THE NEW PENGUIN
ENGLISH
DICTIONARY

The New Penguin English Dictionary

This dictionary is based on the
Longman New Universal Dictionary (Longman Concise English Dictionary)
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How to use this Dictionary

1 Order of entries

1.1 Main entries

Alphabetical order, letter by letter, applies to all main entries, whether they are single words, hyphenated words, or compounds consisting of two or more words. Thus **question mark** comes between **questionable** and **question-master**.

Many words that share the same spelling have a different pronunciation, history, or grammatical function. Such words are shown separately in this dictionary, with small numbers in front to distinguish them; see, for example, the entries at **lead**. These words are listed in historical order, according to when they first appeared in English.

1.2 Undefined words

Words whose meaning can easily be guessed, because they consist of a base form plus an added ending, are not given definitions. These words (run-ons) are shown at the end of the definition for their base form, and after the etymology, if there is one:

charitable ... *adj* ... **charitableness** *n*, **charitably** *adv*

This means that the meaning of **charitableness** can be deduced from the meaning of **charitable** plus the meaning of the ending **-ness**, which can be found at its own place in the dictionary. Sometimes the undefined entry has the same form as its base, but a different part of speech:

²**chink** *n* a short sharp sound – **chink** *vb*

This means that the verb **chink** is obviously related to the noun **chink** – 'to make, or cause to make, a short sharp sound'.

Words whose meaning can be guessed because they consist of a base form plus something added at the beginning are shown at their own place in the dictionary, but with no definition; see, for instance, **unannounced** and **unchecked**.

Some words formed with beginnings and endings have a specific meaning, but also a very general one that can be guessed. For these words, the general meaning is shown in the form of an etymology: see 12.7.

1.3 Idiomatic phrases

An idiom is a fixed phrase whose meaning cannot be guessed from the meanings of the individual words from which it is made up. Idioms are shown at the end of an entry, after the etymology and any derived undefined words:

¹**call** *vi* ... – **call a spade a spade** to speak frankly and usu bluntly

Compound verbs that end in a preposition, such as **put up with**, are treated as idioms; but those that end in an adverb, such as **give away**, are main entries.

Idioms are entered at the first meaningful word they contain. Hence **live it up** is entered at **live**, **on the ball** appears at **ball**, and **in spite of** is shown at **spite**. When

an idiom has more than one accepted form, it is entered at the first invariable meaningful word it contains. The alternative form is shown after an oblique (/):

¹**seed** ... *n* ... – **go/run to seed** ...

2 Alternative versions of words

Many words come in pairs, or even trios, that differ only in spelling (eg **judgment**, **judgement**), or in their ending (eg **excellence**, **excellency**) or even in the presence or absence of a complete word in a compound (eg **silk screen**, **silk-screen printing**). In this dictionary, common variant forms of a word are shown immediately after the main entry. When the variant is preceded by a comma, it is about as common as the main entry in current standard usage; when preceded by *also*, it is rather less common.

Variant spellings of the **-ize/-ise** type are shown in abbreviated form:

computer·ize, -ise *vt*

This means that **computerize** can also be spelt **computerise**.

Variant forms that are entirely or partially restricted to British or American English are labelled *Br* or *NAm*:

jail, *Br also* **gaol** ... *n* ...
gaol ... *vb or n*. *chiefly Br* (to) jail

This means that the spelling **jail** is used everywhere in the English-speaking world, but British English also uses **gaol** (See 8.2.).

If the variable part of a pair of words is shown as a main entry in its own right, then this variation is *not* shown in the entry for the word formed from it. Hence **hemorrhage**, the American variant spelling of **haemorrhage**, is not shown because **hemo-** is already entered as the American variant of **haemo-**.

3 Parts of speech

These are the various word classes to which the entries in this dictionary belong:

adj	adjective:	**energetic, durable**
adv	adverb:	**very, happily**
comb form	combining form:	**Anglo-, mal-**
conj	conjunction:	**but, insofar as**
interj	interjection:	**hey, bravo**
n	noun:	**dynamite, bird of paradise**
prefix		**pre-, trans-**
prep	preposition:	**for, according to**
pron	pronoun:	**herself, ours**
suffix		**-ful, -ness**
trademark		**Hoover, Valium**
vb	verb (both transitive and intransitive):	**agglomerate, americanize**

vb impersonal	impersonal verb: **methinks**
verbal auxiliary	**can, must**
vi	intransitive verb: **arise, arrive**
vt	transitive verb: **indicate, thank**

Sometimes two parts of speech are combined:

yelp ... *vi or n* (to utter) a sharp quick shrill cry

4 Inflections

This dictionary shows inflections only if they are irregular, or may cause difficulty. They are written out in full, unless they involve merely the doubling of a consonant or the change of -c to -ck-:

¹**swat** ... , *vt* -tt-
picnic ... *vi* -ck-

This means that the present participle and past of swat are **swatting** and **swatted**, and those of **picnic** are pic**nicking** and **picnicked**.

4.1 Nouns

Regular plurals of nouns (eg **cats, matches, spies**) are not shown. All other plurals (eg **louse, lice; sheep, sheep**) are given: when plurals are irregular, when alternative plurals are possible, when a plural may have an alternative pronunciation, and when plurals are regular but might have been expected to be irregular.

Nouns that are always plurals are shown as follows:

environs ... *n pl* ...

Sometimes an individual sense of a noun is exclusively plural:

¹**victual** ... *n* ... 2 *pl* supplies of food; provisions

Not all plural nouns always take a plural verb. This is shown as follows:

genetics *n pl but sing in constr* ...
politics *n pl but sing or pl in constr* ...

This means that one says 'Genetics is ...' but one says either 'Politics is ...' or 'Politics are ...'
   Some nouns have no recognizable plural form, but nevertheless can take a plural verb:

police *n* ... 2**a** ... **b** *pl in constr* policemen
crew *n sing or pl in constr* ...

This means that one says 'Several police are ...' but one says either 'The crew is ...' or '... are ...'
   Some nouns are used with the same meaning in the plural. They are shown like this:

latitude ... *n* ... a region as marked by its latitude – often *pl* with *sing*. meaning

This means that one can say 'It's very hot at this latitude' or '... at these latitudes.'

4.2 Verbs

Regular verb forms (eg **halted, cadged, carrying**) are not shown. All other verb inflections (eg **ring, rang, rung**) are shown, including those for verbs ending in a vowel other than -*e*, for verbs which keep a final -*e* before inflections, and for verbs having alternative inflections.
   Inflections are shown in the following order:

present: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person singular; plural; **present** subjunctive; present participle; past: 1st, 2nd,

and 3rd person singular; plural; past subjunctive; past participle.

Only the irregular inflections are shown. Certain forms (eg the entire past tense, or the past tense and the past participle) are combined if they are identical. Thus in

run ... *vb* -**nn**-; **ran; run**

the present participle is running, the entire past tense is **ran**, and the past participle is **run**.

4.3 Adjectives and adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs whose comparative and superlative are formed with **more** and **most**, or by adding -(e)r and -(e)st (eg **nicer, fastest, happier**), are not shown.
   All other inflections (eg **good** ... **better** ... **best**) are shown, including alternatives (eg **shy** ... **shier, shyer; shiest, shyest**) and inflections that involve a change of pronunciation.

4.4 Pronouns

Inflections of pronouns are entered at their alphabetical place and cross-referred to their main form:

²**her** *pron, objective case of* SHE

5 Capitalization

Some words, or meanings of words, can be used with or without a capital letter and this is shown by the notes *often cap* and *often not cap*. In the case of compound words, the note specifies which parts are capitalized:

pop art *n, often cap* P&A ...

6 Definitions

Sometimes, instead of giving a definition, the dictionary describes how a word is used:

²**after** *prep* ... 3 – used to indicate the goal or purpose of an action <*go ~ gold*>

Trademarked terms too are treated in this way:

Hoover *trademark* – used for a vacuum cleaner

Most words, however, are given ordinary dictionary definitions, with one or more meanings.

6.1 The numbering of meanings

The main meanings of a word are numbered: 1, 2, 3. etc where there is more than one sense. Subdivisions of senses are distinguished by lower-case letters, and further subdivisions by bracketed numbers.

6.2 Order of senses

Those meanings that would be understood anywhere in the English-speaking world are shown first, in their historical order: the older senses before the newer. After these come the meanings whose usage is restricted in some way (eg because they are used in only one area, or have gone out of current use).

6.3 Brackets

Round brackets are used in four main ways in definitions in this dictionary:
They enclose the object of a verb:

²**contract** *vt* ... 2**a** to catch (an illness)

They give extra information:

¹**nap** *n* a hairy or downy surface (eg on a woven fabric)

They separate the parts of a combined definition that relate to different parts of speech:

cheep ... *vi or n* (*to utter*) *a faint shrill sound characteristic of a young bird*

They enclose optional wording:

afloat ... *adj or adv* In borne (as if) on the water or air

This indicates that **afloat** means both 'borne on the water or air' and 'borne as if on the water or air'.

7 Examples

Definitions, particularly of words with several different senses, may be followed by a phrase or sentence illustrating a typical use of the word in context. Many of these are actual quotations from a written, spoken, source; in such cases the author or source is named.

Examples are printed in italics between angle brackets (< >). Occasionally the word being illustrated is written out in full, but usually it is represented by a swing dash (~). When an inflected form of the main entry is being illustrated, it is usually shown by a swung dash followed by the inflection:

¹**dare** ... *vt* to confront boldly; defy <~d *the anger of her family*>

The complete example is therefore 'dared the anger of her family'.

8 Usage

There is more to a complete description of a word than a definition of its meaning; many words have peculiarities of usage that a dictionary must take account of. They may be restricted to a particular geographical area; they may be colloquial or slang, or felt to be 'incorrect'; they may have fallen out of use; and there may be limitations on the sort of context they can be used in.

This dictionary shows such restrictions in two different ways. Words, or meanings, that are limited to a particular period or area are identified by an italic label. When an italic label comes between the main entry and the first definition it refers to all meanings of the word; otherwise, it applies to all subsenses of the number or letter it follows.

All other information on usage is given in a note at the end of a definition. When such a note applies to all or several meanings of a word, it follows the last definition, and is introduced by the word *USE*.

8.1 Words that are no longer in current use

The label *obs* for 'obsolete' means there is no evidence of use for a word or meaning since 1755 (the date of publication of Samuel Johnson's Dictionary).

The label *archaic* means that a word or meaning once in common use is found today only in special contexts, such as poetry or historical fiction. Comparatively modern terms which have become old-fashioned are treated in a note:

matron ... *n* ... 3 a woman in charge of the nursing in a hospital – not now used technically

cripes ... *interj, Br* ~ used to express surprise; no longer in vogue

P.R.D.—1*

8.2 Words that are not used throughout the English-speaking world

A word or sense limited in use to one or more of the countries of the English-speaking world is labelled accordingly:

³**crook** *adj, Austr & NZ* 1 ill, sick ...

The label *Br* indicates that a word or meaning is used in Britain and also usually in the Commonwealth countries of Australasia. The label *NAm* indicates the use of a word or meaning in both the USA and Canada.

The label *dial* for 'dialect' indicates that a word or meaning belongs to the common local speech of several different places.

8.3 Words that suggest a particular style, attitude, or level of formality

Most English words can be generally used in both speech and writing, but some would be traditionally described as 'colloquial' or 'slang', and others, perhaps, as 'formal'.

Words of this sort are identified by notes at the end of definitions. It is always hard to apply such descriptions consistently, since the status of these words is constantly shifting with the passage of time, and they are also frequently used in an incongruous setting for stylistic effect.

The note '– infml' is used for words or senses that are characteristic of conversational speech and casual writing (eg between friends and contemporaries) rather than of official or 'serious' speech or writing.

The note '– slang' is used for words or meanings usually found in contexts of extreme informality. Such words may be, or may have been until recently, used by a particular social group such as criminals or drug users. They often refer to topics that are thought of as risqué or 'low'.

The note '– fml', for 'formal', is used for words or meanings characteristic of written rather than spoken English, and particularly of official or academic writings.

Other notes describe the attitude or tone of the user of a word:

egghead ... *n* an intellectual, highbrow – derog or humor

pass away *vi* ... 2 to die – euph

8.4 Words that are not 'correct'

It is not the role of a responsible modern dictionary to dictate usage; it can only make statements, based on reference to a large stock of spoken and written data, as to how a word is being used by the community at large. Where appropriate, it can also warn the dictionary user that a use of a word is likely to arouse controversy or disapproval.

The note '– nonstandard' is used for words or meanings that are quite commonly used in standard English but are considered incorrect by many speakers.

Certain highly controversial words or meanings have the warning note '– disapproved of by some speakers'.

The note '– substandard' is used for words or meanings that are widely used but are not part of standard English.

8.5 The context in which a word can appear

Many words or meanings can be used only in certain contexts within a sentence: some verbs are only used in the passive; some words can appear only in the negative, along with *not, never,* etc; others are always

used with particular prepositions or adverbs, or in certain fixed phrases. Such restrictions are shown in a note following a definition:

abide ... *vb* **1** to bear patiently: tolerate – used negatively

agree ... *vi* ... **2a** to be of one mind – often + *with* <*I ~ with you*>

dumps ... *n pl* a gloomy state of mind; despondency – esp in *in the dumps*

Sometimes a word that is commonly used with the main entry word in a sentence is printed in italic within the definition:

allude ... *vi* to make indirect, casual, or implicit reference *to* .

²**altogether** *n the* nude <*posed in the ~*> – infml
This means that **allude** is almost always used in the phrase **allude to**, and that the noun **altogether** is almost always used with **the**. .

9 Cross-references

Cross-references draw attention to a related word in another part of the dictionary. Any word printed in SMALL CAPITAL letters is a cross-reference.

An entire definition may take the form of a cross-reference. This happens either when the word used in the definition has more than one meaning, and it is necessary to specify which meaning is referred to:

²**flash** *n* ... **6a** ... **c** FLASHLIGHT 2

or when the word used in the definition is a compound that is a main entry in the dictionary:

rubella ... *n* GERMAN MEASLES

Variant forms of prefixes and combining forms – that is to say, alternative spellings used when combining with different base forms (eg the **im-** form of **in-** in words like **impossible**) – are shown as follows in the alphabetical list:

con- – see COM-

Full information about them may be found at the main entry.

10 Prefixes, suffixes, and combining forms

Word elements that can be used to form new words in English are entered at their alphabetical place in the dictionary. These elements are prefixes (eg **pre-**, **un-**), suffixes (eg **-ous**, **-ly**), and combining forms (eg **Anglo-**, **-logy**).

Suffixes and combining forms added to the end of a word may alter the grammatical function as well as the meaning of the word. Where appropriate, this change of part of speech is indicated as follows:

-ful *suffix* (*n→adj*) full of <*eventful*> <*colourful*>

This means that the suffix **-ful** is added to nouns to make adjectives.

11 Pronunciation

11.1 Symbols used

Pronunciations are shown within slant lines (/ /) following main entries. The symbols used are:

Vowels			Consonants		
a	as in	bad, *fat*	b	as in	bad
ah	,,	father, oompah	ch	·,,	cheer
aw	,,	saw, awful	d	,,	day
ay	,,	make, hay	dh	,,	they
e	,,	bed, head	f	,,	few
ee	,,	sheep, key	g	,,	gay
eə	,,	there, hair	h	,,	hot
i	,,	ship, lick	j	,,	jump
ie	,,	bite, lied	k	,,	king
ie·ə	,,	fire, liar .	kh	,,	loch
iə	,,	here, fear	l	:,,	led
o	,,	pot, crop	m	,,	man
oh	,,	note, Joan	n	,,	sun
oo	,,	put, cook	ng	,,	sung
ooh	,,	boot, lute	nh	,,	restaurant
ooə	,,	jury, cure	p	,,	pot
ow	,,	now, bough	r	,,	red
owə	,,	our, power	s	,,	soon
oy	,,	boy, loiter	sh	,,	fish
oyə	,,	lawyer, sawyer	t	,,	tea
u	,,	cut, luck	th	,,	thing
uh	,,	bird, absurd	v	,,	view
ə	,,	mother, about	w	,,	wet
			y	,,	yet
			z	,,	zero
			zh	,,	pleasure

The dictionary attempts to give all the most common variant pronunciations of each word. It is not however, possible to include all the regional and social variants, and so the pronunciation represented here is what may be called a 'standard' or 'neutral British English' accent: the type of speech characteristic of those people often described as having 'no accent'. A better definition would be that it is an accent that betrays nothing of the region to which the speaker belongs.

11.2 Stress

1 *Primary stress*
In all English words of 2 or more syllables one syllable is pronounced more prominently than the others, and we say it has greater stress or *primary stress*. For instance, in the word **paper** the first syllable **pa-** has greater stress than the second syllable **-per**. In the pronunciation entries the symbol /'/ is placed *before* the syllable with primary stress.

2 *Secondary stress*
Some longer words also have *secondary stress* on another syllable; the symbol /,/ is used before such syllables. For instance, in **university** the syllable **-ver-** has primary stress, but the first syllable also has some stress. This is secondary stress, and we show the pronunciation in **university** as /,yoohni'vuhsati/.

3 *Stress on compounds*
Some main entries consist of two or more words separated by a hyphen. If each of these words is listed and given a pronunciation at its own alphabetical place, the hyphenated word is not given a full pronunciation, but only a 'stress pattern':

,dry-'rot

A main entry which consists of two or more words separated by spaces will be given a stress pattern only if this is not obvious, or if the stress pattern does not depend on the position of the phrase within a sentence.

Main entries consisting of two or more individual words are not normally given a full pronunciation.

Since the pronunciation of **bookcase** may be partially guessed from that of **book**, only the pronunciation of the latter part of the compound is shown, together with a stress pattern:

book /book/
'book,case /-,kays/

4 *Alternative stress patterns*

It is sometimes convenient to show alternative stress patterns by using a hyphen to represent each syllable. For example, **carrier bag** may be pronounced with the primary stress either on the **ca-** of **carrier**, or on **bag**. In such cases, the alternative stress patterns are shown like this:

carrier bag /---,-. ,---'-/

5 *Stress shift*

There are certain words for which the stress pattern changes according to the position of the word within a phrase or sentence. For example, **brigadier** has primary stress on the last syllable **-dier**, but when this word is used in the phrase **brigadier general**, the primary stress shifts to the first syllable of **general**, and there is now secondary stress on the first syllable of **brigadier**. For words like **brigadier**, the stress pattern shown is always that which would be used if the word were read out by itself.

11.3 Special symbols

1 *The symbol /ə/*

This is the only special phonetic character used in this dictionary. It represents the unstressed vowel sound in mother, about, purpose, and may correspond to many different vowels in ordinary spelling.

2 *Bracketed (ə)*

This symbol is used when the sound /ə/ may be either pronounced or missed out, or where its presence or absence is uncertain. Most syllables of English contain a vowel: **telephone** /'telifohn/ has three syllables and three vowels, /e/, /i/, and /oh/. But certain consonants can form a syllable by themselves: **cattle** /'katl/ has two syllables, /'kat/ and /l/. In a word such as **memory** /'mem(ə)ri/, a bracketed /(ə)/ is used, to show that the /r/ may or may not form a syllable; one can say /'memri/, /'meməri/, or /'memr·i/.

The bracketed symbol (ə) may also be used after the vowels /ie/ and /oo/:

giro /'jie(ə)roh/
neuralgia /nyoo(ə)'raljə/

This means that some people pronounce the vowels as /ie·ə/ or /ooə/ and others simply as /ie/ or /oo/

3 *Hyphens*

These are used:

i   to show that the pronunciation is not a full word and cannot stand alone (eg for prefixes or suffixes):

-ation /-'aysh(ə)n/

ii   to show that part of the pronunciation has not been repeated:

²digest /di'jest, die-/

Since the syllable /-'jest/ is the same for both variants it is not written twice.

4 *Centred dot*

A centred dot (·) separates pairs of letters that might otherwise be wrongly read as one sound. For example, it separates /n/ from /g/ where the sound /ng/ as in **sing** is not intended, or /t/ from /h/ where /th/ as in **through** is not intended.

5 *Swung dash*

A swung dash (~) means that the plural is pronounced in the same way as the singular:

hors d'oeuvre ... **pl hors d'oeuvres** *also* **hors d'oeuvre** /'duhv(z) (*Fr* ~)/

11.4 Variant pronunciations

1 *Alternative pronunciations*

In general, the first variant shown is considered to be the most usual, although even if two or more pronunciations are genuinely equal in acceptability, it is inevitable because of the nature of print that one must be placed first on the page. All pronunciations shown may be safely used, with the following exceptions:

i   A pronunciation preceded by *also* is not so usual as the other pronunciation(s) given, or, though widely used, is not considered correct by some speakers.

ii   A pronunciation preceded by *often* is commonly used but is generally considered incorrect.

2 *Common variants that are not shown*

There are many words which some speakers pronounce slightly differently from other speakers. Where such differences are very slight, as in the cases below, it has been decided not to show both variants, although each may be quite usual.

i/ə

The two sounds /i/ and /ə/ are often variants within a word. Some people pronounce the final syllable of **bargain, painless, meanness** with an /i/ and others with /ə/. Because such words are so very numerous, normally either /i/ or /ə/ is shown but not both.

i/y

Words like **apiary, anaemia** may be pronounced with either /i/ or /y/. For such words only the /i/ variant is usually given, except after /l/, /m/, and /n/, where both variants are shown.

n/ng

When a prefix such as **un-** is followed by a /k/ or a /g/ sound, the *n* may be pronounced either as /n/ or as /ng/:

ungainly /un'gaynli/ or /ung'gaynli/

Only one variant is normally shown.

3 *Specialized pronunciations*

Pronunciations marked *naut* and *tech* are those used by experts within the field to which the word belongs:

leeward /'leewood; *naut* 'looh·əd/

Here, ordinary people say /'leewood/ but sailors say /'looh·əd/.

11.5 Main entries which are abbreviations

If the main entry consists merely of a sequence of capital letters, such as BA, ESP, or YWCA, the pronunciation is obvious, and so need not be given. However, abbreviations which may be pronounced as a word do receive a pronunciation:

UFO /'yooh,foh, ,yooh ef 'oh/

11.6 Inflections

Regular inflections are not given a pronunciation unless they are a main entry, in which case the stress pattern alone is shown. Irregular inflections are given pronunciations throughout.

A pronunciation is sometimes shown for the present participle of a verb. The present participle of travel

may be pronounced either /'travling/ or /'travl·ing/, but that of t*u*nnel can be pronounced only /'tunl·ing/.

The Latin plurals -ae and -i are pronounced in a number of ways, but it is normally necessary to show only one pronunciation: the plural ending -i is shown as /-ie/ and the ending -ae as /-i/ or /-ee/.

11.7 Strong and weak forms

Many common words have both a *strong form* and a *weak form*. For instance, if I say 'I am going out', am is pronounced in its unstressed or weak form /əm/. But if someone denies that I am going out, I may repeat the same sentence with a different emphasis and say 'I *am* going out.' Here I have stressed the verb am, and the *strong form* /am/ is used.

Since the weak form is the most usual form of the word, this is given first in pronunciation entries and the strong form follows the word *strong*:

am /əm, m; *strong* am/

12.8 Foreign words and phrases

1 *American pronunciations*

American pronunciation often differs from that of British English speakers, but a specifically American pronunciation is only shown when a word is pronounced in such a way that it might not be recognized by British speakers.

2 *Borrowed words and phrases*

Where English has 'borrowed' a word or phrase from a foreign language it eventually acquires an anglicized pronunciation. All such words in this dictionary are given a pronunciation which may be easily used by native English speakers who know nothing of the language from which the word is borrowed. However, many of these words are normally pronounced in a manner that is closer to the original pronunciation, and in these cases the foreign pronunciation is also given, within round brackets, using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This is because many foreign sounds cannot be adequately represented using the English alphabet. The IPA symbols used are these:

Symbol	as in:		Nearest English Equivalent
	French	German	
i	nid	Inhalt	heat
i:	—	riechen	feed
ıə	—	Bier	beer
e	été	Medikament	day
e:	—	mehr	fair
ε	sept	Kette	pet
ε:	mère	Rätsel	fair
eə	—	Wiedersehen	fair
a	patte	Album	cart
a:	tard	—	card
aı	— ·ʂʒ·	Fräulein	tie
au	—	auf ·	cow
ɑ	bas	Ahnung	card
ɑ:	sable	—	card
ɔ	tonne	Post	hot
ɔ:	mors	—	sort
ɔı	—	Fräulein	toy
o	chaud	Tomate	coat
o:	rose	Kohle	code
ʊ	—	unter	put
u	coup	—	cool
u:	rouge	Uhr	cool
y	cru	Führer	crude
y:	buche	physisch	crude
ø	bleu	öffnen	early
ø:	jeune	böse	early
œ	seul	—	early
œ:	peur	—	early
ə	le	genug	ado
ê	vin	—	—
ɑ̃	blanc	—	restaurant
ɔ̃	non	—	—
œ̃	jeune	—	—
ɥ	nuit	—	wheat
ç	—	ich	—
x	—	nach	loch
ɲ	pagne	—	new
ŋ	—	ringen	pang
ʒ	journal	Genie	pleasure
ʃ	chat	Strasse	show
tʃ	(tcheque)	—	cheat
j	mieux	Jahr	you

12 Etymologies

An etymology, or history of a word, is shown in square brackets [ ] after the definition.

12.1 Usual features

The etymology usually aims to trace a word's origin, together with any changes that have taken place in its form and meaning, as far as possible within the recorded history of language, working backwards step by step from its immediate source to the final point where its history becomes obscure. The chief features commonly described are:

1 *Earlier forms in English*

Whenever a word is descended from a word recorded in either or both of the earlier periods of English (ie Old English and Middle English), its occurrence in the earlier period(s) is shown, and its earlier form and meaning are presented if they differ from the form of the main entry and from the earliest sense defined:

¹**above** . . . [ME, fr OE *abufan* . . .]

2 *Loanwords*

When a word has been borrowed into English from another language, the source-language is identified, and the form and meaning of the source-word are stated if they differ from those shown for the English word:

¹**join** . . . [ME *joinen*, fr OF *joindre* . . .]
polo . . . [Balti, ball]

3 *Earlier history of loanwords*

In the case of most words which belong to the general vocabulary of English, the earlier history of a foreign source-word is traced as far back as possible.

Specialized or 'exotic' words which have entered English, such as imam, are often treated less fully, and with few exceptions a word from a language outside the Indo-European family is not traced any further back.

4 *Prehistory and use of 'akin to'*

Sometimes when a word has been traced back to its earliest recorded ancestor, an indication of its ultimate origin is given in the form of one or more significant words which are related to it by common descent (eg from Proto-Indo-European or Proto-Germanic); these related words (cognates) are introduced by the phrase 'akin to'.

The formula 'of [Celtic, Scandinavian, etc] origin; akin to . . .' is used when a word is known to have been borrowed from some word in a certain group of languages (eg Celtic or Scandinavian), but its origin cannot assuredly be traced to any particular known word

in any particular language of that group. In this case, 'akin to' introduces words which belong to the named group and are related to the word in question. For example:

skulk ... [ME *skulken*, of Scand origin; akin to Dan *skulke to* shirk, play truant]

The word skulk came into English in the 13th century, but there is no record of a related Scandinavian word as early as that; however, modern Danish *skulke* points to the existence of an earlier Scandinavian form *from which the English word was borrowed*.

12.2 Implied information

In etymologies, word or word-elements in *italics* are the source from which the main entry is derived. An English word or phrase in ordinary type after such a source-word explains its meaning or function.

When only certain *letters or parts of a source-word* are directly relevant to the etymology, those sections are shown in italic but the rest of the word appears in ordinary type.

If a source-word had the same form as the English word that comes from it, but a different meaning, that meaning is given:

nimbus ... [L, rainstorm, cloud ...]

If a source-word had the same meaning as the English word but a different form, that form is given:

rubicund [L *rubicundus* ...]

If the source-word had the same form and meaning as the English word, it appears like this:

scabies ... [L]

If there is no language-label before the first word in italics, it is English.

The same principles are applied throughout an etymology: when no meaning, form, or language-label is attached to an italicized word, then the meaning, form, and language of the word are to be taken as identical with that of the word preceding it. Take, for example, the etymology for famous:

[ME, fr MF *fameux*, fr L *famosus*, fr *fama* fame]

If this had to be written out in full, it would appear as:

[ME *famous* well-known, fr MF *fameux* well-known, fr L *famosus* well-known, fr L *fama* fame]

12.3 Cross-references

An explicit cross-reference such as 'more at SHILLING' directs you to another main entry where further information about etymology is to be found.

A cross-reference is implied when the same italicized form occurs in two or more etymologies which are not further than ten entries apart; to save repetition, full information about it is given only in one place, so that it is sometimes necessary to look at nearby entries for further details.

12.4 Sub-etymologies

When one (or more than one) of the numbered meanings of a word has an origin which is not strictly identical with that of the other meaning(s), although not sufficiently different to justify listing it as a separate main entry, extra information about it is given:

attrition ... [L *attrition-*, *attritio*, fr *attritus*, pp of *atterere* to rub against, fr *ad-* + *terere* to rub – more at THROW; (1) ME *attricioun*, fr (assumed) ML *attrition-*, *attritio*, fr L]

²walking ... [(1) fr prp of ¹*walk*; (2) fr gerund of ¹*walk*|

12.5 Explanatory etymologies

Sometimes, in place of or in addition to the history of a word, an etymology offers an explanation of *why* that word is used with a particular meaning. Such explanations are always introduced by 'fr':

candidate ... [L *candidatus*, fr *candidatus* clothed in white, fr *candidus* white; fr the white toga worn by candidates for office in ancient Rome]

kiss of death ... [fr the kiss with which Judas betrayed Jesus (Mk 14:44-46)]

12.6 Special terminology

a) fr = from. This indicates various kinds of relationship between one word and another: eg borrowing, compounding, or grammatical change.

b) deriv = derivative. This means that at least one intermediate step has been left out in tracing the history of a word

apricot .. [alter. of earlier *abrecock*, deriv of Ar *al-burqūq* the apricot]

Here, the Arabic word may have reached us through Catalan, Italian, French, Spanish, or Portuguese.

c) alter. = alteration. This means that there has been a change of form, within a single language, following no regular pattern of linguistic change, as with apricot.

d) modif = modification. This means that there has been the same kind of change in a word borrowed from another language:

boulevard ... [Fr, modif of MD *bolwerc* bulwark]

e) blend. This describes a word formed from two or more constituents which has at least one letter or sound in common with those constituents, or in which part of one constituent is inserted into the other:

smog ... [blend of *smoke* and *fog*]

12.7 Sometimes the material in square brackets consists of a base form plus a beginning or ending, printed in SMALL CAPITAL letters:

animation ... [²ANIMATE + -ION]

This does not mean that animation was formed in modern English from *animate* and *-ion* (in fact, the word was borrowed into English from Latin *animation-*, *animatio*); rather, it shows that the word has the general meaning 'the act of animating', which is the sum of the meanings of *animate* and *-ion*.

12.8 When a main entry covers two or more parts of speech, the etymology usually shows which part of speech was the first form in English and/or was the source-word in another language:

conscript ... *n or adj* ... [*adj* MF, fr L *conscriptus* ...; *n* fr adj]

This means that the English noun conscript came from the English adjective conscript, which in turn was borrowed from the Middle French adjective *conscript*.

12.9 Points about particular languages

1 Many technical terms used in the sciences and other specialized studies consist of words or word-elements which are current in at least two languages, with whatever minor changes of form are needed to adapt them to the structure of each individual language.

Frequently it is not known which particular language they were originally formed in. The label ISV (International Scientific Vocabulary) is therefore attached to any such term which is not positively known to have originated in English.

2 The labelling and representation in writing of words from the Indian subcontinent presents a problem. When they were borrowed into English, the language of most of them was generally called Hindustani; but since partition in 1947, more commonly the names Hindi and Urdu have been used to denote the two similar but divergent main forms. Hindi, written in the Sanskritic (Devanagari) alphabet, is the form adopted in India; Urdu, written in Perso-Arabic characters, is the form adopted in Pakistan. In this dictionary, the label Hindi has generally been used in the wider sense formerly conveyed by Hindustani: 'a group of Indic dialects of northern India of which literary Hindi and Urdu are considered diverse written forms'. Words thus labelled are either common to Hindi and Urdu (eg **sari**) or specifically Urdu (eg **sahib**); specifically Hindi words have usually been labelled Sanskrit, whether they came into English directly from Sanskrit or via Hindustani.

3 With a few special exceptions, a word borrowed from Latin or Greek is ascribed to the earliest period in which it is recorded in either of those languages with the same meaning that it has in the borrowing language, regardless of the date of the borrowing. Borrowings from other languages divided into historical periods, such as 'Old' and 'Middle', are attributed to the period corresponding to the date of the word's first recorded borrowing. In the cases of 'Old Italian', 'Old Portuguese', and 'Old Spanish', however, the term 'Old' does not denote a definable period, but indicates a form in Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish which was borrowed into the Old or Middle period of another language.

4 In many Latin and Greek nouns, the final consonant of the nominative singular case differs from the final stem consonant of other cases: eg Latin *nox* (meaning 'night') has the genitive form *noctis*. Such nouns are shown with the stem of the oblique cases preceding the nominative singular form (eg L *noct-*, *nox*).

5 The label 'native name', followed by the name of a country or region, is used in a few instances when it has been impossible to determine which particular language of that place the word comes from:

koala ... [native name in Australia]

12.10 Words from other alphabets

All forms from other alphabets (Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Sanskrit, Chinese, Cyrillic, etc) are presented in the Roman alphabet.

In representing forms from tone languages, such as Chinese, small superscript figures are used to indicate the tone of the word or syllable which they follow. For Chinese words, the Wade-Giles system of romanization is used.

12.11 Main entries without an etymology

When lack of evidence makes it impossible to supply any satisfactory etymology, the phrase '[origin unknown]' is used. When a word is given no etymology, this is usually not because of lack of evidence but because it is considered that an etymology is unnecessary. This applies to any word which is:

a) a trademark (eg **Vaseline**)

b) the name of a tribe or people in its own language (eg **Zulu**)

c) an interjection which is a natural non-linguistic sound (eg **bah**, **ugh**)

d) derived from the name of a person or place identified in the definition (eg **Tokay**)

e) a shortened or contracted form (eg **exam**)

f) a spelling variant of another word to which it is cross-referred (eg **kaftan**)

g) an inflected form of a verb, noun, or adjective to which it is cross-referred (but special forms, such as **better** and **went**, and forms of the verb **be**, **do** have etymologies)

h) a compound, derivative, or phrase created in English by the combination of forms listed in this dictionary, provided that the identity of each component is clear. Thus no etymology is given for **toothpaste** (from *tooth* + *paste*) or for **dehumanize** (from *de-* + *humanize*).

i) formed by the addition of an easily-recognizable suffix to an English word, although it may have been formed in a language other than English. Thus **depression** has no etymology because it is an obvious derivative of **depress**, although in strict point of fact it was borrowed into English from French or Late Latin. In the same way, undefined related words (run-ons) have no etymology, even though in some cases such words may have been borrowed from another language rather than formed in English.

j) created in English by change of grammatical function (as the verb **talk** led to the noun **talk**) from another main entry.

Abbreviations used in this Dictionary

A

A ampere
ab about
abbr abbreviation
abl ablative
acc accusative
AD Anno Domini
adj adjective
adv adverb
AF Anglo-French
Afrik Afrikaans
Alb Albanian
alter. alteration
am ante meridiem
AmerF American French
AmerInd American Indian
AmerSp American Spanish
apprec appreciative
approx approximate,
  approximately
Ar Arabic
Arab Arabian
Aram Aramaic
arch archaic
Arm Armenian
Assyr Assyrian
attrib attributive
aug augmentative
Austr Australian
Av Avestan
AV Authorized Version

B

b born
Bab Babylonian
BC before Christ
Beng Bengali
Br British
Bret Breton
Btu British thermal unit
Bulg Bulgarian

C

c centi-
c century
C Celsius, centigrade
C coulomb
Can Canadian
CanF Canadian French
Cant Cantonese
cap capital, capitalized
Catal Catalan
Celt Celtic
cgs centimetre-gram-second
Chin Chinese
cm centimetre

comb combining
compar comparative
conj conjunction
constr construction
contr contraction
Copt Coptic
Corn Cornish
cwt hundredweight

D

D Dutch
Dan Daniel
Dan Danish
dat dative
deriv derivative
derog derogatory
dial. dialect
dim. diminutive
dr dram

E

E East, Eastern
E English
e g for example
Egypt Egyptian
Eng English, England
Esk Eskimo
esp especially
etc etcetera
euph euphemistic

F

F Fahrenheit
F Farad
F French [1601-]
fem feminine
Finn Finnish
fl floruit (flourished)
fl oz fluid ounce
Flem Flemish
fml formal
fr from
Fr French
freq frequentative
Fris Frisian
ft foot

G

G German
Gael Gaelic
gall gallon
gen genitive
Gen Genesis

Ger German
Gk Greek [to 200 AD]
Gmc Germanic
Goth Gothic
gr grain

H

h hour
ha hectare
Heb Hebrew
Hitt Hittite
hp horsepower
humor humorous
Hung Hungarian
Hz hertz

I

Icel Icelandic
i e that is
IE Indo-European
imit imitative
imper imperative
in inch
incho inchoative
Ind Indian
indef indefinite
indic indicative
infin infinitive
infml informal
interj interjection
interrog interrogative
IrGael Irish Gaelic
irreg irregular, irregularly
Isa Isaiah
ISV International Scientific
  Vocabulary
It Italian

J

J joule
Jap Japanese
Jav Javanese
Jer Jeremiah
journ journalistic

K

k kilo-
kg kilogram
km kilometre

L

l litre
L Latin [to 200 AD]

LaF Louisiana French
Lat Latin
lb pound
LG Low German
LGk Late Greek [201–600]
LHeb Late Hebrew
lit. literally
Lith Lithuanian
Lk Luke
LL Late Latin [201–600]

M

m metre
m milli-
M mega-
masc masculine
MBret Middle Breton
MD Middle Dutch [1100–1500]
ME Middle English [1151–1500]
MexSp Mexican Spanish
MF Middle French [1301–1600]
MFlem Middle Flemish [1301–1600]
MGk Middle Greek [601–1500]
MHeb Middle Hebrew
MHG Middle High German [1101–1500]
MHz megahertz
mi mile
Mid Eng Midlands
Mid US Mid United States
mil military
min minute
MIr Middle Irish [1001–1500]
ML Medieval Latin [601–1500]
ml millilitre
MLG Middle Low German [1100–1500]
mm millimetre
modif modification
MPer Middle Persian
mph miles per hour
Mt Matthew
Mt Mouht
MW Middle Welsh [1151–1500]

N

n noun
N North, Northern
NAm North American
naut nautical
neg negative
neut neuter
NGk New Greek [1501–]
NHeb New Hebrew [19th–20th century]
NL New Latin [1501–]
nom nominative
Norw Norwegian
NZ New Zealand

O

obs obsolete
occas occasionally

OCatal Old Catalan
OE Old English [–1150]
OF Old French [–1300]
OFris Old Frisian [–1500]
OHG Old High German [–1100]
OIr Old Irish [601–1100]
OIt Old Italian
OL Old Latin
ON Old Norse [–ab 1350]
ONF Old North French
OPer Old Persian
OPg Old Portuguese
OProv Old Provençal
OPruss Old Prussian
orig original, originally
ORuss Old Russian [1101–1500]
OS Old Saxon [–12th century]
OSlav Old Slavonic
OSp Old Spanish
OSw Old Swedish
OW Old Welsh [–1150]
oz ounce

P

p peace
PaG Pennsylvania German
part participle
pass passive
Pek Pekingese
Per Persian
perf perfect
perh perhaps
pers person
Pg Portuguese
phr(s) phrase(s)
pl plural
pm post meridiem
Pol Polish
pp past participle
prep preposition
pres present
prob probably
pron pronoun
Prov Provençal
prp present participle
pt pint

Q

qr quarter
qt quart

R

RC Roman Catholic
redupl reduplication
refl reflexive
rel relative
Rom Roman
RSV Revised Standard Version
Russ Russian
RV Revised Version

S

s second
S South, Southern
SAfr South Africa, South African
sby somebody
Sc Scots
Scand Scandinavian
ScGael Scottish Gaelic
Scot Scotland, Scottish
Sem Semitic
Serb Serbian
SEU S Survey of English Usage (Spoken)
SEU W Survey of English Usage (Written)
Shak Shakespeare
SI Système International d'Unités
sing. singular
Skt Sanskrit
Slav Slavonic
Sp Spanish
specif specifically
st stone
St Saint
sthg something
subj subjunctive
substand substandard
superl superlative
Sw Swedish
Syr Syriac

T

Tag Tagalog
tech technical
TES Times Educational Supplement
THES Times Higher Educational Supplement
TLS Times Literary Supplement
trans translation
Turk Turkish

U

UK United Kingdom
US United States
USA United States of America
usu usually

V

V volt
va verbal auxiliary
var variant
vb verb
vi verb intransitive
VL Vulgar Latin (used only for assumed forms)
voc vocative
vt verb transitive
vulg vulgar

W

W watt
W Welsh
W West, Western
WI West Indian
WWI World War 1
WWII World War 2

Y

yd yard

Contents

A

¹**a** /ay/ *n, pl* **a's, as** *often cap* **1a** (a graphic representation of or device for reproducing) the 1st letter of the English alphabet **b** a speech counterpart of orthographic *a* **2** the 6th note of a C-major scale **3** one designated *a*, esp as the 1st in order or class **4** a grade rating a student's work as superior

²**a** /ə; *strong* ay/ *indefinite article* **1** one – used before singular nouns when the referent is unspecified ⟨~ *man overboard*⟩ and before number collectives and some numbers ⟨~ *great many*⟩ **2** the same ⟨*birds of ~ feather*⟩ ⟨*swords all of ~ length*⟩ **3a**(1) any ⟨~ *bicycle has 2 wheels*⟩ (2) one single ⟨*can't see ~ thing*⟩ **b** one particular ⟨*glucose is ~ simple sugar*⟩ **c** – used before the gerund or infinitive of a verb to denote a period or occurrence of the activity concerned ⟨*had ~ little weep*⟩ ⟨*heard ~ crashing of gears*⟩ **4** – used before a proper name to denote (1) membership of a class ⟨I *was ~ Burton before my marriage – SEU S*⟩ (2) resemblance ⟨~ *Daniel come to judgment*⟩ (3) one named but not otherwise known ⟨~ *Mrs Jones*⟩ **5** – used before a pair of items to be considered as a unit ⟨~ *cap and gown*⟩ *USE* used before words or letter sequences with an initial consonant sound; compare ¹**AN 1** [ME, fr OE *ān* one – more at ONE]

³**a** /ə/ *prep* **1** PER **2** ⟨*twice ~ week*⟩ **2** *chiefly dial* on, in, at *USE* used before words or letter sequences with an initial consonant sound [ME, fr OE *a-, an, on*]

⁴**a** /ə/ *prep* of – often attached to the preceding word ⟨*kinda*⟩ ⟨*lotta*⟩ [ME, by contr]

A /ay/ *n or adj* (a film that is) certified in Britain as suitable for all ages but requiring parental guidance for children under 14 – no longer used technically [aːdult]

¹**a-** /ə-/ *prefix* **1** on; in; at; to ⟨*abed*⟩ ⟨*ajar*⟩ **2** in (such) a state or condition ⟨*ablaze*⟩ **3** in (such) a manner ⟨*aloud*⟩ **4** in the act or process of ⟨*gone a-hunting*⟩ ⟨*atingle*⟩ *USE* in predicative adjectives and adverbs [ME, fr OE]

²**a-** /ay-, a-/, **an-** /an-/ *prefix* not; without ⟨*asexual*⟩ ⟨*amoral*⟩ – *a-* usu before consonants other than *h*, *an-* before vowels and usu before *h* ⟨*anaesthetic*⟩ ⟨*anhedral*⟩ [L & Gk; L, fr Gk – more at 'UN-]

-a /-ə/ *suffix* (→ *n*) oxide ⟨*thoria*⟩ ⟨*alumina*⟩ [NL, fr *-a* (as in *magnesia*)]

A1 *adj* **1** of a ship having the highest possible classification of seaworthiness for insurance purposes **2** of the finest quality; first-rate

AA *n or adj* (a film that is) certified in Britain as suitable for people over 14 – no longer used technically

ab- /ab-, əb-/ *prefix* from; away; off ⟨*abaxial*⟩ ⟨*abduct*⟩ [ME, fr OF & L; OF, fr L *ab-, abs-, a-*, fr *ab, a* – more at OF]

aback /əˈbak/ *adv* **1** unintentionally in a position to catch the wind on what is normally the leeward side – used with reference to a sail **2** by surprise – + *take* ⟨*was taken ~ by her sharp retort*⟩ [ME *abak* back, backwards, fr OE *on bæc*, fr *on* on + *bæc* back]

abacus /ˈabəkəs/ *n, pl* **abaci** /-kie, -sie/, **abacuses 1** a slab that forms the uppermost part of the capital of a column **2** an instrument for performing calculations by sliding counters along rods or in grooves [L, fr Gk *abak-, abax*, lit., slab]

¹**abandon** /əˈband(ə)n/ *vt* **1** to give up completely, esp with the intention of never resuming or reclaiming ⟨~ed *his studies*⟩ ⟨*slow to ~ their native language*⟩ **2** to leave, often in the face of danger ⟨~ *ship*⟩ **3** to forsake or desert, esp in spite of an allegiance, duty, or responsibility ⟨*endure the ignominy of his ~ing her* – D H Lawrence⟩ ⟨~ed *to a humble death*⟩ **4** to give (oneself) over unrestrainedly *to* an emotion or activity [ME *abandounen*, fr MF *abandoner*, fr *abandon*, n, surrender, fr *a bandon* in one's power] – **abandoner** *n*, **abandonment** *n*

²**abandon** *n* freedom from constraint or inhibitions ⟨*danced with gay ~*⟩

abandoned *adj* wholly free from restraint ⟨*an ~ party*⟩

abase /əˈbays/ *vt* to bring lower in rank, office, prestige, or esteem [ME *abassen*, fr MF *abaisser*, fr *a-* (fr L *ad-*) + (assumed) VL *bassiare* to lower] – **abasement** *n*

abash /əˈbash/ *vt* to destroy the self-possession or self-confidence of; disconcert – usu pass [ME *abaishen*, fr (assumed) MF *abaiss-, abair* to astonish, alter. of MF *esbair*, fr *ex-* + *baer* to yawn, fr ML *batare*] – **abashment** *n*

abate /əˈbayt/ *vt* **1** to put an end to; abolish ⟨~ *a nuisance*⟩ **2** to reduce in amount, intensity, or degree; moderate ⟨~ *a tax*⟩ ~*vi* to decrease in force or intensity ⟨*the wind has ~*d⟩ [ME *abaten*, fr OF *abattre* to beat down, slaughter – more at ¹REBATE] – **abatement** *n*, **abater** *n*

abattoir /ˈabətwah/ *n* a slaughterhouse [F, fr *abattre*]

abbess /ˈabes/ *n* the female superior of a convent of nuns [ME *abbesse*, fr OF, fr LL *abbatissa*, fem of *abbat-, abbas*]

abbey /ˈabi/ *n* **1** a religious community governed by an abbot or abbess **2** the buildings, esp the church, of a (former) monastery ⟨*Westminster ~*⟩ [ME, fr OF *abaie*, fr LL *abbatia* abbey, fr *abbat-, abbas*]

abbot /ˈabət/ *n* the superior of an abbey of monks [ME *abbod*, fr OE, fr LL *abbat-, abbas*, fr LGk *abbas*, fr Aram *abbā* father]

abbreviate /əˈbreeviayt/ *vt* to make briefer; esp to reduce to a shorter form intended to stand for the whole [ME *abbreviaten*, fr LL *abbreviatus*, pp of *abbreviare* – more at ABRIDGE] – **abbreviator** *n*

abbreviation /əˌbreevi'aysh(ə)n/ *n* a shortened form of a written word or phrase ⟨*amt is an ~ for amount*⟩ [ABBREVIATE + -ION]

ABC *n, pl* **ABC's, ABCs 1** the alphabet **2** the rudiments of a subject – usu pl with sing. meaning in NAm

abdicate /'abdikayt/ vt to relinquish (e g sovereign power) formally ~ vi to renounce a throne, dignity, etc [L abdicatus, pp of abdicare, fr ab- + dicare to proclaim – more at DICTION] – abdicator n, abdicable adj, abdication n

abdomen /'abdəmən, ab'dohmən/ n 1 (the cavity of) the part of the body between the thorax and the pelvis that contains the liver, gut, etc 2 the rear part of the body behind the thorax in an insect or other arthropod [MF & L; MF, fr L] – abdominal adj, abdominally adv

abduct /ab'dukt/ vt 1 to carry off secretly or by force 2 to draw away (e g a limb) from a position near or parallel to the main part of the body [L abductus, pp of abducere, lit., to lead away, fr ab- + ducere to lead – more at 'TOW] – abductor n, abduction n

abeam /ə'beem/ adv or adj on a line at right angles to the length of a ship or aircraft ['a- + 'beam]

abed /ə'bed/ adv or adj in bed

aberrant /ə'berənt/ adj 1 deviating from the right or normal way ⟨~ behaviour⟩ 2 diverging from the usual or natural type [L aberrant-, aberrans, prp of aberrare to go astray, fr ab- + errare to wander, err] – aberrance n, aberrancy n, aberrantly adv

aberration /,abə'raysh(ə)n/ n 1 being aberrant, esp with respect to a moral standard or normal state 2 the failure of a mirror, lens, etc to produce exact correspondence between an object and its image 3 (an instance of) unsoundness or disorder of the mind 4 a small periodic change of apparent position in celestial bodies due to the combined effect of the motion of light and the motion of the observer 5 an aberrant organ or individual; SPORT 5 [L aberratus, pp of aberrare] – aberrational adj

abet /ə'bet/ vt -tt- to give active encouragement or approval to ⟨aided and ~ted in the crime by his wife⟩ [ME abetten, fr MF abeter, fr OF, fr a- (fr L ad-) + beter to bait, of Gmc origin; akin to OE bǣtan to bait] – abetment n, abettor, abetter n

abeyance /ə'bayəns/ n temporary inactivity; suspension ⟨a rule in ~ since 1935⟩ [MF abeance expectation, fr abaer to desire, fr a- + baer to yawn, fr ML batare]

abhor /ab'(h)aw/ vt -rr- to regard with extreme repugnance; loathe [ME abhorren, fr L abhorrēre, fr ab- + horrēre to shudder – more at HORROR] – abhorrer n

abhorrent /ab'(h)orənt, əb'(h)awrənt/ adj 1 opposed, contrary to 2 causing horror; repugnant ⟨acts ~ to every right-minded person⟩ [L abhorrent-, abhorrens, prp of abhorrēre] – abhorrence n, abhorrently adv

abide /ə'bied/ vb abode /ə'bohd/, abided vt to bear patiently; tolerate – used negatively ⟨can't ~ such bigots⟩ ~ vi 1 to remain stable or fixed in a state 2 archaic to dwell [ME abiden, fr OE ābidan, fr ā-, perfective prefix + bidan to bide] – abider n – abide by to remain true to; comply with ⟨abide by the rules⟩ ⟨abide by one's word⟩

abiding /ə'bieding/ adj enduring ⟨an ~ interest in nature⟩ – abidingly adv

ability /ə'biləti/ n 1a being able; esp physical, mental, or legal power to perform ⟨doubted her ~ to walk so far⟩ b natural or acquired competence in doing; skill ⟨a man of great ~⟩ 2 a natural talent; aptitude – usu pl [ME abilite, fr MF habilité, fr L habilitat-, habilitas, fr habilis apt, skilful – more at ABLE]

-ability also **-ibility** /-ə'biləti/ suffix (vb, adj → n) capacity, suitability, or tendency to (so act or be acted on) ⟨readability⟩ ⟨excitability⟩

abject /'abjekt/ adj 1 showing utter hopelessness; wretched, miserable ⟨~ poverty⟩ 2 despicable, degraded 3 very humble, esp to the point of servility ⟨an ~ apology⟩ [ME, fr L abjectus, fr pp of abicere to cast off, fr ab- + jacere to throw – more at 'JET] – abjection n, abjectly adv, abjectness n

abjure /əb'jooə/ vt to renounce on oath or reject formally (e g a claim, opinion, or allegiance) [ME abjuren, fr MF or L; MF abjurer, fr L abjurare, fr ab- + jurare to swear – more at JURY] – abjurer n, abjuration n

ablative /'ablətiv/ n (a form in) a grammatical case expressing typically separation, source, cause, or instrument [adj ME, fr MF or L; MF ablatif, fr L ablativus, fr ablatus, pp of auferre to remove, fr auaway + ferre to carry; n fr adj] – ablative adj

ablaut /'aplowt, 'ab-/ n a systematic variation of vowels in the same root, esp in the Indo-European languages, usu accompanied by differences in use or meaning (e g in sing, sang, sung, song) [G, fr ab away from + laut sound]

ablaze /ə'blayz/ adj or adv 1 on fire 2 radiant with light or bright colour

able /'aybl/ adj 1 having sufficient power, skill, resources, or qualifications to ⟨with more money I was better ~ to help⟩ 2 marked by intelligence, knowledge, skill, or competence ⟨the ~ st lawyer in London⟩ [ME, fr MF, fr L habilis apt, fr habēre to have – more at GIVE] – ably adv

-able also **-ible** /-əbl/ suffix 1 (vb → adj) fit for, able to, liable to, or worthy to (so act or be acted on) ⟨breakable⟩ ⟨reliable⟩ ⟨get-at-able⟩ 2 (n → adj) marked by, providing, or possessing (a specified quality or attribute) ⟨knowledgeable⟩ ⟨comfortable⟩ [ME, fr OF, fr L -abilis, -ibilis, fr -a-, -i-, verb stem vowels + -bilis capable or worthy of] – -ably suffix (vb, n → adv)

able-'bodied adj physically strong and healthy; fit

,able 'seaman, ,able-bodied 'seaman n a trained person ranking below noncommissioned officer in the British navy

ablution /ə'bloohsh(ə)n/ n the washing of (a part of) one's body, esp in a ritual purification [ME, fr MF or L; MF, fr L ablution-, ablutio, fr ablutus, pp of abluere to wash away, fr ab- + lavere to wash – more at LYE] – ablutionary adj

abnegation /,abni'gaysh(ə)n/ n renunciation, self-denial [LL abnegation-, abnegatio, fr L abnegatus, pp of abnegare to refute, fr ab- + negare to deny – more at NEGATE]

abnormal /,ab'nawməl, əb-/ adj deviating from the normal or average; esp markedly and disturbingly irregular ⟨~ behaviour⟩ [alter. of earlier anormal, fr F, fr ML anormalis, fr L a- + LL normalis normal] – abnormally adv, abnormality n

abo /'aboh/ n, pl abos often cap, Austr an Australian aborigine – chiefly derog [by shortening] – abo adj

aboard /ə'bawd/ adv or prep 1 on, onto, or within (a ship, aircraft, train, or road vehicle) ⟨climb ~⟩ ⟨they were ~ a plane bound for Rome⟩ 2 alongside [ME abord, fr 'a- + bord board – more at BOARD]

abode /ə'bohd/ n a home, residence – fml [ME abod, fr abiden to abide]

abolish /ə'bolish/ vt to do away with (e g a law or custom) wholly; annul [ME abolisshen, fr MF aboliss-, stem of abolir, fr L abolēre, prob back-formation fr abolescere to disappear, fr ab- + -olescere (as in adolescere to grow up) – more at ADULT] – abolishable adj,