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## quality, *n.* and *adj.*

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /'kwɒlɪti/, U.S. /'kwɒlədi/, /'kwələdi/

### Forms:

α. ME **qwalyte**, ME–15 **qualyte**, ME–15 **qualytee**, ME–16 **qualite**, ME–16 **qualitee**, ME–16 **qualitie**, ME–**quality**, 15 **qualiti**, 15 **qualytie**, 15 **qualyty**, 15–16 **qualetie**, 15–16 **qualitey**, 15–16 **qualitye**, 16 **qualety**, 16 **qualetye**, 18 **quol'ty** (*Irish English*), 18– **karlity** (*Eng. regional (Devon)*), 18– **quoloty** (*Eng. regional (north-east midl.)*); *Sc.* pre-17 **qualetie**, pre-17 **qualietie**, pre-17 **qualite**, pre-17 **qualitee**, pre-17 **qualitie**, pre-17 **qualyte**, pre-17 **qualytee**, pre-17 **qualytey**, pre-17 **qualytie**, pre-17 **qwalite**, pre-17 **qwalyte**, pre-17 **qwhalite**, pre-17 17– **quality**.

β. LME **quallyte** (in a late copy), 15–16 **quallitie**, 15–16 **quallity**; *Sc.* pre-17 **quallate**, pre-17 **quallatie**, pre-17 **quallietie**, pre-17 **quallitie**, pre-17 **quallity**.

### Frequency (in current use):

**Origin:** Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from French; modelled on a Greek lexical item. Partly a borrowing from Latin; modelled on a Greek lexical item. **Etymons:** French *qualité*; Latin *quālitāt-*, *quālitās*.

**Etymology:** < Anglo-Norman and Old French, Middle French *qualité* (late 12th cent. as †*qualiteit*; French *qualité*) (of things) attribute, property (late 12th cent.), (in medical use) humour (13th cent. or earlier in Anglo-Norman), nature, kind, character (13th cent.), excellence, superiority (1671, originally with reference to merchandise), particular class or grade of something (early 19th cent. or earlier), (of a person) character, disposition, nature (early 13th cent.), personal attribute, trait (early 13th cent.; late 15th cent. in positive sense 'virtue'), rank or position in society (14th cent.), title, description, capacity (1548, earliest in *en ceste qualité de* in this quality of; 1549 in *en qualité de*), nobility, high birth or rank, good social position (1559 in the passage translated in quot. 1579 at sense A. 5a), excellence of character, good nature (1633) and its etymon classical Latin *quālitāt-*, *quālitās* distinguishing characteristic, essential character or nature, (in grammar) mood of a verb, in post-classical Latin also (in grammar) manner of action as denoted by an adverb (3rd cent. in *adverbia qualitatis* adverbs of quality), adjective (4th cent.), good quality (4th or 5th cent. in Jerome), rank (from 12th cent. in British sources), (in medicine) humour (first half of the 13th cent. or earlier) < *quālis* of what kind (< the Indo-European base of WHO *pron.* + classical Latin *-ālis* -AL *suffix*<sup>1</sup>) + *-tās* (see *-TY suffix*<sup>1</sup>; compare *-ITY suffix*); originally formed by Cicero after ancient Greek *ποιότης* (see note). Compare Franco-Occitan *qualitaz* (beginning of the 12th cent.), Old Occitan *qualitat* (13th cent.; also *calitat*), Catalan *qualitat* (12th cent.), Spanish *calidad* (first half of the 12th cent.), also *cualidad* (first half of the 13th cent. as †*qualidad*), Portuguese *qualidade* (14th cent.), Italian *qualità* (first half of the 13th cent. as †*qualitate*), and also Dutch *kwaliteit* (1550 as †*qualiteyt*), German *Qualität* (1519). Compare QUANTITY *n.*, with which the word is frequently contrasted.

In sense A. 4b after Italian *qualità* (1531 in this sense, in the passage translated in quot. 1636).

In *man of quality* (see sense A. 5a) after Middle French, French *homme de qualité* (1559 in the passage translated in quot. 1579 at sense A. 5a).

Ancient Greek *ποιότης* was apparently formed by Plato; it first occurs in *Theaetetus* 182<sup>a</sup>, where Socrates apologizes for it as being a 'strange word' (*ἀλλόκοτον ὄνομα*). It was subsequently used by Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, whence Cicero became acquainted with it (compare Cicero *Academica* 1. 25: *qualitates..appellavi quas ποιότητας Graeci vocant*, I have called 'qualities'

what the Greeks call 'qualities').

Compare the following early use of the Latin word (in sense A. 9a) in an English context:

OE *ÆLFRIC Gram.* (St. John's Oxf.) 228 Sume [ADVERBIA] synd QUALITATIS, ða getacniað hwylcnyse, hu hit gedon sy.

### A. n.

#### I. With reference to a person (also occasionally an animal).

##### 1.

†**a.** Character, disposition, nature. *Obs.*

- c1300 *St. Michael* (Laud) 433 in C. Horstmann *Early S.-Eng. Legendary* (1887) 312 (MED) Þe planetes..ziuen him al-so qualite to don so and so.
- †a1393 GOWER *Confessio Amantis* (Fairf.) Prol. 954 (MED) Thus of his propre qualite, The man..Is as a world.
- c1450 (†?a1400) *Wars Alexander* (Ashm.) 1703 (MED) He..Askis þam of sir Alexander..Bathe of his statoure & his strenth..His qualite, his quantite he quirys all-to-gedire.
- a1500 (†a1450) tr. *Secreta Secret.* (Ashm. 396) (1977) 26 (MED) Of the qualite and stature of man.
- 1553 J. BRENDE tr. Q. Curtius Rufus *Hist.* III. f. 25 He vsed to euery nacion sondry exhortacions, as he thought mete for their disposicions and qualitie.
- a1578 R. LINDSAY *Hist. & Cron. Scotl.* (1899) I. 10 Knawin[g] of wemen..That thay are not constant in thair quallitie.
- 1616 W. LITHGOW *Painefull Peregrination* 116 A Dromidore, and Camell, differ much in quality;..the Dromidorie hath a hard-reaching trot... But the Camell..hath a most slow and lazy pace.
- 1639 J. FORD *Ladies Triall* III. sig. F3<sup>v</sup> He deserves no wife Of worthy qualitie, who dares not trust Her vertue in..any danger.
- 1753 E. HAYWOOD *Hist. Jemmy & Jenny Jessamy* I. 295 She was going on with something, which it is likely would have let Jenny into the quality and character of the intended bride, but was interrupted.
- 1847 R. W. EMERSON *Poems* 120 They her heralds be, Steeped in her quality.
- 1873 R. BROWNING *Red Cotton Night-cap Country* IV. 268 Her quality was, caterpillar-like, To..select a leaf And..feed her fill.

**b.** Without article or possessive adjective: excellence of character; good nature, virtue.

- 1607 T. HEYWOOD *Woman Kilde with Kindnesse* sig. C Disparadge not your worth too much, you are ful of quality and faire desert.
- 1609 SHAKESPEARE *Troilus & Cressida* IV. iv. 76 The Grecian youths are full of quality, And swelling ore with arts and excercise.
- 1702 *Clarendon's Hist. Rebellion* I. I. 72 Persons of Honour, and great Quality..were every day cited into the High Commission Court.
- 1889 TYRWHITT in *Universal Rev.* 15 Feb. 251 One sharp temptation well resisted..shows real moral quality.

- 1894 E. WOOD in *Daily News* 1 Oct. 6/2 [Capt. Peel] had a singularly striking appearance, showing both in face and figure what is termed, in describing well-bred horses, as 'quality'.
- 1943 *Times* 2 July 1/2 (*adv.*) Roan Pony..shows quality: good bone.
- 2006 *Irish Times* (Nexis) 22 July 12 He sought to hide his light under a bushel... Those who knew him know what a man of true quality he was.

**c. With article or possessive adjective: positive characteristics; general excellence.**

- 1803 A. MAIMBURG tr. von Ewald *Treat. Duties Light Troops* i. 5 Superiority over an enemy in the field is acquired rather by the quality than the number of men.
- 1869 *Times* 5 June 7/3 The numbers and the quality of candidates for Orders are notoriously deteriorating.
- 1978 *Globe & Mail* (Nexis) 11 Jan. These things granted, is there any doubt of the quality of..the man?
- 1998 *Harvard Law Rev.* 111 2155 A detailed biographical sketch of a man's academic prowess paints a better picture of his quality.

**d. Capacity, ability, or skill, in some respect. Now rare.**

Sometimes echoing Shakespeare (see quot. 1603), who probably intended the word in sense A. 6a.

- [1603 SHAKESPEARE *Hamlet* II. ii. 434 Come, a taste of your Quallitie, a speech, a passionate speech.]
- 1856 E. K. KANE *Arctic Explor.* I. ii. 24 Hans had given me a touch of his quality by spearing a bird on the wing.
- 1863 J. DORAN *Their Majesties Serv.* 369 Thomas..gave the stranger a hearty welcome,..asked for a taste of his quality.
- 1871 R. BROWNING *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* 80 Can't you contrive to operate at once,..to show Your quality i' the world?
- 1903 *Times* 12 June 7/4 He had a namesake present that night (hear, hear)..and they would be glad of a little taste of his quality.

**2.**

**a. A personal attribute, a trait, a feature of a person's character; (in later use esp.) an attribute considered desirable, a virtue. Formerly also: †a habit (*obs.*).**

- a1400 tr. Lanfranc *Sci. Chirurgie* (Ashm.) (1894–1988) 8 Þe secunde chapitle..is of þe qualitees, maners, and kunnyng of a surgian..A surgian muste haue handis weel schape..Be he no glotoun.
- c1450 tr. *Secreta Secret.* (Royal) 7 It nedith wisely to enquire of vertues and of vicis..Þe qualitees arne forto be reprovid whan they aliene them from ther meene.
- 1533 J. FRITH *Bk. answeringe Mores Let.* Preface To Rdr. sig. Av A frende beholdeth all qualytyes and circumstaunces, his byrth, bryngyng vp, and what feates he hath done.
- 1551 R. ROBINSON in tr. T. More *Vtopia* Epist. sig. æv Youre godlye dysposytyon, and vertuous

- qualytyes.
- 1602 J. MARSTON *Hist. Antonio & Mellida* III. sig. F4 I hate not man, but mans lewd qualities.
- 1690 W. TEMPLE *Ess. Heroick Virtue* iii. 66 in *Miscellanea: 2nd Pt.* Particular qualities have been observed..in the same Families for several hundred years, as Goodness, Clemency [etc.].
- 1783 W. COWPER *Valediction* 31 In thee some virtuous qualities combine To fit thee for a nobler part.
- 1849 MACAULAY *Hist. Eng.* II. vii. 163 Nature had largely endowed William with the qualities of a great ruler.
- 1854 J. H. NEWMAN *Lect. Hist. Turks* I. ii. 35 The subtlety and perfidy, which..were the qualities of his..countrymen.
- 1930 N. COWARD *Private Lives* I. 31 Hatred, possessiveness, petty jealousy. All those qualities came out in us.
- 1989 D. RADCLIFFE *Simply Barbara Bush* v. 91 How prescient her brother had been..to recognize in a girl so young the qualities he admired.
- 2001 *Financial Times* 27 Jan. 13/5 She has many of the qualities needed to map out a new strategy: a reputation as a tough but fair manager [etc.].

**b.** An accomplishment or attainment. Now *rare* except as merged with sense A. 2a.

- 1584 J. LYLly *Campaspe* v. i *Diog.* What can thy sons do? *Syl.* You shall see their qualities. Dance, sirrah!
- a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Timon of Athens* (1623) I. i. 127 I haue bred her at my deerest cost In Qualities of the best.
- a1674 EARL OF CLARENDON *Hist. Rebellion* (1703) II. viii. 392 He was..most accomplish'd in those Qualities of Horsemanship, Dancing, and Fencing, which accompany a good breeding.
- 1780 W. COWPER *Progress of Error* 423 A just deportment, manners graced with ease,..Are qualities that seem to comprehend [etc.].
- 1882 *Daily Tel.* 17 May The fielding..justified the high reputation for this quality which the..colonial teams..have enjoyed.

†**c.** *Law.* A special or characteristic feature. *Obs. rare.*

- 1804 W. CRUISE *Digest Laws Eng. Real Prop.* I. iv. 99 A tenant in tail..has eight qualities or privileges.

### 3.

**a.** Title, description, character, capacity; *esp. in in (the) quality of.*  
Now *rare.*

- a1400 (►a1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) 26682 Man agh to telle hir qualite, Sib or freind or quat sco be.
- 1600 P. HOLLAND tr. Livy *Rom. Hist.* XLVIII. 1236 There could not be found any one who..was willing

- to goe in quality of lieutenant.
- a1626 BACON *Advice to G. Villiers* in *Wks.* (1861) XIII. 35 The attorney of the dutchy of Lancaster partakes of both qualities, partly of a judge..and partly of an attorney general.
- 1664 S. BUTLER *Hudibras: Second Pt.* II. iii. 157 He serv'd his Master, In quality of Poetaster.
- 1711 J. ADDISON *Spectator* No. 127. ¶1 Such Packets as I receive under the Quality of Spectator.
- 1736 tr. C. Rollin *Anc. Hist.* IX. 71 They had a regard to his quality of deputy.
- 1821 SCOTT *Kenilworth* III. v. 76 Leicester..rode on her Majesty's right hand..in quality of her host.
- 1864 D. G. MITCHELL *Seven Stories* 82 To understand that I had come in the professed quality of Consul.
- 1900 *Times* 23 Nov. 3/3 In his quality as a Chief of State he had paid his respects to the Chief of the French State.
- 1964 *Eng. Stud.* 45 (Suppl.) 244 An arraignment of Walter Pater in his quality as homo aestheticus.

†**b.** A part or character acted. *Obs. rare.*

- 1566 W. ADLINGTON tr. Apuleius *.XI. Bks. Golden Asse* xlvi. f. 109 When the people was desirous to see me play qualities [*L. lusus meos spectare*], they caused the gates to be shutte, and such as entred in should pay.

**4.**

**a.** Rank or position in (a) society. Frequently with modifying adjective, as *high, mean, etc.* Now *arch.*

- c1425 LYDGATE *Troyyes Bk.* (Augustus A.iv) II. 2198 For eche trespas mote consydered be Iustly mesurid after þe qualite Of hym þat is offendid.
- c1450 (þ?a1400) *Wars Alexander* (Ashm.) 3303 Lo! so þe quele of qwistsumnes my qualite has changid.
- 1571 G. BUCHANAN *Admon. Trew Lordis* (S.T.S.) 21 It may seame..that I..pas myne estait, being of sa meane qualitie.
- 1604 E. GRIMSTON tr. J. de Acosta *Nat. & Morall Hist. Indies* v. viii. 350 This minister had other different habites, according to the quallitie of the dead.
- 1675 T. HOBBS in tr. Homer *Odyssees* To Rdr. sig. B2 Readers of Poesie (which are commonly Persons of the best Quality).
- 1726 D. DEFOE *Polit. Hist. Devil* II. v. 257 The Priests of Apollo..were..sometimes of no mean Quality.
- 1823 SCOTT *Peveiril* I. i. 8 A gentleman of middling quality.
- 1873 R. BROWNING *Red Cotton Night-cap Country* II. 101 What quality, what style and title, eh?
- 1995 *Evening Post* (Wellington, N.Z.) 11 July 20 Carrigafoyle became a boarding house when it was sold in 1917, being regarded as a good address for ladies of high quality.

†**b.** *concr.* A body of people having a certain social position or rank. *Obs. rare.*

1636 E. DACRES tr. N. Machiavel *Disc. Livy* I. ii. 16 It was compos'd only of two of these forenamed qualities, that is to say, of the Principality and Nobility [It. *Veniua solo ad essere mista di due qualità delle tre soprascritte, cioè di Principato, e di Ottimati*].

## 5.

**a.** Nobility, high birth or rank, good social position; chiefly in phrase **person (also man, woman, gentleman, lady, people, etc.) of quality**. Now *arch.*

- 1579 T. NORTH tr. Plutarch *Liues* 886 He had all the men of qualitie [Fr. *hommes de qualité*] his sworne enemies.
- 1625 BACON *Ess.* (new ed.) 103 Let him..procure Recommendation, to some person of Quality.
- 1671 LADY M. BERTIE in *12th Rep. Royal Comm. Hist. MSS* (1890) App. v. 22 There are no men of quality but the Duke of Monmouth; all the rest are gentlemen.
- 1699 M. LISTER *Journey to Paris* (new ed.) 180 A Lady of Quality, Madam M—..askt me, What I had seen in Paris that most pleased me.
- 1712 J. BROWNE tr. P. Pomet et al. *Compl. Hist. Druggs* I. 148 Freely..eaten by People of Quality.
- 1771 H. MACKENZIE *Man of Feeling* (1803) xl. 85 The count, for he was of quality, was solicitous to return the obligation.
- 1849 MACAULAY *Hist. Eng.* II. viii. 273 Many persons of quality sate the whole day in their carriages.
- 1871 J. MORLEY *Vauvenargues* in *Crit. Misc.* (1878) 1st Ser. 9 High enough to command the admiration of people of quality.
- 1922 M. ARLEN *'Piracy'* II. i. 69 I'd forgotten that such a phrase was ever made by fine men for fine women—a woman of quality!
- 2005 *Irish Independent* (Nexis) 2 Apr. Sam Sweet, a poor Jewish builder,..impresses a lady of quality.

**b.** *concr.* (sometimes with *the*). People of good social position. Now *arch.* and *regional*.

- 1693 *Humours & Conversat. Town* 114 Walk Bare-headed to his Master's Daughter, in imitation of Quality.
- 1706 R. ESTCOURT *Fair Example* v. i Did not you tell me..that you was acquainted with all the Quality.
- 1712 P. LEIGH *Life S. Wenefride* 171 His Son..received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, at which the greatest Quality of that County were pleased to stand *Patrines*.
- 1753 S. RICHARDSON *Hist. Sir Charles Grandison* III. ii. 13 I have looked out among the quality for a future husband for her.
- 1769 WESLEY in *Wks.* (1872) III. 370 A large company of Quality (as they called them) came.
- 1824 BYRON *Don Juan: Canto XVI* lxiv. 96 She was country born and bred, And knew no better..Than to wax white—for blushes are for quality.
- 1894 'M. TWAIN' in *Cent. Mag.* Feb. 550 He wuz the highest quality in dis whole town—ole Virginnny stock. Fust famblies, he wuz.
- 1904 'M. CORELLI' *God's Good Man* (ed. 2) xxii. 415 The quality don't seem to care for no one 'cept

themselves.

- 1978 M. KENYON *Deep Pocket* xiv. 184 A grouse-shoot, lad... It's a country sport for the quality.  
 1999 K. HICKMAN *Daughters of Britannia* (2000) ii. 33 At the dockside a great crowd of the town's 'quality' was waiting to honour them.

## †6.

**a.** (a) Profession, occupation, business, *esp.* that of an actor; (b) fraternity; people of the same profession, *esp.* actors as a body. *Obs.*

- a1586 (þ?a1513) W. DUNBAR *Poems* (1998) I. 257 The rest of craftis grit ethis swair..Ilk ane into thar qualitie.  
 1593 H. CHETTLER *Kind-harts Dreame* To Rdrs. sig A4 My selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes.  
 a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1623) IV. i. 56 A Linguist, and a man of such perfection, As we doe in our quality much want.  
 1629 P. MASSINGER *Roman Actor* I. iii. sig. C In thee, as being the chiefe of thy profession, I doe accuse the qualitie of treason.  
 a1640 J. FLETCHER et al. *Faire Maide of Inne* v. ii, in F. Beaumont & J. Fletcher *Comedies & Trag.* (1647) sig. Ggggggg<sup>v</sup>/2 I am weary of this trade of fortune-telling,..it is a very ticklish quality.

**b.** Party, side. *Obs. rare.*

- 1598 SHAKESPEARE *Henry IV, Pt. 1* IV. iii. 38 Because you are not of our qualitie, But stand against vs like an enimie.

## II. With reference to a thing.

### 7.

**a.** An attribute, property; a special feature or characteristic. In early use: † = HUMOUR *n.* 1a (*obs.*).

*primary quality, secondary quality*: see the first element.

In quot. 1867 (in *pl.*): a register for a ship, recording certain of its attributes.

- 1340 *Ayenbite* (1866) 153 (*MED*) To þe bodye of man comeþ alle eueles uor þe destempringe of þise uour qualites oþer of þise uour humours.  
 c1450 *Contin. Lydgate's Secrees* (Sloane 2464) 1675 (*MED*) Yif Superfluyte..Of qualitees gendre by in-proporeyou In the hed, be signes..knowe thou shalt the indisposicioun be this doctryne.  
 c1484 (þa1475) J. DE CARITATE tr. *Secreta Secret.* (Takamiya) (1977) 160 (*MED*) The natural cause comyth of repugnaunz and contradyccion of contraryus qualyteis, þat is to sey, qwan drynes hath lordchyp in þe bodi, þan must it nedys fayle.  
 1539 T. ELYOT *Castel of Helthe* (new ed.) 33 a But nowe to the qualities of water.  
 1551 W. TURNER *New Herball* sig. A iv<sup>v</sup> The qualites of it answer nothing unto the qualyties of wormwode pontyke in Galene.

- 1604 E. GRIMESTON tr. J. de Acosta *Nat. & Morall Hist. Indies* VI. xiii. 459 According to the qualities and wealth of the Countrie.
- 1671 R. BOHUN *Disc. Wind* 165 The judgment to be made concerning the Qualitys of Winds..is very various and fallible.
- 1725 I. WATTS *Logick* I. iii. §4 Ideas, with Regard to their Qualities,..are either clear and distinct, or obscure and confused.
- 1737 J. OZELL tr. Rabelais *Wks.* I. 255 (*note*) The laxative Quality of the White Grape.
- 1854 L. LLOYD *Scand. Adv.* I. 231 The eatable qualities of the Bothnian salmon.
- 1867 W. H. SMYTH & E. BELCHER *Sailor's Word-bk.* 552 Qualities, the register of the ship's trim, sailing, stowage, &c., all of which are necessary to her behaviour.
- 1920 *Nature* 29 July 692/1 [African teak] possesses none of the qualities of teak with the exception of a superficial resemblance in colour.
- 1964 C. CHAPLIN *My Autobiogr.* xiii. 207 Her art, although brilliant, had a quality pale and luminous, as delicate as a white rose-petal.
- 2006 *Biloxi (Mississippi) Sun Herald* (Nexis) 11 Oct. F3 When choosing mutual funds..expenses, risk,..and tax-efficiency are qualities that can be judged before you buy.

†**b.** *concr.* A substance having a particular attribute or property; a substance of a certain nature; an essence. *Obs. rare.*

- 1583 P. BARROUGH *Methode of Phisicke* I. iv. 5 By drynes is ment in this place a drie distempure of the qualitie alone, and by moisture, a moist distempure of the bare qualitie.
- 1704 SWIFT *Full Acct. Battel between Bks.* in *Tale of Tub* 268 An atramentous Quality, of most malignant Nature, was seen to distil from his Lips.
- 1823 J. BADCOCK *Domest. Amusem.* 21 The wood..throws out its volatile qualities, aquæous and acidulous, into the respective tubes.

†**c.** A manner, style. Cf. sense A. 9a. *Obs. rare.*

- 1600 SHAKESPEARE *Merchant of Venice* III. ii. 6 Hate counsailes not in such a quality .
- 1651 in T. Fuller *Abel Redevivus* 560 The Parishioners..built, and adorned the Church in as good a quality as any round about it.

†**d.** A habit; a power or faculty. *Obs. rare.*

- 1647 T. FULLER *Good Thoughts in Worse Times* II. v. 62 Iordan had a quality in the first moneth to overflow all his bankes.
- 1664 B. GERBIER *Counsel to Builders* (new ed.) I. sig. a8 If it had a speaking quality, your Grace would hear its..Alembick sing the Gold its joy.

## 8.

**a.** Originally: the nature, kind, or character (*of something*). Later: the

standard or nature of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence possessed by a thing.

**quality of life:** the standard of living, or degree of happiness, comfort, etc., enjoyed by an individual or group in any period or place; an instance of this. \**in the quality of* (quot. 1794): in the manner of (*obs.*).

- ▶a1398 J. TREVISA tr. Bartholomaeus Anglicus *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (BL Add.) f. 304 Colour nedep̄ light þat schyneþ in dede to prente þerby þe qualite of þe colour.
- ?a1425 *Mandeville's Trav.* (Egerton) (1889) 59 (*MED*) A man may gyffe no couenable penaunce bot if he knawe þe qualitee and þe quantitee of þe synne.
- c1475 tr. C. de Pisan *Livre du Corps de Policie* (Cambr.) (1977) 111 To geue you a clere vndirstonding of the qualitees of theis twoo passions.
- 1570 J. DEE in H. Billingsley tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* Math. Præf. sig. \*ij<sup>v</sup> An other liquid Medicine I haue: whose Qualitie, is heate, in the first degree.
- 1630 tr. G. Botero *Relations Famous Kingdomes World* (rev. ed.) 190 The English Gentleman..judiciously determineth his manner of satisfaction, according to the quality of the offence.
- 1650 R. BAXTER *Saints Everlasting Rest* (1662) I. iv. 22 It is so little I know of mine own soul, either its quiddity or quality.
- 1734 *Treaty Eng. & Russ.* in N. Magens *Ess. Insurances* (1755) II. 592 The Brackers shall be answerable for the Quality of the Goods.
- 1751 *Let.* 4 Dec. in *Beekman Mercantile Papers* (1956) II. 553 Our Flower was all heavy and of an extraordinary good quality.
- 1794 J. HUTTON *Diss. Philos. Light* 272 This principle of fire moves, in the quality of light, with the most amazing velocity.
- 1841 R. W. EMERSON *Ess.* 1st Ser. (Boston ed.) vii. 188 There is more difference in the quality of our pleasures than in the amount.
- 1879 G. C. HARLAN *Eyesight* viii. 114 It is on account of the quality, rather than the size, of English print, that it is usually so much pleasanter to read than American.
- 1915 W. S. MAUGHAM *Of Human Bondage* xciv. 494 The landlady called it French cooking, by which she meant that the poor quality of the materials was disguised by ill-made sauces.
- 1943 J. B. PRIESTLEY *Daylight on Sat.* xxxi. 253 The plans..that would give all our citizens more security, better opportunities, and a nobler quality of life.
- 1958 A. L. SIMON *Dict. Wines* 110/1 Most of the *Mercurey* wines are red, and they are also of better quality than the few white wines of that district.
- 1977 M. EDELMAN *Polit. Lang.* viii. 151 The consequence is a decline in the quality of life, springing from a lowering of real income.
- 2006 *Canberra* (Austral. Capital Territory) *Times* (Nexis) 3 Oct. A proposal for..measuring the quality of court services.

†**b.** Nature, with reference to origin; (hence) cause, occasion. *Obs. rare.*

- 1609 SHAKESPEARE *Troilus & Cressida* IV. i. 45 Giue him note of our approach, With the whole quality wherefore: I feare we shall be much vnwelcome.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Timon of Athens* (1623) III. vii. 106 Know you the quality of Lord Timons  
fury?

**c. Without article. Excellence, superiority. Cf. A. 1b.**

- 1665 T. HERBERT *Some Years Trav.* (new ed.) 400 Date..a Tree which both for quality, duration, and fruit is usually attributed to Heroes and Conquerors.
- 1771 *Boston News-Let.* 11 July Suppl. 1/3 Several specimens of Flint-glass..equal in beauty and quality to the generality of Flint Glass imported from England.
- 1874 R. ST. J. TYRWHITT *Our Sketching Club* 255 Quality of colour means purity or truth of hue.
- 1885 F. H. BOWMAN *Struct. Wool Fibre* 219 A fine Kent [fleece] selected for quality.
- 1891 *Speaker* 2 May 533/1 The book..has..more quality and distinction than four-fifths of the novels which come under our notice.
- 1937 *Amer. Home* Apr. 116/1 (*adv.*) There is no substitute for quality and there is no substitute for Columbia Residential Venetian Blinds.
- 1967 *Canad. Med. Assoc. Jnl.* 97 1035/1 Quality in medicine is not definable in computer terms; it is a product of parental teaching, of schooling.
- 1991 *German Hist.* 9 330 The..policy of promoting 'quality' in the German workplace.

**d. A particular class, kind, or grade of something, as determined by its character, esp. its excellence.**

- 1765 *Museum Rusticum* IV. cvi. 458 He is able to assort each size and quality of the flax.
- 1835 A. URE *Philos. Manuf.* 324 2s. 5d. for spinning the same quality.
- 1866 G. MACDONALD *Ann. Quiet Neighb.* (1878) xiii. 253 A quality of dialogue which indicated thought.
- 1901 *Times* 4 June 11/3 To quote for such a quality of material as no English railway requires.
- 1985 *Times* 4 Oct. 22/5 Industrial concerns need a quality of water from which all minerals are removed.

**e. Short for *quality newspaper* n. at Compounds 1c(b). Usually in *pl.***

- 1970 *Guardian Weekly* 25 July 11 The 'qualities'..need to earn a greater percentage of their income from advertising than the 'populars.'
- 1995 *Snooker Scene* May 3/2 The tabloids..virtually ignore the game; the qualities cover it more systematically.
- 2006 *Times* 14 Aug. 6 This practice is quite widespread on tabloid newspapers... It may not even be unknown on..the so-called qualities.

**III. Technical and specialist uses (chiefly in senses A. 7 and A. 8).**

**9. Grammar.**

**a. Without article: manner of action, as denoted by an adverb. Chiefly**

in **adverb of quality**. Cf. *adverb of manner n.* at MANNER *n.* 9d.

- 1530 J. PALSGRAVE *Lesclarcissement* Introd. 144 Some [adverbs] betoken qualite, and serve to declare..howe a dede is done.
- a1637 B. JONSON *Eng. Gram.* I. xxi, in *Wks.* (1640) III Adverbs of qualitie..being formed from Nounes, for the most part, by adding *ly*.
- 1713 T. DYCHE *Eng. Particles Latiniz'd* xl. 64 How is *how* made, before an Adjective or Adverb of Quality.
- 1771 M. RAINE *Eng. Rudim.* 185 *Agreeably*, Adverb of Quality.
- 1845 J. STODDART in *Encycl. Metrop.* (1847) I. 122/1 There is no difference in grammatical use between..an adverb of quantity, and an adverb of quality.
- 1872 R. MORRIS *Hist. Outl. Eng. Accidence* xiv. 193 Adverbs of..Manner or Quality, as..*well, wisely*.
- 1948 U. HOLMES et al. *Hist. French Lang.* ii. 18 Any demonstrative..or adverb of quality can have an i-prefix.
- 1965 *Amer. Speech* 40 44 When compared or modified by intensives..ordinarily met before an..adverb of quality, for example *more*.
- 2001 D. B. REDFORD *Oxf. Encycl. Anc. Egypt* at *Demotic* [In Demotic] nouns and pronouns..were used much as in other stages of Egyptian. Adverbs of quality, place, and time are attested.

†**b.** A word, esp. an adjective, which denotes or describes a quality. *Obs.*

- 1710 *Gram. Eng. Tongue* vi. 88 Names..express the Things themselves, Qualities are the Manners of those Things, as good, bad, round, square &c.
- 1769 J. BELL *Encycl. Gram.* III. ii. 200 Qualities or adjectives are those words which express the manners, qualities, or nature of substantives.
- c1790 T. COOKE *New & Compl. Universal Letter-writer* 19 The generality of Qualities are compared, by adding to the positive degree *er* for the comparative, and *est* for the superlative.

## 10. *Philos.*

**a.** Chiefly *Metaphysics*. Without article: the aspect of a thing which relates to its nature, condition, or properties.

Quality is the third of the Aristotelian categories.

- ?1537 T. ELYOT *Castell of Helthe* II. ii. f. 17 Qualitie is in the complexion, that is to saye, in what state it is, Hotte or colde, moyste or drye.
- 1656 T. STANLEY *Hist. Philos.* II. v. 70 If quality be void of matter, it must likewise be void of corporeity.
- 1728 E. CHAMBERS *Cycl.* (at cited word) The antient School Philosophers distinguish Quality in the general..into Essential and Accidental.
- 1829 J. MILL *Anal. Human Mind* II. II. xiv. 57 Quality is finally used as an absolute term, the generical name of every thing in objects, for which a separate notation is required.
- 1884 B. BOSANQUET et al. tr. H. Lotze *Metaphysic* 45 The question is renewed as to the actual essence which..lies behind this surface of Quality.

- 1943 *Jrnl. Philos.* **40** 337 Quality has been explained away by being reduced to some other category as quantity.
- 1995 *Philos. & Phenomenol. Res.* **55** 484 Classifying existence as a category of modality rather than a category of quality.

**b. Logic.** The characteristic by which affirmative or negative propositions (or occasionally positive and negative terms) are distinguished; the property or fact of being affirmative or negative.

Kant's classification of judgements includes a third hybrid form of quality for cases where the proposition affirms a negative predicate (see quot. 1928).

- 1552 T. WILSON *Logike* f. 54 I call that in the proposition a qualitie, when it doth affirme or deny.
- 1599 T. BLUNDEVILLE *Art of Logike* III. i How is a simple proposition divided according to qualitie? Into an affirmative and negative proposition.
- 1697 tr. F. Burgersdijk *Monitio Logica* I. xxx. 117 In Regard of Quality, it is that an Enunciation is divided..into Affirming and Denying.
- 1725 I. WATTS *Logick* II. ii. 250 If two Universals differ in Quality they are Contraries.
- 1843 J. S. MILL *Syst. Logic* I. II. ii. §1. 227 What are called the *quantity* and *quality* of the propositions.
- 1864 F. C. BOWEN *Treat. Logic* v. 120 We thus ascertain the Quality of the Judgment, or whether it is affirmative or negative.
- 1928 J. N. KEYNES *Stud. & Exercises Formal Logic* (ed. 4) II. ii. 106 In respect of quality, Kant gave a *threefold* division, recognising a class of *infinite* (or *limitative*) judgments... Thus, *S is P* being affirmative, and *S is not P* negative, *S is not-P* is spoken of as infinite or limitative.
- 1934 M. R. COHEN & E. NAGEL *Introd. Logic* ii. 36 The negative particle, the sign of quality, must be understood to characterize the copula, not the subject or the predicate.
- 1982 F. SOMMERS *Logic Natural Lang.* App. B 353 A term or proposition is positive or negative in quality. Thus 'wise' and 'a creature was stirring' are positive in quality; 'unwise' and 'not a creature was stirring' are negative in quality.
- 1991 P. J. HURLEY *Conc. Introd. Logic* (ed. 4) iv. 186 'All *S* are *P*' and 'Some *S* are *P*' have affirmative quality, and 'No *S* are *P*' and 'Some *S* are not *P*' have negative quality.

**11. Law.** The manner in which an estate is to be held, as jointly, conditionally, etc. Chiefly in **quality of (the) estate**. Now *rare*. Cf. *quantity of estate* at QUANTITY *n.* 8a.

- 1804 W. CRUISE *Digest Laws Eng. Real Prop.* II. vi. 364 The alteration in the particular estate which would destroy a contingent remainder, must amount to an alteration in its quantity, and not in its quality.
- 1841 *Penny Cycl.* XIX. 46/1. The manner in which the enjoyment is to be exercised..is often expressed by the term Quality of Estate.
- 1930 *Univ. Pennsylvania Law Rev.* **78** 658 The quality of the estate is determined at its inception and..[the] grant..was held by tenancy in common.

1977 J. BURKE *Jowitt's Dict. Eng. Law* (ed. 2) I. 723/2 With reference to their qualities, estates were either absolute, determinable, or conditional.

**12.** Chiefly *Music*. That which distinguishes sounds from other sounds sharing the same pitch and other quantitative features; timbre.

1807 T. YOUNG *Course Lect. Nat. Philos.* I. xxxii. 388 We readily distinguish not only the frequency of the vibrations of a sound, whether constant or variable, and its loudness or softness, but also the quality.

1865 *Q. Jرنل. Sc.* 592 Though [certain sounds are] the same for musical purposes, in all other respects the quality is different.

1881 J. BROADHOUSE *Student's Helmholtz* 77 The most uncultivated ear would perceive a difference of quality.

1984 A. COPLAND & V. PERLIS *Copland: 1900–42* ix. 184 My purpose was not to recreate orchestral sounds reminiscent of the quality of the piano.

2000 *Jرنل. Res. Music Educ.* 48 223 Pairs of tones that changed to 'brighter' or 'darker' tone quality while the fundamental frequency remained unchanged.

**13.** *Engin*. The proportion by weight of a vapour, esp. steam, that is in a gas phase rather than droplets of the liquid.

1898 H. A. GOLDING *Theta-Phi Diagram* iv. 52 (*in figure*) Dryness fraction or quality curve.

1937 T. CROFT & R. P. PURDY *Steam Boilers* (ed. 2) iii. 24 The quality of steam in average practice is..from about 97 to 99 per cent.

2000 P. CHATTOPADHYAY *Boiler Operation Engin.* (ed. 2) xx. 499/1 How does the steam quality vary with the change of the operating parameters of the boiler drum?

**14.** *Radiol*. The penetrating power of a beam of X-rays.

1903 W. A. PUSEY & E. W. CALDWELL *Pract. Applic. Röntgen Rays* II. v. 309 The quality of the rays and their intensity vary greatly.

1928 B. J. LEGGETT *Theory & Pract. Radiol.* II. vi. 162 The more or less exact measurement of the quality of X-radiation is of importance in all branches of radiotherapy.

1972 P. BARNES & D. REES *Conc. Textbk. Radiotherapy* vii. 154 The choice of the radiation quality is determined by the site and the size of the lesion.

2004 S. JAYARAMAN & L. H. LANZL *Clin. Radiotherapy Physics* (ed. 2) xiii. 191 For..X-ray beams modified by filters.., a measured half-value thickness (HVT) can be used for specifying the quality.

**15.** The degree to which a reproduced sound, picture, etc., resembles the original; fidelity.

- 1913 G. F. ROWELL *Hints about Gramophone* 9 He revels in the loudest records he can buy, and so long as the noise is satisfactory the musical quality does not trouble him in the least.
- 1938 A. E. GREENLEES *Amplification & Distribution of Sound* xvi. 230 The sales literature of manufacturers will provide much useful information as to what may be expected in the way of quality of reproduction.
- 1961 G. MILLERSON *Technique Television Production* 46 A contrast range of 30:1 is generally accepted as providing good picture quality photographically.
- 1993 *Camcorder User* Mar. 14/3 Bear in mind that picture and sound quality rapidly deteriorate in second—and third—generation copies.
- 2004 *T3* Apr. 41/1 My Freeview box reports reception quality as 10/10, yet the picture's not as good as a reasonable UHF transmission.

#### †IV. A qualification, a proviso.

#### 16. *Sc.* = QUALIFICATION *n.* 1a. *Obs.*

- 1622 *Burgh Rec. Aberdeen* (Spalding Club) II. 375 Mr. James Ross..acceptit of the said stipend with the qualitie and conditioun aboue mentioned.
- 1671 in M. P. Brown *Suppl. Dict. Decisions Court of Session* (1826) II. 507 The said discharge..is clogged and burdened with qualities and protestations.
- 1714 W. FORBES *Jrnl. Session 1705–13* Pref. 7 Advocates admitted with a quality that they should not take in hand to plead in any..difficult cause without..assistance.
- 1774 J. ERSKINE *Institute* IV. ii. §11 Where the quality adjected to the oath relates precisely to the point which is truly referred to oath, it ought to be accounted intrinsic.

#### B. *adj.*

Of high quality; excellent (orig. with reference to newspapers).

- 1960 *Stand* 4 6 His plan was to raise the paper's price and tip it decisively into the quality camp.
- 1972 *Britain 1972* (Central Office of Information) xviii. 429 The national newspapers..fall into two categories: popular and quality.
- 1994 *M.E.A.T.* Sept. 28/3 The musicianship is quality and tight, and the vocals sound solid and steady.
- 2006 *Decanter* June (Argentina 2006 Suppl.) 1/2 An ambition to deliver quality wines at the premium end of the market.

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## COMPOUNDS

### C1. General *attrib.*

**a.** With sense 'of high social standing, of good breeding, noble', as *quality acquaintance*, *quality air*, *quality blood*, *quality end*,

**quality friend, quality gentleman, quality horse, quality lady, quality living, quality pride, quality white, etc.; quality-mad**  
adj.

Common in the 18th and early 19th centuries; now *arch.*

- 1701 G. FARQUHAR *Sir Harry Wildair* II. i. 12 Something was the matter, I wanted of Quality-Air.
- 1706 R. ESTCOURT *Fair Example* I. i. 10 Your Quality Lady, when she speaks, 'tis thus.
- 1748 S. RICHARDSON *Clarissa* III. xxxv. 183 His relations do not despise the fugitive, as persons of their rank and quality-pride might be supposed to do.
- 1751 T. SMOLLETT *Peregrine Pickle* III. xc. 257 Peregrine found some ladies of his quality-acquaintance.
- 1751 T. SMOLLETT *Peregrine Pickle* II. lxxiii. 281 The influence of Peregrine's new quality-friends.
- 1768 *Woman of Honor* I. 134 She is so stark quality-mad.
- 1784 R. BAGE *Barham Downs* I. 233 My Lady's passion for quality living.
- 1786 A. MACKENZIE *Gamesters* I. 139 To every coffee-house at this quality-end of the town.
- 1810 S. GREEN *Romance Readers & Romance Writers* I. v. 87 She knew but little of fashionable life, and thought every thing that was practised by her quality friend must be right.
- 1819 *Metropolis* (ed. 2) III. 149 The quality-end of the town.
- 1835 W. IRVING *Beauties* 221 Mrs. Lamb, when she had no engagements with her quality acquaintance, would give..tea junkettings.
- 1837 T. CARLYLE *French Revol.* II. II. ii. 104 Young..men, with quality-blood in them, poisoned with quality-pride.
- 1864 *Atlantic Monthly* Feb. 174/1 She was a sweet-spoken young thing,—not like Miss Hammond, with her proud, quality airs.
- 1868 *Atlantic Monthly* Jan. 104/1 Quality ladies took their bitters regular.
- 1891 *Field* 7 Mar. 334/2 Quite a quality horse is Gratian.
- 1908 J. M. SULLIVAN *Criminal Slang* 1 A quality gentleman, a gentleman by birth and education.
- 1966 K. L. MORGAN in A. Dundes *Mother Wit* (1973) 603/1 I never questioned the implication that..my white ancestors were 'quality' whites.
- 2004 S. OLSON *Children of God go Bowling* vi. 84 They would all nod and agree that he was 'quality' or 'a quality person'. This puzzled me... We never discussed who was 'quality'.

**b. (In sense A. 8a.)**

**quality mark** *n.*

- 1891 *Atlantic Monthly* July 125/1 A pussonable red cyarpit sack, what shows quality marks.
- 1904 H. MASSÉ *Pewter Plate* xiv. 190 The touch-marks usually were the initials of the maker of the pewter, and..the Company's quality mark.
- 1999 *Building* 4 June 37/1 A quality mark is the only way that ordinary people can tell the difference between honest builders and rogues.

**quality tested** *adj.*

- 1913 *Oakland (Calif.) Tribune* 4 Nov. 3/7 The most refined patterns in quality tested materials enter into the making of these suits.
- 1974 *Times* 15 Aug. (India Suppl.) p. viii/3 (*adv.*) India's cottons..are quality tested.
- 1995 *Common Ground Mag.* Autumn (back cover) (*adv.*) This purifying tea blend..contains eight quality tested herbs.

**c.** (In sense A. 8c.)

**(a)**

### **quality audience** *n.*

- 1935 *Ann. Amer. Acad. Polit. & Social Sci.* 177 74/1 American radio stations are beginning to distinguish between the quality audience and the quantity audience.
- 1938 *Time* 10 Oct. 43/1 It has a fairly large and very vociferous 'quality' audience.
- 2004 *Campaigns & Elections* (Nexis) Feb. 38 The Web reaches a large, quality audience when no other medium reaches them.

### **quality food** *n.*

- 1922 LADY GREGORY *Image* 1. 19 If there was quality food I didn't see it.
- 1961 *Wine & Food* Winter 240 Shoppers should..be well aware of the quality food that comes from their own farmers.
- 1993 R. LOWE & W. SHAW *Travellers* 40 You have to eat a lot of fresh fruit over a week, two weeks... You need to eat quality food.

### **quality note** *n.*

- 1961 *Punch* 11 Jan. 88/2 The advertising strikes a 'quality' note.
- 2006 *Africa News* (Nexis) 10 July The First Bank ladies..opened their campaign on a quality note..with a 104–28 massacre.

### **quality producer** *n.*

- 1910 *Marion (Ohio) Daily Star* 1 Apr. 5/2 (*adv.*) Hart Schaffner & Marx are correct style makers as well as all-wool quality producers.
- 1936 *Economist* 8 Feb. 314/1 Lower wage scales than those paid by the 'quality' producers in the leading centres.
- 2006 *Canberra Times* (Nexis) 17 Oct. The event aims to bring quality producers and providers together to showcase their goods.

**(b)** *spec.* of a high cultural standard (used *esp.* with reference to newspapers).

**quality magazine** *n.*

- 1910 *Coshocton (Ohio) Daily Tribune* 23 Dec. 2/4 (*headline*) American is the quality magazine.
- 1941 *Times* 22 May (*advt.*) The National Magazine Company..publish such quality magazines as 'Good Housekeeping.'
- 1992 *Canad. Fiction Mag.* No. 79. 5 An entire strata of cartoons on TV..in the papers and quality magazines.

**quality newspaper** *n.*

- 1917 *Washington Post* 21 Feb. 3/7 (*advt.*) The Post is a quality newspaper.
- 1956 *English Summer* 48 Quality newspapers decline alarmingly, serious journals go bankrupt.
- 1999 *Independent* 16 Nov. II. 13/2 All the quality newspapers of those days..felt a real responsibility for not rocking the ship of state.

**quality paper** *n.*

- 1930 F. LAWSON in D. Hart-Davis *House Berrys Built* (1990) iii. 60 While selling at the popular price, we shall remain a 'quality' paper.
- 1962 *Listener* 11 Oct. 569/2 You can see such reporting even in the so-called quality papers.
- 2006 *Guardian* (Nexis) 10 Oct. 13 Britain's biggest selling daily quality paper.

**quality press** *n.*

- 1949 *Times* 30 June 2/3 In the quality Press important questions..are handled seriously.
- 1960 *Guardian* 9 Dec. 12/6 The union would like to see..'quality' programmes analogous to the 'quality' press.
- 1998 A. FORNA *Mother of All Myths* (1999) viii. 237 She published a disclaimer in the quality press shortly after the programme was aired.

**quality programme** *n.*

- 1960 *Guardian* 9 Dec. 12/6 The union would like to see..'quality' programmes analogous to the 'quality' press.
- 2006 *Sunday Times* (Nexis) 15 Oct. (Business section) 23 Television is now run by accountants more interested in..increasing dividends than producing quality programmes.

**quality publisher** *n.*

- 1957 *Syracuse (N.Y.) Herald-Jrnl.* 1 May 25/7 (*advt.*) Children's famous name book sale. 5 quality

publishers participate.

- 1961 *Guardian* 20 Oct. 11/4 The struggle between the commercial and the quality publisher is fierce.
- 2001 *Herald (Glasgow)* (Nexis) 1 Dec. 5 The quality publishers are producing mainstream books with a healthy girl-girl content.

## quality Sunday *n.*

- [1961 *Punch* 11 Jan. 86/3 When may a young man be said to have arrived?... Having his name used as a pun in a quality Sunday paper's erudite crossword puzzle.]
- 1974 *Times* 22 May 20/6 The quality dailies have done rather better than the popular journals... Quality Sundays are up 23 per cent.
- 2006 *Independent on Sunday* (Nexis) 14 May 20 Then came the fat Saturdays, and the doom brigade said it would seriously damage the quality Sundays.

## C2.

**quality assurance** *n.* the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or a manufactured product, esp. by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery or manufacture; abbreviated *QA*; cf. *quality control n.*

- 1940 *Jrnl. Amer. Statist. Assoc.* **35** (Centenary Membership Directory) 24/1 Dodge, Harold F., Quality Results Engineer, Quality Assurance Department, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc.
- 1960 H. C. THOMSON & L. A. MAYO *Ordnance Dept.: Procurement & Supply* xiv. 329 One of the first steps taken..was to enlist the services of George D. Edwards, director of quality assurance of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, as consultant to the Ordnance Department.
- 1976 *Amer. Jrnl. Psychiatry* Jan. 48/2 An approach to quality assurance based on 'laundry lists' of services matched to problems has been criticized as being relevant only to improving the process of care and possibly irrelevant to improving the outcome of care.
- 1990 T. G. WREGHITT & P. MORGAN-CAPNER *ELISA in Clin. Microbiol. Lab.* iii. 37 Quality assurance can be considered as the broad plan, within which the essential processes of quality control function to ensure that the plan is being adequately implemented.
- 1998 *Educ. Rev.* **12** II. 39/1 Schools need a variety of user-friendly, reliable and valid data on the progress and development of all their pupils to guide self-evaluation and quality assurance efforts,.

**quality binding** *n.* binding of high quality, esp. a kind of worsted tape for binding carpets; also *fig.*

- 1733 T. JOHNSON *MS Let.* 3 Aug. (MS BL Add. 32688) f. 222 The Scrub Mobb..burnt a Wooden Image they got at Sam<sup>1</sup> Clarks and dres't it up lik a Man bought blue Quality binding to put on him in Imitation of a Garter and call'd him Sir R. W.
- 1770 G. COLMAN *Man & Wife* II. 24 That flimsy piece of quality-binding..is always running after a title.
- 1825 J. JAMIESON *Etymol. Dict. Sc. Lang.* Suppl. II. *Quality bindin'*, a sort of worsted tape, commonly used for binding the borders of carpets.

1955 *Tri-City Herald* (Pasco, Washington) 3 Nov. 17/4 (*advt.*) Broadloom carpet remnant sale... Every size expertly factory finished with quality binding.

**quality circle** *n.* [probably after Japanese *kyū-shū sākuru* (c1965; < English *QC* (see *QC n.* at *Q n.* Initialisms 2) + *sākuru* (1907; < English *circle* : see *CIRCLE n.*))] (originally with reference to Japanese industry) a group of employees who meet to consider ways of resolving problems and improving production in their organization.

[1971 P. NILAND (*title*) *The quality control circle: an analysis.*]

1974 *Winnipeg Free Press* 12 Feb. 41/4 We now should learn from our Japanese students. There are..the so called 'Quality Circles'.

1980 *Time* 28 Jan. 65/2 The firms are forming 'quality circles'. These are groups of..employees who..gather..in brainstorming sessions that focus on what can be done to improve output.

1994 *IEEE Ann. Hist. Computing* Winter 91/1 The emulation of Japanese management..have made quality circles..popular.

2001 S. CRAINER & D. DEARLOVE in *Financial Times Handbk. Managem.* (ed. 2) 413/1 As much a social system as an industrial process, kaizen is at the heart of the quality philosophy and involves the use of quality circles.

**quality control** *n.* the maintenance of the desired quality in a manufactured product, esp. by comparison of a sample of the output with the specification; an instance of this; (in extended use) any process for maintaining a desired quality of product or output; frequently *attrib.*

1917 *Federal Reporter* (1918) **245** 463 It opened and closed the gas ports, and in its rotary motion it throttled them. This gave a quality control.

1935 E. S. PEARSON (*title*) *The application of statistical methods to industrial standardisation and quality control*.

1943 R. E. WAREHAM in J. F. Young *Materials & Processes* xviii. 589 Quality control methods are based on the laws of probability and statistics.

1977 P. JOHNSON *Enemies of Society* xi. 158 This forced academic growth leads to an inevitable collapse of quality-control.

1997 B. ROWLANDS *Which? Guide Complementary Med.* 108 Fewer..suppliers of Chinese herbal products are to be found in the UK, only two of which..have quality controls.

**quality controller** *n.* a person responsible for quality control.

1947 *Times Herald* (Olean, N.Y.) 29 Mar. 4/1 Maintenance superintendent; quality controller and production planner.

1972 M. JONES *Life on Dole* II. vii. 126 His next employer was Hoover... He became a quality controller.

1996 J. GRENFELL-HILL *Growing up in Wales* 168 The miners got all the coal that was considered slag,

all that was thrown to one side when the quality controller was checking it.

**quality factor** *n.* [originally after German *Qualitätszahl* (1898 in the passage translated in quot. 1899)] a number indicative of the quality of something; (*Electronics and Physics*) = *Q n.* 11.

- 1899 G. C. HENNING tr. A. Martens *Handbk. Testing Materials* I. 345 It has been attempted to establish values..which..furnish standards of utility of the material, and are called quality factors [Ger. *Qualitätszahlen*], or factors of utility.
- 1947 *Electronic Circuits & Tubes* i. 17 The ratio of the series reactance to the series resistance of a reactor is defined as *Q*, its quality factor.
- 1971 *Nature* 24 Dec. 461/1 Recent measurements of the quality factor, *Q*, for mechanical vibrations generated by dropping parts of the Apollo lunar module and by moonquakes indicate that the *Q* of the Moon for these vibrations is of the order of 3,000.
- 1997 R. A. DENTLER & A. L. HAFNER *Hosting Newcomers* ii. 29 The Quality of Education scale was developed because of the necessity of including a general educational quality factor that incorporates a broader sense of high standards.

**quality management** *n.* *Business* (a style of) management focusing on the principle of quality, esp. in the development and implementation of working practices; cf. *total quality management* at TOTAL *adj.* and *n.* Additions.

- 1953 *Appl. Statistics* 2 142 (*heading*) The scope of quality management.
- 1994 R. J. TAYLOR & S. B. TAYLOR *AUPHA Man. Health Services Managem.* xv. 278/2 An organization's information resources must be organized in such a way that the data needed for quality management are gathered and disseminated.
- 2005 W. E. LEWIS et al. *Software Testing & Continuous Quality Improvem.* i. 6 Quality management decreases production costs because the sooner a defect is located and corrected, the less costly it will be in the long run.

**quality management system** *n.* *Business* a system of standards and practices established within a company or industry to ensure consistent quality of products or services.

- 1977 B. W. MARGUGLIO *Quality Syst. in Nucl. Industry* I. ii. 33 The attainment of coherency is extremely important because many elements of a quality management system exist outside of the..control of the Quality organization.
- 2004 J. J. DEPILLO et al. *Shifting Gears* i. 1 Formal quality management systems like ISO 9000 are a basic requirement for doing business with the automotive industry.

**quality time** *n.* orig. *U.S.* time spent in a worthwhile or dedicated

manner; *esp.* time in which one's child, partner, etc., receives one's undivided attention.

- 1972 *Los Angeles Times* 25 Aug. IV. 3 She is a firm believer in 'quality time for each child'. Thus while in Europe..she might take a sidetrip to London museums with Liz Beth or a day sight-seeing alone with Phillip.
- 1977 *Business Week* 18 Apr. 158/2 The time they spend with their children is 'quality time, not quantity time', say the mothers, echoing the claim of many executive fathers, and the children's home life is frequently more stimulating.
- 1987 *Money* (Electronic ed.) 1 Apr. Busy spouses make appointments to spend quality time or even to have sex.
- 1995 N. BLINCOE *Acid Casuals* xviii. 135 She reached inside her bag for her compact, intending to spend some quality time with her cosmetics.
- 2005 Z. SMITH *On Beauty* 61 So here they were, a protesting silence filling the car: against Mozart, against outings generally, against having to take a taxi, against the hour's drive from Wellington into Boston, against the very concept of quality time.

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## DERIVATIVES

### 'qualityless *adj.*

- 1852 *U.S. Democratic Rev.* Mar. 261/1 Color, form, &c., all but that qualityless, nondescript substance of Locke.
- 1859 J. B. MOZLEY *Indian Conversion in Ess.* (1878) II. 313 Brahm is a motionless, characterless, qualityless, colourless essence.
- 1920 A. S. PRINGLE-PATTISON *Idea of God* 385 I am loath to believe that it is M. Bergson's..intention..to identify reality with the qualityless abstraction of change.
- 1980 N. GEORGESCU-ROEGEN in J. Rifkin *Entropy* VI. 262 All in nature consists of simple qualityless motion.

### 'qualitylike *adj.* rare.

- 1594 R. CAREW tr. J. Huarte *Exam. Mens Wits* vi. 77 Neither the vnderstanding, nor any other accident, can be qualiti-like.
- 1985 B. P. HELM *Time & Reality in Amer. Philos.* i. 23 Firsts are..these qualitylike elements of novelty and uniqueness, features that are simply there.

### † qualityship *n.* *Obs. nonce-wd.* social position.

- 1865 *Dublin Univ. Mag.* 65 6/1 He dressed with regard to his qualityship.

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