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- despicable** /di'spɪkəb(ə)l, 'despɪk-/ ■ **adj.** deserving hatred and contempt.
- DERIVATIVES **despicably** *adv.*
- ORIGIN C16: from late L. *despicabilis*, from *despicari* 'look down on'.
- despise** /di'spaɪz/ ■ **v.** feel contempt or repugnance for.
- DERIVATIVES **despiser** *n.*
- ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *despire*, from L. *despicere*, from *de-* 'down' + *specere* 'look at'.
- despite** /di'spaɪt/ ■ **prep.** without being affected by; in spite of. ■ **n.** archaic **1** outrage; injury. **2** contempt; disdain.
- PHRASES **despite** (or **in despite**) of archaic in spite of. **despite oneself** without intending to or expecting to.
- DERIVATIVES **despiteful** *adj.* (archaic).
- ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *despit* (*n.*), from L. *despectus* 'looking down on', past part. of *despicere* (see **DESPISE**).
- despoil** /di'spɔɪl/ ■ **v.** steal valuable or attractive possessions from (a place).
- DERIVATIVES **despoiler** *n.* **despoilment** *n.* **despoliation** /di'spɔɪli'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.*
- ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *despoillier*, from L. *despoliare* 'rob, plunder' (from *spolia* 'spoil').
- despond** /di'spɒnd/ ■ **v.** archaic become dejected and lose confidence.
- ORIGIN C17: from L. *despondere* 'give up, abandon', from *de-* 'away' + *spondere* 'to promise'.
- despondent** ■ **adj.** in low spirits from loss of hope or courage.
- DERIVATIVES **despondence** *n.* **despondency** *n.* **despondently** *adv.*
- despot** /'despɒt/ ■ **n.** a ruler who exercises absolute power, especially in a cruel or oppressive way.
- DERIVATIVES **despotic** *adj.* **despotically** *adv.* **despotism** *n.*
- ORIGIN C16: from Fr. *despote*, via med. L. from Gk *despotēs* 'master, absolute ruler'.
- desquamate** /'deskwəmeɪt/ ■ **v.** (of a layer of cells) come off in scales or flakes.
- DERIVATIVES **desquamation** *n.* **desquamative** /'skwəmətɪv/ *adj.*
- ORIGIN C18 (earlier (ME) as *desquamation*): from L. *desquamare*, *desquamare* 'remove the scales from'.
- des res** /dez'rez/ ■ **n.** Brit. informal a desirable residence.
- dessert** /dr'zɜ:t/ ■ **n.** the sweet course eaten at the end of a meal.
- ORIGIN C16: from Fr., past part. of *desservir* 'clear the table'.
- dessertspoon** ■ **n.** a spoon used for dessert, smaller than a tablespoon and larger than a teaspoon.
- DERIVATIVES **dessertspoonful** *n.* (pl. **dessertspoonfuls**).
- dessert wine** ■ **n.** a sweet wine drunk with or following dessert.
- destabilize** or **destabilise** ■ **v.** upset the stability of.
- DERIVATIVES **destabilization** *n.*
- destination** ■ **n.** the place to which someone or something is going or being sent. > [as modifier] denoting a place that people will make a special trip to visit: *a destination restaurant*.
- destine** /'destɪn/ ■ **v.** (usu. **be destined for/to**) intend or choose for a particular purpose or end. > [as *adj.* **destined**] preordained.
- ORIGIN ME (in the sense 'predetermine, decree'): from OFr. *destiner*, from L. *destinare* 'make firm, establish'.
- destiny** ■ **n.** (pl. **destinies**) the events that will necessarily happen to a particular person in the future. > the hidden power believed to control this; fate.
- ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *destinee*, from L. *destinata*, fem. past part. of *destinare* 'make firm, establish'.
- destitute** /'destɪtju:t/ ■ **adj.** **1** extremely poor and lacking the means to provide for oneself. **2** (**destitute of**) not having.
- DERIVATIVES **destitution** *n.*
- ORIGIN ME (in the sense 'deserted, abandoned, empty'): from L. *destitut-*, *destituere* 'forsake'.
- destock** ■ **v.** Brit. reduce the quantity of stock held in a shop.
- de-stress** ■ **v.** relax after a period of work or tension.
- destrier** /'destriə, de'stri:ə/ ■ **n.** a medieval knight's warhorse.
- ORIGIN ME: from OFr., based on L. *dextera* 'the right hand', from *dexter* 'on the right' (because the squire led the knight's horse with his right hand).
- destroy** ■ **v.** **1** put an end to the existence of (something) by damaging or attacking it. > ruin emotionally or spiritually. **2** kill (an animal) by humane means.
- ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *destruire*, based on L. *destruere*, *destruere*, from *de-* (expressing reversal) + *struere* 'build'.
- destroyer** ■ **n.** **1** someone or something that destroys. **2** a small, fast warship equipped for a defensive role against submarines and aircraft.
- destroying angel** ■ **n.** a deadly poisonous white toadstool which grows in woodland. [*Amanita virosa*.]
- destruct** ■ **v.** cause the destruction of.
- DERIVATIVES **destructor** *n.*
- ORIGIN 1950s (orig. US): back-form. from **DESTRUCTION**.
- destructible** ■ **adj.** able to be destroyed.
- DERIVATIVES **destructibility** *n.*
- ORIGIN C18 (earlier (C17) in *indestructible*): from Fr., from late L. *destruibilis*.
- destruction** ■ **n.** the action or process of destroying something. > a cause of someone's ruin.
- ORIGIN ME: from L. *destruio(n-)*, from *destruere* (see **DESTROY**).
- destructive** ■ **adj.** **1** causing destruction. **2** negative and unhelpful: *destructive criticism*.
- DERIVATIVES **destructively** *adv.* **destructiveness** *n.*
- desuetude** /dr'sju:tju:d, 'deswɪ-/ ■ **n.** formal a state of disuse.
- ORIGIN C17 (in the sense 'cessation'): from Fr., from L. *desuetudo*, from *desuet-*, *desuescere* 'make unaccustomed', from *de-* (expressing reversal) + *suescere* 'be accustomed'.
- desulphurize** or **desulphurise** (US **desulfurize**) ■ **v.** remove sulphur from.
- DERIVATIVES **desulphurization** *n.*
- desultory** /'des(ə)lt(ə)ri, -z-/ ■ **adj.** lacking purpose or enthusiasm.
- DERIVATIVES **desultorily** *adv.* **desultoriness** *n.*
- ORIGIN C16 (lit. 'skipping about'): from L. *desultorius* 'superficial' (lit. 'relating to a vaulter'), from *desultor* 'vaulter', from the verb *desilire*.
- desynchronize** or **desynchronise** ■ **v.** disturb the synchronization of.
- DERIVATIVES **desynchronization** *n.*
- detach** ■ **v.** **1** disengage (something) and remove it. **2** (**detach oneself from**) leave or separate oneself from (a group or place). > (**be detached**) Military be sent on a separate mission.
- DERIVATIVES **detachability** *n.* **detachable** *adj.*
- ORIGIN C16 (in the sense 'discharge a gun'): from Fr. *détacher*, from *des-* (expressing reversal) + *attacher* 'attach'.
- detached** ■ **adj.** **1** separate or disconnected. > (of a house) not joined to another on either side. **2** aloof and objective. **3** denoting a retina that has become separated from the underlying choroid tissue at the back of the eye, causing loss of vision in the affected area.
- DERIVATIVES **detachedly** *adv.*
- detachment** ■ **n.** **1** the state of being objective or aloof. **2** Military a group of troops, ships, etc. sent away on a separate mission. **3** the action or process of detaching.
- detail** ■ **n.** **1** a small individual feature, fact, or item. > a small part of a picture reproduced separately for close study. **2** a small detachment of troops or police officers given a special duty. > a special duty assigned to such a detachment. ■ **v.** **1** describe item by item; give the full particulars of. **2** assign to undertake a particular task.
- PHRASES **go into detail** give a full account of something. **in detail** as regards every feature or aspect; fully.
- ORIGIN C17: from Fr. *détail* (*n.*), *détailler* (*v.*), from *dé-* (expressing separation) + *tailler* 'to cut'.