

Nota Bene: P

P

pacify: to bring to a point of peace

paean: a joyous expression of praise

pagination: the numbers by which one marks the pages in a book

paladins: outstanding protagonists of a cause

palatable: agreeable in taste

palaver: a parley or conference; charming but insubstantial talk meant to persuade or cajole

palpable: touchable or able to be perceived

pandemic: widespread

pandemonium: chaos; wild, uproarious, and noisy tumult

pander: to appeal to the worst in someone

pantheism: all God; the identification of God with the physical world

papal: pertaining to the pope

parable: to set alongside; to equal

paradigm: an example; an ideal; a pattern

paradox: a seemingly self-contradictory statement that expresses a valid idea or potentially true statement

paragon: a peerless model or pattern of perfection

paralysis: loss or damage of movement ability; the loss of feeling in a part of the body due to disease or injury

parameter: limit or boundary

parenthetical: contained within parenthesis; something that qualifies or explains in a manner setting it off from a main idea

pariance: a way of speaking

parody: an imitation created for comic effect; a caricature

paroxysm: an outburst

parse: to break a sentence down into grammatical components; to analyze bit by bit

parsimonious: stingy

particular: an instantiation of a universal

particular quantifier: *something* is such that ...

partisan: reflecting strong allegiance to a particular party or cause

passim: throughout (abbreviated pass.)

pastoral: simple and rustic, bucolic, rural, country

pathos: a quality arousing or evoking pity or sorrow

patrician: from patricius, a member of a noble Roman family

patrimony: heritage or legacy; a church endowment

patron: a special guardian or protector; a wealthy or influential supporter of the arts

paucity: smallness of number

pax vobiscum: peace be with you

pay: from *pacare* - to make peace

peccadillo: a minor offense, a lapse

pecuniary: pertaining to money

pedagogue: an educator or schoolteacher

pedantic: ostentatious in one's learning

pedestrian: unimaginative, ordinary

pejorative: disparaging

penultimate: next-to-last

penurious: miserly

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per annum: per year
per capita: per head
perambulate: to walk around
peregrinations: to travel or journey
peremptory: allowing for no rebuttal or overturning
perennial: enduring
perfidious: disloyal, treacherous
perfunctory: mundane, routine
perimeter: the outer edge of an enclosed shape or area; in mathematics, the measure of the distance described by this edge
peripatetic: wandering; moving or traveling from place to place
periphery: the area at the extreme of a given boundary; the outskirts
perjure: to live or give false and misleading testimony; testifying in court to something one knows is untrue
permeate: to spread through or penetrate
pernicious: tending to cause insidious harm or injury
perpetuate: to make everlasting; to prolong memory or use (of a thing)
persnickety: fussy and over attentive to small details
perspicacity: insightfulness
perspicuity: clear or easy to understand
persona: an actor's mask, a character in a play, the person
persona non grata: an displeasing person
personification: the embodiment of a thing or an abstract idea in human form
peruse: to read through with attention
pervasive: spreading throughout
petitio principii: see **begging the question**
petulant: impatiently peevish; showing annoyance or irritation with minor problems
phenomenalism: the view that what we know is mind-dependent, so that knowledge is limited to appearance (the data of inner or outer sense)
philander: to engage in amorous flirtations or exploits with someone who one cannot or does not intend to marry (in reference to men)
philanthropy: altruistic concern for human welfare and advancement
philately: the collection of stamps or other postal matter as a hobby
philistine: someone who is smugly ignorant and uncultured
philology: the study of literary texts and written records; the establishment of their authenticity and their original form
philosophy: the love of wisdom
physiognomy: the law of the face; to determine one's character by the study of one's facial features
physicalism: pure and absolute empiricism
picayune: petty; something trifling or unimportant
picturesque: reminiscent of or suggesting a (painted) picture; a striking or unusually interesting scene
piety: devotion; religious reverence
pinnacle: the topmost point
pique: to injure a person's pride and thereby engender harsh feelings
pith: the core, the essential part; in biology, the central strand of tissue in the stems of most vascular plants
placate: to soothe or appease
placebo: a medicine having no fixed medical purpose or healing property given either to pacify a patient or, as a control method, to test the effectiveness of another drug

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placid: unmarked by disturbance; complacent
plaintive: expressing suffering or melancholy
plague: a broad-based affliction
plastic: able to be molded or reshaped
platitute: a commonplace or useless remark
platonix: free from sexual desire
plaudit: an expression of gratitude or praise
plausible: apparently believable
platitute: a trite remark or saying; a cliché
plebeian: from plebius meaning "common people"
plenitude: abundance
plethora: excessive oversupply
pliant: supple
plight: predicament, especially arising from a solemn obligation
plummet: to dive or plunge
plutocracy: rule by the rich
poignant: appealing to the emotions
poisoning the well: an informal logical fallacy, a variety of the abusive **ad hominem** argument so named because, by attacking the good faith or intellectual honesty of the opponent, it undermines continued rational exchange
polarize: to encourage elements or components to occupy opposite ends of a spectrum; something that divides or sows discord
polemic: a controversial argument
polity: a system of government
polyglot: a person who speaks a number of languages
polymath: a person who understands most, if not all, the many fields of mathematics
polyphony: having two or more voices or parts, each with an independent melody, but all harmonizing; contrapuntal (counterpoint)
ponderous: unwieldy and bulky; oppressively dull
pons asinorum: the bridge for donkeys or dunces
pontifex maximus: high priest
pontificate: to speak in a pompous, arrogantly dogmatic manner
portend: to suggest or foretell
poseur: someone who pretends to be what he is not
posit: to stipulate; to present or assume something
positivism: a philosophy that assumes that the only true knowledge is scientific or empirical knowledge
possibility: it *may* be the case that ...
possible world: a situation associated with another, *s*, where things actually are as they merely might be in *s*.
post hoc ergo propter hoc: after this, therefore because of it; a variety of the fallacy of false cause, so-called because it concludes that what occurs after an event occurs because of that event
post mortem: after death
postulate: an hypothesis or special notion; an assumption applicable to a specific field of knowledge
potable: drinkable
potentate: a powerful person
praemonitus praemunitus: forewarned, forearmed
pragmatism: the view that the meaning of a statement is its practical consequences in experience, and that truth is satisfactory problem-solving (i.e., success); mere "know-how" without inspiration, unless it is the

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inspiration of monetary profit

precarious: insecure

precedent: an earlier occurrence that serves as an example for a decision

precept: a general principle or law

precipice: a cliff

precipitate: to spur or activate

preclude: to prevent, to hinder

precursor: a forerunner, a predecessor

precocious: unusually advance or mature in development

predicate: for the grammatically simplest kind of sentence, the part which expresses whatever is said about what the sentence is about

preemptive: possessing and acting on a prior right; to act before others can

premise: in an argument, the propositions upon which inference is based

preponderance: a superiority in weight, size or quantity; a majority

presage: to foretell, to anticipate

prescience: foreknowledge or foresight

presentiment: a sense that something (good or evil) is about to happen

presumption: an informal logical fallacy committed when the conclusion of an argument depends critically upon some tacit assumption that is dubious, or unwarranted, or false

presupposition: an elementary assumption or starting point; a basic commitment or foundational perspective

pretentious: characterized by assumption of dignity or importance

prevaricate: to lie, to equivocate, to avoid revealing the true nature of one's position

prima donna: the leading female singer in an opera company; a self-centered member of a group or organization who feels that his contributions are so important as to merit special treatment

prima facie: at first appearance; before investigation

prima lux: dawn or first light

primacy: state of being the utmost in importance; preeminence

primordial: original

principle of Indifference: given a number of possibilities, with no relevant difference between them, they all have the same probability

prior probability: the probability of some statement before any evidence is taken into account

pristine: pure, undefiled

pro bono publico: for the public good

pro tempore: for the time being, temporarily

probity: goodness, integrity

proclivity: a predisposition

procure: to obtain by using particular care and effort

process philosophy: the view that all reality is united into one interdependent, evolving whole

procrustean: the name of a fabled thief of ancient Greece who stretched or amputated his victims in order to make them fit a bed exactly; seeking to enforce doctrines or theories by violently eliminating all possible alternative viewpoints

procure: to obtain

prodigal: with reference to the parable of the prodigal son in the Gospels, one who wanders about wantonly wasting his family inheritance; wasteful or extravagant

prodigality: the condition of being wastefully extravagant

prodigy: a person possessing extraordinary skill or talent

profligate: shamelessly immoral

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profundity: depth of reasoning or insight
progenitor: an ancestor who can be traced back through the direct line
prognosticate: to predict
progressive: forward-moving
proliferate: to increase or multiply
prolixity: a diffuseness; a rambling and verbose quality
promiscuity: indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
promulgate: to put forward publicly
prophetic: auspicious, predictive of what is to come
propagate: to cause to grow; to foster
proper name: a name that is not a description
propinquity: nearness, especially with regard to place, sequence, or heredity
propitiation: to appease the wrath of someone; to make favorably inclined
proposition: a statement, what is typically asserted using a declarative sentence, and hence always either true or false (although its truth or falsity may be unknown)
propound: to set forth
propriety: closeness, nearness
prosaic: commonplace or workaday
proscribe: to prohibit
proselytize: to attempt to convert to one's own religious faith
protasis: the antecedent in a hypothetical argument
portean: capable of taking many shapes
protégé: a person under the patronage, protection, or care of someone interested in his or her career or welfare
protocol: formal etiquette, especially as practiced in diplomatic circles
prototype: first kind or model
proverbial: calling to mind (a familiar) proverb
providence: divine care
provocative: stimulating or combative
proximate: nearest to; in a chain of causes and effects, the proximate cause is the event nearest to the event whose explanation is sought
prudent: exercising due care with regard to one's interests
prurient: lewd; an excessive focus on sex
psychosomatic: pertaining to disorders having emotional or mental (rather than physical) causes
puerile: boyish; juvenile
pugilism: boxing
pugnacious: prone to quarrels or fights
pulchritude: beauty
punctilious: overly attentive to trifling details
pundit: someone who offers opinions in an authoritative style
pungency: marked by having a sharp, biting quality
purify: to make pure, clean, or perfect
puritanical: reminiscent of the Puritans (in terms of their so-called "strict" lifestyle and "narrow" view of morality), a pejorative that strikes ultimately at the roots of Biblical ethics
purlieus: neighborhood
purported: supposed
putative: reputed or generally regarded by common assent
pyrrhic: refers to the ancient King Pyrrhus of Epirus, who observed after a particularly bloody battle that

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another similar victory would destroy his kingdom; gained at an unjustifiably high cost