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THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



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grad·u·ate  (grăj -āt')

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v. grad·u·at·ed, grad·u·at·ing, grad·u·ates

v.intr.

1. To be granted an academic degree or diploma: *Most of the entering freshmen stayed to graduate.*

2.

a. To change gradually or by degrees: *"The most weighty of all the arguments against treating the races of man as distinct species, is that they graduate into each other" (Charles Darwin).*

b. To advance to a new level of skill, achievement, or activity: *After a month of diving instruction, they all graduated to back flips.*

v.tr.

1.

a. To grant an academic degree or diploma to: *The school has graduated many gifted chemists.*

b. *Usage Problem* To receive an academic degree from: *How many chemists graduated the Institute last year?*

2. To arrange or divide into categories, steps, or grades: *graduate an income tax.*

3. To divide into marked intervals, especially for use in measurement: *graduate a thermometer.*

n. (-īt)

1. One who has received an academic degree or diploma.

2. A graduated container, such as a cylinder or beaker.

adj. (-īt)

1. Possessing an academic degree or diploma.

2. Of, intended for, or relating to studies beyond a bachelor's degree: *graduate courses.*

[Middle English *graduaten*, to confer a degree, from Medieval Latin *graduārī*, *graduāt-*, to take a degree, from Latin *gradus*, step; see [GRADE](#).]

grad u·a'tor *n.*

Usage Note: Traditionally, the verb *graduate* denotes the action of conferring an academic degree or diploma, and this sense has often been conveyed in the passive voice, as in *They were graduated from Yale in 2010*. This usage still exists, though it is somewhat old-fashioned and may be slipping away. In our 1988 survey, 78 percent of the Usage Panel accepted this sentence, but almost half the Panel found it unacceptable in our 2006 survey. Nonetheless, this older use of the verb is both acceptable and widespread when the verb is expressed in the active voice and the institution is the subject: *The university graduated more computer science majors in 2010 than in the entire previous decade*. Another transitive use, in which the student is the subject and the institution is the object, as in *She graduated Yale in 2010*, does not find favor with the Panel. Some 77 percent objected to this usage in 1988 and again in 2006. The intransitive, and most frequent, use of the verb, as in *They graduated from Yale in 2010*, was ruled acceptable by 97 percent of the Panel in 2006.

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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