

MACMILLAN
Essential
DICTIONARY

FOR LEARNERS OF
AMERICAN ENGLISH

麦克米伦初阶美语词典
(英语版)

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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出版前言

英国麦克米伦出版公司 (Macmillan Publishers Limited) 1834 年成立于英国伦敦, 是一家具有一百余年历史的大型综合性出版社。百余年来, 麦克米伦出版公司以其高质量的图书和期刊服务于社会并因此赢得了来自世界各国、各界读者的拥戴。目前, 其业务已遍及世界各大洲, 分设在各国的子公司和销售部达四十余个, 是世界三大英语语言教学 (ELT) 出版机构之一。《麦克米伦初阶英语词典》(Macmillan Essential Dictionary for Learners of American English) 是其于 2003 年首次出版发行的一部专为初、中级英语学习者设计的美国英语词典, 是《麦克米伦初阶英语词典》(Macmillan Essential Dictionary for Learners of English) 的姊妹书。本词典特为美国英语学习设计, 选词和释义反映美国文化和英国文化在共性中的差异。其编纂主要得益于世界英语语料库 (World English Corpus), 这使编者能在大量的真实语言材料中挑选适合初、中级英语学习者使用的语言信息。而强大的软件支持使他们的工作更加得心应手。除此之外, 了解使用者到底需要何种信息也是十分关键的。为此, 他们进行了大量深入细致的调查, 上至经验丰富的教师、课本编写者, 下至不同程度的学生。最后将合理的反馈意见融入词典编纂的过程之中, 从而诞生了这本词典。

本词典主要特色如下:

1. 收词 25 000 余条, 为同类词典收词之冠。
2. 提供 36 000 余条有代表性的日常美国英语例句, 不仅贴近生活, 而且提供该词汇的使用环境。
3. 对于日常生活最常用的 3 500 词汇以红色标出, 并按使用频率分为一星、二星和三星三个级别。三星级词最为常用, 如 also, close 等, 提示使用者应熟练掌握。
4. 特设 130 余个用法专栏, 详解用法搭配、同义词之间的区别以及同一意义的不同表达方式。如 clean 一词就提供了 brush, wash 等多达 7 种的表达方式, 活学活用, 有助于扩大词汇量。
5. 收入大量只在美国生活中使用的词语。例如: corn dog (一种外面粘上玉米粉的热狗) 是英语新词。
6. 利用注音符号对美国英语与英国英语在发音上的差异予以区别。
7. 词典的正文中插有 24 页语言学习插页, 提供搭配、构词法及表达日常事物的常用词汇。如 Applying for a Job (求职) 的常用词汇有 vacancy, opening, fill out 等。帮助读者掌握有用词汇, 使用地道的美国英语。
8. 由于英美文化的不同, 本词典中的 16 页全彩插图和 700 余幅双色插图与《麦克米伦初阶英语词典》中的插图也有许多区别。
9. 正文后附地名和国家名列表及美国英语发音指南等实用信息。

对于想学好美国英语的学习者来说, 本词典细致、实用, 能够提供读写过程中所需的基本信息, 是一部质量很高的美国英语工具书。希望它能成为广大美国英语学习者的良师益友。

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Introduction

MICHAEL RUNDELL
Editor-in-Chief

The *Macmillan Essential Dictionary* has been specially designed to meet the needs of intermediate students of English. The word “essential” has two meanings, and both meanings are relevant to this dictionary. First, it provides the information that is *completely necessary* for your success as a learner of English. And second, it focuses on the most *basic and important* features of the English language—the things that you need to know most thoroughly in order to make effective progress.

Dictionaries exist in order to answer questions. To help us to give the right answers to the right questions, we—as dictionary makers—need to know who will be using the dictionary and what kinds of information they really need. All of this means making a careful *selection* from the enormous amount of data available to us. So how do we decide what is really “essential,” and how can we be sure that we have made the *right* selection?

In creating the *Macmillan Essential Dictionary*, we have benefited from two valuable resources:

- high-quality linguistic data: our large language corpora and advanced software give us the tools to identify the essential facts about English
- expert advice: at every stage, experienced teachers, coursebook writers, and language students have contributed their suggestions and comments, telling us what learners really need to know

The *Macmillan Essential Dictionary* builds on the success of its sister dictionary, the *Macmillan English Dictionary*, adapting its unique features to the different needs of intermediate learners. These include:

- the “red words”: the most frequent and useful words in English are shown in red, so that you can easily recognize the vocabulary that—as an intermediate learner—you need to know especially well. For this dictionary, we have identified 3,500 red words. More information about these words is given on the inside front cover.
- maximum coverage: our goal is to include as many vocabulary items as possible, and this dictionary has more entries than any other intermediate learners’ dictionary
- special attention to “collocation” (the way words regularly combine with each other): over 130 new collocation boxes provide a unique bank of data on natural-sounding word combinations
- dozens of special notes: information on common errors and boxes that will help you to increase your vocabulary
- Study Pages: a 24-page central section, packed with ideas that will help you to become a better learner, including information on collocation, word formation, vocabulary development, and much more

We hope you will enjoy using the *Macmillan Essential Dictionary*, and we are confident that you will soon find that it is an essential part of your language-learning experience.

USING YOUR DICTIONARY

Finding a Word

Words with More Than One Entry

Entry

Sometimes the same word belongs to more than one word class: for example, the word **jet** can be a noun and a verb. Each word class is shown as a separate entry. The small number at the end of the headword tells you that a word has more than one entry.

jet¹ /dʒet/ noun ★
1 [C] an airplane that can fly very fast: *a jet fighter*

2 [C] a stream of liquid that comes out of something very quickly and with a lot of force: *The firefighter sprayed a jet of water on the flames.*

3 [U] a hard black shiny stone that is used for making jewelry

jet² /dʒet/ verb [I] to fly somewhere in an airplane: *They will be jetting off to Spain this weekend.*

jet-black adj very dark black in color

jet engine noun [C] a type of engine that combines air and burning fuel to create power for an airplane

jet lag noun [U] the feeling of being very tired because you have traveled on an airplane across parts of the world where the time is different — **jet-lag-ged** /dʒet.lægd/ adj

Compound Words

These are shown as separate entries in the alphabetical list.

Derived Words

Some words are shown at the end of the entry for the word that they are derived from. These words can be understood by reading the definition for the main entry.

Word Classes (Noun, Verb, etc.)

There is a list of word classes on the inside front cover.

bite¹ /baɪt/ (past tense **bit** /bɪt/; past participle

bit-ten /brɪt(ə)n/) verb ★★

1 [I/T] to use your teeth to cut or break something, usually in order to eat it: *Stop biting your nails.* ♦ *I've just been bitten by a snake.* ♦ *Tom bit into his sandwich.*

2 [I] to have an unpleasant effect: *The economic slowdown is beginning to bite.*

Idioms and Other Fixed Expressions

Expressions

Some words are often used in idioms or other fixed expressions. These are shown at the end of the main entry, following the small box that says **PHRASES**. Look for fixed expressions at the entry for the first main word in the expression.

PHRASES **bite the bullet** *informal* to force yourself to do something difficult or unpleasant

bite sb's head off *informal* to react angrily or rudely to someone, when this reaction seems too strong

bite your tongue to stop yourself from saying something that might upset or annoy someone

Phrasal verbs are shown after the entry for the main verb, following the small box that says

PHRASAL VERB **bite sth off** to separate something from the main part by biting: *I bit off a chunk of chocolate.*

PHRASAL VERB.

Finding the Meaning of a Word

Words with More Than One Meaning

Meaning

Many words have more than one meaning, and each different meaning is shown by a number.

bi-ling-ual /baɪˈlɪŋgwəl/ adj 1 able to speak two languages 2 written in two languages: *a bilingual dictionary*

bill¹ /bɪl/ noun [C] ★★

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 amount that you owe | 4 in a restaurant |
| 2 paper money | 5 bird's beak |
| 3 proposal for law | |

Some words have many different meanings, and so the entries can be long. Entries with five or more meanings have a "menu" at the top to make it easier to find the specific meaning you are looking for.

1 a written statement that shows how much money you owe for goods or services that you have received: *a telephone bill* ♦ *I always pay my bills on time.* ♦ *I wonder what the bill for the repairs will be?*

Definitions

All the definitions are written using a carefully selected “defining vocabulary” of under 2,300 words so that it is easier to understand the definitions.

Any word in a definition that is not part of the defining vocabulary, and that is not the entry immediately before or after the one you are looking at, is shown in CAPITAL LETTERS. You can find its meaning by looking it up in the dictionary.

salad dressing noun [C/U] a sauce that adds flavor to salads, usually made by mixing OIL, VINEGAR, and HERBS OF SPICES

sa-la-mi /sə'ləmi/ noun [C/U] a type of SAUSAGE containing strong SPICES, cut into thin pieces and served cold

Finding Out More About a Word

Red Words

Some words are printed in red with a “star rating” to show their frequency. This helps you to identify the words that you are most likely to need to use. For more information about red words, see the inside front cover.

dis-cov-er /dɪskəvər/ verb [T] ★★★

friend-ly /'frendli/ adj ★★

lo-cal¹ /'ləʊk(ə)l/ adj ★

Pronunciation

The International Phonetic Alphabet shows you how a word is pronounced. A list of the symbols used is given on the inside back cover.

a-ro-ma /ə'roumə/ noun [C] a smell that is strong but nice —**aro-mat-ic** /æ'rəmətɪk/ adj

lab-o-ra-to-ry /'læbrətəri, British lə'bɒrət(ə)ri/ noun [C] ★ a building or large room where people do scientific research: *our new research laboratory* ♦ *laboratory tests/experiments/studies* → LANGUAGE
LABORATORY

When British and American pronunciations are very different, both are given.

You can find the pronunciations for compound entries at the main entry for each of the words in the compound.

baseball cap noun [C] a hat that fits close to your head, with a flat curved part that sticks out above your eyes —*picture* → HAT

Stress marks tell you which part of a compound to stress when you are saying it.

Inflections

Irregular inflections are shown.

do¹ /du/ (3rd person singular **does** /weək dəz, strong dʌz/; past tense **did** /dɪd/; past participle **done** /dʌn/) verb ★★★

Labels

Labels (in *italics*) show whether a word is used in only British or American English, or tell you whether it is used in informal contexts, specialized contexts etc. Lists of these labels are given on page 829.

pave-ment /'peɪvmənt/ noun **1** [U] *American* the surface of a road **2** [C] *British* a SIDEWALK

prog-no-sis /prə'gnəʊsɪs/ (plural **prog-no-ses** /prə'gnəʊsɪz/) noun [C] **1** *medical* a doctor's opinion about how a disease is likely to develop **2** *formal* a statement about what is likely to happen in a particular situation → DIAGNOSIS

Examples

Example sentences in *italics* show you how a word is used in context.

Information about collocation and syntax—how words combine and which structures they can be used with—is shown in **bold type**.

When a word has many collocations, these are shown in a box at the end of the entry.

Grammar Boxes

Grammar boxes give extra information to help you to learn more about how a word is used.

Notes are also given to help you to avoid common errors.

Expanding Your Vocabulary

There are many ways that you can use this dictionary to expand your vocabulary.

Sometimes the opposite of a word is shown.

Some definitions give you synonyms.

Sometimes you are told to look at another word or page in the dictionary where you will find additional information, a related entry, or a picture.

“Word family” boxes bring together groups of words that are formed from the same “root word.”

Vocabulary building boxes bring together words that are related to a particular subject, or suggest more specific alternatives for very common words.

pro-mote /prə'moʊt/ verb [T] ★★

1 to support something, or to help something to develop: *a campaign to promote recycling* ♦ *Young plants are exposed to bright light to promote growth.*

2 to attract people's attention to a product or event, for example by advertising: *They are going on tour to promote their new album.*

3 to move someone to a job at a higher level: **promote sb to sth** *Steve Burrows was recently promoted to senior manager.*

Words often used with promote

Adverbs often used with **promote** (sense 1)

■ **actively, heavily, strongly, vigorously** + PROMOTE: promote something in a determined way

Nouns often used with **promote** (sense 1)

■ PROMOTE + **awareness, competition, development, efficiency, growth, interest, understanding**, use: increase the level of something

The is not usually used before the names of streets, towns, countries, counties, states, or continents: *My parents live in Surrey.*

News looks like a plural, but it is never used with a plural verb and cannot be used with a: *I've got a wonderful piece of news* (NOT a wonderful news) for you. ♦ *Do you have any news about Laura's baby?* ♦ *Here's some news about the World Cup.*

left-hand adj on the left side ⇐ RIGHT-HAND: *The plates are on the left-hand side of the cabinet.*

last-ly /'læstli/ adv used when you want to say one more thing before you finish speaking = FINALLY: *And lastly, remember that your reports are due tomorrow.*

hard-back /'hɑ:d,bæk/ noun [C] a book that has a hard cover → PAPERBACK

Word family: compete

Words in the same family as **compete**

■ **competition** n ■ **competitor** n
■ **competitive** adj ■ **uncompetitive** adj

Other ways of saying famous

■ **eminent** famous and respected for doing important work
■ **legendary** very famous and admired by many people
■ **notorious/Infamous** famous for something bad
■ **well-known** fairly famous

NUMBERS THAT ARE ENTRIES

- 000** /,trɪp(ə)l'oo/ in Australia, the telephone number that you use in an emergency to call the police, the fire department, or an AMBULANCE
- 0800 num-ber** /,oo eɪt 'hændrəd nʌmbər/ noun [C] in the U.K., a telephone number beginning with 0800 that is free to use and is usually for calling business services
- 1** /wʌn/ abbrev used in e-mails and TEXT MESSAGES to replace “one”: *NE1* (=anyone)
- 1040 form** /,ten 'fɔrti fɔrm/ noun [C] a form used by people in the U.S. when they are calculating how much tax they have to pay on the money that they have earned
- 1099** /,ten nɑnti 'nɑm/ noun [C] in the U.S., a document you send to the IRS (=the U.S. tax department) that gives details of money that you have earned in addition to your salary
- 12** /twelv/ in the U.K., a number given to a video that should only be watched by children who are at least 12 years old
- 12A** /twelv 'er/ in the U.K., a number given to a movie that should only be watched by children under the age of 12 if they are with an adult
- 1471** /,wʌn fɔr sev(ə)n 'wʌn/ in the U.K., a telephone number that you can call to find out which was the last telephone number to call you
- 15** /fɪf'tɪn/ in the U.K., a number given to a movie or video that should only be watched by children who are at least 15 years old
- 18** /eɪtɪn/ in the U.K., a number given to a movie or video that should only be watched by people who are at least 18 years old
- 1800 num-ber** /,wʌn eɪt 'hændrəd nʌmbər/ in Australia, a telephone number beginning with 1800 that is free to use and is usually for calling business services
- 18-wheel-er** /,eɪtɪn 'wɪlər/ noun [C] *American* a large truck that has 18 wheels
- 2** /tu/ abbrev 1 to or too: used in e-mails and TEXT MESSAGES: *it's up 2 U* (=it's up to you) ♦ *me 2* (=me too) **2** used for replacing “to-” in other words: *2day* (=today)
- 20/20 vi-sion** /,twenti,twenti 'vɪʒ(ə)n/ noun [U] the ability to see normally without wearing glasses
- 2.1** /,tu'wʌn/ noun [C] in the U.K. and Australia, the second-highest grade for an UNDERGRADUATE degree from a university, lower than a first but higher than a 2.2
- 2.2** /,tu'tu/ noun [C] in the U.K. and Australia, the third-highest grade for an UNDERGRADUATE degree from a university, lower than a 2.1 but higher than a third
- .22** /,twenti'tu/ noun [C] a type of gun that shoots small bullets
- 24/7** /,twenti fɔr 'sev(ə)n/ adv *informal* all the time: *He thinks about her 24/7.*
- 3-D** /θri:di/ adj a 3-D movie, picture, etc. looks as if it has length, depth, and width
- 4** /fɔr/ abbrev 1 for: used in e-mails and TEXT MESSAGES: *4 U* (=for you) **2** used for replacing “-fore” in other words: *B4* (=before)
- 401(k)** /,fɔr oo wʌn 'keɪ/ noun [C] in the U.S., a special account in which people can save some of the money they earn for their RETIREMENT without paying taxes on it
- 4x4** /fɔr baɪ fɔr/ noun [C] a FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE vehicle
- .45** /,fɔrtɪfɑv/ noun [C] a PISTOL (=small gun)
- 4-F** /fɔr 'ef/ adj if someone is listed **4-F**, they are not allowed to serve in the U.S. military
- 4WD** abbrev a FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE vehicle
- \$64,000 question, the** /,sɪkstɪfɔrθəʊz(ə)nd dɔlər 'kwɛstɪʃ(ə)n/ noun [singular] a question that is the most important and most difficult to answer concerning a particular problem or situation
- 8** /eɪt/ abbrev used in e-mails and TEXT MESSAGES to replace “-ate” or “-eat”: *C U LBR* (=see you later) ♦ *GR8* (=great)
- 800 num-ber** /eɪt 'hændrəd nʌmbər/ noun [C] in the U.S., a telephone number that is free to use and is usually for calling business services
- 911** /,nɑn wʌn 'wʌn/ in the U.S., the telephone number that you use in an emergency to call the police, the fire department, or an AMBULANCE
- 9/11** /,nɑn 'i:lev(ə)n/ September 11, the date in 2001 when TERRORISTS attacked the U.S., flying planes into the World Trade Center and killing thousands of people
- 999** /,nɑn nɑn 'nɑm/ in the U.K., the telephone number that you use in an emergency to call the police, the fire department, or an AMBULANCE

Roman Numerals

Roman numerals were used in ancient Rome to represent numbers. They are still sometimes used today, for example on clocks and watches and in official documents.

I	one	XVII	seventeen
II	two	XVIII	eighteen
III	three	XIX	nineteen
IV	four	XX	twenty
V	five	XXI	twenty-one
VI	six	XXX	thirty
VII	seven	XL	forty
VIII	eight	L	fifty
IX	nine	LX	sixty
X	ten	LXX	seventy
XI	eleven	LXXX	eighty
XII	twelve	XC	ninety
XIII	thirteen	C	one hundred
XIV	fourteen	CC	two hundred
XV	fifteen	CD	five hundred
XVI	sixteen	M	one thousand

GRAMMAR CODES

Nouns

- [C] countable nouns that are used with *a* or *an* or a number and have a plural: *car, soldier*
- [U] uncountable nouns that cannot be used with *a* or *an* or a number and have no plural: *happiness, pasta*
- [singular] nouns that are used with *a, an,* or *the* but are never used in the plural: *babble, halt*
- [plural] nouns that are used only in the plural and always take a plural verb: *cattle, surroundings*

Verbs

- [I] intransitive verbs that have no direct object: *He paused for a moment.* ♦ *Could you speak up please?*
- [T] transitive verbs that have a direct object: *I ate my lunch.* ♦ *She handed the note over to me.*
- [linking verb] verbs that are followed

by a noun or adjective complement describing the subject: *They looked happy.* ♦ *I feel better now.*

- [auxiliary verb] verbs “be,” “have,” and “do” when they are used with other verbs to show their tense, to form questions etc: *When are you leaving?* ♦ *They didn't understand.*

Other Short Forms or Codes

- **sb** someone
- **sth** something
- + **that** followed by a clause beginning with “that”: *The notice stated that there would be no performance that evening.*
- + **(that)** can be followed by a clause beginning with “that” but you can leave out the “that”: *I decided that it wouldn't be a good idea to go.* OR *I decided it wouldn't be a good idea to go.*
- ...**to do sth** followed by a verb in the infinitive: *I love to go shopping.*
- ...**doing sth** followed by a verb + ing: *I love swimming.*

WORD CLASSES

abbrev (=abbreviation)
adj (=adjective)
adv (=adverb)
conjunction
determiner
grammar word
interjection
modal verb
noun
number
prefix
preposition

pronoun
quantifier
short form (for example *can't*)
suffix
trademark (trademarks are not given a word class)
verb

SYMBOLS

- points to another entry or page that you should look at for more information or for pictures
- ♦ comes between examples
- = comes before synonyms
- ≠ comes before opposites

RED WORDS

The words printed in red form the essential vocabulary for an intermediate learner of English. There are 3,500 red words, which have been carefully chosen on the basis of their importance and frequency. These are the words that you really need to learn, and the dictionary provides a lot of extra information to help you to *understand* these words well and to *use* them correctly.

All red words have a “star rating”:

- ★★★ the most common and basic words, such as **easy, go, have, house**
- ★★ very common words, such as **behave, friendly, intelligence, occasionally**
- ★ fairly common words, such as **campaign, enthusiastic, important, local**

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

This dictionary uses the following symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet:

Consonants

p	press	ʒ	measure
b	bag	h	hot
t	time	hw	why
d	day	x	loch
k	can	tʃ	chair
g	dog	dʒ	jam
f	staff	m	more
v	vote	n	snow
θ	thin	ŋ	sing
ð	that	w	water
s	sit	r	ring
z	zebra	l	small
ʃ	shine	j	you

Vowels and Diphthongs

i	bee	ɜr	bird
ɪ	bit	er	care
e	bed	ər	manager
æ	bad	ɔr	more
ɑ	father	ar	mar
ɔ	caught	ei	bay
ʌ	cut	aɪ	buy
ə	about	ɔɪ	boy
ʊ	book	oo	go
u	boot	aʊ	now
		ɪr	hear

Stress

The main stressed syllable in an entry is shown by the symbol / ˈ /, and the second-most important stressed syllable is shown by the symbol / ˌ /, for example **correspond** /ˌkɔrəˈspænd/. Compound entries that are made up of two or more separate words have stress marks on them if the pronunciation for each individual word is already given in the dictionary, for example **ice cream**.

Alternative Pronunciations

The dictionary shows alternative pronunciations for entries only if the second pronunciation is so different from the main one that it might not be understood easily, for example at **mobile** /ˈmoʊb(ə)l, ˈmoʊbaɪl/. British pronunciations are shown only when they are so different from the American pronunciation that they might not be understood easily, for example at **laboratory** /ˈlæbrətɔri, ˈbrɪtɪʃ ləˈbɔrət(ə)ri/.

Weak Forms and Strong Forms

Some grammar words (common words like prepositions and pronouns) have more than one pronunciation. The weak form is used when the syllable is unstressed, and the strong form is used when the syllable is stressed. These two forms are shown like this in the dictionary: **but** /weak bət, strong bʌt/.

Normal Rapid Speech

Pronunciations of words often change in normal rapid speech. The schwa /ə/ often disappears between certain consonants and the sounds /d/ and /t/ can often not be heard when they are found between two other consonants. If these sounds are given in brackets, it means that they are often not pronounced by fluent speakers of English, for example **station** /ˈsteɪj(ə)n/, **friendly** /ˈfren(d)li/, and **postcard** /ˈpəʊs(t),kɑrd/.

Nasalized Vowels

Some French words that have entered the English language contain a nasalized vowel sound that is common in French but rare in English. These vowels are shown with the symbol /-̃/ above them, for example **seance** /ˈseɪ̃s/.

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A a

A

a¹ or **A** /ei/ noun **1** [C/U] the first letter of the English alphabet **2** **A** [C/U] a mark that a teacher gives to a student's work to show that it is excellent **3** **A** [U] a common BLOOD

TYPE

PHRASE from **A** to **B** from one place to another

a² /weɪk ə, strɒŋ ei/ or **an** /weɪk ən, strɒŋ æn/ determiner ★★★

A and an are indefinite articles.

■ **A** is used when the next word begins with a consonant.

■ **An** is used when the next word begins with a vowel sound.

1 used when you are mentioning a person or a thing for the first time: *I have an idea.* ♦ *There's a concert on Sunday night.*

2 one: *I have a sister and two brothers.* ♦ *a hundred/thousand/million*

3 used when you mean any person or thing of a particular type, but not a specific one: *Do you have a car?* ♦ *Children must be accompanied by an adult.*

4 used when you say what job someone does: *Ruth was a lawyer.* ♦ *I want to be an actor.*

5 used when you say what type someone or something belongs to: *Maria is a Catholic.* ♦ *Greece has been a republic since 1974.*

6 used before a singular noun that represents every person or thing of a particular type: *A dog needs regular exercise.* ♦ *A molecule consists of two or more atoms.*

7 used in phrases showing prices, rates, or speeds to mean "each" or "every": *Meetings are held four times a year (=four times every year).* ♦ *Peaches are 99 cents a pound (=each pound costs 99 cents).* ♦ *90 miles an hour* **8** used in expressions of quantity such as "a lot," "a few," or "a great deal": *a lot of money* ♦ *a few friends* ♦ *We all appreciate a little encouragement.*

9 used before a noun that is formed from a verb and means a single action of that verb: *Can I have a try?* ♦ *Let's take a walk around the garden.*

A.A. /ei'ei/ noun [C] Associate of Arts: a degree given by a U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGE to students who have finished a two-year course of study

a-back /ə'bæk/ adv **be taken aback** to be very shocked or surprised

ab-a-cus /ə'bəkəs/ noun [C] an object used for counting or doing simple calculations. An abacus consists of a frame with small balls in rows.

a-ban-don /ə'bændən/ verb [T] ★
1 to leave someone or something and never come back: *His mother abandoned him when he was five days old.* ♦ *The stolen car*

was abandoned only five miles away.
2 to stop doing something before it is finished, or before you have achieved your goals: *The climbers finally abandoned their attempt on the mountain.*

—**a-ban-don-ment** noun [U]

a-ban-doned /ə'bændnd/ adj **1** left empty or no longer used: *an abandoned farm* **2** left alone by someone who should stay with you and take care of you: *a home for abandoned children*

a-bashed /ə'bæʃt/ adj embarrassed or ashamed about something that you have done

a-bate /ə'beɪt/ verb [I] *formal* to gradually become less serious or extreme

ab-bey /æbi/ noun [C] a large church with buildings attached for MONKS or NUNS to live in

ab-bre-vi-at-ed /ə'bri:vɪeɪtɪd/ adj shorter because some parts have been removed

ab-bre-vi-a-tion /ə'bri:vɪeɪʃ(ə)n/ noun [C] a short form of a word or phrase: *MIA is an abbreviation for "Missing in Action."*

ABC /eɪ bi si/ Australian Broadcasting Corporation: one of the major television companies in Australia

ab-di-cate /æbdɪ'keɪt/ verb **1** [I/T] if a king or queen abdicates, he or she formally gives up being king or queen **2** [T] *formal* to stop accepting responsibility for something

—**ab-di-ca-tion** /æbdɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ noun [C/U]

ab-do-men /æbdəmən, æb'doʊmən/ noun [C] *formal* the front part of your body below your waist

ab-dom-i-nal /æb'dɒmɪn(ə)l/ adj in the abdomen

ab-duct /æbdʌkt/ verb [T] to take someone away using force = KIDNAP —**ab-duc-tion** /æbdʌkʃ(ə)n/ noun [C/U]

ab-er-ra-tion /ə'bɛrɪeɪʃ(ə)n/ noun [C] *formal* something that is not normal, or not what you would usually expect

ab-hor-rent /ə'bɒrənt/ adj *formal* if something is abhorrent, you hate it because it is immoral

a-bide /ə'baɪd/ verb **can't abide sth** to hate something

PHRASAL VERB **a-bide by sth** to follow a rule, decision, or instruction

a-bid-ing /ə'baɪdɪŋ/ adj *formal* an abiding feeling or belief is one that you have had for a long time

a-bil-i-ty /ə'bɪləti/ noun [C/U] ★★★ the skill that you need in order to do something **≠ INABILITY**: *She has good organizational abilities.* ♦ **ability to do sth** *Tiredness can affect your ability to drive.*

PHRASE **to the best of your ability** as well as you can: *Just try to do the job to the best of your ability.*

ab-ject /æbdʒekt/ adj *formal* **1** used for emphasizing how bad something is: *abject poverty* **2** showing that you feel ashamed: *a look of abject embarrassment*

a-blaze /ə'bleɪz/ adj burning with a lot of flames

a-ble /eɪb(ə)l/ adj ★★★ intelligent, or good at doing something

PHRASE **be able to do sth** used for saying that it is possible for someone to do

something: *I don't know if I'll be able to come.* ♦ *I'd love to be able to sing like you.*

Word family: able

Words in the same family as **able**

- **ability** *n*
- **unable** *adj*
- **inability** *n*
- **disability** *n*
- **disabled** *adj*
- **enable** *v*

able-bodied /'eɪb(ə)l bɒdɪd/ *adj* not suffering from any disability

ably /'eɪbli/ *adv* very well, or very skillfully

ab-normal /'æbnɔːrm(ə)l/ *adj* not normal, and therefore a sign that there is a problem: *abnormal behavior* ♦ *abnormal eating habits* — **ab-normal-ly** /'æbnɔːrməli/ *noun* [C/U], **ab-normal-ly** *adv*: *Her blood pressure was abnormally high.*

a-board /ə'bɔːrd/ *adv*, preposition in or on a ship, train, or airplane

a-bode /ə'boʊd/ *noun* [C] *literary* the place where you live = **RESIDENCE**

abol-ish /ə'bɒlɪʃ/ *verb* [T] to officially get rid of a law or system: *The U.S. abolished slavery in 1865.*

ab-o-li-tion /'æbəlɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* [U] the official end to a law or system

a-bom-i-na-ble /ə'bɒmɪnə(ə)bl/ *adj* *formal* extremely bad — **a-bom-i-na-bly** *adv*

Ab-o-rig-i-ne /'æbərɪdʒəni/ or **Ab-o-rig-i-nal** /'æbərɪdʒən(ə)l/ *noun* [C] an Australian who belongs to the race of people who were living in Australia before Europeans arrived

a-bort /ə'bɔːt/ *verb* [T] **1** to stop something before it is finished: *The mission had to be aborted because of a technical problem.* **2** to remove a developing baby from a woman's body, so that it is not born alive

a-bor-tion /ə'bɔːʃ(ə)n/ *noun* [C/U] a medical operation in which a developing baby is removed from a woman's body, so that it is not born alive

a-bor-tive /ə'bɔːtɪv/ *adj* not finished, and therefore not successful: *abortive peace negotiations*

a-bound /ə'baʊnd/ *verb* [I] to be present in large numbers or amounts

a-bout /ə'baʊt/ *grammar word* ★★★

About can be:

- a **preposition**: *He told me about your problem.*
- an **adverb** in British English: *Stop rushing about.*
- followed by an infinitive with "to": *I was just about to explain.*

1 used for giving an amount, number, or time that is not exact = **APPROXIMATELY**: *About 250 people were killed in the explosion.* ♦ *I woke up at about 3 a.m.*

2 almost: *Pam's about the only person that I can trust.* ♦ *I'm just about ready to go.*

3 *British* in or to many different parts or areas = **AROUND**: *The children were running about the room.* ♦ *Dirty clothes were scattered about.*

4 used for stating who or what is being considered or discussed: *a book about American history* ♦ *They were talking about their vacation.* ♦ *There's nothing to get excited about.*

PHRASE **be about to do sth** to be going to happen very soon, or to be going to do something very soon: *I was about to get undressed when someone knocked.* ♦ *The show was about to begin.*

→ **HOW, WHAT**

about-face *noun* [C] *American* **1** a complete change in the way you behave or think about something **2** the action of turning your whole body quickly so that you are facing in the opposite direction

a-bove /ə'baʊv/ *grammar word* ★★★

Above can be:

- a **preposition**: *The birds were flying high above the trees.*
- an **adverb**: *She stared up at the stars above.*
- an **adjective**: *Please reply to the above address.*

1 in a higher position at a higher level than something, or directly over it: *We lived in the room above the store.* ♦ *Her leg was broken above the knee.*

2 higher in amount or standard more than a particular number, amount, or level: *The company's profits were 23% above the previous year's.* ♦ *In most subjects the students scored well above average.*

3 louder or higher than another sound louder or higher than the other sounds that you can hear: *I couldn't hear his voice above all the noise.*

4 in an earlier part of writing in an earlier part of a piece of writing, or higher up on the same page: *Many of the documents mentioned above are now available on the Internet.*

5 with a higher rank higher in rank, or more important than someone else: *As a major, Stuart was a rank above me.*

PHRASE **above all** used for saying what is most important: *We hope you will learn new skills, meet new people, and above all enjoy yourself.*

- Use **above** when something is not directly over something else, but at a higher level: *on the hillside above the river.*
- Use **over** when something moves or stretches across the space above something else: *flying over Miami* ♦ *the bridge over the river.*
- Use **over** when something covers something else: *She put a scarf over her hair.*

a-bove-board /ə'baʊv,bɔːrd/ *adj* completely honest and legal

ab-ra-sive /ə'breɪsɪv/ *adj* **1** someone who is abrasive behaves in a way that seems rude **2** an abrasive substance has a rough surface that is used for rubbing other surfaces

a-breast /ə'brest/ *adv* next to each other, facing or moving in the same direction

PHRASE **keep abreast of sth** to make sure that you know the most recent information about something

a-bridged /ə'brɪdʒd/ *adj* an abridged book or play is shorter than the original

a-broad /ə'brɔːd/ *adv* ★★★ in or to a foreign country: *We try to go abroad at least once a year.* ♦ *special arrangements for voters living abroad*

a-brupt /ə'brʌpt/ *adj* **1** sudden and unexpected, often in an unpleasant way



2 someone who is abrupt speaks in an unfriendly way using very few words

—**a-brupt-ly** adv

ab-cess /æb'ses/ noun [C] a painful swollen area on your skin or inside your body

ab-scond /əb'skɒnd/ verb [I] *formal* 1 to suddenly leave a place and take something with you that does not belong to you 2 to escape from a place where you are being kept as a punishment

ab-sence /'æbsəns/ noun ★

1 [C/U] a time when someone is not where they should be or where they usually are: *We are concerned about your child's frequent absences from school.* ♦ *Mark will be in charge in my absence* (=while I am away).

2 [U] the fact that something does not exist or is not present: *a complete absence of humor*

ab-sent /'æbsənt/ adj 1 not in the place where you should be ≠ **PRESENT**: *He's been absent from school for three days.* 2 *formal* missing from a place or situation: *The story has been absent from the news for weeks.*

ab-sen-tee /'æbsən'ti/ adj not able to do a job well because you are not in the place where you should be: *an absentee father*

ab-sen-tee-ism /'æbsən'ti:zəm/ noun [U] the habit of not being at school or work when you should be

absent-minded adj likely to forget or not notice things because you are not paying attention —**absent-mindedly** adv

ab-so-lute /'æbsə'lʊt, æb'sə'lʊt/ adj 1 used for emphasizing an opinion, feeling, or statement = **TOTAL**: *The way they've been treated is an absolute disgrace.* ♦ *You're talking absolute nonsense.* ♦ *I have absolute confidence in her.* 2 used for emphasizing that something is the most or least possible in a particular situation: *\$4,000 is the absolute maximum we can spend.*

ab-so-lute-ly /'æbsə'lʊtli, æb'sə'lʊtli/ adv ★

1 completely: *Are you absolutely certain you saw him?* ♦ *The food was absolutely fantastic.* ♦ *They have absolutely no idea how this happened.*

2 spoken used for emphasizing that you agree or mean "yes": *"Are you sure it's OK?" "Absolutely!"*

PHRASE **absolutely not** used for showing that you disagree strongly, or used as a strong way of saying "no": *"Do you think I should forgive him?" "Absolutely not!"*

ab-solve /əb'sɒlv/ verb [T] *formal* 1 to state officially that someone is not responsible for something bad 2 to forgive someone

ab-sorb /əb'sɔ:b, əb'zɔ:b/ verb [T] 1 to take in heat, light, liquid, or some other substance: *When wood gets wet, it absorbs water and expands.* ♦ *a device that produces energy by absorbing sunlight* ♦ **be absorbed into sth** *Caffeine is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream.* 2 to make something become a part of something larger: *His music has absorbed influences from all over the world.* ♦ **be absorbed into sth** *After the war, the whole region was absorbed into the Roman Empire.* 3 to learn and understand new facts: *We had to absorb a lot of information.* 4 *business* to accept an increase in your costs,

instead of increasing the prices that you charge: *Oil companies say they will absorb these tax increases.*

ab-sorbed /əb'sɔ:bɪd, əb'zɔ:bɪd/ adj completely interested or involved in something:

Richard was totally absorbed in his book.

ab-sorb-ent /əb'sɔ:bənt, əb'zɔ:bənt/ adj an absorbent material can take in and hold liquids

ab-sorb-ing /əb'sɔ:bɪŋ, əb'zɔ:bɪŋ/ adj taking all your attention: *an absorbing book*

ab-sorp-tion /əb'sɔ:p(ə)n, əb'zɔ:p(ə)n/ noun [U] 1 the process by which something takes in heat, light, liquid, or some other substance 2 the process of becoming part of something larger

ab-stain /əb'steɪn/ verb [I] 1 to deliberately avoid doing something enjoyable 2 to decide not to vote

ab-sten-tion /əb'sten(ə)n/ noun [C] a decision not to vote

ab-sti-nence /'æbstɪnəns/ noun [U] the practice of avoiding something such as alcohol or sex

ab-stract /'æbstrækt, æb'strækt/ adj 1 abstract ideas are not related to physical objects or real events 2 abstract art expresses ideas or feelings, instead of showing the exact appearance of people or things —**ab-stract-ion** /'æbstræk(ə)n/ noun [C/U]

abstract noun noun [C] a word that names a quality, idea, or feeling, such as "happiness" or "beauty"

ab-surd /əb'sɜ:d, əb'zɜ:d/ adj silly, unreasonable, or impossible to believe = **RIDICULOUS** —**ab-surd-ity** noun [C/U], **ab-surd-ly** adv

a-bun-dance /ə'bʌndəns/ noun [U] *formal* a very large quantity of something ≠ **SCARCITY**

a-bun-dant /ə'bʌndənt/ adj *formal* existing or available in large quantities ≠ **SCARCE**

a-bun-dant-ly /ə'bʌndəntli/ adv *formal* in large quantities

PHRASE **abundantly clear** very obvious

a-buse ¹ /ə'bju:s/ noun ★

1 [C/U] cruel, violent, or unfair treatment: *human rights abuses* ♦ *Many of the children were victims of sexual abuse.*

2 [C/U] the use of something in a bad, dishonest, or harmful way: *alcohol/drug/substance abuse* ♦ *This is clearly an abuse of executive power.*

3 [U] angry offensive comments: *racist abuse*

a-buse ² /ə'bju:z/ verb [T] 1 to have sex with someone who is unable to refuse, especially a child: *She was abused as a child.* 2 to treat someone in a cruel or violent way 3 to use something in a bad, dishonest, or harmful way 4 to speak to someone in an angry, offensive way —**a-bus-er** noun [C]

a-bu-sive /ə'bju:sɪv/ adj 1 offensive or insulting = **RUDE**: *abusive language* ♦ *When we asked him to leave, he became abusive.* 2 treating someone in a cruel way, either by being violent or by forcing them to have sex: *an abusive parent* —**a-bu-sive-ly** adv

a-bys-mal /ə'bɪz(ə)l/ adj extremely bad = **APPALLING**

a-byss /ə'bɪs/ noun [C] 1 a very frightening or