

# Oxford English Dictionary | The definitive record of the English language

## island, *n.*

**Pronunciation:** <sup>2</sup> Brit. /'aɪlənd/, U.S. /'aɪlənd/

**Forms:** α. Old English **íglanð, íland, eglanð, -lanð**; Middle English **illond, yllond** ...

**Frequency (in current use):**

**Etymology:** Old English *íglanð* (*ieglanð*), *íland*, Anglian *églanð* = Old Norse *eyland*, Old Frisian ...

### 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 ÆLFRED tr. Boethius *De Consol. Philos.* xxix. §3 Ðæt ilanð þe we hatað Tyle.

a900 *Anglo-Saxon Chron.* an. 895 Hie comon..on an íglanð..þæt is Meres íg haten.

c900 tr. Bede *Eccl. Hist.* (1890) i. Introd. 24 Breoton ist garseges ealand [MS. B. igland], ðæt wæs iu geara Albion haten.

OE *Whale* 16 Ond þonne in þæt eglonð up gewitað collenferþe.

11.. *Charter* dated 1023 of Cnut in Kemble *Cod. Dipl.* IV. 23 Ic Cnut..Ænglelandes kining and ealre ðare eglanðe ðe ðærto licgeð.

c1300 (þ?a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Otho) (1963) l. 7356 And a-non wende to þan yllonde [c1275 *Calig.* æit-londe].

c1300 (þ?a1200) LA3AMON *Brut* (Otho) (1963) l. 3659 We beoþ in on illond [c1275 *Calig.* æit-londe].

c1330 (þ?a1300) *Sir Tristrem* (1886) l. 1024 Þe yland was ful brade þat þai gun in fiȝt.

c1330 R. MANNYNG *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 ylonð they dryuen tulle, Fer yn the est.

?c1450 *Life St. Cuthbert* (1891) l. 1241 Þat bischop of haly eland was.

?a1500 *Nominale* (Yale Beinecke 594) in T. Wright & R. P. Wülcker *Anglo-Saxon & Old Eng. Vocab.* (1884) I. 798/14 *Hec insula*, a hyllyn of the see.

1509 S. HAWES *Pastime of Pleasure* (1845) xxxvi. 186 The fyre was great, it made the ylande lyght.

a1549 A. BORDE *Fyrst Bk. Introd. Knowl.* (1870) vi. 141 Norway is a great Ilond compassed about almost wyth the See.

a1586 SIR P. SIDNEY *Arcadia* (1590) III. xi. sig. Oo6 The Iland within the Lake.

1611 *Bible* (King James) Acts xxviii. 1 The Iland was called Melita.

1667 J. MILTON *Paradise Lost* XI. 834 Down the great River to the op'ning Gulf, And there take root an Iland salt and bare.

#### β.

1511 *Pylgrymage Richarde Guylforde* (Pynson) f. xliij We sayled by Alango, Nio, with many mo yle londes.

a1513 R. FABYAN *New Cronycles Eng. & Fraunce* (1516) II. Prol. f. i Sene the fyrste wynnyng Of this Ile land by Brute.

- 1546 T. LANGLEY tr. P. Vergil *Abridgem. Notable Worke* II. xii. 56 Midacritus fet lead out of the islelandes against spayne called Cassitrides.
- 1566 W. ADLINGTON tr. Apuleius *.XI. Bks. Golden Asse* xxii. f. 43<sup>v</sup> And now is her flying fame dispersed into the next yslelonde.
- Y.
- ?1553–77 [implied in: *Life Fisher* (Harl. 6382) (1921) 36 Lyke the nature of Islanders that commonly be changeable and desirous of novelties. (at ISLANDER *n.*)].
- 1575 [implied in: G. FENTON *Golden Epist.* f. 77<sup>v</sup> Eschines..in an oration he made to the Rhodiens, commended the gouvernement of the Ilandmen. (at ISLANDMAN *n.*)].
- 1598 R. HAKLUYT tr. W. Camden in *Princ. Navigations* (new ed.) I. 10 Godred..tooke possession of the South part of the Island.
- 1695 W. TEMPLE *Introd. Hist. Eng.* 1 Britain was by the Ancients accounted the greatest Island of the known World.
- 1774 M. MACKENZIE *Treat. Maritim Surv.* 80 How to survey small Islands that extend East or West in a long narrow Train.
- 1856 R. W. EMERSON *Eng. Traits* v. 104 The island [sc. Britain] has produced two or three of the greatest men that ever existed.

**b. In Biblical language, after the corresponding Hebrew word, applied to the lands across the sea, the coasts of the Mediterranean: cf. ISLE *n.* 1b.**

- 1535 *Bible* (Coverdale) Isa. li. B The Ilondes (that is y<sup>e</sup> Gentiles) shal hope in me.
- 1847 J. YEOWELL *Chron. Anc. Brit. Church* App. ii. 170/1 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 *n.* an iceberg, or a large mass of floating ice. *Obsolete.***

- 1613 S. PURCHAS *Pilgrimage* 744 They plied North~west among Ilands of Ice,..some of them aground.
- 1613 S. PURCHAS *Pilgrimage* 748 The Ilands of Ice which the current bringeth at that time from the North.
- 1769 W. FALCONER *Universal Dict. Marine* Island of Ice, a name given by sailors to a great quantity of ice collected..and floating about..near..the arctic circle.
- 1772 J. ADAMS tr. A. de Ulloa *Voy. S. Amer.* (ed. 3) II. 318 The Hector..was lost on one of these islands of ice.

**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 J. AUSTEN *Mansfield 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 J. 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 J. 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.
- 1900 *N.E.D.* at *Isle* The Isle of Wight is commonly referred to as 'the island'.

- 1902 *Captain* 7 141 We used to gather the niggers in from all round the islands [sc. Pacific Islands].
- a1911 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. transferred.

**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 [= Latin *insula*]; also an individual or a race, detached or standing out by itself; † **to stand in island**, to be detached or isolated (*obsolete*).

- 1638 in D. G. Hill *Dedham (Mass.) 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 in *Rec. Mass. Bay* (1854) III. 188 A small hill, or iland, in the meddow on the west side of Charles Riuer.
- a1652 I. JONES *Most Notable Antiq. called Stone-Heng* (1655) 80 The pillars standing in Island (as we say) the work could not securely bear a roof.
- 1652 L. S. *Natures Dowrie* x. 22 Every man is an Iland, or a little world.
- c1720 N. DUBOIS & G. LEONI tr. A. Palladio *Architecture* II. iii. 7 This house..stands in an Island, being surrounded by four streets.
- 1785 W. 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 *Nat. & Civil Hist. 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* 178 In some [prairies] are little clumps of trees on higher ground, which are called islands.
- 1809 A. HENRY *Trav. & Adventures Canada* II. xi. 277 The country was one uninterrupted plain,..a frozen sea, of which the little coppices were the islands.
- 1809 A. HENRY *Trav. & Adventures Canada* 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.
- 1839 C. DICKENS *Nicholas Nickleby* vii. 59 A man may call his house an island if he likes.
- 1843 *Amer. Pioneer* 2 283 An island of timber.
- 1853 F. W. THOMAS *John Randolph & Other Sketches* 61 Islands—that is, great clumps of trees, covering some~times many acres, appearing just like many islands in an outstretched ocean.

- 1856 A. P. STANLEY *Sinai & Palestine* (1858) i. 66 It is a strange spot—this plot of tamarisks with its seventeen wells,—literally an island in the Desert.
- 1880 W. B. DAWKINS *Early Man in Brit.* 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. Physiology.** 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 (or Islet) of Langerhans* at ISLET *n.* 2b; also *elliptical*.

- 1879 *St. George's Hosp. Rep.* 9 339 Microscopically the diseased tissue consisted of vascular meshes, containing numerous small cellular islands.
- 1879 H. CALDERWOOD *Relations Mind & Brain* 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.* 4 285 Pigment is frequently abundant in the cells composing the intertubular cell-groups or islands of Langerhans.
- 1900 *Bull. Johns Hopkins Hosp.* 11 205 (*heading*) On the histology of the islands of Langerhans of the pancreas.
- 1900 *Bull. Johns Hopkins Hosp.* 11 207 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.* 4c.

- 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 *Scotl. 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. Royal Soc. 1890–91* 49 545 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 n. at SPEECH n.<sup>1</sup> Compounds 2.**

- 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 *Dial. Notes* 1 225 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.* 74 239 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. Frequently *attributive*.**

- 1932 *Museums Jrnal.* 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.
- 1960 *Guardian* 1 Mar. 3/5 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*.

---

**COMPOUNDS**

**C1.** General *attributive*.

**a.** Simple *attributive*. Of an island or islands; pertaining or belonging to an island. ***island fortress, island race*** (i.e. the British).

- 1621 J. FLETCHER (*title*) The Island Princess.
- 1725 A. POPE tr. Homer *Odyssey* II. v. 385 The island Goddess knew, On the black sea what perils shou'd ensue.
- 1790 R. BEATSON *Naval & Mil. Mem.* II. 154 Some shot were fired at his headmost ships from the Island-battery.
- 1832 LD. TENNYSON *Buonaparte* in *Poems* 5 That island queen who sways the floods and lands From Ind to Ind.
- 1841 W. SPALDING *Italy & Ital. Islands* I. 35 Their highest cluster of peaks..is in the island-chain which shoots off from Tuscany.
- 1844 R. M. MILNES *Palm Leaves* 10 St. John's proud island-chevaliers.
- 1852 LD. 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 *Trav. W. Afr.* 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 H. 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. Jrn.* 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.

- 1842 LD. TENNYSON *Morte d'Arthur* in *Poems* (new ed.) II. 16 I am going a long way With these..To the island-valley of Avilion.
- 1879 'G. ELIOT' *Theophrastus 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 objective genitive.

**island-making** *adj.*

**island-taking** *adj.*

**d.** Locative.

**(a)**

**island-fishing** *n.*

- a1649 W. DRUMMOND *Hist. James V* in *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.

**island-voyage** *n.*

1613 S. PURCHAS *Pilgrimage* 542 I was pressed for this island-voyage, and ready to set saile for Samatra.

**(b)****island-born** *adj.*

1803 *Edinb. Rev.* 1 413 Crisna, the island-born.

**island-contained** *adj.***e. Instrumental.****island belted** *adj.*

1884 *Leisure Hour* June 342/1 The island-belted shores or North-Western Norway.

**island-dotted** *adj.*

1894 *Outing* 24 152/1 Loch Awe is a long, narrow island-dotted ribbon of water.

**island-strewn** *adj.*

1880 A. R. WALLACE *Island Life* 73 They [birds] generally require..an island-strewn sea as a means of dispersal to new homes.

**island-studded** *adj.*

1898 *National Rev.* Aug. 856 The vast area of island-studded ocean east of Java.

**f.****island-like** *adj.*

1859 K. CORNWALLIS *Panorama New World* I. 280 A series of isolated volcanic hills rise island-like out of the western plains.

**C2. Special combinations.**

**island arc** *n.* any arcuate chain of islands located and aligned in relation to an orogenic belt and characteristically having a deep trench on the convex side.

1906 H. B. C. SOLLAS & W. J. SOLLAS tr. E. Suess *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.

**Island Carib** *n.* (a) an Amerindian people of the Lesser Antilles, of Carib and Arawak descent; (b) the language of this people.

- 1938 D. TAYLOR *Caribs of Dominica* (U.S. Bureau Amer. Ethnol. Bull. No. 119) 140 The most typical product of the Island Carib is..the dugout canoe.
- 1951 D. TAYLOR *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* 25 276 In Island-Carib, the plural is employed only with reference to animate..beings.

**island-cedar** *n.* a species of cedar.

- 1885 A. BRASSEY *In Trades* 396 Little islets covered with firs of various sorts, principally the island-cedar.

**island-continent** *n.* a large island, approaching the size of the continents, or large enough to contain several states, as Australia or Greenland.

- 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.

**island-harbour** *n.* ‘that which is protected from the violence of the sea by one or more islands or islets screening its mouth’ (Smyth *Sailor's Word-book*. 1867).

**island-hill** *n.* a hill or mountain rising out of a plain.

- 1839 H. T. DE LA BECHE *Rep. Geol. Cornwall* i. 26 The lower island-hills of Pawlet and Chedzoy..rise out of the plain near Bridgewater.
- 1907 *Q. Jrnal. Geol. Soc.* 63 166 Except around a few clustered ‘island-hills’ (Insel-bergen) the drainage-gradients throughout this great basin are peculiarly low.

**island-hop** *v.* (*intransitive*) (of the U.S. army in the Pacific during the war of 1941–45) to recapture Japanese-occupied islands one after another; also *transferred*; chiefly in **island-hopping** *n.*

- 1944 *Sat. Evening 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. (U.S.)* 23 Feb. 33/1 Cant takes us along on the island-hopping campaigns.
- 1955 in *Amer. Speech* (1956) 31 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.

**island-mountain** *n.* = *island-hill n.*

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.

1912 *Rep. Brit. Assoc.* 476 The kopjes and island mountains of the warmer temperate and tropical regions are essentially of similar origin.

1913 *Geogr. Jnl.* **42** 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).

**island platform** *n.* a platform at a railway station, with lines on each side of it.

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.

**island plot** *n.* a plot of land on a building site surrounded by streets or open spaces.

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.

**island-refuge** *n.* = 2c.

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.

**island site** *n.* = *island plot n.*

1907 *Westm. Gaz.* 20 Sept. 10/1 Australia and the Strand 'Island Site'.

1921 E. WALLACE *Law Four Just Men* iv. 116 The third house, that at the end of the island site, was occupied.

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.

**island-universe** *n.* [apparently translating German *weltinsel* (von Humboldt), though the term has been attributed to Sir William Herschel] a distinct stellar system, such as that to which the sun belongs, occupying a detached position in space.

- [1845 tr. A. von Humboldt *Κοσμος* 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.
- 1887 R. A. PROCTOR *Other Suns than Ours* i. 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 R. D. DAVIES & H. P. 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.

---

## DERIVATIVES

'**islandhood** *n.* the condition of being an island; insularity.

Apparently an isolated use.

- 1862 D. T. ANSTED & R. G. LATHAM *Channel Islands* II. xii. 300 It is the insularity (the islandhood, so to say), of the islands, which determines these.

'**islandless** *adj.* devoid of islands.

- 1842 LD. COCKBURN *Circuit Journeys* (1888) 170 There was too much islandless sea.