

Etymology of Statistical and Probabilistic Terms

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The following etymologies for statistical terms were mainly extracted 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, or balanced together with design, or strong together with law of large numbers. 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.

Accuracy

accurate

1612, from L. *accuratus* "prepared with care, exact," pp. of *accurare* "take care of," from *ad-* "to" + *curare* "take care of" (see *cure*). The notion of doing something carefully led to that of being exact (1651).

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*).

Alias

alias

c.1432, "otherwise called," from L. form of *alius* "at another time, in another way," from *alius* "(an)other," from PIE **al-* "beyond" (cf. Skt. *anya* "other, different," Avestan *anya-*, Armenian *ail*, Gk. *allos* "another," Goth. *aljis* "other," O.E. *elles* "otherwise, else"). The noun meaning "assumed name" is first recorded 1605.

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.

Analysis

analysis

1581, "resolution of anything complex into simple elements" (opposite of *synthesis*), from M.L. *analysis*, from Gk. *analysis* "a breaking up," from *analyein* "unloose," from *ana-* "up, throughout" + *lysis* "a loosening" (see *lose*). Psychological sense is from 1890. Phrase *in the final (or last) analysis* (1844), translates Fr. *en dernière analyse*.

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*).

Antithetic ???

Asymptote/asymptotic

asymptote

"straight line continually approaching but never meeting a curve," 1656, from Gk. *asymptotos* "not falling together," from *a-* "not" + *syn* "with" + *ptotos* "fallen," verbal adj. from *piptein* "to fall" (see *petition*).

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. *avarìa*, 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.

Balanced

balance

c.1275, "apparatus for weighing," from O.Fr. *balance*, from M.L. *bilancia*, from L.L. *bilanx* (acc. *bilancem*), from L. (*libra*) *bilanx* "(scale) having two pans," possibly from L. *bis* "twice" + *lanx* "a dish, scale." The accounting sense is from 1588; the meaning "general harmony between parts" is from 1732; sense of "physical equipoise" is from 1667. The verb is attested from 1579. *Balance of power* in the geopolitical sense is from 1701; *balanced* meal, diet, etc. is from 1908.

Batch

batch

O.E. **bæcce* "something baked," from *bacan* "bake." *Batch* is to *bake* as *watch* is to *wake* and *match* ("one of a pair") is to *make*. Extended 1713 to "any quantity produced at one operation."

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 *categoria* 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.

In that context, also see "fat chance" which means just the opposite, very little likelihood
<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/fat+chance>

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.

Complete

complete

c.1384, from O.Fr. *complet* "full," from L. *completus*, pp. of *complere* "to fill up," from *com-* intensive prefix + *plere* "to fill" (see **plenary**).

plenary

1517, earlier *plenar* (c.1290), from M.L. *plenarius* "entire, complete," from L. *plenus* "full," from PIE **ple-* "to be full" (see **poly-**).

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.

Conjugate ???

Contagious

contagious

c.1374, from O.Fr. *contagieus*, from L.L. *contagiosus*, from *contingere* "touch closely" (see **contact**).

contact (n.)

1626, from L. *contactus* "a touching," pp. of *contingere* "to touch, seize," from *com-* "together" + *tangere* "to touch" (see **tangent**). The verb is 1834, "put in contact;" meaning "get in touch with" is 1927, Amer.Eng. As a signal to the person about to spin an aircraft propeller that the ignition is switched on, the word was in use by 1913. *Contact lens* is first recorded 1888; short form *contact* is from 1961.

Contiguous

contiguous

1611, from L. *contiguus* "bordering upon," from base of *contingere* "to touch upon" (see **contact**). Earlier form, now obs., was *contiguate* (1432).

Contingency

contingency

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.

Convergence

converge

1691, from L.L. *convergere* "to incline together" from *com-* "together" + *vergere* "to bend" (see **verge** (v.)).

-ence

suffix attached to verbs to form nouns of process or fact (*convergence* from *converge*), or of state or quality (*absence* from *absent*); from O.Fr. *-ance*, from L. *-entia/-antia* (from *-ent-* participle stem + *-ia* suffix forming nouns of condition or quality). The L. variants *-entia* and *-antia* were mostly leveled to *-ance* in O.Fr., but words borrowed later by Eng. directly from L. sometimes kept their L. vowels (*diligence*, *absence*), and others have since c.1500 been re-spelled to conform with L., causing much irregularity (*attendance*, but *superintendence*, etc.).

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 **oblate** (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.

Defect

defect (n.)

c.1420, from L. *defectus* "failure, revolt," from pp. of *deficere* "to fail, desert" (see **deficient**). *Defection* "falling away from a leader, party, or cause" is first recorded 1546, originally of faith. *Defective* was a euphemism for "mentally ill" from 1898 to c.1935.

deficient

1581, from L. *deficientem* (nom. *deficiens*), prp. of *deficere* "to desert, fail," from *de-* "down, away" + *facere* "to do, perform" (see **factitious**).

Degree

degree

c.1230, from O.Fr. *degre* "a degree, step, rank," from V.L. **degradus* "a step," from L.L. *degredare*, from L. *de-* "down" + *gradus* "step" (see **grade**). Most modern senses date from M.E., from notion of a hierarchy of steps. Meaning "a grade of crime" is 1676; that of "a unit of

temperature" is from 1727. The division of the circle into 360 degrees is very ancient and was known in Babylon and Egypt. It is perhaps from the daily motion of the sun through the zodiac in the course of a year.

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 *diagraphein* "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 **diction**). 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*.

Distance

distance

c.1290, from O.Fr. *destance*, from L. *distantia* "a standing apart," from *distantem* (nom. *distans*) "standing apart, separate, distant," prp. of *distare* "stand apart," from *dis-* "apart, off" + *stare* "to stand" (see **stet**). The figurative sense is the same as in *stand-offish*. Phrase *go the distance* (1930s) seems to be originally from boxing.

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.

Empty

empty

O.E. *æmettig* "at leisure, not occupied, unmarried," from *æmetta* "leisure," from *æ* "not" + *-metta*, from *motan* "to have" (see **might**). The *-p-* is a euphonic insertion. Sense evolution from "at leisure" to "empty" is paralleled in several languages, cf. Mod.Gk. *adeios* "empty," originally "freedom from fear," from *deios* "fear." "The adj. *adeios* must have been applied first to persons who enjoyed freedom from duties, leisure, and so were unoccupied, whence it was extended to objects that were unoccupied" [Buck]. The adj. also became the v. in 16c., replacing M.E. *empten*, from O.E. *geæmtigian*. Figurative sense of *empty-nester* first attested 1987. *Empty-handed* attested from 1613.

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**).

Equal/Equation

equal

c.1391, from L. *æqualis* "uniform, identical, equal," from *æquus* "level, even, just," of unknown origin. Parallel formation *egal* (from O.Fr. *egal*) was in use 1380-1600s. *Equalitarian* in reference to the doctrine that all mankind are equal is attested from 1799; *equalizer* "pistol" is U.S. slang, c.1900.

equate

c.1400, from L. *æquatus*, pp. of *æquare* "make even or uniform, make equal," from *æquus* "level, even, equal." Earliest use in Eng. was of astrological calculation, then "to make equal;" meaning "to regard as equal" is early 19c. *Equation* is c.1386 in astrology; the mathematical sense is from 1570.

Ergodic ???

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.

Fatigue

fatigue

1669, from Fr. *fatigue* "weariness," from *fatiguer* "to tire," from L. *fatigare*, originally "to cause to break down," later, "to tire out," from reconstructed adj. **fati-agos* "driving to the point of breakdown," from Old Latin **fatis* (of unknown origin, related to adv. *affatim* "sufficiently" and to *fatisci* "crack, split") + root of *agere* "to drive" (see **act**). *Fatigues* appeared 1836, from sense of a soldier's non-military duties (1776).

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.

Formula

formula

1638, from L. *formula* "form, rule, method, formula," lit. "small form," dim. of *forma* "form." Originally, "words used in a ceremony or ritual." Modern sense is colored by Carlyle's use of the word for "rule slavishly followed without understanding" (1837). *Formulaic* is from 1882; *formulate* is 1860.

Fraction

fraction

1391, from L.L. *fractionem* (nom. *fractio*) "a breaking," especially into pieces, from root of L. *frangere* (pt. *fregi*) "to break," from PIE base **bhr(e)g-* (cf. Skt. (*giri*)-*bhraj* "breaking-forth (out of the mountains);" Goth. *brikan*, O.E. *brecan* "to break;" Lith. *brasketi* "crash, crack;" O.Ir. *braigim* "break" wind). Mathematical sense was the original one in Eng. Sense of "broken off piece, fragment," is from 1606.

Freedom

free (adj.)

O.E. *freo* "free, exempt from, not in bondage," also "noble, joyful," from P.Gmc. **frijaz* (cf. M.H.G. *vri*, Ger. *frei*, Du. *vrij*, Goth. *freis* "free"), from PIE **prijos* "dear, beloved" (cf. Skt. *priyah* "own, dear, beloved," *priyate* "loves;" O.C.S. *prijati* "to help," *prijatelji* "friend;" Welsh *rhydd* "free"). The adv. is from O.E. *freon*, *freogan* "to free, love." The primary sense seems to have been "beloved, friend, to love;" which in some languages (notably Gmc. and Celtic) developed also a sense of "free," perhaps from the terms "beloved" or "friend" being applied to the free members of one's clan (as opposed to slaves, cf. L. *liberi*, meaning both "free" and "children"). Cf. Goth. *frijon* "to love;" O.E. *freod* "affection, friendship," *friga* "love," *friðu* "peace;" O.N. *friðr*, Ger. *Friede* "peace;" O.E. *freo* "wife;" O.N. *Frigg* "wife of Odin," lit. "beloved" or "loving;" M.L.G. *vrien* "to take to wife, Du. *vrijen*, Ger. *freien* "to woo." Sense of "given without cost" is 1585, from notion of "free of cost." Of nations, "not subject to foreign rule or to despotism," it is recorded from 1375. *Freedman* "manumitted slave" first recorded 1601. Colloquial *freeloader* first recorded 1930s; *free fall* is from 1919, originally of parachutists; *free-hand* is from 1862; *free-thinker* is from 1692. *Freebie* dates back to 1942 as *freeby*, perhaps as early as 1900. *Free-for-all* "mass brawl" (in which anyone may participate) first recorded 1881. *Freebase* (n. and v.) in ref. to cocaine first recorded 1980.

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.

Group

group

1695, originally an art criticism term, "assemblage of figures or objects in a painting or design," from Fr. *groupe* "cluster, group," from It. *gruppo* "group, knot," likely ult. from P.Gmc. **kruppaz* "round mass, lump." Extended to "any assemblage" by 1736. The verb is from 1718. Meaning "pop music combo" is from 1958; hence *groupie* "girl who follows pop groups," first attested 1967.

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.

Harmonic

harmonic

1531 (implied in *harmonical*), from L. *harmonicus*, from Gk. *harmonikos* "harmonic, musical," from *harmonia* (see **harmony**). First record of verb *harmonize* is from 1483.

harmony

c.1384, from O.Fr. *armonie*, from L. *harmonia*, from Gk. *harmonia* "agreement, concord of sounds," lit. "means of joining," related to *harmos* "joint, shoulder," from PIE **ar-ti-*, from **ar-* "to fit together." Musical sense is oldest in Eng.; that of "agreement of feeling, concord" is from 1588.

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.

Joint

joint (n.)

c.1290, "a part of a body where two bones meet and move in contact with one another," from O.Fr. *joint*, from L. *unctus*, pp. of *jungere* "join" (see **jugular**). Slang meaning of "place, building, establishment" (esp. one where persons meet for shady activities) first recorded 1877, Amer.Eng., from an earlier Anglo-Irish sense (1821), perhaps on the notion of a side-room, one "joined" to a main room. The original U.S. sense was especially of "an opium-smoking den." Meaning "marijuana cigarette" (1938) is perhaps from notion of something often smoked in common, but there are other possibilities; earlier *joint* in drug slang meant "hypodermic outfit" (1935). Meaning "prison" is from 1953.

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. **lappo* (cf. O.N. *latta*, M.Du., Ger. *latte* "lath," M.H.G. *lade* "plank," which is source of Ger. *Laden* "counter," hence, "shop").

Law

law

O.E. *lagu* (pl. *laga*, comb. form *lah-*), from O.N. **lagu* "law," collective pl. of *lag* "layer, measure, stroke," lit. "something laid down or fixed," from P.Gmc. **lagan* "put, lay" (see **lay** (v.)). Replaced O.E. *æ* and *gesetnes*, which had the same sense development as *law*. Cf. also *statute*, from L. *statuere*, Ger. *Gesetz* "law," from O.H.G. *gisatzida*, Lith. *istatymas*, from

istatyti "set up, establish." *Lawsuit* is from 1624. *Law and order* have been coupled since 1796. *Law-abiding* is from 1859.

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. **lausā* (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 *leosān* (a class II strong verb whose pp. *loren* survives in **forlorn** and *love-lorn*), from P.Gmc. **leusanān* (cf. O.H.G. *virliosān*, 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. **khlutom* (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 a 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.]

Match

match (2)

"one of a pair," O.E. *mæcca*, from *gemæcca* "companion, mate, wife, one suited to another," from P.Gmc. **gamakon* "fitting well together" (cf. O.H.G. *gimah* "comfort, ease," M.H.G. *gemach* "comfortable, quiet"), from PIE base **mak-/*mag-* "to fit" (see **make** (v.)). M.E. sense of "matching adversary, person able to contend with another" (c.1300) led to sporting

meaning "contest," first attested 1545. *Match-maker* "marriage-broker" is attested from c.1639.

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.

Mortality

mortal (adj.)

c.1368, "deadly," also "doomed to die" (c.1374), from O.Fr. *mortel* "destined to die," from L. *mortalis* "subject to death," from *mors* (gen. *mortis*) "death," from PIE base **mor-/*mr-* "die" (cf. Skt. *mrtih* "death," Avestan *miryeite* "dies," O.Pers. *martiya-* "man," Lith. *mirtis* "mortal man," Gk. *ambrotos* "immortal," O.C.S. *mrutvu* "dead," O.Ir. *marb*, Welsh *marw* "died," O.E. *morþ* "murder"). The noun meaning "mortal thing or substance" is first recorded 1526. *Mortality* "condition of being mortal" is attested from 1340. In the sense of "loss of life on a large scale" it is from c.1400; as "number of deaths in a given period" it is first recorded 1645.

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.

Quality

quality

c.1290, from O.Fr. *qualite* (12c., Fr. *qualité*), from L. *qualitatem* (nom. *qualitas*; said to have been coined by Cicero to translate Gk. *poiotēs*), from *qualis* "of what sort," from PIE pronominal base **kwo-* (see **qua**). Noun phrase *quality time* first recorded 1977. *Quality of life* is from 1943. *Quality control* first attested 1935.

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 *reri* "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.

Reference

reference

1589, "act of referring," from *refer* (q.v.). Meaning "direction to a book or passage" is recorded from 1612. Meaning "testimonial" is from 1895. The verb first is attested 1884. *Reference book* dates from 1889 (earlier *book of reference*, 1836). Phrase *in reference to* is attested from 1594. *Referential* is attested from 1660.

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.

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.

Regular

regular

1387, from O.Fr. *reguler*, from L.L. *regularis* "continuing rules for guidance," from L. *regula* "rule," from PIE **reg-* "move in a straight line" (see *regent*). Earliest sense was of religious orders (the opposite of *secular*). Extended 16c. to shapes, etc., that followed predictable or uniform patterns; sense of "normal" is from 1638; meaning "real, genuine" is from 1821. Meaning "a regular customer" is recorded from 1852.

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. *repetere* "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. *responsum*, pp. of *respondere*.

Risk

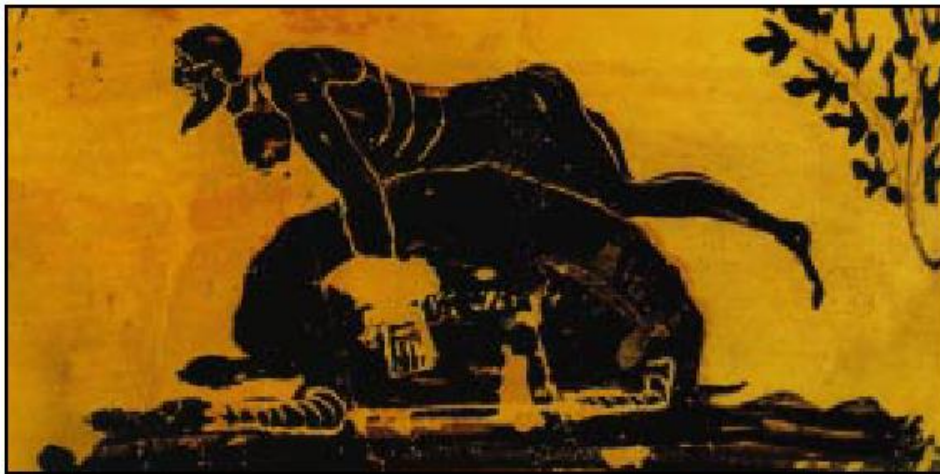
risk (n.)

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 ρίζα, meaning root, later used in Latin for cliff. The term is used in Homer's Rhapsody M of Odyssey "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 grasping 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 κρεμάσπηκα σπιν αγριουσιτιά:** πάνω από το στόμιο της Χάρυδδης φύτρωνε μια μεγάλη αγριουσιτιά· απ' αυτήν αρπάχτηκε ο Οδυσσεάς και σώθηκε.



Εικ. 96 Ο Οδυσσεάς, σύμφωνα με την ομηρική εκδοχή, θα μείνει για ώρες γαντζωμένος από τα κλαριά μιας αγριουσιτιάς και θα σωθεί πάνω στα συντρίμια του καραβιού του που θα ξεβράσει η Χάρυβδη. Στην παράσταση αυτή διακρίνονται δεξιά τα κλαδιά της αγριουσιτιάς, όμως ο Οδυσσεάς 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 18th 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 16th 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 25th 2005.

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

Robust

robust

1549, from L. *robustus* "strong and hardy," originally "oaken," from *robur*, *robus* "hard timber, strength," also "a special kind of oak," named for its reddish heartwood, from L. *ruber* "red" (cf. *robigo* "rust"). *Robustious* (1548) was a common form in 17c. (cf. "Hamlet" iii.2); it fell from use by mid-18c., but was somewhat revived by mid-19c. antiquarian writers.

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.

Screen

screen (n.)

1393, probably from an aphetic (Anglo-Fr.?) variant of O.N.Fr. *escren*, O.Fr. *escran* "a screen against heat" (1318), perhaps from M.Du. *scherm* "screen, cover," or Frank. **skrank* "barrier," from a Gmc. root related to O.H.G. *skirm*, *skerm* "protection" (cf. *skirmish*). Meaning "net-wire frame used in windows and doors" is recorded from 1895. Meaning "flat horizontal surface for reception of projected images" is from 1810, originally in ref. to magic lantern shows; later of movies. Transf. sense of "cinema world collectively" is attested from 1914; hence *screenplay* (1938), *screen test* (1922), *screenwriter* (1921). Verbal meaning "to shield from punishment, to conceal" is recorded from 1485; meaning "examine systematically for suitability" is from 1943; sense of "to release a movie" is from 1915. *Screen saver* first attested 1990.

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.

Shift

shift (n.1)

c.1300, "a movement, a beginning," from **shift** (v.). This is the sense in *to make shift* "make efforts" (c.1460). Meaning "period of working time" (originally in a mine) is attested from 1809, perhaps influenced by a N.Sea Gmc. cognate word (e.g. N.Fris. *skeft* "division, stratum," *skaft* "one of successive parties of workmen"). Similar double senses of "division" and "relay of workers" exist in Swed. *skift*, Ger. *schicht*. Meaning "mechanism for changing gear in a motor vehicle" is recorded from 1914. Typewriter *shift-lock* is from 1899.

shift (v.)

O.E. *sciftan* "arrange, divide," related to *sceadan* "divide, separate" (see **shed** (v.)), from P.Gmc. **skiftanan* (cf. O.N. *skipta* "to divide, change, separate," O.Fris. *skifta* "to decide, determine, test," Du. *schiften* "to divide, turn," Ger. *schichten* "to classify," *Schicht* "shift"). Sense of "change" appeared c.1250; that of "move, transfer" is c.1375; that of "manage to get along" is first attested 1513, in phrase *shift for oneself*, and yielded *shiftless* in the modern sense (1584).

Significance

significance

c.1300 (implied in *signification*), from L. *significantiā* "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*.

Snooping

snoop

1832, "to go around in a prying manner," Amer.Eng., "to appropriate," probably from Du. *snoepen* "to pry," also "eat in secret, eat sweets, sneak," probably related to *snappen* "to bite, snatch" (see **snap**). Specific meaning "to pry into other people's business" is attested from 1921. The noun meaning "detective" is recorded from 1891. *Snoopy* (adj.) first recorded 1895.

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**).

Strong

strong (adj.)

O.E. *strang* "physically powerful, powerful in effect, forceful, severe," from P.Gmc. **strangaz* (cf. O.N. *strangr* "strong," Du. *streng* "strict, rigorous," O.H.G. *strang* "strong, bold, hard," Ger. *streng* "strict, rigorous"). Originally compared *strenger*, *strengest* (cf. *old/elder/eldest*). Grammatical sense, of noun and verb inflections, is first attested 1841, translating Ger. *stark*, used in a grammatical sense by J. Grimm (the terms *strong* and *weak* better fit Ger. inflections). *Strong suit* (1865) is from card-playing. *Strong man* "man of great strength" (especially one who displays it professionally) is recorded from 1699; meaning "dominating man in a political organization" is from 1859.

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 *to 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."

Weak

weak

c.1300, from O.N. *veikr* "weak," cognate with O.E. *wac* "weak, pliant, soft," from P.Gmc. **waikwaz* "yield," **wikanan* "bend" (cf. O.S. *wek*, Swed. *vek*, M.Du. *weec*, Du. *week* "weak, soft, tender," O.H.G. *weih* "yielding, soft," Ger. *weich* "soft," from PIE base **weik-* "to bend, wind" (see **vicarious**). Sense of "lacking authority" is first recorded 1423; that of "lacking moral strength" c.1375. *Weaken* (v.) is recorded from 1530; the earlier verb was simply *weak* (c.1374). *Weak-kneed* "wanting in resolve" is from 1870.

Weight

weight

O.E. *gewiht*, from P.Gmc. **(ga)wekhtiz*, **(ga)wekhtjan* (cf. O.N. *vætt*, O.Fris. *wicht*, M.Du. *gewicht*, Ger. *Gewicht*), from **weg-* (see **weigh**).

The verb meaning "to load with weight" is attested from 1747; sense in statistics is recorded from 1901. To *lose weight* "get thinner" is recorded from 1961. *Weight Watcher* as a trademark name dates from 1960. To *pull one's weight* (1921) is from rowing. *Weighty* "important, serious, grave" is from 1489.

weigh

O.E. *wegan* "find the weight of, have weight, lift, carry," from P.Gmc. **weganan* (cf. O.S. *wegan*, O.Fris. *wega*, Du. *wegen* "to weigh," O.N. *vega*, O.H.G. *wegan* "to move, carry, weigh," Ger. *wiegen* "to weigh"), from PIE **wegh-* "to move" (cf. Skt. *vahati* "carries, conveys," *vahitram* "vessel, ship;" Avestan *vazaiti* "he leads, draws;" Gk. *okhos* "carriage;" L. *vehere* "to carry, convey;" O.C.S. *vesti* "to carry, convey;" Lith. *vezu* "to carry, convey;" O.Ir. *fecht* "campaign, journey"). The original sense was of motion, which led to that of lifting, then to that of "measure the weight of." The older sense of "lift, carry" survives in the nautical phrase *weigh anchor*. Fig. sense of "to consider, ponder" (in ref. to words, etc.) is recorded from 1340.