

**THE
OXFORD
REFERENCE
DICTIONARY**

NEW

ILLUSTRATED

**BOTH A DICTIONARY
AND AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA**

THE OXFORD REFERENCE DICTIONARY

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PREFACE

The . . . Dictionary will be found to contain . . . a large amount of useful and interesting information connected with literature, art, and science, so that the charge usually preferred against English dictionaries, namely, that they furnish but *dry sort of reading*, will not apply to this dictionary.

Preface to *Ogilvie's Imperial Dictionary*, 1850

THIS book is designed to function both as a dictionary and as a concise encyclopaedia. It includes biographical, historical, and geographical entries, with over 6,000 articles on a wide variety of topics—arts, sciences, philosophy, religion, mythology, technology, sport—in addition to conventional lexical material.

The inclusion of encyclopaedic matter in an English dictionary is by no means a new feature. Such matter is found in dictionaries from the 16th century onwards, as it was in the earlier bilingual English and Latin dictionaries upon which they drew. Proper names were included, with a strong bias towards classical antiquity and the Bible, helping the reader to understand the allusions that were characteristic of the literature of the period; practical information, chiefly herbal and medical knowledge, was also presented. Everyday words were the last to be admitted; technical or difficult words and encyclopaedic information were of greater interest. Johnson's Dictionary (1755) has disquisitions on selected subjects (including electricity and opium), and an encyclopaedic element was still strong in the nineteenth century. The American desire for a one-volume comprehensive reference work, attractively produced, ensured the survival of this tradition in most dictionaries of transatlantic origin, but in Britain the general tendency has been to regard such matter as redundant and needlessly cluttering up the pages; it is to be found (if at all) in sparse appendices. The burgeoning vocabulary of the language, and the inevitable pressure on space, have made it attractive for small dictionaries to restrict themselves to lexical information. Even those that aspire to an integrated encyclopaedic element have, for the most part, regarded selected proper names as acceptable material but have made no attempt to offer encyclopaedic information on general topics. And yet the distinction between information about 'words' and about 'things', traditionally regarded as differentiating a dictionary from an encyclopaedia, is not rigid; words refer to things, and understanding of words cannot be separated from awareness of those things to which they refer.

In this book encyclopaedic treatment, including historical information, has been given where this seemed necessary, interesting, or useful, the aim being to present the non-specialist reader with the main aspects of a subject. The fitting of so much material into a single volume has involved careful selection of items; completeness could never be achieved and is not attempted, but we hope that no major subject has been neglected. The choice of proper names

for inclusion has been guided by a number of considerations. Biographical entries are given for persons who are world-famous, pioneers, statesmen who were in power at a time of significant change in their country's history, and persons who have become legendary in their own spheres, together with a representative selection of lesser figures. Some persons' achievements and some subjects can be explained briefly, others cannot; readers who seek to compile or apply a 'league table' of importance based on the lengths of individual entries will find themselves frustrated. Geographical names include all independent countries of the world and their capital cities, continents, oceans, and major rivers and mountains, but the book is not intended to function as a gazetteer. The Appendices offer useful information which is more easily presented in tabulated form than in an encyclopaedic entry or dispersed through a number of such entries.

The illustrations supplement the text. Many have been chosen because their subjects can be explained more clearly by drawings than by words. By grouping items the relationships of separate elements to each other and to the whole can be indicated. Another function of the illustrations is to expand the encyclopaedic element of the book. In choosing subjects for illustration our aims have been to achieve a balance between the broad subject areas of science, natural history, and the arts, to indicate underlying principles or (where appropriate) historical development, and to open doors on some huge and complex subjects. The outline maps, included at the end of the book, present basic information.

The work has been edited in the English Dictionary Department of Oxford University Press, with encyclopaedic articles contributed by outside scholars who are specialists in their subjects. We are grateful to our colleagues in the Department for their help, interest, and encouragement, and in particular to Dr R. W. Burchfield, editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, who gave valuable advice when the dictionary was being planned and suggested the inclusion of the longer and more informative encyclopaedic articles, rather than the perfunctory entries that would usually be expected in a book of this size, that have given the book its distinctive character and made the work of its preparation so much more interesting for us all.

To write succinctly about complex subjects is not within everyone's power, and we are grateful to those scholars who accepted the challenge of presenting their knowledge in a limited space; some found it more difficult than they had expected but afterwards declared, with apparent sincerity, that they had enjoyed it. Particular mention must be made of Dr Malcolm Cooper, who showed himself well able and willing to write with detached, concise, and sometimes sardonic lucidity on the people and events of all periods of history.

For sustained help we must thank our two colleagues in the OED Department, R. C. Palmer, who worked with patient care, chiefly on the lexical material (including the etymologies), and prepared most of the Appendices, and R. C. Beatty, who wrote some of the science entries and edited others with competence and enthusiasm. A. M. Hughes, chief science editor of *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, cheerfully tolerated our endless queries on articles and illustrations. M. Jones and Mrs M. P. A. Trumble gave conscientious help with presentation of the lexical entries. W. H. J. Baker, J. A. Hine, Miss E. M. Knowles, M. A. Mabe, and Dr W. R.

Trumble shared the proof-reading, and M. W. Grose and Mrs E. J. Pusey read through the text and made a number of useful suggestions. Mrs P. Lawton gave expert secretarial help with all stages of the work on the text, and Miss G. Metcalfe and Mrs J. Bartlam with the illustrations.

In preparing the illustrations we have received generous help and advice from a number of specialist museums and institutions and individual experts, and we are very grateful to them. In particular we must thank Mr Peter Clifford who worked closely with us throughout, suggesting appropriate subjects, undertaking substantial research and providing initial ideas for the contents, and checking the accuracy of the drawings at all stages; his precise and scholarly approach and his concern for detail have been invaluable.

In compiling the book we have sought to be informative (within the limits that space imposes), to interest, and occasionally to amuse. If readers can find that we have fulfilled any or all of these aims we shall feel well rewarded.

April 1986

J. M. H.
S. le R.

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ILLUSTRATORS

John Brennan, Margaret Jones, and the staff of Illustra Design.

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NOTES

1. *Pronunciation*

Guidance on pronunciation follows the system of the International Phonetic Alphabet (see p. xi); it indicates the pronunciation that is standard in southern England.

2. *Inflexion*

Plurals of nouns, comparatives in *-er* and superlatives in *-est*, and forms of verbs are given only if they are irregular or if there might be doubt about the spelling. A doubled consonant in verbal inflexions (e.g. *rubbed*, *rubbing*; *sinned*, *sinning*) is shown in the form (**-bb-**), (**-nn-**), etc.

3. *Etymology*

This is given in square brackets at the end of an entry. It is usually omitted where the headword is a compound of two or more words (for which etymologies are given in their separate entries) or of an easily identifiable prefix (e.g. *anti-*, *pre-*, *un-*) and a whole word, or where the derivation is clear from the definition (e.g. *Chippendale*, *Spode*).

4. *Population*

Figures are given for countries and capital cities, but not for provinces, counties, etc. They are based on the latest information that was available when the entries were written.

5. *Proprietary status*

This dictionary includes some words which are, or are asserted to be, proprietary names or trade marks. Their inclusion does not imply that they have acquired for legal purposes a non-proprietary or general significance, nor is any other judgement implied concerning their legal status. In cases where the editor has some evidence that a word is used as a proprietary name or trade mark this is indicated by the letter [P] but no judgement concerning the legal status of such words is made or implied thereby.

PRONUNCIATION

I. CONSONANTS

b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, and *x* have their usual English values. Other symbols are used as follows:

g (<i>game</i>)	ŋ (<i>long</i>)	ʃ (<i>ship</i>)
tʃ (<i>chair</i>)	θ (<i>thin</i>)	ʒ (<i>measure</i>)
dʒ (<i>jet</i>)	ð (<i>there</i>)	j (<i>yes</i>)
x (<i>Scots etc.: loch</i>)		

Other consonants as in *arc, cob cry* (but soft *c* before *e, i, y* as in *ice* and *city*); *church*; *black, lodge, game, bag* (but soft *g* before *e, i, y* as in *age* and *gin*); *jet, sing, blank, photo, queen, shot, bitch, thin, box, yet*.

2. VOWELS

short vowels	long vowels	diphthongs
æ (<i>bat</i>)	ɑ: (<i>dark</i>)	eɪ (<i>say</i>)
e (<i>bet</i>)	i: (<i>seem</i>)	æ (<i>buy</i>)
ə (<i>ago</i>)	ɔ: (<i>born</i>)	ɔɪ (<i>toy</i>)
ɪ (<i>sit</i>)	ɜ: (<i>term</i>)	əʊ (<i>so</i>)
ɒ (<i>top</i>)	u: (<i>moon</i>)	aʊ (<i>now</i>)
ʌ (<i>but</i>)		ɪə(r) (<i>peer</i>)
ʊ (<i>put</i>)		eə(r) (<i>fair</i>)
		ʊə(r) (<i>poor</i>)

(ə) signifies the indeterminate sound as in *garden, carnal, and rhythm*; (r) signifies a final r which is pronounced when the following word begins with a vowel sound.

Other vowels as in *gain, fair, far, dare, saw, say, bean, fear, seen, seer, herd, here, few, thief, bier, bird, tire, boat, board, hoe, join, moon, poor, born, loud, sour, now, toy, due, burn, pure*.

The following signify sounds not natural in English:

æ̃ (<i>bain-marie, timbre</i>)	ø (<i>peu</i>)
ɑ̃ (<i>contretemps</i>)	œ (<i>bœuf</i>)
ɔ̃ (<i>bon voyage</i>)	ɑ̃ (<i>brun</i>)

Main stress is indicated by ' preceding the relevant syllable; no attempt is made to indicate secondary stress.

Pronunciation of words of one syllable is not given when it conforms with the following basic pattern:

Single-letter vowels a = /æ/, e = /e/, i = /i/, o = /ɒ/, u = /ʌ/; when lengthened by a succeeding single consonant followed by *e*, a = /eɪ/, e = /i:/, i = /aɪ/, o = /əʊ/; u = /ju:/ (as in *mat* and *mate*; *met* and *mete, sit* and *site, tot* and *tote, tun* and *tune*).

Pronunciation of two-syllable words is usually omitted when the first syllable is stressed and follows the basic pattern.

Pronunciation of compound words of easily recognized elements (e.g. *bathroom, headache*) is not given when the stress is on the first element.

Pronunciation of regularly formed derivatives is not given when it can be easily deduced from the headword or from a preceding main word (e.g. *casually* from *casual* and *catty* from *cat*), unless there is a change of stress or some other notable feature (as with *certification*).

(iii) The following combinations, beginning a word, have the values shown: kn = /n/, rh = /r/, wh = /w/ or (by some speakers) /hw/ (not shown in individual entries), wr = /r/.

(iv) Pronunciation of the following suffixes and terminations should be noted:

- able /-əb(ə)l/
- age /-ɪdʒ/
- al (preceded by consonant) /-(ə)l/
- dom /-dɒm/
- d (after *d* or *t*) /-ɪd/; (after other voiceless consonant) /-t/; (elsewhere) /-d/
- ess /-ɪs/
- est /-ɪst/
- ful /-fʊl/
- fy /-faɪ/
- ible /-ɪb(ə)l/
- ism /-ɪz(ə)m/
- ive /-ɪv/
- less /-lɪs/
- ment /-mənt/
- ness /-nɪs/
- ous /-əs/
- sion /-ʃ(ə)n or -ʒ(ə)n/
- some /-səm/
- tion /-ʃ(ə)n/
- y (preceded by consonant, but cf. -fy) /-ɪ

ABBREVIATIONS

abbr./eviation etc.	Du./tch	L Latin	pr./onounced
abs./olute(ly)	Electr./icity	LDu. Low Dutch	prec./eding entry
acc./ording	emphat./ic	LG Low German	predic./ative(ly)
adj./ective etc.	Engl./ish	lit./eral(ly)	Print./ing
adjs. adjectives	erron./eous(ly)	masc./uline	prob./able etc.
adv./erb etc.	esp./ecially	Math./ematics	pron./oun
advs. adverbs	est./imated etc.	MDu. Middle Dutch	pronunc./iation
AF Anglo-French	euphem./ism etc.	Mex./ican	prop./er(ly)
Afr./ican	exc./ept	MHG Middle High German	Prov./ençal
Afrik./aans	excl./amation etc.	Min./erology	redupl./icated etc.
alt./eration etc.	F French	MLG Middle Low German	ref./erence etc.
app./arently	f. from	Mus./ic etc.	refl./exive(ly)
approx./imately	fem./inine	myth./ology	rel./ated; relative
Arab./ic	fig./urative(ly)	n. noun	repr./esenting
Archit./ecture	fl./oruit	Naut./ical	rhet./orical(ly)
assim./ilated etc.	Flem./ish	neg./ative(ly)	Rom./an, Romanic
assoc./iated etc.	folll./owing entry	N. Engl. north of England	Russ./ian
Astron./omy Astrol./ogy	freq./ently	neut./er	S.Afr. South Africa(n)
attrib./utive(ly)	frequent./ative	Norw./egian	S.Amer. South America(n)
Austral./ian	fut./ure	ns. nouns	Sc./ottish
aux./iliary	G German	obj./ective	Scand./inavian
Biol./ogy	Gael./ic	obs./olete	sing./ular
Bot./any	gen./itive	occas./ional(ly)	Skr. Sanskrit
c. century	Geol./ogy	OE Old English	Slav./onic
c. circa	Gk Greek	OF Old French	Sp./anish
Chem./istry	Gmc Germanic	OHG Old High German	superl./ative
Chin./ese	Gram./mar	ON Old Norse	Sw./edish
cogn./ate	Heb./rew	ONorw. Old Norwegian	Theol./ogy
collect./ive(ly)	hist./orical(ly)	opp. (as) opposed (to)	transl./ation etc.
colloq./uial(ly)	Hung./arian	orig./in(ally)	Turk./ish
compar./ative	i. intransitive	P proprietary name	ult./imately
conj./unction	Icel./andic	partic./iple	unkn./own
contr./action etc.	ill./ustration etc.	pass./ive(ly)	usu./al(ly)
corrupt./ion	imit./ative etc.	perh./aps	v. verb
D = disputed usage	imper./ative(ly)	Pers./ian	var./iant
(applied to a use that,	infl./uenced	phr./ase	v.aux. auxiliary verb
although widely found,	int./erjection	Phys./ics	v.i. intransitive verb
is still the subject of	interrog./ative(ly)	pl./ural	v.refl. reflexive verb
much adverse	Ir./ish	poet./ical(ly)	v.t. transitive verb
comment by informed	iron./ically	pop./ular(ly), population	v.t./i. transitive and intransitive verb
users)	irreg./ular(ly)	Port./uguese	vulg./ar
d./ied	It./alian	poss./essive	w./ith
dat./ive	Jap./anese	p.p. past participle	wd word
derog./atory	loc./ular(ly)		
dial./ect etc.			
dim./inutive etc.			
dist./inguished			

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A

A, a *n.* 1. the first letter of the alphabet. 2. (*Mus.*) the sixth note in the scale of C major. —**A1**, (*colloq.*) first-rate, in perfect condition (see LLOYD'S).

A *abbr.* ampere(s).

Å *abbr.* ångström(s).

a /ə, *emphatic ei/ adj.* (called the *indefinite article*) 1. one person or thing but not any specific one; one like. 2. per. [OE]

a- *prefix* 1. on (*afoot*), to (*ashore*), towards (*aside*). 2. in (*nowadays*). 3. in the process of (*a-begging*, *a-flutter*). [OE]

Aalto /'a:ltəʊ/, Hugo Henrik Alvar (1898-1976), Finnish architect, one of the most inventive of his generation, who worked extensively in Europe and America as well as in Finland, where he was responsible for the design of a number of public buildings. He is notable for his expressive and inventive use of timber (Finland's basic building material) for structure and decoration, and for the use of mixed materials in designs that were beautiful as a result of purely functional concerns.

aardvark /'a:dva:k/ *n.* a nocturnal African animal (*Orycteropus afer*), with a bulky pig-like body, long ears, and a thick tail, that feeds on termites. [Afrik., = earth-pig]

Aaron /'eə(ə)n/ brother of Moses and traditional founder of the Jewish priesthood. —**Aaron's beard**, (see Ps. 133: 2) a popular name for several plants, especially a St John's wort *Hypericum calycinum*. **Aaron's rod**, a popular name for several tall plants with flowering stems, especially a mullein, *Verbascum thapsus*. (Aaron's rod sprouted and blossomed as a sign that he was designated by God as high priest of the Hebrews; see Numbers 17: 8.)

ab- *prefix* (**abs-** before *c, t*; **a-** before *m, p, v*) off, away, from. [F or f. L]

aback /ə'bæk/ *adv.* taken aback, disconcerted. [OE]

abacus /'æbəkəs/ *n.* (*pl.* **abacuses**) 1. a frame containing grooves or parallel rods or wires with beads that slide to and fro, used for counting. Its provenance and date of origin are uncertain. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used a counting-board with vertical columns as an aid to reckoning; the frame may be a development of this, or may have been devised independently. It was in general use during the Middle Ages until the adoption of the nine figures and zero, and is still used in the Far East. 2. (*Archit.*) the flat upper section of a capital, supporting the architrave (ill. TEMPLES). [L f. Gk *abax* slab, drawing-board f. Heb., = dust (from use of board sprinkled with sand or dust for drawing geometrical diagrams)]

abaft *adv.* in the stern half of a ship. —*prep.* nearer to the stern than. [f. A- + *baft* f. OE (*be by, æftan* behind)]

abalone /'æbələʊn/ *n.* (*US*) an edible mollusc of the genus *Haliotis*, with an ear-shaped shell lined with mother-of-pearl. [Amer. Sp.]

abandon /ə'bændən/ *v.t.* 1. to go away from without intending to return; to give up, to cease work on. 2. to yield completely to an emotion or impulse. —*n.* reckless freedom of manner. —**abandonment** *n.* [f. OF (*à bandon* under another's control)]

abandoned /ə'bændənd/ *adj.* (of a person or behaviour) showing abandon, deprived. [f. prec.]

abase /ə'beɪs/ *v.t.* to humiliate, to degrade. —**abasement** *n.* [f. OF f. L (*bassus* short)]

abashed /ə'bæʃt/ *adj.* embarrassed, disconcerted, ashamed. [f. OF (*bair* astound)]

abate /ə'beɪt/ *v.t./i.* to make or become less, to weaken. —**abatement** *n.* [f. OF f. L (*ab-*, *battuere* beat)]

abattoir /'æbətwa:(r)/ *n.* a slaughterhouse. [F, as prec.]

abbacy /'æbəsi/ *n.* the office or jurisdiction of an abbot or abness. [f. L (as ABBOT)]

Abbasid /'æbəsɪd/ *adj.* of a dynasty of caliphs ruling in Baghdad 750-1258, claiming descent from Abbas (566-652), uncle of Muhammad. —*n.* a member of this dynasty.

abbé /'æbeɪ/ *n.* a Frenchman entitled to wear ecclesiastical dress, with or without official duties. [F f. L (as ABBOT)]

abbess /'æbes/ *n.* a woman who is head of an abbey of nuns. [f. OF (as ABBOT)]

Abbevillian /'æbvi:lən/ *adj.* of the earliest lower palaeolithic hand-axe industries in Europe, named after the type-site at Abbeville on the River Somme in northern France and dated to c. 500,000 BC. The hand-axes were made by hammering flakes off a flint with a hard stone, giving them a rough appearance. (See also ACHEULIAN.) —*n.* this industry. [f. *Abbeville*]

abbey /'æbi/ *n.* 1. a building occupied by a community of monks or nuns. 2. this community. 3. a church or house that was formerly an abbey. —**the Abbey**, Westminster Abbey. [f. OF f. L *abbatia* abbacy]

Abbey Theatre a theatre in Abbey Street, Dublin, first opened in 1904, staging chiefly Irish plays. W. B. Yeats was associated with its foundation. In 1925 it became the first State-subsidized theatre in the English-speaking world.

abbot /'æbət/ *n.* a man who is head of an abbey of monks (now chiefly in Benedictine and Augustinian orders), usually elected by the monks for life or for a period of years and frequently holding certain episcopal rights. [OE, ult. f. Aram. *abba* father]

abbreviate /ə'brɪvi:et/ *v.t.* to shorten (esp. a word or title). —**abbreviation** /-'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *abbreviare* (*brevis* short)]

ABC *n.* 1. the alphabet. 2. the elementary facts of a subject. 3. an alphabetically arranged guide. —*abbr.* Australian Broadcasting Corporation (formerly Commission).

abdicate /'æbdɪkeɪt/ *v.t./i.* to renounce, to resign from a throne, right, or high office. —**abdication** /-'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *abdicare* (*ab-*, *dicare* dedicate)]

abdomen /'æbdəmən/ *n.* 1. the part of the body containing the stomach, bowels, intestines, and other digestive organs (ill. BODY 2); the front surface of the body from waist to groin. 2. the hinder part of an insect (ill. INSECTS), crustacean, spider, etc. —**abdominal** /-'dɒmɪn(ə)/ *adj.* [L]

abduct /'æbdʌkt/ *v.t.* to carry off (a person) illegally by force or deception. —**abduction** *n.*, **abductor** *n.* [f. L *abducere* (*ab-*, *ducere* lead)]

abed /ə'bed/ *adv.* (*archaic*) in bed. [OE (as A-, BED)]

Abel /'æbel/, Niels Henrik (1802-29), Norwegian mathematician who, in his six productive years, published the first acceptable proof that equations of the fifth degree or above cannot be solved by methods analogous to those that had been known since the 16th c. for solving equations of degree 1, 2, 3 or 4, introduced rigorous argument into the theory of power series, and discovered startling new results on elliptic functions, as a result of which the theory of these and of their generalizations became one of the liveliest areas for 19th-c. mathematical research. After two years of travel, meeting mathematicians in Germany and France, he returned to Norway where he lived in poverty and died of consumption aged 26, at the height of his powers. —**Abelian** /ə'bi:liən/ *adj.*

Abelard /'æbɪlə:d/, Peter (1079-1142), French scholar, theologian, and philosopher, whose lively, restless, independent mind impressed his contemporaries but brought him into frequent conflict with his masters and led to his being twice condemned for heresy. He lectured in Paris until his academic career was cut short in 1118 by the tragic issue of his love affair with his pupil Héloïse, niece of Fulbert, a canon of Notre Dame. Abelard was castrated at Fulbert's instigation; he entered a monastery, and made Héloïse become a nun. Abelard continued his highly controversial teaching, applying reason to the deepest mysteries of the faith, notably the doctrine of the Trinity. His doctrine of the Atonement, emphasizing the love of Christ, manifest in his life and passion, which calls forth a human response of love, has had a continuing influence. The lovers are now buried in one grave in Paris.

Aberdeen /'æbɪ:di:n/ a city and former county in Scotland, humorously credited with an extremely parsimonious population. —**Aberdeen Angus**, an animal of a Scottish breed of black hornless cattle. —**Aberdonian** /-'dɒniən/ *adj.* & *n.*

aberrant /æ'berənt/ *adj.* departing from the normal type or accepted standard. [f. L *aberrare* (AB-, *errare* stray)]

aberration /æ'bɛrɪ'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* 1. departure from what is normal or accepted or regarded as right; a moral or mental lapse. 2. (*Optics*) distortion of an image, the non-convergence of rays of light from a point to a single focus; *chromatic aberration*, a form of aberration due to the fact that light of different colours is refracted by different amounts as it passes through a lens, so that the resulting image is fringed with colours. 3. (*Astron.*) the apparent change in the position of a celestial body caused by the observer's motion and the finite speed of light. As the earth has two motions, there is a *diurnal* as well as an *annual* aberration; *planetary* aberration is effected by the additional element of the motion of the planet itself, during the time occupied by the passage of its light to the earth. [as prec.]

abet /ə'bet/ *v.t.* (-tt-) to encourage or assist (an offender or offence). — **abetter** (in legal use *abettor*) *n.*, **abetment** *n.* [f. OF (*à to, betor* bait)]

abeyance /ə'beɪəns/ *n.* in **abeyance**, (of a right or rule or problem etc.) suspended for a time. [f. OF (*à to, beer* gap)]

abhor /əb'hɔ:(r)/ *v.t.* (-rr-) to detest, to regard with disgust. — **abhorrence** /-hɔ:(r)əns/ *n.* [f. L *abhorere* shrink in dread]

abhorrent /əb'hɔ:(r)ənt/ *adj.* disgusting or hateful (to a person or one's beliefs); not according to (a principle). [as prec.]

abide /ə'baɪd/ *v.t./i.* 1. to tolerate, to endure. 2. (*archaic, past abode or abided*) to remain, to dwell. — **abide by**, to act in accordance with (a promise etc.). [OE]

abiding *adj.* enduring, permanent. [f. prec.]

Abidjan /æbɪ'dʒɑ:n/ the capital and chief port of the Ivory Coast; pop. (est. 1981) 1,686,100.

abigail /'æbɪgeɪl/ *n.* a lady's maid. [character in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*; cf. 1 Sam. 25]

ability /ə'bɪləti/ *n.* the quality that makes an action or process possible; cleverness, talent. [f. OF f. L (*habilis* deft)]

ab initio /æb ɪ'nɪʃiəʊ/ from the beginning. [L]

abject /'æbdʒekt/ *adj.* lacking all pride, made humble; wretched, without resources. — **abjectly** *adv.*, **abjection** /-dʒektʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *abjectus* (AB-, *jacere* throw)]

abjure /əb'dʒʊə(r)/ *v.t.* to renounce or repudiate. — **abjuration** /-tʃʊə(r)ʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *abjurare* deny on oath]

ablative /'æblətɪv/ *n.* (*Gram.*) the case (especially in Latin) that indicates the agent, instrument, or location of an action. — *adj.* (*Gram.*) of or in the ablative. [f. OF or L (*ablatus* carried away)]

ablaut /'æblaʊt/ *n.* a change of vowel in related words (e.g. *sing, sang, sung*), characteristic of Indo-European languages. [G]

ablaze /ə'bleɪz/ *predic. adj.* blazing; glittering; greatly excited. [f. A- + BLAZE]

able /'eɪb(ə)/ *adj.* having the ability or capacity (to do something); clever, talented, competent. — **able-bodied** *adj.* fit and strong. — **ably** *adv.* [f. OF f. L *habilis* deft]

-able *suffix* forming adjectives in sense 'that may' (*comfortable, suitable*), now always in passive sense 'that can, may, or must be -d' (*eatable, payable*), 'that can be made the subject of' (*objectionable*), 'that is relevant to or in accordance with' (*fashionable*). [F, f. L *-abilis*]

ablution /ə'blu:ʃ(ə)n/ *n.* (usu. in *pl.*) ceremonial washing of hands, vessels, etc.; (*colloq.*) ordinary washing of the body, a place for doing this. [f. OF or L *ablutio* (AB-, *luere* wash)]

abnegate /'æbnɪgeɪt/ *v.t.* to give up or renounce (a pleasure or right etc.). — **abnegation** /-geɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *abnegare* refuse]

abnormal /æb'nɔ:m(ə)/ *adj.* different from what is normal. — **abnormally** *adv.*, **abnormality** /-mælɪti/ *n.* [f. F f. Gk (as ANOMALOUS)]

aboard /ə'bɔ:d/ *adv. & prep.* on or into a ship, aircraft, train, etc. [f. A- + BOARD]

abode /ə'bɔ:d/ *n.* (*archaic or literary*) a dwelling-place. [f. ABIDE]

abode /ə'bɔ:d/ *past* of ABIDE.

abolish /ə'bɒlɪʃ/ *v.t.* to put an end to (a custom, institution, etc.). [f. F f. L *abolere* destroy]

abolition /ə'bɒlɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* abolishing, being abolished, especially with reference to capital punishment or (*hist.*) Black slavery and the 19th.-c. movement against this. [F or f. L (as prec.)]

abolitionist *n.* one who favours abolition, especially of capital punishment. [f. prec.]

abominable /ə'bɒmɪnəb(ə)/ *adj.* detestable, loathsome;

(*colloq.*) unpleasant. — **Abominable Snowman**, a large unidentified manlike or bearlike animal said to exist in the Himalayas, a yeti. — **abominably** *adv.* [f. OF f. L (as foll.)]

abominate /ə'bɒmɪneɪt/ *v.t.* to detest, to loathe. [f. L *abominari* deprecate]

abomination /ə'bɒmɪneɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* 1. detesting, loathing, 2. an object of disgust. [f. OF (as prec.)]

aboriginal /ə'bɔ:ri'dʒɪn(ə)/ *adj.* indigenous, inhabiting a land from an early period, especially before the arrival of colonists; directly descended from early inhabitants. — *n.* an aboriginal inhabitant, especially (**Aboriginal**) of Australia (see foll.). [f. L (as foll.)]

aborigines /ə'bɔ:ri'dʒɪnɪz/ *n.pl.* (*sing.* **aborigine** is used informally, but **aboriginal** is preferable) aboriginal inhabitants, especially (**Aborigines**) of Australia. The Australian Aborigines, dark-skinned hunter-gatherers comprising several physically distinct groups, arrived in Australia in prehistoric times and brought with them the dingo. Before the arrival of Europeans they were scattered through the whole continent, including Tasmania. Their languages (except of Tasmania) are related to each other but not, apparently, to any other language family and have no literature of their own; estimated at several hundred in number they are almost or completely extinct, and of those that survive some have only a few hundred speakers in Australia. There are now roughly 160,000 Aborigines in Australia. Having become mostly urbanized many have recently moved to their traditional homeland areas in an attempt to preserve their culture. [L, prob. f. *ab origine* from the beginning]

abort /ə'bɔ:t/ *v.t./i.* 1. to cause an abortion of or to; to undergo abortion. 2. to remain undeveloped, to stop (a growth or disease) in its early stages. 3. to end prematurely and unsuccessfully. [f. L *aboriri* miscarry]

abortion /ə'bɔ:ʃ(ə)n/ *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 stunted or misshapen creature or thing. [as prec.]

abortionist *n.* a person who practices abortion, esp. illegally. [f. prec.]

abortive /ə'bɔ:tɪv/ *adj.* 1. producing abortion. 2. unsuccessful. [f. OF f. L (as ABORT)]

abound /ə'baʊnd/ *v.i.* to be plentiful; to be rich in, to teem with. [f. OF f. L *abundare* overflow]

about /ə'baʊt/ *prep.* 1. in connection with, on the subject of. 2. at a time near to. 3. all round. 4. near to hand. 5. here and there in, at points throughout. — *adv.* 1. approximately. 2. at points near by, here and there. 3. on the move, in action. 4. all round, in every direction. 5. in rotation or succession. (Tending to be replaced in many uses by *around* and *round*.) — **about turn**, a turn made so as to face the opposite direction; a reversal of opinion or policy etc. **be about to**, to intend to (do something) immediately; to be on the point or verge of. [OE (*æ-, bûtan* but)]

above /ə'baʊ/ *n.* 1. over, on the top of, higher than; over the level of. 2. more than. 3. higher in rank or importance etc. than. 4. beyond the reach of; too good etc. for. — *adv.* 1. at or to a higher point, overhead. 2. in addition. 3. further back on a page or in a book. 4. (*rhet.*) in heaven. — *adj.* said, mentioned, or written above. — *n.* that which is above. — **above-board** *adv. & adj.* without concealment, open(ly). **above himself** etc., carried away by high spirits or conceit. [f. A- + OE *bufan* (be by, *ufan* above)]

abracadabra /æbrəkə'dæbrə/ *n.* 1. a supposedly magic formula or spell. 2. gibberish. [L f. Gk; a cabalistic word of a Gnostic sect, supposed when written triangularly, and worn, to cure fevers etc.; it is first found in a poem by Q. Serenus Sammonicus (early 3rd c. AD)]

abrade /ə'breɪd/ *v.t.* to scrape or wear away by rubbing. [f. L *abraderē* (AB-, *radere* scrape)]

abrasion /ə'breɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* scraping or wearing away; an area of damage caused thus. [as prec.]

abrasive /ə'breɪsɪv/ *adj.* 1. causing abrasion; capable of polishing by rubbing or rubbing or grinding. 2. harsh and offensive in manner. — *n.* an abrasive substance. [as ABRASE]

Abraham /'eɪbrəhəm/ the Hebrew patriarch from whom all Jews trace their descent (Gen. 11: 27-25; 10). In Gen. 14 he is made a contemporary of 'Amraphel king of Shinar', who may be Hammurabi (Shinar = Babylon). — **Plains of Abraham**, see separate entry.

abreaction /æbrɪ'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* free expression and release of a previously repressed emotion. [f. AB- + REACTION]

abreast /ə'breɪst/ *adv.* 1. side by side and facing the same

way. **2.** keeping up, not behind (of or with developments). [f. A- + BREST]

abridge /ə'brɪdʒ/ *v.t.* to shorten into fewer words.

abridgement *n.* [f. OF f. L (as ABBREVIATE)]

abroad /ə'brɔ:d/ *adv.* **1.** in or to a foreign country. **2.** over a wide area, in different directions. **3.** in circulation. [f. A- + BROAD]

abrogate /'æbrəgeɪt/ *v.t.* to repeal, to cancel. — **abrogation** /-ˈgeɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *abrogare* (AB-, *rogare* propose law)]

abrupt /ə'brʌpt/ *adj.* **1.** sudden; disjointed, not smooth; curt. **2.** steep, precipitous. — **abruptly** *adv.*, **abruptness** *n.* [f. L *abruptus* (AB-, *rumpere* break)]

abscess /'æbsɪs/ *n.* a swollen area of body tissue in which pus gathers. [f. L *abscessus* a going away (AB-, *cedere* go)]

abscissa /æb'sɪsɪsə/ *n.* (pl. -æ /-i:/) (Math.) a coordinate measured parallel to a horizontal axis. [f. L (AB-, *scindere* cut)]

abscond /əb'skɒnd/ *v.i.* to go away furtively, especially after wrongdoing. — **absconder** *n.* [f. L *abscondere* (AB-, *condere* stow)]

abseil /'æbsel/ *v.i.* to descend a steep rock-face using a doubled rope fixed at a higher point. — *n.* this process. [f. Gk (ab down, *seil* rope)]

absence /'æbs(ə)ns/ *n.* being away, the period of this; non-existence or lack of; inattentiveness (of mind), [as foll.]

absent /'æbs(ə)nt/ *adj.* not present; not existing. — /əb'sent/ *v.refl.* to keep oneself away. — **absent-minded** *adj.* forgetful; with one's mind on other things. — **absently** *adv.* [f. OF or L *absens* (*absesse* be away)]

absentee /'æbs(ə)n'ti:/ *n.* one who absents himself. — **absentee landlord**, one not residing at the property he leases out. — **absenteeism** *n.* [f. prec.]

absinthe /'æbsɪnθ/ *n.* a liqueur originally flavoured with wormwood, now usually with other herbs. [f. F f. L f. Gk *apsinthion*]

absolute /'æbsəlu:t-, -ju:t/ *adj.* complete, perfect; unrestricted, independent; not relative. — **absolute magnitude**, see MAGNITUDE. **absolute majority**, a majority over all rivals combined. **absolute pitch**, the ability to recognize or reproduce exactly the pitch of a note in music. **absolute temperature**, one measured from absolute zero. **absolute zero**, the temperature (-273.15 °C) at which the motion of particles that constitutes heat is at a minimum. [f. L (as ABSOLVE)]

absolutely /'æbsəlu:tli/ *adv.* **1.** completely, utterly, unreservedly. **2.** actually. **3.** in an absolute sense. **4.** /-li:/ quite so, yes. [f. prec.]

absolution /æb'səlu:ʃ(ə)n/ *n.* formal forgiveness of a penitent's sins, declared by a priest. [f. OF f. L (as foll.)]

absolve /əb'sɒlv/ *v.t.* **1.** to clear from or of blame or guilt; to give absolution to. **2.** to free from an obligation. [f. L *absolvere* (AB-, *solvere* loosen)]

absorb /əb'sɔ:b/ *v.t.* to take in, to incorporate as part of itself or oneself; to reduce the effect of, to deal easily with (shock etc.); to engross the attention of. — **absorbency** *n.*, **absorbent** *adj.* & *n.*, **absorption** *n.* [f. F or L *absorbere* (AB-, *sorbere* suck in)]

absorptive /əb'sɔ:p'tɪv/ *adj.* able to absorb things; engrossing. [f. L (as prec.)]

abstain /əb'steɪn/ *v.i.* to restrain oneself, especially from drinking alcohol; to decline to use one's vote. — **abstainer** *n.*, **abstention** *n.* [f. AF f. L *abstinere* withhold]

abstemious /æb'stɪmi:əs/ *adj.* sparing or not self-indulgent, especially in eating and drinking. — **abstemiously** *adv.*, **abstemiousness** *n.* [f. L *abstemius* (AB-, *temetum* strong drink)]

abstinence /'æbstɪnəns/ *n.* abstaining, especially from food or alcohol. — **abstinent** *adj.* [f. OF f. L (as ABSTAIN)]

abstract¹ /'æbstrækt/ *adj.* **1.** having no material existence. **2.** theoretical rather than practical. — *n.* **1.** a summary. **2.** an abstract quality or idea. **3.** an example of abstract art. — **abstract noun**, a noun denoting quality or state. — **abstractly** *adv.*, **abstractness** *n.* [f. OF or L *abstractus* (AB-, *trahere* draw)]

abstract² /'æbstrækt/ *v.t.* **1.** to take out, to remove. **2.** to make a written summary of. — **abstracted** *adj.* inattentive, with one's mind on other things. — **abstractor** *n.* [f. prec.]

abstract art painting or sculpture that dispenses with the physical appearance of the real world and concentrates instead on the relations between form and colour. Although such relations are the structural basis of all artistic design, their elevation into a self-sufficient aesthetic is essentially a

20th-c. phenomenon. The first abstract works of art are generally considered to date from c. 1910-14, and since then abstract art has polarized into two main divisions: hard-edged and geometric (akin to the linear and classical) or flowing and organic (akin to the painterly and romantic).

abstract expressionism a term used to describe the art produced in New York in the 1940s and early 1950s in which large canvases were covered by means of spontaneous painterly gestures whose disposition primarily expressed an intangible emotive feeling as opposed to having any descriptive function. Of its participants de Kooning (1904-) retained some figurative elements, but many others avoided all such reference. Although initially inspired by European surrealism in its use of unconscious inspiration for pictorial creation, it is widely considered to be the first major American contribution to art and had enormous impact in Europe in the 1950s.

abstraction /'æb'strækʃ(ə)n/ *n.* **1.** abstracting, removing. **2.** an abstract idea. **3.** inattentiveness. [F or f. L (as ABSTRACT¹)]

abstruse /'æb'stru:s/ *adj.* hard to understand, profound. — **abstrusely** *adv.*, **abstruseness** *n.* [F or f. L *abstrudere* conceal]

absurd /əb'sɜ:d/ *adj.* wildly inappropriate; ridiculous. — **Theatre of the Absurd**, see THEATRE. — **absurdity** *n.*, **absurdly** *adv.* [F or L (AB-, *surdus* deaf, dull)]

abundant /ə'bʌndənt/ *adj.* more than enough, plenty; rich in. — **abundantly** *adv.*, **abundance** *n.* [f. L (as ABOUND)]

abuse /ə'bju:z/ *v.t.* **1.** to make a bad or wrong use of; to maltreat. **2.** to attack verbally. — /ə'bju:z/ *n.* **1.** misuse; an unjust or corrupt practice. **2.** abusive words, insults. [f. OF f. L (AB-, *uti* use)]

abusive /ə'bju:sv/ *adj.* using insulting language, criticizing harshly. — **abusively** *adv.* [as prec.]

Abu Simbel /æbu:'sɪmb(ə)/ a former village in southern Egypt, site of two rock-cut temples built by Rameses II (13th c. BC), a monument to the greatest of the pharaohs and a constant reminder to possibly restive Nubian tribes of Egypt's might. The great temple, with its façade (31 m, 102 ft., high) bearing four colossal seated statues of Rameses, faces due east, and is dedicated to Amun-Ra and other principal State gods of the period; the small temple is dedicated to Hathor and Nefertari, first wife of Rameses. In 1963 an archaeological salvage operation was begun, comparable in scale to the original construction of the temples, in which engineers sawed up the monument and carried it up the hillside to be rebuilt, with its original orientation, well above the rising waters of Lake Nasser, whose level was affected by the building of the High Dam at Aswan.

abut /ə'bat/ *v.t./i.* (-tt-) to adjoin, to border on; to touch at one side. [f. OF *but* end] & L]

abutment /ə'batmənt/ *n.* a lateral supporting structure of a bridge, arch, etc. (ill. BRIDGES). [f. prec.]

abysmal /ə'bɪz(ə)m(ə)/ *adj.* extremely bad; extreme and deplorable. — **abysmally** *adv.* [f. OF f. L (as ABYSS)]

abyss /ə'bɪs/ *n.* a bottomless or deep chasm; an immeasurable depth. [f. L f. Gk *abussos* bottomless (a- not; *bussos* depth)]

abyssal /ə'bɪs(ə)/ *adj.* at or of the ocean depths or floor, especially those below 1,000 metres containing relatively little marine life. [f. prec.]

Abyssinia /æbɪ'sɪni:ə/ a former name of Ethiopia. — **Abyssinian** *adj.* & *n.*

AC, a.c. *abbr.* alternating current.

Ac *symbol* actinium.

acacia /ə'keɪʃə/ *n.* a tree or shrub of the genus *Acacia*, some members of which yield gum arabic; a related tree, the false acacia or locust-tree (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) grown for ornament. [L f. Gk]

Academe /'ækədi:m/ *n.* (literary) Groves of Academe, a university environment. [f. Gk (as ACADEMY)]

academic /ækə'demɪk/ *adj.* **1.** of a college or university; scholarly as opposed to technical or practical. **2.** not of practical relevance. — *n.* a member of an academic institution. — **academically** *adv.* [f. F or L (as ACADEMY)]

academician /ækə'demɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* a member of an Academy. [f. ACADEMY.]

Académie française /ækə'demi:frã'ez/ a French literary academy with a constant membership of 40, founded by Richelieu in 1635. Its functions include the compilation and periodic revision of a definitive dictionary of the French language, the first edition of which appeared in 1694. Its tendency is to defend traditional literary and linguistic rules

and to discourage innovation. Nevertheless, membership is accounted a high literary honour and is coveted even by unorthodox writers who continue to experiment with the language (see FRENCH). [F. = French Academy]

Academy /ə'kædəmi/ *n.* a park and gymnasium in the outskirts of ancient Athens, sacred to the hero Academus, where Plato founded a school which survived until its dissolution by Justinian in AD 529. The name is applied by extension to the philosophical system of Plato, and also to the philosophical scepticism of the school in the 3rd and 2nd c. BC. **2.** a society of scholars or artists etc.; **the Academy**, the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. — **Academy award**, any of the awards of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Hollywood, USA) given annually for success in the film industry. [f. Gk *Acadēmos*]

academy /ə'kædəmi/ *n.* a school, especially for specialized training; (*Sc.*) a secondary school. [f. prec.]

Acadia /ə'keɪdiə/ a former French colony (*Acadie*; now Nova Scotia) on the eastern seaboard of North America. Founded in 1603, the colony was subject to considerable encroachment from British colonists and much of it was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Some of its French inhabitants withdrew to French territory in the following year, and during the French and Indian War (1754–63) the remainder, who were considered to be a threat to the British position, were forcibly resettled in other British colonies to the south.

Acadian /ə'keɪdiən/ *adj.* of Acadia or Acadians. — *n.* a native or inhabitant of Acadia; a descendant of Acadian immigrants in Louisiana. [f. prec.]

acanthus /ə'kæntʊs/ *n.* a Mediterranean herbaceous plant of the genus *Acanthus*, with prickly leaves; (*Gk Archit.*) a representation of its leaf (ill. TEMPLES). [L f. Gk *akantha* thorn]

ACAS /'eɪkəs/ *abbr.* Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service. The service was set up in 1975 to provide such facilities as a means of avoiding or resolving industrial disputes, and to promote the improvement of collective bargaining.

accede /æk'si:d/ *v.t.* **1.** to take office, to come to the throne. **2.** to agree to (a proposal etc.). [f. L *accedere* (AD-, *cedere* go)]

accelerate /æk'seləreɪt/ *v.t./i.* to move faster or happen earlier; to cause to do this; to increase the speed of a motor vehicle. — **acceleration** /-reɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *accelerare* (AD-, *celer* swift)]

accelerator /æk'seləreɪt(r)/ *n.* a device for increasing speed, a pedal that controls the throttle in a motor vehicle; an apparatus for imparting high speeds to charged particles. [f. prec.]

accelerometer /æk'selə'rɒmɪtə(r)/ *n.* an instrument for measuring acceleration or vibrations. [f. ACCELERATE + -METER]

accent /'æksənt/ *n.* **1.** prominence given to a syllable by stress of pitch. **2.** a mark used with a letter or word to indicate pitch, stress, quality of vowel, etc. **3.** a particular (esp. local or national) mode of pronunciation. **4.** a distinctive feature or emphasis. — **accent** /v.t. **1.** to pronounce with an accent. **2.** to write accents on. **3.** to accentuate. — **accidental** /æk'sentʃ(ə)l/ *adj.* [f. L *accensus* (AD-, *cantus* song)]

accettor /æk'sentə(r)/ *n.* a bird of the genus *Prunella*, e.g. the hedge-sparrow. [L, f. *ad* to + *cantor* singer]

accentuate /æk'sentʃ(ə)l/ *v.t.* to emphasize, to make prominent. — **accentuation** /-tʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L (as ACCENT)]

accept /æk'sept/ *v.t.* **1.** to consent to receive, to take willingly; to answer (an invitation or suitor) affirmatively. **2.** to regard favourably; to tolerate or submit to. **3.** to take as valid. **4.** to undertake (a responsibility etc.). — **acceptance** *n.* [f. OF or L *acceptare* (AD-, *capere* take)]

acceptable *adj.* worth accepting, welcome; tolerable. — **acceptably** *adv.* **acceptability** /-bɪlɪti/ *n.* [as prec.]

access /'ækses/ *n.* **1.** a way in, a means of approaching, reaching, or using. **2.** an outburst of emotion. — *v.t.* **1.** to obtain (data) from a computer; **2.** to accession. [f. OF or L (as ACCEDE)]

accessible /æk'sesɪb(ə)l/ *adj.* that may be reached or obtained. — **accessibility** /-bɪlɪti/ *n.*, **accessibly** *adv.*, [F or f. L (as ACCEDE)]

accession /æk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* **1.** acceding or attaining (to a throne, office, etc.). **2.** a thing added. — *v.t.* to record the addition of (a new item) to a library or museum. [as prec.]

accessory /æk'sesəri/ *n.* **1.** an additional or extra thing; (*usu.*

in *pl.*) a small attachment or fitting. **2.** a person who helps in or is privy to an act, especially a crime. — *adj.* additional, contributing in a minor way. [f. L (as ACCEDE)]

accidence /'æksɪd(ə)ns/ *n.* the part of grammar that deals with the way words are inflected. [f. L. (as f.c.l.)]

accident /'æksɪd(ə)nt/ *n.* an event that is unexpected or without apparent cause; an unintentional act, chance; an unfortunate (esp. a harmful) event. [f. OF f. L *accidens* (AD-, *cadere* fall)]

accidental /'æksɪd(ə)nt(ə)l/ *adj.* happening or done by accident. — *n.* (*Mus.*) a sign indicating temporary departure from a key signature. — **accidentally** *adv.* [f. L (as prec.)]

acclaim /ə'kleɪm/ *v.t.* to welcome with shouts of approval, to applaud enthusiastically; to hail as. — *n.* a shout of applause or welcome. — **acclamation** /æk'kleɪmeɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *acclamare* (AD-, *clamare* shout)]

acclimatize /ə'kleɪmətəɪz/ *v.t./i.* to make or become used to a new climate or conditions. — **acclimatization** /-tʃeɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. F (à to, *climat* climate)]

acclivity /ə'kleɪvɪti/ *n.* an upward slope. [f. L *acclivitas* (AD-, *clivus* slope)]

accolade /ækə'leɪd/ *n.* **1.** bestowal of praise. **2.** a sign at the bestowal of a knighthood, now usually a tap on the shoulder with the flat of a sword. [F (as AD, L *collum* neck)]

accommodate /ə'kɒmədeɪt/ *v.t.* **1.** to provide lodging or room for. **2.** to do a favour to, to oblige or supply (a person with). **3.** to adapt, to harmonize. [f. L *accommodare* (AD-, *commodus* fitting)]

accommodating *adj.* obliging, compliant. [f. prec.]

accommodation /ə'kɒmədeɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* **1.** lodging, living-premises. **2.** adaptation, adjustment; a convenient arrangement. — **accommodation address**, one used on letters to a person unable to give a permanent address. [F or f. L (as ACCOMMODATE)]

accompaniment /ə'kəmpanɪmənt/ *n.* **1.** an instrumental or orchestral part supporting or partnering a solo instrument, voice, or group. **2.** an accompanying thing. [f. F (as ACCOMPANY)]

accompanist /ə'kəmpanɪst/ *n.* one who plays a musical accompaniment. [f. foll.]

accompany /ə'kəmpanɪ/ *v.t.* **1.** to go with, to travel with as a companion or helper; to be done or found with. **2.** to provide in addition. **3.** (*Mus.*) to support or partner with an accompaniment. [f. F (as COMPANION)]

accomplice /ə'kəmplɪs/ *n.* a partner in crime or wrongdoing. [f. F *complice* f. L (*complex* confederate)]

accomplish /ə'kəmplɪʃ/ *v.t.* to succeed in doing, to complete. [f. OF f. L (AD-, *complere* complete)]

accomplished /ə'kəmplɪʃt/ *adj.* skilled, having many accomplishments. [f. prec.]

accomplishment /ə'kəmplɪʃmənt/ *n.* **1.** an acquired skill, especially a social one. **2.** accomplishing, completion. **3.** a thing achieved. [f. ACCOMPLISH]

accord /ə'kɔ:d/ *v.t./i.* **1.** to be consistent with. **2.** to grant, to give. — *n.* conformity, agreement. — **of one's own accord**, without being asked or compelled. [f. F f. L *cor* heart]

accordance /ə'kɔ:d(ə)ns/ *n.* conformity, agreement. — **accordant** *adj.* [as prec.]

according adv. **according as**, in a manner or to a degree that varies as. **according to**, in a manner corresponding to; as stated by. [f. ACCORD]

accordingly adv. as the (stated) circumstances suggest. [f. prec.]

accordion /ə'kɔ:dɪən/ *n.* a portable musical instrument with bellows, metal reeds, and keys and/or buttons. — **accordionist** *n.* [f. G. f. It. *accordare* tune]

accost /ə'kɒst/ *v.t.* to approach and speak to; (of a prostitute) to solicit. [f. F f. It. f. L *costa* rib]

account /ə'kaunt/ *n.* **1.** a statement of money, goods, or services received or expended; a credit or similar business arrangement with a bank or firm; a record of this. **2.** a description, a report. **3.** importance, advantage. **4.** a reckoning. — *v.t./i.* to regard as. — **account for**, to give a reckoning of; to provide or serve as an explanation for; to kill or overcome. **on account of**, because of. [f. OF *aconter* (AD-, *conter* count)]

accountable adj. having to account (for one's actions); explicable. — **accountability** /-bɪlɪti/ *n.* [f. prec.]

accountant *n.* one who keeps or examines business accounts. — **accountancy** *n.* [as ACCOUNT]

accounting *n.* keeping or examining accounts; accountancy. [f. ACCOUNT]

accoutrements /ə'ku:trəmənts/ *n.pl.* equipment, trappings. [F]

Accra /ə'kra:/ the capital of Ghana, a port on the Gulf of Guinea; pop. (est. 1980) 998,800.

accredit /ə'kredit/ *v.t.* to attribute, to credit (with a saying etc.); to send (an ambassador etc.) with credentials; to gain belief or influence for. — **accreditation** /-teɪf(ə)n/ *n.*, **accredited** *adj.* [f. F (as AD-, CREDIT)]

accretion /ə'kri:(ə)n/ *n.* a growth or increase by gradual addition; matter added, adhesion of this. [f. L *accretio* (AD-, *crecere* grow)]

accrue /ə'kru:/ *v.t./i.* to come as a natural increase or advantage; to accumulate. [f. AF f. L (as prec.)]

accumulate /ə'kjum:juleɪt/ *v.t./i.* to get more and more of; to increase in quantity or mass. — **accumulation** /-leɪf(ə)n/ *n.* [f. L *accumulare* (AD-, *cumulus* heap)]

accumulator /ə'kjuz:mjuleɪtə(r)/ *n.* 1. a rechargeable electric cell, a storage battery. 2. a bet placed on a series of events with winnings from each staked on the next. 3. a storage register in a computer. [f. prec.]

accurate /ækjʊərət/ *adj.* precise, conforming exactly to a standard or to truth. — **accuracy** *n.*, **accurately** *adv.* [f. L *accuratus* done carefully (AD-, *curare* care)]

accursed /ə'kɜ:sɪd/ *adj.* lying under a curse; (*colloq.*) detestable, annoying. [OE (A-, CURSE)]

accusation /ækju:'zeɪf(ə)n/ *n.* 1. a statement accusing a person. 2. accusing, being accused. [f. OF (as ACCUSE)]

accusative /ə'kjuz:ətɪv/ *n.* (*Gram.*) the case expressing the object of a verb or preposition. — *adj.* (*Gram.*) of or in the accusative. [f. OF or L]

accusatorial /ækju:'zə:tɔ:riəl/ *adj.* (of procedure) in which the prosecutor is distinct from the judge (opp. *inquisitorial*). [f. L (as ACCUSE)]

accusatory /ə'kjuz:ətəri/ *adj.* of or conveying an accusation. [f. L (as foll.)]

accuse /ə'kju:z/ *v.t.* to state that one lays the blame for a fault or crime etc. upon. — **accuser** *n.* (f. OF f. L *accusare* (AD-, *causa* cause))

accustom /ə'kʌstəm/ *v.t.* to make or become used to. [f. OF f. L (as CUSTOM)]

accustomed /ə'kʌstəmd/ *adj.* customary; used to. [f. prec.]

ace /eis/ *n.* 1. a playing-card etc. with one spot. 2. one who excels in some activity. 3. a stroke in tennis (especially a service) that is too good for an opponent to return. 4. a point scored in rackets, badminton, etc. — **within an ace of**, on the verge of. [f. OF f. L as one]

Aceldama /ə'keldəmə/ a field near ancient Jerusalem purchased for a cemetery with the blood-money received by Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27: 8, Acts 1: 19). [Aram., = field of blood]

acerbity /ə'sɜ:biti/ *n.* 1. sharpness in speech or manner. 2. sourness. [f. L *acerbus* sour-tasting]

acetate /'æstɪt/ *n.* 1. a salt or ester of acetic acid, especially its cellulose ester used to make textiles and gramophone records. 2. fabric made from cellulose acetate. [f. foll.]

acetic /ə'si:tɪk/ *adj.* of or like vinegar. — **acetic acid**, the acid that gives vinegar its characteristic taste and smell. [f. F f. L *acetum* vinegar]

acetone /'æsitəʊn/ *n.* a colourless volatile liquid that dissolves organic compounds. [f. prec.]

acetylene /ə'setli:n/ *n.* a hydrocarbon gas that burns with a bright flame used for cutting and welding metal. [as prec.]

Achaea /ə'ki:ə/ 1. a district of ancient Greece comprising SE Thessaly and the north coast of the Peloponnese. 2. a Roman province comprising all the southern part of Greece.

Achaean /ə'ki:ən/ *adj.* of Achaea or the Achaeans. — *n.* 1. (in the Homeric poems) a Greek. 2. (in classical times) an inhabitant of Achaea. [f. prec.]

Achaemenid /ə'ki:mənid/ *adj.* of the ruling dynasty in Persia 553–330 BC, descendants of the eponymous founder Achaemenes, that ended with the defeat of Darius III by Alexander the Great. — *n.* a member of this dynasty.

Achates /ə'kætɪz/ (*Gk & Rom. legend*) a companion of Aeneas. His fidelity to his friend was so exemplary as to become proverbial (*fidus* (= faithful) *Achates*).

ache /eɪk/ *n.* a continuous or prolonged dull pain or mental distress. — *v.i.* to suffer or be the source of this. — **achy** *adj.* [f. OE. Dr Johnson is mainly responsible for the modern spelling, as he erroneously derived *ache* and the earlier form *ake* from Gk *akhos* (= pain, distress) and declared that the latter was 'more grammatically written *ache*']

achene /ə'ki:n/ *n.* a small dry one-seeded fruit that does not open, e.g. a strawberry pip. [f. Gk a not, *khainō* gape]

Acheulian /ə'ʃju:liən/ *adj.* of the later stages of the lower palaeolithic hand-axe industries in Europe, named after the type-site at St Acheul near Amiens in northern France. The hand-axes of this period are differentiated from those of the preceding Abbevillian by the use of an implement made of wood, antler, or bone to hammer flakes off a flint, giving these a less rough appearance than that produced by a hard stone. In Africa, where the industry seems to have originated, and where it survived much longer than elsewhere, the entire lower palaeolithic hand-axe sequence is referred to as Acheulian, with the African lower Acheulian representing the Abbevillian of Europe; remains occur at Olduvai Gorge in northern Tanzania and at Kalambo Falls near the SE end of Lake Tanganyika. The industries as a whole are dated to c. 500,000–200,000 BC. — *n.* this industry. [f. St Acheul]

achieve /ə'tʃi:v/ *v.t.* to reach or attain by effort; to earn (a reputation etc.); to accomplish. [f. OF (a *chief* to a head)]

achievement /ə'tʃi:vmənt/ *n.* 1. something achieved; an act of achieving. 2. (in heraldry) an escutcheon with adjuncts, or a bearing, especially in memory of a distinguished feat (ill. HERALDRY). [f. prec.]

Achilles /ə'kɪli:z/ (*Gk legend*) a hero of the Trojan War, son of Peleus and Thetis. During his infancy his mother plunged him in the Styx, thus making his body invulnerable except for the heel by which she held him. He was wounded in the heel during the Trojan war by an arrow shot by Paris, and died of this wound. — **Achilles' heel**, a weak or vulnerable point. **Achilles' tendon**, a tendon attaching the calf muscles to the heel.

achromatic /æk'rə'mætɪk/ *adj.* (in optics) free from colour; transmitting light without decomposing it into constituent colours. [f. F f. Gk (a not, CHROMATIC)]

acid /'æsid/ *n.* any of a class of substances that contain hydrogen and neutralize alkalis, turn blue litmus red, and of which the principal types are sour and able to corrode or dissolve metals (see below); any sour substance. — *adj.* sharp-tasting, sour; looking or sounding bitter. — **acid rain**, rain made acid by contamination, especially by waste gases from power stations, factories, etc. **acid test**, a crucial and conclusive test. (ACID is applied to a metal to test whether it is gold or not.) — **acidic** /ə'sɪdɪk/ *adj.*, **acidity** /ə'sɪdɪti/ *n.* [f. F or L (*acere* be sour)]

The term was originally applied to the stony 'mineral acids', such as sulphuric acid, whose properties were attributed in the 17th c. to their consisting of particles with sharp points. Many organic compounds, however, also show acidic properties. The commonest modern definition of an acid is a substance which releases hydrogen ions when dissolved in water (or, by extension, in other alkaline substances), producing salts. Acids are now recognized as substances which are donors of hydrogen ions or protons or acceptors of electron pairs, but an unequivocal definition of the term has yet to be found. Acids play a highly important role in industry. Among the most useful mineral acids are sulphuric acid, which is the electrolyte commonly used in car batteries; hydrochloric acid, which is used in ore reduction, metal cleaning, and food processing; and nitric acid, which is used in the manufacture of explosives and fertilizers.

acidify /ə'sɪdɪfaɪ/ *v.t.* to make or become sour. [f. ACID]

acidosis /æ'sɪdəʊsɪs/ *n.* an over-acid condition of blood or body tissue. [as prec.]

acidulate /ə'sɪdjuleɪt/ *v.t.* to make somewhat acid. [f. L *acidulus* somewhat sour]

acidulous /ə'sɪdʊləs/ *adj.* somewhat acid. [as prec.]

acknowledge /ə'kɒnldɪz/ *v.t.* 1. to agree to the truth or validity of, to admit. 2. to report the receipt of. 3. to show appreciation of. — **acknowledgement** *n.* [f. obs. v. *knowledge*]

acme /'ækmɪ/ *n.* the highest point, the point of perfection. [Gk, = highest point]

acne /'æknɪ/ *n.* inflammation of the oil-glands of the skin, producing red pimples. [f. erron. Gk *aknas* for *akmas* (*akmē* facial eruption; cf. prec.)]

acolyte /'ækələt/ *n.* a person assisting a priest in certain church services; an assistant. [f. OF or L f. Gk *akolouthos* follower]

Aconcagua /ækən'ka:gwa:/ the highest mountain in South America (6,960 m, 22,834 ft.) in the Andes of Argentina. It is an extinct volcano.

aconite /'æknaɪt/ *n.* a perennial plant of the buttercup family (genus *Aconitum*) with a poisonous root; a drug obtained from this. — **winter aconite**, a yellow-flowered plant of the genus *Eranthis*, blooming in winter. [f. F or L f. Gk]

acorn /'eɪkɔ:n/ *n.* the fruit of the oak-tree, with a cup-like base. [OE]

acoustic /ə'kustɪk/ *adj.* of sound or the sense of hearing; of acoustics. — *n.* acoustics. — **acoustic guitar**, see GUITAR. **acoustics** *n.pl.* the properties or qualities (of a room etc.) affecting the transmission of sound; (as *sing.*) the science of sound. (See *ill. SOUND*). — **acoustical** *adj.*, **acoustically** *adv.* [f. Gk (*akouō* hear)]

acquaint /ə'kwɛɪnt/ *v.t.* to make aware or familiar. — **be acquainted with**, to know slightly. [f. OF f. L *accognitare* (AD-, *cognoscere* know)]

acquaintance *n.* 1. being acquainted. 2. a person one knows slightly. [as *prec.*]

acquiesce /ækwi'ɛs/ *v.i.* to agree (tacitly), to raise no objection. — **acquiesce in**, to accept (an arrangement etc.). — **acquiescence** *n.*, **acquiescent** *adj.* [f. L *acquiescere* (AD-, *quiescere* rest)]

acquire /ə'kwɪə(r)/ *v.t.* to gain by and for oneself. — **acquire taste**, a liking gained by experience, not instantly. — **acquisition** /ækwi'zɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.* [f. OF f. L *acquirere* (AD-, *quaerere* seek)]

acquisitive /ə'kwɪzɪtɪv/ *adj.* keen to acquire things. — **acquisitively** *adv.*, **acquisitiveness** *n.* [f. L (as *prec.*)]

acquit /ə'kwɪt/ *v.t.* (—tt-) to declare (a person) to be not guilty (of an offence etc.). — **acquit oneself**, to perform, to conduct oneself. [f. OF f. L *acquitare* pay debt]

acquittal /ə'kwɪt(ə)l/ *n.* 1. a verdict acquitting a person. 2. performance (of a duty). [f. *prec.*]

Acre /'eɪkə(r)/ a sea port of Israel. It was captured by the Christians in the Third Crusade in 1191, and recaptured, the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, in 1291.

acre /'eɪkə(r)/ *n.* a measure of land, originally as much as a yoke of oxen could plough in a day, afterwards limited by statute to 4840 sq. yds. (0.405 ha); a stretch of land. [OE]

acreage /'eɪkərɪdʒ/ *n.* the total number of acres; an extent of land. [f. *prec.*]

acrid /'ækrɪd/ *adj.* bitterly pungent; bitter in manner or temper. — **acridity** /ə'krɪdɪtɪ/ *n.* [f. L *acer* keen]

acrimonious /ækri'mɔ:niəs/ *adj.* bitter in manner or temper. — **acrimoniously** *adv.*, **acrimony** /'ækrɪmɔ:ni/ *n.* [f. F or L (as ACRID)]

acrobat /'ækroʊbæt/ *n.* a performer of spectacular gymnastic feats. — **acrobatic** /-'brætɪk/ *adj.*, **acrobatically** *adv.* [f. F f. Gk (*akron* summit, *baínō* walk)]

acrobatics /'ækroʊbætiks/ *n.pl.* acrobatic feats. [f. *prec.*]

acronym /'ækronɪm/ *n.* a word formed from the initial letters of other words, e.g. *Nato*, *laser*. [f. Gk *akron* extremity, *onoma* name]

acropolis /ə'krɒpəlɪs/ *n.* the citadel or upper fortified part of an ancient Greek city. — **the Acropolis**, that at Athens, containing the Parthenon, Erechtheum, and other noted buildings, mostly dating from the 5th c. ac. [f. Gk *akron* summit, *polis* city]

across /ə'krɒs/ *prep.* & *adv.* 1. from side to side (of). 2. to or on the other side (of). 3. forming a cross with. 4. so as to be understood or accepted. — **across the board**, applying to all. **come or run across**, to meet or find by chance. [f. OF (*croix* cross)]

acrostic /ə'krɒstɪk/ *n.* a word-puzzle or poem in which certain letters (usually the first or first and last in each line) form word(s). [f. F or Gk (*akron* end, *stikhos* row)]

acrylic /'ækrɪlɪk/ *adj.* of material made from a synthetic polymer derived from acrylic acid. — *n.* an acrylic fibre, plastic, or resin. — **acrylic acid**, an unsaturated organic acid. [f. L *acer* pungent, *olère* smell]

ACT *abbr.* Australian Capital Territory.

act *n.* 1. a thing done; the process of doing something. 2. a piece of entertainment. 3. a pretence. 4. a main division of a play or opera. 5. a decree or law made by a parliament. — *v.t./i.* x. to perform actions, to behave; to perform functions; to have an effect. 2. to be an actor or actress. 3. to perform (a part) in a play etc.; to portray by actions. — **act of God**, the operation of uncontrollable natural forces. **Acts (of the Apostles)**, a book of the New Testament immediately following the Gospels, relating the early history of the Church and dealing largely with the lives and work of St

Peter and St Paul. It is traditionally ascribed to St Luke. [f. OF & L *actus* (*agere* do)]

Actaeon /ækt'i:ən, 'æ-k-/ (*Gk myth.*) a hunter who, because he accidentally saw Artemis bathing, was changed into a stag and killed by his own hounds.

actinic /ækt'ɪnɪk/ *adj.* having photochemical properties, as of short-wavelength radiation. [f. Gk *aktis* ray]

actinide /æktɪnaɪd/ *n.* any of a series of fifteen radioactive metallic elements ranging from actinium (atomic number 89) to lawrencium (103). [f. *follow.*]

actinium /æktɪ'nɪəm/ *n.* a radioactive metallic element, symbol Ac, atomic number 89, which occurs in pitchblende. It was first discovered in 1899. [f. Gk *aktis* ray]

action /'æktʃ(ə)n/ *n.* 1. the process of doing or performing, exertion of energy or influence. 2. a thing done; a series of events in a drama etc. 3. a battle, fighting. 4. a way of moving or functioning, the mechanism of an instrument. 5. a lawsuit. — **action replay**, a play-back (at normal speed or in slow motion) of a televised incident in a sports match. **out of action**, not working. [f. OF f. L (as ACT)]

actionable *adj.* providing ground for an action at law. [f. *prec.*]

action painting abstract painting in which the artist applies paint by random actions. The term was first used in 1952 to describe the approach to art of certain New York painters. Although it is often used as a synonym for abstract expressionism, not all the artists associated with the latter can be considered as action painters.

activate /'æktɪveɪt/ *v.t.* 1. to make active. 2. to make radioactive. — **activation** /-'veɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.*, **activator** *n.* [f. *follow.*]

active /'æktɪv/ *adj.* 1. *n.* consisting, or characterized by action, energetic; working, operative; having an effect. 2. radioactive. 3. (*Gram.*) attributing the action of the verb to the person or thing whence it proceeds (e.g. in *we saw him*). — *n.* (*Gram.*) the active voice or form of a verb. — **active voice**, (*Gram.*) that comprising the active forms of verbs. — **actively** *adv.*, **activeness** *n.* [f. OF or L (as ACT)]

activist /'æktɪvɪst/ *n.* one who follows a policy of vigorous action in a cause, especially in politics. — **activism** *n.* [f. *prec.*]

activity /æk'tɪvɪtɪ/ *n.* 1. being active, the exertion of energy. 2. a sphere or kind of action. 3. (esp. in *pl.*) actions, occupations. 4. radioactivity. [as ACTIVE]

actor *n.* a performer in a drama, film, etc. — **actress** *n.fem.* [L, = *doer* (as ACT)]

actual /'æktʃʊəl/ *adj.* existing in fact, real; current. [f. OF f. L (as ACT)]

actuality /æktʃʊ'æltɪ/ *n.* reality; (in *pl.*) existing conditions. [f. *prec.*]

actually /'æktʃʊəli/ *adv.* 1. really. 2. at present. 3. strange as it may seem. [f. ACTUAL]

actuary /'æktʃʊəri/ *n.* an expert in statistics, especially one who calculates insurance risks and premiums. — **actuarial** /-'tʃʊəriəl/ *adj.* [f. L *actuarius* bookkeeper]

actuate /'æktʃʊeɪt/ *v.t.* to activate (a movement or process), to cause to function; to cause (a person) to act. — **actuation** /-'tʃʊeɪʃ(ə)n/ *n.*, **actuator** *n.* [f. L (as ACTUAL)]

acuity /ə'kju:əti/ *n.* sharpness, acuteness. [f. F or L (as ACUTE)]

acumen /'ækju:mən/ *n.* shrewdness. [L, = sharp thing]

acupuncture /'ækju:pʌŋktʃə(r)/ *n.* a method (originating in China) of pricking the tissues of the body with fine needles as medical treatment or to relieve pain. — **acupuncturist** *n.* [f. L *acu* with a needle + PUNCTURE]

acute /ə'kju:t/ *adj.* 1. sharp or severe in its effect. 2. shrewd, perceptive. 3. (of a disease) not chronic, coming to a crisis. 4. (of sound) high, shrill. — **acute accent**, a mark (´) over a vowel to show its quality or length. **acute angle**, one of less than 90°. — **acutely** *adv.*, **acuteness** *n.* [f. L *acutus* (*acuere* sharpen)]

AD *abbr.* of the Christian era. [abbr. of ANNO DOMINI]

ad *n.* (*colloq.*) an advertisement. [abbr.]

ad- *prefix* (usu. assimilated to **ac-** before *c, k, q*, to **af-** before *f, g, l, n, p, r, s, t*; reduced to **a-** before *sc, sp, st*) implying motion or direction to; change into; addition, adherence, increase; simple intensification. [f. OF or L *ad* to]

adage /'ædɪdʒ/ *n.* a traditional maxim, a proverb. [F f. L *adagium* (*ad* to, *aiere* say)]

adagio /'ædɑ:ʒɪə/ *adv.* (*Mus.*) in slow time. — *n.* (*pl.* -os) (*Mus.*) a movement to be played in this way. [It.]

Adam /'ædəm/ (in Hebrew tradition) the first man.