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1.0 Z

Z n. (also z) (pl. Zs or Z's) 1 the twenty-sixth letter of the alphabet. 2 (usu. z) Algebra the third unknown quantity. 3 Geom. the third coordinate. 4 Chem. atomic number.

2.0 zabaglione...

zabaglione

n. an Italian sweet of whipped and heated egg yolks, sugar, and (esp. Marsala) wine. [It.]

zaffre n. (US zaffer) an impure cobalt oxide used as a blue pigment. [It. zaffera or F safre]

zag n. a sharp change of direction in a zigzag course. [ZIGZAG]

ZANU abbr. Zimbabwe African National Union.

zany adj. & n. --adj. (zanier, zaniest) comically idiotic; crazily ridiculous. --n. 1 a buffoon or jester. 2 hist. an attendant clown awkwardly mimicking a chief clown in shows; a merry andrew. zamily adv. zaniness n. [F zani or It. zan(n)i, Venetian form of Gianni, Giovanni John]

zap v., n., & int. sl. --v. (zapped, zapping) 1 tr. a kill or destroy; deal a sudden blow to. b hit forcibly (zapped the ball over the net). 2 intr. & tr. move quickly and vigorously. 3 tr. overwhelm emotionally. 4 tr. Computing erase or change (an item in a program). 5 intr. (foll. by through) fast-wind a videotape to skip a section. --n. 1 energy, vigour. 2 a strong emotional effect. --int. expressing the sound or impact of a bullet, ray gun, etc., or any sudden event. [imit.]

zapateado n. (pl. -os) 1 a flamenco dance with rhythmic stamping of the feet. 2 this technique or action. [Sp. f. zapato shoe]

zappy adj. (zappier, zappiest) colloq. 1 lively, energetic. 2 striking.

ZAPU abbr. Zimbabwe African People's Union.

zarape var. of SERAPE.

Zarathustrian
var. of ZOROASTRIAN.

zariba n. (also zareba) 1 a hedged or palisaded enclosure for the protection of a camp or village in the Sudan etc. 2 a restricting or confining influence. [Arab. zariba cattle-pen]

zarzuela n. a Spanish traditional form of musical comedy. [Sp.: app. f. a place-name]

zax var. of SAX(2).

3.0 zeal...

zeal n. 1 earnestness or fervour in advancing a cause or rendering service. 2 hearty and persistent endeavour. [ME zele f. eccl.L zelus f. Gk zelos]

zealot n. 1 an uncompromising or extreme partisan; a fanatic. 2 (Zealot) hist. a member of an ancient Jewish sect aiming at a world Jewish theocracy and resisting the Romans until AD 70. zealotry n. [eccl.L zelotes f. Gk zelotes (as ZEAL)]

zealous adj. full of zeal; enthusiastic. zealously adv. zealousness n.

zebec (also zebeck) var. of XEBEC.

zebra n. 1 any of various African quadrupeds, esp. *Equus burchelli*, related to the ass and horse, with black and white stripes. 2 (attrib.) with alternate dark and pale stripes. zebra crossing Brit. a striped street-crossing where pedestrians have precedence over vehicles. zebrine adj. [It. or Port. f. Congolese]

zebu n. a humped ox, *Bos indicus*, of India, E. Asia, and Africa. [F z u, of unkn. orig.]

Zech. abbr. Zechariah (Old Testament).

zed n. Brit. the letter Z. [F z e f. LL zeta f. Gk ZETA]

zedoary n. an aromatic ginger-like substance made from the rootstock of E. Indian plants of the genus *Curcuma* and used in medicine, perfumery, and dyeing. [ME f. med.L zedoarium f. Pers. zidwar]

zee n. US the letter Z. [17th c.: var. of ZED]

Zeeman effect

n. Physics the splitting of the spectrum line into several components by a magnetic field. [P. Zeeman, Du. physicist d. 1943]

zein n. Biochem. the principal protein of maize. [Zea the generic name of maize + -IN]

Zeitgeist n. 1 the spirit of the times. 2 the trend of thought and feeling in a period. [G f. Zeit time + Geist spirit]

Zen n. a form of Mahayana Buddhism emphasizing the value of meditation and intuition. Zenist n. (also Zennist). [Jap., = meditation]

zenana n. the part of a house for the seclusion of women of high-caste families in India and Iran. [Hind. zenana f. Pers. zanana f. zan woman]

Zend n. an interpretation of the Avesta, each Zend being part of the Zend-Avesta. Zend-Avesta the Zoroastrian sacred writings of the Avesta or text and Zend or commentary. [Pers. zand interpretation]

Zener cards

n. a set of 25 cards each with one of five different symbols, used in ESP research. [K. E. Zener, Amer. psychologist b. 1903]

zenith n. 1 the part of the celestial sphere directly above an observer (opp. NADIR). 2 the highest point in one's fortunes; a time of great prosperity etc. zenith distance an arc intercepted between a celestial body and its zenith; the complement of a body's altitude. [ME f. OF cenit or med.L cenit ult. f. Arab. samt (ar-ra' s) path (over the head)]

zenithal adj. of or relating to a zenith. zenithal projection a projection of part of a globe on to a plane tangential to the centre of the part, showing the correct directions of all points from the centre.

zeolite n. each of a number of minerals consisting mainly of hydrous silicates of calcium, sodium, and aluminium, able to act as cation exchangers. zeolitic adj. [Sw. & G zeolit f. Gk zeo boil + -LITE (from their characteristic swelling and fusing under the blowpipe)]

Zeph. abbr. Zephaniah (Old Testament).

zephyr n. 1 literary a mild gentle wind or breeze. 2 a fine cotton fabric. 3 an athlete's thin gauzy jersey. [F zephyr or L zephyrus f. Gk zephuros (god of the west wind)]

Zeppelin n. hist. a German large dirigible airship of the early 20th

c., orig. for military use. [Count F. von Zeppelin, Ger. airman d. 1917, its first constructor]

zero n. & v. --n. (pl. -os) 1 a the figure 0; nought. b no quantity or number; nil. 2 a point on the scale of an instrument from which a positive or negative quantity is reckoned. 3 (attrib.) having a value of zero; no, not any (zero population growth). 4 (in full zero-hour) a the hour at which a planned, esp. military, operation is timed to begin. b a crucial moment. 5 the lowest point; a nullity or nonentity. --v.tr. (-oes, -oed) 1 adjust (an instrument etc.) to zero point. 2 set the sights of (a gun) for firing. zero in on 1 take aim at. 2 focus one's attention on. zero option a disarmament proposal for the total removal of certain types of weapons on both sides. zero-rated on which no value added tax is charged. zero-sum (of a game, political situation, etc.) in which whatever is gained by one side is lost by the other so that the net change is always zero. [F zero or It. zero f. OSp. f. Arab. sifr CIPHER]

zeroth adj. immediately preceding what is regarded as 'first' in a series.

zest n. 1 piquancy; a stimulating flavour or quality. 2 a keen enjoyment or interest. b (often foll. by for) relish. c gusto (entered into it with zest). 3 a scraping of orange or lemon peel as flavouring. zestful adj. zestfully adv. zestfulness n. zesty adj. (zestier, zestiest). [F zeste orange or lemon peel, of unkn. orig.]

zeta n. the sixth letter of the Greek alphabet (Z). [Gk zeta]

zetetic adj. proceeding by inquiry. [Gk zetetikos f. zeteo seek]

zeugma n. a figure of speech using a verb or adjective with two nouns, to one of which it is strictly applicable while the word appropriate to the other is not used (e.g. with weeping eyes and [sc. grieving] hearts) (cf. SYLLEPSIS). zeugmatic adj. [L f. Gk zeugma -atos f. zeugnumi to yoke, zugon yoke]

4.0 zho

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zho var. of DZHO.

5.0 zibet...

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zibet n. (US zibeth) 1 an Asian or Indian civet, *Viverra zibetha*. 2 its scent. [med.L zibethum: see CIVET]

zidovudine

- n. = AZT. [chem. name azidothymidine]
- ziff n. Austral. sl. a beard. [20th c.: orig. unkn.]
- ziggurat n. a rectangular stepped tower in ancient Mesopotamia, surmounted by a temple. [Assyr. ziqquratu pinnacle]
- zigzag n., adj., adv., & v. --n. 1 a line or course having abrupt alternate right and left turns. 2 (often in pl.) each of these turns. --adj. having the form of a zigzag; alternating right and left. --adv. with a zigzag course. --v.intr. (zigzagged, zigzagging) move in a zigzag course. zigzaggedly adv. [F f. G zickzack]
- zilch n. esp. US sl. nothing. [20th c.: orig. uncert.]
- zillah n. an administrative district in India, containing several parganas. [Hind. dilah division]
- zillion n. colloq. an indefinite large number. zillionth adj. & n. [Z (perh. = unknown quantity) + MILLION]
- zinc n. Chem. a white metallic element occurring naturally as zinc blende, and used as a component of brass, in galvanizing sheet iron, in electric batteries, and in printing-plates. Symb.: Zn. flowers of zinc = zinc oxide. zinc blende see BLENDE. zinc chloride a white crystalline deliquescent solid used as a preservative and flux. zinc oxide a powder used as a white pigment and in medicinal ointments. zinc sulphate a white water-soluble compound used as a mordant. zinned adj. [G Zink, of unkn. orig.]
- zincograph n. & v. --n. (pl. -os) = ZINCOGRAPH. --v.tr. & intr. (-oes, -oed) = ZINCOGRAPH. [abbr.]
- zincography n. & v. --n. 1 a zinc plate with a design etched in relief on it for printing from. 2 a print taken from this. --v. 1 tr. & intr. etch on zinc. 2 tr. reproduce (a design) in this way. zincography n.
- zincotype n. = ZINCOGRAPH.
- zing n. & v. colloq. --n. vigour, energy. --v.intr. move swiftly or with a shrill sound. zingy adj. (zingier, zingiest). [imit.]
- Zingaro n. (pl. Zingari) a gypsy. [It.]
- zinger n. US sl. an outstanding person or thing.
- zinnia n. a composite plant of the genus *Zinnia*, with showy rayed flowers of deep red and other colours. [J. G. Zinn, Ger. physician and botanist d. 1759]

Zion n. (also Sion) 1 the hill of Jerusalem on which the city of David was built. 2 a the Jewish people or religion. b the Christian Church. 3 (in Christian thought) the Kingdom of God in Heaven. [OE f. eccl.L Sion f. Heb. siy]

Zionism n. a movement (orig.) for the reestablishment and (now) the development of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel. Zionist n.

zip n. & v. --n. 1 a light fast sound, as of a bullet passing through air. 2 energy, vigour. 3 esp. Brit. a (in full zip-fastener) a fastening device of two flexible strips with interlocking projections closed or opened by pulling a slide along them. b (attrib.) having a zip-fastener (zip bag). --v. (zipped, zipping) 1 tr. & intr. (often foll. by up) fasten with a zip-fastener. 2 intr. move with zip or at high speed. [imit.]

Zip code n. US a system of postal codes consisting of five-digit numbers. [zone improvement plan]

zipper n. & v. esp. US --n. a zip-fastener. --v.tr. (often foll. by up) fasten with a zipper. zippered adj.

zippy adj. (zippier, zippiest) colloq. 1 bright, fresh, lively. 2 fast, speedy. zippily adv. zippiness n.

zircon n. a zirconium silicate of which some translucent varieties are cut into gems (see HYACINTH 4, JARGON(2)). [G Zirkon: cf. JARGON(2)]

zirconium n. Chem. a grey metallic element occurring naturally in zircon and used in various industrial applications. Symb.: Zr. [mod.L f. ZIRCON + -IUM]

zit n. esp. US sl. a pimple. [20th c.: orig. unkn.]

zither n. a musical instrument consisting of a flat wooden soundbox with numerous strings stretched across it, placed horizontally and played with the fingers and a plectrum. zitherist n. [G (as CITTERN)]

zizz n. & v. colloq. --n. 1 a whizzing or buzzing sound. 2 a short sleep. --v.intr. 1 make a whizzing sound. 2 doze or sleep. [imit.]

6.0 zloty

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zloty n. (pl. same or zlotys) the chief monetary unit of Poland. [Pol., lit. 'golden']

7.0 Zn

Zn symb. Chem. the element zinc.

8.0 zodiac...

zodiac n. 1 a belt of the heavens limited by lines about 8 from the ecliptic on each side, including all apparent positions of the sun, moon, and planets as known to ancient astronomers, and divided into twelve equal parts (signs of the zodiac), each formerly containing the similarly named constellation but now by precession of the equinoxes coinciding with the constellation that bears the name of the preceding sign: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn(us), Aquarius, Pisces. 2 a diagram of these signs. 3 a complete cycle, circuit, or compass. [ME f. OF zodiaque f. L zodiacus f. Gk zoidiakos f. zoidion sculptured animal-figure, dimin. of zoion animal]

zodiacal adj. of or in the zodiac. zodiacal light a luminous area of sky shaped like a tall triangle occasionally seen in the east before sunrise or in the west after sunset, esp. in the Tropics. [F (as ZODIAC)]

zoetrope n. hist. an optical toy in the form of a cylinder with a series of pictures on the inner surface which give an impression of continuous motion when viewed through slits with the cylinder rotating. [irreg. f. Gk zoe life + -tropos turning]

zoic adj. 1 of or relating to animals. 2 Geol. (of rock etc.) containing fossils; with traces of animal or plant life. [prob. back-form. f. AZOIC]

Z Iner's lines

n. parallel lines made to appear not parallel by short oblique intersecting lines. [J. K. F. Z Iner, Ger. physicist d. 1882]

zollverein

n. hist. a customs union, esp. of German States in the 19th c. [G]

zombie n. 1 colloq. a dull or apathetic person. 2 a corpse said to be revived by witchcraft. [W.Afr. zumbi fetish]

zonation n. distribution in zones, esp. (Ecol.) of plants into zones characterized by the dominant species.

zonda n. a hot dusty north wind in Argentina. [Amer. Sp.]

zone n. & v. --n. 1 an area having particular features, properties,

purpose, or use (danger zone; erogenous zone; smokeless zone).
2 any well-defined region of more or less beltlike form. 3 a an area between two exact or approximate concentric circles. b a part of the surface of a sphere enclosed between two parallel planes, or of a cone or cylinder etc., between such planes cutting it perpendicularly to the axis. 4 (in full time zone) a range of longitudes where a common standard time is used. 5 Geol. etc. a range between specified limits of depth, height, etc., esp. a section of strata distinguished by characteristic fossils. 6 Geog. any of five divisions of the earth bounded by circles parallel to the equator (see FRIGID, TEMPERATE, TORRID). 7 an encircling band or stripe distinguishable in colour, texture, or character from the rest of the object encircled. 8 archaic a belt or girdle worn round the body. --v.tr. 1 encircle as or with a zone. 2 arrange or distribute by zones. 3 assign as or to a particular area. zonal adj. zoning n. (in sense 3 of v.). [F zone or L zona girdle f. Gk zone]

zonk v. & n. sl. --v. 1 tr. hit or strike. 2 (foll. by out) a tr. overcome with sleep; intoxicate. b intr. fall heavily asleep. --n. (often as int.) the sound of a blow or heavy impact. [imit.]

zoo n. a zoological garden. [abbr.]

zoo- comb. form of animals or animal life. [Gk zoio- f. zoion animal]

zoogeography

n. the branch of zoology dealing with the geographical distribution of animals. zoogeographic adj. zoogeographical adj. zoogeographically adv.

zoography n. descriptive zoology.

zoid n. 1 a more or less independent invertebrate organism arising by budding or fission. 2 a distinct member of an invertebrate colony. zoidal adj. [formed as ZOO- + -OID]

zoolatry n. the worship of animals.

zoological

disp. adj. of or relating to zoology. zoological garden (or gardens) a public garden or park with a collection of animals for exhibition and study. zoologically adv.

zoology disp. n. the scientific study of animals, esp. with reference to their structure, physiology, classification, and distribution. zoologist n. [mod.L zoologia (as ZOO-, -LOGY)]

zoom v. & n. --v. 1 intr. move quickly, esp. with a buzzing sound. 2 a intr. cause an aeroplane to mount at high speed and a steep angle. b tr. cause (an aeroplane) to do this. 3 a intr. (of a camera) close up rapidly from a long shot to a close-up. b tr.

cause (a lens or camera) to do this. --n. 1 an aeroplane's steep climb. 2 a zooming camera shot. zoom lens a lens allowing a camera to zoom by varying the focal length. [imit.]

zoomancy n. divination from the appearances or behaviour of animals.

zoomorphic

adj. 1 dealing with or represented in animal forms. 2 having gods of animal form. zoomorphism n.

zoonosis n. any of various diseases which can be transmitted to humans from animals. [ZOO- + Gk nosos disease]

zoophyte n. a plantlike animal, esp. a coral, sea anemone, or sponge.

zoophytic adj. [Gk zoophuton (as ZOO-, -PHYTE)]

zooplankton

n. plankton consisting of animals.

zoospore n. a spore of fungi, algae, etc. capable of motion.

zoosporic adj.

zootomy n. the dissection or anatomy of animals.

zoot suit n. colloq. a man's suit with a long loose jacket and high-waisted tapering trousers. [rhyming on SUIT]

zori n. (pl. zoris) a Japanese straw or rubber etc. sandal. [Jap.]

zoril n. (also zorille) a flesh-eating African mammal, *Ichonyx striatus*, of the skunk and the weasel family. [F zorille f. Sp. zorrilla dimin. of zorro fox]

Zoroastrian

adj. & n. (also Zarathustrian) --adj. of or relating to Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) or the dualistic religious system taught by him or his followers in the Zend-Avesta, based on the concept of a conflict between a spirit of light and good and a spirit of darkness and evil. --n. a follower of Zoroaster.

Zoroastrianism n. [L Zoroastres f. Gk Zoroastres f. Avestan Zarathustra, Persian founder of the religion in the 6th c. BC]

Zouave n. a member of a French light-infantry corps originally formed of Algerians and retaining their oriental uniform. [F f. Zouaoua, name of a tribe]

zounds int. archaic expressing surprise or indignation. [(God)'s wounds (i.e. those of Christ on the Cross)]

9.0 ZPG

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ZPG abbr. zero population growth.

10.0 Zr

Zr symb. Chem. the element zirconium.

11.0 zucchetto...

zucchetto n. (pl. -os) a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic's skullcap, black for a priest, purple for a bishop, red for a cardinal, and white for a pope. [It. zucchetta dimin. of zucca gourd, head]

zucchini n. (pl. same or zucchinis) esp. US & Austral. a courgette. [It., pl. of zucchini dimin. of zucca gourd]

zugzwang n. Chess an obligation to move in one's turn even when this must be disadvantageous. [G f. Zug move + Zwang compulsion]

Zulu n. & adj. --n. 1 a member of a Black South African people orig. inhabiting Zululand and Natal. 2 the language of this people. --adj. of or relating to this people or language. [native name]

12.0 zwieback...

zwieback n. a kind of biscuit rusk or sweet cake toasted in slices. [G, = twice baked]

Zwinglian n. & adj. --n. a follower of the Swiss religious reformer U. Zwingli (d. 1531). --adj. of or relating to Zwingli or his reforms.

zwitterion

n. a molecule or ion having separate positively and negatively charged groups. [G f. Zwitter a hybrid]

13.0 zygo...

zygo- comb. form joining, pairing. [Gk zugo- f. zugon yoke]

zygodactyl

adj. & n. --adj. (of a bird) having two toes pointing forward and two backward. --n. such a bird. zygodactylous adj.

zygoma n. (pl. zygomata) the bony arch of the cheek formed by connection of the zygomatic and temporal bones. [Gk zugoma -atos f. zugon yoke]

zygomatic adj. of or relating to the zygoma. zygomatic arch = ZYGOMA.
zygomatic bone the bone that forms the prominent part of the
cheek.

zygomorphic
adj. (also zygomorphous) (of a flower) divisible into similar
halves only by one plane of symmetry.

zygospore n. a thick-walled spore formed by certain fungi.

zygote n. Biol. a cell formed by the union of two gametes. zygotic
adj. zygotically adv. [Gk zugotos yoked f. zugoo to yoke]

zymase n. the enzyme fraction in yeast which catalyses the alcoholic
fermentation of glucose. [F f. Gk zume leaven]

zymology n. Chem. the scientific study of fermentation. zymological
adj. zymologist n. [as ZYMASE + -LOGY]

zymosis n. archaic fermentation. [mod.L f. Gk zumosis (as ZYMASE)]

zymotic adj. archaic of or relating to fermentation. zymotic disease
archaic an epidemic, endemic, contagious, infectious, or
sporadic disease regarded as caused by the multiplication of
germs introduced from outside. [Gk zumotikos (as ZYMOSIS)]

zymurgy n. the branch of applied chemistry dealing with the use of
fermentation in brewing etc. [Gk zume leaven, after metallurgy]