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**Advanced
Learner's
DICTIONARY**

**NEW
EDITION**

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English

A S Hornby

Fifth edition

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Abbreviations

used in the dictionary

abbr	abbreviation	n	noun
adj	adjective	neg	negative
adv	adverb	NZ	New Zealand
adv part	adverbial particle	pers	person
app	appendix	pers pron	personal pronoun
* approv	approving	phr v	phrasal verb(s)
* arch	archaic	pl	plural
attrib	attributive	possess	possessive
Austral	Australian	pp	past participle
aux v	auxiliary verb	pred	predicative
* Brit	British usage	pref	prefix
comb form	combining form	prep	preposition
conj	conjunction	pres p	present participle
def art	definite article	pres t	present tense
* derog	derogatory	pron	pronoun
det	determiner	* prop	proprietary
eg	for example	pt	past tense
emph	emphatic	reflex	reflexive
esp	especially	rel	relative
etc	et cetera	* rhet	rhetorical
* euph	euphemistic	sb	somebody
fem	feminine	* Scot	Scottish
* fig	figurative	sing	singular
* fml	formal	* sl	slang
idm	idiom(s)	sth	something
ie	that is	suff	suffix
indef	indefinite	symb	symbol
* informl	informal	* techn	technical
interj	interjection	* US	American usage
interrog	interrogative	usu	usually
* joc	jocular	v	verb
masc	masculine		

*See notes on **Labels** opposite.

For guidance on the abbreviations used to show how different types of verbs and nouns are used, look at the Study pages **B1–8**.

Symbols

used in the dictionary

- ~ replaces the headword of an entry
- ▶ derivative(s) section of an entry
- compound(s) section of an entry
- before a part-of-speech label (*n*, *v*, etc) indicates a derivative or a compound with the same form but a different part of speech
- ⇒ See ...
- in large verb entries indicates a group of similar meanings
- = means the same as ...
- separates examples
- ! taboo (see **Labels** opposite)
- NOTE** note on usage (see Appendix 9)
- IDM** idiom(s) section of an entry
- PHR V** phrasal verb(s) section of an entry

See inside the back cover for information on pronunciation in the dictionary.
See pages vii–ix for a key to entries in the dictionary.

Labels

used in the dictionary

The following labels indicate words that express a particular attitude or are appropriate in a particular context.

(approv) Approving expressions show that the user feels approval or admiration, eg *cosy, masterly, petite*.

(derog) Derogatory expressions show that the user feels disapproval or scorn, eg *brat, fuddy-duddy, pedantic*.

(euph) Euphemistic expressions are chosen to refer to something unpleasant or painful in a more pleasant or less direct way, eg *cloakroom* (= a toilet), *pass away* (= to die), *senior citizen* (= an old or retired person).

(fig) Figurative usage is when language is used in a non-literal or metaphorical way. The label is used before examples illustrating such usage, eg *It makes my heart ache* (ie makes me sad) *to see her suffer*.

(fml) Formal expressions are usually only used in serious or official, especially written, language and would be inappropriate in normal everyday conversation. Examples are *disrobe, redoubtable, paucity*.

(infml) Informal expressions are used between friends or people who know each other well, in a relaxed or unofficial context. They are not appropriate for formal situations. Examples are *brainy, dad, umpteen, wallop*.

(ironic) Such usage is when words are used to mean the opposite of or something very

different from their apparent meaning, as in *This is a nice mess you've got us into!*

(joc) Jocular expressions are intended to be funny, eg *clodhopper, hanky-panky, long in the tooth, muggins*.

(offensive) Such expressions are used to address or refer to people in a way that is very insulting, especially in connection with their race or religion, eg *nigger, wop, yid*.

(rhet) Rhetorical speech or writing is used in order to sound important, impressive or literary, sometimes in a self-conscious or pompous way. Examples are *attire, doughty, emolument*.

(sexist) Such words express an unfair or patronizing attitude towards a person of the opposite sex. They are usually used by men about women. Examples are *career girl, dolly-bird, looker*.

(sl) Slang is very informal language, mainly used in speaking and sometimes restricted to a particular group of people, eg those who have similar interests or do the same job. Examples are *dope* (= illegal drugs), *the fuzz* (= the police), *lolly* (= money), *naff*.

! Taboo words are likely to be thought obscene or shocking by many people and should be avoided by learners. Examples are *arse, bloody, shit*.

The following labels indicate other restrictions on the use of words.

(arch) Archaic expressions are no longer in current use, eg *ere, fealty, handmaiden*.

(Brit) This indicates expressions used in British English and not in American English, eg *jumble sale, mackintosh, tombola*.

(catchphrase) Catchphrases are well-known expressions that were often originally used by a public figure, an entertainer, etc and have now passed into more general use, eg *the buck stops here; the plot thickens*.

(dated) Dated expressions are passing out of current use and already seem rather old-fashioned, eg *aerodrome, beatnik, gramophone*.

(dialect) This indicates expressions that are mainly used in particular regions of the British Isles, not including Scotland or Ireland, eg *beck, nowt, sup*.

(prop) Proprietary names are registered trademarks belonging to manufacturing companies, even though they may be commonly used in speech and writing, eg *Babygro, Filofax, Sellotape*.

(saying) Sayings are well-known fixed or traditional phrases, such as proverbs, that are used to make a comment, give advice, issue a warning, etc, eg *look before you leap; you're only young once*.

(Scot) This indicates Scottish expressions, eg *bairn, kirk, loch*.

(techn) Technical expressions are used by people who specialize in a particular field or fields.

(US) This indicates expressions, spellings and pronunciations used in American English and not in British English, eg *drugstore, sidewalk, turnpike*.

There are also many labels for expressions that are normally restricted to specialized use in specific fields, eg **(anatomy), (computing), (grammar), (law)**.

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of Current English

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Preface

It is a tribute to the vision and genius of the late A S Hornby that the dictionary which was perhaps his greatest gift to English language learning and teaching still strives to satisfy the same basic needs of foreign students as he perceived them, namely to develop their receptive *and* productive skills, the ability (as Tony Cowie wrote in his preface to the fourth edition) 'to compose as well as to understand'.

In preparing this new edition we have remained true to Hornby's original aims while introducing a number of significant innovations, all designed to give more help to the dictionary user. For the first time we have had at our disposal the British National Corpus, a massive and carefully balanced computer databank of modern written and spoken English developed by a consortium of British publishers led by Oxford University Press. This magnificent new resource has enabled us as never before to determine the relative frequency of words and their meanings, to identify new words and co-occurrences of words, and to present a wholly accurate picture of the syntactic patterns of today's English. In addition the corpus has provided abundant raw material on which to base the illustrative examples which have always been a key feature of the dictionary. Many existing examples were rewritten in the light of the new evidence, and nearly 9000 new ones were added for this edition.

Another new feature is the introduction of a 3500-word vocabulary within which definitions are written. The words in the list (given in full as Appendix 10) were chosen principally according to their frequency in the language, as revealed by the corpus, but also as a 'core' vocabulary of real value to students of English. The size

of the list was determined by the minimum requirement for producing definitions in natural English that are both accurate and easy to understand. The new language study pages, culture pages and maps also make attractive and, we hope, useful additions to the dictionary.

I am very grateful to Michael Ashby of University College, London, for undertaking a thorough update of the phonetics in the dictionary, and in particular for his overhaul of the treatment of stress in phrasal verbs and idioms, always a difficult area for foreign students. I must also thank Keith Brown for devising the new simplified verb coding scheme introduced in this edition.

The work of revising a major dictionary inevitably involves many helping hands. I am extremely grateful to all those within and outside Oxford University Press who worked on the project, including the following lexicographers: Evadne Adrian-Vallance, Angela Crawley, Gary Dexter, Sarah Hall, Mark Harrison, Fiona McIntosh, Christine Rickards, Allene Tuck, John Williams, and, for her work on the coverage of American English, Coleen Degnan-Veness. Thanks are also due to Margaret Deuter, Penny Stock, Deborah Tempest and Sally Wehmeier for the language notes and study pages; to Jane Taylor, Eunice Gill and Phil Longford for their work on the illustrations and the maps; and to Anna Cotgreave and Kay Pepler for keyboarding most of the text. I am especially indebted to my colleague Kathryn Kavanagh for her hard work, enthusiasm and meticulous attention to detail at every stage of the project.

Jonathan Crowther
January 1995

Key to dictionary entries

<p>headword and pronunciation (see inside back cover)</p>	<p>fender /'fɛndə(r)/ <i>n</i> 1 a low metal frame placed around a fireplace to prevent burning coal from falling out. 2 a soft solid object such as a mass of rope or a rubber tyre, hung over the side of a boat to prevent damage when it comes next to another boat or to land. 3 (US) (a) a MUDGUARD over the wheel of a bicycle. (b) = WING 4.</p>	<p>meanings separated by numbers or, when closely related, by letters</p>
<p>headwords with same spelling separated by different numbers</p>	<p>ferment¹ /'fɜ:mənt/ <i>v</i> to change or make sth change by means of a chemical reaction involving esp YEAST or bacteria: [V] <i>Fruit juices ferment if they are kept a long time.</i> ◦ (fig) <i>His anger fermented inside him.</i> [Vn] <i>Yeast is used in fermenting sugar to produce alcohol.</i> ▶ fermentation /,fɜ:mən'teɪʃn/ <i>n</i> [U]: <i>Sugar is converted into alcohol through (the process of) fermentation.</i> ferment² /'fɜ:mənt/ <i>n</i> [U] political or social excitement or uncertainty: <i>The country was in (a state of) ferment.</i></p>	<p>synonym of headword</p>
<p>American pronunciation (see inside back cover)</p>	<p>Ferris wheel /'ferɪs wi:l/ (also big wheel) <i>n</i> (at a FAIR²(1), etc) a large upright revolving wheel with seats hanging from its edge for people to ride in. ferule /'feru:l; US 'ferəl/ <i>n</i> a metal ring or cap placed on the end of a stick, an UMBRELLA, etc to stop it becoming damaged.</p>	<p>word not in defining vocabulary (see Appendix 10)</p>
<p>part of speech (see inside front cover for abbreviations)</p>	<p>ferry /'feri/ <i>n</i> (a) a boat that carries people and goods across a stretch of water: <i>catch/take the ferry ◦ the cross-channel ferry service.</i> (b) the place where such a service operates: <i>We waited at the ferry for two hours.</i> ▶ ferry <i>v</i> (pt, pp <i>ferried</i>) to transport people or goods by boat, aircraft, etc for a short distance, sometimes regularly over a period of time: [Vnp] <i>Can you ferry us across?</i> [Vnpr] <i>ferry goods to the mainland ◦ ferry the children to and from school</i> [Vn, Vnpr] <i>planes ferrying food (to the refugees).</i></p>	<p>verb codes before examples that illustrate them (see Study pages B4–8)</p>
<p>derivatives section with special symbol ▶</p>	<p>fertilize, -ise /'fɜ:təlaɪz/ <i>v</i> [Vn] 1 to introduce POLLEN into a plant so that it develops seed, or SPERM into an egg or a female animal so that a young animal, etc develops inside: <i>a fertilized egg/cell ◦ Flowers are often fertilized by bees as they gather nectar.</i> 2 to make soil, etc MORE FERTILE(1) by adding a substance such as MANURE to it: <i>fertilize the garden.</i> ▶ fertilization, -isation /,fɜ:təlaɪ'zeɪʃn; US 'lə'z/ <i>n</i> [U]: <i>successful fertilization by the male.</i> fertilizer, -iser <i>n</i> [C, U] a natural or artificial substance added to soil to make it more FERTILE(1): <i>chemical fertilizers ◦ a bag of fertilizer ◦ Get some more fertilizer for the garden. Compare MANURE.</i></p>	<p>cross-reference to contrasted word</p>
<p>American English spelling of headword</p>	<p>feravour (US feror) /'fɜ:və(r)/ <i>n</i> [U] strength or intensity of feeling; enthusiasm: <i>speak with great feravour ◦ religious/nationalistic/revolutionary feravour.</i></p>	<p>cross-reference to related word</p>
<p>fixed form of noun</p>	<p>festival /'festɪvl/ <i>n</i> 1 a day or period of religious or other celebration: <i>Christmas and Easter are Christian festivals. ◦ a festival atmosphere. See also HARVEST FESTIVAL.</i> 2 a series of performances of music, drama, films, etc given regularly, esp once a year: <i>the Edinburgh Festival ◦ a jazz festival.</i> festivity /fe'stɪvətɪ/ <i>n</i> 1 [U] celebration; happiness and enjoyment: <i>The wedding was an occasion of great festivity.</i> 2 festivities [pl] celebrations; happy and enjoyable events held in honour of sb/sth: <i>wedding festivities.</i> fetch /fetʃ/ <i>v</i> 1 ~ sb/sth (for sb) (esp Brit) to go and find and bring back sb/sth: [Vn] <i>Fetch a doctor at once.</i> [Vnpr] <i>I have to fetch the children from school.</i> [Vnp] <i>The chair is in the garden — please fetch it in.</i> [Vnn, Vnpr] <i>Should I fetch you your coat/fetch your coat for you from upstairs?</i> 2 (of goods) to be sold for a price: [Vn] <i>The picture should fetch at least £2000</i></p>	<p>cross-reference to related word</p>

	<p>at auction. [Vn, Vnn] <i>Those old books won't fetch (you) much.</i> 3 (<i>informal</i>) to hit sb, esp with the hand: [Vnn] <i>She fetched him a terrific slap in the face.</i> IDM</p> <p>fetch and carry (for sb) to act like a servant for sb; to be busy with small duties: <i>He expects his daughter to fetch and carry for him all day.</i> PHRV</p> <p>fetch up (<i>Brit informal</i>) to arrive at a certain place or in a certain position, often by chance: <i>At lunch-time they all fetched up in the bar of the local pub.</i></p>	<p>idioms section with special symbol IDM</p>
alternative written form	<p>fetid (also fetid) /'fetɪd/ n 1(a) (<i>usu derog</i>) a thing to which more respect or attention is given than is normal or sensible: <i>He makes a fetish of his work.</i> o <i>She has a fetish about cleanliness.</i> (b) (<i>techn</i>) an object or activity that is necessary for or adds to an individual's sexual pleasure. 2 an object that certain people worship, esp because a spirit is believed to live in it.</p>	<p>phrasal verbs section with special symbol PHRV</p>
labels giving information about usage (see inside front cover)	<p>fetlock /'fetlɒk/ n the part of a horse's leg above and behind the HOOF, where long hair grows out. ⇨ picture at HOOF.</p>	<p>alternative British pronunciation</p>
'dummy' entry with reference to main entry elsewhere	<p>fetis = FOETUS.</p> <p>feud /fju:d/ n ~ (between A and B); ~ (with sb) a long and bitter quarrel between two people, families or groups: <i>a long-running feud between the two artists</i> o <i>Because of a family feud, he never spoke to his wife's parents for years.</i> See also BLOOD FEUD.</p>	<p>cross-reference to illustration at different entry</p>
information on different types of noun (see Study pages B1-3)	<p>fever /'fi:və(r)/ n 1 [C, U] an abnormally high body temperature, esp as a sign of illness: <i>He has a high fever.</i> o <i>Aspirin can reduce fever.</i> 2 [U] (esp in compounds) a specified disease in which a fever occurs: <i>yellow/typhoid/rheumatic/scarlet fever.</i> See also HAY FEVER.</p>	<p>information on which prepositions to use with a word</p>
information on usage of adjectives (see Study pages B1-3)	<p>▶ fevered adj [attrib] 1 affected by or suffering from a fever: <i>She cooled his fevered brow.</i> 2 highly excited: <i>a fevered imagination</i> o <i>fevered negotiations.</i></p> <p>■ 'fever pitch n [U] a very high level of excitement: <i>His anxiety reached fever pitch.</i> o <i>The crowd had been roused to fever pitch by the drama of the game.</i></p>	<p>examples of use in <i>italic</i> type, separated by special symbol o</p>
information on comparative and superlative forms of adjectives	<p>few¹ /fju:/ <i>indef det, adj</i> [usu attrib] (-er, -est) (used with <i>pl</i> countable <i>ns</i> and a <i>pl v</i>) not many: <i>Few people live to be 100.</i> o <i>a man/woman of few words</i> (ie one who speaks very little) o <i>There are fewer cars parked outside than yesterday.</i> o <i>The police have very few clues to the murderer's identity.</i> o <i>The few houses we have seen are in terrible condition.</i> o <i>There were too few people at the meeting.</i> o <i>The last few years have been very difficult.</i> o <i>I visit my parents every few days/weeks/months</i> (ie once in a few days, etc). o <i>Accidents at work are few.</i> (Compare: <i>There are few accidents at work.</i>) ⇨ note at LESS, MUCH¹.</p>	<p>examples of words often used with the headword, separated by special symbol /</p>
common phrase in <i>thick type</i> in example, with extra explanation in brackets	<p>fez /fez/ n (<i>pl fezzes</i>) a red hat with a flat top and a TASSEL but no BRIM(2). ⇨ picture at HAT.</p> <p>fiancé (<i>fem fiancée</i>) /fi'ɒnsɜː/ n a man or woman to whom one is engaged to be married: <i>her fiancé</i> o <i>his fiancée.</i></p> <p>fieldsman /'fi:ldzmən/ n (<i>pl -men /-mən/</i>) (in cricket, etc) a member of the team that is not batting (BAT¹ <i>v</i> 1b).</p>	<p>compounds section with special symbol ■, and stress shown on compounds</p>
word used only in British English, with American English equivalent	<p>file¹ /faɪl/ n 1(a) any of various types of drawer, shelf, holder, cover, box, etc, usu with a wire or metal rod for keeping loose papers together and in order, so that they can be found easily: <i>a stack of files</i> o <i>I bought a file for my letters.</i> (b) a file and its contents: <i>top secret police files</i> o <i>a file of cuttings</i> o <i>Where's the customer order file?</i> o <i>have/open/keep a confidential file on each member of staff.</i> 2 an organized collection of related data or material in a computer: <i>I can't access/update the file on your company because I've forgotten the code.</i> IDM on 'file / on the 'files kept in a file: <i>We have all your particulars on file.</i></p> <p>■ 'filing cabinet (<i>Brit</i>) (<i>US 'file cabinet</i>) n a piece of office furniture with deep drawers for storing files.</p>	<p>irregular plural form of noun</p>
		<p>alternative American pronunciation (see inside back cover)</p>
		<p>cross-reference to special sense of word used in definition</p>

NOTE In British English the floor of a building at street level is the **ground floor** and the floor above that is the **first floor**. In American English the street level is often called the **first floor** and the one above is the **second floor**.

special note on usage (see Appendix 9)

floor² /flo:(r)/ *v* **1** (*infmt*) to defeat or confuse sb so that they are unable to respond: [Vn] *Tom was completely floored by two of the questions in the exam.* **2** to knock sb down by hitting them: [Vnpr] *He floored his opponent with a fine punch in the first round.* [also Vn]. **3** to provide a building or room with a floor of a particular type: [Vnpr] *The room is floored with pine.* [also Vn].

additional verb pattern for which no example is given

doubling of final consonant in *-ing* and *-ed* forms

flop /flɒp/ *v* (**-pp-**) **1** to fall, move or hang heavily, loosely or in an awkward way: [Vpr] *The pile of books flopped noisily onto the floor.* *Her hair flopped over her eyes.* [Vp] *The fish we'd caught were flopping around in the bottom of the boat.* [V] *His head began to flop and seconds later he was asleep.* **2** to sit or lie down heavily and awkwardly because of being tired: [V] *I'm ready to flop.* [Vpr] *Exhausted, he flopped into the nearest chair.* [Vp] *She staggered into the room and flopped down.* **3** (*infmt*) to fail totally; to be completely UNSUCCESSFUL: [V] *His first record flopped but his second was a big hit.*

sense in which noun is countable but usually singular

derivative with same spelling but different part of speech

► **flop** *n* **1** (*usu sing*) a flopping movement or sound. See also BELLIFYLOP. **2** (*infmt*) a total failure; a completely UNSUCCESSFUL thing: *Despite all the publicity, her latest novel was a complete flop.*

flop *adv* with a flop: *fall flop into the water.*

floppy *adj* falling or hanging loosely; soft and flexible; not stiff: *a floppy hat.* — *n* (*infmt*) = FLOPPY DISK.

Using your dictionary

Entries

The dictionary contains a great many **entries**, arranged in alphabetical order. Every entry begins with a **headword** and in all main entries this is followed by information on pronunciation and grammar and by one or more **definitions**. These explain the meaning or meanings of the headword and are accompanied in most cases by **examples** showing how the headword is used in context. Different senses are separated by numbers (or, for closely-related meanings, by letters) and are arranged according to their frequency of use in the language, with the main or most common meaning given first.

The definitions are followed, where appropriate, by the **idioms** and/or **phrasal verbs** containing the headword. These sections of the entry are introduced by the symbols **IDM** and **PHRV** respectively. Help with understanding and using idioms and phrasal verbs is given in the Study pages **A2-3** and **A6-7**.

Words which are formed from a simple ('root') word by the addition of a suffix are

called **derivatives** and the derivatives of a headword are listed alphabetically in the headword entry after the symbol ►. In some derivatives the spelling of the root form is changed so that the link between root and derivative is less clear. These derivatives are made headwords in the dictionary. The same is also true for derivatives which have developed distinct meanings from those of their roots. So *satisfy* and its derivative *satisfaction*, and *scarce* and its derivative *scarcely*, are all separate headwords.

Words or expressions which are formed from two or more words functioning as a single unit are called **compounds**. Compounds may be written as unbroken single words (eg *birthplace*) or with a hyphen (eg *bitter-sweet*) or as two or more separate words (eg *boarding card*, *bird of prey*). In this dictionary compounds spelt with hyphens or as separate words are listed alphabetically in the headword entry, after the symbol ■. Compounds spelt as unbroken single words appear as headwords. More information about compounds is given on Study page **A1**.

Cross-references

The dictionary gives extra help by regularly referring you elsewhere for more information about words. These references may be to other entries, or to pictures, or to notes on usage, or to one of the appendices at the back of the book. They are of various types, as follows. When a word in another entry is referred to, it is given in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

- ⇒ refers you to another entry where the meaning of a word, an idiom, etc is given, or to a picture or note
- = indicates a word with exactly the same meaning

Compare refers you to another word with an opposite or contrasted meaning

See also refers you to another word with a similar or related meaning.

Alternative forms and synonyms

When a word can be spelt in more than one way, or can be replaced by another word with the same meaning, this is shown in the following ways:

blowzy (also **blowsy**) /'blauzi/

– different spelling, same pronunciation

barefoot /'beəfʊt/ (also **barefooted** /,beə'fʊtɪd/)

– different form, different pronunciation

basset /'bæst/ (also **basset-hound**)

– longer form

bank-book (also **passbook**)

– synonym

bedsitting room ... (also *infml* **bedsitter**, **bedsit**)

– informal equivalents

Differences between British and American English are shown in similar ways:

bedhead ... (*Brit*) (*US* **headboard**)

– British and American English words are completely different.

belabour (*US* **belabor**)

– British and American English words have different spellings.

blinkers ... (*US* also **blinders**)

– The word is used in both British and American English but there is a synonym that only occurs in American English.

Irregular forms

The dictionary gives help with certain forms of nouns, verbs and adjectives, especially when these are not what you might expect. These irregular forms are shown near the beginning of the entries.

Nouns

- nouns ending in *-o*
banjo ... (*pl -os*)
potato ... (*pl -oes*)
- nouns ending in *-i*
semi ... (*pl semis*)
- nouns with Latin or Greek endings
antenna ... (*pl antennae*)
analysis ... (*pl analyses*)
- nouns with more than one plural form
fungus ... (*pl fungi* ... or **funguses**)
- nouns with plurals involving a change in the stem
foot ... (*pl feet*)
- nouns whose plural form is the same as the singular form
sheep ... (*pl unchanged*)
- nouns ending in *-ful*
basketful ... (*pl -fuls*)

Verbs

- verbs ending in a consonant which is doubled before *-ing* or *-ed*
regret ... (**-tt-**)
- verbs whose stem changes in the past tense and/or in the past participle
drink ... (*pt drank* ... *pp drunk* ...)
- verbs ending in *-y* after a consonant
defy ... (*pt, pp defied*)

Adjectives

Whenever an adjective can have one-word comparative and superlative forms this is shown. Irregular comparative and superlative forms are shown in full.

plain ... (**-er, -est**) = **plainer, plainest**
brave ... (**-r, -st**) = **braver, bravest**
pretty ... (**-ier, -iest**) = **prettier, prettiest**
big ... (**-gger, -ggest**) = **bigger, biggest**
good ... (**better ... best** ...)

When no comparative and superlative forms are shown, this means that they are rarely or never found. *More* and *most* are used with the adjective in these cases:

more difficult, most difficult
not **difficulter, difficultest**

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Inside front cover

Abbreviations, symbols and labels used in the dictionary

Inside back cover

Phonetic symbols and pronunciation in the dictionary

Aa

A¹ (also **a**) /eɪ/ *n* (pl **A's**, **a's** /eɪz/) **1** [C, U] the first letter of the English alphabet: 'Ann' begins with (an) A/A'. **2** **A** [C, U] (*music*) the 6th note in the scale⁽⁶⁾ of C major. **3** **A** [C, U] an academic mark indicating the highest standard of work: *get (an) A/A' in biology*. **4** **A** [U] (used to represent the first of two or more alternatives): *Let's decide on plan A then*. **5** **A** [U] (used to represent a person, eg in an imaginary situation or to conceal her or his identity): *Let's assume A knows B is guilty*. **IDM** **from A to B** from one place to another: *I don't care what a car looks like as long as it gets me from A to B*. **from A to Z** from beginning to end; completely or thoroughly: *know a subject from A to Z*.

A² /eɪ/ *symp* **1** (used in Britain before a number to refer to a particular major road): *the A34 to Stratford-upon-Avon*. Compare **B²**. **2** (Brit) (used before one of a specified set of numbers to indicate standard sizes of paper): *an A4 folder/pad* (ie 297 × 210 mm).

■ **A1** /eɪ 'wʌd/ *adj* (*dated infml*) excellent: *I'm feeling A1* (ie very well).

A-OK /eɪ ə'keɪ/ *adj* [usu *pred*] (*US infml*) completely satisfactory.

A-road /'eɪ roʊd/ *n* (Brit) a major road, less important than a motorway but usu wider and straighter than a B-road (**B²**): *The A-road is much quicker*. See also **A²** 1.

A³ *abbr* **1** ampere(s): *13 A* (eg on a FUSE⁽¹⁾). **2** answer. Compare **Q²**.

a¹ /ə/; *strong form* eɪ/ (also an /ən; *strong form* æn/) *indef art* (The form **a** is used before consonant sounds and the form **an** before vowel sounds. Both are used before [C], [CGp] or [sing] *ns* that have not already been mentioned.) **1** any one: *a man/horse/girl/committee/unit/U-turn* (Compare: *some men/horses/girls, etc*) ○ *an egg/aunt/uncle/hour/X-ray/MD/L-plate* (Compare: *some eggs/aunts/uncles/hours, etc*) ○ *I can only carry two at a time*. ○ *There's a book on the table — is that the one you want?* **2** (used with an abstract [U] *n* restricted by an *adj* or by the phrase which follows it): *a strange unease* ○ *We're looking for someone with a good knowledge of German*. ○ *An excess of fat in one's diet can lead to heart disease*. **3** any; every: *A horse is a quadruped*. (Compare: *Horses are quadrupeds*.) ○ *An owl can see* (Compare: *Owls can see*) *in the dark*. **4** (used after a negative) one single; any: *He didn't tell us a thing about his trip*. **5** (used with *ns* followed by *of* + *possess det* + *n* + *s*): *He is a friend of my father's* (ie one of my father's friends). ○ *It's a habit of Sally's* (ie one of Sally's habits). **6** (used in front of two *ns* seen as a single unit): *a cup and saucer* ○ *a knife and fork*.

7 (*infml*) (used instead of *one* before particular numbers and fractions): *a fifth* (ie one fifth) *of the population* ○ *A thousand people attended the concert*. □ App 2. **8** to or for each; per: *pay £2.20 a gallon* ○ *write 800 words a day* ○ *cost 50p a pound*. **9** (*often derog*) a person like sb: *My boss is a little Napoleon*.

10 (used before sb's name to show that the speaker does not know the person): *Do we know a Tim Smith?* ○ *A Mrs Green is waiting to see you*. **11** (used to show membership of a class of people or things): *My mother is a solicitor*. ○ *My father is a Dallas Cowboys supporter*. ○ *The car was a Volvo, not a Saab*. **12** a work of art by the specified artist: *The*

painting my grandfather gave me turned out to be a Constable. **13** (used before the names of days of the week to refer to a particular instance of that day): *They were married on a Monday*.

NOTE When saying abbreviations like FM or UN, the way the name of the first letter is said, and not whether it is a vowel or a consonant, determines whether to put **a** or **an** before it. The letter **F** is a consonant but begins with the sound /e/ and so you say: *an FM radio*. The letter **U** is a vowel but begins with the sound /j/ and so you say: *a UN declaration*.

a² /eɪ/ *symp* (used to label the first section or part of sth. It is usually written **a**) or (**a**): *A 'jar' means a) a glass container and b) its contents*.

a- *pref* (forming *ns*, *adjs* and *adv*) *not*; without: *atheist* ○ *atypical* ○ *asexually*.

AA /eɪ 'eɪ/ *abbr* (in Britain) Automobile Association: *members of the AA*.

aback /ə'bæk/ *adv* **PHRV** **take sb aback** □ TAKE¹.

abacus /'æbəkəs/ *n* (pl **abacuses** /-kəzɪz/) a frame holding a set of parallel rods along which small balls are pushed. It is used for teaching numbers to children, and (in some countries) for counting.

abandon /ə'bændən/ *v* **1** ~ **sb/sth** (to **sb/sth**) (**a**) (often *passive*) to go away from a person, thing or place not intending to return; to desert sb/sth: [Vn] *a baby abandoned by its parents* ○ *an abandoned car/village* ○ *The fort had long since been abandoned*. ○ *The order came: 'Abandon ship!'* [Vnpr] *They abandoned their lands and property to the invading forces*.

(**b**) to withdraw support or help from sb: [Vn] *The country abandoned its political leaders after the war*. [Vnpr] *The poor have been abandoned to their fate*. **2** to stop doing or being involved in sth, or to stop sth happening, esp before it is finished: [Vn] *Have they just postponed the scheme, or abandoned it altogether?* ○ *He urged people who smoke to abandon the habit*. ○ *The match was abandoned because of bad weather*. ○ *The regime has abandoned all/any pretence of democracy*. ○ *He will never abandon hope*. **3** ~ **oneself to sth** (*rhet*) to allow oneself to be completely dominated by an emotion or impulse: [Vnpr] *He abandoned himself to despair*.

► **abandon** (also **abandonment**) *n* [U] freedom from worry or inhibition (INHIBIT): *dance with gay abandon*.

abandoned *adj* [usu *attrib*] (of people or behaviour) wild or not following accepted standards.

abandonment *n* [U] **1** the action of abandoning sb/sth or of being abandoned: *her abandonment of the idea* ○ *the fear of abandonment in old age*. **2** = **ABANDON** *n*.

abase /ə'beɪs/ *v* [Vn] ~ **oneself/sb** (*fm*) to lower oneself/sb in dignity. ► **abasement** *n* [U].

abashed /ə'bæʃt/ *adj* [pred] embarrassed and ashamed: *His boss's criticism left him feeling rather abashed*. Compare **UNABASHED**.

abate /ə'beɪt/ *v* (of wind, noise, pain, etc) to become less intense: [V] *The storm showed no signs of abating*. ○ *Public interest in this issue seems to have abated*. ► **abatement** *n* [U].

abattoir /'æbətwaɪ(r)/ *n* (Brit) = **SLAUGHTERHOUSE**.

abbess /'æbəs/ *n* a woman who is the head of a CONVENT.

abbey /'æbi/ *n* [C] a church associated with other

buildings in which monks or nuns live or formerly lived as a religious community: *Westminster Abbey* ◦ a ruined abbey.

abbot /'æbət/ *n* a man who is the head of a MONASTERY or an ABBEY.

abbr *abbr* (esp in this dictionary) abbreviation.

abbreviate /ə'brɪvi:ət/ *v* 1 ~ sth (to sth) to make a word, phrase, etc shorter by omitting letters or using only the first letter of each word: [Vnpr] *In writing, the title 'Doctor' is abbreviated to 'Dr.'* [Vn] *The abbreviated form of 'United States of America' is 'USA.'* 2 to make sth, eg a story, shorter, by omitting details: [Vn] *I gave him an abbreviated account, as there wasn't time to tell him everything.*

► **abbreviation** /ə'brɪvi:ətən/ *n* 1 [C] (abbreviated as in this dictionary) a form of a word, phrase, etc that is shorter than the full form: a dictionary of abbreviations ◦ 'GB' is the abbreviation of/for 'Great Britain'. 2 [U] the process of abbreviating sth: *Some abbreviation may be necessary to save space.*

ABC /eɪ bi: 'si:/ *n* [sing] 1 the alphabet, ie all the letters from A to Z, esp as learnt by children: *Do you know your ABC?* 2 the basic facts about a subject: *the ABC of gardening.* **IDIOM** as easy as ABC ⇨ EASY¹.

abdicate /'æbdɪkeɪt/ *v* 1 to resign from being, or choose not to become, king, queen, EMPEROR, etc: [V] *King Edward VIII abdicated in 1936.* 2 (fml) to choose not to fulfil a role or duty: [Vn] *This government will not abdicate its responsibility to beat inflation.* [Vpr] *The party decided to abdicate from its role in the coalition government.* ► **abdication** /'æbdɪkeɪʃən/ *n* [C, U].

abdomen /'æbdəmən/ *n* 1 the part of the body below the chest, containing the stomach, bowels, etc. See also INTESTINE. 2 the back part of an insect, SPIDER or CRUSTACEAN: *head, thorax and abdomen.* ⇨ picture at INSECT. ► **abdominal** /æb'dɒmɪnəl/ *adj*: *abdominal pains* ◦ an abdominal operation.

abduct /æb'dʌkt/ *v* to take sb away illegally, using force or deception; to KIDNAP sb: [Vn] *He was abducted by four gunmen.* ► **abduction** /æb'dʌkʃən/ *n* [U, C]: *child abduction.*

aberrant /æ'berənt/ *adj* not normal or acceptable: *aberrant behaviour/ideas.*

aberration /æ'berɪʃən/ *n* [C, U] a temporary change from what is normal or acceptable, esp one that is surprising: *steal sth in a moment of aberration* ◦ *The defeat was a temporary aberration — he quickly started winning matches again.*

abet /ə'bet/ *v* (-tt-) ~ sb (in sth) to help or encourage sb to commit an offence or do sth wrong: [Vn, Vnpr] *He was abetted (in the deception) by his wife.* [Vn] *Aiding and abetting suicide is a serious crime.*

abeyance /ə'beɪəns/ *n* [U] a state of not being used or being suspended temporarily: *The scheme is/has been put in abeyance until sufficient funds can be found.* ◦ *Legal proceedings are being held/left in abeyance.* ◦ *This law falls into abeyance when the country's security is threatened.*

abhor /əb'hɔ:(r)/ *v* (-rr-) to feel hatred and disgust for sb/sth, esp for moral reasons: [Vn] *abhor terrorism/terrorists.*

► **abhorrence** /əb'hɒrəns/ *US* 'hɔ:(r)- *n* [U, sing]: *have an abhorrence of war.*

abhorrent /əb'hɒrənt/ *US* 'hɔ:(r)- *adj* ~ (to sb) causing hatred and disgust: *Violence is abhorrent to him.*

abide /ə'baɪd/ *v* (pt, pp **abided**; in sense 2 also **abode** /ə'bəʊd/) 1 (esp with *can/could*, in negative sentences or questions) to tolerate or bear sb/sth: [Vn] *I can't abide that man.* ◦ *How could you abide such awful conditions?* 2 (arch or fml) to remain or stay in a place: [Vpr] *abide with sb* ◦ *the right to enter and abide in a country.* **PHRV** **a'bide by sth** to accept and act according to a law, agreement, etc; to

be faithful to sth: *abide by a decision/verdict* ◦ *If you join a club, you have to abide by its rules.*

► **abiding** *adj* enduring; lasting: *an abiding friendship/hatred/mistrust/interest/memory.*

ability /ə'bɪləti/ *n* ~ (to do sth) [U, C] the mental or physical capacity, power or skill required to do sth: *a machine with the ability to cope with large loads* ◦ *He has the ability to solve complex technical problems.* ◦ *I try to do my job to the best of my ability* (ie as well as I can). ◦ *A woman of her ability shouldn't have any difficulty getting a good job.* ◦ *have musical ability* ◦ *pupils of different/mixed abilities* ◦ *He was given work more suited to his abilities.*

-ability, -ibility *suff* (forming uncountable *ns* from *adjs* ending in *-able* and *-ible*): *profitability* ◦ *capability.*

abject /'æbdʒekt/ *adj* 1 (of conditions or states of mind) terrible; extreme: *living in abject poverty/misery.* 2 (of people) completely without pride or dignity: *an abject coward* ◦ *an abject apology* (ie a very HUMBLE(1) one). 3 very poor; completely without success: *The scheme was an abject failure.* ► **abjectly** *adv.*

abjure /əb'dʒʊə(r)/ *v* (fml) to promise or swear to give up a claim, an opinion, a belief, etc; to RENOUNCE(2) sth formally: [Vn] *abjure one's religion.*

ablate /ə'blɛz/ *adj* [pred] 1 burning strongly; completely on fire: *set sth ablaze* ◦ *The whole building was soon well ablaze.* 2 ~ (with sth) (a) very bright and cheerful: *The palace was ablaze with lights.* ◦ *The garden was ablaze with flowers.* (b) very excited: *His face was ablaze with anger.*

able¹ /'eɪbl/ *adj* **be ~ to do sth** (used as a modal *v*) to have the power, skill, intelligence, means or opportunity to do sth: *I wasn't able to lift the suitcase.* ◦ *The child is not yet able to write.* ◦ *I've never been able to understand such complicated things.* ◦ *Will you be able to come?* ◦ *You are better able to do it than I (am).* ⇨ note at CAN².

able² /'eɪbl/ *adj* (-r /'eɪblə(r)/; -st /'eɪblɪst/) clever and skilful; competent: *an able worker* ◦ *the ablest/most able student in the class.*

► **ably** /'eɪblɪ/ *adv* in an able manner: *The organizers of the exhibition were ably assisted by a team of volunteers.*

■ **able-bodied** /-bɒdɪd/ *adj* healthy, fit and strong.

able seaman *n* a rank in the British Navy. ⇨ App 6.

-able, -ible /-əbl/ *suff* 1 (with *ns* forming *adjs*) having or showing the quality of: *fashionable* ◦ *comfortable.* 2 (with *vs* forming *adjs*) (a) that may or must be: *eatable* ◦ *payable* ◦ *reversible.* (b) tending to: *changeable* ◦ *perishable.* ► **ably, -ibly** (forming *advs*): *noticeably* ◦ *incredibly.*

ablutions /ə'blu:ʃnz/ *n* [pl] (fml or joc) 1 the act of washing the body, face, hands, etc: *perform one's ablutions* (ie wash oneself). 2 (Brit) a building or other structure that contains a toilet and facilities for washing.

abnegation /'æbnɪ'geɪʃən/ *n* [U] (fml) the action of refusing or not allowing oneself sth that one likes or normally has.

abnormal /æb'nɔ:ml/ *adj* different, esp in a way that is not desirable, from what is normal, ordinary or expected: *abnormal behaviour/weather conditions* ◦ *an abnormal relationship* ◦ *be physically/mentally abnormal.* ► **abnormality** /'æbnɔ:'mæləti/ *n* [U, C]: *tests to detect abnormality at birth* ◦ *abnormalities of the heart.* **abnormally** /æb'nɔ:mlɪ/ *adv*: *abnormally large feet.*

aboard /ə'bɔ:d/ *adv part, prep* on or into a train, a bus, a ship or an aircraft: *We went/climbed aboard.* ◦ *Welcome aboard!* ◦ *All aboard!* (ie *The train, etc is about to depart*). ◦ *An American airliner has crashed killing all 157 people aboard.* ◦ *He was already aboard (the) ship.*

abode¹ /ə'bəʊd/ *n* (usu *sing*) (fml or rhet or joc) a

house; a home: *one's place of abode* (ie where one lives) ◦ *Welcome to our humble abode!* ◦ *people of/with no fixed abode.*

abode² *pt, pp* of ABIDE 2.

abolish /ə'bɒlɪʃ/ *v* to end the existence of a law, a practice, an institution, etc: [Vn] *vote to abolish a tax* ◦ *Should the death penalty be abolished?* See also ABROGATE.

► **abolition** /æ'bɒlɪʃn/ *n* [U]: *campaigns for the abolition of slavery/hanging/vivisection.* **abolitionist** /æ'bɒlɪʃənɪst/ *n* a person who favours the abolition of sth.

abominable /ə'bɒmɪnəbl/ *US -mən-/ adj* **1** (*fm*) causing disgust and horror: *an abominable crime* ◦ *abominable behaviour.* **2** (*in*fm) very bad or unpleasant: *abominable weather/food/music/people.* ► **abominably** /ə'bɒmɪnəbli/ *US -mən-/ adv*: *I treated my father abominably.* ◦ *Her head ached abominably.*

■ **A, abominable 'Snowman** *n* = YETI.

abominate /ə'bɒmɪneɪt/ *US -mən-/ v* [Vn] (*fm*) to feel hatred or disgust for sth/sb.

► **abomination** /ə'bɒmɪ'neɪʃn/ *US -mə'n-/ n* **1** [C] a thing that causes disgust or hatred: *That new concrete building is an abomination.* ◦ *For many the death penalty is a moral abomination.* **2** [U] a strong feeling of disgust or hatred.

aboriginal /æ'bɔːrɪdʒɪnəl/ *adj* (esp of people) existing in a place from a very early period, esp before the arrival of colonists (COLONIST): *aboriginal tribes/inhabitants* ◦ *aboriginal art/culture.*

► **aboriginal n** (usu **Aboriginal**) an aboriginal inhabitant, esp of Australia.

aborigine /æ'bɔːrɪdʒɪni/ (usu **Aborigine**) *n* an inhabitant of a place, esp Australia, from a very early period: *a Queensland aborigine* ◦ *Aborigine art.*

abort /ə'boːt/ *v* **1** (*medical*) **(a)** to cause a pregnancy (PREGNANT) to end early in order to prevent the baby from developing and being born alive: [Vn] *abort an expectant mother/a deformed foetus* ◦ *In this age-group more than half of all pregnancies are aborted.* **(b)** to give birth to a child or young animal too early for it to survive: [V] *She aborted after four months.* See also MISCARRY. **2** (often passive) to end or cause sth to end before it has been completed, esp because it is likely to fail: [Vn] *abort a space mission* (ie cancel it in space, usu because of mechanical trouble) ◦ *Peace talks had to be aborted.* [V] (*computing*) *If no password is given the program aborts.*

abortion /ə'boːʃn/ *n* **(a)** [U] the act of causing a pregnancy (PREGNANT) to end early, in order to prevent the baby from developing and being born alive: *Her parents don't approve of abortion.* ◦ *abortion laws* ◦ *Many people are anti-abortion.* **(b)** [C] an operation to cause a pregnancy to end in this way: *She had an abortion.* Compare MISCARRIAGE 1.

► **abortionist** /ə'boːʃənɪst/ *n* a person who performs abortions, esp illegally.

abortive /ə'boːtɪv/ *adj* failing to produce the intended result; not successful: *an abortive attempt/coup/mission* ◦ *plans that proved abortive.*

abound /ə'baʊnd/ *v* **(a)** to exist in great numbers or quantities: [V] *Oranges abound here all the year round.* ◦ *Rumour/Speculation/Confusion abounds.* **(b)** ~ *in/with sth* to have sth in great numbers or quantities: [Vpr] *a river abounding in/with fish.* See also ABUNDANCE, ABUNDANT.

about¹ /ə'baʊt/ *adv* **1** (also **around**) a little more or less than; a little before or after; approximately: *It costs about \$10.* ◦ *He's about the same height as you.* ◦ *She drove (for) about ten miles.* ◦ *They waited (for) about an hour.* ◦ *He arrived (at) about ten o'clock.* **2** (*in*fm) nearly; very close to: *I'm (just) about ready.* ◦ *This is about the best we can hope for in the circumstances.* ◦ *She has (just) about finished her homework.* See also JUST ABOUT. **3** (*in*fm) (in emphatic statements) definitely: *I've had (just) about enough* (ie too much) of your complaining. ◦ *He's been promoted,*

and about time too (ie it ought to have happened earlier). See also JUST ABOUT. **IDM** **that's (just) about 'all; that's (just) about 'it** that is the end of the subject, conversation, matter, etc: *'Do you have any other comments?' 'No, I think that's about it for now.'* **that's about 'it / the 'size of it** (*in*fm) that is how I see it or assess the situation.

about² /ə'baʊt/ *adv part* (in senses 1, 2 and 3 *esp* *Brit*; in these senses also *esp* *US around*) For the special uses of **about** in phrasal verbs, look at the verb entries. For example, the meaning of **bring sth about** is given in the phrasal verb section of the entry for **bring**. **1(a)** (indicating movement) here and there; in many directions: *The children were rushing a'bout.* ◦ *The boys were climbing about on the rocks.* **(b)** (indicating position) here and there in no particular order or arrangement; in various places: *books lying about on the 'floor* ◦ *people sitting about on the 'grass.* **(c)** doing nothing in particular; doing nothing useful: *I waited about but nobody came.* ◦ *People were just standing about on street corners.* **(d)** in many directions from a fixed point: *He looked about, trying to work out where he was.* **2** in circulation; moving from one place to another: *There was nobody a'bout* (ie Nobody was to be seen). ◦ *There's a lot of 'flu about* (ie many people are suffering from it). ◦ *He'll soon be a'bout again* (eg after an illness). **3** somewhere near; not far off: *She's 'somewhere about, I saw her a few minutes ago.* **4** facing the opposite or a different direction: *put the ship a'bout* ◦ *It's the wrong way a'bout.*

■ **a,about-'turn** (also **a,about-'face**) *n* a complete change of opinion, plan, etc: *These new measures indicate an about-turn in government policy.* See also U-TURN.

about³ /ə'baʊt/ *prep* (in senses 3 and 4 *US around; Brit also around* in these senses) **1(a)** on the subject of sb/sth; in connection with sb/sth; concerning sb/sth: *a book about flowers* ◦ *Tell me all about it.* ◦ *What is he so angry about?* ◦ *He is very careful about his personal appearance.* ⇨ note. **(b)** in order to affect or solve sth: *It's happened now and there's nothing you can do about it.* **(c)** relating to sb/sth; in the nature of sb/sth: *There's something strange about the whole affair.* **2** (*esp* *Brit*) concerned or occupied with sth: *And while you're a'bout it...* (ie while you're doing that...) ◦ *people going about their daily business* ◦ *Commerce is all about making money.* **3(a)** (indicating movement) here and there in a place; in many directions in a place: *walking about the town* ◦ *travelling about the world.* **(b)** (indicating position) here and there in a place; at points throughout sth: *papers strewn about the room.* **(c)** in many directions from a fixed point: *He came out of the door and looked about him.* **(d)** surrounding sb/sth: *He put his arms about her.* ◦ *She wore a shawl about her shoulders.* **4** near to a place or point; in the specified area: *She's somewhere about the office.* ◦ *I dropped the key somewhere about here.* ◦ *He takes no interest in what's going on about him.* **IDM** **be about to do sth** to be intending to do sth in a very short time; to be on the point of doing sth: *As I was about to say when you interrupted me...* ◦ *We're about to start.* ◦ *I'm not about to admit defeat* (ie I have no intention of doing so). **how/what about...?** **1** (used when asking for information or to get sb's opinion): *What about his qualifications* (ie Is he qualified) *for the job?* **2** (used when making a suggestion): *How about going to France for our next anniversary?* ◦ *What about a cup of tea?*

NOTE Both **about** and **on** can mean 'on the subject of'. A book, film, etc **on** Chinese art, education or early history suggests a serious or formal presentation. A book, discussion or TV programme **about** China, schools or dinosaurs is probably of more general interest and more informal.

above¹ /ə'baʊ/ *adv* **1** at or to a higher point: *My bedroom is immediately above.* ◦ *Put the books on the shelf above.* ◦ *Seen from above, the fields looked like a geometrical pattern.* ◦ *A voice called down to us from above.* **2** more; greater in number, level or age: *wage increases of 5% and above* ◦ *The competition is open to anyone aged 18 and above.* ◦ *Grades C and above are considered satisfactory.* See also **over**¹ **4**. **3** earlier or further back in sth written or printed: *As was stated above...* ◦ *the points mentioned above* ◦ *See above, page 97.* **4** (*rhet* or *loc*) at a higher rank or level of authority: *act on instructions from above.*

Compare **BELOW**, **UNDER**, **UNDERNEATH**.

■ **above-mentioned** *adj* [attrib] (*fml*) mentioned or named earlier in the same letter, book, article, etc.

above² /ə'baʊ/ *prep* **1** higher than sth: *The sun rose above the horizon.* ◦ *The water came above our knees.* ◦ *We were flying above the clouds.* ◦ *the people who live in the apartment above mine.* **2** more than sth; greater in number, level or age than sth: *Temperatures have been above average recently.* ◦ *inflation above 10%* ◦ *Applicants must be above the age of 18.* ⇨ **note.** **3**(a) higher in rank, position or authority than sb/sth: *A captain in the Navy ranks above a captain in the Army.* ◦ *The Head of Section is above the Head of Department.* ◦ *They finished the season five places above their local rivals.* (b) of greater importance or of higher quality than sb/sth: *Should a soldier value honour above life?* ◦ *I rate him above every other player in the sport.* **4** too good, too honest, etc to do sth: *She wouldn't lie — she's above that.* ◦ *He thinks he's above* (ie too important for) *such a post.* ◦ *Although she's the manager, she's not above asking* (ie she isn't too proud to ask) *for advice.* **5** beyond the reach of sth, because of being too good, too honest, etc: *He is above suspicion* (ie is not suspected because he is completely trusted). ◦ *Her behaviour was above criticism.* **6** (*informal*) too difficult for one to understand: *All this maths is above me.* **7** (of a sound) louder or clearer than another sound: *I could hardly hear his voice above the noise in the background.* **8** nearer the source of a river than the specified place: *the waterfall above the bridge.* **IDM** **above all** most important of all; especially: *He longs above all (else) to see his family again.* **above oneself** having too high an opinion of oneself. Compare **BELOW**, **UNDER**, **UNDERNEATH**.

NOTE When they describe a position higher than something, **above** and **over** can often be used in the same way: *They built a new room above/over the garage.* You can only use **over** when there is movement from one side of something to the other: *She threw the ball over the fence.* ◦ *They jumped over the stream.* **Over** can also mean 'covering': *He put a blanket over the sleeping child.*

Above and **over** can also mean 'more than'. **Above** is used in relation to a minimum level or a fixed point: *2000 feet above sea-level* ◦ *He is above average height for his age.* ◦ *Temperatures will not rise above zero tonight.* **Over** is used with numbers, ages, money and time: *He's over 50.* ◦ *It costs over £100.* ◦ *We waited over two hours.* ◦ *Over a million people have visited the exhibition.*

above³ /ə'baʊ/ *adj* [attrib] mentioned, specified or printed previously in a letter, book, article, etc: *See the above paragraph.* ◦ *at the above address.* ► **the above** *n*: *If the above is not correct, please inform us immediately.*

abracadabra /ˌæbrəkə'dæbrə/ *n*, *interj* a word said by a magician (**MAGIC**) at the moment of performing a magic trick because it is supposed to make the trick happen.

abrade /ə'breɪd/ *v* [Vn] to rub or scrape the surface of sth, eg rock or skin, and make it rough.

abrasion /ə'breɪʒn/ *n* **1** [U] the effect on a surface caused by rubbing or scraping: *wood that is resistant to abrasion.* **2** [C] a damaged area, esp of the skin, caused by rubbing or scraping: *suffer cuts and abrasions.*

abrasive /ə'breɪsɪv/ *adj* **1** that can scrape or rub sth; rough: *abrasive substances/materials.* **2** tending to hurt other people's feelings; harsh and offensive: *an abrasive person/personality/tone of voice.*

► **abrasive** *n* [U, C] a substance used for grinding or polishing surfaces.

abrasively *adv*.

abrasiveness *n* [U].

abreast /ə'breɪst/ *adv* ~ (of sb/sth) side by side and facing the same way: *cycling two abreast* ◦ *The boat came abreast of us and signalled us to stop.* **IDM** **be/keep abreast of sth** to be or remain always aware of the latest news, ideas, developments, etc: *Reading the papers keeps me abreast of current affairs.*

abridge /ə'brɪdʒ/ *v* to make a book, play, etc shorter by omitting parts: [Vn] *an abridged edition/version of 'War and Peace'.* ► **abridgement** (also **abridgment**) *n* [U, C].

abroad /ə'brɔ:d/ *adv* **1** in or to a foreign country or countries; away from one's own country: *be/go/live/travel abroad* ◦ *visitors (who have come) from abroad* (ie from another country) ◦ *He was much respected, both at home and abroad* (ie in his own country and in other countries). **2** being talked about or felt by many people: *There's a rumour abroad that...* (ie People are saying that...). **3** (*arch* or *rhet*) out of doors: *Have you ventured abroad yet today?*

abrogate /'æbrəgeɪt/ *v* (*fml*) to cancel or ABOLISH sth: [Vn] *abrogate a law/custom/treaty.* ► **abrogation** /'æbrəgeɪʃn/ *n* [U].

abrupt /ə'brʌpt/ *adj* **1** sudden and unexpected: *a road with many abrupt turns* ◦ *an abrupt ending/change/departure.* **2** talking very little and often rude or seeming rude; *curt*: *He has an abrupt manner* (ie does not spend time being polite). ◦ *When I asked her about her new job she was quite abrupt with me.* **3** (of speech, etc) not smooth or flowing evenly; *DISJOINTED*: *short abrupt sentences* ◦ *an abrupt style of writing.* ► **abruptly** *adv*: *The interview ended abruptly.* **abruptness** *n* [U].

abscess /'æbsəs/ *n* a swollen part of the body in which a thick yellowish liquid (called *pus*) has collected: *abscesses on the gums.*

abscond /əb'skɒnd/ *v* to run away suddenly and secretly, esp in order to avoid being taken or held prisoner: [V, Vpr] *He absconded (from police custody) on the way to court.*

abseil /'æbsaɪl/ *v* to descend a steep slope or rock face attached to a double rope that is fixed at a higher point: [Vpr] *abseil down the mountain* [also V, Vp]. ► **abseil** *n*.

absence /'æbsəns/ *n* **1** ~ (from ...) (a) [U] the state of being away: *His repeated absence (from school) is worrying.* ◦ *It happened in my/her/his/our/your/their absence.* ◦ *In the absence of the manager (ie While she is away) I shall be in charge.* Compare **PRESENCE**. (b) [C] an occasion or period of being away: *numerous absences from school* ◦ *throughout his long absence* ◦ *after an absence of three months.* **2** [U] a lack; the fact of not existing or not being available: *in the absence of definite proof* ◦ *a complete/total absence of any emotion.* **IDM** **conspicuous by one's absence** ⇨ **CONSPICUOUS**.

absent¹ /'æbsənt/ *adj* **1** ~ (from sth) (a) not present; at another place: *be absent from school/a meeting/woork* ◦ *absent friends.* (b) not existing; lacking; missing: *Love was totally absent from his childhood.* **2** showing that one is not really thinking about what is being said or done around one: *an absent expression/look.*

► **absently** *adv* without concentrating on what is happening or what one is doing: *stare absently*.

■ **absent-minded** *adj* not concentrating; tending to forget things: *become absent-minded with age*.
absent-mindedly *adv*. **absent-mindedness** *n* [U].

absent² /æb'sent/ *v* ~ oneself (from sth) (*fml*) to decide not to be present; to stay away: [Vn, Vnpr] *He deliberately absented himself (from the meeting)*.

absentee /,æbsən'ti:/ *n* a person who is absent from a place, event, etc where he or she was expected.

► **absenteeism** /,æbsən'ti:zəm/ *n* [U] frequent absence from school or work, esp without good reason.

■ **absentee landlord** *n* a person who does not live at and rarely visits the property that he or she lets (LET¹ 4).

absolute /'æbsəlʊt/ *adj* **1** (often used for emphasis) complete; total: *have absolute trust in a person* ◦ *tell the absolute truth* ◦ *absolute ignorance/silence* ◦ *The darkness was absolute*. ◦ *He's an absolute fool!* **2** certain; definite; leaving no doubt: *have absolute proof* ◦ *It's an absolute fact*. See also DECREE ABSOLUTE. **3(a)** without limit or restriction: *absolute authority/power*. **(b)** having power without limit or restriction: *an absolute ruler*. **4** existing independently and not in relation to sth else: *There is no absolute standard for beauty*.

► **absolute** *n* an idea or principle that is valid at all times and in all circumstances: *a desire for absolutes in an uncertain world*.

■ **absolute majority** *n* (in an election) a majority over all rivals combined; more than half of the total votes: *The Socialists won/gained an absolute majority*. ◦ *33 seats short of an absolute majority*.

absolute zero *n* [U] the lowest temperature that is possible in theory.

absolutely /'æbsəlʊtli/ *adv* **1** completely and totally: *Let me make the position absolutely clear*. ◦ *I'm absolutely convinced that there will be no conflict of interests*. ◦ *You're absolutely right*. ◦ *I'm not absolutely certain, but...* ◦ *I absolutely refuse*. ◦ *The money is mine absolutely*. **2** (used with adjs or vs that express strong emotion or feeling) extremely; very much: *I was absolutely furious*. ◦ *She absolutely adores him*. ◦ *Her father was absolutely appalled*. **3** (used to give emphasis) positively: *It's absolutely pouring down*. ◦ *He did absolutely no work* (ie no work at all). ◦ *We had absolutely no intention of following* (ie certainly did not intend to follow) *her advice*. ◦ *There is absolutely nothing that anyone can do about it*. **4** /,æbsə'lʊtli/ (*infml*) (used in answer to a question or as a comment to indicate agreement) yes; certainly: *'Don't you agree?' 'Oh, absolutely!'*

absolution /,æbsə'lju:ʃn/ *n* [U] (esp in the Christian Church) a formal declaration by a priest that a person's sins have been forgiven: *grant sb absolution*.

absolutism /'æbsəlʊtɪzəm/ *n* [U] (*politics*) the principle that those responsible for government should have power without limit or restriction. ► **absolutist** *n, adj*.

absolve /æb'zɒlv/ *v* [Vn, Vnpr] ~ sb (from/of) sth (*fml*) to declare that sb is free of guilt, blame, etc: *The inquiry absolved the driver (of all responsibility for the accident)*. **2** to give ABSOLUTION to sb: *absolve repentant sinners (from/of their sins)*.

absorb /æb'sɔ:b, -'zɔ:b/ *v* [Vn] **1(a)** to take, draw or suck sth into: *absorb heat* ◦ *Plants absorb oxygen*. ◦ *Dry sand absorbs water*. ◦ *Aspirin is quickly absorbed by/into the body*. ◦ (*fig*) *absorb the atmosphere of a place* ◦ (*fig*) *a society that has absorbed other cultures*. **(b)** (often passive) to include sth/sb as part of itself or oneself; to INCORPORATE sth/sb: *The larger firm gradually absorbed its smaller competitors*. ◦ *The surrounding villages have been absorbed by/into*

the growing city. **(c)** to take sth into the mind and learn or understand it: *absorb information* ◦ *going to Italy to absorb the language*. **2** to reduce the effect of a blow, etc: *Buffers absorbed most of the impact*. See also SHOCK ABSORBER. **3** to hold sb's attention or interest completely: *His business absorbs him*. **4** to use up a large supply of sth, esp money: *absorb over half of all public expenditure*.

► **absorbed** *adj* [usu pred] with one's attention fully held: *She seemed totally absorbed in her book*.
absorbent /-ənt/ *adj* that can absorb sth, esp liquids: *absorbent paper*. **absorbency** *n* [U].

absorbing *adj* holding the attention fully; extremely interesting: *an absorbing film* ◦ *Watching the animals come to drink was utterly absorbing*.

absorption /æb'sɔ:pʃn, -'zɔ:p-/ *n* [U] ~ (in sth): *rapid absorption of water* ◦ *better shock absorption* ◦ *His work suffered because of his total absorption in sport*.

abstain /æb'steɪn/ *v* [V, Vpr] ~ (from sth) **1** to choose not to use one's vote: *At the last election he abstained (from voting)*. **2** (*fml* or *joc*) to keep oneself from doing or having sth that one likes or enjoys: *He has been advised to abstain from alcohol*.

► **abstainer** *n* a person who abstains: *a total abstainer* (ie one who never takes alcoholic drinks). See also ABSTENTION, ABSTINENCE.

abstemious /æb'sti:mɪəs/ *adj* not taking much food or drink; not doing or having too much of sth one likes or enjoys: *an abstemious person/lifestyle* ◦ *abstemious habits*.

abstention /æb'stenʃn/ *n* (a) [U] ~ (from sth) the action or practice of abstaining (ABSTAIN 1), esp of choosing not to use one's vote at an election. **(b)** [C] an instance of this: *five votes in favour of the proposal, three against and two abstentions*.

abstinence /'æbstɪnəns/ *n* [U] ~ (from sth) the practice of abstaining (ABSTAIN 2), esp from food, alcoholic drinks or sex: *total abstinence*.

abstract¹ /'æbstrækt/ *adj* **1(a)** existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or practical existence: *We may talk of beautiful things, but beauty itself is abstract*. **(b)** general; not based on any particular person, situation, etc: *talk about sth in abstract terms/in an abstract way* ◦ *He has some abstract notion of wanting to change the world*. Compare CONCRETE¹ 1. **2** (of art) not representing people or objects in a realistic way but expressing the artist's ideas and feelings about certain aspects of them: *an abstract painting/painter/design/ballet*.

► **abstractly** *adv*.

■ **abstract¹ noun** *n* a noun that refers to an abstract¹(1) quality or state, eg *goodness* or *freedom*, not a physical object.

abstract² /'æbstrækt/ *n* **1** an abstract idea or quality. **2** an example of abstract art: *a painter of abstracts*. **3** a short summary of a book, etc: *an abstract of a lecture*. **IDM** in the **'abstract** in a general way, without reference to a particular person, thing, event, situation, etc: *Consider the problem in the abstract*.

abstract³ /æb'strækt/ *v* **1** ~ sth (from sth) to remove sth; to separate sth from sth else: [Vnpr] *Two other points must be abstracted from the argument*. [also Vn]. **2** [Vn] to make a written summary of a book, etc.

abstracted /æb'stræktɪd/ *adj* thinking of other things; not paying attention: *an abstracted gaze/smile*. ► **abstractedly** *adv*.

abstraction /æb'strækʃn/ *n* **1(a)** [C] an abstract idea: *ideological abstractions*. **(b)** [U] the quality of being abstract. **2** [U] the state of thinking of other things and not paying attention; absent-mindedness (ABSENT²): *a general air of abstraction*. **3** [U] (*fml*) the action of removing sth from sth else; the state of