

The Paperback
Oxford
English Dictionary

**牛津实用
英语词典**

[英语版]

新版

**New
Edition**

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

The Paperback
Oxford
English Dictionary

牛津实用
英语词典
[英语版]

Fifth edition

Edited by
Catherine Soanes

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牛津实用英语词典[英语版]

Catherine Soanes 编

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出版前言

《牛津实用英语词典》(*Paperback Oxford English Dictionary*, 简称 POED) 是牛津大学出版社在《新牛津英语词典》(*New Oxford English Dictionary*) 基础上推出的新一代词典之一, 与国内读者所熟悉的《牛津英语小词典》(简称 LOD)、《牛津袖珍英语词典》(简称 POD) 和《牛津简明英语词典》(简称 COD) 属于同一系列。

这部词典具有以下几大鲜明特色:

一、释义准确简练。这部词典释义的特点是直截了当, 贴切简洁。在对数百万真实词语进行科学分析的基础上, 它的释义直指单词的核心意义, 并且释义词汇避免使用较难的和过于术语化的词, 便于读者理解和查阅。

二、各种说明扼要实用。本词典收录了相当数量的关于拼写、用法和词源等方面的说明, 是指导读者在学习和生活中如何使用英语的好帮手。拼写说明善意地提醒读者要注意那些容易拼写错的单词, 用法说明则囊括了从语法要点到某一具体单词的正确使用等信息, 词源说明可以帮助读者弄清单词的起源, 有利于记忆单词和扩大词汇量。

三、广收专有名词。一般来说, 英国出版的通用词典和学习词典属于纯语言词典, 不收专有名词。但对于英语学习者来说, 不论普通名词或专有名词, 只要不认识, 都是理解或表达上的障碍。意识到了学习者可能会碰到这类问题, 这部词典的编纂者特别收录了各类专有名词, 共计 4, 700 余条, 内容可谓极其广泛丰富。读者从中既可以找到对俄罗斯总统 Putin (普京) 的介绍, 也可以了解到古希腊神话中的英雄 Achilles (阿喀琉斯) 的故事; 既可以获得对 Alps (阿尔卑斯山) 的了解, 也可以弄清 Vietnam War (越南战争) 的来龙去脉。

四、附录丰富多样。本词典虽然是一部中型词典, 但它的附录却多达 16 种之多, 包括国家名称、美国历届总统、英国历届首相、星座名称、音乐乐谱、建筑风格等等, 其中有许多在其他词典中是查不到的, 对读者而言非常有用。

经牛津大学出版社惠允, 外语教学与研究出版社引进出版这部词典, 相信会成为我国广大英语学习者的良师益友。

外语教学与研究出版社
学术与辞书部
2003 年 12 月

Preface

The *Paperback Oxford English Dictionary* is part of the range of new generation dictionaries based on the *New Oxford Dictionary of English*. It is a handy all-in-one reference book that provides up-to-date and accessible information on the core vocabulary of current English, together with over 4,700 factual entries on important people, places, historical events, etc. Its priorities are clear explanations of meaning, informative encyclopedic entries, and help with spelling, pronunciation, and usage.

The dictionary text is directly informed by the evidence of how the language is actually used today, based on the analysis of hundreds of millions of words of real English carried out for *NODE*. This information is presented in a clear and concise way; definitions focus on the central meanings of words and are immediately accessible, avoiding the use of difficult and over-technical vocabulary. Boxed usage notes within the text give clear guidance on points of grammar and usage. An open layout, with each new section of an entry (phrases, derivatives, usage notes, and etymologies) on a new line, ensures that finding individual sections and entries is easy to do.

The encyclopedic entries cover a wide range of important people, places, historical events, mythological characters, and other proper names, giving useful facts, figures, and points of interest. They are highlighted within the text by special design features, making them easy to find. In addition, there is a set of Appendices providing a wealth of information on subjects such as countries and currencies, prime ministers, and weights and measures.

Pronunciations are given using a simple system, making them very easy to understand. Greater clarity has also been introduced into etymologies, which are written in a non-technical style to focus on root words, with language names written out in full.

The editor would like to thank Clare Collinson for editorial work on encyclopedic entries, Bill Trumble for scientific advice, and Susan Wilkin for providing pronunciations.

Guide to the use of the dictionary

1. Structure of entries

The *Paperback Oxford English Dictionary* is designed to be as straightforward as possible and the use of special dictionary symbols and conventions has been kept to a minimum. Those that are used are explained below.

Headword	bathe /bayth/ ● v. (bathes, bathing, bathed) 1 wash by immersing one's body in water. 2 ^{Brit} take a swim. 3 soak or wipe gently with liquid to clean or soothe. ● n. a swim. – DERIVATIVES bather n. – ORIGIN Old English.	Verb inflections Label (showing regional distribution)
● Introduces new part of speech		
Pronunciation (for selected words)	apogee /ap-uh-jee/ ● n. 1 Astron. the point in the orbit of the moon or a satellite at which it is furthest from the earth. 2 the highest point: <i>his creative activity reached its apogee in 1910.</i> – ORIGIN from Greek <i>apogaiōn diastēma</i> , 'distance away from earth'.	Subject label
Sense number		Example of use (taken from real evidence)
	buck ¹ ● n. 1 the male of some animals, e.g. deer and rabbits. 2 a vertical jump performed by a horse. 3 ^{archaic} a fashionable young man. ● v. 1 (of a horse) perform a buck. 2 go against: <i>the shares bucked the market trend.</i> 3 (buck up): informal make or become more cheerful. – ORIGIN Old English.	Typical pattern (in bold)
Label (showing currency)		
Homonym number (indicates different word with the same spelling)	buck ² ● n. N. Amer. & Austral./NZ informal a dollar. – ORIGIN unknown.	Label (showing level of formality)
	centralize (also centralise) ● v. (centralizes, centralizing, centralized) bring under the control of a central authority. – DERIVATIVES centralism n. centralist n. & adj. centralization (also centralisation) n.	Variant spelling
Derivatives (in alphabetical order)		
Part of speech	him ● pron. (third person sing.) used as the object of a verb or preposition to refer to a male person or animal previously mentioned. – ORIGIN Old English.	Grammatical information (in round brackets)

Cross reference
(in bold small capitals)

die² **n.** **1** sing. of **dice**. **2** (pl. **dies**) a device for cutting or moulding metal or for stamping a design onto coins or medals.

Plural form

Phrases and idioms

- PHRASES **the die is cast** an event has happened that cannot be changed.
- ORIGIN Old French *de*.

bacteria **n.** (sing. **bacterium**) a group of microscopic organisms, each made up of a single cell, many kinds of which can cause disease.

- DERIVATIVES **bacterial** adj.
- ORIGIN Greek *baktērion* 'little rod'.

Word origin

USAGE **bacteria**

Usage note

The word **bacteria** means 'microscopic organisms, each made up of a single cell' and is the plural form of **bacterium**. This means that **bacteria** should always be used with a plural verb: *the bacteria were multiplying*.

Darwin¹
the capital of Northern Territory, Australia.

E

Encyclopedic entries

Darwin²
Charles (Robert) (1809-82), English naturalist, who proposed of the theory of evolution by natural selection. His works *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* revolutionized our thinking about nature and humanity's place within it.

E

Encyclopedic entry symbol

2. Pronunciation system used in the dictionary

The *Paperback Oxford English Dictionary* uses a respelling system for pronunciations in which special symbols are avoided. The dictionary's policy is to give a pronunciation for any word which might cause difficulty; it does not provide pronunciations for everyday words assumed to be familiar to everyone, such as *table* or *large*. Foreign pronunciations are always anglicized, e.g. /kor-don **bler**/ (cordon bleu).

Hyphens have been used to divide pronunciations approximately into syllables. The main stress is shown in bold, e.g. /**ab**-duh-muhn/ (abdomen). Secondary stresses are not given.

An apostrophe has been used instead of the sound /uh/ in cases where this is too heavy, or where the sound is a syllabic consonant (a consonant that is a whole syllable), as in /ay-zh'n/ (Asian) or /**har**-k'n/ (hearken).

A consonant is sometimes doubled to avoid misinterpretation, for example, -ss is given whenever -s might be pronounced as -z, as in /**cha**-liss/ (chalice).

'I' occurs in initial segments of words and in stand-alone segments (e.g. /I-uh-tol-luh/ (ayatollah), /cat-I-uhn/ (cation)). All other instances of 'I' are represented with 'y'.

A rhyming pronunciation is given where the alternative respelling involves odd-looking word groups, as in aisle /rhymes with mile/.

List of Respelling Symbols

Vowels	Examples	Vowels	Examples	Vowels	Examples	Vowels	Examples
a	as in cat	eer	as in beer	oo	as in soon	uu	as in book
ah	as in calm	er	as in her	oor	as in poor	y	as in cry
air	as in hair	ew	as in few	or	as in corn	yoo	as in unit
ar	as in bar	i	as in pin	ow	as in cow	yoor	as in Europe
aw	as in law	l	as in eye	oy	as in boy	yr	as in fire
ay	as in say	o	as in top	u	as in cup		
e	as in bed	oh	as in most	uh	as in along		
ee	as in meet	oi	as in join				
Consonants	Examples	Consonants	Examples	Consonants	Examples	Consonants	Examples
b	as in bat	kh	as in loch	p	as in pen	w	as in will
ch	as in chin	l	as in leg	r	as in red	y	as in yes
d	as in day	m	as in man	s	as in sit	z	as in zebra
f	as in fat	n	as in not	sh	as in shop	zh	as in vision
g	as in get	ng	as in sing, finger	t	as in top		
h	as in hat			th	as in thin		
j	as in jam	nk	as in thank	th	as in this		
k	as in king			v	as in van		

3. Abbreviations used in the dictionary

abbrev.	abbreviation	Med.	Medicine
adj.	adjective	Meteorol.	Meteorology
adv.	adverb	Mil.	Military
Anat.	Anatomy	n.	noun
Amer. Football	American Football	N. Amer.	North American
Archit.	Architecture	Naut.	Nautical
Astron.	Astronomy	N. Engl.	Northern English
Austral.	Australian	NZ	New Zealand
b.	born	opp.	opposite of
Biochem.	Biochemistry	offens.	offensive
Biol.	Biology	part.	participle
Bot.	Botany	Philos.	Philosophy
Chem.	Chemistry	Phonet.	Phonetics
comb. form	combining form	Physiol.	Physiology
contr.	contraction	pl.	plural
d.	died	predet.	predeterminer
derog.	derogatory	prep.	preposition
det.	determiner	pres.	present
Electron.	Electronics	pronunc.	pronunciation
Engl. Law	English Law	Rom. Myth.	Roman Mythology
esp.	especially	S. Afr.	South African
euphem.	euphemistic	Sc.	Scottish
exclam.	exclamation	sing.	singular
fem.	feminine	Stat.	Statistics
Geol.	Geology	symb.	symbol
Gk Myth.	Greek Mythology	tech.	technical
hist.	historical	usu.	usually
Ind.	Indian	v.	verb
Ir.	Irish	var.	variant
Math.	Mathematics	Zool.	Zoology

Note on trademarks and proprietary status

This dictionary includes some words which have, or are asserted to have, proprietary status as trademarks or otherwise. Their inclusion does not imply that they have acquired for legal purposes a non-proprietary or general significance, nor any other judgement concerning their legal status. In cases where the editorial staff have some evidence that a word has proprietary status this is indicated in the entry for that word by the label *trademark*, but no judgement concerning the legal status of such words is made or implied thereby.

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Aa

A¹ (also **a**) ● **n.** (pl. **As** or **A's**) **1** the first letter of the alphabet. **2** referring to the first, best, or most important item in a group. **3** Music the sixth note of the scale of C major.

— **PHRASES** **from A to B** from one's starting point to one's finishing point.

A² ● **abbrev.** **1** ampere(s). **2** (Å) ångström(s). **3** answer.

a¹ ● **det.** **1** used when mentioning someone or something for the first time; the indefinite article. **2** one single: *a hundred*. **3** per.

— **ORIGIN** Old English.

a² ● **abbrev.** **1** (in travel timetables) arrives. **2** (used before a date) before. [ORIGIN Latin *ante*.]

a-¹ (often **an-** before a vowel) ● **prefix** not; without: *atheistic*.

— **ORIGIN** Greek.

a-² ● **prefix** **1** to; towards: *aside*. **2** in the process of: *a-hunting*. **3** in a specified state: *afutter*.

— **ORIGIN** Old English.

a-³ ● **prefix** **1** of: *anew*. **2** utterly: *abash*.

— **ORIGIN** Old French.

A1 ● **adj.** informal excellent.

AA ● **abbrev.** **1** Alcoholics Anonymous. **2** Automobile Association.

aardvark /ard-vark/ ● **n.** an African mammal with a tubular snout and a long tongue, feeding on ants and termites.

— **ORIGIN** South African Dutch, 'earth pig'.

Aaron

/air-uhn/ (in the Bible) the brother of Moses and traditional founder of the Jewish priesthood.

ab- (also **abs-**) ● **prefix** away; from: *abdicate*.

— **ORIGIN** Latin.

aback ● **adv.** (in phr. *take aback*) shock or surprise (someone).

— **ORIGIN** Old English.

abacus /ab-uh-kuhss/ ● **n.** (pl. *abacuses*) a frame with rows of wires along which beads are slid, used for counting.

— **ORIGIN** Greek *abax* 'slab'.

abaft /uh-bahft/ ● **adv.** & **prep.** Naut. in or behind the stern of a ship.

— **ORIGIN** from archaic *baft* 'in the rear'.

abandon ● **v.** **1** leave permanently. **2** give up (an action or practice) completely. **3** (*abandon oneself to*) give in to (a desire) completely. ● **n.** complete lack of self-consciousness or self-control.

— **DERIVATIVES** *abandonment* **n.**

— **ORIGIN** Old French *abandoner*.

abandoned ● **adj.** wild; uncontrolled.

abase /uh-bayss/ ● **v.** (*abases, abasing, abased*) (*abase oneself*) behave in a way that causes others to think less of one.

— **DERIVATIVES** *abasement* **n.**

— **ORIGIN** Old French *abaissier* 'to lower'.

abashed ● **adj.** embarrassed or ashamed.

— **ORIGIN** Old French *esbair* 'utterly astound'.

abate /uh-bayt/ ● **v.** (*abates, abating, abated*) (of something bad) become less severe or widespread.

— **DERIVATIVES** *abatement* **n.**

— **ORIGIN** Old French *abatre* 'to fell'.

abattoir /ab-uh-twar/ ● **n.** a slaughterhouse.

— **ORIGIN** French.

Abbas

/uh-bass/, Ferhat (1899-1989), Algerian nationalist leader; first President of independent Algeria in 1962.

abbess /ab-biss/ ● **n.** a woman who is the head of an abbey of nuns.

abbey ● **n.** (pl. *abbeys*) a building occupied by a community of monks or nuns.

— **ORIGIN** Old French *abbie*.

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

— **ORIGIN** Greek *abbas* 'father'.

abbreviate /uh-bree-vi-ayt/ ● **v.** (*abbreviates, abbreviating, abbreviated*) shorten (a word, phrase, or text).

— **ORIGIN** Latin *abbreviare*.

abbreviation ● **n.** a shortened form of a word or phrase.

USAGE *abbreviation*

What is the difference between an **abbreviation**, an **acronym**, a **contraction**, and an **initialism**? An **abbreviation** is a shortened form of a word or phrase (for example, *miss* is an abbreviation of *mistress*). An **acronym** is a word formed from the first letters of other words (for example, *laser* is an acronym formed from the initial letters of the words *light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation*). A **contraction** is a shortened form of a word or words, often joined by an apostrophe (for example *I'll* is a contraction of either *I shall* or *I will*). Finally, an **initialism** is an abbreviation consisting of initial letters pronounced separately (for example, *BBC* is an initialism for the *British Broadcasting Corporation*).

ABC ● **n.** **1** the alphabet. **2** a guide to something arranged in alphabetical order. **3** the basic facts of a subject.

abdicate /ab-di-kayt/ ● **v.** (*abdicates, abdicating, abdicated*) **1** give up the role of king or queen. **2** fail to carry out (a duty).

— **DERIVATIVES** *abdication* **n.**

— **ORIGIN** Latin *abdicare* 'renounce'.

abdomen /ab-duh-muhn/ ● **n.** **1** the part of the body containing the digestive and reproductive organs; the belly. **2** the rear part of the body of an insect, spider, or crustacean.

— **DERIVATIVES** *abdominal* **adj.**

— **ORIGIN** Latin.

abduct ● **v.** take (someone) away by force or trickery.

— **DERIVATIVES** *abductee* **n.** *abduction* **n.** *abductor* **n.**

— **ORIGIN** Latin *abducere*.

Abdul Hamid II [E]
/ab-duul ha-mid/ (1842-1918), the last sultan of Turkey 1876-1909.

Abdullah ibn Hussein [E]
/ab-duul-luh i-b'n huu-sayn/ (1882-1951), king of Jordan 1946-51. Emir of Transjordan from 1921, he became king of Jordan on its independence.

Abdul Rahman [E]
/ab-duul rah-muhn/, Tunku (1903-90), first Prime Minister of independent Malaya 1957-63 and of Malaysia 1963-70.

Abel [E]
/ay-b1/ (in the Bible) the second son of Adam and Eve, murdered by his brother Cain.

Abelard [E]
/ab-uh-lard/, Peter (1079-1142), French scholar, theologian, and philosopher, famous for his tragic love affair with his pupil Héloïse (see **HELOISE**).

Aberdeen [E]
a city and seaport in NE Scotland, a centre of the offshore North Sea oil industry.

Aberdeen² [E]
George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of (1784-1860), British Conservative statesman, Prime Minister 1852-5.

Aberdeen Angus [E] **n.** a Scottish breed of black beef cattle.

Aberdeenshire [E]
an administrative region and former county of NE Scotland.

Aberfan [E]
/a-ber-van/ a village in South Wales where, in 1966, a slag heap collapsed, overwhelming houses and a school and killing 28 adults and 116 children.

aberrant /uh-berr-uhnt/ **adj.** not normal or acceptable.

aberration /a-buh-ray-sh'n/ **n.** an action, event, or way of behaving that is not normal or acceptable.
- ORIGIN Latin.

Abertawe [E]
/a-ber-tow-i/ Welsh name for **SWANSEA**.

abet /uh-bet/ **ov.** (**abets, abetting, abetted**) (usu. in phr. **aid and abet**) encourage or help (someone) to do something wrong.
- ORIGIN Old French **abeter**.

abeyance /uh-bay-uhns/ **n.** (in phr. **in/into abeyance**) temporarily not occurring or in use.

- ORIGIN Old French **abeer** 'aspire after'.

abhor /uhb-hor/ **ov.** (**abhors, abhorring, abhorred**) detest; hate.
- ORIGIN Latin **abhorrere**.

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

abide **ov.** (**abides, abiding, abided**) **1** (**abide by**) accept or obey (a rule or decision). **2** informal put up with: *he could not abide conflict*. **3** (of a feeling or memory) last for a long time.
- ORIGIN Old English, 'wait'.

abiding **adj.** lasting; enduring.

ability **n.** (pl. **abilities**) **1** the power or capacity to do something. **2** skill or talent.
- ORIGIN Latin **habilitas**.

abject /ab-jekt/ **adj.** **1** extremely unpleasant and wretched: *abject poverty*. **2** completely without pride or dignity: *an abject apology*.
- DERIVATIVES **abjectly** **adv.**
- ORIGIN Latin **abjectus** 'rejected'.

abjure /uhb-joor/ **ov.** (**abjures, abjuring, abjured**) formal swear to give up (a belief or claim).
- ORIGIN Latin **abjurare**.

ablaze **adj.** burning fiercely.

able **adj.** (**abler, ablest**) **1** having the power, skill, or means to do something. **2** skilful and capable.

- DERIVATIVES **ably** **adv.**
- ORIGIN Latin **habilis** 'handy'.

-able **suffix** forming adjectives meaning: **1** able to be: *calculable*. **2** subject to; relevant to: *taxable*. **3** having the quality to: *suitable*.
- DERIVATIVES **-ability** suffix **-ably** suffix.

able-bodied **adj.** physically fit; not disabled.

ablutions /uh-bloo-shuhn/ **pl. n.** formal or humorous the act of washing oneself.
- ORIGIN Latin.

abnegate /ab-ni-gayt/ **ov.** (**abnegates, abnegating, abnegated**) formal give up or reject (something desired or valuable).
- DERIVATIVES **abnegation** **n.**

- ORIGIN Latin.

abnormal **adj.** not normal.

- DERIVATIVES **abnormally** **adv.**
- ORIGIN Greek **anōmalos** 'uneven'.

abnormality **n.** (pl. **abnormalities**) **1** a feature or event which is not normal. **2** the state of being abnormal.

Abo /ab-oh/ **n.** (pl. **Abos**) Austral. informal, offens. an Aboriginal.

aboard **adv. & prep.** on or into (a ship, train, or other vehicle).

abode **n.** formal or literary a house or home.

- ORIGIN FROM **ABIDE**.

abolish **ov.** put an end to (a system, law, or custom).
- ORIGIN Latin **abolere** 'destroy'.

abolition **n.** the ending of a system, law, or custom.

abolitionist **n.** a person who supports the abolition of something.

A-bomb **n.** = **ATOM BOMB**.

abominable **adj.** **1** very unpleasant and causing disgust. **2** informal very bad.

- DERIVATIVES **abominably** **adv.**

- ORIGIN Latin **abominabilis**.

Abominable Snowman **n.** a yeti.

abominate /uh-bom-i-nayt/ **ov.** (**abominates, abominating, abominated**) formal hate.

abomination **n.** **1** a thing that causes disgust or hatred. **2** a feeling of hatred.

aboriginal **adj.** **1** existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists. **2** (**Aboriginal**) having to do with the Australian Aborigines. **n.** **1** an inhabitant of a land from the earliest times. **2** (**Aboriginal**) a member of one of the original peoples of Australia.

aborigine /ab-uh-ri-ji-nee/ (also **Aborigine**)

- **n.** an original inhabitant of a land, especially an Australian Aboriginal.
- **ORIGIN** from Latin *ab origine* 'from the beginning'.
- abort** ● **v.** 1 carry out the abortion of (a fetus). 2 bring to an early end because of a problem or fault.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *aboriri* 'miscarry'.
- abortion** ● **n.** 1 the deliberate bringing to an end of a human pregnancy. 2 the natural ending of a pregnancy before the fetus is able to survive on its own.
- abortionist** ● **n.** derog. a person who carries out abortions.
- abortive** ● **adj.** failing to achieve the intended result; unsuccessful.
- abound** ● **v.** 1 exist in large numbers or amounts. 2 (abound in/with) have in large numbers or amounts.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *abundare* 'overflow'.
- about** ● **prep.** & **adv.** 1 on the subject of; concerning. 2 used to indicate movement within an area or position in a place: *she looked about the room*. 3 approximately.
- **PHRASES** **be about** to be on the point of.
- **ORIGIN** Old English.
- about-turn** (also esp. N. Amer. **about-face**) ● **n.** Brit. 1 Mil. a turn made so as to face the opposite direction. 2 informal a complete change of opinion or policy.
- above** ● **prep.** & **adv.** 1 at a higher level than. 2 rather or more than: *he valued safety above comfort*. 3 (in printed text) mentioned earlier.
- **PHRASES** **above board** lawful and honest. **above oneself** arrogant and self-important. **not be above** be capable of doing (something unworthy).
- **ORIGIN** Old English.
- abracadabra** ● **exclam.** a word said by magicians when performing a trick.
- **ORIGIN** Latin.
- abrade** /uh-brayd/ ● **v.** (abrades, abrading, abraded) scrape or wear away.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *abradere*.
- Abraham** [E]
/ay-bruh-ham/ (in the Bible) the Hebrew patriarch from whom all Jews trace their descent.
- abrasion** /uh-bray-zh'n/ ● **n.** 1 the action or process of scraping or wearing away. 2 an area of scraped skin.
- abrasive** /uh-bray-siv/ ● **adj.** 1 able to polish or clean a hard surface by rubbing or grinding. 2 harsh or rough in manner.
- abreast** ● **adv.** 1 side by side and facing the same way. 2 (abreast of) up to date with.
- abridge** ● **v.** (abridges, abridging, abridged) shorten (a text or film).
- **ORIGIN** Old French *abregier*.
- abridgement** (also **abridgment**) ● **n.** a shortened version of a larger work.
- abroad** ● **adv.** 1 in or to a foreign country or countries. 2 over a wide area: *millions of seeds are scattered abroad*. 3 at large: *there is a new spirit abroad*.
- abrogate** /ab-ruh-gayt/ ● **v.** (abrogates, abrogating, abrogated) formal cancel or do away with (a law or agreement).
- **ORIGIN** Latin *abrogare* 'repeal'.
- abrupt** ● **adj.** 1 sudden and unexpected.

- 2 brief to the point of rudeness. 3 steep.
- **DERIVATIVES** **abruptly** **adv.** **abruptness** **n.**
- **ORIGIN** Latin *abruptus* 'broken off, steep'.
- abscess** ● **n.** a swelling containing pus.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *abscessus*.
- abscond** /uhb-skond/ ● **v.** leave quickly and secretly to escape from custody or avoid arrest.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *abscondere* 'hide'.
- abseil** /ab-sayl/ ● **v.** climb down a rock-face using a rope wrapped round the body and fixed at a higher point.
- **ORIGIN** German *absilen*.
- absence** ● **n.** 1 the state of being away from a place or person: *the letter had arrived in his absence*. 2 (absence of) the non-existence or lack of.
- absent** ● **adj.** /ab-s'nt/ 1 not present. 2 not paying attention. ● **v.** /uhb-sent/ (absent oneself) stay or go away.
- **DERIVATIVES** **absently** **adv.**
- **ORIGIN** Latin *absesse* 'to be away'.
- absentee** ● **n.** a person who is absent.
- absenteeism** ● **n.** frequent absence from work or school without good reason.
- absent-minded** ● **adj.** inattentive or forgetful.
- **DERIVATIVES** **absent-mindedly** **adv.**
- absinthe** /ab-sinth/ ● **n.** a green aniseed-flavoured liqueur.
- **ORIGIN** French.
- absolute** ● **adj.** 1 complete; total. 2 having unlimited power: *an absolute ruler*. 3 not related or compared to anything else: *absolute moral principles*.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *absolutus* 'freed'.
- absolutely** ● **adv.** 1 completely; entirely. 2 used for emphasis or to express agreement.
- absolute majority** ● **n.** a majority over all rivals considered as a group; more than half.
- absolute pitch** ● **n.** Music 1 the ability to recognize the pitch of a note or produce any given note. 2 a fixed standard of pitch defined by the frequency of the sound vibration.
- absolute temperature** ● **n.** a temperature measured from absolute zero in kelvins.
- absolute zero** ● **n.** the lowest temperature theoretically possible (zero kelvins, -273.15°C).
- absolution** ● **n.** formal forgiveness of a person's sins.
- **ORIGIN** Latin.
- absolutism** ● **n.** the principle that those in government should have unlimited power.
- **DERIVATIVES** **absolutist** **n.** & **adj.**
- absolve** /uhb-zolv/ ● **v.** (absolves, absolving, absolved) declare (someone) free from guilt, blame, or sin.
- **ORIGIN** Latin *absolvere* 'set free, acquit'.
- absorb** /uhb-zorb/ ● **v.** 1 soak up (liquid or another substance). 2 take in (information). 3 take over (something less powerful). 4 use up (time or resources). 5 reduce the effect or strength of (sound or an impact): *buffers absorbed most of the shock*. 6 hold the attention of.
- **DERIVATIVES** **absorbable** **adj.** **absorber** **n.**
- **ORIGIN** Latin *absorbere* 'suck in'.
- absorbent** ● **adj.** able to soak up liquid easily.
- **DERIVATIVES** **absorbency** **n.**

absorption *n.* the process of absorbing or the action of being absorbed.

abstain *v.* **1** (abstain from) stop oneself from (doing something enjoyable). **2** formally choose not to vote.

— DERIVATIVES **abstainer** *n.*

— ORIGIN Latin *abstinere* 'hold from'.

abstemious /uhb-stee-mi-uhss/ *adj.* taking care to limit one's intake of food or alcohol.

— ORIGIN Latin *abstemius*.

abstention /uhb-sten-sh'n/ *n.* **1** a deliberate decision not to vote. **2** abstinence.

abstinence /ab-sti-nuhns/ *n.* the avoidance of something enjoyable, such as food or alcohol.

— DERIVATIVES **abstinent** *adj.*

— ORIGIN Latin *abstinencia*.

abstract *adj.* /ab-strakt/ **1** having to do with ideas or qualities rather than physical things. **2** (of art) using colour and shapes to create an effect rather than attempting to represent real life accurately. *v.* /uhb-strakt/ take out or remove. *n.* /ab-strakt/ a summary of a book or article.

— DERIVATIVES **abstractly** *adv.*

— ORIGIN Latin *abstrahere* 'draw away'.

abstracted *adj.* not paying attention to what is happening; preoccupied.

abstraction *n.* **1** the quality of being abstract. **2** something which exists only as an idea. **3** a preoccupied state. **4** the action of removing something.

abstruse /uhb-strooss/ *adj.* difficult to understand.

— ORIGIN Latin *abstrusus* 'concealed'.

absurd *adj.* completely illogical or ridiculous.

— DERIVATIVES **absurdity** *n.* **absurdly** *adv.*

— ORIGIN Latin *absurdus* 'out of tune'.

Abu Dhabi

/a-booh dah-bi/ the largest of the seven member states of the United Arab Emirates; capital, Abu Dhabi.

Abuja

/uh-booh-juh/ a newly built city in Nigeria, capital since 1991.

abundance /uh-bun-duhns/ *n.* **1** a very large quantity. **2** the state of having a very large quantity; *vines grew in abundance*.

— ORIGIN Latin *abundantia*.

abundant *adj.* **1** existing in large quantities; plentiful. **2** (abundant in) having plenty of.

— DERIVATIVES **abundantly** *adv.*

abuse *v.* /uh-byooz/ (**abuses, abusing, abused**) **1** use badly or wrongly. **2** treat cruelly or violently. **3** speak to in an insulting and offensive way. *n.* /uh-byoooss/ **1** the wrong use of something. **2** cruel and violent treatment. **3** insulting and offensive language.

— DERIVATIVES **abuser** *n.*

— ORIGIN Latin *abuti* 'misuse'.

Abu Simbel

/a-booh sim-b'l/ the site of two huge temples cut out of cliffs in southern Egypt, built in the 13th century BC.

abusive *adj.* **1** extremely offensive and insulting. **2** involving cruelty and violence.

— DERIVATIVES **abusively** *adv.*

abut /uh-but/ *v.* (**abuts, abutting, abutted**)

be next to or touching.

— ORIGIN Old French *abouter*.

abysmal /uh-biz-m'l/ *adj.* informal extremely bad.

— DERIVATIVES **abysmally** *adv.*

— ORIGIN Old French *abysme* 'abyss'.

abyss /uh-biss/ *n.* a very deep hole.

— ORIGIN Greek *abussos* 'bottomless'.

Abyssinia

/a-bi-sin-i-uh/ former name for ETHIOPIA.

AC *abbrev.* alternating current.

a/c *abbrev.* account.

acacia /uh-kay-shuh/ *n.* a tree or shrub with yellow or white flowers, found in warm climates.

— ORIGIN Greek *akakia*.

academia /a-kuh-dee-mi-uh/ *n.* the academic environment or community.

academic *adj.* **1** having to do with education or study. **2** not related to a real situation and so not important. *n.* a teacher or scholar in a university or college.

— DERIVATIVES **academically** *adv.*

Académie française

/uh-ka-duh-mi fron-sayz/ a French literary academy responsible for the standard form of the French language.

academy *n.* (pl. **academies**) **1** a place of study or training in a special field. **2** a society or institution of scholars, artists, or scientists. **3** US & Sc. a secondary school.

— ORIGIN Greek *akademeia*.

Academy award *n.* an award given by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for achievement in the film industry; an Oscar.

Acadia

/uh-kay-di-uh/ a former French colony established in 1604 in the territory now forming Nova Scotia in Canada.

acanthus /uh-kan-thuhss/ *n.* a plant or shrub with spiny leaves.

— ORIGIN Greek *akanthos*.

a cappella /a kuh-pel-luh/ *adj.* & *adv.* (of music) sung without being accompanied by instruments.

— ORIGIN Italian, 'in chapel style'.

Acapulco

/a-kuh-puul-koh/ a port and resort in southern Mexico.

accede /uhk-seed/ *v.* (**accedes, acceding, acceded**) (usu. **accede to**) formal **1** agree to a demand or request. **2** take up an office or position.

— ORIGIN Latin *accedere* 'come to'.

accelerate /uhk-sel-uh-rayt/ *v.* (**accelerates, accelerating, accelerated**) **1** begin or cause to move more quickly. **2** increase in amount or scale.

— DERIVATIVES **acceleration** *n.*

— ORIGIN Latin *accelerare*.

accelerator *n.* **1** a foot pedal which controls the speed of a vehicle. **2** Physics an apparatus for causing charged particles to move at high speeds.

accent *n.* /ak-s'nt, ak-sent/ **1** a way of pronouncing a language. **2** an emphasis given to a syllable, word, or note. **3** a mark on a letter or word showing how a sound is pronounced

- or stressed. **4** a particular emphasis: *the accent is on participation*. **ov.** /ak-sent/ **1** (accented) spoken with a particular accent. **2** emphasize.
- ORIGIN Latin *accentus* 'tone, signal, or intensity'.
- accentuate** /uhk-sen-tyuu-ayt/ **ov.** (accentuates, accentuating, accentuated) make more noticeable.
- DERIVATIVES **accentuation** *n.*
- accept** **ov.** **1** agree to receive or do (something offered or proposed). **2** regard favourably. **3** believe or receive as valid or correct. **4** admit responsibility for. **5** put up with.
- DERIVATIVES **acceptance** *n.* **acceptor** *n.*
- ORIGIN Latin *acceptare*.
- acceptable** **ov.** **1** able to be accepted. **2** adequate.
- DERIVATIVES **acceptability** *n.* **acceptably** *adv.*
- access** **ov.** **1** the means or opportunity to approach or enter a place. **2** the right or opportunity to use something or see someone. **ov.** **1** obtain (data) from a computer. **2** enter (a place).
- ORIGIN Latin *accessus*.
- accessible** **ov.** **1** able to be reached or used. **2** friendly and easy to talk to. **3** easily understood or enjoyed.
- DERIVATIVES **accessibility** *n.*
- accesion** **ov.** **1** the gaining of an important position or rank. **2** a new item added to a library or museum collection.
- accessorize** (also **accessorise**) **ov.** (accessorizes, accessorizing, accessorized) add a fashion accessory to (a garment).
- accessory** **ov.** (pl. **accessories**) **1** a thing which can be added to or worn with something else to make it more useful or attractive. **2** law a person who helps someone commit a crime without taking part in it.
- ORIGIN Latin *accessorius* 'additional thing'.
- accident** **ov.** **1** an unpleasant incident that happens unexpectedly. **2** an incident that happens by chance.
- ORIGIN Latin *accidere* 'fall or happen'.
- accidental** **ov.** happening by accident. **ov.** Music a sign attached to a note indicating a momentary departure from the key signature.
- DERIVATIVES **accidentally** *adv.*
- acclaim** **ov.** praise enthusiastically and publicly. **ov.** enthusiastic public praise.
- ORIGIN Latin *acclamare*.
- acclamation** **ov.** loud and enthusiastic approval or praise.
- acclimatize** (also **acclimatise**) **ov.** (acclimatizes, acclimatizing, acclimatized) make or become used to a new climate or new conditions.
- DERIVATIVES **acclimatization** (also **acclimatisation**) *n.*
- ORIGIN French *acclimater*.
- accolade** /ak-kuh-layd/ **ov.** something given as a special honour or as a reward for excellence.
- ORIGIN first meaning 'a touch on a person's shoulders with a sword when knighting them': from Provençal *acolada* 'embrace around the neck'.
- accommodate** **ov.** (accommodates, accommodating, accommodated) **1** provide lodging or space for. **2** adapt to or fit in with.
- ORIGIN Latin *accommodare*.
- accommodating** **ov.** willing to help or fit in with someone's wishes.
- accommodation** **ov.** **1** a place where someone may live or stay. **2** a settlement or compromise.
- accompaniment** **ov.** **1** a musical part which accompanies an instrument, voice, or group. **2** something that accompanies something else.
- accompanist** **ov.** a person who plays a musical accompaniment.
- accompany** **ov.** (accompanies, accompanying, accompanied) **1** go somewhere with (someone). **2** be present or occur at the same time as. **3** play musical support or backing for (an instrument, voice, or group).
- ORIGIN Old French *acompanier*.
- accomplice** /uh-kum-pliss/ **ov.** a person who helps another commit a crime.
- ORIGIN Old French *complice*.
- accomplish** **ov.** achieve or complete (something) successfully.
- ORIGIN Old French *acomplir*.
- accomplished** **ov.** highly skilled.
- accomplishment** **ov.** **1** an activity that one can do well. **2** something that has been achieved successfully.
- accord** **ov.** **1** give (power or recognition) to. **2** (accord with) be in agreement or consistent with. **ov.** **1** agreement in opinion. **2** an official agreement or treaty.
- PHRASES **of one's own accord** willingly.
- ORIGIN Old French *acorder* 'reconcile, be of one mind'.
- accordance** **ov.** (in phr. **in accordance with**) in a way conforming with.
- according** **ov.** (according to) **1** as stated by. **2** following or agreeing with: *cook the rice according to the instructions*.
- accordingly** **ov.** **1** in a way that is appropriate. **2** therefore.
- accordion** /uh-kor-di-uhn/ **ov.** a musical instrument played by stretching and squeezing with the hands to work a bellows, the notes being sounded by buttons or keys.
- DERIVATIVES **accordionist** *n.*
- ORIGIN German *Akkordion*.
- accost** **ov.** approach and speak to boldly or aggressively.
- ORIGIN French *accoster*.
- account** **ov.** **1** a description of an event. **2** a record of money spent and received. **3** a service through a bank or firm by which funds are held on behalf of a customer or goods or services are supplied on credit. **4** importance: *money was of no account to her*. **ov.** regard in a particular way.
- PHRASES **account for** **1** supply or make up (an amount). **2** give a satisfactory explanation of. **call to account** require (someone) to explain poor performance. **on someone's account** for someone's benefit. **on account of** because of. **on no account** under no circumstances. **take account of** take into consideration.
- ORIGIN Old French *aconter*.
- accountable** **ov.** responsible for one's actions and expected to explain them.
- DERIVATIVES **accountability** *n.*
- accountant** **ov.** a person who keeps or inspects financial accounts.

– DERIVATIVES **accountancy** *n.*

accounting *n.* the keeping of financial accounts.

accoutrement /uh-koo-truh-muhnt, uh-koo-ter-muhnt/ (US **accouterment**) *n.* an extra item of dress or equipment.

– ORIGIN French *accouter* 'clothe, equip'.

Accra

/uh-krah/ the capital of Ghana.

accredit *ov.* (**accredits**, **accrediting**, **accredited**) **1** (**accredit** **to**) give (someone) the credit for (something). **2** give official authorization to.

– ORIGIN French *accréditer*.

accretion /uh-kree-sh'n/ *n.* **1** growth or increase by a gradual build-up of layers. **2** a thing formed or added in this way.

– ORIGIN Latin *accrescere* 'grow'.

accrue /uh-kroo/ *ov.* (**accrues**, **accruing**, **accrued**) **1** (of money) be received in regular or increasing amounts. **2** collect or receive (payments or benefits).

– DERIVATIVES **accrual** *n.*

– ORIGIN Old French *accresire* 'increase'.

accumulate /uh-kyoo-myuu-layt/ *ov.* (**accumulates**, **accumulating**, **accumulated**) **1** gather together a number or quantity of. **2** increase.

– DERIVATIVES **accumulation** *n.*

– ORIGIN Latin *accumulare* 'heap up'.

accumulator *n.* **1** a large rechargeable electric cell. **2** a bet placed on a series of events, the winnings and stake from each being placed on the next.

accurate /ak-kyuu-ruht/ *adj.* **1** correct in all details. **2** reaching an intended target.

– DERIVATIVES **accuracy** *n.* **accurately** *adv.*

– ORIGIN Latin *accurare* 'do with care'.

accursed /uh-ker-sid, uh-kerst/ *adj.* literary under a curse.

accusation *n.* a claim that someone has done something illegal or wrong.

accusative /uh-kyoo-zuh-tiv/ *adj.* (of a grammatical case) used for the object of a verb.

– ORIGIN from Latin *casus accusativus* 'the case showing cause'.

accusatory /uh-kyoo-zuh-tuh-ri/ *adj.* suggesting that one believes a person has done something wrong.

accuse *ov.* (**accuses**, **accusing**, **accused**) say that (someone) has done something wrong or has committed a crime: *he was accused of murder*.

– DERIVATIVES **accuser** *n.*

– ORIGIN Latin *accusare* 'call to account'.

accustom *ov.* **1** (**accustom** **to**) make used to. **2** (**be accustomed to**) be used to. **3** (**accustomed**) usual.

– ORIGIN Old French *acostumer*.

AC/DC *adj.* alternating current/direct current.

ace *n.* **1** a playing card with a single spot on it, usually the highest card in its suit. **2** informal a person who is very good at a particular activity. **3** Tennis a service that an opponent is unable to return. *adj.* informal very good.

– PHRASES **ace up one's sleeve** a plan or piece of information kept secret until needed. **hold all the aces** have all the advantages.

– ORIGIN Latin as 'unity, a unit'.

acellular /ay-sel-yuu-ler/ *adj.* Biol. **1** not divided into or containing cells. **2** consisting of one cell only.

acerbic /uh-ser-bik/ *adj.* sharp and direct: *acerbic comments*.

– DERIVATIVES **acerbity** *n.*

– ORIGIN Latin *acerbus* 'sour-tasting'.

acetate /a-si-tayt/ *n.* **1** Chem. a salt or ester of acetic acid. **2** fibre or plastic made from a substance produced from cellulose.

acetic acid /uh-see-tik/ *n.* the acid that gives vinegar its characteristic taste.

– ORIGIN Latin *acetum* 'vinegar'.

acetone /a-si-tohn/ *n.* a colourless liquid used as a solvent.

– ORIGIN from **ACETIC ACID**.

acetylene /uh-set-i-leen/ *n.* a gas which burns with a bright flame, used in welding.

– ORIGIN from **ACETIC ACID**.

ache *n.* a continuous or long-lasting dull pain. *ov.* (**aches**, **aching**, **ached**) **1** suffer from an ache. **2** (**ache for/to do**) feel great desire for or to do.

– ORIGIN Old English.

Achebe

/uh-chay-bi/, Chinua (b.1930), Nigerian novelist, poet, and short-story writer.

Achernar

/ay-kuh-nar/ the ninth-brightest star in the sky and the brightest in the constellation Eridanus.

achieve *ov.* (**achieves**, **achieving**, **achieved**) succeed in doing by effort, skill, or courage.

– DERIVATIVES **achievable** *adj.* **achiever** *n.*

– ORIGIN Old French *achever* 'come or bring to a head'.

achievement *n.* **1** a thing that is achieved. **2** the action of achieving something.

Achilles

/uh-kil-leez/ Gk Myth. a hero of the Trojan War. His mother plunged him in the river Styx when he was a baby, making his body invulnerable except for the heel by which she held him.

Achilles heel *n.* a weak point.

– ORIGIN see **ACHILLES**.

Achilles tendon *n.* the tendon connecting calf muscles to the heel.

achromatic /a-kroh-mat-ik/ *adj.* **1** transmitting light without separating it into colours. **2** without colour.

achy (also **achey**) *adj.* suffering from an ache or aches.

acid *n.* **1** a substance with chemical properties including turning litmus red, neutralizing alkalis, and dissolving some metals. **2** informal the drug LSD. *adj.* **1** having the properties of an acid; having a pH of less than 7. **2** sharp-tasting or sour. **3** (of a remark) bitter or cutting.

– DERIVATIVES **acidic** *adj.* **acidly** *adv.*

– ORIGIN Latin *acidus*.

acidify *ov.* (**acidifies**, **acidifying**, **acidified**) make or become acid.

acidity *n.* **1** the level of acid in something. **2** bitterness or sharpness in a person's remarks or tone.

acid rain *n.* rainfall made acidic by pollution.

acid test **n.** a decisive test of success or value.

— ORIGIN from the use of an acid to test whether or not a metal is gold.

acknowledge **v.** (**acknowledges, acknowledging, acknowledged**) **1** accept that (something) exists or is true. **2** confirm that one has received or is grateful for (something). **3** greet with words or gestures.

— ORIGIN from the former verb *knowledge* (in the same sense).

acknowledgement (also **acknowledgment**) **n.** **1** the action of acknowledging. **2** something done or given in gratitude.

acme /ak-mi/ **n.** the highest point of achievement or excellence.

— ORIGIN Greek *akmē*.

acne **n.** a skin condition causing red pimples.

— ORIGIN Greek *aknas*.

acolyte /ak-uh-lyt/ **n.** an assistant or follower.

— ORIGIN Greek *akolouthos*.

Aconcagua

/a-kon-kah-gwuh/ an extinct volcano in the Andes, at 6,960 m (22,834 ft), the highest mountain in the western hemisphere.

acorn **n.** the fruit of the oak, a smooth oval nut in a cup-like base.

— ORIGIN Old English.

acoustic /uh-koo-stik/ **adj.** **1** having to do with sound or hearing. **2** not electrically amplified: *an acoustic guitar*. **n.** (**acoustics**) **1** the aspects of a room or building that affect how well it transmits sound. **2** the branch of physics concerned with the properties of sound.

— DERIVATIVES **acoustical** **adj.**

— ORIGIN Greek *akoustikos*.

acquaint **v.** **1** (**acquaint with**) make (someone) aware of or familiar with. **2** (**be acquainted with**) know personally.

— ORIGIN Latin *accognitare*.

acquaintance **n.** **1** a person one knows slightly. **2** familiarity with or knowledge of someone or something.

acquiesce /ak-wi-ess/ **v.** (**acquiesces, acquiescing, acquiesced**) accept something without protest.

— ORIGIN Latin *acquiescere*.

acquiescent **adj.** ready to accept or do something without protest.

— DERIVATIVES **acquiescence** **n.**

acquire **v.** (**acquires, acquiring, acquired**) **1** come to have. **2** learn or develop (a skill or quality).

— DERIVATIVES **acquisition** **n.** **acquirer** **n.**

— ORIGIN Latin *acquirere* 'get in addition'.

acquisition /ak-wi-zh-sh'n/ **n.** **1** something that has recently been acquired. **2** the action of acquiring.

acquisitive **adj.** too interested in gaining money or material things.

— DERIVATIVES **acquisitiveness** **n.**

acquit **v.** (**acquits, acquitting, acquitted**)

1 formally state that (someone) is not guilty of a criminal charge. **2** (**acquit oneself**) behave or perform in a particular way.

— ORIGIN Latin *acquitare* 'pay a debt'.

acquittal **n.** a judgement that a person is not guilty of the crime with which they have

been charged.

acre /ay-ker/ **n.** a unit of land area equal to 4,840 square yards (0.405 hectare).

— DERIVATIVES **acreage** **n.**

— ORIGIN Old English.

acid /ak-rid/ **adj.** unpleasantly bitter or sharp.

— ORIGIN Latin *acer*.

acrimonious /ak-ri-moh-ni-uhss/ **adj.** angry and bitter.

acrimony /ak-ri-muh-ni/ **n.** bitterness or ill feeling.

— ORIGIN Latin *acrimonia*.

acrobat **n.** an entertainer who performs spectacular gymnastic feats.

— ORIGIN Greek *akrobatēs*.

acrobatic **adj.** involving or skilled at spectacular gymnastic feats. **n.** (**acrobatics**) spectacular gymnastic feats.

acronym /ak-ruh-nim/ **n.** a word formed from the first letters of other words (e.g. *laser*).

— ORIGIN from Greek *akron* 'end' + *onoma* 'name'.

acropolis /uh-krop-uh-liss/ **n.** the citadel of an ancient Greek city, built on high ground.

— ORIGIN Greek.

across **prep. & adv.** from one side to the other of (something).

— PHRASES **across the board** applying to all.

— ORIGIN from Old French *a croix, en croix* 'in or on a cross'.

acrostic /uh-kross-tik/ **n.** a poem or puzzle in which certain letters in each line form a word or words.

— ORIGIN Greek *akrostikhis*.

acrylic **adj.** (of a synthetic fabric, plastic, or paint) made from a particular organic acid.

— ORIGIN from Latin *acer* 'pungent' + *oleum* 'oil'.

act **v.** **1** do something. **2** take effect or have a particular effect. **3** behave in a particular way. **4** (**act as**) perform the function of. **5** (**act for/on behalf of**) represent the interests of. **6** (**acting**) temporarily doing the duties of another. **7** perform a role in a play or film. **n.** **1** a thing done. **2** a law passed formally by a parliament. **3** a pretence: *putting on an act*. **4** a main division of a play, ballet, or opera. **5** a set performance or performing group.

— PHRASES **act of God** an event caused by natural forces beyond human control. **act up** informal behave badly. **get in on the act** informal become involved in an activity to share its benefits.

— ORIGIN Latin *actus* 'event, thing done'.

actinium /ak-tin-i-uhm/ **n.** a rare radioactive metallic chemical element found in uranium ores.

— ORIGIN Greek *aktis* 'ray'.

action **n.** **1** the process of doing something to achieve an aim. **2** a thing done. **3** the effect of something such as a chemical. **4** a lawsuit. **5** armed conflict. **6** the way in which something works or moves. **v.** deal with.

— PHRASES **In action** performing an activity. **out of action** not working.

actionable **adj.** law giving cause for legal action.

action replay **n.** Brit a playback of part of a television broadcast.