

Oxford English Dictionary Study

convertĕre

The etymological origin of **conversion** is the Latin **convertĕre** (*con-* together, altogether + *vertĕre* to turn). An advanced search in the 'etymologies' section of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has resulted in the following entries, listed alphabetically:

- 1. converse, *adj.*¹ and *n.*²** **a1300**
...sus turned, past participle of *convertĕre* to convert Obs. Converted in mind...
- 2. converse, *adj.*² and *n.*³** **1570**
...ransformed, past participle of *convertĕre* : see convert La converse occurs...
- 3. converse, *v.*** **1340**
...n to and fro, frequentative of *convertĕre* to turn about. As with other...
- 4. conversible, *adj.*** **a1660**
..., convers- participial stem of *convertĕre* to convert : see -ble. Also in...
- 5. conversion, *n.*** **a1340**
...urning round, n. of action from *convertĕre* to turn round: see convert Turning...
- 6. conversive, *adj.*¹** **1636**
..., convers- participial stem of *convertĕre* to convert : see -ive....
- 7. convert, *v.*** **a1300**
...convertĕre, for classical Latin *convertĕre* to turn about, turn in character...
- ~~**8. convertend, *n.*** **a1856**
...to be converted, gerundive of *convertĕre* to convert Logic....
[Struck from the list because its origin dates to the 19th century.]~~
- 9. convertible, *adj.* and *n.*** **c1386**
...é), late Latin *convertibil-is*, *convertĕre* to convert : see -ble. That may...
- 10. e converso, *adv.*** **c1425**
...conversus, past participle of *convertere* convert Now rare....

We have looked at the uses of each of these words (with the exception of #8 which dates to the 19th century) selecting quotes from the earliest available up to 1719. Entries with quotes from only beyond 1719 have been deleted, however notes were added to alert to this fact so that the reader can refer to the full entry in the OED.

The selections have been organized according to their relevance to the project; in order to **begin with the word 'conversion'**, the latter part of the list has been included first (i.e. conversion, conversive, convert, convertible, e converse), followed by the first part of the list (i.e. converse, conversible).

[Please note that all notes added are in dark red color]

conversion, *n.*

Etymology: < French *conversion*, < Latin *conversīōn-em* turning round, *n.* of action from *convertĕre* to turn round: see CONVERT *adj.* and *n.*

I. Turning in position, direction, destination.

†1.

a. The action of turning round or revolving; revolution, rotation. *Obs.*

- 1541 T. ELYOT *Image of Governace* xxii. f. 41, Conuersions of sterres motions and reuolutions of planettes.
- 1587 SIR P. SIDNEY & A. GOLDING tr. P. de Mornay *Trewnesse Christian Reliq.* ix. 144 Were the World eternall, the Conuersions or turnings about therof should be eternal too.
- 1656 T. HOBBS *Elements Philos.* III. xx. 227 That Straight line..which touches a Spiral at the end of its first conversion.
- 1666 *Philos. Trans. 1665–6* (Royal Soc.) 1 143 The conversion of Jupiter about his own axis.
- 1715 tr. D. Gregory *Elements Astron.* I. I. §68. 139 In the conversion of the Body of the Sun, this Virtue thereof..is also turned about.

b. centre of conversion: see CENTRE *n.* and *adj.* Phrases.

†2.

a. The action of turning to a particular direction; turning. *Obs.*

- 1594 T. BLUNDEVILLE *Exercises* III. I. xx. f. 154^v, This Greeke word *Tropos*, which is..a conuersion or turning.
- 1638 BP. J. WILKINS *Discov. New World* (1684) I. 50 Divers Conversions of those sides towards our Eyes.
- 1643 SIR T. BROWNE *Reliq. Medici* 111 The conversion of the needle to the North.
- 1659 R. BOYLE *Motives & Incentives Love of God* xvi. 104 A Conversion to that Magnetick Posture.

†b. *fig.* The action of turning or directing (one's mind, attention, actions, etc.) to some object. *Obs.*

- 1581 J. BELL tr. W. Haddon & J. Foxe *Against Jerome Osorius* 513 b, With such an unremoveable conversion of mynde to Godward.
- 1647 T. FULLER *Cause Wounded Conscience* vi. 40 Daily sinne..is an aversion from God, and his daily Repentance a conversion to God.
- 1712 *Spectator* No. 524. □5 An habitual inclination and conversion of his sight towards it.

†3.

a. The action of turning back or returning; *spec.* the turning back of the sun in its apparent course on reaching the tropic; the solstice. *Obs.*

- 1553 R. EDEN tr. S. Münster *Treat. Newe India* sig. Mv, The sommer conuersion of the sunne.

conversion, *n.*

Etymology: < French *conversion*, < Latin *conversio*-em turning round, *n.* of action from *convertĕre* to turn round: see **CONVERT** *adj.* and *n.*

1618 G. CHAPMAN tr. Hesiod *Georgicks* II. 162 If at the sun's conversion thou shalt sow
The sacred earth.

a1682 SIR T. BROWNE *Certain Misc. Tracts* (1684) 3 The tropical conversion of the Sun.

†b. In versions of the O.T., rendering Latin *conversio*. *Obs.*

a1425 (1395) *Bible* (Wycliffite, L.V.) (Royal) (1850) Jer. xxxiii. 7 And y schal conuerte
the conuersioun of Juda [1382 Turne the turnyng of Juda].

1610 *Bible* (Douay) II. Jer. xxxiii. 26, I wil bring backe their conversion, and wil have
mercie on them.

4. Transposition, inversion (of the terms of a statement; cf. **CONVERSE *adj.*² 1); spec. in *Logic*, the transposition of the subject and predicate of a proposition according to certain rules to form a new proposition by immediate inference. Conversion in which the quantity of the proposition is unchanged is called *simple conversion* (e.g. 'No A is B'; 'No B is A'); when there is a change of quantity, *conversion per accidens* (e.g. 'All A is B'; 'Some B is A').**

Cf. CONTRAPOSITION *n.* 2.

1551 T. WILSON *Rule of Reason* sig. Fijj, Conuersion, is the chaungyng or alteryng of
wordes in a Proposicion, when y^e former part (wherof any thyng is rehersed) and
the hynder parte (which is rehersed of the former) are changed, the one, into
the others place.

1570 H. BILLINGSLEY tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* i. f. 15^v, In Geometrie is oftentimes vsed
conuersion of propositions.

1651 T. HOBBS *Philos. Rudim.* iv. §14. 69 As the law of nature is all of it Divine, so the
Law of Christ by conversion..is all of it also..the doctrine of Nature.

†5. Rhetoric. Used by 16th and 17th c. writers as the equivalent of **ANTISTROPHE *n.* 1, and sometimes of **APOSTROPHE** *n.*¹ 1. *Obs.***

1552 R. HULOET *Abcedarium Anglico Latinum*, Conuersion, or speakyng one to
another.

1553 T. WILSON *Arte of Rhetorique* 107 b, Conversion is an ofte repeatyng of the last
worde, and is contrarie to that whiche went before.

[1589 G. PUTTENHAM *Arte Eng. Poesie* III. xix. 166 The Greekes call this
figure *Antistrophe*, the Latines, *conuersio*, I following the originall call him
the *counterturne*.]

[1611 R. COTGRAVE *Dict. French & Eng. Tongues*, *Antistrophe*, An Antistrophe; or
alternall conversion of two things, which bee somewhat alike. [copied from
antistrophe, n. 2 "An inverse relation or correspondence."]]

1706 *Phillips's New World of Words* (ed. 6), *Conversion*..a Rhetorical Figure, the same
as *Apostrophe*.

6. Math. The substitution of the difference of antecedent and consequent for the consequent in each of the ratios forming a proportion: see quotes. ? *Obs.*

conversion, *n.*

Etymology: < French *conversion*, < Latin *conversīōn-em* turning round, *n.* of action from *convertĕre* to turn round: see CONVERT *adj.* and *n.*

- 1570 H. BILLINGSLEY tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* v. f. 134, Conuersion of proportion (which of the elders is commonly called euerse proportion).
- 1664 H. POWER *Exper. Philos.* II. 130 So that here is now four Proportionals, and by any three given, you may strike out the fourth, by Conversion, Transposition, and Division of them.
- 1695 W. ALINGHAM *Geom. Epitomiz'd* 19 If A:B::C:D then by Conversion 'twill be as A:A—B::C: C—D.

7. Law. The action of (illegally) converting or applying something to one's own use. Usually in phr. trover and conversion.

- 1615 COKE in Bulstrode *Rep.* II. (1657) 311–2 There may be a trover and no conversion, if he keep and lay up the goods, by him found, for the Owner.
- 1647 N. BACON *Hist. Disc. Govt.* 195 Fraudulent conversion of Treasure trove.
- 1712 J. ARBUTHNOT *John Bull* I. vii. 13 He talk'd of nothing but..*Writs of Error, Actions of Trover and Conversion.*

II. Change in character, nature, form, or function.

8.

a. The bringing of any one over to a specified religious faith, profession, or party, esp. to one regarded as true, from what is regarded as falsehood or error. (Without qualification, usually = conversion to Christianity.)

- a1400 (1325) *Cursor Mundi* (Fairf. 14) l. 19477 (*heading*) Of the Conuersioun of saint Paule.
- 1413 LYDGATE *Pilgr. of Sowle* (1483) III. x. 56 Paynymys and heretikes that ben dede withouten conuersion.
- 1555 R. EDEN in tr. Peter Martyr of Angleria *Decades of Newe Worlde* Pref. sig. aiiij, The conuersion of the gentyles.
- 1685 E. STILLINGFLEET *Oriqines Britannicæ* i. 2 The Conversion of the British Nation, to the Christian Faith.

b. The festival of the Conversion of St. Paul, observed on Jan. 25.

- 1382–8 WYCLIF *N.T., Table of Lessons* 691 (Propre Sanctorum) Jan., Seynt Vincent, martir, Conuersioun of Seynt Poul.
- 1501 in J. G. Nichols *Chron. Grey Friars* (1852) II. 184 On Sent Powlles evyn the Conuersioun.

†c. spec. In the mediæval church: Change from the secular to the 'religious' life; entry into monastic life. Obs. (See Du Cange, *conversio*.)

- c1340 R. ROLLE *Prose Treat.* (1866) 5 When I had taken my syngulere purpos and lefte þe seculere habyte..it fell one a nyghte..in the begynnyng of my conuersyone, etc.

conversion, *n.*

Etymology: < French *conversion*, < Latin *conversio*-em turning round, *n.* of action from *convertĕre* to turn round: see CONVERT *adj.* and *n.*

1482 *Monk of Evesham* 19 There was a certen yong man, turnyd..fro thys worldys vanyte to the lyfe of a Monke, the whiche abowte the begynnyng of his conuersion fyll yn to a grete and a greuys sekenes.

9. *Theol.* The turning of sinners to God; a spiritual change from sinfulness, ungodliness, or worldliness to love of God and pursuit of holiness.

a1340 R. ROLLE *Psalter* xvii. 53 In conuersyon of synful men.

c1430 tr. *Th. à Kempis Imit.* i. xiii, Somme men haue most greuous temptacions in þe begynnyng of her conuersion, somme in þe ende.

1592 R. GREENE *Disput. Conny-catcher* sig. F2^v, See how God wrought for my conuersion.

1667 MILTON *Paradise Lost* xi. 724 And to them preachd Conversion and Repentance.

†10. A change in the constitution of a state; a revolution. *Obs. rare.*

1614 W. RALEIGH *Hist. World* i. v. iii. §12. 488 In such cases, especially where God intends a great conuersion of Empire.

a1618 W. RALEIGH *Maxims of State* (1651) 49 The ruin of many Tyrants, and conversion of their States.

11.

a. The action of turning, or process of being turned, *into* or *to* something else; change of form or properties, alteration.

1549 *Bk. Common Prayer* Athan. Creed, Not by conuersion of the Godhead into flesh.

1555 R. EDEN tr. Peter Martyr of Angleria *Decades of Newe Worlde* ii. ix. f. 84, The conuersion or turnynge of ayer into water.

1626 BACON *Sylva Sylvarum* §82 Artificiall Conuersion of Water into Ice, is the worke of a few Houres.

b. Change of condition or function. (Const. *into*.)

1661 E. HICKERINGILL *Jamaica* 36 If cut through from Sea to Sea..This Isthmus would lose it's name in an Island; And the conversion conduce much to its security.

12. [19th and 20th century uses; deleted]

†13. *Mil.* An evolution by which files were converted into ranks, or smaller ranks into larger; a change of front to a flank. *Obs.*

1635 W. BARRIFFE *Mil. Discipl.* xxxi. 85 Inversion doth alwaies produce, file, or files; and Conversion, ranke, or rankes.

1650 R. ELTON *Compl. Body Art Milit.* (1668) 32 My subject in this Chapter shall be of Ranks filing, and Files filing, and Ranks ranking, and Files ranking, which are by some called Inversion and Conversion.

conversion, *n.*

Etymology: < French *conversion*, < Latin *conversīōn-em* turning round, *n.* of action from *convertĕre* to turn round: see CONVERT *adj.* and *n.*

1678 A. LOVELL tr. La Fontaine *Mil. Duties Cavalry* 9 Wheeling by conversion is performed by the front of the squadron, so that it is the rank and not the file which makes the motion.

III. Change by substitution of an equivalent in purport or value.

†14. Translation into another language (or into a different literary form); usually *concr.*, a translation, version. *Obs.*

1586 W. WEBBE *Disc. Eng. Poetrie* sig. F.i^v, Abraham Flemming in hys conuersion of the Eglogues, promised to translate and publishe [the Georgics].

?1611 G. CHAPMAN in tr. Homer *Iliads* To Rdr. 117 And see that my conversion much abates The license they take.

1653 I. WALTON *Compl. Angler* i. 7 This Epigram..I have taken a little pleasant pains to make such a conversion of it as, etc.

15. *Math.* Change of a number or quantity into another denomination; reduction. †*conversion of equations: reduction of fractional equations to integral by multiplication (obs.)*.

1557 R. RECORD *Whetstone of Witte* sig. Zi, Any of them maie be diuided by conuersion into a fraction.

1706 *Phillips's New World of Words* (ed. 6), Conversion of Equations (in Algebra).

16.

a. Substitution of or exchange for something else; esp. of one kind of property for another. *spec.* The change of an issue of public securities, of bonds, debentures, stocks, shares, etc., into another of different character, or with an altered (generally reduced) rate of interest. Also *attrib.*, as in *conversion scheme, conversion operation, etc.*

1607 J. NORDEN *Surveyors Dialogue* 35 Neyther theyr infranchisements, nor the conversion of works into rents doe so farre free them, but that they still owe services.

b. [late C18th – modern use; deleted]

c. [C19th – modern use; deleted]

COMPOUNDS

C1. General *attrib.*

a. (In senses 8, 9.)

conversion-scripture *n.*

1678 *Young Man's Calling* 109 He takes up his bible, and often reads the father's conversion-scripture, praying the Lord that it may prove his also.

DERIVATIVES

† con'versioner *n.* *Obs. nonce-wd.* a writer on conversion.

1655 T. FULLER *Church-hist. Brit.* i. 3 The Conversioner..mainly stickleth for the Apostle Peter to have first preached the Gospel here.

conversive, adj.1

Etymology: < French *conversif*, -ive, in medieval Latin *conversivus*, < *convers-* participial stem of *convertĕre* to CONVERT *v.* : see -IVE suffix.

†1. = CONVERSE *adj.*² [i.e. “1. Turned round; opposite or contrary in direction or action; acting in reverse manner.” Or “2. Math. converse ratio, proportion”] *Obs. rare.*

1636 D. FEATLEY *Clavis Mystica* lvi. 774 In the conversive proposition..I admit, etc.

2.

a. Having the power or function of conversion.

1656 R. VINES *Treat. Inst. Lords-Supper* vi. 81 Those operative and conversive words.

1677 T. GALE *Court of Gentiles: Pt. IV* II. iv. 14 Impletive of althings and conversive of althings into itself.

b. *Hebrew Grammar.* In *Vau conversive*, a term applied to the conjunction וַ (va) ‘and’, when employed to give to the future (or imperfect) tense, following a past (or perfect) expressed or understood, the force of the latter tense.

1751 J. WESLEY *Wks.* (1872) XIV. 154 The conversive particle וַ, with a Patha..turns the Future into a Perfect.

3. ‘Capable of being converted or changed’ (Webster 1864).

DERIVATIVES

† **conversively** *adv.* *Obs.* = CONVERSELY *adv.*

1607 R. WILKINSON *Merchant Royall* 33 We may say, conuersiue..that the wisdome of Salomon, etc.

1634 ‘E. KNOTT’ in W. Chillingworth *Wks.* (1742) 236 Every Heretique is a Schismatique, but not conversively every Schismatique is an Heretique.

convert, v.

Forms: Also 15 **conuart(e).**

Etymology: < Old French *convert-ir* = Provençal *co(n)vertir*, Spanish *convertir*,

Italian *convertire* < popular Latin **convertire*, for classical Latin *convertĕre* to turn about, turn in character or nature, transform, translate, etc., < *con-* together, altogether + *vertĕre* to turn.

I. To turn in position or direction.

†1.

a. trans. To turn (a thing or oneself) about, to give a different (or specific) direction to. refl. = To turn (intr.). Obs.

1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) John i. 38 Sothli Ihesu conuertid [*v.r.* turnede; Vulg. *conversus autem Jesus*] and seynghe hem suwynghe him, seith to hem, What seken ȝe?

c1572 W. FORREST *Theophilus* 530 in *Anglia* (1884) 7 94 Which waye to conuerte hym standinge in dowte.

1622–62 P. HEYLYN *Cosmogr.* Introd. (1682) 18, Priests..who usually in their Sacrifices..Convert themselves unto the East.

1646 SIR T. BROWNE *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* II. i. 51 Electricity, that is a power to attract strawes or light bodies, and convert the needle freely placed.

a1676 M. HALE *Primitive Originat. Mankind* (1677) 29 By the volitive Power of the Soul..the Eye is converted to this or that object.

†b. In *convert the visage, convert the eyes, etc.*, the sense passes from *literal* to *fig.*: cf. 2. Obs.

1483 CAXTON tr. J. de Voragine *Golden Legende* 76/3 Unto the lord I conuerte my vysage.

1609 SHAKESPEARE *Sonnets* vii. sig. B2^v, The eyes..now conuerted are From his low tract and looke an other way.

1611 T. CORYATE tr. H. Kirchner *Oration in Crudities* sig. B6, Vpon thee I conuert the minds and eyes of all my Auditors.

1677 T. GALE *Court of Gentiles: Pt. IV* IV. 41 The mind that converts its eyes to that so great amplitude of the first Beautie.

†2.

a. fig. To turn, direct; refl. to turn one's attention. Const. to, against, upon, from.

c1430 tr. *Th. à Kempis' Imit.* II. i. i. Lerne to despice outwarde þinges & to conuerte þe to inwarde þinges.

1533 J. BELLENDEN tr. Livy *Hist. Rome* (1822) IV. 331 Quincius Cincinnatus began to convert his prayaris to the goddis.

1573 G. HARVEY *Let.-bk.* (1884) 11 If I onc convert mi studdi to diuinitie.

1600 P. HOLLAND tr. Livy *Rom. Hist.* I. lv. 38 After this he converted his mind to the affaires of the cittie.

1613 S. PURCHAS *Pilgrimage* VI. xi. 523 Hee now..converts his forces against the King of Fez.

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1647 R. STAPYLTON tr. Juvenal *Sixteen Satyrs* 203 He converted his fury upon himself, and..fell upon his own sword.

1655 T. STANLEY *Hist. Philos.* I. II. 16 Euripides,..lastly converted himself to Tragick poesy.

†b. *intr.* To turn, direct one's attention (*to*). *Obs.*

1413 LYDGATE *Pilgr. of Sowle* (1859) I. xxii. 25 Take hede now, and to thy selfe conuerte, And see what wretchydnesse is the withynne.

1570 J. DEE in H. Billingsley tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* Pref. sig. aij^v, That we may turne or conuert, toward heauenly thinges.

1615 G. SANDYS *Relation of Journey* 73 Now conuert we to the Person and Court of this Sultan.

†3. *trans.* To turn back, cause to return; sometimes, to bring back, restore. *Obs.*

a1425 (1395) *Bible* (Wycliffite, L.V.) (Royal) (1850) Jer. xxxiii. 6 Y schal conuert the conuersion [1382 turne the turning] of Jerusalem.

a1425 (1395) *Bible* (Wycliffite, L.V.) (Royal) (1850) Isa. xlix. 6 To conuerte the drastis of Israel.

1477 CAXTON tr. R. Le Fèvre *Hist. Jason* (1913) 85 She was so angry that she might not conuerte Iason.

1633 G. HERBERT *Temple: Sacred Poems* 167 Or if I stray, he doth convert, And bring my minde in frame.

†4.

a. To reverse the relative position of, to invert, transpose; to exchange the data and conclusion of (a proposition in mathematics). *Obs.* (exc. as in 4b.)

1547 A. BORDE *Breuiary of Helthe* I. f. lxxxiii, A woman the syllables conuerted is..a man in wo.

1551 R. RECORD *Pathway to Knowl.* II. lxxvii, This Theoreme is nothyng els but the sentence of the last Theoreme before conuerted.

b. *Logic.* To transpose the subject and predicate of (a proposition) by CONVERSION *n.* (sense 4).

1638 W. CHILLINGWORTH *Relig. Protestants* I. iv. §23. 204 Punies in Logick, know that universall affirmatives, are not simply converted.

†5. *fig.* To reverse the course of, turn in the opposite direction; *pa. pple.* = opposite, contrary.

1612 J. SELDEN in M. Drayton *Poly-olbion* I. viii. Illustr. 124 Fortune conuerted by martiall opportunity, they were at last by Camillus..put to the sword.

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1680 J. MOXON *Mech. Exercises* I. xi. 196 Soft Wood, because its being loose, will not endure scraping without leaving a roughness upon the Work; But Hard Wood or Ivory (for the Reason converted) will.

†6. [C18th use; deleted]

7. To turn or apply to (another or a specific use or purpose), to divert; spec. in Law, wrongfully or illegally to appropriate and apply to (one's own private use). (Cf. CONVERSION *n.* 7.)

- 1480 in S. Tymms *Wills & Inventories Bury St. Edmunds* (1850) 57 That alle the issues..be houly conuertyd and applyid to thuse and profitys of thynhabytauntys.
1542–3 *Act 34 & 35 Hen. VIII c. 2 §1* Receiuours of his reuenues..conuerted the same to their owne singuler profit.
1547 in *Eng. Gilds* 248 Landes and possessions..w^{ch} are nowe..conuerted..to dedes of charyte.
1569 R. GRAFTON *Chron.* II. 76 The great and wastfull expences bestowed at Rome might..haue bene conuerted to their..flocks committed vnto them.
1623 J. BINGHAM tr. Xenophon *Hist.* 53 Much Lead, which they conuerted to the vse of slings.
1635 E. PAGITT *Christianogr.* (1646) I. 215 Converting all their goods and moveables into his own coffers.

II. To turn or change in character, nature, form, or function.

†8.

a. trans. To turn in mind, feeling, or conduct; to bring into another state (of mind, etc.). Obs.

- c1374 CHAUCER *Troilus & Criseyde* I. 301 Blessid be Love, that can thus folk convert.
1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) Ezek. iii. 20 If the riȝtwis man shal be convertid fro his riȝtwisnes, and shal doo wickidnes.
?1533 G. DU WES *Introductory for to lerne Frenche* sig. Ei, A man doutfull and suspect of ielous, is sone conuerted and tourned in smerte.
1555 R. EDEN in tr. Peter Martyr of Angleria *Decades of Newe Worlde* Pref. sig. aij^v, Conuertynge them to a better mynde.
1575 J. ROLLAND *Treat. Court Venus* I. f. 4, Bot at that time, I traist he was conuart.
?1577 J. NORTHBROOKE *Spiritus est Vicarius Christi: Treat. Dicing* 62 Least the custome of pleasure shoulde..conuerte vs..from God and good workes.

†b. intr. To turn from a course of conduct, purpose, disposition, etc.; to turn aside. Obs.

- c1374 CHAUCER *Troilus & Criseyde* IV. 1412 But I make hym soone to conuerte And don my red with-Inne a day or tweye.

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c1386 CHAUCER *Doctor's Tale* 212 Al wolde he from his purpos not conuerte.

1596 *Raigne of Edward III* sig. D2, When thou conuertest from honors golden name.

1609 SHAKESPEARE *Sonnets* xi. sig. B3, When thou from youth conuertest.

9.

a. trans. To cause to turn to and embrace a (specified) religious faith, usually implying that the turning is to truth from error or ignorance. (Without qualification, usually = 'to convert to Christianity'.)

a1300 *Cursor M.* 19134 (Cott.), Þar was conuerted thusand fiue.

1340 R. ROLLE *Pricke of Conscience* 4502 Þai sal drawe And convert þe lewes til cristen lawe.

c1400 *Mandeville's Trav.* (Roxb.) xxv. 117 Cristend and conuerted to Cristen faith.

1600 SHAKESPEARE *Merchant of Venice* III. v. 33 In conuerting lewes to Christians, you raise the price of porke.

1632 W. LITHGOW *Total Disc. Trav.* (1682) x. 448 Repent thee of thy wickedness, and be converted to the Holy Mother Church.

1642 D. ROGERS *Naaman* 9 Except it be granted that Naaman was converted, the whole scope of our Saviours speech is overthrowen.

1707 R. NELSON *Compan. Festivals & Fasts* (ed. 4) II. vii. 540 When Philip the Deacon had Converted..the Men of Samaria.

b. [19th use; deleted]

†c. refl. Obs.

c1400 *Rowland & O.* 1153, I rede þ^t þou converte the in hye, And then sall saughtyll with thyn Eme sir Garcy.

c1430 *Pilgr. Lyf Manhode* (1869) II. xxiv. 85 Ne were it, þe jewes wolden come to hire, and conuerte hem.

†d.

(a) intr. Obs.

a1300 *Cursor M.* 22367 (Cott.), Þe iuus sal convert, als it sais.

c1440 *Partonope* 3994 Yf thow wylt conuerte and crystened be.

1560 *Bible* (Geneva) Jonah Arg't., That they which were of the heathen, should conuert.

1625 S. PURCHAS *Pilgrimes* II. 1292 If a Christian haue deserued death..if hee will conuert, they will..remit his punishment.

1649 *Alcoran* 171 Your Lord shall pardon you, if you convert.

†(b) with complement: To become, 'turn'. Obs.

1574 E. HELLOWES tr. A. de Guevara *Familiar Epist.* 383 But the doctors of your law, perceiving that many Jewes did convert Christians, and that..they gathered that Christ was the true Messias.

convert, v.

Forms: Also 15 **conuart(e).**

Etymology: < Old French *convert-ir* = Provençal *co(n)vertir*, Spanish *convertir*,

Italian *convertire* < popular Latin **convertīre*, for classical Latin *convertĕre* to turn about, turn in character or nature, transform, translate, etc., < *con-* together, altogether + *vertĕre* to turn.

10. Theol.

a. (trans.) To cause to turn from a sinful or irreligious life to one marked by love of God and pursuit of holiness; to turn to godliness.

c1340 *Earliest Compl. Eng. Prose Psalter* (E.E.T.S.) l[i]. 14 þe wicked shul ben conuerted to þe.

1377 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* B. xvi. 110 Comune wommen conuerted and to good torned.

1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) John xii. 40 That thei be conuertid, or al turned, and I heele hem.

c1400 *Rom. Rose* 7189 The grace..That doth the synfulle folk converte, And hem to Jhesu Crist reverte.

c1450 *Knt. de la Tour* (1868) 139 Thow hast..conuerted her with thine longe preching and good ensaumples.

1549 *Bk. Common Prayer* Collect Gd. Friday, Rather that he should be conuerted and liue.

1611 *Bible* (A.V.) James v. 20 Hee which conuerteth the sinner from the errour of his way.

†b. refl. Obs.

1572 *Taill of Rauf Coilȝear* (1882) 924 Wald thow conuert the in hy, and couer the of sin Thow suld haue..mekle pardoun.

†c. intr. Obs.

?a1400 *Chester Pl.* (Shaks. Soc.) ll. 169 Conwertes to me moste mightelye I shall save you.

1460 in *Pol., Rel. & L. Poems* (1866) 454 The synneful schulle to þee conuerte.

1530 J. RASTELL *New Bk. Purgatory* ll. i, Many of them do never converte from those vyces.

1554 J. KNOX *Godly Let.* B j, They haue hardened their faces harder then stones, they will not convert.

1557 *Bible* (Geneva) Luke xv. 7 Likewise ioye shal be in heauen ouer one sinner that conuerteth.

1611 *Bible* (A.V.) Isa. vi. 10 Lest they..vnderstand with their heart, and conuert and be healed.

1630 W. PRYNNE *Anti-Arminianisme* 113 By which they may conuert, repent, beleue, and be saued.

1703 W. BURKITT *Expos. Notes New Test.* Matt. iii. 2 Arguments to move a Sinner to Repent, and to Convert to God.

11. trans. To turn or change into something of different form or properties; to transform:

convert, v.

Forms: Also 15 **conuart(e).**

Etymology: < Old French *convert-ir* = Provençal *co(n)vertir*, Spanish *convertir*,

Italian *convertire* < popular Latin **convertire*, for classical Latin *convertĕre* to turn about, turn in character or nature, transform, translate, etc., < *con-* together, altogether + *vertĕre* to turn.

a. something material.

a1530 W. BONDE *Pylgrimage of Perfection* (1531) III. f. CCxxviii^v, The same asshes or dust, in to the whiche mannes body is conuerted.

1615 J. DAY *Festivals* 290 Even as the Wind..is sometimes converted to be a Plague.

1632 J. PORY in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eng. Hist.* II. 273 III. 274 Some redd spotted appeared on his face and breast, which..were converted into the Small Poxe.

1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* II. xxix. 171 As if the poyson endeavoured to convert him into a Dogge.

b. something immaterial.

1382 *Bible* (Wycliffite, E.V.) Amos vi. 13 ȝe conuerted dom in to bitternesse.

1393 LANGLAND *Piers Plowman* C. XXI. 190 Crist haþ conuerted þe kynde of ryghtwisnesse In-to pees and pyte.

1548 *Hall's Vnion: Edward IV* f. ccxvi^v, Not knowynge that or nyght, hys tryumphyng shoulde be torned to trymblyng, and hys solempnitie conuerted in to mournyng.

1600 SHAKESPEARE *Henry IV, Pt. 2* v. ii. 60 Harry liues, that shal conuert those teares..into howres of happinesse.

1671 MILTON *Samson Agonistes* 1564 That still lessens The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

c. To change in character or function; to turn (into, to).

1557 T. NORTH tr. A. de Guevara *Diall Princes* 155 a/1 Since they [men] are conuerted vnto adulterers, tyrauntes, etc.

1576 W. LAMBARDE *Perambulation of Kent* 176 Lately conuerted by the Townesmen into a Free schoole.

1587 G. TURBERVILLE *Tragicall Tales* f. 71^v, Whose skull he did conuert into a pot.

1639 T. FULLER *Hist. Holy Warre* II. xlvi. 106 Solomons Temple he converted to a Mosque.

td. spec. To turn into one's own bodily substance; to assimilate, digest. Obs.

c1400 *Lanfranc's Cirurg.* 73 Wiyn..is soone converted of kyndely heete & for he is so sotil..he assendiþ soone into þe heed.

1613 J. SALKELD *Treat. Angels* 56 Angels have somtimes beene knowne to eate..although they did not convert the meate..into their owne substance.

1667 MILTON *Paradise Lost* v. 492 Wonder not then, what God for you saw good If I refuse not, but convert, as you, to proper substance.

te. intr. To turn, change, undergo a change of form or nature (into or to something else). Obs.

convert, v.

Forms: Also 15 **conuart(e).**

Etymology: < Old French *convert-ir* = Provençal *co(n)vertir*, Spanish *convertir*, Italian *convertire* < popular Latin **convertīre*, for classical Latin *convertĕre* to turn about, turn in character or nature, transform, translate, etc., < *con-* together, altogether + *vertĕre* to turn.

1549–62 T. STERNHOLD & J. HOPKINS *Whole Bk. Psalms* xxxii. 4 All my blood and humors
moyst to drines did convert.

1579 G. FENTON tr. F. Guicciardini *Hist. Guicciardin* i. 22 His reuenewes would conuert to
nothing in a moment.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Macbeth* (1623) iv. iii. 231 Let grieffe Conuert to anger.

1658 T. WILLSFORD *Natures Secrets* 196 The drops distill'd from Clinos convert to blood.

1700 DRYDEN tr. Ovid *Cinyras & Myrrha* in *Fables* 185 Her solid Bones convert to solid
Wood.

f. [late C19th – modern use; deleted]

g. [C20th – modern use; deleted]

12. [C19th – modern use; deleted]

III. To change by substituting something of equivalent purport or value.

†13. To turn *into* (another language), translate, render. *Obs.*

a1538 T. STARKEY *Dial. Pole & Lupset* (1989) 91 Hyt ys necessary..to have hyt converted
in to our tong.

1573 (*title*) *Æneidos* of Virgill..converted into English Meeter by T. Phaër.

1651 T. HOBBS *Leviathan* III. xxxiii. 204 The seventy Interpreters that converted the
Bible into Greek.

14. *Arith.* To reduce to a different denomination; to 'turn *into*'. ? *Obs.*

1594 T. BLUNDEVILLE *Exercises* III. II. xiv. f. 189, The difference of the longitudes
conuerted into miles.

1660 T. WILLSFORD *Scales of Comm.* 27 The common rule of Three..by which means any
one thing may be converted into the species of another, in respect of value or
quantity.

15. To change by substitution of something of equivalent value; *spec. in Law*, to change (actually or
constructively) the quality of property (see *CONVERSION n. 16b*),

a. from real to personal or *vice versa*,

b. [late 18th – 19th use; deleted]

convert, *adj.* and *n.*

Forms: Also 15 **conuart.**

Etymology: apparently < CONVERT *v.*; perhaps by abbreviation for *converted*, but possibly partly due to CONVERSE *n.*², < French *convers*: compare sense A. 2.

A. *adj.*

1. = CONVERTED *adj.* 2. Now rare.

1622 BACON *Hist. Raigne Henry VII* 114 John Osbecke, a Convert-lew.

1711 LD. SHAFTESBURY *Characteristicks* (1737) III. 78 By means of a convert emperor, the heathen church-lands..became transfer'd to the Christian clergy.

†2. *convert brother, convert sister*: = B. 2, CONVERSE *n.*² 2. *Obs.*

1640 H. GLAPTHORNE *Wit in Constable* i. sig. Bi^v, More money..Then would for convert sisters build an almes-house.

1693 A. GAVIN *Short Hist. Monastical Orders* xvii. 179 The Convert Brothers shall recite..seventy seven times the Lord's Prayer.

B. *n.*

1.

a. A person converted to, or brought to embrace and profess, any religious faith or doctrine.

1561 T. NORTON tr. J. Calvin *Inst. Christian Reliq.* III. f. 191, [They] appoint certaine dayes to their newe conuertes, during the which they must exercise themselues in penance.

1611 *Bible* (A.V.) Isa. i. 27 Zion shall be redeemed with iudgement, and her conuerts with righteousnesse.

a1680 S. BUTLER *Genuine Remains* (1759) I. 265 A Convert's but a Fly, that turns about After his Head's pull'd off, to find it out.

1704 R. NELSON *Compan. Festivals & Fasts* i. (1739) 17 An early Convert to Christianity.

b. *transf.* A person brought over to any opinion, belief, or party.

1641 W. HAKEWILL *Libertie of Subj.* 3, I did forsake my former opinion as erroneous, and do now embrace the contrary..and so am now become a convert.

1665 R. BOYLE *Occas. Refl.* II. xv. sig. Q8^v, If..our new Convert shall consider things of this Nature.

†2. = CONVERSE *n.*² 2. *Obs.*

1577 R. HOLINSHED *Chron.* II. 336 One of his owne seruants did conspire with a conuert of that abbeie.

†3. That which has undergone conversion; that into which anything is turned. *Obs. rare.*

1589 W. WARNER *Albions Eng.* (new ed.) VI. xxxi. 139 When his sudden Eies admir'de the boan-flesht faire Conuart Deriued from his Side. [Adam's rib 'converted' into Eve.]

4. [C20th – modern use; deleted]

5. [C18th; deleted]

convertible, *adj.* and *n.*

Etymology: < French *convertible* (13th cent. in Littré), < late Latin *convertibil-is*, < *convertĕre* to CONVERT V. : see -BLE *suffix*.

A. *adj.*

1.

a. That may be ‘converted’ or transposed each into the place of the other; interchangeable. Usually of terms: Equivalent, synonymous.

c1386 CHAUCER *Cook's Tale* 31 Ffor thefte and Riot they been Conuertible.

a1420 T. HOCCLEVE *De Reg. Princ.* 57 Thou demest luste and love convertible.

1590 H. SWINBURNE *Briefe Treat. Test. & Willes* 21 The definition is not of any speciall testament..nor is conuertible with any speciall kinde of testament, mencioned in any part of the Ciuill lawe.

1646 H. LAWRENCE *Of Communion & Warre with Angels* 109 To be carnall and to be weake are convertible termes.

1709 SWIFT *Let. conc. Sacramental Test* 21 [Those who] put *Prelacy* and *Popery* together as Terms convertible.

b. Logic. That may be transposed by CONVERSION *n.* (sense A. 4).

1609 BP. J. HALL *Passion-serm.* 4 It is a sure and conuertible rule; Nothing was done by Christ, which was not fortolde, nothing was ever foretolde by the Prophets of Christ, which was not done.

†2. Capable of being turned, or made to take a particular direction. Also *fig.* *Obs.*

1526 W. BONDE *Pylgrimage of Perfection* III. sig. YYYii^v, A wyll that was conuertible to thy grace.

1620 WALTON in *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ* (1672) 300 It is convertible (like a Wind-Mill) to all quarters at pleasure.

1625 N. CARPENTER *Geogr. Delineated* I. iv. 77 The Axis of the Earth is supposed to haue a *convertible* nature.

3. [C19th; deleted]

4. [C19th; deleted]

5.

a. Capable of being turned *into* something else; capable of being changed in form, condition, or properties. *spec.* of a motor-car (see quot. 1918) (cf. sense B. 2 below.)

1533 T. ELYOT *Castel of Helthe* ii. (R.), It is conuertible into bloude and flesh.

1694 *Acc. of Sweden* 11 These [trees] being generally very straight and tall, are easily convertible into timber.

†b. *spec.* Capable of assimilation; easily digestible. (Cf. CONVERT v. 11d) *Obs.*

c1400 *Lanfranc's Cirurg.* 75 No manere conuertible mete.

6. [C19th– modern use; deleted]

convertible, *adj.* and *n.*

Etymology: < French *convertible* (13th cent. in Littré), < late Latin *convertibil-is*, < *convertĕre* to CONVERT V. : see -BLE *suffix*.

7. [C19th; deleted]

B. *n.*

1. *pl.* = Convertible things or terms: see A. 1.

1615 J. STEPHENS *Satyr. Ess.* (ed. 2) 368 To make truths and tales convertibles.

1634 R. H. tr. *Regim. Salerni* Pref. 2 Those in whom Folly and Ignorance are convertibles.

1652 E. SPARKE *Scintillula Altaris* (1663) 539 Publicans and most hated persons, were grown convertibles.

2. [C20th; deleted]

e converso, adv.

Forms: IME–16 **econuerso**, IME– **econverso**, 15–16 **e conuerso**, 15–16 **è conuerso**, 15– **e converso**, 16 **é converso**, 16 **è conversò**, 16–18 **è converso**.

Etymology: < post-classical Latin *e converso* conversely, on the contrary (6th cent.; 11th cent., 1522 in British sources) < classical Latin *ē* out of (see E- *prefix*³) + *conversō*, ablative of *conversus*, past participle of *convertere* CONVERT *v.*

Now *rare*.

Conversely, vice versa; on the other hand. Also (of an argument): from a contrary position. Cf. E CONTRA *adv.*, E CONTRARIO *adv.*

- c1425 tr. J. Arderne *Treat. Fistula* (Sloane 6) 63 þe same sekenez þat comeþ of þe vice of menstruez, comeþ also of þe emoroid, & econverso; and so by sewyng þat þai acorde in cure.
- 1474 CAXTON tr. *Game & Playe of Chesse* (1883) IV. ii. 167 For a man is the heed of a woman, and not econuerso.
- 1597 R. GREENHAM *Propositions Spirituall Matters* f. 3^v, The best art of Logick is to reason *E converso*, out of that saying of Paul. *There is no Temptation hath overtaken you, but it hath overtaken others.* And so say thus, There hath no temptation overtaken others, but the same may overtake vs.
- 1610 J. SELDEN *Duello* vii. 27 [He] swore the oath before rehearsed, which *é converso* was seconded by the Appellant.
- 1700 M. HALE *De Successionibus* 55 If Land descended of the part of the Father, it should not resort to the part of the Mother, & *è converso*.

† converse, *adj.*¹ and *n.*²

Forms: Also ME–15 **convers**.

Etymology: < French *convers*, *-se*, < Latin *conversus* turned, past participle of *convertĕre* to CONVERT V.

Obs.

A. *adj.*¹

Converted in mind or feeling.

a1300 *Cursor M.* 19736 (Cott.), Fra þat time men cald him ai Conuers paule in godds lai.

1436 in T. Wright *Polit. Poems & Songs* (1859) II. 203 That oure verry foo Mow be to us convers and torned.

B. *n.*²

1. A convert.

1388 *Bible* (Wycliffite, L.V.) 1 Chron. xxii. 2 Conuersis for hethenesse to the lawe of Israel.

1483 CAXTON tr. J. de Voragine *Golden Legende* 178/3 Somme converses of the Jewes wold mynysshe the bounte of the grace of god.

2.

a. Ecclesiastical. A lay member of a convent; a lay brother or sister. Orig. applied to those who were converted from a secular to 'religious' life in adult age, as opposed to the *nutriti* who had been brought up in the monastic life from childhood: see Du Cange.
14.. *Prose Leg.* in *Anglia* VIII. 135 In þe steppes of þe conuerses or monkes.

1483 CAXTON tr. J. de Voragine *Golden Legende* 240/2 A frere conuerse began to be tormented of the deuyll.

c1500 *Melusine* (1895) 100 Thabbot and an houndred monkkis, beside the convers.

1512 C'TESS RICHMOND in Nichols *Royal Wills* (1780) 368 Oon perpetuell brother, called a conuerse..specially to serve the same monks at their masses.

1691 A. GAVIN *Observ. Journy to Naples* 178 The Fifth Monastery..contains the Brothers Converses.

b. [C19th; deleted]

converse, *adj.*² and *n.*³

Etymology: < Latin *conversus* turned about, transformed, past participle of *convertĕre* : see CONVERT V. *La converse* occurs in French from 13th cent., = Provençal *conversa*, medieval Latin *conversa*.

A. *adj.*²

1. [C18th – 19th; deleted]

†2. *Math. converse ratio, proportion: see quotes.*

1570 H. BILLINGSLEY tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* v. f. 133^v, Converse proportion, or proportion by conuersion is, when the consequent is taken as the antecedent, and so is compared to the antecedent as to the consequent.

1660 tr. I. Barrow *Euclide's Elements* v. 94 Converse ratio is when the antecedent is compared to the excesse wherein the antecedent exceeds the consequent.

1695 W. ALINGHAM *Geom. Epitomiz'd* 19 Converse Reason or proportion is the comparing the Antecedent to the excess, wherein the Antecedent exceeds the Consequent.

B. *n.*³

1.

a. [C19th; deleted]

b. [C18th – C19th; deleted]

2. *Math. (One proposition is the converse of another, when the datum and conclusion of the one are respectively taken as the conclusion and datum of the other.)*

1570 H. BILLINGSLEY tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* i. f. 16, The 8. proposition being the converse of the fourth.

1660 tr. I. Barrow *Euclide's Elements* i. 7 Things which agree together, are equall one to the other. The converse of this axiome is true in right lines and angles, but not in figures, unlesse they be like.

1715 tr. D. Gregory *Elements Astron.* i. i. §27. 53 The Converses of these are evident.

3. [C19th; deleted]

converse, v.

Etymology: < French *converser* (12th cent. in Littré) to pass one's life, live, dwell in or with, in modern French also to exchange words with; = Provençal *conversar*, Spanish *conversar*, Italian and late Latin *conversare* < Latin *conversārī* lit. to turn oneself about, to move to and fro, pass one's life, dwell, abide, live somewhere, keep company with; middle voice of rare *conversāre* to turn to and fro, frequentative of *convertĕre* to turn about. As with other deponent verbs the active form was in late Latin substituted for the middle, whence the Romanic forms. The transference of sense from 'live with' to 'talk with' is recent in French and English, and most complete in the latter.

†1. *intr.* To move about, have one's being, live, dwell in (on, upon) a place, among (with) people, etc. *Obs.*

- 1340 [implied in: R. ROLLE *Pricke of Conscience* 4198 He [Anticrist] sal be lered..And nurist and mast conversand In þe cite of Bethsayda. [at *CONVERSANT adj.* 1]
- c1374 CHAUCER tr. Boethius *De Consol. Philos.* i. iii. 10 In whos houses I hadde conuersed and haunted fro my zouþe.
- 1483 CAXTON tr. *Caton* B v, Before them emonge the whyche we conuerse and go dayly.
- 1483 CAXTON tr. J. de Voragine *Golden Legende* 405/4 How many yere arte thou olde and where conuersest thou.
- 1640 BP. J. WILKINS *Disc. New World & Another Planet* (new ed.) i.xiv. 207 Birds..which doe most converse upon the earth..as a Pheasant, Partridge, &c.
- 1665 R. BOYLE *Occas. Refl.* iv. ix. sig. Dd8, Impurities..contracted, by Conversing to and fro in a defiling World.
- 1691 J. RAY *Wisdom of God* 10 Cetaceous Fishes, which converse chiefly in the Northern Seas.
- 1701 J. RAY *Wisdom of God* (ed. 3) ii. 376 Birds have been taught to..pronounce Words,..yet Quadrupeds never; though..Dogs and Horses, converse almost perpetually with Men.

†2.

a. To associate familiarly, consort, keep company; to hold intercourse, be familiar with. *Obs.*

- 1598 SHAKESPEARE *Love's Labour's Lost* v. ii. 837 You shall..Visite the speachlesse sicke, and still conuerse, With groning wretches.
- 1622–62 P. HEYLYN *Cosmogr.* (1682) iv. 134 So rude a Country, as hath not hitherto conversed with more civil Nations.
- 1667 MILTON *Paradise Lost* ii. 184 For ever sunk Under yon boyling Ocean, wrapt in Chains; There to converse with everlasting groans.
- 1678 J. EVELYN *Mem.* (1857) ii. 131 Too blessed a creature to converse with mortals.

†b. To hold sexual intercourse. *Obs.*

- c1540 J. BELLENDEN tr. H. Boece *Cosmogr.* ii, in *Hyst. & Cron. Scotl.* sig. Bj, Yis Albyne with hir .i. systeris..conuersit with deuillis in forme of men. And consaut childrin.
- 1611 R. COTGRAVE *Dict. French & Eng. Tongues* at *Riffiarde*,
- 1656 S. WINTER *Serm.* 45 They may lawfully converse together as man and wife.

converse, v.

Etymology: < French *converser* (12th cent. in Littré) to pass one's life, live, dwell in or with, in modern French also to exchange words with; = Provençal *conversar*, Spanish *conversar*, Italian and late Latin *conversare* < Latin *conversārī* lit. to turn oneself about, to move to and fro, pass one's life, dwell, abide, live somewhere, keep company with; middle voice of rare *conversāre* to turn to and fro, frequentative of *convertĕre* to turn about. As with other deponent verbs the active form was in late Latin substituted for the middle, whence the Romanic forms. The transference of sense from 'live with' to 'talk with' is recent in French and English, and most complete in the latter.

1713 J. ADDISON in *Guardian* 19 Sept. 2/1 How long a time a Woman might be allowed to pray to the Gods, after having conversed with a Man.

†c. To have commercial intercourse, to deal, trade, traffic. *Obs.*

1598 R. HAKLUYT *Princ. Navigations* (new ed.) I. 159 They may friendly conuerse & exercise mutual traffick together.

1613 A. SHERLEY *Relation Trav. Persia* 9 The Turke hauing giuen certaine scales to trade in, out of which..it was vnlawfull for any to converse.

1690 J. CHILD *Disc. Trade* v. 111. This Law will not at all Incommode Gentlemen as to what they Buy in Shops,..neither those that converse in Fairs and Markets.

†3. To be engaged *in*; to have to do *with* (a thing); to deal *with*, be familiar or conversant *with*. *Obs. exc. as fig. of 4 or 5, in to converse with books.*

1592 A. DAY *Eng. Secretorie* II. sig. O2^v, You that conuerse in these & such like actions.

1602 J. MARSTON *Antonios Reuenge* IV. iii. sig. H3, O world thou art too subtile, For honest natures to conuerse withall.

1612 BACON *Ess.* (new ed.) 156 When they converse in those things they doe not affect.

1662 E. STILLINGFLEET *Origines Sacrae* I. v. §5 Since he hath conversed more with the Orientall traditions.

1688 R. SOUTH *Serm. Prov.* xii. 22 Wheresoever he treads, he sinks, and converses with a bottomless Pit.

1709 J. STRYPE *Ann. Reformation* xxxi. 354 That ministers should converse in this catechism, and learn true divinity from it.

1719 J. RICHARDSON *Sci. Connoisseur* 204 By conversing with the Works of the Best Masters.

†4.

a. To communicate or interchange ideas (*with any one*) by speech or writing or otherwise. *Obs.*

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Comedy of Errors* (1623) II. ii. 163 Did you conuerse sir with this gentlewoman?.. I never spake with her in all my life.

1650 SIR E. NICHOLAS in *N. Papers* (Camden) I. 177, [As] I have att noe tyme soe much ease and content as when I converse with you, I hope I shall gaine pardon for this tedious letter.

1712 POPE *Corr.* 28 May (1956) I. 143 It is not only the disposition I always have of conversing with you, that makes me so speedily answer your obliging lines.

converse, v.

Etymology: < French *converser* (12th cent. in Littré) to pass one's life, live, dwell in or with, in modern French also to exchange words with; = Provençal *conversar*, Spanish *conversar*, Italian and late Latin *conversare* < Latin *conversārī* lit. to turn oneself about, to move to and fro, pass one's life, dwell, abide, live somewhere, keep company with; middle voice of rare *conversāre* to turn to and fro, frequentative of *convertĕre* to turn about. As with other deponent verbs the active form was in late Latin substituted for the middle, whence the Romanic forms. The transference of sense from 'live with' to 'talk with' is recent in French and English, and most complete in the latter.

b. To hold inward communion, commune with.

a1616 SHAKESPEARE *Henry VI, Pt. 1* (1623) II. i. 25 Well let them practise and converse with spirits.

a1652 J. SMITH *Select Disc.* (1821) IX. ii. 415 He knows how to converse with himself, and truly to love and value himself.

1686 A. HORNECK *Crucified Jesus* iv. 66 Before he eats, converses with himself, while he is eating converses with God, and after he hath eaten, converses with the holy angels.

5. spec. 'To convey the thoughts reciprocally in talk' (Johnson); to engage in conversation, to talk with (a person), on, upon (a subject), in (a language, voice). The ordinary current sense.

1615 J. STEPHENS *Satyr. Ess.* (ed. 2) 249 If..you desire to converse with him, you must tarry till he be awake.

1653 I. WALTON *Compl. Angler* i. 32, I have conversed with those which have conversed with him.

6. trans.

†a. To keep company with.

b. To render familiar or well acquainted.

c. To communicate with, talk with. Obs.

d. To talk (any one) out of, etc.

1649 BP. J. TAYLOR *Great Exemplar* Exhort. §9 Such a life without which human society cannot be conversed.

1665 J. SERGEANT *Sure Footing* 84 Not conversing him daily or very often.

1683 D. A. *Whole Art Converse* Pref., Whether we Converse our Superiours, Inferiours, or Equals.

1704 SWIFT *Full Acct. Battel between Bks.* in *Tale of Tub* 242 This Temple having been educated and long conversed among the Antients.

1718 R. WODROW *Corr.* (1843) II. 354 After I have conversed himself, and read his theses.

conversible, *adj.*

Etymology: < late Latin *conversibil-is*, < *convers-* participial stem of *convertĕre* to CONVERT *v.* : see *-BLE* *suffix*. Also in modern French

See also CONVERSABLE *adj.*

Capable of being converted or transposed.

*a*1660 H. HAMMOND *Serm.* (1664) vii. 100 So that this conversible retrogradous Sorites
may shut up all.