

Collins
ENGLISH
DICTIONARY

A

**Collins English Dictionary –
Essential Edition**

Editie voor de Nederlandstalige markt

Eerste editie
Eerste oplage, 2024

Van Dale Uitgevers
ISBN 978 94 6077 668 7
NUR 627

© HarperCollins Publishers 2019

www.collinsdictionary.com
Zetwerk: Davidson Publishing Solutions

Collins® is a registered trademark of
HarperCollins Publishers Limited.
De merknaam *Van Dale* is voor alle
publicaties van Van Dale Uitgevers als
merknaam beschermd.

All rights reserved. No part of this book
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval
system, or transmitted in any form or
by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording or otherwise,
without the prior permission in writing of
the Publisher. This book is sold subject to
the conditions that it shall not, by way of
trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired
out or otherwise circulated without the
Publisher's prior consent in any form of
binding or cover other than that in which
it is published and without a similar
condition including this condition being
imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Entered words that we have reason to believe
constitute trademarks have been designated
as such. However, neither the presence
nor absence of such designation should be
regarded as affecting the legal status of any
trademark. The contents of this publication
are believed correct at the time of printing.
Nevertheless, the Publisher can accept
no responsibility for errors or omissions,
changes in the detail given or for any
expense or loss thereby caused.

Voor eventuele overname van gedeelten
uit het woordenboek is schriftelijke
toestemming van de uitgever noodzakelijk.
De uitgever kan geen aansprakelijkheid
aanvaarden voor eventuele schade die zou
kunnen voortvloeien uit enige fout die in
deze uitgave zou kunnen voorkomen.
Dit woordenboek bevat enkele woorden die
als handelsnaam of merknaam worden
gebruikt. Uit opname van deze woorden
kan niet worden afgeleid dat afstand wordt
gedaan van bepaalde (eigendoms)rechten,
dan wel dat Van Dale Uitgevers bv zulke
rechten miskent.

Van Dale Uitgevers vindt het belangrijk
om op milieuvriendelijke en verantwoorde
wijze met natuurlijke bronnen om te gaan.
Bij de productie van dit boek is daarom
gebruikgemaakt van papier waarvan
het zeker is dat de productie niet tot
bosvernietiging heeft geleid.

Correspondentieadres: redactie@vandale.nl
www.vandale.nl / www.vandale.be

Contents

v

Foreword

vi–vii

Using this dictionary

viii

Abbreviations used in this dictionary

1–951

Collins English Dictionary

Supplement:

Common mistakes and controversial issues

Foreword

The purpose of Collins Dictionaries is simple: to take as sharp and as true a picture of language as possible. In order to stay at the forefront of language developments we have an extensive reading, listening and viewing programme, taking in broadcasts, websites and publications from around the globe. These are fed into our monitoring system, an unparalleled 4.5 billion-word analytical database: the Collins Corpus. By analysing this data, Collins editors are able to build up a picture of the vocabulary of today, and how it is being used.

Now Collins has another important word-tracking resource. When we launched Collins Dictionary online in 2012, we invited word lovers across the globe to contribute new words and help us make our word collection process truly democratic. By 2019, we had received well over 20,000 suggestions, opening up whole new worlds of words and areas of language for the editors to consider.

Everyone is welcome to join us in the home of living English by contributing new words and meanings at www.collinsdictionary.com, where we celebrate the extraordinary breadth and changing nature of English worldwide.

Using this dictionary

- Main entry words** printed in large bold type, eg
abbey
All main entry words, including abbreviations and combining forms, in one alphabetical sequence, eg
abbot
abbreviate
ABC¹
ABC²
abdicate
- Variant spellings** shown in full, eg
adrenalin or **adrenaline**
Note: where the spellings **-ize** and **-ization** are used at the end of a word, the alternative forms **-ise** and **-isation** are equally acceptable.
- Pronunciations** given in brackets for words that are difficult or confusing; the word is respelt as it is pronounced, with the stressed syllable in bold type, eg
antipodes (an-**tip**-pod-deez)
- Parts of speech** shown in italics as an abbreviation, eg
ablaze *adj*
When a word can be used as more than one part of speech, the change of part of speech is shown after an arrow, eg
adept *adj* 1 proficient in something requiring skill ▷ *n* 2 a person skilled in something
Parts of speech may be combined for words, eg
awash *adv, adj* washed over by water

Using this dictionary

Irregular parts or confusing forms of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs shown in bold type, eg

begin *vb* -ginning, -gan, -gun

regret *vb* -gretting, -gretted

anniversary *n, pl* -ries

angry *adj* -grier, -griest

well *adv* better, best

Meanings separated by numbers, eg

absorb *vb* **1** to soak up a liquid

2 to engage the interest of

someone **3** to receive the force

of an impact ...

Phrases and idioms are included in the meanings of the main entry word, eg

hand ... 22 keep one's hand in to continue to practise something

23 (near) at hand very close

24 on hand close by; available

Related words shown in the same paragraph as the main entry word, eg

absurd *adj* obviously senseless or illogical; ridiculous [Latin

absurdus] **absurdity** *n* **absurdly** *adv*

Note: where the meaning of a related word is not given, it may be understood from the main entry word, or from another related word.

Usage notes introduced by the label USAGE, eg

USAGE The phrase *with bated breath* is sometimes wrongly spelled *with baited breath*.

Abbreviations used in this dictionary

<i>Abbrev</i>	abbreviation	<i>geom</i>	geometry
<i>AD</i>	anno Domini	<i>interj</i>	interjection
<i>adj</i>	adjective	<i>masc</i>	masculine
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>med</i>	medicine
<i>anthropol</i>	anthropology	<i>meteorol</i>	meteorology
<i>archaeol</i>	archaeology	<i>myth</i>	mythology
<i>archit</i>	architecture	<i>n</i>	noun
<i>astrol</i>	astrology	<i>N</i>	North
<i>astron</i>	astronomy	<i>naut</i>	nautical
<i>Austral</i>	Australia(n)	<i>NZ</i>	New Zealand
<i>bacteriol</i>	bacteriology	<i>ornithol</i>	ornithology
<i>BC</i>	before Christ	<i>pathol</i>	pathology
<i>biochem</i>	biochemistry	<i>pharmacol</i>	pharmacology
<i>biol</i>	biology	<i>photog</i>	photography
<i>Brit</i>	British	<i>physiol</i>	physiology
<i>Canad</i>	Canadian	<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>cap</i>	capital(s)	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>chem</i>	chemistry	<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>conj</i>	conjunction	<i>psychol</i>	psychology
<i>crystallog</i>	crystallography	<i>RC</i>	Roman Catholic
<i>E</i>	East	<i>S</i>	South
<i>econ</i>	economics	<i>Scot</i>	Scottish
<i>eg</i>	for example	<i>sing</i>	singular
<i>esp.</i>	especially	<i>sociol</i>	sociology
<i>etc.</i>	et cetera	<i>theol</i>	theology
<i>fem</i>	feminine	<i>US</i>	United States
<i>fol</i>	followed	<i>vb</i>	verb
<i>geog</i>	geography	<i>W</i>	West
<i>geol</i>	geology	<i>zool</i>	zoology

Aa

a or **A** *n*, *pl a's, A's* or **As** **1** the first letter of the English alphabet **2** from **A** to **B** from one place to another: *I just want a car that takes me from A to B* **3** from **A** to **Z** from start to finish

a *adj* (*indefinite article*) **1** used preceding a singular count noun that has not been mentioned before: *a book*; *a great shame* **2** used preceding a noun or adjective of quantity: *a litre of wine*; *a great amount has been written*; *I swim a lot and walk much more* **3** each or every; per: *I saw him once a week for six weeks*

A **1** *music* the sixth note of the scale of C major **2** ampere(s) **3** atomic: *an A-bomb*

Å angstrom unit

a- or **before a vowel an-** *prefix* not or without: *atonal*; *asexual*; *anaemia* [Greek]

A1, A-1 or **A-one** *adj informal* first-class, excellent

A4 *n* a standard paper size, 297 × 210 mm

AA **1** Alcoholics Anonymous **2** (in Britain and South Africa) Automobile Association

AAA *Brit* (formerly) Amateur Athletic Association

A & R artists and repertoire

aardvark *n* a S African anteater with long ears and snout [obsolete Afrikaans: earth pig]

AB **1** able-bodied seaman **2** Alberta

ab- *prefix* away from or opposite to: *abnormal* [Latin]

aback *adv taken aback* startled or disconcerted

abacus (ab-a-cuss) *n* a counting device consisting of a frame holding beads on metal rods [Latin]

abaft *adv, adj naut* closer to the stern of a ship [Old English *be by + æftan* behind]

abalone (ab-a-lone-ee) *n* an edible sea creature with a shell lined with mother-of-pearl [American Spanish *abulón*]

abandon *vb* **1** to desert or leave: *he had already abandoned his first wife* **2** to give up completely: *did you abandon all attempts at contact with the boy?* **3** to give oneself over completely to an emotion ▷ *n* **4** **with abandon** uninhibitedly and without restraint [Old French *a bandon* under one's control] **abandonment** *n*

abandoned *adj* **1** no longer used or occupied: *four people were found dead in an abandoned vehicle* **2** wild and uninhibited: *that fluffy abandoned laugh*

abase *vb* **abasing, abased** ▷ **abase oneself** to make oneself humble [Old French *abaissier*] **abatement** *n*

abashed *adj* embarrassed and ashamed [Old French *eschair* to be astonished]

abate *vb* **abating, abated** to make or become less strong: *the tension has abated in recent months* [Old French *abatre* to beat down] **abatement** *n*

abattoir (ab-a-twahr) *n* a slaughterhouse [French *abattre* to fell]

abbacy *n, pl -cies* the office or jurisdiction of an abbot or abbess [Church Latin *abbatia*]

abbé (ab-bay) *n* a French abbot or other cleric

abess *n* the nun in charge of a convent [Church Latin *abbatissa*]

abbey *n* **1** a church associated with a community of monks or nuns **2** a community of monks or nuns **3** a building inhabited by monks or nuns [Church Latin *abbatia* **ABBACY**]

abbot *n* the head of an abbey of monks [Aramaic *abbā* father]

abbreviate *vb -ating, -ated* **1** to shorten a word by leaving out some letters **2** to cut short [Latin *brevis* brief] **abbreviation** *n*

ABC¹ *n* **1** the alphabet **2** an alphabetical guide **3** the basics of something

ABC² Australian Broadcasting Corporation

abdicate *vb -cating, -cated* **1** to give up the throne formally **2** to give up one's responsibilities [Latin *abdicare* to disclaim]

abdication *n*

abdomen *n* the part of the body that contains the stomach and intestines [Latin] **abdominal** *adj*

abdominoplasty *n* the surgical removal of excess skin and fat from the abdomen

abduct *vb* to remove (a person) by force; kidnap [Latin *abducere* to lead away] **abduction** *n*

abductor *n*

abeam *adv, adj* at right angles to the length of a ship or aircraft

Aberdeen Angus *n* a black hornless breed of beef cattle originating in Scotland

aberrant *adj* not normal, accurate, or correct: *aberrant behaviour*

aberration *n* **1** a sudden change from what is normal, accurate, or correct **2** a brief lapse in control of one's thoughts or feelings: *he suddenly had a mental aberration* [Latin *aberrare* to wander away]

abet *vb* **abetting, abetted** to help or encourage in wrongdoing [Old French *abeter* to lure on]

abeyance *n* **in abeyance** put aside temporarily [Old French *abeance*, literally: a gaping after]

abhor *vb -horring, -horred* to detest utterly [Latin *abhorrere* to shudder at]

abhorrent *adj* hateful or disgusting **abhorrence** *n*

abide *vb* **1** to tolerate: *I can't abide stupid people* **2** to last or exist for a long time: *these instincts, while subdued in the individual, may abide in the race* **3** **abide by** to act in accordance with: *we must abide by the findings of the report* **4** *archaic* to live [Old English *āidan*, from *a-* (intensive) + *īdan* to wait]

abiding *adj* lasting for ever: *an abiding interest in history* **ability** *n, pl -ties* **1** possession of the necessary skill or power to do something **2** great skill or competence: *his ability as a speaker was legendary* [Latin *habilitas*]

abject *adj* **1** utterly miserable: *his mother grew up in abject poverty* **2** lacking all self-respect [Latin *abjectus* thrown away] **abjectly** *adv*

abjure *vb -juring, -jured* to renounce or deny under oath [Latin *abjurare*] **abjuration** *n*

ablation *n* **1** the surgical removal of an organ or part **2** the wearing away of a rock or glacier **3** the melting of a part, such as the heat shield of a space re-entry vehicle [Latin *ablatus* carried away]

ablaze *adj* **1** on fire **2** brightly illuminated: *the sky was ablaze with the stars shining bright* **3** emotionally aroused: *his eyes were ablaze with anger*

able *adj* **1** having the necessary power, skill, or opportunity to do something **2** capable or talented [Latin *habilis* easy to hold]

-able *adj* *suffix* able to be acted upon as specified: *washable* [Latin *-abilis, -ibilis*] **-ably** *suffix* forming adverbs **-ability** *suffix* forming nouns

able-bodied *adj* **1** strong and healthy **2** not having a physical disability

USAGE When talking about people who do not have a disability, the term *non-disabled* is preferred.

able-bodied seaman or **able seaman** *n* a seaman who is trained in certain skills

abled *adj* having a range of physical powers as specified: *less abled; differently abled*

ableism (*ay-bel-iz-zum*) *n* discrimination against people with disabilities

able rating *n* (in Britain) a seaman of the lowest rank in a navy

ablutions *pl n* the act of washing: *after the nightly ablutions, I settled down to read* [Latin *abluer* to wash away]

ably *adv* competently or skilfully

ABM antiballistic missile

abnegation *n* the act of giving something up [Latin *abnegare* to deny]

abnormal *adj* differing from the usual or typical **abnormality** *n* **abnormally** *adv*

aboard *adv, adj, prep* on, in, onto, or into (a ship, plane, or train)

abode *n* one's home [from *ABIDE*]

abolish *vb* to do away with (laws, regulations, or customs) [Latin *abolere* to destroy]

abolition *n* **1** the act of doing away with something: *the abolition of the death penalty*

2 Abolition the ending of slavery **abolitionist** *n, adj*

A-bomb *n* short for **atomic bomb**

abominable *adj* very bad or unpleasant: *I think that what is being done here is utterly abominable*

abominably *adv*

abominable snowman *n* a large creature, like a man or an ape, that is said to live in the Himalayas [translation of Tibetan *metohkangmi* foul snowman]

abominate *vb* **-nating, -nated** to dislike intensely [Latin *abominari* to regard as an ill omen]

abomination *n*

aboriginal *adj* existing in a place from the earliest known period [Latin *aborigines* the name of the inhabitants of Latium in pre-Roman times]

Aboriginal *adj* of or relating to the peoples who inhabited Australia before the arrival of European settlers

Aborigine *n* *offensive* a member or descendant of any of the peoples who were already living in Australia before the arrival of European settlers

USAGE The noun *Aborigine* is now considered offensive. It is better to use the term *Aboriginal* people or *Indigenous* people.

abort *vb* **1** (of a pregnancy) to end before the fetus is viable **2** to perform an abortion on a pregnant

woman **3** to end a plan or process before completion [Latin *abortare*]

abortion *n* **1** an operation to end pregnancy **2** the premature ending of a pregnancy when a fetus is expelled from the womb before it can live independently **3** the failure of a mission or project **4** *offensive* something that is grotesque **abortionist** *n*

abortion pill *n* a drug used to terminate a pregnancy in its earliest stage

abortive *adj* failing to achieve its purpose

abound *vb* **1** to exist in large numbers **2** **abound in** to have a large number of [Latin *abundare* to overflow]

about *prep* **1** relating to or concerning **2** near to **3** carried on: *I haven't any money about me* **4** on every side of **▷ adv** **5** near in number, time, or degree; approximately **6** nearby **7** here and there: *there were some fifteen other people scattered about on the first floor **8** all around; on every side **9** in or to the opposite direction **10** in rotation: *turn and turn about* **11** used to indicate understatement: *it's about time somebody told the truth on that subject**

12 about to on the point of; intending to: *she was about to get in the car* **13 not about to** determined not to: *we're not about to help her out* **▷ adj** **14 active:** *he was off the premises well before anyone was up and about* [Old English *abūtan, onbūtan* on the outside of]

about-turn or **US about-face** *n* **1** a complete change of opinion or direction **2** a reversal of the direction in which one is facing

above *prep* **1** higher than; over **2** greater than in quantity or degree: *above average* **3** superior to or higher than in quality, rank, or ability **4** too high-minded for: *she considered herself above the task of working* **5** too respected for; beyond: *his fleet was above suspicion* **6** too difficult to be understood by: *a discussion that was way above my head* **7** louder or higher than (other noise) **8** in preference to **9** **above all** most of all; especially **▷ adv** **10** in or to a higher place: *the hills above* **11** in a previous place (in something written or printed)

12 higher in rank or position **▷ n** **13 the above** something previously mentioned **▷ adj** **14** appearing in a previous place (in something written or printed): *for a copy of the free brochure write to the above address* [Old English *abufan*]

above board *adj* completely honest and open

abracadabra *n* a word used by conjurers when performing a magic trick [Latin]

abrasion *n* **1** a scraped area on the skin; graze

2 *geog* the erosion of rock by rock fragments scratching and scraping it [Latin *abradere* to scrape away]

abrasive *adj* **1** rude and unpleasant in manner **2** tending to rub or scrape; rough

▷ n **3** a substance used for cleaning, smoothing, or polishing

abreast *adj* **1** alongside each other and facing in the same direction: *the two cars were abreast*

2 **abreast of** up to date with

abridge *vb* **abridging, abridged** to shorten a written work by taking out parts [Late Latin *abbreviare*] **abridgment** or **abridgement** *n*

abroad *adv* **1** to or in a foreign country

2 generally known or felt: *there is a new spirit abroad*

abrogate *vb* **-gating, -gated** to cancel (a law or an agreement) formally [from Latin *ab-* away + *rogare* to propose a law] **abrogation** *n*

abrupt *adj* **1** sudden or unexpected: *an abrupt departure **2** rather rude in speech or manner [Latin *abruptus* broken off] **abruptly** *adv**

abruptness *n*

abs *pl n* abdominal muscles

abscess (**ab-** + **sess**) *n* **1** a swelling containing pus as a result of inflammation **▷ vb 2** to form a swelling containing pus [Latin *abscessus* literally: a throwing off] **abscessed** *adj*

abscissa *n, pl -scissas or -scissae* *maths* (in a two-dimensional system of Cartesian coordinates) the distance from the vertical axis measured parallel to the horizontal axis [New Latin *linea abscissa* a cut-off line]

abscond *vb* to run away unexpectedly [Latin *abscondere* to conceal]

abseil (**ab-** + **sale**) *vb 1* to go down a steep drop by a rope fastened at the top and tied around one's body **▷ n 2** an instance of abseiling [German *abseilen*]

absence *n 1* the state of being away **2** the time during which a person or thing is away **3** the fact of being without something

absent *adj 1* not present in a place or situation **2** lacking **3** not paying attention **▷ vb 4** **absent oneself** to stay away [Latin *absens*] **absently** *adv*

absentee *n* a person who should be present but is not

absenteeism *n* persistent absence from work or school

absent-minded *adj* inattentive or forgetful

absent-mindedly *adv*

absinthe *n* a strong, green, alcoholic drink, originally containing wormwood [Greek *apsinthion* wormwood]

absolute *adj 1* total and complete: *he ordered an immediate and absolute ceasefire* **2** with unrestricted power and authority: *she has absolute control with fifty per cent of the shares* **3** undoubted or certain: *I was telling the absolute truth* **4** not dependent on or relative to anything else **5** pure; unmixed: *absolute alcohol* **▷ n 6** a principle or rule believed to be unfaillingly correct **7** **the Absolute** *philosophy* that which is totally unconditioned, perfect, or complete [Latin *absolutus*]

absolutely *adv 1* completely or perfectly **▷ interj 2** yes indeed, certainly

absolute majority *n* a number of votes totalling over 50 per cent, such as the total number of votes that beats the combined opposition

absolute pitch *n* the ability to identify the pitch of a note, or to sing a given note, without reference to one previously sounded

absolute zero *n* *physics* the lowest temperature theoretically possible, at which the particles that make up matter would be at rest: equivalent to -273.15°C or -459.67°F

absolution *n* *Christianity* a formal forgiveness of sin pronounced by a priest

absolutism *n* a political system in which a monarch or dictator has unrestricted power

absolve *vb -solving, -solved* to declare to be free from blame or sin [Latin *absolvere*]

absorb *vb 1* to soak up a liquid **2** to engage the interest of someone **3** to receive the force of an impact **4** *physics* to take in radiant energy and retain it **5** to take in or incorporate: *this country has absorbed almost one million refugees* [Latin *absorbere* to suck] **absorbent** *adj* **absorbing** *adj*

absorption *n 1* the process of absorbing something or the state of being absorbed **2** *physiol* the process by which nutrients enter the tissues of an animal or a plant **absorptive** *adj*

abstain *vb 1* (usually foll. by *from*) to choose not to do or partake of something: *you will be asked to abstain from food prior to your general anaesthetic* **2** to choose not to vote [Latin *abstinere*] **abstainer** *n*

abstemious (**ab-** + **stem** + **-ee-** + **uss**) *adj* taking very little alcohol or food [Latin *abstemius*]

abstemiously *adv* **abstemiousness** *n*

abstention *n 1* the formal act of not voting **2** the act of abstaining from something, such as drinking alcohol

abstinence *n* the practice of choosing not to do something one would like **abstinent** *adj*

abstract *adj 1* referring to ideas or qualities rather than material objects: *an abstract noun* **2** not applied or practical; theoretical: *he was frustrated by the highly abstract mathematics being taught* **3** of art in which the subject is represented by shapes and patterns rather than by a realistic likeness **▷ n 4** a summary **5** an abstract painting or sculpture **6** an abstract word or idea **7** **in the abstract** without referring to specific circumstances **▷ vb 8** to summarize **9** to remove or extract [Latin *abstractus* drawn off]

abstracted *adj* lost in thought; preoccupied

abstractedly *adv*

abstraction *n 1* a general idea rather than a specific example: *these absurd philosophical abstractions continued to bother him* **2** the quality of being abstract or abstracted

abstruse *adj* not easy to understand [Latin *abstrusus* concealed]

absurd *adj* obviously senseless or illogical; ridiculous [Latin *absurdus*] **absurdity** *n*

absurdly *adv*

abundance *n 1* a great amount **2** degree of plentifulness **3** **in abundance** in great amounts: *they had fish and fruit in abundance* [Latin *abundare* to abound] **abundant** *adj*

abundantly *adv 1* very: *he made his disagreement with the prime minister abundantly clear* **2** plentifully; in abundance

abuse *n 1* prolonged ill-treatment or violence towards someone: *child abuse* **2** insulting comments **3** improper use: *an abuse of power* **▷ vb** **abusing, abused 4** to take advantage of dishonestly: *these two ministers had abused their position for financial gain* **5** to ill-treat violently or sexually: *he had been sexually abused as a child* **6** to speak insultingly or cruelly to [Latin *abuti* to misuse] **abuser** *n*

abusive *adj 1* rude or insulting: *he was alleged to have used abusive language towards spectators* **2** involving cruelty and ill-treatment: *an abusive relationship* **abusively** *adv*

abut *vb* **abutting, abutted** to be next to or touching [Old French *abouter*]

abutment *n* a construction that supports the end of a bridge

abysmal *adj* *informal* extremely bad [Medieval Latin *abyssus* abyss] **abysmally** *adv*

abys *n* 1 a very deep hole in the ground 2 a frightening or threatening situation: *the abyss of revolution and war ahead* [Greek *abyssos* bottomless]

Ac *chem* actinium

AC 1 alternating current 2 athletic club

a/c 1 account 2 account current

acacia (a-kay-sha) *n* a shrub or tree with small yellow or white flowers [Greek *akakia*]

academic *adj* 1 relating to a college or university 2 (of pupils) having an aptitude for study 3 relating to studies such as languages and pure science rather than technical or professional studies 4 of theoretical interest only: *the argument is academic* ▷ *n* 5 a member of the teaching or research staff of a college or university

academically *adv*

academy *n*, *pl* -mies 1 a society for the advancement of literature, art, or science 2 a school for training in a particular skill: *sixteen hundred students would also spend their first year at the military academy* 3 a secondary school [Greek *akadēmeia* the place where Plato taught]

Acadian *adj* 1 denoting or relating to Acadia or its inhabitants ▷ *n* 2 any of the early French settlers in Nova Scotia ▷ See also **Cajun**

acanthus *n* 1 a plant with large spiny leaves and spikes of white or purplish flowers 2 a carved ornament based on the leaves of the acanthus plant [Greek *akantha* thorn]

ACAS (in Britain) Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service

ACC (in New Zealand) Accident Compensation Corporation

acc. 1 *grammar* accusative 2 account

accede *vb* -ceding, -ceded ▷ **accede to** 1 to agree to 2 to take up (an office or position): *he acceded to the throne after his Irish exile* [Latin *accedere*]

accelerando *adv* *music* with increasing speed [Italian]

accelerate *vb* -ating, -ated 1 to move or cause to move more quickly 2 to cause to happen sooner than expected [Latin *accelerare*]

acceleration *n* 1 the act of increasing speed 2 the rate of increase of speed or the rate of change of velocity

accelerator *n* 1 a pedal in a motor vehicle that is pressed to increase speed 2 *physics* a machine for increasing the speed and energy of charged particles

accent *n* 1 the distinctive style of pronunciation of a person or group from a particular area, country, or social background 2 a mark used in writing to indicate the prominence of a syllable or the way a vowel is pronounced 3 particular emphasis: *there will be an accent on sport and many will enjoy rowing* 4 the stress on a syllable or musical note ▷ *vb* 5 to lay particular emphasis on [Latin *accentus*]

accentuate *vb* -ating, -ated to stress or emphasize **accentuation** *n*

accept *vb* 1 to take or receive something offered 2 to agree to 3 to consider something as true

4 to tolerate or resign oneself to 5 to take on the responsibilities of: *he asked if I would become his assistant and I accepted that position* 6 to receive someone into a community or group 7 to receive something as adequate or valid [Latin *acceptare*]

acceptable *adj* 1 able to be endured; tolerable: *in war killing is acceptable* 2 good enough; adequate: *he found the article acceptable* **acceptability** *n* **acceptably** *adv*

acceptance *n* 1 the act of accepting something 2 favourable reception 3 belief or agreement

accepted *adj* commonly approved or recognized: *the accepted wisdom about old age*

access *n* 1 a means of approaching or entering a place 2 the condition of allowing entry, for example entry to a building by wheelchairs or prams 3 the right or opportunity to use something or enter a place: *the bourgeoisie gained access to political power* 4 the opportunity or right to see or approach someone: *my ex-wife sabotages my access to the children* ▷ *vb* 5 to obtain (information) from a computer [Latin *accedere* to accede]

accessible *adj* 1 easy to approach, enter, or use 2 easy to understand: *the most accessible opera by Wagner* **accessibility** *n*

accession *n* the act of taking up an office or position: *the 40th anniversary of her accession to the throne*

accessory *n*, *pl* -ries 1 a supplementary part or object 2 a small item, such as a bag or belt, worn or carried by someone to complete his or her outfit 3 a person who is involved in a crime but who was not present when it took place [Late Latin *accessorius*]

access road *n* a road providing a way to a particular place or on to a motorway

access time *n* the time required to retrieve a piece of stored information from a computer's memory

accident *n* 1 an unpleasant event that causes damage, injury, or death 2 an unforeseen event or one without apparent cause: *they had met in town by accident* [Latin *accidere* to happen]

accidental *adj* 1 occurring by chance or unintentionally ▷ *n* 2 *music* a symbol denoting a sharp, flat, or natural that is not a part of the key signature **accidentally** *adv*

accident-prone *adj* (of a person) often involved in accidents

acclaim *vb* 1 to applaud or praise: *the highly acclaimed children's TV series* 2 to acknowledge publicly: *he was immediately acclaimed the new prime minister* ▷ *n* 3 an enthusiastic expression of approval [Latin *acclamare*]

acclamation *n* 1 an enthusiastic reception or display of approval 2 *Canada* an instance of being elected without opposition 3 **by acclamation** by a majority without a ballot

acclimatize *or* -tise *vb* -tizing, -tized *or* -tising, -tised to adapt to a new climate or environment **acclimatization** *or* -tisation *n*

accolade *n* 1 an award, praise, or honour 2 a touch on the shoulder with a sword conferring a knighthood [Latin *ad-* to + *collum* neck]

accommodate *vb* -dating, -dated 1 to provide with lodgings 2 to have room for 3 to do a favour

for **4** to adjust or become adjusted; to adapt [Latin *accommodare*]

accommodating *adj* willing to help; obliging

accommodation *n* a place in which to sleep, live, or work

accommodation address *n* *Brit* an address on letters to a person who cannot or does not wish to receive mail at a permanent address

accompaniment *n* **1** something that accompanies something else **2** *music* a supporting part for an instrument, a band, or an orchestra

accompanist *n* a person who plays a musical accompaniment

accompany *vb* **-nies, -nying, -nied** **1** to go with (someone) **2** to happen or exist at the same time as **3** to provide a musical accompaniment for [Old French *accompaignier*]

accomplice *n* a person who helps someone else commit a crime [Late Latin *complex partner*]

accomplish *vb* **1** to manage to do; achieve; *most infants accomplish it immediately* **2** to complete [Latin *complere* to fill up]

accomplished *adj* **1** expert or proficient; *an accomplished liar* **2** successfully completed

accomplishment *n* **1** the successful completion of something **2** something successfully completed **3** (*often pl*) personal abilities or skills

accord *n* **1** agreement or harmony **2** a formal agreement between groups or nations; *the Paris peace accords* **3** of **one's own accord** voluntarily or willingly **4** **with one accord** unanimously **▷ vb** **5** to grant; *she was at last accorded her true status* **6** **accord with** to fit in with or be consistent with [Latin *ad-* to + *cor* heart]

accordance *n* in **accordance with** conforming to or according to; *food is prepared in accordance with Jewish laws*

according *adv* **1** **according to** **A** as stated by; *according to her, they were once engaged* **B** in conformity with; *work hours varied according to the tides* **2** **according as** depending on whether

accordingly *adv* **1** in an appropriate manner **2** consequently

accordion *n* a box-shaped musical instrument played by moving the two sides apart and together, and pressing a keyboard or buttons to produce the notes [German *Akkordion*]

accordionist *n*

accost *vb* to approach, stop, and speak to (someone) rudely or aggressively [Latin *ad-* to + *costa* side, rib]

account *n* **1** a report or description **2** an arrangement for a financial institution to look after one's money **3** a statement of financial transactions with the resulting balance **4** part or behalf; *I am sorry that you suffered on my account* **5** **call someone to account** to demand an explanation from someone **6** **give a good or bad**

account of oneself to perform well or fail to perform well **7** **of no account** of little importance or value **8** **on account of** because of **9** **take account of** or **take into account** to take into consideration; allow for **▷ vb** **10** to consider as; *the evening was accounted a major step forward by all concerned* [Old French *acon*]

accountable *adj* responsible to someone or for some action **accountability** *n*

accountant *n* a person who maintains and audits business accounts

accountancy *n*

account for *vb* **1** to give reasons for **2** to explain or count up what has been spent

accounting *n* the skill or practice of maintaining and auditing business accounts

accountments (ak-koo-tra-ments) or **US**

accouterments (ak-koo-ter-ments) *pl n* clothing and equipment for a particular activity [Old French *accoustrer* to equip]

accredit *vb* **1** to give official recognition to

2 to send (a diplomat) with official credentials to a particular country **3** to certify as meeting required standards **4** to attribute (a quality or an action) to (a person) [French *accréditer*]

accreditation *n*

accretion (ak-kree-shun) *n* **1** a gradual increase in size, through growth or addition **2** something added, such as an extra layer [Latin *accretio*]

accrue *vb* **-cruing, -crued** **1** (of money or interest) to increase gradually over a period of time

2 **accrue to** to fall naturally to; *some advantage must accrue to the weaker party* [Latin *accrescere*]

accumulate *vb* **-lating, -lated** to gather together in an increasing quantity; collect [Latin *accumulare* to heap up]

accumulative *adj*

accumulation *n* **1** something that has been collected **2** the collecting together of things

accumulator *n* **1** *Brit* & *Austral* a rechargeable device for storing electrical energy **2** *Brit horse racing* a collective bet on successive races, with both stake and winnings being carried forward to accumulate progressively

accuracy *n* faithful representation of the truth; *care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the content*

accurate *adj* faithfully representing the truth; *all the information was accurate* [Latin *accurare* to perform with care] **accurately** *adv*

accursed (a-curse-id) *adj* **1** under a curse **2** hateful or detestable

accusation *n* **1** an allegation that a person is guilty of some wrongdoing **2** a formal charge brought against a person

accusatory *adj*

accusative *n* *grammar* a grammatical case in some languages that identifies the direct object of a verb

accuse *vb* **-cusing, -cused** to charge a person with wrongdoing [Latin *accūsāre*]

accuser *n*

accusing *adj* **accusingly** *adv*

accused *n* **the accused** *law* the defendant appearing on a criminal charge

accustom *vb* **accustom oneself to** to become familiar with or used to from habit or experience [Old French *acostumer*]

accustomed *adj* **1** usual or customary; *he parked his motorcycle in its accustomed place* **2** **accustomed to** **A** used to **B** in the habit of

ace *n* **1** a playing card with one symbol on it **2** *informal* an expert; *an American stock car ace* **3** *tennis* a winning serve that the opponent fails to reach

4 a fighter pilot who has destroyed several enemy aircraft **▷ adj** **5** *informal* superb or excellent; *an ace skateboarder* [Latin as a unit]

acerbic (ass-sir-bik) *adj* harsh or bitter; *an acerbic critic* [Latin *acerbus* sharp, sour]

acerbity *n*, *pl -ties* 1 bitter speech or temper
2 bitterness of taste

acetaldehyde (ass-it-tal-dee-hide) *n* *chem* a colourless volatile liquid, used as a solvent

acetate (ass-it-tate) *n* 1 *chem* any salt or ester of acetic acid 2 Also: **acetate rayon** a synthetic textile fibre made from cellulose acetate

acetic (ass-see-tik) *adj* *chem* of, containing, or producing acetic acid or vinegar [Latin *acetum* vinegar]

acetic acid *n* *chem* a strong-smelling colourless liquid used to make vinegar

acetone (ass-it-tone) *n* *chem* a strong-smelling colourless liquid used as a solvent for paints and lacquers

acetylene (ass-set-ill-een) *n* *chem* a colourless soluble flammable gas used in welding metals

ache *vb* **aching, ached** 1 to feel or be the source of a continuous dull pain 2 to suffer mental anguish ▷ *n* 3 a continuous dull pain [Old English *ācan*]

achieve *vb* **achieving, achieved** to gain by hard work or effort [Old French *achever* to bring to an end] **achiever** *n*

achievement *n* 1 something that has been accomplished by hard work, ability, or heroism 2 the successful completion of something

Achilles heel (ak-kill-eez) *n* a small but fatal weakness [Achilles in Greek mythology was killed by an arrow in his unprotected heel]

Achilles tendon *n* the fibrous cord that connects the muscles of the calf to the heel bone

achromatic *adj* 1 without colour 2 refracting light without breaking it up into its component colours 3 *music* involving no sharps or flats

achromatically *adv*

acid *n* 1 *chem* one of a class of compounds, corrosive and sour when dissolved in water, that combine with a base to form a salt 2 *slang* LSD 3 a sour-tasting substance ▷ *adj* 4 *chem* of, from, or containing acid 5 sharp or sour in taste 6 sharp in speech or manner [Latin *acidus* acidly] *adv*

Acid House or **Acid** *n* a type of funk-based, electronically edited dance music of the late 1980s, which has hypnotic sound effects and which is associated with the use of the drug ecstasy [*acid* (LSD) + *House* music]

acidic *adj* containing acid

acidify *vb -fies, -fying, -fied* to convert into acid **acidification** *n*

acidity *n* 1 the quality of being acid 2 the amount of acid in a solution

acid rain *n* rain containing pollutants released into the atmosphere by burning coal or oil

acid reflux *n* the regurgitation of stomach acid into the oesophagus, causing heartburn

acid test *n* a rigorous and conclusive test of worth or value [from the testing of gold with nitric acid]

acknowledge *vb -edging, -edged* 1 to recognize or admit the truth of a statement 2 to show recognition of a person by a greeting or glance 3 to make known that a message or letter has been received 4 to express gratitude for (a favour or compliment) [Old English *oncnāwan* to recognize]

acknowledgment or **acknowledgement** *n*

1 the act of acknowledging something or someone 2 something done or given as an expression of gratitude

acme (ak-mee) *n* the highest point of achievement or excellence [Greek *akmē*]

acne (ak-nee) *n* a skin disease in which pus-filled spots form on the face [New Latin]

acolyte *n* 1 a follower or attendant 2 *Christianity* a person who assists a priest [Greek *akolouthos*]

aconite *n* 1 a poisonous plant with hoodlike flowers 2 dried aconite root, used as a narcotic [Greek *akoniton*]

acorn *n* the fruit of the oak tree, consisting of a smooth nut in a cuplike base [Old English *æcern*]

acoustic *adj* 1 of sound, hearing, or acoustics 2 (of a musical instrument) without electronic amplification 3 designed to absorb sound: *acoustic tiles* [Greek *akouein* to hear] **acoustically** *adv*

acoustics *n* 1 the scientific study of sound ▷ *pl n* 2 the characteristics of a room or auditorium determining how well sound can be heard within it

acquaint *vb* **acquaint with** to make (someone) familiar with [Latin *accognoscere* to know well]

acquaintance *n* 1 a person whom one knows slightly 2 slight knowledge of a person or subject 3 **make the acquaintance of** to come into social contact with 4 the people one knows: *an actress of my acquaintance*

acquainted *adj* 1 on terms of familiarity but not intimacy 2 **acquainted with** familiar with: *she became acquainted with the classics of Chinese literature*

acquiesce (ak-wee-ess) *vb -escing, -esced* to agree to what someone wants [Latin *acquiescere*]

acquiescence *n* **acquiescent** *adj*

USAGE The use of *to* after *acquiesce* was formerly regarded as incorrect, but is now acceptable.

acquire *vb -quiring, -quired* to get or develop (something such as an object, trait, or ability) [Latin *acquirere*] **acquisition** *n*

acquired taste *n* 1 a liking for something at first considered unpleasant 2 the thing liked

acquisition *n* 1 something acquired, often to add to a collection 2 the act of acquiring something

acquisitive *adj* eager to gain material possessions **acquisitively** *adv* **acquisitiveness** *n*

acquit *vb -quitting, -quitted* 1 to pronounce someone not guilty: *he's been acquitted of negligence* 2 to behave in a particular way: *she acquitted herself well in the meeting* [Old French *aquiter*] **acquit** *n*

acre *n* 1 a unit of area equal to 4840 square yards (4046.86 square metres) 2 **acres** *informal* a large amount: *acres of skin* [Old English *æcer*]

acreage (ake-er-rij) *n* land area in acres

acrid (ak-rid) *adj* 1 unpleasantly strong-smelling 2 sharp in speech or manner [Latin *acer* sharp, sour] **acridity** *n* **acridly** *adv*

acrimony *n* bitterness and resentment felt about something [Latin *acrimonia*] **acrimonious** *adj*

acrobat *n* an entertainer who performs gymnastic feats requiring skill, agility, and balance [Greek *akrobatēs* one who walks on tiptoe]

acrobatic *adj* **acrobatically** *adv*

acrobatics *pl n* the skills or feats of an acrobat

acronym *n* a word made from the initial letters of other words, for example UNESCO for the *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization* [Greek *akros* outermost + *onoma* name]

acrophobia *n* abnormal fear of being at a great height [Greek *akron* summit + *phobos* fear]

acropolis (a-crop-pol-liss) *n* the citadel of an ancient Greek city [Greek *akros* highest + *polis* city]

across *prep* **1** from one side to the other side of **2** on or at the other side of ▷ *adv* **3** from one side to the other **4** on or to the other side [Old French *a croix* crosswise]

across-the-board *adj* affecting everyone in a particular group or place equally: *across-the-board tax cuts*

acrostic *n* a number of lines of writing, such as a poem, in which the first or last letters form a word or proverb [Greek *akros* outermost + *stikhos* line of verse]

acrylic *adj* **1** made of acrylic ▷ **n** **2** a man-made fibre used for clothes and blankets **3** a kind of paint made from acrylic acid [Latin *acer* sharp + *olere* to smell]

acrylic acid *n* *chem* a strong-smelling colourless corrosive liquid

acrylic resin *n* *chem* any of a group of polymers of acrylic acid, used as synthetic rubbers, in paints, and as plastics

act *n* **1** something done **2** a formal decision reached or law passed by a law-making body: *an act of parliament* **3** a major division of a play or opera **4** a short performance, such as a sketch or dance **5** a pretended attitude: *she appeared calm but it was just an act* **6** **get in on the act** *informal* to become involved in something in order to share the benefit **7** **get one's act together** *informal* to organize oneself ▷ *vb* **8** to do something **9** to perform (a part or role) in a play, film, or broadcast **10** to present (a play) on stage **11** **act for** to be a substitute for: *Mr Lewis was acting for the head of the department* **12** **act as** to serve the function of: *she is acting as my bodyguard* **13** to behave: *she acts as though she really hates you* **14** to behave in an unnatural way ▷ See also **act up** [Latin *actum* a thing done]

ACT Australian Capital Territory

acting *n* **1** the art of an actor ▷ *adj* **2** temporarily performing the duties of: *the acting president has declared a state of emergency*

actinide series *n* *chem* a series of 15 radioactive elements with increasing atomic numbers from actinium to lawrencium

actinium *n* *chem* a radioactive element of the actinide series, occurring as a decay product of uranium. Symbol: **Ac** [Greek *aktis* ray]

action *n* **1** doing something for a particular purpose **2** something done on a particular occasion **3** a lawsuit **4** movement during some physical activity **5** the operating mechanism in a gun or machine **6** the way in which something operates or works **7** *slang* the main activity in a place **8** the events that form the plot of a story or play **9** activity, force, or energy **10** a minor battle **11** **actions** behaviour **12** **out of action** not functioning

actionable *adj* *law* giving grounds for legal action

action painting *n* an art form in which paint is thrown, smeared, dripped, or spattered on the canvas

action replay *n* the rerunning of a small section of a television film or tape, for example of a sporting event

action stations *pl n* the positions taken up by individuals in preparation for battle or for some other activity

activate *vb* **-vating, -vated** **1** to make something active **2** *physics* to make something radioactive **3** *chem* to increase the rate of a reaction

activation *n*

active *adj* **1** busy and energetic **2** energetically involved in or working hard for: *active in the peace movement* **3** happening now and energetically: *the plan is under active discussion* **4** functioning or causing a reaction: *the active ingredient is held within the capsule* **5** (of a volcano) erupting periodically **6** *grammar* denoting a form of a verb used to indicate that the subject is performing the action, for example *kicked* in *The boy kicked the football* ▷ **n** **7** *grammar* the active form of a verb **actively** *adv*

active list *n* *military* a list of officers available for full duty

active service *n* *military* duty in an operational area

activist *n* a person who works energetically to achieve political or social goals **activism** *n*

activity *n* **1** the state of being active **2** lively movement **3** *pl -ties* any specific action or pursuit: *he was engaged in political activities abroad*

act of God *n* *law* a sudden occurrence caused by natural forces, such as a flood

actor *n* a person who acts in a play, film, or broadcast

actress *n* a female actor

actual *adj* existing in reality or as a matter of fact [Latin *actus* act]

USAGE The excessive use of *actual* and *actually* should be avoided. They are unnecessary in sentences such as *in actual fact, he is forty-two, and he did actually go to the play but did not enjoy it*.

actuality *n, pl -ties* reality

actually *adv* as an actual fact; really

actuary *n, pl -aries* a person qualified to calculate commercial risks and probabilities involving uncertain future events, esp. in such contexts as life assurance [Latin *actuarius* one who keeps accounts] **actuarial** *adj*

actuate *vb* **-ating, -ated** **1** to start up a mechanical device **2** to motivate someone [Medieval Latin *actuare*]

act up *vb* *informal* to behave in a troublesome way **acuity** (ak-kew-it-ee) *n* keenness of vision or thought [Latin *acutus* acute]

acumen (ak-yew-men) *n* the ability to make good decisions [Latin: sharpness]

acupuncture *n* a medical treatment involving the insertion of needles at various parts of the body to stimulate the nerve impulses [Latin *acus* needle + *punctura*] **acupuncturist** *n*

acute *adj* **1** severe or intense: *acute staff shortages*
2 penetrating in perception or insight
3 sensitive or keen: *it was amazing how acute your hearing got in the bush* **4** (of a disease) sudden and severe **5** *maths* (of an angle) of less than 90°

6 (of a hospital or bed) intended to accommodate short-term patients ▶ **7** an acute accent [Latin *acutus*] **acutely** *adv* **acuteness** *n*
acute accent *n* the mark (´), used in some languages to indicate that the vowel over which it is placed is pronounced in a certain way
ad *n* *informal* an advertisement

AD (indicating years numbered from the supposed year of the birth of Christ) in the year of the Lord [Latin *anno Domini*]

ad- *prefix* **1** to or towards: *adverb* **2** near or next to: *adrenal* [Latin]

Ada *n* a high-level computer programming language, used esp. for military systems [after Ada, Countess of Lovelace, pioneer in computer programming]

adage (ad-ij) *n* a traditional saying that is generally accepted as being true [Latin *adagium*]

adagietto *music* ▶ *adv* **1** slowly, but more quickly than *adagio* ▶ *n*, *pl* **-tos** **2** a movement or piece to be performed fairly slowly

adagio (ad-dahj-yo) *music* ▶ *adv* **1** slowly ▶ *n*, *pl* **-gios** **2** a movement or piece to be performed slowly [Italian]

Adam *n* **1** *Bible* the first man created by God **2** **not know someone from Adam** to not know someone at all

adamant *adj* unshakable in determination or purpose [Greek *adamas* unconquerable]
adamantly *adv*

Adam's apple *n* the projecting lump of thyroid cartilage at the front of a person's neck

adapt *vb* **1** to adjust (something or oneself) to different conditions **2** to change something to suit a new purpose [Latin *adaptare*] **adaptable** *adj*
adaptability *n*

adaptation *n* **1** something that is produced by adapting something else: *a TV adaptation of a Victorian novel* **2** the act of adapting

adapter or **adapter** *n* **1** a device used to connect several electrical appliances to a single socket
2 any device for connecting two parts of different sizes or types

ADC *aide-de-camp*

add *vb* **1** to combine (numbers or quantities) so as to make a larger number or quantity **2** to join something to something else so as to increase its size, effect, or scope: *these new rules will add an extra burden on already overworked officials* **3** to say or write something further **4** **add in** to include ▶ See also **add up** [Latin *addere*]

addendum *n*, *pl* **-da** something added on, esp. an appendix to a book or magazine

adder *n* a small poisonous snake with a black zigzag pattern along the back [Old English *nædre*]

addict *n* **1** a person who is unable to stop taking narcotic drugs **2** *informal* a person who is devoted to something: *he's a telly addict* [Latin *addictus* given over] **addictive** *adj*

addicted *adj* **1** dependent on a narcotic drug

2 *informal* devoted to something: *I'm a news freak and addicted to BBC Breakfast News* **addiction** *n*

addition *n* **1** the act of adding **2** a person or thing that is added **3** a mathematical operation in which the total of two or more numbers or quantities is calculated **4** **in addition (to)** besides; as well (as) **additional** *adj* **additionally** *adv*

additive *n* any substance added to something, such as food, to improve it or prevent deterioration

added *adj* **1** confused or unable to think clearly
2 (of eggs) rotten [Old English *adela* filth]

add-on *n* a feature that can be added to a standard model to give increased benefits

address *n* **1** the place at which someone lives
2 the conventional form by which the location of a building is described **3** a formal speech

4 *computers* **A** a number giving the location of a piece of stored information **B** a series of characters that represents a location on the internet ▶ **vb** **5** to mark (a letter or parcel) with an address **6** to speak to **7** to direct one's attention to (a problem or an issue) **8** **address oneself to** **A** to speak or write to **B** to apply oneself to: *we have got to address ourselves properly to this problem* [Latin *ad-* to + *directus* direct]

addressee *n* a person to whom a letter or parcel is addressed

adduce *vb* **-ducing, -duced** to mention something as evidence [Latin *adducere* to lead to]
add up *vb* **1** to calculate the total of (two or more numbers or quantities) **2** *informal* to make sense: *there's something about it that doesn't add up* **3** **add up** to amount to

adenoidal *adj* having a nasal voice or impaired breathing because of enlarged adenoids

adenoids (ad-in-oidz) *pl n* a mass of tissue at the back of the throat [Greek *adenoidēs* glandular]

adept *adj* **1** proficient in something requiring skill ▶ **n** **2** a person skilled in something [Latin *adipisci* to attain] **adeptness** *n*

adequate *adj* just enough in amount or just good enough in quality [Latin *ad-* to + *aequus* equal]

adequacy *n* **adequately** *adv*

à deux (ah duh) *adj, adv* of or for two people [French]

ADHD *med* attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

adhere *vb* **-hering, -hered** **1** to stick to **2** to act according to (a rule or agreement) **3** to be a loyal supporter of (something) [Latin *adhaerere*]

■ **USAGE** See at **adhesion**.

adherent *n* **1** a supporter or follower ▶ *adj*
2 sticking or attached **adherence** *n*

adhesion *n* **1** the quality or condition of sticking together **2** *pathol* the joining together of two structures or parts of the body that are normally separate, for example after surgery

■ **USAGE** *Adhesion* is preferred when talking about sticking or holding fast in a physical sense. *Adherence* is preferred when talking about attachment to a political party, cause, etc.

adhesive *n* **1** a substance used for sticking things together ▶ *adj* **2** able or designed to stick to things

ad hoc *adj, adv* for a particular purpose only [Latin: to this]

adieu (a-dew) *interj, n, pl adieux or adieus* (a-dewz) goodbye [French]

ad infinitum *adv* endlessly; *we would not be able to sustain the currency ad infinitum* [Latin]

adipose *adj* of or containing fat; fatty: *adipose tissue* [Latin *adeps* fat]

adj. adjective

adjacent *adj* **1** near or next: *the schools were adjacent but there were separate doors* **2 geom** (of a side of a right-angled triangle) lying between a specified angle and the right angle [Latin *ad-* near + *jacere* to lie]

adjective *n* a word that adds information about a noun or pronoun [Latin *nomen adjectivum* attributive noun] **adjectival** *adj*

adjoin *vb* to be next to and joined onto

adjoining *adj*

adjourn *vb* **1** to close a court at the end of a session **2** to postpone or be postponed temporarily **3 informal** to go elsewhere: *can we adjourn to the dining room?* [Old French *ajourner* to defer to an arranged day] **adjournment** *n*

adjudge *vb* **-judging, -judged** to declare someone to be something specified: *my wife was adjudged to be the guilty party*

adjudicate *vb* **-cating, -cated** **1** to give a formal decision on a dispute **2** to serve as a judge, for example in a competition [Latin *adjudicare*]

adjudication *n* **adjudicator** *n*

adjunct *n* **1** something added that is not essential **2** a person who is subordinate to another [Latin *adjunctus* adjoined]

adjure *vb* **-juring, -jured** **1** to command someone to do something **2** to appeal earnestly to someone [Latin *adjurare*] **adjuration** *n*

adjust *vb* **1** to adapt to a new environment **2** to alter slightly, so as to be accurate or suitable **3 insurance** to determine the amount payable in settlement of a claim [Old French *adjuster*]

adjustable *adj* **adjuster** *n*

adjustment *n* **1** a slight alteration **2** the act of adjusting

adjutant (aj-oo-tant) *n* an officer in an army who acts as administrative assistant to a superior [Latin *adjutare* to aid]

ad-lib *vb* **-libbing, -libbed** **1** to improvise a speech or piece of music without preparation ▷ *adj* **2** improvised: *ad-lib studio chat* ▷ *n* **3** an improvised remark ▷ *adv* **ad lib** **4** spontaneously or freely [short for Latin *ad libitum*, literally: according to pleasure]

Adm. Admiral

adman *n, pl -men* *informal* a person who works in advertising

admin *n* *informal* administration

administer *vb* **1** to manage (an organization or estate) **2** to organize and put into practice: *anyone can learn to administer the test procedure* **3** to give medicine to someone **4** to supervise the taking of (an oath) [Latin *administrare*]

administrate *vb* **-trating, -trated** to manage an organization

administration *n* **1** management of the affairs of an organization **2** the people who administer

an organization **3** a government: *the first non-communist administration in the country's history*

4 the act of administering something, such as medicine or an oath **administrative** *adj*

administrator *n* a person who administers an organization or estate

admirable (ad-mer-a-bl) *adj* deserving or inspiring admiration: *the boldness of the undertaking is admirable* **admirably** *adv*

admiral *n* **1** Also called: **admiral of the fleet** a naval officer of the highest rank **2** any of various brightly coloured butterflies [Arabic *amīr*-al commander of]

Admiralty *n* Brit the former government department in charge of the Royal Navy

admire *vb* **-miring, -mired** to respect and approve of (a person or thing) [Latin *admirari* to wonder at]

admiration *n* **admirer** *n* **admiring** *adj*

admiringly *adv*

admissible *adj* law allowed to be brought as evidence in court

admission *n* **1** permission or the right to enter **2** permission to join an organization **3** the price charged for entrance **4** a confession: *she was, by her own admission, not educated*

admit *vb* **-mitting, -mitted** **1** to confess or acknowledge (a crime or mistake) **2** to concede (the truth of something) **3** to allow (someone) to enter **4** to take (someone) in to a hospital for treatment: *he was admitted for tests* **5** **admit to** to allow someone to participate in something

6 **admit of** to allow for: *these rules admit of no violation* [Latin *admittere*]

admittance *n* **1** the right to enter **2** the act of entering a place

admittedly *adv* it must be agreed: *my research is admittedly incomplete*

admixture *n* **1** a mixture **2** an ingredient

admonish *vb* to reprimand sternly [Latin *admonere*] **admonition** *n* **admonitory** *adj*

ad nauseam (ad naw-zee-am) *adv* to a boring or sickening extent: *she went on and on ad nauseam about her divorce* [Latin: to (the point of) nausea]

ado *n* fuss: *without further ado* [Middle English at do a to-do]

adobe (ad-oh-bee) *n* **1** a sun-dried brick **2** the claylike material from which such bricks are made **3** a building made of such bricks [Spanish]

adolescence *n* the period between puberty and adulthood [Latin *adolescere* to grow up]

adolescent *adj* **1** of or relating to adolescence

2 *informal* (of behaviour) immature ▷ *n* **3** an adolescent person

Adonis *n* a handsome young man [name of a handsome youth in Greek myth]

adopt *vb* **1** law to take someone else's child as one's own **2** to choose (a plan or method) **3** to choose (a country or name) to be one's own [Latin *adoptare*] **adopter** *n* **adoption** *n*

adoptive *adj* **1** acquired or related by adoption: *an adoptive father* **2** of or relating to adoption

adorable *adj* very attractive; lovable

adore *vb* **adoring, adored** **1** to love intensely or deeply **2** *informal* to like very much: *I adore being in the country* **3** to worship a god with religious rites

[Latin *adorare*] **adoration** *n* **adoring** *adj*
adoringly *adv*

adorn *vb* to decorate; increase the beauty of

[Latin *adornare*] **adornment** *n*

adrenal (ad-reen-al) *adj* **anatomy** **1** on or near the

kidneys **2** of or relating to the adrenal glands

[Latin *ad-* near + *renes* kidneys]

adrenal glands *pl n* **anatomy** two endocrine glands covering the upper surface of the kidneys

adrenalin or **adrenaline** *n* **biochem** a hormone secreted by the adrenal gland in response to stress. It increases heart rate, pulse rate, and blood pressure

adrift *adj, adv* **1** drifting **2** without a clear purpose

3 *informal* off course, wrong; *it was obvious that something had gone adrift*

adroit *adj* quick and skilful in how one behaves or

thinks [French *à droit* rightly] **adroitly** *adv*

adroitness *n*

adsorb *vb* (of a gas or vapour) to condense and form a thin film on a surface [Latin *ad-* to + *sorbere*

to drink in] **adsorbent** *adj* **adsorption** *n*

ADT Atlantic Daylight Time

adulation *n* uncritical admiration [Latin *adulari* to flatter]

adult *n* **1** a mature fully grown person, animal, or

plant **▷ adj** **2** having reached maturity; fully

developed **3** suitable for or typical of adult

people: *she had very adult features **4** sexually*

explicit: *adult films* [Latin *adultus* grown up]

adulthood *n*

adulterate *vb* **-ating, -ated** to spoil something

by adding inferior material [Latin *adulterare*]

adulteration *n*

adulterer or *fem* **adulteress** *n* a person who has committed adultery

adultery *n, pl -teries* sexual unfaithfulness of a husband or wife [Latin *adulterium*] **adulterous** *adj*

adv. *adverb*

advance *vb* **-vancing, -vanced** **1** to go or bring

forward **2** to make progress: *this student has*

advanced in reading and writing **3** to further a cause:

an association founded to advance the interests of

ex-soldiers **4** **advance on** to move towards

someone in a threatening manner **5** to present

an idea for consideration **6** to lend a sum of

money **▷ n** **7** a forward movement

8 improvement or progress: *the greatest advance in*

modern medicine **9** a loan of money **10** a payment

made before it is legally due **11** an increase in

price: *any advance on fifty pounds?* **12** **in advance**

beforehand: *you have to pay in advance* **13** **in advance**

of ahead of in time or development **▷ adj** **14** done

or happening before an event: *advance warning*

▷ See also **advances** [Latin *abante* from before]

advanced *adj* **1** at a late stage in development

2 not elementary: *he was taking the advanced class in*

economics

Advanced level *n* **Brit** a formal name for **A level**

advancement *n* promotion in rank or status

advances *pl n* approaches made to a person with

the hope of starting a romantic or sexual

relationship

advantage *n* **1** a more favourable position or

state **2** benefit or profit: *they could make this work to*

their advantage **3** **tennis** the point scored after deuce

4 **take advantage of** **a** to use a person unfairly **b** to use an opportunity **5** **to advantage** to good effect: *her hair was shaped to display to advantage her superb neck* [Latin *abante* from before]

advantaged *adj* in a superior social or financial position

advantageous *adj* likely to bring benefits **advantageously** *adv*

advection *n* **physics** the transferring of heat in a horizontal stream of gas [Latin *ad-* to + *vehere* to carry]

advent *n* an arrival: *the advent of the personal computer* [Latin *ad-* to + *venire* to come]

Advent *n* **Christianity** the season that includes the four Sundays before Christmas

Adventist *n* a member of a Christian group that believes in the imminent return of Christ

adventitious *adj* added or appearing accidentally [Latin *adventicius* coming from outside]

adventure *n* **1** a risky undertaking, the ending

of which is uncertain: *our African adventure*

2 exciting or unexpected events [Latin *advenire* to

happen to (someone), arrive]

adventure playground *n* **Brit, Austral & NZ** a

playground for children that contains building

materials and other equipment to build with or

climb on

adventurer or *fem* **adventuress** *n* **1** a person

who seeks money or power by unscrupulous

means **2** a person who seeks adventure

adventurism *n* recklessness in politics or finance

adventurous *adj* daring or enterprising

adverb *n* a word that modifies a sentence, verb,

adverb, or adjective, for example *easily, very, and*

happily in *They could easily envy the very happily married*

couple [Latin *adverbium*, literally: added word]

adverbial *adj*

adversary (ad-verse-er-ree) *n, pl -saries* an

opponent in a fight, disagreement, or sporting

contest [Latin *adversus* against]

adverse *adj* **1** unfavourable to one's interests:

adverse effects **2** antagonistic or hostile [Latin

ad- towards + *vertere* to turn] **adversely** *adv*

adversity *n, pl -ties* very difficult or hard

circumstances

advert *n* *informal* an advertisement

advertise *vb* **-tising, -tised** **1** to present or praise

(goods or a service) to the public, in order to

encourage sales **2** to make (a vacancy, an event,

or an article for sale) publicly known [Latin

advertere to turn one's attention to] **advertiser** *n*

advertising *n*

advertisement *n* any public announcement

designed to sell goods or publicize an event

advertorial *n* advertising material presented

under the guise of editorial material [from *advert*

+ (*edit*)*orial*]

advise *n* **1** recommendation as to an appropriate

choice of action **2** formal notification of facts

[Latin *ad* to + *visum* view]

advisable *adj* sensible and likely to achieve the

desired result **advisability** *n*

advise *vb* **-vising, -vised** **1** to offer advice to

2 to inform or notify [Latin *ad-* to + *videre* to see]

adviser or **advisor** *n*

advised *adj* thought-out: *ill-advised*
advisedly (*ad-vize-id-lee*) *adv* deliberately; after careful consideration: *I use the word advisedly*
advisory *adj* 1 able to offer advice ▷ *n*, *pl* -ries
 2 a statement giving advice or a warning
 3 a person or organization that gives advice: *the Prime Minister's media advisory*
advocaat *n* a liqueur with a raw egg base [Dutch]
advocacy *n* active support of a cause or course of action
advocate *vb* -*cating*, -*cated* 1 to recommend a course of action publicly ▷ *n* 2 a person who upholds or defends a cause or course of action
 3 a person who speaks on behalf of another in a court of law 4 *Scots law* a barrister [Latin *advocare* to call, summon]
adware *n* *computers* 1 software that collects information about a user's browsing pattern in order to display relevant advertisements
 2 software that is produced with advertisements embedded within it
adze or **US adz** *n* a tool with a blade at right angles to the handle, used for shaping timber [Old English *adesa*]
aegis (*ee-jiss*) *n* **under the aegis of** with the sponsorship or protection of [Greek *aigis* shield of Zeus]
aeolian harp (*ee-oh-lee-an*) *n* a musical instrument that produces sounds when the wind passes over its strings [after *Aeolus*, god of winds in Greek myth]
aeon or **US eon** (*ee-on*) *n* 1 an immeasurably long period of time 2 the longest division of geological time [Greek *aiōn*]
aerate *vb* -*ating*, -*ated* to put gas into a liquid, for example when making a fizzy drink
aeration *n*
aerial *n* 1 the metal pole or wire on a television or radio which transmits or receives signals ▷ *adj* 2 in, from, or operating in the air 3 extending high into the air 4 of or relating to aircraft [Greek *aēr* air]
aerial top dressing *n* spreading of fertilizer from an aeroplane onto remote areas
aero-, aeri- or aer- *combining form* 1 relating to aircraft 2 relating to air, atmosphere, or gas [Greek *aēr* air]
aerobatics *n* spectacular manoeuvres, such as loops or rolls, performed by aircraft [AERO- + (ACROBATICS)]
aerobe *n* *biol* an organism that requires oxygen to survive [Greek *aēr* air + *bios* life]
aerobic *adj* designed for or relating to aerobics: *aerobic exercise*
aerobics *n* exercises to increase the amount of oxygen in the blood and strengthen the heart and lungs
aerodrome *n* a small airport
aerodynamics *n* the study of how air flows around moving objects *aerodynamic* *adj*
aerodynamicist *n*
aero engine *n* an engine for an aircraft
aerofoil *n* a part of an aircraft, such as the wing, designed to give lift in flight
aerogram *n* an airmail letter on a single sheet of light paper that seals to form an envelope

aeronautics *n* the study or practice of flight through the air **aeronautical** *adj*
aeroplane or **US & Canad airplane** *n* a heavier-than-air powered flying vehicle with fixed wings [AERO- + Greek *planos* wandering]
aerosol *n* a small metal pressurized can from which a substance can be dispensed in a fine spray [AERO- + SOL(UTION)]
aerospace *n* 1 the earth's atmosphere and space beyond ▷ *adj* 2 of rockets or space vehicles: *the aerospace industry*
aesthete or **US esthete** (*eess-theet*) *n* a person who has or who pretends to have a highly developed appreciation of beauty
aesthetic or **US esthetic** (*iss-theet-ik*) *adj*
 1 relating to the appreciation of art and beauty ▷ *n* 2 a principle or set of principles relating to the appreciation of art and beauty [Greek *aisthanomai* to perceive, feel] **aesthetically** or **US esthetically** *adv* **aestheticism** or **US estheticism** *n*
aesthetics or **US esthetics** *n* 1 the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of the concepts of beauty and taste 2 the study of the rules and principles of art
aether *n* same as **ether** (senses 2, 3)
aetiology (*ee-tee-ol-a-jee*) *n* same as **etiology**
a.f. audio frequency
afar *n* from **afar** from or at a great distance
affable *adj* showing warmth and friendliness [Latin *affabilis*] **affability** *n* **affably** *adv*
affair *n* 1 an event or happening: *the Watergate affair* 2 a sexual relationship outside marriage
 3 a thing to be done or attended to: *my wife's career is her own affair* 4 something previously specified: *lunch was a subdued affair* [Old French *à faire* to do]
affairs *pl n* 1 personal or business interests
 2 matters of public interest: *foreign affairs*
affect¹ *vb* 1 to influence (someone or something): *the very difficult conditions continued to affect our performance* 2 (of pain or disease) to attack: *the virus can spread to affect the heart muscle* 3 to move someone emotionally: *the experience has affected him deeply* [Latin *afficere*]
affect² *vb* 1 to put on a show of: *she affects a certain disinterest* 2 to wear or use by preference: *he likes to be called Captain John and affects a nautical cap* [Latin *affectare* to strive after]
affection *n* an attitude or manner put on to impress others
affected *adj* 1 behaving or speaking in a manner put on to impress others 2 pretended: *an affected indifference*
affecting *adj* arousing feelings of pity; moving
affection *n* 1 fondness or tenderness for a person or thing 2 **affections** feelings of love; emotions: *I was angry with her for playing with their affections*
affectionate *adj* having or displaying tenderness, affection, or warmth
affectionately *adv*
affectedless *adj* 1 showing no emotion or concern for others 2 not causing any emotion: *an affectedless novel*
affianced (*af-fie-anst*) *adj* old-fashioned engaged to be married [Medieval Latin *affidare* to trust (oneself) to]

affidavit (af-fid-*ave-it*) *n* *law* a written statement made under oath [Medieval Latin, literally: he declares on oath]

affiliate *vb* **-ating, -ated** **1** (of a group) to link up with a larger group **▷** **2** a person or organization that is affiliated with another [Medieval Latin *affiliatus* adopted as a son]

affiliation *n*

affinity *n, pl -ties* **1** a feeling of closeness to and understanding of a person **2** a close similarity in appearance, structure, or quality **3** a chemical attraction [Latin *affinis* bordering on, related]

affirm *vb* **1** to declare to be true **2** to state clearly one's support for (an idea or belief) [Latin *ad-* to + *firmare* to make firm] **affirmation** *n*

affirmative *adj* **1** indicating agreement: *an affirmative answer* **▷** **2** a word or phrase indicating agreement, such as *yes*

affix *vb* **1** to attach or fasten **▷** **2** a word or syllable added to a word to produce a derived or inflected form, such as *-ment* in *establishment* [Medieval Latin *affixare*]

afflict *vb* to cause someone suffering or unhappiness [Latin *affligere* to knock against]

affliction *n* **1** something that causes physical or mental suffering **2** a condition of great distress or suffering

affluent *adj* having plenty of money [Latin *ad-* to + *fluere* to flow] **affluence** *n*

affluent society *n* a society in which the material benefits of prosperity are widely available

afford *vb* **1** **can afford** to be able to do or spare something without risking financial difficulties or undesirable consequences: *she can't afford to be choosy* **2** to give or supply: *afford me an opportunity to judge for myself* [Old English *geforthian* to further, promote] **affordable** *adj* **affordability** *n*

afforest *vb* to plant trees on [Medieval Latin *afforestare*] **afforestation** *n*

affray *n* *Brit, Austral & NZ* a noisy fight in a public place [Vulgar Latin *exfidare* (unattested) to break the peace]

affront *n* **1** a deliberate insult **▷** **vb** **2** to hurt someone's pride or dignity [Old French *afronter* to strike in the face]

afghan *n* *NZ* a type of biscuit

Afghan *adj* **1** of Afghanistan **▷** **2** a person from Afghanistan **3** the language of Afghanistan

Afghan hound *n* a large slim dog with long silky hair

aficionado (af-fish-yo-nah-do) *n, pl -dos* an enthusiastic fan of a sport or interest [Spanish]

afield *adv* **far afield** far away: *they used to travel as far afield as Hungary*

afflame *adv, adj* **1** in flames **2** deeply aroused: *his face was aflame with self-contempt and embarrassment*

afloat *adj* **1** floating **2** free of debt: *his goal is to keep the company afloat* **3** aboard ship **▷** **adv** **4** floating **5** free of debt **6** aboard ship; at sea

afoot *adj, adv* happening; in operation: *I had no suspicion of what was afoot*

afore *adv, prep, conj* *old-fashioned or dialect* before

aforementioned *adj* mentioned before

aforsaid *adj* referred to previously

aforethought *adj* premeditated: *malice aforethought*

a fortiori (eh-for-tee-or-rye) *adv* for similar but more convincing reasons [Latin]

afraid *adj* **1** feeling fear or apprehension **2** regretful: *I'm afraid I lost my temper* [Middle English *afraid*]

afresh *adv* once more

African *adj* **1** of Africa **▷** **2** a person from Africa

Africana *pl n* objects of cultural or historical interest from Africa

African-American *n* **1** an American of African descent **▷** **adj** **2** of African-Americans, their history, or their culture

Africander *n* a breed of humpbacked cattle originally from southern Africa [Afrikaans *Afrikander*]

African time *n* *S African slang* unpunctuality

African violet *n* a flowering house plant with pink or purple flowers and hairy leaves

Afrikaans *n* one of the official languages of South Africa, descended from Dutch [Dutch]

Afrikaner *n* a White South African whose native language is Afrikaans

Afro *n, pl -ros* a frizzy bushy hairstyle

Afro- *combining form* indicating Africa or African: *Afro-Caribbean*

aft *adv, adj* at or towards the rear of a ship or aircraft [shortened from *ABAFT*]

after *prep* **1** following in time or place **2** in pursuit of: *he was after my mother's jewellery* **3** concerning: *she asked after Laura* **4** considering: *you seem all right after what happened last night* **5** next in excellence or importance to **6** in imitation of; in the manner of **7** in accordance with: *a man after his own heart* **8** with the same name as: *the street is named after the designer of the church* **9** US past (the hour of): *fifteen after twelve* **10** **after all** **A** in spite of everything: *I was, after all, a suspect* **B** in spite of expectations or efforts **11** **after you** please go before me **▷** **adv** **12** at a later time; afterwards **▷** **conj** **13** at a time later than the time when: *she arrived after the reading had begun* **▷** **adj** **14** *naut* further aft: *the after cabin* [Old English *æfter*]

afterbirth *n* the placenta and fetal membranes expelled from the mother's womb after childbirth

aftercare *n* **1** the help and support given to a person discharged from a hospital or prison **2** the regular care required to keep something in good condition

afterdamp *n* a poisonous gas formed after the explosion of firedamp in a coal mine

aftereffect *n* any result occurring some time after its cause

afterglow *n* **1** the glow left after the source of a light has disappeared, for example after sunset **2** a pleasant feeling remaining after an enjoyable experience

afterlife *n* life after death

aftermath *n* effects or results of an event considered collectively: *the aftermath of the weekend violence* [after + Old English *math* a mowing]

afternoon *n* the period between noon and evening

afterpains *pl n* pains caused by contraction of a woman's womb after childbirth