

Features OF DICTIONARY ENTRIES

headword (e.g. messenger)
see § 4.1, p. xii

part of speech (e.g. ► **A** noun.)
indicated by arrow and bold letter
see § 4.3, p. xiii

sense (e.g. **2, 3**)
indicated by bold numerals
see § 4.10, p. xvii

date (e.g. M17)
indicates a sense's first recorded use
see § 4.8, p. xvi

phrases (e.g. *express messenger*, *King's messenger*)
introduced by *Phrases*:
see § 4.14, p. xix

combinations (e.g. *messenger-at-arms*, *messenger cable*)
introduced by *Comb.*:
see § 4.14, p. xx

derivative (e.g. ■ *messengership*)
introduced by square bullet ■
see § 4.16, p. xx

phrase (e.g. *in mimicry* of)
indicated by bold
see § 4.14, p. xix

cross-reference (e.g. MÜLLERIAN)
indicated by small capitals
see § 5, p. xxi

messenger /'mesɪndʒə/ noun & verb. ME.

[Old & mod. French *messenger*, formed as MESSAGE: see -ER². For the intrusive *n* cf. *passenger*, *scavenger*, etc.]

► **A** noun. **1** A person who carries a message or goes on an errand for another; a person employed to carry messages. ME. ► **b** A bearer of (a specified message). ME. ► **c** BIOLOGY. A molecule or substance that carries (esp. genetic) information. Freq. attrib. M20.

2 A person sent forward to prepare the way; a herald, precursor, a harbinger. arch. ME.

3 A government official employed to carry dispatches and formerly to apprehend State prisoners; a courier. LME.

4 a Esp. NAUTICAL. An endless rope, cable, or chain used with a capstan to haul a cable or drive a powered winch etc. Also, a light line used to haul or support a larger cable. M17. ► **b** A device able to be sent down a line, esp. in order to trip a mechanism.

1 D. CARKEET You can't shoot the messenger for bringing bad news. M. FLANAGAN Jason asked for a cheque to be sent round by messenger. 2 fig.; SHAKES. *Jul. Caes.* You grey lines That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

Phrases: express messenger: see EXPRESS adjective. **King's messenger**, **Queen's messenger** a courier employed by the British Government to carry important official papers within Britain and abroad. **second messenger: see SECOND adjective.**

Comb.: messenger-at-arms Scot. an official employed to execute writs from the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary; **messenger cable** a cable used to support a power cable or other conductor of electricity; a suspension cable or wire; **messenger RNA** BIOLOGY RNA which is synthesized in a cell nucleus with a nucleotide sequence complementary to the coding sequence of a gene (transcription), and passes from the nucleus to a ribosome, where its nucleotide sequence determines the amino-acid sequence of a protein synthesized there (translation); abbreviation *mRNA*; **messenger wire** = **messenger cable** above.

► **B** verb trans. Send by messenger. (rare before L20.) E19.

■ **messengership** noun the position or function of a messenger. E17

mimicry /'mɪmɪkri/ noun. L17.

[from MIMIC noun + -RY.]

1 The action, practice, or art of mimicking; an act, instance, or example of this. L17.

2 BIOLOGY. A close external resemblance which (part of) one living creature (or occas. a nest or other structure) bears to (part of) another, or to some inanimate object. E19.

1 BARONESS ORCZY The mimicry was so perfect, the tone of the voice so accurately produced. DENNIS POTTER When she told them what the wicked old witch said, her own face twisted and snarled in chilling mimicry. D. FRASER With his gift of mimicry, he also caught the great man's manner perfectly. **in mimicry** of in imitation of. 2 R. DAWKINS A remarkable perfection of mimicry on the part of the cuckoo eggs.

MÜLLERIAN MERTENSIAN mimicry. Müllerian mimicry: see MÜLLERIAN adjective.

pronunciation (/ 'mesɪndʒə/)

see § 4.2, p. xii

etymology (e.g. [Old & mod. French... etc.])

indicated by bold square brackets
see § 4.9, p. xvii

subsense (e.g. ► **b**)

indicated by small arrow and bold letter
see § 4.10, p. xvii

illustrative quotation block

indicated by a tinted box
see § 4.13, p. xix

date (e.g. L17)

indicates a word's first recorded use
see § 4.8, p. xvi

illustrative quotation

see § 4.13, p. xix

cross-reference (e.g. MERTENSIAN)

indicated by italic small capitals
see § 5, p. xxi

dagger (†)

indicates a word is obsolete
see § 4.1, p. xii

†**mop** /mɒp/ *noun*¹. ME.
[Origin uncertain; perh. rel. to *MOPE* *noun, verb*.]
1 A fool, a simpleton. Only in ME.
2 A baby, a toddler; a rag doll. LME–L16.
Survives as 1st elem. of *MOPPET*, *MOPSY*.

date range (e.g. LME–L16)

indicates a sense's first and last recorded usage
see § 4.8, p. xvi

major semantic divisions (e.g. ▶ I, ▶ II)

indicated by arrow and bold roman numeral
see § 4.10, p. xvii

mop /mɒp/ *noun*². Also (earlier) **†map(p)**. L15.
[Origin uncertain; perh. ult. connected with *map* in *mappa* (see *MAP* *noun*¹). In branch II from the verb.]

variant form (e.g. †map(p))

(the dagger indicates that it is obsolete)
see § 4.6, p. xv

▶ **I** A long stick with a bundle of coarse yarn or cloth or a piece of foam rubber or similar absorbent material fastened to one end so as to soak up liquid easily, used in cleaning floors (also *floor mop*) and nautically for laying on pitch; (in full *dish-mop*), a smaller form of this for washing dishes. L15.

2 A thick mass of something, esp. of or of hair. E19.
3 Any of various small instruments resembling a mop, as (a) a circular pad of cloth used for polishing silver with rouge; (b) a surgical instrument with a sponge at the end of a handle, for applying medicated fluids or removing purulent matter. M19.

1 B. REID A lady who was cleaning the floor with a bucket and mop. 2 R. CROMPTON Thomas's blue eyes, beneath a mop of curls. **mops and brooms** *slang* half-drunk. Mrs Mop: see Mrs.

label (e.g. *slang*)

showing register
see § 4.5, p. xiv

cross-reference (e.g. Mrs)

indicated by small capitals
see § 5, p. xxi

▶ **II** **mop-up**, the action or an act of mopping something up. E20.

label (e.g. *US*)

showing regional distribution
see § 4.5, p. xiv

5 A rug, wipe, or clean with a mop. L20.
Comb.: **mop-board** *US* a skirting-board; **mophead** (a) the head of a mop; (b) (a person with) a thick head of hair; **mopstick** the handle of a floor-mop; **mop-up**: see sense 4 above.

homonym numbers (e.g. 4, 5)

indicate different words with the same spelling
see § 4.4, p. xiv

mop /mɒp/ *noun*³. *arch.* L16.
[Rel. to *MOP* *verb*¹.]

label (e.g. *arch.*)

showing currency
see § 4.5, p. xiv

A grimace, orig. esp. one made by a monkey. Chiefly in *mops and mows*.

bold italics (e.g. *mutatis mutandis*)

indicate a word is not fully naturalized in English
see § 4.1, p. xii

†**mop** /mɒp/ *noun*⁴. M16–M18.
[Origin unkn.]
A young whiting or gurnard. Also *whiting-mop*, *gurnard-mop*.

inflected form (e.g. *-pp-*)

see § 4.7, p. xv

mop /mɒp/ *noun*⁵. M17.
[Perh. from a mop (*MOP* *noun*²) carried by maidservants seeking employment.]
ENGLISH HISTORY. An annual fair at which servants seeking to be hired assembled together. Also *mop fair*.

mop /mɒp/ *verb*¹ *intrans.* *arch.* Inf. *-pp-*. M16.
[Rel. to *MOP* *noun*³.]
Make a grimace. Chiefly in *mop and mow*.

plural form (e.g. *morae*)

with pronunciation /ˈmɔːriː/
see § 4.7, p. xv

mora /ˈmɔːrə/ *noun*¹. Pl. **morae** /ˈmɔːriː/. M16.
[Latin = delay.]

1 *SCOTS LAW*. Undue delay in the assertion of a claim etc. M16.

† **2** A short space of time; a delay. *rare*. M–L17.
3 a A unit of metrical time equal to the duration of a short syllable. M19. ▶ *LINGUISTICS*. The minimal unit of duration of a speech sound. M20.

mutatis mutandis /mjuːˈtɑːtɪs mjuːˈtændɪs, muː-, -iːs/ *adverbial phr.* L15.

[Latin, lit. 'things being changed that have to be changed'.]
Making the necessary changes; with due alteration of details.

J. BAYLEY Both gifts he shares, *mutatis mutandis*, with the American poets.