

wage, n.

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Pronunciation: /weɪdʒ/

Forms: ME Sc. vag, ME Sc., 15 wag, 15 waige, wayge, wedge, pl. wagiens, Sc. vaig(e), vage, 15-16 ... (Show More)

Etymology: < Anglo-Norman, Old French (north-eastern) wage (Anglo-Latin wagium) = Central Old French ... (Show More)

†1.

a. A pledge or security; = GAGE n.1 1. Phr. to hold, lay in wage. Obs.

[1183 Pipe Roll 29 Hen. II (1911) 61 Henricus dec' de Wallebi debet .v. m. quia renuit dare wagium et plegium iusticiariis.]

1338 R. MANNING Chron. (1810) 139 He sesed fiue castels, & held þam in his wage.

c1480 (1400) St. Agnes 400 in W. M. Metcalfe Legends Saints Sc. Dial. (1896) II. 357 Here-of in vitnesyng remanis ay þe forsad ryng one þe fyngire of þat ymag of vad of weding in to vage.

1513 G. DOUGLAS tr. Virgil Aeneid. iv. 132. Or Thai war and shall for vass luge Thai had far levir lay thar lyf in wage.

1530 J. PALSGRAVE Lesclarcissement 286/1 Wage or pledge, gaige.

1590 SPENSER Faerie Queene I. iv. sig. D5v, But th'Elfin knight, which ought that warlike wage, Disdained to loose the meed he wonne in fray.

(Hide quotations)

†b. A challenge or engagement to fight. In full, wage of battle. Cf. GAGE n.1 2. Obs.

c1400 Laud Troy Bk. 8476 So it was seyde to the Emperoure..How ffight was taken hem be-twene, And no man myzt here ire a-swage And thei hadde 3euen to-gedur wage.

1523 LD. BERNERS tr. J. Froissart Cronycles I. ccxvii. 113 And ye same season ther was a wage of batel before the french king, betwene two noble and expert knightes.

(Hide quotations)

2. A payment to a person for service rendered. Formerly used widely, e.g. for the salary or fee paid to persons of official or professional status. Now (exc. in rhetorical language) restricted to mean: The amount paid periodically, esp. by the day or week or month, for the labour or service of an employee, worker, or servant.

Commonly in pl. (after French gages). The sing. is now either dial. or has a rhetorical flavour; but it has sometimes a special convenience with reference to a particular instance or amount (see e.g. quot. 1776 at sense 2a).

a. sing. (For living wage see living wage n. at LIVING n. Compounds 3.)

Second edition, 1989; online version June 2012

About this entry Previous version

In this entry:

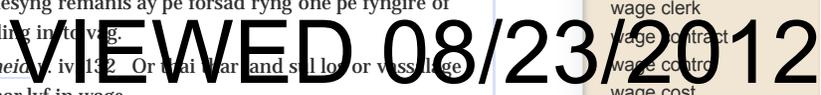
- at or of (a person's) wage or wages
at wage
hold, lay in wage, to in (a person's) wages
iron law of wages
put out of wages, to take wages, to under wages
wage-bargainer
wage-bargaining
wage bill
wage board
wage-book
wage claim
wage clerk
wage contract
wage control
wage cost
wage cut
wage demand
wage differential
wage dispute
wage drift
wage-earner
wage-earning
wage economy
wage-fixing
wage freeze
wage hike
wage inflation
wage-labour
wage labourer
wage-level
wage negotiation
wage of battle
wage packet
wage-paying
wage payment
wage policy
wage-price
wage-price spiral
wage push
wage-rate
wage-related
wage restraint
wage-rigidity
wage round
wage scale
wages council
wages-fellow

My entries (1)

My searches (1)

Jump to:

Table with 2 columns: Entry, Date. Lists various entries like wafture, n., wafty, adj., wag, n.1, etc., with their corresponding dates.



- 1338 R. MANNING *Chron.* (1810) 319 Ilk man þou reft his wage.
- a1400 *Coer de L.* 4264 Ther was non so lytyl page, That ne hadde to hys wage,  
Off gold and sylvyr [etc.].
- c1440 *Promp. Parv.* 513/1 Wage, or hyre, *stipendium, salarium.*
- 1510 in I. S. Leadam *Select Cases Star Chamber* (1911) II. 73 Lewed & evyll  
disposed persons..to whom..the seid Priour gave wage vjd by the day.
- 1522 *Worlde & Chylde* (de Worde) (1909) sig. A.iii. Whan I was seuen yere of  
age I was sent to the worlde to take wage And this seuen yere I haue ben  
his page.
- 1623 W. SCLATER *Quæstion of Tythes* sig. F5, Dreames any man hee meant it to  
the Lord as a Wage for his Worke.
- 1776 A. SMITH *Inq. Wealth of Nations* I. i. x. 177 When masters combine  
together in order to reduce the wages of their workmen, they commonly  
enter into a private bond or agreement, not to give more than a certain  
wage under a certain penalty.
- 1855 W. G. CLARK in *Cambr. Ess.* 287 Millions of childen..must needs  
commence their life of toil in the factory or the field, as soon as their  
physical strength enables them to get a day's wage for a day's work.
- 1877 J. MORLEY *Crit. Misc.* 2nd Ser. 204 The labourers, having little heart in  
work for which they had no wage.

(Hide quotations)

**b.**

(a) *pl.*

- 1377 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* B. xi. 283 He þat toke 3ow 3owre tytle shulde  
take 3ow 3owre wages.
- 1429 *Rolls of Parl.* IV. 338/2 Ye seide Lord Talbot, servid the Kynges  
Fader..withoute takyng of any wages.
- 1444 *Rolls of Parl.* V. 110/2 There be the wages of the knyghtes of the shires.
- c1460 J. FORTESCUE *Governance of Eng.* (1885) xv. 146 It shall not be  
necessarie, þat the xij spirituall men off this covnsell haue so gret wages as  
the xij temporall men.
- 1540 in J. W. Clay *Testamenta Eboracensia* (1902) VI. 107, I will that a prest  
synge for my fayther..and he to have for his wadges vij markes in the yere.
- 1588 T. KYD tr. Tasso *Housholders Philos.* f. 16, Gyuing euery one hys sallary or  
day wages.
- 1642 J. MARCH *Argument Militia* 17 By the Law..it is enacted, that no Knight,  
Citizen, or Burges, absent himselfe..under the paine of the losse of their  
wages.
- 1776 A. SMITH *Inq. Wealth of Nations* I. i. viii. (init.) 78 The produce of labour  
constitutes the natural recompence or wages of labour.
- 1809 E. A. KENDALL *Trav. Northern Parts U.S.* I. xv. 169 A member would be  
thought not to earn what are called his wages. These wages amount to two  
dollars per diem.
- 1830 T. CARLYLE *Jrnl.* in J. A. Froude *T. Carlyle: First Forty Years* (1882) II. iv.  
83 Thus we have private individuals whose wages are equal to the wages  
of seven or eight thousand other individuals.
- 1872 R. W. RAYMOND *Statist. Mines & Mining* 282 Wages are still low, \$1 per  
day and board.

(Hide quotations)

(b) The *pl.* was formerly often construed as *sing.*

- a1425 [see sense 2e].
- 1539 in *Abstr. Protocols Town Clerks Glasgow* (1897) IV. 118 Everilk ane to  
haif ane lyik waigis.
- 1551 R. ROBINSON tr. T. More *Vtopia* sig. Rviiiiv, Their dayly wages is so lytle

wages-fund  
wage-sheet  
wage-slave  
wage-slavery  
wages-man  
wage-snatch  
wage spiral  
wages-taking  
wage stop  
wage-stop  
wage-stopped  
wage structure  
wage system  
wage unit  
wage-winner  
wage-work  
wage-worker  
wage-working

In other  
dictionaries:

wage: quick current  
definition in Oxford  
Dictionaries Online 

wage, n. in Middle  
English Dictionary 

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that it will not suffice for the same daye.

- 1623 W. SCLATER *Quæstion of Tythes* Introd. sig. B, How easie is it to answer, that Tythes was that inheritance, and Tythes is this wages.
- 1679 L. ADDISON *First State Mahumedism* 23 As for his wages, it amounted to so little, that it would not do him much service.
- 1736 J. TULL *Suppl. Horse-hoeing Husb.* 253 As their Wages is supposed to be low, their Masters find them in Tools to work with.

(Hide quotations)

†c. *spec.* The pay of a soldier. Chiefly *pl. to take wages*: to enlist, take service (*with or under a commander*). *Obs.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

- 1338 R. MANNING *Chron.* (1810) 163 A hundreth knyghtes mo.. & fiue hundreth o fote, to whilk I salle pay Ilk day þer wages.
- 1436 *Rolls of Parl.* IV. 499/1 Wages of Werre for the said Soudeours.
- c1440 *Generydes* 2441 With the Sowdon he will take no wage.
- 1490 CAXTON tr. *Fourre Sonnes of Aymon* (1885) ix. 216 He..wende that it had ben straunge knyghtes that were come vnto hym to take wages.
- 1535 *Bible (Coverdale)* 1 Macc. iii. 28 Kynge Antiochus..opened his treasury, and gaue his hoost a yeares wagies in honde.
- 1560 J. DAUS tr. J. Sleidane *Commentaries* f. cclv, They also, which..take wages vnder them in this war.
- 1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* II. xxx. 181 The Wages, due to them that hold the publique Sword.

(Hide quotations)

†d. Phr. *at wage, under wages, et or of (a person's) wage or wages, in (a person's) wages*: in the pay or service of another. *to put out of wages*: to discharge, cashier. *Obs.*

Thesaurus >

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- ?a1400 *Morte Arth.* 302, I salle the forthire..Fifty thowsande mene,..Of my wage for to wende, whare so the lykes.
- c1400 *Mandeville's Trav.* (1839) v. 38 The Soudan may lede out of Egipt mo than 20000 Men of Armes... And alle tho ben at his Wages.
- 1420 WATERTON in Rymer *Fœdera* (1709) IX. 883 To come ovyr to zowe at zour Wage, Armyd and Arayde, as langys to thaire Estate to do zowe Service.
- 1488 (1478) HARY *Actis & Deidis Schir William Wallace* (Adv.) v. l. 909 Xxx<sup>ti</sup> with him off nobill men at wage.
- a1533 LD. BERNERS tr. A. de Guevara *Golden Bk. M. Aurelius* (1537) let. v. f. 110, And fynally...ye entre newly into the wages of the worlde.
- 1542 N. UDALL tr. Erasmus *Apophthegmes* f. 187, When he espyed one of the souldiers..trymmyng a strop or loope to sette on his darte, he putte out of wages, and discharged of his roume.
- 1548 *Hall's Vnion: Henry VI* f. lxxxviii, Many of the Britons..submitted them selues to the lorde regent..whom he gentely accepted and put them in wages.
- 1551 R. ROBINSON tr. T. More *Vtopia* sig. Pii<sup>v</sup>, For them whomewyth they be in wayges they fyghte hardelye fyerslye, and faythefullye.
- 1553 J. BRENDE tr. Q. Curtius Rufus *Hist.* VI. f. 104, The Greakes that were in his wages.
- a1614 J. MELVILLE *Autobiogr. & Diary* (1842) 318 The King, with companies of horsmen and futtmen under wages.
- 1665 T. MANLEY tr. H. Grotius *De Rebus Belgicis* 73 A mutiny for want of pay: which was an unavoydable evill in those parts, though in wages under a most wealthy King.

(Hide quotations)

e. *fig.* Reward, recompense.

Thesaurus &gt;

- c1400 (1390) *Sir Gawain & Green Knight* (1940) l. 396 Þat þou schal seche me þi-self..& foch þe such wages As þou deles me to-day.
- c1400 *Laud Troy Bk.* 3886 Ne were that 3e come in message, Veleyns dethe schulde be 3oure wage.
- a1425 (1395) *Bible (Wycliffite, L.V.)* (Royal) (1850) Rom. vi. 22 The wagis [1382 hyris] of synne is deth.
- c1480 (1400) *St. Lawrence* 139 in W. M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.* (1896) l. 406 Fere mare Ioyful victorag þu sal resawe syne to þi wag.
- 1513 G. DOUGLAS tr. Virgil *Aeneid* xii. xii. 175 Na for small wagis thai debait and stryfe, But apoun Turnus blude schedding and lyfe.
- 1549 COVERDALE et al. tr. Erasmus *Paraphr. Newe Test.* II. 1 Pet. i. f. ii<sup>v</sup>, They y<sup>t</sup> serue the world goe about to haue rewardes y<sup>t</sup> are transitory & wage that is slyppery.
- 1608 SHAKESPEARE *King Lear* xxiv. 298 All friends shall tast the wages of their vertue.
- a1770 J. JORTIN *Serm.* (1787) I. vi. 122 Yet we may shew the same temper..by loving our religion and liberties better than the wages of slavery and iniquity.
- 1864 A. C. SWINBURNE *Atalanta* 2205 The gods give thee fair wage and dues of death.
- 1915 A. SMELLIE *Lift up your Heart* i. 31 He, our Kinsman and Redeemer..bears no relationship to sin any more. He has shaken off its wage and tyranny.

(Hide quotations)

f. **iron law of wages** *n.* the law or idea that wages

tend to sink to the level of mere subsistence.

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- 1875 *Fraser's Mag.* Aug. 186 The new programme of the party states that, in order to effect the emancipation of labour, it is necessary by all legal means to break 'the iron law of wages', by abolishing the system of work for wages and every social and political inequality.
- 1896 R. H. I. PALGRAVE *Dict. Polit. Econ.* II. 568/1 He [*sc.* Lassalle] dwelt on what he called the iron or 'brazen law' (*ehernes Gesetz*) of wages, already laid down by Turgot and Ricardo.
- 1907 J. S. NICHOLSON in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* X. 774 Ricardo..was credited with the 'iron law of wages' on the one side and the theories of the continuous growth of rent and the unearned increment on the other.
- 1966 A. GILPIN *Dict. Econ. Terms* 219 *Subsistence theory.* Of French origin, this 'iron law' of wages asserted that if wages rose above subsistence level an increase in population would inevitably follow, thus forcing wages down again to subsistence level.

(Hide quotations)

## †3. A payment for the use or possession of property.

Thesaurus >  
Categories >*Obs. rare.*

- 1447 O. BOKENHAM *Margaret in Lyvys Seyntyty* 232 If she be bonde and vndyr seruage..Hyr lord wyl I yeue ryht good wage And to my paramour hyr vndyrfonge.
- 1562 in J. Strype *Ann. Reformation* (1709) xxvii. 286 The said incumbents paying to the owners, by the wage of a yearly pension, the yearly rent of all such impropriations.
- 1592 W. WEST *Symbolæogr.: 1st Pt.* l. §25 Letting and hyring..is a Contract by consent of the making or vsing of some thing for a certeine rent, hier or wage.

1629 J. GAULE *Practique Theories Christs Predict.* 183 How grossely doth hee [sc. Judas] vndervalue him in this sale, and wage, and rate?

(Hide quotations)

## COMPOUNDS

General *attrib.*

**C1.** Simple attrib.

**a.**

**wage bill** *n.* (also **wages bill**)

Thesaurus >

Categories >

1919 M. BEER *Hist. Brit. Socialism* I. II. v. 169 The total wage bill of the country diminished.

1923 H. W. B. JOSEPH *Labour Theory of Value in Karl Marx* ii. 49 If all this is true..a capitalist ought not to be indifferent whether he economizes in his wages-bill or in his other expenditure.

1982 T. KENEALLY *Schindler's Ark* viii. 96 The meeting of his wage bill was the least of Oskar's worries.

(Hide quotations)

**wage board** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1925 *Scribner's Mag.* Oct. 415/2 The regulation of wages has been put in the hands of wage boards.

1930 *Economist* 22 Mar. 651/1 The success of the Wages Boards..should be carefully considered.

1970 *Washington Post* 30 Sept. B 17/1 A 3 per cent hike to 850,000 hourly pressed blue-collar (wage board) people.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-book** *n.*

Thesaurus >

Categories >

1865 TROLLOPE *Can you forgive Her?* II. vii. 54, I don't suppose I've opened the wages book half a dozen times since last July.

1960 G. E. EVANS *Horse in Furrow* ix. 115 These wages-books..contained the lists of jobs allocated to people employed on the farm, and the amount of wages due to them.

(Hide quotations)

**wage claim** *n.*

Thesaurus >

Categories >

1971 H. WILSON *Labour Govt.* xxxviii. 787 One of the main groups of printing unions, SOGAT, put in a large wage-claim.

(Hide quotations)

**wage clerk** *n.*

Thesaurus >

Categories >

1921 *Dict. Occup. Terms* (1927) §939 Wages clerk.

1961 *Evening Standard* 18 July 23/5 Wages clerk to head..wages section.

(Hide quotations)

**wage contract** *n.*

Thesaurus >

Categories >

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- 1921 *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, Brit. Columbia) 20 Mar. 1/3 We deny that any wage contract with the miners has been broken.
- 1977 P. JOHNSON *Enemies of Society* iii. 39 The medieval manor..yielded to a cash-nexus society based on wage-contracts between freely-negotiating individuals.

(Hide quotations)

**wage cost** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

- 1958 *Spectator* 4 July 33/3 Wage-cost inflation.
- 1975 J. DE BRES tr. E. Mandel *Late Capitalism* vi. 203 Economies in costs will thus always be accompanied in the long-run by a relative decrease in the share of wage costs in the value of the commodity.

(Hide quotations)

**wage cut** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

- 1925 *Daily Herald* 30 June 2/4 (heading) Folly of wage-cuts.
- 1974 J. AIKEN *Midnight is Place* iii. 102 Protests about the wage-cut had been nipped in the bud.

(Hide quotations)

**wage demand** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

- 1970 *Guardian* 2 Mar. 1/2 The biggest disagreement is about the effect of wage demands.

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**wage dispute** *n.*

Thesaurus >

- 1919 in M. Gilbert *Winston S. Churchill* (1977) IV. Compan. i. 498 The moment the revolt advanced over the line of a pure wage dispute, and the strikers were guilty of a serious breach of the law, then was the moment to act.
- 1955 W. GADDIS *Recognitions* II. i. 322 Not written to be played by men in worn dinner jackets,..involved in wage disputes.

(Hide quotations)

**wage inflation** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

- 1976 *Morecambe Guardian* 7 Dec. 21/7 One woman waving a placard saying 'Wage Inflation' [etc.].

(Hide quotations)

**wage-labour** *n.*

Thesaurus >

- 1871 C. KINGSLEY *At Last* xvi, Those who cultivate some scrap of ground, or follow some petty occupation, which prevents their depending entirely on wage-labour.

(Hide quotations)

**wage labourer** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1957 V. W. TURNER *Schism & Continuity in Afr. Society* v. 135 A man can acquire wealth by working in the White economy as a wage labourer.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-level** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1928 *Britain's Industr. Future* (Liberal Industr. Inquiry) iii. 139 A wise wage-policy should aim at the highest practicable wage-levels.

1965 M. HILTON tr. J. Meuvret in D. V. Glass & D. E. C. Eversley *Population in Hist.* xxi. 517 In normal times wage-levels and price-levels were both very low.

(Hide quotations)

**wage negotiation** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1928 *Britain's Industr. Future* (Liberal Industr. Inquiry) iii. xvi. 188 It is not even enough that the wage-system should be just in itself; it must be visibly and demonstrably just. And this conception ought to inspire the whole system of wage-negotiation.

1974 *Guardian* 23 Jan. 3/1 Today's wage negotiations were conducted with the Frame group.

(Hide quotations)

**wage packet** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1951 R. FIRTH *Elem. Social Organization* iv. 140 One point of view is that the size of the wage-packet remains the most important factor in the incentive to work.

a1974 R. CROSSMAN *Diaries* (1976) II. 638 The trade unionists want to see us spending much less on social services so that there'll be more for wage packets.

(Hide quotations)

**wage payment** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1923 H. W. B. JOSEPH *Labour Theory of Value in Karl Marx* vii. 154 In the absence of definite agreements or enactments, we can produce no rule of universal application, to which wage-payments ought to conform.

(Hide quotations)

**wage policy** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1928 Wage-policy [see *wage-level n.*].

1965 *New Statesman* 9 Apr. 576/3 The principles (but not the practice) of a wages policy.

(Hide quotations)

**wage push** *adj. and n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1968 *Manch. Guardian Weekly* 14 Mar. 13 It has become fashionable to say that the British..manage to keep a wage-push inflation in times of crippling deflation.

1979 *Dædalus* Spring 53 Other things being equal, the greater the wage push, the tougher and more 'lesson-teaching' a policy is necessary to control inflation.

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(Hide quotations)

**wage-rate** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1898 *Edinb. Rev.* Apr. 278 Wage-rates are..the chief cause of trade disputes.

(Hide quotations)

**wage restraint** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1958 *Listener* 4 Dec. 930/2 Don't think it's a matter of wage restraint only.

1977 M. EDELMAN *Polit. Lang.* viii. 153 Employers perceive wage restraint by workers as in the public interest.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-rigidity** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1930 W. K. HANCOCK *Australia* ix. 187 It is apparent that wage-rigidity is less important in its social consequences than in its economic and psychological consequences.

1983 *Economist* 18 June 21/3 Some belief in wage-rigidity is deeply rooted in his work.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-slave** *n.*

1886 W. H. MALLOCK *Old Order Change* II. 23 The hands, as you call them, the poor jaded underfed wage-slaves.

(Hide quotations)

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**wage-slavery** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1886 D. DONOHUE *Let.* 21 Oct. in *N.Y. Times* 24 Oct. 1/5 It is therefore but natural that we should vote for a man who proposes to use his best endeavors to bring about legislation by which wage slavery and land monopoly shall be abolished.

1903 *Dubl. Rev.* Oct. 243 The attitude taken up by the Pope..in regard to wage-slavery.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-snatch** *adj.* and *n.*

Thesaurus >

1962 *Observer* 25 Feb. 23/3 They were working themselves at the wage-snatch business, with a bit of smash-and-grab on the side.

1964 J. CREASEY *Look Three Ways* xx. 183 There's a hold-up... Wages snatch!

1977 L. MEYNELL *Hooky gets Wooden Spoon* xii. 149 She wasn't doing anything for the police in the wages snatch.

(Hide quotations)

**wage spiral** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1948 *Ann. Reg.* 1947 20 A wage spiral was only prevented by distortion which would soon become intolerable.

(Hide quotations)

**wage structure** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1955 *Ann. Reg. 1954* 1 The commission..undertook to make a thorough examination..of the whole wage structure.

(Hide quotations)

**wage system** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1898 *Kansas City (Missouri) Star* 18 Dec. 2/1 The ultimate outcome of the labor movement..will be the destruction of the wage system.

1929 D. H. LAWRENCE *Pansies* 75 Ultimately, we are all busy buying and selling one another. It began with Judas and goes on in the wage-system.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-work** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1870 TENNYSON *Coming of Arthur* 417 Dark sayings..echo'd by old folk beside their fires, For comfort after their wage-work is done.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-worker** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1888 *Boston (Mass.) Jrnl.* 17 July 2/3 Free trade's bitterest foe is the American wageworker.

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**b.**

**wage-related** *adj.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1963 *Punch* 20 Mar. 398/2 There must..be a wage-related contributory insurance system.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-working** *adj.*

Thesaurus >

1898 G. B. SHAW *Perfect Wagnerite* 29 The starving wage-working class.

(Hide quotations)

**C2. Objective.**

**a.**

**wage-bargainer** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1968 *Economist* 23 Mar. 16/3 Any wage bargainer worth his salt should be able to dress up a claim to fit the loose criteria 'justifying' a 3½ per cent increase.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-bargaining** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1928 *Britain's Industr. Future* (Liberal Industr. Inquiry) III. xvii. 209 In the boot

and shoe trade..it has been thought desirable to keep wage-bargaining apart from the general discussions carried on by the Joint Industrial Council.

1983 *Times* 24 June 7/6 The fear that mass hunger striking will become a common tool of wage bargaining.

(Hide quotations)

**wage control** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1910 *Encycl. Brit.* V. 879/1 This argument, which combined statutory wage control and statutory poor relief, seems to have been firmly embedded in the English legislative mind..till after 1600.

1978 *Economist* 18 Feb. 75/1 The [Argentine] government..has relaxed wage controls on private industry.

1985 *Financial Times* 4 Mar. 6/4 The most apparent difference is in their approach to inflation and wage control.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-earner** *n.*

Thesaurus >

1885 *Manch. Examiner* 20 Feb. 5/1 Trade will always fluctuate, wage-earners will always suffer as a consequence.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-earning** *adj.* and *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1865 *Sat. Rev.* 12 Aug. 203 The wages-earning and beef-eating qualities of the Briton.

1884 *Times* (Weekly ed.) 10 Oct. 7/2 To turn their young children into wage-earning machines.

1902 *Edinb. Rev.* Oct. 402 Education..may do much to..raise the power of wage-earning.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-fixing** *n.*

Thesaurus >  
Categories >

1928 *Britain's Industr. Future* (Liberal Industr. Inquiry) II. xvi. 181 The practical considerations which ought to govern the process of wage-fixing.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-paying** *n.*

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1868 J. RUSKIN *Time & Tide* (1872) 7 This principle of regular wage-paying.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-winner** *n.*

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1902 J. P. STRUTHERS *Life & Lett.* (1918) 279 They were the chief wage-winners in the house.

(Hide quotations)

**b.**

† **wages-taking** *n.* *Obs.*

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1552 R. HULOET *Abcedarium Anglico Latinum*, *Wages takyng, stipendiatus*.

(Hide quotations)

### C3. Appositive.

#### a.

**wage-price** *n. attrib.*, esp. in phr. **wage-price spiral**. [Thesaurus >](#)  
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1946 *Sun* (Baltimore) 1 Mar. 1/3 The situation, therefore, presents possibilities of a critical test of the administration's new wage price line.

1958 *Engineering* 11 Apr. 460/1 There appeared to be no doubt whatever in Lord Cohen's mind that this painful process of breaking the wage-price spiral had to be adopted.

1977 M. EDELMAN *Polit. Lang.* viii. 147 A wage-price freeze from which major industries quickly won exceptions.

(Hide quotations)

#### b.

**wage differential** *n.* = **DIFFERENTIAL** *n.* 3b. [Thesaurus >](#)  
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1950 D. W. BROGAN *Era of F. D. Roosevelt* v. 100 Controversy arose over wage differentials between North and South.

1957 *Observer* 6 Oct. 10/2 The pension scheme, by relating superannuation to wages, strengthens the value of wage differentials and hence the incentive to acquire greater skills.

1977 *China Now* Apr.–May 7/1 They were cutting down wage differentials.

(Hide quotations)

**wage drift** *n.* the tendency for wages to rise above national rates through local overtime and other agreements; the extent of this increase.

1963 *Times* 22 Jan. 4/6 This is a comparatively rare phenomenon, 'wage drift' in reverse, and reflects increased short time and lower earnings from bonuses, overtime and so on.

a1974 R. CROSSMAN *Diaries* (1976) II. 703 As for the 3½ per cent ceiling, he told me it was quite unrealistic since wage drift by itself probably comes to 3½ per cent.

(Hide quotations)

**wage freeze** *n.* a temporary fixing of wages at a certain level; cf. **pay freeze** *n.* at **PAY** *n.* **Compounds 3** and **FREEZE** *n.*<sup>1</sup> (2b). [Thesaurus >](#)  
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1942 *Business Week* 11 Apr. 88/1 In wartime there is much to be said for a general price, wage, and profit freeze.

1967 *Spectator* 1 Sept. 238/2 The wage freeze has been imposed without a murmur of national strike action.

1980 C. MOOREHEAD *Fortune's Hostages* v. 104 The President [of Uruguay]..tried to introduce economic restraint by wage freezes.

(Hide quotations)

**wage hike** *n.* *N. Amer.* a wage increase (cf. **HIKE** *n.* 2). [Thesaurus >](#)  
[Categories >](#)

1976 *Washington Post* 19 Apr. A 23/4 By last spring, some unions were putting in for wage hikes up to 60 per cent.

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[\(Hide quotations\)](#)

**wage round** *n.* a recurring succession or series of meetings for discussion or negotiation of wage increases.

- 1947 *Amer. Econ. Rev.* **37** 387 The 1946 wage round did not cause the price increases of the period.
- 1977 *Economist* 22 Oct. 89/1 There is still no sign (two months into the current wage round) that wages are about to go through the roof.
- 1991 *Economist* 22 June 89/1 The Bank of Japan was supposedly going to cut its discount rate as soon as the spring wage round had been concluded with safely non-inflationary rises.

[\(Hide quotations\)](#)

**wage scale** *n.* a graduated scale of wage rates for different levels of work.

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- 1960 F. LYNDE *Quickening* 310 His father was deep in the new wage scale submitted by the miners' union.
- 1979 *Gloss. Terms Work Study* (B.S.I.) 27 *Wage scale determination*, the construction of a scale of wages reflecting the relative values of jobs.

[\(Hide quotations\)](#)

**wages council** *n.* any of a number of joint management and employee councils succeeding the trade boards (from 1945), and responsible for determining the conditions of employment in certain trades.

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- 1945 *Wages Councils Act* (8 & 9 Geo. VI. c. 17) 116 An Act to provide for the establishment of wages councils.
- 1971 *Observer* 7 Nov. 16/6 Many trade unionists argue that the very existence of wages councils discourages poorer workers from joining trade unions.
- 1984 *Listener* 1 Nov. 11/3 The Wages Councils, providing legal minimum wages and conditions for 2.7 million of Britain's lowest-paid workers..are threatened.

[\(Hide quotations\)](#)

† **wages-fellow** *n.* *contemptuously Obs.* one who receives wages.

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- 1652 R. BROME *Joviall Crew* IV. i. sig. I3<sup>v</sup>. That she should sleight me, and run away with a wages-fellow, that is but a petty Cleark and a Serving-man.

[\(Hide quotations\)](#)

**wages-fund** *n.* (also **wage-fund**) *Polit. Econ.* that part of the total capital of a community which is available for paying wages.

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- 1848 J. S. MILL *Princ. Polit. Econ.* I. II. xi. §1. 402 There is unfortunately no mode of expressing by one familiar term, the aggregate of what may be called the wages-fund of a country.
- 1863 H. FAWCETT *Man. Polit. Econ.* II. viii. 241 The remark has frequently been made that the capital of the country provides its wage-fund. This wage-fund is distributed amongst the whole wage-receiving population, and, therefore,

the average of each individual's wages cannot increase unless either the number of those who receive wages is diminished, or the wage-fund, which, in other words, may be described as the capital of the country, is increased.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-sheet** *n.* (also **wages-sheet**) the list of wages paid by an employer of labour.

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1903 *Daily Chron.* 9 July 4/4 The cotton spinners..had to diminish their output and the wage-sheet.

1906 *Westm. Gaz.* 14 Nov. 10/1 Mr. Farrell quoted figures from his wages-sheet to prove that ability and competence..have to be paid for.

(Hide quotations)

**wages-man** *n. Austral.* a man who works for wages.

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1888 'R. BOLDREWOOD' *Robbery under Arms* xxvi, They took up a claim... Then they got a wages-man to help them, and all four used to work like niggers.

1890 'R. BOLDREWOOD' *Miner's Right* I. iii. 54 One would think I was a wages-man, the way you three coves bosses it over me.

(Hide quotations)

**wage stop** *n.* (also **wages stop**) the limitation of supplementary benefit to the level of the normal wage.

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1940 *Economist* 28 Dec. 799/1 The attempt to carry out a wage stop similar to the price stop had to be abandoned.

1954 E. H. CARR *Interregnum* 73 This quasi-official wages-stop remained in force throughout 1923.

1971 *Daily Tel.* 16 June 3/3 The wage stop is the system by which men are prevented from drawing more in State benefits than they had earned while in work—even if this means they get less than the commission's official poverty level.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-stop** *v. (trans.)* .

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1963 *Guardian* 25 Feb. 11/7 If a man is wage-stopped, he will not get anything at all from the increases.

(Hide quotations)

**wage-stopped** *adj.*

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1963 *Times* 18 Feb. 11/6 To suggest..that all the 15,000 wage-stopped families were outside would, on the board's own figures, be plainly absurd.

(Hide quotations)

**wage unit** *n.* (see quot. 1936).

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1936 J. M. KEYNES *Gen. Theory Employment* iv. 41 The money-wage of a labour-unit we shall call the wage-unit.

1976 F. ZWIG *New Acquisitive Society* II. iv. 106 Economic planning which is based primarily on a 'wage unit' determined by the planning authorities as the pivot of economic planning.

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(Hide quotations)

**DRAFT ADDITIONS 1993**

**wage economy** *n.* a system of economic organization (or section of the economy) that is based on the payment of a regular, fixed wage in return for labour; *contr.* with *share economy n.* at *SHARE n.*<sup>3</sup> **Additions.**

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1971 *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* XI. 314 Out of 4 million people in Malawi only 130,000 are in the wage economy.

1983 *N.Y. Times* 24 Apr. vii. 14/4 The rise of the national marketplace and of a wage economy strained the old informalities.

(Hide quotations)

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