

DISCOVERING WORDS ON WEDNESDAYS JUNE 4th – FREE CHOICE

This may help to follow up the words and phrases discussed if you would like to. As usual, this is mostly copied and pasted from material you provided.

HYPOCHONDRIA

- An anxiety disorder where a person worries excessively about their health when nothing is seriously wrong
- Usually characterized by fears that minor aches or pains or other sensations in the body are a sign of serious illness.
- A pre-occupation with the body. Constant, obsessive self-examination and self-diagnosis (Dr Goggle!)
- Doubt or disbelief in a doctor's reassurance or diagnosis of the true cause of their bodily experiences

Medical terms are usually very logical and can be worked out if you know the meaning of the different parts of the medical term. But I couldn't work out how hypochondria means *excessive* worry about health.

Hypo and Hyper are often used in front of other medical terms.

Hyper:

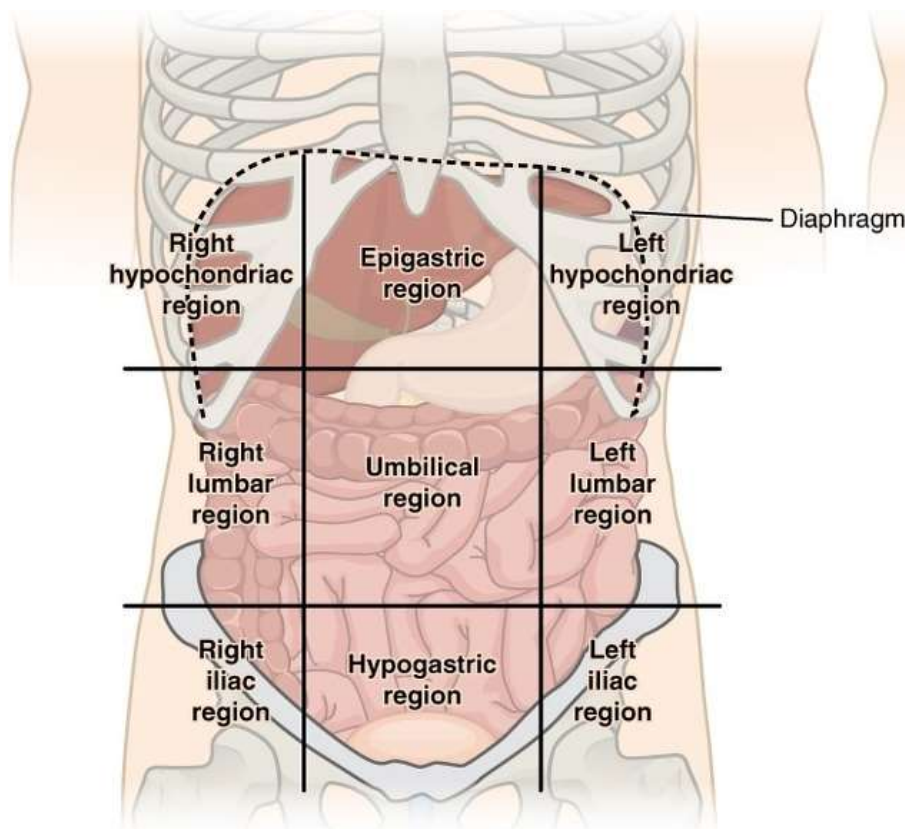
- Excessive; above normal (in medical terminology) e.g. hypertension (raised blood pressure); hyperthyroidism (over-active thyroid); hypercalcaemia (raised calcium levels in the bloodstream); hyperglycaemia (raised sugar levels in the bloodstream)
- Overly; excessive (in daily English) e.g. hyper – unusually energetic; extremely excited or nervous, over-stimulated
- Comes from Ancient Greek word 'hupér' (pronounced 'hoo pearrr') meaning over, beyond or above
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hyper>

Hypo:

- Under; below normal; deficient; beneath (in medical terminology) e.g. hypotension (low blood pressure); hypothyroid (under-active thyroid); hypoglycaemic (low sugar levels in the bloodstream); hypoxic (low oxygen levels in the body); hypodermic (needle) (needle that goes under the skin)
- Comes from Ancient Greek word 'hupó' (pronounced hoo-paw) to express a physical position of being beneath or underneath
- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hypo>

So back to hypochondria. If hypochondria is excessive anxiety about one's health, why does it have 'hypo' at the start of the word? And what does 'chondria' mean?

- In 1600s, hypochondria meant 'depression or melancholy without cause' from Middle English medical term 'ipocondrie'
- Ipocondrie refers to the soft upper abdomen area, right across the abdomen. Today, the equivalent modern term 'hypochondrium' has been split into left and right - above the belly button and tucked-up below the bottom ribs
- The word derives from the Greek word for 'hupokhondros' – means **hupo** – under or beneath; **knondros** means cartilage
- Cartilage refers to the costal cartilage in the rib cage (see diagram) – ribs are attached to the breastbone by cartilage
- So this reflects the ancient belief that the viscera (soft internal organs) of the upper abdomen ('under the cartilage') were the seat of melancholy and where the vapours that caused depressed and morbid feelings came from.
- The meaning of hypochondria has repeatedly changed over time. Until 18th century, hypochondria was used to mean a '**physical disease caused by imbalances in the region that was below your rib cage**'
- Hypochondria is now a term for a psychiatric/health anxiety disorder where there is a persistent preoccupation over a serious and progressive illness
- The person misinterprets and catastrophises bodily signs and symptoms, and the distress they cause is out of all proportion to the reality
- They have doubt or disbelief in the doctor's reassurances or diagnosis of the true cause of their bodily experiences.



- **Right hypochondrium:** liver, gallbladder.
- **Left hypochondrium:** spleen, colon, pancreas.
- **Epigastrium:** stomach, liver, pancreas, duodenum, adrenal glands.
- <https://radiopaedia.org/articles/abdominal-surface-anatomy-2>

- <https://www.etymonline.com/word/hypochondria>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypochondriasis>
- <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2812786>

BOB'S YOUR UNCLE

- A saying common in UK... and Commonwealth countries, many of which were once part of the British Empire
- It's used to mean '**something is easy and straightforward**', or when the process is complete - 'there you have it'; 'it's done'; 'it's as simple as that'
- Similar to the French expression 'et voilà!'
- The origin is uncertain
- An often cited link is from a case of nepotism!
- In **1887, the Conservative Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Lord Salisbury) i.e. 'Bob', appointed his nephew Arthur Balfour, a young man, to a succession of posts.** The most controversial one was as Chief Secretary of Ireland when he was in his late 30s.
- It was a surprising and unpopular appointment for such an important and difficult post. So it reeked of political nepotism.
- And this seemed even more apt when one knows that the word '**nepotism**' derives from the **Italian word for nephew - 'nepotismo'. Nepotism came from the practice of Italian Popes and Bishops giving appointments and jobs to 'nephews'** to keep things in the family and loyal to them, and sometimes it was a euphemistic word for their 'bastard sons'!
- So, the theory goes, Lord Salisbury's link to 'Bob's your uncle' was a sarcastic saying used to mock how easy it was to gain a prestigious position with the help of a powerful and influential relative.

BUT... although this is the most common explanation of the origin, it's disputed.

- The first recorded use of the term was in the 1920s which is 40 years after Lord Salisbury's act of nepotism, which seems odd. His nepotism actions were so unpopular, that it's likely that it would have been used in satirical papers at the time, like Punch, to mock him, if it had been a phrase developed at that time, but it wasn't. Punch was launched in 1841 so was well established by 1887.
- Instead, the phrase seems to have come out of nowhere
- It was first used in the 1920s for the title of a comedy revue in Dundee, and again in the late 1920s for different musical comedy in Barnstable. This one had a character named Bob in it. It probably didn't invent the phrase so it may have been in usage verbally. But if so, it wasn't used in print before this time so it's not known how well and for how long it had been in use.
- A nonsensical rhyme used it in the 1930s: '*If Bob's your Uncle, how old would your Aunt's mother be?*'

- In 1935, a Waddington's pack of cards company used it for a new card game called 'Bob's your Uncle' which was apparently very popular in the UK and was sold to Australia.
- But also, the word 'bob' was already in use with various meanings as a slang term. In the 1600s, '*All is bob*' or '*It's all bob*' meant everything was 'pleasant, satisfactory or safe', or generally meant something was 'good'
- From 1700s onwards, Bob was a common generic name for somebody you didn't know.
- It's not clear if or when these transitioned to 'Bob's your uncle', but as a phrase, it's still going strong.
- <https://www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-bob1.htm>
- <https://www.suzannearnold.com/blog/l11iyhht9m5ruuhzf82nejo6qcjscq>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Gascoyne-Cecil,_3rd_Marquess_of_Salisbury
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/robert-gascoyne-cecil>

HAVING A CHIP ON ONE'S SHOULDER

This appeared in various writings by 1840 and continues to be used for those having a grudge against something or someone,

One explanation for the idiom dates from the 1750s when shipwrights were thought to be abusing their longstanding right to take home offcuts of timber or "chips" on their shoulders. An order reduced the number of offcuts permitted for removal to what they could carry under one arm. Unhappy dockworkers recorded as "strikers" were said, in a letter from Chatham dockyards, to have refused defiantly to lower their "chips", but "pushed on with their chips on their shoulders".

The more common reference is from North America in the 1830s, when boys looking for a fight would place a chip of wood on their shoulders and challenge others to knock it off. (Similar to medieval origin "throw down the gauntlet).

DOOLALLY

British slang term, meaning "out of one's mind" or "crazy", "deranged" or "feeble-minded".

This comes from the British Empire in India. A military sanitarium had been established in north-east Bombay at a place called **Deolali**. It was also a transit camp for soldiers waiting for their boat home at the end of a tour of duty. Boats only left between November and March, so many soldiers had a long wait in the scorching heat or monsoons, and often had venereal disease, so the resulting boredom and restlessness led to deteriorating behavior. The men were described as going "**doolally tap**"... the former from their pronunciation of Deolali and the latter from Urdu for "malarial fever". The tap was soon dropped and "doolally" travelled from army slang into the present day usage "being a bit doolally".

NEWS

English word originates from the Middle English "newes" or "newys" which meant "new things". This developed in parallel to other languages like the French "nouvelles"* from Latin origin "nova", Serbo-Croat "novost" or Czech "noviny".

The English word was construed as singular at least from the 1560s, but it sometimes was still regarded as plural in 17c.-19c. There is a persistent but false theory that **NEWS is an acronym for north east south west**, as for "information from all quarters of the compass." This is attested by 1640 but originally, and through 18c. treated as a joke.

*The French word for news in the sense of current affairs is "l'actualité"

NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

This proverbial phrase may have originated with King James I of England, who allegedly said "No news is better than evil news" (1616). The exact phrase is recorded by James Howell in 1640, translating the Italian phrase "Nulla nuova, buona nuova" (no news, good news).

NEWS TO ME meaning something unexpected or previously unknown to you, dates back to 1889.

NEWSWORTHY "of interest to the general public," 1932, from news (n.) + worthy (adj.)

TIDINGS "news, information about a situation, announcement of an event or occurrence not previously made known," late 12c. from Old English *tidan* "to happen, Old Norse *tiðendi* (plural) "events"

TO GO THE WHOLE HOG

To do something as entirely or completely as possible; to reserve or hold back nothing. Alternative form - go whole hog (chiefly US)

The precise source is disputed, but it was first recorded in 1828 by Frederick Marryat, as an informal idiom meaning "to do something in a complete way".

Likely a folk term from the practice of livestock and butchery; "whole hog" or ("snout to tail") refers to **letting no portion of the animal carcass go to waste**. For example, skin is tanned for leather, sweetbreads are harvested, and commonly cast off pieces such as hooves are pickled. The phrase *the whole hog* appears in Cowper's poem "The Love of the World Reproved" (1779), which discusses Muslim uncertainty about which parts of the pig are acceptable as food, leading to the 'whole hog' being eaten, because of confusion over Muhammad's teaching.

By 1830 the phrase had become popular across America, being used in newspapers and political campaigns. At this time, it migrated across to Britain, where the phrase was adopted. A related phrase in North American informal usage, is to **LIVE HIGH ON THE HOG** meaning to have a luxurious lifestyle.

HOG

A domesticated pig, especially a castrated male reared for slaughter; often taken as a type of indiscriminating greed. The word is recorded from Old English (in form *hogg*, *hocg*), perhaps of Celtic origin and related to Welsh *hwch* and Cornish *hoch* 'pig, sow'.

HOG is also American slang term for a ten cent piece

NICKNAME

Mid-15c., **neke name**, a "misdivision" (see "EKE" and "N" below) of **ekenname** (c. 1300), *an eke name*, "a familiar or diminutive name," especially one given in derision or reproach, literally "an additional name," from Old English *eaca* "an increase," related to **eacian** "to increase" Used as a verb from 1530s.

EKE - VERB

c. 1200, *eken* "to increase, lengthen," was a north England and East Midlands variant of *echen* from Old English *eacian* "to increase," probably from *eaca* "an increase," from Proto-Germanic **aukan* PIE **aug-* "to increase." Now mainly in phrase *to eke out* (1590s), meaning "to make a supply of something go further or last longer." Related: *Eked*; *eking*.

(**PIE** means Proto-Indo-European, the **ancient common language** from which many modern languages, including English, are believed to be derived).

"N" – INFLUENCE ON SPELLING OF WORDS

In late Middle English writing, *a* and *an* commonly were joined to the following noun, if that word began with a vowel, which caused confusion over how such words ought to be divided when written separately. In **nickname**, **newt**, and British dialectal **naunt**, the **-n-** belongs to a preceding indefinite article *an* or possessive pronoun *mine*. *My naunt* for *mine aunt* is recorded from 13c.-17c., and *my nown* (for *mine own*) was frequent 15c.-18c.

Other examples of this from Middle English manuscripts include *a neilond* ("an island," early 13c.), *a narawe* ("an arrow," c. 1400), *a nox* ("an ox," c. 1400), *a noke* ("an oak," early 15c.), *a nappyle* ("an apple," early 15c.), *a negge* ("an egg," 15c.), *a nynche* ("an inch," c. 1400), *a nostryche* ("an ostrich," c. 1500). *None other* could be *no noder* (mid-15c.).

<https://www.etymonline.com/word/nickname>

WELSH SURNAMES

e.g. ap (son of) Rice became "Price"

LIVING IN AN IVORY TOWER

A state of privileged seclusion or separation from the facts and practicalities of the real world.

The earliest-known use of the term "ivory tower" can be found in Biblical sources. The **Song of Songs**, also known as the Song of Solomon, features the phrase "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon".

The **Greek word for ivory and for elephant was *elephas*** probably from a non-Indo-European language, likely via Phoenician (compare Hamitic *elu* "elephant," source of the word for it in many Semitic languages).

Elephas played upon the word meaning to cheat or deceive (*elephairo*).

"Ivory seems classically to have been associated with the notion of fantasy, illusion, if not delusion."

Basically, it's a beautiful but impractical substance for a building – valuable because relatively scarce, used for ornaments.

The artist deceives you, takes you away from the real, but that was not necessarily considered a bad thing," Steven Shapin, a historian of science at Harvard University, explains in a paper on the phrase's origins.

Shapin believes the Biblical usage of the word came to inspire the modern phrase "ivory tower", which truly took off in the early 19th century when it started to be used by several French Romantic thinkers.

In 1837, for example, **Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve wrote a poem that mocked another French poet, Alfred de Vigny**, for becoming too aloof and retiring to his grand estate in Angoulême where he wrote introspective poems, totally divorced from the outside world. The poem reads: "And Vigny, more discreet, As if in his ivory tower, retired before noon".

This poetic use of "*tour d'ivoire*" may have been an allusion to the rook (or castle) in chess, which is another meaning of the French word *tour*.

During the 19th century, the phrase became increasingly more common in the French and English-speaking world, where it was most commonly used to describe self-obsessed poets and artists who had become impractical dreamers.

By the second half of the 20th century, the term "ivory tower" became increasingly associated with the worlds of academia, universities, and scientists. The phrase was essentially an insult thrown at academics to describe how they had become disengaged from the public, too concerned about lofty theories that have little relation to the everyday lives of people.

At times, poets, composers, urban planners have been accused of working in “ivory towers”. This charge could also be applied to “privileged” politicians and civil servants.

There has been a backlash. Sinclair Lewis, Nobel Prize-winning novelist argued that people should be allowed to work in ivory towers away from the world and its cares, where they could think creatively and produce literature, verse, mathematical formulae or whatever they wished. E.M Forster held a similar view.

IVORY TOWER ACTUALLY EXISTS.

“Ivory tower” is located in Antarctica; it is a small peak rising to about 2600 feet above sea level, between the Harold Byrd Mountains and the Bender Mountain. It is so named because the composition of the peak is nearly all white marble, but it is not the origin of the idiom!



BULLDOZER

Merriam-Webster's Eleventh Collegiate Dictionary confirms this etymological date of origin and—generally—the etymological source of the wording, albeit with an equivocal “perhaps” thrown in:

bulldoze *vb* {perh. fr. *bull* [“a male bovine”] + alter. of *dose*} *vt* (1876) **1** : to coerce or restrain by threats : BULLY **2** : to move, clear, gouge out, or level off by pushing with or as if with a bulldozer **3** : to force insensitively or ruthlessly {*bulldozed* the program through the legislature} ...

bulldozer *n* (1876) **1** : one that bulldozes **2** : a tractor-driven machine usu. having a broad blunt horizontal blade for moving earth (as in road building)

The earliest examples of bulldozers/bulldozing, from March and June of 1876, indicate that it was originally a local term along the Louisiana/Mississippi border for white “Regulators”—vigilantes or border ruffians or irregular militiamen—who engaged in occasional efforts to harass or terrorize Black citizens (and to a lesser extent, white Republican citizens) in the state of Louisiana. At that time the Republicans were more sympathetic to the freed slaves but the Democrats veered towards white supremacy and the removal of any rights given to the Negroes.

A quick search of the Elephind newspaper database yields an interesting early explanation of the term’s origin.

From “**Bull-Dozing—A Comprehensive Definition of the Term**,” in the *Iola [Kansas] Register* (November 25, 1876), reprinted from the *Cincinnati [Ohio] Times* and written by that newspaper’s New Orleans, Louisiana, correspondent:

The word here in this muddle is “**Bull-dozed**.” I see some Northern papers persist in printing it “Bull-dogged.” The **bull-dozers** are organized and armed bands of assassins and robbers, who ride about the country by night, killing innocent people and spreading terrorism among republican negroes. The **Bull-dozers** are successors to the Kuklux, the White League, the White Liners, and other similar organizations. It is to [t]hese ruffians that Louisiana owes her sad condition today. ...

Perhaps, just here, it will not be amiss to explain the origin of this new term of “**Bull-dozed**.” It originated in Mississippi. The “black-snake” whip that teamsters use upon oxen or mules is called there by a compound word, the first of which is “Bull’s.” It is abbreviated to “Bull,” and the whip is called a “bull.” Whipping an obstinate animal or [Black person] with it is called giving the animal or [Black person] a dose of the bull, or bull’s dose. The Kuklux and White League used that instrument to beat Republicanism out of the negroes, and oblige them to vote the Democratic ticket, or keep away from the polls. Hence the name for these bands of roving scoundrels, “**Bull-dozers**,” or “**Bull-dosers**.” They pronounce it “**Bull-doozers**” here [in New Orleans]. This is the real and only origin of the term, and the name is very significant and appropriate, as many a negro with a scarred back can testify.

From “**The Mount Pleasant Murders**,” in the *New Orleans Republican* (June 24, 1876):

A man—and perhaps his name had better not be mentioned just yet—living close by Mount Pleasant, was concealed on an island at Fontania landing. He saw Levin Foster, a Baptist minister, Henry Marin and Wilson Rhodes, all Mount Pleasant men, hanged. Lorenzo Jackson, of J. A. Campbell’s plantation, was **bulldozed**, terribly whipped, the excuse being that he had stolen a gun in 1872. ...

The planters are worse off than the traders. Isolated, perhaps, with their families, they have been liable, whenever they offend a **bulldozer**, to suffer as have the Mount Pleasant proprietors. The "**bulldozers**" know no mercy. They kill the black proprietor of a few acres, and ravage his place, but they also blackmail the white proprietor. The country is in a worse state than the border of Scotland in the time of the Pretender. Rob Roy raided cattle from those all under him deemed enemies of his country. The "**bulldozers**" grind down the planter, force contributions, and then compel him to give them a certificate of character. That is, "the irresponsible parties from Mississippi" do this.

When did 'bulldozer' begin to be used as a term for powerful industrial machinery?

As for the question of when *bulldozer* began to be used in connection with heavy machinery or devices for clearing material out of the way, the usage seems to go back at least to the very beginning of the twentieth century. Here is an interesting untitled item from the *Maysville [Kentucky] Public Ledger* (January 10, 1900):

Someone wants to know what a "**bulldozer**" on the river means or is. A "**bulldozer**" is a strongly built heavily-loaded scow-bowed flatboat. It is from fifty to sixty feet long, and generally the width of the towboat that uses it to fight ice with in the river. It is generally loaded with pig iron, stone, sand, or some other heavy substance to make it heavy and solid, and, when placed at the head of a towboat, it is shoved into and on top of the ice with great force. Its heavy weight causes the ice to give way, when the towboat shoves again and again, thus crushing the heaviest ice and cutting a channel through it with apparent ease. The "**bulldozer**," in other words, is a towboat cowcatcher for crushing ice.

A decade earlier we have this instance from "**Court Callings**," in the *Rock Island [Illinois] Argus* (January 9, 1890)

The case of Michael Hensler vs Williams. White & Co., for \$20,000 damages was called this afternoon. The plaintiff seeks damages for the loss of his left arm in a "**bulldozer**" machine while at work in Williams, White & Company's shop in Moline. A brief item in the *[Terre Haute, Indiana] Express* (August 22, 1886) indicates that a bulldozer machine at that time was "used for bending arch bars and all kinds of iron work."

- Around 1870s: In the USA, a "**bulldose**" was a large dose (namely, one large enough to be literally or figuratively effective against a bull) of any sort of medicine or punishment.
- By the late 1870s, "to bulldoze" and "bulldozing" were being used throughout the United States to describe intimidation "by violent and unlawful means", which sometimes meant a severe whipping or coercion, or other intimidation, such as at gunpoint. It had a particular meaning in the Southern United States as a whipping or other punishment for African Americans to suppress black voter turnout in the 1876 United States presidential election.
- 1886: "Bulldozer" meant a large-calibre pistol and the person who wielded it.
- Late 19th century: "**Bulldozing**" meant using brute force to push over or through any obstacle, with reference to two bulls pushing against each other's heads in a fight over dominance.
- **1930s: applied to the vehicle.**