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## subject, *v.*

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /səb'dʒɛkt/, U.S. /səb'dʒɛk(t)/

### Forms:

α. ME **isubiecte** (past participle), ME **subjectid** (past tense), ME–16 **subject**, ME–16 **subiecte**, 15 **subject** (past participle), 15 **subject** (past participle), 15 **subyect**, 15– **subject**, 16 **subjecte**; *Scottish* pre-17 **subgek**, pre-17 **subieckit** (past participle), pre-17 **subject** (past tense and past participle), pre-17 **subject**, pre-17 **subiek**, pre-17 **subieckit** (past participle), pre-17 **subjecte**, pre-17 17– **subject**.

β. ME **sochete**, ME **soget**, ME **sogete**, ME **sogette**, ME **soogete**, ME **sugete**, ME **sugette**.

γ. 16 **subiet**.

### Frequency (in current use):

**Origin:** Probably a borrowing from French. Or perhaps a borrowing from Latin. Or perhaps formed within English, by conversion. **Etyms:** French *subjecter* ; Latin *subiectāre* ; Latin *subiect-* , *subicere* ; SUBJECT *adj.*; SUBJECT *n.*

**Etymology:** Probably partly (i) < (a) Middle French *subjecter*, *subgeter*, *subgeter* to subjugate, hold in submission (c1300 in Old French; compare Anglo-Norman *sugester* (12th cent.)),

and its etymon (b) classical Latin *subiectāre* to throw up from below, to apply below, in post-classical Latin also to subordinate (14th cent. in British sources), to provide with a subject (frequently from 14th cent. in British sources), frequentative formation < *subicere* (see SUBJECT *adj.*);

partly (ii) < classical Latin *subiect-*, past participial stem of *subicere* (see SUBJECT *adj.*);

partly (iii) < SUBJECT *adj.*;

and partly (iv) < SUBJECT *n.*

Compare Spanish *sujetar*, †*subjetar* (15th cent.), Portuguese *sujeitar* (1561), Italian *soggettare* (a1642 as *subbiettare*). In Middle English prefixed and unprefixed forms of the past participle are attested (see *v-* *prefix*).

### I. Senses related to SUBJECT *adj.* I.

#### 1.

**a. transitive.** To make (persons, a nation or country) subject to a conquering or sovereign power; to bring into subjection to a superior; to subjugate. Chiefly with *to*, †*unto*. Also *reflexive*. Now somewhat *archaic* and *rare*.

▶ a1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) (Douce 370) (1850) 2 Chron. xxviii. 10 The sonis of Juda and of Jerusalem  
3ee wiln subjecten [L. *subicere*] to 3ou seruauntis and hond wymmen.

c1410 tr. R. Higden *Polychron.* (St. John's Cambr.) (1879) VII. 169 Þe forseide Harolde, kyng of  
Norway..subjectid [L. *subjugavit*] unto hym Denmark.

1530 J. PALSgrave *Lesclarcissement* 742/1 They be nowe subjected to the emperour.

a1540 in *Bannatyne Misc.* (1855) III. 38 Efter that the Romanis subjectit the Britones.

- 1565 in J. H. BURTON *Reg. Privy Council Scotl.* (1877) 1st Ser. I. 362 Doand that in thame lysis to subject the haill stait of the commoun weill.
- 1603 R. JOHNSON tr. G. Botero *Hist. Descr. Worlde* 162 Some of them haue subiected themselues to this crowne.
- 1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* II. xix. 95 Men..consequently may subject themselves, if they think good, to a Monarch.
- 1667 J. MILTON *Paradise Lost* XII. 93 God in Judgement just Subjects him from without to violent Lords.
- a1684 J. EVELYN *Diary* anno 1646 (1955) II. 518 Should the Swisse..be subj<e>cted to France or Spaine.
- 1758 tr. C. Rollin *Anc. Hist.* (ed. 4) I. Pref. p. i The Medes and Persians, who were themselves subjected by the Macedonians.
- 1798 W. OPPENHEIM tr. *Geogr. & Statist. Acct. Cisalpine Republic* 423 The Valley Pollicella..obtained great privileges from the Venetians, in consequence of its having been the first valley which subjected itself to that state.
- 1812 R. SOUTHEY in *Q. Rev.* Dec. 328 By abolishing that system in the countries which he has subjected, and by necessitating its abolishment in others.
- 1903 R. MAYR in H. F. Helmolt *World's Hist.* VII. i. 57 The Schmalkaldic League..was joined by the largest and most influential cities, which unconditionally subjected themselves to their ancient enemies, the ruling princes.
- 2005 G. WOOLF in K. Galinsky *Camb. Compan. Age Augustus* II. v. 118 All territory west of the Phasis and the Euphrates has been subjected to the Romans and rulers appointed by them.

**b. transitive.** To make subject or bring into subjection *to* the rule, government, power, or service of a superior.

- c1460 in A. Clark *Eng. Reg. Oseney Abbey* (1907) 56 (MED) Bothe parties haue i-subiecte þem-selfe by goode feyth to our Jurisdiccion.
- a1475 in A. Clark *Eng. Reg. Godstow Nunnery* (1905) I. 325 He subiected hym-selfe to þe constreininge of ony iuge.
- ?1540 in tr. Erasmus *Dialoge Two Persons To Rdr.* sig. ¶vi He willeth euery soule to be subiected to the hygher power and obedyent to theyr prynce.
- 1552 ABP. J. HAMILTON *Catech.* Pref. All subieckit to the seruice of ane lord.
- 1556 W. LAUDER *Compend. Tractate Dewtie of Kyngis* sig. B4<sup>v</sup> How thay suld, Instruct thare floke That ar subiectit to thare þoke.
- 1589 *True Coppie Disc. Late Voy. Spaine & Portingale* (1881) 81 They bee of so base a mould, as they can verie well subject themselves to any government.
- a1661 T. FULLER *Worthies* (1662) Derb. 233 A meek..man, much beloved of such who were subjected to his jurisdiction.
- 1693 J. DRYDEN tr. *Last Parting of Hector & Andromache* in *Examen Poeticum* 464 I see thee, in that fatal Hour, Subjected to the Victor's cruel Pow'r.
- 1752 *London Mag.* Feb. 98/1 There was..a great party for subjecting their native country to the tyrannical power of the pope of Rome.
- 1798 M. NOBLE *Lives Eng. Regicides* I. 216 Sir Thomas..subjected the whole country to the jurisdiction of the parliament.
- 1835 C. THIRLWALL *Hist. Greece* I. vii. 272 Phalces subjected Sicyon to the Dorian sway.
- 1839 T. KEIGHTLEY *Hist. Eng.* II. 42 Subjecting them to an unheard of tyranny.
- 1854 J. H. NEWMAN *Lect. Hist. Turks* i. 85 The service to which they were subjected was no matter of choice.

- 1902 A. LANG *Hist. Scotl.* II. 354 He had subjected the Kirk men to the king's ordinances, and..had taught that presbyteries were 'a foolish invention'.
- 1999 K. TERRACIANO in J. C. Laursen *Relig. Tolerance* vi. 113 Mendieta protested the treatment of natives in the colonial system, especially the excessive compulsory labor service to which they were subjected.

## 2.

**a. transitive.** To make submissive or dependent; to bring into a state of subordination. Now chiefly *reflexive*. Also †*intransitive* with implied object.

- a1382 *Bible (Wycliffite, E.V.)* (Douce 369(1)) (1850) *Ecclus.* iv. 31 Ne sochete [L. *subjicias*] thou thee to eche man for synne.
- a1425 J. WYCLIF *Sel. Eng. Wks.* (1871) II. 248 (*MED*) Many men þat wolen have worship of þis world..sugette oþer men to hem for þe pride þat þei have in þer hert.
- c1475 (‣ ?c1400) *Apol. Lollard Doctr.* (1842) 109 Tul he soget him to þe biddingis of þe apostil.
- ?a1513 W. DUNBAR *Poems* (1998) I. 262 Thy vengeance seis on ws, to syn subiectit.
- a1530 W. BONDE *Pylgrimage of Perfeccyon* (1531) III. f. CCxi [He] hath subject all thynges to hym, & put them vnder his fete.
- ?1569 W. LAUDER *Godlie Tractate* sig. Biii Least tha alwayis, with Sin suld be subieckit.
- a1590 in *Montgomery's Poems* Suppl. (S.T.S.) 199 Pai sleichtis sell neurir subgek me.
- 1605 *Famous Hist. Capt. Stukeley* sig. G4<sup>v</sup> I will not subiect my desire herein, And wait vpon his leisure.
- 1614 W. RALEIGH *Hist. World* I. II. i. §1. 217 Altogether feminine, and subiected to ease and delicacie.
- 1643 J. BURROUGHES *Expos. Prophetie Hosea First Three Chapters* ii. 39 If he subject that to his own base ends.
- 1654 J. BRAMHALL *Just Vindic. Church of Eng.* ii. 9 They have subjected Oecumenical Councils..to the Jurisdiction of the Papal Court.
- 1667 J. MILTON *Paradise Lost* VIII. 607 Yet these subject not.
- 1692 tr. C. de Saint-Évremond *Misc. Ess.* 342 [Religion] compells, and doth not subject enough.
- 1734 tr. C. Rollin *Anc. Hist.* (1827) I. Pref. 51 In order the better to subject the minds of the people.
- 1744 J. SWIFT 3 *Serm.* i. 10 This Doctrine of subjecting ourselves to one another.
- 1827 W. SCOTT *Surgeon's Daughter* in *Chron. Canongate* 1st Ser. II. ii. 33 He..was unwilling to subject himself to that which was exacted in polite society.
- 1920 L. M. SMITH *Early Hist. Monast. Chuny* x. 108 Christ, who deigned to subject Himself to His mother, commanded men to honour their parents.
- 1998 A. RUBENSTEIN *Bad Lang., Naked Ladies, & Other Threats to Nation* ii. 46 The stereotypical traditional women..subjected themselves to their husbands, fathers, and sons.

†**b. transitive.** To overawe; to prevail upon *to* do something. *Obsolete. rare.*

- 1605 *Famous Hist. Capt. Stukeley* sig. F3 To be threatned and subiected by him.
- 1663 R. L'ESTRANGE *Considerations & Proposals Regulation of Press* sig. E2 The Stationers, on the other side, They would Subject the Printers to be absolutely Their Slaves.
- 1670 I. WALTON *Life J. Donne* 29 in *Lives* Sir Robert put on as suddain a resolution, to subject Mr. Donne to be his Companion in that Iourney.

**c. transitive.** To master, overpower (one's desires). Now *rare*.

- 1620 T. VENNER *Via Recta* vii. 114 Such as respect their health, and can subiect their appetite.
- 1660 R. COKE *Justice Vindicated* 15 Subjecting all their passions and affections.
- 1737 *Hist. Wks. Learned* Aug. 156 It ought to be every ones chief Aim to subject his Passions.
- 1777 F. CARTER *Journey Gibraltar to Malaga* II. 428 This teaches them early in life to subject their passions.
- 1896 O. S. MARDEN *Pushing to Front* x. 157 A gentleman..subjects his appetites, refines his tastes, subdues his feelings, controls his speech, and deems every other as good as himself.
- 1904 C. E. ORR *Gospel Day* I. xiv. 303 The true, devoted Christian..will so subject his appetites and passions, that his whole conduct in every respect will be an adornment of the doctrine of God his Savior.

†3. *intransitive*. To be or become subject, submit *to*. *Obsolete*.

- c1475 ( ▶ ?c1400) *Apol. Lollard Doctr.* (1842) 76 (*MED*) New law techip þat no prest nor clerk ow to soget to no seculer lord.
- 1622 T. SCOTT *Belgicke Pismire* 1 The Creatures subjected to his gouernment, in their voluntarie obedience.
- 1624 W. BEDELL *Copies Certaine Lett.* v. 90 Shee kils with the spirituall sword, those that subiect not to her.
- 1644 P. HUNTON *Vindic. Treat. Monarchy* iv. 20 He is unresistible, and to be subjected to actively in lawfull things.
- 1720 R. WODROW *Corr.* (1843) II. 477 His Majesty's government, which they most heartily pray for, and subject to in all things they possibly can.

II. Senses related to SUBJECT *n.* II.

†4. *transitive* (in *passive*). To be attributed *to*, inhere *in* a subject (SUBJECT *n.* 5). *Obsolete*.

- c1400 J. WYCLIF *Sel. Eng. Wks.* (1871) III. 405 (*MED*) Þo sacrament of þo chalis may opinly shewe, ffirst, swettenesse of wyne and, aftir, sournesse..Lord, wheþer swettenesse and sournesse ben sogettid in figure!
- c1450 ( ▶ 1410) J. WALTON tr. Boethius *De Consol. Philos.* (Linc. Cathedral 103) 93 (*MED*) Aperteyneþ..oght to þe?..Darst þow reioyen þat þey in the be As þing subiectid in þy propre kynde? Art þou depeynted, semeþ in þy mynde, Wiþ floures of þe firste somer sesoun?
- 1606 B. JONSON *Hymenaei* 1 It is a noble and iust advantage, that the things subjected to Vnderstanding have of those which are objected to Sense.
- 1649 BP. J. TAYLOR *Great Exemplar* III. xiii. §13 When the relations are subjected in persons religious, and holy.
- 1659 J. PEARSON *Expos. Apostles Creed* iv. 381 That all the sufferings of our Mediatour were subjected in his human nature.
- 1667 BP. J. TAYLOR *2nd Pt. Dissuasive from Popery* Introd. sig. B2<sup>v</sup> I hope I. S. does not suppose it [sc. infallibility] subjected in every single Christian man or woman.
- 1690 J. NORRIS *Christian Blessedness* 92 For such and such Vertues as subjected in Man.

5. *transitive*. *Logic*. To make the subject of a proposition. Cf. SUBJECTION *n.* 10. *rare*.

- 1628 T. SPENCER *Art of Logick* 129 How they be predicated, and how subiected.

- 1725 I. WATTS *Logick* III. ii. §3 A fourth Figure wherein the middle Term is predicated in the major Proposition, and subjected in the minor.
- 1849 B. H. SMART *Man. Logic* App. 233 In what is called the *second figure*, the middle term is predicated in both premises; in what is called the *third figure*, it is subjected in both premises.
- 2001 G. KLIMA tr. J. Buridan *Summulae de Dialectica* v. i. 310 If the middle term is subjected in one premise and is predicated in the other, then we get the first figure, as in: 'Every animal is a substance; every man is an animal; therefore, every man is a substance.'

### III. Senses related to SUBJECT *adj.* II.

**6. transitive.** To lay open or expose to the incidence, occurrence, or infliction of something; to make liable *to* something. †Also occasionally: to make susceptible *to*, predispose *to*.

- a1450 *De Oblacione Iugis Sacrificii* (Titus) l. 2110 in *Wks. Lollard Preacher* (2001) 210 Þe martir soiectiþ his bodi to turmentis.
- c1550 *Complaynt Scotl.* (1979) xx. 135 Euerye thing is subieckit to the proces of the tyme.
- 1611 M. SMITH in *Bible (King James)* Transl. Pref. ¶2 As oft as we do any thing of note or consequence, we subiect our selues to euery ones censure.
- a1616 W. SHAKESPEARE *As you like It* (1623) II. iii. 37 I rather will subiect me to the malice Of a diuerted blood, and bloudie brother.
- c1660 J. EVELYN *Diary* anno 1641 (1955) II. 38 It stands upon Contribution Land, which subjects the environs to the Spanish incursions.
- 1701 J. SWIFT *Disc. Contests Nobles & Commons* iv. 46 One Folly, Infirmity or Vice, to which a single Man is subjected.
- 1758 J. DALRYMPLE *Ess. Hist. Feudal Prop.* (ed. 2) 91 Clauses, subjecting the whole to forfeiture, in case the prohibition was infringed.
- 1770 P. LUCKOMBE *Conc. Hist. Printing* 350 Having too much wooll in them..will subject them to soon hardening.
- 1792 E. BURKE *Corr.* (1844) IV. 3 It would only subject the people to a renewal of the former outrages.
- 1830 I. D'ISRAELI *Comm. Life Charles I* III. 72 A mind thus deeply busied..was necessarily subjected to its peculiar infirmities.
- 1845 J. R. MCCULLOCH *Treat. Taxation* I. iv. 114 Is all that is upon the farm..subjected to taxation?
- 1861 M. PATTISON in *Westm. Rev.* Apr. 415 A blow or an abusive expression subjected the offender to a fine.
- 1882 *Encycl. Brit.* XIV. 688/1 The nature of the trade carried on in public-houses has subjected them to a much more rigorous police supervision than ordinary trades.
- 1915 *Pop. Mech.* Sept. 352/2 More than 90 per cent of the colored glass used to safeguard the eyes of industrial workers, who are subjected to violet rays and intense heat, is injurious.
- 1999 M. RAMJOHN *Revenue Law* (ed. 2) I. I. 16 Mary's taxable income may subject her to higher rate of tax.
- 2005 R. D. BARTLETT *Vipers* 69/2 The surface sand is often dry and unless anchored by plant roots is subjected to wind-caused movement as well.

**7. transitive.** To bring under the operation of an agent, agency, or process; to submit *to* certain treatment; to cause to undergo or experience something physically.

- 1723 T. RYMER *Gen. Representation Reveal'd Relig.* 60 He disposes the various Revolutions in the Condition of his Church; subjecting it sometimes to Clouds and Storms, Persecutions and Corruptions.
- 1793 J. SMEATON *Narr. Edystone Lighthouse* (ed. 2) §196 The work will always be dry, or subjected only to the rain.
- 1794 R. J. SULLIVAN *View of Nature* I. 59 The polar parts being subjected to a colder medium, would be more compressed.
- 1801 *Encycl. Brit.* Suppl. II. 357/2 One knows not how to subject to the laws of our perceptions that which is absolutely independent of them.
- 1838 T. THOMSON *Chem. Org. Bodies* 274 The alcohol is then to be separated by subjecting the matter to strong pressure in cloth.
- 1842 J. C. LOUDON *Suburban Horticulturist* 94 This branch of garden management..has been subjected to scientific inquiry.
- 1855 A. BAIN *Senses & Intellect* II. ii. 459 Subject the same persons to an extremely faint exhalation of the same substance.
- 1870 F. M. MÜLLER *Sci. Relig.* (1873) 125 When people began to subject the principal historical religions to a critical analysis.
- 1907 J. H. PATTERSON *Man-eaters of Tsavo* xix. 208 Just after this caravan had moved on we were subjected to some torrential rain-storms.
- 1920 *Marine Insurance: Hearings before Subcomm. Merchant Marine & Fisheries* (66th U.S. Congr. 1st Sess. House) 101 If that cargo is discharged at some intermediate point, and they put it on the open dock, subjecting it to exposure and subjecting it to damage by rain, [etc.].
- 1955 *Eng. Digest* June 44/2 Corporal of Horse Pomfret..subjected us to a dispassionate scrutiny.
- 2005 *N.Y. Times Mag.* 25 Sept. 92/1 If the hydrogen economy is to liberate us from fossil fuels, hydrogen will probably be isolated by subjecting water to electrolysis, which separates the liquid into hydrogen and oxygen.

#### IV. Senses related to SUBJECT *adj.* III.

##### 8.

†**a.** *transitive.* To place under something or in a lower position; to make subjacent to. Chiefly in *passive*. *Obsolete.*

- 1578 J. BANISTER *Hist. Man* v. f. 68<sup>v</sup> The rest of his way is subiected vnder Vena caua.
- 1594 R. CAREW tr. J. Huarte *Exam. Mens Wits* viii. 116 Spaine is not so cold as the places subiected to the Pole.
- a1676 M. HALE *Primitive Originat. Mankind* (1677) II. vii. 190 The like Volcans..happen sometimes in the Land subjected to the Sea.
- 1807 J. BARLOW *Columbiad* I. 30 O'er the proud Pyrenees it looks sublime, Subjects the Alps, and levels Europe's clime.

**b.** *transitive.* To lay before a person's eyes. With *to*. Now *rare* or merged in sense 7.

- 1720 A. POPE *Verses Addison's Medals in Wks.* 27 In one short view, subjected to our eye, Gods, Emp'rors, Heroes, Sages, Beauties lye.
- 1776 *Trial Maha Rajah Nundocomar for Forgery* 106/2 It would be highly improper that their books should be..subjected to curious and impertinent eyes.

- 1798 *Anti-Jacobin Rev.* (1799) Nov. 520 All human nature was subjected to his piercing eye.
- 1833 *Blackwood's Edinb. Mag.* Oct. 550/1 The most enlightened man does not always think aright about what he truly sees; nor does he always see truly what is subjected to his eyes.
- 2002 WU HUNG *Making Hist.* iv. 52 He used an extension cord to take pictures on the street..and see what people and the city look like when they were not subjected to his eyes.

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## PHRASES

***to subject someone's neck to (also †unto) the yoke:*** to place someone under the rule or control of someone or something.

- c1592 *Faire Em* sig. A3 A number such as we subiect Their gentle neckes vnto their stubborne yoke, Of drudging labour.
- 1641 J. JACKSON *True Evangelical Temper* II. 120 To subject their necks to the yoak of Christ.
- a1708 W. BEVERIDGE *Private Thoughts Relig.* (1709) 71 He thus subjected his Neck to the Yoke of His own law.
- 1834 *Knickerbocker* Jan. 6 Distinctly blazoning his purpose never to subject his own neck to this intolerable yoke.
- 1906 tr. in E. H. Blair et al. *Philippine Islands* XXXVI. 110 Upon being freed from the conjugal yoke she desired to subject her neck to that of religion.
- 2003 E. LEIVA-MERIKAKIS *Way of Disciple* iii. 58 Only on condition that we willingly subject our neck to his yoke.

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