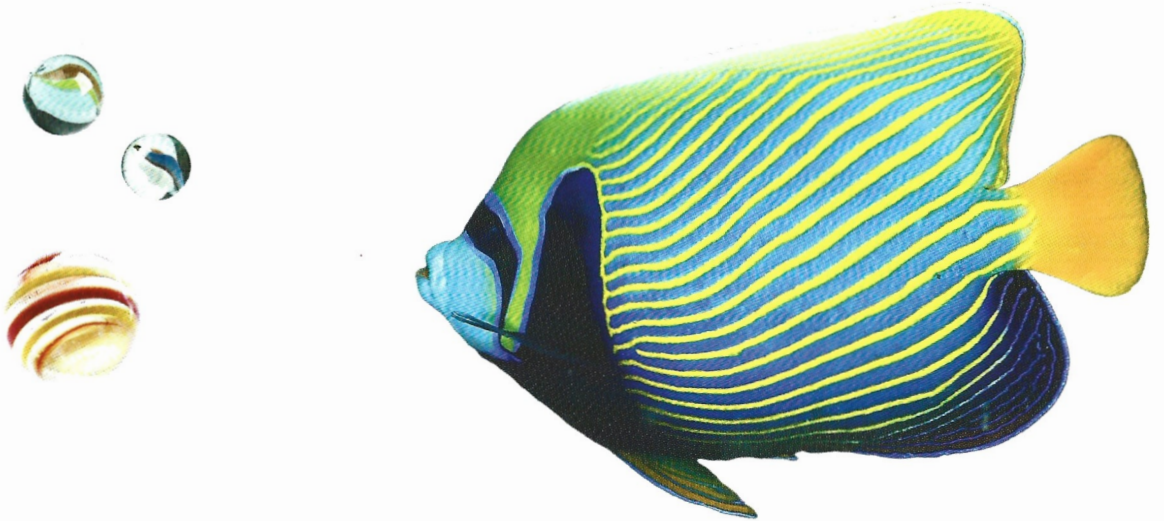




*The* AMERICAN HERITAGE<sup>®</sup>

# children's dictionary

*By the Editors of the*  
AMERICAN HERITAGE<sup>®</sup>  
DICTIONARIES



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the body of most arthropods, including all insects and spiders and many crustaceans.

**abduct** (ăb dŭkt') *verb* To take someone away by force and keep them from returning.

► *verb forms* **abducted, abducting**

**aberration** (ăb'ə rā'shən) *noun* Something that is different from what is normally expected: *Wearing a tie to work is an aberration for him.*

**abide** (ə bīd') *verb* **1.** To live in a place; reside: *The monarch abides in the castle.* **2.** To put up with or deal with something: *I cannot abide that noise.*

► *idiom* **abide by** To obey or go along with something: *All players must abide by the rules.*

► *verb forms* **abided, abiding**

**ability** (ə bīl'ī tē) *noun* **1.** The power to do something: *Birds have the ability to fly.* **2.** The power to do something well; skill or talent: *You have real ability as a writer.*

► *noun, plural* **abilities**

**Synonyms**

**ability, aptitude, skill, talent**

► Most people have the **ability** to sing. ► She has a natural **aptitude** for doing math. ► You need a lot of **skill** to repair watches. ► Her **talent** for writing poetry was evident to the judges.

**ablaze** (ə blāz') *adjective* **1.** On fire: *The house was ablaze, and smoke was everywhere.* **2.** Brightly shining: *The sky was ablaze with fireworks on the Fourth of July.*



■ **ablaze**

**able** (ā'bəl) *adjective* **1.** Having the power to do something: *My brother is able to swim all the way across the lake.* **2.** Having the skill or talent to do something well: *The able mechanic fixed our car.*

► *adjective forms* **abler, ablest**

► *adjective forms* **abler, ablest**

**-able** *suffix* **1.** The suffix *-able* forms adjectives and means “capable of being.” An *inflatable* raft is a raft that is capable of being inflated. **2.** The suffix *-able* also means “deserving.” A *lovable* puppy is a puppy that deserves love.

**Vocabulary Builder**

**-able**

Many words that are formed with **-able** are not entries in this dictionary. But you can figure out what these words mean by looking up the meanings of the base words and the suffix. For example:

**questionable** = deserving to be questioned  
**washable** = capable of being washed

**abnormal** (ăb nŏr'məl) *adjective* Not usual or not normal: *The abnormal heat caused the trees to lose their leaves early.*

**aboard** (ə bŏrd') *adverb & preposition* On or into a ship, train, airplane, or other vehicle: *We climbed aboard the train and found our seats.*

**abode** (ə bŏd') *noun* A place where someone or something lives; a home: *The dragon's abode was high up in the mountains.*

**abolish** (ə bŏl'ish) *verb* To put an end to something; do away with something: *Before the school abolished its dress code, the students had to wear uniforms.*

► *verb forms* **abolished, abolishing**

**abolition** (ăb'ə lish'ən) *noun* **1.** The act of abolishing something. **2.** Often **Abolition** The abolishing of slavery in the United States.

**abolitionist** (ăb'ə lish'ə nĭst) *noun* A person who worked to end slavery before the Civil War.

**abominable** (ə bŏm'ə nə bəl) *adjective* **1.** Causing disgust or hatred: *Kidnapping is an abominable crime.* **2.** Very unpleasant; awful: *The cold, rainy weather has been abominable.*

**aborigine** (ăb'ə rĭj'ə nē) *noun* A member of the group of people who first lived in a place.

**Aborigine** (ăb'ə rĭj'ə nē) *noun* A member of the group of people whose ancestors lived in Australia before Europeans arrived in the 1700s.

**abound** (ə baund') *verb* **1.** To be present in large numbers or amounts: *Fish abound in the lakes near here.* **2.** To be full of something: *This cookbook abounds with simple recipes.*

► *verb forms* **abounded, abounding**

**about** (ə baʊt') *adverb* **1.** Not much more or less than; approximately: *The class lasted about an hour.* **2.** On the point of doing something: *We're about to*

leave. ► *preposition* **1.** Having to do with something: *That book is about astronomy.* **2.** Around on all sides: *The explorers looked about them.*

**above** (ə bŭv') *preposition* **1.** Over or higher than something: *We live in an apartment above a restaurant.* **2.** Higher in rank, degree, or number: *My sister is in the grade above me.* ► *adverb* Over or higher than something: *Look at the clouds drifting above.*

**abreast** (ə brĕst') *adverb & adjective* **1.** Side by side in a line: *The soldiers crossed the bridge two abreast.* **2.** Up-to-date; current: *Daniel listens to the radio to keep abreast of the news.*

■ **abreast**



**abridge** (ə brīj') *verb* To shorten a piece of writing without changing its meaning: *Many more people read the book after it was abridged.*

► *verb forms* **abridged, abridging**

**abroad** (ə brōd') *adverb* In a place outside the country that you are from: *We lived abroad in Germany while my father was in the army.*

**abrupt** (ə brŭpt') *adjective* **1.** Taking place without warning; sudden: *The abrupt change in the weather surprised everyone.* **2.** Being quick in speech or behavior in a rude way: *Andrew's abrupt reply hurt Emily's feelings.*

**abscess** (ăb'sĕs') *noun* A swollen area on the skin or in the body that contains pus. Abscesses are caused by infections.

► *noun, plural* **abscesses**

**absence** (ăb'sĕns) *noun* **1.** The fact of being away from a person or a place: *Soccer practice was canceled because of the coach's absence.* **2.** The time when someone or something is away: *Noah returned to school after an absence of four days.* **3.** The fact of not existing or not being present: *Plants cannot grow in the absence of water.*

**absent** (ăb'sĕnt) *adjective* Not present in a place; missing: *Three students were absent from school today.*

**absent-minded** (ăb'sĕnt mĭn'dĭd) *adjective* Not paying attention; forgetful: *I was so absent-minded this morning that I forgot to brush my teeth.*

**absolute** (ăb'sə lōōt) *adjective* **1.** Complete; total: *We were in absolute darkness after the campfire went out.* **2.** Not limited in any way: *My partner has my absolute trust.* **3.** Without any doubt; certain: *I have absolute proof that the dog ate the cookies.*

**absolve** (ăb zōlv') *verb* To free someone from blame or punishment: *The police absolved the suspect after someone else confessed to the crime.*

► *verb forms* **absolved, absolving**

**absorb** (ăb zōrb') *verb* **1.** To take something in; soak up: *A sponge absorbs water.* **2.** To take up someone's attention or time: *Ballet completely absorbed her thoughts.* **3.** To take something in without letting it bounce back or pass through: *Thick rugs absorb sound. Black objects absorb light.*

► *verb forms* **absorbed, absorbing**

**absorbent** (ăb zōr'bĕnt) *adjective* Able to soak something up: *These towels are very absorbent.*

**absorbing** (ăb zōr'bĭng) *adjective* Holding all your attention: *The mystery novel was so absorbing that she didn't want to stop reading it.*

**absorption** (ăb zōrp'shĕn) *noun* The process of absorbing: *Absorption of vitamins occurs in the intestine.*

**abstain** (ăb stān') *verb* To keep yourself from doing something: *Nathaniel abstained from eating candy.*

► *verb forms* **abstained, abstaining**

**abstinence** (ăb'stĕ nĕns) *noun* The act of abstaining: *Total abstinence from junk food and soda is not easy.*

**abstract** (ăb străkt') *adjective* **1.** Being an idea or a general quality rather than something specific that you can see or touch: *I have an abstract idea of what I want to do, but I don't have a plan for how to do it. Strength is an abstract quality.* **2.** Hard to understand: *Because the explanation was so abstract, I asked for an example.*

**absurd** (ăb'sŭrd') *adjective* Not making any sense; silly: *It would be absurd to wear shoes on your hands.*

## abundance ► accent

**abundance** (ə bŭn'dəns) *noun* **1.** A large amount that is more than you need: *The abundance of trees in the forest meant that we would have enough firewood.* **2.** The condition of being plentiful: *We found berries in abundance growing by the road.*



■ abundance

**abundant** (ə bŭn'dənt) *adjective* Present in large amounts that are more than you need; plentiful: *Fresh water was abundant in the valley.*

**abuse** *verb* (ə byōōz') **1.** To use in a way that is not right; misuse: *The manager abused her power by forcing the employees to work late.* **2.** To hurt or injure by treating badly; mistreat: *Our dog was scared of people because his previous owners abused him.*

► *noun* (ə byōōs') **1.** Use or treatment that is not right; misuse: *Cheating on a test would be an abuse of the teacher's trust.* **2.** Bad treatment that causes harm or injury: *Animal abuse is a serious problem.* **3.** Words that are cruel or insulting: *The crowd shouted abuse at the politicians.*

► *verb forms* **abused, abusing**

**abyss** (ə bis') *noun* A hole or space that seems to be so deep that you cannot measure it: *The explorers looked over the edge of the cliff into the dark abyss.*

► *noun, plural* **abysses**



■ abyss

**academic** (äk'ə dēm'ik) *adjective* Having to do with school or college.

**academy** (ə käd'ə mē) *noun* **1.** A school where a special subject is taught: *My sister went to a music academy to study singing.* **2.** A private high school.

► *noun, plural* **academies**

### Word History

#### academy

In ancient Greece, there was a grove of sacred olive trees called the **Akademeia**. It belonged to Athena, the goddess of wisdom. In 385 BC, a philosopher named Plato began to teach in the shade of the trees. His school became so famous that other schools were named after the grove. In this way, the name of the grove became the word **academy**.

**a cappella** (ä' kə pĕl'ə) *adverb* Singing without musical instruments playing along: *The chorus performed the last song a cappella.*

**accelerate** (äk sĕl'ə rāt') *verb* To go faster; increase in speed: *The airplane accelerated down the runway.*

► *verb forms* **accelerated, accelerating**

**acceleration** (äk sĕl'ə rā'shən) *noun* An increase in speed: *The weight of our luggage slowed the car's acceleration.*

**accelerator** (äk sĕl'ə rā'tər) *noun* A pedal in a car that you push with your foot to make the car go faster.

**accent** (äk'sĕnt') *noun* **1.** The stress or force with which a speaker says one syllable of a word compared with the other syllables of a word. In the word *butter* the accent is on the first syllable. **2.** A mark showing stress or an accent. In this dictionary, we show the strongest accent with the mark ' and the next strongest accent with the mark '. For example, the pronunciation of *accent* is (äk'sĕnt'). **3.** A way of speaking or pronouncing that is typical of a certain group of people, like people from a particular part of the United States or people who spoke a particular language before they learned English. For example, people in the northern United States usually have an accent that is different from the accent of people in the southern United States. ► *verb* To pronounce a syllable using a stronger stress: *We accent the first syllable in the word "butter."*

► *verb forms* **accented, accenting**

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H  
I  
J  
K  
L  
M  
N  
O  
P  
Q  
R  
S  
T  
U  
V  
W  
X  
Y  
Z

**accentuate** (ăk sĕn'chōō āt') *verb* **1.** To stress something or to make something easier to notice: *A red background accentuates the white letters of a stop sign.* **2.** To pronounce a syllable or word with stress or an accent.

► *verb forms* **accentuated, accentuating**

**accept** (ăk sĕpt') *verb* **1.** To take something that you are offered: *Ethan accepted the gift gratefully. Our teacher will not accept papers that have messy handwriting.* **2.** To say yes to something that you are offered: *Isabella accepted the invitation.* **3.** To allow someone to join a group: *Our class quickly accepted the new student.* **4.** To put up with something; endure: *I didn't like it, but I had to accept sharing a bedroom with my sister.* **5.** To agree that something is correct or adequate: *Most scientists accept the new theory.*

► *verb forms* **accepted, accepting**

**acceptable** (ăk sĕp'tə bəl) *adjective* Good enough; satisfactory: *This work is acceptable, but it's not your best.*

**acceptance** (ăk sĕp'təns) *noun* **1.** The act of taking something that you are offered: *Her acceptance of my apology made me happy.* **2.** Favorable judgment; approval: *Victoria earned the acceptance of her teammates by working hard.*

**access** (ăk'sĕs') *noun* **1.** The right to enter, reach, or use something: *Only members of the club have access to the swimming pool.* **2.** A way of getting to or reaching something: *The only access to the attic is through a trapdoor. Many people have no access to clean water.* ► *verb* To get to or to reach something: *You need a password to access your email account.*

► *noun, plural* **accesses**

► *verb forms* **accessed, accessing**

**accessible** (ăk sĕs'ə bəl) *adjective* **1.** Easy to reach or obtain: *The fishing camp is accessible only by seaplane. The information is accessible on our computer.* **2.** Usable by anyone, including people with disabilities: *The wheelchair ramp makes the building more accessible.*

**accessory** (ăk sĕs'ə rē) *noun* **1.** Something that is not necessary but adds to the appearance or usefulness of something else: *I bought a belt and a scarf as accessories to go with my new outfit. The camera comes with a case and other accessories.* **2.** A person who helps commit a crime: *The driver who helped the robbers escape was charged as an accessory.*

► *noun, plural* **accessories**

**accident** (ăk'sĭ dĕnt) *noun* **1.** Something that happens that you did not plan: *We met by accident in the store.* **2.** Something bad that happens because of a mistake: *The car was damaged in an accident.*

**accidental** (ăk'sĭ dĕn'tl) *adjective* Happening because of chance or a mistake: *The drops of paint on the picture are accidental.*

**accidentally** (ăk'sĕ dĕn'tl ē) *adverb* Without planning or expecting it; without meaning to: *I accidentally called the wrong phone number.*

**acclaim** (ə klām') *verb* To praise something with enthusiasm: *Everyone acclaimed the show for its beautiful music.* ► *noun* Enthusiastic praise: *The author's new book received great acclaim from readers.*

► *verb forms* **acclaimed, acclaiming**

**accommodate** (ə kŏm'ə dāt') *verb* **1.** To have room for someone or something; hold: *The auditorium can accommodate 500 people.* **2.** To provide someone with a place to stay: *We looked for a hotel to accommodate the extra guests.*

► *verb forms* **accommodated, accommodating**

**Writers Choose Their Words**

**accommodate**

When the Swan Boat docked and the passengers got off, long lines of people were waiting to get aboard for the next ride. Business was booming. Another boat was being made ready, to accommodate the crowds.

~ E. B. White  
*The Trumpet of the Swan*

**accommodations** (ə kŏm'ə dā'shənz) *plural noun* A place to stay overnight that often offers food: *The accommodations on the trip were very comfortable.*

**accompaniment** (ə kŏm'pə nĭ mĕnt) *noun* **1.** A part in a piece of music that is less important than the main part: *I played the accompaniment on guitar while Juan sang.* **2.** Something that goes along with or adds to something else: *The sound of the storm was a perfect accompaniment to the mystery I was reading.*

**accompany** (ə kŏm'pə nĕ) *verb* **1.** To go along with someone: *My father accompanied us to the concert.* **2.** To happen together with something: *Thunder ordinarily accompanies lightning.* **3.** To play a musical