

# Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language

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**virgin birth**, *n.* *Theol.* the doctrine or dogma that, by the miraculous agency of God, the birth of Christ did not impair or prejudice the virginity of Mary. Cf. **Immaculate Conception**. *Zool.* parthenogenesis: par-turition by a female who has not copulated. [1645-55]

**Virgin-ia** (vər jɪn'yoʊ), *n.* **1.** a state in the E United States, on the Atlantic coast; part of the historical South. 3,646,279; 40,815 sq. mi. (105,710 sq. km). *Cap.*: Richmond. *Abbr.*: VA (for use with zip code), Va. **2.** a town in NE Minnesota. 11,056. **3.** (*italics*) Merrimac. **4.** a female given name: from a Roman family name.



**Virgin'ia Beach**, a town in SE Virginia. 262,199.

**Virgin'ia Cit'y**, a mining town in W Nevada; famous for the discovery of the rich Comstock silver lode 1859.

**Virgin'ia cow'slip**, a wild plant, *Mertensia virginica*, of the borage family, native to the eastern U.S., grown as a garden plant for its handsome, nodding clusters of blue flowers. Also called **Roanoke bells**. [1905-10, Amer.]

**Virgin'ia creep'er**, a climbing plant, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, of the grape family, native to North America, having palmate leaves and bluish-black berries. Also called **American ivy**, **ivy vine**. [1660-70, Amer.]

**Virgin'ia deer**, **1.** the common white-tailed deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*, of eastern North America. **2.** any related variety of white-tailed deer.

**Virgin'ia fence**. See **snake fence**. Also called **raile fence**, **Virgin'ia rail fence**. [1665-75, Amer.]

**Virgin'ia ham**, a ham from a hog fed on corn and peanuts, cured in hickory smoke. [1625-35, Amer.]

**Virgin'ian** (vər jɪn'yoʊ), *adj.* **1.** of or pertaining to the state of Virginia. **—n.** **2.** a native or inhabitant of Virginia. [1625-35; VIRGINIA(A) + -AN]

**Virgin'ia pine**, a pine tree, *Pinus virginiana*, of the eastern U.S., that grows in poor soil and has needles in groups of two. Also called **Jersey pine**. [1765-75]

**Virgin'ia plan**, *Amer. Hist.* a plan, unsuccessfully proposed at the Constitutional Convention, providing for a legislature of two houses with proportional representation in each house and executive and judicial branches to be chosen by the legislature. Cf. **Connecticut Compromise**, **New Jersey plan**.

**Virgin'ia rail**, a long-billed American rail, *Rallus limicola*, having blackish and reddish-brown plumage. See **illus.** under **rail**. [1775-85, Amer.]

**Virgin'ia reel**, an American country dance in which the partners start by facing each other in two lines.

**Virgin'ia snake/root**. See under **snakeroot** (def. 1).

**Virgin'ia stock**, a plant, *Malcolmia maritima*, of the mustard family, native to the Mediterranean region, having oblong leaves on a weak, often reclining stem and reddish or white flowers.

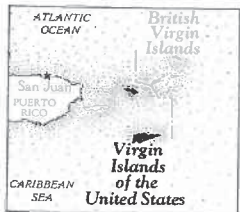
**Virgin'ia wil'low**, a shrub, *Itea virginica*, of the eastern and southern U.S., having showy, fragrant, white flowers. Also called **sweet spire**. [1890-95, Amer.]

**virgin-i-bus pu'er-is-que** (vɪrjɪn'ɪ bʊs' pʊə'rɪs'kwɛ), *Eng.* var. *virgin'is bas pyōō'a ris'kwɛ*, *Latin*. For girls and boys.

**Vir'gin Is'lands**, a group of islands in the West Indies, E of Puerto Rico: comprises the Virgin Islands of the United States and the British Virgin Islands. *Abbr.*: V.I., VI

**Vir'gin Is'lands Na'tional Park**, a national park on St. John Island, Virgin Islands: prehistoric Indian relics 24 sq. mi. (62 sq. km).

**Vir'gin Is'lands of the Unit'ed States**, a group of islands in the West Indies, including St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix: purchased from Denmark 1917. 96,569; 133 sq. mi. (345 sq. km). *Cap.*: Charlotte Amalie. Formerly, **Danish West Indies**.



**virgin-ity** (vər jɪn'ɪtē), *n.* **1.** the state or condition of being a virgin. **2.** the state or condition of being pure, fresh, or unused. **3.** *Informal.* any naive, uninitiated, or uninformed state. [1250-1300; ME *virginitate* < AF, OF < L *virginitas*. See **VIRGIN**, -ITY]

**virgin-ium** (vər jɪn'ɪəm), *n.* *Chem.* (formerly) francium. *Symbol*: Vi [1925-30; VIRGINIA(A) + -IUM]

**virgin's-bow'er** (vɜr'jɪnz baʊ'ər), a climbing vine, *Clematis virginiana*, of eastern North America, having branching clusters of small, white flowers and seed pods with silky, grayish plumes. [1590-1600]

**Vir'go** (vɜr'gō), *n.* *gen.* **Vir-gi-nis** (vɜr'jə nis) for **1.** **1.** *Astron.* the Virgin, a zodiacal constellation between Leo and Libra, containing the bright star Spica. **2.** *Astron.* a. the sixth sign of the zodiac; the mutable earth sign. See **illus.** under **zodiac**. b. a person born under this sign, usually between August 23 and September 22. [bef. 1000; ME, OE *Virgō* < L: maiden]

**Vir'go clus'ter**, *Astron.* a cluster of about 2500 galaxies in the constellation Virgo, the nearest cluster to our galaxy.

**vir-gu-late** (vɜr'gyʊl'it, -lāt'), *adj.* rod-shaped; vir-gate. [1830-40; < L *virgul(a)* rod (see **VIRGA**, -ULE) + -ATE']

**vir-gule** (vɜr'gyool), *n.* *Print.* **1.** a short oblique stroke (/) between two words indicating that whichever is appropriate may be chosen to complete the sense of the text in which they occur. *The defendant and/or his/her attorney must appear in court.* **2.** a dividing line, as in dates, fractions, a run-in passage of poetry to show verse division, etc.: 3/21/27, 3/4; *Sweetest love I do not go/For weariness of thee.* Also called **diagonal**, **separatrix**, **shilling mark**, **slant**, **slash**, **solidus**; *esp. Brit.*, **stroke**. [1830-40; < F *virgule* comma, little rod < L *virgula*; see **VIRGULATE**]

**vi-ri-cide** (vi'rɪsɪd'), *n.* viricide. [1945-50; VIR(US) + -I + -CID-] —vi'rɪ-sɪd'-al, *adj.*

**vir-id** (vɪr'ɪd), *adj.* green or verdant; the *virid* woodlands of spring. [1590-1600; < L *viridis* green, for \**viridus*, equiv. to *vir(ere)* to be green + -IDUS -ID']

**vir-id-es-cent** (vɪr'ɪd'ɛs'ənt), *adj.* slightly green; greenish. [1840-50; < LL *viridescens* (s. of *viridescens*, prp. of *viridescere* to become green, equiv. to *virid(is)* VIRID + -ESCENT -ESCENT)] —vir-id-es-cence, *n.*

**vir-id-i-an** (və rɪd'ɪən), *n.* a long-lasting, bluish-green pigment, consisting of a hydrated oxide of chromium. Also, **veridian**. [1880-85; < L *viridis*(s) green + -AN]

**vir-idi-ty** (və rɪd'ɪtē), *n.* **1.** greenness; verdancy; verdure. **2.** youth; innocence; inexperience. [1400-50; late ME < L *viriditas*, equiv. to *virid(is)* green + -TAS -TY']

**vir-ile** (vɪr'əl or esp. Brit., -ɪl), *adj.* **1.** of, pertaining to, characteristic of, or befitting a man; masculine; manly; *virile strength*. **2.** having or exhibiting masculine energy, forcefulness, or strength in a marked degree. **3.** characterized by a vigorous, masculine in a marked degree. **4.** of, pertaining to, or capable of procreation. [1480-90; < L *virilis* manly, equiv. to *vir* man (akin to OE *wer* man; see **WEREWOLF**) + -ILIS -ILE] —Syn. **2.** vigorous. See **male**.

**vir-il-ism** (vɪr'ɪl'ɪzəm), *n.* a female disorder in which there is development of secondary male sexual characteristics, as hirsutism and lowered voice, caused by various conditions affecting hormone regulation. [1895-1900; VIRILE + -ISM]

**vir-il-ity** (və rɪl'ɪtē), *n.* **1.** the state or quality of being virile; manly character, vigor, or spirit; masculinity. **2.** the power of procreation. [1680-90; < L *virilitas*, equiv. to *virilis*(s) VIRILE + -TAS -TY']

**vir-ilo-cal** (vɪr'ɪlə kəl), *adj.* *Anthropol.* living with or located near the husband's father's group; patrilineal. Cf. **matrilocal**, **neolocal**. [**<** L *vir-* (comb. form of *vir* man; see **VIRILE**) + **LOCAL**] —vir-ilo-cal-ly, *adv.*

**vir-ion** (vɪr'ɪən, vɪr'ɪ-), *n.* the infectious form of a virus as it exists outside the host cell, consisting of a nucleic acid core, a protein coat, and, in some species, an external envelope. [**<** F *virion* (1959), equiv. to *vir(i)en* viral (see **VIRUS**, -IAN) + -ON -ON']

**vir-l** (vɜrl), *n.* *Scot.* ferrule (def. 1). [1400-50; syncopated var. of ME *virole* FERRULE] —vir-led, *adj.*

**vir-oid** (vɪr'ɔɪd), *n.* an infectious agent of plants similar to a virus but consisting of only a short, single strand of RNA without a protein coat. [1946; VIR(US) + -OID]

**vir-ol-o-gy** (vɪ rə lə'jɪ, vɪ-), *n.* the science dealing with the study of viruses and the diseases caused by them. [1930-35; VIR(US) + -OL -LOGY] —vir-ol-o-gi-cal (vɪ rə lə'jɪ kəl), *adj.* —vir-ol-o-gist, *n.*

**Vi-ron** (vɪ'rən), *n.* a male given name.

**vi-ro-sis** (vi rə'sɪs), *n.* *Med.*, *Plant Pathol.* infection with a virus. [VIR(US) + -OSIS]

**v. irr.**, irregular verb.

**Vir-ta-nen** (vɪr'tænən), *n.* **Art-tu-ri Il-ma-ri** (ärt'tūō-ni il'mä ri), 1895-1973, Finnish biochemist: Nobel prize 1945.

**vir-tu** (vɜr'too, vɜr'too), *n.* **1.** excellence or merit in objects of art, curios, and the like. **2.** (used with plural v.) such objects or articles collectively. **3.** a taste for or knowledge of such objects. Also, **vertu**. [1715-25; < It *virtù*, *vertù* VIRTUE]

**vir-tu-al** (vɜr'tʃoo əl), *adj.* **1.** being such in power, force, or effect, though not actually or expressly such: a *virtual dependence on charity*. **2.** *Optics.* a. noting an image formed by the apparent convergence of rays geometrically, but not actually, prolonged, as the image formed by a mirror (opposed to *real*). b. noting a focus of a system forming virtual images. **3.** temporarily simulated or extended by computer software: a *virtual disk in RAM*; *virtual memory on a hard disk*. [1350-1400; ME < ML *virtuālis*, equiv. to L *virtu(s)* VIRTUE + -ALIS -AL'] —vir-tu-al-ly, *adv.*

**vir-tu-al-ly** (vɜr'tʃoo ə lē), *adv.* for the most part; almost wholly; just about: He is *virtually unknown*. [1400-50; late ME; see **VIRTUAL**, -LY]

**vir-tual par-ticle**, *Physics.* an elementary particle of transitory existence that does not appear as a free particle in a particular situation but that can transmit a force

**vir-tual stor-age**, *Computers.* a system whereby addressable memory is extended beyond main storage through the use of secondary storage managed by system software in such a way that programs can treat all of the designated storage as addressable main storage. Also called **vir-tual mem-ory**. Cf. **real storage**. [1970-75]

**vir-tue** (vɜr'tʃoo), *n.* **1.** moral excellence; goodness; righteousness. **2.** conformity of one's life and conduct to moral and ethical principles; uprightness; rectitude. **3.** chastity; virginity: *to lose one's virtue*. **4.** a particular moral excellence. Cf. **cardinal virtues**, **natural virtue**, **theological virtue**. **5.** a good or admirable quality or property: *the virtue of knowing one's weaknesses*. **6.** effective force; power or potency: *a charm with the virtue of removing warts*. **7.** **virtues**, an order of angels. Cf. **angel** (def. 1). **8.** manly excellence; valor. **9.** by or in **virtue of**, by reason of; because of: *to act by virtue of one's legitimate authority*. **10.** **make a virtue of necessity**, to make the best of a difficult or unsatisfactory situation. [1175-1225; alter. (with i < L) of ME *vertu* < AF, OF < L *virtūt-* (s. of *virtūs*) maleness, worth, virtue, equiv. to *vir* man (see **VIRILE**) + -TŪ- abstract *n.* suffix] —vir-tue-less, *adj.* —vir-tue-less-ness, *n.* —Syn. **1.** See **goodness**. **2.** probity, integrity. —Ant. **1.** vice.

**vir-tu-ous-ity** (vɜr'tʃoo əs'ɪtē), *n.* **1.** the character, ability, or skill of a virtuoso. **2.** a fondness for or interest in virtu. [1665-75; VIRTUOS(O) + -ITY]

**vir-tu-o-so** (vɜr'tʃoo ə'sō), *n.* **pl.** -sos, -si (-ē), *adj.* —**n.** **1.** a person who has special knowledge or skill in a field. **2.** a person who excels in musical technique or execution. **3.** a person who has a cultivated appreciation of artistic excellence, as a connoisseur or collector of objects of art, antiques, etc. **4.** *Obs.* a scholar. —*adj.* **5.** Also, **vir-tu-ous-ic** (vɜr'tʃoo əs'ɪk), of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a virtuoso: *a virtuoso performance*. [1610-20; < It: versed, skilled < LL *virtuosus* VIRTUOUS]

**vir-tu-ous** (vɜr'tʃoo əs), *adj.* **1.** conforming to moral and ethical principles; morally excellent; upright: *Lead a virtuous life*. **2.** chaste: *a virtuous young person*. [1300-50; alter. (with i < L) of ME *vertuosus* < AF < LL *virtuosus*, equiv. to L *virtu(s)* VIRTUE + -OSUS -OUS] —vir-tu-ous-ly, *adv.* —vir-tu-ous-ness, *n.*

**vir-tu-te et ar-mis** (vɪr'too'te et ä'r'mɪs; Eng. vər-tōō'te et ä'r'mɪs, -tyōō'-), *Latin*. by virtue and arms: motto of Mississippi.

**vir-u-cide** (vɪr'ʊsɪd'), *n.* an agent for destroying viruses. [VIRU(S) + -CID-] —vir-ru-cid'-al, *adj.*

**vir-u-lence** (vɪr'ʊləns, vɪr'ʊ-), *n.* **1.** quality of being virulent. **2.** *Bacteriol.* a. the relative ability of a microorganism to cause disease; degree of pathogenicity. b. the capability of a microorganism to cause disease. **3.** venomous hostility. **4.** intense sharpness of temper. Also, **vir-u-len-cy**. [1655-65; < LL *virulentia* stench; see **VIRULENT**, -ENCE]

**vir-u-lent** (vɪr'ʊlənt, vɪr'ʊ-), *adj.* **1.** actively poisonous; intensely noxious: *a virulent insect bite*. **2.** *Med.* highly infective; malignant or deadly. **3.** *Bacteriol.* causing clinical symptoms. **4.** violently or spitefully hostile. **5.** intensely bitter, spiteful, or malicious: *a virulent attack*. [1350-1400; ME *verulent* < L *virulentus*, equiv. to *vir(us)* poison (see **VIRUS**) + -ulentus -ULENT] —vir-u-lent-ly, *adv.* —Syn. **1.** venomous. **5.** vicious, acerbic.

**vir-us** (vɪ'rəs), *n.* **pl.** -rus-es. **1.** an ultramicroscopic (20 to 300 nm in diameter), metabolically inert infectious agent that replicates only within the cells of living hosts, mainly bacteria, plants, and animals: composed of an RNA or DNA core, a protein coat, and, in more complex viruses, a surrounding envelope. **2.** *Informal.* a viral disease. **3.** a corrupting influence on morals or the intellect; poison: *the virus of intolerance*. **4.** a segment of self-replicating code planted illegally in a computer program, often to damage or shut down a system or network. [1590-1600; < L *virus* slime, poison; akin to *oozē*] —vir-us-like', *adj.*

**vir-us-oid** (vɪ'rə sɔɪd'), *n.* a small particle of RNA associated with the larger RNA of some infectious plant viruses. Compare **viroid**. [1980-85]

**vis** (wes; Eng. vɪs), *n.* **pl.** vi-res (wə'rās; Eng. vɪ'rɛz). *Latin*. strength; force; power.

**Vis.**, **1.** Viscount. **2.** Viscountess.

**vis.**, **1.** visibility. **2.** visual.

**vi-sa** (vɪ'zə), *n.* **pl.** -sas, v., -saed, -sa-ing. —**n.** **1.** an endorsement made by an authorized representative of one country upon a passport issued by another, permitting the passport holder entry into or transit through the country making the endorsement. —*v.t.* **2.** to give a visa to; approve a visa for. **3.** to put a visa on (a passport). Also, **visé**. [1825-35; < F, short for L *carta visa* the document (has been) examined; *visa*, ptp. fem. of *visere* to look into, see to, freq. of *videre* to see]

**vis-age** (vɪz'ɪj), *n.* **1.** the face, usually with reference to features, expression, etc.; countenance. **2.** aspect; appearance. [1250-1300; ME < AF, OF, equiv. to *vis* face (< L *visum* sight, appearance (VL: face), *n.* use of neut. ptp. of *videre* to see) + -age -AGE] —vis'aged, *adj.* —Syn. **1.** physiognomy, image. See **face**.

**Vi-sa-kha-pat-nam** (vi sāk'ə pat'nəm), *n.* a seaport in Andhra Pradesh, in E India, on the Bay of Bengal. 362,270.

**Vi-sa-li-a** (vi sāl'yo), *n.* a city in central California. 49,729.

**vis-ard** (vɪz'ərd), *n.* vizard.

**vis-à-vis** (vɛz'ə vɛz; Fr. vɛ zə vɛ'), *adv.*, *adj.*, *prep.*, *n.*, *pl.* -vis (vɛz; Fr. -vɛ'). —*adv.* **1.** face to face: *They sat vis-à-vis at the table*. —*adj.* **2.** face-to-face: *a vis-à-vis encounter*. **3.** *Numis.* (of a coin) having two portraits