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patriot, *n.* and *adj.*

Pronunciation: Brit. /'patriət/, /'peɪtriət/, U.S. /'peɪtriət/

Forms: 15 **patriotte**, 15–16 **patriote**, 16– **patriot**.

Frequency (in current use):

Origin: A borrowing from French. **Etymon:** French *patriote*.

Etymology: < Middle French, French *patriote* fellow-countryman (c1460; also *patriot* (1599)), person who loves his or her country (1561 as *patriot*, chiefly with modifying adjective, as *bon patriot*, etc.; also sometimes used among the Huguenots to denote their fellow believers; 1562 in *bon patriote*; also as adjective in this sense) < post-classical Latin *patriota* fellow-countryman (6th cent.) < ancient Greek *πατριώτης* (see note), partly < *πάτριος* of one's fathers (< *πατρ-*, *πατήρ* father (see *FATHER n.*) + *-ιος*, suffix forming adjectives) + *-ότης* -OTE suffix, and partly < *πατριά* clan (see *PATRIARCH n.*) + *-ότης* -OTE suffix. Compare Italian *patriota* (a1536; c.1400 as *patrioto* in sense 'fellow-countryman'), Spanish *patriota* (1535–52 in sense 'fellow-countryman'), Dutch *patriot* (a1579 in *goede patriotten* (plural), with reference to the war against Spain), German *Patriot* (second half of the 16th cent.; 1579 with reference to the Huguenots).

Ancient Greek *πατριώτης* is used of barbarians, who had a common *πατρίς* (as opposed to Greeks who were called *πολίται*, having a common *πόλις*); in this sense it derives from *πάτριος*. It is also used of members of a clan, in which case it derives from *πατριά*.

Usage in the Netherlands in the 1570s, when the term was applied to followers of William of Orange, a leader in the Dutch War of Independence, appears to have been significant in the shift in sense from 'fellow-countryman' to 'lover of one's country': see A. Duke *Reformation & Revolt in Low Countries* (1990) 191.

The form *patriotte* is perhaps after the Dutch plural *patriotten*.

In sense A. 3 perhaps influenced by association with *PATRON n.*

A. *n.*

I. A person.

1.

a. A person who loves his or her country, *esp.* one who is ready to support its freedoms and rights and to defend it against enemies or detractors.

In early use, as in French and Dutch, chiefly with 'good', 'true', 'worthy', or other commendatory adjective: cf. 'good citizen'. 'Patriot' for 'good patriot' is *rare* before 1680. At that time often applied to a person who supported the rights of the country against the King and court.

1577 DR. WILSON *Let.* 8 June in *Relations Politiques L'Angleterre* (1890) IX. 333 Champeignie joyneth harde with them that are thought to bee the best patriotes and lovers of their cowntrie.

1587 EARL OF LEICESTER *Let.* 5–15 Nov. in H. Brugmans *Correspondentie van R. Dudley* (1931) III. 281 Hit ys caryed under a quite contrarye pretence by such, as make shewe wholly ageinst ye king of Spayn and to be ye only patriottes of their country.

- 1607 B. JONSON *Volpone* IV. i. 95 Such as were knowne Patriots, Sound louers of their country.
- 1611 M. SMITH in *Bible* (King James) Transl. Pref. 8 Was Catiline therefore an honest man, or a good Patriot?
- a1641 R. MONTAGU *Acts & Monuments* (1642) ii. 147 Nehemias, a true and faithfull Patriot.
- 1646 H. HAMMOND *View Exceptions to Visct. Falkland's Disc. Infallibilitie* 176 The Catholiques were knowne good Patriots under our former Kings.
- 1700 DRYDEN *To my Kinsman J. Driden* in *Fables* 100 A Patriot, both the King and Country serves; Prerogative, and Privilege preserves.
- 1717 POPE *Wks.* 380 An honest Courtier, and a Patriot too, Just to his Prince, and to his Country true.
- 1750 G. BERKELEY *Max. conc. Patriotism* §24 A patriot is one who heartily wisheth the public prosperity, and doth..also study and endeavour to promote it.
- 1815 SCOTT *Lord of Isles* III. xxvii. 115 His was the patriot's burning thought, Of Freedom's battle bravely fought.
- 1855 W. H. PRESCOTT *Hist. Reign Philip II of Spain* I. II. x. 255 A band of patriots ready to do battle for the liberties of their country.
- 1865 R. H. KELLOGG *Life & Death in Rebel Prisons* 247 Husbands, sons and brothers were carried, to finish..their careers as patriots and soldiers.
- 1908 *Daily Chron.* 5 Aug. 1/1 Richard Cobden..was a great patriot..by which I mean a man who always gave the first place to what he thought were the real interests of his own country.
- 1987 *Indian Bookworm's Jrnl.* Autumn 5/2 Lala Lajpat Raj, the famous patriot who was known as *Sher-e-Punjab*, the Lion of the Punjab.

b. derogatory or ironic. A person who claims to be disinterestedly or self-sacrificingly devoted to his or her country, but whose actions or intentions are considered to be detrimental or hypocritical; a false or feigned patriot.

The term *patriot* has been at various times assumed by those whose claim to it has been disputed by others. It fell into particular discredit in the earlier half of the 18th cent., being used, according to Dr Johnson, 'ironically for a factious disturber of the government' (cf. also quot. 1833).

- 1644 J. MAXWELL *Sacro-sancta Regum Majestas* 117 The specious and spurious pretences of our glorious Reformers, and zealous Patriots today.
- 1677 G. HICKES in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eng. Hist.* (1827) 2nd Ser. IV. 42 Encouraged..by their foresaid patriots, whereof some wish the ruin of the Church, and all of them the ruin of my Lord Duke.
- 1681 DRYDEN *Absalom & Achitophel* 30 Gull'd with a Patriots name, whose Modern sense Is one that would by Law destroy his Prince: The Peoples Brave, the Politicians Tool; Never was Patriot yet, but was a Fool.
- 1771 EARL OF MALMESBURY *Lett.* (1870) I. 218 [This country] does not wish a war, whatever wicked patriots may endeavour, or lying newspapers print.
- 1780 W. COWPER *Table Talk* 143 A band, called patriots for no cause But that they catch at popular applause.
- 1833 MACAULAY *Horace Walpole* in *Edinb. Rev.* Oct. 256 The name of patriot had become [sc. c1744] a byword of derision. Horace Walpole scarcely exaggerated when he said, that..the most popular

declaration which a candidate could make on the hustings was, that he had never been and never would be a patriot.

- 1888 *Times* 17 Aug. 7/2 Much to his credit, he refused to interfere in favour of the Irish patriots.
- 1935 R. L. ASHLEY *Our Contemp. Civilization* xv. 456 The jingoist, the false patriot..who stirs up strife between these western countries in the hope of advantage for his nation.
- 1999 *Observer* (Nexis) 4 Apr. 29 Judas Sicarius.., the real or politically convenient band of treacherous 'patriots' who hung around crowds with tiny daggers concealed under their cloaks.

c. spec. (orig. U.S.). A person actively opposing enemy forces occupying his or her country; a member of a resistance movement, a freedom fighter.

Originally used of those who opposed and fought the British in the American War of Independence.

- [1773 B. FRANKLIN *Let.* 7 July 883 It should be no Wonder..if among so many Thousand true Patriots as New England contains there should be found even Twelve Judases.]
- 1789 *Gazette of U.S. (N.Y.)* 19 Aug. 2/1 The widow of Colonel Mott, (who died a patriot) was banished from her house.
- 1889 *Harper's Mag.* July 209/1 It was somewhere here that in 1776, just as the bolder patriots were scheming to carry the Declaration, the war ships of his Majesty..were boldly attacked.
- 1938 *Life* 4 Apr. 33/1 (caption) A Chinese patriot throws a grenade and scuttles for his life.
- 1945 *News Chron.* 7 May 1/5 The formal liberation of Denmark had begun. Actually the patriots had started it much earlier.
- 1959 *Listener* 23 Apr. 727/2 Wingate's leadership of the ill-found 'Patriot' forces [in Ethiopia] was audacious.
- 1995 W. D. HALLS *Politics, Society & Christianity in Vichy France* xi. 165 Not a few exploits by so-called 'patriots' were carried out by robber bands whose links with the genuine forces of Resistance were often tenuous or non-existent.

d. U.S. Frequently with capital initial. An opponent of presumed intervention by federal government in the affairs of individuals, esp. with respect to gun and tax laws.

Frequently in the names of right-wing libertarian political and militia groups.

- 1981 *Associated Press Newswire* (Nexis) 7 Apr. There's the Thomas Jefferson Equal Tax Society in Virginia.., the Tax Patriots in Sumter, S.C., the Committee for the Restoration of the Constitution in New York, [etc.].
- 1986 *United Press Internat. Newswire* (Nexis) 16 Dec. The Arizona Patriots surfaced in Arizona in 1982, filing numerous lawsuits..claiming that the only legal form of government was at the county level.
- 1995 *Denver Post* 22 Jan. A1/3 The FBI is concerned with those patriots who promote violence and racial discord.

†**2.** A fellow-countryman, a compatriot. *Obs. rare.*

- 1596 W. LAMBARDE *Perambulation of Kent* (rev. ed.) 246 Tenham..where our honest patriote Richard Harrys..planted..the sweete Cherry.
- 1611 R. COTGRAVE *Dict. French & Eng. Tongues* *Patriote*, a patriote, ones country~man.
- 1629 H. BURTON *Truth's Triumph* 285 If hee..finde..kinde vsage of the natiues and patriots of the country.

3. In extended use: a lover, devotee, or supporter of a particular place, cause, ideal, etc.; a champion.

- 1631 J. WEEVER *Anc. Funerall Monuments* 440 A carefull Patriot of the State.
- 1641 H. L'ESTRANGE *Gods Sabbath* Ep. Ded. sig. A3^v The Truth which it profeseth will gain it some measure of acceptance with so profest a Patriot of Truth.
- a1697 *On Bishop's Confinement* in *Poems on Affairs State* (1697) I. 29 His Holiness, that Patriot of Strife.
- a1745 W. MESTON *Knight of Kirk* in *Poet. Wks.* (1767) 29 Brave patriot of mine And nature's rights.
- 1842 C. MATHEWS *Career Puffer Hopkins* xxxiii. 252 He was immediately styled the Patriot of the Pie-houses.
- 1920 B. CARMAN 'Open Let.' from *Bliss Carman* 10 The Authors..Close to their ranks a patron and patriot of Yale.
- 1979 *UCT Stud. in Eng.* (Univ. Cape Town) Sept. 60 He..becomes a 'patriot' or fan of an actress at the Yiddish theatre.
- 1984 C. BUKOWSKI *War all Time* 226 (*title of poem*) A patriot of life.

II. A thing.

4. *Mil.* With capital initial. (The name of) a radar-guided surface-to-air missile system designed for early detection and interception of incoming missiles or aircraft; a missile deployed in this system. More fully ***Patriot missile***.

A proprietary name in the United Kingdom.

- [1973 *N.Y. Times* 29 Dec. 1/3 Under the \$26.9-million program nicknamed Giant Patriot by the Air Force, four Minuteman 2 missiles would be fired in the winter of 1974–5.]
- 1976 *Jrnl. Armed Forces* July 18/2 It'll be the story of how long it took to get the Army's new Patriot (formerly SAM-D) surface-to-air missile system from concept to the field.
- 1991 *Independent on Sunday* 17 Feb. 2 Iraq has fired 68 Scud missiles—35 at Israel, 33 at Saudi Arabia. The allies have launched about 130 Patriots against them.
- 2003 *Guardian* 24 Mar. 1. 3/3 The downing of an RAF Tornado by an American Patriot missile.

B. *adj.* (chiefly *attrib.*).

That is or has the character of a patriot; belonging to or characteristic of a patriot; patriotic.

- 1649 J. OGILBY tr. Virgil *Georgics* (1684) I. 72 Great Vesta, Romulus, and Patriot Gods [L. *di patrii Indigetes*], Who guard Imperial Rome, and Tuscan Floods.
- 1697 DRYDEN tr. Virgil *Georgics* II, in tr. Virgil *Wks.* 93 Some Patriot Fools to pop'lar Praise aspire, Of Publick Speeches, which worse Fools admire.
- a1742 J. HAMMOND *Love Elegies* (1743) xiv. 19 My Patriot Breast a nobler Warmth shall feel.
- 1759 W. H. DILWORTH *Life of Pope* 95 So truly patriot an attachment to the manufactures of Old England.
- 1813 J. C. EUSTACE *Tour through Italy* I. iv. 67 The same patriot passion..that characterized..the ancient Romans.
- 1896 *Harper's Mag.* Apr. 761/2 The growing activity of the German patriot guerilla.
- 1908 *Daily Chron.* 27 Feb. 3/3 The patriot part of the author's personality forbade his carrying young Jack Bull quite so far as the sad end threatened.
- 1977 J. JUDD *Corr. Van Cortlandt Family* 131 Early patriot efforts to fortify the Highlands were aborted after work had begun.
- 1995 S. SCHAMA *Landscape & Memory* III. 139 The very picture of the bluff patriot king come among his loyal woodlander subjects.

COMPOUNDS

Patriots' Day *n.* U.S. the anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord in the American War of Independence, 19 April 1775, observed since 1894 as a legal holiday in Maine and Massachusetts.

- 1894 *Boston Evening Transcript* 18 Apr. 8/4 Lowell mill agents, having heard the indignant protest against the running of machinery in the mills Patriots' Day, have decided to reconsider their action and all the mills will suspend work.
- 1948 *Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, Okla.) 18 Apr. 14/7 They are down to play a second game in the afternoon, since it's Patriots' day in Boston.
- 1992 *Watertown (N.Y.) Daily Times* 21 Apr. 18/2 Roberto Alomar grounded a bad-hop double off shortstop Tim Lincecum's glove..for the go-ahead run in the annual Patriots' Day game.

