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柯林斯最新英语词典

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ENGLISH DICTIONARY

- ◆ Invaluable writing style guide
- ◆ Full coverage of new words

◆ 北京大学出版社



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ENGLISH DICTIONARY

- Irregular verb and phrasal verb guide
- Full coverage of new words

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ENGLISH

DICTIONARY

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BANK *of* ENGLISH

This dictionary has been compiled by referring to the Bank of English, a unique database of the English language with examples of over 320 million words enabling Collins lexicographers to analyse how English is actually used today and how it is changing. This is the evidence on which the changes in this dictionary are based.

The Bank of English was set up as a joint initiative by HarperCollins Publishers and Birmingham University to be a resource for language research and lexicography. It contains a very wide range of material from books, newspapers, radio, TV, magazines, letters, and talks reflecting the whole spectrum of English today. Its size and range make it an unequalled resource and the purpose-built software for its analysis is unique to Collins Dictionaries.

This ensures that Collins Dictionaries accurately reflect English as it is used today in a way that is most helpful to the dictionary user as well as including the full range of rarer and historical words and meanings.

FOREWORD

Collins New English Dictionary is an entirely new addition to the Collins range. It is practical, up to date, easy to use, and easy to understand. An open, modern layout makes the dictionary a pleasure to read. Every word defined is given as a main entry in a single alphabetical sequence. Every definition is presented in concise straightforward English. Where a word has more than one sense, the one given first is the normal everyday meaning in today's language. Other senses of a word - for example, historical and technical senses - are explained after the main present-day meaning. Each sense is separately numbered, so that it is easy to see how many different senses a word has and to find the one required.

The entries show the spelling and meaning of each word. Other features which make this dictionary particularly helpful include simple pronunciations for words that may be unfamiliar. Etymologies give information about the origins of words. Guidance is also given on appropriate levels of usage: for example, some uses are appropriate only in informal contexts, others in extremely formal contexts. These are clearly marked. Words and meanings that have gone out of use are labelled *obsolete* or *archaic*: they are included in the dictionary if they are common in the literature of the past. In addition up-to-date usage notes give clear and helpful guidance on such things as words that are often confused, and on acceptable and unacceptable usage. The evidence for these has been collected from the Bank of English.

New words and senses have been gathered through the Collins language monitoring programme. There is also specialist vocabulary from subjects such as science, technology, and computing. Particular attention has been paid to the terms used in school examinations, including GCSE. There is extensive coverage of the vocabulary of chemistry, biology, and physics.

In compiling this dictionary the lexicographers have been able to consult the Bank of English, a unique computer-based collection of over 320 million words of written and spoken English. By analysing this data, the lexicographers have ensured that the dictionary user is given the most up-to-date information about how English is written and spoken today. Thousands of examples have been taken from real English to help illustrate meaning within the definitions.

Collins New English Dictionary also contains the Good Writing Guide. This is an invaluable aid for anyone who wants to write clear and effective English. It is particularly useful for writing official letters or for people who have to write reports in the course of their jobs. As well as rules and tips on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage, there are helpful sections on writing official letters and business reports.

Collins New English Dictionary offers clear, straightforward help that enables the user to read and write correctly and confidently.

FEATURES OF THE DICTIONARY

Entry Word	<p>direct current <i>n</i> an electric current that flows in one direction only.</p> <p>direct debit <i>n</i> an order given to a bank or other financial institution by an account holder to pay an amount of money from the account to a specified person or company at regular intervals.</p>
Definition	<p>direction <i>n</i> 1 the course or line along which a person or thing moves, points, or lies. 2 management or guidance: <i>the campaign was successful under his direction.</i> 3 <u>the work of a stage or film director.</u></p> <p>directional <i>adj</i> 1 of or showing direction. 2 <i>Electronics</i> (of an aerial) transmitting or receiving radio waves more effectively in some directions than in others.</p> <p>directions <i>pl n</i> instructions for doing something or for reaching a place.</p> <p>directive <i>n</i> an instruction; order.</p>
Part of Speech	<p>directly <i>adv</i> 1 in a direct manner. 2 at once; without delay. 3 immediately or very soon: <i>I'll do that directly.</i> > <i>conj</i> 4 as soon as: <i>we left directly the money arrived.</i></p> <p>direct object <i>n</i> <i>Grammar</i> a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase denoting the person or thing receiving the direct action of a verb. For example, <i>a book</i> in <i>They bought Anne a book.</i></p> <p>director <i>n</i> 1 a person or thing that directs or controls. 2 a member of the governing board of a business, trust, etc. 3 the person responsible for the artistic and technical aspects of the making of a film or television programme. directorial <i>adj</i> directorship <i>n</i></p>
Related Word	<p>directoriate <i>n</i> 1 a board of directors. 2 the position of director.</p>
Spelling Help	<p>director-general <i>n, pl directors-general</i> a person in overall charge of certain large organizations.</p> <p>director's chair <i>n</i> a light wooden folding chair with a canvas seat and back.</p>
Specialist Subject Label	<p>directory <i>n, pl -ries</i> 1 a book listing names, addresses, and telephone numbers of individuals or business companies. 2 <i>Computers</i> an area of a disk containing the names and locations of the files it currently holds.</p> <p>direct speech <i>n</i> the reporting of what someone has said by quoting the exact words.</p> <p>direct tax <i>n</i> a tax paid by the person or organization on which it is levied.</p> <p>dirge <i>n</i> 1 a chant of lamentation for the dead. 2 any mournful song. [Latin <i>dirige</i> direct (imperative), opening word of antiphon used in the office of the dead]</p>
Cross-Reference	<p>dirigible (<i>dir-rij-jib-b1</i>) <i>adj</i> 1 able to be steered. > <i>n</i> 2 same as airship. [Latin <i>dirigere</i> to direct]</p> <p>dirk <i>n</i> a dagger, formerly worn by Scottish Highlanders. [Scot. <i>durk</i>]</p> <p>dirndl <i>n</i> 1 a woman's dress with a full gathered skirt and fitted bodice. 2 a gathered skirt of this kind. [from German]</p> <p>dirt <i>n</i> 1 any unclean substance, such as mud; filth. 2 loose earth; soil. 3 packed earth, cinders, etc., used to make a racetrack. 4 obscene speech or writing. 5 <i>Informal</i> harmful gossip. [Old Norse <i>drit</i> excrement]</p>
Regional Label	<p>dirt-cheap <i>adj, adv</i> at an extremely low price.</p> <p>dirt-poor <i>adj</i> <i>Chiefly US</i> extremely poor.</p> <p>dirt track <i>n</i> a racetrack made of packed earth or cinders.</p>

dirty <i>adj</i> dirtier , dirtiest 1 covered or marked with dirt; filthy. 2 causing one to become grimy: <i>a dirty job</i> . 3 (of a colour) not clear and bright. 4 unfair, dishonest, or unkind: <i>dirty tricks</i> . 5 a obscene: <i>dirty jokes</i> . b sexually clandestine: <i>a dirty weekend</i> . 6 revealing dislike or anger: <i>a dirty look</i> . 7 (of weather) rainy or stormy. 8 dirty work unpleasant or illicit activity. > n 9 do the dirty on <i>Informal</i> to behave meanly towards. > <i>vb</i> dirtyies , dirtying , dirtyed 10 to make dirty; soil. dirtiness <i>n</i>	Sense Number
dis <i>vb</i> dissing , dissed <i>Slang</i> , chiefly US same as diss .	
dis- <i>prefix</i> indicating: 1 reversal: <i>disconnect</i> . 2 negation or lack: <i>dissimilar</i> ; <i>disgrace</i> . 3 removal or release: <i>disembowel</i> .	
disability <i>n</i> , <i>pl -ties</i> 1 a severe physical or mental illness that restricts the way a person lives his or her life. 2 something that disables someone.	
disable <i>vb</i> -abling , -abled to make ineffective, unfit, or incapable. disablement <i>n</i>	Spelling Help
disabled <i>adj</i> lacking one or more physical powers, such as the ability to walk or to coordinate one's movements.	
USAGE The use of <i>the disabled</i> , <i>the blind</i> , etc. can be offensive and should be avoided. Instead you should talk about <i>disabled people</i> , <i>blind people</i> , etc.	Usage Note
disabuse <i>vb</i> -abusing , -abused to rid (someone) of a mistaken idea: <i>Arnold felt unable to disabuse her of her prejudices</i> .	
disaccharide (<i>die-sack-a-ride</i>) <i>n</i> a sugar, such as sucrose, whose molecules consist of two linked monosaccharides.	Pronunciation
disadvantage <i>n</i> 1 an unfavourable or harmful circumstance. 2 at a disadvantage in a less favourable position than other people: <i>he continued to insist that he was at a disadvantage at the hearings</i> . disadvantageous <i>adj</i>	Fixed Phrase
disadvantaged <i>adj</i> socially or economically deprived.	
disaffected <i>adj</i> having lost loyalty to or affection for someone or something; alienated. disaffection <i>n</i>	
disagree <i>vb</i> -greeing , -greed 1 to have differing opinions or argue about (something). 2 to fail to correspond; conflict. 3 to cause physical discomfort to: <i>curry disagrees with me</i> .	
disagreeable <i>adj</i> 1 (of an incident or situation) unpleasant. 2 (of a person) bad-tempered or disobliging. disagreeably <i>adv</i>	Example
disagreement <i>n</i> 1 refusal or failure to agree. 2 a difference between results, totals, etc., which shows that they cannot all be true. 3 an argument.	
disallow <i>vb</i> to reject as untrue or invalid; cancel.	
disappear <i>vb</i> 1 to cease to be visible; vanish. 2 to go away or become lost, esp. without explanation. 3 to cease to exist: <i>the pain has disappeared</i> . disappearance <i>n</i>	
disappoint <i>vb</i> 1 to fail to meet the expectations or hopes of; let down. 2 to prevent the fulfilment of (a plan, etc.); frustrate. [Old French <i>desappointier</i>] disappointed <i>adj</i> disappointing <i>adj</i>	Word Origin
disappointment <i>n</i> 1 the feeling of being disap-	

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE DICTIONARY

<i>abbrev.</i>	abbreviation	<i>Med</i>	Medicine
<i>adj</i>	adjective	<i>Meteorol</i>	Meteorology
<i>adv</i>	adverb(ial)	<i>Mil</i>	Military
<i>Anat</i>	Anatomy	<i>Myth</i>	Mythology
<i>Anthropol</i>	Anthropology	<i>n</i>	noun
<i>Archaeol</i>	Archaeology	<i>N</i>	North(ern)
<i>Archit</i>	Architecture	<i>Naut</i>	Nautical
<i>Astrol</i>	Astrology	<i>NE</i>	Northeast(ern)
<i>Astron</i>	Astronomy	<i>NW</i>	Northwest(ern)
<i>Austral</i>	Australian	<i>NZ</i>	New Zealand
<i>Bacteriol</i>	Bacteriology	<i>obs.</i>	obsolete
<i>Biochem</i>	Biochemistry	<i>orig.</i>	originally
<i>Biol</i>	Biology	<i>Ornithol</i>	Ornithology
<i>Bot</i>	Botany	<i>Pathol</i>	Pathology
<i>Brit</i>	British	<i>Pharmacol</i>	Pharmacology
<i>C</i>	Celsius	<i>Photog</i>	Photography
<i>Canad</i>	Canadian	<i>Physiol</i>	Physiology
<i>cap</i>	capital	<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>cent.</i>	century	<i>pp</i>	past participle
<i>Chem</i>	Chemistry	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>comp.</i>	comparative	<i>prob.</i>	probably
<i>conj</i>	conjunction	<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>Crystallog</i>	Crystallography	<i>Psychoanal</i>	Psychoanalysis
<i>dim.</i>	diminutive	<i>Psychol</i>	Psychology
<i>E</i>	East(ern)	<i>pt</i>	past tense
<i>Econ</i>	Economics	<i>RC</i>	Roman Catholic
<i>esp.</i>	especially	<i>rel.</i>	related
<i>etc.</i>	et cetera	<i>S</i>	South(ern)
<i>F</i>	Fahrenheit	<i>Scot</i>	Scots, Scottish
<i>fem</i>	feminine	<i>SE</i>	Southeast(ern)
<i>foll.</i>	followed	<i>sing</i>	singular
<i>Geog</i>	Geography	<i>SW</i>	Southwest(ern)
<i>Geol</i>	Geology	<i>Theol</i>	Theology
<i>Geom</i>	Geometry	<i>ult.</i>	ultimately
<i>imit.</i>	imitative	<i>US</i>	United States
<i>infl.</i>	influence(d)	<i>var.</i>	variant
<i>interj</i>	interjection	<i>vb</i>	verb
<i>lit.</i>	literally	<i>W</i>	West(ern)
<i>masc</i>	masculine	<i>Zool</i>	Zoology
<i>Maths</i>	Mathematics		

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ENGLISH DICTIONARY

- ✓ This dictionary reflects today's language, with modern meanings first
- ✓ The definitions are written in clear, straightforward language
- ✓ There is comprehensive coverage of specialist vocabulary
- ✓ New words and senses are defined – *alcopop, bull bars, clone, euro, snail mail*
- ✓ Spelling help is given for all irregular and difficult forms of words
- ✓ Word origins are explained clearly
- ✓ Up-to-date notes within the text give advice on acceptable and unacceptable English usage

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Aa

a or **A** *n*, pl **a's**, **A's** or **As** **1** the first letter of the English alphabet. **2** **from A to B** from one place to another: *I just want a car that takes me from A to B. **3** **from A to Z** from start to finish.*

a *adj* (indefinite article) **1** used preceding a singular count noun that has not been mentioned before: *a book; a great shame.* **2** used preceding a noun or adjective of quantity: *a litre of wine; a great amount has been written; I swim a lot and walk much more.* **3** each or every; per: *I saw him once a week for six weeks.*

A4 *n* the sixth note of the scale of C major. **2** ampere(s). **3** atomic: *an A-bomb.*

Å angstrom unit.

a- or before a vowel **an-** *prefix* not or without: *atonal; asocial; anaphrodisiac.* [Greek]

A1, **A-1** or **A-one** *adj* *Informal* first-class, excellent.

A4 *n* a standard paper size, 297 × 210 mm.

AA **1** Alcoholics Anonymous. **2** (in Britain) Automobile Association.

AAA *Brit* Amateur Athletic Association.

A & R artists and repertoire.

aardvark *n* an African mammal with long ears and snout. [obsolete Afrikaans: earth pig]

AB **1** able-bodied seaman. **2** Alberta.

ab- *prefix* away from or opposite to: *abnormal.* [Latin]

aback *adv* **taken aback** startled or disconcerted.

abacus (ab-a-cuss) *n* a counting device consisting of a frame holding beads on metal rods. [Greek, from Hebrew]

abaft *adv*, *adj* *Naut* closer to the stern of a ship. [Old English *be by* + *aftan* behind]

abalone (ab-a-lone-ee) *n* an edible sea creature with a shell lined with mother-of-pearl. [American Spanish]

abandon *vb* **1** to desert or leave: *he had already abandoned his first wife.* **2** to give up completely: *did you abandon all attempts at contact with the boy?* **3** to give oneself over completely to an emotion. ➤ **n** **4** **with abandon** uninhibitedly and without restraint. [Old French *a bandon* under one's control] **abandonment** *n*

abandoned *adj* **1** no longer used or occupied: *four people were found dead in an abandoned vehicle.* **2** wild and uninhibited: *she made his aunt laugh, that fluffy abandoned laugh he so liked to hear.*

abase *vb* **abasing**, **abased** **abase oneself** to make oneself humble. [Old French *abaissier*] **abasement** *n*

abashed *adj* embarrassed and ashamed. [Old French *esbair* to be astonished]

abate *vb* **abating**, **abated** to make or become less strong: *the tension has abated in recent months.* [Old French *abatre* to beat down] **abatement** *n*

abattoir (ab-a-twahr) *n* a slaughterhouse. [French *abattre* to fell]

abbacy *n*, pl **-cies** the office or jurisdiction of an abbot or abbess. [Church Latin *abbatia*]

abbé (ab-bay) *n* a French abbot or other clergyman.

abbess *n* the nun in charge of a convent. [Church Latin *abbatissa*]

abbey *n* **1** a church associated with a community of monks or nuns. **2** a community of monks or nuns. **3** a building inhabited by monks or nuns. [Church Latin *abbatia* ABBACIA]

abbot *n* the head of an abbey of monks. [Arabic *abbā* father]

abbreviate *vb* **-ating**, **-ated** **1** to shorten a word by leaving out some letters. **2** to cut short. [Latin *brevis* brief] **abbreviation** *n*

ABC *n* **1** the alphabet. **2** an alphabetical guide. **3** the basics of something.

abdicate *vb* **-cating**, **-cated** **1** to give up the throne formally. **2** to give up one's responsibilities. [Latin *abdicare* to disclaim] **abdication** *n*

abdomen *n* the part of the body that contains the stomach and intestines. [Latin] **abdominal** *adj*

abduct *vb* to remove (a person) by force; kidnap. [Latin *abducere* to lead away] **abduction** *n* **abductor** *n*

abeam *adv*, *adj* at right angles to the length of a ship or aircraft.

Aberdeen Angus *n* a black hornless breed of beef cattle originating in Scotland.

aberrant *adj* not normal, accurate, or correct: *aberrant behaviour.*

aberration *n* **1** a sudden change from what is normal, accurate, or correct. **2** a brief lapse in control of one's thoughts or feelings: *he suddenly had a mental aberration.* [Latin *aberrare* to wander away]

abet *vb* **abetting**, **abetted** to help or encourage in wrongdoing. [Old French *abeter* to lure on]

abeyance *n* **in abeyance** put aside temporarily. [Old French *abeance*, lit: a gaping after]

abhor *vb* **-horrng**, **-horred** to detest utterly. [Latin *abhorrere*]

abhorrent *adj* hateful or disgusting. **abhorrence** *n*

abide *vb* **1** to tolerate: *I can't abide stupid people.* **2** to last or exist for a long time: *these instincts, while subdued in the individual, may abide in the race.* **3** **abide by** to act in accordance with: *he must abide by the findings of the report.* **4** Archaic to live. [Old English *āidan*, from *a-* (intensive) + *īdan* to wait]

abiding *adj* lasting for ever: *an abiding interest in history.*

ability *n*, pl **-ties** **1** possession of the necessary skill or power to do something. **2** great skill or competence: *his ability as a speaker was legendary.* [Latin *habilitās*]

abject *adj* **1** utterly miserable: *one Mexican in five lives in abject poverty.* **2** lacking all self-respect. [Latin *abjectus* thrown away] **abjectly** *adv*

abjure *vb* **-juring**, **-jured** to renounce or deny under oath. [Latin *abjurare* to deny on oath] **ab-**

juration *n*

ablation *n* **1** the surgical removal of an organ or part. **2** the wearing away of a rock or glacier. **3** the melting of a part, such as the heat shield of a space re-entry vehicle. [Latin *auferre* to carry away]

ablaze *adj* **1** on fire. **2** brightly illuminated: *the sky was ablaze with the stars shining bright*. **3** emotionally aroused: *his eyes were ablaze with anger*.

able *adj* **1** having the necessary power, skill, or opportunity to do something. **2** capable or talented. [Latin *habilis*]

-able *suffix forming adjectives* able to be acted upon as specified: *washable*. [Latin *-abilis, -ibilis*]

-ably *suffix forming adverbs* **-ability** *suffix forming nouns*

able-bodied *adj* strong and healthy.

able-bodied seaman or **able seaman** *n* a seaman who is trained in certain skills.

abled *adj* having a range of physical powers as specified: *less abled*; *differently abled*.

ableism (*ay-bel-iz-zum*) *n* discrimination against disabled or handicapped people.

able rating *n* a seaman of the lowest rank in a navy.

ablutions *pl n* the act of washing: *after the nightly ablutions, I settled down to read*. [Latin *ablūere* to wash away]

ably *adv* competently or skilfully.

ABM antiballistic missile.

abnegation *n* the act of giving something up. [Latin *abnegāre*]

abnormal *adj* differing from the usual or typical. **abnormality** *n* **abnormally** *adv*

aboard *adv, adj, prep* on, in, onto, or into (a ship, plane, or train).

abode *n* one's home. [from *ABIDE*]

abolish *vb* to do away with (laws, regulations, or customs). [Latin *abolere* to destroy]

abolition *n* **1** the act of doing away with something: *the abolition of slavery*. **2** **Abolition** the ending of slavery. **abolitionist** *n, adj*

A-bomb *n* short for **atomic bomb**.

abominable *adj* very bad or unpleasant: *what is being done here is utterly abominable*. **abominably** *adv*

abominable snowman *n* a large creature, like a man or an ape, that is said to live in the Himalayas. [translation of Tibetan *metohkangmi* foul snowman]

abominate *vb* **-nating, -nated** to dislike intensely. [Latin *abōmināri* to regard as an ill omen] **abomination** *n*

aboriginal *adj* existing in a place from the earliest known period.

Aboriginal *adj* **1** of the Aborigines of Australia. **> n** **2** an Aborigine.

aborigine (*ab-or-rij-in-ee*) *n* an original inhabitant of a country or region. [Latin *ab origine* from the beginning]

Aborigine *n* a member of a dark-skinned people who were already living in Australia when European settlers arrived.

abort *vb* **1** (of a pregnancy) to end before the fetus is viable. **2** to perform an abortion on a pregnant woman. **3** to end a plan or process before completion. [Latin *abortāre*]

abortion *n* **1** an operation to end pregnancy. **2**

the premature ending of a pregnancy when a fetus is expelled from the womb before it can live independently. **3** the failure of a mission or project. **4** *informal* something that is grotesque. **abortionist** *n*

abortion pill *n* a drug used to terminate a pregnancy in its earliest stage.

abortive *adj* failing to achieve its purpose.

abound *vb* **1** to exist in large numbers. **2** **abound in** to have a large number of. [Latin *abundāre*]

about *prep* **1** relating to or concerning. **2** near to. **3** carried on: *I haven't any money about me*. **4** on every side of. **> adv** **5** near in number, time, or degree; approximately. **6** nearby. **7** here and there: *there were some fifteen other people scattered about on the first floor*. **8** all around; on every side. **9** in or to the opposite direction. **10** in rotation: *turn and turn about*. **11** used to indicate understatement: *it's about time somebody told the truth on that subject*. **12** **about to** on the point of; intending to: *she was about to get in the car*. **13** **not about to** determined not to; *we're not about to help her out*. **> adj** **14** active: *he was off the premises well before anyone was up and about*. [Old English *abūtan, onbūtan*]

about-turn or **US about-face** *n* **1** a complete change of opinion or direction. **2** a reversal of the direction in which one is facing.

above *prep* **1** higher than; over. **2** greater than in quantity or degree: *above average*. **3** superior to or higher than in quality, rank, or ability. **4** too high-minded for: *he considered himself above the task of working*. **5** too respected for; beyond: *his fleet was above suspicion*. **6** too difficult to be understood by: *a discussion that was way above my head*. **7** louder or higher than (other noise). **8** in preference to. **9** **above all** most of all; especially. **> adv** **10** in or to a higher place: *the hills above*. **11** in a previous place (in something written or printed). **12** higher in rank or position. **> n** **13** **the above** something previously mentioned. **> adj** **14** appearing in a previous place (in something written or printed): *for a copy of the free brochure write to the above address*. [Old English *abufan*]

above board *adj* completely honest and open.

abracadabra *n* a word used in magic spells, which is supposed to possess magic powers. [magical word used in certain Gnostic writings]

abrasion *n* **1** a scraped area on the skin; graze. **2** *Geog* the erosion of rock by rock fragments scratching and scraping it. [Latin *abrādere*]

abrasive *adj* **1** rude and unpleasant in manner. **2** tending to rub or scrape; rough. **> n** **3** a substance used for cleaning, smoothing, or polishing.

abreast *adj* **1** alongside each other and facing in the same direction: *the two cars were abreast*. **2** **abreast of** up to date with.

abridge *vb* **abridging, abridged** to shorten a written work by taking out parts. [Late Latin *abbreviāre*] **abridgment** or **abridgement** *n*

abroad *adv* **1** to or in a foreign country. **2** generally known or felt: *there is a new spirit abroad*.

abrogate *vb* **-gating, -gated** to cancel (a law or an agreement) formally. [from Latin *ab-* away + *rogāre* to propose a law] **abrogation** *n*

abrupt *adj* **1** sudden or unexpected: *an abrupt de-*

- parture. **2** rather rude in speech or manner. [Latin *abruptus* broken off] **abruptly** *adv* **abruptness** *n*
- abscess** (ab-sess) *n* **1** a swelling containing pus as a result of inflammation. **►** *vb* **2** to form a swelling containing pus. [Latin *abscedere* to go away] **abscessed** *adj*
- abscissa** *n*, *pl* -**scissas** or -**scissae** *Maths* (in a two-dimensional system of Cartesian coordinates) the distance from the vertical axis measured parallel to the horizontal axis. [New Latin *linea abscissa* a cut-off line]
- abscond** *vb* to run away unexpectedly. [Latin *abscondere* to conceal]
- abseil** (ab-sale) *vb* **1** to go down a steep drop by a rope fastened at the top and tied around one's body. **►** **n** **2** an instance of abseiling. [German]
- absence** *n* **1** the state of being away. **2** the time during which a person or thing is away. **3** the fact of being without something.
- absent** *adj* **1** not present in a place or situation. **2** lacking. **3** not paying attention. **►** *vb* **4** **absent oneself** to stay away. [Latin *absesse* to be away] **absently** *adv*
- absentee** *n* a person who should be present but is not.
- absenteeism** *n* persistent absence from work or school.
- absent-minded** *adj* inattentive or forgetful. **absent-mindedly** *adv*
- absinthe** *n* a strong, green, alcoholic drink, originally containing wormwood. [Greek *apsinthion* wormwood]
- absolute** *adj* **1** total and complete: *he ordered an immediate and absolute ceasefire. **2** with unrestricted power and authority: *she has absolute control with fifty per cent of the shares. **3** undoubted or certain: *I was telling the absolute truth. **4** not dependent on or relative to anything else. **5** pure; unmixed: *absolute alcohol. **►** **n** **6** a principle or rule believed to be unfailingly correct. **7** **the Absolute** *Philosophy* that which is totally unconditioned, perfect, or complete. [Latin *absolutus*]****
- absolutely** *adv* **1** completely or perfectly. **►** *interj* **2** yes indeed, certainly.
- absolute majority** *n* a number of votes totaling over 50 per cent, such as the total number of votes that beats the combined opposition.
- absolute pitch** *n* the ability to identify the pitch of a note, or to sing a given note, without reference to one previously sounded.
- absolute zero** *n* *Physics* the lowest temperature theoretically possible, at which the particles that make up matter would be at rest: equivalent to -273.15°C or -459.67°F .
- absolution** *n* *Christianity* a formal forgiveness of sin pronounced by a priest.
- absolutism** *n* a political system in which a monarch or dictator has unrestricted power.
- absolve** *vb* -**solving**, -**solved** to declare to be free from blame or sin. [Latin *absolvere* to make loose]
- absorb** *vb* **1** to soak up a liquid. **2** to engage the interest of someone. **3** to receive the force of an impact. **4** *Physics* to take in radiant energy and retain it. **5** to take in or incorporate: *this country has absorbed almost one million refugees.* [Latin *absorbere*] **absorbent** *adj* **absorbing** *adj*
- absorption** *n* **1** the process of absorbing something or the state of being absorbed. **2** *Physiol* the process by which nutrients enter the tissues of an animal or a plant. **absorptive** *adj*
- abstain** *vb* **1** to choose not to do something: *you will be asked to abstain from food prior to your general anaesthetic. **2** to choose not to vote. [Latin *abstinere*] **abstainer** *n**
- abstemious** (ab-steem-ee-uss) *adj* taking very little alcohol or food. [Latin *abstemius*] **abstemiously** *adv* **abstemiousness** *n*
- abstention** *n* **1** the formal act of not voting. **2** the act of abstaining from something, such as drinking alcohol.
- abstinence** *n* the practice of choosing not to do something one would like. **abstinent** *adj*
- abstract** *adj* **1** referring to ideas or qualities rather than material objects: *an abstract noun. **2** not applied or practical; theoretical: *he was frustrated by the highly abstract mathematics being taught. **3** of art in which the subject is represented by shapes and patterns rather than by a realistic likeness. **►** **n** **4** a summary. **5** an abstract painting or sculpture. **6** an abstract word or idea. **7** **In the abstract** without referring to specific circumstances. **►** *vb* **8** to summarize. **9** to remove or extract [Latin *abstractus* drawn off]**
- abstracted** *adj* lost in thought; preoccupied. **abstractedly** *adv*
- abstraction** *n* **1** a general idea rather than a specific example: *these absurd philosophical abstractions continued to bother him. **2** the quality of being abstract or abstracted.*
- abstruse** *adj* not easy to understand. [Latin *abstrusus*]
- absurd** *adj* obviously senseless or illogical; ridiculous. [Latin *absurdus* out of time] **absurdity** *n* **absurdly** *adv*
- abundance** *n* **1** a great amount. **2** degree of plentifulness. **3** **in abundance** in great amounts: *they had fish and fruit in abundance.* [Latin *abundare* to abound] **abundant** *adj*
- abundantly** *adv* **1** very: *he made his disagreement with the prime minister abundantly clear. **2** plentifully; **in abundance.***
- abuse** *n* **1** prolonged ill-treatment of or violence towards someone: *child abuse. **2** insulting comments. **3** improper use: *an abuse of power.* **►** *vb* **abusing**, **abused** **4** to take advantage of dishonestly: *these two ministers had abused their position for financial gain. **5** to ill-treat violently: *he had been sexually abused as a child. **6** to speak insultingly or cruelly to. [Latin *abuti*] **abuser** *n****
- abusive** *adj* rude or insulting: *he was alleged to have used abusive language towards spectators.* **abusively** *adv*
- abut** *vb* **abutting**, **abutted** to be next to or touching. [Old French *abouter*]
- abutment** *n* a construction that supports the end of a bridge.
- abysmal** *adj* *Informal* extremely bad. [Medieval Latin *abyssus* abyss] **abysmally** *adv*
- abyss** *n* **1** a very deep hole in the ground. **2** a frightening or threatening situation: *the abyss of revolution and war ahead.* [Greek *abyssos* bottomless]

Ac *Chem* actinium.

AC 1 alternating current. **2** athletic club.

a/c 1 account. **2** account current.

acacia (a-kay-sha) *n* a shrub or tree with small yellow or white flowers. [Greek *akakia*]

academic *adj* **1** relating to a college or university. **2** (of pupils) having an aptitude for study. **3** relating to studies such as languages and pure science rather than technical or professional studies. **4** of theoretical interest only: *the argument is academic*. **>** *n* **5** a member of the teaching or research staff of a college or university. **academically** *adv*

academy *n*, *pl* **-mies** **1** a society for the advancement of literature, art, or science. **2** a school for training in a particular skill: *sixteen hundred students would also spend their first year at the military academy*. **3** (in Scotland) a secondary school. [Greek *akadēmeia* the place where Plato taught]

acanthus *n* **1** a plant with large spiny leaves and spikes of white or purplish flowers. **2** a carved ornament based on the leaves of the acanthus plant. [Greek *akantha* thorn]

ACAS (in Britain) Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

acc. **1** Grammar accusative. **2** account.

accede *vb* **-ceding**, **-ceded** **accede to** **1** to agree to. **2** to take up (an office or position): *he acceded to the throne after his Irish exile*. [Latin *accēdere*]

accelerando *adv* *Music* with increasing speed. [Italian]

accelerate *vb* **-ating**, **-ated** **1** to move or cause to move more quickly. **2** to cause to happen sooner than expected. [Latin *accelerāre*]

acceleration *n* **1** the act of increasing speed. **2** the rate of increase of speed or the rate of change of velocity.

accelerator *n* **1** a pedal in a motor vehicle that is pressed to increase speed. **2** *Physics* a machine for increasing the speed and energy of charged particles.

accent *n* **1** the distinctive style of pronunciation of a person or group from a particular area, country, or social background. **2** a mark used in writing to indicate the prominence of a syllable or the way a vowel is pronounced. **3** particular emphasis: *there will be an accent on sport and many will enjoy rowing*. **4** the stress on a syllable or musical note. **>** *vb* **5** to lay particular emphasis on. [Latin *accentus*]

accentuate *vb* **-ating**, **-ated** to stress or emphasize. **accentuation** *n*

accept *vb* **1** to take or receive something offered. **2** to agree to. **3** to consider something as true. **4** to tolerate or resign oneself to. **5** to take on the responsibilities of: *he asked if I would become his assistant and I accepted that position*. **6** to receive someone into a community or group. **7** to receive something as adequate or valid. [Latin *acceptāre*]

acceptable *adj* **1** able to be endured; tolerable: *in war killing is acceptable*. **2** good enough; adequate: *he found the article acceptable*. **acceptability** *n* **acceptably** *adv*

acceptance *n* **1** the act of accepting something. **2** favourable reception. **3** belief or agreement.

accepted *adj* commonly approved or recognized: *the accepted wisdom about old age*.

access *n* **1** a means of approaching or entering a place. **2** the condition of allowing entry, for example entry to a building by wheelchairs or prams. **3** the right or opportunity to use something or enter a place: *the bourgeoisie gained access to political power*. **>** *vb* **4** to obtain information from a computer. [Latin *accēdere* to accede]

accessible *adj* **1** easy to approach, enter, or use. **2** easy to understand: *the most accessible opera by Wagner*. **accessibility** *n*

accession *n* the act of taking up an office or position: *the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne*.

accessory *n*, *pl* **-ries** **1** a supplementary part or object. **2** a small item, such as a bag or belt, worn or carried by someone to complete his or her outfit. **3** a person who is involved in a crime but who was not present when it took place. [Late Latin *accessorius*]

access road *n* a road providing a way to a particular place or on to a motorway.

access time *n* the time required to retrieve a piece of stored information from a computer.

accident *n* **1** an unpleasant event that causes damage, injury, or death. **2** an unforeseen event or one without apparent cause: *they had met in town by accident*. [Latin *accidēre* to happen]

accidental *adj* **1** occurring by chance or unintentionally. **>** *n* **2** *Music* a symbol denoting a sharp, flat, or natural that is not a part of the key signature. **accidentally** *adv*

accident-prone *adj* (of a person) often involved in accidents.

acclaim *vb* **1** to applaud or praise: *the highly acclaimed children's TV series*. **2** to acknowledge publicly: *he was immediately acclaimed the new prime minister*. **>** *n* **3** an enthusiastic expression of approval. [Latin *acclamāre*]

acclamation *n* **1** an enthusiastic reception or display of approval. **2** *Canad* an instance of being elected without opposition. **3** by **acclamation** by a majority without a ballot.

acclimatize or **-tise** *vb* **-tizing**, **-tized** or **-tising**, **-tised** to adapt to a new climate or environment. **acclimatization** or **-tisation** *n*

accolade *n* **1** an award, praise, or honour. **2** a touch on the shoulder with a sword conferring knighthood. [Latin *ad-* to + *collum* neck]

accommodate *vb* **-dating**, **-dated** **1** to provide with lodgings. **2** to have room for. **3** to do a favour for. **4** to get used to (something). [Latin *accommodāre*]

accommodating *adj* willing to help; obliging.

accommodation *n* a place in which to sleep, live, or work.

accommodation address *n* an address on letters to a person who cannot or does not wish to receive mail at a permanent address.

accompaniment *n* **1** something that accompanies something else. **2** *Music* a supporting part for an instrument, a band, or an orchestra.

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

accompany *vb* **-nies**, **-nying**, **-nied** **1** to go with (someone). **2** to happen or exist at the same time as. **3** to provide a musical accompaniment for. [Old French *accompaignier*]

accomplice *n* a person who helps someone else commit a crime. [Latin *complicāre* to complicate]

accomplish *vb* **1** to manage to do; achieve: *most infants accomplish it immediately.* **2** to complete. [Latin *complēre* to fill up]

accomplished *adj* **1** expert or proficient: *an accomplished liar.* **2** successfully completed.

accomplishment *n* **1** the successful completion of something. **2** something successfully completed. **3** **accomplishments** personal abilities or skills.

accord *n* **1** agreement or harmony. **2** a formal agreement between groups or nations: *the Paris peace accord.* **3** **of one's own accord** voluntarily or willingly. **4** **with one accord** unanimously. **>** *vb* **5** to grant: *she was at last accorded her true status.* **6** **accord with** to fit in with or be consistent with. [Latin *ad-* to + *cor* heart]

accordance *n* **in accordance with** conforming to or according to: *food is prepared in accordance with Jewish laws.*

according *adv* **1** **according to a** as stated by: *according to her, they were once engaged.* **b** in conformity with: *work hours varied according to the tides.* **2** **according as** depending on whether.

accordingly *adv* **1** in an appropriate manner. **2** consequently.

accordion *n* a box-shaped musical instrument played by moving the two sides apart and together, and pressing a keyboard or buttons to produce the notes. [German] **accordionist** *n*

accost *vb* to approach, stop, and speak to. [Latin *ad-* to + *costa* side, rib]

account *n* **1** a report or description. **2** a person's money held in a bank. **3** a statement of financial transactions with the resulting balance. **4** part or behalf: *I am sorry that you suffered on my account.* **5** **call someone to account** to demand an explanation from someone. **6** **give a good or bad account of oneself** to perform well or fail to perform well. **7** **of no account** of little importance or value. **8** **on account of** because of. **9** **take account of or take into account** to take into consideration; allow for. **>** *vb* **10** to consider as: *the evening was accounted a major step forward.* [Old French *acon*]

accountable *adj* responsible to someone or for some action. **accountability** *n*

accountant *n* a person who maintains and audits business accounts. **accountancy** *n*

account for *vb* **1** to give reasons for. **2** to explain or count up what has been spent.

accounting *n* the skill or practice of maintaining and auditing business accounts.

accountrements (ak-koo-tra-ments) or **US accouterments** (ak-koo-ter-ments) *pl* *n* clothing and equipment for a particular activity. [Old French *accouter* to equip]

accredit *vb* **1** to give official recognition to. **2** to send (a diplomat) with official credentials to a particular country. **3** to certify as meeting required standards. **4** to attribute (a quality or an action) to (a person). **5** **NZ** to pass (a candidate for university entrance) on school recommendation, without external examination. [French *accréditer*] **accreditation** *n*

accretion (ak-kree-shun) *n* **1** a gradual increase in size, through growth or addition. **2** something added, such as an extra layer.

[Latin *accretiō*]

accrue *vb* **-cruing, -crued** **1** (of money or interest) to increase gradually over a period of time. **2** **accrue to** to fall naturally to: *some advantage must accrue to the weaker party.* [Latin *accrēscere*]

accumulate *vb* **-lating, -lated** to gather together in an increasing quantity; collect. [Latin *accumulāre* to heap up] **accumulative** *adj*

accumulation *n* **1** something that has been collected. **2** the collecting together of things.

accumulator *n* **1** a rechargeable device for storing electrical energy. **2** *Brit* horse racing a collective bet on successive races, with both stake and winnings being carried forward to accumulate progressively.

accuracy *n* faithful representation of the truth: *care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the content.*

accurate *adj* faithfully representing the truth: *all the information was accurate.* [Latin *accūrāre* to perform with care] **accurately** *adv*

accursed (a-curse-id) *adj* **1** under a curse. **2** hateful or detestable.

accusation *n* **1** an allegation that a person is guilty of some wrongdoing. **2** a formal charge brought against a person. **accusatory** *adj*

accusative *n* *Grammar* a grammatical case in some languages that identifies the direct object of a verb.

accuse *vb* **-cusing, -cused** to charge a person with wrongdoing. [Latin *accūsāre*] **accuser** *n* **accusing** *adj* **accusingly** *adv*

accused *n* **the accused** *Law* the defendant appearing on a criminal charge.

accustom *vb* **accustom oneself** to become familiar with or used to. [Old French *acostumer*]

accustomed *adj* **1** usual or customary: *he parked his motorcycle in its accustomed place.* **2** **accustomed to a** used to. **b** in the habit of.

ace *n* **1** a playing card with one symbol on it. **2** *Informal* an expert: *an American stock car ace.* **3** *Tennis* a winning serve that the opponent fails to reach. **4** a fighter pilot who has destroyed several enemy aircraft. **>** *adj* **5** *Informal* superb or excellent: *an ace tennis player.* [Latin *as* a unit]

acerbic (ass-sir-bik) *adj* harsh or bitter: *an acerbic critic.* [Latin *acerbus* sharp, sour]

acerbity *n, pl* **-ties** **1** bitter speech or temper. **2** bitterness of taste.

acetaldehyde (ass-it-tal-dee-hide) *n* *Chem* a colourless volatile liquid, used as a solvent.

acetate (ass-it-tate) *n* **1** *Chem* any salt or ester of acetic acid. **2** Also: **acetate rayon** a synthetic textile fibre made from cellulose acetate.

acetic (ass-see-tik) *adj* *Chem* of, containing, or producing acetic acid or vinegar. [Latin *acētum* vinegar]

acetic acid *n* *Chem* a strong-smelling colourless liquid used to make vinegar.

acetone (ass-it-tone) *n* *Chem* a strong-smelling colourless liquid used as a solvent for paints and lacquers.

acetylene (ass-see-ill-een) *n* *Chem* a colourless soluble flammable gas used in welding metals.

ache *vb* **aching, ached** **1** to feel or be the source of a continuous dull pain. **2** to suffer mental anguish. **>** *n* **3** a continuous dull pain. [Old English *acan*]