

Mutation

- [a. f. mutation (15th c. in Littré), -ation, ad. L. mutation-em, f. mutare to change]
1. a. The action or process of changing; alteration or change in form or qualities.
- N1374 Chaucer Boeth. Pr. vi. 18 (Camb. MS.), ffor-thi wenestow þat þise Mutacyouns of fortune fletyn with-owte gouernor.
- 1426 Lydg. De Guil. Pilgr. 3280 To maken..That merveyllous mutacion, Bred in-to flesshe, wyln in-to blood.
- N1430 Pilgr. Lyf Manhode i. xli. (1869) 24 Al mutacioun that is doon in haste j hate.
- N1522 Bp. Fox in Ellis Orig. Lett. Ser. ii. ll. 4 Thestate & condicon of the Toune & Marches of Calis & other Fotryses within the same, & of theyr ryunes, decayes, mutacyons, and alteracions, fro the aunyent estatuz and ordinaunces [etc.].
- 1523 Ld. Berners Froiss. i. cv. 187 It is come to the kynges knowledge, howe that his subgettes ar sore greued by reason of the mutacyon of ye moneys.
- 1605 Shakes. Lear iv. i. 11 O world! But that thy strange mutations make vs hate thee Life would not seele to age.
- 1655 G. S. in Hartlib Ref. Comwd. Bees 21, I took the pain to observe and collect the Generation of several Insects, with their various mutations from kind to kind.
- 1776 Burney Hist. Mus. (1789) I. iv. 54 The Mutations or changes incident to melody which in modern music we should call..modulation.
- Ð1849 Hor. Smith Addr. Mummy ix, Since first thy form was in this box extended We have above ground seen some strange mutations.
- 1892 Stevenson & L. Osbourne Wrecker vi, More than three years had intervned almost without mutation in that stationary household.
3. Mus.
- a. In mediæval solmization: The change from one hexachord to another involving a change of the syllable applied to a given note.
- 1597 Morley Introd. Mus. Annot., Mutation is the leauing of one name of a note and taking another in the same sound.
- 1609 Douland Ornith. Microf. 16 To a Musitian, Mutation is: the putting of one concord for another in the same Key.
- 1760 Phil. Trans. LI. 743 The author is speaking of the sixth division of harmonic, which was mutation.
- 1807 Robinson Archæol. Græca v. xxiii. 534 In music the Greeks distinguished..rhythmus, mutations, and melopœa.
- b. mutation stop: a stop whose pipes produce tones one-fifth or a major third above the proper pitch of the key struck, or above one of its octaves. So mutation rank.
- 1855 Hopkins Organ 110 Mutation or Filling-up Stops do not give a sound corresponding with the key pressed down; but some sound from the C-key, others e.
- 1881 C. A. Edwards Organs 153 The proper balancing of the foundation and mutation ranks.
- c. In violin-playing: 'The shifting of the hand from one position to another' (Cent. Dict. 1890).
4. Gram.
- a. In the Celtic languages, a change of an initial consonant, depending on the grammatical (or, prehistorically, on the phonetic) character of the preceding word.
- 1943 Proc. Philol. Soc. I. 124 That remarkable system of initial mutations of consonants which distinguishes the Celtic languages from all others in Europe.
- 1904 Athenæum 5 Nov. 621/3 If Welsh loses its mutations as South Wales is doing slightly, we shall be sorry.
6. Biology.
- a. The process whereby detectable and heritable changes in genetic material arise; also, formerly, a process by which de Vries (Die Mutationstheorie (1901–3)) supposed a new species to be suddenly produced by a departure from the parent type (in contrast with variation).
- b. A change of this kind in the genetic material.
- c. An individual (or more rarely) an assemblage of like individuals) which has been produced by this process; a mutant.
- 1894 W. B. Scott in Amer. Jrn. Sci. Nov. 372 Bateson's results..emphasis strongly the difference between variation and that steady advance along certain definite lines which Waagen called mutation.
- 1901 Jrn. L. Microsc. Soc. 439 Quite distinct from these are those abrupt..variations..which sometimes occur, and of which de Vries records a remarkable instance in the genus *Oenothera*. For such variations de Vries proposes the term mutations.
- 1904 Westm. Gaz. 23 Apr. 12/3 It is with the origin of the minor species that the De Vries Mutation Theory is concerned.
- 1905 in Q. Jrn. Geol. Soc. LXI. Proc. p. lxxiii. A mutation, in the palæontological and original sense, may be defined as a contemporaneous assemblage of individuals united by specific identity of structure inter se, and by common descent from a known pre-existing species, from which they differ in some minute but constant character or characters.
- 1907 Athenæum 31 Aug. 242/1 The theory of mutation..assumes that a species has its birth, its lifetime, and its death, even as an individual, and that throughout its life it remains one and the same. By a mutation it does not change itself, but simply produces a new type. The mutation 'is allied to its ancestor as a branch is to a tree'
- 1919 Jrn. Exper. Zool. XXVIII. 381 In our opinion, the attempted distinctions between 'saltations', 'mutations', and 'variations of slight degree' have led rather to confusion of thought than to clearer thinking. To us these are all a single class, 'mutations', and the term carries no restrictions of degree, covering the most extreme as well as the slightest detectable inherited variation.
- 1925 Genetics X. 117 If one thinks of mutations as being simply inherited changes, it becomes necessary to distinguish changes that involve whole chromosomes.., changes that involve several adjacent genes.., and what have been called 'point-mutations' or 'gene-mutations'.
- 1928, 1930 [see gene mutation s.v. gene1 2].
- 1955 Sci. News Let. 25 June 409 Many mutations are lethal. If man-made irradiation increases the mutation rate, the result is sure to be harmful.
- 1955 Sci. Amer. July 74/2 Reproduction is one of the two essential features of life. Mutation is the other.
- 1957 I. Asimov Naked Sun (1958) xi. 145 Even the best gene analysis of parents can't assure that all gene permutations and combinations will be favourable, to say nothing of the possibility of mutations. That's our big concern, the unexpected mutation.
- 1965 A. H. Sturtevant Hist. Genetics x. 62 It is ironic that few of the original mutations observed by de Vries in *Oenothera* would now be called mutations.

Alchemy

- Forms: 4–5 alkamy(e, alkmamy(e, alkenamy(e, -emye, alcomomy(e, 5 alcanamy, 6 alkemy, alcomye, alchumie, 6–7 alchymie, -ymie, 7 alkimy, -emie, -cumy, 7–8 alchimy, 6– alchymy, 7– alchemy.
- [a. OFr. alquimie, -emie, -kemie, -scamie (also ar-), ad. med.L. alchimia (Pr. alkimia, Sp. alquimia, It. alchimia), a. Arab. al-kīmiya, i.e. al the + kīmiya, apparently a. Gr. vgl-α, vgl-e-a found (c. 300) in the Decree of Diocletian against the old writings of the Egyptians, which treat of the vgl-α (transmutation) of gold and silver; hence the word is explained by most as 'Egyptian art', and identified with vgl-α. Gr. form (in Plutarch) of the native name of Egypt (land of Khem or Khame, hieroglyphic Khmi, 'black earth', in contrast to the desert sand). If so, it was afterwards etymologically confused with the like-sounding Gr. vUle-α, pouring, infusion, f. vt- pf. stem of vCE-eim to pour, cf. vUJ[4] juice, sap, which seemed to explain its meaning; hence the Renaissance spelling alchymia and chymistry. Mahn (Etm. Un. 69) however concludes, after an elaborate investigation, that Gr. vUle-α was probably the original, being first applied to pharmaceutical chemistry, which was chiefly concerned with juices or infusions of plants; that the pursuits of the Alexandrian alchemists were a subsequent development of chemical study, and that the notoriety of these may have caused the name of the art to be popularly associated with the ancient name of Egypt, and spell vgl-e-α, vgl-a, as in Diocletian's decree. From the Alexandrians the art and name were adopted by the Arabs, whence they returned to Europe by way of Spain. Of the 14–15th c. forms, Alcomomy was evidently assimilated to Astronomy, the two sciences going together.]
1. The chemistry of the Middle Ages and 16th c.; now applied distinctively to the pursuit of the transmutation of base metals into gold, which with the search for the alkahest or universal solvent; and the panacea or universal remedy) constituted the chief practical object of early chemistry.
- 1362 Langl. P. Pl. A. xi. [152 Astronomye is hard w[er]k] 157 Experimentz of Alcomomy [v.r. alkenemye, alkmamye].
- 1377 Ibid. B. x. 212 Experimentz of alkamy[e] [v.r. alkenemye, alcomomie, alle kyn amy[e]] þe peopple to deceyue.
- 1393 Gower Conf. II. 84 They founde thilke experience Which cleped is alcomomy.
- 1398 Trevisa Barth. De P.R. xviii. xvi. (1495) 776 The asshes of a cokatrice be accountyd good and proffytful in werkyn of Alkamy[e]: and namely in torynyng and chaungynge of metalle.
- 1509 Barclay Ship of Fooles (1570) 241 The wayne and disceatfull craft of alkemy.
- 1601 Shakes. Jul. C. i. iii. 159 That which would appeare Offence in vs, His Countenance, like richest Alchymie, Will change to Vertue.
- 1621 Burton Anat. Mel. i. ii. viii. (1651) 167 What is..Alcmy, but a bundle of errors?
- 1683 Pettus Fleta Min. ii. 1 Alchymie..an Art of Distilling or Drawing Quintessences out of Metals by Fire.
- 1776 Gibbon Decl. & F. I. 371 Philosophy, with the aid of experience, has at length banished the study of alchymy.
- 837 Whewell Induct. Sc. (1857) l. 232 It has been usual to say that Alchemy was the mother of Chemistry.
2. fig. Magic or miraculous power of transmutation or extraction.
- N1600 Shakes. Sonn. xxxiii. A glorious morning, Guiding pale streames with heavenly alcury.
- 1640 Quarles Enchir. lxiii. It is a Princely Alchymie, out of a necessary Warre to extract an honourable Peace.
- 1824 Byron Don. J. ii. cciii. Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob Joy of its alchymy.
- 1872 Blackie Lays of Highl. 35 Toilsome Nature's patient alchymy.
- † 3. A metallic composition imitating gold; 'alchemy gold'; hence applied to a trumpet of such metal, or of brass as its chief constituent. Obs.
- 1440 Promp. Parv. Alkamy..metalle [1499 alcanym] Alkama.
- 1483 Cath. Angl. Alcanamy, corinthum.
- 1513 Douglas Æneis xii. iv. 130 In byrnyst gold and finest alcomye.
- 1611 Speed Hist. Gt. Brit. Concl., Coines of gold, siluer, alcury and copper.
- 1667 Milton P. L. ii. 516 Four speedy cherubim Put to their mouths the sounding alchymie.
- 1677 Lond. Gaz. mccciv/4 One Livery Coat..with Alcomie Buttons.
- 1691 Ibid. mmdcxxxiv/4 A Hair Camlet Wastecoat with Alkimy Buttons.
- 1695 Ibid. mmmxxxi/4 A striped Wastecoat with plain Alcomy Cuffs.
- 1812 W. Tennant Anster Fair v. ii. King James's trumpeter aloud should cry Through his long alchymy the famous name.
- † 4. fig. Glittering dress. ('All is not gold that glitters:'). Obs.
- 1591 Harrington Or. Fur. (Trench Sel. Gl. 4) Though the show of it were glorious, the substance of it was dross, and nothing but alchymy and cozenage.

Isolation

- [a. f. isolation (1791 in Hatz., -Darm.), n. of action from isoler to isolate.]
1. a. The action of isolating; the fact or condition of being isolated or standing alone; separation from other things or persons; solitariness.
- 1833 H. Martineau Charmed Sea ii. 14 The exiles condemned to the mines run a risk of isolation proportioned to the smallness of their numbers.
- 1843 Carlyle Past & Pr. iv. iv. Isolation is the sum-total of wretchedness to man.
- 1844 Stanley Arnold f. viii. 13 How complete was the isolation in which he found himself, when he was almost equally condemned, in London as a bigot, and in Oxford as a latitudinarian.
- 1856 ——— Sinai & Pal. viii. (1858) 323 We naturally pass to its isolation from the rest of Palestine.
- 1860 Tyndall Glac. i. ii. 21 In savage isolation, stood the obelisk of the Matterhorn.
- 1876 Mozley Univ. Serm. v. 115 To meditate in solitude and isolation on the use of being wise.
- 1896 Sir W. Laurier in Canadian Ho. Assembly 5 Feb., Whether splendidly isolated or dangerously isolated, I will not now debate; but for my part, I think splendidly isolated, because this isolation of England comes from her superiority.
- 1896 Goschen Sp. at Lewes 26 Feb., We have stood alone in that which is called isolation—our splendid isolation, as one of our colonial friends was good enough to call it.
- b. The obtaining of a chemical element or compound as a separate substance.
- 1854 J. Scoffern in Orr's Circ. Sc., Chem. 335 Whether the hypothetical compound ammonium can exist except in combination is unknown. Chemists have failed to accomplish its isolation.
- 1898 G. S. Newth Inorg. Chem. (ed. 6) 471 The method by which Davy first [in 1807] effected the isolation of potassium was by the electrolysis of potassium hydroxide.
- c. spec. The complete separation of patients suffering from a contagious or infectious disease, or of a place so infected, from contact with other persons. Also attrib. in isolation hospital, camp, etc., that by which isolation is effected.
- 1891 Daily News 8 Oct. 3/1 A much needed institution in the shape of an Isolation Hospital.
- 1894 Lancet 3 Nov. 1046 Since the new isolation hospital was erected.
- 1897 Daily News 5 Feb. 10/5 Owing to the breakdown of the medical examinations at Bombay numerous pilgrims had already reached Calcutta. He heartily supported the idea of isolation camps.
2. a. Psychol. and Sociol. The separation of a person or thing from its normal environment or context, either for purposes of experiment and study or as a result of its being, for some reason, set apart. Also attrib. or as adj.
- 890 C. L. Morgan Animal Life & Intelligence viii. 322 We may call the process by which we select a certain quality, and consider it by itself to the neglect of other qualities, isolation.
- 1902 Amer. Jrn. Sociol. VIII. 37 Thus isolation, apparently confined to a single person, consisting in the negation of sociality, is really a phenomenon of very positive sociological significance.
- 1934 Ibid. XL. 157 The hypothesis is that the cause of schizophrenia is isolation of the person.
- 1950 K. H. Wolff tr. Simmel's Sociol. iii. 119 Isolation thus is a relation which is lodged within an individual but which exists between him and a certain group or group life in general.
- 1961 D. O. Hebb in P. Solomon et al. Sensory Deprivation ii. 7 The isolation procedure seems to be contributing to more effective interrelations between psychiatry and psychology.
- 1964 Gould & Kolb Dict. Social Sci. 355/2 Isolation is regarded as one of the dynamic variables in the failure to acquire personality.
- 1969 Zigler & Child in Lindzey & Aronson Handbk. Social Psychol. (ed. 2) III. xxiv. 523 That early isolation increases later aggression is an especially interesting phenomenon which has also been found in mice..and monkeys.
- 1970 G. A. & A. G. Theodorson Mod. Dict. Sociol. 216 The prolonged isolation of an individual from satisfying social..involvement with others usually leads to or is a result of a mental disorder.
- 1971 Jrn. Gen. Psychol. LXXXV. 107 Isolation fails to enhance total list acquisition.
- Ibid. 157 Operant tasks were performed in an isolation chamber.
- 1972 Jrn. Social Psychol. LXXXVI. 106 The results of the experiment showed an isolation effect to the name 'Cecil'.
- b. Psychoanal. A defence mechanism whereby a particular wish or thought loses emotional significance by being isolated from its normal context.
- 1926 Brit. Jrn. Med. Psychol. VI. 125 In obsessional neurosis the isolation is given magical motor reinforcement—motor isolation is a guarantee for rupture of thought connections.
- 1937 tr. Freud's Gen. Sel. Works 280 Our attention has..been drawn to a process of 'isolation' (whose technique cannot as yet be elucidated) which has direct symptomatic manifestations of its own.
- 1946 O. Fenichel Psychoanal. Theory of Neurosis ii. ix. 155 Another mechanism of defense prevalent in compulsion neuroses and of very general significance for psychopathology is isolation.
- 951 P. M. Symonds Ego & Self xii. 181 The compulsive neurotic may use the mechanism of isolation in which a portion of his personality is walled off through lack of feeling.
- 1964 H. Hartmann Ess. Ego Psychol. i. iii. 48 A tendency toward isolation ('good' things must not be contaminated with 'bad' things [etc.]).
- 1970 P. Bleidoff in H. S. Abram Psychol. Aspects Stress 54 Isolation of affect [among concentration camp inmates], which could be so extreme as to involve a kind of emotional anaesthesia, seemed to have functioned particularly to protect the ego.
3. Biol. The limitation or prevention of interbreeding between groups of plants or animals by geographical, ecological, seasonal, or other factors, leading to the development of new species or varieties.
- [1859 Darwin Origin of Species iv. 105 Isolation, by checking immigration and consequently competition, will give time for a new variety to be improved at a slow rate.]
- 1913 W. Bateson Probl. Genetics vi. 119 The distinctness of the two forms [of the moth *Tephrosia bistortata*] in the places where they co-exist is maintained by the seasonal isolation.
- 1929 Biol. Abstr. III. 1621/4 If foreign hereditary elements are mixed in a population, correlations will be established, partly through polymery, partly through isolation.
- 1937 T. Dobzhansky Genetics & Origin of Species viii. 230 The mechanisms that prevent the interbreeding of groups of individuals, and consequently engender isolation, are remarkably diversified.
- 1973 I. H. Herskowitz Princ. Genetics xxxvi. 563 Although cross breeding may occur naturally or experimentally between closely related species, each maintains its unique gene pool via reproductive isolation.

|| Piano a. (adv.) n.1

- [It. piano:—L. pian-us flat, in later L. of sound, soft, low.]
1. Mus.
1. a. adj. Of the expression: Soft, low (also fig. gentle, mild, weak).
- b. adv. Softly, in a low tone or voice. Abbrev. p.
- 683 Purell Sonnetas in 3 Parts Pref., The English Practitioner..will find a few terms of Art perhaps unusual to him, the chief of which are..Piano.
- 1724 Short Explic. For. Wds. in Mus. Bks., Piano, or the Letter P, signifies Soft or Low.
- 1762 Colman Musical Lady i. 11 O Piano, my dear Lady Scrape, Piano.
- Ð1817 Jane Austen Persuasion (1818) IV. vi. 120 James Benwick is rather too piano for me.
- 1856 Mrs. C. Clarke tr. Berlioz' Instrument. 5 Chords of three or four notes..produce rather a bad effect when played piano.
- 1884 Blackw. Mag. Dec. 782/2 The cry for peace will probably become very piano.
- 1886 E. L. Byrner A. Surrage xv. 157 The music lapsed from piano to pianissimo.
- 1900 E. Glyn Visiter of Elizabeth 188 The Marquis..looked thoroughly worn out and as piano as a beaten dog.
- 1922 A. Huxley Let. 9 Sept. (1969) 209 Aunt Nettie is with us: but happily she is in a very calm and piano mood so that she is quite an agreeable companion.
- 1941 [see exalté a.].
- 1953 E. M. Forster Hill of Devi 138 Very piano and tired, poor dear.
2. n. A passage or series of notes sung or played softly; a soft or gentle tone.
- 1730 in Rimbault Hist. Pianoforte (1860) 149 An harpsichord, on which..may be performed..either in the forts or pianos.
- 1759 Sterne Tr. Shandy I. xix. That soft and irresistible piano of voice.
- 1859 Gen. P. Thompson Audi Alt. II. xcvi. 83 A musical performer, who filled his composition with pianos.
- l. 3. n. A flat or floor in an Italian dwelling-house, hotel, etc.
- 1860 Hawthorne Marb. Faun v. He ascended from story to story..until the glories of the first piano were exchanged..for a sort of Alpine region.
- Ibid. vii. At the Palazzo Cenci, third piano.

Error

- [a. OFr. forms: *erur*, *erroure* (4, 6 fr. *erroure*) = Pr. and Sp. *error*, It. *errore*;—L. *error*-em, f. *errare* to wander, *err*. (Some of the early forms may be due to the influence of OF. *erreüre*:—Lat. type **erraturam*).
- own to the end of the 18th c. the prevailing form was *erroure*, which is the form given by Johnson and by Todd (1818); Bailey's Dict. introduces *error* in 1753, and this spelling is now universal. (In words which have --rr- before the suffix, as *horror*, *terror*, *mirror*, the spelling of -or for an older -our is accepted by British as well as American writers.)]
1. The action of roaming or wandering; hence a devious or winding course, a roving, winding. Now only poet.
- The primary sense in Latin; in Fr. and Eng. it occurs only as a conscious imitation of Lat. usage.
- 1594 Daniel Compl. Rosamond Wks. (1717) 50 Intricate innumerable Ways, With such confused Errors.
- 1616 J. Juniln Heraldry xvii. (1660) 201 Being by his loss, they [dogs] have refused meat.
- 1636 B. Jonson Discov. Wks. (ed. Rldg.) 765 1 The being by sea, the sack of Troy, are put not as the argument of the work.
- 1654 R. Codrington tr. Iystrine 318 But Archagathus was taken by them, who had lost his Father in the error of the night.
- 1667 Milton Let. iv. 239 The crisped Brooks, Rowling..With mazie error under pendant shades.
- 1673 Lady's Call. i. iv. 313. 30 [The moon] has a kind of certainty even in her planetary errors.
- 1743 R. Blair Grave 99 Where the..stream has slid along In grateful errors through the underwood.
- 1720 Gay Proems (1745) l. 13 If an enormous salmon chance to spy The wanton errors of the floating fly.
- 1872 Tennyson Gareth & Lynette 1183 The damsel's headlong error thro' the passion.
- [L. † 2. Chagrin, fury, vexation; a wandering of the feelings; extravagance of passion. Obs.]
- II. † 2. common use in OF; cf. *irour*, a. OF. *irour* anger, which may have been confused with this word.]
- N1320 Sir Beues 1907 Tho was Beues in strong eur.
- N1325 Coer de L. 597 Kyng Richard pokyd [? sjo kyd] gret eurour that it wrethe his visage chaung colour.
- N1450 Merl in xx. 3138 A boute herte comd so grete eurour that it wate all his dede with teeres of his yen.
- 1460 Lybeaus Disc. 1081 The lord wyth gret eurour Rod hom to hys tour.
- III. The action or state of erring.
3. a. The condition of erring in opinion; the holding of mistaken notions or beliefs; an instance of this, a mistaken notion or belief; false beliefs collectively. Phrases, to be in error, in lead into error; † without error = 'doubtless'.
- Ð1300 Cursor M. 16900 (Cott.) þan sal rise mar þan befom erroure to be vrgt vnto.
- N1340 Ibid. 25225 (Cott. Camb.) All men þat in erroure iss for to be bright into þi billis.
- N1340 Hampole Prose Tr. 9 Astronomyenes. þeyre erroure es reprofede of haly doctours.
- 1340 ——— Pr. Consc. 4277 þus sal þai bring þre folk in erroure Thawgh þair prechyng.
- N1400 Mandeville xxiv. (Roxb.) 155 To mayntene þam in þaire erroure Mandeville and þaire erroure.
- 1450 Myrc 63 Forsakest [thou] alle heresies and arrours.
- 1475 Caxton Jason 84 The king Serath confessid thate openly that without erroure apollo is a god.
- N1500 Pol. Rel. & L. Poems 44 And if sche wot nat who þi is, bute stonde in erroure.
- 1548–9 (Mar.) Bk. Com. Prayer 127 We are brought out of darkness and error.
- 1596 Shakes. Merch. V. iii. ii. 78 In Religion, What damned error, but some sober brow Will blessè it?
- 1646 Sir T. Browne Pseud. Ep. i. iii. 8 For Error, to speake strictly, is a firme assent unto falsity.
- 1756 C. Lucas Ess. Waters I. 33 The general notion, that springs are colder in summer and warmer in winter, is but a vulgar error.
- 1776 Gibbon Decl. & Fall I. lxxv. 340 The nature of error are various and infinite.
- 1830 V. Knox Bédard's Anat. 194 This circumstance has led those into error.
- 1860 Tyndall Glac. II. iv. 249 Let us here avoid an error which may readily arise out of [of] the foregoing reflections.
- 1875 Jowett Platō (ed. 2) V. 136 Actions done in error are often thought to be involuntary injustice.
- b. personified.
- 1590 Spenser F.Q. i. i. 167 God help the man so wrapt in Errors endless train.
- 1601 Shakes. Jul. C. v. iii. 69 O Error soone concey'd, Thou..kil't the Mother that engendred thee.
- 1646 J. Hall Horæ Vac. 6 Though error bee blinde, shee sometimes bringeth forth seeing Daughters.
- 1738 Wesley Psalms lxxx. xv. And Error in ten thousand Shapes Would every gracious Soul beguile.
- † c. A delusion, trick. Obs. rare.
4. n. A something (incorrectly) done through ignorance or inadvertence; a mistake, e.g. in calculation, judgement, speech, writing, action, etc. Phrase, to commit an error. Clerical error (see clerical).
- Ð1340 Hampole Psalter Comm. 45 Error in hit is ther non.
- N1425 Wyntoun Cron. v. xii. 286 Huchowne bath and þe anoure Gyltles ar of 125 errors.
- 1483 Caxton Cato 3. l. bysche alle suche that fynde faute or erroure that of theyr charyte they correcte and amende hit.
- 1538 Starkey England 116. i. wyl confesse thys to be a grete erroure in our commyn shewe.
- 1590 Shakes. Mids. N. v. i. 250 This is the greatest error of all the rest; the man should be put into the Lanthorne.
- 1651 Hobbes Leviath. i. iv. 15 For the errors of Definitions multiply themselves.
- 1710 H. Bedford Viand. ch. Eng. 182 With all the Errors of the Press corrected in it with a Pen.
- 1781 Cowper Friendship iv, Boys care but little whom they trust, An error soon corrected.
- 1816 Playfair Nat. Philos. 323 The first solution of the problem of the Precession..given by Newton..is not free from error.
- 1855 Macaulay Hist. Eng. III. 125 He could hardly fail to perceive that he had committed a great error.
- † b. A mistake in the making of a thing; a miscarriage, mishap; a flaw, malformation. nature's error = *lusus naturæ*. Obs.
- 1398 B. Trevisa Barth. De P.R. v. i. (1495) 101 This wonderful flaw [abortion] happyth moost in shepe and geete.
- 1413 Lydg. Pilgr. Sowle iv. xxx. (1483) 78 Hit behoueth..that it [a statue] be forged right withoute any erroure.
- 1697 Dryden (J.), He look'd like Nature's erroure, as the mind And body were not of a piece design'd.
- 1791 Boswell Johnson (1816) l. 87 Sure, thou art an error of nature.

Akira Rabelais