

# Aa

**a** *adjective* (called the *indefinite article* and changing to **an** before most vowel sounds)

**1** one (but not any special one), *Can you lend me a book?* **2** each; per, *We can see it once a day or once an hour.*

**a**<sup>-1</sup> *prefix* **1** on; to; towards (as in *afoot*, *ashore*, *aside*). **2** in the process of (as in *a-hunting*).

**a**<sup>-2</sup> *prefix* (**an-** is used before a vowel sound) not; without (as in *asymmetrical*, *anarchy*). [from Greek *a-* = not]

**aardvark** (say *ahd-vahk*) *noun* an African animal with a pig-like body and a tubular snout, feeding on termites. [from Afrikaans *aarde* = earth, + *vark* = pig]

**ab-** *prefix* (changing to **abs-** before *c* and *t*) away; from (as in *abduct*, *abnormal*, *abstract*). [from Latin *ab* = away]

**aback** *adverb* taken **aback** surprised.

**abacus** (say *ab-uh-kuhs*) *noun* (*plural abacuses*) a frame used for counting with beads sliding on wires. [Latin from Greek from Hebrew]

**abalone** (say *ab-uh-loh-nee*) *noun* an edible mollusc with a shell lined with mother-of-pearl.

**abandon**<sup>1</sup> *verb* **1** give up. **2** leave a person, thing, or place without intending to return, *Abandon ship!* **abandonment** *noun*

**abandon**<sup>2</sup> *noun* a casual and careless manner, *dancing with great abandon.*

**abase** *verb* (**abased**, **abasing**) humiliate.

**abashed** *adjective* embarrassed.

**abate** *verb* (**abated**, **abating**) make or become less; die down, *The storm had abated.* **abatement** *noun*

**abattoir** (say *ab-uh-twah*) *noun* a place where animals are killed for food. [French]

**abess** *noun* the head of an abbey of nuns.

**abbey** *noun* (*plural abbeys*) **1** a monastery or convent. **2** a church that was once part of a monastery, *Westminster Abbey.*

**abbot** *noun* the head of an abbey of monks.

**abbreviate** *verb* (**abbreviated**, **abbreviating**) shorten something.

**abbreviation** *noun* **1** a shortened form of a word or words, such as *maths*, *TV*, *USA*. **2** abbreviating something.

**ABC** *noun* **1** a name for the alphabet, *We know our ABC.* **2** Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

**abdicate** *verb* (**abdicated**, **abdication**) resign from a throne; give up an important responsibility. **abdication** *noun*

**abdomen** (say *ab-duh-muhn*) *noun* **1** the lower front part of a person's or animal's body, containing the stomach, intestines, and other digestive organs. **2** the rear section of an insect's body. **abdominal** (say *ab-dom-uh-nuhl*) *adjective*

**abduct** *verb* take a person away illegally; kidnap. **abduction** *noun*, **abductor** *noun* [from *ab-*, + Latin *ductum* = led]

**aberration** (say *ab-uh-ray-shuhn*) *noun* a deviation from what is normal.

**abet** *verb* (**abetted**, **abetting**) help or encourage someone to commit a crime.

**abetter** or **abettor** *noun*

**abeyance** (say *uh-bay-uhns*) *noun* in **abeyance** suspended or postponed.

**abhor** *verb* (**abhorred**, **abhorring**) detest. **abhorrence** *noun*, **abhorrent** *adjective* [from Latin *abhorre* = shrink in fear]

**abide** *verb* (**abided** (in sense **1** **abode**), **abiding**) **1** (*old use*) remain; dwell. **2** bear; tolerate, *I can't abide flies.*

**abide by** keep a promise; act in accordance with a rule or decision.

**abiding** *adjective* lasting; permanent.

**ability** *noun* (*plural abilities*) **1** being able to do something. **2** cleverness; talent.

**abiotic** *adjective* not having life.

**abject** (say *ab-jekt*) *adjective* **1** wretched; miserable, *living in abject poverty.* **2** humble, *an abject apology.* [from *ab-*, + Latin *-jectum* = thrown]

**ablaze** *adjective* blazing; on fire.

**able** *adjective* **1** having the power or skill or opportunity to do something. **2** skilful; clever. **ably** *adverb*

**ablution** *noun* ceremonial washing of the hands or sacred vessels.

**ablutions** *plural noun* (*informal*) washing yourself, *perform your ablutions.*

**abnormal** *adjective* not normal; unusual.

**abnormality** *noun*, **abnormally** *adverb*

**aboard** *adverb & preposition* on or into a ship or aircraft or train.

**abode**<sup>1</sup> *noun (old use)* the place where someone lives.

**abode**<sup>2</sup> *past tense & past participle* of **abide**.

**abolish** *verb* put an end to. **abolition** (*say* ab-uh-lish-uhn) *noun*

**abominable** *adjective* very bad; detestable. **abominably** *adverb*

**abominate** *verb* (**abominated**, **abominating**) detest. **abomination** *noun*

**aboriginal**<sup>1</sup> *adjective* 1 inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times. 2 (usually **Aboriginal**) of Australian Aboriginal people.

**aboriginal**<sup>2</sup> *noun* 1 an aboriginal inhabitant of a place. 2 (usually **Aboriginal**) a person belonging to one of the indigenous peoples of Australia. 3 (*informal*) (usually **Aboriginal**) any of the numerous Australian Aboriginal languages.

**Aboriginality** *noun* 1 the quality of being Aboriginal. 2 Aboriginal culture.

**aborigine** (*say* ab-uh-rij-uh-nee) *noun* (*plural* **aborigines**) 1 an original inhabitant of a place. 2 (usually **Aborigine**) an aboriginal inhabitant of Australia. [from Latin *ab origine* = from the beginning]

**abort** *verb* put an end to something before it has been completed, *They aborted the space flight because of problems.*

**abortion** *noun* removal of a foetus from the womb before it has developed enough to survive.

**abortive** *adjective* unsuccessful, *an abortive attempt.*

**abound** *verb* 1 be plentiful or abundant, *Fish abound in the river.* 2 have something in great quantities, *The river abounds in fish.*

**about**<sup>1</sup> *preposition* 1 near in amount or size or time; approximately, *It costs about \$5; Come about two o'clock.* 2 on the subject of; in connection with, *Tell me about your holiday.* 3 all round; in various parts of, *They ran about the yard.*

**about**<sup>2</sup> *adverb* 1 approximately. 2 in various directions, *They were running about.* 3 not far away, *He is somewhere about.*

**be about** to be going to do something.

**about-face** *noun* (also **about-turn**) a reversal of previous actions or opinions.

**above**<sup>1</sup> *preposition* 1 higher than. 2 more than.

**above**<sup>2</sup> *adverb* 1 at or to a higher place. 2 earlier in a book or article, *mentioned above.*

**above board** *adjective & adverb* honest; without deception.

**abrade** *verb* (**abraded**, **abrading**) scrape or wear something away by rubbing it. **abrasion** *noun*

**abrasive**<sup>1</sup> *adjective* 1 that abrades things. 2 harsh, *an abrasive manner.*

**abrasive**<sup>2</sup> *noun* a rough substance used for rubbing or polishing things.

**abreast** *adverb* 1 side by side. 2 keeping up with something.

**abridge** *verb* (**abridged**, **abridging**) shorten, especially by using fewer words, *an abridged edition.* **abridgement** *noun* [from Old French *abregier* = shorten]

**abroad** *adverb* in or to another country.

**abrupt** *adjective* 1 sudden; hasty. 2 brief and rude. **abruptly** *adverb*, **abruptness** *noun* [from *ab-*, + Latin *ruptum* = broken]

**ABS** *abbreviation* 1 anti-lock braking system. 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**abs-** *prefix* see **ab-**.

**abscess** (*say* ab-suhs) *noun* (*plural* **abscesses**) an inflamed place where pus has formed in the body.

**abscond** *verb* go away secretly, *The cashier had absconded with the money.*

**abseil** (*say* ab-sayl) *verb* descend a rock face using a doubled rope that is fixed at a higher point.

**absence** *noun* 1 being away; the period of this. 2 a lack of something.

**absent**<sup>1</sup> (*say* ab-suhnt) *adjective* not here; not present, *absent from school.*

**absent**<sup>2</sup> (*say* ab-sent) *verb* **absent yourself** stay away.

**absentee** *noun* a person who is absent. **absenteeism** *noun*

**absent-minded** *adjective* having your mind on other things; forgetful.

**absolute** *adjective* 1 complete. 2 not restricted. [same origin as *absolve*]

**absolutely** *adverb* 1 completely. 2 (*informal*) yes, I agree.

**absolute majority** *noun* a majority over all rivals combined; more than half.

**absolution** *noun* a priest's formal declaration that people's sins are forgiven.

**absolve** *verb* (**absolved**, **absolving**) 1 clear a person of blame or guilt. 2 release from a promise or obligation. [from *ab-*, + Latin *solvere* = set free]

**absorb** *verb* 1 soak up; take in. 2 receive something and reduce its effects, *The buffers absorbed most of the shock.* 3 take up a person's attention or time. **absorbent** *adjective*, **absorption** *noun*

**abstain** *verb* keep yourself from doing something (e.g. from voting); refrain.

**abstainer** *noun*, **abstention** *noun*