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2. An advance guard of troops sent on a hazardous mission. [By folk ety. < Du. *verloren hoop*, advance guard: *verloren*, p.part. of *verliezen*, to lose; see *leu\** + *hoop*, troop.]

**form** (fôrm) *n.* 1. **a.** The shape and structure of an object. **b.** The body or outward appearance of a person or an animal considered separately from the face or head; figure. **2.a.** The essence of something. **b.** The mode in which a thing exists, acts, or manifests itself; kind. **3.a.** Procedure as determined by regulation or custom. **b.** A fixed order of words or procedures, as for use in a ceremony; a formula. **4.** A document with blanks for the insertion of details or information. **5.a.** Manners or conduct as governed by etiquette, decorum, or custom. **b.** Behavior according to a fixed or accepted standard; *had form to be late*. **c.** Performance considered with regard to acknowledged criteria: *unusual form as a bowler*. **6.a.** Proven ability to perform: *a musician in top form*. **b.** Fitness, as of an athlete, with regard to health or training. **c.** The past performance of a racehorse. **d.** A racing form. **7.a.** Method of arrangement or manner of coordinating elements in literary or musical composition or in organized discourse: *in outline form*. **b.** A particular type or example of such arrangement: *The essay is a literary form*. **c.** The design, structure, or pattern of a work of art: *symphonic form*. **8.a.** A mold for the setting of concrete. **b.** A model of the human figure or part of it used for displaying clothes. **c.** A proportioned model that may be adjusted for fitting clothes. **9.** A grade in a British secondary school or in some American private schools: *the sixth form*. **10.a.** A linguistic form. **b.** The external aspect of words with regard to their inflections, pronunciation, or spelling. **11.a.** Chiefly British. A long seat; a bench. **b.** The resting place of a hare. **12.** Bot. A subdivision of a variety usu. differing in one trivial characteristic. — *v.* **formed, form-ing, forms.** — *tr.* **1.a.** To give form to; shape. **b.** To develop in the mind; conceive. **2.a.** To shape or mold (something, for example) into a particular form. **b.** To arrange oneself in. **c.** To organize or arrange. **d.** To fashion, train, or develop by instruction or precept. **3.** To come to have; develop or acquire. **4.** To constitute or compose a usu. basic element, part, or characteristic of. **5.a.** To produce (a tense, for example) by inflection. **b.** To make (a word) by derivation or composition. **6.** To put in order; arrange. — *intr.* **1.** To become formed or shaped. **2.** To come into being by taking form; arise. **3.** To assume a specified form, shape, or pattern. [ME *forme* < Lat. *forma*.] — **form'a-bil'i-ty** *n.* — **form'a-ble** *adj.*

**form aff.** Having the form of: *plexiform*. [NLat. *-formis* < Lat. *forma*, form.]

**form-al** (fôr'mâl) *adj.* **1.a.** Relating to or involving outward form or structure. **b.** Being or relating to essential form or constitution: *a formal principle*. **2.a.** Following or being in accord with accepted forms, conventions, or regulations: *a formal dinner*. **b.** Executed, carried out, or done in proper or regular form. **3.a.** Characterized by strict observation of forms; methodical: *formal in their transactions*. **b.** Stiffly ceremonious: *a formal greeting*. **4.** Having the outward appearance, but lacking in substance. — *n.* Something, such as a shape. — **form'al-ly** *adv.* — **form'al-ness** *n.*

**form-al-de-hyde** (fôr'mâl'de-hid') *n.* A colorless gaseous compound, HCHO, the simplest aldehyde, used to make synthetic resins, as an embalming fluid, and in aqueous solution as preservative and disinfectant. [FORM(IC ACID) + ALDEHYDE.]

**form-alin** (fôr'mo-lin) *n.* An aqueous solution of formaldehyde that is 37 percent by weight. [Originally a trademark.]

**form-al-ism** (fôr'mo-liz'm) *n.* **1.** Rigorous or excessive adherence to recognized forms, as in art. **2.** An instance of formalism. — **form'al-ist** *adj.* & *n.* — **form'al-is'tic** *adj.*

**form-al-ly** (fôr'mâl'i-ti) *adv.*

**form-al-ness** (fôr'mâl-nis) *n.*, *pl.* **-ties**. **1.** The quality or condition of being formal. **2.** Rigorous or ceremonious adherence to forms, rules, or customs. **3.** An established procedure or custom, esp. one followed merely for the sake of tradition or decorum.

**form-al-ize** (fôr'mo-lîz) *tr.v.* **-ized, -iz-ing, -iz-es**. **1.** To give form or shape to. **2.a.** To make formal. **b.** To give form or shape to (something) to make official by the official procedure. — **form'al-iz'a-ble** *adj.*

**form-al-iz'a-tion** (fôr'mo-lîz'â-shən) *n.* — **form'al-iz'er** *n.*

**form-al-ly** (fôr'mâl'i-ti) *adv.*

**form-ant** (fôr'mânt) *n.* Any of several frequency regions of a sound spectrum, which together make up the characteristic quality of a vowel sound. [Ger. *Formant*, *formant*, *formant*, p-part. of *formieren*, to form < *forma*, form.]

**form-ant** (fôr'mânt) *n.* **1.** A plan for the organization and arrangement of a specified production. **2.** The material form or arrangement of a production. **3.** Comp. Sci. **a.** The arrangement of the elements of a data structure. **b.** A method for achieving such an

arrangement. — *tr.v.* **-mat-ted, -mat-ting, -mats**. **1.** To plan or arrange in a specified form. **2.** Comp. Sci. **a.** To divide (a disk) into marked sectors so that it may store data. **b.** To determine the arrangement of (data) for storage or display. [Fr., ult. < Lat. *formātus*, p-part. of *formāre*, to form < *forma*, form.]

**form-ate** (fôr'māt') *n.* A salt or an ester of formic acid that contains the HCOO<sup>-</sup> radical. [FORM(IC ACID) + -ATE<sup>2</sup>.]

**form-a-tion** (fôr-mâ'shən) *n.* **1.** The act or process of forming something or of taking form. **2.** Something formed: *cloud formations*. **3.** The manner or style in which something is formed; structure. **4.** A specified arrangement or deployment, as of troops. **5.** Geol. The primary unit of lithostratigraphy, consisting of a body of rock useful for mapping or description. — **form'a-tion-al** *adj.*

**form-a-tive** (fôr'mā-tiv) *adj.* **1.** Forming or capable of forming. **2.a.** Susceptible to transformation by growth and development. **b.** Biol. Capable of producing new cells or tissue. **3.** Of or relating to formation, growth, or development: *the formative stages of a plot*. **4.** Ling. Relating to the formation or inflection of words. — *n.* Gram. A derivational or inflectional affix. — **form'a-tive-ly** *adv.*

**form class** *n.* Ling. A set of words that have one or more grammatical or syntactic characteristics in common.

**form criticism** *n.* A method of textual criticism, applied esp. to the Bible, for tracing the origin and history of certain passages through systematic study of the writings in terms of conventional literary forms.

**form-er** (fôr'mər) *n.* **1.** One that forms; a maker or creator. **2.** Chiefly British. A member of a school form.

**form-er** (fôr'mər) *adj.* **1.a.** Occurring earlier in time. **b.** Of, relating to, or taking place in the past. **2.** Coming before in place or order; foregoing. **3.** Being the first of two mentioned. **4.** Having been in the past: *a former ambassador*. [ME, comp. of *forme*, first < OE *forma*. See *per*\*.]

**Usage Note:** Grammarians have often insisted that the phrases *the former* and *the latter* should be used only to refer to the first of two things and the second of two things, respectively: "*But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake, and the former was a lulu and the latter was a fake.*" It is not difficult to find violations of this rule in the works of reputable writers. But the fact that *former* and *latter* are plainly comparatives will make many readers uneasy when the words are used in enumerations of more than two things.

**form-er-ly** (fôr'mər-lē) *adv.* At an earlier time; once.

**form-fit-ting** (fôr'm'fīt'ing) *adj.* Snugly fitting the contours of the body: *formfitting jeans*.

**form genus** *n.* Bot. A classification, as of fossil plants, based on morphological resemblance.

**form-ic** (fôr'mik) *adj.* **1.** Of or relating to ants. **2.** Of, derived from, or containing formic acid. [< Lat. *formica*, ant.]

**Form-i-ca** (fôr-mi'kə) *n.* A trademark for a variety of laminated plastic sheets of synthetic resin used esp. as a surface on tables and counters.

**formic acid** *n.* A colorless caustic fuming liquid, HCOOH, used in dyeing and finishing textiles and paper and in fumigants and insecticides. [From its natural occurrence in ants.]

**form-i-car-y** (fôr'mi-kēr'ē) *n.*, *pl.* **-ies**. A nest of ants; an anthill. [Med.Lat. *formicarium* < Lat. *formica*, ant.]

**form-i-civ-o-rous** (fôr'mi-siv'ər-əs) *adj.* Feeding on ants. [Lat. *formica*, ant + *-vorous*.]

**form-i-da-ble** (fôr'mi-də-bəl) *adj.* **1.** Arousing fear, dread, or alarm. **2.** Inspiring awe, admiration, or wonder. **3.** Difficult to undertake, surmount, or defeat: *a formidable challenge*. [ME < OFr. < Lat. *formidābilis* < *formidāre*, to fear < *formidō*, fear.] — **form'i-da-bil'i-ty**, **form'i-da-ble-ness** *n.* — **form'i-da-bly** *adv.*

**form-less** (fôr'm'lis) *adj.* **1.** Having no definite form; shapeless. **2.** Lacking order. **3.** Having no material existence. — **form'less-ly** *adv.* — **form'less-ness** *n.*

**form letter** *n.* A usu. impersonal letter in a standardized format that may be sent to different people.

**Form-o-sa** (fôr-mô'sə) See **Taiwan**.

**Formosa Strait** also **Taiwan Strait** (tī'wān'): An arm of the Pacific Ocean between Taiwan and China linking the East China Sea with the South China Sea.

**form-u-la** (fôr'mya-lə) *n.*, *pl.* **-las** or **-lao** (-lē'). **1.a.** An established form of words or symbols for use in a ceremony or procedure. **b.** An utterance of conventional notions or beliefs; a hackneyed expression. **2.** A method of doing or treating something that relies on an established uncontroversial model or approach. **3.** Chem. **a.** A symbolic representation of the composition or of the composition and structure of a compound. **b.** The compound so represented. **4.a.** A prescription of ingredients in fixed proportion; a recipe. **b.** A liquid food for infants, containing most of the nutrients in human milk. **5.** Math. A statement, esp. an equation, of a rule, principle, or other factual relation. **6.** Formula. Sports. A set of specifications that determine a class of racing car. [Lat. *formula*, dim. of *forma*, form.] — **form'u-la'ic** (-lā'ik) *adj.* — **form'u-la'i-cal-ly** *adv.*

**form-u-la-rize** (fôr'mya-lə-rîz') *tr.v.* **-rized, -riz-ing, -riz-es**,

à pat	oi boy
à pay	ou out
àr care	oo took
à father	oo boot
è pet	ù cut
é be	ür urge
ì pit	th thin
ì pie	th this
ir pier	hw which
ò pot	zh vision
ò toe	ə about
ó paw	item

Stress marks:  
 ' (primary);  
 ^ (secondary), as in  
 dictionary (dik'shə-nèr'ē)