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crazy, *adj.*

Pronunciation: Brit. /'kreɪzi/, U.S. /'kreɪzi/

Forms: 15–16 **crasy**, 15–17 **crasie**, (15 **crasie**), 16–17 **crazie**, 16– **crazy**.

Frequency (in current use):

Etymology: < CRAZE *v.* or CRAZE *n.* + -Y suffix¹.

1. Full of cracks or flaws; damaged, impaired, unsound; liable to break or fall to pieces; frail, 'shaky'. (Now usually of ships, buildings, etc.)

- 1583 P. STUBBES *Anat. Abuses* sig. Dviiv If Aeolus with his blasts, or Neptune with his stormes, chaunce to hit vppon the crasie bark.
 1595 SPENSER *Colin Clouts come Home Againe* sig. C Or be their pipes vntunable and crasie?
 1612 T. TAYLOR *Ἀρχὴν Ἀπάντων: Comm. Epist. Paul to Titus* i. 16 As a crazie pitcher which is vnfit to hold water.
 1748 B. ROBINS & R. WALTER *Voy. round World by Anson* i. x. 151 With a crazy ship.
 1776 A. SMITH *Inq. Wealth of Nations* I. ii. ii. 375 The house is crazy..and will not stand very long.
 1844 DICKENS *Let.* 16 Nov. (1977) IV. 219 The court was full of crazy coaches.
 1868 E. A. FREEMAN *Hist. Norman Conquest* (1876) II. ix. 336 An old crazy ship.

†2. Having the bodily health or constitution impaired; indisposed, ailing; diseased, sickly; broken down, frail, infirm. *Obs.*

- 1576 A. FLEMING tr. Cicero in *Panoplie Epist.* 4 Remove not from the place where you be, sithence you are weake and crasie.
 1611 J. SPEED *Hist. Great Brit.* IX. xv. 624/2 The King somewhat crasie, and keeping his Chamber.
 a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Henry VI, Pt. 1* (1623) III. v. 48 Some better place, Fitter for sicknesse, and for crasie age.
 1712 R. STEELE *Spectator* No. 426. ¶2 I find my Frame grown crasie with perpetual Toil and Meditation.
 1807 *Med. & Physical Jrnl.* 17 290 By a guarded mode of living..a very crazy constitution is frequently piloted into old age.
 1847 L. HUNT *Men, Women, & Bks.* II. ii. 33 An indulgence conceded to his little crazy body.

3. *fig.* and *transf.*

a. Unsound, impaired, 'shaky'; frail, infirm.

- 1601 P. HOLLAND tr. Pliny *Hist. World* I. 3 Fraile and crasie mortall men, remembring wel their owne infirmitie.
- 1641 MILTON *Of Reformation* 43 To keep up the floting carcas of a crazie, and diseased Monarchy.
- a1656 BP. J. HALL *Shaking of Olive-tree* (1660) I. 29 Misdoubting what issue those his crasie evidences would find at the Common law.
- 1785 W. COWPER *Task* II. 60 The old And crazy earth has had her shaking fits More frequent.

†b. Broken down in estate; ruined, bankrupt.

- 1700 T. BROWN *Amusem. Serious & Comical* iii. 29 There Sneaks a Hunger-starv'd Usurer in quest of a Crasie Citizen.

4.

a. Of unsound mind; insane, mad, demented, 'cracked'. Often used by way of exaggeration in sense: Distracted or 'mad' with excitement, vehement desire, perplexity, etc., extremely eager, enthusiastic, etc.
Phr. **to go crazy; to be crazy about or for (a person)**, to be infatuated with, to be in love with.

- 1617 J. CHAMBERLAIN in R. F. Williams *Birch's Court & Times James I* (1848) (modernized text) II. 19 He was noted to be crazy and distempered before.
- 1674 S. BUTLER *Epist. to Sidrophel* in *Hudibras* (new ed.) II. 392 'Tis in vain To tamper with your Crazy Brain.
- 1732 B. FRANKLIN in *Pennsylvania Gaz.* 17–24 July 1/1 Lord, Child..are you crazy?
- 1779 F. BURNEY *Diary & Lett.* May (1842) I. 208 Mr. Murphy is crazy for your play..do pray let me run away with the first act.
- 1798 S. T. COLERIDGE *Anc. Marinere* VII, in Wordsworth & S. T. Coleridge *Lyrical Ballads* 47 The Pilot's boy, Who now doth crazy go, Laugh'd loud and long.
- 1826 M. R. MITFORD *Our Village* II. 271 All the world..were crazy to have their fortunes told.
- 1839 C. CLARK *John Noakes* lxxxii But so crazy all for Tiptree wor, They coodn't thussins stay.
- 1856 B. BRODIE *Psychol. Inq.* (ed. 3) I. i. 24 Lord George Gordon, a crazy fanatic, led the London mob to burn down Newgate.
- 1859 in *Chicago Tribune* (1929) 11 Oct. VIII. 1 I am crazy to have a carpet like Mr. Laflins.
- 1873 W. H. DIXON *Hist. Two Queens* IV. XIX. ii. 7 Linked in a marriage without love..driving each other crazy with..mutual spite.
- 1883 J. HAY *Bread-winners* xi. 175 I see you are crazy to go and talk to Miss Dallas.
- 1892 H. DACRE *Daisy Bell* 5 Daisy, Daisy, Give me your answer, do! I'm half crazy, All for the love of you!
- 1895 S. HALE *Lett.* (1919) 294 They were crazy that I should talk about the celebrated people I have known.
- 1898 *Scribner's Mag.* Oct. 447/2 He's crazy over this girl.
- 1904 R. L. MCCARDELL *Show Girl & Friends* 35 You know everybody is just crazy about octets?

- 1917 P. G. WODEHOUSE *Man with Two Left Feet* 18 I love you. I'm crazy about you.
 1926 J. BLACK *You can't Win* iii. 19 Well, if you're so crazy about a job, I'll make one for you.
 1929 M. LIEF *Hangover* 235 He was crazy in love with her and one moonlit night he proposed to her.
 1930 *Daily Tel.* 1 Dec. 21/1 At Royal Wimbledon..he went 'crazy', to use an inoffensive and common golfing phrase. His figures to the turn..a total of 30.
 1932 GRACE PERKINS (*title*) Boy crazy.
 1936 E. C. BENTLEY & H. W. ALLEN *Trent's Own Case* vii. 72 We were talking about Eunice Faviell..and the way so many men go crazy about her.
 1949 P. G. WODEHOUSE *Mating Season* iii. 28 And the unfortunate part of it all is, Bertie, that I'm crazier about him than ever.
 1962 J. LUDWIG in R. Weaver *Canad. Short Stories* (1968) 2nd Ser. 252 A Toronto deb-type, gorgeous, crazy for Jimmy, hot and burning.

b. Of things, actions, etc.: Showing derangement of intellect; insane, mad.

- 1855 H. MELVILLE *Piazza Tales* (1856) 425 Hopelessly infected with the craziest chimeras of his age.
 1859 *Sat. Rev.* 7 471/1 Crazy theories.
 18.. J. G. WHITTIER *Cassandra Southwick* ix By crazy fancies led.
 1885 *Manch. Examiner* 13 Oct. 5/1 The crazy wildness of his appeal.

c. like crazy = *like mad* at MAD *adj.* Phrases 1. *colloq.* (orig. U.S.).

- 1924 P. MARKS *Plastic Age* xxiv. 288 She has been going an awful pace, tearing around like crazy.
 1957 J. OSBORNE *Entertainer* v. 35 There she was, beating them with her umbrella like crazy.
 1964 *Punch* 24 June 929/1 They're wooing us like crazy.
 1968 *Punch* 28 Feb. 309/1 Here were all those guys consuming like crazy and having to be regularly restocked.

d. slang (orig. U.S.). (a) Of music, esp. jazz: unrestrained, wild; exciting. (b) Hence as a term of approbation: excellent, admirable, satisfying. Cf. COOL *adj.* 8b.

- 1927 *Melody Maker* June 573/2 Leath has established her reputation as a..first-class artist in 'Crazy Words, Crazy Tune'.
 1933 *Melody Maker* 2 Sept. 2 Arthur Roseberry Goes All 'Crazy'.
 1935 *Hot News* Apr. 13/1 He is a crazy player, and a crazier singer.
 1935 *Hot News* Apr. 13/1 'Jamaica Shout' is, I think, the craziest record.
 1935 *Hot News* Apr. 13/1 Where musicians are concerned..if I say a man is crazy you may be sure that I think he is very, very good.
 1953 *Time* 14 Sept. 68/3 The latest Tin Pan Alley argot, where 'cool' means good, 'crazy' means wonderful.

- 1956 *New Yorker* 8 Dec. 159 (adv.) Hi Fi can turn your bachelor apartment into a Harem..and the crazy part is you don't have to be an engineer to operate H. H. Scott components.
- 1959 *Punch* 14 Oct. 319 The swing-cats sway, the hipsters tap their feet As Victor pounds his low-down crazy beat.
- 1962 J. BALDWIN *Another Country* (1963) II. iii. 274 She laughed. 'Black Label [Scotch]?' 'Crazy.'

e. crazy like (or as) a fox: very cunning or shrewd. *colloq.* (orig. U.S.).

- 1935 G. LORIMER & S. LORIMER *Heart Specialist* vi. 164 'Is she drunk or crazy and is she a giraffe?..' 'Crazy as a fox,' I said glumly.
- 1944 S. J. PERELMAN (title) Crazy like a fox.
- 1967 M. PROCTER *Rogue Running* xxv. 165 'Crazy,' Martineau mused. 'Crazy like a fox. And as hard to catch.'
- 1969 D. BAGLEY *Spoilers* x. 294 I'm crazy like a fox... How much did I win from you..?

f. In the colloq. phr. crazy, mixed-up (kid, person, etc.), descriptive of one whose mind is driven distracted by conflicting and unresolved emotions. Also used of a confused situation.

- 1955 *Melody Maker* 30 July 6/2 Full of the most peculiar phrases..something else is a 'crazy, mixed-up creep'.
- 1956 *Punch* 28 Nov. 653 We live in an age in which the Common Man is apt also to be a crazy, mixed-up personality.
- 1957 J. BRAINE *Room at Top* xi. 106 As they say in the films, I'm just a crazy mixed-up kid.

5. Used (after crazy quilt n. at Special uses 2) to denote a garden walk or pavement of irregular pieces of flat stone or tile, esp. in crazy paving; so (as a back-formation) crazy-pave v. trans., crazy-paved ppl. adj.

- 1923 *Daily Mail* 13 Jan. 11 Stone walks, either crazy or rectangular.
- 1923 *Daily Mail* 19 Feb. 6 Visitors will pass by old red brick and crazy paths to a sunk lawn.
- 1925 A. S. M. HUTCHINSON *One Increasing Purpose* iii. xvi Under the blue tile..of the crazy-paving just by the rain-water butt.
- 1927 H. C. BAILEY *Mr. Fortune, Please* 173 Along the house was a terrace with crazy pavement in which saxifrage grew.
- 1927 H. C. BAILEY *Mr. Fortune, Please* 223 Mrs. Pemberton's garden was a pleasant place of crazy paving and rock plants.
- 1952 E. R. JANES *Flower Garden* 36 Probably the best form of crazy paving is the broken paving stones obtainable in some towns when stone pavements are replaced by asphalt.
- 1960 *News Chron.* 22 Apr. 8/6 Jimmy Gold is..getting ready to crazy-pave his front garden.

1963 *Times* 25 Feb. 14/5 Almost every room in the house has exposed oak beam ceilings and there is a small crazy-paved garden.

SPECIAL USES

S1. General *attrib.*

a.

crazy-headed *adj.*

1716 J. LONG *Assize Serm. Govt.* 3 Crazy-headed people.

crazy-pate *adj.*

1821 *Blackwood's Edinb. Mag.* 9 61 The crazy-pate banker.

b.

crazy-sensible *adj.*

1923 D. H. LAWRENCE *Let.* 24 Sept. (1962) II. 754 California is..sort of crazy-sensible.

crazy-wayed *adj.*

1957 J. KEROUAC *On Road* II. viii. 164 So amazingly himself, all raging and sniffy and crazy-wayed.

crazy-witty *adj.*

1851 H. MELVILLE *Moby-Dick* xcix. 484 He's too crazy-witty for my sanity.

S2.

crazy ant *n.* (see quot.).

1885 A. BRASSEY *In Trades* 132 Another curious variety is appropriately called the 'crazy ant'. He always seems to be in a violent hurry..moving forwards, backwards, and sideways in the most purposeless and insane manner.

crazy Betty *n.* (see quot.: cf. CRAYSE *n.*).

1880 R. JEFFERIES *Round about Great Estate* 24 Where to find the first 'crazy Betties'..These are the marsh marigolds.

crazy bone *n.* (U.S.) the 'funny-bone'.

1880 *Webster's Dict. Suppl.* *Crazy-bone*..so called on account of the intense pain produced when it receives a blow.

crazy flying *n.* aerobatics performed near the ground.

1922 *Flight* **14** 372/2 The next item was the extraordinary exhibition of 'crazy' flying..on a jazzified Avro.

1940 N. MONKS *Squadrons Up!* 162 To lift that gold cup for the crazy-flying event.

Crazy Foam *n.* orig. U.S. the name (proprietary in the U.S.) of a type of soap for children which is sold as pressurized foam in an aerosol container; also used as a plaything and for practical jokes.

1965 *Official Gaz.* (U.S. Patent Office) 13 Apr. TM84/1 Aerosol Corporation of America, Clifton, N.J. Filed Nov. 8, 1963. *Crazy Foam*. For bath soap in toy shaped container. First use Aug. 19, 1963.

1976 *West Lancs. Evening Gaz.* 13 Dec. 11/2 (*advt.*) Bill's House of Jokes, Party Poppers, Crazy Foam, [etc.].

1984 S. TOWNSEND *Growing Pains Adrian Mole* 131 Drunken youths covered in 'crazy foam' and factory girls wearing tinsel garlands paraded around the town singing carols.

crazy patchwork *n.*

1885 *Harper's Mag.* Mar. 531/2 Alternate stripes of 'crazy patchwork' embroidered on crimson turcoman.

crazy quilt *n.* (orig. U.S.) a patchwork quilt made of pieces of stuff of all kinds in fantastic patterns or without any order; also *attrib.* and *fig.*; so **crazy-work**.

1886 *Pall Mall Gaz.* 12 Nov. 6/2 What is generally called 'crazy quilt' in the States and patchwork in England.

1888 *Boston Evening Jrnl.* 20 June A Washington letter gives a clever sketch of the conversation which recently took place at the house of a matron who receives a hundred or two of people on the afternoon of 'her day'. 'Crazy quilt conversation', the hostess declared it to be.

1890 *Cent. Mag.* May 47/1 As uncertain in marking as the pattern of a crazy-quilt.

1911 H. S. HARRISON *Queed* 49 The present system is a mere crazy-quilt, quite unsatisfactory in a thousand ways.

1946 W. S. MAUGHAM *Then & Now* xxii. 118 Machiavelli's emotions were as various as the colours of a crazy quilt.

- 1958 *Listener* 13 Nov. 765/1 Can anything but crazy-quilt legislation emerge from a chamber exposed to pressures such as these?
 1963 *Economist* 28 Sept. 1121/3 The crazy-quilt redevelopment of Lower Manhattan.

DRAFT ADDITIONS 1997

crazy ant *n.* any of several ants that exhibit very fast or erratic movement, esp. *Prenolepis longicornis*, native to tropical regions.

- 1905 *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* **21** 111 *Prenolepis longicornis*... This tropicopolitan species which is common in New Providence..but very sporadic on the eastern coast of Andros..occurs in houses and is known as the 'crazy ant' on account of its singular erratic movements.
 1915 C. A. EALAND *Insects & Man* vi. 245 The Argentine ant, *Iridomyrmex humilis*... The ant has received its popular name from the fact that Argentina is believed to be one, at least, of the countries in which it is native. At first it was called the 'New Orleans ant'..; other names which have been suggested and dropped..are the 'crazy ant', the 'tropical ant', and the 'pernicious ant'.
 1971 E. O. WILSON *Insect Societies* xxi. 447/2 *Paratrechina longicornis*, the swift-running *hormiga loca* (crazy ant) found in tropical cities around the world, is an example of a class of species I have come to call 'opportunists'.
 1983 *Listener* 27 Oct. 16/3 Another new import is the long-legged ant, which is also called the Crazy Ant, which has appropriately turned up in a psychiatric hospital.

DRAFT ADDITIONS JANUARY 2005

crazy golf *n.* golf played in an unusual manner or on a novel course; *spec.* (chiefly *Brit.*) a putting game played on a small, usually concrete, course, each hole of which involves negotiating a novelty obstacle; cf. *miniature golf n.* at *MINIATURE n.* and *adj.* Compounds 2, *Tom Thumb golf n.* at *TOM THUMB n.* Compounds 2.

- 1936 *Oshkosh (Wisconsin) Northwestern* 2 Sept. 11/7 Women members..were to assemble at the course today attired in unique costumes for the 'crazy' golf tournament.
 1948 *Compl. Home Entertainer* 416 Crazy Golf. This game requires more preparation, but it will be worth the trouble.
 1988 G. PATTERSON *Burning your Own* III. v. 203 Mal was in defiant mood as he strode along the bottom of the crazy golf course and on to the frowzy sprawl of grass leading down to the dump.
 2002 *List (Glasgow & Edinb.)* 4 July 94/1 Crazy golf has always been an odd phenomenon, peculiarly British in character and reminiscent of faded seaside towns.

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