

From the second edition (1989):

island, *n.*

(ˈaɪlənd) Forms: α. 1 **i**land, **iland**, **e**land, **-lond**; 3 **illond**, **yllond**, (4–5 **eland**), 4–6 **yland**, **ylond**, 5–6 **ilond**, (5 **hylyn**), 5–7 **iland**. β. 5 **ile-land**, **yle-**, 6 **ysle-**, **isle-land**. γ. 6– **island**. [OE. *i*land (*ie*land), *iland*, Anglian *é*land = ON. *eyland*, OFris. *eiland* (MDu., MLG. *eilant*, Du., EFris. *eiland*), a compound of OE. *ie*, *i*, ON. *ey* (Norw. *öy*), OFris. *ey* ‘isle’ + LAND. The simple *ie* = OHG. *auwa*, *ouwa*, MHG. *ouwe*, Ger. *aue*, *au*, corresponded to Gothic type **ahwiô*, *aujô*, a substantivized fem. of an adj. derived from *ahwa* ‘water’ (OS. and OHG. *aha*, OFris. and ON. *á*, OE. *éa*), with sense ‘of or pertaining to water’, ‘watery’, ‘watered’, and hence ‘watered place, meadow, island’. A cognate compound frequent in OE. was *éaland*, lit. ‘water-land’, ‘river-land’; and a deriv. of the simple *ie*, *é*, exists in *eyot*, *ait*. The ordinary ME. and early mod.Eng. form was *iland*, *yland*. (*Eland* in 14–15th c. may repr. OE. *éaland* or *e*land.) In 15th c. the first part of the word began to be associated with the synonymous *ile*, *yle* (of Fr. origin), and sometimes analytically written *ile-land*; and when *ile* was spelt *isle*, *iland* erroneously followed it as *isle-land*, *island*; the latter spelling became established as the current form before 1700.]

1. a. A piece of land completely surrounded by water.

Formerly used less definitely, including a peninsula, or a place insulated at high water or during floods, or begirt by marshes, a usage which survives in particular instances, as Portland Island, Hayling Island, Mochras or Shell Island, etc.

α **c888** K. ÆLFRED *Boeth.* xxix. §3 Ðæt iland þe we hatað Tyle. **a900** *O.E. Chron.* an. 895 Hie comon..on an iland..þæt is Meres i haten. **c900** tr. *Bæda's Hist.* i. Introd. (1890) 24 Breoton ist garseges ealond [*MS. B.* iland], ðæt wæs iu eara Albion haten. **a1000** *Whale* 16 in *Cod. Exon.* (Th.) 360 And þonne in þæt eiland up ewitað collenferðe. **11.** *Charter* (dated 1023) of *Cnut* in *Kemble Cod. Dipl.* IV. 23 Ic Cnut.. Ænglelandes kining and ealre ðare elande ðe ðærto licgeð. **c1275** LAY. 7340 We beoþ in on illond [c1205 æit-londe]. *Ibid.* 14741 And a-non wende to þan yllonde [c1205 æit-londe]. **c1320** *Sir Tristr.* 1024 Þe yland was ful brade þat þai gun in fiȝt. **c1330** R. BRUNNE *Chron.* (1810) 77 Þe ferth was holy Eland, þer þe se it withdrouh, þei ȝede on þe sand, to þat Ilde wele inouh. **a1400** *Octouian* 539 A wast ylond they dryuen tulle, Fer yn the est. **c1450** *St. Cuthbert* (Surt.) 1241 Pat bischop of haly eland was. **c1475** *Voc.* in

Wr.-Wülcker 798/14 *Hec insula*, a hylyn of the see. **1509** HAWES *Past. Pleas.* xxxvi. (Percy Soc.) 186 The fyre was great, it made the ylande lyght. **1547** BOORDE *Introd. Knowl.* vi. (1870) 141 Norway is a great Ilond compassed about almost wyth the See. **1586** SIDNEY *Arcadia* iii. (1590) 267 The iland within the lake. **1611** BIBLE *Acts* xxviii. 1 The Iland was called Melita. **1667** MILTON *P.L.* xi. 834 Down the great River to the op'ning Gulf, And there take root an Iland salt and bare.

β **1494** FABYAN *Chron.* vii. 293 Sene the fyrste wynnynge Of this ile land by Brute. **1506** SIR R. GUYLFORDE *Pilgr.* (Camden) 58 We sayled by Alango, Nio, with many mo yle londes. **1546** LANGLEY *Pol. Verg. de Invent.* ii. xii. 56 Midacritus fet lead out of the islelandes against spayne called Cassitrides. **1566** W. ADLINGTON *Apuleius* 44 And now is her flying fame dispersed into the next yslelonde.

γ [**1550**: see ISLANDER. **1577**: see ISLANDMAN.] **1598** HAKLUYT *Voy.* I. 10 Godred. . . tooke possession of the South part of the Island. **1695** TEMPLE *Hist. Eng.* 1 Britain was by the Ancients accounted the greatest Island of the known World. **1774** M. MACKENZIE *Maritime Surv.* 80 How to survey small Islands that extend East or West in a long narrow Train. **1856** EMERSON *Eng. Traits, Ability* Wks. (Bohn) II. 45 The island [Britain] has produced two or three of the greatest men that ever existed.

b. In Biblical lang., after the corresp. Heb. word, applied to the lands across the sea, the coasts of the Mediterranean: cf. ISLE *n.* 1b.

1535 COVERDALE *Isa.* li. 5 The Ilondes (that is ye Gentiles) shal hope in me. **1839** J. YEOWELL *Anc. Brit. Ch.* App. ii. (1847) 170 The Jews call all those places *islands* that lie on the sea coast: thus the posterity of Japheth is said to have peopled 'the islands of the Gentiles' (Gen. x. 5); that is, the sea-coasts of Asia and Greece.

†**c.** *island of ice*: an iceberg, or a large mass of floating ice. *Obs.*

1613 PURCHAS *Pilgrimage* (1614) 744 They plied North~west among Ilands of Ice, . . . some of them aground. *Ibid.* 748 The Ilands of Ice which the current bringeth at that time from the North. **1760–72** tr. *Juan & Ulloa's Voy.* (ed. 3) II. 318 The Hector. . . was lost on one of these islands of ice. **1769** FALCONER *Dict. Marine* (1789), *Island of Ice*, a name given by sailors to a great quantity of ice collected. . . and floating about. . . near. . . the arctic circle.

d. In specific elliptical uses for some particular island or islands, as the Isle of Wight, the Hebrides, some islands in the western Pacific. Also, by further extension, for a specific prison on an island.

1814 JANE AUSTEN *Mansf. Park* I. ii. 34 She thinks of nothing but the Isle of Wight, and she calls it *the Island*, as if there were no other island in the world. **1817** KEATS *Let.* 17 Apr. (1931) I. 19, I intend to walk over the Island east—West—North South. **1852** C. M. YONGE *Two Guardians* xiii. 239 Suppose I was to take him to Marchmont's grouse shooting place in Scotland, and about among the Highlands and Islands. **1896** CONRAD *Outcast of Islands* i. ii. 15 There was not a white man in the islands, from Palembang to Ternate, from Ombawa to Palawan, that did not know Captain Tom and his lucky craft. **1901** *N.E.D.* s.v. *Isle*, The Isle of Wight is commonly referred to as 'the island'. **1902** *Captain* VII. 141 We used to gather the niggers in from all round the islands [sc. Pacific Islands]. **1911** D. G. PHILLIPS *Susan Lenox* (1917) II. vii. 185 He was caught, did a year on the Island before his 'pull' could get him out. **1930** V. PALMER *Men are Human* xxiii. 205 He was tormented by sporadic impulses to scrap his responsibilities and go off to the [Pacific] Islands. **1935** A. J. POLLOCK *Underworld Speaks* 62/2 *Island*, Portland prison, England; Blackwell's Island, N.Y. **1939** J. PHELAN *In Can* iii. 28 He's bin on the Moor

and the Island an' in the Ville, but I ain't never heard as he was in *Eton*. **1968** R. C. GALWAY *Assignment Gaolbreak* viii. 71 You're going straight to the island, via the cells at the Old Bailey. **1974** *Times* 9 Mar. 3/1 It was here in the Isle of Wight that the Conservatives last week suffered their biggest electoral disaster... For the past 50 years the island..had been considered a Tory fortress.

2. transf. **a.** An elevated piece of land surrounded by marsh or 'intervale' land; a piece of woodland surrounded by prairie or flat open country; a block of buildings [= L. *insula*]; also an individual or a race, detached or standing out by itself; **to stand in island*, to be detached or isolated (*obs.*).

1620–55 I. JONES *Stone-Heng* (1725) 53 The Pillars standing in Island (as we say) the Work could not securely bear a Roof. **1638** *Dedham* (U.S.) *Rec.* (1892) III. 51 Abraham Shawe selleth vnto Ferdinando Adam one portion of Grownd called an hill or Iland as it lyeth to his home lott. **1641** *Plymouth Col. Rec.* (1855) I. 169 The Court hath graunted vnto Willm Thomas..all that whole neck of vpland..as also those hammocks of vpland called ilands in the marshes before the same. **1650** *Mass. Col. Rec.* (1854) III. 188 A small hill, or iland, in the meddow on the west side of Charles Riuer. **1652** L. S. *People's Liberty* x. 22 Every man is an Iland, or a little world. **1715** LEONI *Palladio's Archit.* I. (1742) 47 This House..stands in an Island, being surrounded by four Streets. **1776** A. HENRY *Trav. & Adv. Canada* (1901) xi. 282 The country was one uninterrupted plain,..a frozen sea, of which the little coppices were the islands. **1784** COWPER *Task* iii. 630 The shapely knoll, That, softly swelled and gaily dressed, appears A flowery island, from the dark green lawn Emerging. **1794** S. WILLIAMS *Vermont* 35 The small islands in these intervalles, are of a different soil, and..are evidently the tops of small hills, which have not been covered by the inundations of the rivers. **1805** T. M. HARRIS *Jrnl. Tour*, etc. 178 (Bartlett) In some [prairies] are little clumps of trees on higher ground, which are called islands. **1809** A. HENRY *Trav.* 281 We were in sight of a wood, or island, as the term not unnaturally is, as well with the Indians as others. **1834** *Visit to Texas* iv. 41 These groves are called islands, from the striking resemblance they present to small tracts of land surrounded by water. **1838** DICKENS *Nich. Nick*. vii, A man may call his house an island if he likes. **1843** *Amer. Pioneer* II. 283 An island of timber. **1853** F. W. THOMAS *John Randolph* 61 Islands—that is, great clumps of trees, covering some~times many acres, appearing just like many islands in an outstretched ocean. **1856** STANLEY *Sinai & Pal.* i. (1858) 66 It is a strange spot—this plot of tamarisks with its seventeen wells,—literally an island in the Desert. **1880** DAWKINS *Early Man* ix. 330 The Silures no longer form a compact ethnological island, but are..mingled with other races. **1897** *Daily News* 11 May 4/6 The island of houses between the Churches of St. Mary-le-Strand and St. Clement Danes. **1902** S. E. WHITE *Blazed Trail* ix. 63 The pine there grew thick on isolated 'islands' of not more than an acre or so in extent,—little knolls rising from the level of a marsh. **1930** *19th Cent.* Dec. 713 Now, the drawback of this plan, from the Zionist point of view, is that it will prevent land purchase for the meantime and the growth of the Jewish 'islands' in the country. **1962** A. FRY *Ranch on Cariboo* iv. 42 The islands were small patches of pine and spruce timber on little rises of high ground that occurred here and there in the several hundred acres of the meadow. **1974** *Country Life* 21 Feb. 350/1 A churchyard..is..perhaps a well-wooded 'island' in an agricultural countryside.

b. Physiol. A detached or insulated portion of tissue or group of cells, entirely surrounded by parts of a different structure; *island of Reil*, the central lobe of the cerebrum, *insula*; *island (or Island) of Langerhans* = *islet of Langerhans* (ISLET 2b); also *ellipt.*

1879 *St. George's Hosp. Rep.* IX. 339 Microscopically the diseased tissue consisted of vascular meshes, containing numerous small cellular islands. **1879** CALDERWOOD *Mind & Br.* 25 The concealed central lobe (island of Reil) shows the grey matter always deep.

1898 P. MANSON *Trop. Dis.* ix. 173 The islands of sound skin [in the eruption of dengue] give rise at first sight to the impression that they constitute the eruption. **1899** *Jrnl. Exper. Med.* IV. 285 Pigment is frequently abundant in the cells composing the intertubular cell-groups or islands of Langerhans. **1900** *Bull. Johns Hopkins Hosp.* XI. 205 (*heading*) On the histology of the islands of Langerhans of the pancreas. *Ibid.* 207 When the foetal pancreas is affected by congenital syphilis, the islands. .retain their continuity with the secreting structures. **1951** A. GROLLMAN *Pharmacol. & Therapeutics* xxvi. 571 Banting and Best. .obtained a preparation which was named insulin, since it is derived from the Islands of Langerhans in the pancreas, and not from the general parenchyma of the gland. **1962** W. H. HOLLINSHEAD *Textbk. Anat.* ix. 140/2 The endocrine tissue of the pancreas, the pancreatic islands (islets) or islands of Langerhans, consists of small groups of cells scattered among the more numerous acini.

c. = REFUGE *n.* 3c.

1869 *Spectator* 12 June 695/1 We have already 'refuges', or 'islands', or whatever they are, in most crossings. **1878** *Social Notes* 10 Aug. 358/1 It is only very lately that 'islands'—those necessary havens of refuge—have been placed at the most dangerous portions of the boulevards. **1899** *Daily Tel.* 31 Jan. 6/6 The statue being situated on an 'island', a certain amount of skirmishing was necessary in order to reach it. **1926** C. SIDGWICK *Sack & Sugar* xi. 131, I took Gerda's arm, and was nearly at the island, when the bus swept round a corner and was on us. **1930** L. COOPER *Ship of Truth* ii. 178 He stood on an island in the middle and saw the traffic sweep past him. **1956** D. GASCOYNE *Night Thoughts* 26 Street-crossing islands stand becalmed. **1970** P. LAURIE *Scotland Yard* iii. 72 The cart collided with a concrete bollard and finished up on an island. **1972** *Daily Tel.* 20 Jan. 17/7 The gang lifted a grill on a Shaftesbury Avenue island to gain access to the inspection tunnel.

d. A small isolated ridge or structure between the lines in finger-prints.

1891 *Proc. R. Soc.* XLIX. 545 Any one well-marked characteristic of a minute kind, such as an island, or enclosure, or a couple of adjacent bifurcations. **1930** E. WALLACE *White Face* xii. 183 Before we start discussing whorls, islands and circles. .what is this? **1950** *Gross's Criminal Investigation* (ed. 4) v. 127 On Fig. 4 are marked some of the common types of ridge characteristics:—'A' is an enclosure or lake. . 'F' is a short independent ridge or island.

e. = speech island.

1882 A. J. ELLIS in *Trans. Philol. Soc.* 30 The maps being thus arranged, coloured lines are drawn on them marking boundaries, which sometimes unite and form islands. **1892** *Dialect Notes* I. iv. 225 One of his own students was thinking of a linguistic island in the Tennessee mountains as a field for future work. **1923** A. L. KROEBER *Anthropol.* v. 105 This explains the numerous survivals and 'islands' of speech. **1934** H. KURATH in *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* LXXIV. 239 R-islands still exist in eastern New England.

f. A piece of furniture, in a private house or in a museum, library, etc., surrounded by unoccupied floor space. Freq. *attrib.*

1932 *Museums Jrnl.* June 127 In the vertical island-cases with different displays on opposite sides. **1960** *Guardian* 1 Mar. 3/5 Living and dining space planned round a large island range and barbecue grill. *Ibid.*, Peter Jones and Heal's both show island fireplaces. **1960** *Oxf. Univ. Gaz.* 4 Mar. 806/2 A new island bookcase has been acquired

for the library. **1960** *House & Garden* Aug. 65/2 The cooking island screens a small corner used for informal meals. **1968** *Globe & Mail* (Toronto) 13 Feb. 30/1 (Advt.), Huge kitchen with built-ins and double sink plus island sink for children. **1972** *House & Garden* Dec.–Jan. 77 Country-style kitchen. .has a central butcher-block island with built-in hot-plates.

g. The superstructure of a ship, esp. an aircraft carrier.

1937 *Jane's Fighting Ships* 497 Adding 2½ feet to the beam. .to balance the island superstructure. **1964** *New Scientist* 2 July 22 (caption) The 'island' which supports a giant radar scanner on HMS *Hermes*.

3. *attrib.* and *Comb.* **a.** *simple attrib.* Of an island or islands; pertaining or belonging to an island. *island fortress, island race* (i.e. the British).

1621 FLETCHER (*title*) *The Island Princess*. **1725** POPE *Odyss.* v. 385 The island goddess knew, On the black sea what perils should ensue. **1790** BEATSON *Nav. & Mil. Mem.* II. 154 Some shot were fired at his headmost ships from the Island-battery. **1832** TENNYSON *Sonn. Buonaparte*, That island queen who sways the floods and lands From Ind to Ind. **1841** W. SPALDING *Italy & It. Isl.* I. 35 Their highest cluster of peaks. .is in the island-chain which shoots off from Tuscany. **1844** MONCKTON MILNES *Palm Leaves* 10 St. John's proud island-chevaliers. **1852** TENNYSON *Ode Wellington* viii, Not once or twice in our rough island-story, The path of duty was the way to glory. **1897** M. KINGSLEY *W. Africa* 129 A good deal of the bank we have passed by. has been island shore, with a channel between the islands and the true south bank. **1898** H. NEWBOLT (*title*) *The island race*. **1902** BELLOC *Path to Rome* 51 Some kinds of men begin talking of Dogged Determination, Bull-dog pluck, the stubborn spirit of the Island race, and so forth. **1942** *R.A.F. Jrnl.* 18 Apr. 28 In the strongly defended island fortress of Corregidor. **1958** *Spectator* 14 Feb. 199/2, I could wish that the Island Race as a whole were a little more discriminating in its drooling. **1966** *Listener* 26 May 771/1 Aware of Mr Menuhin's devotion to his adopted country, one felt it matched by the island-race stateliness of Sir Adrian.

b. That is, or consists of an island; insular.

1859 TENNYSON *Morte D'Arthur* 259, I am going a long way With these. .To the island-valley of Avilion. **1879** GEO. ELIOT *Theo. Such* xviii. 318 To keep the island-home they won for us. **1899** *Daily News* 27 Oct. 5/1 The 'House of Keys', the legislative chamber of the little island-kingdom [Isle of Man].

c. objective and obj. genitive, as *island-making, island-taking*, etc.; locative, as *island-fishing, island-voyage*; *island-born, island-contained* adjs.; instrumental, as *island belted, island-dotted, island-strewn, island-studded* adjs.; also *island-like* adj.

1884 *Leisure Hour* June 342/1 The *island-belted shores or North-Western Norway. **1803** *Edin. Rev.* I. 413 Crisna, the *island-born. **1894** *Outing* (U.S.) XXIV. 152/1 Loch Awe is a long, narrow *island-dotted ribbon of water. **a1649** DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN *Jas. V, Wks.* (1711) 102 A complaint against the Londoners, who, in their passage to the *island-fishing, spoiled the coasts of Orkney and the adjacent islands. **1859** CORNWALLIS *New World* I. 280 A series of isolated volcanic hills rise *island-like out of the western plains. **1880** A. R. WALLACE *Isl. Life* 73 They [birds] generally require. . an *island-strewn sea as a means of dispersal to new homes. **1898** *Nat. Rev.* Aug. 856

The vast area of *island-studded ocean east of Java. **1613** PURCHAS *Pilgrimage* (1614) 542, I was pressed for this *Iland-voyage, and ready to set saile for Samatra.

4. Special Comb.: **island arc**, any arcuate chain of islands located and aligned in relation to an orogenic belt and characteristically having a deep trench on the convex side; **Island Carib**, (a) the Carib people of the Lesser Antilles; (b) the language of this people; **island-cedar**, a species of cedar; **island-continent**, a large island, approaching the size of the continents, or large enough to contain several states, as Australia or Greenland; **island-harbour**, 'that which is protected from the violence of the sea by one or more islands or islets screening its mouth' (Smyth *Sailor's Word-bk.* 1867); **island-hill**, a hill or mountain rising out of a plain; **island-hop** *v. intr.* (of the U.S. army in the Pacific during the war of 1941–45), to recapture Japanese-occupied islands one after another; also *transf.*; chiefly in *vbl. n.*; **island-mountain** = *island-hill* above; **island platform**, a platform at a railway station, with lines on each side of it; **island plot**, a plot of land on a building site surrounded by streets or open spaces; **island-refuge** = 2c; **island site** = *island plot* above; **island-universe** [app. tr. G. *weltinsel* (von Humboldt), though the term has been attributed to Sir William Herschel], a distinct stellar system, such as that to which our sun belongs, occupying a detached position in space.

1906 H. B. C. & W. J. SOLLAS tr. *Suess's Face of Earth* II. iv. 207 It would be sound geology to draw the western boundary of the Pacific Ocean outside the *island arcs from Kamchatka through Japan. **1971** I. G. GASS et al. *Understanding Earth* xix. 271/1 The zone meets the surface close to the line of the deep ocean trench and dips away beneath the island-arc. **1938** D. TAYLOR in *U.S. Bureau Amer. Ethnol. Bull.* No. 119. 140 The most typical product of the *Island Carib is..the dugout canoe. **1951** — *Black Carib of Brit. Honduras* 41 The Black Carib of Central America speak a dialect of Island Carib—of the language, that is to say, spoken by the native Indian inhabitants of the 'Caribee' islands at the time of Breton's stay among them (1635–1653). **1968** *Encycl. Brit.* XXIII. 433/1 These island Carib [of Dominica] have not retained as much of their aboriginal language and culture [as the Black Carib]. **1969** *Word* XXV. 276 In Island-Carib, the plural is employed only with reference to animate..beings. **1885** A. BRASSEY *The Trades* 396 Little islets covered with firs of various sorts, principally the *island-cedar. **1872** R. B. SMYTH *Mining Statist.* 5 The colony of Victoria embraces the southern extremity of the *island-continent of Australia. **1898** *Westm. Gaz.* 12 Sept. 3/2 The labours..of the plucky lieutenant and his party in the inhospitable and cheerless island-continent of the Far Northern seas. **1839** H. T. DE LA BECHE *Rep. Geol. Cornwall, Devon & W. Somerset* i. 26 The lower *island-hills of Pawlet and Chedzoy..rise out of the plain near Bridgewater. **1907** *Island-hill* [see INSELBERG]. **1944** *Sat. Even. Post* 28 Oct. 98/3 American air power won the battles for Attu, Kwajalein and Tarawa, and has made possible *island hopping. **1946** *Sat. Rev. Lit.* 23 Feb. 33/1 Cant takes us along on the island-hopping campaigns. **1955** in *Amer. Speech* (1956) XXXI. 85 Did you island-hop or did you take the plane directly? **1971** P. DRISCOLL *White Lie Assignment* vii. 61 The caiques are built for coasting and island-hopping. They can't take much rough weather. **1972** *Guardian* 11 Aug. 1/1 The airlift by small, island-hopping aircraft. **1906** *Daily Chron.* 31 Aug. 4/4 They [sc. the Malvern Hills] lie precisely north by south, moored like some great *island-mountain to the westward of the central plain of England. **1913** *Geogr. Jrnl.* XLII. 149 The fantastic peaks and domes of the rocky island-mountains. **1941** F. H. LAHEE *Field Geol.* (ed. 4) xi. 360 A similar residual type in arid regions is the island mountain, or island mount (German, Inselberg). **1885** *Standard* 6 Mar. 3/2 There was..a refreshment bar on the up platform, but no such accommodation on the *island platform. **1898** *Daily News* 23 Nov. 5/1 The new station..will consist of an island platform placed between the up and down relief lines. **1908** *Daily Chron.* 20 Apr. 3/5 On this '*island' plot of land has been erected a building which is certainly an adornment to Great Portland-street. **1922**

F. MUIRHEAD *London & Environs* (ed. 2) 8 A busy street should be crossed only at a point where an ‘island-refuge’ is provided in the middle. **1907** *Westm. Gaz.* 20 Sept. 10/1 Australia and the Strand ‘Island Site’. **1936** C. ROUSE *Old Towns* i. 17 The market house or town hall was often built on an island site in those wide streets. **1972** *Accountant* 17 Aug. 206/1 Two important island sites with main frontages to Great Portland Street have been assembled over the course of many years. [**1845** A. VON HUMBOLDT *Kosmos* I. 93 Unter den vielen selbstleuchtenden ihren Ort verändernden Sonnen..welche unsre Weltinsel bilden.] **1867** A. J. DAVIS *Stellar Key to Summer Land* vi. 32 The expression ‘Island Universe’ was suggested by the immense distance of the fixed stars from our Sun and Planets; giving the impression that our Solar System occupies an isolated position in the boundless ocean of space. **1887** R. A. PROCTOR *Other Suns than Ours* i. 1 Our ‘island universe’, as Humboldt poetically called the stellar system. *Ibid.* 11 The results which Sir W. Herschel published in 1817 and 1818 justify the belief that..large numbers of the nebulae must be regarded as external galaxies. This grand conception fascinated..some who, like Humboldt,..had understood and appreciated the work of the great observer. The idea of ‘island universes’ strewn throughout the ocean of space impressed the world. **1898** *Daily News* 7 May 8/1 The distance between these separate systems—or ‘island universes’ as they have been called—may be very great compared with the diameter of each system. **1928** J. H. JEANS *Astron. & Cosmogony* i. 19 These figures amply show that these nebulae and star-clouds are quite outside our system of stars; they constitute what Herschel described as ‘island-universes’ distinct from the universe which contains our sun. **1959** DAVIES & PALMER *Radio Stud. Universe* i. 2 Many..nebulae were discovered. However, it was not until the 1920's that the problem of their distance and spacing was unravelled by Hubble, who showed that they were very distant island universes (galaxies) of stars many of which were similar to our Milky Way system.

Hence ‘**islandhood** *nonce-wd.*, the condition of being an island; insularity; ‘**islandless** *a.*, devoid of islands.

1842 LD. COCKBURN *Circuit Journeys* (1883) 170 There was too much islandless sea.
1862 ANSTED *Channel Isl.* ii. xii. (ed. 2) 300 It is the insularity (the islandhood, so to say), of the islands, which determines these.

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