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The Penguin Pocket English Dictionary

Fourth Edition



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The Penguin Pocket English Dictionary

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How to use this Dictionary

1 Order of entries

1.1 Main entries

Alphabetical order of entry, letter by letter, applies to all main entries, whether they are single words, hyphenated words, or compounds consisting of two or more individual words.

Many words that share the same spelling have a different pronunciation or a different history, or are different in grammar. Such words are shown separately, 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. They follow the main entry and are shown in these ways:

- a Where the undefined word is the same as the main entry, but has a different part of speech, it appears in full
- b Where the main entry forms a stem to which an ending is added to form the undefined word, the stem is represented by ~, and the ending follows:
content *adj* ... ~ment *n*
- c Where any part of the main entry forms the stem of an undefined word, the unchanged part is represented by - :
indifferent *adj* ... -ence *n*

Occasionally no shortening of the undefined entry is possible, and it is given in full.

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 **consistency, consistence**), or even in the presence or absence of a complete word in a compound (eg **prime, prime number**). 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 the variant is preceded by *also*, it is rather less common.

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

real-ize, -ise *v*

This means that **realize** can also be spelt **realise**.

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

jail, *Br also gaol* ... *n* ...

gaol ... *v* 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).

3 Parts of speech

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

<i>adj</i>	adjective:	energetic
<i>adv</i>	adverb:	happily
<i>conj</i>	conjunction:	but
<i>interj</i>	interjection:	hey
<i>n</i>	noun:	dynamite
<i>prep</i>	preposition:	for
<i>pron</i>	pronoun:	our
<i>trademark</i>		Hoover
<i>v</i>	verb:	agglomerate

Sometimes two parts of speech are combined:

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

4 Inflections

The dictionary shows inflections only if they are irregular, and may therefore cause difficulty.

4.1 Nouns

Regular plurals of nouns (eg **cats**, **matches**, **spies**) are not shown. All other plurals (eg **louse**, **lice**; **sheep**, **sheep**) are given. Nouns that are always plurals are shown as follows:

environs ... *n pl* ...

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 in apparently singular form can take a plural verb:

police *n* ... 2a ... *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 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* **ran**; **run**

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.

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 How the meaning of words is shown

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 (eg go *after* trout)

Trademarked terms are also 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 the senses are distinguished by lower-case letters, and further subdivisions by bracketed numbers.

When a definition is followed by a colon and two or more subsenses, this indicates that the meaning of the subsenses is covered by the introductory definition.

Sometimes an introductory definition is simply the common element shared by the following subsenses:

cheapen ... *v* to make or become **a** cheap in price or value **b** lower in esteem **c** tawdry, vulgar, or inferior

This indicates that **cheapen** means 'to make or become cheap in price and value', 'to make or become lower in esteem', and 'to make or become tawdry, vulgar, or inferior'.

When two meanings of a word are very closely related, they are not separated off with numbers or letters, but run together, with the word *esp.*, *specif.*, *also*, or *broadly* between them to show the way in which they are related:

aggression ... *n* ... 2 attack, encroachment; *esp* unprovoked violation by one country of the territory of another

6.2 The order in which senses are shown

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:

They enclose the object of a verb:

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

They give extra information:

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

They enclose optional wording:

afloat ... *adj or adv* 1a 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

Phrases illustrating a typical use of a word in context are used to clarify the definitions of some words, like **in** and **up**. These examples appear in round brackets.

8 Usage

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 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

groovy ... *adj* fashionably attractive or exciting – *infml*: no longer in vogue

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:

tuxedo ... *n*, *NAm* a dinner jacket

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'.

The note '- *infml*' is used for words or senses that are characteristic of conversational speech and casual writing 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'

Many people would disapprove of the use of some of the words we have described as 'slang' or 'informal', and there are of course many contexts in which their use would be inappropriate; but there is a further distinct class of words that are generally felt to be 'incorrect'.

The note '- *nonstandard*' is used for words or meanings that are quite commonly used in 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 used only in the passive; some words can appear only in the negative, along with **not**, **never**, etc; others are always used with

How to use this Dictionary

Variant pronunciations, which are to be taken as equally acceptable, are separated by a comma. Sometimes variant pronunciations are not shown in full; parts which are the same as the previous pronunciation are simply represented by a hyphen.

Pronunciations are not usually given for entries which are compounds of words listed individually, or which have the same pronunciation as the preceding entry. For some compounds and variants, only a stress pattern is shown: each syllable is represented by a dot, and stress marks show main and secondary stress.

Abbreviations used in this Dictionary

A

A ampere
abbr abbreviation
AD Anno Domini
adj adjective
adv adverb
am ante meridiem
apprec appreciative
approx approximate, approximately
arch archaic
attrib attributive
Austr Australian

B

BC before Christ
Br British
Btu British thermal unit

C

c centi-
century
C Celsius, centigrade
Can Canadian
cap capital, capitalized
cgs centimetre-gram-second
cm centimetre
conj conjunction
constr construction
cwt hundredweight

D

derog derogatory
dial dialect
dr dram

E

E East, Eastern
eg for example
Eng English, England
esp especially
etc etcetera
euph euphemistic

F

F Fahrenheit
fem feminine
fl oz fluid ounce
fml formal
ft foot

G

gall gallon
gr grain

H

h hour
ha hectare
hp horsepower
humor humorous
Hz hertz

I

ie that is
imper imperative
in inch
Ind Indian
indic indicative
infin infinitive
informl informal
interj interjection
interrog interrogative

J

J joule
journ journalistic

K

k kilo-
kg kilogram
km kilometre

L

l litre
lat latitude
lb pound
long longitude

M

M metre
m milli-
M mega-
masc masculine
MHz megahertz
mi mile
Mid Eng Midlands
Mid US Mid United States
mil military
min minute
ml millilitre
mm millimetre
mph miles per hour
Mt Mount

N

n noun

N North, Northern
N Newton
NAm North American
naut nautical
neg negative
NZ New Zealand

O

obs obsolete
occas occasionally
orig original, originally
oz ounce

P

p pence
part participle
pass passive
perf perfect
phr(s) phrase(s)
pl plural
pm post meridiem
prep preposition
pres present
prob probably
pron pronoun
pt pint

Q

qr quarter
qt quart

R

RC Roman Catholic

S

s second
S South, Southern
SAfr South Africa, South African
sby somebody
Scot Scotland, Scottish
SI Système International d'Unités
sing singular
specif specifically
st stone
St Saint
sthg something
substand substandard

T

tech technical

Abbreviations used in this Dictionary

U

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

V

v verb
V volt
vulg vulgar

W

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

Y

yd yard

Contents

How to use this Dictionary

vi

Abbreviations used in this Dictionary

xiii

The Dictionary

1-991

Common Abbreviations

993

Periodic table

1010

Physical units table

1012

A

¹**a** /eɪ/ *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 counter-part of written *a* **2** one designated *a*, esp as the 1st in order or class **3** a grade rating a student's work as superior

²**a** *indefinite article* **1** one – used before singular nouns when the referent is unspecified (e.g. *a* dog) and before number collectives and some numbers (e.g. *a* great many) **2** the same (e.g. birds of *a* feather) **3a**(1) any (e.g. *a* bike has 2 wheels) **a**(2) one single (e.g. can't see *a* thing) **b** one particular (e.g. health is *a* good thing) **c** – used before the gerund or infinitive of a verb to denote a period or occurrence of the activity concerned (e.g. *a* good weep), **4** – used before a proper name to denote (1) membership of a class (e.g. born *a* Romanov) (2) resemblance (e.g. *a* little Hitler) (3) one named but not otherwise known (e.g. *a* Dr Smith) **5** – used before a pair of items to be considered as a unit (e.g. *a* collar and tie) **USE** used before words or letter sequences with an initial consonant sound

³**a** *prep* **1** per **2** chiefly *dial* on, in, at **USE** used before words or letter sequences with an initial consonant sound

A /eɪ/ *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

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

aback /ə'bak/ *adv* by surprise – + take

abacus /'æbəkəs/ *n.* *pl* **abaci**, **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

abandon /ə'bændən/ *v* **1** to give up completely, esp with the intention of never resuming or reclaiming **2** to leave, often in the face of danger **3** to forsake or desert (e.g. *a* responsibility) **4** to give (oneself) over to an emotion or activity – *~ment* *n*

abase /ə'beɪs/ *v* to bring lower in rank, office, prestige, or esteem – *~ment* *n*

abash /ə'bæʃ/ *v* to destroy the self-possession or self-confidence of; disconcert – *usu* *pass*

abate /ə'beɪt/ *v* **1** to put an end to; abolish **2** to reduce in amount, intensity, or degree; moderate **3** to decrease in force or intensity – *~ment* *n*

abattoir /'æbətwaɪ/ *n* a slaughterhouse

abbess /'æbɪs, 'æbes/ *n* the female superior of a convent of nuns

abbey /'æbi/ *n* **1** a religious community governed by an abbot or abbess **2** the buildings, esp the church, of a (former) monastery

abbot /'æbət/ *n* the superior of an abbey of monks

abbreviate /ə'brɪvɪət/ *v* to reduce to a shorter form – *~ation* *n*

ABC *n.* *pl* **ABC's**, **ABCs** **1** the alphabet **2** the first principles of a subject

abdicate /'æbdɪket/ *v* **1** to relinquish (e.g. sovereign power) formally **2** to renounce a throne, dignity, etc – *~cation* *n*

abdomen /'æbdəmən, æb'dəu-/ *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

abd

part of the body behind the thorax in an insect, spider, etc – **dominal** *adj*

abduct /æb'dakt, əb-/ *v* to carry off secretly or by force – **~ion** *n*

aberrant /æ'berənt/ *adj* 1 deviating from the right or normal way 2 diverging from the usual or natural type

aberration /,æbə'reɪʃən/ *n* 1 being aberrant, esp with respect to a moral standard or normal state 2 (an instance of) unsoundness or disorder of the mind 3 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

abet /ə'bet/ *v* to give active encouragement or approval to – **~tor**, **~ter** *n*

abeyance /ə'beɪəns/ *n* temporary inactivity; suspension

abhor /əb'hɔː, əb-/ *v* to regard with extreme repugnance; loathe

abhorrent /əb'hɒrənt/ *adj* 1 opposed, contrary to 2 causing horror; repugnant – **~rence** *n*

abide /ə'baɪd/ *v* **abode**, **abided** 1 to bear patiently; tolerate – used negatively 2 to remain stable or fixed in a state 3 *archaic* to dwell 4 to comply with – **usu** + *by*

abiding /ə'baɪdɪŋ/ *adj* enduring

ability /ə'bɪlɪti/ *n* 1a being able; *esp* physical, mental, or legal power to perform **b** natural or acquired competence in doing; skill 2 a natural talent; aptitude – **usu** *pl*

abject /'æbdʒekt/ *adj* 1 showing utter hopelessness; wretched, miserable 2 despicable, degraded 3 very humble, esp to the point of servility – **~ly** *adv* – **~ion** *n*

abjure /əb'dʒʊə, əb-/ *v* to renounce on oath or reject formally (e.g. a claim, opinion, or allegiance) – **~ration** *n*

ablative /'æblətɪv/ *n* (a form in) a grammatical case expressing typically separation, source, cause, or instrument

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

able /'eɪbəl/ *adj* 1 having sufficient power, skill, resources, or qualifications to 2 marked by intelligence, knowledge, skill, or competence

able-bodied *adj* physically strong and healthy; fit

ableism /'eɪbəl,ɪzəm/ *n* discrimination against disabled people – **~ist** *adj*

abnormal /æb'nɔːməl/ *adj* deviating from the normal or average – **~ly** *adv* – **~ity** *n*

aboard /ə'bɔːd/ *adv* or *prep* 1 on, onto, or within (a ship, aircraft, train, or road vehicle) 2 alongside

abode /ə'bəʊd/ *n* a home, residence – **fml**

abolish /ə'bɒlɪʃ/ *v* to do away with (e.g. a law or custom) wholly; annul – **~ition** *n*

A-bomb /'eɪ,bɒm/ *n* an atom bomb

abominable /ə'bɒmɪnəbəl, -mə-nə-/ *adj* 1 worthy of or causing disgust or hatred; detestable 2 very disagreeable or unpleasant – *esp* in colloquial exaggeration – **~bly** *adv*

abominate /ə'bɒmɪneɪt/ *v* to hate or loathe intensely and unremittingly; abhor

abomination /ə'bɒmɪ'neɪʃən/ *n* 1 sthg abominable; *esp* a detestable or shameful action 2 extreme disgust and hatred; loathing

aboriginal /æbə'ndʒɪnəl/ *adj* 1 indigenous 2 of *esp* Australian aborigines

aborigine /,æbə'ndʒɪni/ *n* an indigenous inhabitant, esp as contrasted with an invading or colonizing people; *specif.* often *cap* a member of the indigenous people of Australia

abort /ə'bɔːt/ *v* 1 to expel a premature foetus 2 to fail to develop completely; shrink away 3 to induce the abortion of (a foetus) 4 to end prematurely – **~ion** *n* – **~ionist** *n*

abortive /ə'bɔːtɪv/ *adj* 1 fruitless, unsuccessful 2 imperfectly formed or developed – **~ly** *adv*

abound /ə'baʊnd/ *v* 1 to be present in large numbers or in great quantity 2 to be amply supplied – + *in* 3 to be crowded or infested with

about /ə'baut/ *adv* 1 round 2 in succession or rotation; alternately 3 approximately 4 almost 5 in the vicinity

about *prep* 1 on every side of; surrounding 2a in the vicinity of **b** on or near the person of **c** in the makeup of **d** at the command of 3a engaged in **b** on the verge of – + *to* 4a

abs

- with regard to, concerning **b** intimately concerned with **5** over or in different parts of **6** chiefly *NAm* – used with the negative to express intention or determination
- about** *adj* **1** moving from place to place; *specific* out of bed **2** in existence, evidence, or circulation
- about-face, about-turn** *v or n* **1** (to make) a 180° turn to the left, esp as a drill movement **2** (to make) a reversal of direction, policy, or opinion
- above** *adv* **1a** in the sky overhead **b** in or to heaven **2a** in or to a higher place **b** higher on the same or an earlier page **c** upstairs **3** in or to a higher rank or number **4** upstage
- above** *prep* **1** higher than the level of **2** over **3** beyond, transcending **4a** superior to (e.g. in rank) **b** too proud or honourable to stoop to **5** upstream from
- above** *n, pl above* **1a** sthg (written) above **b** a person whose name is written above **2a** a higher authority **b** heaven
- above** *adj* written higher on the same, or on a preceding, page
- aboveboard** *adv* **1a** *aboveboard*, *aboveboard* **2a** free from all traces of deceit or dishonesty
- abracadabra** *n* **1a** *abracadabra* **2a** a magical charm or incantation – used interjectionally as an accompaniment to conjuring tricks
- abrade** *v* **1a** *abrade* **2a** to roughen, irritate, or wear away, esp by friction
- abrasion** *n* **1a** *abrasion* **2a** a wearing, grinding, or rubbing away by friction **2b** an abraded area of the skin or mucous membrane
- abrasive** *adj* **1a** *abrasive*, *abrasive* **2a** tending to abrade; causing irritation – *adv*
- abrasive** *n* a substance (e.g. emery) that may be used for grinding away, smoothing, or polishing
- abreast** *adv or adj* **1a** *abreast* **2a** side by side and facing in the same direction **2b** up-to-date in attainment or information
- abridge** *v* **1a** *abridge* **2a** to reduce in scope; curtail **2b** to shorten by omission of words without sacrifice of sense; condense – *ment, -ment* **n**
- abroad** *adv* **1a** *abroad* **2a** over a wide area; widely **2b** away from one's home; out of doors **3** beyond the boundaries of one's country **4** in wide circulation; about
- abrogate** *v* **1a** *abrogate* **2a** to abolish by authoritative action; annul, repeal – *-gation* **n**
- abrupt** *adj* **1a** *abrupt* **2a** ending as if sharply cut off; truncated **2b** occurring without warning; unexpected **b** unceremoniously curt **c** marked by sudden changes in subject matter **3** rising or dropping sharply; steep – *ly* *adv* – *-ness* **n**
- abscess** *n* **1a** *abscess* **2a** a pocket of pus surrounded by inflamed tissue
- abscond** *v* **1a** *abscond*, *abscond* **2a** to depart secretly, esp so as to evade retribution
- abseil** *v* **1a** *abseil* **2a** to descend a vertical surface by sliding down a rope secured from above and wound round the body
- absence** *n* **1a** *absence* **2a** being absent **2b** the period of time that one is absent **3** a lack
- absence of mind** *n* inattention to present surroundings or occurrences
- absent** *adj* **1a** *absent* **2a** not present or attending; missing **2b** not existing; lacking **3** preoccupied – *ly* *adv*
- absent** *v* **1a** *absent*, *absent* **2a** to take or keep (oneself) away – *usu + from*
- absentee** *n* **1a** *absentee* **2a** one who is absent or who absents him-/herself
- absenteeism** *n* **1a** *absenteeism* **2a** persistent and deliberate absence from work or duty
- absent-minded** *adj* **1a** *absent-minded* **2a** lost in thought and unaware of one's surroundings or actions; forgetful; *also* given to absence of mind – *ly* *adv* – *-ness* **n**
- absinth, absinthe** *n* **1a** *absinth*, *absinthe* **2a** a green liqueur flavoured with wormwood and aniseed
- absolute** *adj* **1a** *absolute* **2a** perfect **b** (relatively) pure or unmixed **c** outright, unmitigated **2b** completely free from constitutional or other restraint **3** having no restriction, exception, or qualification **4** positive, unquestionable **5** being self-sufficient and free of external references or relationships – *-ness* **n**
- absolutely** *adv* **1a** *absolutely*, *absolutely* **2a** totally, completely – often used to express emphatic agreement

abs

absolute zero *n* the lowest temperature theoretically possible at which there is a complete absence of heat and which is equivalent to about -273.16°C or 0°K

absolution /æbsə'lu:ʃən/ *n* the act of absolving; *specif* a declaration of forgiveness of sins pronounced by a priest

absolutism /'æbsəlutɪzəm/ *n* (the theory favouring) government by an absolute ruler or authority

absolve /əb'zɒlv/ *v* 1 to set free from an obligation or the consequences of guilt 2 to declare (a sin) of (a person) forgiven by absolution

absorb /əb'sɔ:b, əb'zɔ:b/ *v* 1 to take in and make part of an existing whole; incorporate 2a to suck up or take up b to assimilate; take in 3 to engage or occupy wholly - *ent adj*

absorbing /əb'sɔ:bɪŋ, -'zɔ:-/ *adj* engaging one's full attention; engrossing - *~ly adv*

absorption /əb'sɔ:pʃən, -'zɔ:-/ *n* 1 absorbing or being absorbed 2 total involvement of the mind

abstain /əb'steɪn/ *v* 1 to refrain deliberately, and often with an effort of self-denial, from 2 to refrain from using one's vote

abstemious /əb'stɪmiəs/ *adj* sparing, esp in eating or drinking; marked by abstinence - *~ly adv* - *~ness n*

abstention /əb'stenʃən/ *n* 1 abstaining - often + *from* 2 an instance of withholding a vote

abstinence /'æbstɪnəns/ *also* **abstency** *n* 1 voluntary forbearance, esp from indulgence of appetite or from eating some foods - often + *from* 2 habitual abstaining from intoxicating beverages - esp in *total abstinence* - *-nent adj*

abstract /'æbstrækt/ *adj* 1a detached from any specific instance or object b difficult to understand; abstruse 2 of a *noun* naming a quality, state, or action rather than a thing; not concrete 3 theoretical rather than practical 4 having little or no element of pictorial representation - *~ly adv*

abstract /'æbstrækt/ *n* 1 a summary of points (e.g. of a piece of writing) 2 an abstract concept or state 3 an abstract composition or creation

abstract /əb'strækt, æb-/ *v* 1 to remove, separate 2 to consider in the abstract 3 to make an abstract of; summarize 4 to draw away the attention of 5 to steal, purloin - *euph*

abstracted /əb'stræktɪd, æb-/ *adj* preoccupied, absentminded - *~ly adv*

abstraction /əb'strækʃən, æb-/ *n* 1 an abstract idea or term stripped of its concrete manifestations 2 absent-mindedness 3 an abstract composition or creation

abstruse /əb'stru:s, æb-/ *adj* difficult to understand; recondite - *~ly adv* - *~ness n*

absurd /əb'sɜ:d, -'zɜ:d/ *adj* 1 ridiculously unreasonable or incongruous; silly 2 lacking order or value; meaningless - *~ly adv* - *~ity n*

absurd *n* the state or condition in which human beings exist in an irrational and meaningless universe, and in which their life has no meaning outside their own existence

abundance /ə'bʌndəns/ *n* 1 an ample quantity; a profusion 2 affluence, wealth

abundant /ə'bʌndənt/ *adj* 1a marked by great plenty (e.g. of resources) b amply supplied with; abounding in 2 occurring in abundance - *~ly adv*

abuse /ə'bju:z/ *v* 1 to attack in words; revile 2 to put to a wrong or improper use 3 to use so as to injure or damage; maltreat - *sive adj* - *-sively adv*

abuse /ə'bju:s/ *n* 1 a corrupt practice or custom 2 improper use or treatment; misuse 3 vehemently expressed condemnation or disapproval 4 physical maltreatment

abut /ə'bat/ *v* 1 to border on; touch 2 to lean on for support

abysmal /ə'bɪzmal/ *adj* 1 deplorably great 2 immeasurably bad - *~ly adv*

abyss /ə'bɪs/ *n* 1 the infernal regions in old religions, thought of as a bottomless pit 2a an immeasurably deep gulf b moral or emotional depths

academic /,ækə'demɪk/ *also* **academical** *adj* 1a of an institution of higher learning b scholarly c very learned but inexperienced in practical matters 2 conventional, formal 3