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actually, *adv.*

Pronunciation: ² Brit. /'ak(t)ʃʊəli/, /'ak(t)ʃəli/, /'ak(t)ʃli/, U.S. /'æk(t)ʃ(əw)əli/

Forms: late Middle English **actuale**, late Middle English **actuali**, late Middle English ...

Frequency (in current use):

Origin: Formed within English, by derivation. **Etymons:** ACTUAL *adj.*, -LY *suffix*².

Etymology: < ACTUAL *adj.* + -LY *suffix*²....

1. In action; in fact, in reality, really. Opposed to *possibly*, *potentially*, *theoretically*, etc.

?a1425 tr. Guy de Chauliac *Grande Chirurgie* (N.Y. Acad. Med.) f. 111v To cure it actuale [?c1425 *Paris in dede*] whilez it is introduct but ys not conformed.

► c1454 R. PECOCK *Folewer to Donet* 190 (MED) Eche of þilke deedis is actuali moral vertu..as þe habit of hem is moral vertu.

c1500 (► ?a1475) *Assembly of Gods* (1896) l. 2047 (MED) My body..began for to shake For drede of the syght that I had seene, Wenying to me all had be trew Actually doon where I had beene.

1587 SIR P. SIDNEY & A. GOLDING tr. P. de Mornay *Trewnesse Christian Relig.* xv. 265 This Mynd..hath being and continuance actually and of it selfe; and euen when it is seperated from the body.

1608 SIR H. WOTTON in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eng. Hist.* (1827) II. 99 He was heere..actually a Senator.

1671 T. TENISON *Let.* 6 Apr. in H. Oldenburg *Corr.* (1970) VII. 557 Philosophers beleive not at this day..that Fire is actually in a Flint, but only in ye potentiall atoms of it.

1775 J. HARRIS *Philos. Arrangem.* xvi. 397 Every Substance that actually is, by actually being that thing, actually is not any other... A piece of Brass for example actually is not an Oak.

1777 J. PRIESTLEY *Disquis. Matter & Spirit* Pref. p. xxi I would have every man write as he actually feels.

1835 H. HAREWOOD *Dict. Sports at Cautery actual* Boiling water is actually hot, and brandy is potentially hot, as it heats the body, though of itself cold.

1866 'G. ELIOT' *Felix Holt* I. i. 38 She..sat with a fixed look, seeing nothing that was actually present.

1878 W. S. JEVONS *Polit. Econ.* 52 The rates of interest actually paid in business vary very much.

1907 *Jrnl. Philos., Psychol. & Sci. Methods* 4 405 The definition of actually, as distinguished from imaginably, complete and objective truth.

1957 *Lancet* 18 May 1018/1 Her word centre at one time was greatly disturbed, giving the impression that she was rather more severely demented than she actually was.

2006 D. EDGERTON *Shock of Old* (2008) v. 106 The term techno-nationalism is used by Western analysts..to describe a potentially, perhaps actually, dangerous thing.

†2. In a manner characterized by action; with deeds; practically. *Obsolete.*

► c1449 R. PECOCK *Repressor* (1860) 413 Whi schulen mi children, not 3it bigeten, suffre therbi eny losse of good to hem dew, which not 3it trespassen neither habituali neither actuali?

- 1533 T. MORE *Answere Poysened Bk.* Pref. sig. Bb.iii^v Vpon shere thursday, wherin out sauyour actually dyd instytute y^e blessed sacrament.
- 1587 SIR P. SIDNEY & A. GOLDING tr. P. de Mornay *Trewnesse Christian Relig.* v. 57 Now, this vnderstanding is actually euerlasting [Fr. *actuellement eternelle*], (that is..in deede) and euerlastingly actual, (that is..doing).
- 1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* III. xxxv. 219 Christ shall come..to judge the world, and actually to governe his owne people.
- 1656 T. STANLEY *Hist. Philos.* II. IV. 5 Those who offend actually, are most grievously punished.
- 1710 J. NORRIS *Treat. Christian Prudence* ii. 74 Prudence..actually directs and conducts men in the management of themselves..and this actual Directiveness is of the very essence of Prudence.
- 1817 *Panoplist* Feb. 56 It is impossible to obey these commandments, unless the powers and faculties of the body and soul are actually and habitually engaged in the service of God.

†3. Actively, energetically. *Obsolete.*

- a1470 T. MALORY *Morte Darthur* (Winch. Coll. 13) (1990) I. 165 Than on foote they drew there swerdis and dud full actually.

4. At present, currently; for the time being. Now *rare*.

- 1663 B. GERBIER *Counsel to Builders* 60 Workmen, actually employed in every work.
- 1699 N. LUTTRELL *Diary in Brief Hist. Relation State Affairs* (1857) IV. 567 The Turks have actually evacuated Camineec.
- 1742 W. ELLIS *Mod. Husbandman* June i. 8 There are three Sorts of Hough Horse-breaks, actually in Use.
- 1804 in D. KNOX *Naval Documents U.S. Wars Barbary Powers* (1941) III. 308 In consequence of the War actually existing between the United States and the Bey & Regency of Tripoli he has given orders for a detachment of said Squadron to Blockade the Port of Tripoli.
- 1832 H. HALLAM *Constit. Hist. Eng.* I. 507 The impeachment of the earl of Middlesex, actually lord treasurer of England.

5.

a. As a matter of fact, in truth; indeed; even. Now somewhat *colloquial*.

Used to assert the truth of a statement which seems surprising, incredible, or exaggerated.

- 1762 O. GOLDSMITH *Citizen of World* II. 218 I had some dispositions to be a scholar, and had actually learned my letters.
- 1849 J. RUSKIN *Seven Lamps Archit.* iv. 124 And this principle will be actually found, I believe, to guide the old workmen.
- 1863 F. A. KEMBLE *Jrnl. Resid. Georgian Plantation* 22 This woman actually imagines that there will be no slaves in heaven.
- 1878 G. MACDONALD *Ann. Quiet Neighb.* vii. 121 I actually found the door standing open.
- 1911 V. BELL *Let.* 2 July (1993) 102 Then we talked of painting and I actually got some compliments without fishing!
- 1956 *Diner Drive-in* June 90/1 (*advt.*) A drink that's served in semi-liquid form..so wonderfully different that customers actually go out of their way to order it!
- 2007 J. FERRIS *And then we came to End* i. i. 40 Some people actually generate revenue around here.

b. colloquial. As a sentence adverb: in fact, as a matter of interest; contrary to what one might think.

- 1870 L. M. ALCOTT *Old-fashioned Girl* xvi. 316 'What is it? moths in the furs, a smoky chimney, or small-pox next door?'.. 'Actually I have nothing to wear.'
- 1919 D. H. LAWRENCE in *Strand Mag.* Apr. 289/1 Instantly, like the gallant he was, he took her on the dragons, grim-toothed, round-about switchbacks. It was not nearly so exciting as a tram-car, actually.
- 1952 L. ROSS *Picture* (1953) iii. 108 Actually, every director should make the rough cut..himself.
- 1967 I. HAMILTON *Man with Brown Paper Face* xv. 214 Actually, I'm not completely one hundred per cent.
- 1981 *Encounter* Aug. 3/1 'I told you, I've got a problem at work.' 'Actually, you didn't.'
- 2007 A. HOFFMAN *Skylight Confessions* II. 132 Actually, I can't remember you ever playing a single game with me.

COMPOUNDS

actually existing *adj.* of or designating socialism as realized in the Soviet Union and other countries in the Eastern bloc, esp. as distinct from the Marxist–Leninist ideal; also in extended use.

- 1961 *Current Digest Soviet Press* 6 Dec. 6/2 As a result of the self-sacrificing labor of the Soviet people,..mankind has received an actually existing socialist society.
- 1988 J. HUCKLE in D. Hicks *Educ. for Peace* xii. 200 The majority of actually existing socialist societies are undemocratic and controlled from above by privileged bureaucracies.
- 1993 *Nation* 18 Jan. 50/2 The switch from Leningrad to St. Petersburg took..a few minutes of discussion and a vote. Actually existing capitalism, with a developed bourgeoisie and a surrounding bourgeois culture, is still light-years away.
- 2007 *Irish Times* (Nexis) 3 Sept. 14 The implosion of actually-existing socialism in 1989.
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