

The Oxford Senior Dictionary

Compiled by

Joyce M. Hawkins

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Preface

This dictionary has been specially prepared for students in the upper forms of secondary schools. Its compilation included a systematic survey of textbooks in subjects studied for the O-level and CSE examinations, to ensure thorough coverage of words encountered as part of the curriculum. This, together with the straightforward definitions throughout and many notes on usage, make it a school dictionary that will also last the user into adult life.

I am grateful to Dr R. W. Burchfield CBE (chief editor of Oxford English Dictionaries), and to my colleagues in the Dictionary Department of Oxford University Press, for help of various kinds. Julia Swannell (editor of the *Little Oxford Dictionary*) assisted with the collecting and editing of technical terms, Dr J. B. Sykes (editor of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*) and A. M. Hughes (chief science editor, OED Department) gave professional advice, Rosemary Sansome assisted with the reading of textbooks, and Jonathan Crowther of the Educational Division found time to read through the proofs.

J.M.H.

August 1981

Introduction

Spelling

Some words have two or more spellings that are in common use, but few variants are given here. The aim is not to dictate the use of a particular spelling, but to offer a standard form to those who seek one. When two spellings are equally common the preferred one is given first. Similar principles are followed with regard to pronunciation.

Words ending in **-ize** and **-ization** (such as *realize* and *realization*) may also be spelt with *s* instead of *z*. Words given in this dictionary with the spelling **-ise** (such as *advertise* and *surprise*) do not have an alternative spelling with *z*.

Derived forms

Plurals of nouns, comparatives in **-er** and superlatives in **-est** of adjectives and adverbs, and derived forms of verbs, are given if they are irregular or if there might be doubt about the spelling. When only two verb forms are given:

admit v. (admitted, admitting)

the first form is both the past tense (he *admitted* it) and the past participle (it was *admitted*). Where three forms are given:

come v. (came, come, coming)

freeze v. (froze, frozen, freezing)

the first is the past tense (he *came*; it *froze*) and the second is the past participle (he had *come*; it was *frozen*).

Notes on usage

These are introduced by the symbol ¶ and given comments about the meanings of words that are often confused (such as *gourmand* and *gourmet*), grammatical points (such as whether *data* and *media* are singular or plural), and information about the origin of expressions (such as *fifth column*, *sour grapes*) especially where this helps to a better understanding of why the words are used in this way.

Proprietary terms

This book includes some words which are or are asserted to be proprietary names. The presence or absence of such assertions should not be regarded as affecting the legal status of any proprietary name or trade mark.

Pronunciation

A guide to this is given for any word that is difficult to pronounce, or difficult to recognize when read, or is spelt the same as another word but pronounced differently. The pronunciation given represents the standard speech of southern England. It is shown in brackets, usually just after the word itself, and as a rule only one pronunciation is given (see the note on Spelling, above).

The letters *pr.* (= pronounced) are sometimes put in to make clear that it is the pronunciation that follows, not an alternative spelling.

Words are broken up into small units, usually of one syllable. The syllable that is spoken with most stress in a word of two or more syllables is shown in heavy letters, like **this**.

The sounds represented are as follows:

a as in cat	i as in pin	s as in sit
ă as in ago	ī as in pencil	sh as in shop
ah as in calm	I as in eye	t as in top
air as in hair	j as in jam	th as in thin
ar as in bar	k as in king	th as in this
aw as in law	l as in leg	u as in cup
ay as in say	m as in man	ũ as in circus
b as in bat	n as in not	uu as in book
ch as in chin	ng as in sing, finger	v as in van
d as in day	nk as in thank	w as in will
e as in bed	o as in top	y as in yes
ē as in taken	ō as in lemon	or when preceded
ee as in meet	oh as in most	by a consonant = I
eer as in beer	oi as in join	as in cry, realize
er as in her	oo as in soon	yoo as in unit
ew as in few	oor as in poor	yoor as in Europe
ewr as in pure	or as in for	yr as in fire
f as in fat	or as in cow	z as in zebra
g as in get	p as in pen	zh as in vision
h as in hat	r as in red	

A consonant is sometimes doubled to help to show that the vowel just before it is short (like the vowels in *cat*, *bed*, *pin*, *top*, *cup*), or when without this the combination of letters might suggest a wrong pronunciation through looking misleadingly like a familiar word. The pronunciation of a word (or part of a word) is sometimes indicated by giving a well-known word that rhymes with it.

Abbreviations

<i>abbrev.</i>	abbreviation	<i>int.</i>	interjection
<i>adj.</i>	adjective	<i>n.</i>	noun
<i>adjs.</i>	adjectives	<i>ns.</i>	nouns
<i>adv.</i>	adverb	<i>pl.</i>	plural
<i>advs.</i>	adverbs	<i>pl. n.</i>	plural noun
<i>Amer.</i>	American	<i>pr.</i>	pronounced
<i>Austral.</i>	Australian	<i>prep.</i>	preposition
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction	<i>preps.</i>	prepositions
<i>conjs.</i>	conjunctions	<i>v.</i>	verb

Abbreviations that are in general use (such as ft., RC, and UK) appear in the dictionary itself.

Symbols

- ¶ introduces notes on usage (see p. vi).
- introduces a set of compounds, derivatives, and phrases in complex entries.
- introduces a use of the word at the head of the entry as a second or third etc. part of speech (the word itself is repeated, for clarity, if there is more than one set of numbered meanings). It is also placed before undefined derivatives in complex entries.

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Aa

A the first letter of the alphabet. **A1**, (*informal*) in perfect condition; first-rate.

À abbrev. ampere.

a *adj.* (called the *indefinite article*) 1. one person or thing but not any specific one, *I need a knife*. 2. *per, we pay £40 a year*.

aback *adv.* taken **aback**, disconcerted.

abacus (ab-ä-küs) *n.* (*pl.* abacuses) a frame containing parallel rods with beads that slide to and fro, used for counting.

abandon *v.* 1. to go away from (a person or thing or place) without intending to return; *abandon ship*, leave a sinking ship. 2. to give up, to cease work on, *abandon the attempt*. 3. to yield completely to an emotion or impulse, *abandoned himself to despair*. —*n.* careless freedom of manner. —**abandonment** *n.*

abandoned *adj.* (of behaviour) showing abandon, lacking restraint, depraved.

abase *v.* to humiliate, to degrade.

abatement *n.*

abashed *adj.* embarrassed or ashamed.

abate *v.* to make or become less; *the storm abated*, died down. **abatment** *n.*

abattoir (ab-ä-twar) *n.* a slaughterhouse.

abbess (ab-ess) *n.* a woman who is head of an abbey of nuns.

abbey *n.* 1. a building occupied by monks or nuns living as a community. 2. the community itself. 3. a church or house that was formerly an abbey.

abbot *n.* a man who is head of an abbey of monks.

abbreviate *v.* to shorten (especially a word or title).

abbreviation *n.* 1. abbreviating, being abbreviated. 2. a shortened form of a word or title.

ABC *n.* 1. the alphabet. 2. the elementary facts of a subject, *the ABC of carpentry*.

abdicate *v.* to resign from a throne or other high office. **abdication** *n.*

abdomen (ab-döm-ën) *n.* 1. the part of the body below the chest and diaphragm, containing most of the digestive organs. 2. the hindmost section of the body of an insect, spider, or crustacean, *head, thorax, and abdomen*. **abdominal** (äb-döm-in-äl) *adj.*, **abdominally** *adv.*

abduct *v.* to carry off (a person) illegally. **abduction** *n.*, **abductor** *n.*

Abelian (ä-bee-li-än) *adj.* (of a mathematical group) in which the operation applied to the elements is commutative.

aberration (ab-cr-ay-shön) *n.* 1. a deviation from what is normal. 2. a mental or moral lapse. 3. distortion, e.g. of an image produced through an imperfect lens.

abet *v.* (abetted, abetting) to encourage or assist in committing an offence. **abettor** (*or, in legal use*) **abettor** *n.*, **abetment** *n.*

abeyance (ä-bay-äns) *n.* in **abeyance**, (of a right or rule or problem etc.) suspended for a time.

abhor (äb-hör) *v.* (abhorred, abhorring) to detest.

abhorrent (*rhymes with torrent*) *adj.* detestable. **abhorrence** *n.* detestation.

abide *v.* abided (in sense 1 **abode**), abiding) 1. (*old use*) to remain, to dwell. 2. to bear, to endure, *can't abide wasps*. □ **abide by**, to act in accordance with; *abide by a promise*, keep it; *abide by the consequences*, accept them.

abiding *adj.* long-lasting, permanent.

ability *n.* 1. the quality that makes an action or process possible, the capacity or power to do something. 2. cleverness, talent.

abiotic (ay-by-öt-ik) *adj.* not having life.

abject (ab-jekt) *adj.* 1. wretched, without resources, *abject poverty*. 2. lacking all pride, *an abject coward*; *an abject apology*, very humble. **abjectly** *adv.*

ablative (ab-lä-tiv) *adj. & n.* the **ablative case**, the grammatical case (especially in Latin) expressing *by*, *with*, or *from*.

ablaut (ab-lowt) *n.* a change of vowel in related words, e.g. in *sing, sang, sung*.

ablaze *adj.* blazing.

able *adj.* 1. having the ability to do something. 2. having great ability, competent.

ably *adv.* □ **able-bodied** *adj.* fit and strong.

ablutions (ä-bloo-shönz) *pl. n.* 1. washing, *perform one's ablutions*, wash oneself. 2. a place with facilities for washing oneself.

abnegation (ab-ni-gay-shön) *n.* renunciation, self-denial.

abnormal *adj.* different from what is normal. **abnormally** *adv.*, **abnormality** (ab-nor-mäl-i-ti) *n.*

aboard *adv. & prep.* on or into a ship or aircraft or train.

abode *n.* (*old use*) a dwelling-place.

abode² *see* abide.

abolish *v.* to put an end to, *abolish slavery*. **abolition** (ab-ö-lish-ön) *n.*

abolitionist

abolitionist *n.* a person who favours abolishing capital punishment.

abominable *adj.* 1. detestable, loathsome. 2. very bad or unpleasant, *abominable weather*. **abominably** *adv.* **Abominable Snowman**, a large man-like or bear-like animal said to exist in the Himalayas, a yeti.

abominate *v.* to detest, to loathe.

abomination *n.* loathing, something loathed.

aboriginal *adj.* existing in a land from earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists, *aboriginal inhabitants* or *plants*. --- *n.* an aboriginal inhabitant, especially (*Aboriginal*) of Australia.

aborigines (ab-er-ij-in-eez) *pl. n.* aboriginal inhabitants. **aborigine** *n.* (*informal*) an aboriginal inhabitant.

abort (ā-bort) *v.* 1. to cause or suffer abortion. 2. to end or cause to end prematurely and unsuccessfully.

abortion *n.* 1. the expulsion (either spontaneous or induced) of a foetus from the womb before it is able to survive, especially in the first 28 weeks of pregnancy. 2. a misshapen creature or thing.

abortionist *n.* a person who practises abortion illegally.

abortive *adj.* 1. producing abortion. 2. unsuccessful, *an abortive attempt*. **abortively** *adv.*

abound *v.* 1. to be plentiful, *fish abound in the river*. 2. to have in great quantities, *the river abounds in fish*.

about *prep. & adv.* 1. all around, *look about you*. 2. somewhere near, not far off, *he's somewhere about*. 3. here and there in (a place), *papers were lying about or about the room*. 4. on the move, in circulation, *he will soon be about again*. 5. approximately, *about £10*. 6. in connection with, on the matter or subject of, *what is he talking about?* 7. so as to face in the opposite direction, *put the ship about*. 8. in rotation, *on duty week and week about*. **about-face**, **about-turn** *ns.* a complete reversal of previous actions or opinions. **be about to**, to be on the point or verge of (doing something).

above *adv.* 1. at or to a higher point. 2. earlier in a book or article, *mentioned above*. — **above** *prep.* 1. over, higher than, more than. 2. upstream from. 3. beyond the level or reach of, *she is above suspicion; above himself*, carried away by high spirits or conceit. 4. more important than, *this above all*. **above-board** *adv. & adj.* without deception or concealment, done honourably.

abracadabra (ab-rā-kā-dab-rā) *n.* 1. a

absolute

supposedly magic formula or spell. 2. gibberish.

abrade (ā-brayd) *v.* to scrape or wear away by rubbing.

abrasion (ā-bray-zhōn) *n.* abrading, an abraded place.

abrasive (ā-bray-siv) *adj.* 1. causing abrasion. 2. harsh, causing angry feelings, *an abrasive personality*. — *n.* a substance used for grinding or polishing surfaces.

abreast *adv.* 1. side by side and facing the same way. 2. keeping up, not behind, *keep abreast of modern developments*.

abridge *v.* to shorten by using fewer words. **abridgement** *n.*

abroad *adv.* 1. away from one's own country. 2. far and wide, everywhere, *scattered the seeds abroad*. 3. out and about, *nothing was abroad*.

abrogate (ab-rō-gayt) *v.* to cancel or repeal, *abrogate a law*. **abrogation** *n.*

abrupt *adj.* 1. sudden, *came to an abrupt stop*. 2. disconnected, not smooth, *short abrupt sentences*. 3. curt. 4. (of a slope) very steep. **abruptly** *adv.*, **abruptness** *n.*

abscess (ab-sis) *n.* a collection of pus formed in the body.

abscissa (ab-sis-ā) *n.* (*pl.* *abscissae*, *pr.* *ab-sis-ce*) the distance of a given point from a vertical axis.

abscond (āb-skond) *v.* to go away secretly, especially after wrongdoing. **absconder** *n.* **absence** *n.* 1. being away, the period of this. 2. lack, non-existence, *in the absence of proof*. 3. inattention, *absence of mind*.

absent¹ (āb-sent) *adj.* 1. not present. 2. non-existent. 3. with one's mind on other things. **absently** *adv.* **absent-minded** *adj.* with one's mind on other things; forgetful.

absent² (āb-sent) *v.* **absent oneself**, to stay away.

absentee *n.* a person who is absent from work or school; *absentee landlord*, one who seldom visits the premises he lets.

absenteism *n.* frequent absence from work or school.

absinthe (ab-sinth) *n.* a green liqueur made from brandy with wormwood and other herbs.

absolute *adj.* 1. complete, *absolute silence*. 2. unrestricted, *absolute power*. 3. independent, not relative, *there is no absolute standard for beauty*. 4. (*informal*) utter, out-and-out, *it's an absolute miracle*. **absolute majority**, a majority over all rivals combined. **absolute pitch**, the ability to recognize or reproduce exactly the pitch of a note in music; a fixed standard of pitch defined by the rate of vibration. **absolute temperature**, that measured in

absolutely

kelvins from absolute zero. **absolute zero**, the lowest possible temperature (-273.15°C).

absolutely *adv.* 1. completely. 2. without restrictions, unconditionally. 3. (*informal*) quite so, yes.

absolution (ab-sō-loo-shōn) *n.* a priest's formal declaration of the forgiveness of penitents' sins.

absolve *v.* 1. to clear of blame or guilt. 2. to give absolution to (a person). 3. to free from an obligation.

absorb *v.* 1. to take in, to combine or merge into itself or oneself, *absorb fluid, food, knowledge; the large firm absorbed the smaller ones*, incorporated them. 2. to reduce the effect of, *buffers absorbed most of the shock*. 3. to occupy the attention or interest of; *an absorbing book*, holding one's interest. **absorber** *n.*, **absorption** *n.*

absorbable *adj.* able to be absorbed.

absorbent *adj.* able to absorb moisture etc. **absorbency** *n.*

adsorptive *adj.* 1. able to absorb liquids etc. 2. engrossing.

abstain *v.* 1. to keep oneself from some action or indulgence, especially from drinking alcohol. 2. to refrain from using one's vote. **abstainer** *n.*, **abstention** *n.*

abstemious (āb-steem-i-ūs) *adj.* sparing in one's taking of food and drink, not self-indulgent. **abstemiously** *adv.*, **abstemiousness** *n.*

abstinence (ab-stin-ēns) *n.* abstaining, especially from food or alcohol. **abstinent** *adj.*

abstract¹ (ab-strakt) *adj.* 1. having no material existence, *beauty is an abstract quality*. 2. theoretical rather than practical. —**abstract** *n.* 1. an abstract quality or idea. 2. a summary. 3. an example of abstract art. —**abstractly** *adv.*, **abstractness** *n.* □ **abstract art**, art that does not represent things pictorially but expresses the artist's ideas or sensations. *in the abstract*, regarded theoretically, *he favours economy in the abstract but refuses to economize*.

abstract² (āb-strakt) *v.* 1. to take out, to separate, to remove. 2. to make a written summary. **abstractor** *n.*

abstracted *adj.* with one's mind on other things.

abstraction *n.* 1. abstracting, removing. 2. an abstract idea. 3. abstractedness.

abstruse (āb-strooss) *adj.* hard to understand, profound. **abstruseness** *n.*

absurd *adj.* 1. not in accordance with common sense, very unsuitable. 2. ridiculous. **absurdly** *adv.*, **absurdity** *n.*

abundance *n.* a quantity that is more

than enough, plenty.

abundant *adj.* 1. more than enough, plentiful. 2. having plenty of something, rich, *abundant in minerals*. **abundantly** *adv.*

abura (ā-bewr-ā) *n.* the soft pale wood of a tropical West African tree.

abuse¹ (ā-bewss) *n.* 1. a misuse. 2. an unjust or corrupt practice. 3. abusive words, insults.

abuse² (ā-bewz) *v.* 1. to make a bad or wrong use of, *abuse one's authority*. 2. to ill-treat. 3. to attack in words, to utter insults to or about.

abusive (ā-bew-siv) *adj.* insulting, criticizing harshly or angrily. **abusively** *adv.*

abut (ā-but) *v.* (abutted, abutting) to have a common boundary, to touch at one side, *their land abuts on ours*. **abutment** *n.*

abysmal (ā-biz-mäl) *adj.* 1. extreme, *abysmal ignorance*. 2. (*informal*) extremely bad, *their taste is abysmal*. **abysmally** *adv.*

abyss (ā-biss) *n.* a hole so deep that it appears bottomless.

AC or **a.c.** *abbrev.* alternating current.

acacia (ā-kay-shā) *n.* 1. a tree or shrub from which gum arabic is obtained. 2. a related tree (the false acacia or locust-tree) grown for ornament.

academic (ak-ā-dem-ik) *adj.* 1. of a school or college or university. 2. scholarly as opposed to technical or practical, *academic subjects*. 3. of theoretical interest only, with no practical application. —*n.* an academic person. —**academically** *adv.*

academician (ā-kad-ē-mish-ān) *n.* a member of an Academy.

academy *n.* 1. a school, especially for specialized training. 2. (in Scotland) a secondary school. 3. *Academy*, a society of scholars or artists.

accede (āk-seed) *v.* 1. to take office, to become monarch. 2. to agree to what is proposed.

accelerate *v.* 1. to cause to move faster or happen earlier, to increase the speed of a motor vehicle. 2. to become faster, to move or happen more quickly.

acceleration *n.*

accelerator *n.* 1. a device for increasing speed, a pedal operating this in a motor vehicle. 2. an apparatus for causing charged particles to move at high speeds.

accent¹ (ak-sēnt) *n.* 1. emphasis on a syllable or word. 2. a mark indicating such emphasis or (as on the *e* in *café*) the quality of a vowel-sound. 3. a national, local, or individual way of pronouncing words. 4. the emphasis given to something, *the accent is on quality*.

accent² (āk-sent) *v.* 1. to pronounce with an accent. 2. to emphasize.

accent

accentuate

accentuate (äk-sen-tew-ayt) *v.* to emphasize. **accentuation** *n.*

accept *v.* 1. to take (a thing offered) willingly, to say yes to an offer or invitation. 2. to undertake (a responsibility). 3. to treat as welcome, *they were never really accepted by their neighbours*. 4. to agree to, *we accept the proposed changes*. 5. to take as true, *we do not accept your conclusions*. **acceptance** *n.*

acceptable *adj.* 1. worth accepting, welcome. 2. tolerable, *an acceptable risk*. **acceptably** *adv.*, **acceptability** *n.*

acceptor *n.* 1. one who who accepts something. 2. an atom or molecule able to receive an extra electron or proton etc.

access (äk-sess) *n.* 1. a way in, a means of approaching or entering. 2. the right or opportunity of reaching or using, *students need access to books*. 3. an attack of emotion, *a sudden access of rage*. —*v.* to retrieve (information stored in a computer). □ **direct or random access**, the process of storing or retrieving information in a computer without having to read through items stored previously (contrasted with *sequential or serial access*).

accessible *adj.* able to be reached or used. **accessibly** *adv.*, **accessibility** *n.*

accession (äk-sesh-ön) *n.* 1. reaching a rank or position, *the Queen's accession to the throne*. 2. an addition, being added, *recent accessions to the library*.

accessory (äk-sess-er-i) *adj.* additional, extra. —*n.* 1. a thing that is extra or useful or decorative but not essential, a minor fitting or attachment. 2. a person who helps another in a crime.

acciaccatura (ä-chah-kä-toor-ä) *n.* (in music) a grace-note played quickly before the primary note.

accidence (äk-si-dëns) *n.* the part of grammar that deals with the way words are inflected.

accident *n.* 1. an unexpected or undesirable event, especially one causing injury or damage. 2. chance, fortune, *we met by accident*. □ **accident-prone** *adj.* more than usually likely to have accidents.

accidental *adj.* happening by accident. —*n.* a sign attached to a single note in music, showing temporary departure from the key signature. —**accidentally** *adv.*

acclaim (ä-klaym) *v.* to welcome with shouts of approval, to applaud enthusiastically. —*n.* a shout of welcome, applause. —**acclamation** (äk-lä-may-shön) *n.*

acclimatize *v.* to get used to a new climate or new conditions. **acclimatization** *n.*

accolade (äk-ö-layd) *n.* 1. a ceremonial

account

tap on the shoulder with the flat of a sword, given when a knighthood is conferred. 2. praise, approval.

accommodate *v.* 1. to provide or supply, *the bank will accommodate you with a loan*. 2. to provide lodging or room for. 3. to adapt, to make harmonize, *I will accommodate my plans to yours*.

accommodating *adj.* willing to do as one is asked.

accommodation *n.* 1. the process of accommodating or adapting. 2. lodgings, living-premises. □ **accommodation**

address, an address used on letters for a person who is unable or unwilling to give his permanent address.

accompaniment *n.* 1. an accompanying thing. 2. an instrumental part supporting a solo instrument or voice or a choir.

accompanist *n.* a person who plays a musical accompaniment.

accompany *v.* (accompanied, accompanying) 1. to go with, to travel with as a companion or helper. 2. to be present with. 3. to provide in addition. 4. to play a musical accompaniment to.

accomplice (ä-kum-plis) *n.* a partner in wrongdoing.

accomplish (ä-kum-plish) *v.* to succeed in doing, to fulfil.

accomplished *adj.* skilled, having many accomplishments.

accomplishment *n.* 1. accomplishing. 2. skill in a social or domestic art.

accord *n.* consent, agreement. —*v.* 1. to be in harmony or consistent. 2. (*formal*) to give or grant, *he was accorded this privilege*. □ **of one's own accord**, without being asked or compelled.

accordance *n.* agreement, conformity.

according *adv.* **according as**, in proportion as, depending on whether, *he was praised or blamed according as his work was good or bad*. **according to**, as stated by or in, *according to the Bible*; in a manner consistent with or in proportion to, *grouped according to size*.

accordingly *adv.* 1. according to what is known or stated, *ask what they want and act accordingly*. 2. therefore.

accordion *n.* a portable musical instrument with bellows, keys, and metal reeds.

accordionist *n.* a person who plays the accordion.

accost (ä-köst) *v.* to approach and speak to.

account *n.* 1. a statement of money paid or owed for goods or services. 2. a credit arrangement with a bank or firm. 3. importance, *that is of no account*. 4. a description, a report. —*v.* to regard as, a

accountable

person is accounted innocent until proved guilty. □ **account-book** *n.* a book for keeping financial accounts in. **account for**, to give a reckoning of (money received); to explain the cause of; to be the explanation of; to be successful in killing or overcoming, *we accounted for six partridges.* **give a good account of oneself**, to perform well. **on account**, as an interim payment, *here is £10 on account*; debited to be paid for later, *bought it on account.* **on account of**, because of. **on no account**, under no circumstances, never. **on one's own account**, for one's own purposes and at one's own risk. **take into account**, to make allowances for. **turn to account**, to use profitably.

accountable *adj.* 1. obliged to give a reckoning or explanation for one's actions etc., responsible. 2. able to be explained. **accountability** *n.*

accountancy *n.* the profession of an accountant.

accountant *n.* one whose profession is to keep and examine business accounts.

accounting *n.* the process of keeping and examining business accounts.

accoutrements (ă-koo-trĕ-mĕnts) *pl. n.* equipment, a soldier's outfit other than weapons and clothes.

accredited (ă-kred-it-id) *adj.* 1. officially recognized, *our accredited representative.* 2. generally accepted or believed. 3. certified as being of a prescribed quality.

accretion (ă-kree-shŏn) *n.* 1. a growth or increase by means of gradual additions. 2. the growing of separate things into one.

accrue (ă-kroo) *v.* to come as a natural increase or advantage, to accumulate, *interest accrues on investments.* **accrual** *n.*

accumulate *v.* 1. to acquire an increasing quantity of. 2. to increase in quantity or amount. **accumulation** *n.*

accumulator *n.* a storage battery.

accurate *adj.* 1. free from error, conforming exactly to a standard or to truth. 2. careful and exact, showing precision. **accurately** *adv.* **accuracy** *n.*

accursed (ă-ker-sid) *adj.* 1. under a curse. 2. (*informal*) detestable, hateful.

accusation *n.* 1. accusing, being accused. 2. a statement accusing a person of a fault or crime or wrongdoing.

accusative (ă-kew-ză-tiv) *n. & adj.* the accusative case, the grammatical case used for the object of a verb etc., e.g. *him* in 'we saw him'.

accuse *v.* to state that one lays blame for a fault, crime, or wrongdoing etc. upon (a named person). **accuser** *n.*, **accusingly**

acne

adv. □ **the accused**, the person accused in a court of law.

accustom *v.* to make or become used to. **accustomed** *adj.* usual, customary, *in his accustomed seat.*

ace *n.* 1. a playing-card with one spot. 2. a person who excels at something, *an ace pilot.* 3. (in tennis) a stroke that one's opponent cannot return. □ **within an ace of**, on the verge of, *he was within an ace of collapse.*

acerbity (ă-serb-i-ti) *n.* sharpness of speech or manner.

acetate (ass-i-tayt) *n.* 1. a compound derived from acetic acid. 2. a fabric made from cellulose acetate.

acetic (ă-see-tik) *adj.* of vinegar. **acetic acid**, the acid that gives vinegar its characteristic taste and smell.

acetone (ass-i-tohn) *n.* a colourless liquid used as a solvent.

acetylene (ă-set-i-leen) *n.* a gas that burns with a bright flame, used in cutting and welding metal.

ache *v.* 1. to suffer a dull continuous physical or mental pain. 2. to yearn. —*n.* a dull continuous pain. —**achy** *adj.*

achievable *adj.* able to be achieved.

achieve *v.* to accomplish, to gain or reach by effort. **achievement** *n.*

Achilles (ă-kil-ez) *n.* Achilles' heel, a weak or vulnerable point. **Achilles tendon**, the tendon connecting the heel with the calf muscles. ¶ Named after a hero in Greek legend, who was invulnerable except in his heel.

acid *adj.* 1. sharp-tasting, sour. 2. looking or sounding bitter, *acid remarks.* —**acid** *n.* 1. a sour substance. 2. any of a class of substances containing hydrogen that can be replaced by a metal to form a salt. —**acidly** *adv.* □ **acid test**, a severe or conclusive test. (¶ Acid is applied to a metal to test whether it is gold or not.)

acidic (ă-sid-ik) *adj.* of or like an acid.

acidify (ă-sid-i-fy) *v.* (acidified, acidifying) to make or become acid.

acidity (ă-sid-i-ti) *n.* 1. being acid. 2. an over-acid condition of the stomach.

acknowledge *v.* 1. to admit that something is true or valid. 2. to report that one has received something, *acknowledge his letter.* 3. to express thanks for, *acknowledge his services to the town.* 4. to indicate that one has noticed or recognized. **acknowledgement** *n.*

acme (ak-mi) *n.* the highest point, the peak of perfection.

acne (ak-ni) *n.* inflammation of the oil-glands of the skin, producing red pimples.

acolyte

acolyte (ak-ō-lyt) *n.* a person who assists a priest in certain church services.

aconite *n.* a perennial plant of the but-tercup family, with a poisonous root.

acorn *n.* the fruit of the oak-tree, with a cup-like base.

acoustic (ā-koo-stik) *adj.* of sound or the sense of hearing, of acoustics. **acoustical** *adj.*, **acoustically** *adv.* □ **acoustics** *pl. n.* the properties of sound: the qualities of a hall etc. that make it good or bad for carrying sound.

acquaint *v.* to make aware or familiar, *acquaint him with the facts.* **be acquainted with**, to know slightly.

acquaintance *n.* 1. being acquainted. 2. a person one knows slightly.

acquiesce (ak-wi-ess) *v.* to agree without protest, to assent. **acquiesce in**, to accept as an arrangement.

acquiescent (ak-wi-ess-ēnt) *adj.* acquiescing. **acquiescence** *n.*

acquire *v.* to gain possession of. **acquirement** *n.* □ **acquired taste**, a liking gained gradually.

acquisition (ak-wi-zish-ōn) *n.* 1. acquiring. 2. something acquired.

acquisitive (ā-kwiz-i-tiv) *adj.* keen to acquire things. **acquisitively** *adv.*, **acquisitiveness** *n.*

acquit *v.* (acquitted, acquitting) to declare (a person) to be not guilty of the crime etc. with which he was charged. **acquit oneself**, to conduct oneself, to perform, *he acquitted himself well in the test.*

acquittal (ā-kwi-tāl) *n.* a judgement that a person is not guilty of the crime with which he was charged.

acre (ay-ker) *n.* 1. a measure of land, 4840 sq. yds. 2. a stretch of land, *broad acres.*

acreage (ay-ker-ij) *n.* the total number of acres.

acrid (ak-rid) *adj.* 1. having a bitter smell or taste. 2. bitter in temper or manner. **acridity** (ā-krid-i-ti) *n.*

acrimony (ak-ri-mōn-i) *n.* bitterness of manner or words. **acrimonious** (ak-ri-mōh-ni-ūs) *adj.*, **acrimoniously** *adv.*

acrobat *n.* a performer of spectacular gymnastic feats.

acrobatic *adj.* of or like an acrobat. **acrobatically** *adv.* □ **acrobatics** *pl. n.* acrobatic feats.

acronym (ak-rō-nim) *n.* a word formed from the initial letters of other words, e.g. *Nato, Unesco.*

acropolis (ā-krop-ō-lis) *n.* the citadel or upper fortified part of an ancient Greek city; *the Acropolis*, that of Athens.

across *prep. & adv.* 1. from one side of a thing to the other. 2. to or on the other

actor

side of. 3. so as to be understood or accepted, *got his points across to the audience.* 4. so as to form a cross or intersect, *laid across each other.* □ **across the board**, applying to all members or groups

acrostic (ā-kros-tik) *n.* a word-puzzle or poem in which the first or last letters of each line form a word or words.

acrylic (ā-kril-ik) *adj.* of a synthetic material made from an organic acid. ---*n.* an acrylic fibre, plastic, or resin.

act *n.* 1. something done. 2. the process of doing something, *caught in the act.* 3. a decree or law made by a parliament. 4. one of the main divisions of a play. 5. one of a series of short performances in a programme, *a circus act.* 6. (*informal*) a pose or pretence. *put on an act.* ---*v.* 1. to perform actions, to behave, *you acted wisely.* 2. to do what is required, to function, *act as umpire; the brakes did not act.* 3. to have an effect, *acid acts on metal.* 4. to portray by actions, to perform a part in a play etc.; *act the fool, to clown.* □ **Act of God**, the operation of uncontrollable natural forces.

ACT *abbrev.* Australian Capital Territory.

acting *adj.* serving temporarily, especially as a substitute, *the acting headmaster.*

action *n.* 1. the process of doing something, the exertion of energy or influence; *the action of acid on metal*, the way it affects metal. 2. a thing done, *generous actions.* 3. a series of events in a story or play, *the action is set in Spain.* 4. a way or manner of moving or functioning, the mechanism of an instrument. 5. a lawsuit. 6. a battle, *he was killed in action.* □ **action painting**, abstract painting in which the artist applies paint by random actions.

actionable *adj.* giving cause for a lawsuit. **activate** *v.* to make active. **activation** *n.*, **activator** *n.*

active *adj.* 1. moving about, characterized by energetic action. 2. taking part in activities. 3. functioning, in operation; *an active volcano*, one that erupts occasionally. 4. having an effect, *the active ingredients.* ---*n.* the form of a verb used when the subject of the sentence is the doer of the action, e.g. *saw* in *'we saw him.'* ---*actively* *adv.*, **activeness** *n.*

activist *n.* one who follows a policy of vigorous action, especially in politics.

activity *n.* 1. being active, the exertion of energy. 2. energetic action, being busy. 3. actions, occupations, *outdoor activities.*

4. radioactivity.

actor *n.* a performer in a stage play or a film. **actress** *n.*

actual

actual *adj.* existing in fact, real, current.
actually *adv.*

actuality (ak-tew-al-i-ti) *n.* reality.
actualities *pl. n.* existing conditions.

actuary (ak-tew-er-i) *n.* an expert in statistics who calculates insurance risks and premiums.

actuate *v.* 1. to activate (a movement or process). 2. to be a motive for (a person's actions). **actuation** *n.*, **actuator** *n.*

acumen (ā-kew-men) *n.* sharpness of mind, shrewdness.

acupuncture (ak-yoo-punk-cher) *n.* pricking the tissues of the body with fine needles to relieve pain or as a local anaesthetic. **acupuncturist** *n.* an expert in acupuncture.

acute *adj.* 1. very perceptive, having a sharp mind. 2. sharp or severe in its effect, *acute pain*; *an acute shortage*. 3. (of an illness) coming sharply to a crisis of severity, *acute appendicitis*. **acutely** *adv.*, **acuteness** *n.* □ **acute accent**, a mark over a vowel, as over *e* in *café*. **acute angle**, an angle of less than 90°.

ad *n.* (*informal*) an advertisement.

AD *abbrev.* of the Christian era. (¶ From the Latin *anno domini* = in the year of Our Lord.)

adagio (ā-dahj-yoh) *adv.* (in music) slowly and gracefully. —*n.* (*pl.* **adagios**) a passage to be played in this way.

Adam's apple the projection of cartilage at the front of the neck, especially in men.

adamant (ad-ā-mānt) *adj.* unyielding to requests, quite firm.

adapt *v.* to make or become suitable for a new use or situation. **adaptation** *n.*

adaptable *adj.* 1. able to be adapted. 2. able to adapt oneself. **adaptability** *n.*

adaptor *n.* a device that connects pieces of equipment that were not originally designed to be connected.

add *v.* 1. to join (one thing to another) as an increase or supplement; *this adds to the expense*, increases it. 2. to put numbers or amounts together to get a total. 3. to make a further remark.

addendum *n.* (*pl.* **addenda**) something to be added at the end of a book, etc. ¶ The word *addenda* is used as a plural, and also as a collective noun with a singular verb (as in *the addenda contains new information*).

adder ¹ *n.* a small poisonous snake, a viper.
adder ² *n.* (in a computer) a device that performs additions on pairs of bits. **full adder**, one that can add a bit carried forward from a previous stage to the pair of bits. **half adder**, one that can only add a pair of bits.

adhesive

addict (ad-ikt) *n.* a person who is addicted to something, especially to drugs.

addicted (ā-dik-tid) *adj.* 1. doing or using something as a habit or compulsively. 2. devoted to something as a hobby or interest. **addiction** *n.*

addictive (ā-dik-tiv) *adj.* causing addiction.

addition *n.* 1. adding, being added. 2. a thing added to something else. □ **in addition**, as an extra thing.

additional *adj.* added, extra.
additionally *adv.*

additive (ad-it-iv) *adj.* involving addition. —*n.* a substance added in small amounts for a special purpose.

addle *v.* 1. to become rotten and produce no chick, *addled eggs*. 2. to muddle or confuse, *addle one's brains*.

address *n.* 1. the place where a person lives, particulars of where mail should be delivered to a person or firm. 2. a speech delivered to an audience. 3. the part of a computer instruction that specifies the location of a piece of stored information.

—**address** *v.* 1. to write directions for delivery on (an envelope or parcel). 2. to make a speech to. 3. to direct a remark or written statement to. 4. to use a particular word or words in speaking or writing to, *how to address a bishop*. 5. to apply (oneself) to a task or problem. 6. to take aim at (the ball) in golf. □ **forms of address**, words (such as *Mr*, *Sir*, *Your Majesty*) used in addressing a person.

addressee (ad-ress-ee) *n.* a person to whom a letter etc. is addressed.

adduce (ā-dews) *v.* to cite as an example or proof.

adenoids (ad-in-oidz) *pl. n.* enlarged spongy tissue between the back of the nose and the throat, often hindering breathing. **adenoidal** *adj.*

adept (ad-ept) *adj.* very skilful. —*n.* one who is very skilful, *an adept at carpentry*.

adequate *adj.* 1. sufficient, satisfactory. 2. passable but not outstandingly good.

adequately *adv.*, **adequacy** *n.*

adhere (ād-her) *v.* 1. to stick when glued or by suction or as if by these. 2. to remain faithful, to continue to give one's support (to a person or cause). 3. to keep to and not alter, *we adhered to our plan*.

adherent *adj.* sticking, adhering. —*n.* a supporter of a party or doctrine. —

adherence *n.*

adhesion (ād-her-zhōn) *n.* 1. adhering. 2. tissue formed when normally separate tissues of the body grow together as a result of inflammation or injury.

adhesive *adj.* causing things to adhere, sticky. —*n.* an adhesive substance. —

ad hoc

adhesiveness *n.* □ **adhesive tape**, a strip of paper or other material coated with adhesive, used for fastening packages etc.

ad hoc for a specific purpose, *an ad hoc arrangement.* (¶ Latin, = for this.)

adiabatic (ay-dy-ā-bat-ik) *adj.* occurring without heat being gained or lost.

adiou (ā-dew) *int. & n. (pl. adious)* goodbye.

Adi Granth *see* Granth.

ad infinitum (ad-in-fin-I-tūm) without limit, for ever. (¶ Latin, = to infinity.)

adipose (ad-i-pohs) *adj.* of animal fat, fatty. **adiposity** (ad-i-poss-i-ti) *n.*

adit *n.* a horizontal entrance or passage in a mine.

adjacent *adj.* lying near, adjoining.

adjective (aj-ik-tiv) *n.* a word added to a noun to describe a quality or modify a meaning, e.g. *old, tall, Swedish, my, this.*

adjectival (aj-ik-ty-väl) *adj., adjectivally* *n.*

adjoin *v.* to be next or nearest to.

adjourn (ā-jern) *v.* 1. to postpone. 2. to break off temporarily. **adjournment** *n.*

adjudge *v.* to decide or award judicially, *he was adjudged to be guilty.*

adjudicate (ā-joo-dik-ayt) *v.* 1. to act as judge in a court, tribunal, or competition. 2. to judge and pronounce a decision upon. **adjudication** *n., adjudicator* *n.*

adjunct (ad-junkt) *n.* something added or attached but subordinate.

adjure (ā-joor) *v.* to command or urge solemnly, *I adjure you to tell the truth.*

adjuration *n.*

adjust *v.* 1. to arrange, to put into the proper position. 2. to alter by a small amount so as to fit or be right for use, *the brakes need adjusting.* 3. to be able to be adjusted. 4. to adapt or adapt oneself to new circumstances, *had difficulty in adjusting to civilian life.* 5. to assess (loss or damages). **adjuster** *n., adjustment* *n.*

adjustable *adj.* able to be adjusted.

adjutant (aj-oo-tānt) *n.* an army officer assisting a superior officer with administrative work. **adjutancy** *n.*

ad lib as one pleases, without restraint. (¶ From the Latin *ad libitum*, according to pleasure.) —**ad-lib** *adj.* said or done impromptu. —**ad-lib** *v.* (ad-libbed, ad-libbing) (*informal*) to speak impromptu, to improvise remarks or actions.

administer *v.* 1. to manage the business affairs of, to be an administrator. 2. to give or hand out formally, to provide, *administer a rebuke; administer the oath to a person, hear him swear it officially.*

administrate *v.* to act as administrator.

administration *n.* 1. administering. 2. the management of public or business affairs.

adoptive

administrative *adj.* of or involving administration.

administrator *n.* 1. a person responsible for administration, one who has a talent for this. 2. a person appointed to administer an estate.

admirable *adj.* worthy of admiration, excellent. **admirably** *adv.*

admiral *n.* a naval officer of high rank, commander of a fleet or squadron; *admiral of the Fleet, admiral, vice-admiral, rear-admiral*, the four grades of such officers. □ **red admiral, white admiral**, European species of butterfly.

Admiralty *n.* the former name for the department of State superintending the Royal Navy.

admire *v.* 1. to regard with pleasure or satisfaction, to think highly of. 2. to express admiration of. **admiration** *n., admirer* *n.*

admissible *adj.* capable of being admitted or allowed. **admissibly** *adv., admissibility* *n.*

admission *n.* 1. admitting, being admitted. 2. a statement admitting something, a confession.

admit *v.* (admitted, admitting) 1. to allow to enter, 2. to accept into a school etc. as a pupil or into a hospital as a patient. 3. to accept as true or valid. 4. to state reluctantly, *we admit that the task is difficult.* 5. to leave room for, *the plan does not admit of improvement.*

admittance *n.* admitting or being admitted, especially into a private place.

admittedly *adv.* as an acknowledged fact.

admixture *n.* something added as an ingredient.

admonish (ād-mon-ish) *v.* 1. to advise or urge seriously. 2. to reprove mildly but firmly. **admonition** (ad-mōn-ish-ōn) *n.*

admonitory (ād-mon-it-er-i) *adj.* admonishing.

ad nauseam (naw-si-am) to a sickening extent. (¶ Latin.)

ado (ā-doo) *n.* fuss, trouble, excitement.

adolescent (ad-ō-less-ēnt) *adj.* between childhood and maturity. —*n.* an adolescent person. **adolescence** *n.*

adopt *v.* 1. to take into one's family as a relation, especially as one's child with legal guardianship. 2. to take (a person) as one's heir or representative, *adopt a candidate.* 3. to take and use as one's own, *adopted this name or custom.* 4. to accept responsibility for maintenance of (a road etc.). 5. to approve or accept (a report or financial accounts). **adoption** *n.*

adoptive *adj.* related by adoption, *his adoptive parents.*

adorable

adorable *adj.* 1. very lovable. 2. (*informal*) delightful. **adorably** *adv.*

adore *v.* 1. to love deeply. 2. to worship as divine. 3. (*informal*) to like very much. **adoration** *n.*, **adorer** *n.*

adorn *v.* 1. to decorate with ornaments. 2. to be an ornament to. **adornment** *n.*

ADP *abbrev.* adenosine diphosphate (*see* ATP).

adrenal (ă-dree-nāl) *adj.* close to the kidneys. —*n.* one of the **adrenal glands**, ductless glands on top of the kidneys.

adrenalin (ă-dren-ă-lin) *n.* a hormone that stimulates the nervous system, secreted by a part of the adrenal glands or prepared synthetically.

Adriatic (ay-dri-at-ik) *adj.* of the Adriatic Sea, between Italy and Yugoslavia. —*n.* the Adriatic Sea.

adrift *adv.* & *adj.* 1. drifting. 2. (*informal*) unfastened, loose.

adroit (ă-droit) *adj.* skilful, ingenious. **adroitly** *adv.*, **adroitness** *n.*

adsorb *v.* to attract and hold (a gas or liquid) to a surface. **adsorption** *n.*

adulation (ad-yoo-lay-shŏn) *n.* excessive flattery. **adulatory** (ad-yoo-lay-er-i) *adj.*

adult (ad-ult) *adj.* grown to full size or strength, mature. —*n.* an adult person. — **adulthood** *n.*

adulterant *n.* a substance added in adulterating something.

adulterate *v.* to make impure or poorer in quality by adding another substance, especially an inferior one. **adulteration** *n.*

adulterer *n.* a person who commits adultery. **adulteress** *n.*

adultery *n.* the act of being unfaithful to one's wife or husband by voluntarily having sexual intercourse with someone else. **adulterous** *adj.*

ad valorem (va-lor-em) in proportion to the estimated value of the goods. (¶ Latin.)

advance *v.* 1. to move or put forward, to make progress. 2. to help the progress of, *advance someone's interests*. 3. to bring forward or make, *advance a suggestion*. 4. to bring (an event) to an earlier date. 5. to lend (money), to pay before a due date, *advance her a month's salary*. — **advance** *n.* 1. a forward movement, progress. 2. an increase in price or amount. 3. a loan, payment beforehand. — *adj.* going before others, done or provided in advance, *the advance party*; *advance bookings*. — **advancement** *n.* □ **advances** *pl. n.*

attempts to establish a friendly relationship or a business agreement. in **advance**, ahead in place or time.

advanced *adj.* 1. far on in progress or in life, *an advanced age*. 2. not elementary,

advisable

advanced studies. 3. (of ideas etc.) new and not yet generally accepted. □ **Advanced level**, a GCE examination for university entrance qualification.

advantage *n.* 1. a favourable condition or circumstance. 2. benefit, profit; *the treaty is to their advantage*, benefits them; *turn it to your advantage*, use it profitably. 3. the next point won after deuce in tennis. □ **take advantage of**, to make use of; to exploit. **to advantage**, making a good effect, *the painting shows to advantage here*.

advantageous (ad-van-tay-jūs) *adj.* profitable, beneficial. **advantageously** *adv.*

Advent *n.* 1. the coming of Christ; *Second Advent*, his coming at the Last Judgement. 2. the season (with four Sundays) before Christmas Day. 3. *advent*, the arrival of an important person or event etc.

Adventist *n.* a member of a sect believing that Christ's second coming is very near.

adventitious (ad-ven-tish-ūs) *adj.* 1. accidental, casual. 2. occurring in an unusual place, *adventitious roots*.

adventure *n.* 1. an exciting or dangerous experience. 2. willingness to take risks, *the spirit of adventure*. **adventurous** *adj.*, **adventurously** *adv.*

adventurer *n.* 1. a person who seeks adventures. 2. a person who is ready to make gains for himself by risky or unscrupulous methods.

adverb *n.* a word that qualifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb and indicates how, when, or where, e.g. *gently*, *fully*, *soon*. **adverbial** *adj.*, **adverbially** *adv.*

adversary (ad-ver-ser-i) *n.* an opponent, an enemy.

adverse (ad-vers) *adj.* 1. unfavourable, *an adverse report*. 2. bringing misfortune or harm, *the drug has no adverse effects*. **adversely** *adv.*

adversity (ăd-vers-i-ti) *n.* misfortune, trouble.

advert *n.* (*informal*) an advertisement.

advertise *v.* 1. to make generally or publicly known, *advertise a meeting*. 2. to praise publicly in order to encourage people to buy or use something, *advertise soap*. 3. to ask or offer by public notice, *advertise for a secretary*. **advertiser** *n.*

advertisement *n.* 1. advertising. 2. a public notice advertising something.

advice *n.* 1. an opinion given about what to do or how to behave. 2. a piece of information, *we received advice that the goods had been dispatched*. □ **advice note**, a document sent by supplier to customer stating that goods have been dispatched.

advisable *adj.* worth recommending as a course of action. **advisability** *n.*