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lines of latitude. ■ **(latitudes)** regions, especially with reference to their temperature and distance from the equator: *temperate latitudes* | *northern latitudes*.

2 [mass noun] scope for freedom of action or thought: *journalists have considerable latitude in criticizing public figures*.

3 Photography the range of exposures for which an emulsion or printing paper will give acceptable contrast.

DERIVATIVES **latitudinal** adjective, **latitudinally** adverb.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *latitudo* 'breadth', from *latus* 'broad'.

latitudinarian /ˌlætɪtʃuːˈdɪnəriən/ adjective allowing latitude in religion; showing no preference among varying creeds and forms of worship.

► noun a person with a latitudinarian attitude.

DERIVATIVES **latitudinarianism** noun.

ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *latitudo* 'breadth' (see **latitude**) + *-arian*. The term was first applied in a derogatory sense to more liberal and tolerant Anglican clerics.

Latium /ˈleɪtjəm/ an ancient region of west central Italy, west of the Apennines and south of the River Tiber. Settled during the early part of the 1st millennium BC by a branch of the Indo-European people known as the Latini, it had become dominated by Rome by the end of the 4th century BC; it is now part of the modern region of Lazio.

latke /ˈlʌtkə/ ► noun (in Jewish cookery) a pancake, especially one made with grated potato.

ORIGIN Yiddish.

Latona /ləˈtəʊnə/ Roman Mythology Roman name for **Leto**.

La Tour /ləˈtuə/, French /la tur/, Georges de (1593–1652), French painter. He is best known for his nocturnal religious scenes and his subtle portrayal of candlelight. Notable works: *St Joseph the Carpenter* (1645) and *The Denial of St Peter* (1650).

latría /ləˈtɹɪə, ˈlætɹɪə/ ► noun [mass noun] (in the Roman Catholic Church) supreme worship allowed to God alone. Compare with **dulia**.

ORIGIN early 16th cent.: from late Latin, from Greek *latreia* 'worship', from *latreuein* 'serve'.

latrine /ləˈtɹɪn/ ► noun a toilet, especially a communal one in a camp or barracks.

ORIGIN Middle English (rare before the mid 19th cent.): via French from Latin *latrina*, contraction of *lavatrina*, from *lavare* 'to wash'.

-latry ► combining form denoting worship of a specified thing: *idolatry*.

ORIGIN from Greek *-latría* 'worship'.

latte /ˈlæteɪ, ˈlæteɪ/ ► noun a drink made by adding a shot of espresso coffee to a glass or cup of frothy steamed milk.

ORIGIN from Italian (*caffè*) *latte*, literally 'milk (coffee)'.

latten /ˈlæt(ə)n/ ► noun [mass noun] historical an alloy of copper and zinc resembling brass, hammered into thin sheets and used to make monumental brasses and church ornaments.

ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *laton*, of unknown origin.

latter ► adjective [attrib.] 1 occurring or situated nearer to the end of something than to the beginning: *the latter half of 1989* | *heart disease dogged his latter years*. ■ recent: *the project has had low cash flows in latter years*.

2 (the latter) denoting the second or second mentioned of two people or things: *the Russians could advance into either Germany or Austria—they chose the latter option* | [as noun] *the President appoints the Prime Minister and, on the latter's advice, the rest of the government*.

ORIGIN Old English *lætra* 'slower', comparative of *læt* (see **late**).

USAGE It is not considered good writing style to use *latter* to refer to more than two things. For an explanation, see **USAGE** at **FORMER**.

latter-day ► adjective [attrib.] modern or contemporary, especially when mirroring some person or thing of the past: *the book is built round the story of the Flood and a latter-day Noah*.

Latter-Day Saints (abbrev.: **LDS**) ► plural noun the Mormons' name for themselves.

latterly ► adverb recently: *latterly, his painting has shown a new freedom of expression*. ■ in the later stages of something, especially of a person's life:

he worked on the paper for fifty years, latterly as its political editor.

lattice ► noun a structure consisting of strips of wood or metal crossed and fastened together with square or diamond-shaped spaces left between, used as a screen or fence or as a support for climbing plants.

■ an interlaced structure or pattern resembling a lattice: *the lattice of branches above her*. ■ Physics a regular repeated three-dimensional arrangement of atoms, ions, or molecules in a metal or other crystalline solid.

ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *lattis*, from *latte* 'lath', of Germanic origin.

latticed ► adjective decorated with or in the form of a lattice: *a latticed screen*.

lattice energy ► noun Chemistry a measure of the energy contained in the crystal lattice of a compound, equal to the energy that would be released if the component ions were brought together from infinity.

lattice frame (also **lattice girder**) ► noun an iron or steel structure consisting of two horizontal beams connected by diagonal struts.

lattice window ► noun a window with small panes set in diagonally crossing strips of lead.

latticework ► noun [mass noun] interlacing strips of wood, metal, or other material forming a lattice.

latticino /ˌlætɪˈtʃɪnəʊ/ (also **latticino** /-nəʊ/) ► noun [mass noun] an opaque white glass used in threads to decorate clear Venetian glass.

ORIGIN Italian, literally 'dairy produce', from medieval Latin *lacticinum*.

Latvia /ˈlætviə/ a country on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, between Estonia and Lithuania; pop. 2,231,500 (est. 2009); official language, Latvian; capital, Riga.

Latvia was annexed by Russia in the 18th century after periods of Polish and Swedish rule. It was proclaimed an independent republic in 1918, but in 1940 was annexed by the Soviet Union as a constituent republic. In 1991, on the break-up of the Soviet Union, Latvia became an independent republic once again.

Latvian ► noun 1 a native or inhabitant of Latvia.

2 [mass noun] the official language of Latvia, which belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family and has about 1.5 million speakers.

► adjective relating to Latvia or its language.

Laud /lɔːd/, William (1573–1645), English prelate, Archbishop of Canterbury 1633–45. His attempts to restore some pre-Reformation practices in England and Scotland aroused great hostility and were a contributory cause of the English Civil War. He was executed for treason.

laud /lɔːd/ ► verb [with obj.] formal praise (a person or their achievements) highly: *the obituary lauded him as a great statesman and soldier* | (as adj., with submodifier **lauded**) *her much-lauded rendering of Lady Macbeth*.

► noun [mass noun] archaic praise: *all glory, laud, and honour to Thee Redeemer King*.

ORIGIN late Middle English: the noun from Old French *laude*, the verb from Latin *laudare*, both from Latin *laus*, *laud* 'praise' (see also **lauds**).

laudable ► adjective (of an action, idea, or aim) deserving praise and commendation: *laudable though the aim might be, the results have been criticized*.

DERIVATIVES **laudability** noun, **laudably** adverb.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *laudabilis*, from *laus*, *laud* 'praise'.

laudanum /ˈlɔːd(ə)nəm, ˈlɒ-/ ► noun [mass noun] an alcoholic solution containing morphine, prepared from opium and formerly used as a narcotic painkiller.

ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (applied to various preparations containing opium): modern Latin, the name given by Paracelsus to a costly medicament of which opium was believed to be the active ingredient; perhaps a variant of Latin *ladanum* (see **ladanum**).

laudation /lɔːd(ə)n(ə)n/ ► noun [mass noun] formal praise; commendation.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *laudatio*(-n), from the verb *laudare* (see **laud**).

laudatory /ˈlɔːd(ə)t(ə)rɪ/ ► adjective (of speech or writing) expressing praise and commendation.

ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: from late Latin *laudatorius*, from *laudat* 'praised', from the verb *laudare* (see **laud**).

Lauder /ˈlɔːdə/, Sir Harry (1870–1950), Scottish music-hall comedian; born **Hugh MacLennan Lauder**. He became highly popular singing songs such as

'Roamin' in the Gloamin', and entertained troops at home and abroad in both world wars.

lauds /lɔːdz/ ► noun a service of morning prayer in the Divine Office of the Western Christian Church, traditionally said or chanted at daybreak, though historically it was often held with matins on the previous night.

ORIGIN Middle English: from the frequent use, in Psalms 148–150, of the Latin imperative *laudate!* 'praise ye!' (see also **laud**).

laugh ► verb [no obj.] make the spontaneous sounds and movements of the face and body that are the instinctive expressions of lively amusement and sometimes also of derision: *he rarely smiled or laughed* | *she couldn't help laughing at his jokes* | *we fell about laughing*. ■ **(laugh at)** treat with ridicule or scorn. ■ **(laugh something off)** dismiss something by treating it in a light-hearted way: *he laughed off suggestions that the company was in trouble*. ■ **(be laughing)** informal be in a fortunate or successful position: *if next year's model is as successful, Ford will be laughing*.

► noun 1 an act of laughing: *she gave a loud, silly laugh*. 2 (a laugh) informal something that causes laughter; a source of fun, amusement, or derision: *come along, it'll be a laugh* | *she decided to play along with him for a laugh* | *that's a laugh, the idea of you cooking a meal* | a person who is good fun or amusing company: *I like Peter—he's a good laugh*.

PHRASES **be laughing all the way to the bank** informal be making a great deal of money very easily.

have the last laugh be finally vindicated, thus confounding earlier scepticism. **he who laughs last laughs longest** proverb don't rejoice too soon, in case your delight at your own good fortune is premature.

laugh one's head off laugh heartily or uncontrollably. **laugh in someone's face** show open contempt for someone by laughing rudely at them in their presence: *I remonstrated with him but he just laughed in my face* | figurative **vandals and muggers who laugh in the face of the law**. **the laugh is on me** (or **you**, **him**, etc.) the tables are turned and now the other person is the one who appears ridiculous: *all the critics had laughed at him—well, the laugh was on them now*.

laugh like a drain Brit. informal laugh raucously. **a laugh a minute** very funny: *it's a laugh a minute when Lois gets together with her dad*. **laugh on the other side of one's face** (or **N.Amer.** **out of the other side of one's mouth**) be discomfited after feeling satisfaction or confidence about something.

laugh someone/thing out of court Brit. dismiss with contempt as being obviously ridiculous. **laugh oneself silly** (or **sick**) laugh uncontrollably or for a long time. **laugh something to scorn** dated ridicule something. **laugh up one's sleeve** be secretly or inwardly amused. **no laughing matter** something serious that should not be joked about: *heavy snoring is no laughing matter*. **play something for laughs** (of a performer) try to arouse laughter in an audience, especially in inappropriate circumstances.

ORIGIN Old English *hlæhhan*, *hliehhan*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch and German *lachen*, also to **LAUGHTER**.

laughable ► adjective so ludicrous as to be amusing: *if it didn't make me so angry it would be laughable*.

DERIVATIVES **laughably** adverb [as submodifier] *his antics were laughably pretentious*.

laugher ► noun 1 a person who laughs.

2 N.Amer. informal a sporting match or competition which is so easily won by one team or competitor that it seems absurd.

laughing gas ► noun non-technical term for **NITROUS OXIDE**.

laughing hyena ► noun another term for **SPOTTED HYENA**.

laughing jackass ► noun Austral. dated the laughing kookaburra. See **KOOKABURRA**.

laughingly ► adverb in an amused way; with laughter. ■ with amused ridicule or ludicrous inappropriateness: *we finally reached what we laughingly called civilization*.

laughing stock ► noun a person subjected to general mockery or ridicule.

laughing-thrush ► noun a gregarious thrush-like babbler of South and SE Asia, typically with dark grey or brown plumage and a boldly marked head, and a cackling call. • Genus *Carrulax*, family Timalidae; many species.

laughter ► noun [mass noun] the action or sound of laughing: *he roared with laughter*.