
RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY

Second Edition



RANDOM HOUSE
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ular juror, to his or her serving, or to the legality of an entire jury. Cf. **peremptory challenge**. 8. the assertion that a vote is invalid or that a voter is not legally qualified. 9. *Biol.* the process of inducing or assessing physiological or immunological activity by exposing an organism to a specific substance. 10. *Hunting*, the crying of a hound on finding a scent. —*v.t.* 11. to summon to a contest of skill, strength, etc. 12. to take exception to; call in question: *to challenge the wisdom of a procedure*. 13. to demand as something due or rightful. 14. *Mil.* to halt and demand identification or countersign from. 15. *Law*, to take formal exception to (a juror or jury). 16. to have a claim to; invite; arouse; stimulate: *a matter which challenges attention*. 17. to assert that (a vote) is invalid. 18. to assert that (a voter) is not qualified to vote. 19. to expose an organism to a specific substance in order to assess its physiological or immunological activity. 20. *Archaic*, to lay claim to. —*v.i.* 21. to make or issue a challenge. 22. *Hunting*, (of hounds) to cry or give tongue on picking up the scent. —*adj.* 23. donated or given by a private, corporate, or government benefactor on condition that the recipient raise an additional specified amount from the public: *a challenge grant*. [1175-1225; ME *challenge* < OF, var. of *chalonge* < L *calumnia* CALUMNY] —**chal/lenge-a-ble**, *adj.*

—**Syn.** 11. dare, bid, invite. 12. question, impute, doubt.

chal-leng-er (chal'jeng'or), *n.* 1. a person or thing that challenges. 2. *Boxing*, a boxer who fights a champion for his championship title. 3. *Radio*, interrogator (def. 2). 4. (*cap.*, *italics*) *U.S. Aerospace*, the second space shuttle to orbit and return to earth: exploded 1½ min. after launch on Jan. 28, 1986, causing the death of all seven on board. [1250-1300; ME; see CHALLENGE, -ER]

chal-leng-ing (chal'jeng'ing), *adj.* 1. offering a challenge; testing one's ability, endurance, etc. *a challenging course*; *a challenging game*. 2. stimulating, interesting, and thought-provoking: *a challenging suggestion*. 3. provocative; intriguing: *a challenging smile*. [1300-50; ME, as ger; 1835-45 for def. 1; see CHALLENGE, -ING]

—**chal/leng-ing-ly**, *adv.*

chal-lis (shal'le), *n.* a soft fabric of plain weave in wool, cotton, rayon, or other staple fiber, either in a solid color or, more often, a small print. Also, **chal/lie**, **chal/ly**. [1840-50; perh. after *Challis*, a surname]

Chal-mers (chal'marz, chal'-), *n.* Alexander, 1759-1834, Scottish biographer, editor, and journalist.

chal-one (kal'on), *n.* *Physiol.* an endocrine secretion that depresses or inhibits physiological activity. [1910-15; < Gk *chalón*, *prp.* of *chalán* to slacken, loosen; on the model of HORMONE]

Châ-lons (sha lôn'), *n.* 1. Also called **Châ-lons-sur-Marne** (sha lôn syr marn'), a city in and the capital of Marne, in NE France: defeat of Attila A.D. 451. 55,709. 2. Also called **Châ-lons-sur-Saône** (sha lôn syr son'), a city in E France, on the Saône River. 60,451.

Chal-u-kyā (chāl'u kyā), *n.* a dynasty of central India, ruling A.D. c500-753, and restored A.D. 973-1190. —**Chal/u-kyān**, *adj.*

chal-u-méau (shal'yō mō'; Fr. sha ly mō'), *n.*, *pl.* -méaux (-mōz', Fr. -mō'). 1. *Music*, the low register of the clarinet. 2. a 17th- or 18th-century woodwind instrument. [1705-15; < F; orig., flute made from a reed, stem of a reed; OF *chalem* < LL *calamellus* narrow reed; see CALAMUS, -ELLE]

chal-u-pa (cha loo'pā; Sp. chā loo'pā), *n.*, *pl.* -pas (-paz; Sp. -pās). *Mexican Cookery*, a fried tortilla spread with bean paste or ground cooked meat and topped with shredded cheese, lettuce, chopped tomato, and often hot sauce. [1890-95, Amer.; < MexSp; Sp. boat, launch < F *chaloupe*; see SHALLOP, SLOOP]

chal-lutz (khā lōotz'), *n.*, *pl.* -lutz-im (-lōo tsēm'). *Hebrew*, halutz.

chal-yb-e-ate (ka lib'e it, -āt'), *adj.* 1. containing or impregnated with salts of iron, as a mineral spring or medicine. —*n.* 2. a chalybeate water, medicine, or the like. [1625-35; < NL *chalybeatus*, L *chalybē(ūs)* of steel (< Gk *chalybēis*, equiv. to *chalybe*, var. s. of *chalybs* iron + *-is* adj. suffix) + *-atus* -ATE; see CHALYBITE]

chal-y-bite (kal'yō bit'), *n.* *Mineral*, siderite (def. 1). [1855-60; < Gk *chalybē* (-s of *chalybs*) iron, also ironworker, member of the Chalybes, a tribe of Asia Minor noted for their blacksmiths + *-ite*']

cham (kam), *n.* *Archaic*, khan'.

cha-made (sha mād'), *n.* *Mil.* *Archaic*, a signal by drum or trumpet inviting an enemy to a parley. [1675-85; < F < Pg *chamada*, equiv. to *cham(ar)* to sound (< L *clamāre* to shout; see CLAIM) + *-ada* -ADE']

cham-ae-do-re-a (kam'ā dōr'e ā, -dōr'-), *n.* any of various small, slender palms of the genus *Chamaedorea*, several species of which are cultivated as houseplants. [< NL (1806) < Gk *chamai* on the ground, low-growing + *dōr(u)* tree + NL *-ea* -EA]

Chamae-le-on (ka mē'le on, -mēl'yan), *n.*, *gen.* -mae-le-on-tis (-mē'le on'tis). *Astron.* a small southern constellation between Musca and Hydrus. Also, **Chamele-on**. [< L]

cham-ae-phyte (kam'ē fī't), *n.* *Bot.* a plant having dormant vegetative buds at, slightly above, ground level. [1910-15; < Gk *chamai* on the ground + *-phyte*]

cham-ber (chām'ber), *n.* 1. a room, usually private, in a house or apartment, esp. a bedroom: *She retired to her chamber*. 2. a room in a palace or official residence. 3. the meeting hall of a legislative or other assembly. 4. **chambers**, *Law*, a. a place where a judge hears matters not requiring action in open court. b. the private office of a judge. c. (in England) the quarters or rooms that lawyers use to consult with their clients, esp. in the Inns of Court. 5. a legislative, judicial, or other like body: *the upper or the lower chamber of a legislature*. 6. an organization of individuals or companies for a specified purpose. 7. the place where the moneys due a government are received and kept; a treasury or chamberlain's office. 8. (in early New England) any bedroom above the ground floor, generally named for the ground-floor room beneath it. 9. a compartment or enclosed space;

cavity: *a chamber of the heart*. 10. (in a canal or the like) the space between any two gates of a lock. 11. a receptacle for one or more cartridges in a firearm, or for a shell in a gun or other cannon. 12. (in a gun) the part of the barrel that receives the charge. 13. See **chamber pot**. —*adj.* 14. of, pertaining to, or performing chamber music: *chamber players*. —*v.t.* 15. to put or enclose in, or as in, a chamber. 16. to provide with a chamber. [1175-1225; ME *chambre* < OF < L *camera*, var. of *camara* vaulted room, vault < Gk *kamara*]

cham/ber con/cert, a concert of chamber music. [1830-40]

cham-bered (chām'berd), *adj.* having compartmental chambers: *a spiral chambered seashell*. [1350-1400; ME. See CHAMBER, -ED']

cham/bered nau/tilus, nautilus (def. 1). [1855-60]

cham-ber-er¹ (chām'ber'or), *n.* *Archaic*, a man who frequents ladies' chambers; gallant. [1200-50; ME; *chamberlain* < AF; see CHAMBER, -ER²]

cham-ber-er² (chām'ber'or), *n.* Obs. chambermaid. [1350-1400; ME *chamberers* < AF, fem. of *chamberer* chamberlain; see CHAMBERER¹]

cham/ber-lain (chām'ber'lin), *n.* 1. an official charged with the management of the living quarters of a sovereign or member of the nobility. 2. an official who receives rents and revenues, as of a municipal corporation; treasurer. 3. the high steward or factor of a member of the nobility. 4. a high official of a royal court. [1175-1225; ME < OF, var. of *chamberlenc* < Frankish **kamerling*, equiv. to *kamer* (< L *camera* room; see CHAMBER) + *-ling* -LING']

Cham-ber-lain (chām'ber'lin), *n.* 1. (Arthur) Neville, 1869-1940, British statesman; prime minister 1937-40. 2. Joseph, 1836-1914, British statesman (father of Sir Austen and Neville Chamberlain). 3. Sir (Joseph) Austen, 1863-1937, British statesman; Nobel peace prize 1925. 4. Owen, born 1920, U.S. physicist; Nobel prize 1959. 5. Wiltton Norman ("Wilt the Stilt"), born 1936, U.S. basketball player.

cham/ber-maid (chām'ber mād'), *n.* a maid who cleans bedrooms and bathrooms. [1580-90; CHAMBER + MAID]

cham/ber mug¹, *Chiefly New England Older Use*, a chamber pot. [1945-50, Amer.]

cham/ber mu/sic, music suited for performance in a room or a small concert hall, esp. for two or more, but usually fewer than ten, solo instruments. [1780-90]

cham/ber of com/mmerce, an association, primarily of people in business, to promote the commercial interests of an area. *Abbr.*: C of C [1780-90]

cham/ber of dep/uties, the lower house of the legislature of certain countries, as Italy. Also, **Cham/ber of Dep/uties**.

cham/ber of hor/rors, 1. a place for the exhibition of gruesome or horrible objects. 2. a group of such objects, as instruments of torture or murder. 3. any collection of things or ideas that inspire horror. [1840-50]

cham/ber op/era, an opera requiring few performers and a small orchestra.

cham/ber or/chestra, a small orchestra, commonly of about 25 players. [1925-30]

cham/ber pot¹, a portable container, esp. for urine, used in bedrooms. [1660-70]

Cham-bers (chām'berz), *n.* 1. Robert, 1802-71, Scottish publisher and editor. 2. Robert William, 1865-1933, U.S. novelist and illustrator. 3. Whittaker (Jay David Chambers), 1901-61, U.S. journalist, Communist spy, and accuser of Alger Hiss.

Cham-bers-burg (chām'berz bûrg'), *n.* a city in central Pennsylvania. 16,174.

Cham-ber-tin (shān ber tan'), *n.* a dry, red wine from the Grevy-Chambertin commune of the Burgundy region in France.

cham/ber tomb¹, *Archaeol.*, a type of late Neolithic to Bronze Age tomb found in Britain and Europe, usually of megaliths covered by mounds, sometimes decorated, and used for successive family or clan burials spanning a number of generations. Cf. **dolmen**, **passage grave**. [1890-95]

Cham-bé-ry (shān bā rē'), *n.* 1. a city in and the capital of Savoie, in SE France. 56,788. 2. a dry vermouth from this city.

Cham-bly (shām'blē, shām'-; Fr. shān blē'), *n.* a city in S Quebec, in E Canada. 12,190.

cham-bray (shām'brā), *n.* a fine cloth of cotton, silk, or linen, commonly of plain weave with a colored warp and white weft. [1805-15, Amer.; var. of CAMBRIC]

cha-me-le-on (ka mē'le on, -mēl'yan), *n.* 1. any of numerous Old World lizards of the family Chamaeleonidae, characterized by the ability to change the color of their skin, very slow locomotion, and a projectile tongue. 2. any of several American lizards capable of changing the color of the skin, esp. *Anolis carolinensis* (American chameleon), of the southeastern U.S. 3. a changeable, fickle, or inconstant person. 4. (*cap.*) *Astron.* Chamaeleon. [1300-50; var. of *chamaeleon* < L < Gk *chamailēon*, equiv. to *chamai* on the ground, dwarf (akin to HOMUS) + *léon* LION; r. ME *camelion* < MF <

L, as above] —**cha-me-le-on-ic** (ka mē'le on'ik), *adj.*

—**cha-me-le-on-like**¹, *adj.*

cha-metz (Seph. khā mets'; Ashk. khō'mits), *n.* *Hebrew*, hametz.

cham-fer (chām'far), *n.* 1. a cut that is made in wood or some other material, usually at a 45° angle to the adjacent principal faces. Cf. **bevel**. —*v.t.* 2. to make a chamfer on or in. [1595-1605; back formation from *chamfering* (taken as *chamfer* + *-ing*) < MF *chamfrein*, var. of *chanfrein* beveled edge, orig. ptp. of *chanfreindre* to bevel, equiv. to *chant edge* (< L *canthus*; see CANT) + *freindre* to break < L *frangere*; see FRANGIBLE] —**cham/fer-er**, *n.*

cham/fer bit¹, a bit for beveling the edge of a hole. [1875-80]

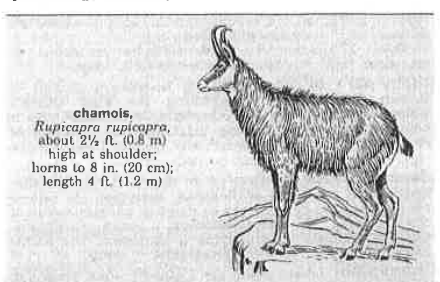
cham-fron (chām'fron), *n.* *Armor.* chanfron.

Cha-mi-nade (sha mē nād'), *n.* Cécile Louise Stéphanie (sā sēl' lwez shtā fā nē'), 1857-1944, French pianist and composer.

cha-mi-so (sha mē'zō, chā-), *n.*, *pl.* -sos, a saltbush, *Atriplex canescens*, of the western U.S. and Mexico, having grayish, scurfy foliage. Also, **cha-mi-za** (sha mē'zā, chā-). Also called **cenizo**. [1840-50; < MexSp]

cham-my (shām'ē), *n.*, *pl.* -mies, *v.t.* -mied, -my-ing. chamois (def. 2-4, 6, 7).

cham-ois (shām'ē; Fr. sha mwā'), *n.*, *pl.* **cham-ois**, **cham-oix** (shām'ēz; Fr. sha mwā'), *v.*, **cham-olse** (shām'ed), **cham-ois-ing** (shām'ē ing). —*n.* 1. an agile, goatlike antelope, *Rupicapra rupicapra*, of high mountains of Europe; now rare in some areas. 2. a soft, pliable leather from any of various skins dressed with oil, esp. fish oil, originally prepared from the skin of the chamois. 3. a piece of this leather. 4. a cotton cloth finished to simulate this leather. 5. a medium to grayish yellow color. —*v.t.* 6. to dress (a pel) with oil in order to produce a chamois. 7. to rub or buff with a chamois. Also, **chammy**, **shammy**, **shamoy** (for def. 2-4, 6, 7). [1525-35; < MF < LL *camox*, presumably of pre-L orig.; cf. GEMS]



cham-o-mile (kam'ō mil', -mēl'), *n.* 1. a composite plant, *Chamaemelum nobile* (or *Anthemis nobilis*), native to the Old World, having strongly scented foliage and white ray flowers with yellow centers used medicinally and as a tea. 2. any of several allied plants of the genera *Matricaria* and *Tripleurospermum*. Also, **camomile**. [1350-1400; ME *camamylle*, *camomille* < MF, OF *camomille* or ML *camomilla*, for L *chamaemelon* < Gk *chamaímēlon*, equiv. to *chamai* on the ground + *mēlon* apple; allegedly so called from the applelike odor of the flowers]

Cha-mo-nix (shām'ō nē', sham'ō nē; Fr. sha mō nē'), *n.* a mountain valley in E France, N of Mont Blanc. Also, **Cham-mou-ni** (Fr. sha mō nē').

Cha-mor-ro (cha mōr'ō; Sp. chā mōr'ō), *n.*, *pl.* -morros (-mōr'ōz; Sp. -mōr'ōs), (*esp. collectively*) -mor-ro for 1. 1. a people inhabiting the Mariana Islands. 2. the Austronesian language of the Chamorro.

Cham-mos (kā'mos), *n.* Douay Bible. Chemosh.

cham-o-site (shām'ō zit'), *n.* a mineral of the chlorite group, hydrous aluminum silicate of iron, occurring in gray or black crystals in bolitic iron ore. [1825-35; var. of *camosite*, named after Chamoison in the Valais, Switzerland, where found; see -ITE']

cha-motte (sha mōt'), *n.* *Metall.* grog (def. 3). [1885-90; prob. < F < G *Schamotte*]

champ¹ (chāmp, chomp), *v.t.* 1. to bite upon or grind, esp. impatiently: *The horses champed the oats*. 2. to crush with the teeth and chew vigorously or noisily; munch. 3. to mash; crush. —*v.i.* 4. to make vigorous chewing or biting movements with the jaws and teeth. 5. **champ at the bit**, to betray impatience, as to begin some action. —*n.* 6. the act of champing. Also, **chomp**. [1520-30; perh. akin to *chāp*; see CHOP¹] —**champ/er**, *n.* —**champ/y**, *adj.*

champ² (chāmp), *n.* *Informal*. a champion. [by shortening]

cham-pac (chām'pak, chūm'puk), *n.* a southern Asian tree, *Micheletia champaca*, of the magnolia family, having fragrant yellow or orange flowers and yielding an oil (cham/paca oil) used in perfumes. Also, **cham-pa-ca** (chām'pa ka, chūm'-), **cham/pak**. [1760-70; < Hind *campak* < Skt *campaka*]

cham-pagne (shām'pan'), *n.* 1. (*cap.*) the sparkling, dry, white table wine from the region of Champagne in France. 2. a similar sparkling wine produced elsewhere. 3. (formerly) the nonsparkling, dry, white table wine produced in the region of Champagne in France. 4. a

CONCISE PRONUNCIATION KEY: act, cāpe, dāre, pārt, sāt, equal; if, ice; ox, över, öder, oil, böök, bööt, out, up, ürg; child; sing; shor; thin; that; zh as in treasure, a = as in alone, e as in system, i as in unity, o as in goliath, u as in circus, ' as in fire (fī'r), hour (ou'r), i and n can serve as syllabic consonants, as in cradle (krād'l) and button (but'n). See the full key inside the front cover.

CONCISE PRONUNCIATION KEY: æt, câpe, dâre, pârt; set, êqual; if, lee; ox, ôver, ôrder, oil, bôok, bôol, out, up, ôrge; child; sing; shoe; thin; that; zh as in treasure. æ = a as in alone, e as in system, i as in easily, o as in gallop, u as in circus; * as in fire (fîr), hour (ôur*). l and n can serve as syllabic consonants, as in cradle (krădʹl), and button (putʹn). See the full key inside the front cover.

[1645-55; < L *vacuus* empty; see -ous] —**vac-u-ous-ly**, *adv.* —**vac-u-ous-ness**, *n.*

vac-u-um (vak'yōm, -yōō am, -yom), *n.*, *pl.* **vac-u-ums** for 1, 2, 4-6, **vac-u-a** (vak'yōō a) for 1, 2, 4, 6; *adj.* *v.* —**1.** a space entirely devoid of matter. **2.** an enclosed space from which matter, esp. air, has been partially removed so that the matter or gas remaining in the space exerts less pressure than the atmosphere (opposed to *plenum*). **3.** the state or degree of exhaustion in such an enclosed space. **4.** a space not filled or occupied; emptiness; void: *The loss left a vacuum in his heart.* **5.** a vacuum cleaner or sweeper. **6.** Physics. a state of lowest energy in a quantum field theory. —*adj.* **7.** of, pertaining to, employing, or producing a vacuum. **8.** (of a hollow container) partly exhausted of gas or air. **9.** pertaining to a device or process that makes use of a vacuum to accomplish a desired task. **10.** noting or pertaining to canning or packaging in which air is removed from the container to prevent deterioration of the contents. —*u.t.* **11.** to use a vacuum cleaner on; clean with a vacuum cleaner: *to vacuum rugs.* **12.** to treat with any vacuum device, as a vacuum drier. —*u.t.* **13.** to use a vacuum cleaner: *to vacuum in the dining room.* [1540-50; < L *neut. of vacuus* empty]

vac-u-um aspira-tion, *Med.* **1.** See under **menstrual extraction**. **2.** a method of sampling the contents of the uterus for diagnostic purposes. [1965-70]

vac-u-um bot-tle, a bottle or flask having a vacuum liner that prevents the escape of heat from hot contents, usually liquids, or the entrance of heat into cold contents; thermos. [1905-10]

vac-u-um clean'er, an electrical appliance for cleaning carpets, floors, etc., by suction. Also called **vac-u-um sweep'er**. [1900-05]

vac-u-um cof-fee mak'er, a coffee pot with upper and lower glass units, the upper for ground coffee and the lower for water that, when boiled, rises through the filter-stoppered bottom of the upper unit and remains there until drawn back down to the lower unit as brewed coffee by a reduction in pressure caused by the removal of heat.

vac-u-um con-crete, concrete from which excess moisture and air are sucked to quicken hardening and increase strength.

vac-u-um distilla-tion, *Chem.* a process of distillation employing a vacuum that by lowering the pressure on a liquid allows volatilization at a lower temperature than normal. [1895-1900]

vac-u-um gauge, a device for measuring pressures below atmospheric pressure in the receiver of an air pump, in steam condensers, and the like. [1860-65]

vac-u-um-ize (vak'yōō miz', -yōō ə-, -yā-), *u.t.*, *-ized*, *-izing*. **1.** to create a vacuum in. **2.** vacuum (def. 11). **3.** vacuum-pack. Also, *esp. Brit.*, **vac-u-um-ise**'. [1905-10; *VACUUM* + *-ize*]

vac-u-um-pack (vak'yōōm pak', -yōō əm-, -yem-), *u.t.* to pack (food) in a vacuum-packed container.

vac-u-um-packed (vak'yōōm pak't', -yōō əm-, -yem-), *adj.* packed and sealed in a container, as a can or jar, with as much air as possible evacuated before sealing, chiefly to preserve freshness. [1925-30]

vac-u-um pan, a vessel equipped with a vacuum pump used for rapid evaporation by boiling a substance at a low temperature under reduced pressure.

vac-u-um pump, a pump or device by which a partial vacuum can be produced. [1855-60]

vac-u-um tube, **1.** Also called, *esp. Brit.*, **vac-u-um valve**, an electron tube from which almost all air or gas has been evacuated: formerly used extensively in radio and electronics. **2.** a sealed glass tube with electrodes and a partial vacuum or a highly rarefied gas, used to observe the effects of a discharge of electricity passed through it. [1775-85]

va-de-me-cum (vā'dē mē'kəm, vā'-), *pl.* **va-de-me-cums**. **1.** something a person carries about for frequent or regular use. **2.** a book for ready reference; manual; handbook. [1620-30; < L *vādē mēcum* lit. go with me]

V. Adm., Vice-Admiral.

va-dose (vā'dōs), *adj.* *Geol.* found or located above the water table; vadose water; vadose zone. [1895-1900; < L *vadosus* shallow, equiv. to *vad(um)* a shoal, ford + *-ōsus* -ous']

Vads-ø (vāt'sø), *n.* a seaport in NE Norway. 5625.

Vaduz (fā dōōts'), *n.* a city in and the capital of Liechtenstein, on the upper Rhine. 7500.

vae vic-tis (vā' vik'tis; *Eng.* vā' vik'tis), *Latin*. woe to the vanquished.

Va-fi-o (vā'fē ō'; *Gk.* vā fyō'), *n.* Vaphio.

vag-a-bond (vag'ə bōnd'), *adj.* **1.** wandering from place to place without any settled home; nomadic: *a vagabond tribe*. **2.** leading an unsettled or carefree life. **3.** disreputable; worthless; shiftless. **4.** of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a vagabond: *vagabond habits*. **5.** having an uncertain or irregular course or direction: *a vagabond voyage*. —*n.* **6.** a person, usually without a permanent home, who wanders from place to place; nomad. **7.** an idle wanderer without a permanent home or visible means of support; tramp; vagrant. **8.** a carefree, worthless, or irresponsible person; rogue. [1400-50; late ME *vagabound* (< OF *vagabond*) < LL *vagabundus* wandering, vagrant, equiv. to *L vagā(ri)* to wander + *-bundus* *adj. suffix*] —**vag-a-bond-ish**, *adj.*

—**Syn.** **7.** hobo, loafer. **See** **vagrant**. **8.** knave, idler. **vag-a-bond-age** (vag'ə bōn'dij), *n.* **1.** the state or condition of being a vagabond; idle wandering. **2.** vagabonds collectively. Also called **vag-a-bond-ism**. [1805-15; *VAGABOND* + *-age*]

va-gal (vā'gəl), *adj.* of or pertaining to a vagus nerve. [1850-55; *VAG(US)* + *-AL*']

vag-al block, *Med.* the obstruction of vagus nerve impulses by the administration of drugs, a treatment for reducing acid secretion by the stomach. Cf. **vagotomy**.

va-gar-i-ous (və gār'ē əs), *adj.* **1.** characterized by vagaries; erratic; capricious: *a vagarious foreign policy*. **2.** roving; wandering: *vagarious artists*. [1790-1800; *VAGARY* + *-ous*] —**va-gar-i-ous-ly**, *adv.*

va-gar-y (və gār'ē, vā'gə rē), *n.*, *pl.* **-gar-ies**. **1.** an unpredictable or erratic action, occurrence, course, or instance: *the vagaries of weather; the vagaries of the economic scene*. **2.** a whimsical, wild, or unusual idea, desire, or action. [1565-75, in sense "wandering journey"; appar. < L *vagari* to wander] —**Syn.** **2.** caprice, whim, quirk, crotchet.

vag-ile (vā'əl or, *esp. Brit.*, -il), *adj.* *Biol.* endowed with or having freedom of movement. [1885-90; < L *vag(us)* wandering + *-ile*]

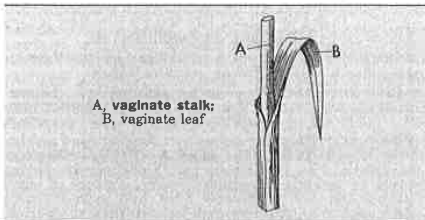
vag-ili-ty (və jil'i tē), *n.* *Biol.* the ability of an organism to move about freely and migrate. [1935-40; *VAGILE* + *-ity*]

vagin-, var. of **vagino-** before a vowel: *vaginectomy*.

va-gi-na (və jī'nə), *n.*, *pl.* **-nas**, **-nae** (-nē). **1.** *Anat., Zool.* a. the passage leading from the uterus to the vulva in certain female mammals. Cf. *oviduct*. b. a sheathlike part or organ. **2. *Bot.* the sheath formed by the basal part of certain leaves where they embrace the stem. [1675-85; < NL; *L. vagina* sheath]**

vag-i-nal (vā'ə nəl), *adj.* **1.** *Anat., Zool.* pertaining to or involving the vagina. **2. pertaining to or resembling a sheath. —**vag-i-nal-ly**, *adv.* [1720-30; *VAGIN(A)* + *-AL*']**

vag-i-nate (vā'ə nit, -nāt'), *adj.* *Bot.* having a vagina or sheath; sheathed. [1840-50; < NL *vaginatus*. See *VAGINA*, *-ATE*']



A, vaginate stalk;
B, vaginate leaf

vag-i-nec-to-my (vā'ə nek'tō mē), *n.*, *pl.* **-mies**. *Surg.* excision of part or all of the vagina. [*VAGIN(A)* + *-ECTOMY*]

vag-i-nis-mus (vā'ə niz'məs), *n.* *Pathol.* a painful spasm of the vagina. [1865-70; < NL; see *VAGINA*, *-ISM*]

vag-i-ni-tis (vā'ə nī'tis), *n.* *Pathol.* inflammation of the vagina. Also called **colpitis**. [1840-50; *VAGIN(A)* + *-ITIS*]

vagino-, a combining form representing *vagina* in compound words: *vaginotomy*. Also, *esp. before a vowel*, **vagin-**.

vag-i-no-my-co-sis (vā'ə nō mī kō'sis), *n.* *Pathol.* a fungal infection of the vagina. [*VAGINO-* + *MYCOSIS*]

vag-i-not-o-my (vā'ə not'ō mē), *n.*, *pl.* **-mies**. *Surg.* colpotomy. [*VAGINO-* + *TOMY*]

vago-, a combining form with the meaning "vagus nerve" used in the formation of compound words: *vagotomy*. [see *VAGUS*, *-O-*]

vag-o-de-pres-sor (vā'gō dī pres'ər), *Pharm.* —*adj.* **1.** decreasing or mimicking the decrease of the activity of the vagus nerve. —*n.* **2.** any such substance. [*VAGO-* + *DEPRESSOR*]

vag-ot-o-my (vā'gōt'ō mē), *n.*, *pl.* **-mies**. the surgical severing of vagus nerve fibers, performed to reduce acid secretion by the stomach. Cf. **vagal block**. [1900-05; *VAGO-* + *TOMY*]

vag-o-to-ni-a (vā'gō tō'nē ə), *n.* *Pathol.* hyperexcitability of the vagus nerve, producing bradycardia, decreased heart output, and faintness. [1910-15; *VAGO-* + *-TONIA*] —**vag-o-ton-ic** (vā'gō ton'ik), *adj.*

vag-o-trop-ic (vā'gō trōp'ik, -trō'pik), *adj.* *Physiol.* affecting the vagus nerve. [*VAGO-* + *-TROPIC*]

vag-gran-cy (vā'grən sē), *n.*, *pl.* **-cies**. **1.** the state or condition of being a vagrant; an arrest for vagrancy. **2.** the conduct of a vagrant. **3.** mental wandering; reverie. [1635-45; *VAGR(ANT)* + *-ANCY*]

vag-grant (vā'grənt), *n.* **1.** a person who wanders about idly and has no permanent home or employment; vagabond; tramp. **2.** *Law.* an idle person without visible means of support, as a tramp or beggar. **3.** a person who wanders from place to place; wanderer; rover. **4.** wandering idly without a permanent home or employment; living in vagabondage: *vagrant beggars*. **5.** of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a vagrant: *the vagrant life*. —*adj.* **6.** wandering or roaming from place to place; nomadic. **7.** (of plants) straggling in growth. **8.** not fixed or settled, esp. in course; moving hither and thither: *a vagrant leaf blown by the wind*. [1400-50; late ME *vogrant*, appar. prp. of *AL* *vagr*, perh. < ME *vāgren*, *b. vagen* (< L *vagari* to wander) and *uāleren* (> OF *uālerer*), equiv. to *uāle-* (see *WALK*) + *-r* freq. suffix + *-en* inf. suffix] —**vag-grant-ly**, *adv.* —**vag-grant-ness**, *n.* —**Syn.** **1.** *VAGRANT*, *VAGABOND* describe an idle, disreputable person who lacks a fixed abode. *VAGRANT* suggests a tramp, a person with no settled abode or livelihood, an idle and disorderly person: *picked up by police as a vagrant*. *VAGABOND* especially emphasizes the idea of worthless living, often by trickery, thieving, or other disreputable means: *Actors were once classed with rogues and vagabonds*.

vag-grom (vā'grōm), *adj.* *Archaic.* vagrant. [1590-1600; var. of *VAGRANT*]

vague (vāg), *adj.*, **vag-u-er**, **vag-u-est**. **1.** not clearly or explicitly stated or expressed: *vague promises*. **2. indefinite or indistinct in nature or character, as ideas or feelings: *a vague premonition of disaster*. **3.** not clear or**

distinct to the sight or any other sense; perceptible or recognizable only in an indefinite way: *vague shapes in the dark; vague murmurs behind a door*. **4.** not definitely established, determined, confirmed, or known; uncertain: *a vague rumor; The date of his birth is vague*. **5.** (of persons) not clear or definite in thought, understanding, or expression: *vague about his motives; a vague person*. **6.** (of the eyes, expression, etc.) showing lack of clear perception or understanding: *a vague stare*. [1540-50; < MF < L *vagus* wandering] —**vague-ly**, *adv.* —**vague-ness**, *n.*

—**Syn.** **1.** unspecific, imprecise. **3.** obscure, hazy, shadowy.

va-gus (vā'gəs), *n.*, *pl.* **-gi** (-jī, -gi). See **vagus nerve**. [1830-40; < L: wandering]

vā-gus nerve, *pl. vagus nerves. Anat.* either one of the tenth pair of cranial nerves, consisting of motor fibers that innervate the muscles of the pharynx, larynx, heart, and thoracic and abdominal viscera, and of sensory fibers that conduct impulses from these structures to the brain. [1830-40]

vail¹ (vāl), *u.t.* **1.** to let sink; lower. **2.** *Archaic.* to take off or doff (one's hat), as in respect or submission. [1300-50; ME *vaien*, aph. var. of *avalen* (now obs.) < MF *avalier* to phrase down, v. deriv. of phrase *a val* down (lit., to the valley) (a to (< L *ad*) + *val* *VALE*)]

vail² (vāl), *Archaic.* —*u.t.*, *u.t.* **1.** to be of use or profit; avail. —*n.* **2.** a tip; gratuity. [1250-1300; ME; aph. var. of *AVAIL*]

vail³ (vāl), *Obs.* —*n.* **1.** a veil. —*u.t.* **2.** to veil.

vain (vān), *adj.*, **-er**, **-est**. **1.** excessively proud of or concerned about one's own appearance, qualities, achievements, etc.; conceited: *a vain dandy*. **2.** proceeding from or showing personal vanity: *vain remarks*. **3.** ineffectual or unsuccessful; futile: *a vain effort*. **4.** without real significance, value, or importance; baseless or worthless: *vain pageantry; vain display*. **5. *Archaic.* senseless or foolish. **6. in *vain*, a. without effect or avail; to no purpose: *to apologize in vain*. b. in an improper or irreverent manner: *to take God's name in vain*. [1250-1300; ME < OF < L *vānus* empty, vain] —**vain-ly**, *adv.* —**vain-ness**, *n.*****

—**Syn.** **1.** egotistical, self-complacent, vainglorious, proud, arrogant, overweening. **3.** fruitless, unavailing. **4.** unimportant, trivial, trifling, nugatory. See **useless**. —**Ant.** **1.** humble. **3.** useful.

Väin-nä-möi-nen (vi'nä möi'nēn; *Finn.* vā'nä möi'nēn), *n.* *Finnish Legend.* an old magician, the hero of the Kalevala, who opposes the magician Joukahainen and the sorceress Louhi.

vain-glo-ri-ous (vān glōr'ē əs, -glōr'ē-), *adj.* **1.** filled with or given to vainglory: *a vainglorious actor*. **2.** characterized by, showing, or proceeding from vainglory: *a vainglorious estimate of one's ability*. [1470-80; *VAIN-GLORY* + *-ous*] —**vain-glo-ri-ous-ly**, *adv.* —**vain-glo-ri-ous-ness**, *n.*

vain-glo-ry (vān glōr'ē, -glōr'ē, vān glōr'ē, -glōr'ē), *n.* **1.** excessive elation or pride over one's own achievements, abilities, etc.; boastful vanity. **2.** empty pomp or show. [1250-1300; ME *vainglorie*, trans. of ML *vāna glōria*; see *VAIN*, *GLORY*]

—**Syn.** **1.** See **pride**. **2.** ostentation. —**Ant.** **1.** humility.

vair (vār), *n.* **1.** a fur much used for lining and trimming garments in the 13th and 14th centuries, generally assumed to have been that of a variety of squirrel with a gray back and white belly. Cf. **miniver** (def. 1). **2.** *Heraldry.* a fur represented by a pattern of escutcheon- or bell-shaped figures, each outlining the adjacent sides of those beside it so that the figures alternate vertically and horizontally both in position and in tinctures, of which argent and azure are common. [1250-1300; ME < OF < L *varium* something patterned; see *VARIOUS*]

Vai-she-shi-ka (vi'she shē'kə, vi shā'shī kə), *n.* *Indian Philos.* a school of thought asserting the existence of a universe formed by a god out of atoms of earth, air, fire, and water, as well as out of space, time, ether, mind, and soul, all conceived as substances coexisting eternally with the god. [*< Skt vaiśeṣika*, deriv. of *viśeṣa* difference, particular property]

Vaish-na-va (vish'na vā), *n.* *Hinduism.* a Bhakti sect devoted to Vishnu. —**Vaish-na-vism**, *n.*

Vais-ya (vis'ya, vish'-), *n.* a member of the Hindu mercantile and professional class, above the Shudras and below the Kshatriyas. Cf. **Brahman** (def. 1). [1785-95; < Skt *vaiśya*]

vai-vode (vi'vōd), *n.* *voivode*.

vaj-ra (vaj'rə), *n.* *Hinduism.* (in Vedic mythology) the thunderbolt of Indra. [*< Skt*]

va-keel (və kēl'), *n.* *Anglo-Indian.* a native lawyer. Also, **va-ki'l'**. [1615-25; < Hindi *vākīl* < *Ar wakīl*]

Val (val), *n.* **1.** a male given name, form of **Valentine**. **2.** a female given name, form of **Valerie**.

Val (val), *n.* *Valenciennes* (def. 2).

Val, *Biochem.* valine.

val., **1.** valentine. **2.** valuation. **3.** value. **4.** valued.

va-la (vā'lə), *n.* *Scand. Myth.* a propheticess.

Va-la-don (vā lā dōn'), *n.* *Su-zanne* (sy zān'), 1865-1938, French painter (mother of Maurice Utrillo).

Va-lais (Fr. vā lē'; *Eng.* vā lā'), *n.* a canton in SW Switzerland. 211,600; 2021 sq. mi. (5235 sq. km). *Cap.* Sion.

val-ance (val'əns, vā'ləns), *n.* **1.** a short curtain or piece of drapery that is hung from the edge of a canopy, from the frame of a bed, etc. **2.** a short ornamental piece of drapery placed across the top of a window.

CONCISE PRONUNCIATION KEY: act, cāpe, dāre, pūr; not, equal; if, ice; ox, över, öder, oil, bōk, bōst, out, up, ürg; child; sing; shoe; thin, that; zh as in treasure. a = a as in alone, e as in system, i as in easily, o as in gallop, u as in circus, ʰ as in fire (fī'r), hour (ou'r). l and n can serve as syllabic consonants, as in cradle (krād'l), and button (but'n). See the full key inside the front cover.