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Catherine Soanes
Angus Stevenson

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despicable /dɪˈspɪkəb(ə)l, ˈdɛspɪk-/ ■ **adj.** deserving hatred and contempt.
 – DERIVATIVES **despicably** *adv.*
 – ORIGIN C16: from late L. *despicabilis*, from *despicari* ‘look down on’.

despise /dɪˈspaɪz/ ■ **v.** feel contempt or repugnance for.
 – DERIVATIVES **despiser** *n.*
 – ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *despire*, from L. *despicere*, from *de-* ‘down’ + *specere* ‘look at’.

despite /dɪˈspat/ ■ **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 /dɪˈspɔɪl/ ■ **v.** steal valuable or attractive possessions from (a place).
 – DERIVATIVES **despoiler** *n.* **despoilment** *n.* **despoliation** /dɪˈspɔɪliˈeɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.*
 – ORIGIN ME: from OFr. *despoillier*, from L. *despoliare* ‘rob, plunder’ (from *spolia* ‘spoil’).

despond /dɪˈspɒnd/ ■ **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 /ˈdɛspɒt/ ■ **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 /ˈdɛskwəmeɪt/ ■ **v.** (of a layer of cells) come off in scales or flakes.
 – DERIVATIVES **desquamation** *n.* **desquamative** /ˈdɛskwəmətɪv/ *adj.*
 – ORIGIN C18 (earlier (ME) as *desquamation*): from L. *desquamare*, *desquamare* ‘remove the scales from’.

des res /dɛz ˈrɛz/ ■ **n.** Brit. informal a desirable residence.

dessert /ˈdɛzərt/ ■ **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 /ˈdɛstɪn/ ■ **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 /ˈdɛstrɪtjuːt/ ■ **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 /ˈdɛstriə, dɛˈstriːə/ ■ **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*, 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 /dɪˈsjuːtjuːd, ˈdɛswɪ-/ ■ **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 /ˈdɛs(ə)lɪ(ə)rɪ, -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’.