

The Oxford English Dictionary

SECOND EDITION

Volume I

A–Bazouki

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD

THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

SECOND EDITION

Prepared by

J. A. SIMPSON *and* E. S. C. WEINER

VOLUME I

À–Bazouki

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PREFACE

THIS second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* amalgamates the text of the first edition, published in twelve volumes in 1933, the *Supplement*, published in four volumes between 1972 and 1986, and approximately five thousand new words, or new senses of existing words, which have gained currency since the relevant volume of the *Supplement* was published. The editorial policies which informed each of the constituent parts of this edition are detailed in the Introduction, which also includes information on the way in which the task of bringing the parts together was accomplished.

The University of Oxford has the honour, with Her Majesty's gracious permission, of dedicating this edition of the Dictionary to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. In 1897 'this historical dictionary of the English language' was dutifully dedicated by the University to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and on the completion of the first edition in 1928 it was presented to His Majesty King George the Fifth.

The aim of this Dictionary is to present in alphabetical series the words that have formed the English vocabulary from the time of the earliest records down to the present day, with all the relevant facts concerning their form, sense-history, pronunciation, and etymology. It embraces not only the standard language of literature and conversation, whether current at the moment, or obsolete, or archaic, but also the main technical vocabulary, and a large measure of dialectal usage and slang. Its basis is a collection of several millions of excerpts from literature of every period amassed by an army of readers and the editorial staff. Such a collection of evidence—it is represented by a selection of about 2,400,000 quotations actually printed—could form the only possible foundation for the historical treatment of every word and idiom which is the *raison d'être* of the work. It is generally recognized that the consistent pursuit of this method has worked a revolution in the art of lexicography. In 1891 a great English philologist wrote of the 'debt' which 'English grammar will some day owe to the *New English Dictionary*'; and the debt has been mounting up ever since. There is no aspect of English linguistic history that the Dictionary has not illuminated; its findings have called for the revision of many philological statements and the reconsideration of many judgements on textual matters. So wide is its scope and so intensive its treatment that it has served for students, both native and foreign, as a lexicon of many languages, and, though it deals primarily with words, it is virtually an encyclopaedic treasury of information about things. It has provided a ready quarry of material for many authors of treatises and dissertations. Abridgements and adaptations of it in several forms have been produced by the Oxford University Press: the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, the *Little Oxford Dictionary*, and numerous dictionaries for the use of students, children, and foreign learners.

In preparing this new edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, we have received help and support from a wide range of individuals and organizations. Foremost among these were IBM United Kingdom Limited, which donated the equipment on which the text was held and manipulated, made available to us proprietary software, seconded three computer experts to assist in the development of the computer system, and maintained throughout a close involvement in the management of the project; the University of Waterloo, in Canada, which provided valuable help in the structuring of the text and was an ever-ready source of technical advice; and the Department of Trade and Industry, which provided a grant—from its Support for Innovation Fund—to help cover the cost of lexicographical research. The very professional service provided by International Computaprint

Corporation in converting the text of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Supplement* into machine-readable form was of crucial importance.

The successful completion of the project is attributable in very large measure to the application and dedication of all those who were involved: lexicographers, computer staff, consultants, readers, library researchers, keyboarders, and proof-readers; and to the support and encouragement of the Advisory Council and Editorial Board (listed below), and of the Delegates and senior management of the Oxford University Press.

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During the span of the project, the files of the Oxford Dictionaries Department continued to benefit from the labours of the directed readers, the material submitted by voluntary readers, and the resources of independently compiled collections. In particular, it received from Mrs M. Moe a gift of a large collection of quotations relating to American English, compiled by her husband, the late Colonel A. F. Moe. Significant help was received from Mr D. Barnhart, Mr R. Barnhart, and Mr B. Garner. Notable contributors included Mr S. C. Boorman, Mr G. Charters, Mr G. Chowdharay-Best, Mr C. Collier, Mrs S. Fleming, Mr F. D. Hayes, Miss C. Graves Taylor, Miss R. Mateer,

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It is with the greatest sadness that the Co-editors record the death, in February 1988, of Miss Marghanita Laski, a steadfast friend of the *OED* and its *Supplement* over some thirty years; especially as she did not live to see the results of her work incorporated into the *OED* itself. The exact size of her written contribution will never be known, but has been estimated at a quarter of a million quotations.

The following consultants and critical readers assisted with the new vocabulary:

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The management of IBM UK Ltd., especially Mr J. W. Fairclough, Dr G. W. Robinson, Mr P. D. Wright.

The University of Waterloo Centre for the New OED, especially Professor G. Gonnet, G. Johannesen, Professor J. Stubbs, Professor F. W. Tompa.

The University of Oxford Phonetics Laboratory, especially its acting head, Dr I. Watson.

INTRODUCTION

THIS new edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* contains the whole text, unaltered in all essentials, of the twelve-volume first edition, which appeared in 1933 as a reprint of the ten-volume *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, itself originally published in parts between 1884 and 1928. It also contains the complete text of the four-volume *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, published between 1972 and 1986; this superseded the previous *Supplement*, which was issued in 1933 as a companion to the main work.

The main purpose of this second edition is to present a version of the Dictionary in which these two parts, the twelve volumes and the four volumes, are amalgamated into a continuous, seamless text. Accordingly, every article from the *Supplement* has been either added in its proper alphabetical position (if a wholly new entry) or merged with its corresponding *OED* entry (following directions which the *Supplement* gives but the present edition omits, as now redundant). Instead of the sixteen volumes of large but unequal size in which the previous works were issued, it has been published in twenty slimmer and evenly sized volumes, which it is hoped will prove more convenient to use.

Although the *raison d'être* of this new edition is the integration of the two texts, and adherence to the instructions of the *Supplement*, whether explicitly stated or contextually implied, is the guiding principle of the work, the material brought over from the *Supplement* is by no means the only feature that differentiates the second edition from the first. New vocabulary has been added, certain important general revisions, and numerous local corrections, have been made, and the whole text has been given an entirely new typographical format. It is estimated that these changes, fuller details of which are given below, have affected (in different ways) the majority of the 290,500 entries contained in this edition, including virtually all articles on the commonest words. Together they have made this edition significantly richer in information, and more modern in aspect, than its distinguished predecessors.

Whereas the *Supplement* can be regarded for practical purposes as up to date, it is a matter of common knowledge that many elements of the original *OED* require revision. That is the very purpose for which the New OED Project, of which the present work is the first printed product, was initiated. Several of these requirements have been addressed in this edition. But the full revision and updating of the Dictionary (an outline agenda for which is given in the *History* section below) must be regarded as a long-term goal, demanding considerable resources, and therefore to be approached in stages. This new edition represents the first, and almost certainly the most arduous, step towards that goal.

The fundamental difference between this edition and its predecessors is, by its nature, quite invisible to the user of the Dictionary. Before the compilation of this edition, the *OED* and *Supplement*, which had only ever been typeset in hot metal, were computerized. The machine-readable version of the Dictionary resulting from computerization is now the master copy from which the present printed edition has been made. It is the version to which further modifications to the Dictionary will be applied, and from which new editions and offspring works of reference will be generated in the future.

But the machine-readable text is not distinct from the printed one merely by virtue of existing in a different physical medium, electronic instead of paper, or tape rather than type; or even by its priority in the production process. Much more important, it carries a whole new world of information. This has nothing to do with supplementary text. In addition to the conventional natural-language text taken over from the printed *OED* and *Supplement*, there is another layer of information: the

'mark-up language' or tagging system. The different categories of information into which the text can be partitioned, such as headword, pronunciation, variant form, quotation, or date of quotation, are each identified accurately and unambiguously by computer tags. These tags consist of short sequences of letters, mainly mnemonic in form (e.g. 'quot' for 'quotation'), set off by delimiting characters from the conventional text which they mark. They do not appear on the printed page, but are there translated into various features of layout, typography, and punctuation. Unlike the tags, most of the latter, viewed logically, are to some degree ambiguous and redundant, though familiar and convenient to the user of the Dictionary. Thus, the tags that signify 'headword' and 'date of quotation' accompany these elements, but no instruction to print them in bold type appears in the machine-readable text; they could as easily be printed in capitals or sanserif if desired. The typographical realization of an element is relative, being determined by the requirements of the particular published form; accordingly, information of this kind has been largely, though not absolutely, purged from the electronic master text.

Only the presence of this structural information within the text has made it possible to integrate the *OED* and *Supplement*, and to perform the other systematic changes listed below, with so small a staff and in so short a time, and only because of it is the further revision and updating of the Dictionary feasible at all. It is also the prerequisite for the conversion of the *OED* into a publicly available electronic database. The project team believes the addition of this information to have been, without doubt, their chief contribution to the future of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE SECOND EDITION

The distinctive features of this edition may be described under four headings: supplementary text, general revisions, local corrections, and typographical format. These will be explained in turn.

A. SUPPLEMENTARY TEXT

1. The 69,372 entries of the four-volume *Supplement* have been amalgamated with the 252,259 entries of the *OED*, first edition. 41,752 of these entries are new and independent; the remaining 27,620 have been integrated with the corresponding *OED* entries. The principles that guided this process of integration are explained below.
2. Entirely new articles dealing with an additional 5,000 words, combinations, and senses, have been included and integrated; these are located chiefly in the first third of the alphabet, where the work done for the *Supplement* is now twenty years or more old. The policy and history of this part of the project are set out below.
3. The 260 addenda and 83 spurious entries appended to Volume XII of the first edition have here been merged with the main text.
4. 560 corrections, being chiefly earlier illustrative examples, which were prepared for Volumes I and II of the *Supplement* but not inserted there, have been included here.
5. The process of integration has from time to time required that a lexical item, treated as a subordinate part of an entry in the *OED* or *Supplement*, should be elevated to the status of a main entry, and this has naturally entailed the writing of new text.

B. GENERAL REVISIONS

1. *IPA and stress-marked headwords*. The system devised by Sir James Murray for representing pronunciation, used in both the first edition of the *OED* and the *Supplement*, has now been replaced

throughout the text by the International Phonetic Alphabet. Many headwords and lexical items in the two parent works had their stress-pattern marked by symbols placed within them, instead of being followed by a phonetic transcription; these marks, which are placed *after* the stressed vowel, have been replaced by IPA stress-marks, which are placed *before* the stressed syllable. The principles of transcription and translation followed here are described below, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv.

2. *Foreign script.* In its etymological material, the first edition regularly cited foreign words in non-roman scripts; besides Greek, cited forms in Arabic script, the Cyrillic alphabet, Devanagari, the square Hebrew alphabet, and the Syriac script are quite usual. These were normally, but not universally, accompanied by transliterations. Except when citing Greek, the *Supplement* abandoned this practice, giving only transliterations. It was decided to follow the latter's practice in the present edition, considering that the dropping of the scripts would be more straightforward than the furnishing of accurate new non-roman forms, and that the first edition itself frequently neglected to supply the non-roman forms. Transcriptions have been supplied wherever they were missing in the first edition.

In quotations the presence of foreign script is, of course, an intrinsic feature; it has been preserved as far as possible, subject to the constraints upon 'artwork' and special characters in general (see below).

3. *Illustration and special characters.* The parent texts resort from time to time to the inclusion of what amount to pictorial illustrations, mainly diagrammatic or typographic in style. In the first edition a number of names for typefaces are typographically illustrated, and a few other concepts are conveyed diagrammatically. These have been omitted. Other more modest forms of illustration, which involve the use of individual special characters such as occur or might reasonably be expected to occur in the Dictionary, have been retained.

Between them, the two parent texts make use of approximately 660 characters apart from the ninety or so available on the typical keyboard. Virtually all of these have been retained, and some previously wrong have been corrected.

4. *Ordering of entries.* The alphabetical arrangement of entries in the *OED* and *Supplement* is to some extent affected by the presence of special characters, accents, punctuation, and capitalization within the headword. The principles which prevail, but are not universally followed, in the parent texts have been standardized throughout the present edition. As a result, certain details in the identification of some entries differ from their counterparts in the parent texts, and a few of these have consequently been removed some distance from their former position.

5. *Ordering of senses.* The sense-divisions of most entries in the first edition and its *Supplement* follow a very clear system of structural organization, as described below, p. xxxiii. The system has been extended to the few scattered entries which were (usually for no special reason) irregular in structure.

Entries in which a series of senses skips or duplicates a number, owing to simple editorial or typographical oversight, have been corrected.

6. *Cross-references.* Cross-references whose targets were changed as a result of the integration of *OED* and *Supplement* entries have been emended as far as possible. These changes reflect the changes to the identifying structure of an entry, listed below, p. xviii.

Many of the 580,000 cross-references in the Dictionary are imprecise, citing headwords without parts of speech and homonym numbers, for example. It was impossible for the automatic cross-referencing system to determine which of two or more possible targets was the one proper to an

ambiguous cross-reference of this sort, and so, on the whole, these have not been made more precise; in many cases, the intended target is obvious to the reader, and amplification would merely be fussy. There were also a fair number of cross-references which, as printed, did not match any existing headword; this was nearly always because of a slight difference in spelling. Most of these have been emended in the present edition.

C. LOCAL CORRECTIONS

1. *The spelling of vocabulary items.* Certain conventions of spelling, as also of capitalization, hyphenation, and punctuation, have changed since the publication of the first edition; indeed the occurrence of some such changes is evidenced within the Dictionary itself. Harmonization of the whole text with currently acceptable style would have been impossible within the limits of this new edition. The *Supplement*, however, indicated many changes to the spelling of headwords, which have, of course, been effected; and an attempt has been made to carry such changes through into derivatives and combinations of the main words and into contiguous definitions. Other such updatings, overlooked by the *Supplement*, are carried out wherever possible.

2. *The main text of Dictionary entries.* Innumerable small misprints and slips have naturally been encountered, during editing, in the definitions, etymologies, and notes which form the core of the Dictionary text. These have been corrected.

3. *Quotations.* The text of quotations has been carefully protected from corruption. The working assumption was that it always correctly reproduces the original source, however strangely it may read. Nevertheless, an appreciable number of quotations came under suspicion of inaccuracy, or could be clearly seen to have suffered mutilation at the hands of compositors, and were checked and corrected from the sources.

It was a basic, and not unreasonable, requirement of our automatic processing that quotations (with certain regular exceptions, such as those from *Beowulf*) must begin with a date. Dates (sometimes only approximate) were supplied by means of bibliographical investigation to the small number of quotations that were found to lack them.

D. TYPOGRAPHICAL CHANGES

1. *Entry spacing.* In the first edition, no spacing separates entries one from another. This edition follows the *Supplement* in placing space between entries. Series of entries for variant and obsolete forms are treated in the same way, not run on as they often are in the first edition.

2. *Distinction between main and subordinate entries.* The typographical distinction in the first edition between main words and subordinate words, by which the latter were printed in a lighter bold type, has been given up in this edition, as it had already in the *Supplement*. Such a distinction is difficult to draw absolutely and is, in any case, of doubtful utility.

3. *Distinction between headword and other bold elements.* Besides the distinction between two kinds of headword just described, the first edition used other varieties of bold type to identify derivatives, combinations, and variant forms of the headword, when cited within the same entry. Derivatives were usually printed in dark bold similar to, but smaller than, that of the headword, while combinations and variant forms were printed in a lighter bold. The *Supplement* used only a single typeface to distinguish all three from the headword. In this edition derivatives and combinations are printed in a dark bold, smaller than the headword, and variant spellings are printed in a light bold. It seemed

logical to symbolize in the same way what are, in effect, subordinated headwords, but to differentiate them from the variant spellings of the main headword.

4. *Italicized vocabulary items.* The text of a Dictionary definition contains numerous elements printed in italics, which fall into several different categories of information: chiefly usage label, cross-reference, cited linguistic form, and lexical item (such as phrase or minor combination). This last element is of particular importance since, like the headword, derivative, or bold combination, it constitutes one of the keys by which the reader finds the information which he or she is seeking. Since this kind of element is specially marked by tags in the electronic version of the text, it seemed helpful to print it in this edition in a special bold italic typeface, clearly setting it off from all other italicized text.

5. *Capitalization of headwords.* In the first edition of the *OED*, every main headword was given a capital initial, regardless of whether the word was normally so written. Most derivatives, and many combinations, were also capitalized. The *Supplement*, in accord with modern lexicographical practice, abandoned this convention, giving a capital only where that is the normal spelling. This edition follows the *Supplement*'s practice.

For many words capitalization varies, either at different dates or in different senses. Because its convention disguised the problem, the *OED* often did not indicate the prevailing or preferred style. Where the intentions of the first edition were not deducible, as often with rare and obsolete words, decisions about capitalization were made on the basis of the printed quotations or analogy with similar and related words, or both.

6. *Abbreviations in initial letter entries.* Only a small number of abbreviations (i.e. initialisms) were listed under the entries for initial letters in the first edition. In line with recent linguistic developments, these lists were greatly augmented by the *Supplement*. But though these abbreviations have definitions, they are not picked out typographically in the parent texts. In this edition they are printed in bold type for easy identification.

7. *Asterisks in quotation paragraphs and cross-references.* In the Dictionary, quotations illustrating a series of combinations can be listed either in one chronological sequence, or (as is usual when the combinations are defined) in a series of chronological sequences, each illustrating one combination and all arranged in the alphabetical order of the combinations. In the first edition, an asterisk was placed in the first quotation of each sequence, marking the combination being illustrated. In the *Supplement*, this convention was not followed, because asterisks were used to mark two other features: sense numbers that were to be intercalated into the *OED* sequence, and cross-references to entries in the *Supplement*. As a result of integration, the latter conventions have disappeared; but also, many quotation series without asterisks from the *Supplement* have been merged with series with asterisks from the *OED*. In these cases, the asterisking convention has been carried through the whole merged quotation paragraph. It has not, however, been introduced into every paragraph of this kind originating in the *Supplement* alone.

8. *Hyphenation.* Unlike its parent texts, this edition has been printed without regular line-end hyphenation. Most of the hyphens printed are true ('hard') hyphens. This has the advantage that no extraneous hyphens are introduced into lexical items, variant forms, or other linguistic forms cited in the text. It also means that virtually no merely line-end ('soft') hyphens have been introduced into the text of quotations. Though this results in a less even layout of text on the page than in the parent texts, it is felt that the advantages outweigh this drawback.

When the text of quotations from the Dictionary was keyboarded, hyphens occurring at line

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
The New Oxford English Dictionary Project	ix
Introduction	xi
<i>Special features of the second edition</i>	xii
<i>Principles of integration</i>	xvi
<i>The translation of the phonetic system</i>	xviii
<i>New vocabulary</i>	xxi
<i>Statistics</i>	xxiii
General Explanations	xxiv
<i>The vocabulary</i>	xxiv
<i>Classification of the vocabulary</i>	xxv
<i>Main words</i>	xxvi
<i>Subordinate words</i>	xxxi
<i>Combinations</i>	xxxii
<i>Derivatives</i>	xxxii
<i>Ordering of entries</i>	xxxii
<i>Ordering of senses</i>	xxxiii
<i>Pronunciation</i>	xxxiii
The History of the Oxford English Dictionary	xxxv
Key to the Conventions of the Dictionary	lxii
Key to the Pronunciation	lxv
List of Abbreviations, Signs, etc.	lxvi
Note on Proprietary Names	lxviii
THE DICTIONARY	i

THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

A (ei), the first letter of the Roman Alphabet, and of its various subsequent modifications (as were its prototypes Alpha of the Greek, and Aleph of the Phœnician and old Hebrew); representing originally in English, as in Latin, the 'low-back-wide' vowel, formed with the widest opening of jaws, pharynx, and lips. The plural has been written *æs*, *A's*, *As*. *from A to Z*: see *Z* 3.

c1340 HAMPOLE *Pr. Consc.* 481 And by þat cry men know þan Whether it be man or weman, For when it es born it cryes swa. If it be man it says al! That þe first letter is of þe nam Of our forme-fader Adam. c1386 CHAUCER *Prolog.* 161 On which was first i-wrote a crowned A, And after, Amor vincit omnia. 1401 *Pol. Poems* II. 57 I know not an *a* [A] from the wynd-mylne, ne a *b* [B] from a bole-foot. 1678 BUTLER *Hudib.* III. i. 1006 And loue your Loues with *A's* and *B's*. 1765 TUCKER *Light of Nat.* II. 89 Tully tells us, a hog has been known to make a perfect letter *A* with his snout upon the ground; but nobody ever saw, or thought it possible to see, the whole poem of Ennius scratched out in that manner: and I believe he might have added safely, that no man ever saw a single *A* written by a hog, without a multitude of other irregular scratches round about it. 1842 TENNYSON *The Epic 50* Moutching out his hollow oes and æs, Deep-chested music.

The sounds now represented by *A* are thus symbolized in this work:—

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) (ei) in name (neim) | (4) (a:) in father ('fa:ðə(r)) |
| (2) (æ) in bare (beə(r)) | (5) (ɜ:) in water ('wɔ:tə(r)) |
| (3) (e) in man (mæn) | (6) (ɒ) in want (wɒnt) |

The vowel in chant, past, varies with different speakers from 3 to 4.

1 and 2 are also commonly represented by the digraphs *ai*, *ay*, as in *pain*, *pay*, *pair* (pein, pei, peə(r)); and 5 by *au*, *aw*, as in *laud*, *law* (lɔ:d, lɔ:). *ai*, *ay* rarely represent a diphthong (ai), as in *ay*, *Isaiah* (ai, ai'zaɪə); *au* is a diphthong (au) only in foreign words.

In unaccented syllables these vowels are modified, and obscured; thus:—

- | | |
|--|--|
| (7) i in village, marriage ('vɪldʒ, 'mɛrɪdʒ) | (1) (i) in village, marriage ('vɪldʒ, 'mɛrɪdʒ) |
| (8) i/a in separate, adj. ('sepəreɪt, -ɪt) | (2) (i/a) in separate, adj. ('sepəreɪt, -ɪt) |
| (9) o in lunar, ameba ('luːnə(r), 'æmɪbə) | (3) (o) in lunar, ameba ('luːnə(r), 'æmɪbə) |

In rapid utterance the *ə* may become a mere voice glide, or entirely disappear, as *separate* *adj.* 'sepəreɪt, 'sep(ə)rət, 'sepɪt. These phonetic variations in actual speech are reflected in variant spellings like *mackerel*, *mackerell*, *mackrel*; *abanet*, *abnet*; *caravel*, *carvel*; *Catharine*, *Catherine*, *Cathrine*; *dependant*, *dependent*; and common 'mistakes' in spelling, such as *seperate*.

II. The letters of the alphabet, or some of them, are also used to indicate serial order and distinguish things in a series, as the notes of the musical scale, the 'quires' or sheets of a book, classes of ships, propositions in logic, quantities in algebra, points, and hence lines and figures in geometry. As the order is in some cases fixed, *A* or *a* has some specialized uses:

1. In *Music*: The 6th note of the diatonic scale of *C* major, or the first note of the relative minor scale of *C*, corresponding to *la* in the Tonic Sol-fa notation. Also, the scale of a composition with *A* as its key-note; as 'a symphony in *A*'.

1609 DOULAND Ornithoparcus *Micrologus* 22 In the first part set *A* Base, in the third *D* sol re, in the fifth *A* lamire. 1806 CALLCOTT *Gramm. of Music* The notes of Music are named from the first seven letters of the alphabet, A, B, C, D, E, F, G. When the Melody, or Tune, exceeds these seven, the same series of letters must be repeated. 1880 GROVE *Dict. Mus.* I. 102 The beautiful and passionate Sonata in *A* which was inspired by and dedicated to his [Beethoven's] friend Madame Ertmann.

2. In *Nautical language*: see *AI* below.

3. In *Logic*: a universal affirmative.

1866 MANSEL (in Bowen *Logic* 201) *A* is declared by Aristotle to be the most difficult proposition to establish, and the easiest to overthrow.

4. In *Abstract reasoning*, *hypothetical argumentation*, *Law*, etc. *A* means any one thing or person, *B* another, *C* a third, etc.; as, *A* becomes surety to *B* for *C*; *C* fails in his engagements, on which *B*, etc.

1870 BOWEN *Logic* III. 49 Every conceivable thing is either *A* or not-*A*. Of course *A* and not-*A*, taken together, include the universe.

5. In *Algebra*: *a*, *b*, *c*, and other early letters of the alphabet are used to express known quantities, as *x*, *y*, *z* are to express the unknown.

6. Designating a first-class road.

1921 *Autocar* 29 Oct. 829/2 Those roads, however, which have already received numbers are all of the first, or *A*, category and it is by no means probable that their numbers will suffer any change after being fixed... Six boundary roads radiating from London are taken as the basis. Road *A*1 is that from London to Edinburgh; *A*2 runs from London to Dover; *A*3 London to Portsmouth.

7. Used of a type of blood.

1927 *Jrnl. Amer. Med. Assoc.* LXXXVIII. 1422/1 Dr. Karl Landsteiner has suggested the substitution of the well known letters *O*, *A*, *B* and *AB* for the Jansky numbers I, II, III and IV and the Moss numbers IV, II, III and I. The letters will... express the actual constitution of the blood corpuscles with respect to iso-agglutination, as far as it concerns the separation of the groups. 1928 *Jrnl. Exper. Med.* XLVII. 757 They separate the human bloods into four sharply defined groups designated as *O*, *A*, *B*, and *AB*.

8. *Sociol.* Designating the highest (or 'flower') of a series of social classes; now *spec.* the higher managerial, administrative, or professional class; a member of this. *AB* (*Sociol.*): *pl.*, the membership of the two highest social classes *A* and *B*; also in *sing.* and as *adj.*

1880 C. BOOTH *Life & Labour* I. ii. 33 The 8 classes into which I have divided these people are: *A*. The lowest class of occasional labourers, and semi-criminals. *B*. Casual earnings—'very poor' [etc.]. 1910 F. G. D'AETH in *Sociol. Rev.* III. 270 The present class structure is based upon different standards of life... These varying standards tend to fall into seven groups... *A*. The Lower. *B*. Low-skilled labour... *C*. Artizan... *D*. Smaller Shopkeeper and clerk... *E*. Smaller Business Class... *F*. Professional and Administrative Class... *G*. The Rich. 1936 HARRISON & MITCHELL *Home Market* xii. 59 Blue Symbols represent *A* grade—where chief income earner receives £10 per week or more. 1950 D. C. JONES in *Brit. Jrnl. Sociol.* I. 51 It will simplify both our analysis and your classification if you begin by thinking in terms of five main social classes, which we have lettered in descending order *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*. 1968 M. ABRAMS in *J. A. Jackson Social Stratification* vi. 135 In the middle 1950's... the National Readership Survey came under the direction of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (I.P.A.).... Interviewers recorded the occupation of each respondent... The stratification of respondents into six grades—*A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*—was based exclusively on occupation. 1984 *Social Trends* (Central Statistical Office) No. 14. x. 142 Almost every household in social classes *A* and *B* possessed a dictionary in May 1982. 1966 *Punch* 10 Aug. 212/1 We have shown... that the *ABs* watch the same kind of programmes as everybody else. 1969 *Listener* 31 July 164 Such trusts appeal primarily to *AB* readers. 1976 *New Society* 1 Jan. 5/1 Upper middle class *ABs* living in the prosperous southern counties. 1986 *Age* (Melbourne) 18 Jan. 8/4 The social niceties... are very *A*, *B*. When I say 'dick', Liz pounces.

9. Designating a range of international standard paper sizes (as *Ao*, *A1*, *A2*, etc.), based on a proportion of 1:√2, with each size in the series having half the surface area of the previous one (see quot. 1937). Cf. *B* II. 2(v), *C* II. 4.

1932 *Industr. Standardization* III. 203/2 The European main or *A*-series of paper sizes... The basic sheet with an area of one square metre is designated *Ao* (*A* zero); the next smaller sheet by *A1*; half of this by *A2*, etc. 1937 E. J. LABARRE *Dict. Paper* 277/1 The basic sizes are therefore: *A*-series = *Ao* = 841 × 1189 mm; *B*-series = *Bo* = 1000 × 1414 mm; *C*-series = *Co* = 917 × 1297 mm. 1958 *B.S.I. News* Nov. 17/2 Another manufacturer... has laid down stocks of its 'Wave Writing' paper in three sizes from which the 'A' sizes can... be cut. 1962 F. T. DAY *Introduct. Paper* vii. 71 At present there is much discussion of the advantages of what are termed *A* and *B* paper sizes. 1982 *Financial Times* 25 Oct. 1. 12/7 The new chassis... is about the size of an *A4* sheet of paper. 1983 *Electronics* 1 Dec. 38 (heading) Linear CCD array senses images on *A3*-size pages.

10. *A-side*, of a single-playing gramophone record: (the music recorded on) the side that is being promoted; contr. with *B-side* s.v. *B* II 2b(vi).

1962 *Melody Maker* 7 July 10/1 No doubt the *A* side will get plenty of spins. 1968 *Guardian* 5 Jan. 18/4 The seven-man band arrived at the London recording studio to make the '*A*' side of a new 'single'. 1970 J. LENNON in J. Wenner *Lennon Remembers* (1971) 49 Maybe if he was feeling guilty that he had most of the *A*-sides or something he'd give me a solo. 1984 *Sounds* 1 Dec. 6/5 The *A*-side features the inimitable talents of Jim Thirlwell on lead vocal.

III. *Abbreviations*. (Many abbreviations given here with the full stop are frequently used without it.)

A., *a.*, *stands for*: (1) *anno*, in the year, as *A.D. anno domini*, in the year of our Lord; *A.M. anno mundi*, in the year of the world; *A.U.C. anno urbis conditæ*, in the year of the city (Rome) having been founded; (2) *ante*, as '*a.m.*' *ante meridiem*, before noon; *a.* 1600 or *a* 1600, before 1600; (3) *adjective*; *active* (verb); (4) *artium*, as *A.B. artium baccalaureus*; *A.M. artium magister*; which in England are now written *B.A.*, *M.A.*, Bachelor, and Master, of Arts; (5) *alto*; (6) *accepted* (of bills); (7) *Associate*, as *A.L.S. Associate of the Linnæan Society*; (8) *R.A. Royal Artillery*, *Royal Academy* or *Academician*; *F.S.A. Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries*; *F.R.A.S. Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society*, and many similar titles; (9) *A.B. able-bodied seaman*; (10) *a* or *aa* in *Med. ANA*, q.v.; *A.*, adult, designating films suitable for exhibition to adult audiences; *A.*, *a.*, *ampere*; *A.*, *atom(ic)*; *A.* in *GA*, *Australian*; *Å.*, *Ångström*; *A.A.*, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (orig. *U.S.*); also, a member of this organization; *A.A.*, *A.A.*, *anti-aircraft*; *A.A.*, *Automobile Association*; *A.A.A.*, *Amateur Athletic Association*; *A.A.A.*, *American Automobile Association*; *A.A.F.*, *Auxiliary Air Force*; *A.A.M.*, *air-to-air missile*; *A. and R.* (see quot.); *A.B.*, *Bachelor of Arts*; *A.B.C.*, *Aerated Bread Company*; *A.B.C.*, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (formerly *Commission*); also, *† Australian Broadcasting Company*; *A.B.C.A.*, *Army Bureau of Current Affairs*, an organization which provided troops with information about current affairs during the 1939–45 war; *ABM*, *anti-ballistic missile* (orig. *U.S.*); cf. *I.C.B.M.* s.v. I III; *ABS*, *acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene*; freq. *attrib.*, esp. designating a group of metallizable plastics consisting of a rubbery phase dispersed in a hard phase and with uses that include tubing, parts of car bodies, and domestic articles; *A.C.*, *A/C*, *aircraftman*; *A.C.*, *a.c.*, *alternating current*; *A.C.C.*, *anodal* (or *anodic*) closure contraction; *A.C.C.M.* (also with pronunc. 'ækəm), *Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry*; *AC/DC*, *AC-DC* [humorously after *A.C.* and *D.C.* (alternating and direct electrical current): see above and *D* III. 3] *slang* (orig. *U.S.*), of a person: *bisexual*; *A.C.L.U.*, *American Civil Liberties Union*; *A.C.P.*, *African, Caribbean, and Pacific* (countries), *spec.* the signatories to the Lomé Convention (see quot. 1975²); *A.C.S.*, *antireticular cytotoxic serum*; *A.C.T.*, *Australian Capital Territory*; *A.C.T.H.*, *adrenocorticotroph(hic) hormone*; *A.C.T.T.*, *Association of Cinematograph, Television, and Allied Technicians*; *A.C.T.U.*, *Australian* (formerly also *Australasian*) *Council of Trade Unions*; *A.C.V.*, *air-cushion vehicle* (see

air-cushion (b) s.v. AIR sb.¹ B. II); A.C.W., aircraftwoman; A.D.C., aide-de-camp, hence A.D.C.-ship, aide-de-campship; A.D.F., automatic direction finder; A.D.G.B., Air Defence of Great Britain; ADH, antidiuretic hormone; A.D.P., automatic data processing; A.D.S., autograph document (signed); A.E.F., American Expeditionary Forces; cf. B.E.F. s.v. B. III. 1; A.E.U., Amalgamated Engineering Union; A.F., a.f., audio frequency; A.F.C., Air Force Cross; A.F.M., Air Force Medal; A.F.S., Auxiliary Fire Service; A.F.V., armoured fighting vehicle; A.G., Adjutant-General; A.G., Attorney-General; A.G.M., annual general meeting; A.G.R., advanced gas-cooled reactor; A.H., Anno Hegiræ (see HEGIRÆ); A.I., Air Interception; A.I., A.I.D., A.I.H., artificial insemination (by donor, husband); AI, artificial intelligence; A.I.D., Aeronautical Inspection Directorate (in quot. 1918 Department); A.I.D. (pron. eid) (U.S.), Agency for International Development, established in 1961 to give economic aid to underdeveloped countries; A.I.F., Australian Imperial Force; AIM (pron. eim) (U.S.), American Indian Movement; a.k.a. (colloq., orig. U.S.), also known as; A.K.C., American Kennel Club; A level, Advanced level (of the General Certificate of Education examination); A.L.P., Australian Labour Party; A.L.S., autograph letter (signed); ALU (Computing), arithmetic and logic(al) unit; A.M., Albert Medal; A.M., amplitude modulation; cf. F.M. s.v. F. III. 3a; A.M.A., American Medical Association; A.M.D.G. [L. ad maiorem Dei gloriam], to the greater glory of God (esp. as a motto of the Jesuits); A.M.G., Allied Military Government; A.N.C., African National Congress; A.N.(S.), autograph note (signed); A.O.N.B., area of outstanding natural beauty; cf. S.S.S.I. s.v. S. I. 4a; A.P., Associated Press; APB (U.S.), all-points bulletin (see ALL III); A.P.C. (Austral. and U.S.), aspirin (= acetylsalicylic acid), phenacetin, and caffeine, used as an analgesic or antipyretic; a mixture, tablet, or capsule containing these; A.P.I., American Petroleum Institute (used spec. with reference to a scale for expressing the relative density of oil, developed by the Institute, in which higher values correspond to lower densities); APL [now usu. expanded as 'a programming language', but see quot. 1966], a high-level computer programming language developed by IBM in the mid-1960s; APR, annual(ized) percentage rate (of interest on money lent on credit); A.P.T., advanced passenger train; ARC, AIDS-related complex; A.R.P. (see AIR-RAID); ASA (also with pronunc. 'esə), American Standards Association (used spec. in Photogr. with reference to a standard scale for rating film speed); A.S.A.P., a.s.a.p. (also with pronunc. 'eisəp), as soon as possible; A.S.B., Alternative Service Book; A.S.C., Army Service Corps; ASEAN, Asean (pron. 'eɪsən), Association of South-East Asian Nations; ASH (pron. æʃ), Action on Smoking and Health; ASL, American Sign Language; A.S.M., air-to-surface missile; A.S.M., assistant stage-manager; A.J.R.S., Air-Sea Rescue Service; A.S.T.M.S. (also with pronunc. 'æstəmz), Association of Scientific, Technical, and Managerial Staffs; A.S.V., air(craft) to surface vessel; A.T.A., Air Transport Auxiliary; A.T.&T. (U.S.), American Telephone and Telegraph Company; A.T.C., Air Traffic Control; A.T.C., Air Training Corps; A.T.C., Automatic Train Control; ATM (Banking, orig. U.S.), automated (orig. automatic) teller machine; A.T.S., animal tub-sized; ATV, all-terrain vehicle; A.T.V., Associated Television; A.U., A.U., Ångström Unit; A.U. = astronomical unit s.v. ASTRONOMICAL a. 3; AUEW, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers; AV, alternative vote; A.V., Authorized Version (of the Bible); A.V.H., initials of Hungarian secret police, also A.V.O.; A.V.M., Air Vice-Marshal; A.W.O.L., absent without leave (orig. U.S.); A.W.U., Australian Workers' Union; AZT, azidothymidine.

See also (as main entries) ABTA, ACAS, ADAS, AIDS, A-O-K, APEX sb.¹, APRA, ASCII, A.S.L.E.F., AWACS.

1914 Times 16 Feb. 6/2 Since the inception of the board [British Board of Film Censors]... 627 have been passed for 'public' exhibition with the 'A' certificate. 1935 Lp. MACMILLAN Local Govt. Law & Admin. III. 166 It is the practice of the Board of Film Censors to distinguish

between films suitable for universal exhibition ('U' films) and films suitable for exhibition to adult audiences ('A' films) which by implication are unsuitable for children.

1936 Sunday Express 13 Dec. 14/1 Cinema Theatres. Academy, Ox.-st. Finnish Exp. 'Fredlos' (A). 1889 S. R. BOTTONE Electric Bells ii. 56 Or if we like to use the initials of volts, ampères, and ohms... we may write $V = A$, or $Volts = Ampères$. 1937 Rep. Joint Comm. Chem. Soc. Faraday Soc. etc. 11 Ampère (in sub-units). 1945 Daily Mirror 8 Aug. 1 (headline) Jap Radio says Evacuate—Ware 'A-Bombs'. 1954 Britannica Bk. of Ev. 637/2 A-test, a test explosion of an atomic bomb. 1935 Whitaker's Alman. 1937 810/2 Total imports, 1935-36... £104,687,000. 1941 Sat. Even. Post 1 Mar. 10/3 The city editor, the assistant city editor and a nationally known reporter were 'A.A.'s. 1943 A.A. (Alcoholic Foundation) I As an active member of A.A. since 1939, I feel myself a useful member of the human race at last. 1955 M. MCCARTHY Charmed Life i. 13 Drink... was one of the chief local dangers... In a village of four hundred souls, there was... a branch of A.A., with regular Wednesday meetings. 1977 M. FRENCH Women's Room (1978) ii. 117, I keep thinking I just have to get through today, you know? Like an A.A. 1914 Times Book of Navy 145 The abbreviations used in the lists are as follows: 'A.A. Anti-aircraft guns. 1917 CONTACT Airman's Outings 157 The A.A. batteries have only worried us to the extent of half a dozen shells. 1943 N. & Q. CLXXXIV. 107/2 A.A. barrage was audible from twenty miles away. 1905 Autocar 14 Oct. 443/1 Commonsense precautions taken with regard to villages, and at dangerous points, do not concern the 'A.A.s., for therein it is considered lies the duty of the policeman. 1937 Discovery July liv/2 (Advt.), Victoria Hotel, A.A. H. & C. Electricity. 1882 Amateur Athl. Assoc. Rules, Laws to be observed at every Athletic Meeting held under the sanction of the 'A.A.A. 1955 Times 20 July 3/5 B. S. Hewson, the A.A.A. mile champion. 1902 Automobile May 1945/1 (heading) Constitution and by-laws of the 'A.A.A. 1955 Times 1 Aug. 10/2 Colonel Hallington, the chairman of the A.A.A. contest board, said that the decision had been prompted by the accident at Le Mans. 1973 C. W. GEAR Introd. Computer Sci. vii. 311 Suppose that you have to design an online system for the A.A.A. It must store the road map of the United States. 1982 Financial Times 6 Dec. 1 The A.A.A. contract... constitutes the major portion of Cook's U.S. travellers' cheque business. 1925 Flight 15 Jan. 32/2 The designating numbers of the 'A.A.F. units will start with 600. 1958 Aero-Space Times 1/1 'A.A.M., Air-to-air missile. 1958 Times 26 May 7/6 'A and R men, dee-jays, pluggers—to use the abbreviated titles by which artists and recording managers, disc jockeys and exploitation men are known. 1959 TV Times 14 Aug. 11/1 It all revolves around someone known as 'A and R men'. The common translation of 'A and R' is Artists and Repertoire—and it is for these two items that the A and R man is responsible. 1973 Boston News-Let. 20 Apr. 3/2 Last Friday departed this life... John Alden, 'A.B. aged 22. 1842 Knickerbocker XIX. 429 A man may... write 'A.B. after his name, and even A.M., and be no greater things either. 1895 Rep. to Harvard Club of Chicago 2 (D.A.E.), Educational qualifications equivalent to the Harvard A.B. 1894 Punch 15 Dec. 285/1, I pass an 'A.B.C. Where I purchase two or three Cakes and scones. 1941 E. BLUNDEN Thomas Hardy 120 Afterwards we went to a Lyons tea-shop, at which he [Hardy] was a little alarmed, being used only to an A.B.C. 1937 Austral. Broadcasting Co. Ltd. Bk. 1930 24 (heading) The widespread ramifications of the A.B.C. 1933 1st Ann. Rep. Austral. Broadcasting Commission 9 A.B.C. (Sydney) Symphony Orchestra. 1957 'N. SHUTE On Beach iv. 132 The A.B.C.'s been doing a good job in telling people just the way things are. 1959 New Statesman 31 Jan. 151/1 The Australian Broadcasting Commission... is subject to constant pressure, much of it is organised, and ABC officials need remarkable stamina to resist political and sectarian attack. 1984 Daily Tel. 7 May 17/4 Air hostesses will become flight attendants and newsmen on the ABC will be journalists. 1942 Rep. Comm. on Amenities in Women's Services (Cmd. 6384) 44 'ABCA came into existence in September, 1941, to remedy this ignorance and to mitigate boredom. 1963 Mirror 8 Sept. 14/1 (heading) Boredom has ultimate 'ABM. 1984 Daily Tel. 2 Feb. 18/6 The Air Vice-Marshal claims that Russia has violated the SALT and ABM treaties. 1964 Brit. Plastics Year Bk. (ed. 34) iv. 229/1 'A.B.S. Fabricators. 1967 Times Rev. Industry June 76/2 Familiar uses include... PVC or ABS... for decorative use in fascia boards. 1983 McGraw-Hill Encycl. Chem. 702/1 Ease of fabrication by a variety of methods, including typical metalworking methods such as cold stamping, has led to the development of new uses for ABS resins. 1889 E. J. HOUSTON Dict. Electr. Words 8 'A.C.C.—An abbreviation used in medical electricity for Anodic Closure Contraction, or the contraction observed on closing the circuit when the anode is lying over the muscle. 1893 DUNGLISON Dict. Med. Sci. (ed. 21) p. vii, A.C.C., anodal closure contraction. 1967 Church of England Yearbk. 177 Candidates for courses, are specially selected by 'ACCM. 1984 Oxf. Diocesan Mag. Feb. 15/2 Calls for disestablishment from Evangelicals, and some Catholics, for an 'all members ministry' (to quote ACCM). 1960 WENTWORTH & FLEXNER Dict. Amer. Slang 1/2 'ac-de, ac/dc... bisexual. Some jocular use since 1940. 1972 D. LEES Zodiac 115 Being suspected of being AC/DC isn't going to ruin anyone these days. 1974 K. MILLETT Flying (1975) i. 91 You can also tell Time Magazine you're bisexual, be AC-DC in the international edition. 1983 Him May 7/2 I'm well, a bit that way myself, if you follow... You know, AC/DC... half and half. 1936 Amer. Mercury Dec. 385/2 The fiction of the 'Liberalism' of the 'ACLU has been firmly implanted in the popular mind. 1980 Economist 21 June 28/3 The ACLU may have a strong case. 1975 Ann. Reg. 1974 381 Jamaica's Minister of Trade... led the ACP group. 1975 Keating's Contemp. Archives 2705/1 A five-year convention establishing an overall trading and economic co-operation relationship between the European Economic Community and 46 developing African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries was signed in Lomé (the capital of Togo) on Feb. 28. 1983 Financial Times 4 Oct. 14 It offers some protection against declining prices for a range of ACP commodities through the Stabex mechanism; and it is committed to buying 1.3m tons of ACP sugar a year. 1938 Official Year Bk. Australia 390 'A.C.T. 1945 S. J. BAKER Austral. Lang. x. 187 We use A.C.T. or F.C.T. to denote the Australian or Federal Capital Territory where

Canberra is situated. 1957 Film & TV Technician XXIII. 5/3 The new 'A.C.T.T. badges and brochures can be obtained from Head Office. 1974 Socialist Worker 26 Oct. 11/2 The ACTT... organise more than 18,000 film and TV workers. 1985 Listener 28 Feb. 13/3 The ACTT has taken a strong interest in the development of the independent sector. 1928 Econ. Rec. May 108 The 1927 Congress... set itself to construct machinery that might act adequately in the field of Interstate industrial disputes. Hence the new Australasian Council of Trades Unions ('A.C.T.U.). 1972 J. BELFRAGE in G. W. Turner Good Austral. Eng. vi. 108 This is another local reference, to the active pro-labour work of the new President of the ACTU. 1986 Courier-Mail (Brisbane) 3 July 4/1 The acting Opposition Leader... said the commission should... not give in to ACTU and Government blackmail tactics. 1962 Flight Internat. LXXXI. 113 Free-moving 'ACVs will be going into business also, together with hydrofoil craft. 1975 Aviation Week & Space Technol. 1 Sept. 17 Slightly smaller and considerably smaller versions of the Russian ACV craft are shown at top and bottom. 1837 EMILY EDEN Let. 28 Oct. in Up the Country (1866) l. i. 9 The 'A.D.C.'s are very apt to assemble over our cabins at night. 1888 Kipling Plain Tales fr. Hills to The A.D.C. in Waiting. 1896 Punch 4 Jan. 5/2 Permitted to retain his A.D.C.-ship after promotion from field-rank. 1948 Shell Aviation News No. 123. 10/2 When homing on a ground station with the 'ADF the passage of the aircraft over the station is indicated by a 180° reversal of bearing within a few seconds. 1926 Flight 6 May 272/2 The Fighting and Wessex Bombing Areas are under the A.O.C.-in-C. 'A.D.G.B. 1944 Times 1 Mar. 4/5 Sir Archibald Sinclair disclosed for the first time that the organization responsible for the air defence of this country is now known as A.D.G.B. (Air Defence of Great Britain). 1951 H. W. SMITH Kidney x. 245 It is only in birds and mammals that 'ADH increases the tubular reabsorption of water. 1983 Oxf. Textbk. Med. II. xviii. 20/2 Reliable assays for ADH in plasma or urine are now available. 1958 Engineering 4 Apr. 424/1 Automatic data processing (or 'ADP) is the modern nervous system of corporate bodies. 1862 Sotheby. 8 Wilkinson Catal. 1 July Tension. Mass. 26 26 signifies Autograph S. signifies Signed L. signifies Letter D. signifies Document. Ibid. 50 Colbert, A.L.S. to Cavalier Bertrino. 1665 —Perrault (the architect of the Louvre), 'A.D.S. with portrait. 1912 F. K. WALTER Abbrev. & Techn. Terms Book Catal. 1 A.D., Autograph document. A.D.S., Autograph document signed. 1917 U.S. Army A.E.F. Gen. Staff Press Rev. 12 Ch. 6. 1/1 Issued by the Second Section General Staff. G.H.Q. 'A.E.F. 1977 H. FAST Immigrants iii. 177 He joined in the singing of 'Smiles', one of the theme songs of the AEF. 1921 Justice 24 Feb. 6/2 (heading) The N.U.R. and the 'A.E.U. and also the R.C.A. 1974 R. CROSSMAN Diaries (1976) II. 497, I spent the morning with the old A.E.U. members who have the A.E.U. pensions. 1919 Whitaker's Alman. 144/1 The Air Force Cross. 1918 'A.F.C.—Instituted, for acts of courage or devotion to duty when flying, although not in active operations against the enemy. 1919 London Gaz. (Suppl. 5) 19 Dec. 15840/2 Act. Sergeant Elmo O'Neal Bearden, 'A.F.M. (South Russia). 1921 S. C. JOHNSON Med. Collector 237 A.F.M.—As for the A.F.C., but the width of the stripes is $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch... The D.F.M. and A.F.M. ribbon will show at the top corner nearest to the left arm a triangle of white. 1939 War Weekly 1 Dec. 166/2 Flying Officer R. C. Graveley, O.B.E., receiving congratulations from members of a Leytonstone 'A.F.S. station. 1940 New Statesman 21 Dec. 642 Most of its best workers are busy on A.R.P., or A.F.S., or evacuation, or some other emergency job. 1939 War Illustr. 18 Nov. 18/1 War-time Acronyms. 'A.F.V., Armoured Fighting Vehicle. 1942 War Office Bulletin (City of Oxford Civil Defence) No. 53, 18 June 3 Vehicles. Very dark dull grey with dark brown disruptive design. A.F.V.'s have black cross outlined in white. 1913 W. T. ROGERS Dict. Abbrev. 7/1 'A.G., Adjutant-General. 1914 W. S. CHURCHILL in M. Gilbert Winston S. Churchill (1972) III. Compan. 1. 185 A.G., R.M. will make arrangements for their reception in the camps. 1957 H. H. JENKINS Dict. of 'Yank' vi. 55 Many official and quasi-official abbreviations were used in GI speech the world over. The most widely known ones included... 'A.G. (the adjutant general, or his office, or a member of his staff). 1889 A. J. BALFOUR Let. 11 Apr. (ov. Let. Ad. MSS. 49827 f. 845), My dear 'A.G. 1912 W. T. ROGERS Dict. Abbrev. 1912 'A.G.M., Annual General Meeting. 1952 Secretary's Jnl. 2 Aug. 90/2 It is surely not the intention to enable even private companies to hold their A.G.M.'s on paper with the members in various different places. 1961 Architect & Building News 21 June 814/1 Mr. Henry Brooke... spoke up for the need for better architecture when addressing the AGM of the Council for Visual Education recently. 1984 National Trust Spring 23/3 The present inordinately long period between June and the AGM caused unnecessary barriers. 1960 Gloss. Atomic Terms (H.M.S.O.) 2 'A.G.R., advanced gas-cooled reactor. 1961 Ann. Reg. 1960 405 The most advanced of the two schemes was the Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor (AGR), the prototype of which was under construction at Windscale. 1983 Listener 14 July 6/1 The American reactor will produce five times as much intermediate waste as the AGR. 1988 GIBSON Dict. & F. V. lii. 418 The foundations of Bagdad were laid 'A.H. 145, a.d. 762. 1940 F. STARK Winter in Arabia iv. 25 It is the wooden minbar' belonged to the year A.H. 693 (1293 A.D.). 1945 Electronic Engin. XVII. 683 With the Battle of Britain by night must be associated the use of 'A.I. or Air Interception. 1945 Flight 21 June 664/2 Later on came airborne interception equipment (A.I.), which comprised a radar set in the aircraft by means of which the target objective could be registered, stalked and attacked. 1971 New Scientist 2 Sept. 525 The first major effort of the 'AI scientists was directed towards writing computer programs to translate automatically between languages. 1985 Business Week 1 July 78 Sales for AI technology rose to £710 million this year. 1918 C. BRIGHT Teleg. Aeronaut. & War ix. 201 Steps should be taken... to introduce into the Aeronautical Inspection Department ('A.I.D.) more who have had a training that would especially fit them for the work in a technical sense. 1931 Flight 16 Jan. 56/2 Those who occupy those front offices such as the A.I.D. and the Meteorological Office staff. 1961 J. F. KENNEDY in N. Y. Times 27 May 2/5 Responsibility... will be assigned to a single agency—the Agency for International Development... The new agency —'A.I.D.—will be headed by an administrator of Under Secretary rank. 1983 N. Y. Times 11 Dec. 15/1 The inquiries

involve a £14 million A.I.D.-financed contract. 1918 *Official Year Bk. Australia XI*. 1019 Little difficulty was experienced... obtaining and training horses for the mounted units of the A.I.F. 1940 *War Illustr.* 16 Feb. 121 The Second A.I.F. - Australian Imperial Force - consisting of men who have volunteered for service either at home or abroad. 1971 *Minneapolis Tribune* 16 Aug. 172 The occupation began... when 25 Indians, most of them members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) broke a window. 1983 *N.Y. Times* 11 Dec. 33/1 Whether or not the AIM Indians were involved, it was over quickly. 1955 R. J. SCHWARTZ *Comp. Dict. Abbrev.* 8/1 'aka, also known as. 1970 *New Yorker* 5 Dec. 142/1 (Adv.), Cassius Clay, a.k.a. Muhammad Ali. 1982 *Times* 8 Nov. 11/1 He is perhaps a shade too comfortable and not enough of a cad as Johnson, aka Ramirez, the outlaw. 1902 *Dog Fancier* Jan. 3/2 The dog show will be under 'A.K.C. rules. 1983 *Christian Science Monitor* 18 Aug. 22 1/2 [sc. the Dog Museum of America] is located in the same building where the AKC has its headquarters. 1951 *Joint Matric. Board Gen. Crim. Exam. Reg.* 6 If a language is to be specially approved at the 'A' level, 1952 *Jrnl. Educ.* May 220/2 The award of an 'O' level pass on the 'A' level papers. 1922 *Round Table* Mar. 409 The federal conference of the 'A.L.P.', held at Perth in June, 1918. 1973 *Nation Rev.* (Melbourne) 31 Aug. 143/1 Will the ALP grow a new set of wings? 1951 *Pittsburgh & Simpson Catal.* 29 July, Autograph Letters 1, Letters autograph and signed are thus marked 'A.L.S.' 1962 *Automatic Data Processing Gloss.* (U.S. Bureau of Budget) 2/2 'ALU. 1984 *Byte* Jan. 135/1 A basic operation of the ALU will be to accept 20 16-bit inputs and to produce a 32-bit product. 1918 *Times* 6 Sept. 3/2 It is notified in Army Orders that officers... who have been awarded the Albert Medal are now entitled to add the distinctive letters 'A.M.' after their names. 1944 *A.M.* (see AMPITUDE 6d). 1962 E. SNOW *Other Side of River* (1963) xlv. 352 The hi-fi set and typewriter have already been stolen and only a worthless AM set remains. 1982 *Giant Bk. Electronics Projects* 1. 27 Reduce hash picked up on AM broadcast sets. 1911 *Sunset* Sept. 284/1 Now and then the ducks left their pond and waddled pompously across the lawn, as if to let the 'A.M.A. know that the 'quacks' had a right to membership, too. 1959 *New Statesman* 13 June 833/3 One cannot help wondering whether obstruction by the AMA has played any part in preventing Eckstein's book from being published earlier. 1984 *N.Y. Times* 24 Feb. 118/6 (heading) A.M.A. bids doctors voluntarily free their fee. 1977 *Sci. News* 10 Aug. 13/1 (heading) A.M.G.D. 1977 E. S. DALLAS *Kettner's Bk. of Table* 270 Another liqueur, Benedictine... is consecrated with the letters 'A.M.D.G. (Ad maiorem Dei gloriam). 1965 N. FREELING *Criminal Conversation* 11. xiii. 148 We had to write at the top of the page... the Jesuit motto A.M.D.G. 1985 *Church Times* 29 Nov. 13/1 Men and women must be freed from oppression. But freed for what? By way of answer it is always possible to fall back on the Jesuits' formula AMDG. 1953 *Keesing's Contemp. Archives* 13006/1 Mr. Albert Luthuli (president-general of the 'A.N.C.'). 1959 *New Statesman* 6 June 779/1 The ensuing ban on Luthuli was timed to prevent him... from presiding... at a special national ANC conference in Johannesburg. 1984 *Daily Tel.* 24 Mar. 16/1 Many years the ANC was a peaceful organisation dedicated to changing South Africa through non-violent means. 1912 F. K. WALTER *Abbrev. & Techn. Terms Book Catal.* 1 'A.N.S. Autograph note signed. 1957 *Ann. Rep. Council Preservation of Rural Eng.* 1956-7 32/1 The Breckland area of Norfolk and Suffolk has also been considered... for designation as an 'A.O.N.B. but rejected as unsuitable. 1973 *Times* 21 Apr. 14/5 Official AONB status allows government grants to be paid for tree-planting and removal of eyesores and enhancement. 1981 *Economist* 24 Jan. 72/2 Together national parks, AONBs and SSSIs cover some 21% of the land area of England and Wales. 1979 *Chicago Tribune* 4 Mar. 5/4 Now, the 'A.P.' may be a very quick institution, but a 'Monopoly' it is not. 1947 *Mem. Evidence Subm. to Royal Comm. on Press* 1. The full A.P. service is provided to Press Association and a selection of items is distributed to subscribers in this country. 1960 *Acronyms Dict.* (Gale Research Co.) 38 'APB, all points bulletin. (Police call.) 1973 A. BURTON *Police Telecommunications* viii. 255 The necessity occurs... to broadcast to all listening ears and stations a variety of general information broadcasts... These involve... robberies, burglaries... and general informational broadcasts. It is for this reason that the term 'all points bulletin (APB)' was adopted as being more descriptive of the intended use than 'general alarm'. 1979 A. HATLEY *Overload* 17 xviii. 382 A man... drove away in a Volkswagen van half an hour before the place was raided. The police have issued an APB for the van. 1943 W. G. SEARS *Materna Medica* for Nurses xi. 134 Tablets containing aspirin mixed with other drugs are... commonly used, e.g. Compound aspirin tablet... Tab. 'A.P.C., containing aspirin... phenacetin... caffeine. 1970 G. JACKSON *Let* 30 Mar. in *Soledad Brother* (1971) 200 When I ask for medication the M.T.A. gives me an APC or two. 1924 *Circular U.S. Bureau of Standards* No. 154. 2 The American Petroleum Institute, the U.S. Bureau of Mines, and the U.S. Bureau of Standards in December, 1921, agreed to recommend that in the future only the scale based on the modulus 141.5 be used in the petroleum-oil industry, and that it be known as the 'A.P.I. scale. 1958 *Times Rev.* Industry June 59/1 Crude oil prices are usually quoted on a scale... the heavier oil commanding... say 2 cents a barrel for each degree A.P.I. more than the lighter. 1984 *N.Y. Times* 26 Feb. 11. 39/2 Check the product's specific gravity (density and viscosity). It should have an API range between 30 and 40 degrees. 1966 *AFIPS Conf. Proc.* XXIX. 677/2 'APL was conceived at the General Motors Research Laboratories to satisfy the need for convenient data handling techniques in a high-level language. Standing for *associative programming language*, it is designed to be embedded in PL/I as an aid to the user dealing with data structures in which associations are expressed. 1979 *Sci. Amer.* Dec. 90/1 An even more highly developed language in terms of the manipulation of arrays, indeed the most sophisticated of any of the programming languages in this respect, is APL. 1984 *N.Y. Times* 3 Jan. xii. 7/3 He taught himself how to program by sitting at a terminal with a book on APL. 1979 *Money Which?* Sept. 502/2 There are plans to make all lenders quote an annual percentage rate of charge (APR) worked out in a set way. 1983 *Which?* Oct. 450/3 Ask for written details about payment—find out the difference between cash and credit prices, the terms of any loans you're

offered, and what the APR is. 1986 *Oxford Times* 15 Aug. 19/1 (Adv.), Fiat Uno 45... Total credit price £4,432.63. 0% APR. 1969 *Railway Mag.* Jan. 22/2 To overcome the lateral forces on passengers when such a fast train negotiates a curve, the 'A.P.T.' will incorporate a hydraulically-operated vehicle-body tilting mechanism which would be capable of banking the booms of the vehicles by up to 9 degrees to either side. 1971 *New Scientist* 10 June 624/2 The APT is going to be the common or garden inter-city train of the future. 1976 P. R. WHITE *Planning for Public Transport* viii. 173 The first APTs to enter service will probably work the London-Glasgow run. 1984 *Time* 5 Nov. 91/3 Some individuals will develop the full-blown syndrome, others will simply manifest the flukie symptoms of AIDS-related complex (ARC). *Ibid.*, Some ARC patients do get better. 1986 *N.Y. Rev. Bks.* 16 Jan. 43/1 It was also held to be the cause of the milder form of the illness known as AIDS-related complex (ARC) — a group of symptoms including swollen lymph glands in several parts of the body, night sweating, substantial weight loss, and recurrent diarrhoea. 1929 *Amer. Standard Assoc. Year Bk.* 7/2 The 'ASA limits itself strictly to those fields in which engineering methods apply. 1943 *Jrnl. Optical Soc. Amer.* XXXIII. 470/2 For general civilian use it would be more satisfactory to employ a name indicating that this value was related to speed. The term *American Standard Speed Number* was... chosen... The initials ASA may be used in connection with numerical values of Speed Number when determined in accordance with the complete method. 1976 *Early Music* Oct. 451/1 All films have a speed number on the carton — an ASA number — which indicates how sensitive the film is to light. 1955 R. J. SCHWARTZ *Comp. Dict. Abbrev.* 16/3 'ASAP... as soon as possible (U.S. Army). 1977 *Times Educ. Suppl.* 21 Oct. 51/5 (Adv.), Required. A.S.A.P.: Young enthusiastic teacher to take P.E. 1977 *Daily Tel.* 7 Dec. 25 (Adv.), Do it a.s.a.p. He will be happy to talk to you. 1985 *Washington Post* 11 Aug. 64/3 It is selfish and inconsiderate for a guest [at a party] to conclude that he/she will not be entertained adequately and must therefore bail out ASAP. 1978 *Church Times* 14 July 4/4 To exclude the psalms from the 'ASB would be to hasten their [sc. hymns] decline. 1984 *Daily Tel.* 8 Mar. 18/5 There are parishes who have welcomed the freshness of ASB services. 1906 *Army & Navy Gaz.* 2 June 510/2 C.S.M. Yates, 'A.S.C.', Dublin. 1941 W. FORSTER *Trampled Lilies* xviii. 267 She continued to cope throughout the day, marshalling her men like a General of the A.S.C. 1963 F. D. FAWCETT *Cycl. Initials & Abbrev.* 13/2 A.S.C. Assoc. of S.E. Asia. 1967 *Times* 9 Aug. 4/1 Leaders of five Asian countries today called for collective action to prevent outside interference in the region... after signing the joint declaration setting up the new association of South-East Asian Nations ('A.S.E.A.N.'). 1968 *Economist* 23 Mar. 33/1 We must not think that Asean is a common market. 1968 *Ann. Reg.* 1967 9/1 Early in August, Malaysia and Singapore participated together with Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia in the establishment in Bangkok of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). 1977 *Bangladesh Times* 19 Jan. 11/6 The meeting would mark the first anniversary of the ASEAN summit meeting in Bali last year. 1983 *Listener* 2 June 16/1 Hanoi said it was pulling out an unspecified number of these as a gesture of good will towards Vietnam's non-Communist neighbours in ASEAN. 1968 *Christian Science Monitor* 30 Jan. 5/1 Most recently there is the formation of the brand new Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) to act as a legal arm of the antismoking forces. 1971 C. FLETCHER in R. G. Richardson *Proc. Second World Conf. Smoking & Health* (1972) 6 As chairman of ASH I also wish to express our thanks... for financial support to help voluntary agencies to collaborate in action with the effects of legislative measures. 1983 *Listener* 30 June 36/1 After talking to ASH... I use the word 'lethal' advisedly. 1965 W. C. STOKOE et al. *Dict. Amer. Sign Lang.* 293 Some 'signs' for numbers in 'ASL are simply configurations shown as letters are. 1983 A. NEISSER *Other Side of Silence* 1. 16 They... had spent five years trying to teach ASL to Washoe. 1958 *Aero-Space Terms* 4/1 'ASPM, air-to-surface missile. 1926 J. SAVILLE *Let.* (unpubl.) 12 May, Mr. Denville wants you to do 'A.S.M. 1949 K. S. ALLEN *A.B.C. of Stagecraft* for Amateurs iv. 30 The A.S.M. often combines the duties of a stage-hand with that of 'props' or stage-carpenter, or for any useful purpose around the stage. 1982 S. BRETT *Murder Unprompted* xviii. 156 He had a word with the A.S.M. before the show. 1967 in Hughes & Pollins *Trade Unions in Gt. Brit.* (1973) xliii. 200 A new body — the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs — would be established. The Executive Council of the 'ASTMS would consist of six members each from the Executives of the present unions. 1979 JENKINS & SHERMAN *White-Collar Unionism* ii. 31 ASTMS... has over 400,000 members and is a general union. 1944 *U.S. War Dept. Techn. Man.* TM 11-407364 'A.S.V. the device carried in Coastal Command aircraft which directed them to the surfaced U-boat. 1921 *Harper's Mag.* Oct. 632/2 Organized in 1885 for long-lines construction, the 'A. T. & T.' had grown steadily more powerful. 1965 J. A. MICHENER *Source* (1966) 884 Until the day when A.T. and T. drops to forty and you have an economic crisis. 1976 *Washington Post* 19 Apr. A6/2 AT&T... owns most intercity long distance lines. 1949 *Jrnl. R. Aeronaut. Soc.* LIII. 959/2 The inefficiency of 'A.T.C. (Air Traffic Control) procedures and patterns. 1934 *Railway Mag.* Apr. 290 (caption) Diagram of Signum 'A.T.C. system. 1958 *Engineering* 14 Mar. 336/1 Before the Second World War... in general, the Great Western Railway had A.T.C. and the other British railways did not. 1976 *Business Week* 28 June 45 On the basis of the trial the average cost of a transaction with 60 'ATMs would be \$1.25 vs. 40 cents using a live teller. 1979 *God Housekeeping* Apr. 215/1 To use an ATM you need a plastic bank card. a 1912 *Spalding & Hodge's Paper Terminal* ii. 1 Animal Tub-sized, or 'A.T.S.', is a term employed to denote the more costly method of passing the manufactured sheet through a bath or 'tub' of animal size. 1970 *Time* 23 Nov. 41 Marauders on 'ATVs or snowmobiles occasionally strip hunters' shacks or loot vacation homes. 1987 *Washington Post* 21 Apr. A3/1 The rockhounds, the ranchers... the All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) enthusiasts, all are resolved to... try to stop the idea. 1957 *Daily Mail* 4 Sept. 12/8 'ATV announce The £4,000 Question on September 14. 1927 H. N. RUSSELL et al. *Astron. I. App. p.1.* astronomical unit ('A.U.') = 1.4945 x 10⁸ km. 1975 KAYE & R. C. Tables *Physical & Chem. Constants* (ed. 14) i. 129 Primary constants. Measure of 1

AU... 1.49600 x 10¹¹m. 1984 *Aviation Week & Space Technol.* 2 Jan. 48/3 Halley will be... 0.97 AU from Earth at the time of the Giotto encounter. 1971 *Times* 9 Nov. 19/7 The 1.4 m member 'AUEW—the most important craft union in the country. 1986 *Financial Times* 13 Aug. 10/3 In the days of the joint GEC-Hitachi there were a number of unions recognised at the plant—the EETPU (716 members), AUEW (223), ASTMS (87), [etc.]. 1965 *New Statesman* 6 Aug. 174/1 His colleagues would happily settle for the single-member-constituency 'AV system. 1983 *Financial Times* 2 Nov. 15 It is most unlikely in Australia, where the alternative vote (AV) system applies in the most important elections. 1868 B. F. WESTCOTT *Gen. View Hist. Eng. Bible* iii. 334 In the later (Irish) editions of the 'Rhemes and Doway' Bible and New Testament there are considerable alterations, and the text is far nearer to that in the 'A.V. 1982 G. HAMMOND *Making of Eng. Bible* 237 The same phrase occurs twice in Genesis... Tyndale renders both as 'speak kindly'. The AV follows his rendering. 1953 *N.Y. Times* 29 Mar. 4vi. 9/3 The structure of terror in Hungary consists of many overlapping... agencies... it is pyramidal with the *Allam Védelmi Hatosag* (State Security Authority, or secret police), at the apex. 'A.V.H., which has 50,000 men and women in its force, is... the party's harsh punitive arm. 1956 *New Statesman* 22 Dec. 818/1 The... lynching of many persons, A.V.H. men and Party members in particular. 1929 T. E. LAWRENCE *Let.* 22 Jan. (1938) v. 640, I could do nothing, with the 'A.V.M., of what I'd hoped. 1956 *Times* 29 Nov. 10/5 The Kadar Government is also concerned... at the treatment being meted out by the population to former members of the 'A.V.O. (secret police). 1921 *Outing* (U.S.) June 137/1, I was surprised to find one day that unless I left the following morning to rejoin my regiment I would be an 'a-w-o-l'. 1929 *Amer. Speech* IV. 33 Absence without leave is a military offence designated by the abbreviation AWOL, usually written without periods and sometimes with small letters, in the pronunciation of which each letter is pronounced. 1949 *Wodehouse Mating Season* x. 98 Nothing sticks the gaff into your chataleine more than a guest being constantly a.w.o.l. 1957 B. & C. EVANS *Dict. Contemp. Amer. Usage* 9/2 AWOL... in World War I... was pronounced as four letters; in World War II, it was pronounced as a word. 1911 C. E. W. BEAN 'Dreadnought' of *Darling* xxxviii. 337 The situation, however, was supposed to be solved when the 'A.W.U... issued instructions that the train must not be interfered with. 1983 *Financial Times* 25 Nov. 6/1 Mr. Frank Mitchell, federal secretary of the 'Australian Workers' Union (AWU), issued an immediate rebuff to Mr. Dolan, saying work would proceed. 1985 *Business Week* 2 Dec. 86/2 Technically known as azidothymidine (AZT), the drug has been tested on only 20 patients at the National Cancer Institute and Duke University. 1987 *Daily Tel.* 19 Jan. 4/8 Researchers said patients tested with AZT had benefited in many ways, including improved neurological functions and reduced instances of opportunistic infections. 1987 *Sci. Amer.* Apr. 75/1 The prospect of long-term use has... heightened concerns about AZT's considerable toxicity to bone-marrow cells, the precursors of blood cells.

IV. Phrases. 1. A per se: the letter A when standing by itself, especially when making a word.

The word 'a' was formerly spelt 'a-per-se, a', that is, 'a by itself makes the word a', whence also the letter itself was sometimes called A-per-se-a. So also I per se, O per se, & per-se (and per-se, an-per-se, amper-se).

Hence b per se, (also formerly Aperse, Apersey, A per C) the first, chief, most excellent, most distinguished, or unique person or thing; one who is *facile princeps*, or in modern phrase, A 1. 1475 HENRYSON *Test. of Cresside* 78 (Speght's Chaucer) The flour and A per se of Troie and Grece. a 1500 *MS. Cantab.* ff. ii. 38 f. 51 Thow schalt be an apersey, my sone. In myllys ij, or thre. 1501 DUNBAR *Poems*, Suppl. (1865) 277 London, thow arte of townes A per se. 1567 DRANT *Horace Epist.* ii. 1 If they make them A per se as that none are like to them. 1578 *Gude and Godlie Ballades* 128 Christ Jesus is ane A per C. And peirless Princes of all mercy. 1602 MIDDLETON *Let.* iii. iii Who that is the a-per-se of all, the very cream of all.

2. A 1. Applied in Lloyd's Register to ships in first-class condition, as to hull and stores alike. 'The character A denotes New ships, or Ships Renewed or Restored. The Stores of Vessels are designated by the figures 1 and 2; 1 signifying that the Vessel is well and sufficiently found.'

—Key to the Register. Added to the names of ships, as 'the fast-sailing ship "Sea-breeze", A 1 at Lloyd's', or used attributively, 'the splendid A 1 clipper-built ship "Miranda".'

Hence, fig. (familiar and savouring of commercial phraseology), A 1, or in U.S. A No. 1, is used adjectively for 'prime, first-class'.

1837 DICKENS *Pickwick* 341 (1847) 'He must be a first-rater,' said Sam. 'A 1,' replied Mr. Roker. 1851 Mrs. Stowe *Dred* 1. 313 An A number one cook, and no mistake. 1861 COL. G. WOLSELEY (Reynolds's *News*, Nov. 24) The Chinese police are certainly A 1 at such work.

†a, a.¹ (definite numeral). Obs. or dial. [OE. *án*, one, of which the *n* began to disappear before a cons. about 1150. In the definite numeral sense, *án* and *a*, following the ordinary course of OE. long *a*, became in the south bef. 1300, on (*oon*, *one*), o (*oo*); and eventually o became obs., leaving *one* as the form in all positions; while *an* and *a*, pronounced lightly and indistinctly, became the 'indefinite article.' See next word. But in the north *an* (or *ane*) and *a* were written in both senses, the stress or emphasis alone distinguishing the numeral from the article.]

Apocopate form of *an*, *ane*, used only before a consonant. See *AN(E, O a., and ONE*.

c1200 Trin. Coll. Hom. 39 Ure drihten drof fele deules togedere ut of a man, þe was of his wit. *c1300 A. Ali.* 5055 An eithe he had in his wys, And a foot, and no moo lways. *c1350 HAMPOLE Prose Tr.* 32 Some ere of a tre and some er of anoper. *1483 CAXTON, Geoffroi de la Tour, l. iii.* b, They satte at dyner in a hall and the queene in another.

A in the various forms *a, ae, eae, yea, yā*, is still the regular form of the numeral one used adjectively, in the northern dialects, the absolute form being *an, aue, ean, yen, yān*, etc.

a (toneless *æ*; emph. *ei*), *a*² ('indefinite article'). Before a vowel-sound *an* (2n, emph. *æn*). [A weakening of OE. *ān*, 'one', already by 1150 reduced before a cons. to *a*. About the same time the numeral began to be used in a weakened sense (usually unexpressed in OE. as *he was god man*, 'he was a good man'; cf. Chron. 1137 'he was god munec & god man', and 1140 'he was an yuel man'); becoming in this sense proclitic and toneless, *ān, ā*, while as a numeral it remained long, *ān, ā*, and passed regularly during the next cent. into *on, o*; see the prec. word. Though *an* began to sink to *a* in midl. dial. by 1150, it often remained bef. a cons. to 1300; bef. sounded *h*, *an* was retained after 1600, and somet. after 1700, as *an house*, *an heifer*, *an hermitage*. The present rule is to use *an* bef. a vowel-sound (incl. *h* mute, as *an hour*); a bef. a consonant-sound (including *h* sounded, and *eu-, u-* with sound of *yū-*, as *a host*, *a one*, *a eunuch*, *a unit*). But in unaccented syllables, many, perhaps most, writers still retain *an* bef. sounded *h*, some even bef. *eu, u*, as *an historian*, *an euphonic vowel*, *an united appeal*, though this is all but obsolete in speech, and in writing *a* becomes increasingly common in this position. *A, an* has been indeclinable in midl. and north. dial. since 1150, but vestiges of the OE. declension (as nom. f. *ane*, gen. m. *anes*, gen. & dat. f. *are*, acc. m. *anne*) remained much later in southern. In north. *an* was frequently written *ane* (with *e* mute), the use of *a* and *an(e)* being as elsewhere; but about 1475 Scottish writers began to use *ane* in all positions, a practice which prevailed till the disuse of literary Scotch after 1600. Quotations illustrating the history of the forms:—

c1131 O.E. Chron. (Laud. MS.) anno 1125 Se man þe hafde an pund he ne mihte cysten ænne peni at anne market. *c1150 Ibid.* anno 1137, Wel þu myhtes faren all a dæis fare, sculdest þu neure finden man in tūne sittende. *c1175 Lamb. Hom.* 221 God þa geworhte ænne man of lāme. *a1200 Trin. Coll. Hom.* 47 3if þi hwa is rīche wīman, a lomb. 1205 LAYAMON I. 3 A [masc.] Frenchis clerc, Wace was ihoten, þa luuede he a [fem.] maide, þeo was Lauine mawe. 1483 CAXTON Geoffroi de la Tour E. 4 A baronesse, ryght a hyghe and noble lady of ignaygne. 1532 MORE Conf. Tyndale Wks. 1557 447/2 We haue two articles in english, a & the: a or an (for bothe is one article, the tone before a consonant the tother before a vowel) is comen to euery thinge almost. 1611 BIBLE Acts vii. 47 But Solomon built him an house [1881 Revised a eunuch]. *Ibid.* vii. 27 An eunuch of great authority [Revised a eunuch]. 1732 POPE Essay Man iv. 78 Nor in an hermitage set Dr. Clarke. 1763 JOHNSON Ascham Wks. 1816 XII. 306 An yearly pension. 1823 LINGARD Hist. Eng. VI. 219 An eulogium on his talents. 1850 MRS. JAMESON Sec. & Leg. Art. 206 A eulogium of Mary Magdalene. 1857 LEVER Tom Burke xxxix. 387 A eulogium on their conduct. 1843 Penny Cyc. XXVI. 212 In November [1835] the great seal was put to a charter creating a University of London. 1847 TENNYSON Princess i. 149 All wild to found an University For maidens.

About the 15th cent. *a* or *an* was commonly written in comb. with the following sb. as *aman*, *anoke*, *anele*. When they were separated, much uncertainty prevailed as to the division; thus we find *a nend*, *a noke*, *a nadder*, *an adder*, *an est*. In some words a mistaken division has passed into usage: see ADDER, NEWT.

c1420 Chron. Vilod. 515 And Ry3t with þat worde he made a nend.]

A is strictly adjective and can only be used with a substantive following. Meanings:—

1. One, some, any: the oneness, or indefiniteness, being implied rather than asserted. It is especially used in first introducing an object to notice, which object, after being introduced by *a*, is kept in view by *the*; as 'I plucked a flower; this is the flower.' Used before a noun singular, and its attributes.

a. Ordinarily before the name of an individual object or notion, or of a substance, quality or state individualized, and before a collective noun, as *a tree*, *a wish*, *an ice*, *a beauty*, *a new ink*, *a greater strength*, *a second youth*, *a legion*, *a hundred*, *a pair*.

c1175 Lamb. Hom. 121 Vre drihten wes illed to slepe al swa me dede a secp. 1297 R. GLOUC. 78 He hadde a gret ost in a lute stonde. 1847 LONGF. Ev. i. 1. 59 A celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty. *Mod.* An ink that will retain its fluidity; a permanent black. Is it a red wheat? What kind of

a wine is this? To walk out in a pouring rain. There was a something—of that we may be sure. Oh, a mere nothing.

b. Also before proper names, used connotatively, with reference to the qualities of the individual; or figuratively as the type of a class.

1596 SHAKS. Merch. Ven. iv. i. 223 A Daniel come to judgement, yea a Daniel! 1665-9 BOYLE Occ. Refl. iv. xii. 245 D. A. Art. of Conterse 53. Cannot ye praise a philosopher unless ye say he is an Aristotle. *c1830 A Fable (in 4th Irish Schk.)* 50 He whom his party deems a hero. His foes a Judas or a Nero. 1855 TENNYSON Maud i. iv. 46 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?

c. *A* follows the adj. in many *a*, such *a*, what *a*! and the obs. or dial. *each a*, which *a*; it follows any adj. preceded by *how*, *so*, *as*, *too*, as *how large a sum*; and in earlier Eng. the genit. phrases *what manner*, *no manner*, *whathins*, *nakins*, *what sort*, etc., as *what manner a man* = *cujusmodi homo*? (See these words.)

In none of these was the *a* found in Old English. *Many a* is not to be confused with the approximative *a many* (see 2). *Such a* was earlier (2-3) *a such*. *Each a* and *which a* survive in the north, as *ilk a*, *whilk a*. *What manner a*, and its likes soon became corrupted to *what manner of*. See *A prep.*² = *of*.

1593 SHAKS. 3 Hen. VI. v. iv. 12 Ah, what a shame! ah, what a fault were this! 1611 Wint. T. v. iii. 140 And haue (in vaine) said many A prayer vpon her graue. 1611 BIBLE Ruth iv. 1. Ho, such a one! [Later reprints, such an one.] —James iii. 5 Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth [1881 Revised Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire.] *Mod.* Too high a price for so small an advantage. As fine a child as you will see.

d. With nouns of multitude, after which the gen. sign. or prep. *of*, has been omitted, *a* comes apparently before pl. nouns. Compare *a score of men*, *a dozen (of) men*, *hundreds of men*, *a hundred men*, *a thousand miles*; and the obs. *a certain of men* or *a certain men*, now *certain men*. (See under these words.)

c1225 Sawles Warde 251 þah ich hefde a pūent tungen of stele. 1543 L.D. BERNERS Froissart i. lxxx. 101 A certeyne of varlettes and boyes, who ran away. *Ibid.* xiv. 13 A certeyne noble knightis. she kept. 1600 SHAKS. A. Y. L. i. i. 2 It was upon this fashion bequeathed me by will, but poore a thousand crownes. 1653 HOLCROFT Procopius i. 32 Belisarius commanded Bessas with a 1000. selected men to charge them. 1860 TYNDALL Glaciers i. §11. 290 He had to retreat more than a dozen times.

2. *A* with numeral adjectives removes their definiteness, or expresses an approximate estimate: *some*, *a matter of*, *about*; as *a sixty fathom*, *a six years*, *a two hundred spears*; so also *a many men*, *a few retainers*, the latter already in OE. *āne feawa* (āne plural = *some*). An exceedingly common use of *a* in 14-16th c. Now obs. except in *a few*, *a great many*, *a good many* (*a many*, *a good few*, *a small few*, dialectal). See also under these words.

c1000 Gosp. Nicod. (1698) 5 Ane feawa words. 1297 R. GLOUC. 18 þe kyng with a fewe men hymself fleg. 1366 MAUNDEV. 37 That See is wel a 6 myle of largenesse in bredth. *c1286 CHAUCER Snygges T.* 275 And up they risen, a ten other a twelve. 1523 L.D. BERNERS Froissart i. lxxxvii. 50 A ii hundred spears. *Ibid.* xxxviii. 51. A xx. M. Almaynes. 1531 TURNER Herbal ii. 7 Steppe them a five or six dayes in vineger. 1595 DRAKE Voyage (Hakl. Soc.) 5 He had a three hundred men more in his squadron. 1600 SHAKS. A. Y. L. i. i. 121 And a many merry men with him. 1611 BIBLE Luke ix. 28 An eight days after these sayings. 1684 BUNYAN Pilg. Prog. 11 Introd. Have also overcome a many evils. 1833 TENNYSON Miller's Dau. 21 They have not shed a many tears. *c1860 H. BONAR Hymn* A few more struggles here, A few more partings o'er, A few more toils, a few more tears, And we shall weep no more. *Mod.* A great many acquaintances, a good many well-wishers, a few tried friends.

3. In a more definite sense: One, a certain, a particular; the same. Now only used in a few phrases like *once on a day*; *two at a time*; *two, three, all of a sort*, *a size*, *a price*, *an age*.

c1220 St. Katherine (Abb. Cl.) i. Constantin & Maxence weren on a time. *I* hehest in Rome. 1523 L.D. BERNERS Froissart i. cx. 134 In his dayes, there was at a tyme, a great tournayng before Cambray. 1551 ROBINSON More's Utopia 45 The killing of a man or the taking of his money... were both a matter. 1553-87 FOXE A. & M. 695/1 (1596) Whether the christians yeld to them, or yeld not, all is a matter. 1601 SHAKS. All's Well i. iii. 244 He and his Phisitians Are of a minde. 1602 —Haml. v. ii. 277 These Foyles haue all a length. 1694 BR. TENISON in Evelyn Mem. (1857) III. 34 Six little pieces of coin (all of a sort) found in an urn by a ploughman. 1791 SWIFT Wks. (1755) II. i. 25 The power of these princes... was much of a size with that of the kings in Sparta. *Mod. Prob.* Fowls of a feather flock together.

4. 'Denoting the proportion of one thing to another.' J.; chiefly of rate or price: *in each*, *to or for each*; as *a hundred a year*, *twenty pounds a man*, *thirty shillings a head*, *sixpence an ounce*, *a penny a line*. This was originally the preposition *a*, OE. *an*; *on*, defining time, as in *twice a day*; whence by slight extension, *a penny a day* (*par jour*, *per diem*). Then, being formally identified with the indef. art., *a*, *an* was extended analogically from time, to space,

measure, weight, number, as *a penny a mile*, *sixpence a pound* (*la livre*), *tenpence a hundred*, *so much a head*. See *A prep.*¹ 8b.

c1000 Agr. Gosp. Luke xvii. 4 Scofen sidum on dæg. *a1200 Trin. Coll. Hom.* 67 Enes o dai. *Ibid.* 100 Anes a dai. 1382 WYCLIF Matt. xx. 2 A peny for the day. 1526 TINDALE 1b. A peny a daye. 1584 W. (ELDERTON) A new Yorkshire song [York, York, for my Monie, etc.] *Yorksh. Anth.* (1851) 2 And they shot for twentie pounden a bowe. 1725 De Foe Voyage round the World (1849) 50 Iia men to whom I gave four pieces of eight a man. 1794 SOUTHEY Botany Bay Ecl. 3 Wks. II. 82 To be popt at like pigeons for sixpence a day. 1849 MACAULAY Hist. Eng. I. 305 Three hundred and eighty thousand pounds a year.

a, also *a'* (α), *a'* [from ALL; *l* lost as in *alms*, *talk*. *A* occurs rarely and doubtfully in ME. north. or n. midl.; *a'* is the current spelling in modern literary Scotch.] = ALL.

1280 Havelok 610 He sal hauen in his hand A denemark and england. 1795 BURNS III. 234 For a' that, an' a' that, His ribbond, star, an' a' that, The man o' independent mind He looks an' laughs at a' that.

† *a* (α), *pron.* Obs. or dial. [for *ha* = HE, HEO, HI, *he*, *she*, (it), *they*, when stressless; chiefly in southern and western writers. *A* for *he* (*ha* in the *Ayenbit*) is common from 3 to 5; in the dramatists of 6, 7, it is frequent in representations of familiar speech. *A* for *ha*, *heo*, = *she*, *they*, is rarer and somewhat doubtful in Layamon, but common in Trevisa; not found after 1450. Owing to the persistence of grammatical gender in the south, Trevisa also uses *a* = *he* of inanimate objects, and so apparently = *it*, which takes its place when rationality and sex are substituted for gender in the concord of the pronouns. The s.w. dialects still apply *he* to inanimate objects. See further under *He*.]

1. *He*. 1250 LAYAMON (later text) I. 59 þa a lond a verde sechinge ware he mihte wonie [1205 he ferde sechinde]. *c1315 SHOREHAM Poems* 3 Ac a deythe and he not [i.e. wots not] wanne. 1387 TREvisa Higden (Norm. Inv. in Morris Specim. 341) Kyng Edward hadde byhote duc William þat a scholde be kyng after hym if he dyede wyoute chylidren. *c1440 Arthur* 370 He went ouer to þe hulle syde, And þere a fonge a woman made byde. 1553 SIR T. GRESHAM (in Froude Hist. Eng. V. xxix. 472a) For that the retailer doth sell. *a* doth not only take away the living of the Merchant. 1584 PIERRE Arraign. Paris II. i. 22 Tut, Mars hath horns to butt withal, although no bull 'a shows. 'A never needs to mask in nets, 'a fears no jealous foes. 1604 SHAKS. Hamlet. III. iii. 74 Now might I do it, but now is a praying. And now I'll do it, and so goes to heauen. 1610 Histrimastix i. 157 A speaks to you players: I am the poet.

2. *She*. 1205 LAYAMON III. 127 Ne beo ich nauere blide, þa wile a [the queen] beoð alieue. *c1220 St. Katherine* (Abb. Cl.) 136 þus hwil a wiste hire & pohte ai to witen hire meiden in meidenhad. 1387 TREvisa MS. Cott. Vesp. D. vii. 29b. He ran home to uore & prayede his wyf þat hwe wolde helpe for to saue hym. *a* bote a duc þe contrary. 3. *It* (for *he*). 1387 TREvisa (in Morris Specim. 334) Yn þis ylond growep a ston þat hatte gaggates; þef me axep hys feyrnesse — a ys blak as gemmes bup. *a* brennep yn water & quencheþ in oyle. *a* 3if a ys yfrosted & yhat, a holdeþ what hym neysþe; þef me axep hys goodnes, hys heeleþ þe dropes & hys be ydrongke, etc. *c1500 Spirit. Rem.* (in Nugæ Poeticæ 67) Cordys contricio ys the too [i.e. second] *A* washyth the woundes as doth a wellie.

4. *They*. 1205 LAYAMON I. 149 Quer se a icomen; haene sone a nomen [1250 Quer see his comen, and haueþ his nomen]. 1387 TREvisa Higden (Descr. Brit. in Morris Specim. 340) þe kinges of Engeland woupe alwey fer fram þat contray, for a þup more yturnd to þe souþ contray; & þef a þop to þe norþ contray, a þop wip gret helþ & strengthe.

† *A* still retains all these meanings, and especially that of *he*, in southern and western dialects, where it appears as (α, ær(ɪ)). See Elworthy Gramm. of West Somerset Dial. 33, and Halliwell.

1853 AKERMAN Wiltshire Tales 169 One night a was coming whoome vrom market, and vell off's hos into the rood, a was zo drunk. 1864 TENNYSON Northern Farmer But Parson a comes an' a goes, an' a says it eisy an' free. *Ibid.* Doctors, they knows nowt, for a says what's nawways true: Naw soort o' koidnd o' use to say the things that a do.

In mod. north. dialects *a*, also *aa*, *ah*, *aw* (α, æ) = *I*, being the first half of the diphthong (ai, æi). 1864 T. CLARKS Yonny Shippard (Westm. dial.) Let ma git thear, an' a's mebbie preeave a bit aalther ner tha tak ma ta be.

a, v. For *ha, ha'*, a worn-down form of HAVE (cf. French *a* from *habet*) when unaccented or obscure in compound verbal forms, or where the independent meaning is sunk in a phrase, as *a might a been*, *would a said*, *should a thought*, *a done!* = have done, *a mind!* = have a mind. Exceedingly frequent in 13-17th c.; in later times chiefly in representations of colloquial or familiar speech, in which it is still often said, though infrequently written, except in specimens of local dialects, where also, under