mem'bər), *n.* 1. a person, animal, plant, or thing belonging to or forming part of an organization, taxon, or other group. 2. a part or organ of an animal body; a limb. 3. **PENIS**. 4. a structural entity of a plant body. 5. a constituent part of any structural or composite whole, as a subordinate architectural feature of a building. 6. a person belonging to a legislative body. 7. *Math.* a. either side of an equation. b. an element of a set. 8. a stratigraphic unit recognized within a geologic formation and mapped as such. [1250-1300; ME *membre* < OF < L *membrum*] — **mem-ber-less**, *adj.*

mem-ber-ship (mem'bər ship'), *n.* 1. the state of being a member, as of a society. 2. the status of a member. 3. the total number of members belonging to an organization, society, etc. [1640-50]

mem-brane (mem'brān), *n.* 1. a thin, pliable sheet or layer of animal or vegetable tissue, serving to line an organ, connect parts, etc. 2. any thin, pliable material used as a filter, separator, resonator, etc. [1375-1425; late ME; ME *membraan* parchment < L *membrāna*. See MEMBER, -AN'] — **mem-brane-less**, *adj.*

mem-brane bone, *n.* a bone that develops from or within a connective tissue membrane rather than from cartilage. [1875-80]

mem-bra-nous (mem'brā nəs), *adj.* 1. consisting of, of the nature of, or resembling membrane. 2. characterized by the formation of a membrane. [1590-1600] — **mem-bra-nous-ly**, *adv.*

me-me (mēm), *n.* a cultural item that is transmitted by repetition in a manner analogous to the biological transmission of genes. [1976; < Gk *mīmēsthai* to imitate, copy; coined by R. Dawkins, Brit. biologist]

me-men-to (mə men'tō), *n., pl. -tos, -toes*. 1. something that serves as a reminder of what is past or gone; keepsake; souvenir. 2. anything serving as a reminder or warning. 3. (*cap.*) either of two prayers in the canon of the Roman Catholic Mass, one for persons living and the other for persons dead. [1350-1400; ME < L *mementō*, impv. of *meminisse* to remember] — **Usage**. MEMENTO is sometimes spelled MOMENTO. Though this spelling occurs frequently in edited writing, it is usually considered an error.

memento (mə mēn'tō), *n., pl. memento*. 1. a skull, serving as a reminder of death. [1585-95; < L *mementō mori* remember (that you must) die]

mem-o (mem'ō), *n., pl. mem-os*, memorandum.