

# New Oxford American Dictionary

THIRD EDITION

*Edited by*

Angus Stevenson

Christine A. Lindberg

FIRST EDITION

Elizabeth J. Jewell

Frank Abate

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further  
Oxford University's objective of excellence  
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi  
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece  
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore  
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Copyright © 2010 by Oxford University Press

First edition 2001

Second edition 2005

Third edition 2010

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.

198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

[www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com)

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,  
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 978-0-19-539288-3

10

Printed in the United States of America  
on acid-free paper

1536233313150735

modified by a "direction" word. ■ Phonetics pronunciation (a speech sound) in a way that is different from the norm for that sound.

**DERIVATIVES** **mod-i-fi-a-ble** adj., **mod-i-fi-ca-to-ry** /mə'dɪfə'keɪtə'reɪ, mə'dɪfə'fika'tɔ'reɪ/ adj.

**ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Old French **modifier**, from Latin *modificare*, from *modus* (see **MODE**).

**Mo-dig-li-a-ni** /mɒ'dɪgljə'nɪ/, Amedeo (1884–1920), Italian painter and sculptor, resident in France from 1906. His portraits and nudes are noted for their elongated forms, linear qualities, and earthy colors.

**mod-ill-ion** /mɒ'dɪljən/ ► n. Architecture a projecting bracket under the corona of a cornice in the Corinthian and other orders.

**ORIGIN** mid 16th cent.: from French *modillon*, from Italian *modiglione*, based on Latin *mutulus* 'mutilate.'

**mod-i-o-lus** /mɒ'diə'ləs/ ► n. (pl. **modioli** /-li, -lɛ/) Anatomy the conical central axis of the cochlea of the ear.

**ORIGIN** early 19th cent.: from Latin, literally 'nave of a wheel.'

**mod-ish** /'mɒdɪʃ/ ► adj. often derogatory conforming to or following what is currently popular and fashionable: *it seems sad that such a scholar should feel compelled to use this modish jargon.*

**DERIVATIVES** **mod-ish-ly** adv., **mod-ish-ness** n.

**mod-iste** /mɒ'dɛst/ ► n. dated a fashionable milliner or dressmaker.

**ORIGIN** mid 19th cent.: French, from *mode* 'fashion.'

**mod-u-lar** /'mɒdjələr/ ► adj. employing or involving a module or modules as the basis of design or construction: **modular housing units.** ■ Mathematics of or relating to a modulus.

**DERIVATIVES** **mod-u-lar-i-ty** /,mɒdjələ(ə)rɪtɪ/ n. **ORIGIN** late 18th cent.: from modern Latin *modularis*, from Latin *modulus* (see **MODULUS**).

**mod-u-late** /'mɒdjə,læt/ ► v. [with obj.] exert a modifying or controlling influence on: *the state attempts to modulate private business's cash flow.* ■ vary the strength, tone, or pitch of (one's voice): *we all modulate our voice by hearing it.* ■ alter the amplitude or frequency of (an electromagnetic wave or other oscillation) in accordance with the variations of a second signal, typically one of a lower frequency: *radio waves are modulated to carry the analog information of the voice.* ■ [no obj.] Music change from one key to another: *the first half of the melody, modulating from E minor to G.* ■ [no obj.] (modulate into) change from one form or condition into (another): *ideals and opinions are not modulated into authoritative journalese.*

**DERIVATIVES** **mod-u-la-tion** /,mɒdjə'læʃən/ n., **mod-u-la-tor** /-lætər/ n.

**ORIGIN** mid 16th cent. (in the sense 'intone [a song]'): from Latin *modulātus* 'measured, made melody', from the verb *modulari*, from *modulus* 'measure' (see **MODULUS**).

**mod-ule** /'mɒdjʊl/ ► n. each of a set of standardized parts or independent units that can be used to construct a more complex structure, such as an item of furniture or a building. ■ [usu. with adj.] an independent self-contained unit of a spacecraft. ■ Computing any of a number of distinct but interrelated units from which a program may be built up or into which a complex activity may be analyzed.

**ORIGIN** late 16th cent. (in the senses 'allotted scale' and 'plan, model'): from French, or from Latin *modulus* (see **MODULUS**). Current senses date from the 1950s.

**mod-u-lo** /'mɒdjələ/ ► prep. Mathematics (in number theory) with respect to or using a modulus of a specified number. Two numbers are congruent modulo a given number if they give the same remainder when divided by that number: *19 and 64 are congruent modulo 5.* ■ [as adj.] using moduli: **modulo operations.**

**ORIGIN** late 19th cent.: from Latin, ablative of *modulus* (see **MODULUS**).

**mod-u-lus** /'mɒdjələs/ Mathematics ► n. (pl. **moduli** /-li, -lɛ/) 1 another term for **ABSOLUTE VALUE.** ■ the positive square root of the sum of the squares of the real and imaginary parts of a complex number. 2 a constant factor or ratio. ■ a constant indicating the relation between a physical effect and the force producing it. 3 a number used as a divisor for considering numbers in sets, numbers being considered congruent when giving the same remainder when divided by a particular modulus.

**ORIGIN** mid 16th cent. (denoting an architectural unit of length): from Latin, literally 'measure,' diminutive of *modus*.

**mod-ulus op-er-and-i** /'mɒdəs əpə'rændɪ, -dɪ/ ► n. (pl. **modi operandi** /'mɒdə, 'mɒdɪ/) [usu. in sing.] a particular way or method of doing something, esp. one that is characteristic or well-established: *the*

*volunteers were instructed to buy specific systems using our usual modus operandi—anononymously and with cash.* ■ the way something operates or works.

**ORIGIN** Latin, literally 'way of operating.'

**mod-us po-nens** /'mɒdəs 'pɒnɛnz/ ► n. the rule of logic stating that if a conditional statement ("if *p* then *q*") is accepted, and the antecedent (*p*) holds, then the consequent (*q*) may be inferred. ■ an argument using this rule.

**ORIGIN** Latin, literally 'mood that affirms.'

**mod-us tol-lens** /'mɒdəs 'tɒlɛnz/ ► n. the rule of logic stating that if a conditional statement ("if *p* then *q*") is accepted, and the consequent does not hold (*not-q*), then the negation of the antecedent (*not-p*) can be inferred. ■ an argument using this rule.

**ORIGIN** Latin, literally 'mood that denies.'

**mod-us vi-ven-di** /'mɒdəs vɪ'vendɪ, -dɪ/ ► n. (pl. **modi vivendi** /'mɒdə, 'mɒdɪ/) [usu. in sing.] an arrangement or agreement allowing conflicting parties to coexist peacefully, either indefinitely or until a final settlement is reached. ■ a way of living.

**ORIGIN** Latin, literally 'way of living.'

**moe-ri-the-ri-um** /,mɪrə'thɪ(ə)rɪəm/ ► n. (pl. **moeritheria** /-rɪə/) a medium-sized mammal of the late Eocene and Oligocene epochs with a long snout and short legs, related to modern elephants. ■ **Moeritherium trigodon.**

**ORIGIN** modern Latin, from the name of Lake *Moeris* in Egypt, where the first fossils were found + Greek *thērion* 'wild beast.'

**mo-fette** /mɒ'fet/ ► n. archaic term for **FUMAROLE.**

**ORIGIN** early 19th cent.: from French, from Neapolitan Italian *moffetta*.

**mo-fo** /'mɒ,fə/ ► n. (pl. **mofos**) vulgar slang short for **MOTHERFUCKER.**

**Mo-ga-di-shu** /,mɒgə'dɪʃu/ **māgə-, -dɛʃu/** the capital of Somalia, a port on the Indian Ocean; pop. 1,100,000 (est. 2007). Italian name **Mogadiscio.** Also called **MUQDISHO.**

**Mo-gi-lyov** /,mɒgɪ'ljəv/ (also **Mogilev**) Russian name for **MAHILYŌV.**

**Mo-gul** /'mɒgəl/ (also **Moghul** or **Mughal**) ► n. a member of the Muslim dynasty of Mongol origin founded by the successors of Tamerlane, which ruled much of India from the 16th to the 19th century: [as modifier] **Mogul architecture.** ■ (often **the Great Mogul**) historical the Mogul emperor of Delhi.

**ORIGIN** from Persian *mogul* 'Mongol.'

**mo-gul** /'mɒgəl/ ► n. 1 informal an important or powerful person, esp. in the motion picture or media industry. 2 (**Mogul**) a steam locomotive with three pairs of driving wheels and one pair of smaller wheels in the front.

**ORIGIN** late 17th cent.: figurative use of **MOGUL.**

**mo-gul**² ► n. a bump on a ski slope formed by the repeated turns of skiers over the same path: [as modifier] *a mogul field.*

**ORIGIN** 1960s: probably from southern German dialect *Mugel, Mugel.*

**MOH** ► abbr. ■ Medical Officer of Health (chief health executive of a local authority). ■ Ministry of Health.

**mo-hair** /'mɒ,he(ə)r/ ► n. the long, silky hair of the angora goat. ■ a yarn or fabric made from this, typically mixed with wool: [as modifier] *a mohair sweater.*

**ORIGIN** late 16th cent.: from Arabic *muḥayyar* 'cloth made of goat's hair' (literally 'choice, select'). The change in ending was due to association with **HAIR.**

**Mo-ham-med** ► n. variant spelling of **MUHAMMAD**.

**Mo-ham-me-dan** /'mɒ'hæmɪd(ə)n, mɒ-/ ► n. variant spelling of **MUHAMMADAN.**

**Mo-ham-me-rah** /mɒ'hæmə'reɪ/ former name (until 1924) for **KHORRAMSHAHR.**

**Mo-ha-ve Des-ert** variant spelling of **MOJAVE DESERT.**

**Mo-hawk** /'mɒ,hɒk/ ► n. (pl. **same** or **Mohawks**) 1 a member of an American Indian people, one of the Five Nations, originally inhabiting parts of eastern New York. 2 the Iroquoian language of this people. 3 a hairstyle with the head shaved except for a strip of hair from the middle of the forehead to the back of the neck, typically stiffened to stand erect or in spikes. [erroneously associated with the Mohawk people (see **HURON**)] 4 Figure Skating a step from either edge of the skate to the same edge on the other foot in the opposite direction.

► adj. of or relating to the Mohawks or their language.

**ORIGIN** from Narragansett *mohowawog*, literally 'man-eaters.'

**Mo-hawk Riv-er** a river that flows across central New York for 140 miles (230 km) to join the Hudson River above Albany. The Mohawk Valley is the site of much of the Erie Canal.

**Mo-he-gan** /mɒ'hɛgən/ (also **Mohican** /-'hɛkən/) ► n. (pl. **same** or **Mohegans**) 1 a member of an American Indian people formerly inhabiting eastern Connecticut. Compare with **MAHICAN.** 2 the Algonquian language of this people, closely related to Pequot.

► adj. of or relating to the Mohegans or their language.

**ORIGIN** from Mohegan, literally 'people of the tidal waters.'

**mo-hel** /moɪl, mɒ(h)el/ ► n. a person who performs the Jewish rite of circumcision.

**ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: from Hebrew *mōhēl*.

**Mo-hen-jo-Da-ro** /mɒ'hɛnjə'dɑ:rə/ an ancient city of the civilization of the Indus valley (c.2600–1700 BC), now a major archaeological site in Pakistan, southwest of Sukkur.

**Mo-hi-can** /mɒ'hɛkən/ ► adj. & n. old-fashioned variant spelling of **MAHICAN** or **MOHEGAN.**

**Mo-ho** /'mɒ,hə/ ► n. Geology short for **MOHOROVIČIĆ DISCONTINUITY.**

**Mo-holy-Nagy** /mə'hɒlə'nɛɪ, mɒhɒli'nɛɪdɪ/, László (1895–1946), US painter, sculptor, and photographer; born in Hungary. He pioneered the experimental use of plastic materials, light, photography, and film.

**Mo-ho-ro-vi-čič dis-con-ti-nu-i-ty** /,mɒhə'rɒvɪ,tʃɪtʃ/ ► n. Geology the boundary surface between the earth's crust and the mantle, lying at a depth of about 6–7 miles (10–12 km) under the ocean bed and about 24–30 miles (40–50 km) under the continents.

**ORIGIN** 1930s: named after Andrija *Mohorovičić* (1857–1936), Yugoslav seismologist.

**Mohs' scale** /mɒz, mɒs, 'mɒsəz/ ► n. a scale of hardness used in classifying minerals. It runs from 1 to 10 using a series of reference minerals, and a position on the scale depends on the ability to scratch minerals rated lower.

**ORIGIN** late 19th cent.: named after Friedrich *Mohs* (1773–1839), German mineralogist.

**moi** /mwə/ ► exclam. (usu. **moi?**) humorous me? (used esp. when accused of something that one knows one is guilty of): *sarcastic, moi?*

**ORIGIN** French, 'me.'

**moi-dore** /'moɪ,dɔr/ ► n. a Portuguese gold coin, current in England in the early 18th century and then worth about 27 shillings.

**ORIGIN** from Portuguese *moeda d'ouro* 'money of gold.'

**moi-e-ty** /'moɪetɪ/ ► n. (pl. **moieties**) formal or technical each of two parts into which a thing is or can be divided. ■ Anthropology each of two social or ritual groups into which a people is divided, esp. among Australian Aborigines and some American Indians. ■ a part or portion, esp. a lesser share. ■ Chemistry a distinct part of a large molecule: *the enzyme removes the sulfate moiety.*

**ORIGIN** late Middle English: from Old French *moite*, from Latin *medietas* 'middle', from *medius* 'mid, middle.'

**moil** /moɪl/ ► v. [no obj.] work hard: *men who moiled for gold.* ■ (with adverbial) move around in confusion or agitation: *a crowd of men and women moiled in the smoky haze.*

► n. hard work; drudgery. ■ turmoil; confusion: *the moil of his intimate thoughts.*

**ORIGIN** late Middle English (in the sense 'moisten or bedaub'): from Old French *moillier* 'paddle in mud, moisten', based on Latin *mollis* 'soft.' The sense 'work' dates from the mid 16th cent., often in the phrase *toil and moil.*

**Moi-rai** /'moɪ,rɪ/ Greek Mythology the Fates.

**moi-re** /'mɔrə, mwä-, mwär/ (also **moiré** /mwä'rə, mɔr-/) ► n. silk fabric that has been subjected to heat and pressure rollers after weaving to give it a rippled appearance.

► adj. (of silk) having a rippled, lustrous finish. ■ denoting or showing a pattern of irregular wavy lines like that of such silk, produced by the superposition at a slight angle of two sets of closely spaced lines.

**ORIGIN** mid 17th cent.: French *moiré* 'mohair' (the original fabric); the variant *moiré* 'given a watered appearance' (past participle of *moirer*, from *moire*).

**Mois-san** /'mwä'sæn/, Ferdinand Frédéric Henri (1852–1907), French chemist. In 1886 he succeeded



PRONUNCIATION KEY ə ago, up; ɔr over, fur; a hat; ā ate; ā car; e let; ē see; i fit; i by; ŋg sing; ô go; ô law, for; oi toy; oo good; oo goo; ou out; TH thin; TH them; ZH vision