

Rigmarole



'Rigmarole' can refer to a confused, rambling, or **incoherent discourse**, or to a complicated, **petty set of procedures**.

*Choosing a password may feel like a **rigmarole** – an unnecessary step to getting to the information you need.*

In medieval times, there was a game called **Ragman**, which seems to have been similar to the parlor game known as Consequences, but with predefined statements. It used a **rolled-up scroll** containing descriptions of characters, each with a string attached. Players selected a random string, the scroll then was unrolled and the associated passage read out, to the hilarity of all present. The name was then transferred to various **English statutes** at the end of the 13th-century, which were written on scrolls. With the seals and ribbons of their signers sticking out, these reminded people of the scroll used in the game. The most famous such document was the one in which the Scottish nobility and gentry subscribed allegiance to Edward I in **1291**. It seems that the term '**ragman (roll)**' later passed into the language as a description of a rambling discourse. After falling out of use for a few centuries, it reappeared in the **18th century** in various spellings before eventually settling down as '**rigmarole**'.