

PRECES'SION, *n.* [Fr. *precession*; It. *precessione*; from the L. *præcessus*, *præcedo*, to go before.]

1. Literally, the act of going before, but in this sense rarely or never used.
2. In astronomy, the *precession of the equinox*, is an annual motion of the equinox, or point when the ecliptic intersects the equator, to the westward, amounting to 50 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". This precession was discovered by Hipparchus, a century and a half before the christian era, though it is alleged that the astronomers of India had discovered it long before. At that time, the point of the autumnal equinox was about six degrees to the eastward of the star called *spica virginis*. In 1750, that is, about nineteen hundred years after, this point was observed to be about 20° 21' westward of that star. Hence it appears that the equinoctial points will make an entire revolution in about 25,745 years.

PRE'CINCT, *n.* [L. *præcinctus*, *præcingo*, to encompass; *præ* and *cingo*, to surround or gird.]

1. The limit, bound or exterior line encompassing a place; as the *precincts* of light. *Milton.*
2. Bounds of jurisdiction, or the whole territory comprehended within the limits of authority.
Take the body of A B, if to be found within your *precincts*. *Technical Law.*
3. A territorial district or division.
It is to be observed that this word is generally used in the plural, except in the third sense.
In case of non-acceptance [of the collector] the parish or *precinct* shall proceed to a new choice. *Law of Massachusetts.*

PRECIOUSITY, for *preciousness* or value, nor used. *Brown. More.*

PRE'CIOUS, *a.* [Fr. *précieux*; L. *pretiosus*, from *pretium*, price. See *Praise*.]

1. Of great price; costly; as a *precious* stone.
2. Of great value or worth; very valuable.
She is more *precious* than rubies. Prov. iii.
3. Highly valued; much esteemed.
The word of the Lord was *precious* in those days; there was no open vision. 1 Sam. iii.
4. Worthless; in irony and contempt. *Locke.*

Precious metals, gold and silver, so called on account of their value.

PRE'CIOUSLY, *adv.* Valuably; to a great price.

2. Contemptibly; in irony.

PRE'CIOUSNESS, *n.* Valuableness; great value; high price. *Wilkins.*

PRE'CIPE, *n.* *pres'ipy*. [L. *præcipio*. See *Precept*.]

In law, a writ commanding the defendant to do a certain thing, or to show cause to the contrary; giving him his choice to redress the injury or to stand the suit.

PRE'CIPE, *n.* [Fr. from L. *præcipitum*, from *præceps*, headlong; *præ*, forward, and *ceps*, for *caput*, head. See *Chief*.]

1. Strictly, a falling headlong; hence, a steep descent of land; a fall or descent of land, perpendicular or nearly so.

Where wealth, like fruit, on *precipices* grew. *Dryden.*

2. A steep descent, in general.

In the breaking of the waves there is ever a *precipice*. *Bacon.*

Swift down the *precipice* of time it goes. *Dryden.*

PRECIP'IENT, *a.* [L. *præcipiens*. See *Precept*.] Commanding; directing.

PRECIPITABILITY, *n.* [from *precipitable*.] The quality or state of being precipitable.

PRECIPITABLE, *a.* [from L. *præcipito*, from *præceps*, headlong.]

That may be precipitated or cast to the bottom, as a substance in solution.

PRECIPITANCE, *n.* [from *precipitant*.]

PRECIPITANCY, *n.* Headlong hurry; rash haste; haste in resolving, forming an opinion or executing a purpose without due deliberation.

Hurried on by the *precipitance* of youth. *Swift.*

Rashness and *precipitance* of judgment. *Watts.*

2. Hurry; great haste in going. *Milton.*

PRECIPITANT, *a.* [L. *præcipitans*, *præcipito*, from *præceps*, headlong.]

1. Falling or rushing headlong; rushing down with velocity.

They leave their little lives

Above the clouds, *precipitant* to earth. *Philips.*

2. Hasty; urged with violent haste.

Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,

Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight. *Pope.*

3. Rashly hurried or hasty; as *precipitant* rebellion. *K. Charles.*

4. Unexpectedly brought on or hastened. *Taylor.*

PRECIPITANT, *n.* In chemistry, a liquor, which when poured on a solution, separates what is dissolved and makes it precipitate, or fall to the bottom in a concrete state. *Encyc.*

PRECIPITANTLY, *adv.* With great haste; with rash unadvised haste; with tumultuous hurry. *Milton.*

PRECIPITATE, *v. t.* [L. *præcipito*, from *præceps*, headlong. See *Precipice*.]

1. To throw headlong; as, he *precipitated* himself from a rock. *Milton. Dryden.*

2. To urge or press with eagerness or violence; as, to *precipitate* a flight. *Dryden.*

3. To hasten.

Short intermittent and swift recurrent pains do *precipitate* patients into consumptions. *Harvey.*

4. To hurry blindly or rashly.

If they be daving, it may *precipitate* their designs and prove dangerous. *Bacon.*

5. To throw to the bottom of a vessel; as a substance in solution.

All metals may be *precipitated* by alkaline salts. *Encyc.*

PRECIPITATE, *v. i.* To fall headlong. *Shak.*

2. To fall to the bottom of a vessel, as sediment, or any substance in solution. *Bacon.*

3. To hasten without preparation. *Bacon.*

PRECIPITATE, *a.* Falling, flowing or rushing with steep descent.

Precipitate the furious torrent flows. *Prior.*

2. Headlong; over hasty; rashly hasty; as, the king was too *precipitate* in declaring war.

3. Adopted with haste or without due deliberation; hasty; as a *precipitate* measure.

4. Hasty; violent; terminating speedily in death; as a *precipitate* case of disease. *Arbuthnot.*

PRECIPITATE, *n.* A substance which, having been dissolved, is again separated from its solvent and thrown to the bottom of the vessel by pouring another liquor upon it.

Precipitate per se, the red oxyd or peroxyd of mercury. *Thomson.*

PRECIPITATED, *pp.* Hurried; hastened rashly; thrown headlong.

PRECIPITATELY, *adv.* Headlong; with steep descent.

2. Hastily; with rash haste; without due caution. Neither praise nor censure *precipitately*.

PRECIPITATING, *ppr.* Throwing headlong; hurrying; hastening rashly.

PRECIPITATION, *n.* [L. *præcipitatio*.]

1. The act of throwing headlong. *Shak.*

2. A falling, flowing or rushing down with violence and rapidity.

The hurry, *precipitation* and rapid motion of the water. *Woodward.*

3. Great hurry; rash, tumultuous haste; rapid movement.

The *precipitation* of inexperience is often restrained by shame. *Rambler.*

4. The act or operation of throwing to the bottom of a vessel any substance held in solution by its menstruum. *Precipitation* is often effected by a double elective attraction. *Encyc.*

PRECIPITATOR, *n.* One that urges on with vehemence or rashness. *Hammond.*

PRECIPITOUS, *a.* [L. *præceps*.] Very steep; as a *precipitous* cliff or mountain.

2. Headlong; directly or rapidly descending; as a *precipitous* fall. *K. Charles.*

3. Hasty; rash; heady.

Advice unsafe, *precipitous* and bold. *Dryden.*

PRECIPITOUSLY, *adv.* With steep descent; in violent haste.

PRECIPITOUSNESS, *n.* Steepness of descent.

2. Rash haste. *Hammond.*

PRECISE, *a.* [L. *præcisus*, from *præcido*, to cut off; *præ* and *cedo*; literally, cut or pared away, that is, pared to smoothness or exactness.]

1. Exact; nice; definite; having determinate limitations; not loose, vague, uncertain or equivocal; as *precise* rules of morality; *precise* directions for life and conduct.

The law in this point is *precise*. *Bacon.*

For the hour *precise*

Exacts our parting. *Milton.*

2. Formal; superstitiously exact; excessively nice; punctilious in conduct or ceremony. *Addison.*

PRECISELY, *adv.* Exactly; nicely; accurately; in exact conformity to truth or to a model. The ideas are *precisely* expressed. The time of an eclipse may be *precisely* determined by calculation.

When more of these orders than one are to be set in several stories, there must be an exquisite care to place the columns *precisely* one over another. *Wotton.*