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observed; visible; discernible; noticeable 2 deserving of attention; noteworthy 3 that can or must be kept or celebrated [an *observable* holiday] —*ob-serv'-ably* *adv.*

ob-serv-ance (əb zər'vəns) *n.* [ME *observance* < OFr *observance* < L *observantia*, attention, regard, in LL(Ec), divine worship] 1 the act or practice of observing, or keeping, a law, duty, custom, rule, etc. 2 a customary act, rite, ceremony, etc. 3 the act of observing, or noting; observation 4 [Archaic] respectful attention; deference 5 *R.C.Ch.* a) the rule observed by a religious order b) the order observing a specified rule

ob-serv-ant (əb zər'vənt) *adj.* [Fr. *prp.* of *observer*, OBSERVE] 1 strict in observing, or keeping, a law, custom, duty, rule, etc.: often with *of* [observant of the rules of etiquette] 2 paying careful attention; keenly watchful 3 perceptive or alert 4 *Judaism* designating or of a person who adheres strictly to traditional religious practices —*n.* [O-] former name for FRIAR MINOR —*ob-serv'-antly* *adv.*

ob-ser-va-tion (əb'zər vā'shən) *n.* [ME *observacioun* < L *observatio*, in LL(Ec), reverence, outward display] 1 observance, as of laws, customs, etc. 2 a) the act, practice, or power of noticing b) something noticed 3 the fact of being seen or noticed [seeking to avoid *observation*] 4 a) the act or practice of noting and recording facts and events, as for some scientific study b) the data so noted and recorded 5 a comment or remark based on something observed 6 a) the act of determining the altitude of the sun, a star, etc., in order to find a ship's position at sea b) the result obtained —*adj.* for observing —*SYN.* REMARK

ob-ser-va-tional (-shə nəl) *adj.* of or based on observation rather than experimentation

observation car a railway car with extra-large windows or a transparent dome for facilitating a view of the scenery

observation post an advanced military position from which movements of the enemy can be observed, artillery fire directed, etc.

ob-serva-tory (əb zər'və tōr'ē) *n., pl. -ries* [ModL *observatorium* < pp. of L *observare*: see fol.] 1 a) a building equipped for scientific observation, esp. such a building with a large telescope for astronomical research b) an institution for such research 2 any building or place providing an extensive view of the surrounding terrain

ob-serve (əb zər'v) *vt. -served', -serv'-ing* [ME *observer* < OFr *observer* < L *observare*, to watch, note < *ob-* (see OB-) + *servare*, to keep or hold < IE base **ser-*, to watch over, guard > Sans *haraiti*, (he) guards] 1 to adhere to, follow, keep, or abide by (a law, custom, duty, rule, etc.) 2 to celebrate or keep (a holiday, etc.) according to custom 3 a) to notice or perceive (something) b) to pay special attention to 4 to arrive at as a conclusion after study 5 to say or mention casually; remark 6 to examine and study scientifically —*vi.* 1 to take notice 2 to comment or remark (on or upon) 3 to act as an observer —*SYN.* DISCERN, CELEBRATE —*ob-serv'-ingly* *adv.*

ob-server (əb zər'vər) *n.* 1 a person who observes something; specif., a) a soldier manning an observation post b) a person who attends an assembly, convention, etc., not as an official delegate but only to observe and report the proceedings c) an official, usually a member of a group, sent by a UN committee to collect and report facts on the situation in a special area 2 a member of an aircraft crew, other than a pilot, with certain specialized duties and a special rating (aircraft observer)

ob-sess (əb ses') *vt.* [L *obsessus*, pp. of *obsidere*, to besiege < *ob-* (see OB-) + *sedere*, SIT] to haunt or trouble in mind, esp. to an abnormal degree; preoccupy greatly —*vi.* to be obsessed or preoccupied: usually with *about*, *over*, or *on*

ob-ses-sion (əb ses'hən) *n.* [L *obsessio*] 1 the act of an evil spirit in possessing or ruling a person 2 a) the fact or state of being obsessed with an idea, desire, emotion, etc. b) such a persistent idea, desire, emotion, etc., esp. one that cannot be gotten rid of by reasoning —*ob-ses'-sional* *adj.*

ob-ses-sive (əb ses'iv) *adj.* of, having the nature of, or causing an obsession or obsessions —*n.* a person who has obsessive thoughts —*ob-ses'-sively* *adv.* —*ob-ses'-sive-ness* *n.*

obsessive-compulsive (əb ses'iv kəm pul'siv) *adj.* designating or of a mental disorder, esp. a neurosis, characterized by compulsive thoughts or actions, irresistible urges, etc., that are unwanted and uncontrollable and interfere with work, social activity, and personal relationships, and often appear as repeated, somewhat ritualistic performances of certain acts —*n.* a person who is obsessive-compulsive

ob-sid-ian (əb sid'ē ən) *n.* [ModL *obsidianus* < L *Obsidianus* (*lapis*), a faulty reading in PLINY (altered by assoc. with L *obsidium*, a siege < *obsidere*: see OBSESS) for *Obsianus* (*lapis*), stone of Obsius, finder of a similar stone in Ethiopia] a hard, usually dark-colored or black volcanic glass with conchoidal fracture, often used as a gem

ob-so-lesce (əb'sə les') *vi. -lesced', -lesc'-ing* [L *obsolescere*: see OBSOLETE] to be or become obsolescent

ob-so-les-cent (əb'sə les'ənt) *adj.* [L *obsolescens*] in the process of becoming obsolete —*ob'-so-les'-cence* *n.* —*ob'-so-les'-cently* *adv.*

ob-so-lete (əb'sə lēt', əb'sə lēt') *adj.* [L *obsoletus*, pp. of *obsolescere*, to go out of use < *ob-* (see OB-) + **solescere* (< *exolescere*, to grow out of use < *ex-*, EX- + ? *alescere*, to increase: see ADOLESCENT)] 1 no longer in use or practice; discarded 2 no longer in fashion; out-of-date; passé 3 *Biol.* rudimentary or poorly developed as compared with its counterpart in other individuals of a related species, the opposite sex, etc.; vestigial: said of an organ, etc. —*vt.* -let'ed, -let'-ing to make obsolete, as by replacing with

something newer —*SYN.* OLD —*ob'-so-lete'ly* *adv.* —*ob'-so-lete-ness* *n.*

ob-sta-ble (əb'stə kəl) *n.* [Ofr < L *obstaculum*, obstacle < *obstare*, to withstand < *ob-* (see OB-) + *stare*, to STAND] anything that gets in the way or hinders; impediment; obstruction; hindrance

SYN.—obstacle is used of anything which literally or figuratively stands in the way of one's progress (her father's opposition remained their only *obstacle*); *impediment* applies to anything that delays or retards progress by interfering with the normal action (a speech *impediment*); *obstruction* refers to anything that blocks progress or some activity as if by stopping up a passage (your interference is an *obstruction* of justice); *hindrance* applies to anything that thwarts progress by holding back or delaying (lack of supplies is the greatest *hindrance* to my experiment); *barrier* applies to any apparently insurmountable obstacle that prevents progress or keeps separate and apart (language differences are often a *barrier* to understanding)

obstacle course 1 a physical exercise course with barriers, ditches, and other obstacles, used to train military personnel 2 any situation or course of action that presents obstacles or obstructions

ob-stet-ric (əb stət'rik, əb-) *adj.* [ModL *obstetricus*, for L *obstetricus*, belonging to a midwife < *obstetrux*, midwife, lit., she who stands before < *ob-* (see OB-) + *stare*, to STAND] of childbirth or obstetrics: also *ob-stet'-ri-cal* —*ob-stet'-ri-cally* *adv.*

ob-ste-tri-cian (əb'stə trish'ən) *n.* a medical doctor who specializes in obstetrics

ob-stet-ric (əb stət'riks, əb-) *n.* [Ofr < OBSTETRIC] the branch of medicine concerned with the care and treatment of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the ensuing period

ob-sti-nacy (əb'stə nə sē) *n.* [ME *obstinacie* < ML *obstinatio*, for L *obstinatio*] 1 the state or quality of being obstinate; specif., a) stubbornness b) resistance to treatment; persistence, as of a disease 2 *pl. -cies* an obstinate act, attitude, etc.

ob-sti-nate (əb'stə nət) *adj.* [ME < L *obstinatus*, pp. of *obstinare*, to resolve on < *obstare*, to stand against, oppose < *ob-* (see OB-) + *stare*, to STAND] 1 unreasonably determined to have one's own way; not yielding to reason or plea; stubborn; dogged; mulish 2 resisting remedy or treatment (an *obstinate* fever) 3 not easily subdued, ended, etc. —*SYN.* STUBBORN —*ob'-sti-nately* *adv.* —*ob'-sti-nate-ness* *n.*

ob-sti-pa-tion (əb'stə pā'shən) *n.* [L *obstipatio* < L *ob-* (see OB-) + *stipare*, to cram, pack: see STIFF] *Med.* severe and persistent constipation

ob-strep-er-ous (əb strep'ər əs, əb-) *adj.* [L *obstreperus* < *obstrepere*, to roar at < *ob-* (see OB-) + *strepere*, to roar < IE base **strep-*, to make a loud noise > OE *thraef*, strife] noisy, boisterous, or unruly, esp. in resisting or opposing —*SYN.* VOCIFEROUS —*ob-strep'-er-ously* *adv.* —*ob-strep'-er-ous-ness* *n.*

ob-struct (əb strukt') *vt.* [L *obstructus*, pp. of *obstruere*, to block up, build against < *ob-* (see OB-) + *struere*, to pile up: see STREW] 1 to block or stop up (a passage) with obstacles or impediments; dam; clog 2 to hinder (progress, an activity, etc.); impede 3 to cut off from being seen; block (the view) —*SYN.* HINDER —*ob-struct'er* *n.* or *ob-struct'-tor*

ob-struc-tion (əb struk'shən) *n.* [L *obstructio*] 1 an obstructing or being obstructed 2 anything that obstructs; hindrance —*SYN.* OBSTACLE

ob-struc-tion-ist (-ist) *n.* anyone who obstructs progress; esp., a member of a legislative group who hinders the passage of legislation by various technical maneuvers —*adj.* of obstructionists or obstructionism: also *ob-struc'-tion-is'-tic* —*ob-struc'-tion-ism* *n.*

ob-struc-tive (əb struk'tiv) *adj.* obstructing or tending to obstruct —*ob-struc'-tively* *adv.* —*ob-struc'-tive-ness* *n.*

ob-stru-ent (əb'strū ənt) *adj.* [L *obstruens*, pp. of *obstruere*, to block up: see OBSTRUCT] [Rare] obstructing; esp., blocking a passage of the body —*n.* [Rare] something, as a kidney stone, that blocks a passage of the body

ob-tain (əb tain') *vt.* [ME *obteinen* < OFr *obtenir* < L *obtinere*, to obtain, prevail, maintain < *ob-* (see OB-) + *tenere*, to hold: see TENANT] 1 to get possession of, esp. by some effort; procure 2 [Archaic] to arrive at; reach or achieve —*vi.* 1 to be in force or in effect; prevail (a law that no longer *obtains*) 2 [Archaic] to succeed —*SYN.* GET —*ob-tain'-able* *adj.* —*ob-tain'er* *n.* —*ob-tain'-ment* *n.*

ob-lect (əb lekt') *adj.* [L *oblectus*, pp. of *oblegere*, to cover over < *ob-* (see OB-) + *tegere*, to cover: see THATCH, *vt.*] pertaining to an insect pupa in which the appendages and wings are glued down against the body by a secretion: also *ob-lect'ed*

ob-test (əb test') *vt.* [L *obtestari* < *ob-* (see OB-) + *testari*, to witness < *testis*, a witness: see TESTIFY] 1 to beg for; beseech; supplicate 2 to call to witness —*ob'-tes-ta'-tion* (-tes tā'shən) *n.*

ob-trude (əb trūd', əb-) *vt. -trud'ed, -trud'-ing* [L *obtrudere* < *ob-* (see OB-) + *trudere*, to thrust: see THREAT] 1 to thrust forward; push out; eject 2 to offer or force (oneself, one's opinions, etc.) upon others unasked or unwanted —*vi.* to obtrude oneself (on or upon) —*SYN.* INTRUDE —*ob-trud'er* *n.* —*ob-tru'-sion* *n.*

ob-tru-sive (əb trū'siv, əb-) *adj.* [L *obtrusus*, pp. of *obtrudere* + *-IVE*] 1 inclined to obtrude 2 obtruding itself; esp., calling attention to itself in a displeasing way —*ob-tru'-sively* *adv.* —*ob-tru'-sive-ness* *n.*

ob-tund (əb tund') *vt.* [ME *obtunden* < L *obtundere*, to strike at, blunt < *ob-* (see OB-) + *tundere*, to strike < IE **(s)teud-*, to strike > STOCK] to make blunt or dull; make less acute; deaden

ob-tu-rate (əb'tū rāt', -tyū-) *vt. -rat'ed, -rat'-ing* [L *obtutatus*, pp. of *obturare*, to stop up < *ob-* (see OB-) + base akin to *turgere*, to