RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S *unabridged dictionary*

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SECOND EDITION

RANDOM HOUSE
REFERENCE

NEW YORK TORONTO LONDON SYDNEY AUCKLAND

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Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, Second Edition, is a revised and updated edition of *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, Unabridged.*

International Phonetic Alphabet courtesy of International Phonetic Association

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

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Visit the Random House Reference Web site at www.randomwords.com
Printed in China.

10 9 8 7 6

ISBN: 978-0-375-42599-8
ISBN: 978-0-375-42605-6 (Deluxe Edition)
ISBN: 978-0-375-42609-4 (CD-ROM Edition)

gen•der-spe•cif•ic (jen′dər spi sif′ik), *adj.* for, characteristic of, or limited to either males or females: *Left-handedness is not gender-specific.*

gene (jēn), *n.* the basic physical unit of heredity; a linear sequence of nucleotides along a segment of DNA that provides the coded instructions for synthesis of RNA, which, when translated into protein, leads to the expression of hereditary character. [1911; < G *Gen* (1909), appar. abstracted from *-gen* -GEN; introduced by Danish geneticist Wilhelm L. Johannsen (1857–1927)]

Gene (jēn), *n.* a male given name, form of **Eugene.**

geneal., genealogy.

genealog′ical rela′tionship, *Historical Ling.* See **genetic relationship.**

ge′nealog′ical tree′. See **family tree.** [1805–15]

ge•ne•al•o•gy (jē′nē ol′ə jē, -al′-, jen′ē-), *n., pl.* **-gies.** **1.** a record or account of the ancestry and descent of a person, family, group, etc. **2.** the study of family ancestries and histories. **3.** descent from an original form or progenitor; lineage; ancestry. **4.** *Biol.* a group of individuals or species having a common ancestry: *The various species of Darwin's finches form a closely knit genealogy.* [1250–1300; ME *genealogie* < MF < LL *genealogia* < Gk *genealogía* pedigree, equiv. to *geneá* race (see GENE) + *-logia* -LOGY] **—ge•ne•a•log•i•cal** (jē′nē ə loj′i kəl, jen′ē-), **ge′ne•a•log′ic,** *adj.* **—ge′ne•a•log′i•cal•ly,** *adv.* **—ge′ne•al′o•gist,** *n.*
—Syn. 1. See **pedigree.**

gene′ amplifica′tion, **1.** an increase in the frequency of replication of a DNA segment. **2.** such an increase induced by a polymerase chain reaction. [1970–75]

gen•e•arch (jen′ē ärk′), *n.* a chief of a family or tribe. [1720–30; < Gk *geneárchēs* founder of a family, equiv. to *gene(á)* race (see GENE) + *árchēs* -ARCH]

gene′ flow′, *Ecol.* the alteration of the frequencies of alleles of particular genes in a population, resulting from interbreeding with organisms from another population having different frequencies. [1945–50]

gene′ fre′quency, the frequency of occurrence or proportions of different alleles of a particular gene in a given population. Also called **allele frequency.** [1925–30]

gene′ map′ping, *Genetics.* **1.** any of a number of methods used to construct a model of the linear sequence of genes of a particular chromosome. **2.** the act of constructing such a model. [1975–80]

gene′ pool′, the total genetic information in the gametes of all the individuals in a population. [1945–50]

gen•er•a (jen′ər ə), *n.* a pl. of **genus.**

gen•er•a•ble (jen′ər ə bəl), *adj.* capable of being generated or produced. [1350–1400; ME < L *generābil(is)* creative, productive, equiv. to *gener(āre)* to beget, produce (see GENDER[2]) + *-ābilis* -ABLE] **—gen′er•a•bil′i•ty, gen′er•a•ble•ness,** *n.*

gen•er•al (jen′ər əl), *adj.* **1.** of or pertaining to all persons or things belonging to a group or category: *a general meeting of the employees.* **2.** of, pertaining to, or true of such persons or things in the main, with possible exceptions; common to most; prevalent; usual: *the general mood of the people.* **3.** not limited to one class, field, product, service, etc.; miscellaneous: *the general public; general science.* **4.** considering or dealing with overall characteristics, universal aspects, or important elements, esp. without considering all details or specific aspects: *general instructions; a general description; a general resemblance one to another.* **5.** not specific or definite: *I could give them only a general idea of what was going on.* **6.** (of anesthesia or an anesthetic) causing loss of consciousness and abolishing sensitivity to pain throughout the body. **7.** having extended command or superior or chief rank: *the secretary general of the United Nations; the attorney general.* **—*n.*** **8.** *Mil.* **a.** *U.S. Army and Air Force.* an officer ranking above a lieutenant general and below a general of the army or general of the air force. **b.** *U.S. Army.* an officer of any of the five highest ranks: a brigadier general, major general, lieutenant general, general, or general of the army. **c.** *U.S. Marines.* an officer holding the highest rank in the corps. **d.** (in numerous armies) an officer in the highest, second, or third highest rank, as one ranking immediately below a field marshal in the British army. **9.** *Eccles.* the chief official of a religious order. **10.** something that is general; generality. **11.** *Archaic.* the general public. **12. in general, a.** with respect to the whole class referred to; as a whole: *He likes people in general.* **b.** as a rule; usually: *In general, the bus is here by 9 A.M.* [1250–1300; ME < L *generālis,* equiv. to *gener-* (s. of *genus*) GENUS + *-ālis* -AL[1]] **—gen′er•al•ness,** *n.*
—Syn. 1, 2. customary, prevailing, regular, ordinary; catholic. GENERAL, COMMON, POPULAR, UNIVERSAL agree in the idea of being nonexclusive and widespread. GENERAL means belonging to, or prevailing throughout, a whole class or body collectively, irrespective of individuals: *a general belief.* COMMON means shared by all, and belonging to one as much as another: *a common interest; common fund;* but use of this sense is frequently avoided because of ambiguity of sense. POPULAR means belonging to, adapted for, or favored by the people or the public generally, rather than by a particular (esp. a superior) class: *the popular conception; a popular candidate.* UNIVERSAL means found everywhere, and with no exceptions: *a universal longing.* **5.** ill-defined, inexact, imprecise, approximate. **—Ant. 1.** special, limited. **5.** definite, exact, precise.

Gen′eral Account′ing Of′fice, *U.S. Govt.* an independent auditing and accounting agency that assists Congress and government departments and agencies and settles claims for the federal government. *Abbr.:* GAO

gen′eral admis′sion, an admission charge for unreserved seats at a theatrical performance, sports event, etc. [1945–50]

Gen′eral Agree′ment on Tar′iffs and Trade′, an international organization formed in 1948 to establish common rules governing tariffs and to eliminate restrictive trade practices. *Abbr.:* GATT

Gen′eral Amer′ican, any form of American English speech considered to show few regional peculiarities, usually including all dialects except for eastern New England, New York City, Southern, and South Midland (no longer in technical use). *Abbr.:* GA [1930–35, *Amer.*]

Gen′eral Assem′bly, **1.** the legislature in some states of the U.S. **2.** the main deliberative body of the United Nations, composed of delegations from member nations. [1610–20, *Amer.*]

gen′eral av′erage, *Insurance.* any damage or loss to a ship or its cargo voluntarily sustained, as freight jettisoned in a storm, by all parties to a voyage (distinguished from *particular average*). *Abbr.:* G.A. [1690–1700]

gen′eral avia′tion, aviation including business flying, sports flying, and crop dusting.

Gen′eral Court′, **1.** the state legislature of Massachusetts or New Hampshire. **2.** (in colonial New England) any of various local assemblies having both legislative and judicial powers. [1620–30, *Amer.*]

gen′eral court′-martial, a court-martial having the authority to try any offense against military law and to impose a sentence of dishonorable discharge or of death when provided by law. [1805–15]

gen•er•al•cy (jen′ər əl sē), *n.* the office or tenure of a general. [1860–65; GENERAL + -CY]

gen′eral deliv′ery, **1.** a postal service that delivers mail to a specific post office where it is held for pickup by the addressee. **2.** the postal department that handles such mail. [1830–40, *Amer.*]

gen′eral dis′charge, *Mil.* **1.** a discharge from military service of a person who has served honorably but who has not met all the conditions of an honorable discharge. **2.** a certificate of such a discharge.

gen′eral elec′tion, **1.** *U.S. Politics.* **a.** a regularly scheduled local, state, or national election in which voters elect officeholders. Cf. **primary** (def. 15). **b.** a state or national election, as opposed to a local election. **2.** *Brit.* an election, which must be held at any time within five years of the last election, in which constituents elect members of the House of Commons. Cf. **by-election.** [1710–20, *Amer.*]

gen′eral head′quarters, *U.S. Army.* the headquarters of the commanding officer of a large military force. *Abbr.:* GHQ, G.H.Q. [1855–60]

gen•er•al•is•si•mo (jen′ər ə lis′ə mō′), *n., pl.* **-mos.** (in certain countries) the supreme commander of the armed forces. [1615–25; < It, superl. of *generale* GENERAL]

gen•er•al•ist (jen′ər ə list), *n.* a person whose knowledge, aptitudes, and skills are applied to a field as a whole or to a variety of different fields (opposed to *specialist*). [1605–15; GENERAL + -IST]

gen•er•al•i•ty (jen′ə ral′i tē), *n., pl.* **-ties.** **1.** an indefinite, unspecific, or undetailed statement: *to speak in generalities.* **2.** a general principle, rule, or law. **3.** the greater part or majority: *the generality of people.* **4.** the state or quality of being general. [1400–50; late ME *generalite* < L *generālitās.* See GENERAL, -ITY]
—Syn. 1. truism, cliché, platitude, banality.

gen•er•al•i•za•tion (jen′ər ə lə zā′shən), *n.* **1.** the act or process of generalizing. **2.** a result of this process; a general statement, idea, or principle. **3.** *Logic.* **a.** a proposition asserting something to be true either of all members of a certain class or of an indefinite part of that class. **b.** the process of obtaining such propositions. **4.** *Psychol.* **a.** Also called **stimulus generalization.** the act or process of responding to a stimulus similar to but distinct from the conditioned stimulus. **b.** Also called **response generalization.** the act or process of making a different but similar response to the same stimulus. **c.** Also called **mediated generalization.** the act or process of responding to a stimulus not physically similar to the conditioned stimulus and not previously encountered in conditioning. **d.** the act or process of perceiving similarity or relation between different stimuli, as between words, colors, sounds, lights, or feelings; the formation of a general notion. [1755–65; GENERALIZE + -ATION]

gen•er•al•ize (jen′ər ə līz′), *v.,* **-ized, -iz•ing.** **—*v.t.*** **1.** to infer (a general principle, trend, etc.) from particular facts, statistics, or the like. **2.** to infer or form (a general principle, opinion, conclusion, etc.) from only a few facts, examples, or the like. **3.** to give a general rather than a specific or special character or form to. **4.** to make general; bring into general use or knowledge. **—*v.i.*** **5.** to form general principles, opinions, etc. **6.** to deal, think, or speak in generalities. **7.** to make general inferences. Also, *esp. Brit.,* **gen′er•al•ise′.** [1745–55; GENERAL + -IZE] **—gen′er•al•iz′a•ble,** *adj.* **—gen′er•al•iz′er,** *n.*

gen′eralized coor′dinates, *Physics.* the least number of coordinates needed to specify the state of a given system. [1880–85]

gen′eralized oth′er, *Sociol.* an individual's internalized impression of societal norms and expectations.

gen′eral linguis′tics, the study of the characteristics of language in general rather than of a particular language; theoretical, rather than applied, linguistics.

gen•er•al•ly (jen′ər ə lē), *adv.* **1.** usually; commonly; ordinarily: *He generally comes home at noon.* **2.** with respect to the larger part; for the most part: *a generally accurate interpretation of the facts.* **3.** without reference to or disregarding particular persons, things, situations, etc., that may be an exception: *generally speaking.* [1250–1300; ME; see GENERAL, -LY]
—Syn. 1. See **often.** **—Ant. 1.** seldom.

gen′er•al•ob•li•ga′tion bond′ (jen′ər əl ob′li gā′shən), a bond issued by a state or city and backed by general tax revenue and the issuer's credit. Cf. **revenue bond.**

gen′eral of′ficer, *Mil.* an officer ranking above colonel. [1635–45, *Amer.*]

gen′eral of the air′ force′, the highest ranking officer in the U.S. Air Force.

gen′eral of the ar′mies, *U.S. Army.* a special rank held by John J. Pershing, equivalent to general of the army.

gen′eral of the ar′my, *U.S. Army.* the highest ranking military officer; the next rank above general. Cf. **fleet admiral.** [1940–45]

gen′eral or′ders, *Mil.* **1.** a set of permanent orders from a headquarters establishing policy for a command or announcing official acts. **2.** a set of permanent orders governing the duties and behavior of sentries on routine guard duty. Cf. **special order.** [1865–70]

gen′eral paral′ysis, *Pathol.* a syphilitic brain disorder characterized by chronic inflammation and degeneration of cerebral tissue resulting in mental and physical deterioration. Also called **gen′eral pare′sis.** [1890–95]

gen′eral part′ner, a partner with unlimited liability for the debts of the partnership. Cf. **special partner.** [1885–90, *Amer.*]

gen′eral part′nership, a partnership in which each of the partners is fully liable for the firm's debts. Cf. **limited partnership.**

Gen′eral Post′al Un′ion, former name of **Universal Postal Union.** *Abbr.:* GPU

gen′eral post′ of′fice, (in the U.S. postal system) the main post office of a city, county, etc., that also has branch post offices. *Abbr.:* G.P.O., GPO [1650–60]

gen′eral prac′tice. See **family practice.** [1815–25]

gen′eral practi′tioner, a medical practitioner whose practice is not limited to any specific branch of medicine or class of diseases. *Abbr.:* G.P. [1880–85]

gen′eral preces′sion, *Astron.* the precession that results from both lunisolar precession and planetary precession; precession of the equinoxes.

gen•er•al•pur•pose (jen′ər əl pûr′pəs), *adj.* useful in many ways; not limited in use or function: *a good general-purpose dictionary.* [1890–95]

gen′eral quar′ters, *Mil.* a condition of readiness for combat on a warship, during which crew members remain at their battle stations and have guns and ammunition ready for immediate loading.

gen′eral relativ′ity, *Physics.* See under **relativity** (def. 2).

gen′eral rule′, *Law.* See under **rule** (def. 10).

gen′eral seman′tics, a philosophical approach to language, developed by Alfred Korzybski, exploring the relationship between the form of language and its use and attempting to improve the capacity to express ideas. [1930–35]

Gen′eral Serv′ices Administra′tion, *U.S. Govt.* an independent agency, created in 1949, that manages federal property, records, construction, etc. *Abbr.:* GSA

gen′eral ses′sions, a court of general jurisdiction in criminal cases in some U.S. states. [1685–95]

gen•er•al•ship (jen′ər əl ship′), *n.* **1.** skill as commander of a large military force or unit. **2.** the rank or functions of a general. **3.** management or leadership. [1585–95; GENERAL + -SHIP]

gen′eral solu′tion, *Math.* a solution to a differential equation that contains arbitrary, unevaluated constants. Cf. **particular solution.**

gen′eral staff′, *Mil.* a group of officers who are without command and whose duty is to assist high commanders in planning and carrying out orders.

gen′eral store′, a store, usually in a rural area, that sells a wide variety of merchandise, as clothing, food, or hardware, but is not divided into departments. [1825–35, *Amer.*]

gen′eral strike′, a mass strike in all or many trades and industries in a section or in all parts of a country. [1800–10, *Amer.*]

gen′eral the′ory of relativ′ity, *Physics.* See under **relativity** (def. 2). [1930–35]

gen•er•ate (jen′ə rāt′), *v.,* **-at•ed, -at•ing.** **—*v.t.*** **1.** to bring into existence; cause to be; produce. **2.** to create by a vital or natural process. **3.** to create and distribute vitally and profusely: *He generates ideas that we all should consider. A good diplomat generates good will.* **4.** to reproduce; procreate. **5.** to produce by a chemical process. **6.** *Math.* **a.** to trace (a figure) by the motion of a point, straight line, or curve. **b.** to act as base for all the elements of a given set: *The number 2 generates the set 2, 4, 8, 16.* **7.** *Ling.* to produce or specify (a grammatical sentence or other construction or set of constructions) by the application of a rule or set of rules in a generative grammar. **—*v.i.*** **8.** to reproduce; propagate. [1350–1400; ME < L *generātus* produced, ptp. of *generāre* to beget; see GENUS]
—Syn. 1. create, evolve, originate, engender, institute.

gen•er•a•tion (jen′ə rā′shən), *n.* **1.** the entire body of individuals born and living at about the same time: *the postwar generation.* **2.** the term of years, roughly 30 among human beings, accepted as the average period between the birth of parents and the birth of their offspring. **3.** a group of individuals, most of whom are the same approximate age, having similar ideas, problems, attitudes, etc. Cf. **Beat Generation, Lost Generation.** **4.** a group of individuals belonging to a specific category at the same time: *Chaplin belonged to the generation of silent-screen stars.* **5.** a single step in natural descent, as of human beings, animals, or plants. **6.** a form, type,