

PARAGON:

noun

epitome, archetype, model, prototype(*example, instance, illustration, sample, norm, analogue, referent, metaphor*), **quintessence**(*essence, heart, core, quiddity, essentialness, essentiality, pith, marrow, sum and substance, nonpareil, embodiment, personification*), **pattern**(*original, yardstick, gauge, measure*), **standard**(*measure, benchmark, pattern, touchstone, yardstick, gauge, guide, guideline, paradigm, example, sample, type, rule, canon, law, requirement, precept, principle*), **exemplar, ideal, criterion.**

/The Oxford Thesaurus, An A-Z Dictionary of Synonyms/

PARAGON:

noun

1. A model of excellence or perfection of a kind; a peerless example: a paragon of virtue.
2. **a.** An unflawed diamond weighing at least 100 carats. **b.** A very large spherical pearl.
3. Printing. A type size of 20 points.

verb, transitive

1. To compare; parallel.
2. To equal; match.

/The American Heritage Dictionary/

PARAGON:

noun

1. A **pattern or model of excellence**; esp. a person supreme in merit or excellence; a person who is an exemplar of a virtue or a model of a character.

2. A match; a **companion**; a partner in marriage; a rival, a competitor.
3. **Comparison**; competition, emulation, rivalry.
4. A **perfect diamond**. Now spec. one weighing more than 100 carats.

attrib. or as adjective

Of surpassing excellence. Now rare.

verb trans.

1. **Place side by side; compare to.** Also foll. by **with.**
2. **Excel, surpass.**
3. Present as a paragon or perfect model.
4. Match, mate.

/SOED - Small Oxford English Dictionary/

PARAGON:

-n.

1. a model or pattern of excellence or of a particular excellence.
2. *Print.* a 20-point type.
3. an unusually large, round pearl.

-v.t.

4. to compare; parallel.
5. to be a match for; rival.
6. *Obs.* to surpass.
7. *Obs.* to regard as a paragon.

[1540–50; < MF < OIt *'paragone'* comparison, perh. < Gk *'parágōn'*, prp. of *'parágein'* to bring side by side]

—**Syn.** 1. ideal, standard; nonesuch, nonpareil.

/Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary/

paragon, *n.* (*a.*)

(*ˈpærəɡən*) Also (6 **parageon**, **peragon**, 6–7 **parragon**), 6–8 **paragone**. [a. OF. *paragon* (15th c.), now *parangon* m, in OF. also *para(n)gonne* fem., ad. It. *paragone* (also *parangone*) m., ‘a triall or touch-stone to try gold, or good from bad’ (so in Dino Compagni *a*1324, and Boccaccio; also in 15th c. Fr.: see Godef.); ‘a comparison or conferring together; a paragon, a match, a compare, an equal’ (Florio 1611). Cf. Sp. *parangon* or *paragon* ‘an equall, a fit man to match him, one comparable with’ (Minsheu 1599). See below.]

A. n.

I.

1. A pattern or model of excellence.

1.a. A person supreme in merit or excellence.

a1548 HALL *Chron., Hen. V* 33b, Thys prince was almost the Arabicall Phenix, and emongest his predecessors a very Paragon. **1557** *Tottell's Misc.* (Arb.) 178 But therwas neuer Laura more then one, And her had Petrarke for his paragone. **1577** B. GOOGE *Heresbach's Husb.* (1586) 168 She was the very Phenix and Parageon of all the Gentlewomen that I euer knewe. **1592** GREENE *Philom. Wks.* (Grosart) XI. 175 The peragon of Italy for honorable grace. **1689** SHADWELL *Bury Fair* II. i, Your ladyship..has been long held a paragon of perfection. **1784** J. POTTER *Virtuous Villagers* II. 159 He is a paragon of his sex. **1833** H. MARTINEAU *Charmed Sea* ix. 133 She will turn out a paragon of a wife. **1871** R. ELLIS *Catullus* xxxvii. 17 You chiefly, peerless paragon of the tribe long-lock'd,..Egnatius.

1.b. A thing of supreme excellence.

1601 HOLLAND *Pliny* II. 372 [Magic] is at this day reputed by most nations of the earth, for the paragon & chief of al sciences. **a1656** BP. HALL *Rem. Wks.* (1660) 22 We came down to Antwerp, the paragon of Cities. **1756** C. LUCAS *Ess. Waters* I. Ded., The dissolved civil constitution, that paragon of perfect polity. **1861** J. RUFFINI *Dr. Antonio* x, Sir John..pronounced it to be the paragon of easy-chairs.

1.c. One who (occas. that which) is a model or exemplar of (some admired or excellent quality).

1689 SHADWELL *Bury Fair* II. i, Your ladyship..has been long held a paragon of perfection. **1756** C. LUCAS *Ess. Waters* I. Ded., The dissolved civil constitution, that paragon of perfect polity. **c1874** E. DICKINSON *Poems* (1955) III. 907 We commend ourselves to thee Paragon of Chivalry. **1906** GALSWORTHY *Man of Property* II. i. 3 Having watched a tree grow from its planting—a paragon of tenacity, insulation, and success, amidst the deaths of a hundred other plants less fibrous, sappy, and persistent. **1934** R. GRAVES *I, Claudius* ii. 36 She is a paragon of matronly modesty. **1988** A. N. WILSON *Tolstoy* vi. 132 Tolstoy finds it hard to account for the fact that this paragon of virtue should have died in the arms of a prostitute.

†**2.** A match; a mate, companion; a consort in marriage; a rival, competitor. (Also of a thing.)

1566 PAINTER *Pal. Pleas.* I. 45 Cyrus our prince and lorde, whose paragon wee haue chosen you to bee. **1591** SPENSER *M. Hubberd* 1026 Love and Lordship bide no paragone. **1596** — *F.Q.* VI. ix. 11 He..her worthy deemed To be a Princes Paragone esteemed. **1594** CHAPMAN *Hymnus in Cynthiam* Wks. (1875) 15/1 Through noblest mansions, Gardens and groves, exempt from paragons. **1762** J. HALL-STEVENSON *Crazy Tales* 43 You cannot fish up His like and paragon again. **1824** J. H. WIFFEN tr. *Tasso* IV. xlvi, None but himself could be his paragon in vice.

†**3.** Comparison; competition, emulation, rivalry.

[Cf. **1589** PUTTENHAM *Eng. Poesie* III. xix. (Arb.) 241.] **1590** SPENSER *Muiopotmos* 274 Minerva..deign'd with her the paragon to make. **1590** — *F.Q.* III. iii. 54 Wemen valorous, Which have full many feats..Performd, in paragone of proudest men. **1596** *Ibid.* v. iii. 24 Then did he set her by that snowy one,..Of both their beauties to make paragone. **1664** EVELYN tr. *Freart's Archit.* Ep. Ded. 1 A Work..worthy to go in paragon with it.

II. Specific and technical applications.

4.a. A perfect diamond; now applied to those weighing more than a hundred carats. [So in mod.F.] In quot. 1616 *fig.* of a person.

1616 B. JONSON *Devil an Ass* III. i, He is no great large stone, but a true paragon, He has all his corners. **1622** MALYNES *Anc. Law Merch.* 75 The fassets must be industriously wrought, which in great stones of 10 or 12 Carrats maketh them to be Paragons, that is to say, in all perfection. **1647** R. STAPYLTON *Juvenal* 241 That stone, which for a paragon was set. **1863** *Chambers' Bk. of Days* I. 484/1 Only six very large diamonds (called paragons) are known.

4.†b. Also **paragon-stone**. *Obs.*

1558 WARDE tr. *Alexis' Secr.* I. 94b, Take Cristall, or paragon stone. **1573** *Art of Limming* 9 Take a beade of Christall or a Paragon stone. **1629** MAXWELL tr. *Herodian* (1635) 250 His Rings set with Paragon Stones. **1698** FRYER *Acc. E. India & P.* 213 The Diamond..Without Spots or Foulness, is called a Paragon-stone.

†**5.** A kind of double camlet; a stuff used for dress and upholstery in the seventeenth and early

eighteenth century. *Obs.* [Cf. *F. paragon de Venise*, the finest silk stuffs from Venice (Littré).]

¶1605 *Allegations of Worsted Weavers* (B.M. Add. MS. 12504, art. 64) The Paragon, Peropus, and Philiselles may be affirmed to be double chamblet; the difference being only the one was double in the warpe, and the other in the w[oo]ff. 1618 *Naworth Househ. Bks.* (Surtees) 74, xij yards of water paragon for my Lady at vs. viijd... 5 yards of French green paragon... xxvs. xd. 1659–60 *PEPYS Diary* 8 Mar., Took my wife by land to Paternoster Row, to buy some Paragon for a petticoat and so home again. 1674 *Lond. Gaz.* No. 852/4 Hangings for a Room of Green Paragon. 1678 *Flemings in Oxford* (O.H.S.) I. 255, 7 yards & an halfe of black Paragon for a [Undergraduate's] Gowne. 1739 *Observ. Wool & Wooll. Manuf.* in *Beck Draper's Dict.* 245 Paragon... stuff of combing wool. 1719 *D'URFEY Pills* (1872) III. 173 The Plowman, the Squire, the Erranter Clown, At home she subdued in her Paragon Gown.

6. A kind of black marble: see quot. 1753. [*F. paragon* a kind of black marble of Egypt and Greece (Littré).] Usu. written **paragone**.

[1632 *LITHGOW Trav.* VI. 267 The floore being curiously indented with intermingled Alabaster and black shining *Paragone*.] 1645 *EVELYN Diary* May (1879) I. 227 A niche of paragon for the statue of the Prince now living. 1753 *CHAMBERS Cycl. Supp.*, *Paragone*,... the name given by many to the basaltes, a black marble, used as a touchstone. 1848 J. D. DANA *Man. Mineral.* vii. 349 The *Neroantico* marble of the Italians is an ancient deep black marble; the *paragone* is a modern one, of a fine black color, from Bergamo. 1888 G. H. *BLAGROVE Marble Decoration* 68 In Italy a black marble, sometimes called *Paragone*, is found mixed with marble of inferior quality at Castle Nuovo, in Piedmont [etc.]. 1894 H. W. *PULLEN Handbk. Anc. Roman Marbles* II. 140 The term *Paragone* has... been loosely applied to several very black columns, such as those at a Tomb in the Winter Choir of St. John Lateran. 1955 M. H. *GRANT Marbles & Granites of World* 71 *Paragone*. [Locality.] Bergamo, Italy. [Characteristics.] A pure, fine black.

7. *Printing*. Name of a large size of type intermediate between Great Primer and Double Pica, about 3 3/4 lines to the inch. Now usually called 'two-line Long Primer'.

1706 *Specimen of Letters* b1, in H. Hart *Century of Oxf. Typog.* 67 *Paragon Roman* (Bought 1706). *Paragon Italick* (Bought 1706). 1824 J. JOHNSON *Typogr.* II. 77 *Paragon* is the only letter that has preserved its name, being called so by all the printing nations. 1843 *Penny Cycl.* XXV. 456/1 Of types larger than those employed for book-work, the first, in an ascending series, is called *Paragon*. 1887 T. B. REED *Old Eng. Letter Foundries* 34 The first named [Trafalgar] has disappeared in England, as also has *Paragon*.

B. *adj.* [Perh. originating in *attrib.* use of the n.] Of surpassing excellence, perfect in excellence. (See also 4b.)

1601 *HOLLAND Pliny* I. 457 We may be bold to compare them with that *Paragon-coronet* of the Greeks, which passeth al others. 1632 *WENTWORTH Let.* 24 Sept. in *Gardiner Hist. Chas. I*, I. Pref. 14 If I do not fall square, and... *paragon*, in every point of duty to my master. 1672 *SIR T. BROWNE Let. to Friend* §29 Those jewels were *paragon*, without flaw, hair, ice, or cloud. 1825 R. P. *WARD Tremaine* III. xv. 345 Presuming to have had opinions, which this *paragon* Lord does not approve.

[*Note*. This word appears first in Italian (14th c.), whence in Fr., Sp., etc. The notion of Diez that *paragon* originated in Sp., from the prep. phrase *para con* (which is sometimes = 'in comparison with') is historically untenable. But it is not certain whether the original sense of It. *paragone* was 'comparison', or 'touch-stone'; in the latter sense it might stand for *pietra di paragone*. For the etymology, Tobler (*Zeitschr. Rom. Phil.* (1880) IV. 373) suggested derivation from the Gr. vb. *παρακονᾶν* 'to sharpen or whet one thing against another', f. *ἀκόνη* 'whetstone', supposing that this may have developed the sense 'touch-stone', or that the It. vb. *paragonare* may have been formed from *παρακονᾶν*, with the sense of 'try or compare by rubbing together', whence *paragone* the act of doing this, *pietra di paragone* 'comparison stone, touch-stone'. A med.Gr. *παρακόνη* is cited as applied to a smooth hard stone used to polish the gold laid on in illuminating. But the suggestion presents various difficulties.]

paragon, *v.*

(ˈpærəgən) Also 7 **-one**, **parangon**, **parragon**. [f. *PARAGON n.*: cf. *F. para(n)gonner*, It. *para(n)gonare* 'to equall, to paragone, to compare' (Florio), Sp. *parangonar*: see prec.]

1. *trans.* To place side by side; to parallel, compare. (Now *archaic* or *poetic*.)

¶1586 *SIDNEY Arcadia* I. (1590) Lij, The picture of Pamela... whiche in little forme he ware in a Tablet... purposing... to paragon the little one with Artesias length. 1600 O. E. (? M. Sutcliffe) *Repl. to Libel* I. i. 1 An excellent and singular woman, to bee parangoned with the famous women of ancient

time. 1606 SHAKES. *Ant. & Cl.* I. v. 71. 1667 MILTON *P.L.* x. 426 Lucifer, so by allusion call'd, Of that bright Starr to Satan paragon'd. 1894 A. AUSTIN in *Blackw. Mag.* Sept. 312 Baby billows, mere cradles rather..when paragoned with these monsters of the real deep.

2. To match, to mate. (Now *poetic*, etc.)

1615 SIR W. MURE *Sonn.* vii, My loue, my lyfe..Bright spark of beutie, paragon'd by few. 1697 EVELYN *Numism.* vii. 239 Such proof of their Abilities..as may rightly paragon them with..the Ancients. 1835 LYTTON *Rienzi* vi. v, [It was] a virtue nature could not paragon, words could not repay. 1872 BROWNING *Fifine* xxiii, To join your peers, paragon charm with charm, As I shall show you may.

†3. To excel, surpass. *Obs.*

1604 SHAKES. *Oth.* II. i. 62 He hath atchieu'd a Maid That paragons description, and wilde Fame.

†4. To set forth as a paragon or perfect model.

1613 SHAKES. *Hen. VIII*, II. iv. 230 We are contented To weare our mortall State to come, with her..before the primest Creature That's Parragon'd o' th' World.

†5. To serve as a paragon or model of; to typify, exemplify. *Obs.*

1617 COLLINS *Def. Bp. Ely* I. Abstr. of Contents ii, Peter the fitter to paragon the Church, because a great sinner and so apt to shew mercie.

†6. *intr.* To compare, compete, vie *with*. *Obs.*

1620 SHELTON *Quix.* II. IV. ix. 123 Few or none could for Feature paragon with her, and much less excel her.

/OED - Oxford English Dictionary - Second Edition/