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mixture may be separated according to a physical property such as boiling point or solubility. 4 (usu. **the Fraction**) (in the Christian Church) the breaking of the Eucharistic bread.

ORIGIN ME: via OFr. from eccles. L. *fractio(n)-* 'breaking (bread)', from L. *frangere* 'to break'.

fractional ● *adj.* 1 of, relating to, or expressed as a fraction. 2 small or tiny in amount. 3 Chemistry relating to or denoting the separation of a mixture into fractions.

DERIVATIVES **fractionally** *adv.*

fractionalize (also **-ise**) ● *v.* (usu. as *adj.* **fractionalized**) divide into separate groups or parts.

DERIVATIVES **fractionalization** *n.*

fractionate /frak(fə)neɪt/ ● *v.* chiefly Chemistry divide into fractions or components.

DERIVATIVES **fractionation** *n.*

fractious /frakjəs/ ● *adj.* 1 easily irritated. 2 difficult to control.

DERIVATIVES **fractiously** *adv.* **fractiousness** *n.*

ORIGIN C17: from **FRACTION**, prob. on the pattern of the pair *faction, factious*.

fracture ● *n.* 1 the cracking or breaking of a hard object or material. > a crack or break, especially in a bone or a rock stratum. > the shape of the surface formed by a freshly broken rock or mineral. 2 Phonetics the replacement of a simple vowel by a diphthong owing to the influence of a following sound, typically a consonant. ● *v.* break or cause to break. > (of a group or organization) break up or fragment.

ORIGIN ME: from Fr. or from L. *fractura*, from *frangere* 'to break'.

fræ /fɹeɪ/ ● *prep.* Scottish from.

frag *n.* Amer. military slang ● *n.* a hand grenade. ● *v.* (**fragged, fraging**) deliberately kill (an unpopular officer) with a hand grenade.

ORIGIN C20: from *fragmentation grenade*.

fragile /frædʒaɪl/ ● *adj.* 1 easily broken or damaged. 2 delicate and vulnerable.

DERIVATIVES **fragilely** *adv.* **fragility** *n.*

ORIGIN C15 (in the sense 'morally weak'): from L. *fragilis*, from *frangere* 'to break'.

fragile X syndrome ● *n.* Medicine an inherited mental disability resulting from an X chromosome that is abnormally susceptible to damage.

fragment ● *n.* /fræɡ(ə)nt/ a small part broken off or detached. > an isolated or incomplete part. ● *v.* /fræɡ'ment/ break or cause to break into fragments.

DERIVATIVES **fragmental** *adj.* (chiefly Geology) **fragmentarily** *adv.* **fragmentary** *adj.* **fragmentation** *n.*

ORIGIN ME: from Fr. or from L. *fragmentum*, from *frangere* 'to break'.

fragmentation bomb (or **fragmentation grenade**) ● *n.* a bomb (or grenade) designed to break into small fragments as it explodes.

fragrance /fræŋɡr(ə)ns/ ● *n.* a pleasant, sweet smell. > a perfume or aftershave.

DERIVATIVES **fragranced** *adj.* **fragrancy** *n.* (dated).

fragrant ● *adj.* having a pleasant or sweet smell.

DERIVATIVES **fragrantly** *adv.*

ORIGIN ME: from Fr. or from L. *fragrant-, fragrare* 'smell sweet'.

frail ● *adj.* 1 weak and delicate. 2 easily damaged or broken. ● *n.* US informal, dated a woman.

DERIVATIVES **frailly** *adv.* **frailness** *n.*

ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *fraille*, from L. *fragilis* (see **FRA**).

frailty ● *n.* (pl. **-ies**) the condition of being frail. > weakness in character or morals.

frise /fɹeɪ, fɹeɪz/ ● *n.* (pl. pronounced same) 1 (in cookery) a strawberry. 2 a white brandy distilled from strawberries.

ORIGIN from Fr.

fraktur /fraktʊə, German frak'tuːə/ ● *n.* a German style of black-letter type.

ORIGIN C19: Ger., from L. *fractura* 'fracture' (because of its angularity).

framboesia /framb'ɪziə/ (US **frambesia**) ● *n.* another term for **yaws**.

ORIGIN C19: mod. L., from Fr. *framboise* 'raspberry', so named because of the red swellings caused by the disease.

framboise /frɒm'bwʌz/ ● *n.* 1 (in cookery) a raspberry. 2 a white brandy distilled from raspberries.

ORIGIN from Fr.

frame ● *n.* 1 a rigid structure surrounding a picture, door, etc. > (**frames**) a metal or plastic structure holding the lenses of a pair of glasses. > the rigid supporting structure of a vehicle, aircraft, or other object. > a person's body with reference to its size or build. > a box-like structure of glass or plastic in which seeds or young plants are grown. 2 a basic underlying or supporting structure of a system, concept, or text. 3 Linguistics a structural environment within which a class of words or other linguistic units can be correctly used (e.g. *I* — *him* is a frame for a large class of transitive verbs). 4 a single complete picture in a series forming a cinema, television, or video film. 5 the triangular structure for positioning the red balls in snooker. > a single game of snooker. ● *v.* 1 place (a picture or photograph) in a frame. > surround so as to create a sharp or attractive image. 2 formulate. > archaic construct by fitting parts together or in accordance with a plan. 3 informal produce false incriminating evidence against (an innocent person).

PHRASES **be in** (or **out of**) **the frame** *be* (or *not be*) eligible. > *be* wanted (or *not wanted*) by the police. **frame of mind** a particular mood.

DERIVATIVES **framable** *adj.* **framed** *adj.* **frameless** *adj.* **framer** *n.* **framing** *n.*

ORIGIN OE *framian* 'be useful', later 'prepare timber for building', 'make the wooden parts of a building': of Gmc origin and rel. to **FROM**.

frame house ● *n.* chiefly N. Amer. a house constructed from a wooden skeleton covered with timber boards.

frame of reference ● *n.* 1 a set of criteria in relation to which judgements can be made. 2 a system of geometrical axes in relation to which size, position, or motion can be defined.

frame saw ● *n.* a saw with a thin blade kept rigid by being stretched in a frame.

frameset ● *n.* the frame and front fork of a bicycle.

frame tent ● *n.* chiefly Brit. a tent supported by a tall frame, giving it nearly perpendicular sides and standing headroom throughout.

frame-up ● *n.* informal a conspiracy to incriminate someone falsely.

framework ● *n.* an essential supporting or underlying structure.

franc /fræŋk/ ● *n.* the basic monetary unit of France, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and several other countries, equal to 100 centimes.

ORIGIN from OFr., from L. *Francorum Rex* 'king of the Franks', the legend on gold coins struck in the 14th cent.

franchise /fræn(t)ʃaɪz/ ● *n.* 1 an authorization granted by a government or company to an individual or group enabling them to carry out specified commercial activities. > a business or service granted such authorization. > N. Amer. an authorization given by a professional league to own a sports team. > N. Amer. informal a team granted such authorization. 2 the right to vote in public elections, especially for members of parliament. ● *v.* grant a franchise to. > grant a franchise for the sale of (goods) or the operation of (a service).

DERIVATIVES **franchisee** *n.* **franchiser** (also **franchisor**) *n.*

ORIGIN ME (denoting a grant of legal immunity): from OFr., based on *franc, franche* (see **FRANK**).

Franciscan /fræn'sɪsk(ə)n/ ● *n.* a monk, nun, or lay member of a Christian religious order following the rule of St Francis of Assisi. ● *adj.* of St Francis or the Franciscans.

francium /frænsɪəm/ ● *n.* the chemical element of atomic number 87, an unstable radioactive member of the alkali metal group. (Symbol: **Fr**)

ORIGIN 1940s: from the country *France* + **-ium**.

Franco- (also **franco-**) ● *comb. form* French; French and

put | u: too | ʌɪ my | aʊ how | eɪ day | əʊ no | ɪə near | ɔɪ boy | ʊə poor | ʌɪə fire | aʊə sour

one in which mail is kept until collected. 2 Brit. a delivery of mail.

mailer ● n. 1 chiefly N. Amer. the sender of a letter or package by post. 2 a piece of advertising material sent out by post. 3 a container used for conveying items by post. 4 Computing a program that sends email messages.

mailing ● n. something sent by mail, especially a piece of mass advertising.

mailing list ● n. a list of the names and addresses of people to whom advertising matter or information may be mailed regularly.

maillot /maɪ'jɔʊ/ ● n. (pl. pronounced same) 1 a pair of tights worn for dancing or gymnastics. 2 chiefly N. Amer. a woman's tight-fitting one-piece swimsuit. 3 a jersey or top, especially one worn in sports such as cycling.

— ORIGIN from Fr.

mailman ● n. (pl. -men) N. Amer. a postman.

mail merge ● n. Computing the automatic addition of names and addresses from a database to letters and envelopes in order to facilitate sending mail to many addresses.

mail order ● n. the ordering of goods by post.

mailshot ● n. Brit. an item, especially a piece of advertising material, sent to a large number of addresses.

maim ● v. wound or injure (someone) so that part of the body is permanently damaged.

— ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *mahaignier*, of unknown origin.

main ● adj. chief in size or importance. ● n. 1 a principal pipe carrying water or gas or a cable carrying electricity. > (the mains) Brit. the source of public water, gas, or electricity supply through pipes or cables. 2 (the main) archaic or poetic/literary the open ocean. 3 Nautical short for MAINSAIL or MAINMAST.

— PHRASES by main force through sheer strength. In the main on the whole.

— ORIGIN ME: from OE *mægen* 'physical force', reinforced by ON *meginn*, *megn* 'strong, powerful', both from a Gmc base meaning 'have power'.

main² ● n. 1 (in the game of hazard) a number (5, 6, 7, 8, or 9) called by a player before dice are thrown. 2 historical a match between fighting cocks.

— ORIGIN C16: prob. from the phr. *main chance*.

main brace ● n. the brace attached to the main yard of a sailing ship.

main clause ● n. Grammar a clause that can form a complete sentence standing alone, having a subject and a predicate.

main course ● n. 1 the most substantial course of a meal. 2 the mainsail of a square-rigged sailing ship.

maincrop ● adj. Brit. denoting a vegetable produced as a principal crop of the season.

main drag ● n. informal, chiefly N. Amer. the main street of a town.

Maine Coon ● n. a large, powerful cat of a long-haired breed, originally from America.

— ORIGIN 1970s: so named because of a resemblance to the raccoon.

Malner ● n. a native or inhabitant of the US state of Maine.

mainframe ● n. 1 a large high-speed computer, especially one supporting numerous workstations or peripherals. 2 the central processing unit and primary memory of a computer.

mainland ● n. a large continuous extent of land that includes the greater part of a country or territory, as opposed to offshore islands and detached territories.

— DERIVATIVES *mainlander* n.

main line ● n. 1 a chief railway line. 2 N. Amer. a chief road or street. 3 informal a principal vein as a site for a drug injection. ● v. (mainline) informal inject (a drug) intravenously.

— DERIVATIVES *mainliner* n.

mainly ● adv. more than anything else. > for the most part.

main man ● n. 1 informal, chiefly N. Amer. a close and trusted friend. 2 a principal figure in an organization, team, etc.

mainmast ● n. the principal mast of a ship.

mainplane ● n. the principal wing or other supporting surface of an aircraft, as opposed to a tailplane.

mainsail /'meɪnsəl/ ● n. the principal sail of a ship. > the sail set on the after part of the mainmast in a fore-and-aft rigged vessel.

main sequence ● n. Astronomy a series of types to which most stars other than giants, supergiants, and white dwarfs belong.

— ORIGIN 1920s: so named because they occupy a broad band on a graph of magnitude against spectral type.

mainsheet ● n. a sheet used for controlling and trimming the mainsail of a sailing boat.

mainspring ● n. 1 the principal spring in a watch, clock, etc. 2 a prime source of motivation or support.

mainstay ● n. 1 a stay which extends from the mainmast to the foot of the foremast of a sailing ship. 2 the chief support or main part.

mainstream ● n. (the mainstream) normal or conventional ideas, attitudes, or activities. ● adj. belonging to or characteristic of the mainstream.

maintain ● v. 1 cause or enable (a condition or state of affairs) to continue. > keep at the same level or rate. > keep (a building, machine, etc.) in good condition. > check or repair it regularly. 3 provide with necessities for life or existence. > archaic give one's support. > uphold. 4 assert something to be the case.

— DERIVATIVES *maintainability* n. *maintainable* adj.

— ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *maintenir*, from L. *manu* 'hold in the hand'.

maintained school ● n. Brit. a school financed by public money.

maintainer ● n. 1 a person or thing that maintains. (also *maintainer*) Law, historical a person guilty of aiding a party in a legal action without lawful cause.

maintenance ● n. 1 the process or state of maintaining or being maintained. 2 a husband's or wife's payment for a spouse after separation or divorce. 3 Law, historical former offence of aiding a party in a legal action without lawful cause.

maintop ● n. a platform around the head of the mainmast of a sailing ship's mainmast.

maintopmast /meɪn'tɒpmɑːst/ ● n. the second mast of a sailing ship's mainmast.

maiolica /mə'jɒlɪkə, mə'jɒlɪkə/ ● n. fine earthenware with coloured decoration on an opaque white background, originating in Italy during the Renaissance.

— ORIGIN C16: Ital., from *Malolica* 'Majorca'.

maisonette /meɪzə'net/ ● n. a set of rooms, typically on two storeys of a larger building, with a separate entrance.

— ORIGIN C18: from Fr. *maisonnette*, diminutive of *maison* 'house'.

mai tai /'maɪ tɑɪ/ ● n. chiefly US a cocktail, usually rum, curaçao, and fruit juices.

— ORIGIN from Polynesian.

Maithili /'maɪtɪli/ ● n. a Bihari language spoken especially in northern Bihar.

— ORIGIN Sanskrit, from *Mithilā*, a place in Bihar.

maitre d'hôtel /meɪ'trə dəʊ'tel, French/ (also *maitre d'* /meɪ'trə 'di:/) ● n. (pl. *maitres*) pronounce same or *maitre d's* 1 the head waiter in a restaurant. 2 the manager of a hotel.

— ORIGIN C16: Fr., lit. 'master of (the) house'.

maize ● n. chiefly Brit. a cereal plant originating in America and yielding large grains (corn). > set in rows on a cob. [Zea mays.]

— ORIGIN C16: from Sp. *maíz*, from *Taino* *mayi*.

Maj. ● abbrev. Major.

majestic ● adj. having or showing imperial

CONSONANTS b but | d dog | f few | g get | h he | j yes | k cat | l leg | m man | n | nd |