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*Handy
Learner's*

**DICTIONARY
OF AMERICAN
ENGLISH**

28,000 words and phrases



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30BOOK

ABC
D

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Guide to the dictionary

Spelling

different spelling

age-is-m. **agism** /'eɪdʒɪzəm/ *n* [U] the making of unfair differences between people because of their age, esp. treating young people more favorably than old people **agist** *adj, n*

irregular plurals

ox /ɒks/ *n* **oxen** /'ɒksən/ large animal of the cattle type, esp. male

irregular verbs

a-rise /ə'raɪz/ *v* **arose** /ə'raʊz/, **arisen** /ə'raɪzən/ **happen, appear**

Pronunciation/stress

pronunciations are shown using symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet – see inside front cover

ba-by /'beɪbi/ *n* 1 very young child: (fig.) *the baby of the class* (= the youngest) 2 very young animal or bird: *a baby monkey* 3 *informal* person, esp. a girl or woman 4 *informal* one's special responsibility – **ish** *adj* like a baby

stress syllables are clearly marked

bal-loon /bə'lʊn/ *n* 1 bag filled with gas or air so that it can float 2 small rubber bag that can be blown up and used as a toy

Meaning

clear and simple explanations using a limited defining vocabulary

beam /bi:m/ *n* long heavy piece of wood, esp. used to support a building

words with the same spelling but different use or meaning

an-tique /æn'tɪk/ *adj* old and therefore valuable • *n* valuable old object

more than one meaning

be-come /bɪ'kʌm/ *v* **became, become** 1 begin to be: *became kind* | *became warmer* 2 *vt* be suitable for: *Such behavior hardly becomes someone in your position.*

Words that you may not know are written like this. You can find all these words in the dictionary.

be-drag-gled /bɪ'dræɡəld/ *adj* wet, LIMP, and muddy

co-in-cide /'kəʊn'saɪd/ *vt* 1 happen at the same time 2 (of opinions, etc.) agree

choc-o-late /'tʃɒkəlɪt/ *n* 1 [U] solid brown substance eaten as candy 2 [C] small candy covered with this 3 [U] hot drink made from this + *adj* dark brown

boy /bɔɪ/ *n* young male person ~hood *n* time of being a boy - *ish adj* like a boy

bone-dry /'bɒnɪ/ *adj* perfectly dry

close call /'kloʊs 'kɔ:l/ *n* *informal* situation in which something dangerous or very unpleasant is only just avoided

boil over *phr vt* 1 (of a boiling liquid) flow over the sides of the container 2 get out of control (and develop into): *The conflict boiled over into war.*

boil down to *phr vt* to be no more than: *It all boils down to a question of money.*

boil away *phr vt* disappear by boiling
Bring the soup to a boil.
[U] almost no water remains + *n* [S]:
After 10 hours the soup had boiled away.

bee /bi:/ *n* 1 stinging insect that makes honey 2 a bee in one's bonnet fixed idea; obsession 3 the bee's knees *informal* the best person or thing

intransitive and transitive verbs

countable and uncountable nouns

words which are part of the same word family and which have different parts of speech are shown like this

parts of speech

Grammar

labels showing style, region, etc.

examples showing how to use the word or phrase

phrasal verbs (= verbs which have a special meaning when they are used with a particular adverb or preposition)

common idioms and phrases are shown in dark type

a-bove-board /ə'ba:v,bɔ:d/, -bɔ:rd/ *adj* without any trick or attempt to deceive
a-bra-sive /ə'breɪsɪv/, -zɪv/ *adj* 1 causing the rubbing away of a surface 2 rough and annoying: *an abrasive personality*
a-breast /ə'breɪst/ *adv* 1 side by side 2 keep/be abreast of know the most recent facts about
a-bridge /ə'brɪdʒ/ *vt* make (a book, etc.) shorter **-ment** *n*
a-broad /ə'brɔ:d/ *adv* to or in another country
a-brupt /ə'brʌpt/ *adj* 1 sudden and unexpected: *an abrupt stop* 2 (of behavior, etc.) rough and impolite **-ly** *adv* **-ness** *n* [U]
ab-scess /'æbsɪs/ *n* swelling on or in the body, containing pus
ab-scond /æb'skɒnd/, əb-/ *vi fml* go away suddenly because one has done something wrong
ab-sence /'æbsəns/ *n* 1 [C;U] (period of) being away: *absence from work* 2 [U] lack: *the absence of information about the crime*
ab-sent /'æbsənt/ *adj* 1 not present 2 showing lack of attention: *an absent look on his face*
ab-sent /əb'sent/, əb-/ *vt fml* keep (oneself) away
ab-sen-tee /'æbsən'ti:/ *n* person who is absent from a place
absent-mind-ed /ɪ-'æbsən'tɪ-/ *adj* so concerned with one's thoughts as not to notice what is happening, what one is doing, etc.
ab-so-lute /'æbsə'lju:t/, 'æbsə'lju:t/ *adj* 1 complete; undoubted; 2 having unlimited power: *an absolute ruler* 3 not measured by comparison with other things; not RELATIVE **-ly** /'æbsə'lju:tli-/ *adv* 1 completely: *I'm absolutely sure* 2 certainly: *"Do you think so?" "Absolutely."*
ab-solve /əb'zɒlv/, -sɒlv/ *vt* free (someone) from fulfilling a promise, or from punishment
ab-sorb /əb'sɔ:b/, 'zɔ:rb/ *vt* 1 take in (liquids, heat, etc.) 2 fill the attention of: *I was absorbed in a book.* | *an absorbing task* **-ent** *adj* able to absorb (1) absorption /-ɔ:pʃən/ *n* [U]
ab-stain /əb'steɪn/ *vi* 1 keep oneself from doing something unhealthy, bad, etc. 2 not vote **-er** *n*
ab-ste-mi-ous /əb'stɪmiəs/ *adj* not allowing oneself much food, etc.

ab-sten-tion /əb'stɛnʃən/ *n* [C;U] act of abstaining, esp. from voting
ab-sti-nence /'æbstɪnəns/ *n* [U] abstaining, esp. from alcoholic drink
ab-stract /'æbstrækt/, əb'strækt/, əb'strækt/ *adj* 1 existing as a quality or concept rather than as something real or solid: *Beauty is abstract but a house is not.* | *The word 'hunger' is an abstract noun.* 2 general rather than particular: *an abstract discussion of crime, without reference to actual cases* 3 (in art) not showing things as a camera would see them * /'æbstrækt/ *n* 1 abstract work of art 2 short form of a statement, speech, etc.
ab-surd /əb'sɜ:d/, -'zɜ:d/ *adj* unreasonable; (funny because) false or foolish **-ly** *adv* **-ity** /əb'sɜ:di/, -'zɜ:/ *n* [C;U]
a-bun-dant /ə'bʌndənt/ *adj* more than enough **-ly** *adv* **-dance** *n* [S;U] *an abundance of food*
a-buse /ə'byu:z/ *vt* 1 do cruel or violent things to 2 say bad things to or about 3 use badly: *abuse one's power*
a-buse /ə'byu:s/ *n* 1 [U] cruel or violent behavior towards 2 [U] cruel or rude words 3 [C;U] wrong use: *the abuse of drugs* **abusive** *adj* using cruel or rude words
a-bys-mal /ə'biznəl/ *adj* very bad
a-byss /ə'bis/ *n* large hole that seems to have no bottom
AC *n* [U] AIR CONDITIONING
ac-a-dem-ic /'æksə'dɛmɪk/ *adj* 1 about schools and education 2 not related to practical situations; theoretical (THEORY): *a purely academic question.* * *n* 1 university teacher 2 someone who values skills of the mind more than practical skills **-ally** *adv*
a-cad-e-my /ə'kædəmi/ *n* 1 private high school 2 school for training in a special skill: *a military academy* 3 society of people interested in the advancement of art, science, or literature
ac-cede /æk'si:d/, ək-/ *vi fml* 1 agree to a demand, etc. 2 come to a high position
ac-cel-e-rate /æk'selə'reɪt/ *vi/t* 1 (cause to) move faster 2 (cause to) develop or happen faster **-ration** /ək'selə'reɪʃən/ *n* [U]
ac-cel-e-ra-tor /æk'selə'reɪtə/ *n* instrument in a car, etc., that is used to increase its speed
ac-cent /'æksənt/ *n* 1 particular way of speaking, usu. connected with a place or

a nationality **2** mark written over or under a letter, such as that on the 'e' of 'café' **3** importance given to a word or part of a word by saying it with more force

ac-cent¹ /ə'ksent, æk'sent/ *vt* say with added force

ac-cen-tu-ate /ək'sentʃu,et, æk-/ *vt* give extra importance to

ac-cept /ək'sept/ *v* **1** *vi/t* receive (something offered), esp. willingly **2** *vt* believe or agree to: *Did she accept your reasons for being late?* -able *adj* good enough; worth accepting: *an acceptable gift* -ance *n* [C:U]

ac-cess¹ /'ækses/ *n* [U] **1** way in; entrance **2** means of using or getting something: *Students need access to books.*

-ible /ək'sesəbəl/ *adj* easy to get or get to

-ibil *ty* /ək'sesə'biləti/ *n* [U]

access² *vt* obtain (stored information)

from a computer's memory

ac-ces-so-ry /ək'sesəri/ *n* **1** thing that is added but is not a necessary part: *car accessories such as a radio | a black dress with matching accessories* (= hat, bag, shoes, etc.) **2** *law* person who is not present at a crime but who helps in doing it

ac-ci-dent /'æksədənt, -dənt/ *n* something, usu. unpleasant, that happens unexpectedly: *serious accidents on the freeway | I met her by accident.* -al /'æksədəntəl/ *adj* -ally *adv*

ac-claim /ə'kleɪm/ *vt* give public approval
acclaim *n* [U]

ac-cli-mate /ək'klaɪmət, ə'klaɪmɪt/ *vi/t* make or get used to the weather in a new place
acclimation /ək'klaɪ'meɪʃən/ *n* [U]

ac-co-lade /'ækəleɪd/ *n* strong praise

ac-com-mo-date /ə'kɒmədeɪt/ *vt fml* **1** provide with a place to live in **2** help by making changes: *to accommodate your wishes* -dating *adj* helpful
dation(s) /ə'kɒmədeɪʃən/ *n* [P] room and food

ac-com-pa-ni-ment /ə'kɒmpənɪmənt/ *n* **1** something which is used or provided with something else **2** music played at the same time as singing or another instrument

ac-com-pa-nist /ə'kɒmpənɪst/ *n* player of a musical accompaniment

ac-com-pa-ny /ə'kɒmpəni/ *vt* **1** go with, as on a journey **2** happen at the same time as: *Lightning usually accompanies*

thunder **3** play a musical accompaniment to

ac-com-lice /ə'kɒmplɪs/ *n* person who helps someone to do wrong

ac-com-plish /ə'kɒmplɪʃ/ *vt* succeed in doing -ed *adj* skilled -ment *n* **1** [C] something one is skilled at **2** [U] act of accomplishing something

ac-cord /ə'kɔ:d/ *n* [U] **1** in accord (with) in agreement (with) **2** of one's own accord without being asked; willingly

ac-cord-ance /ə'kɔ:dəns/ *n* in accordance with in a way that agrees with
ac-cord-ing-ly /ə'kɔ:dɪŋli/ *adv* because of what has happened; therefore

according to /ə'kɔ:dɪŋ tu/ *prep* **1** from what is said or written: *According to my watch, it's 4 o'clock.* **2** in a way that agrees with: *paid according to the amount of work done*

ac-cord-i-on /ə'kɔ:dɪən/ *n* musical instrument played by pressing the middle part together to force air through holes controlled by KEYS³ (3) worked by the fingers

ac-cost /ə'kɒst, ə'kɔ:st/ *vt* go up and speak to (esp. a stranger), often threateningly

ac-count¹ /ə'kaʊnt/ *n* **1** report; description: *give an account of what happened* | **By all accounts,** (- according to what everyone says) *she's a good player.* **2** accounts record of money received and paid out **3** money kept in a bank or other institution where one saves money **4** arrangement that lets one buy goods and pay for them later **5** customer: *one of our biggest accounts* **6** bring/call someone to account cause (someone) to give an explanation **7** on account of because of **8** on no account/not on any account not for any reason **9** take into account/take account² of give thought to; consider
account² *v* account for *phr vt* **1** give or be an explanation for **2** give a statement showing how money has been spent

ac-count-a-ble /ə'kaʊntəbəl/ *adj* responsible -billy /ə'kaʊntə'biləti/ *n* [U]

ac-count-ant /ə'kaʊntənt, -ɪnt/ *n* person who controls and examines money accounts

ac-cred-it-ed /ə'kredɪtɪd/ *adj* **1** officially recognized as reaching a certain standard or quality: *an accredited college* **2** officially representing one's government in a foreign country **3** having the power to act for an organization

ac-crue /ə'kru:/ *vi fml* come as an increase or advantage

ac-cu-mu-late /ə'kyumyə'leɪt/ *vi/t* make or become greater; collect into a mass
-lation /ə'kyumyə'leɪʃən/ *n* [C;U]

ac-cu-ra-cy /ə'kjurəsi/ *n* [U] being accurate; exactness

ac-cu-rate /ə'kyurət/ *adj* exactly correct
-ly *adv*

ac-cu-sa-tion /ə'kyʊə'seɪʃən/ *n* [C;U] (statement) accusing someone of something

ac-cuse /ə'kyuz/ *vt* charge (someone) with doing wrong: *He was accused of murder.* | *The accused (men) were found guilty.* **accuser** *n* **accusingly** *adv*

ac-cus-tom /ə'kʌstəm/ *vt* be accustomed to be in the habit of; be used to

ace /eɪs/ *n* 1 playing card with one mark or spot on it 2 person of the highest skill 3 (in tennis) very fast and strong **serve** that the opponent cannot hit back ♦ *adj* *infml* very good or very skilled ♦ *v infml* receive the highest possible grade on a test

a-cer-bic /ə'sɜ:bɪk/ *adj* (of a person or manner) clever in a rather cruel way

ache /eɪk/ *vi* have a continuous dull pain: *My head aches.* **ache** *n*: a *headache*

a-chieve /ə'tʃi:v/ *vt* 1 finish successfully 2 get by effort: *achieve results* ~ment *n* 1 [U] successful finishing of something 2 [C] something achieved

a-chiever /ə'tʃi:və/ *n* person who achieves a lot: *high achiever*

A-chit-les' heel /ə'tʃɪlz'hi:l/ *n* small but important weakness

ac-id /ə'sɪd/ *adj* sour; bitter **acid** *n* 1 [C;U] chemical substance containing HYDROGEN 2 [U] *st* the drug *asn*

acid rain /ə'sɪd'reɪn/ *n* [U] rain containing harmful quantities of acid as a result of industrial pollution (POLLUTE)

acid test /ə'sɪd'test/ *n* test of the value of something

ac-knowl-edge /ə'knoʊldʒ/ *vt* 1 admit; recognize as a fact: *to acknowledge defeat* | *an acknowledged expert* 2 show one is grateful for 3 state that one has received: *acknowledge a letter* 4 show that one recognizes (someone) as by smiling, etc. -edgment, -edgement *n* [C;U]

ac-ne /ə'kni:/ *n* [U] skin disorder common among young people, in which pimples appear on the face and neck

a-corn /'eɪkɔ:n, 'eɪkən/ *n* nut of the oak tree

a-cous-tics /ə'kʌstɪks/ *n* 1 [U] scientific study of sound 2 [P] qualities that make a place good or bad for hearing in acoustic *adj*

ac-quaint /ə'kwetɪn/ *vt fml* 1 acquaint someone with tell; make known to 2 be acquainted (with) have met socially; know ~ance *n* 1 [C] person whom one knows slightly 2 [S;U] (with) knowledge gained through experience

ac-qui-esce /ə'kwɪ'es/ *vt* agree, often unwillingly -escent *adj*

ac-quire /ə'kwɪə/ *vt* gain; come to possess

ac-qui-si-tion /ə'kwɪ'zɪʃən/ *n* 1 [U] act of acquiring 2 [C] something acquired -tive /ə'kwɪ'zɪv/ *adj* in the habit of acquiring; things

ac-quit /ə'kwɪt/ *vt* decide that (someone) is not guilty: *The jury acquitted him (of murder).* -tal *n* [C;U]

a-cres /'eɪkɪz/ *n* a measure of land equal to 4,840 square yards

a-cres-age /'eɪkɪrɪdʒ/ *n* [S;U] area measured in acres

ac-rid /'ækrɪd/ *adj* (of taste or smell) bitter; stinging

ac-ri-mo-ny /'ækrə'moʊni/ *n* [U] bitterness of manner or language -nious /'ækrə'moʊniəs/ *adj*

ac-ro-bat /'ækrə'bæt/ *n* person skilled in walking on ropes, etc., esp. at a circus -ic /'ækrə'bætɪk/ *adj* -ics *n* [P;U]

ac-ro-ny-m /'ækrənɪm/ *n* word made from the first letters of a name, such as NATO

a-cross /ə'krɔ:s/ *adv, prep* from one side to the other; on or to the other side (of): *a bridge across the river* | *Can you swim across?*

a-cross-the-board /ə'krɔ:s'the'bɔ:rd/ *adj* influencing or having effects on people or things of all types or at every level **across-the-board** *adv*

ac-ryl-ic /ə'krɪlɪk/ *adj* made from chemicals, rather than natural materials: *acrylic paint*

act /ækt/ *v* 1 *vi* do something: *She acted on my suggestion.* | *The doctor acted correctly.* 2 *vi/t* perform in a play or film 3 *vi* produce an effect: *Does the drug take long to act?*

act up *phr* *vi* behave badly

actⁿ *n* 1 something that one has done; an action of a particular kind: *an act of ter-*

rorism | a kind act 2 law made by congress, etc. 3 main division of a stage play 4 short event in a stage or circus performance 5 example of insincere behavior used for effect: *She was just putting on an act.* 6 get one's act together *informal* do things in a more effective way — see also ACT OF GOD

act-ing ¹ /'æktɪŋ/ *adj* appointed to do the duties of a position for a short time

acting ² *n* [U] job or skill of representing a character in a play, movie, etc.

ac-tion /'æksjən/ *n* 1 [U] process of doing something: *We must take action quickly.* 2 [C] something done; *ACT: Her prompt action saved his life.* 3 [C;U] way something works 4 [U] effect: *the action of light on photographic film* 5 [C;U] military fighting or a fight 6 [U] main events in a book, play, etc.: *The action takes place in Italy.* 7 [C;U] *law* legal charge of guilt: *bring an action against him* 8 *in/into action* *in/into* operation 9 *out of action* not working 10 *take action* begin to act — see also JOB ACTION

ac-tiv-ate /'æktə'veɪt/ *vt* make active

-ation /'æktə'veɪʃən/ *n* [U]

ac-tive /'æktɪv/ *adj* doing things; able to take action — *ly adv*

ac-tiv-ist /'æktə'vɪst/ *n* person taking an active part in politics

ac-tiv-i-ty /'æktɪvətɪ/ *n* 1 [U] movement or action: *political activity* 2 [C] something done, esp. for interest or pleasure: *leisure activities*

act of God /r- / *n* a major event that can't be controlled, like a flood or EARTHQUAKE

ac-tor /'æktə/ **actress** /'æktɪs/ *fem.* — *n* person who acts in a play, film, etc.

ac-tu-al /'æktʃuəl, 'æktʃuəl/ *adj* existing as a fact; real — *ly* /'æktʃuəli, -tʃəli, 'æktʃuəli/ *adv* 1 in fact; really 2 (showing surprise): *He actually offered me a drink!*

ac-u-men /ə'kyu:mən, 'ækjəməni/ *n* [U] *informal* ability to judge quickly

ac-u-punc-ture /'ækjəpəŋktʃə/ *n* [U] method of curing diseases by putting special needles into certain parts of the body

a-cute /ə'kyu:t/ *adj* 1 severe; very great: *acute shortage of water* 2 (of the mind or of senses) working very well 3 (of an angle) less than 90° 4 (of a mark) put above a letter, e.g. é, to show pronunciation — *ly adv* — *ness n* [U]

ad /æd/ *n informal* advertisement

A.D. (in the year) since the birth of Christ: *in 1492 A.D.*

ad-age /'ædɪdʒ/ *n* old wise phrase; PROVERB

ad-a-mant /'ædəmənt/ *adj informal* refusing to change one's mind

Ad-am's ap-ple /'ædəmz ɪpəl/ *n* lump at the front of the throat that moves when one talks or swallows

a-dapt /'ædæpt/ *vt* make suitable for new conditions — **able** *adj* able to change — **ability** /ə'deɪptə'bɪləti/ *n* [U] — **ation** /'ædæpt'eɪʃən, 'ædæpt-ɪn/ [C;U] act of adapting: *an adaptation of the play for television*

a-dapt-er, — *or* /'ædæptə/ *n* electrical plug allowing more than one piece of equipment to run from the same socket

add /æd/ *v* 1 *vt* put with something else: *add a name to the list* 2 *vi/t* join (numbers) together: 3 *vt* say also

add to phr vt increase: *His absence added to our difficulties.*

add up phr vi make sense; seem likely: *The facts just don't add up.*

ad-dict /'ædɪkt/ *n* person who cannot stop a harmful habit — **ion** /'ædɪkʃən/ *n* [C;U]

— **ive** /'ædɪktɪv/ *adj* habit forming

ad-dic-ted /'ædɪktɪd/ *adj* dependent on something, esp. a drug

ad-di-tion /'ædɪʃən/ *n* 1 [U] act of adding 2 [C] something added 3 **in addition (to)** as well as (as) — **al** *adj* as well; added — **ally** *adv* also

ad-di-tive /'ædətɪv/ *n* substance, esp. a chemical one, added to something else

ad-d-on /r- / *n* piece of equipment that can be connected to a computer that increases its usefulness

ad-dress /ə'dres, 'ædres/ *n* 1 number, town, etc., where someone lives 2 speech made to a group of people + *vt* 1 write a name and ADDRESS (1) on 2 direct a speech to: *She addressed the crowd.*

ad-apt /'ædæpt/ *adj* highly skilled

adept /'ædɛpt/ *n* person who is adept at something

ad-e-quate /'ædəkwət/ *adj* enough; good enough — *ly adv* — **quacy** /'kwəsi/ *n* [U]

ad-here /'æd'hiə/ *vi* stick firmly, as with glue **adherence** *n* [U] **adherent** *n* loyal supporter of something

adhere to phr vt remain loyal to (an idea, plan, etc.)

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ENGLISH**

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