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three-cornered

three-cornered ▶ adj. triangular. ■ (esp. of a contest) between three people or groups.

three-cush-ion bil-li-ards ▶ plural n. [usu. treated as sing.] a type of billiards in which the cue ball must strike one object ball and three or more cushions before the second object ball.

three-deck-er ▶ n. a thing with three levels or layers: [as modifier] *three-decker sandwiches*. ■ historical a sailing warship with three gun decks.

three-di-men-sion-al ▶ adj. having or appearing to have length, breadth, and depth: *a three-dimensional object*. ■ (of a literary or dramatic work) sufficiently full in characterization and representation of events to be believable.

-DERIVATIVES **three-di-men-sion-al-i-ty** /di,menshə'nælətē/ n., **three-di-men-sion-al-ly** adv.

three-fold /'θri:ə,fəld/ ▶ adj. three times as great or as numerous: *a threefold increase in the number of stolen cars*. ■ having three parts or elements: *the differences are threefold*.

▶ adv. by three times; to three times the number or amount: *the aftershocks intensify threefold each time*.

Three Grac-es see GRACE.

three-leg-ged race /'legəd/ ▶ n. a race run by pairs of people, one member of each pair having their left leg tied to the right leg of the other.

Three Mile Is-land an island in the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, site of a nuclear power station. In 1979, an accident caused damage to the reactor core, provoking strong reactions against the nuclear industry in the US.

three-mile lim-it ▶ n. Law the outer boundary of the area extending 3 miles (4.8 km) out to sea from the coast of a state or country, considered to be within its jurisdiction.

three-peat ▶ v. [no obj.] win a particular sports championship three times, esp. consecutively: *the Bulls rate as the favorite to three-peat*.

▶ n. [in sing.] a third win of a particular sports championship, esp. the third of three consecutive wins: *all eyes were on the 49ers' bid for a three-peat*.

-ORIGIN 1980s: from THREE + a shortened form of REPEAT.

three-pence /'θri:epəns, 'θri:pə-, 'θri:ə,pəns/ ▶ n. Brit. the sum of three pence, esp. before decimalization (1971).

three-pen-ny /'θri:p(ə)nē, 'θri:p-, 'θri:ə,pənē/ ▶ adj. [attrib.] Brit. costing or worth three pence, esp. before decimalization (1971). ■ trifling or paltry; of little worth: *a threepenny production*.

three-phase ▶ adj. (of an electric generator, motor, or other device) designed to supply or use simultaneously three separate alternating currents of the same voltage, but with phases differing by a third of a period.

three-piece ▶ adj. [attrib.] consisting of three separate and complementary items, in particular: ■ (of a set of furniture) consisting of a sofa and two armchairs. ■ (of a set of clothes) consisting of slacks or a skirt with a vest and jacket.

▶ n. a set of three separate and complementary items. ■ a group consisting of three musicians.

three-ply ▶ adj. (of material) having three layers or strands.

▶ n. 1 knitting wool made of three strands. 2 plywood made by gluing together three layers with the grain in different directions.

three-point land-ing ▶ n. a landing of an aircraft on the two main wheels and the tailwheel or skid simultaneously.

three-point turn ▶ n. a method of turning a vehicle around in a narrow space by moving forward, backward, and forward again in a sequence of arcs.

three-quar-ter ▶ adj. [attrib.] consisting of three quarters of something (used esp. with reference to size or length): *a three-quarter length cashmere coat*. ■ (of a view or depiction of a person's face) at an angle between full face and profile.

three-ring cir-cus ▶ n. a public spectacle, esp.

rank of lieutenant general, distinguished by three stars on the uniform.

Three Stoog-es US comedy team, comprising various partners from the early 1930s to 1970. The most popular trio (1934-46) were **Moe Howard** (born *Moses Horwitz*) (1897-1975), **Curly Howard** (Moe's brother; born *Jerome Lester Horwitz*) (1903-52), and **Larry Fine** (born *Louis Feinberg*) (1902-75). The Stooges' nearly 200 movie shorts include *Men in Black* (1934), *Hold That Lion!* (1947), and *Quiz Whizz* (1958).

three strikes ▶ n. [usu. as modifier] legislation providing that an offender's third felony is punishable by life imprisonment or another severe sentence.

-ORIGIN 1990s: from the phrase *three strikes and you're out* (with allusion to baseball).

three-way ▶ adj. involving three directions, processes, or participants: *a three-way race for the presidency* | *a three-way switch*.

three-wheel-er ▶ n. a vehicle with three wheels, esp. a child's tricycle.

Three Wise Men another name for **MAGI**.

threm-ma-tol-o-gy /θ'remə'täləj/ ▶ n. the science of breeding animals and plants.

-ORIGIN late 19th cent.: from Greek *thremma*, *thremmat-* 'nursling' + **LOGY**.

thren-o-dy /θ'renədəi/ ▶ n. (pl. **threnodies**) a lament.

-DERIVATIVES **thre-no-dial** /θ're'nədəəl/ adj., **thre-nod-ic** /θ're'nədik/ adj., **thre-no-dist** /-dist/ n.

-ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Greek *threnōidia*, from *threnos* 'wailing' + *oidē* 'song'.

thre-o-nine /θ'reə,nēn-, 'ni:n/ ▶ n. Biochemistry a hydrophilic amino acid that is a constituent of most proteins. It is an essential nutrient in the diet of vertebrates. ● Chem. formula: CH₃CH(OH)CH(NH₂)COOH.

-ORIGIN 1930s: from *threose* (the name of a tetrose sugar) + **-INE**.

thresh /θ'reʃ/ ▶ v. [with obj.] 1 separate grain from (a plant), typically with a flail or by the action of a revolving mechanism: *machinery that can reap and thresh corn in the same process* | (as noun **threshing**) *farm workers started the afternoon's threshing*. 2 variant spelling of **THRASH**.

-ORIGIN Old English *threscan*, later *threscan*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *dorsen* and German *dreschen*. Compare with **THRASH**.

thresher /θ'reʃə/ ▶ n. 1 a person or machine that separates grain from the plants by beating. 2 (also **thresher shark**) a surface-living shark with a long upper lobe to the tail. Threshers often hunt in pairs, lashing the water with their tails to herd fish into a tightly packed shoal. ● *Alopias vulpinus*, family Alopiidae.

thresh-ing floor ▶ n. a hard, level surface on which grain is threshed with a flail.

thresh-ing ma-chine ▶ n. a power-driven machine for separating grain from plants.

thresh-old /θ'reʃ(h)əld/ ▶ n. 1 a strip of wood, metal, or stone forming the bottom of a doorway and crossed in entering a house or room. ■ [in sing.] a point of entry or beginning: *she was on the threshold of a dazzling career*. ■ the beginning of an airport runway on which an aircraft is attempting to land. 2 the magnitude or intensity that must be exceeded for a certain reaction, phenomenon, result, or condition to occur or be manifested: *nothing happens until the signal passes the threshold* | [as modifier] *a threshold level*. ■ the maximum level of radiation or a concentration of a substance considered to be acceptable or safe: *their water would meet the safety threshold of 50 milligrams of nitrates per liter*. ■ Physiology & Psychology a limit below which a stimulus causes no reaction: *everyone has a different pain threshold*. ■ a level, rate, or amount at which something comes into effect: *the tax threshold has risen to \$10,492 of adjusted gross income*.

-ORIGIN Old English *threscold*, *threscold*; related to German dialect *Drischaufel*; the first element is related to **THRESH** (in a Germanic sense 'tread'), but

growing chiefly on sea cliffs and mountains. Also called **SEA PINK**. ● *Armeria maritima*, family Plumbaginaceae.

-ORIGIN Middle English (in the sense 'prosperity, acquired wealth, success'): from Old Norse, from *thrifa* 'grasp, get hold of.' Compare with **THRIVE**.

thrift-less /θ'rɪftlɪs/ ▶ adj. (of a person or their behavior) spending money in an extravagant and wasteful way.

-DERIVATIVES **thrift-less-ly** adv., **thrift-less-ness** n.

thrift shop (also **thrift store**) ▶ n. a store selling secondhand clothes and other household goods, typically to raise funds for a charitable institution.

thrift-y /θ'rɪfti/ ▶ adj. (**thriftier**, **thriftiest**) 1 (of a person or their behavior) using money and other resources carefully and not wastefully. 2 chiefly archaic dialect (of livestock or plants) strong and healthy. ■ archaic prosperous.

-DERIVATIVES **thrift-i-ly** /-li/ adv., **thrift-i-ness** n.

thrill /θ'rɪl/ ▶ n. a sudden feeling of excitement and pleasure: *the thrill of jumping out of an airplane*. ■ an experience that produces such a feeling. ■ a wave or nervous tremor of emotion or sensation: *a thrill of excitement ran through her*. ■ archaic a throb or pulsation. ■ Medicine a vibratory movement or resonance heard through a stethoscope.

▶ v. 1 [with obj.] cause (someone) to have a sudden feeling of excitement and pleasure: *his kiss thrilled and excited her* | *I'm thrilled to death* | *they were thrilled to pieces* | (as adj. **thrilling**) *a thrilling adventure*. ■ [no obj.] experience such feeling: *thrill to the magic of the world's greatest guitarist*. 2 [no obj.] (of an emotion or sensation) pass with a nervous tremor: *the shock of alarm thrilled through her*. ■ literary quiver or throb.

-PHRASES **thrills and chills** the excitement of dangerous sports or entertainments, as experienced by spectators.

-DERIVATIVES **thrill-ing-ly** adv.

-ORIGIN Middle English (as a verb in the sense 'pierce or penetrate'): alteration of dialect *thirl* 'pierce, bore.'

thriller /θ'rɪlər/ ▶ n. a novel, play, or movie with an exciting plot, typically involving crime or espionage. ■ a very exciting contest or experience: *a 17-14 overtime thriller against Tampa Bay*.

thrips /θ'rɪps/ (also **thrip**) ▶ n. (pl. **same**) a minute black winged insect that sucks plant sap and can be a serious pest of ornamental and food plants when present in large numbers. ● Order Thysanoptera: many species.

-ORIGIN late 18th cent.: via Latin from Greek, literally 'woodworm.'

thrive /θ'rɪv/ ▶ v. (**thrives**, **thriving**; past **throve** /θ'rɒv/ or **thrived**; past participle **thriven** /θ'rɪvən/ or **thrived**) [no obj.] (of a child, animal, or plant) grow or develop well or vigorously: *the new baby thrived*. ■ prosper; flourish: *education groups thrive on organization* | (as adj. **thriving**) *a thriving economy*.

-ORIGIN Middle English (originally in the sense 'grow, increase'): from Old Norse *thrifask*, reflexive of *thrifa* 'grasp, get hold of.' Compare with **THRIFT**.

thro' /θ'rɒ/ (or **thro**) ▶ prep., adv., & adj. literary spelling of **THROUGH**.

throat /θ'rɒt/ ▶ n. the passage that leads from the back of the mouth of a person or animal. ■ the front part of a person's or animal's neck, behind which the esophagus, trachea, and blood vessels serving the head are situated: *a gold pendant gleamed at her throat*. ■ literary a voice of a person or a songbird: *from a hundred throats came the cry "Vive l'Empereur!"* ■ a thing compared to a throat, esp. a narrow passage, entrance, or exit. ■ Sailing the forward upper corner of a quadrilateral fore-and-aft sail.

-PHRASES **be at each other's throats** (of people or organizations) quarrel or fight persistently. **cut one's own throat** bring about one's own downfall by one's actions. **force** (or **shove** or **ram**) **something down someone's throat** force ideas or material on a person's attention by repeatedly putting them forward. **grab** (or **take**) **someone's throat** seize someone's attention.