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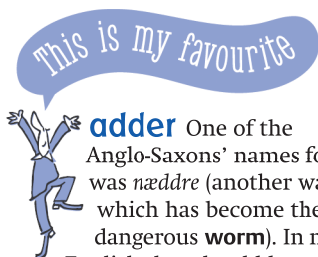
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neck. Adam (the first man, according to the Bible) ate a forbidden apple and the story goes that a piece of it stuck in his throat.

add comes from Latin *addere*. Originally it meant 'to join one thing to another', and it only took on its mathematical use in the 16th century.



adder One of the Anglo-Saxons' names for a snake was *næddre* (another was *wyrm*, which has become the much less dangerous **worm**). In modern English that should have turned into *nadder* (and actually that form of the word survived in some northern English dialects until quite recently), but something odd happened to it — it lost its 'n'. This probably happened because when someone said 'a nadder', people weren't quite sure whether they'd said 'a nadder' or 'an adder' — and the idea that the word might really be **adder** gradually got stuck in people's minds. (To find out about other words where a similar thing happened, look at the entries for **nickname** and **umpire**.) Meanwhile, **adder** moved on from being a general word for a snake to being the name of a particular small poisonous snake (as did its German relative *Natter*, which has never lost its 'n').

address originally meant 'to straighten', and it comes ultimately from Latin *directum* meaning 'straight or direct'. In Old French the verb derived from this became *adresser*, and this was borrowed to give the English form. The link with the current meaning is that when you address a letter you direct it to somebody.

adieu was originally a French word for 'goodbye', and comes from two French words: *à* meaning 'to' and *Dieu* meaning 'God'.

adjective comes from Old French *adjectif*. This came from Latin *adject-* meaning 'added', from the verb *adiciere*.

adjourn can mean 'to break off a meeting until another time', or 'to break off and go somewhere else'. There was an Old French phrase *à jour nommé* which meant 'to an appointed day'. The verb *ajourner* was derived from this, and that is where **adjourn** comes from.

adjust comes from French, from an old word *ajuster*. This came from Old French *ajoster* meaning 'to approximate', based on Latin *ad-* meaning 'to' and *juxta* meaning 'close to' (from which we also get the word **juxtaposition**).

ad lib If you *ad lib* you say or do something without preparing or rehearsing it. **Ad lib** can also be an adverb, meaning 'as you like' or 'freely'. The words are a shortening of Latin *ad libitum* meaning 'at your pleasure'.

admiral There may not seem to be much connection between **admirals** (senior naval officers) and *emirs* (rulers of Muslim states), but in fact they started out as the same thing. The linking factor is 'command'. The Arabic word *amir* means 'commander' (hence English **emir**). It came to be used in various titles of rank, such as *amir-al-bahr* meaning 'commander of the sea' and *amir-al-ma* meaning 'commander of the water'. Somehow, when speakers of European languages came into contact with these titles, the first part, *amir-al*, began to get detached and used on its own, even though it literally meant only 'commander of the'. Scholars who wrote Latin in the Middle Ages used it, and they put the Latin prefix *ad-* on to the front of it — which is where we get **admiral** from. It still meant 'commander' in general; it wasn't until around 1500 that the modern meaning 'naval commander' became firmly fixed.

admire comes from Latin *admirari*, made up of *ad-* meaning 'at' and *mirari*

meaning 'to wonder'. When it came into English in the 16th century it meant 'to marvel at', but gradually the weaker sense 'to approve' took over. Related words are **marvel** and **miracle**.

admit comes from Latin *admittere*, made up of *ad-* meaning 'to' and *mittere* meaning 'to send'. Other words that come from this verb include **mission**, **transmit**, and **commit**.

ad nauseam If you do something ad nauseam, you do it until people are sick of it. The words come from Latin and mean 'to sickness'.

ado If you do something without more ado or without further ado, you do it without wasting any more time. **Ado** was originally (in northern English dialect, borrowed from Old Norse) *at do*, an alternative way of saying 'to do'. It later became a noun meaning 'activity or fuss'.

adolescent If we track the words back to their origins, adolescents are people who are growing because they're being fed, and **adults** have finished growing. The starting point of all this is the Latin verb *alere*, which meant 'to give food to, to nourish' (it's also where we get **alimentary canal**, the technical term for the stomach and intestines). A new verb *alescere* was formed from this, meaning 'to be given food', and hence 'to grow'. Add the prefix *ad-* meaning 'to' to the front of *alescere* and you get *adolescere* meaning 'to grow up'. Its present participle *adolescens* meaning 'growing up' is where we get **adolescent**, and its past participle *adultus* meaning 'grown up' is the source of our **adult**.

adopt comes via French from Latin *adoptare*, made up of *ad-* meaning 'to' and *optare* meaning 'to choose'.

adore comes via Old French from Latin *adorare* meaning 'to worship', made up of *ad-* meaning 'to' and *orare* meaning 'to pray'.

adrenalin The hormone adrenalin is made by the adrenal glands, above the kidneys, and stimulates the nervous system. The word comes from **adrenal**, which is made up of *ad-* meaning 'to' and **renal** meaning 'to do with the kidneys' (from Latin *renes* 'kidneys').

advantage comes from Old French *avantage*, based on *avant* meaning 'before'. If you were before (in the sense of 'ahead of') other people, then you were in a better position, i.e. you had an advantage.

adventure Originally there was nothing exciting about an adventure — it was simply 'something that happens'. Let's look at its origin, the Latin verb *advenire*. That meant 'to arrive'. Latin verbs had a future participle, and the feminine future participle of *advenire* was *adventura* — 'about to arrive'. This came to be used as a noun, meaning at first 'what comes or happens by chance', and later 'luck' (it was still being used in this way in English until as late as the end of the 17th century). But as human beings always seem to be expecting the worst, words meaning 'what happens by chance' do tend to turn sour, and that was what happened to **adventure**: people started to use it to mean 'danger', and then 'a dangerous undertaking'. That's how it came to have its present-day meaning.

adverb comes from Latin *adverbium*, made up of *ad-* meaning 'to' and *verbum* meaning 'word or verb'.

advertise comes from Old French *advertiss-*, from the verb *advertir*. This came from the Latin verb *advertere* meaning 'to turn towards'. When it was originally borrowed into English it meant 'to notice'; this then became 'to give notice of', and finally 'to publicize'.

advice originally meant 'an opinion or point of view' and comes from Old French *avis* meaning 'an opinion'. This was based on Latin *ad* meaning 'to' and

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