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First edited by

H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler

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Della Thompson

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rosy /rəʊzi/ *adj.* (rosier, rosiest) 1 a coloured like a pink or red rose (rosy lips, rosy sky). 2 optimistic, indication of health or youth (rosy cheeks). 3 hopeful, cheerful (a rosy future; a rosy attitude to life).

rosiness *n.*

rot /rɒt/ *v.* *n.* & *int.* ● *v.* (rotted, rotting) 1 *intr.* a (of animal or vegetable matter) lose its original form by the chemical action of bacteria, fungi, etc.; decay. b (of a substance) crumble or drop from a stem etc. 2 *intr.* a (of society, institutions, etc.) gradually perish from lack of vigour or use. b (of a prisoner etc.) waste away (left to rot in prison); (of a person) languish. 3 *tr.* cause to rot, make rot. 4 *tr.* *Brit.* slang tease, abuse, denigrate. 5 *intr.* *Brit.* slang joke. ● *n.* 1 the process or state of rotting. 2 rot, nonsense; an absurd or foolish statement, argument, or proposal. 3 *Brit.* a sudden series of (usu. unaccountable) failures; a rapid decline in standards etc. (a rot set in; we must try to stop the rot). 4 (often prec. by the) necrosis of the liver in sheep, caused by infestation with liver-flukes. ● *int. colloq.* expressing incredulity or ridicule. [Old English *rotian* (v.): the *rot* from Middle English, perhaps from Scandinavian: cf. Old Norse *rotinn*; related to ROT, RET]

rota /rəʊtə/ *n.* 1 esp. *Brit.* a list of persons acting, or duties to be done, in rotation; a roster. 2 (Rota) RC Ch. the supreme ecclesiastical and secular court. [Latin, = wheel]

rotarian /rəʊtəriən/ *n.* & *adj.* ● *n.* a member of Rotary. ● *adj.* of Rotary. [ROTARY + -AN]

rotary /rəʊtəri/ *adj.* & *n.* ● *adj.* acting by rotation (rotary drill; rotary pump). ● *n.* (pl. -ies) 1 a rotary machine. 2 *N. Amer.* a traffic roundabout. 3 (Rotary) (in full Rotary International) a worldwide charitable society of businessmen and professional men, originally named from members entertaining in rotation. [Middle English *rotarius* (as ROTA)]

rotary club *n.* a local branch of Rotary.

rotary-wing attrib. adj. (of an aircraft) deriving lift from rotary aerofoils.

rotate /rəʊt(ə)teɪ/ *v.* 1 *intr.* & *tr.* move round an axis or centre, revolve. 2 a *tr.* take or arrange in rotation. b *intr.* act or take place in rotation (the chairmanship will rotate). ● *rotatable adj.* *rotative* /rəʊtətɪv/ *adj.* *rotatory* /rəʊtət(ə)ri, -t(ə)ri/ *adj.* [Latin *rotare* from *rota* 'wheel']

rotate /rəʊt(ə)teɪ/ *adj.* Bot. wheel-shaped. [Latin *rota* 'wheel']

rotation /rəʊt(ə)teɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* 1 the act or an instance of rotating or being rotated. 2 a recurrence; a recurrent series or period; a regular succession of various members of a group in office etc. 3 a system of growing different crops in regular order to avoid exhausting the soil. ● *rotational adj.* *rotationally adv.* [Latin *rotatio*]

rotator /rəʊt(ə)teɪə/ *n.* 1 a machine or device for causing something to rotate. 2 *Anat.* a muscle that rotates a limb etc. 3 a revolving apparatus or part. [Latin (as ROTATOR)]

rotavator /rəʊtəv(ə)teɪə/ *n.* (also Rotovator) *Brit. propr.* a machine with a rotating blade for breaking up or tilling the soil. ● *rotavate v. tr.* [ROTARY + CULTIVATOR]

rote /rəʊt/ *n.* (usu. prec. by by) mechanical or habitual repetition (with reference to acquiring knowledge). [Middle English: origin unknown]

rote learning *n.* learning by rote.

rotenone /rəʊtənoʊn/ *n.* a toxic crystalline substance obtained from the roots of derris and other plants, used as an insecticide. [Japanese *rotenon* from *roten* 'derris']

rot-gut *n.* slang cheap harmful alcoholic liquor.

rotifer /rəʊtɪfə/ *n.* any minute aquatic animal of the phylum Rotifera, with a characteristic wheel-like ciliated organ used in swimming and feeding. [modern Latin *rotiferus*, from Latin *rota* 'wheel' + *-fer* 'bearing']

roisserie /rəʊt(ə)ts(ə)ri/ *n.* 1 a restaurant etc. where meat is roasted or barbecued. 2 a cooking appliance with a rotating spit for roasting and barbecuing meat. [French *rôtisserie* from *roster* ROAST]

rotogravure /rəʊtəgrəˈvjuːə/ *n.* 1 a printing system using a rotary press with intaglio cylinders, usu. running at high speed. 2 a sheet etc. printed with this system, esp. *N. Amer.* the colour magazine of a Sunday newspaper. [German *Rotogravur* (name of a company) assimilated to PHOTOGRAVURE]

rotor /rəʊtə/ *n.* 1 a rotary part of a machine, esp. in the distributor of an internal-combustion engine. 2 a set of radiating aerofoils round a hub on a helicopter, providing lift when rotated. [formed irregularly from ROTATOR]

rototill /rəʊtətɪl/ *v. tr.* *N. Amer.* = ROTAVATE (see ROTAVATOR).

Rotovator var. of ROTAVATOR.

rotten /rɒt(ə)n/ *adj.* (rotten, rottenest) 1 rotting or rotted; falling to pieces or liable to break or tear from age or use. 2 morally, socially, or politically corrupt. 3 *colloq.* a disagreeable, unpleasant (had a rotten time). b (of a plan etc.) ill-advised, unsatisfactory (a rotten idea). c disagreeably ill (feel rotten today). ● *rottenly adv.* *rotteness* /rɒt(ə)nɪs/ *n.* [Middle English from Old Norse *rotinn*; related to ROT, RET]

rotten apple *n. colloq.* a bad or esp. a morally corrupt person in a group etc.

rotten borough *n. hist.* (before 1832) an English borough able to elect an MP though having very few voters.

rotten-stone *n.* decomposed siliceous limestone used as a powder for polishing metals.

rotter /rɒtə/ *n.* esp. *Brit. colloq.* an objectionable, unpleasant, or reprehensible person. [ROT]

Rottweiler /rɒtˈvaɪlə, -waɪlə/ *n.* 1 a large powerful dog of a tall black and tan breed. 2 this breed. [German, from *Rottweil* in SW Germany]

rotund /rəʊ(t)ˈtʌnd/ *adj.* 1 a circular, round. b (of a person) large and plump, podgy. 2 (of speech, literary style, etc.) sonorous, grandiloquent. ● *rotundity n.* *rotundly adv.* [Latin *rotundus* from *rotare* ROTATE]

rotunda /rəʊ(t)ˈtʌndə/ *n.* 1 a building with a circular ground plan, esp. one with a dome. 2 a circular hall or room. [earlier *rotonda* from Italian *rotonda* (camera) 'round (chamber)', fem. of *rotondo* 'round' (as ROTUND)]

rouble /ruːb(ə)l/ *n.* (also ruble) the chief monetary unit of Russia and some other former republics of the USSR. [French from Russian *rubl'*]

roué /ruːeɪ/ *n.* a debauchee, esp. an elderly one; a rake. [French, past part. of *rouer* 'break on wheel', = one deserving this]

rouge /ruːʒ/ *n.* & *v.* ● *n.* 1 a red powder or cream used for colouring the cheeks. 2 powdered ferric oxide etc. as a polishing agent esp. for metal. ● *v.* 1 *tr.* colour with rouge. 2 *intr.* a apply rouge to one's cheeks. b become red, blush. [French, = red, from Latin *rubeus*, related to RED]

rouge-et-noir /ruːʒəˈniw/ *n.* a gambling game using a table with red and black marks, on which players place stakes. [French, = red and black]

rough /rʌf/ *adj.*, *adv.*, *n.*, & *v.* ● *adj.* 1 a having an uneven or irregular surface, not smooth or level or polished. b Tennis etc. applied to the face of a racket on which the loops formed from the stringing process project (opp. SMOOTH *adj.* 1b). 2 (of ground, country, etc.) having many bumps, obstacles, etc. 3 a hairy, shaggy. b (of cloth) coarse in texture. 4 a (of a person or behaviour) not mild or quiet or gentle; boisterous, unrestrained (rough manners; rough play). b (of language etc.) coarse, indelicate. c (of wine etc.) sharp or harsh in taste. 5 (of the sea, weather, etc.) violent, stormy. 6 disorderly, riotous (a rough part of town). 7 harsh, insensitive, inconsiderate (rough words; rough treatment). 8 a unpleasant, severe, demanding (had a rough time). b *Brit.* unfortunate, unreasonable.