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a player or team. **b.** The condition of being on offense: *The home team was in possession during most of the fourth quarter.* —**pos-ses'sion-al** *adj.*

pos-ses-sive (pə-zēs'iv) *adj.* **Abbr. poss.** 1. Of or relating to ownership or possession. 2. Having or manifesting a desire to control or dominate: *a possessive parent.* 3. **Grammar.** Of, relating to, or being a noun or pronoun case that indicates possession. —**possessive** *n.* **Abbr. poss.** **Grammar.** 1. The possessive case. 2. A possessive form or construction. —**pos-ses'sive-ly** *adv.* —**pos-ses'sive-ness** *n.*

possessive adjective *n.* **Grammar.** A pronominal adjective expressing possession.

possessive pronoun *n.* **Grammar.** One of several pronouns designating possession and capable of substituting for noun phrases.

pos-ses-so-ry (pə-zēs'sə-rē) *adj.* 1. Of, relating to, or having possession. 2. **Law.** Depending on or arising from possession: *possessory interest.*

pos-set (pōs'it) *n.* A spiced drink of hot sweetened milk curdled with wine or ale. [Middle English *poshet, possot*; perhaps Old French **posce* (Latin *pōsca*, drink of vinegar and water, from *potāre*, to drink; see **POTABLE** + Latin *esca*, food, from *edere*, to eat, see **EDIBLE**) + Middle English *hot, hot*; see **HOT**]

pos-si-bil-i-ty (pōs'a-bil'i-tē) *n., pl. -ties.* 1. The fact or state of being possible. 2. Something that is possible. 3. **possibilities.** Potentiality for favorable or interesting results: *The idea has tremendous possibilities.*

pos-si-ble (pōs'a-bəl) *Abbr. poss. adj. Abbr. poss.* 1. Capable of happening, existing, or being true without contradicting proven facts, laws, or circumstances. 2. Capable of occurring or being done without offense to character, nature, or custom. 3. Capable of favorable development, potential: *a possible site for the new capital.* 4. Of uncertain likelihood. [Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *possibilis*, from *posse*, to be able. See **POTI-** in Appendix.] —**pos'si-bly** *adv.*

SYNONYMS: possible, workable, practicable, feasible, viable. These adjectives signify capable of occurring or of being done. Possible indicates that something may happen, exist, be true, or be realizable. "I beseech you . . . think it possible you may be mistaken" (Oliver Cromwell). "Only the initiated know and honor those [scientists] whose patient integrity and devotion to exact observation have made the last step possible" (Hans Zinsser). Workable is used of something that can be put into effective operation: *Assuming that the scheme is workable, how will you begin to implement it?* Something that is practicable is capable of being effected, done, or put into practice: "As soon as it was practicable, he would wind up his business" (George Eliot). Feasible refers to what can be accomplished, brought about, or carried out: Making cars by hand is possible but not economically feasible. Something viable is both practicable and workable; the term often implies capacity for continuing effectiveness or success: "How viable are the ancient legends as vehicles for modern literary themes?" (Richard Kain).

POSSLQ *abbr.* Person of the opposite sex sharing living quarters.

♦ **pos-sum** (pōs'əm) *n.* Chiefly Southern U.S. An opossum. [Short for **OPOSSUM**.]

♦ **REGIONAL NOTE:** Since English is a language that stresses some syllables and not others, weakly stressed syllables, especially those preceding strong stresses, are dropped at times. This process, called aphesis when it occurs at the beginning of a word, is more common in regional American dialects than in the more conservative Standard English, which tends to retain in pronunciation anything reflected in spelling. Although many American dialects feature aphesis, it is most famous in the dialects of the South, where it yields pronunciations such as *count of for (on) account of, tater for potato, possum for opossum, and skeeter for mosquito.*

possum haw *n.* 1. A deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) of the southeast United States, having bright red fruit and dull green toothed leaves. 2. A deciduous shrub (*Viburnum nudum*) of the eastern United States, having white or yellowish flowers and bluish-black fruit. 3. See **doelmackie**.

post¹ (pōst) *n.* 1. A long piece of wood or other material set upright into the ground to serve as a marker or support. 2. A similar vertical support or structure, as: **a.** A support for a beam in the framework of a building. **b.** A terminal of a battery. 3. **Sports.** A goal post. 4. The starting point at a racetrack. 5. An earring attached by a short bar or stud that passes through the ear and fits into a cap in the back. —**post** *tr.v.* **post-ed, post-ing, posts.** 1. **a.** To display (an announcement) in a place of public view. **b.** To cover (a wall, for example) with posters. 2. To announce by or as if by posters: *post banners.* 3. To put up signs on (property) warning against trespassing. 4. To denounce publicly: *post a man as a thief.* 5. To publish (a name) on a list. 6. **Games.** To gain (points or a point) in a game or contest; score. [Middle

in the evening as a signal to retire to quarters. 4. An assigned position or station, as of a guard or sentry. 5. A position of employment, especially an appointed public office. 6. A place to which someone is assigned for duty. 7. A trading post. —**post** *tr.v.* **post-ed, post-ing, posts.** 1. To assign to a specific position or station: *post a sentry at the gate.* 2. To appoint to a naval or military command. 3. To put forward; present: *post bail.* [French *poste*, from Italian *posto*, from Old Italian, from Vulgar Latin **postum*, from Latin *positum*, neuter past participle of *ponere*, to place. See **apo-** in Appendix.]

post³ (pōst) *n.* 1. **a.** A delivery of mail. **b.** The mail delivered. 2. Chiefly British. **a.** A governmental system for transporting and delivering the mail. **b.** A post office. 3. **a.** Archaic. One of a series of relay stations along a fixed route, furnishing fresh riders and horses for the delivery of mail on horseback. **b.** Obsolete. A rider on such a mail route; a courier. —**post** *v.* **post-ed, post-ing, posts.** —*tr.* 1. To mail (a letter or package). 2. To send by mail in a system of relays on horseback. 3. To inform of the latest news: *Keep us posted.* 4. **a.** To transfer (an item) to a ledger in bookkeeping. **b.** To make the necessary entries in (a ledger). 5. **Computer Science.** To enter (a unit of information) on a record or into a section of storage. —*intr.* 1. To travel in stages or relays. 2. To travel with speed or in haste. 3. To bob up and down in the saddle in rhythm with a horse's trotting gait. —**post** *adv.* 1. By mail. 2. With great speed; rapidly. 3. By post horse. [French *poste*, from Old French, relay station for horses, from Old Italian *posta*, from Vulgar Latin **posta*, station, from Latin *posita*, feminine past participle of *ponere*, to place. See **apo-** in Appendix.]

Post (pōst), **Emily Price.** 1872–1960. American etiquette authority. She wrote *Etiquette: The Blue Book of Social Usage* (1922) and a popular syndicated newspaper column.

Post, Wiley. 1899–1935. American aviator who made the first solo flight around the world (1933).

post- *pref.* 1. After; later: *postmillennial.* 2. Behind; posterior to: *postaxial.* [Latin, from *post*, behind, after. See **apo-** in Appendix.]

post-age (pō'stij) *n.* 1. The charge for mailing an item. 2. The stamps, labels, or printing placed on an item to be mailed as evidence of payment of this charge.

postage meter *n.* A machine used in bulk mailing to print the correct amount of postage for each piece of mail, either directly on the piece or on a label to be put on the piece.

postage stamp *n.* A small, usually adhesive label issued by a government and sold in various denominations to be affixed to items of mail as evidence of the payment of postage.

post-age-stamp (pō'stij-stāmp') *adj.* Very small: *postage-stamp villages; a postage-stamp farm.*

post-al (pō'stəl) *adj.* Of or relating to a post office or mail service. —**post'al-ly** *adv.*

postal card *n.* An unadorned card printed with the image of a postage stamp, issued by a government and used for sending messages. Also called *post card*.

postal order *n.* **Abbr. PO, P.O.** Chiefly British. A money order.

postal service *n.* See **post office** (sense 1).

post-ax-i-al (pōst-āk'se-əl) *adj.* **Anatomy.** Located behind an axis of the body, as the lateral aspect of the lower leg or the medial aspect of the upper arm. —**post-ax'i-al-ly** *adv.*

post-bel-lum (pōst-bĕl'əm) *adj.* Belonging to the period after a war, especially the U.S. Civil War: *postbellum houses, postbellum governments.* [Latin *post*, after + *bellum*, war.]

post-boost phase (pōst'bōōst') *n.* The period during which warheads and decoys are released from the last stage of a ballistic missile.

post-box also **post box** (pōst'bōks') *n.* See **mailbox** (sense 1).

post card also **post-card** (pōst'kărd') *n.* **Abbr. p.c.** 1. A commercially printed card with space on one side for an address and a postage stamp, used for sending a short message through the mail. 2. See **postal card**.

post-ca-va (pōst-kā'və) *n.* A large vein that returns blood to the heart from the lower half of the body; the inferior vena cava. —**post-ca'val** *adj.*

post chaise *n.* A closed, four-wheeled, horse-drawn carriage, formerly used to transport mail and passengers.

post-clas-si-cal (pōst-klás'i-kəl) *adj.* Of, relating to, or being a time following a classical period, as in art or literature.

post-co-lo-ni-al (pōst'kə-lō'nē-əl) *adj.* Of, relating to, or being the time following the establishment of independence in a colony: *postcolonial economics.*

post-cra-ni-al (pōst-kra'nē-əl) *adj.* 1. Situated behind the cranium. 2. Consisting of the parts or structures behind the cranium: *the postcranial skeleton of an animal.* —**post-cra'ni-al-ly** *adv.*

post-date (pōst-dāt', pōst'-) *tr.v.* **-dat-ed, -dat-ing, -dates.** 1. To put a date on (a check, for example) that is later than the actual date. 2. To occur later than; follow in time.

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