

Aa

a *article*

Grammar: an indefinite article. See ARTICLE.

a-

a prefix meaning not or without, as in *asymmetrical*. A variant is **an-**, as in *anarchy*.

WORD ORIGINS: Greek

A

SI unit of electric current (ampere).

AA

Alcoholics Anonymous.

aardvark (say **ahd**-vahk) *noun*

a large, burrowing, African mammal which has a long snout and ears and feeds on termites and ants.

WORD ORIGINS: Afrikaans *aarde* earth + *vark* pig

AARNet

Australian Academic and Research Network.

AAT

1. Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
2. Australian Antarctic Territory.

ab-

a prefix meaning off, from or away from, as in *abnormal*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin

AB

able-bodied seaman.

aback *adverb*

1. *Nautical:* backwards.
2. **taken aback**, startled: *She was taken aback by his rudeness.*

abacus (say **ab**-a-cus) *noun*

1. a device used for counting by sliding beads along thin rods set in a frame.
 2. *Architecture:* a flat slab forming part of the top of a column.
- WORD ORIGINS:* Greek

abaft *adverb, preposition*

Nautical: at or towards the stern.

abalone (say **abba-lo**-nee) *noun*

an edible marine snail with an ear-shaped shell lined with mother-of-pearl.

WORD ORIGINS: Spanish

abandon (1) *verb*

1. to leave something without intending to return for it: *We had to **abandon** all our possessions and flee.*

2. to stop going on with: *We **abandoned** the search after four days without any result.*

Usage: The child **abandoned** himself to grief (= surrendered).

SIMILAR MEANING: for definition 1

desert, forsake, quit

WORD ORIGINS: Middle English, from Old French

abandon (2) *noun*

a freedom from restraint: *The class cheered with great **abandon**.*

WORD FAMILY: **abandonment**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: French

abase *verb*

to humble or degrade: *The prisoner **abased** himself before the judge.*

WORD FAMILY: **abasement**, *noun*.

abashed *adjective*

ashamed or embarrassed.

WORD FAMILY: **abash**, *verb*.

WORD ORIGINS: Old French *esbair* to be astonished

abate (say **a-bate**) *verb*

to lessen in amount or intensity: *The storm gradually **abated**.*

WORD FAMILY: **abatement**, *noun*.

abattoir (say **ab**-a-twar) *noun*

(often plural) a place where cattle, sheep, etc. are killed for food.

WORD ORIGINS: French

abbey (say **ab**-ee) *noun*

1. a monastery or convent.
2. a church or house that was once part of an abbey, such as Westminster Abbey.

WORD ORIGINS: Old French

abbot *noun*

the male head of an abbey.

WORD FAMILY: **abbess**, *noun*, the female head of an abbey.

abbreviate (say **a-bree**-vi-ate) *verb*

to shorten or contract, especially a word or phrase.

WORD ORIGINS: **AB-** + Latin *brevis* short



abbreviation *noun*

1. the act of abbreviating.
2. a shortened form of a word, especially one using only the first letter or letters. Compare CONTRACTION.

ABC (1) *noun*

the alphabet.

ABC (2)

Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

abdicate *verb*

1. to renounce the throne.
2. to give up a claim, position, privilege, etc.

WORD FAMILY: **abdication**, *noun*.

abdomen (*say* ab-do-men) *noun*

also called the **belly**

1. *Anatomy*: the region below the chest at the front of the trunk, containing the intestines.
2. the last section of an insect's or spider's body.

WORD FAMILY: **abdominal** (*say* ab-dom-in-al), *adjective*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin

abduct *verb*

to take away a person, illegally or by force. Compare KIDNAP.

WORD FAMILY: **abductor**, *noun*, a person who abducts someone; **abduction**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abductus* led away

abeam (*say* a-beem) *adverb*

Nautical: directly opposite the middle part of a ship.

aberration (*say* ab-er-ray-shon) *noun*

1. a deviation from the normal course: *He destroyed his own work in a moment of aberration.*
2. *Physics*: the distortion of an image produced by a lens or mirror.

Spherical aberration is a lack of clear focus caused by the use of a spherical rather than a parabolic surface and **chromatic aberration** is the presence of coloured fringes in the image cast by a simple lens.

WORD FAMILY: **aberrant** (*say* a-ber-rent), *adjective*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *aberrare* to wander away

abet (*say* a-bet) *verb*

(**abetted**, **abetting**)

to encourage or assist someone to commit a crime.

WORD FAMILY: **abetter**, **abettor** (*Law*), *noun*.

abeyance (*say* a-bay-ance) *noun*

a state of temporary inactivity: *The*

project is in abeyance because of a lack of support.

abhor (*say* ab-hor) *verb*

(**abhorred**, **abhorring**)

to regard with hatred or disgust.

WORD FAMILY: **abhorrence**, *noun*.

SIMILAR MEANING: **abominate**, **detest**, **loathe**

OPPOSITE MEANING: **esteem**, **respect**, **revere**

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abhorre* to shrink back

abhorrent (*say* ab-hor-rent) *adjective*

causing disgust or horror.

WORD FAMILY: **abhorrently**, *adverb*.

abide *verb*

(**abided** or **abode**, **abiding**)

1. to continue or remain.
2. an old-fashioned word meaning to dwell.
3. (*informal*) to tolerate: *I can't abide fools.*
4. **abide by**, *keep to*: *He abided by his decision.*

ability *noun*

the quality of being able to do something.

SIMILAR MEANING: **capacity**, **competence**, **facility**, **power**, **skill**, **talent**

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *habilitas* aptitude

abiogenesis (*say* ab-ee-o-jen-e-sis or a-by-o-jen-e-sis) *noun*

see SPONTANEOUS GENERATION.

WORD ORIGINS: A- + Greek *bios* life + *genesis* creation

abiu (*say* ah-bee-oo) *noun*

a fruit with a shiny yellow skin.

abject (*say* ab-ject) *adjective*

1. contemptible: *an abject coward.*
2. humble: *an abject apology.*
3. wretched: *He lived in abject poverty.*

WORD FAMILY: **abjectly**, *adverb*; **abjection**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: AB- + Latin *jactus* thrown

abjure *verb*

to publicly renounce a belief, opinion, etc.: *They abjured their allegiance to the deposed ruler.*

WORD FAMILY: **abjuration**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abjurare* to deny on oath

ablative case (*say* ab-la-tive case)

Grammar: see CASE (1).

ablaze *adverb, adjective*

on fire or lit up: *The town was ablaze with lights.*

able *adjective*

1. clever: *He is an **able** man.*
2. having the skill to do something: *Are you **able** to drive a car?*
3. having the opportunity or permission to do something: *Will you be **able** to start work tomorrow?*
WORD FAMILY: **ably**, *adverb*.
WORD ORIGINS: Latin *habilis* fit, apt

-able

a suffix indicating: a) ability or tendency, as in *obtainable*;
b) worthiness, as in *likable*. A variant is **-ible**, as in *visible*.

able-bodied *adjective*
healthy or strong.

abled *adjective*
not suffering from a physical or mental disability.

LANGUAGE NOTE: DIFFERENTLY ABLED is preferred by many to the term 'disabled' when describing people who have been physically malformed from birth or incapacitated as the result of injury. According to this view 'disabled' brings to mind an image of people who are less capable than others of living as active, independent and worthwhile contributors to society. *Differently abled*, however, speaks of difference but without this suggestion of inferiority.

ablution (say a-**blu**-shon) *noun*
(usually plural) the act of washing oneself.

ABM

anti-ballistic missile

abnegate (say ab-**ni**-gate) *verb*
to renounce: *I will not **abnegate** my rights in this matter.*
WORD FAMILY: **abnegation**, *noun*.
WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abnegare* to deny

abnormal *adjective*
different from what is normal or expected.
WORD FAMILY: **abnormally**, *adverb*;
abnormality, *noun*.
SIMILAR MEANING: **unusual**
OPPOSITE MEANING: **normal**, **usual**

aboard *adverb, preposition*
on a ship, train, aircraft, etc.

abode (say a-**bode**) *noun*
the place where one lives.
abode *verb*
a past tense of the verb *abide*.

abolish (say a-**bol**-ish) *verb*
to put an end to: *It took many years to*

abolish *the slave trade.*

WORD FAMILY: **abolition** (say ab-o-**lish**-on), **abolishment**, *nouns*.

abomasum (say ab-o-**may**-zum) *noun*
the true stomach of ruminant mammals, e.g. cows.
WORD ORIGINS: AB- + Latin *omasum* a paunch

A-bomb *noun*

short form of **atomic bomb**
see **NUCLEAR WEAPON**.

abominable (say a-**bom**-i-na-bl)

adjective
dreadful or shocking.
WORD FAMILY: **abominably**, *adverb*;
abomination, *noun*, a person or thing that is abominable; **abominate**, *verb*, to detest.

aboriginal (say ab-o-**rij**-in-al) *adjective*
of or relating to an aborigine or aborigines.

Aboriginal (say ab-o-**rij**-in-al) *adjective*
of or relating to an Aborigine or Aborigines.

Aborigine *noun*
an Aborigine.

aborigine (say ab-o-**rij**-in-ee) *noun*
any of the original inhabitants of a country.

Aborigine (say ab-o-**rij**-in-ee) *noun*
any of the original inhabitants of Australia.
WORD ORIGINS: Latin *ab origine* from the beginning

TRICKY WORDS: **ABORIGINE** OR **ABORIGINAL**? There is little agreement about a standard approach to using *Aborigine* and *Aboriginal*. The approach preferred by this dictionary is to use both *Aborigine* and *Aborigines* as nouns (one **Aborigine** in a tribe of **Aborigines**) and *Aboriginal* as an adjective (**Aboriginal** rock art). *Aborigine* and *Aboriginal* always have an initial capital letter when they refer to the indigenous people of Australia.

abortifacient (say a-**bor**-ti-**fay**-shent) *adjective*
of or relating to any substance inducing an abortion.
WORD FAMILY: **abortifacient**, *noun*.

abortion (say a-**bor**-shon) *noun*
1. the expulsion or removal of a human foetus from the uterus before the foetus is capable of independent survival, usually before the 28th week.
2. anything that is a failure.



abound

3. a monstrous creature or thing.

WORD FAMILY: **abort**, verb; **abortive**, adjective, unsuccessful; **abortionist**, noun.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abortus* a miscarriage

abound verb
to be plentiful.

about preposition, adverb

1. around: *He looked **about** as he walked.*

2. on the subject of: *What is the book **about**?*

3. approximately: *She ran **about** 14 kilometres.*

4. engaged in doing: *What are you **about**?*

5. **about to**, just going to: *She is **about to jump**.*

6. **up and about**, out of bed, active: *She won't be **up and about** for at least a week.*

about-face, about-turn verb

to turn so as to face the opposite direction.

WORD FAMILY: **about-face**, **about-turn**, nouns, a sudden reversal.

above adverb, preposition

in a higher position: *The sun rose **above** the horizon.*

Usage: *There were **above** 400 people at the meeting (= more than).*

WORD FAMILY: **above**, adjective.

aboveboard adverb, adjective
open and honest.

Abp

Archbishop.

abracadabra (say ab-ra-da-dab-ra)

interjection

an exclamation used as a magic spell.

abrade verb

to scrape off or wear away by rubbing.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abradere* to scrape off

abrasion noun

1. the act or process of abrading.

2. a place where something has been rubbed away.

abrasive adjective

1. serving to abrade.

2. (of a personality, etc.) harsh, irritating or annoying.

abrasive noun

something that abrades.

abreast adverb

side by side: *They marched five **abreast**.*

abridge verb

to shorten: *The book was **abridged** for publication in serial form.*

absent

WORD FAMILY: **abridgment**, **abridgement**, noun.

abroad adverb

1. in or to another country: *We went **abroad** for our holidays.*

2. outside: *He did not venture **abroad** all day.*

Usage: *Vicious rumours are **abroad** (= circulating).*

abrogate (say ab-ro-gate) verb

to repeal or annul: *to **abrogate** a law.*

WORD FAMILY: **abrogation**, noun.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abrogare* to repeal

abrupt adjective

1. sudden or unexpected.

2. discourteously brief, especially in manner.

WORD FAMILY: **abruptly**, adverb; **abruptness**, noun.

SIMILAR MEANING: for definition 2 **brusque**, **curt**, **short**, **terse**

OPPOSITE MEANING: for definition 2 **civil**, **courteous**, **gallant**, **polite**

abscess (say ab-sess) noun

an acute, local, bacterial infection containing pus, such as a boil.

WORD FAMILY: **abscessed**, adjective.

abscissa (say ab-siss-a) noun

Mathematics: the horizontal distance of a point from the origin of a graph; the *x* coordinate. Compare **ORDINATE**.

abscission (say ab-sizh-on) noun

the act of cutting off.

WORD FAMILY: **abscind** (say ab-sind), verb.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abscissio* a cleaving

abscond (say ab-scond) verb

to leave suddenly or secretly, especially after doing wrong: *She **absconded** with the money.*

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abscondere* to hide away

abseil (say ab-sale) verb

to lower oneself down a cliff or steep slope using a rope.

absent (say ab-sent) adjective

1. away: *She was **absent** from school.*

2. inattentive or preoccupied: *He had an **absent** look about him.*

WORD FAMILY: **absent** (say ab-sent), verb, to take or keep (oneself) away; **absently**, adverb; **absence**, noun;

absentee (say ab-sen-tee), noun, a person who is absent.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *absens* being away

absenteeism (say ab-sen-tee-izm)*noun*

the practice of staying away from one's place of work, study, property, etc. habitually or without good excuse or permission.

absentee landowner

a person who owns land, such as a farm, often solely for investment purposes, and who lives elsewhere.

absent-minded *adjective*

vague or forgetful.

WORD FAMILY: **absent-mindedly**, *adverb*; **absent-mindedness**, *noun*.

SIMILAR MEANING: **inattentive**, **preoccupied**

absolute (say ab-so-loot) *adjective*

complete, perfect or unlimited: *The day was an **absolute** success.* / *The dictator had **absolute** power.*

WORD FAMILY: **absolutely**, *adverb*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *absolutus* freed

absolute alcohol

Chemistry: ethyl alcohol, at least 99 per cent pure by mass.

absolute humidity

see HUMIDITY.

absolute majority

a winning number of votes which is more than the combined votes received by all other candidates or parties in an election.

absolute temperature

Physics: the temperature measured from absolute zero.

absolute zero

Physics: the lowest temperature possible, which is equal to 0 kelvin (-273.15°C).

absolutism (say ab-so-loot-izm) *noun*

the principle or practice of absolute power and control, especially in government.

WORD FAMILY: **absolutist**, *noun*, a supporter of absolutism; **absolutist**, *adjective*.

absolve *verb*

to pardon or release from guilt, blame, obligation, etc.

WORD FAMILY: **absolution** (say ab-so-loo-shon), *noun*.

absorb *verb*

to take in or soak up: *The sponge **absorbed** the water.* Compare ADSORB.

Usages:

a) *She was completely **absorbed** by the book (= engrossed).*

b) *The international corporation **absorbed** its competitors (= took over).*

c) *A black surface tends to **absorb** heat, whereas a white surface tends to reflect it (= retain).*

WORD FAMILY: **absorbent**, *adjective*; **absorption**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: AB- + Latin *sorbere* to suck in

abstain *verb*

to refrain voluntarily from doing something: *Some people **abstain** from drinking alcohol.* / *He **abstained** from voting.*

WORD FAMILY: **abstinence** (say ab-sti-nence), *noun*, self-restraint; **abstention**, *noun*, the act of abstaining; **abstainer**, *noun*, a person who abstains.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abstinere* to keep away from

abstemious (say ab-stee-mee-us)

adjective

tending to eat and drink sparingly.

abstract (say ab-strakt) *adjective*

1. concerning things which have no real or physical existence, such as ideas.

2. based on theory: **abstract** arguments.

3. **Art:** not representing people or things as they would be seen by a camera, but relying on colour, form, etc.

abstract *noun*

1. the state of being abstract.

2. a summary: *She handed out an **abstract** of her paper.*

abstract (say ab-strakt) *verb*
to remove or take away.

WORD FAMILY: **abstractly**, *adverb*; **abstraction**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abstractus* drawn away

abstracted *adjective*

preoccupied, lost in thought: *She had a vague, **abstracted** look.*

abstract noun

Grammar: see NOUN.

abstruse (say abs-trooce) *adjective*

obscure or difficult to understand: *I couldn't follow the lawyer's **abstruse** argument.*

WORD FAMILY: **abstrusely**, *adverb*; **abstruseness**, *noun*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *abstrusus* hidden

TRICKY WORDS: see OBTUSE.

absurd *adjective*

foolish or illogical.

WORD FAMILY: **absurdly**, *adverb*; **absurdity**, *noun*, a) the quality of



abundance

being absurd, b) something which is absurd.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *absurdus* out of tune

abundance (say a-bun-dance) *noun*

a full or ample supply or amount.

WORD FAMILY: **abundant**, *adjective*; **abundantly**, *adverb*.

abuse (say ab-yooz) *verb*

1. to use wrongly or maltreat: *Never abuse a chisel by using it as a screwdriver.*

2. to speak insultingly to: *The drunk abused the waiter.*

3. to ill-treat or maltreat, especially physically or sexually.

abuse (say ab-yooce) *noun*

1. wrong or improper use.

2. ill-treatment or maltreatment, especially physical or sexual: *child abuse.*

3. excessive or illegal use: *drug abuse.*

4. insulting remarks.

WORD FAMILY: **abusive**, *adjective*; **abusively**, *adverb*; **abusiveness**, *noun*.

abut (say a-but) *verb*

(**abutted**, **abutting**)

to border on or be next to: *The farm abuts the park.*

abutment *noun*

Architecture: a supporting structure extending from the ends or piers of a bridge.

abuzz *adverb, adjective*

buzzing.

abysmal (say a-biz-mal) *adjective*

1. of, like or as deep as an abyss: *Your abysmal ignorance appals me.*

2. (informal) very bad: *I thought the performance was abysmal.*

WORD FAMILY: **abysmally**, *adverb*.

abyss (say a-biss) *noun*

1. an immeasurable depth or chasm.

2. anything very profound or deep: *He mourned in an abyss of grief.*

WORD ORIGINS: Greek *abyssos* bottomless

ac-

a variant of the prefix **ad-**.

a.c.

Electricity: alternating current.

AC

Companion of the Order of Australia.

A/C

1. account.

2. current account.

acacia (say a-cay-sha) *noun*

any of a group of trees or shrubs, such

accent

as the wattle, with very small, yellow flowers massed together into balls or rods.

academic (say ac-a-dem-ic) *adjective*

1. of or relating to learning or studies, especially in a university or similar institution.

2. theoretical rather than practical: *That is just an academic quibble.*

academic *noun*

a person who teaches or does research in a university or similar institution.

WORD FAMILY: **academically**, *adverb*.

academy (say a-cad-e-mee) *noun*

1. a scientific or artistic association: *the Australian Academy of Science.*

2. a private school for practical subjects: *an academy of hairdressing.*

3. a private secondary school.

WORD ORIGINS: ACADEMY, from the Greek *Akademie*, was the garden near ancient Athens where the philosopher Plato taught. The word came to mean the philosophical school of Plato, and later, any place or institution where the arts and sciences are taught.

accede (say ac-seed) *verb*

1. to agree: *I accede to your request.*

2. to attain a position, office, etc.: *The prince acceded to the throne.*

accelerate (say ac-sel-e-rate) *verb*

1. to move or cause to move faster: *The car accelerated and passed the truck.*

2. *Physics:* to change velocity.

acceleration *noun*

1. an increase in swiftness of movement.

2. *Physics:* the vector quantity describing the rate of change in velocity of an object, including linear acceleration, expressed in metres per second per second, and angular acceleration, expressed in radians per second per second.

accelerator (say ac-sel-e-ray-ter) *noun*

1. a device to increase or control speed, especially the device in a motor vehicle which controls the throttle.

2. *Physics:* a device to alter the velocity of subatomic particles: *a nuclear accelerator.* See CYCLOTRON.

accent *noun*

1. a particular way of pronouncing a language: *She speaks French with an American accent.*

2. *Language:* any of the marks used with letters to change their sound or to indicate stress:

accentuate

a) an **acute** may indicate stress or pronunciation: **attaché** (say a-tash-ay).

b) a **grave** (say grahv) generally flattens the vowel sound, as in French: **père** (say pair).

c) a **circumflex** indicates a dropped s, as in French: **arrêter** (= to arrest or stop).

d) a **tilde** (say til-da) introduces the sound of a y, as in Spanish: **señor** (say sen-yor).

e) a **cedilla** (say sa-dill-a) softens a hard c(k) to a soft c(s) as in French: **façade** (say fa-sahd).

f) a **dieresis** (say dy-erra-siss), placed over the second of two adjacent vowels, indicates that both vowel sounds should be pronounced: **noël** (say no-el).

g) an **umlaut** (say oom-lowt), indicates a change from the normal vowel sound, as in German: **Köln** (say kerln).

3. any stress or emphasis.

4. *Art, Music*: any part of a work which is emphasised to highlight or intensify a mood, theme or effect.

WORD FAMILY: **accent** (say ac-sent), verb; **accental**, adjective.

accentuate (say ac-sent-yoo-ate) verb
to emphasise.

WORD FAMILY: **accentuation**, noun.

accept (say ac-sept) verb
to receive, especially with approval:
Please accept my apologies.

WORD FAMILY: **acceptable**, adjective, welcome or worthy of being accepted.

HOMOPHONES: **accept** sounds like **except** 'excluding or leaving out'

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *acceptus* received

acceptance noun

1. the act of taking or receiving something offered.

2. *Commerce*: an agreement to pay a draft, order or bill of exchange.

3. *Horseracing*: (plural) the list of horses accepted to compete in a race.

access (say ac-sess) noun

1. a means of entry or approach: *The only access to the island is by boat.*

2. the right or opportunity of reaching, approaching, etc., such as the right of a divorced parent to visit the children.

access verb

1. to gain entry to the memory of a computer.

2. to obtain data from a computer.

WORD FAMILY: **accessible** (say ac-

acclivity

sess-i-bl), adjective, able to be reached or obtained; **accessibility**, noun.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *accessus* an approach

accession noun

1. the act of acceding: *The country celebrated the queen's accession to the throne.*

2. an addition or increase: *Numbers rose with the accession of new members.*

accessory (say ac-sess-o-ree) noun

1. a) any extra non-essential item: *Most cars today have a radio as an accessory.* b) (plural) any additional items of clothing, such as shoes, handbags, etc. to complement one's dress.

2. *Law*: any person who helps a criminal before or after a crime.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *accessio* an addition

accident (say ac-si-dent) noun

1. anything that is unexpected or unintentional: *I met him by accident.*

2. any unfortunate event, especially one involving injury: *a car accident.*

accidental adjective

occurring by chance.

accidental noun

Music: a sign used before a note to indicate change to a sharp, flat or natural.

WORD FAMILY: **accidentally**, adverb.

TRICKY WORDS: ACCIDENTAL OR INCIDENTAL? These words are sometimes confused because they sound alike and have related meanings. *Accidental* describes something that occurs unexpectedly or unintentionally, while *incidental* refers to something that accompanies an event or is of secondary importance.

acclaim (say a-claim) verb

to applaud or express loud approval.

WORD FAMILY: **acclaim**, **acclamation**, nouns.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *acclamare* to shout approval

acclimatise (say a-clime-a-tize)

acclimatize verb

to make or become used to something new: *It took a month to become acclimatised to the tropical heat.*

WORD FAMILY: **acclimatisation**, noun.

acclivity (say ac-liv-it-ee) noun

any upward slope.



accolade

accolade (say ac-o-lade) *noun*

1. a ceremonial touching of the shoulder with a sword, a symbol of the award of knighthood.
2. a special recognition of, or praise for, merit: *Her courageous effort in the final won accolades from the crowd.*

accommodate (say a-com-o-date) *verb*

1. to do a favour for, especially by providing something: *Can you accommodate me with a loan?*
2. to adapt: *It takes a few minutes for my eyes to accommodate to the dark.*
3. to have rooms or beds for: *The hotel accommodates 14 guests.*

WORD ORIGINS: Latin, fitting, suited

accommodation *noun*

1. the act of accommodating.
2. any rooms provided for visitors or paying guests, such as in a hotel.

accommodation ladder

steps over the side or stern of a ship used to climb aboard from boats alongside.

accompaniment

(say a-cum-pa-nee-ment) *noun*
anything that goes with or adds to another: *There was no piano accompaniment for the singer.*

WORD FAMILY: **accompanist** (say a-cum-pa-nist), *noun*, a person who plays a musical accompaniment.

accompany (say a-cum-pa-nee) *verb*

1. to exist, or go, with: *We will accompany you to the airport.*
2. to provide an accompaniment to.

accomplice (say a-cum-pliss) *noun*
a partner in crime or wrongdoing.

SIMILAR MEANING: **accessory**, **henchman**

accomplish (say a-cum-plish) *verb*
to bring about or complete successfully: *He accomplished his task ahead of time.*

accomplished *adjective*

1. already done: *My task is accomplished.*
2. skilled: *an accomplished singer.*

accomplishment *noun*

1. something achieved.
2. an acquired skill: *His many accomplishments include horseriding and operatic singing.*

accord (say a-cord) *verb*

1. to agree or be in harmony: *What he said today doesn't accord with what he said yesterday.*

accoutrements

2. to give or grant: *He was accorded a warm welcome.*

accord *noun*

1. an agreement or harmony: *The government representative signed the accord.*

2. of one's own accord, voluntarily: *She did it quite of her own accord.*

3. with one accord, spontaneously together: *The whole crowd cheered with one accord.*

WORD FAMILY: **accordance**, *noun*; **accordant**, *adjective*; **accordingly**, *adverb*, therefore or for that reason.

according *adverb*

- according to**, a) in relation to: *We sorted the fruit according to size.* b) as stated by: *According to all reports she's quite mad.*

accordion *noun*

a portable keyed musical instrument with two sets of metal reeds that are made to vibrate by air from a set of bellows.

WORD FAMILY: **accordionist**, *noun*.

accost (say a-cost) *verb*

to greet or approach, often offensively: *The beggar accosted me in the street.*

account *noun*

1. any statement which lists, describes or explains: *The radio gave a full account of the match.* | *The clerk kept the financial accounts.*

2. an agreement allowing one to buy goods on credit, of which a record is kept.

3. see BANK ACCOUNT.

4. importance: *It's an issue of no account.*

WORD FAMILY: **account**, *verb*.

accountable *adjective*

1. able to be explained.
2. responsible: *I'm not accountable for your debts.*

WORD FAMILY: **accountably**, *adverb*; **accountability**, *noun*.

accountant *noun*

a person who records and examines the financial transactions of a business.

WORD FAMILY: **accounting**, **accountancy**, *nouns*.

accoutrements (say a-coot-re-ments)

plural noun

1. a soldier's equipment, apart from clothes and weapons.

2. any equipment.

WORD FAMILY: **accoutre** (say a-koot-er), *verb*, to equip.

WORD ORIGINS: French

accredit

accredit *verb*

1. to give credit for: *She is **accredited** with several inventions.*
 2. to authorise or recognise officially: *As ambassador she is the **accredited** representative of her country.*
- WORD FAMILY:** **accreditation**, *noun*.

accretion (say a-cree-shon) *noun*

any growth or increase by addition.

WORD FAMILY: **accrete**, *verb*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *accretio* an increasing

accrue (say a-croo) *verb*

(**accrued**, **accruing**)

to occur as a natural increase or addition: *Interest **accrues** at 8 per cent a year.*

WORD FAMILY: **accrual**, *noun*, a) the act of accruing, b) an entry in an account representing a debt which is due but which has not yet been paid.

accrued interest

Commerce: see **INTEREST**.

acculturation (say a-cul-ture-ay-shon) *noun*

Anthropology: the process in which a person or group adopts the customs of a society by social or economic necessity.

accumulate (say ac-yoom-yoo-late) *verb*

to gather or pile up.

WORD FAMILY: **accumulation**, *noun*, a) the act of accumulating, b) a number of things collected together; **accumulative**, *adjective*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *accumulare* to heap up

accumulator *noun*

1. a person or thing that accumulates.
2. *Electricity:* any rechargeable battery, such as a car battery.

accurate (say ac-yoo-rate) *adjective*

free from error or deviation: *My new watch is more **accurate** than my old one. / He made an **accurate** guess.*

WORD FAMILY: **accurately**, *adverb*; **accuracy**, **accurateness**, *nouns*.

SIMILAR MEANING: **correct**, **exact**

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *accuratus* prepared with care

accursed (say a-curst or a-cur-sed) *adjective*

1. under a curse.

2. (*informal*) hateful or irritating: *This **accursed** knife is blunt.*

accusative case (say ac-yoo-za-tiv case)

Grammar: see **CASE** (1).

achieve

accuse (say ac-yooz) *verb*

to blame with having done wrong: *I **accuse** you of stealing the money.*

WORD FAMILY: **accusation** (say ac-yoo-zay-shon), *noun*; **accusatory**, *adjective*.

accused *noun*

Law: the defendant in a criminal court case.

accustom *verb*

to become familiar with through use or habit: *You'll have to **accustom** yourself to our strange ways.*

WORD FAMILY: **accustomed**, *adjective*, a) familiar with, b) usual or customary.

ace *noun*

1. a playing card with a single pip, the highest or lowest card in its suit.

2. a person who excels in a particular field, such as a fighter pilot.

3. *Tennis:* a serve which the opposing player is unable to touch with his or her racquet.

WORD FAMILY: **ace**, *verb*, to play an ace.

acerbic (say a-ser-bic) *adjective*

sharp or bitter.

WORD FAMILY: **acerbity**, *noun*;

acerbate (say ass-er-bate), *verb*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *acerbus* bitter

acetate (say ass-e-tate) *noun*

Chemistry: a salt or ester of acetic acid.

acetic acid (say a-see-tic assid)

Chemistry: see **ETHANOIC ACID**.

acetone (say ass-e-tone) *noun*

Chemistry: a colourless, highly inflammable liquid (formula CH_3COCH_3), used as an industrial solvent, in making rayon, and as nail polish remover.

acetylene (say a-set-i-leen) *noun*

1. *Chemistry:* a colourless, poisonous flammable gas (formula C_2H_2) used in making organic compounds and in welding.

2. (*plural*) see **ALKYNES**.

acetylsalicylic acid

(say a-settil-salla-sill-ic assid)

see **ASPIRIN**.

ache (say ake) *noun*

any dull, continuous pain.

WORD FAMILY: **ache**, *verb*.

achieve (say a-cheev) *verb*

to attain or accomplish something.

WORD FAMILY: **achiever**, *noun*, a person who achieves; **achievement**, *noun*.

SIMILAR MEANING: **fulfil**, **realise**



Achilles' heel (say a-kill-eez heel)
a fatal weakness.

WORD ORIGINS: ACHILLES' HEEL comes from the tale of Achilles, a hero in Greek mythology. Achilles' mother, wishing to make him immortal, took her son by one heel and dipped him in the river Styx; the only place on his body untouched by the waters was the heel in her hand. During the siege of Troy, Achilles was killed by an arrow wound to his heel, the only vulnerable spot on his body.

achromatic (say ay-cro-mat-ic)
adjective

1. being colourless, and therefore composed of black, white and grey tones only.
2. *Physics:* (of a lens or mirror) having been corrected for chromatic aberration.
3. *Music:* without accidentals or changes in key.

acid (say ass-id) *noun*

1. *Chemistry:* a substance which liberates hydrogen ions when dissolved in water. *Example:* hydrochloric acid (formula HCl) dissociates in water to form one hydrogen ion (H⁺) and one chloride ion (Cl⁻). Compare BASE (1).
2. (*informal*) lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

acid *adjective*

sharp or bitter: *an acid taste / an acid comment.*

WORD FAMILY: **acidly**, *adverb*; **acidity**, *noun*; **acidify** (**acidified**, **acidifying**), *verb*; **acidic**, *adjective*.

WORD ORIGINS: Latin *acidus* sour

acid house

any music with a heavy beat that includes dialogue, laughter and screams.

WORD ORIGINS: ACID HOUSE music started in Chicago in the mid-1980s. *House* is a shortened form of 'Warehouse', the name of a nightclub in Chicago where *House* music was first performed. The music has a fast, thumping, rhythmic pulse and is often associated with the use of the drug ecstasy, also known as *acid*.

acid rain

any rain which contains high levels of acid discharged into the atmosphere as waste products from factories and industrial processes, and which is harmful to crops.

acid test

any decisive or crucial test.

acidulous (say a-sid-yoo-luss)

adjective

slightly sour or caustic.

WORD FAMILY: **acidulate**, *verb*, to make or become sour.

ack-ack *noun*

anti-aircraft fire or guns.

acknowledge (say ac-noll-age) *verb*

1. to confess or accept responsibility for: *Will you acknowledge your mistake?*

2. to mention having received something, etc.: *I would like to acknowledge your letter.*

WORD FAMILY: **acknowledgment**, **acknowledgement**, *noun*.

acme (say ac-mee) *noun*

the peak or highest point: *the acme of perfection.*

acne (say ac-nee) *noun*

an inflammation of the skin, common in adolescence, causing pimples.

acolyte (say ac-o-lite) *noun*

1. *Christian:* a person who assists the priest at religious services, especially at the Eucharist. Also called a **server**.
2. any assistant or helper.

WORD ORIGINS: Greek

acorn (say ay-corn) *noun*

the fruit of the oak tree, consisting of a nut in cup-shaped holder.

ACOSS

Australian Council of Social Service.

acoustic (say a-coo-stic) **acoustical**

adjective

1. a) of or relating to hearing. b) of or relating to the study of sound.
2. *Music:* of or relating to any instrument whose sound is not electronically amplified.

WORD FAMILY: **acoustically**, *adverb*.

acoustic coupler

a device that converts data from one computer into a form that can be transmitted along telephone lines to another computer.

acoustics *plural noun*

1. (*used with singular verb*) a branch of physics which studies sound.
2. the properties of a particular space which determine the quality of sound.

acoustic tile

a tile made of a soft substance such as cork, etc., used to absorb sound in buildings.

acquaint (say a-kwaint) *verb*

to make familiar: *Who will acquaint him with the facts?*

