

The Essential Desk Reference



The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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Preface

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legion • lessen

tion of ex-servicemen — **le-gion-ary** \jə-'ner-ē\ *n* — **leg-ion-naire** \lɛ-'jə-'nar\ *n*

Legionnaires' disease also **Legionnaire's disease** \-nerz-\ *n*: a lobar pneumonia caused by a bacterium

legis *abbr* legislation; legislative; legislature

leg-is-late \lɛ-'jəs-'lāt\ *vb* -lat·ed, -lat·ing: to make or enact laws; also: to bring about by legislation — **leg-is-la-tor** \-'lā-'tər\ *n*

leg-is-la-tion \lɛ-'jəs-'lā-'shən\ *n* 1: the action of legisla-tion 2: laws made by a legislative body

leg-is-la-tive \lɛ-'jəs-'lā-'tɪv\ *adj* 1: having the power of legisla-tion 2: of or relating to a legislature or legislature

leg-is-la-ture \lɛ-'jəs-'lā-'chər\ *n*: an organized body of persons having the authority to make laws

le-git \lɪ-'jɪt\ *adj*, *slang*: LEGITIMATE

le-git-i-mate \lɪ-'jɪ-'tə-'mæt\ *adj* 1: lawfully begotten 2: GENUINE 3: LAWFUL 4: conforming to recognized principles or accepted rules or standards — **le-git-i-ma-cy** \-'mæ-'sē\ *n* — **le-git-i-mate-ly** *adv*

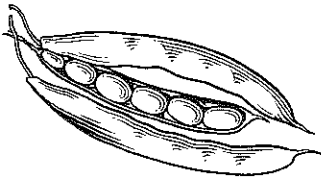
le-git-i-mate \-'māt\ *vb*: to make legitimate

le-git-i-mise *Brit var of* LEGITIMIZE

le-git-i-mize \lɪ-'jɪ-'tə-'mīz\ *vb* -mized; -miz·ing: LEGIT-I-MATE

leg-man \lɛg-'mæn\ *n* 1: a reporter assigned usu. to gath-er information 2: an assistant who gathers information and runs errands

le-gume \lɛ-'gyūm, lɪ-'gyūm\ *n* [F] 1: any of a large fam-ily of plants having fruits that are dry pods and split when ripe and including important food and forage plants (as beans and clover); also: the part (as seeds or pods) of a legume used as food 2: the pod of a legume — **le-gu-mi-nous** \lɪ-'gyū-'mə-'nəs\ *adj*



legume 2

an ally to aid in a common cause with payment made by a return of the items or their use in the cause or by a sim-ilar transfer of other goods and services

length \lɛnθ\ *n* 1: the longer or longest dimension of an object; also: a measured distance 2: duration or extent in time or space 3: the length of something taken as a unit of measure 4: a single piece of a series of pieces that may be joined together (a ~ of pipe) — **at length** 1: in full 2: FINALLY

length-en \lɛŋ-'θən\ *vb*: to make or become longer

♦ **Synonyms** EXTEND, ELONGATE, PROLONG, PROTRACT

length-wise \lɛnθ-'wīz\ *adv*: in the direction of the length — **length-wise** *adj*

lengthy \lɛŋ-'θi\ *adj* **length-i-er**; -**est** 1: protracted ex-cessively 2: EXTENDED, LONG (a ~ journey)

le-nient \lɛ-'nē-'ont, -nɪənt\ *adj*: of mild and tolerant dis-position or effect ♦ **Synonyms** INDULGENT, FORBEAR-ING, MERCIFUL, TOLERANT — **le-ni-en-cy** \lɛ-'nē-'ən-'sē, -nɪən-'sē\ *n* — **le-ni-en-ty** *adv*

len-i-tive \lɛ-'nā-'tɪv\ *adj*: alleviating pain or harshness

len-i-ty \lɛ-'nā-'tē\ *n*: LENIENCY

lens \lɛnz\ *n* [L *lent*, *lens* lentil; so called fr. the shape of a convex lens] 1: a curved piece of glass or plastic used singly or combined in an optical instrument for forming an image; also: a device for focusing radiation other than light 2: a transparent body in the eye that focuses light rays on receptors at the back of the eye

Lent \lɛnt\ *n*: a 40-day period of penitence and fasting observed from Ash Wednesday to Easter by many churches — **Lent-en** \lɛn-'tən\ *adj*

len-til \lɛn-'tɪl\ *n*: a Eurasian annual legume grown for its flat edible seeds and for fodder; also: its seed

Leo \lɛ-'ō\ *n* [L, lit., lion] 1: a zodiacal constellation be-tween Cancer and Virgo usu. pictured as a lion 2: the 5th sign of the zodiac in astrology; also: one born under this sign

le-one \lɛ-'ōn\ *n*, *pl* **leones** or **leone** — see MONEY table

le-o-nine \lɛ-'ō-'nɪn\ *adj*: of, relating to, or resembling a lion

leop-ard \lɛ-'pərd\ *n*: a large usu. tawny and black-spot-ted cat of southern Asia and Africa

le-o-tard \lɛ-'ə-'tərd\ *n*: a close-fitting garment worn esp. by dancers and for exercise

lep-er \lɛ-'pər\ *n* 1: a person affected with leprosy 2: OUTCAST

lep-re-chaun \lɛ-'prə-'kæn\ *n*: a mischievous elf of Irish folklore

lep-ro-sy \lɛ-'prə-'sē\ *n*: a chronic bacterial disease marked esp. if not treated by slow-growing swellings with deformity and loss of sensation of affected parts — **lep-rous** \-'prəs\ *adj*

lep-tin \lɛp-'tɪn\ *n*: a hormone that is produced by fat-containing cells and plays a role in body weight regula-tion

lep-ton \lɛp-'tæn\ *n*, *pl* **lep-ta** \-'tə\ : a former monetary unit equal to 1/100 drachma

les-bi-an \lɛz-'bē-'ən\ *n* [fr. the reputed homosexual group associated with the poet Sappho of Lesbos] : a woman who is a homosexual — **les-bi-an-ism** \-'ə-'ni-'zəm\ *n*

lese ma-jes-té or **lese maj-es-ty** \lɛz-'mə-'jə-'stē, 'lɛz-'lɛz-\ *n* [MF *lese majesté*, fr. L *laesa majestas*, lit., injured majesty] : an offense violating the dignity of a sovereign

le-sion \lɛ-'zhən\ *n*: an abnormal structural change in the body due to injury or disease; esp: one clearly marked off from healthy tissue around it

less \lɛs\ *adj*, *comparative of* LITTLE 1: FEWER (~ than six) 2: of lower rank, degree, or importance 3: SMALL-ER; also: more limited in quantity

less *adv*, *comparative of* LITTLE : to a lesser extent or de-gree

less *n*, *pl* **less** 1: a smaller portion 2: something of less importance

less *prep*: diminished by: MINUS (list price ~ the dis-count)

-less \lɛs\ *adj* *suffix* 1: destitute of: not having (child-less) 2: unable to be acted on or to act (in a specified way) (dauntless)

les-see \lɛ-'sē\ *n*: a tenant under a lease

lessen \lɛ-'sən\ *vb*: to make or become less ♦ **Synonyms**