

celestial navigation ► **noun** [mass noun] the action of finding one's way by observing the sun, moon, and stars.

celestial pole ► **noun** Astronomy the point on the celestial sphere directly above either of the earth's geographic poles, around which the stars and planets appear to rotate during the course of the night.

celestial sphere ► **noun** an imaginary sphere of which the observer is the centre and on which all celestial objects are considered to lie.

celiac ► **noun** US spelling of **COELIAC**.

celibate /sɛlɪbət/ ► **adjective** abstaining from marriage and sexual relations, typically for religious reasons: a *celibate priest*.

■ having or involving no sexual relations: a *celibate lifestyle*.

► **noun** a person who abstains from marriage and sexual relations.

– DERIVATIVES **celibacy** **noun**.

– ORIGIN early 19th cent. (earlier (mid 17th cent.) as *celibacy*): from French *celibat* or Latin *caelibatus* 'unmarried state' + **-ATE**².

Céline /sɛr'li:n/. Louis-Ferdinand (1894–1961), French novelist; pseudonym of *Louis-Ferdinand Destouches*. He is best known for his autobiographical novel, the satirical *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932).

cell ► **noun** **1** a small room in which a prisoner is locked up or in which a monk or nun sleeps.

■ historical a small monastery or nunnery dependent on a larger one.

2 Biology the smallest structural and functional unit of an organism, which is typically microscopic and consists of cytoplasm and a nucleus enclosed in a membrane.

■ an enclosed cavity in an organism. ■ a small compartment in a larger structure such as a honeycomb.

3 a small group forming a nucleus of political activity, typically a secret, subversive one: *terrorist cells*.

4 a device containing electrodes immersed in an electrolyte, used for generating current or for electrolysis.

■ a unit in a device for converting chemical or solar energy into electricity.

5 the local area covered by one of the short-range transmitters in a cellular telephone system.

■ N. Amer. a mobile phone.

– DERIVATIVES **celled** **adjective** [in combination] a *single-celled organism*, **cell-like** **adjective**.

– ORIGIN Old English, from Old French *celle* or Latin *cella* 'storeroom or chamber'.

cella /'kɛlə/ ► **noun** (pl. **cellae** /-li:/) the inner area of an ancient temple, especially one housing the hidden cult image in a Greek or Roman temple.

– ORIGIN Latin.

cellar ► **noun** a room below ground level in a house, often used for storing wine or coal.

■ a stock of wine.

► **verb** [with obj.] store (wine) in a cellar.

– ORIGIN Middle English (in the general sense 'storeroom'): from Old French *celier*, from late Latin *cellarium* 'storeroom', from Latin *cella* 'storeroom or chamber'.

cellarage ► **noun** [mass noun] cellars collectively.

■ money charged for the use of a cellar or storehouse.

cellarer /sɛlərə/ ► **noun** the person in a monastery who is responsible for provisioning and catering.

■ a cellarman.

cellaret /sɛlə'ret/ (US also **cellarette**) ► **noun** historical a cabinet or sideboard for keeping alcoholic drinks and glasses in a dining room.

cellarman ► **noun** (pl. **cellarmen**) Brit. a person in charge of a wine cellar.

cell block ► **noun** a large single building or part of a complex subdivided into separate prison cells.

Cellini /tʃɛ'li:ni/, Benvenuto (1500–71), Italian goldsmith and sculptor, the most renowned goldsmith of his day.

cell line ► **noun** Biology a cell culture developed from a single cell and therefore consisting of cells with a uniform genetic make-up.

cellmate ► **noun** a person with whom one shares a cell.

cell-mediated ► **adjective** Physiology denoting the aspect of an immune response involving the action of white blood cells, rather than that of circulating antibodies. Often contrasted with **HUMORAL**.

cello /'tʃɛləʊ/ ► **noun** (pl. **cellos**) a bass instrument of the violin family, held upright on the floor between

the legs of the seated player.

– DERIVATIVES **cellist** **noun**.

– ORIGIN late 19th cent.: shortening of **VIOLONCELLO**.

cellophane /sɛlə'feɪn/ ► **noun** [mass noun] trademark a thin transparent wrapping material made from viscose.

– ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from **CELLULOSE** + *-phane*, from *diaphane*, a kind of semi-transparent woven silk (from medieval Latin *diaphanus* 'diaphanous').

cellphone ► **noun** a mobile phone.

cellular /sɛljələ/ ► **adjective** **1** relating to or consisting of living cells: *cellular proliferation*.

2 denoting or relating to a mobile telephone system that uses a number of short-range radio stations to cover the area that it serves, the signal being automatically switched from one station to another as the user travels about.

3 (of a fabric item, such as a blanket or vest) knitted so as to form holes or hollows that trap air and provide extra insulation.

4 consisting of small compartments or rooms: *cellular accommodation*.

– DERIVATIVES **cellularity** **noun**.

– ORIGIN mid 18th cent.: from French *cellulaire*, from modern Latin *cellularis*, from *cellula* 'little chamber', diminutive of *cella*.

cellular automaton ► **noun** (pl. **cellular automata**) Computing each of a set of units in a mathematical model which have simple rules governing their replication and destruction, used to model complex systems composed of simple units such as living things or parallel processors.

cellular phone ► **noun** chiefly N. Amer. a mobile phone.

cellulase /sɛljʊləz/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Biochemistry an enzyme that converts cellulose into glucose or a disaccharide.

– ORIGIN early 20th cent.: from **CELLULOSE** + **-ASE**.

cellulite /sɛljʊlaɪt/ ► **noun** [mass noun] persistent subcutaneous fat causing dimpling of the skin, especially on women's hips and thighs.

– ORIGIN 1960s: from French, from *cellule* 'small cell'.

cellulitis ► **noun** [mass noun] Medicine inflammation of subcutaneous connective tissue.

celluloid ► **noun** [mass noun] a transparent flammable plastic made in sheets from camphor and nitrocellulose, formerly used for cinematographic film.

■ the cinema as a genre: *having made the leap from the *atre* to *celluloid*, she can now make more money*.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from **CELLULOSE** + **-OID**.

cellulose /sɛljʊləʊz, -s/ ► **noun** [mass noun] **1** an insoluble substance which is the main constituent of plant cell walls and of vegetable fibres such as cotton. It is a polysaccharide consisting of chains of glucose monomers.

2 paint or lacquer consisting principally of cellulose acetate or nitrate in solution.

– DERIVATIVES **cellulosic** **adjective**.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from French, from *cellule* 'small cell' + **-OSE**².

cellulose acetate ► **noun** [mass noun] a non-flammable thermoplastic polymer made by acetylating cellulose, used as the basis of artificial fibres and plastic.

cellulose nitrate ► **noun** another term for **NITROCELLULOSE**.

cellulose triacetate ► **noun** see **TRIACETATE**.

cell wall ► **noun** Biology a rigid layer of polysaccharides lying outside the plasma membrane of the cells of plants, fungi, and bacteria. In the algae and higher plants it consists mainly of cellulose.

celosia /sɪ'ləʊsiə, -ʃə/ ► **noun** a plant of a genus that includes cockscomb.

● Genus *Celosia*, family *Amarantaceae*.

– ORIGIN modern Latin, from Greek *kēlos* 'burnt or dry' (from the burnt appearance of the flowers in some species).

Celsius /sɛl'siəs/, Anders (1701–44), Swedish astronomer, best known for his temperature scale.

Celsius² /sɛl'siəs/ (abbrev.: **C**) ► **adjective** [postpositive when used with a numeral] of or denoting a scale of temperature on which water freezes at 0° and boils at 100° under standard conditions.

► **noun** (also **Celsius scale**) the Celsius scale of temperature.

USAGE Celsius rather than centigrade is the standard accepted term when giving temperatures: use 25° Celsius rather than 25° centigrade.

Celt /kɛlt, sɛlt/ ► **noun** a member of a group of peoples inhabiting much of Europe and Asia Minor in pre-

Roman times. Their culture developed in the late Bronze Age around the upper Danube, and reached its height in the La Tène culture (5th to 1st centuries BC) before being overrun by the Romans and various Germanic peoples.

■ a native of any of the modern nations or regions in which Celtic languages are (or were until recently) spoken; a person of Irish, Highland Scottish, Manx, Welsh, or Cornish descent.

– ORIGIN from Latin *Celtae* (plural), from Greek *Keltōi*; in later use from French *Celte* 'Breton' (taken as representing the ancient Gauls).

celt /sɛlt/ ► **noun** Archaeology a prehistoric stone or metal implement with a bevelled cutting edge, probably used as a tool or weapon.

– ORIGIN early 18th cent.: from medieval Latin *celtis* 'chisel'.

Celtiberian /kɛltɪ'biəriən, -tɪ-, sɛlt-/ ► **noun** another term for **IBERIAN** (in sense 3 of the noun).

Celtic /kɛltɪk, 's-/ ► **adjective** relating to the Celts or their languages, which constitute a branch of the Indo-European family and include Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Breton, Manx, Cornish, and several extinct pre-Roman languages such as Gaulish.

► **noun** [mass noun] the Celtic language group. See also **P-CELTIC**, **Q-CELTIC**.

– DERIVATIVES **Celticism** /-sɪz(ə)m/ **noun**.

– ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from Latin *Celticus* (from *Celtae* 'Celts'), or from French *Celtique* (from *Celte* 'Breton').

USAGE *Celt* and *Celtic* can be pronounced either with an initial **k-** or **s-**, but in standard English the normal pronunciation is with a **k-**, except in the name of the Glaswegian football club.

Celtic Church the Christian Church in the British Isles from its foundation in the 2nd or 3rd century until its assimilation into the Roman Catholic Church (664 in England; 12th century in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland).

Celtic cross ► **noun** a Latin cross with a circle round the centre.

Celtic fringe ► **noun** the Highland Scots, Irish, Welsh, and Cornish in relation to the rest of Britain.

Celtic harp ► **noun** another term for **CLARSACH**.

Celtic Sea the part of the Atlantic Ocean between southern Ireland and SW England.

cembalo /'tʃɛmbəloʊ/ ► **noun** (pl. **cembali**) another term for **HARPSICHORD**.

– DERIVATIVES **cembalist** **noun**.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from Italian, shortening of *clavicembalo*, from medieval Latin *clavicymbalum*, from Latin *clavis* 'key' + *cymbalum* 'cymbal'.

cement ► **noun** [mass noun] a powdery substance made by calcining lime and clay, mixed with water to form mortar or mixed with sand, gravel, and water to make concrete.

■ concrete. ■ a soft glue that hardens on setting. ■ a substance for filling cavities in teeth. ■ (also **cem-entum**) Anatomy a thin layer of bony material that fixes teeth to the jaw. ■ Geology the material which binds particles together in sedimentary rock.

► **verb** [with obj.] fix with cement.

■ settle or establish firmly: *the two firms are expected to cement an agreement soon*.

– DERIVATIVES **cementer** **noun**.

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *ciment* (noun), *cimenter* (verb), from Latin *caementum* 'quarry stone', from *caedere* 'hew'.

cementation /sɪ'mɛn'teɪ(ə)n/ ► **noun** [mass noun] **1** the binding together of particles or other things by cement.

2 Metallurgy a process of altering a metal by heating it in contact with a powdered solid.

cementite /sɪ'mɛntaɪt/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Metallurgy a hard, brittle iron carbide present in cast iron and most steels.

cementitious /sɪ'mɛn'tɪʃ(ə)s/ ► **adjective** of the nature of cement.

cement mixer ► **noun** a machine with a revolving drum used for mixing cement with sand, gravel, and water to make concrete.

cemetery ► **noun** (pl. **cemeteries**) a large burial ground, especially one not in a churchyard: a *military cemetery*.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: via late Latin from Greek *koimētērion* 'dormitory', from *koiman* 'put to sleep'.

cenacle /sɛnək(ə)l/ ► **noun** **1** formal a group of people such as a discussion group or literary clique.

2 the room in which the Last Supper was held.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: from Old French *cenacle*, from Latin *cenaculum*, from *cena* 'dinner'.

3 [mass noun] an attractive and exciting but superficial quality: *he avoids the glitter of show business.*

– PHRASES **all that glitters is not gold** proverb the attractive external appearance of something is not a reliable indication of its true nature.

– DERIVATIVES **glittery** adjective.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: from Old Norse *glitra*.

glitterati /ˈɡlɪtəˈræti/ ► plural noun informal the fashionable set of people engaged in show business or some other glamorous activity.

– ORIGIN 1950s (originally US): blend of **GLITTER** and **LITERATI**.

glittering ► adjective shining with a shimmering or sparkling light: *glittering chandeliers.*

■ impressively successful or elaborate: *a glittering military career.*

– DERIVATIVES **glitteringly** adverb.

Glittertind /ˈɡlɪtətɪnd/ a mountain in Norway, in the Jotunheim range. Rising to 2,470 m (8,104 ft), it is the highest mountain in the country.

glitz informal ► noun [mass noun] extravagant but superficial display: *the glitz and sophisticated night life of Ibiza.*

► verb [with obj.] N. Amer. make (something) glamorous or showy.

– ORIGIN 1970s (originally a North American usage): back-formation from **GLITZY**.

glitzy ► adjective (**glitzier**, **glitziest**) informal attractive in a showy and often superficial way: *glitzy hotel restaurants.*

– DERIVATIVES **glitzyly** adverb, **glitzy** noun.

– ORIGIN 1960s (originally a North American usage): from **GLITTER**, suggested by **RITZY**, and perhaps also by German *glitzerig* 'glittering'.

Gliwice /ɡliːˈvɪtsə/ a mining and industrial city in southern Poland, near the border with the Czech Republic; pop. 209,356 (est. 2000).

gloaming ► noun (**the gloaming**) literary twilight; dusk.

– ORIGIN Old English *glōmung*, from *glōm* 'twilight', of Germanic origin; related to **glow**.

gloat ► verb [no obj.] dwell on one's own success or another's misfortune with smugness or malicious pleasure: *his enemies gloated over his death* | [as adj. **gloating**] *gloating accounts of his triumphs.*

► noun [in sing.] informal an act of gloating.

– DERIVATIVES **gloater** noun, **gloatingly** adverb.

– ORIGIN late 16th cent.: of unknown origin; perhaps related to Old Norse *glotta* 'to grin' and Middle High German *glotzen* 'to stare'. The original sense was 'give a sideways or furtive look', hence 'cast amorous or admiring glances'; the current sense dates from the mid 18th cent.

glob ► noun informal a lump of a semi-liquid substance: *thick globs of mozzarella cheese.*

– ORIGIN early 20th cent.: perhaps a blend of **BLOB** and **GOB**?

global /ˈɡləʊb(ə)l/ ► adjective **1** relating to the whole world; worldwide: *the downturn in the global economy*

2 relating to or encompassing the whole of something, or of a group of things: *give students a global picture of what is involved in the task.*

■ Computing operating or applying through the whole of a file, program, etc.: *global searches.*

– DERIVATIVES **globally** adverb.

global distillation ► noun [mass noun] a process whereby certain volatile substances vaporize in warm climates and condense in cooler areas, causing the accumulation of pollutants.

globalism ► noun [mass noun] the operation or planning of economic and foreign policy on a global basis.

– DERIVATIVES **globalist** noun & adjective.

globalization (also **globalisation**) ► noun [mass noun] the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale: *fears about the increasing globalization of the world economy.*

– DERIVATIVES **globalize** verb, **globalizer** noun.

Global Surveyor (in full **Mars Global Surveyor**) an unmanned American spacecraft which went into orbit around Mars in 1997 to begin detailed photography and mapping of the surface.

global village ► noun the world considered as a single community linked by telecommunications.

global warming ► noun [mass noun] the gradual increase in the overall temperature of the earth's atmosphere due to the greenhouse effect caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide, CFCs, and other pollutants.

globe ► noun **1** (**the globe**) the earth: *goods from all over the globe.*

■ a spherical representation of the earth or of the constellations with a map on the surface.

2 a spherical or rounded object: *orange trees dipped into giant globes.*

■ a golden orb as an emblem of sovereignty.

3 Austral./NZ a lightbulb.

► verb [with obj.] literary form (something) into a globe.

– DERIVATIVES **globe-like** adjective, **globoid** adjective & noun, **globose** adjective.

– ORIGIN late Middle English (in the sense 'spherical object'): from Old French, or from Latin *globus*.

globe artichoke ► noun see **ARTICHOKE** (sense 1).

globefish ► noun (pl. same or **globefishes**) a pufferfish or porcupine fish.

globeflower ► noun a plant of the buttercup family with globular yellow or orange flowers, native to north temperate regions.

● Genus *Trollius*, family Ranunculaceae.

Globe Theatre a theatre in Southwark, London, erected in 1599, where many of Shakespeare's plays were first publicly performed. The theatre's site was rediscovered in 1989 and a reconstruction of the original theatre was opened in 1997.

globe thistle ► noun an Old World thistle with globe-shaped heads of metallic blue-grey flowers.

● Genus *Echinops*, family Compositae.

globetrotter ► noun informal a person who travels widely.

– DERIVATIVES **globetrot** verb, **globetrotting** noun & adjective.

globigerina /ˌɡləʊbɪdʒəˈraɪnə/ ► noun (pl. **globigerinas** or **globigerinae** /-ni:/) a planktonic marine protozoan with a calcareous shell. The shells collect as a deposit (**globigerina ooze**) over much of the ocean floor.

● Genus *Globigerina*, order Foraminifera, kingdom Protista

– ORIGIN modern Latin, from Latin *globus* 'spherical object, globe' (because of the globular chambers in its shell) + *-ger* 'carrying' + *-ina*.

globular /ˈɡləʊbjʊlə/ ► adjective **1** globe-shaped; spherical.

2 composed of globules.

► noun Astronomy short for **GLOBULAR CLUSTER**.

– DERIVATIVES **globularity** noun.

globular cluster ► noun Astronomy a large compact spherical star cluster, typically of old stars in the outer regions of a galaxy.

globule /ˈɡləʊbjʊːl/ ► noun **1** a small round particle of a semi-liquid substance; a drop: *globules of fat.*

2 Astronomy a small dark cloud of gas and dust seen against a brighter background such as a luminous nebula.

– DERIVATIVES **globulous** adjective.

– ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from French, or from Latin *globulus*, diminutive of *globus* 'spherical object, globe'.

globulin /ˈɡləʊbjʊlɪn/ ► noun Biochemistry any of a group of simple proteins soluble in salt solutions and forming a large fraction of blood serum protein.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from **GLOBULE** (in the archaic sense 'blood corpuscle') + *-in*.

globus hystericus /ˌɡləʊbʊs ˈhɪstərɪkəs/ ► noun [mass noun] Medicine the sensation of a lump in the throat, as a symptom of anxiety or hysteria.

– ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Latin.

globus pallidus /ˈpælɪdəs/ ► noun Anatomy the median part of the lentiform nucleus in the brain.

– ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from Latin, 'pale globus'.

glochid /ˈɡləʊkɪd/ ► noun Botany a barbed bristle on the areole of some cacti.

– ORIGIN late 19th cent.: from Greek *glōkhis*, *glōkhiid-* 'arrowhead'.

glochidium /ˌɡləʊˈkɪdɪəm/ ► noun (pl. **glochidia**) Zoology a parasitic larva of certain freshwater bivalve molluscs, which attaches itself by hooks and suckers to the fins or gills of fish.

– ORIGIN late 19th cent.: modern Latin, based on Greek *glōkhis*, *glōkhiid-* 'arrowhead'.

glockenspiel /ˈɡlək(ə)nspiːl, -ˈʃpiːl/ ► noun a musical percussion instrument having a set of tuned metal pieces mounted in a frame and struck with small hammers.

– ORIGIN early 19th cent. (denoting an organ stop imitating the sound of bells): from German *Glockenspiel*, literally 'bell play'.

glögg /ˈɡləʊg/ (also **glugg** /ˈɡlʌg/) ► noun [mass noun] a type of Scandinavian mulled wine made with brandy,

almonds, raisins, and spices.

– ORIGIN Swedish.

glom /ɡlɒm/ ► verb (**gloms**, **glomming**, **glommed**) N. Amer. informal **1** [with obj.] steal: *I thought he was about to glom my wallet.*

2 [no obj.] (**glom on to**) become stuck or attached to.

– ORIGIN early 20th cent.: variant of Scots *glau*, of unknown origin.

glomerulonephritis /ˌɡləːməʃjʊləniˈfræɪtɪs/ ► noun [mass noun] Medicine acute inflammation of the kidney, typically caused by an immune response.

glomerulus /ˌɡləːmə(ʃ)jʊləs/ ► noun (pl. **glomeruli** /-ləɪ, -li:/) Anatomy & Biology a cluster of nerve endings, spores, or small blood vessels, especially a cluster of capillaries around the end of a kidney tubule.

– DERIVATIVES **glomerular** adjective.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: modern Latin, diminutive of Latin *glomus*, *glomer-* 'ball of thread'.

gloom ► noun [mass noun] **1** partial or total darkness: *he strained his eyes peering into the gloom.*

■ [count noun] literary a dark or shady place.

2 a state of depression or despondency: *a year of economic gloom for the car industry* | *his gloom deepened.*

► verb [no obj.] **1** literary have a dark or sombre appearance: *the black gibbet glooms beside the way.*

■ [with obj.] make dark or dismal.

2 be or look depressed or despondent: *Charles was always glooming about money.*

– PHRASES **gloom and doom** see **DOOM**.

– ORIGIN late Middle English (as a verb): of unknown origin.

gloomy ► adjective (**gloomier**, **gloomiest**) **1** dark or poorly lit, especially so as to appear depressing or frightening: *a gloomy corridor badly lit by oil lamps.*

2 causing or feeling depression or despondency: *gloomy forecasts about the economy.*

– DERIVATIVES **gloomily** adverb, **gloominess** noun.

gloop ► noun [mass noun] informal sloppy or sticky semi-fluid matter, typically something unpleasant.

– DERIVATIVES **gloopy** adjective.

– ORIGIN 1960s: the letters *gl*, *o*, and *p* are said to be symbolic of semi-liquid matter (compare with **GLOP**).

glop informal, chiefly N. Amer. ► noun [mass noun] sticky and amorphous matter, typically something unpleasant: *a cup of vile green glop.*

■ [count noun] a soft, shapeless lump of something: *a glop of creamy dressing.*

■ figurative worthless writing, music, or other material.

► verb (**glops**, **glopping**, **glopped**) [with obj. and adverbial of direction] transfer (a sloppy or sticky substance) to a container: *glop 2 gallons of premixed compound into a bucket.*

– DERIVATIVES **gloppy** adjective (**gloppier**, **gloppiest**).

– ORIGIN 1940s: symbolic (see **GLOOP**).

Gloria ► noun a Christian liturgical hymn or formula beginning (in the Latin text) with *Gloria*, in particular:

■ the hymn beginning *Gloria in excelsis Deo* (Glory be to God in the highest), forming a set part of the Mass.

■ the doxology beginning *Gloria Patris* (Glory be to the Father), used after psalms and in formal prayer (e.g. in the rosary).

– ORIGIN Latin, 'glory'.

Gloriana /ˌɡlɔːriˈɑːnə/ the nickname of Queen Elizabeth I.

glorified ► adjective **1** [attrib.] (of something or someone ordinary or unexceptional) represented as or appearing more elevated or special than is the case: *the word processor is not merely a glorified typewriter.*

2 (in religious contexts) made glorious: *the transformed and glorified Jesus.*

glorify ► verb (**glorifies**, **glorifying**, **glorified**) [with obj.] **1** praise and worship (God).

■ reveal the glory of (God) by one's actions: *God can be glorified through a life of scholarship.*

2 describe or represent as admirable, especially unjustifiably: *a football video glorifying violence.*

– DERIVATIVES **glorification** noun, **glorifier** noun.

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *glorifier*, from ecclesiastical Latin *glorificare*, from late Latin *glorificus*, from Latin *gloria* 'glory'.

gloriole /ˌɡlɔːriəʊl/ ► noun literary a halo or aureole.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: French, from Latin *gloriola*, diminutive of *gloria* 'glory'.

glorious ► adjective **1** having, worthy of, or bringing fame or admiration: *the most glorious victory of all time.*

2 having a striking beauty or splendour: *a glorious autumn day.*

■ informal very enjoyable: *glorious platters of succulent crabs.*

– DERIVATIVES **gloriously** adverb, **gloriousness** noun.

from the same Germanic word as **MITE**¹.

miter ► **noun** & **verb** US spelling of **MITRE**.

Mitford /'mɪtfɔːd/, Nancy (Freeman) (1904–73) and her sister Jessica (Lucy) (1917–96), English writers. Nancy achieved fame with comic novels including *Love in a Cold Climate* (1949). Jessica became an American citizen in 1944, and is best known for her works on American culture, notably *The American Way of Death* (1963). Among their four sisters were **Unity** (1914–48), who was an admirer of Hitler, and **Diana** (1910–2003), who married Sir Oswald Mosley in 1936.

mithai /'mi'tʰaɪ/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Indian sweets, such as burfi or gulab jamun.

– ORIGIN from Hindi *mīthāi*.

mithan /'mɪθ(ə)n/ ► **noun** (pl. same) another term for **GAYAL**.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from Khasi (a Mon-Khmer language of NE India).

mither /'mɪθə/ ► **verb** [no obj.] dialect, chiefly N. English make a fuss; moan: *oh men—don't they mither?*

■ [with obj.] pester or irritate (someone).

– ORIGIN late 17th cent.: of unknown origin; compare with Welsh *moedrodd* 'to worry, bother'.

Mithraeum /'mɪθrɪə/ ► **noun** (pl. **Mithraea** /-'θrɪə/) a sanctuary or temple of the god Mithras.

– ORIGIN late Latin, from Latin *Mithras* (see **MITHRAS**).

Mithraism /'mɪθrɪz(ə)m, 'mɪθrɪ- / ► **noun** [mass noun] the cult of the god Mithras, which became popular among Roman soldiers of the later empire, and was the main rival to Christianity in the first three centuries AD.

– DERIVATIVES **Mithraic** /-'θrɪk/ adjective, **Mithraist** noun.

Mithras /'mɪθrəs/ Mythology a god of light, truth, and honour, the central figure of the cult of Mithraism but probably of Persian origin. He was also associated with merchants and the protection of warriors.

Mithridates VI /'mɪθrɪ'deɪtɪz/ (also **Mithradates VI**) (c.132–63 BC), king of Pontus 120–63; known as Mithridates the Great. His expansionist policies led to three wars with Rome (88–5; 83–2; 74–66). He was finally defeated by Pompey.

mithridatize /'mɪθrɪ'deɪtɪz/ (also **mithridatise**)

► **verb** [with obj.] rare make (someone) immune to a poison by administering gradually increasing doses of the poison.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from the name of Mithridates (see **MITHRIDATES VI**), who reputedly made himself immune to poisons by constantly taking antidotes, + **-IZE**.

mitigate /'mɪtɪgeɪt/ ► **verb** [with obj.] make (something bad) less severe, serious, or painful: *drainage schemes have helped to mitigate this problem.*

■ lessen the gravity of (an offence or mistake): [as adj. **mitigating**] *he would have faced a prison sentence but for mitigating circumstances.*

– DERIVATIVES **mitigable** adjective, **mitigator** noun, **mitigatory** adjective.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: from Latin *mitigare*: 'softened, alleviated', from the verb *mitigare*, from *mitis* 'mild'.

USAGE The verbs **mitigate** and **mitigate** do not have the same meaning, although the similarity of the forms has led to them being often confused. **Mitigate** means 'make (something bad) less severe', as in *drainage schemes have helped to mitigate this problem*, while **mitigate** is nearly always used in constructions with **against** to mean 'be a powerful factor in preventing', as in *these disagreements will mitigate against the two communities coming together*.

mitigation ► **noun** [mass noun] the action of reducing the severity, seriousness, or painfulness of something: *the identification and mitigation of pollution.*

– PHRASES **in mitigation** so as to make something, especially a crime, appear less serious and thus be punished more leniently: *in mitigation she said her client had been deeply depressed.*

– ORIGIN late Middle English: from Old French, or from Latin *mitigare*(n-), from the verb *mitigare* 'alleviate' (see **MITIGATE**).

Mitilini /'mɪtɪ'liːni/ Greek name for **MYTILENE**.

Mitla /'mɪtʰlɑː/ an ancient city in southern Mexico, to the east of the city of Oaxaca, now a noted archaeological site. Believed to have been established as a burial site by the Zapotecs, it was eventually overrun by the Mixtecs in about AD 1000.

– ORIGIN Nahuatl, literally 'place of the dead'.

mitochondrion /'mɪtəʊ(ə)'kɒndrɪən/ ► **noun** (pl. **mitochondria** /-'rɪə/) Biology an organelle found in large numbers in most cells, in which the biochemical

processes of respiration and energy production occur. It has a double membrane, the inner layer being folded inwards to form layers (cristae).

– DERIVATIVES **mitochondrial** adjective.

– ORIGIN early 20th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek *mitos* 'thread' + *khondrion* (diminutive of *khondros* 'granule').

mitogen /'mɪtədʒ(ə)n/ ► **noun** Physiology a substance that induces or stimulates mitosis.

– DERIVATIVES **mitogenic** adjective.

– ORIGIN 1960s: from **MITOSIS** + **-GEN**.

mitosis /'mɪtəʊsɪs/ ► **noun** (pl. **mitoses**) [mass noun] Biology a type of cell division that results in two daughter cells each having the same number and kind of chromosomes as the parent nucleus, typical of ordinary tissue growth. Compare with **MEIOSIS**.

– DERIVATIVES **mitotic** adjective.

– ORIGIN late 19th cent.: modern Latin, from Greek *mitos* 'thread'.

mitral /'mɪtrəl/ ► **adjective** denoting or relating to the mitral valve.

– ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from modern Latin *mitralis*, from Latin *mitra* 'belt or turban'.

mitral valve ► **noun** Anatomy the valve between the left atrium and the left ventricle of the heart, which has two tapered cusps.

mitre (US **miter**) ► **noun** 1 a tall headdress worn by bishops and senior abbots as a symbol of office, tapering to a point at front and back with a deep cleft between.

2 (also **mitre joint**) a joint made between two pieces of wood or other material at an angle of 90°, such that the line of junction bisects this angle.

■ a diagonal seam between two pieces of fabric that are sewn together at a corner.

3 (also **mitre shell**) a mollusc of warm seas which has a sharply pointed shell with a narrow aperture, supposedly resembling a bishop's mitre.

● Family Mitridae, class Gastropoda: *Mitra* and other genera.

► **verb** [with obj.] join by means of a mitre joint or seam.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: from Old French, via Latin from Greek *mitra* 'belt or turban'.

mitre box (also **mitre block** or **mitre board**) ► **noun** a guide to enable a saw to cut mitre joints at the desired angle.

mitred ► **adjective** 1 joined with a mitre or seam: *complete the sides with mitred corners.*

2 bearing, wearing, or entitled to wear a mitre: *the mitred abbot of Battle.*

mitre wheel ► **noun** each of a pair of bevelled cog-wheels with teeth set at 45° and axes at right angles.

Mitsiwa /'mɪtʰsɪwə/ variant spelling of **MASSAWA**.

mitt ► **noun** (usu. **mitts**) a mitten: *woolly mitts.*

■ a glove leaving the fingers and thumb-tip exposed.

■ (also **baseball mitt**) Baseball a large fingerless glove worn by the catcher or first baseman. ■ informal a person's hand: *it's essential to get your mitts on a pair of long-slung combat trousers.*

– ORIGIN mid 18th cent.: abbreviation of **MITTEN**.

Mittelland Canal /'mɪt(ə)l'land, German 'mɪtl'lant/ a canal in NW Germany, which was constructed between 1905 and 1930. It is part of an inland waterway network linking the Rivers Rhine and Elbe.

Mittelstand /'mɪt(ə)l'stand, German 'mɪtl|'tant/ ► **noun** the medium-sized companies in a country, viewed as an economic unit.

– ORIGIN German, literally 'middle group'.

mitten ► **noun** (usu. **mittens**) a glove with two sections, one for the thumb and the other for all four fingers.

■ (**mittens**) informal boxing gloves.

– DERIVATIVES **mittened** adjective.

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *mitaine*, perhaps from *mite*, a pet name for a cat (because mittens were often made of fur).

mitten crab (also **Chinese mitten crab**) ► **noun** an olive-green Asian crab with hairy pincers that has been introduced into Europe, where it lives in fresh water and estuaries and can become a pest.

● *Eriocheir sinensis*, family Grapsidae.

Mitterrand /'mɪtərɒ̃, French mɪtɛrɑ̃/, François (Maurice Marie) (1916–96), French statesman, President 1981–95. As President he initially moved to raise basic wages, increase social benefits, nationalize key industries, and decentralize government. The Socialist Party lost its majority vote in the 1986 general election and Mitterrand made the right-wing Jacques Chirac Prime Minister, resulting in a reversal of some policies.

mittimus /'mɪtɪməs/ ► **noun** a warrant committing a person to prison.

– ORIGIN Latin, literally 'we send', first used as the opening word of the writ which transferred records from one court to another (late Middle English to the early 18th cent.).

Mitty see **WALTER MITTY**.

mitumba /'mɪ'tʌmbə/ ► **noun** [mass noun] (in eastern and central Africa) second-hand clothing, especially that donated by aid agencies in the West.

– ORIGIN Swahili, plural of *mtumba*, literally 'bale (of cloth)'.

mitzvah /'mɪtʃvə/ ► **noun** (pl. **mitzvot** /-vʌʊt/) Judaism a precept or commandment.

■ a good deed done from religious duty.

– ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Hebrew *mīšvāh* 'commandment'.

mix ► **verb** [with obj.] 1 combine or put together to form one substance or mass: *peppercorns are sometimes mixed with other spices for a table condiment | these two chemicals, when mixed together, literally explode.*

■ [no obj.] [often with negative] (of different substances) be able to be combined to form one substance or mass: *oil and water don't mix.* ■ make or prepare by combining various ingredients: *mixing concrete is hard physical work.* ■ juxtapose or put together to form a whole whose constituent parts are still distinct: *he continues to mix an off-hand sense of humour with a sharp insight.*

2 [no obj.] (of a person) associate with others socially: *the people he mixed with were nothing to do with show business.*

3 (especially in sound recording) combine (two or more signals or soundtracks) into one: *up to eight tracks can be mixed simultaneously.*

■ produce (a sound signal or recording) by combining a number of separate signals or recorded soundtracks: *it was everyone's dream to mix their album in their front room.*

4 (**mix it**) informal be belligerent physically or verbally.

► **noun** 1 [usu. in sing.] two or more different qualities, things, or people placed, combined, or considered together: *the decor is a fascinating mix of antique and modern.*

■ a group of people of different types within a particular society or community: *the school has a good social mix.* ■ the proportion of different people or other constituents that make up a mixture: *arriving at the correct mix of full-time to part-time staff | trousers made from a cotton and polyester mix.*

2 (often with modifier) a commercially prepared mixture of ingredients for making a particular type of food or a product such as concrete: *cake mixes have made cooking easier.*

3 (often with modifier) a version of a recording in which the component tracks are mixed in a different way from the original: *a dance mix version of This Charming Man.*

■ an image or sound produced by the combination of two separate images or sounds.

– PHRASES **be (or get) mixed up in** be (or become) involved in (something regarded dubious or dishonest): *Steve was mixed up in an insurance swindle.* **be (or get) mixed up with** be (or become) associated with (someone unsuitable or unreliable). **mix and match** select and combine different but complementary items, such as clothing or pieces of equipment, to form a coordinated set: *mix and match this season's colours for a combination that says winter | [as modifier] a mix-and-match menu.* **mix one's drinks** drink different kinds of alcohol in close succession.

– DERIVATIVES **mixable** adjective.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: back-formation from **MIXED** (taken as a past participle).

► **mix something up** 1 spoil the order or arrangement of a collection of things: *disconnect all the cables, mix them up then try to reconnect them.* 2 (**mix someone/thing up**) confuse someone or something with another person or thing: *I'd got her mixed up with her sister.*

mixed ► **adjective** consisting of different qualities or elements: *a varied, mixed diet | beaches with mixed sand and shingle.*

■ (of an assessment of, reaction to, or feeling about something) containing a mixture of both favourable and negative elements: *the film opened last Friday to mixed reviews | I had mixed feelings about seeing Laura again.* ■ composed of different varieties of the same thing: *crab on a bed of mixed salad.* ■ (especially of an educational establishment or a sports team or competition) of or for members of both sexes: *the college's mixed hockey team.* ■ involving or showing a mixture of races or social classes: *people of mixed race.*

– ORIGIN late Middle English *mixt*: from Old French *mixte*, from Latin *mixtus*, past participle of *miscere* 'to mix'.

■ Linguistics a word whose meaning includes the meaning of one or more other words: *'bird'* is the *superordinate* of *'canary'*.

2 a person of superior rank or status.

► **adjective** superior in rank or status: *senior staff's superior position.*

– ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from **SUPER-** 'above', on the pattern of *subordinate*.

superoxide ► **noun** Chemistry an oxide containing the anion O_2^- .

superphosphate ► **noun** [mass noun] a fertilizer made by treating phosphate rock with sulphuric or phosphoric acid.

superplastic Metallurgy ► **adjective** (of a metal or alloy) capable of extreme plastic extension under load.

► **noun** a superplastic metal or alloy.

– DERIVATIVES **superplasticity** **noun**.

superpose ► **verb** [with obj.] place (something) on or above something else, especially so that they coincide: [as adj. **superposed**] *a border of superposed triangles.*

– DERIVATIVES **superposition** **noun**.

– ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from French *superposer*, from *super-* 'above' + *poser* 'to place'.

superpower ► **noun** a very powerful and influential nation (used especially with reference to the US and the former USSR when these were perceived as the two most powerful nations in the world).

supersaturate ► **verb** [with obj.] Chemistry increase the concentration of (a solution) beyond saturation point.

– DERIVATIVES **supersaturation** **noun**.

superscalar ► **adjective** Computing denoting a microprocessor architecture where several instructions are loaded at once and, as far as possible, are executed simultaneously, shortening the time taken to run the whole program.

superscribe ► **verb** [with obj.] write or print (an inscription) at the top of or on the outside of a document.

■ write or print (a letter, word, symbol, or line of writing or printing) above an existing letter, word, or line.

– DERIVATIVES **superscription** **noun**.

– ORIGIN late 15th cent.: from Latin *superscribere*, from *super-* 'over' + *scribere* 'write'.

superscript ► **adjective** (of a letter, figure, or symbol) written or printed above the line.

► **noun** a superscript letter, figure, or symbol.

– ORIGIN late 19th cent. (as an adjective): from Latin *superscriptus* 'written above', past participle of *superscribere*.

supersede /s(j)u:pə'si:d/ ► **verb** [with obj.] take the place of (a person or other previously in authority or use); supplant: *the older models of car have now been superseded.*

– DERIVATIVES **supersession** **noun**.

– ORIGIN late 15th cent. (in the sense 'postpone/defer'): from Old French *superseder*, from Latin *supersedere* 'be superior to', from *super-* 'above' + *sedere* 'sit'. The current sense dates from the mid 17th cent.

USAGE The standard spelling is **supersede** rather than **supercede**. The word is derived from the Latin verb *supersedere* but has been influenced by the presence of other words in English spelled with a **c**, such as **intercede** and **accede**. The **c** spelling is recorded as early as the 16th century; although still often regarded as incorrect, it is now being entered without comment in some modern dictionaries.

superset ► **noun** Mathematics a set which includes another set or sets.

supersize ► **adjective** larger than average or standard sizes; extremely large.

► **verb** [with obj.] [often as adj. **supersized**] greatly increase the size of: *supersized suitcases on wheels.*

supersonic ► **adjective** involving or denoting a speed greater than that of sound.

– DERIVATIVES **supersonically** **adverb**.

supersonics ► **plural noun** [treated as sing.] another term for **ULTRASONICS**.

superspace ► **noun** [mass noun] Physics a concept of space-time in which points are defined by more than four coordinates.

■ a space of infinitely many dimensions postulated to contain actual space-time and all possible spaces.

superspecies ► **noun** (pl. same) Biology a group of largely allopatric species which are descended from a common evolutionary ancestor and are closely related but too distinct to be regarded as subspecies of one species.

superstar ► **noun** an extremely famous and successful performer or sports player: *he became a superstar overnight* | [as modifier] *despite their superstar status the band refuse to change their lifestyle.*

– DERIVATIVES **superstardom** **noun**.

superstate ► **noun** a large and powerful state formed from a federation or union of nations: *we are not advocates of a European superstate.*

superstation ► **noun** N. Amer. a television station using satellite technology to broadcast over a very large area, especially an entire continent.

superstition ► **noun** [mass noun] excessively credulous belief in and reverence for the supernatural: *he dismissed the ghost stories as mere superstition.*

■ [count noun] a widely held but irrational belief in supernatural influences, especially as leading to good or bad luck, or a practice based on such a belief: *she touched her locket for luck, a superstition she'd had since childhood.*

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French, or from Latin *superstitio*(n), from *super-* 'over' + *stare* 'to stand' (perhaps from the notion of 'standing over' something in awe).

superstitious ► **adjective** having or showing a belief in superstitions: *many superstitious beliefs and practices are connected with sneezing.*

– DERIVATIVES **superstitiously** **adverb**, **superstitiousness** **noun**.

superstore ► **noun** a very large out-of-town supermarket.

superstratum /s(j)u:pə'strætəm, -'strætəm/ ► **noun** (pl. **superstrata** /-tə/) an overlying stratum.

superstring ► **noun** Physics a subatomic particle in a version of string theory that incorporates supersymmetry.

superstructure ► **noun** a structure built on top of something else.

■ the parts of a ship, other than masts and rigging built above its hull and main deck. ■ the part of a building above its foundations. ■ a concept or idea based on others. ■ (in Marxist theory) the institutions and culture considered to result from or reflect the economic system underlying a society.

– DERIVATIVES **superstructural** **adjective**.

supersymmetry ► **noun** [mass noun] Physics a very general type of mathematical symmetry which relates fermions and bosons.

– DERIVATIVES **supersymmetric** **adjective**.

super tanker ► **noun** a very large oil tanker.

supertaster ► **noun** a person who has more taste buds than normal and is very sensitive to particular tastes.

supertax ► **noun** [mass noun] an additional tax on something already taxed.

supertitle ► **noun** & **verb** North American term for **SURTITLE**.

supertonic ► **noun** Music the second note of the diatonic scale of any key; the note above the tonic.

Super Tuesday ► **noun** US informal a day on which several states hold primary elections.

supertwist ► **adjective** denoting a type of liquid crystal display used in portable computers, in which to change state the plane of polarized light passing through the display is rotated by at least 180 degrees.

superunleaded ► **adjective** denoting unleaded petrol with a higher octane rating than that of regular unleaded petrol, achieved by the addition of aromatic hydrocarbons.

► **noun** [mass noun] superunleaded petrol.

superuser ► **noun** a user of a computer system with special privileges needed to administer and maintain the system; a system administrator.

supervene /s(j)u:pə'vi:n/ ► **verb** [no obj.] occur as an interruption or change to an existing situation: *he had appendicitis and as complications supervened, refrained from work for months* | [as adj. **supervening**] *any plan is liable to be disrupted by supervening events.*

■ Philosophy (of a fact or property) be entailed by or consequent on the existence or establishment of another: *the view that mental events supervene upon physical ones.*

– DERIVATIVES **supervenient** **adjective**, **supervention** **noun**.

– ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *supervenire*, from *super-* 'in addition' + *venire* 'come'.

supervise ► **verb** [with obj.] observe and direct the execution of (a task or activity): *the sergeant left to supervise the loading of the lorries.*

■ observe and direct the work of (someone): *nurses were supervised by a consultant psychiatrist.*

– DERIVATIVES **supervision** **noun**.

– ORIGIN late 15th cent. (in the sense 'survey, peruse'): from medieval Latin *supervis-* 'surveyed, supervised', from *supervidere*, from *super-* 'over' + *videre* 'to see'.

supervision order ► **noun** English Law a court order placing a child or young person under the supervision of a local authority or a probation officer in a case of delinquency or where care proceedings are appropriate.

supervisor ► **noun** a person who supervises a person or an activity.

■ a person who directs and oversees the work of a postgraduate research student.

– DERIVATIVES **supervisory** **adjective**.

supervoltage ► **noun** [usu. as modifier] Medicine a voltage in excess of 200 kV used in X-ray radiotherapy.

superwoman ► **noun** (pl. **superwomen**) informal a woman with exceptional physical or mental ability, especially one who successfully manages a home, brings up children, and has a full-time job.

supinate /s(j)u:pneit/ ► **verb** [with obj.] technical put or hold (a hand, foot, or limb) with the palm or sole turned upwards: [as adj. **supinated**] *a supinated foot.*

Compare with **PRONATE**.

– DERIVATIVES **supination** **noun**.

– ORIGIN mid 19th cent. (earlier (mid 17th cent.) as *supination*); back-formation from *supination*, from Latin *supinatio*(n), from *supinare* 'lay backwards', from *supinus* (see **SUPINE**).

supinator ► **noun** Anatomy a muscle whose contraction produces or assists in the supination of a limb or part of a limb.

■ any of several specific muscles in the forearm.

supine /s(j)u:pain/ ► **adjective** **1** (of a person) lying face upwards.

■ technical having the front or ventral part upwards.

■ (of the hand) with the palm upwards.

2 failing to act or protest as a result of moral weakness or indolence: *the government was supine in the face of racial injustice.*

► **noun** Grammar a Latin verbal noun used only in the accusative and ablative cases, especially to denote purpose (e.g. *mirabile dictu* 'wonderful to relate').

– DERIVATIVES **supinely** **adverb**, **supineness** **noun**.

– ORIGIN late Middle English: the adjective from Latin *supinus* 'bent backwards' (related to *super* 'above'); the noun from late Latin *supinum*, neuter of *supinus*.

supper ► **noun** an evening meal, typically a light or informal one: *we had a delicious cold supper* | [mass noun] *I was sent to bed without any supper.*

■ [with modifier] Scottish & N. English a meal consisting of the specified food with chips: *a fish supper.*

– PHRASES **sing for one's supper** earn a favour or benefit by providing a service in return: *the cruise lecturers are academics singing for their supper.*

– DERIVATIVES **supperless** **adjective**.

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *super* 'to sup' (used as a noun) (see **SUP²**).

supper club ► **noun** a restaurant or nightclub serving suppers and usually providing entertainment.

supplant ► **verb** [with obj.] supersede and replace: *the socialist society which Marx believed would eventually supplant capitalism.*

– DERIVATIVES **supplanter** **noun**.

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *supplanter* or Latin *supplantare* 'trip up', from *sub-* 'from below' + *planta* 'sole'.

supple ► **adjective** (**suppler**, **supplest**) bending and moving easily and gracefully; flexible: *her supple fingers* | *figurative my mind is becoming more supple.*

■ not stiff or hard; easily manipulated: *this body oil leaves your skin feeling deliciously supple.*

► **verb** [with obj.] make more flexible.

– DERIVATIVES **supplely** (also **supply**) **adverb**, **suppleness** **noun**.

– ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *souple*, from Latin *supplex*, *supplic-* 'submissive', from *sub-* 'under' + *placere* 'propitiate'.

supplejack ► **noun** any of a number of tropical and subtropical climbing plants with tough, supple stems:

● a tall North American climber (*Berchemia scandens*, family Rhamnaceae). ● a plant of the Caribbean and tropical America (*Paullinia plumieri*, family Sapindaceae). ● an Australasian plant (*Ripogonum scandens*, family Liliaceae).

supplement ► **noun** **1** a thing added to something else in order to complete or enhance it: *the handout is a supplement to the official manual.*

■ a substance taken to remedy the deficiencies in a person's diet: *multivitamin supplements*. ■ a separate section, especially a colour magazine, added to a newspaper or periodical. ■ a sum of money paid to