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# Oxford Dictionary of English

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# Preface to the first edition

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The Oxford Dictionary of English is a new dictionary of the English language, covering the full range of English as spoken and written in all parts of the world. It is the first dictionary to be based on a comprehensive corpus of English, and is the first to be based on a comprehensive corpus of English, and is the first to be based on a comprehensive corpus of English.

Linguists have long been aware that the English language is not a single, uniform entity, but a family of related varieties. The Oxford Dictionary of English is the first dictionary to be based on a comprehensive corpus of English, and is the first to be based on a comprehensive corpus of English.

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■ concealed from sight; hidden: *he lounged in a doorway, invisible in the dark.*

**2** Economics relating to or denoting earnings which a country makes from the sale of services or other items not constituting tangible commodities: *invisible exports.*

► **noun (invisibles)** invisible exports and imports.

- DERIVATIVES **invisibility** noun, **invisibly** adverb.

- ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French, or from Latin *invisibilis*, from *in-* 'not' + *visibilis* (see **VISIBLE**).

**invisible ink** ► **noun** [mass noun] a type of ink used to produce writing that cannot be seen until the paper is heated or otherwise treated.

**invitation** ► **noun** a written or verbal request inviting someone to go somewhere or to do something: *a wedding invitation.*

■ [mass noun] *the action of inviting someone to go somewhere or to do something: a club with membership by invitation only | a herb garden where guests can only go at the invitation of the chef.* ■ [in sing.] *a situation or action that tempts someone to do something or makes a particular outcome likely: tactics like those of the colonel would have been an invitation to disaster.*

- ORIGIN late Middle English: from French, or from Latin *invitatio(n)-*, from *invitare* (see **INVITE**).

**invitational** N. Amer. ► **adjective** (especially of a competition) open only to those invited.

► **noun** an invitational competition.

**invitatory** /ɪnˈvɪtət(ə)ri/ ► **adjective** containing or conveying an invitation.

■ (in the Christian Church) denoting a psalm or verse acting as an invitation to worshippers, especially Psalm 95 (the Venite).

- ORIGIN Middle English: from late Latin *invitatorius*, from Latin *invitare* (see **INVITE**).

**invite** ► **verb** [with obj.] make a polite, formal, or friendly request to (someone) to go somewhere or to do something: *we were invited to a dinner at the Embassy* | [with obj. and infinitive] *she invited Patrick to sit down.*

■ make a formal or polite request for (something) from someone: *applications are invited for the post of Director.* ■ (of an action or situation) tend to elicit (a particular reaction or response) or to tempt (someone) to do something: *his use of the word did little but invite criticism.*

► **noun** informal an invitation.

- DERIVATIVES **invitee** noun, **inviter** noun.

- ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: from Old French *inviter*, or from Latin *invitare*.

**inviting** ► **adjective** offering the promise of an attractive or enjoyable experience: *the sea down there looks so inviting.*

- DERIVATIVES **invitingly** adverb.

**in vitro** /ɪnˈvɪtʁəʊ/ ► **adjective & adverb** Biology (of processes or reactions) taking place in a test tube, culture dish, or elsewhere outside a living organism: [as adj.] *in vitro fertilization.* The opposite of **IN VIVO**.

- ORIGIN Latin, literally 'in glass'.

**in vivo** /ɪnˈvɪvəʊ/ ► **adverb & adjective** Biology (of processes) taking place in a living organism. The opposite of **IN VITRO**.

- ORIGIN Latin, 'in a living thing'.

**invocation** ► **noun** [mass noun] the action of invoking someone or something: *his invocation of the ancient powers of Callanish.*

■ [count noun] an incantation used to invoke a deity or the supernatural. ■ [count noun] (in the Christian Church) a form of words such as 'In the name of the Father' introducing a prayer, sermon, etc.

- DERIVATIVES **invocatory** /ɪnˈvɒkət(ə)ri/ adjective.

- ORIGIN late Middle English: via Old French from Latin *invocatio(n)-*, from the verb *invocare* (see **INVOCATE**).

**invoice** ► **noun** a list of goods sent or services provided, with a statement of the sum due for these; a bill.

► **verb** [with obj.] send an invoice to (someone).

■ send an invoice for (goods or services provided).

- ORIGIN mid 16th cent.: originally the plural of obsolete *invoy*, from obsolete French *envoy* from *envoyer* 'send' (see **ENVOY**).

**invoke** /ɪnˈvəʊk/ ► **verb** [with obj.] **1** call on (a deity or spirit) in prayer, as a witness, or for inspiration.

■ summon (a spirit) by charms or incantations.

**2** cite or appeal to (someone or something) as an authority for an action or in support of an argument: *the antiquated defence of insanity is rarely invoked in England.*

■ call earnestly for: *she invoked his help against this attack.* ■ give rise to; evoke: *how could she explain how the accident happened without invoking his wrath?*

**3** Computing cause (a procedure) to be carried out.

- DERIVATIVES **invoker** noun.

- ORIGIN late 15th cent.: from French *invoker*, from Latin *invocare*, from *in-* 'upon' + *vocare* 'to call'.

**involatile** ► **adjective** not volatile; unable to be vaporized.

**involute** /ɪnˈvɒl(j)uːkə/ ► **noun** **1** Anatomy a membranous envelope.

**2** Botany a whorl or rosette of bracts surrounding an inflorescence (especially a capitulum) or at the base of an umbel.

- ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from French, or from Latin *involutum*, from *involvere* 'roll in, envelop' (see **INVOLVE**).

**involuntary** ► **adjective** **1** done without conscious control: *she gave an involuntary shudder.*

■ (especially of muscles or nerves) concerned in bodily processes that are not under the control of the will.

**2** done against someone's will; compulsory: *a policy of involuntary repatriation.*

- DERIVATIVES **involuntarily** adverb, **involuntariness** noun.

**involute** /ɪnˈvɒl(j)uːt/ ► **adjective** **1** formal involved or intricate: *the art novel has grown increasingly involute.*

**2** technical curled spirally.

■ Zoology (of a shell) having the whorls wound closely round the axis. ■ Botany (of a leaf or the cap of a fungus) rolled inwards at the edges.

► **noun** Geometry the locus of a point considered as the end of a taut string being unwound from a given curve in the plane of that curve. Compare with **EVOLUTE**.

- ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *involutus*, past participle of *involvere* (see **INVOLVE**).

**involved** ► **adjective** complicated or abstruse: *his involved prose.*

**involution** ► **noun** **1** [mass noun] Physiology the shrinkage of an organ in old age or when inactive, e.g. of the womb after childbirth.

**2** Mathematics a function, transformation, or operator that is equal to its inverse, i.e. which gives the identity when applied to itself.

**3** [mass noun] formal the process of complicating something, or the state of being complicated: *periods of artistic involution.*

- DERIVATIVES **involutional** adjective.

- ORIGIN late Middle English (in the sense '(part) curling inwards'): from Latin *involutio(n)-*, from *involvere* (see **INVOLVE**).

**involve** ► **verb** [with obj.] have or include (something) as a necessary or integral part or result: *my job involves a lot of travelling | a bill proposing harsher penalties for crimes involving firearms and drugs.*

■ cause to participate in an activity or situation: *an opportunity to involve as many people as possible in all aspects of music-making.* ■ (be/get involved) be or become occupied or engrossed in something: *her husband had been very involved in his work.* ■ (be involved) be engaged in an emotional or personal relationship: *Angela told me she was involved with someone else.*

- ORIGIN late Middle English (in the senses 'enfold' and 'entangle'; formerly also as *envolve*): from Latin *involvere*, from *in-* 'into' + *volvere* 'to roll'.

**involved** ► **adjective** difficult to understand; complicated: *a long, involved conversation.*

**involvement** ► **noun** [mass noun] the fact or condition of being involved with or participating in something: *US officials produced evidence of his involvement in drug trafficking.*

■ emotional or personal association with someone: *she knew that involvement with Adam would only complicate her life.*

**invulnerable** ► **adjective** impossible to harm or damage: *no state in the region is now invulnerable to attack by another.*

- DERIVATIVES **invulnerability** noun, **invulnerably** adverb.

- ORIGIN late 16th cent. (earlier than *vulnerable*): from Latin *invulnerabilis*, from *in-* 'not' + *vulnerabilis* (see **VULNERABLE**).

**-in-waiting** ► **combining form** **1** denoting a position as attendant to a royal personage: *lady-in-waiting.*

**2** awaiting a turn, confirmation of a process, etc.: *a political administration-in-waiting.*

■ about to happen: *an explosion-in-waiting.*

**inwale** /ɪnˈweɪl/ ► **noun** a longitudinal structural piece on the inside of a boat; an internal gunwale.

**inward** ► **adjective** [attrib.] directed or proceeding towards the inside; coming in from outside: *inward*

*mail* | *a graceful inward movement of her wrist.*

■ existing within the mind, soul, or spirit, and often not expressed: *she felt an inward sense of release.*

► **adverb** variant of **INWARDS**.

- ORIGIN Old English *inweard*, *inneweard*, *innanweard* (see **IN-**, **-WARD**).

**inward investment** ► **noun** [mass noun] investment made within a country from outside.

**inward-looking** ► **adjective** not interested in or taking account of other people or groups.

**inwardly** ► **adverb** within the mind: *inwardly seething, he did as he was told.*

- ORIGIN Old English *inweardlice* (see **INWARD**, **-LY**<sup>2</sup>).

**inwardness** ► **noun** [mass noun] preoccupation with one's inner self; concern with spiritual or philosophical matters rather than externalities.

**inwards** (also **inward**) ► **adverb** towards the inside: *the door began to swing inwards.*

■ into or towards the mind, spirit, or soul: *people must look inwards to gain insight into their own stress.*

**inwrap** ► **verb** variant spelling of **ENWRAP**.

**inwreath** ► **verb** variant spelling of **ENWREATH**.

**inwrought** /ɪnˈrɔʊt, ˈɪnrɔʊt/ ► **adjective** literary (of a fabric or garment) intricately embroidered with a pattern or decoration: *robes inwrought with gold.*

**inyanga** /ɪnˈjʌŋgə, ɪnˈjɑːŋgə/ ► **noun** (pl. **inyangas** or **izinyangas**) S. African a traditional healer or diviner, especially one specializing in herbalism.

- ORIGIN Zulu, 'doctor, herbalist'.

**I/O** Electronics ► **abbreviation** for input-output.

**Io** /ɪˈɔɪəʊ/ **1** Greek Mythology a priestess of Hera who was loved by Zeus. Trying to protect her from the jealousy of Hera, Zeus turned Io into a heifer. Hera sent a gadfly to torture the heifer, which then fled across the world and finally reached Egypt, where Zeus turned her back into human form.

**2** Astronomy one of the Galilean moons of Jupiter, the fifth-closest satellite to the planet, being actively volcanic and coloured red and yellow with sulphur compounds (diameter 3,630 km).

**IOC** ► **abbreviation** for International Olympic Committee.

**iod-** ► **combining form** variant spelling of **iodo-** shortened before a vowel (as in **iodic**).

**iodate** ► **noun** Chemistry a salt or ester of iodic acid.

**iodic acid** /ɪˈɔɪdɪk/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Chemistry a crystalline acid with strong oxidizing properties, made by oxidation of iodine.

● Chem. formula:  $\text{HIO}_3$ .

**iodide** /ɪˈɔɪdɪd/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Chemistry a compound of iodine with another element or group, especially a salt of the anion  $\text{I}^-$ .

**iodinate** /ɪˈɔɪdɪneɪt, ɪˈɔɪdɪneɪt/ ► **verb** [with obj.] [usu. as adj.] **iodinated** Chemistry introduce iodine into (a compound).

- DERIVATIVES **iodination** noun.

**iodine** /ɪˈɔɪdɪn, -aɪn, -ɪn/ ► **noun** [mass noun] the chemical element of atomic number 53, a non-metallic element forming black crystals and a violet vapour. (Symbol: **I**)

■ a solution of this in alcohol, used as a mild antiseptic.

A member of the halogen group, iodine occurs chiefly as salts in seawater and brine. As a constituent of thyroid hormones it is required in small amounts in the body, and deficiency can lead to goitre.

- ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from French *iode* (from Greek *iodēs* 'violet-coloured', from *ion* 'violet' + *-eîdēs* 'like') + **-INE**<sup>1</sup>.

**iodism** /ɪˈɔɪdɪz(ə)m/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Medicine iodine poisoning, causing thirst, diarrhoea, weakness, and convulsions.

**iodize** (also **iodise**) ► **verb** [with obj.] [usu. as adj.] **iodized** treat or impregnate with iodine.

- DERIVATIVES **iodization** noun.

**iodo-** (usu. **iod-** before a vowel) ► **combining form** Chemistry representing **IODINE**.

**iodoform** /ɪˈɔɪdəʊ(ə)fɔːrm, ˈɔɪdəʊ(ə)-, ɪˈɔɪdəʊ(ə)-/ ► **noun** [mass noun] a volatile pale yellow sweet-smelling crystalline organic compound of iodine, with antiseptic properties.

● Alternative name: **triiodomethane**; chem. formula:  $\text{CHI}_3$ .

- ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: from **IODINE**, on the pattern of **chloroform**.

**iodometry** /ɪɔːˈdɒmɪtri/ ► **noun** [mass noun] Chemistry the quantitative analysis of a solution of an oxidizing agent by adding an iodide which reacts to form iodine, which is then titrated.