



Pocket Oxford American Thesaurus

Second Edition

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Pocket Oxford American Thesaurus

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Preface

This new edition of the *Pocket Oxford American Thesaurus*, with more than 15,000 main entries and over 350,000 synonyms, will help you enrich your writing and express yourself more effectively. Example sentences or phrases for virtually every sense guide you to the right synonym, the synonyms are arranged in order of usefulness and closeness to the target word, and antonyms are provided for many senses.

Two kinds of featured note help you still further: “The Right Word” describes the subtle differences between a group of similar synonyms (for example, *replace*, *displace*, *supersede*, and *supplant*), and each “Usage Note,” specially written by Brian Garner, the author of *Garner’s Modern American Usage*, gives guidance on a tricky or disputed point of English, such as the expression *the reason is because...* and the use of *but* at the start of a sentence.

The compilers have been able to make full use of the worldwide resources of Oxford University Press, including work carried out for the *Concise Oxford American Thesaurus* (2006). This has ensured that the *Pocket* is fully informed by analysis of both the Oxford English Corpus, a two-billion-word database of many different types of real English, and the database of the Oxford Reading Program.

The brand new *Wordfinder* section in the center of the thesaurus contains hundreds of lists of words that are not normally found as synonyms in a thesaurus. The lists of Dogs, Fruit, Boats, etc., are grouped in thematic categories such as Animals, Food, and Transportation to make them interesting to browse, while an index enables you to go straight to a particular list. This section forms an invaluable additional resource for finding the word you need, especially for word puzzles such as crosswords.

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Guide to the Thesaurus

entry word	<p>approve ▶ verb 1 <i>his boss doesn't approve of his lifestyle</i> agree with, endorse, support, back, uphold, subscribe to, recommend, advocate, be in favor of, favor, think well of, like, appreciate, go for, hold with, take kindly to; be pleased with, admire, applaud, praise. ANTONYMS condemn, disapprove.</p> <p>2 <i>the government approved the proposals</i> accept, agree to, consent to, assent to, give one's blessing to, bless, rubber-stamp; ratify, sanction, endorse, authorize, validate, pass; support, back; informal give the nod to, give the go-ahead to, give the green light to, give the OK to, give the thumbs-up to. ANTONYMS refuse.</p>	phrase for which synonyms are given
label indicating the style of English in which the following synonym(s) are used (see page ix for explanations)		example of use, to help distinguish different senses
note helping you choose between similar words	<div><p>CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD</p><p>approve, certify, commend, endorse, ratify, sanction</p><p>There are a number of ways to show your support for something. The most general way is to approve it, a term that covers</p></div>	
word(s) meaning the opposite of the entry word; most have entries of their own, where a wider choice will be found	<p>adorable ▶ adjective <i>adorable little kittens</i> lovable, appealing, charming, cute, cuddly, sweet, enchanting, bewitching, captivating, engaging, endearing, dear, darling, delightful, lovely, beautiful, attractive, gorgeous, winsome, winning, fetching; Scottish bonny. ANTONYMS repulsive, hateful.</p>	label indicating the region of the world in which the following synonym(s) are used
part of speech of the entry word	<p>aggravate ▶ verb 1 <i>the new law could aggravate the situation</i> worsen, make worse, exacerbate, inflame, compound; add fuel to the fire/flames, add insult to injury, rub salt in the wound. ANTONYMS alleviate, improve.</p>	
numbered sense of the entry word	<p>2 informal <i>you don't have to aggravate people to get what you want</i> annoy, irritate, exasperate, bother, put out, nettles, provoke, antagonize, get on someone's nerves, ruffle (someone's feathers), try someone's patience; informal peeve, needle, bug, miff, get under someone's skin; tick off. ANTONYMS calm, conciliate.</p>	core synonym—the closest synonym to the entry word
note giving help with a particular point of usage	<div><p>USAGE</p><p>aggravate, aggravation</p><p>Though documented as existing since the 1600s, <i>aggravate</i> for <i>annoy</i> or <i>irritate</i> has never gained the approval of stylists and</p></div>	

	authority ► noun 1 <i>a rebellion against those in authority</i> power , jurisdiction, command, control, charge, dominance, rule, sovereignty, supremacy; influence; informal clout. See note at	
cross reference to a note at another entry	JURISDICTION. 2 <i>the authority to arrest drug traffickers</i> authorization , right, power, mandate, prerogative, license, permission.	
form of the entry word for which the following synonym(s) can be used	3: (authorities) <i>they failed to report the theft to the authorities</i> officials , officialdom; government, administration, establishment; police; informal the powers that be. 4 <i>an authority on the stock market</i> expert , specialist, aficionado, pundit, guru, sage. 5 <i>on good authority</i> evidence , testimony, witness, attestation, word, avowal, deposition. Law	label indicating the specialist field in which the following synonym(s) are used

Most of the synonyms given are part of standard English, but some are suitable only in certain contexts. These are grouped at the end of their synonym set and given the following labels:

formal	e.g., <i>cognizance</i> as a synonym for <i>knowledge</i> : normally used only in writing, such as official documents or academic works.
informal	e.g., <i>cornball</i> as a synonym for <i>sentimental</i> : normally used only in speaking or in informal writing such as email.
vulgar slang	informal language that may cause offense, usually because it refers to bodily functions.
technical	e.g., <i>annular</i> as a synonym for <i>round</i> : normally used only in technical and specialist language, though not necessarily restricted to any specific field. Words used in specific fields are given appropriate labels, e.g., Medicine, Nautical.
literary	e.g., <i>strand</i> as a synonym for <i>beach</i> : found only or mainly in literature.
dated	e.g., <i>gay</i> as a synonym for <i>cheerful</i> : no longer used by most, but still sometimes by older people.
historical	e.g., <i>alms</i> as a synonym for <i>charity</i> : still used today, but only to refer to some activity or article that is no longer part of the modern world.
rare	e.g., <i>flexuous</i> as a synonym for <i>winding</i> : not in normal use, either today or in previous times.
humorous	e.g., <i>libation</i> as a synonym for <i>drink</i> : intended to sound funny or playful.
archaic	e.g., <i>bootless</i> as a synonym for <i>futile</i> : old-fashioned language found in literature of the past, but not in ordinary use today except for an old-fashioned effect.
derogatory	e.g., <i>brat</i> as a synonym for <i>child</i> : intended to insult or offend the person or thing referred to.
euphemistic	e.g., <i>neutralize</i> as a synonym for <i>kill</i> : used in place of a more direct or vulgar term.

Synonyms are also labeled Canadian, Brit. (British), Scottish, Irish, or Austral. (Australian) if they are used exclusively or mainly in those particular parts of the world.

Contents

Contributors *vi*

Preface *vii*

Guide to the Thesaurus *viii*

Pocket Oxford American Thesaurus *1*

Wordfinder *center*

Index to Wordfinder *1*

Aa

abandon ► **verb** 1 *the party abandoned policies that made it unelectable* **renounce**, relinquish, dispense with, disclaim, forgo, disown, disavow, discard, wash one's hands of; give up, withdraw, drop, jettison, do away with; informal ax, ditch, dump, scrap, scrub, junk, deep-six; formal forswear, abjure. See note at **RELINQUISH**.

ANTONYMS keep, retain.

2 *by that time, she had abandoned painting* **give up**, stop, cease, drop, forgo, desist from, dispense with, have done with, abstain from, discontinue, break off, refrain from, set aside; informal cut out, kick, pack in, quit.

ANTONYMS take up, continue.

3 *he abandoned his wife and children* **desert**, leave, leave high and dry, turn one's back on, cast aside, break (up) with; jilt, strand, leave stranded, leave in the lurch, throw over; informal walk out on, run out on, dump, ditch; literary forsake.

4 *the skipper gave the order to abandon ship* **vacate**, leave, depart from, withdraw from, quit, evacuate.

5 *a vast expanse of territory was abandoned to the invaders* **relinquish**, surrender, give up, cede, yield, leave.

ANTONYMS keep, claim.

6 *she abandoned herself to the sensuousness of the music* **indulge in**, give way to, give oneself up to, yield to, lose oneself to/in.

ANTONYMS control oneself.

► **noun** *at age sixty he had no less abandon than when he was twenty* **uninhibitedness**, recklessness, lack of restraint, lack of inhibition, wildness, impulsiveness, impetuosity, immoderation, wantonness. ANTONYMS self-control.

abandoned ► **adjective** 1 *an abandoned child deserted*, forsaken, cast aside/off; jilted, stranded, rejected; informal dumped, ditched.

2 *an abandoned tin mine* **unused**, disused, neglected, idle; deserted, unoccupied, uninhabited, empty.

3 *an abandoned dance* **uninhibited**, reckless, unrestrained, wild, unbridled, impulsive, impetuous; immoderate, wanton.

abase ► **verb** 1 *Dunlap had a reputation for openly abasing his employees* **humble**, humiliate, belittle, demean, lower, degrade, debase, cheapen, discredit, bring low. See note at **HUMBLE**.

2 *I'd rather lose my job than continue to abase myself* grovel, kowtow, bow and scrape, toady, fawn; informal crawl, suck up to someone, lick someone's boots.

abasement ► **noun** *only a fiend delights in*

the abasement of his children **humiliation**, humbling, belittlement, lowering, degradation, debasement.

ANTONYMS pride.

abashed ► **adjective** *Iris was positively abashed when she rose only to realize another nominee had won the award* **embarrassed**, ashamed, shamefaced, remorseful, conscience-stricken, mortified, humiliated, humbled, chagrined, crestfallen, sheepish, red-faced, blushing, put out of countenance, with one's tail between one's legs; taken aback, disconcerted, discomfited, fazed, disturbed; informal floored.

abate ► **verb** 1 *the storm had abated* **subside**, die down/away/out, lessen, ease (off), let up, decrease, diminish, moderate, decline, fade, dwindle, recede, tail off, peter out, taper off, wane, ebb, weaken, come to an end; archaic remit. See note at **ALLEVIATE**.

ANTONYMS intensify.

2 *nothing abated his crusading zeal* **decrease**, lessen, diminish, reduce, moderate, ease, soothe, dampen, calm, tone down, allay, temper. ANTONYMS increase.

abatement ► **noun** 1 *the storm rages with no sign of abatement* **subsiding**, dying down/away/out, lessening, easing (off), letup, decrease, moderation, decline, ebb.

2 *noise abatement* **decrease**, reduction, lowering.

abbey ► **noun** *the brothers had been hiding refugees in the abbey's catacombs* **monastery**, **convent**, priory, cloister, friary, nunnery; historical charterhouse; rare cenobium.

abbreviate ► **verb** *please abbreviate your essays to a length of no more than two pages* **shorten**, reduce, cut, contract, condense, compress, abridge, truncate, pare down, prune, shrink, telescope; summarize, abstract, précis, synopsise, digest, edit.

ANTONYMS lengthen, expand, elongate.

abbreviation ► **noun** 1 *the abbreviation for 'teaspoon' is 'tsp.' or just 't.'* **shortened form**, short form, contraction, acronym, initialism, symbol, diminutive; elision.

ANTONYMS full form.

2 *'Desi Arnaz' was an abbreviation of the bandleader's full name, 'Desiderio Alberto Arnaz y de Acha III'* **shortening**, reduction, cutting, contraction, condensation, abridgment, truncation, cropping, paring down.

ANTONYMS expansion.

abdicate ► **verb** 1 *the king abdicated in 1936* **resign**, retire, stand down, step down, bow out, renounce the throne; archaic demit.

ANTONYMS be crowned.

2 *Ferdinand abdicated the throne* **resign from**, relinquish, renounce, give up, surrender, vacate, cede; Law disclaim; formal abjure.

ANTONYMS accede to.

3 *the state abdicated all responsibility for their welfare* **disown**, reject, renounce, give up, refuse, relinquish, repudiate, abandon, turn one's back on, wash one's hands of; forgo, waive; formal abjure; literary forsake.

ANTONYMS accept, take on.

abdication ► **noun** **1** *Edward VIII's abdication* **resignation**, retirement; relinquishment, renunciation, surrender; formal abjuration; archaic demission.

ANTONYMS coronation.

2 *an abdication of responsibility* **disowning**, renunciation, rejection, refusal, relinquishment, repudiation, abandonment.

ANTONYMS acceptance.

abdomen ► **noun** *a firm abdomen* **stomach**, belly, gut, middle, intestines; informal tummy, insides, guts, maw, breadbasket, pot, paunch.

abdominal ► **adjective** *abdominal pains* **gastric**, intestinal, stomach, stomachic, enteric, duodenal, visceral, celiac, ventral.

abduct ► **verb** *police were tipped off that Kiley was planning to abduct the congressman's wife* **kidnap**, carry off, seize, capture, run away/off with, make off with, spirit away; informal snatch, shanghai.

aberrant ► **adjective** *eating on the floor with the dogs is just one example of his aberrant behavior* **deviant**, deviating, divergent, abnormal, atypical, anomalous, irregular; nonconformist, rogue; strange, odd, peculiar, uncommon, freakish, quirky; twisted, warped, perverted. ANTONYMS normal, typical.

aberration ► **noun** *a statistical aberration* **anomaly**, deviation, departure from the norm, divergence, abnormality, irregularity, variation, digression, freak, rogue, rarity, oddity, peculiarity, curiosity, quirk; mistake.

abet ► **verb** *I refused to abet the neighbors in their scheme to sabotage the construction site* **assist**, aid, help, lend a hand to, support, back, encourage; cooperate with, collaborate with, work with, connive with, collude with, go along with, be in collusion with, be hand in glove with, side with; second, endorse, sanction; promote, incite, champion, further, expedite. ANTONYMS hinder.

abeyance ► **noun** *expansion plans for the middle school are in abeyance* **in suspension**, in a state of suspension, in a state of dormancy, in a state of uncertainty, in remission; pending, suspended, deferred, postponed, put off, put to one side, unresolved, up in the air; informal in cold storage, on ice, on the back burner. See note at **LATENT**.

abhor ► **verb** *I abhor the taste of liver* **detest**, hate, loathe, despise, execrate, regard with disgust, shrink from, recoil from, shudder at; formal abominate. See note at **DESPISE**. ANTONYMS love, admire.

abhorrent ► **adjective** *he continued to find war morally abhorrent* **detestable**, hateful, loathsome, despicable, abominable, execrable,

repellent, repugnant, repulsive, revolting, disgusting, distasteful, horrible, horrid, horrifying, awful, heinous, reprehensible, obnoxious, odious, nauseating, offensive, contemptible. See note at **OFFENSIVE**.

ANTONYMS admirable.

abide ► **verb** **1** *he expected everybody to abide by the rules* **comply with**, obey, observe, follow, keep to, hold to, conform to, adhere to, stick to, stand by, act in accordance with, uphold, heed, accept, go along with, acknowledge, respect, defer to.

ANTONYMS flout, disobey.

2 informal *I can't abide the smell of cigarettes* **tolerate**, bear, stand, put up with, endure, take, countenance; informal stomach; formal brook; archaic suffer.

ANTONYMS enjoy, relish.

3 *the memory of our parting will abide* **continue**, remain, survive, last, persist, stay, live on.

ANTONYMS fade, disappear.

abiding ► **adjective** *theirs is an abiding friendship* **enduring**, lasting, persisting, long-lasting, lifelong, continuing, remaining, surviving, standing, durable, everlasting, perpetual, eternal, unending, constant, permanent, unchanging, steadfast, immutable.

ANTONYMS short-lived, ephemeral.

ability ► **noun** **1** *the ability to read and write* **capacity**, capability, potential, potentiality, power, faculty, aptness, facility; wherewithal, means.

2 *the president's leadership ability* **talent**, skill, expertise, adeptness, aptitude, skillfulness, savoir faire, prowess, mastery, accomplishment; competence, proficiency; dexterity, adroitness, deftness, cleverness, flair, finesse, gift, knack, genius; qualification, resources; informal know-how.

abject ► **adjective** **1** *abject poverty* **wretched**, miserable, hopeless, pathetic, pitiful, pitiable, piteous, sorry, woeful, lamentable, degrading, appalling, atrocious, awful.

2 *an abject sinner* **contemptible**, base, low, vile, worthless, debased, degraded, despicable, ignominious, mean, unworthy, ignoble.

3 *an abject apology* **obsequious**, groveling, fawning, toadyish, servile, cringing, sycophantic, submissive, craven.

abjure ► **verb** formal *she has abjured the doctrines of her parents' faith* **renounce**, relinquish, reject, forgo, disavow, abandon, deny, repudiate, give up, wash one's hands of; eschew, abstain from, refrain from; informal kick, pack in; Law disaffirm; literary forsake; formal forswear, abnegate.

ablaze ► **adjective** **1** *several vehicles were ablaze* **on fire**, alight, aflame, in flames, flaming, burning, fiery, blazing; literary afire, igneous.

2 *every window was ablaze with light* **lit up**, alight, gleaming, glowing, aglow, illuminated, bright, shining, radiant, shimmering, sparkling, flashing, dazzling, luminous, incandescent.

3 *his eyes were ablaze with fury* **passionate**, impassioned, aroused, excited, adrenalized, stimulated, eager, animated, intense, ardent, fiery, fervent, frenzied.

able ► **adjective** **1** *he will soon be able to resume his*

duties **capable of**, competent to, equal to, up to, fit to, prepared to, qualified to; allowed to, free to, in a position to.

ANTONYMS incapable.

2 *an able student* **intelligent**, clever, talented, skillful, skilled, accomplished, gifted; proficient, apt, good, adroit, adept; capable, competent, efficient, effective.

ANTONYMS incompetent.

able-bodied ► **adjective** *we'll need at least six able-bodied men and women for the expedition* **healthy, fit**, in good health, robust, strong, sound, sturdy, vigorous, hardy, hale and hearty, athletic, muscular, strapping, burly, brawny, lusty; in good shape, in good trim, in fine fettle, fighting fit, as fit as a fiddle; informal husky; dated stalwart.

ANTONYMS infirm, frail, disabled.

abnegation ► **noun** formal **1** *a serious abnegation of their responsibilities* **renunciation**, rejection, refusal, abandonment, abdication, surrender, relinquishment, repudiation, denial; formal abjuration.

ANTONYMS acceptance.

2 *people capable of abnegation and unselfishness* **self-denial**, self-sacrifice, abstinence, temperance, continence, asceticism, austerity, abstemiousness.

ANTONYMS self-indulgence.

abnormal ► **adjective** *an increased appetite during pregnancy is not abnormal | she speaks Spanish with a Swedish accent, which is pretty abnormal* **unusual**, uncommon, atypical, untypical, nontypical, unrepresentative, rare, isolated, irregular, anomalous, deviant, divergent, aberrant, freak, freakish; **strange**, odd, peculiar, curious, bizarre, weird, queer; eccentric, idiosyncratic, quirky; unexpected, unfamiliar, unconventional, surprising, unorthodox, singular, exceptional, extraordinary, out of the ordinary, out of the way; unnatural, perverse, perverted, twisted, warped, unhealthy, distorted; informal freaky.

ANTONYMS normal, typical, common.

abnormality ► **noun** **1** *born with a heart abnormality* **malformation**, deformity, irregularity, flaw, defect, anomaly.

2 *the abnormality of such behavior* **unusualness**, uncommonness, atypicality, irregularity, anomalousness, deviation, divergence, aberrance, aberration, freakishness; strangeness, oddness, peculiarity, unexpectedness, singularity.

abode ► **noun** *welcome to my humble abode* **home**, house, place of residence, accommodations; quarters, lodgings, domicile, rooms; address; informal pad, digs; formal dwelling, dwelling place, residence, habitation.

abolish ► **verb** *the governor never fulfilled his promise to abolish the state income tax* **put an end to**, get rid of, scrap, end, stop, terminate, ax, eradicate, eliminate, exterminate, destroy, annihilate, stamp out, obliterate, wipe out, extinguish, quash, expunge, extirpate; annul, cancel, invalidate, negate, nullify, void, dissolve; rescind, repeal, revoke, overturn; discontinue, remove, excise, drop, jettison; informal do away with, ditch, junk, scrub, dump;

formal abrogate.

ANTONYMS retain, create.

abolition ► **noun** *the abolition of slavery did not guarantee equality* **scrapping**, ending, termination, eradication, elimination, extermination, abolishment, destruction, annihilation, obliteration, extirpation; annulment, cancellation, invalidation, nullification, dissolution; revocation, repeal, discontinuation, removal; formal abrogation.

abominable ► **adjective** *Caligula was among the most abominable figures in history* **loathsome**, detestable, hateful, odious, obnoxious, despicable, contemptible, damnable, diabolical; disgusting, revolting, repellent, repulsive, offensive, repugnant, abhorrent, reprehensible, atrocious, horrifying, execrable, foul, vile, wretched, base, horrible, awful, dreadful, appalling, nauseating; horrid, nasty, disagreeable, unpleasant, distasteful; informal terrible, shocking, godawful; beastly; dated cursed, accursed. See note at **OFFENSIVE**.

ANTONYMS good, admirable.

abominate ► **verb** formal *I truly abominate her use of coarse language* **detest**, loathe, hate, abhor, despise, execrate, shudder at, recoil from, shrink from, be repelled by.

ANTONYMS like, love.

abomination ► **noun** **1** *in both wars, internment was an abomination* **atrocities**, disgrace, horror, obscenity, outrage, evil, crime, monstrosity, anathema, bane.

2 *she looked upon his kitschy decor with abomination* **detestation**, loathing, hatred, aversion, antipathy, revulsion, repugnance, abhorrence, odium, execration, disgust, horror, hostility.

ANTONYMS liking, love.

aboriginal ► **adjective** **1** *the area's aboriginal inhabitants* **indigenous**, native; original, earliest, first; ancient, primitive, primeval, primordial; rare autochthonous.

2 *Aboriginal soldiers serving in the Canadian forces* **native**, indigenous, First Nations, Indian, Inuit, Metis. See note at **NATIVE**.

► **noun** *the social structure of the aboriginals* **native**, aborigine, original inhabitant; rare autochthon, indigene.

abort ► **verb** *the crew aborted the takeoff* **halt**, stop, end, ax, call off, cut short, discontinue, terminate, arrest, cancel, scrub; informal pull the plug on.

abortion ► **noun** *her first pregnancy resulted in a spontaneous abortion* **termination**, miscarriage.

abortive ► **adjective** *the abortive coup was crushed after two days of fighting* **unsuccessful**, failed, vain, thwarted, futile, useless, worthless, ineffective, ineffectual, to no effect, inefficacious, fruitless, unproductive, unavailing, to no avail, sterile, nugatory; archaic bootless.

ANTONYMS successful, fruitful.

abound ► **verb** **1** *cafés and bars abound in the narrow streets* **be plentiful**, be abundant, be numerous, proliferate, superabound, be thick on the ground; informal grow on trees.

2 *the stream abounds with trout and eels* **be full of**, overflow with, teem with, be packed

with, be crowded with, be thronged with; be alive with, be crawling with, be overrun by/with, swarm with, bristle with, be infested with, be thick with; informal be stuffed with, be jam-packed with, be chockablock with, be chock-full of.

about ► **preposition** 1 *a book about needlecraft* regarding, concerning, with reference to, referring to, with regard to, with respect to, respecting, relating to, on, touching on, dealing with, relevant to, connected with, in connection with, on the subject of, in the matter of, apropos, re.

2 *two hundred people were milling about the room around*, round, throughout, over, through, on every side of.

► **adverb** 1 *there were babies crawling about in the grass around*, here and there, to and fro, back and forth, from place to place, hither and thither, in all directions.

2 *I knew he was somewhere about near*, nearby, around, hereabouts, not far (off/away), close by, in the vicinity, in the neighborhood.

3 *the explosion caused about \$15,000 worth of damage approximately*, roughly, around, round about, in the region of, circa, of/on the order of, something like; or so, or thereabouts, there or thereabouts, more or less, give or take a few, not far off; informal in the ballpark of.

4 *there's a lot of gossip about around*, in circulation, in existence, current, going on, prevailing, prevalent, happening, in the air, abroad.

– **PHRASES** **about to** *I'm about to leave (just) going to*, ready to, all set to, preparing to, getting ready to, intending to, soon to; on the point of, on the verge of, on the brink of; informal fixing to.

above ► **preposition** 1 *a tiny window above the door over*, higher (up) than; on top of, atop, on, upon.

ANTONYMS below, under, beneath.

2 *those above the rank of colonel superior to*, senior to, over, higher (up) than, more powerful than; in charge of, commanding.

ANTONYMS below, junior to.

3 *you must be above suspicion beyond*, not liable to, not open to, not vulnerable to, out of reach of; immune to, exempt from.

4 *the Chinese valued pearls above gold more than*, over, before, rather than, in preference to, instead of.

5 *an increase above the rate of inflation greater than*, more than, higher than, exceeding, in excess of, over, over and above, beyond, surpassing, upwards of.

ANTONYMS below, less than.

► **adverb** 1 *in the darkness above, something moved overhead*, on/at the top, high up, on high, up above, (up) in the sky, high above one's head, aloft.

2 *the two cases described above earlier*, previously, before, formerly.

► **adjective** *the above example preceding*, previous, earlier, former, foregoing, prior, above-stated, above-mentioned, aforementioned, aforesaid.

– **PHRASES** **above all** *above all, deactivate the alarm before attempting to open the door most importantly*, before everything, beyond

everything, first of all, most of all, chiefly, primarily, in the first place, first and foremost, mainly, principally, predominantly, especially, essentially, basically, in essence, at bottom; informal at the end of the day, when all is said and done.

aboveboard ► **adjective** *the proceedings were completely aboveboard legitimate*, lawful, legal, licit, honest, fair, open, frank, straight, overt, candid, forthright, unconcealed, trustworthy, unequivocal; informal legit, kosher, by the book, street legal, fair and square, square, on the level, on the up and up, upfront.

ANTONYMS dishonest, shady.

abrasion ► **noun** 1 *his knees were marked up with abrasions graze*, cut, scrape, scratch, gash, laceration, injury, contusion; sore, ulcer.

2 *the metal is resistant to abrasion erosion*, wearing away/down, corrosion, scraping, scouring.

abrasive ► **adjective** 1 *abrasive cleanser*

corrosive, corroding, erosive; caustic, harsh, scratching, coarse.

ANTONYMS gentle.

2 *her abrasive manner caustic*, cutting, biting, acerbic; rough, harsh, hard, tough, sharp, grating, curt, brusque, stern, severe; wounding, nasty, cruel, callous, insensitive, unfeeling, unsympathetic, inconsiderate.

ANTONYMS kind, gentle.

abreast ► **adverb** 1 *they walked three abreast in a row*, side by side, alongside, level, beside each other, shoulder to shoulder.

2 *try to keep abreast of current affairs up to date with*, up with, in touch with, informed about, acquainted with, knowledgeable about, conversant with, familiar with, au courant with, au fait with.

abridge ► **verb** *she was hired to abridge the works of Shakespeare for a children's book club shorten*, cut, cut short, cut down, curtail, truncate, trim, crop, clip, pare down, prune; abbreviate, condense, contract, compress, reduce, decrease, shrink; summarize, sum up, abstract, précis, synopsise, give a digest of, put in a nutshell, edit; rare epitomize.

ANTONYMS lengthen.

abridgment ► **noun** *an abridgment of the full report summary*, abstract, synopsis, précis, outline, résumé, sketch, compendium, digest.

abroad ► **adverb** 1 *he regularly travels abroad overseas*, out of the country, to/in foreign parts, to/in a foreign country, to/in a foreign land.

2 *rumors were abroad in circulation*, circulating, widely current, everywhere, in the air, 'here, there, and everywhere'; about, around; at large.

abrogation ► **noun** formal *such a defense system would require amendment or abrogation of the 1972 antiballistic missile treaty repeal*, revocation, repudiation, rescinding, overturning, annulment, overruling, cancellation, invalidation, nullification, negation, dissolution, discontinuation; reversal, retraction, removal, withdrawal, abolition; formal rescission; rare deracination.

abrupt ► **adjective** 1 *an abrupt halt | an abrupt change of subject sudden*, unexpected,

without warning, unanticipated, unforeseen, precipitate, precipitous, surprising, startling; quick, swift, rapid, hurried, hasty, immediate, instantaneous.

ANTONYMS gradual, unhurried.

2 *an abrupt manner* **curt**, brusque, blunt, short, sharp, terse, crisp, gruff, rude, discourteous, uncivil, snappish, unceremonious, offhand, rough, harsh; bluff, no-nonsense, to the point; informal snappy.

ANTONYMS friendly, expansive.

3 *abrupt, epigrammatic paragraphs* **disjointed**, jerky, uneven, disconnected, inelegant.

ANTONYMS smooth, flowing.

4 *an abrupt slope* **steep**, sheer, precipitous, bluff, sharp, sudden; perpendicular, vertical, dizzy, vertiginous.

ANTONYMS gradual, gentle.

abscess ► **noun** *the abscess is what's causing the pain* **ulcer**, ulceration, cyst, boil, blister, sore, pustule, carbuncle, pimple, wen, whitlow, canker; inflammation, infection, eruption.

abscond ► **verb** *it seems that the one they entrusted with their stolen goods has absconded* **run away**, escape, bolt, flee, make off, take flight, take off, decamp; make a break for it, take to one's heels, make a quick getaway, beat a hasty retreat, run for it, make a run for it; disappear, vanish, slip away, split, steal away, sneak away; clear out, duck out; informal cut and run, skedaddle, skip, skip town, head for the hills, do a disappearing act, fly the coop, take French leave, vamoose, take a powder.

absence ► **noun** **1** *what excuse has he given for his absence this time?* | *an extended absence* **nonattendance**, nonappearance, absenteeism; **truancy**, playing truant; leave, holiday, vacation, sabbatical.

ANTONYMS presence, attendance.

2 *the absence of suitable candidates* **lack**, want, nonexistence, unavailability, deficiency, dearth; need.

ANTONYMS presence, availability.

absent ► **adjective** **1** *she was absent from work* | *an absent parent* **away**, off, out, nonattending, truant; off duty, on holiday, on leave; gone, missing, unavailable, nonexistent; informal AWOL, playing hooky.

ANTONYMS present.

2 *an absent look* **distracted**, preoccupied, inattentive, vague, absorbed, abstracted, unheeding, oblivious, distraught, absentminded, dreamy, far away, in a world of one's own, lost in thought, in a brown study; blank, empty, vacant; informal miles away.

ANTONYMS attentive, alert.

► **verb** (**absent oneself**) *Rose absented herself from the occasion* **stay away**, be absent, withdraw, retire, take one's leave, remove oneself.

absentminded ► **adjective** *I tend to be most absentminded in school* **forgetful**, distracted, preoccupied, inattentive, vague, abstracted, daydreaming, unheeding, oblivious, distraught, in a brown study; lost in thought, moony, pensive, thoughtful, brooding; informal scatterbrained, out of it, out to lunch, miles away, having a mind/memory like a sieve, spacey.

ANTONYMS alert, observant.

absolute ► **adjective** **1** *absolute silence* | *an absolute disgrace* **complete**, total, utter, out-and-out, outright, entire, perfect, pure, decided; thorough, thoroughgoing, undivided, unqualified, unadulterated, unalloyed, unmodified, unreserved, downright, undiluted, consummate, unmitigated, sheer, arrant, rank, dyed-in-the-wool.

ANTONYMS partial, qualified.

2 *the absolute truth* **definite**, certain, positive, unconditional, categorical, unquestionable, incontrovertible, undoubted, unequivocal, decisive, conclusive, confirmed, infallible.

ANTONYMS partial, qualified.

3 *absolute power* **unlimited**, unrestricted, unrestrained, unbounded, boundless, infinite, ultimate, total, supreme, unconditional.

ANTONYMS limited, conditional.

4 *an absolute monarch* **autocratic**, despotic, dictatorial, tyrannical, tyrannous, absolutist, authoritarian, arbitrary, autonomous, sovereign, autarchic, autarchical, omnipotent.

ANTONYMS constitutional.

5 *absolute moral standards* **universal**, fixed, independent, nonrelative, nonvariable, absolutist.

ANTONYMS relative, flexible.

absolutely ► **adverb** *you're absolutely right* **completely**, totally, utterly, perfectly, entirely, wholly, fully, quite, thoroughly, unreservedly; definitely, certainly, positively, unconditionally, categorically, unquestionably, undoubtedly, without (a) doubt, without question, surely, unequivocally; exactly, precisely, decisively, conclusively, manifestly, in every way, in every respect, one hundred percent, every inch, to the hilt; informal dead.

ANTONYMS partially, in no way.

► **exclamation** informal *"Have I made myself clear?" "Absolutely!"* **yes**, indeed, of course, definitely, certainly, quite, without (a) doubt, without question, unquestionably; affirmative, by all means.

ANTONYMS by no means.

absolution ► **noun** Christianity *Father, I am a sinful man in need of absolution* **forgiveness**, pardon, exoneration, remission, dispensation, indulgence, clemency, mercy; discharge, acquittal; freedom, deliverance, release; vindication; formal exculpation; archaic shrift.

ANTONYMS punishment, condemnation.

absolve ► **verb** **1** *this fact does not absolve you from responsibility* **exonerate**, discharge, acquit, vindicate; release, relieve, liberate, free, deliver, clear, exempt, let off; formal exculpate.

ANTONYMS blame, condemn.

2 Christianity *I absolve you of your sins* **forgive**, pardon.

ANTONYMS punish, condemn.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD

absolve, acquit, exempt, exonerate, forgive, pardon, vindicate

To varying degrees, all of these words mean to free from guilt or blame, and some are most frequently heard in a legal or political context. **Absolve** is the most general term,

meaning to set free or release—not only from guilt or blame, but from a duty or obligation (*absolved from her promise to serve on the committee*) or from the penalties for their violation. **Pardon** is usually associated with the actions of a government or military official (*he was convicted of murder but later pardoned*) and specifically refers to a release from prosecution or punishment. It is usually a legal official who decides to **acquit** someone—that is, release someone from a specific and formal accusation of wrongdoing (*the court acquitted the accused due to lack of evidence*). **Exonerate** suggests relief (its origin suggests the lifting of a burden), often in a moral sense, from a definite charge so that not even the suspicion of wrongdoing remains (*completely exonerated from the accusation of cheating*). A person who is **vindicated** is also off the hook, usually due to the examination of evidence (*she vindicated herself by producing the missing documents*). **Exempt** has less to do with guilt and punishment and more to do with duty and obligation (*exempt from paying taxes*). To **forgive**, however, is the most magnanimous act of all: It implies not only giving up on the idea that an offense should be punished, but also relinquishing any feelings of resentment or vengefulness (*"To err is human; to forgive divine"*).

absorb ► verb 1 *a spongelike material that absorbs water* **soak up**, suck up, draw up/in, take up/in, blot up, mop up, sop up.

ANTONYMS exude.

2 *she absorbed the information in silence* **assimilate**, digest, take in.

3 *the company was absorbed into the new concern* **incorporate**, assimilate, integrate, take, appropriate, subsume, include, co-opt, swallow up.

4 *these roles absorb most of his time and energy* **use (up)**, consume, take (up), occupy.

5 *she was totally absorbed in her book* **engross in**, captivate by, occupy with, preoccupy with, engage in, rivet by, grip by, hold by, interest in, intrigue by/with, immerse in, involve in, enthrall by, spellbind by, fascinate by/with.

absorbent ► adjective *absorbent towels* **porous**, spongy, spongelike, permeable, pervious, absorptive; technical spongiform.

ANTONYMS waterproof.

absorbing ► adjective *an absorbing spy novel* **fascinating**, interesting, captivating, gripping, engrossing, compelling, compulsive, enthralling, riveting, spellbinding, consuming, intriguing, thrilling, exciting; informal unputdownable.

ANTONYMS boring, uninteresting.

absorption ► noun 1 *the absorption of water* **soaking up**, sucking up; technical osmosis.

2 *by 1543, Scottish fears of absorption by England were allayed* **incorporation**, assimilation, integration, appropriation, inclusion.

3 *her total absorption in the music*

involvement in, immersion in, raptness in, engrossment in, occupation with, preoccupation with, engagement in, captivation with, fascination with, enthrallment with.

abstain ► verb 1 *Benjamin abstained from wine* **refrain from**, desist from, hold back from, forbear; give up, renounce, avoid, shun, eschew, forgo, go without, do without; refuse, decline; informal cut out; formal abjure.

ANTONYMS indulge in.

2 *pregnant women are encouraged to abstain not drink*, be teetotal, take the pledge; informal be on the wagon.

ANTONYMS drink.

3 *262 voted against, 38 abstained not vote*, decline to vote.

ANTONYMS vote.

abstemious ► adjective *the monks here have willingly chosen this abstemious life* **self-denying**, temperate, abstinent, moderate, self-disciplined, restrained, self-restrained, sober, austere, ascetic, puritanical, spartan, hair-shirt.

ANTONYMS self-indulgent.

abstinence ► noun 1 *AA endorses a path of abstinence* **teetotalism**, temperance, sobriety, abstemiousness, abstention; rare nephalism.

2 *of course abstinence is the most effective form of birth control, but is it the most realistic?* **celibacy**, chastity, virginity, self-restraint, self-denial.

ANTONYMS promiscuity.

3 *three days of abstinence from solid food* **refraining from**, desisting from, holding back from, withholding; **renunciation of**, refusal of, declining, avoidance of, eschewal of, abjuration of; forgoing, shunning, going without, doing without.

ANTONYMS indulgence.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD

abstinence, abnegation, abstemiousness, continence, forbearance, moderation, temperance

Abstinence implies voluntary self-denial and is usually associated with the non-indulgence of an appetite (*total abstinence from cigarettes and alcohol*). **Abstemiousness** is the quality or habit of being abstinent; an abstemious person would be one who is moderate when it comes to eating and drinking. **Continence, temperance, and moderation** all imply various forms of self-restraint or self-denial: *moderation* is the avoidance of extremes or excesses (*he drank in moderation*); *temperance* is habitual moderation, or even total abstinence, particularly with regard to alcohol (*the nineteenth-century temperance movement*); and *continence* (in this regard) refers to self-restraint with regard to sexual activity. **Forbearance** is self-control, the patient endurance that characterizes deliberately holding back from action or response. **Abnegation** is the rejection or renunciation of something that is generally held in

high esteem (*abnegation of the Christian Church*), although it can also mean to refuse or deny oneself a particular right, claim, or convenience (*abnegation of worldly goods*).

- abstract** ► **adjective** **1** *abstract concepts* **theoretical**, conceptual, notional, intellectual, metaphysical, ideal, philosophical, academic; rare ideational.
ANTONYMS actual, concrete.
- 2** *abstract art* **nonrepresentational**, nonpictorial.
ANTONYMS representational.
- **verb** **1** *we'll be abstracting material for an online database* **summarize**, précis, abridge, condense, compress, shorten, cut down, abbreviate, synopsise; rare epitomize.
- 2** *he abstracted the art of tragedy from its context* **extract**, isolate, separate, detach.
- **noun** *an abstract of her speech* **summary**, synopsis, précis, résumé, outline, abridgment, digest, summation; wrap-up.
- abstracted** ► **adjective** *I apologize for being so abstracted when you were talking* **absentminded**, distracted, preoccupied, in a world of one's own, with one's head in the clouds, daydreaming, dreamy, inattentive, thoughtful, pensive, lost in thought, deep in thought, immersed in thought, in a brown study, musing, brooding, absent, oblivious, moony, distraught; informal miles away, out to lunch.
ANTONYMS attentive.
- abstraction** ► **noun** **1** *philosophical abstractions* **concept**, idea, notion, thought, theory, hypothesis.
- 2** *she sensed his momentary abstraction* **absentmindedness**, distraction, preoccupation, dreaminess, inattentiveness, inattention, woolgathering; thoughtfulness, pensiveness.
- 3** *the abstraction of metal from ore* **extraction**, removal, separation.
- abstruse** ► **adjective** *her abstruse arguments were hard to follow* **obscure**, arcane, esoteric, little known, recherché, rarefied, recondite, difficult, hard, puzzling, perplexing, cryptic, enigmatic, Delphic, complex, complicated, involved, over/above one's head, incomprehensible, unfathomable, impenetrable, mysterious. See note at **OBSCURE**.
- absurd** ► **adjective** *what an absurd idea!* **preposterous**, ridiculous, ludicrous, farcical, laughable, risible, idiotic, stupid, foolish, silly, inane, imbecilic, insane, harebrained, cockamamie; unreasonable, irrational, illogical, nonsensical, incongruous, pointless, senseless; informal crazy, daft.
ANTONYMS reasonable, sensible.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD
absurd, foolish, ludicrous, preposterous, ridiculous, unreasonable
We call something **absurd** when it is utterly inconsistent with what common sense or experience tells us (*she found herself in the absurd position of having to defend the intelligence of a cockroach*).

Ludicrous applies to whatever is so incongruous that it provokes laughter or scorn (*a ludicrous suggestion that he might escape unnoticed if he dressed up as a woman*), and **ridiculous** implies that ridicule or mockery is the only appropriate response (*she tried to look younger, but succeeded only in making herself look ridiculous*). **Foolish** behavior shows a lack of intelligence or good judgment (*it was foolish to keep that much money under a mattress*), while **unreasonable** behavior implies that the person has intentionally acted contrary to good sense (*his response was totally unreasonable in view of the fact that he'd asked for their honest opinion*). **Preposterous** should be reserved for those acts or situations that are glaringly absurd or ludicrous. For example, it might be *unreasonable* to judge an entire nation on the basis of one tourist's experience and *foolish* to turn down an opportunity to visit that country on those grounds alone, but it would be *preposterous* to suggest that everyone who comes to the United States will be robbed at gunpoint.

- absurdity** ► **noun** *these artworks convey a sense of the absurdity of contemporary life* **preposterousness**, ridiculousness, ludicrousness, incongruity, inappropriateness, risibility, idiocy, stupidity, foolishness, folly, silliness, inanity, insanity; unreasonableness, irrationality, illogicality, pointlessness, senselessness; informal craziness.
- abundance** ► **noun** *the abundance of donated funds was completely unexpected* **profusion**, plentifulness, profuseness, copiousness, amplitude, lavishness, bountifulness, bounty; host, cornucopia, riot; plenty, quantities, scores, multitude; informal millions, sea, ocean(s), wealth, lot(s), heap(s), mass(es), stack(s), pile(s), load(s), bags, mountain(s), ton(s), slew, scads, oodles, gobs; formal plenitude.
ANTONYMS lack, scarcity.
- abundant** ► **adjective** *an abundant supply of food* **plentiful**, copious, ample, profuse, rich, lavish, abounding, liberal, generous, bountiful, large, huge, great, bumper, overflowing, prolific, teeming; in plenty, in abundance; informal galore; literary plenteous, bounteous. See note at **PREVALENT**.
ANTONYMS scarce, sparse.
- abuse** ► **verb** **1** *the judge abused his power* **misuse**, misapply, misemploy; exploit, take advantage of.
- 2** *he was accused of abusing children* **mistreat**, maltreat, ill-treat, treat badly; molest, interfere with, indecently assault, sexually abuse, sexually assault; injure, hurt, harm, damage.
ANTONYMS look after, nurture.
- 3** *the referee was abused by players from both teams* **insult**, be rude to, swear at, curse, call someone names, taunt, badmouth, dis, shout at, revile, inveigh against, bawl out, vilify, slander, cast aspersions on.
ANTONYMS compliment, flatter.
- **noun** **1** *the abuse of power* **misuse**,

misapplication, misemployment; exploitation.

2 *the abuse of children mistreatment*, maltreatment, ill-treatment; molestation, interference, indecent assault, sexual abuse, sexual assault; injury, hurt, harm, damage. ANTONYMS care, nurturing.

3 *the scheme is open to administrative abuse corruption*, injustice, wrongdoing, wrong, misconduct, misdeed(s), offense(s), crime(s), sin(s).

4 *torrents of abuse insults*, curses, jibes, expletives, swear words; swearing, cursing, name-calling; invective, vilification, vituperation, slander; informal trash talk; archaic contumely.

ANTONYMS compliments, flattery.

5 *alcohol abuse addiction*, dependency, overuse, misuse, problems.

abusive ► **adjective** *such abusive language will not be tolerated in this workplace insulting*, rude, vulgar, offensive, disparaging, belittling, derogatory, opprobrious, disrespectful, denigratory, uncomplimentary, censorious, pejorative, vituperative; defamatory, slanderous, libelous, scurrilous, blasphemous; informal bitchy; archaic contumelious.

abut ► **verb** *two rows of forsythia abut one another where the driveway meets the sidewalk adjoin*, be adjacent to, butt against, border, neighbor, join, touch, meet, reach, be contiguous with.

abysmal ► **adjective** informal *some of the teaching was abysmal very bad*, dreadful, awful, terrible, frightful, atrocious, disgraceful, deplorable, shameful, hopeless, lamentable; informal rotten, appalling, crummy, pathetic, pitiful, woeful, useless, lousy, dire, the pits.

abyss ► **noun** *a recurring nightmare in which he falls into an abyss chasm*, gorge, ravine, canyon, fissure, rift, crevasse, hole, gulf, pit, cavity, void, bottomless pit.

academic ► **adjective** **1** *an academic institution educational*, scholastic, instructional, pedagogical.

2 *his academic turn of mind scholarly*, studious, literary, well-read, intellectual, clever, erudite, learned, educated, cultured, bookish, highbrow, pedantic, donnish, cerebral; informal brainy, inkhorn; dated lettered.

3 *the debate has been largely academic theoretical*, conceptual, notional, philosophical, hypothetical, speculative, conjectural, suppositional; impractical, unrealistic, ivory-tower.

► **noun** *a group of Russian academics scholar*, lecturer, teacher, tutor, professor, fellow, man/woman of letters, don, bluestocking; informal egghead, bookworm; formal pedagogue.

accede ► **verb** formal **1** *he acceded to the government's demands agree to*, consent to, accept, assent to, acquiesce in, comply with, go along with, concur with, surrender to, yield to, give in to, give way to, defer to.

2 *Elizabeth I acceded to the throne in 1558 succeed to*, come to, assume, inherit, take.

3 *Albania acceded to the IMF in 1990 join*, become a member of, sign on to, sign up for.

accelerate ► **verb** **1** *the car accelerated down the hill speed up*, go faster, gain momentum,

increase speed, pick up speed, gather speed, put on a spurt.

ANTONYMS decelerate, slow down.

2 *inflation started to accelerate increase*, rise, go up, leap up, surge, escalate, spiral.

ANTONYMS slow down, drop.

3 *the university accelerated the planning process hasten*, expedite, precipitate, speed up, quicken, make faster, step up, advance, further, forward, promote, give a boost to, stimulate, spur on; informal crank up, fast-track.

ANTONYMS slow down, delay.

acceleration ► **noun** **1** *the acceleration of the industrial process hastening*, precipitation, speeding up, quickening, stepping up, advancement, furtherance, boost, stimulation, spur.

2 *an acceleration in the divorce rate increase*, rise, leap, surge, escalation.

accent ► **noun** **1** *a Bronx accent pronunciation*, intonation, enunciation, articulation, inflection, tone, modulation, cadence, timbre, manner of speaking, delivery; brogue, burr, drawl, twang.

2 *the accent is on the first syllable stress*, emphasis, accentuation, force, prominence; beat; technical ictus.

3 *the accent is on comfort emphasis*, stress, priority; importance, prominence.

4 *an acute accent mark*, diacritic, diacritical mark.

► **verb** *fabrics that accent the background colors in the room focus attention on*, draw attention to, point up, underline, underscore, accentuate, highlight, spotlight, foreground, feature, play up, bring to the fore, heighten, stress, emphasize.

accentuate ► **verb** *a haircut that accentuates your cheekbones focus attention on*, draw attention to, point up, underline, underscore, accent, highlight, spotlight, foreground, feature, play up, bring to the fore, heighten, stress, emphasize.

accept ► **verb** **1** *she accepted a pen as a present receive*, take, get, gain, obtain, acquire.

ANTONYMS refuse, reject.

2 *he accepted the job immediately take on*, undertake, assume, take responsibility for.

ANTONYMS turn down, refuse.

3 *she accepted an invitation to lunch say yes to*, agree to.

ANTONYMS turn down, refuse.

4 *she was accepted as one of the family welcome*, greet, receive, receive favorably, embrace, adopt.

ANTONYMS reject.

5 *he accepted Ellen's explanation believe*, regard as true, give credence to, credit, trust; informal buy, swallow.

ANTONYMS reject, doubt.

6 *we have agreed to accept his decision go along with*, agree to, consent to, acquiesce in, concur with, assent to, acknowledge, comply with, abide by, follow, adhere to, act in accordance with, defer to, yield to, surrender to, bow to, give in to, submit to, respect; formal accede to.

ANTONYMS defy, go against.

7 *she will just have to accept the consequences tolerate*, endure, put up with, bear, take,

submit to, stomach, swallow; reconcile oneself to, resign oneself to, get used to, adjust to, learn to live with, make the best of; face up to.

acceptable ► **adjective** 1 *an acceptable standard of living* **satisfactory**, adequate, reasonable, quite good, fair, decent, good enough, sufficient, sufficiently good, fine, not bad, all right, average, tolerable, passable, middling, moderate; informal OK, jake, so-so, 'comme ci, comme ça', fair-to-middling.

2 *the risk had seemed acceptable at the time* **bearable**, tolerable, allowable, admissible, sustainable, justifiable, defensible.

acceptance ► **noun** 1 *the acceptance of an award* **receipt**, receiving, taking, obtaining.

2 *the acceptance of responsibility* **undertaking**, assumption.

3 *acceptances to an invitation* **yes**, affirmative reply, confirmation.

4 *her acceptance into the group* **welcome**, favorable reception, adoption.

5 *his acceptance of Thom's promise* **belief in**, trust in, faith in, confidence in, credence in, giving of credence to.

6 *their acceptance of the ruling* **compliance with**, acquiescence in, agreement with, consent to, concurrence with, assent to, acknowledgment of, adherence to, deference to, surrender to, submission to, respect for, adoption of, buy-in to.

7 *the acceptance of pain* **toleration**, endurance, forbearance, sufferance.

accepted ► **adjective** *newspaper ads from the 1700s show that, even in New England, the brokering of slaves was an accepted practice* **recognized**, acknowledged, established, traditional, orthodox, sanctioned; usual, customary, habitual, common, current, normal, general, prevailing, accustomed, familiar, wonted, popular, expected, routine, standard, stock.

access ► **noun** 1 *the building has a side access* **entrance**, entry, way in, means of entry; approach, means of approach.

2 *they were denied access to the stadium* **admission**, admittance, entry, entrée, ingress, right of entry.

3 *students have access to a photocopier* (the) **use of**, permission to use/visit.

► **verb** 1 *the program is used to access data* **retrieve**, gain access to, obtain; read.

2 *you access the building from the south side* **enter**, approach, gain entry to.

USAGE

access

Although the verb *access* is standard and common in computing and related terminology (*only subscribers may access the full text online*), the word is primarily a noun. Outside computing contexts, its use as a verb in the sense of 'approach or enter a place' is often regarded as nonstandard (*you must use a key card to access the lounge*). Even weaker is its use in an abstract sense (*access the American dream*). It is usually clear enough to say 'enter' or 'gain access to.'

accessible ► **adjective** 1 *the village is accessible only on foot* | *an easily accessible reference tool* **reachable**, attainable, approachable; obtainable, available; informal get-at-able.

2 *his accessible style of writing* **understandable**, comprehensible, easy to understand, intelligible; formal exoteric.

3 *Professor Cooper is very accessible* **approachable**, friendly, agreeable, obliging, congenial, affable, cordial, welcoming, easygoing, pleasant.

accession ► **noun** 1 *the Queen's accession to the throne* **succession to**, assumption of, inheritance of.

2 *accession to the Treaty of Rome was effected in 1971* **assent to**, consent to, agreement to; acceptance of, acquiescence in, compliance with, concurrence with.

3 *recent museum accessions* **addition**, acquisition, new item, gift, purchase.

accessory ► **noun** 1 *camera accessories such as tripods* **attachment**, extra, addition, add-on, adjunct, appendage, appurtenance, fitment, supplement.

2 *fashion accessories* **adornment**, embellishment, ornament, ornamentation, decoration; frills, trimmings.

3 *two days after the murder, she was charged as an accessory* **accomplice**, partner in crime, associate, collaborator, abettor, fellow conspirator, co-conspirator; henchman.

► **adjective** *an accessory gearbox* **additional**, extra, supplementary, supplemental, auxiliary, ancillary, secondary, subsidiary, reserve, add-on.

accident ► **noun** 1 *an accident at work* **mishap**, misadventure, unfortunate incident, mischance, misfortune, disaster, tragedy, catastrophe, calamity; technical casualty.

2 *she was injured in a highway accident* **crash**, collision, smash, bump, car crash; wreck; informal smash-up, pileup, fender bender.

3 *it is no accident that there is a similarity between them* (mere) **chance**, coincidence, twist of fate, freak; fluke, bit of luck, serendipity; fate, fortuity, fortune, providence, happenstance.

accidental ► **adjective** 1 *an accidental meeting* **fortuitous**, chance, adventitious, fluky, coincidental, casual, serendipitous, random; unexpected, unforeseen, unanticipated, unlooked-for, unintentional, unintended, inadvertent, unplanned, unpremeditated, unthinking, unwitting.

ANTONYMS intentional.

2 *the location is accidental and contributes nothing to the poem* **incidental**, unimportant, by the way, by the by, supplementary, subsidiary, subordinate, secondary, accessory, peripheral, tangential, extraneous, extrinsic, irrelevant, nonessential, inessential.

ANTONYMS deliberate.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD

accidental, adventitious, casual, contingent, fortuitous, incidental

Things don't always go as planned, but there are many ways to describe the role that