

# Etymology of Statistical and Probabilistic Terms

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The following etymologies for statistical terms were mainly extracted/modified from <http://www.etymonline.com/> unless otherwise attributed, e.g., (Wikipedia).

My interest in making this collection was triggered by looking up the etymology of the common English word "average," which is quite different from the corresponding German term "Durchschnitt" (cut through). Another early example was the term "sample." For many terms the origins are quite obvious for anyone with a Latin or Greek education. The selections of terms are obvious in some cases, but others may seem far afield. Some terms only make a proper connection in combination with other terms, e.g., alternative together with hypothesis.

For some terms, I am still looking for good references to quote, these are entered but marked by ??? Any suggestions for further terms are welcome.

## Aggregate

### aggregate

c.1400, from L. *aggregatus* "associated," lit. "united in a flock," pp. of *aggregare* "add to," from *ad-* "to" + *gregare* "herd," so "to lead to a flock" (see *gregarious*).

## Alternative

### alternate (adj.)

1513, from L. *alternus* "one after the other," pp. of *alternare* "to do first one thing, then the other," from *alternus* "every other," from *alter* "the other" (see *alter*). The verb is recorded from 1599; the noun meaning "a substitute" is first attested 1848. *Alternative* with the counter-culture sense of "better than the establishment" is attested from 1970, originally with reference to the press. *Alternate* means "by turns;" *alternative* (1590) means "offering a choice." Both imply two kinds or things.

## Ancillary

### ancillary

1667, "subservient, subordinate," from L. *ancillaris* "relating to maidservants," dim. of *ancilla* "handmaid," fem. dim. of *anculus* "servant," lit. "he who bustles about," from root of *ambi-* "about" + PIE *\*kwol-o-*, from base *\*kwel-* "move round, turn about, be much about" (see *cycle*).

## Attribute

### attribute (v.)

1398, from L. *attributus*, pp. of *attribuere* "assign to," from *ad-* "to" + *tribuere* "assign, give, bestow." The noun (c.1400) is from L. *attributum* "anything attributed," neut. of *attributus*.

## Average

### average (n.)

1491, "financial loss incurred through damage to goods in transit," from O.Fr. *avarie*, from It. *avaria*, a word from 12c. Mediterranean maritime trade. Sometimes traced to Arabic *'arwariya* "damaged merchandise," but this may be rather a borrowing of the word from the Franks. OED suggests It. *avere*, O.Fr. *aveir* "property, goods," from L. *habere* "to have." Meaning shifted to "equal sharing of such loss by the interested parties."

Transferred sense of "statement of a medial estimate" is first recorded 1735. The adjective is first recorded 1770; the verb is from 1769. The mathematical extension is from 1755.

## Bet

### bet

1592, probably aphetic of *abet*, or from *beet* "to make good," from O.E. *bætan* "make better, arouse, stimulate," from P.Gmc. *\*baitjanan*. First surfaced in argot of petty criminals. The original notion is perhaps to "improve" a contest by wagering on it. Used since 1852 in various Amer.Eng. slang assertions (cf. *you bet* "be assured," 1857).

## Bias

### bias

1530, from M.Fr. *biasis* "slant, oblique," from O.Prov. *biais*, possibly from V.L. *\*(e)bigassius*, from Gk. *epikarsios* "slanting, oblique," from *epi-* "upon" + *karsios* "oblique." Transferred sense of "predisposition, prejudice" is from 1572.

### unbiased

1607, lit., in ref to throws at bowls, from **un-** (1) "not" + pp. of **bias**. Fig. sense of "impartial, unprejudiced" is recorded from 1647.

## Calibration

### caliber

1567, from M.Fr. *calibre*, via Sp. or It., ult. from Arabic *qalib* "a mold, last," perhaps from Gk. *kalopodion* "a shoemaker's last," lit. "little wooden foot," from *kalon* "wood" + *podos* gen. of *pous* "foot" (see **foot**). Arabic also used the word in the sense "mold for casting bullets," which is the original lit. meaning in Eng., though the earliest cited sense is the fig. one of "social standing, quality, rank." *Calibrate* is attested from 1864.

## Categorical

### category

1588, from M.Fr. *catégorie*, from L.L. *categoria*, from Gk. *kategorein* "to accuse, assert, predicate," from *kata* "down to," + *agoreuein* "to declaim (in the assembly)," from *agora* "public assembly." Original sense of "accuse" weakened to "assert, name" by the time Aristotle applied

*kategoria* to his 10 classes of things that can be named. *Categorical imperative*, from the philosophy of Kant, first recorded 1827.

### Censoring/Census

#### **censor (n.)**

1531, Roman magistrate who took censuses and oversaw public morals, from L. *censere* "to appraise, value, judge," from PIE base *\*kens-* "speak solemnly, announce." Transferred sense of "officious judge of morals and conduct" is from 1592; of books, plays, later films, etc., 1644. The verb is from 1882.

#### **censure**

c.1378, from L. *censura* "judgment" (see **censor**). The verb is first attested 1589.

#### **census**

1613, from L. *census*, originally pp. of *censere* "to assess" (see **censor**).

### Certain

#### **certain**

1297, "determined, fixed," from O.Fr. *certain*, from V.L. *\*certanus*, from L. *certus* "sure, fixed," originally a variant pp. of *cernere* "to distinguish, decide," originally "to sift, separate" (see **crisis**). *Certainer*, *certainest* were common to c.1750, but have fallen from proper use for some reason.

### Chance

#### **chance**

1297, from O.Fr. *cheance* "accident, the falling of dice," from V.L. *cadentia* "that which falls out," from L. *cadentem* (nom. *cadens*), prp. of *cadere* "to fall" (see **case** (1)). Notions of "opportunity" and "randomness" are equally old in Eng. The verb meaning "to risk" is from 1859. *Chancy* was originally (1513) "lucky;" sense of "risky, untrustworthy" is first recorded 1860.

### Chaos

#### **chaos**

c.1440, "gaping void," from L. *chaos*, from Gk. *khaos* "abyss, that which gapes wide open, is vast and empty," from *\*khnwos*, from PIE base *\*gheu-*, *\*gh(e)i-* "to gape" (cf. Gk *khaino* "I yawn," O.E. *ginian*, O.N. *ginnunga-gap*; see **yawn**). Meaning "utter confusion" (1606) is extended from theological use of *chaos* for "the void at the beginning of creation" in Vulgate version of Genesis. The Gk. for "disorder" was *tarakhe*, however the use of *chaos* here was rooted in Hesiod ("*Theogony*"), who describes *khaos* as the primeval emptiness of the Universe, begetter of Erebus and Nyx ("Night"), and in Ovid ("*Metamorphoses*"), who opposes *Khaos* to *Kosmos*, "the ordered Universe." *Chaotic* is from 1713.

## Class/Classification

### **class**

1602, from Fr. *classe*, from L. *classis*, one of the six orders into which Servius Tullius divided the Roman people for the purposes of taxation, traditionally originally "the people of Rome under arms," and thus akin to *calare* "to call (to arms)" (see **calendar**). School and university sense (1656) is from the notion of a form or lecture reserved to a certain level of scholars. Natural history sense is from 1753. Meaning "a division of society according to status" is from 1772. The verb is first recorded 1705. *Classy* is from 1891. *Class-consciousness* (1903) is from Ger. *klassenbewusst*.

## Cluster

### **cluster (n.)**

O.E. *clyster* "cluster," probably from the same root as *clot*. The verb is from 1398.

### **clot**

O.E. *clott*, akin to Du. *kloot* "ball" (see **clod**). The verb, of fluids, is from 1591.

### **clod**

O.E. *clod-* (in *clod-hamer* "field-goer"), from P.Gmc. *\*kludda-*, from PIE *\*g(e)leu-*, from base *\*gel-* "to make round." Synonymous with *clot* until 18c. *Clodhopper* "rustic" first attested 1690, originally "plowman."

## Coefficient

### **efficient**

1398, "making," from L. *efficientem* (nom. *efficiens*), prp. of *efficere* "work out, accomplish" (see **effect**). Meaning "productive, skilled" is from 1787. *Efficiency* apartment is first recorded 1930, Amer.Eng.

### **coefficient**

1665, from *co-* + *efficient*, probably influenced by Mod.L. *coefficientens*, used in mathematics 16c.

## Coin

### **coin (n.)**

1304, from O.Fr. *coigne* "a wedge, cornerstone," from L. *cuneus* "a wedge." Die for stamping metal was wedge-shaped, and the word came to mean "thing stamped, a piece of money" by c.1386. To *coin a phrase* is c.1590. The "cornerstone" sense is now usually *quoin*.

## Collection/Collective

### **collective**

1520, from the source of **collect** (q.v.). As a shortened form of *collective farm* (in the U.S.S.R.) it dates from 1925. *Collectivism* in socialist theory is from 1880. *Collective bargaining* coined 1891 by Beatrice Webb; defined in U.S. 1935 by the Wagner Act.

## **collect**

1573 (trans.), from O.Fr. *collector* (1371), from L. *collectus*, pp. of *colligere* "gather together," from *com-* "together" + *legere* "to gather." The intrans. sense is attested from 1794. *Collection* "group of things gathered together" is from 1460; as "money gathered for charitable or religious purposes" it is attested from 1535. As an adj. meaning "paid by the recipient" it is attested from 1893, originally with ref. to telegrams.

## **Combination**

### **combine**

c.1440, from M.Fr. *combiner*, from L.L. *combinare* "to unite, yoke together," from L. *com-* "together" + *bini* "two by two," adv. from *bi-* "twice." *Combine* "machine that cuts, threshes and cleans grain" (short for *combine harvester*) first attested 1857. *Combo*, U.S. slang shortening of *combination*, first attested 1929.

## **Concomitant**

### **concomitant**

1607, from Fr. *concomitant*, from L. *concomitantem*, prp. of *concomitari* "accompany, attend," from *com-* "with, together" + *comitari* "join as a companion," from *comes* (gen. *comitis*) "companion."

## **Conditional**

### **condition**

c.1315, from O.Fr. *condition*, from L. *condicionem* (nom. *condicio*) "agreement, situation," from *condicere* "to speak with, talk together," from *com-* "together" + *dicere* "to speak" (see **diction**). Evolution of meaning through "stipulation, condition," to "situation, mode of being." The verb meaning "to bring to a desired condition" is from 1850.

## **Confidence**

### **confidence**

c.1430, from L. *confidentia*, from *confidentem*, prp. of *confidere*, from *com-* intens. prefix + *fidere* "to trust" (see **faith**). For sense of "swindle" see **con** (3). *Confidant*, with spelling to reflect Fr. pronunciation, first attested 1714.

## **Confound**

### **confound**

c.1290, "discomfit, abash, confuse," from Anglo-Fr. *confoundre*, from O.Fr. *confondre*, from L. *confundere* "to confuse," lit. "to pour together," from *com-* "together" + *fundere* "to pour" (see **found** (2)). The fig. sense of "confuse, fail to distinguish, mix up" emerged in L., passed into O.Fr. and thence into M.E., where it is mostly found in Scripture; the sense of "destroy utterly" is recorded in Eng. from c.1300. The L. pp., meanwhile, became **confuse** (q.v.). *Confounded* as an execration is first recorded 1652.

## Contingency

### **contingent**

c.1385, from L. *contingentem* (nom. *contingens*) "happening, touching," prp. of *contingere* "to touch" (see **contact**). *Contingency* "uncertain incident" is from c.1626.

## Contrast

### **contrast (v.)**

1695, from Fr. *contraster*, from It. *contrastare* "stand out against," from V.L. *\*contrastare* "to withstand," from L. *contra* "against" + *stare* "to stand," from PIE base *\*sta-* "to stand" (see **stet**). M.E. had *contrest* "to fight against, to withstand," which became extinct. Modern word re-introduced c.1700 as an art term.

## Control

### **control**

c.1310, "to check, verify, regulate," from Anglo-Norm. *contreroller* "exert authority," from M.L. *contrarotulus* "a counter, register," from L. *contra-* "against" + *rotulus*, dim. of *rota* "wheel" (see **roll**). From a medieval method of checking accounts by a duplicate register. Sense of "dominate, direct" is c.1450.

## Convolution

### **convolution**

1545, from L. *convolutus*, pp. of *convolvere* "to roll together," from *com-* "together" + *volvere* "to roll"

## Correction

### **correct (v.)**

1340, "to set right, rectify" (a fault or error), from L. *correctus*, pp. of *corrigere* "make straight, put right," from *com-* intens. prefix + *regere* "to lead straight, rule" (see **regal**). Originally of persons; with ref. to writing, etc., attested from c.1374. The pp. adj. is recorded from 1460. *House of correction* first recorded 1575.

## Correlation

### **correlation**

1561, from M.Fr. *corrélacion*, from *com-* "together" + *relation* (see **relation**).

### **relation**

1390, from Anglo-Fr. *relacioun*, O.Fr. *relacion* (14c.), from L. *relationem* (nom. *relatio*) "a bringing back, restoring," from *relatus* (see **relate**). Meaning "person related by blood or marriage" first attested 1502. *Relationship* "sense of being related" is from 1744; meaning "an affair, a romantic or sexual relationship" is attested from 1944.

## **relate**

1530, "to recount, tell," from L. *relatus*, used as pp. of *referre* (see **refer**), from *re-* "back, again" + *latus* (see **oblade** (n.)). Meaning "to establish a relation between" is from 1771. Sense of "to feel connected or sympathetic to" is attested from 1950, originally in psychology jargon. *Related* in the sense of "connected by blood or marriage" is from 1702.

## **refer**

c.1374, "to trace back, attribute, assign," from O.Fr. *referer* (14c.), from L. *referre* "to relate, refer," lit. "to carry back," from *re-* "back" + *ferre* "carry" (see **infer**). Meaning "to commit to some authority for a decision" is from 1456; sense of "to direct (someone) to a book, etc." is from 1601. *Referral* "act of referring" is first recorded 1934; specific sense of "an act of referring an individual to a specialist" is from 1955.

## **Craps**

### **craps**

1843, Amer. Eng., unrelated to the term for excrement, from Louisiana Fr. *craps*, from Fr., corruption of Eng. *crabs* (see **crab**), 18c. slang for "a throw of two or three," which is perhaps from the *crab* sense in *crab apple*.

## **Count**

### **count (v.)**

1341, from O.Fr. *conter* "add up," but also "tell a story," from L. *computare* (see **compute**). *Countdown* is 1953, Amer.Eng.

## **Critical**

### **critic**

1583, from L. *criticus*, from Gk. *kritikos* "able to make judgments," from *krinein* "to separate, decide." The Eng. word always had overtones of "censurer, faultfinder." *Critical* in this sense is from 1590; meaning "of the nature of a crisis" is 1649 (see **crisis**).

## **Cumulative**

### **cumulative**

1605, from L. *cumulatus*, pp. of *cumulare* "to heap," from *cumulus* "heap" (see **cumulus**).

## **Data**

### **data**

1646, pl. of *datum*, from L. *datum* "(thing) given," neuter pp. of *dare* "to give" (see **date** (1)). Meaning "transmittable and storable computer information" first recorded 1946. *Data processing* is from 1954. *Database* formed 1962, from *data* + *base*.



## Decision

### **decide**

c.1380, from O.Fr. *decider*, from L. *decidere* "to decide," lit. "to cut off," from *de-* "off" + *cædere* "to cut" (see **cement**). Sense is of resolving difficulties "at a stroke." Originally "to settle a dispute;" meaning "to make up one's mind" is attested from 1830. *Decided* in the adj. sense of "resolute" is from 1790. *Decisive* is 1611. A *decided* victory is one whose reality is not in doubt; a *decisive* one goes far toward settling some issue.

## Deductive

### **deduce**

1410, from L. *deducere* "lead down, derive" (in M.L. "infer logically"), from *de-* "down" + *ducere* "to lead" (see **duke**). Originally literal, sense of "draw a conclusion from something already known" is first recorded 1529, from M.L.

### **deduct**

1419, from L. *deductus*, pp. of *deducere* "lead down, bring away;" see **deduce**, with which it formerly was interchangeable. Technically, *deduct* refers to taking away portions or amounts; *subtract* to taking away numbers.

## Dependent/Independent

### **depend**

1413, "to be attached to as a condition or cause," fig. use, from M.Fr. *dependre* "to hang from, hang down," from L. *dependere*, from *de-* "from, down" + *pendere* "to hang, be suspended" (see **pendant**). *Dependence* was spelled *-ance* from time of borrowing from Fr. c.1400 until respelling c.1800 by influence of Latin; *dependant* (1523) usually retains the Fr. form. *Dependable* is from 1735.

## Design

### **design**

1548, from L. *designare* "mark out, devise," from *de-* "out" + *signare* "to mark," from *signum* "a mark, sign." Originally in Eng. with the meaning now attached to *designate* (1646, from L. *designatus*, pp. of *designare*); many modern uses of *design* are metaphoric extensions. *Designer* (adj.) in the fashion sense of "prestigious" is first recorded 1966; *designer drug* is from 1983. *Designing* "scheming" is from 1671. *Designated hitter* introduced in American League baseball in 1973, soon giving wide figurative extension to *designated*.

## Deviation/deviate

### **deviant**

c.1400 (adj.), from L.L. *deviantem*, prp. of *deviare* "turn aside," from L. phrase *de via*, from *de* "off" + *via* "way." The noun, in the sexual sense, is attested from 1952; also *deviate* (n.), recorded since 1947. The verb



*deviate* (c.1633) is from the L. pp. stem. *Deviation* in the statistical sense is first attested 1858.

### Diagram

#### **diagram (n.)**

1619, from Fr. *diagramme*, from L. *diagramma*, from Gk. *diagramma* (gen. *diagrammatos*) "that which is marked out by lines," from *diagraphēin* "mark out by lines, delineate," from *dia-* "across, out" + *graphein* "write, mark, draw." The verb is 1840, from the noun.

### Die/Dice

#### **die (n.)**

c.1330 (as a plural), from O.Fr. *de*, of uncertain origin, perhaps from L. *datum* "given," pp. of *dare* (see **date** (1)), which, in addition to "give," had a secondary sense of "to play" (as a chess piece); or else from "what is given" (by chance or Fortune). Sense of "stamping block or tool" first recorded 1699.

#### **dice**

c.1330, *des*, *dys*, pl. of *dy* (see **die** (n.)), altered 14c. to *dyse*, *dyce*, and 15c. to *dice*. "As in *pence*, the plural *s* retains its original breath sound, probably because these words were not felt as ordinary plurals, but as collective words" [OED]. Sometimes used as sing. 1400-1700. The v. "to cut into cubes" is first recorded c.1390. *Dicey* "doubtful, difficult" is RAF slang from the 1940s.

### Digit

#### **digit**

1398, from L. *digitus* "finger or toe," related to *dicere* "tell, say, point out" (see **dictionary**). Numerical sense is because numerals under ten were counted on fingers. *Digital* (1656) is first recorded 1945 in reference to computers, 1960 of recording or broadcasting.

### Dimension

#### **dimension**

1413, from L. *dimensionem* (nom. *dimensio*), from stem of *dimetri* "to measure out," from *dis-* + *metri* "to measure."

### Discrete

#### **discrete**

1398, see **discreet**.

#### **discreet**

1340, from O.Fr. *discret*, from L. *discretus* "separated, distinct," in M.L. "discerning, careful," from pp. of *discernere* "distinguish" (see **discern**). Spellings *discrete* and nativized *discreet* co-existed until after c.1600, when *discreet* became the common word for "careful, prudent," and

*discrete* was maintained in philosophy, medicine, music and other disciplines that remembered L. and tried to stick close to it.

#### **Discriminant**

##### **discriminate**

1628, from L. *discriminare* "to divide," from *discrimen*, derived n. from *discernere* (see **discern**). The adverse (usually racial) sense is first recorded 1866, Amer.Eng. Positive sense remains in *discriminating* (adj.) "possessing discernment" (1792).

#### **Dispersion**

##### **disperse**

c.1450, from M.Fr. *disperser* "scatter," from L. *dispersus*, pp. of *dispergere* "to scatter," from *dis-* "apart, in every direction" + *spargere* "to scatter" (see **sparse**). The L. word is glossed in O.E. by *tostregdan*.

#### **Distribution**

##### **distribution**

1382, from L. *distributionem*, from *distribuere* "deal out in portions," from *dis-* "individually" + *tribuere* "assign, allot."

#### **Dummy**

##### **dummy**

1598, "mute person," from *dumb* (q.v.). Extended by 1845 to "figure representing a person." Used in card games (originally whist) since 1736.

#### **Efficient**

See coefficient

#### **Empirical**

##### **empirical**

1569, from L. *empiricus*, from Gk. *empeirikos* "experienced," from *empeiria* "experience," from *empeiros* "skilled," from *en-* "in" + *peira* "trial, experiment." Originally a school of ancient physicians who based their practice on experience rather than theory.

#### **Entropy**

##### **entropy**

1868, from Ger. *Entropie* "measure of the disorder of a system," coined 1865 (on analogy of Ger. *Energie*) by physicist Rudolph Clausius (1822-1888) from Gk. *entropia* "a turning toward," from *en-* "in" + *trope* "a turning" (see **trope**).

## Error

### error

c.1300, from O.Fr. *errur*, from L. *errorem* (nom. *error*) "a wandering, straying, mistake," from *errare* "to wander" (see **err**). Words for "error" in most I.E. languages originally meant "wander, go astray" (but Ir. *dearmad* "error," from *dermat* "a forgetting").

## Estimation

### estimation

c.1374, from O.Fr. *estimacion*, from L. *æstimationem* (nom. *æstimatio*) "a valuation," from *æstimare* "to value" (see **esteem**). The verb *estimate* is first recorded 1532.

## Event

### event

1573, from M.Fr. *event*, from L. *eventus* "occurrence, issue," from *evenire* "to come out, happen, result," from *ex-* "out" + *venire* "to come" (see **venue**). *Eventually* "ultimately" first recorded c.1680; *eventuality* is 1828, originally "the power of observing in phrenology." *Eventful* is from 1600. *Event horizon* in astrophysics is from 1969.

## Expected

### expect

1393 (implied in *expectant*), from L. *expectare* "await, hope," from *ex-* "thoroughly" + *spectare* "to look," freq. of *specere* "to look at" (see **scope** (1)). Fig. sense of "anticipate, look forward to" developed in Latin. Used since 1817 as a euphemism for "be pregnant."

## Experiment

### experiment

1348, from O.Fr. *experiment*, from L. *experimentum* "a trial, test," from *experiri* "to test, try" (see **experience**). The verb is 1481, from the noun.

## Extreme

### extreme (adj.)

c.1460, from L. *extremus* "outermost, utmost," superl. of *exterus* (see **exterior**). In Eng. as in L., not always felt as a superl., hence *more extreme*, *most extreme* (which were condemned by Johnson). The noun is first recorded 1546, originally of the end of life, cf. L. *in extremis*. The derived noun *extremity* (from O.Fr. *extremite*, from L. *extremitatem*, from *extremus*) is first recorded 1375, and its meaning remains closer to the etymological source.

## Factor

### factor (n.)

1432, "agent, deputy," from M.Fr. *facteur* "agent, representative," from L. *factor* "doer or maker," from *facere* "to do" (see **factitious**). Sense of "circumstance producing a result" is from 1816; the v. use in mathematics is attested from 1837.

## Failure

### fail

c.1225, from O.Fr. *faillir* "be lacking, miss, not succeed," from V.L. *\*fallire*, from L. *fallere* "deceive, be lacking or defective." Replaced O.E. *abreoðan*. The Anglo-Norm. form, *failer*, came to be used as a noun, hence *failure* (1643). *Fail-safe* dates from 1948.

## Fair

### fair (adj.)

O.E. *fæger* "beautiful, pleasant," from P.Gmc. *\*fagraz* (cf. O.N. *fagr*, O.H.G. *fagar* "beautiful," Goth. *fagrs* "fit"), from PIE *\*fag-*. The meaning in ref. to weather (c.1205) preserves the original sense (opposed to *foul*). Sense of "light complexioned" (1551) reflects tastes in beauty; sense of "free from bias" (c.1340) evolved from another early meaning, "morally pure, unblemished" (c.1175). The sporting senses (*fair ball*, *fair catch* etc.) began in 1856. *Fair play* is from 1595; *fair and square* is from 1604. *Fair-haired* in the fig. sense of "darling, favorite" is from 1909. *Fairly* in the sense of "somewhat" is from 1805; it earlier meant "totally." *Fairway* (1584) originally meant "navigational channel of a river;" golfing sense is from 1910. First record of *fair-weather friends* is from 1736.

## Fiducial

### fiducial

From: The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology | Date: 1996 | Author: T. F. HOAD

**fiducial** XVII. — late L. *fidūciālis*, f. 'L. *fidūcia* trust, f. *fidere* to trust, rel. to *fidēs*

**FAITH**; see **-IAL**.

So fiduciary XVII. — L. *fidūciārius*.

## Fit

### fit (n.1)

1823, "the fitting of one thing to another," later (1831) "the way something fits." Origin obscure, possibly from O.E. *fitt* "a conflict, a struggle" (see **fit** (n.2)).

### fit (n.2)

"paroxysm, sudden attack" (as of anger), 1547, probably via M.E. sense of "painful, exciting experience," from O.E. *fitt* "conflict, struggle," of

uncertain origin, with no clear cognates outside Eng. Phrase *by fits and starts* first attested 1620. *Fitful* was used once by Shakespeare ("Macbeth" iii.2) in sense of "characterized by fits," then revived by Scott (1810) with a sense of "shifting, changing."

### Fluctuation

#### fluctuation

c.1450, from L. *fluctuationem* (nom. *fluctuatio*), from *fluctuare* "to undulate," from *fluctus* "wave," from pp. of *fluere* "to flow" (see **fluent**). *Fluctuate* is from 1634.

### Frequency/frequent

#### frequent

1531, from L. *frequentem* (nom. *frequens*) "crowded, repeated," of uncertain origin. The v. (1477) is from L. *frequentare* "visit regularly." *Frequency* (1551) came to be used 1831 in physics for "rate of recurrence," especially of a vibration. In radio electronics, *frequency modulation* (1922, abbreviated *F.M.*) as a system of broadcasting is distinguished from *amplitude modulation* (or *A.M.*).

### Game

#### game (n.)

O.E. *gamen* "joy, fun, amusement," common Gmc. (cf. O.Fris. *game*, O.N. *gaman*, O.H.G. *gaman* "joy, glee"), regarded as identical with Goth. *gaman* "participation, communion," from P.Gmc. \**ga-* collective prefix + \**mann* "person," giving a sense of "people together." Meaning "contest played according to rules" is first attested c.1300. Sense of "wild animals caught for sport" is c.1290; hence *fair game* (1825), also *gamey* "having the flavor of game" (1863). Adjective sense of "brave, spirited" is 1725, from the noun, especially in *game-cock* "bird for fighting." *Game plan* is 1941, from U.S. football; *game show* first attested 1961.

### Graph/graphic

#### graphic

1610, "traced" (implied in *graphical*), from L. *graphicus* "picturesque," from Gk. *graphikos* "of or for writing, belonging to drawing, picturesque," from *graphe* "writing, drawing," from *graphein* "write," originally "to scratch" on clay tablets with a stylus. Meaning "of or pertaining to drawing" is from 1756; that of "vivid" is from 1669, on the notion of words that produce the effect of a picture.

### Handicap

#### handicap

c.1653, from *hand in cap*, a game whereby two bettors would engage a neutral umpire to determine the odds in an unequal contest. The bettors would put their hands holding forfeit money into a hat or cap. The umpire would announce the odds and the bettors would withdraw their hands --

hands full meaning that they accepted the odds and the bet was on, hands empty meaning they did not accept the bet and were willing to forfeit the money. If one forfeited, then the money went to the other. If both agreed on either forfeiting or going ahead with the wager, then the umpire kept the money as payment. The custom, though not the name, is attested from 14c. Reference to horse racing is 1754 (*Handy-Cap Match*), where the umpire decrees the superior horse should carry extra weight as a "handicap;" this led to sense of "encumbrance, disability" first recorded 1890. The verb sense of "equalize chances of competitors" is first recorded 1852, but is implied in the horse-race sense. Meaning "put at a disadvantage" is 1864. The main modern sense, "disability," is the last to develop; *handicapped* (adj.) is 1915.

### **Hazard**

#### **hazard**

1167, from O.Fr. *hasard* "game of chance played with dice," possibly from Sp. *azar* "an unfortunate card or throw at dice," which is said to be from Arabic *az-zahr* (for *al-zahr*) "the die." But this is doubtful because of the absence of *zahr* in classical Arabic dictionaries. Klein suggests Arabic *yasara* "he played at dice;" Arabic -s- regularly becomes Sp. -z-. The -d was added in Fr. in confusion with the native suffix -ard. Sense of "chance of loss or harm, risk," first recorded 1548; the verb sense of "put something at stake in a game of chance" is from 1530. *Hazardous* in the sense of "perilous" is from 1618.

### **Histogram**

#### **histogram**

The word *histogram* is derived from **Greek**: *histos* 'anything set upright' (as the masts of a ship, the bar of a loom, or the vertical bars of a histogram); *gramma* 'drawing, record, writing'. (Wikipedia)

### **Homogeneous/Homogeneity**

#### **homogeneous**

1641, from M.L. *homogeneus*, from Gk. *homogenes* "of the same kind," from *homos* "same" (see **same**) + *genos* "kind, gender, race, stock" (see **genus**). Earlier in this sense was *homogeneal* (1603). *Homogenize* "make similar" formed in Eng. 1886; its sense of "render milk uniform in consistency" is from 1904.

### **Hypothesis**

#### **hypothesis**

1596, from M.Fr. *hypothese*, from L.L. *hypothesis*, from Gk. *hypothesis* "base, basis of an argument, supposition," lit. "a placing under," from *hypo-* "under" + *thesis* "a placing, proposition." A term in logic; narrower scientific sense is 1646; *hypothetical* is 1588.

## Indicator/Index

### index

1398, "the forefinger," from L. *index* (gen. *indicis*) "forefinger, pointer, sign, list," lit. "anything which points out," from *indicare* "point out" (see **indicate**). Meaning "list of a book's contents" is first attested 1580, from L. phrases such as *Index Nominum* "Index of Names," *index expurgatorius* "specification of passages to be deleted from works otherwise permitted." The verb meaning "compile an index" is from 1720. Scientific sense (*refractive index*, etc.) is from 1829; economic sense (*cost-of-living index*, etc.) is after 1886. The Church sense of "forbidden books" is from *index librorum prohibitorum*, first published 1564 by authority of Pius IV.

## Inductive

### induce

c.1375, "to lead by persuasions or other influences," from L. *inducere* "lead into, persuade," from *in-* "in" + *ducere* "to lead" (see **duke**). Meaning "to bring about," of concrete situations, etc., is from 1413; sense of "to infer by reasoning" is from 1563. Electro-magnetic sense first recorded 1777.

### induct

c.1378, from L. *inductus*, pp. of *inducere* "to lead" (see **induce**). Originally of church offices; sense of "bring into military service" is 1934 in Amer.Eng. *Induction* as a term of logic (c.1440) is from L. *inductio*, used by Cicero to translate Gk. *epagoge* "leading to" in Aristotle; as a term of science, c.1800. *Induction* starts with known instances and arrives at generalizations; *deduction* starts from the general principal and arrives at some individual fact.

## Inference

### infer

1526, from L. *inferre* "bring into, cause," from *in-* "in" + *ferre* "carry, bear," from PIE *\*bher-* "to bear, to carry, to take" (cf. Skt. *bharati* "carries;" Avestan *baraiti* "carries;" O.Pers. *barantiy* "they carry;" Armenian *berem* "I carry;" Gk. *pherein* "to carry;" O.Ir. *beru/berim* "I catch, I bring forth;" Goth. *bairan* "to carry;" O.E., O.H.G. *beran*, O.N. *bera* "barrow;" O.C.S. *birati* "to take;" Rus. *brat'* "to take," *bremya* "a burden"). Sense of "draw a conclusion" is first attested 1529.

## Information

### information

1387, "act of informing," from O.Fr. *informacion*, from L. *informationem* (nom. *informatio*) "outline, concept, idea," noun of action from *informare* (see **inform**). Meaning "knowledge communicated" is from c.1450. Short form *info* is attested from 1906. *Info-mercial* and *info-tainment* are from 1983.



**Interpolation**  
**interpolate**

1612 (implied in *interpolation*) "to alter or enlarge (a writing) by inserting new material," from L. *interpolatus*, pp. of *interpolare* "alter, freshen up, falsify," from *inter-* "up" + *polare*, related to *polire* "to smoothe, polish." Sense evolved in L. from "refurbish," to "alter appearance of," to "falsify (especially by adding new material)."

**Interval**  
**interval**

c.1300, from O.Fr. *intervalle* (14c.), earlier *entreval* (13c.), from L.L. *intervallum*, originally "space between palisades or ramparts," from *inter-* "between" + *vallum* "rampart." Metaphoric sense of "gap in time" was present in L.

**Lag**  
**lag (v.)**

"fail to keep pace," 1530, from earlier adj. meaning "last" (1514), e.g. *lag-mon* "last man," possibly from a Scand. source (cf. Norw. *lagga* "go slowly"), or some dialectal version of *last*, *lack*, or *delay*. First record of *lag time* is from 1956. *Laggard* is from 1702.

**Lattice**  
**lattice**

1304, from O.Fr. *latta* "lath," from Frank. (cf. O.H.G. *latta* "lath"). See ***lath***.

**lath**

O.E. *\*laððe*, variant of *lætt* "lath," apparently from P.Gmc. *\*labbo* (cf. O.N. *latta*, M.Du., Ger. *latte* "lath," M.H.G. *lade* "plank," which is source of Ger. *Laden* "counter," hence, "shop").

**Likely/Likelihood**  
**likely**

c.1300, perhaps from O.N. *likligr* "likely," from *likr* "like" (adj.). O.E. had cognate *geliclic*. Meaning "having the appearance of being strong and capable" is from 1454, though now mostly confined to Amer.Eng. Sense of "good-looking" is from 1470. Meaning "probably" is attested from c.1380, now principally in Amer.Eng.

**Logistic**  
**logistic**

"pertaining to logic," 1628, from M.L. *logisticus*, from Gk. *logistikos* "pertaining to logic," from *logikos* (see ***logic***).

**logic**

1362, "branch of philosophy that treats of forms of thinking," from O.Fr. *logique*, from L. (*ars*) *logica*, from Gk. *logike (techne)* "reasoning (art)," from fem. of *logikos* "pertaining to speaking or reasoning," from *logos* "reason, idea, word" (see ***logos***). Meaning "logical argumentation" is from

1601. *Logical* attested 1500 as "pertaining to logic;" 1588 as "conformable to laws of reasoning;" 1860 as "following as a reasonable consequence."

## Loss

### lose

O.E. *losian* "be lost, perish," from *los* "destruction, loss," from P.Gmc. \**lausa* (cf. O.N. *los* "the breaking up of an army"), from PIE base \**leu-* "to loosen, divide, cut apart, untie, separate" (cf. Skt. *lunati* "cuts, cuts off," *lavitram* "sickle;" Gk. *lyein* "to loosen, untie, slacken," *lysus* "a loosening;" L. *luere* "to loose, release, atone for"). Replaced related *leos* (a class II strong verb whose pp. *loren* survives in **forlorn** and *love-lorn*), from P.Gmc. \**leusanan* (cf. O.H.G. *virlios*, Ger. *verlieren*, O.Fris. *urliasa*, Goth. *fraliusan* "to lose"). Transitive sense of "to part with accidentally" is from c.1205. Meaning "to be defeated" (in a game, etc.) is from c.1533. To *lose (one's) mind* "become insane" is attested from c.1500. To *lose out* "fail" is 1858, Amer.Eng.

## Lot/lottery

### lot

O.E. *hlot* "object (anything from dice to straw, but often a chip of wood with a name inscribed on it) used to determine someone's share," also "what falls to a person by lot," from P.Gmc. \**khlotom* (cf. O.N. *hlutr* "lot, share," O.H.G. *hluz* "share of land," O.E. *hleotan* "to cast lots, to foretell"), of unknown origin. The object was placed with others in a receptacle, which was shaken, the winner being the one that fell out first. Hence, to *cast lots*. In some cases the lots were drawn by hand. The word was adopted from Gmc. into the Romanic languages (cf. *lottery*, *lotto*). Meaning "choice resulting from the lasting of lots" first attested c.1205. Sense of "plot of land" is first recorded 1633 (distribution of the best property in new settlements often determined by casting lot), that of "group, collection" is 1725, from notion of auction lots. The generalized sense of "great many" is first attested in 1812. To *cast (one's) lot with* another is to agree to share winnings.

### lottery

1567, "arrangement for a distribution of prizes by chance," from It. *lotteria*, from same root as O.E. *hlot* (see **lot**).

## Luck

### luck

15c. from M.Du. *luc*, shortening of *gheluc* "happiness, good fortune," of unknown origin. Related to M.H.G. *g(e)lücke*, Ger. *Glück* "fortune, good luck." Perhaps first borrowed in Eng. as a gambling term. *Lucky break* dates from 1938. To *luck out* "succeed through luck" is Amer.Eng. colloquial, first attested 1954.

## Martingale

The Oxford English Dictionary says:

French martingale is attested earliest in the phrase *chausses à la martingale* hose that fasten at the back (1491); cf. Occitan *braias à la martegala* hose that fasten at the back, and Italian *martingala* (a1556; also 1598 in sense 1 [the horse-harness]), Spanish *martingala* (1529) in the same sense. The application may arise from a belief that the inhabitants of Martigues, a remote town, were eccentric and naive; hence also the application to an apparently foolish system of gambling. Sense 2 [the ship-rigging], however, is prob. attributable to the former importance of Martigues as a port and ship-building centre. Sense 1 is variously explained: some take as a development from the application to hose (although N.E.D. (1905) holds that the opposite is the case); *Französisches Etymol. Wörterbuch* takes this sense as developed from nautical uses, in spite of the chronology in English and French. A derivation of Middle French, French martingale from Spanish *almártaga*, *almártiga* kind of headstall put on horses over the bit to steady them when the rider dismounts (1500), prob. after an Arabic word, is to be rejected on formal as well as semantic grounds.]

## Mean

### mean (n.)

"that which is halfway between extremes," 1330, from O.Fr. *meien*, from L. *medianus* "of or that is in the middle" (see **median**). Oldest sense is musical. Sense of "so-so, mediocre" led to confusion with *mean* (adj.). First record of *means* "course of action," is c.1380; sense of "wealth" is first recorded 1603. This is the *mean* in *meantime* (1340), *meanwhile* (1464), and *by no means* (1472).

### mean (adj.)

"low-quality," O.E. *gemæne* "common, public, general, universal, shared by all," from P.Gmc. *\*ga-mainiz* "possessed jointly" (cf. O.Fris. *mene*, M.L.G. *gemeine*, Du. *gemeen*, Ger. *gemein*, Goth. *gamains* "common"), from PIE *\*ko-moin-i-* "held in common," a compound adjective formed from collective prefix *\*ko-* "together" (P.Gmc. *\*ga-*) + *\*moi-n-*, suffixed form of PIE base *\*mei-* "to change, exchange" (see **mutable**); cf. second element in **common**, a word whose sense evolution parallels that of *mean* (adj.). Sense influenced by **mean** (n.). Meaning "inferior, poor" emerged c.1300; that of "stingy, nasty" first recorded 1665; weaker sense of "disobliging, pettily offensive" is from 1839, originally Amer.Eng. slang. Inverted sense of "remarkably good" (i.e. *plays a mean saxophone*) first recorded c.1900, also in phrase *no mean* \_\_\_\_\_ "not inferior" (1596, also, "not average," reflecting further confusion with *mean* (n.)). *Meanie* "cruel person" is from 1927.

## Measurement

### measure (v.)

c.1300, from O.Fr. *mesurer*, from L.L. *mensurare* "to measure," from L. *mensura* "a measuring, a thing to measure by," from *mensus*, pp. of *metiri* "to measure," from PIE *\*ma-/\*me-* "measure" (see **meter** (2)). Replaced O.E. cognate *mæð* "measure." The noun also is attested from c.1300. Meaning "treatment 'meted out' to someone" is from 1593; that of "plan or course of action intended to obtain some goal" is from 1698; sense of "legislative enactment" is from 1759. To *measure up* "have the necessary abilities" is 1910, Amer.Eng. Phrase *for good measure* (1382) is lit. "ample in quantity, in goods sold by measure."

## Median

### median

1592, from M.Fr. *médian*, from L. *medianus* "of the middle," from *medius* "middle" (see **medial**). Originally anatomical, of veins, arteries, nerves; mathematical sense "middle number of a series" first recorded 1902; *median strip* "strip between lanes of a highway" is from 1954.

## Mode

### mode (2)

"current fashion," c.1645, from Fr. *mode*, from L. *modus* "manner" (see *mode* (1)).

### mode (1)

"manner," c.1374, "kind of musical scale," from L. *modus* "measure, rhythm, song, manner" (in L.L. also "mood" in grammar and logic), from PIE base *\*med-/\*met-* "to measure, limit, consider, advise, take appropriate measures" (cf. L. *meditari* "to think or reflect upon, consider," *mederi* "to look after, heal, cure;" O.E. *metan* "to measure out," Gk. *medein* "to rule"). Meaning "manner in which a thing is done" first recorded 1667.

## Model

### model

1575, "architect's set of designs," from M.Fr. *modelle* (Fr. *modèle*), from It. *modello* "a model, mold," from V.L. *\*modellus*, dim. of L. *modulus* "measure, standard," dim. of *modus* "manner, measure" (see *mode* (1)). Sense of "thing or person to be imitated" is 1639. Meaning "motor vehicle of a particular design" is from 1900 (e.g. *Model T*, 1909). Sense of "artist's model" is first recorded 1691; that of "fashion model" is from 1904. The verb is 1665 in the sense of "fashion in clay or wax;" 1915 in the sense "to act as a model, to display (clothes)." The adj. is 1844, from the noun.

## Moment

### moment

1340, "very brief portion of time, instant," in *moment of time*, from O.Fr. *moment*, from L. *momentum* "movement, moving power," also "instant,

importance," contraction of *\*movimentum*, from *movere* "to move" (see **move**). Some (but not O.E.D.) explain the sense evolution of the L. word by notion of a particle so small it would just "move" the pointer of a scale, which led to the transf. sense of "minute time division." Sense of "importance, 'weight' " is attested in Eng. from 1522. *Momentous* formed 1656 in Eng., to carry the sense of "important" while *momentary* (1526) kept the meaning "of an instant of time." Phrase *never a dull moment* first recorded 1889 in Jerome K. Jerome's "*Three Men in a Boat*." Phrase *moment of truth* first recorded 1932 in Hemingway's "*Death in the Afternoon*," from Sp. *el momento de la verdad*, the final sword-thrust in a bull-fight.

### **momentum**

1699, "quantity of motion of a moving body," from L. *momentum* "movement, moving power" (see **moment**). Fig. use dates from 1782.

### **Noise**

#### **noise**

c.1225, "loud outcry, clamor, shouting," from O.Fr. *noise* "uproar, brawl" (in modern Fr. only in phrase *chercher noise* "to pick a quarrel"), apparently from L. *nausea* "disgust, annoyance, discomfort," lit. "seasickness" (see **nausea**). Another theory traces the O.Fr. word to L. *noxia* "hurting, injury, damage." OED considers that "the sense of the word is against both suggestions," but *nausea* could have developed a sense in V.L. of "unpleasant situation, noise, quarrel" (cf. O.Prov. *nauza* "noise, quarrel"). Replaced native *gedyn* (see **din**).

### **Number**

#### **number**

1297, "sum, aggregate of a collection," from Anglo-Fr. *noumbre*, from O.Fr. *nombre*, from L. *numerus* "a number, quantity," from PIE base *\*nem-* "to divide, distribute, allot" (related to Gk. *nemein* "to deal out;" see **nemesis**). Meaning "symbol or figure of arithmetic value" is from c.1391. The meaning "musical selection" is from vaudeville theater programs, where acts were marked by a number. The verb meaning "to count" is from 1297. *Number one* "oneself" is from 1704 (mock-It. form *numero uno* attested from 1973); the biblical *Book of Numbers* (c.1400, L. *Numeri*, Gk. *Arithmoi*) so called because it begins with a census of the Israelites. *No.*, "abbreviation for 'number,' " is from It. *numero*. Slang *number one* and *number two* for "urinate" and "defecate" attested from 1902. *Number cruncher* is 1966, of machines; 1971, of persons. To *get* or *have* (someone's) *number* "have someone figured out" is attested from 1853. *The numbers* "illegal lottery" is from 1897, Amer.Eng.

### **Odds**

#### **odds**

in wagering sense, found first in Shakespeare ("2 Henry IV," 1597), probably from earlier sense of "amount by which one thing exceeds or falls

short of another" (1548), from **odd** (q.v.), though the sense evolution is uncertain. Always treated as a singular, though obviously a plural (cf. *news*).

## **odd**

c.1300, "constituting a unit in excess of an even number," from O.N. *oddi* "third or additional number," as in *odda-maðr* "third man, odd man (who gives the casting vote)," *odda-tala* "odd number." O.N. *oddi* means lit. "point, angle;" related via notion of "triangle" to *oddr* "point of a weapon," from P.Gmc. *\*uzdaz* "pointed upward" (cf. O.E. *ord* "point of a weapon, spear, source, beginning," O.Fris. *ord* "point, place," Du. *oord* "place, region," O.H.G. *ort* "point," Ger. *Ort* "place"), from PIE *\*uzdho-* (cf. Lith. *us-nis* "thistle"). None of the other languages, however, shows the O.N. development from "point" to "third number." Used from 1382 to indicate a surplus over any given sum. Sense of "strange, peculiar" first attested 1588 from notion of "odd one out, unpaired one of three" (attested earlier, c.1400, as "singular" in a positive sense of "renowned, rare, choice"); *oddball* "eccentric or unconventional person" first attested 1948. *Odd job* (c.1770) is so called from notion of "not regular." *Odd lot* "incomplete or random set" is from 1897. The international order of *Odd Fellows* began as local social clubs in England, late 18c., with Masonic-type trappings; formally organized 1813 in Manchester.

## **Order**

### **order (n.)**

c.1225, "body of persons living under a religious discipline," from O.Fr. *ordre* (11c.), from earlier *ordene*, from L. *ordinem* (nom. *ordo*) "row, rank, series, arrangement," originally "a row of threads in a loom," from Italic root *\*ored(h)-* "to arrange, arrangement" (cf. *ordiri* "to begin to weave," e.g. in *primordial*), of unknown origin. Meaning "a rank in the (secular) community" is first recorded c.1300; meaning "command, directive" is first recorded 1548, from the notion of "to keep in order." Military and honorary orders grew out of the fraternities of Crusader knights. Business and commerce sense is attested from 1837. In natural history, as a classification of living things, it is first recorded 1760. Meaning "condition of a community which is under the rule of law" is from 1483. Phrase *in order to* (1655) preserves etymological notion of "sequence." The word reflects a very medieval notion: "a system of parts subject to certain uniform, established ranks or proportions," and was used of everything from architecture to angels. The verb is c.1240, from the noun. *In short order* "without delay" is from 1834, Amer.Eng.; *order of battle* is from 1769.

## **Outcome**

### **outcome (n.)**

1788, "that which results from something," originally Scottish, from *out* + **come** (v.). Popularized in Eng. by Carlyle (c.1830s). Used in M.E. in sense of "the act or fact of coming out."



## come

O.E. *cuman* "come" (class IV strong verb; past tense *cuom*, *com*, pp. *cumen*), from P.Gmc. *\*kwem-*, from PIE base *\*gwem-* "to go, come" (cf. Skt. *gamati* "he goes," Avestan *jamaiti* "goes," Tocharian *kakmu* "come," Lith. *gemu* "to be born," Gk. *bainein* "to go, walk, step," L. *venire* "to come"). Substitution of -o- for -u- is scribal change before minims, cf. *monk*, *some*, *worm*, orig. *munuc*, *sum*, *wyrm*. Past tense form is probably from O.N. *kvam*, replacing O.E. *cuom*. Amazingly productive with prepositions (NTC's "Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs" lists 198 combinations); consider the varied senses in *come to* "regain consciousness," *come over* "possess" (as an emotion), *come at* "attack," and *come off* "occur." For slang sexual senses, see **cum**. *Come-back* "verbal retort" is from 1889.

## Parameter

### parameter

1656, from Mod.L. *parameter* (1631), from Gk. *para-* "beside, subsidiary" + *metron* "measure" (see **meter** (2)). A geometry term until 1920s when it yielded sense of "measurable factor which helps to define a particular system" (1927). Common modern meaning (infl. by *perimeter*) of "boundary, limit, characteristic factor" is from 1950s.

## Pattern

### pattern (n.)

1324, "the original proposed to imitation; the archetype; that which is to be copied; an exemplar" [Johnson], from O.Fr. *patron*, from M.L. *patronus* (see **patron**). Extended sense of "decorative design" first recorded 1582, from earlier sense of a "patron" as a model to be imitated. The difference in form and sense between *patron* and *pattern* wasn't firm till 1700s. Meaning "model or design in dressmaking" (especially one of paper) is first recorded 1792, in Jane Austen. Verb phrase *pattern after* "take as a model" is from 1878.

## Permutation

### permutation

1362, from O.Fr. *permutacion* (14c.), from L. *permutationem* (nom. *permutatio*), from *permutatus*, pp. of *permutare* "change thoroughly, exchange," from *per-* "thoroughly" + *mutare* "to change" (see **mutable**).

## Pivot

### pivot (n.)

1611, from Fr., from O.Fr. *pivot* "hinge, pivot" (12c.), of uncertain origin. The verb is 1841, from the noun. Fig. sense of "central point" is recorded from 1813; *pivotal* in this sense is from 1844.

## Plot



## plot

O.E. *plot* "small piece of ground," of unknown origin. Sense of "ground plan," and thus "map, chart" is 1551; that of "plan, scheme" is 1587, probably by accidental similarity to *complot*, from O.Fr. *complot* "combined plan," of unknown origin, perhaps a back-formation from *compeloter* "to roll into a ball." Meaning "set of events in a story" is from 1649. The verb is first attested 1589 in the sense of "to lay plans for" (usually with evil intent); 1590 in the lit. sense of "to make a map or diagram."

## Poll

### poll

c.1290, *polle* "hair of the head," from M.L.G. or M.Du. *pol* "head, top." Meaning "collection of votes" is first recorded 1625, from notion of "counting heads;" meaning "survey of public opinion" is first recorded 1902. The verb meaning "to take the votes of" also is first recorded 1625. *Pollster* is 1939. A *deed poll* "deed executed by one party only," is from earlier verbal meaning "cut the hair of," because the deed was cut straight rather than indented (see *indent*).

## Posterior

### posterior (adj.)

1534, "later," from L. *posterior* "after, later, behind," comparative of *posterus* "coming after, subsequent," from *post* "after." Meaning "buttocks" is attested from 1619.

## Prediction

### predict

1623, "to foretell, prophesy," from L. *prædicatus*, pp. of *prædicere* "foretell, advise, give notice," from *præ-* "before" + *dicere* "to say" (see *diction*). Scientific sense of "to have as a deducible consequence" is recorded from 1961. *Prediction* is recorded from 1561, from L. *prædictio* "a foretelling," from *prædictus*. *Predictably* "as could have been predicted" is attested from 1914.

## Prior

### prior (adj.)

1714, from L. *prior* "former, superior," comparative of Old L. *pri* "before" (see *prime*), related to L. *præ* "before" (see *pre-*).

### prior (n.)

"superior officer of a religious house or order," 1093, from L. *prior* "former, superior" (see *prior* (adj.)).

**Probability/probable**  
**probable**

1387, from O.Fr. *probable* (14c.), from L. *probabilis* "provable," from *probare* "to try, to test" (see **prove**). *Probable cause* as a legal term is attested from 1676. *Probably* is attested from 1535; *probability* from 1551.

**Quantile/Percentile**  
**percent**

1568, *per cent*, from Mod.L. *per centum* "by the hundred" (see **per** and **hundred**). Until early 20c. often treated as an abbreviation and punctuated accordingly. *Percentage* is first recorded 1789; sense of "profit, advantage" is from 1862; *percentile* is from 1889.

**Quantity**  
**quantity**

c.1325, from O.Fr. *quantite* (Fr. *quantité*), from L. *quantitatem* (nom. *quantitas*, coined as a loan-translation of Gk. *posotes*) "relative greatness or extent," from *quantus* "how much," from *quam* "how, how much."

**quantum**

1619, "one's share or portion," from L. *quantum* "how much," neut. sing. of *quantus* "how great" (see **quantity**). Introduced in physics by Max Planck, 1900; reinforced by Einstein, 1905. *Quantum theory* is from 1912; *quantum mechanics*, 1922; *quantum jump* is first recorded 1955; *quantum leap*, 1970.

**Random**  
**random**

"having no definite aim or purpose," 1655, from *at random* (1565), "at great speed" (thus, "carelessly, haphazardly"), alteration of M.E. *randon* "impetuosity, speed" (c.1305), from O.Fr. *randon* "rush, disorder, force, impetuosity," from *randir* "to run fast," from Frankish *\*rant* "a running," from P.Gmc. *\*randa* (cf. O.H.G. *rennen* "to run," O.E. *rinnan* "to flow, to run"). In 1980s college student slang, it began to acquire a sense of "inferior, undesirable." *Random access* in ref. to computer memory is recorded from 1953.

**Range**  
**range (n.)**

c.1300, "row or line of persons" (esp. hunters or soldiers), from O.Fr. *range* "range, rank," from *rangier* "to place in a row, arrange," from *reng* "row, line" (see **rank** (n.)). Meaning "row of mountains" is from 1705. Meaning "scope, extent" first recorded 1666; that of "area over which animals seek food" is from 1626, from the verb meaning "move over a large area" (1477). Specific U.S. sense of "series of townships six miles in width" is from 1785. Sense of "distance a gun can send a bullet" is recorded from 1591; meaning "place used for shooting practice" is from 1862. The verb sense of "to arrange in rows" is recorded from 1375. The cooking

appliance so called since 1446, for unknown reasons. *Rangy* is 1868, "adapted for ranging;" the meaning "having a long, slender form" (as an animal suited to ranging) is from 1876.

### Rank

#### rank (n.)

early 14c., from O.Fr. *ranc*, from Frankish *\*hring* (cf. O.H.G. *hring* "circle, ring"), from P.Gmc. *\*khrengaz* "circle, ring" (see **ring**). Meaning "social position" is from c.1430; the verb sense of "put in order, classify" is from 1592. *Rank and file* is 1598, in reference to soldiers marching in formation, generalized to "common soldiers" (1796) and "common people" (1860). The verb meaning "to arrange things in order" is from 1590.

### Rate

#### rate (n.)

"estimated value or worth," 1425, from M.Fr. *rate* "price, value," from M.L. *rata (pars)* "fixed (amount)," from L. *rata* "fixed, settled," fem. pp. of *rerī* "to reckon, think" (see **reason**). Meaning "degree of speed" (prop. ratio between distance and time) is attested from 1652. Currency exchange sense first recorded 1727. The verb "to estimate the worth or value of" is from 1599. *First-rate*, *second-rate*, etc. are 1649, from British Navy division of ships into six classes based on size and strength. Phrase *at any rate* originally (1619) meant "at any cost;" weakened sense of "at least" is attested by 1760.

### Regression

#### regress

c.1375 (n.), "act of going back," from L. *regressus* "a return," from *regress-*, pp. stem of *regredi* "to go back," from *re-* "back" + *gradi* "to step, walk" (see **grade**). The verb meaning "to move backward" is recorded from 1823; the psychological sense of "to return to an earlier stage of life" is attested from 1926. *Regressive* is recorded from 1634; in ref. to taxation, it is attested from 1889.

### Reliability

#### reliable

1569, *raliabil*, Scottish, from *rely* + *-able*. Not common before 1850; and execrated thereafter in Britain as an Americanism.

#### rely

c.1330, "to gather, assemble," from O.Fr. *relier* "fasten, attach, rally, oblige," from L. *religare* "fasten, bind fast," from *re-*, intensive prefix, + *ligare* "to bind" (see **ligament**). Sense of "depend, trust" is from 1574, perhaps via notion of "rally to, fall back on."

### Repeat

#### repeat

c.1375, from O.Fr. *repeter* "say or do again, get back, demand the return of" (13c.), from L. *repetere* "do or say again, attack again," from *re-* "again" + *petere* "go toward, seek, demand, attack" (see **petition**). Specific meaning "to take a course of education over again" is recorded from 1945, Amer.Eng. The noun is first recorded 1556.

## **Replication** **replication**

c.1374, "action of folding back," also "legal reply, rejoinder" (c.1386), from Anglo-Fr. *replicacioun*, O.Fr. *replication*, from L. *replicationem* (nom. *replicatio*) "a reply, repetition, a folding back," from *replicatus*, pp. of *replicare* "to repeat, reply," lit. "to fold back" (see **reply**). Meaning "copy, reproduction" first recorded 1692. *Replicate* "to make a replica of" is from 1882; specifically of genetic material from 1957.

## **Residual** **residue**

1362, from O.Fr. *residu*, from L. *residuum* "a remainder," neut. of *residuus* "remaining, left over," from *residere* "remain behind" (see **residence**). *Residual* (adj.) is from 1570.

## **Response** **response**

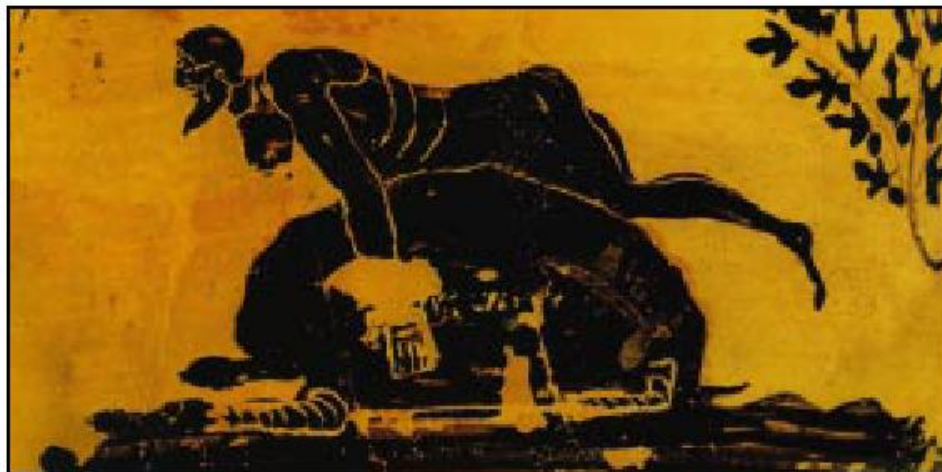
c.1300, from L. *responsum* "answer," prop. neut. pp. of *respondere* "to respond" (see **respond**). *Responsive* is from L.L. *responsivus*, from L. *responsus*, pp. of *respondere*.

## **Risk** **risk (n.)**

1661, *risque*, from Fr. *risque*, from It. *risco*, *riscio* (modern *rischio*), from *riscare* "run into danger," of uncertain origin. The Anglicized spelling first recorded 1728. Sp. *riesgo* and Ger. *Risiko* are It. loan-words. The verb is from 1687; *risky* first recorded 1826.

The term risk may be traced back to classical Greek *πιζα*, meaning root, later used in Latin for cliff. The term is used in Homer's Rhapsody M of Odysseus "Sirens, Scylla, Charybdee and the bulls of Helios (Sun)" Odysseus tried to save himself from Charybdee at the cliffs of Scylla, where his ship was destroyed by heavy seas generated by Zeus as a punishment for his crew killing before the bulls of Helios (the god of the sun), by grappling the roots of a wild fig tree. In the classical text there is an antique painting of Odysseus riding a turtle (that happened to be on the cliffs) and the fig tree on the right.

στ. 485     μετά κρεμάστικα στην αγριουσικιά: πάνω από το στόμιο της Χάρυδδης φύτρωνε μια μεγάλη  
αγριουσικιά: απ' αυτήν αρπάχτηκε ο Οδυσσέας και σώθηκε.



Εικ. 96 Ο Οδυσσέας, σύμφωνα με την ομηρική εκδοχή, θα μείνει για ώρες γαντζωμένος από τα κλαριά μιας αγριουσικιάς και θα σωθεί πάνω στα συντρίμια του καραβιού του που θα ξεβράσει η Χάρυβδη. Στην παράσταση αυτή διακρίνονται δεξιά τα κλαδιά της αγριουσικιάς, όμως ο Οδυσσέας εμφανίζεται να απομακρύνεται πάνω σε μια θαλάσσια χελώνα.

[Από μελανόμορφο σκύφο (αρχές του 5ου αι. π.Χ.), Παλέρμο, Εθνικό Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο]

Latin and vulgar latin (*resicum, risicum, riscus* : *cliff, récif, Felsklippe*, is the direct formal origin for italian (*risico, risco, rischio*), spanish *riesgo* and french *risque*. English borrowed it from spanish, german from italian and both were confirmed by the French *risque* of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Dictionaries confirm that the Latin word comes from a Greek navigation term *rhizikon, rhiza* which meant "root, stone, cut of the firm land" and was a metaphor for "difficulty to avoid in the sea". It might be of a certain interest that these lexical borrowings happened in the end of the middle-ages, when mentalities woke up and people dared to discover the world. So that from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, the term got a benefit meaning, for example in middle-high-German *Rysigo 1507* a technical term for business, with the meaning "to dare, to undertake, enterprise, hope for economic success".

Rolf Skjong, DNV, February 25<sup>th</sup> 2005.

<http://research.dnv.com/skj/Papers/ETYMOLOGY-OF-RISK.pdf>

## Roulette

### roulette

1734, "small wheel," from Fr. *roulette* "gambling game played with a revolving wheel," lit. "small wheel," from O.Fr. *roetele* "little wheel," on model of L.L. *rotella*, dim. of L. *rota* "wheel." The game of chance so-called from 1745.

## Run

### run (n.)

"spell of running," c.1450 (earlier *ren*, c.1390), from **run** (v.). Sense of "small stream" first recorded 1581, mostly Northern Eng. dialect and

Amer.Eng. Meaning "series or rush of demands on a bank, etc." is first recorded 1692. Baseball sense is from 1856. Meaning "single trip by a railroad train" is from 1857. Military aircraft sense is from 1916. Meaning "total number of copies printed" is from 1909. Meaning "tear in a knitted garment" is from 1922. Phrase *a run for one's money* is from 1874. *Run-in* "quarrel, confrontation" is from 1905.

### Sample sample

c.1300, "something which confirms a proposition or statement," from Anglo-Fr. *saumple*, aphetic of O.Fr. *essample*, from L. *exemplum* "a sample" (see **example**). Meaning "small quantity (of something) from which the general quality (of the whole) may be inferred" (usually in a commercial sense) is recorded from 1428; sense of "specimen for scientific sampling" is from 1878. The verb meaning "to test by taking a sample" is from 1767.

### Scale scale (n2.)

"pan of a balance," c.1375, earlier "drinking cup" (c.1205), from O.N. *skal* "bowl, drinking cup," in pl., "weighing scale" from P.Gmc. *\*skælo* "split, divide" (cf. O.N. *skel* "shell," O.E. *scalu*, O.S. *skala*, O.H.G. *scala*, Ger. *Schale*, M.Du. *scale*, Du. *schaal* "drinking cup, bowl, shell, scale of a balance"), see **scale** (n.1). The connecting sense seems to be of half of a bivalve ("split") shell used as a drinking cup or a pan for weighing. But according to Paulus Diaconus the "drinking cup" sense originated from a supposed custom of making goblets from skulls (see **skull**).

### scale (n1.)

"skin plates on fish or snakes," c.1300, from O.Fr. *escale* (12c., Mod.Fr. *écale*) "scale, husk," from Frank., from P.Gmc. *\*skælo* "split, divide" (cf. O.H.G. *scala* "shell," Goth. *skalja* "tile," O.E. *scealu* "shell, husk"), from PIE base *\*(s)kel-* "to cut, cleave, split" (cf. L. *culter* "knife," *scalpere* "to cut, scrape;" O.C.S. *skolika* "mussel, shell," Rus. *skala* "rind, bark," O.E. *scell* "shell"). In reference to humans, as a condition of certain skin diseases, it is attested from c.1400. As what falls from one's eye when blindness ends (usually fig.), it echoes Acts ix.18 (L. *tanquam squamæ*, Gk. *hosei lepides*). Verb meaning "to remove the scales from (a fish)" is attested from c.1440.

### skull

c.1225, probably from O.N. *skalli* "bald head, skull," a general Scand. word (cf. Swed. *skulle*, Norw. *skult*), probably related to O.E. *scealu* "husk" (see **shell**). But early prominence in southwestern texts suggests rather origin from a Du. or Low Ger. cognate (e.g. Du. *schol* "turf, piece of ice," but the sense of "head bone framework" is wanting). Derivation from O.Fr. *escuelle* seems unlikely on grounds of sound and sense. O.E. words for skull include *heafod-bolla*.



### Scatter scatter

1154, possibly a northern Eng. variant of M.E. *schateren* (see **shatter**), reflecting Norse influence. *Scatterbrain* is first recorded 1790. *Scattershot* (adj.) is attested from 1961, fig. use of term for a kind of gun charge meant to broadcast the pellets when fired.

### Score score

late O.E. *scoru* "twenty," from O.N. *skor* "mark, tally," also, in Icelandic, "twenty," from P.Gmc. *\*skura-*, from PIE base *\*(s)ker-* "to cut" (cf. O.E. *sceran*; see **shear**). The connecting notion is perhaps counting large numbers (of sheep, etc.) with a notch in a stick for each 20. This counting notion is the origin of the modern sense in sports (1742, originally in whist). In O.Fr., "twenty" (*vint*) or a multiple of it could be used as a base, e.g. *vint et doze* ("32"), *dous vint et diz* ("50"). Meaning "printed piece of music" first recorded 1701, from the practice of connecting related staves by scores of lines. The verb meaning "to cut with incisions or notches" is attested from c.1400; the slang sense "achieve intercourse" first recorded 1960.

### Seasonal season (n.)

c.1300, "a period of the year," with ref. to weather or work, from O.Fr. *seison* (Mod.Fr. *saison*) "a sowing, planting," from L. *sationem* (nom. *satio*) "a sowing," from pp. stem of *serere* "to sow" (see **sow**). Sense shifted in V.L. from "act of sowing" to "time of sowing." In O.Fr. and O.Prov. this was extended to "season" in general (sowing season being the most important). *Seasonable* is first recorded c.1380. *Season ticket* is attested from 1820.

### Sequential sequence

1387, "hymn sung after the Hallelujah and before the Gospel," from O.Fr. *sequence* "answering verses" (13c.), from M.L. *sequentia* "a following, a succession," from L. *sequentem* (nom. *sequens*), prp. of *sequi* "to follow" (see **sequel**). In Church use, a partial loan-translation of Gk. *akolouthia*, from *akolouthos* "following." General sense of "succession," also "a sequence at cards," appeared 1575.

### Series series

1611, "a number or set of things of one kind arranged in a line," from L. *series* "row, chain, series," from *serere* "to join, link, bind together, put," from PIE base *\*ser-* "to line up, join" (cf. Skt. *sarat-* "thread," Gk. *eirein* "to fasten together in rows," Goth. *sarwa* (pl.) "armor, arms," O.N. *sörve* "necklace of stringed pearls," O.Ir. *sernaid* "he joins together," Welsh



*ystret* "row"). Meaning "set of printed works published consecutively" is from 1711. Meaning "set of radio or television programs with the same characters and themes" is attested from 1949.

## Set

### **set (n.)**

"collection of things," 1443, from O.Fr. *sette* "sequence," variant of *secte*, from M.L. *secta* "retinue," from L. *secta* "a following" (see **sect**). The word had been earlier used in Eng. in the sense of "religious sect" (1387), which likely is the direct source of some meanings, e.g. "group of persons with shared status, habits, etc." (1682). Sense of "burrow of a badger" is attested from 1898. That of "scenery for an individual scene in a play, etc." is recorded from 1859. Meaning "group of pieces musicians perform at a club during 45 minutes (more or less)" is from c.1925, though it is found in a similar sense in 1590.

## Significance

### **significance**

c.1300 (implied in *signification*), from L. *significantia* "meaning, force, energy," from *significans*, prp. of *significare* (see **signify**). First record of *significant* is from 1579.

### **insignificant**

1651, from *in-* "not" + *significant* (see **significance**).

## Simulation

### **simulation**

1340, "a false show, false profession," from O.Fr. *simulation*, from L. *simulationem* (nom. *simulatio*) "an imitating, feigning," noun of action from *simulare* "imitate," from stem of *similis* "like" (see **similar**).

### **simulate (v.)**

1622 (implied in *simulated*), from L. *simulatus*, pp. of *simulare* (see **simulation**). First record of *simulated* in sense of "imitative for purposes of experiment or training" is from 1966.

## Simultaneous

### **simultaneous**

1652 (implied in *simultaneity*), from L.L. *simultaneus*, from L. *simul* "at the same time" (see **similar**) + *-taneous*, abstracted from *spontaneous*, etc.

## Skewed/Skewness

### **skew (v.)**

c.1470, from O.N.Fr. *eskiuer* "shy away from, avoid," O.Fr. *eschiver* (see **eschew**). Meaning "depict unfairly" first recorded 1872, on notion of being slanted. Statistical sense dates from 1929. The adj. meaning "slanting, turned to one side" is recorded from 1609; noun meaning "slant, deviation" first attested 1688.

## askew

1573, probably lit. "on skew" (see **skew**), perhaps from O.N. form of it, *aska*. Earlier *askoye* is attested in the same sense (1430).

## Slope

### slope (v.)

1591, from earlier adj. meaning "slanting" (1502), probably from M.E. *aslope* (adv.) "on the incline" (1470), from O.E. *\*aslopen*, pp. of *aslupan* "to slip away," from *a-* "away" + *slupan* "to slip" (see **sleeve**). The noun is first recorded 1611, from the verb. Derogatory slang meaning "Oriental person" is attested from 1948.

## Smooth

### smooth

O.E. *smoð* "free from roughness, not harsh," of unknown origin. Sense of "pleasant, polite, sincere" first recorded c.1390. Slang meaning "superior, classy, clever" is attested from 1893. The verb is first recorded c.1440. *Smooth-bore* in ref. to guns is from 1812. *smooth talk* (v.) is recorded from 1950. A 1599 dictionary has *smoothboots* "a flatterer, a faire spoken man, a cunning tongued fellow." The usual O.E. form was *smede*, and there is a dial. *smeeth* found in places names, e.g. **Smithfield**, *Smedley*.

## Sort

### sort (v.)

1358, "to arrange according to type or quality," from O.Fr. *sortir* "allot, sort, assort," from L. *sortiri* "draw lots, divide, choose," from *sors* (see **sort** (n.)). In some senses, the verb is a shortened form of **assort**.

## Standard/Standardized

### standard

1138, "flag or other conspicuous object to serve as a rallying point for a military force," from O.Fr. *estandard*, probably from Frank. *\*standhard*, lit. "stand fast or firm," a compound of words similar to Gothic *standan* "to stand" (see **stand**) and *hardus* "hard" (see **hard**). So called because the flag was fixed to a pole or spear and stuck in the ground to stand upright. The other theory connects the O.Fr. word to *estendre* "to stretch out," from L. *extendere* (see **extend**). Meaning "unit of measure" is 1327, from Anglo-Fr., where it was used 13c., and is perhaps metaphoric, the royal standard coming to stand for royal authority in matters like setting weights and measures. Hence the meaning "authoritative or recognized exemplar of quality or correctness" (1477). Meaning "rule, principal or means of judgment" is from 1562. That of "definite level of attainment" is attested from 1711 (e.g. *standard of living*, 1903). Some senses (e.g. "upright pole," c.1450) seem to be infl. by **stand** (v.). *Standardize* is recorded from 1873. *Standard-bearer* in the figurative sense is from 1561.

## Statistic

### statistics

1770, "science dealing with data about the condition of a state or community," from Ger. *Statistik*, popularized and perhaps coined by Ger. political scientist Gottfried Aschenwall (1719-72) in his "*Vorbereitung zur Staatswissenschaft*" (1748), from Mod.L. *statisticum (collegium)* "(lecture course on) state affairs," from It. *statista* "one skilled in statecraft," from L. *status* (see **state** (n.1)). Meaning "numerical data collected and classified" is from 1829. Abbreviated form *stats* first recorded 1961. *Statistician* is from 1825.

## Stochastic

### stochastic

1662, "pertaining to conjecture," from Gk. *stokhastikos* "able to guess, conjecturing," from *stokhazesthai* "guess," from *stokhos* "a guess, aim, target, mark," lit. "pointed stick set up for archers to shoot at" (see **sting**). The sense of "randomly determined" is first recorded 1934, from Ger. *Stochastik*.

## Strata

### stratum

"horizontal layer," 1599, from Mod.L., special use of L. *stratum* "thing spread out, coverlet, pavement," from neut. pp. of *sternere* "to spread out, lay down, stretch out," from PIE *\*stre-to-* "to stretch, extend," from base *\*stere-* "to spread, extend, stretch out" (see **structure**).

### strata

c.1700, plural of *stratum*.

### stratification

1617, from Mod.L. *stratificationem* (nom. *stratificatio*), from *stratificatus*, pp. of *stratificare* "to form strata," from *stratum* "thing spread out" + root of *facere* "to make" (see **factitious**).

## Subjective

### subject (n.)

1315, "person under control or dominion of another," from O.Fr. *suget*, *subget* "a subject person or thing" (12c.), from L. *subjectus*, noun use of pp. of *subicere* "to place under," from *sub* "under" + combining form of *jacere* "to throw." In 14c., *sugges*, *sogetis*, *subgit*, *sugette*; form re-Latinized in Eng. 16c. Meaning "person or thing that may be acted upon" is recorded from 1592. Meaning "subject matter of an art or science" is attested from 1541, probably short for *subject matter* (c.1374), which is from M.L. *subjecta materia*, a loan translation of Gk. *hypokeimene hyle* (Aristotle), lit. "that which lies beneath." Likewise some specific uses in logic and philosophy are borrowed directly from L. *subjectum* "foundation or subject of a proposition," a loan-translation of Aristotle's *hypokeimenon*. Grammatical sense is recorded from c.1638. The adj. is attested from c.1330. *Subjective* "existing in the mind" is from 1707.

### Sufficient suffice

c.1325, from stem of O.Fr. *souffire* "be sufficient," from L. *sufficere* "supply, suffice," from *sub* "up to" + root of *facere* "to make" (see **factitious**). Phrase *suffice it to say* (1390) is a rare surviving subjunctive. *Sufficient* (1375) is from L. *sufficiens*, prp. of *sufficere*.

### Sure sure

c.1300, "safe, secure," later "mentally certain" (c.1450), from O.Fr. *sur*, *seur* "safe, secure," from L. *securus* "free from care, untroubled, heedless, safe" (see **secure**). Pronunciation development followed that of *sugar*. As an affirmative meaning "yes, certainly" it dates from 1803, from M.E. meanings "firmly established, having no doubt," and phrases like *to be sure* (1657), *sure enough* (1545), and *for sure* (1586). The use as a qualifier meaning "assuredly" goes back to 1425. *Sure-footed* is from 1633; *sure-fire* first attested 1901; *sure thing* dates from 1836. In 16c.-17c., *Suresby* was an appellation for a person to be depended upon.

### Table table (n.)

c.1175, "board, slab, plate," from O.Fr. *table* "board, plank, writing table, picture" (11c.), and late O.E. *tabele*, from W.Gmc. *\*tabal* (cf. O.H.G. *zabel*, Ger. *Tafel*), both from L. *tabula* "a board, plank, table," originally "small flat slab or piece" usually for inscriptions or for games, of uncertain origin, related to Umbrian *tafle* "on the board." The sense of "piece of furniture with the flat top and legs" first recorded c.1300 (the usual L. word for this was *mensa*; O.E. writers used *bord*). The meaning "arrangement of numbers or other figures for convenience" is recorded from c.1386 (e.g. *table of contents*, 1460). *Tablecloth* is from 1467; *tablespoon* is 1763; *tableware* first recorded 1852. Fig. phrase *turn the tables* (1634) is from backgammon (in O.E. and M.E. the game was called *tables*). *Table talk* is attested from 1569, translating L. *colloquia mensalis*. *To table-hop* is first recorded 1956. The adj. phrase *under-the-table* "hidden from view" is recorded from 1949; *under the table* "passed out from excess drinking" is recorded from 1921. *Table tennis* is recorded from 1887.

### Test test (n.)

c.1386, "small vessel used in assaying precious metals," from O.Fr. *test*, from L. *testum* "earthen pot," related to *testa* "piece of burned clay, earthen pot, shell" (cf. L. *testudo* "tortoise") and *texere* "to weave" (cf. Lith. *tistas* "vessel made of willow twigs;" see **texture**). Sense of "trial or examination to determine the correctness of something" is recorded from 1594. The verb in this sense is from 1748. The connecting notion is "ascertaining the quality of a metal by melting it in a pot." *Test-tube* is from 1846; *test-tube baby* is recorded from 1935. *Test Act* was the name

given to various laws in Eng. history meant to exclude Catholics and Nonconformists from office, especially that of 1673, repealed 1828. *Test drive* (v.) is first recorded 1954.

## Treatment

### treat (v.)

1297, "negotiate, bargain, deal with," from O.Fr. *traitier* (12c.), from L. *tractare* "manage, handle, deal with," originally "drag about," frequentative of *trahere* (pp. *tractus*) "to pull, draw" (see **tract** (1)). Meaning "to entertain with food and drink by way of compliment or kindness (or bribery)" is recorded from c.1500. Sense of "deal with in speech or writing" (c.1325) led to the use in medicine (1781), "to attempt to heal or cure." The noun is first recorded 1375, "action of discussing terms;" sense of "a treating with food and drink" (1651) was extended by 1770 to "anything that gives pleasure." *Treatment* "conduct, behavior" is recorded from c.1560; in the medical sense, it is first recorded 1744.

## Tree

### tree

O.E. *treo*, *treow* "tree" (also "wood"), from P.Gmc. *\*trewan* (cf. O.Fris. *tre*, O.S. *trio*, O.N. *tre*, Goth. *triu*), from PIE *\*deru-*/*\*doru-* "oak" (cf. Skt. *dru* "tree, wood," *daru* "wood, log;" Gk. *drys* "oak," *doru* "spear;" O.C.S. *drievō* "tree, wood;" Serb. *drvo* "tree," *drva* "wood;" Rus. *drevo* "tree, wood;" Czech *drva*; Pol. *drwa* "wood;" Lith. *derva* "pine wood;" O.Ir. *daur*, Welsh *derwen* "oak," Albanian *drusk* "oak"). Importance of the oak in mythology is reflected in the recurring use of words for "oak" to mean "tree." In O.E. and M.E., also "thing made of wood," especially the cross of the Crucifixion and a gallows (cf. *Tyburn tree*, gallows mentioned 12c. at Tyburn, at junction of Oxford Street and Edgware Road, place of public execution for Middlesex until 1783). Sense in *family tree* first attested 1706; verb meaning "to chase up a tree" is from 1700. *Tree-hugger*, contemptuous for "environmentalist" is attested by 1989.

## Trend

### trend (v.)

1598, "to run or bend in a certain direction" (of rivers, coasts, etc.), from M.E. *trenden* "to roll about, turn, revolve," from O.E. *trendan*, from P.Gmc. *\*trandijanan* (cf. O.E. *trinde* "round lump, ball," O.Fris. *trind*, M.L.G. *trint* "round," M.L.G. *trent* "ring, boundary," Du. *trent* "circumference," Dan. *trind* "round"); origin and connections outside Gmc. uncertain. Sense of "have a general tendency" (used of events, opinions, etc.) is first recorded 1863, from the nautical sense. The noun meaning "the way something bends" (coastline, mountain range, etc.) is recorded from 1777; sense of "general tendency" is from 1884. *Trend-setter* first attested 1960; *trendy* is from 1962.

## Trial

## **trial**

1436, "act or process of testing," from Anglo-Fr. *trial*, noun formed from *triet* "to try" (see **try**). Sense of "examining and deciding a case in a court of law" is first recorded 1577; extended to any ordeal by 1595.

## **try**

c.1300, "examine judiciously, sit in judgment of," from Anglo-Fr. *trier* (c.1290), from O.Fr. *trier* "to pick out, cull" (12c.), from Gallo-Romance *\*triare*, of unknown origin. The ground sense is "separate out (the good) by examination." Meaning "to test" is first recorded c.1362; that of "attempt to do" is from early 14c. Sense of "to subject to some strain" (of patience, endurance, etc.) is recorded from 1539. *Trying* "distressing" is first attested 1718. *Try-out* "trial of skill or ability" first recorded 1903. To *try (something) on for size* in the fig. sense is recorded from 1956.

## **Unit**

### **unit**

1570, "single number regarded as an undivided whole," alteration of **unity** on the basis of **digit**. Popularized in John Dee's Eng. translation of Euclid, to express Gk. *monas* (Dee says *unity* formerly was used in this sense). Meaning "single thing regarded as a member of a group" is attested from 1642. Extended sense of "a quantity adopted as a standard of measure" is from 1738. Sense of "group of wards in a hospital" is attested from 1893.

## **monad**

"unity, arithmetical unit," 1615, from L. *monas* (gen. *monadis*), from Gk. *monas* "unit," from *monos* "alone" (see **mono-**). In Leibnitz's philosophy, "an ultimate unit of being" (1748).

## **Variance**

### **variance**

c.1340, "fact of undergoing change," from O.Fr. *variance*, from L. *variantia*, from *variare* "to change" (see **vary**). Meaning "state of disagreement" is recorded from c.1425. The U.S. zoning sense of "official dispensation from a building regulation" is recorded from 1925.

## **Variate**

### **vary**

c.1340 (trans.), c.1369 (intrans.), from O.Fr. *varier*, from L. *variare* "change, alter, make different," from *varius* "varied, different, spotted;" perhaps related to *varus* "bent, crooked, knock-kneed," and *varix* "varicose vein," from a PIE base *\*wer-* "high raised spot or other bodily infirmity" (cf. O.E. *wearte* "wart," Swed. *varbulde* "pus swelling," L. *verruca* "wart").

## **variable (adj.)**

1387, of persons, from O.Fr. *variable*, from L. *variabilis* "changeable," from *variare* "to change" (see **vary**). Of weather, seasons, etc., attested from c.1480; of stars, from 1788. The noun meaning "quantity that can vary in value" first recorded 1816, from the adj.

**various**

1552, "subject to change," from M.Fr. *varieux*, from L. *varius* "changing, different, diverse" (see **vary**). Meaning "different from one another" is recorded from 1634.

**variety**

1533, from M.Fr. *variété*, from L. *varietatem* (nom. *varietas*) "difference, diversity," from *varius* "various" (see **vary**). First recorded 1868, Amer.Eng., in ref. to "music hall or theatrical performances of a mixed nature."