

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⁻¹ *prefix* **1** on; to; towards (as in *afloat, ashore, aside*). **2** in the process of (as in *a-hunting*).

a⁻² *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.

abandon¹ *verb* **1** give up. **2** leave a person, thing, or place without intending to return. *Abandon ship!* **abandonment** *noun*

abandon² *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]

abbess *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, abdicating**) 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 *abhorrere* = 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 *-jctum* = 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.

abode¹ *noun* (*old use*) the place where someone lives.

abode² *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*

aboriginal¹ *adjective* **1** inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times. **2** (usually **Aboriginal**) of Australian Aboriginal people.

aboriginal² *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.*

about¹ *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.*

about² *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.

above¹ *preposition* **1** higher than. **2** more than.

above² *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*

abrasive¹ *adjective* **1** that abrades things. **2** harsh, *an abrasive manner.*

abrasive² *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-suh) *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.

absent¹ (*say* ab-suhnt) *adjective* not here; not present, *absent from school.*

absent² (*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*

abstemious (*say* uhb-stee-mee-uhs) *adjective* eating or drinking only small amounts; not greedy. **abstemiously** *adverb*, **abstemiousness** *noun*

abstinence *noun* abstaining, especially from alcohol. **abstinent** *adjective*

abstract¹ (*say* ab-strakt) *adjective* **1** concerned with ideas, not with objects, *Truth is abstract.* **2** (of a painting or sculpture) showing the artist's ideas or feelings, not showing a recognisable person or thing.

abstract² (*say* ab-strakt) *noun* a summary. [from *abs-*, + Latin *tractum* = pulled]

abstracted *adjective* with your mind on other things; not paying attention.

abstract noun *noun* a noun denoting an idea, quality, state, or action.

abstruse (*say* uhb-stroos) *adjective* hard to understand; obscure.

absurd *adjective* ridiculous; foolish. **absurdity** *noun*, **absurdly** *adverb* [from Latin *absurdus* = out of tune]

abundance *noun* plenty.

abundant *adjective* plentiful. **abundantly** *adverb*

abuse¹ (*say* uh-hyooz) *verb* (**abused, abusing**) **1** use badly or wrongly; misuse. **2** ill-treat. **3** say unpleasant things to a person or thing.

abuse² (*say* uh-hyoos) *noun* **1** a misuse. **2** ill-treatment. **3** words abusing a person or thing; insults. **abusive** *adjective* [from *ab-* + *use*]

abut *verb* (**abuted, abutting**) end against something, *Their shed abuts against ours.* **abutment** *noun*

abysmal (*say* uh-biz-muhl) *adjective* extremely bad, *abysmal ignorance.*

abyss (*say* uh-bis) *noun* (*plural abysses*) an extremely deep pit.

AC *abbreviation* **1** (also **ac**) alternating current. **2** Companion of the Order of Australia.

ac- *prefix* see **ad-**.

acacia (*say* uh-kay-shuh) *noun* any tree or shrub of the genus *Acacia*, to which wattles belong.

academic *adjective* **1** of a school or college or university. **2** scholarly. **3** theoretical; having no practical application.

academy *noun* (*plural academies*) **1** a school or college, especially for specialised training. **2** a society of scholars, *The Australian Academy of Science.*

a cappella (*say* ah kuh-pel-uh) *adverb* & *adjective* (of choral music) sung without instrumental accompaniment.

accede (*say* ak-seed) *verb* **1** agree to what is asked or suggested, *accede to a request.* **2** take office; become king or queen, *accede to the throne.* [from *ac-*, + Latin *cedere* = go]

accelerate *verb* (**accelerated, accelerating**) **1** make or become quicker. **2** happen or cause to happen earlier or more quickly. **acceleration** *noun* [from *ac-*, + Latin *celer* = swift]

accelerator *noun* something that speeds things up; the pedal that a driver presses to make a motor vehicle go faster.

accent¹ (*say* ak-sent) *noun* **1** the way a person pronounces words, *She has a French accent.* **2** emphasis; pronouncing part of a word more strongly than the rest. In '*action*', the accent is on '*ac-*'. **3** a mark placed over a letter to show its pronunciation, e.g. on *café*.

accent² (*say* ak-sent) *verb* pronounce part of a word more strongly than the other parts; emphasise.

accentuate (*say* ak-sen-choo-ayt) *verb* (**accentuated, accentuating**) emphasise; accent. **accentuation** *noun*

accept *verb* **1** take a thing that is offered or presented. **2** say yes to an

offer or invitation. **acceptance** *noun*

Usage Do not confuse *accept* with *except*.

acceptable *adjective* worth accepting; pleasing. **acceptability** *noun*, **acceptably** *adverb*

access¹ (*say* **ak-ses**) *noun* a way in; a way to reach something.

access² *verb* find information that has been stored in a computer.

Usage Do not confuse *access* with *excess*.

accessible *adjective* able to be reached. **accessibility** *noun*, **accessibly** *adverb*

accession *noun* 1 reaching a rank or position. 2 an addition. *recent accessions to the library.*

accessory (*say* **uhk-ses-uh-ree**) *noun* (*plural accessories*) 1 an extra thing that goes with something. 2 a person who helps another with a crime.

accident *noun* an unexpected happening, especially one causing injury or damage. **by accident** *adverb* by chance; without its being arranged in advance. [from *ac-*, + Latin *cadens* = falling]

accidental *adjective* happening or done by accident. **accidentally** *adverb*

acclaim *verb* welcome or applaud. **acclaim** *noun*, **acclamation** *noun* [from *ac-*, + Latin *clamare* = to shout]

acclimatise *verb* (**acclimatised**, **acclimatising**) make or become used to a new climate or new conditions. **acclimatisation** *noun*

accolade (*say* **ak-uh-layd**) *noun* 1 praise. 2 the ceremonial conferring of a knighthood by tapping a person on the shoulders with a sword.

accommodate *verb* (**accommodated**, **accommodating**) 1 provide room or lodging for somebody. 2 help by providing something. *We can accommodate you with skis.*

accommodation *noun* somewhere to live; lodgings.

accompanist *noun* a person who plays a musical accompaniment.

accompany *verb* (**accompanied**, **accompanying**) 1 go somewhere with somebody. 2 be present with something. *Thunder accompanied the storm.* 3 play music that supports a singer or another player. **accompaniment** *noun*

accomplice (*say* **uh-kum-pluhs**) *noun* a person who helps another in a crime or wrongdoing.

accomplish *verb* do something successfully. **accomplishment** *noun*

accomplished *adjective* skilled. **accord**¹ *noun* 1 agreement; consent. 2 a formal agreement or treaty. **of your own accord** voluntarily; without being asked or compelled.

accord² *verb* 1 be consistent with something. 2 (*formal*) give. *He was accorded this privilege.*

accordance *noun* in accordance with in agreement with. *This is done in accordance with the rules.*

according *adverb* **according to** 1 as stated by. *According to him, she's a genius.* 2 in a way that suits. *Price the apples according to their size.*

accordingly *adverb* 1 in the way that is required. *It's a formal occasion, so please dress accordingly.* 2 therefore.

accordion *noun* a portable musical instrument like a large concertina with bellows, metal reeds, and keys or buttons. **accordionist** *noun*

accost *verb* approach and speak to a person.

account¹ *noun* 1 a statement of money owed, spent, or received; a bill. 2 an arrangement to keep money in a bank or firm. 3 a description; a report.

on account of because of. **on no account** certainly not. **take into account** consider.

account² *verb* **account for** make it clear why something happens.

accountable *adjective* responsible; having to explain why you have done something. **accountability** *noun*

accountant *noun* a keeper or inspector of financial accounts. **accountancy** *noun*

accounting *noun* keeping financial accounts.

accredited *adjective* officially recognised. *our accredited agent.*

accrue (*say* **uh-kroo**) *verb* (**accrued**, **accruing**) accumulate. **accrual** *noun*

accumulate *verb* (**accumulated**, **accumulating**) 1 collect; pile up. 2 grow numerous; increase.

accumulation *noun* [from *ac-*, + Latin *cumulus* = heap]

accumulator *noun* a storage battery.

accurate *adjective* correct; exact. **accuracy** *noun*, **accurately** *adverb*

accuse *verb* (**accused**, **accusing**) claim that someone has done something wrong; blame. **accusation** *noun*, **accuser** *noun*

accustom *verb* make a person become used to something. [from *ac-* + *custom*]

accustomed *adjective* customary; usual.

ace *noun* 1 a playing card with one spot. 2 a very skilful person or thing.

acetylene (*say* **uh-set-uh-leen**) *noun* a gas that burns with a bright flame, used in cutting and welding metal.

ache¹ *noun* 1 a dull continuous pain. 2 mental distress.

ache² *verb* (**ached**, **aching**) have an ache.

achieve *verb* (**achieved**, **achieving**) succeed in doing or producing something; accomplish. **achievable** *adjective*, **achievement** *noun* [from Old French *a chief* = to a head]

acid¹ *noun* a chemical substance that contains hydrogen and neutralises alkalis. **acidic** *adjective*, **acidity** *noun*

acid² *adjective* 1 sharp-tasting; sour. 2 looking or sounding bitter. *an acid reply.*

acidly *adverb*

acid rain *noun* rain made acid by mixing with waste gases from industrial processes such as power generation.

acid test *noun* a severe or conclusive test.

acknowledge *verb* (**acknowledged**, **acknowledging**) 1 admit that something is true. 2 state that you have received or noticed something. *Acknowledge this letter.* 3 express thanks or appreciation for something. **acknowledgement** or **acknowledgment** *noun*

acknowledgement of country *noun* (*Australian*) a formal recognition of the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land.

acme (*say* **ak-mee**) *noun* the highest degree of something. *the acme of perfection.* [from Greek *akme* = highest point]

acne (*say* **ak-nee**) *noun* inflamed red pimples on the face and neck.

acorn *noun* the seed of the oak tree.

acoustic (*say* **uh-koo-stik**) *adjective* 1 of sound or hearing. 2 (of a musical instrument) not electronic. *an*

acoustic guitar. **acoustically** *adverb* [from Greek *akouein* = hear]

acoustics *plural noun* 1 the qualities of a room or building that make it good or bad for carrying sound. 2 the properties of sound.

acquaint *verb* tell somebody about something. *Acquaint him with the facts.*

be acquainted with know slightly.

acquaintance *noun* 1 a person you know slightly. 2 being acquainted.

acquiesce (*say* **ak-wee-es**) *verb* (**acquiesced**, **acquiescing**) agree to something. **acquiescence** *noun*, **acquiescent** *adjective*

acquire *verb* (**acquired**, **acquiring**) obtain. **acquisition** *noun* [from *ac-*, + Latin *quaerere* = seek]

acquisitive (*say* **uh-kwiz-uh-tiv**) *adjective* eager to acquire things.

acquit *verb* (**acquitted**, **acquitting**) decide that somebody is not guilty. **acquittal** *noun*

acre (*say* **ay-kuh**) *noun* an area of land measuring 0.405 hectares.

acreage *noun*

acrid *adjective* bitter. *an acrid smell.*

acrimonious (*say* **ak-ruh-moh-nee-uhz**) *adjective* (of a person's manner or words) sharp and bad-tempered or bitter. **acrimony** (*say* **ak-ruh-muh-nee**) *noun*

acrobat *noun* a person who performs spectacular gymnastic stunts for entertainment. **acrobatic** *adjective*, **acrobatics** *plural noun* [from Greek *akrobatos* = walking on tiptoe]

acronym (*say* **ak-ruh-nim**) *noun* a word or name formed from the initial letters of other words. *ASEAN is an acronym of Association of South East Asian Nations.* [from Greek *akros* = top, + *onyma* = name]

across *preposition & adverb* 1 from one side to the other. *Swim across the river. Are you across yet?* 2 on the opposite side. *the house across the street.*

across the board applying to all.

acrostic *noun* a word puzzle or poem in which the first or last letters of each line form a word or words.

acrylic (*say* **uh-kril-ik**) *noun* a kind of fibre, plastic, or resin made from an organic acid.

act¹ *noun* 1 an action. 2 a law passed by a parliament. 3 one of the main divisions of a play or opera. 4 a short performance in a program of entertainment. *a juggling act.* 5 (*informal*) a pretence. *She is only putting on an act.*

act² *verb* 1 do something; behave; perform actions. 2 perform a part in a play or film. 3 function; have an effect. 4 pretend. [from Latin *actum* = done]

acting *adjective* serving temporarily, especially as a substitute. *the acting principal.*

action *noun* 1 doing something. 2 something done. 3 a battle; fighting. *He was killed in action.* 4 a lawsuit. 5 a series of events in a story or play. 6 exciting activity. *an action-packed holiday.* 7 the mechanism of an instrument. **out of action** not functioning. **take action** do something.

activate *verb* (**activated**, **activating**) start something working. **activation** *noun*, **activator** *noun*

active *adjective* 1 doing things; moving about; taking part in activities. 2 functioning; in operation. *an active volcano.* 3 radioactive. 4 (of a form of a verb) used when the subject of the verb is performing the action. In 'Tom washed the car' the verb is active; in 'The car was washed by

Tom' the verb is passive. (Compare **passive**.) **actively** *adverb*, **activeness** *noun*

activist *noun* a person who believes in vigorous action, especially in politics.

activity *noun* (*plural activities*) 1 an action or occupation. *outdoor activities.* 2 being active or lively.

actor *noun* a performer in a play or film.

actress *noun* a female actor.

actual *adjective* real. **actuality** *noun*, **actually** *adverb*

actuate *verb* (**actuated**, **actuating**) activate. **actuation** *noun*

acumen (*say* **ak-yuh-muhn**) *noun* sharpness of mind. [Latin, = a point]

acupuncture (*say* **ak-yuh-pungk-chuh**) *noun* pricking parts of the body with needles to relieve pain or cure disease. **acupuncturist** *noun* [from Latin *acu* = with a needle, + *puncture*]

acute *adjective* 1 sharp; strong. *acute pain.* 2 having a sharp mind. 3 (of an illness) coming quickly to a crisis. *acute appendicitis.* **acutely** *adverb*, **acuteness** *noun*

acute accent *noun* a mark over a vowel, as over *e* in *café*.

acute angle *noun* an angle of less than 90°.

AD *abbreviation* Anno Domini (Latin = in the year of Our Lord), used in dates counted from the birth of Jesus Christ. *The Roman Emperor Nero died in AD 68.*

ad- *prefix* (changing to *ac-*, *af-*, *ag-*, *al-*, *an-*, *ap-*, *ar-*, *as-*, *at-* before certain consonants) to; towards (as in *adapt*, *admit*). [from Latin *ad* = to]

adage (*say* **ad-ij**) *noun* a short saying; a proverb.

adagio (*say* **uh-dah-zhee-oh**) *adverb & adjective* (in music) in slow time. [Italian]

adamant (*say* **ad-uh-muhnt**) *adjective* firm and not giving way to requests.

Adam's apple *noun* the lump at the front of a man's neck.

adapt *verb* make or become suitable for a new purpose or situation.

adaptable *adjective* [from *ad-*, + Latin *aptus* = fitted]

adaptation *noun* 1 the process of adapting or being adapted. 2 a thing that has been adapted. 3 the process by which an organism or species becomes suited to its environment. *Living in groups is an adaptation to increase the efficiency of hunting.*

adaptor *noun* a device to connect pieces of electrical or other equipment.

ADD *abbreviation* attention deficit disorder.

add *verb* 1 put one thing with another. 2 make another remark. **add to** increase.

add up 1 make or find a total. 2 (*informal*) make sense; seem reasonable.

addendum *noun* (*plural addenda*) a thing added at the end of a book. [Latin, = thing to be added]

adder *noun* a small poisonous snake. [originally called a *nadder*, which became an *adder*]

addict *noun* a person who does or uses something that they cannot give up. **addicted** *adjective*, **addiction** *noun* [from Latin *addictus* = person given as a servant to someone to whom he owes money]

addictive *adjective* causing people to become addicts. *an addictive drug.*

addition *noun* 1 the process of adding. 2 something added. **additional** *adjective*, **additionally** *adverb* **in addition** also; as an extra thing.