

de-scry (di skri'), *v.t.*, -sried, -sry-ing. 1. to make out (something unclear or distant) by looking carefully; discern. 2. to discover; detect. [ME *descrie(r)* < OF *decri(er)* (to) proclaim, DECRY. See DIS-¹, CRY] —**de-scri'er**, *n.*

de-se-crate (des'ə krāt'), *v.t.*, -crat-ed, -crat-ing. 1. to divert from a sacred to a profane use or purpose. 2. to treat with sacrilege; profane. [DE- + (CON)SECRATE] —**de-se-crat'er**, **de-se-cra'tor**, *n.* —**de-se-cra'tion**, *n.*

de-seg-re-gate (dē seg'rə gāt'), *v.*, -gat-ed, -gat-ing. —*v.t.* 1. to eliminate racial segregation in: *to desegregate all schools.* —*v.i.* 2. to eliminate racial segregation.

de-seg-re-ga-tion (dē seg'rə gā'shən, dē seg'-), *n.* the elimination of laws, customs, or practices that restrict different races, groups, etc., to specific or separate schools and other public facilities, neighborhoods, etc.

de-sen-si-tize (dē sen'si tiz'), *v.t.*, -tized, -tiz-ing. 1. to lessen the sensitiveness of. 2. to make indifferent in feeling, unaware, or the like. 3. *Physiol.* to eliminate the natural or acquired reactivity or sensitivity of (an animal, organ, tissue, etc.) to an external stimulus, as an allergen. 4. *Photog.* to make less sensitive or wholly insensitive to light, as the emulsion on a film. —**de-sen'si-tiz-a'tion**, *n.* —**de-sen'si-tiz'er**, *n.*

de-sert¹ (dez'ərt), *n.* 1. a region so arid that it supports only sparse vegetation or none at all. 2. any area in which few forms of life can exist because of lack of water, permanent frost, or absence of soil. 3. any place lacking in something, usually as specified: *The town was a cultural desert.* —*adj.* 4. of, pertaining to, or like a desert; desolate; barren. 5. occurring, living, or flourishing in the desert: *a desert tribe.* [ME < OF < eccl. L *desert(um)* (neut.), *n.* use of ptp. of *deserere* to abandon, forsake = *dē-* DE- + *serere* to join together (in a line); cf. SERIES]

—**Syn.** 1. DESERT, WASTE, WILDERNESS refer to areas that are uninhabited. DESERT emphasizes lack of water; it refers to a dry, barren, treeless region, usually sandy: *an oasis in a desert; the Sahara Desert.* WASTE emphasizes lack of inhabitants and of cultivation; it is used of wild, barren land, but figuratively the word is also applied to turbulent seas: *a desolate waste; a terrifying waste of water.* WILDERNESS emphasizes the difficulty of finding one's way because of barrenness or of luxuriant vegetation; it is also applied to the ocean, esp. in stormy weather: *a trackless wilderness.*

de-sert² (di zūrt'), *v.t.* 1. to leave (a person, place, etc.) without intending to return, esp. in violation of a duty, promise, or the like; abandon; forsake: *He deserted his wife.* 2. (of military personnel) to run away from (service, duty, etc.) with the intention of never returning. 3. to fail (someone) at a time of need: *All his friends had deserted him.* —*v.i.* 4. to forsake or leave one's duty, obligations, or the like (sometimes fol. by *from*, *to*, etc.). [*< F désert(er)* < LL *desertāre*, freq. of L *deserere*; see DESERT¹] —**de-sert'er**, *n.*

—**Syn.** 1. DESERT, ABANDON, FORSAKE mean to leave behind persons, places, or things. DESERT implies intentionally violating an oath, formal obligation, or duty: *to desert campaign pledges.* ABANDON suggests giving up wholly and finally, whether of necessity, unwillingly, or through shirking responsibilities: *to abandon a hopeless task.* FORSAKE has emotional connotations, since it implies violating obligations of affection or association: *to forsake a noble cause.*

de-sert³ (di zūrt'), *n.* 1. Often, **deserts**, reward or punishment that is deserved: *to get one's just deserts.* 2. the fact of deserving reward or punishment. 3. merit or virtue. [ME < OF *deserte*, *n.* use of fem. ptp. of *deservire* to DESERVE]

de-sert-ed (di zūrt'id), *adj.* 1. abandoned; forsaken. 2. untenanted; without inhabitants. 3. unfrequented; lonely.

de-ser-tion (di zūrt'shən), *n.* 1. the act of deserting. 2. the state of being deserted. 3. *Law.* willful abandonment, esp. of one's spouse without consent, in violation of legal or moral obligations. 4. *Mil.* leaving or running away from service or duty without the intention of returning. Cf. A.W.O.L. [*< LL desertiōn-* (s. of *desertiō*)]

de-serve (di zūrv'), *v.*, -served, -serv-ing. —*v.t.* 1. to merit or have a claim to (reward, assistance, punishment, etc.) because of one's acts, qualities, or situation. —*v.i.* 2. to be worthy of, qualified for, or have a claim to reward, punishment, recompense, etc. [ME *deserve(n)* < OF *deserv(ir)*, L *deservire* to serve zealously] —**de-serv'er**, *n.*

de-served (di zūrvd'), *adj.* justly earned; merited. —**de-serv-ed-ness** (di zūrv'id nis), *n.*

de-serv-ed-ly (di zūrv'id lē), *adv.* justly; rightly.

de-serv-ing (di zūrv'vīng), *adj.* worthy of reward, praise, or help. —**de-serv-ing-ly**, *adv.* —**de-serv-ing-ness**, *n.*

de-sex (dē seks'), *v.t.* 1. to castrate or spay. 2. to deprive of sex, sex appeal, or sexual interest.

de-sex-u-al-ize (dē sek'shūō ə līz'), *v.t.*, -ized, -iz-ing. *desex.* —**de-sex'u-al-i-za'tion**, *n.*

des-ha-bille (dez'ə bēl', -bē'), *n.* dishabille.

des-ic-cant (des'ə kənt), *adj.* 1. desiccating, as a medicine. —*n.* 2. a drying substance or agent. [*< L desiccant-* (s. of *desiccāns*), prp. of *desiccāre* to dry up]

des-ic-cate (des'ə kāt'), *v.*, -cat-ed, -cat-ing. —*v.t.* 1. to dry thoroughly; dry up. 2. to preserve (food) by removing moisture; dehydrate. —*v.i.* 3. to become thoroughly dried or dried up. [*< L desiccāt(us)* dried up, ptp. of *desiccāre* = *dē-* DE- + *siccāre* < *sicc(us)* dry; see -ATE¹] —**des'ic-ca-tion**, *n.* —**des'ic-ca-tive**, *adj.*

des-ic-cat-ed (des'ə kāt'id), *adj.* dehydrated.

des-ic-ca-tor (des'ə kāt'ər), *n.* 1. a person or thing that desiccates. 2. an apparatus for drying fruit, milk, etc. 3. *Chem.* an apparatus for absorbing moisture in a substance, esp. an airtight, usually glass container containing calcium chloride or some other drying agent.

de-sid-er-a-ta (di sid'ə rā'tə), *n.* pl. of **desideratum**.

de-sid-er-ate (di sid'ə rāt'), *v.t.*, -at-ed, -at-ing. to wish or long for; want; desire. [*< L desiderāt(us)* longed for (ptp. of *desiderāre*) = *dē-* DE- + *sider-* (s. of *sīdus*) star + -ātus -ATE¹] —**de-sid'er-a'tion**, *n.*

de-sid-er-a-tive (di sid'ə rā'tiv, -ər ə tiv), *adj.* 1. having or expressing desire. 2. *Gram.* (of a verb derived from another verb) expressing desire to perform the action denoted by the underlying verb. —*n.* 3. *Gram.* a desiderative verb.

de-sid-er-a-tum (di sid'ə rā'təm), *n.*, pl. -ta (-tə). something wanted or needed. [*< L, n.* use of neut. ptp. of *desiderāre*; see DESIDERATE]

de-sign (di zīn'), *v.t.* 1. to prepare the preliminary sketch

or the plans for (a work to be executed), esp. to plan the form and structure of: *to design a new bridge.* 2. to plan and fashion artistically or skillfully. 3. to intend for a definite purpose: *a scholarship designed for medical students.* 4. to form or conceive in the mind; contrive; plan. 5. to assign in thought or intention; purpose. 6. *Archaic.* to mark out, as by a sign; indicate. —*v.i.* 7. to make drawings, preliminary sketches, or plans. 8. to plan and fashion the form and structure of an object, work of art, decorative scheme, etc. —*n.* 9. an outline, sketch, or plan, as of the form and structure of a work of art. 10. the organization or structure of formal elements in a work of art; composition. 11. the pattern or motif of an artistic work. 12. the art of designing. 13. a plan or project. 14. a plot or intrigue. 15. intention; purpose; end. [ME *design(en)* < L *designāre* (to) mark out] —**Syn.** 4. devise, project. 13. See **plan**.

des-ig-nate (v. dez'ig nāt'; *adj.* dez'ig nit, -nāt'), *v.*, -nat-ed, -nat-ing, *adj.* —*v.t.* 1. to mark or point out; specify. 2. to denote; indicate. 3. to name; entitle; style. 4. to nominate or select for a duty, office, position, etc. —*adj.* 5. named or selected for an office, position, etc., but not yet installed (often used in combination following the noun it modifies): *ambassador-designate.* [ME < L *designāt(us)*, ptp. of *designāre*] —**des'ig-na'tive**, **des'ig-na-to-ry** (dez'ig nā tōr'ē, -tōr'ē, dez'ig nā'tə rē), *adj.* —**des'ig-na'tor**, *n.*

des'ignated/ hit'ter, *Baseball.* a hitter selected prior to the start of the game to bat for the starting pitcher and all subsequent pitchers without otherwise affecting the status of the pitchers in the game. *Abbr.*: dh

des-ig-na-tion (dez'ig nā'shən), *n.* 1. the act of designating. 2. the fact of being designated. 3. a distinctive name or title. 4. a nomination, appointment, or election. [ME *designacioun* < L *designātiōn-* (s. of *designātiō*) a marking out]

de-signed (di zīnd'), *adj.* made or done by design; intended; planned. —**de-sign-ed-ly** (di zī'nid lē), *adv.*

des-ig-nee (dez'ig nē'), *n.* a person who is designated. [DESIGN(ATE) + -EE]

de-sign-er (di zī'nər), *n.* 1. a person who devises or executes designs for works of art, dresses, machines, or stage sets. 2. a schemer, intriguer, or plotter.

de-sign-ing (di zī'ning), *adj.* 1. scheming; intriguing; artful; crafty. 2. showing or using forethought. —*n.* 3. the act or art of making designs. —**de-sign'ing-ly**, *adv.*

des-i-nence (des'ə nəns), *n.* 1. a termination or ending, as the final line of a verse. 2. *Gram.* a termination, ending, or suffix of a word. [*< F < ML desinentia* = L *desinent-* (s. of *desinēns*), prp. of *desinere* to put down, leave (*dē-* DE- + *sinere* to leave) + -ia; see -ENCE] —**des'i-nent**, **des-i-nen-tial** (des'ə nən'shəl), *adj.*

de-sir-a-ble (di zī'r'ə bəl), *adj.* 1. worth desiring; pleasing, excellent, or fine. 2. arousing desire or longing: *a desirable woman.* 3. advisable; commendable: *a desirable law.* —*n.* 4. a person or thing that is desirable. [ME *desirable* < OF] —**de-sir'a-bil'i-ty**, *n.* —**de-sir'a-bly**, *adv.*

de-sire (di zīr'), *v.*, -sired, -sir-ing, *n.* —*v.t.* 1. to wish or long for; crave; want. 2. to express a wish to obtain; ask for; request. —*n.* 3. a longing or craving: *a desire for fame.* 4. an expressed wish; request. 5. something desired. 6. sexual appetite or a sexual urge. [ME *desire(n)* < OF *desir(er)* < L *desiderāre*; see DESIDERATE] —**de-sir'er**, *n.*

—**Syn.** 1. covet, fancy. See **wish**. 2. solicit. 3. aspiration, hunger, appetite, thirst. DESIRE, CRAVING, LONGING, YEARNING suggest feelings that impel a person to the attainment or possession of something. DESIRE is a strong feeling, worthy or unworthy, that impels to the attainment or possession of something: *a desire for success.* CRAVING implies a deep and imperative wish for something, based on a sense of need and hunger (literally or figuratively). A LONGING is an intense wish, generally repeated or enduring, for something that is at the moment beyond reach but may be attainable at some future time: *a longing to visit Europe.* YEARNING suggests persistent, uneasy, and sometimes wistful or tender longing. —**Ant.** 1. reject, loathe.

de-sir-ous (di zīr'əs), *adj.* having or characterized by desire; desiring. [ME < OF *desireus*] —**de-sir'ous-ly**, *adv.* —**de-sir'ous-ness**, *n.*

de-sist (di zist', -sist'), *v.i.* to cease, as from some action or proceeding; stop. [ME < OF *desist(er)* < L *desistere* to leave off = *dē-* DE- + *sistere* to stand, place, redupl. form of *stare* to stand] —**de-sist'ance**, **de-sist'ence**, *n.*

desk (desk), *n.* 1. an article of furniture having a broad, usually level, writing surface, as well as drawers or compartments for papers, writing materials, etc. 2. a frame for supporting a book from which the service is read in a church. 3. a pulpit. 4. the section of a large organization, as a governmental bureau, newspaper, etc., having responsibility for particular operations: *news desk.* 5. a stand used to support sheet music; music stand. —*adj.* 6. of or pertaining to a writing desk: *a desk drawer.* 7. made for use on a desk: *a desk dictionary.* 8. done at or based on a desk: *a desk job.* [ME *deske* < ML *desc(a)* table < L *disc(us)* desk, dish]

desk-size (desk'siz'), *adj.* of a size suitable for use at a desk: *a desk-size dictionary.*

desk/top pub/lishing (desk/top'), the writing, assembling, and design of publications, as business reports, newsletters, and trade journals, in a business or editorial office by the use of computers, esp. microcomputers.

D. ès L., Doctor of Letters. [*< F Docteur ès Lettres*]

des-man (des'mən), *n.*, pl. -mans. either of two aquatic, insectivorous mammals, *Myogale moschata*, of southeastern Russia, or *M. pyrenaica*, of the Pyrenees, related to shrews. [*< Sw, short for desman-råtta muskrat*]

des-mid (des'mid), *n.* any of the microscopic freshwater algae belonging to the family *Desmidiaceae*. [*< NL Desmid(ium)* name of the genus < Gk *desm(ōs)* a band, chain + NL -id- dim. suffix] —**des-mid'i-an**, *adj.*

des-moid (des'moid), *adj.* *Anat., Zool.* 1. resembling a fascia or fibrous sheet. 2. resembling a ligament. [*< Gk desm(ōs)* (see DESMID) + -oid]

Des Moines (də moin', moinz'), 1. a city in and the capital of Iowa, in the central part, on the Des Moines River. 201,404 (1970). 2. a river flowing SE from SW