

Aa

a *article*, Grammar: an indefinite article. See ARTICLE.

aardvark (*say* ahd-vahk) *noun* a large, burrowing, African mammal which has a long snout and ears and feeds on termites and ants.

aback *adverb*, Nautical: backwards. ▶ **taken aback**, 'she was taken aback by his rudeness' (= startled).

abacus (*say* abba-kus) *noun* a frame with rods along which beads slide, used for counting.

abalone (*say* abba-lo-nee) *noun* an edible marine snail.

abandon *verb* 1. to leave something without intending to return for it. 2. to stop going on with: 'they abandoned the search after four days'. ▶ *noun* 3. a freedom from restraint. ▶ **abandonment**, *noun*.

abashed *adjective* ashamed or embarrassed.

abate (*say* a-bate) *verb* to lessen in amount or intensity. ▶ **abatement**, *noun*.

abattoir (*say* abba-twar) *noun* (often *plural*) a place where cattle, sheep, etc. are killed for food.

abbey (*say* abbee) *noun* 1. a monastery or convent. 2. a church or house that was once part of an abbey. ▶ **abbess**, **abbot**, *nouns*.

abbreviate (*say* a-breevi-ate) *verb* 1. to shorten or contract, especially a word or phrase. ▶ **abbreviation** *noun* 2. the act of abbreviating. 3. a shortened form of a word, especially one using only the first letter or letters. Compare CONTRACTION.

abdicate *verb* 1. to renounce the throne. 2. to give up a claim, position, privilege, etc. ▶ **abdication**, *noun*.

abdomen (*say* abda-m'n) *noun*, also called the **belly**. *Anatomy*: the region below the chest at the front of the trunk, containing the intestines. ▶ **abdominal**, *adjective*.

abduct *verb* to take away a person, illegally or by force. Compare KIDNAP. ▶ **abduction**, **abductor**, *nouns*.

aberration (*say* abba-ray-sh'n) *noun* 1. a departure from the normal course of events. 2. a mental or moral lapse: 'he destroyed his own work in a moment of aberration'. ▶ **aberrant**, *adjective*.

abet (*say* a-bet) *verb* (abetted, abetting) to encourage or assist someone to commit a crime. ▶ **abetter**, **abettor**, *nouns*.

abeyance (*say* a-bay'nce) *noun* a state of temporary inactivity.

abhor (*say* ab-hor) *verb* (abhorred, abhorring) 1. to regard with hatred or disgust. ▶ **abhorrent** (*say* ab-hor-runt) *adjective* 2. causing disgust or horror. ▶ **abhorrence**, *noun*.

abide *verb* (abided or abode, abiding) 1. to continue or remain. 2. an old word meaning to dwell. 3. (informal) to tolerate: 'I can't abide fools'. ▶ **abide by**, 'he abided by his decision' (= kept to).

ability *noun* the quality of being able to do something.

abject (*say* ab-jekt) *adjective* 1. contemptible or despicable. 2. wretched: 'abject poverty'.

ablaze *adverb*, *adjective* on fire or lit up.

able *adjective* having the skill to do something: 'are you able to drive a car?'. ▶ **ably**, *adverb*.

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

abnormal *adjective* different from what is normal or expected. ▶ **abnormally**, *adverb*; **abnormality**, *noun*.

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

abode (*say* a-bode) *noun* 1. a dwelling place. ▶ *verb* 2. 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'. ▶ **abolition**, *noun*.

abominable (*say* a-bommina-b'l) *adjective* dreadful or shocking. ▶ **abominably**, *adverb*.

Aborigine (*say* abba-rija-nee) *noun* 1. any of the original inhabitants of Australia. ▶ **aborigine** *noun* 2. any of the original inhabitants of a country. ▶ **Aboriginal**, **aboriginal**, *adjectives*.

★ *Common Error*: ABORIGINE, 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.

abortion (*say* a-bore-sh'n) *noun* 1. the expulsion or removal of a human foetus from the uterus before the foetus is capable of independent survival. 2. anything which is a failure. 3. a monstrous creature or thing. ▶ **abort**, *verb*; **abortive**, *adjective*; **abortionist**, *noun*.

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?'. ▶ **about to**, 'she is about to jump' (= just going to).

above *adverb*, *preposition* 1. in a higher position: 'the sun rose above the horizon'. 2. a greater than expected number: 'there were above 400 people at the meeting'. ▶ **above**, *adjective*.

aboveboard *adverb*, *adjective* open and honest.

abracadabra (*say* abra-ka-dab-ra) *interjection* an exclamation used as a magic spell.

abrade *verb* to scrape off or wear away by rubbing.

abrasion *noun* 1. the act or process of abrading. 2. a place where something has been rubbed away: 'an abrasion on his knee'.

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.

abridge *verb* to shorten: 'the book was abridged for publication in serial form'. ▶ **abridgement**, **abridgment**, *nouns*.

abroad *adverb* 1. in or to another country. 2. outside: 'he did not venture abroad all day'.

abrogate (*say* ab-ro-gate) *verb* to repeal or annul: 'to abrogate a law'.

abrupt *adjective* 1. sudden or unexpected. 2. discourteous or brief, especially in manner. ▶ **abruptly**, *adverb*; **abruptness**, *noun*.

abscess (*say* absis) *noun* an acute, local, bacterial infection containing pus, such as a boil. ▶ **abscessed**, *adjective*.

abscond (*say* ab-skond) *verb* to leave suddenly or secretly, especially after doing wrong.

abseil (*say* ab-sale) *verb* to move down a steep slope by using a double rope.

absent (*say* ab-s'nt) *adjective* 1. away: 'she was absent from school'. 2. inattentive or preoccupied. ▶ **absent**, *verb*; **absently**, *adverb*; **absence**, **absentee**, **absenteeism**, *nouns*.

absent-minded *adjective* vague or forgetful.

absolute (*say* absa-loot) *adjective* complete, perfect or unlimited. ▶ **absolutely**, *adverb*.

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

absolve (*verb*) to pardon or release from guilt, blame, obligation, etc. ▶ **absolution**, *noun*.

absorb *verb* 1. to take in or soak up. 2. to take over. 3. to capture and hold the attention of. ▶ **absorbent**, *adjective*; **absorption**, *noun*.

abstain *verb* to refrain voluntarily from doing something: 'some people abstain from drinking alcohol'. ▶ **abstinence**, **abstention**, **abstainer**, *nouns*.

abstemious (*say* ab-steec-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, but relying on colour, form, etc. ▶ *noun* 4. the state of being abstract. 5. a summary. ▶ (*say* ab-strakt) *verb* 6. to remove or take away. ▶ **abstractly**, *adverb*; **abstraction**, *noun*.

abstract noun Grammar: see NOUN.

abstruse (*say* ab-strewce) *adjective* obscure or difficult to understand. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with **OBTUSE**.

absurd *adjective* foolish or illogical. ▶ **absurdly**, *adverb*; **absurdity**, *noun*.

abundance (*say* a-bun-d'nce) *noun* a full or ample supply or amount. ▶ **abundant**, *adjective*; **abundantly**, *adverb*.

abuse (*say* a-bewz) *verb* 1. to use (wrongly) or maltreat. 2. to speak insultingly. 3. to ill-treat, to maltreat, especially physically or sexually. ▶ **abuse** *noun* (*say* a-bewce) 4. wrong or improper use. 5. insulting remarks. 6. ill-treatment or maltreatment, especially physical or sexual: 'child abuse'. 7. excessive or illegal use: 'drug abuse'. ▶ **abusive**, *adjective*.

abut (*say* a-but) *verb* (abuted, abutting) to border on or be next to: 'the farm abuts on the park'.

abyss (*say* a-biss) *noun* 1. an immeasurable depth or chasm.

▶ **abysmal** (*say* a-biz-m'l) *adjective* 2. of, like or as deep as an abyss. 3. (informal) very bad: 'I thought that the performance was abysmal'. ▶ **abysmally**, *adverb*.

acacia (*say* a-kay-sha) *noun* any of a group of trees or shrubs with very small, yellow flowers.

academic (*say* akka-demmik) *adjective* 1. of or relating to learning or studies, especially in a university or similar institution. 2. theoretical rather than practical. ▶ *noun* 3. a person who teaches or does research in a university or similar institution. ▶ **academically**, *adverb*.

academy (*say* a-kadda-mee) *noun* 1. a scientific or artistic association. 2. a private school for practical subjects. 3. a private secondary school.

accede (*say* ak-seed) *verb* 1. to agree or give consent. 2. to attain a position, office, etc.: 'the prince acceded to the throne'.

accelerate (*say* ak-sella-rate) *verb* to move or cause to move faster. ▶ **acceleration**, **accelerator**, *nouns*.

accent (*say* aksent) *noun* 1. a particular way of pronouncing a language. 2. Language: any of the marks used with letters, to change their sound or to indicate stress. 3. any stress or emphasis. ▶ **accent**, *verb*.

accentuate (*say* ak-senchoo-ate) *verb* to emphasise. ▶ **accentuation**, *noun*.

accept (*say* ak-sept) *verb* to receive, especially with approval: 'please accept my apologies'. ▶ **acceptable**, *adjective*; **acceptance**, *noun*.

access (*say* ak-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. ▶ *verb* 3. a) to gain entry to the memory of a computer. b) to obtain data from a computer. ▶ **accessible**, *adjective*; **accessibility**, *noun*.

accession *noun* 1. the act of acceding: 'the queen's accession to the throne'. 2. an addition or increase.

accessory (*say* ak-sessa-ree) *noun* 1. any additional non-essential item, such as a radio for one's car, or a scarf to complement one's dress. 2. Law: any person who helps a criminal before or after a crime.

accident (*say* aksa-d'nt) *noun* 1. anything which is unexpected or unintentional. 2. any unfortunate event, especially one involving injury.

accidental *adjective* occurring by chance. ▶ **accidentally**, *adverb*. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with **INCIDENTAL**.

acclaim (*say* a-claim) *verb* to applaud or express loud approval. ▶ **acclaim**, *noun*.

acclimatise (*say* a-klime-a-tize) *verb* to make or become used to something new: 'it took a month to become acclimatised to the tropical heat'. ▶ **acclimatisation**, *noun*.

accolade (*say* akka-lade) *noun* 1. a token of the award of knighthood. 2. a special recognition of, or praise for, merit.

accommodate (*say* a-komma-date) *verb* 1. to do a favour for, especially by providing something. 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 fourteen guests'. ▶ **accommodation**, *noun*.

accompaniment (*say* a-kumpni-m'nt) *noun* anything which goes with or adds to another: 'there was no piano accompaniment for the singer'. ▶ **accompanist**, *noun*.

accompany (*say* a-kumpa-nee) *verb* (accompanied, accompanying) 1. to exist, or go, with: 'we will accompany you to the airport'. 2. to be or provide an accompaniment to.

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

accomplish (*say* a-kumplish) *verb* 1. to bring about or complete successfully. ▶ **accomplished** *adjective* 2. already done, completed. 3. skilled: 'an accomplished singer'. ▶ **accomplishment**, *noun*.

accord (*say* a-kord) *verb* 1. to agree or be in harmony. 2. to give or grant: 'he was accorded a warm welcome'. ▶ *noun* 3. an agreement or harmony. ▶ **accordance**, *noun*; **according**, *adverb*.

accordion *noun* a portable, keyed musical instrument with bellows and two sets of metal reeds. ▶ **accordionist**, *noun*.

accost (*say* a-kost) *verb* to greet or approach, often offensively.

account *noun* 1. any statement which lists, describes or explains: 'the radio gave a full account of the match'. 2. an agreement allowing one to buy goods on credit. 3. the money kept by a customer at a bank or similar institution, from which withdrawals may be made and to which deposits may be added. ▶ **account**, *verb*.

accountable *adjective* 1. able to be explained. 2. responsible: 'I'm not accountable for your debts'. ▶ **accountably**, *adverb*; **accountability**, *noun*.

accountant *noun* a person who records, in a set of books, the financial transactions of a business. ▶ **accounting**, **accountancy**, *nouns*.

accredit *verb* 1. to give credit for. 2. to authorise or recognise officially.

accrue (*say* a-kroo) *verb* (accrued, accruing) to occur as a natural increase or addition: 'interest accrues at 8 per cent a year'. ▶ **accrual**, *noun*.

acculturation (*say* a-kulcher-ay-shon) *noun*, *Anthropology*: the process in which a person or group adopts the customs of a society by social or economic necessity.

accumulate

accumulate (say a-kew-mew-late) *verb* to gather or pile up.
 ▶ **accumulation, accumulator, nouns; accumulative, adjective.**

accurate (say ak-yoorit) *adjective* free from error or deviation.
 ▶ **accurately, adverb; accuracy, noun.**

accursed (say a-kerst or a-kersed) *adjective* 1. under a curse. 2. (informal) hateful or irritating.

accuse (say a-kewz) *verb* 1. to blame with having done wrong: 'I accuse you of stealing the money'. ▶ **accused** *noun* 2. the defendant in a criminal court case. ▶ **accusation, noun.**

accustom *verb* to become familiar with through use or habit.
 ▶ **accustomed, adjective.**

ace *noun* 1. a playing card with a single pip. 2. a person who excels in a particular field, such as a fighter pilot. 3. a service in tennis in which the ball is not touched by the opponent's racket. ▶ **ace, verb.**

acerbic (say a-ser-bik) *adjective* sharp or bitter.

ache (rhymes with take) *noun* any dull, continuous pain. ▶ **ache, verb.**

achieve (say a-cheev) *verb* to attain or accomplish something. ▶ **achiever, achievement, nouns.**

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

acid (say assid) *noun* 1. *Chemistry:* one of a class of substances that combine with bases to form salts. ▶ *adjective:* 2. sour. 3. sarcastic. ▶ **acidity, noun; acidic, adjective.**

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.

acknowledge (say ak-nollij) *verb* 1. to confess or accept responsibility for. 2. to mention having received something, etc. ▶ **acknowledgment, acknowledgement, noun.**

acme (say ak-mee) *noun* the peak or highest point: 'the acme of perfection'.

acne (say ak-nee) *noun* an inflammation of the skin causing pimples.

acolyte (say ak-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.

acorn (say ay-korn) *noun* the fruit of an oak tree.

acoustic (say a-koostik) **acoustical** *adjective* 1. of or relating to hearing. 2. of or relating to the study of sound. 3. *Music:* of or relating to any instrument whose sound is not electronically amplified. ▶ **acoustics** *plural noun* 4. the properties of a particular space which determine the quality of sound. ▶ **acoustically, adverb.**

acquaint (say a-kwaint) *verb* 1. to make familiar: 'who will acquaint him with the facts?'. ▶ **acquaintance** *noun* 2. a person known slightly, as distinct from a friend.

acquiesce (say ak-wee-ess) *verb* to agree or submit passively. ▶ **acquiescent, adjective; acquiescence, noun.**

acquire (say a-kwire) *verb* to get or obtain. ▶ **acquisition, acquirement, nouns.**

acquired immune deficiency syndrome, short form is **AIDS**, *Medical:* a generally fatal condition often characterised by multiple diseases, resulting from a virus (human immunodeficiency virus—HIV) entering the blood system and destroying the body's natural resistance to infection.

acquisitive (say a-kwizza-tiv) *adjective* having a liking for or habit of acquiring or collecting things. ▶ **acquisitively, adverb.**

acquit (say a-kwit) *verb* (**acquitted, acquitting**) to declare a person free of guilt, especially in a court of law. ▶ **to acquit oneself**, 'she acquitted herself well in the exam' (= performed). ▶ **acquittal, noun.**

acre (say ay-ka) *noun* a unit of area equal to 4047 square metres (about 0.4 hectare). ▶ **acreage, noun.**

acrid *adjective* sharp or biting: 'an acrid smell of burning rubber'.

acrimonious (say akra-mo-nee-us) *adjective* bitter or resentful. ▶ **acrimony, noun.**

acrobat (say akra-bat) *noun* 1. a skilled entertainer who performs tricks on a tightrope or trapeze. ▶ **acrobatics** *plural noun* 2. the feats of an acrobat. 3. any elaborate or agile behaviour.

acronym (say akra-nim) *noun* a word formed from the first letter or letters of several words, such as ANZAC from *Australian and New Zealand Army Corps*.

acrophobia (say ak-ro-fo-bee-a) *noun* an abnormal fear of heights.

acropolis (say a-krop-o-liss) *noun*, *Ancient history:* any citadel of a Greek city, especially the Acropolis in Athens.

across *preposition, adverb* 1. from one side to the other. ▶ *adverb:* 2. on the opposite side of.

acrostic (say a-kross-tic) *noun* a poem in which the first or last letters of each line form a word.

acrylic (say a-krillik) *adjective* 1. being made from acrylic acid. ▶ *noun* 2. a quick-drying paint based on acrylic resins and soluble in water. 3. any of a variety of synthetic materials.

act *noun* 1. anything done: 'an act of great bravery'. 2. a law or decree, especially one passed by a parliament. 3. a main division in a play or opera. ▶ *verb* 4. to do or perform. 5. to take part in a play or film, especially imitating or representing a particular character. ▶ **act up**, to misbehave. ▶ **acting, noun, adjective.**

action (say ak-sh'n) *noun* 1. the process or manner of acting or doing. 2. any legal proceedings. 3. (informal) lively or exciting occurrences: 'where's the action in this town?'. ▶ **activate** *verb* to put into action or operation. ▶ **activation, noun.**

active *adjective* 1. being in action. 2. *Computers:* (of a program, file, device or window of a screen, etc.) currently in operation and able to be used. 3. busy or lively. 4. *Grammar:* see VOICE. ▶ **actively, adverb.**

activist *noun* a person who encourages and practises direct action, especially in politics. ▶ **activism, noun.**

activity *noun* 1. the state of being active. 2. a pastime or occupation.

act of God *Law:* an event for which no person was responsible, such as a flood, earthquake, etc

actor *noun* a person who performs a role in a play, film, etc. ▶ **actress, noun (feminine).**

actual (say ak-tew'l) *adjective* real or existing. ▶ **actuality, noun.**

actuary (say akt-yoo-a-ree) *noun*, *Insurance:* a person who calculates risks, rates, etc., based on recorded facts.

acumen (say ak-yoo-men) *noun* a quickness of mind or perception.

acupuncture (say ak-yoo-punkcher) *noun* the Chinese technique of puncturing the skin with needles, used as an anaesthetic or to treat and cure illness.

acute *adjective* 1. sharp or keen. 2. *Maths:* (of an angle) being less than 90°. 3. intense, severe and usually short-term. ▶ *noun* 4. *Language:* a mark placed above a letter to indicate stress or pronunciation. ▶ **acutely, adverb; acuteness, noun.**

ad *noun (informal)* an advertisement.

adage (say addij) *noun* an old saying or proverb.

adamant (say adda-m'nt) *adjective* stubborn or inflexible.

Adam's apple (informal) the larynx.

adapt (say a-dapt) *verb* 1. to alter or adjust to suit new conditions: 'one must adapt to change'. ▶ **adaptation, noun; adaptable, adjective.**

adaptor *noun* 1. a person or thing that adapts. 2. any device which fits together parts of different sizes, etc.

add *verb* 1. to find the sum of two or more numbers. 2. to join one thing to another: 'add an extension to the house'. ▶ **add up**, 'your explanation does not add up' (= make sense). ▶ **addition, noun; additional, adjective; additionally, adverb.**

addendum *noun*, plural is **addenda**, anything added, such as an appendix to a book.

adder *noun* 1. a small poisonous snake. 2. any of various Australian snakes.

addict (say addikt) *noun* a person who cannot free himself or herself from a particular habit, such as smoking. ▶ **addict, verb; addiction, noun; addictive, adjective.**

addition *noun* See ADD.

additive *noun* anything which is added, such as preservatives in tinned foods. ▶ **additive, adjective.**

address *noun* 1. the destination of a letter, parcel, etc., written on it. 2. the place where someone lives or may be contacted. 3. a formal talk made to an audience. 4. *Internet:* a unique code of letters, and sometimes numbers, which identifies a particular user or computer when transmitting messages, requesting information, etc. ▶ *verb* 5. to speak to. 6. to write an address on: 'address this letter'. 7. to direct attention or energy: 'he addressed himself to the task'. ▶ **addresser, addressee, nouns.**

adenoids (say adda-noydz) *plural noun, Anatomy:* glandular tissue, similar to the tonsils, in the cavity at the back of the nose. ▶ **adenoidal, adjective.**

adept (say a-dept) *adjective* highly skilled or clever.

adequate (say adda-kwit) *adjective* sufficient or enough. ▶ **adequately, adverb; adequacy, noun.**

adhere *verb* to stick: 'the label must adhere to the bottle'. ▶ **adhesion, noun.**

adhesive *noun* any substance, such as cement, etc., used for sticking two surfaces together. ▶ **adhesive, adjective; adhesiveness, noun.**

adjacent (say a-jay-s'nt) *adjective* next to or near: 'they occupied adjacent seats'.

adjective (say ajjik-tiv) *noun, Grammar:* any word which describes or adds to the meaning of a noun or pronoun. *Example:* the young boy bought a big book. ▶ **adjectival, adjective; adjectively, adverb.**

adjoin *verb* to be connected or next to: 'the bedroom adjoins the balcony'.

adjourn (say a-jern) *verb* to break off or postpone. ▶ **adjournment, noun.**

adjudicate (say a-joodi-kate) *verb* to judge or settle a dispute, etc. ▶ **adjudication, adjudicator, nouns.**

adjunct (say ajjunkt) *noun* something added or attached.

adjust (say a-just) *verb* 1. to change the shape, form or position of something, so that it fits. 2. to adapt oneself to current or new circumstances. ▶ **adjustment, noun; adjustable, adjective.**

ad lib freely, or as one pleases. ▶ **ad-lib, verb.**

administer, administrate *verb* 1. to manage or have charge of. 2. to give or apply: 'the doctor administered first aid to the patient'.

administration (say ad-minna-stray-sh'n) *noun* 1. the act of administering. 2. a group of people appointed to govern, manage or have charge. ▶ **administrator, noun: administrative, adjective.**

admiral (say adma-r'l) *noun* a commissioned officer of the highest or second highest rank in the navy. ▶ **admiralty, noun.**

admire *verb* to have a high regard or respect for. ▶ **admirable, adjective; admirably, adverb; admiration, noun.**

admissible *adjective* capable or worthy of being allowed or considered: 'a letter is admissible evidence in a court of law'. ▶ **admissibility, noun.**

advertise

admission *noun* 1. the act of entering. 2. the state of being allowed to enter. 3. an entrance fee. 4. the act of admitting something: 'they made an admission of guilt to the lawyer'.

admit *verb* (**admitted, admitting**) 1. to give entrance to: 'dogs not admitted'. 2. to say that one is responsible for something. 3. to agree that something is true or valid. ▶ **admittance, noun.**

admonish *verb* to advise or warn in a firm but gentle manner. ▶ **admonition, noun; admonitory, adjective.**

adolescence (say adda-less'nce) *noun* the period between puberty and adulthood. ▶ **adolescent, noun, adjective.**

adopt *verb* 1. to make a member of one's family by legal means: 'to adopt a child'. 2. to make one's own: 'to adopt the customs of a new country'. 3. to accept by vote: 'the committee adopted both suggestions'. ▶ **adoption, adoptee, nouns; adoptive, adjective.**

adore *verb* 1. to worship or love devotedly. 2. (informal) to like very much: 'I adore ice-cream'. ▶ **adorable** *adjective* enchanting or lovable: 'what an adorable puppy!'. ▶ **adoration, noun; adoringly, adverb.**

adorn *verb* to decorate or make beautiful. ▶ **adornment, noun.**

adrenal (say a-dreen'l) *adjective* being near the kidneys.

adrenalin (say a-dreena-lin) **adrenaline** *noun* a hormone secreted by the adrenal gland that stimulates the heart at times of stress.

adrift *adverb* loose or drifting.

adroit (say a-droyt) *adjective* skilful or clever. ▶ **adroitly, adverb; adroitness, noun.**

adulation (say ad-yoo-lay-sh'n) *noun* any excessive praise or flattery. ▶ **adulate, verb.**

adult *noun* a fully grown, mature animal or plant. ▶ **adulthood, noun.**

adulterate (say a-dulta-rate) *verb* 1. to lower the quality or make impure, especially by adding inferior substances. ▶ **adulteration** *noun* 2. the act of adulterating. ▶ **adulterant, noun.**

adultery (say a-dulta-ree) *noun* the act of a married person having sexual intercourse with a person other than his or her spouse. ▶ **adulterer, noun; adulterous, adjective.**

advance *verb* 1. to move forward. 2. to pay beforehand. 3. to lend money. ▶ *noun* 4. a forward movement or progress. 5. something done or given before it is actually due, such as an early payment of a wage. ▶ **advancement, noun.**

advantage (say ad-vahntij) *noun* 1. anything which is favourable or profitable. 2. *Tennis:* the first point after a score of deuce. ▶ **take advantage of**, 'we took advantage of the shelter' (= made use of). ▶ **advantageous, adjective.**

advent *noun* a coming or arrival: 'we'll have to buy warm clothes with the advent of winter'.

adventure *noun* 1. a dangerous or exciting activity or experience. ▶ **adventurous** *adjective* 2. willing to seek or risk danger. ▶ **adventurer, noun.**

adverb *noun, Grammar:* any word which adds to the meaning of a verb, adjective or other adverb, by telling how, why, when or where an action takes place. *Example:* the boy walked home slowly. ▶ **adverbial, adjective.**

adverse *adjective* unfavourable or opposing one's interests: 'adverse weather conditions'. ▶ **adversary, noun.** ▶ *Common Error:* do not confuse with AVERSE.

adversity *noun* any hardship or misfortune: 'in times of adversity we seek help'.

advertise *verb* 1. to promote or make known to the public, especially through the media. ▶ **advertisement, advertising, advertiser, nouns.**

advice

advice *noun* 1. an opinion or suggestion. 2. a piece of information.

advisable (say ad-*vize*-a-b'l) *adjective* being the sensible or recommended thing to do. ▶ **advisability**, *noun*.

advise (say ad-*vize*) *verb* 1. to give advice to. ▶ **advisory** *adjective* 2. having the duty or power to advise. ▶ **advisedly**, *adverb*; **adviser**, *noun*.

advocate (say ad-*va*-kit) *noun* 1. a person who recommends or supports a particular cause. 2. a person, especially a barrister, who presents a case for, or speaks on behalf of, another. ▶ (say ad-*va*-kate) *verb* 3. to urge or support, especially by argument. ▶ **advocacy**, *noun*.

aeon (say ee-on) *noun* an immensely long period of time.

aerate (say air-*rate*) *verb* to add air or gas to a liquid under pressure, as in making lemonade. ▶ **aeration**, *noun*.

aerial (say air-*ri*ul) *noun*, also called an **antenna**. 1. a device which receives or sends out electromagnetic waves. ▶ *adjective* 2. of or from the air: 'aerial bombardment'.

aerobatics (say air-*bat*-tik) *plural noun* any acrobatics carried out by an aeroplane, such as loops or dives. ▶ **aerobatic**, *adjective*.

aerobics (say air-*ro*-biks) *plural noun* a form of vigorous physical exercise done to music.

aerodrome (say air-*dro*-me) *noun* an airport, especially a small one.

aerodynamics (say air-*die*-nam-iks) *plural noun* (used with *singular verb*) the study of the motion of gases, especially in relation to moving or flying objects.

aeronautics (say air-*naw*-tik) *plural noun* (used with *singular verb*) the study of flight, especially of aircraft. ▶ **aeronautical**, *adjective*.

aeroplane (say air-*plane*) *noun* an aircraft which is driven by jet engines or propellers.

aerosol (say air-*sol*) *noun* a can or container with a substance, such as paint, stored under pressure and released as a fine spray.

aesthetic (say ees-*thet*-tik) *adjective* relating to the appreciation of beauty. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with ASCETIC.

affable (say aff-*a*-b'l) *adjective* friendly or pleasant. ▶ **affably**, *adverb*; **affability**, *noun*.

affair *noun* 1. (usually *plural*) any particular interests: 'the affairs of state must be dealt with first'. 2. a particular event or matter. 3. a sexual relationship between two people who are not married to each other.

affect (1) *verb* to act on or influence: 'the sight of the accident did not affect me at all'. ▶ **affect**, *noun*; **affecting**, **affective**, *adjectives*. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with EFFECT.

affect (2) *verb* to pretend or imitate: 'Sally affects the mannerisms of a rock star'. ▶ **affectation**, *noun*.

affection *noun* any liking or warm feeling. ▶ **affectionate**, *adjective*; **affectionately**, *adverb*.

affidavit (say aff-*day*-vit) *noun*, *Law*: a written statement made under oath.

affiliate (say a-*filli*-ate) *verb* to join or unite with a society or federation, etc. ▶ **affiliation**, *noun*.

affinity *noun* 1. a mutual attraction or resemblance. 2. any relationship through marriage. 3. *Chemistry*: the force holding atoms together, especially atoms of the same element.

affirm *verb* 1. to firmly declare or confirm. 2. *Law*: to solemnly promise to tell the truth, as distinct from making a formal oath. ▶ **affirmative** *adjective* 3. being in agreement: 'he gave an affirmative answer'. ▶ **affirmatively**, *adverb*; **affirmation**, *noun*.

affix (say a-*fix*) *verb* 1. to attach or fasten: 'he affixed two stamps to the envelope'. ▶ (say aff-*ix*) *noun* 2. *Grammar*: any of various forms which can be added to a word to change its meaning. A **prefix** is

added at the beginning of a word, as *de-* in *devalue*, whereas a **suffix** is added at the end of a word, as *-ness* in *kindness*. 3. something which is added or attached.

afflict *verb* to trouble or cause distress: 'he is afflicted with cancer'. ▶ **affliction**, *noun*.

affluence (say aff-*loo*-nce) *noun* any wealth or abundance, especially of possessions. ▶ **affluent**, *adjective*. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with EFFLUENCE.

afford *verb* 1. to have enough of something for a particular purpose: 'I can afford a new coat this winter'. 2. to give: 'it affords me great pleasure'.

afforestation (say a-*forra*-stay-sh'n) *noun* the planting of trees to form forests. ▶ **afforest**, *verb*.

affront (say a-*frunt*) *verb* to upset or offend. ▶ **affront**, *noun*.

afloat *adverb*, *adjective* floating or carried on water.

afraid *adjective* 1. feeling fear or apprehension. 2. regretful.

aft *adverb*, *adjective*, *Nautical*: at or towards the rear of a boat. Compare FORE (1).

after *preposition*, *adverb*, *conjunction*, *adjective* later or behind: (as a preposition) 'she came after me'; (as an adverb) 'the dog trotted after'; (as a conjunction) 'after we left'; (as an adjective) 'the after parts of a boat'.

afterbirth *noun* the placenta when expelled from the uterus after birth.

afterlife *noun* life after death.

aftermath *noun* the time or conditions after something: 'they discovered much damage in the aftermath of the storm'.

afternoon *noun* the time of day between noon and sunset.

aftershock *noun* a shockwave, sometimes one of a series, which passes through the ground after an earthquake has occurred, and which originates from or near the earthquake's epicentre.

afterthought *noun* an idea or reflection which comes to mind after an event.

afterwards, **afterward** *adverb* later.

again *adverb* 1. once more or another time. 2. besides or on the other hand: 'we may come, but then again we may not'.

against *preposition* 1. not in favour or supportive of. 2. in collision with. 3. in preparation for or anticipation of. 4. in contrast with or opposition to.

agape (say a-*gape*) *adverb* with the mouth wide open: 'he stood agape in horror at the sight'.

agate (say ag-*git*) *noun* 1. a decorative type of quartz. 2. a playing marble.

age (say ay-) *noun* 1. the length of time during which something has existed: 'she is 12 years of age'. 2. a particular period of time in history: 'the Ice Age'. ▶ *verb* 3. to become or appear older. 4. to allow wine, etc. to stand so that it matures or becomes mellow. ▶ **aged** *adjective* 5. (say ay-jd) having the age of: 'a boy aged 13'. 6. (say ay-jid) old: 'an aged grandparent'.

ageism *noun* a manner or attitude which assesses a person according to age rather than individual ability. ▶ **ageist**, *adjective*.

agency (say ay-*j*-n-see) *noun* 1. a business organisation which provides a particular service. 2. anything which aids or produces a result: 'it was achieved through the agency of his friends'.

agenda (say a-*jenda*) *plural noun* (used with *singular verb*), singular is **agendum**, any matters to be dealt with or introduced, usually in the form of a list.

agent (say ay-*j*-nt) *noun* 1. anything which produces an effect or result: 'storms can be agents of destruction'. 2. a person who has authority to act for another person, company or a government. 3. *Chemistry*: any substance causing a reaction.

Agent Orange a defoliant used extensively in the Vietnam War.

agglomerate (say a-*glom*-ate) *verb* to collect into a mass or cluster. ▶ **agglomeration**, *noun*.

aggravate (say a-*gra*-vate) *verb* 1. to make worse. 2. (informal) to annoy or irritate. ▶ **aggravation**, *noun*.

★ *Common Error*: AGGRAVATE, IRRITATE have different but related meanings. Many people regard the use of *aggravate* to mean 'annoy or irritate' as incorrect, and prefer to keep active one of the word's earlier meanings 'to make worse': 'sitting in a cold draught will only aggravate your illness'; 'you will only aggravate the situation if you keep arguing with him'.

aggregate (say a-*gra*-t) *noun* 1. a number of separate things brought together in a group. 2. a total. 3. a mixture of different materials used in making concrete, etc. ▶ **aggregation**, *noun*; **aggregate**, *verb*.

aggression *noun* 1. a hostile act, especially if unprovoked. 2. the tendency to attack or be hostile. ▶ **aggressive**, *adjective*.

aghost (say a-*gahst*) *adjective* amazed and horrified.

agile (say aj-*ile*) *adjective* quick or nimble. ▶ **agility**, *noun*.

agitate (say aj-*ta*-te) *verb* 1. to shake or move rapidly from side to side. 2. to disturb or excite. 3. to arouse public feelings about something. ▶ **agitation**, *noun*; **agitatedly**, *adverb*.

agnostic (say a-*gno*-stik) *noun* a person who believes that one cannot know whether God exists. Compare ATHEIST; **agnosticism**, *noun*.

agony (say ag-*ga*-nee) *noun* 1. a state of extreme pain or anguish. ▶ **agonise** *verb* 2. to suffer agony or intense worry. ▶ **agonisingly**, *adverb*.

agrarian (say a-*gra*-ri-um) *adjective* relating to farming land or agriculture.

agree *verb* 1. to decide in favour of a request, suggestion, etc. 2. to hold or come to the same idea, etc. 3. to exist without difference or friction. ▶ **agreeable** *adjective* 4. to one's liking: 'she has an agreeable smile'. 5. willing or ready to agree. ▶ **agreement** *noun* 6. the state of holding the same opinion. 7. a contract.

agriculture (say a-*gra*-kul-cher) *noun* the use of land for planting and growing crops. ▶ **agricultural**, *adjective*; **agriculturally**, *adverb*; **agriculturalist**, *noun*.

ahead *adverb* in front or forward: 'walk ahead of us'.

aid *noun* 1. any help or assistance. 2. something which helps: 'films, maps, and other teaching aids'. ▶ **aid**, *verb*.

aide *noun* an assistant.

AIDS *noun* See ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME.

ail *verb* to trouble or feel pain, discomfort, etc.: 'what ails you?'. ▶ **ailing**, *adjective*.

ailment *noun* any minor illness.

aim *verb* 1. to point or direct towards something. 2. to have a purpose or intention. ▶ **aim**, *noun*.

air *noun* 1. the gases surrounding the earth. 2. a simple tune or melody. 3. a particular manner or appearance: 'she has the air of a kind, gentle person'. ▶ *verb* 4. to expose to the air: 'we must air the spare room to get rid of the smell'. ▶ **on the air**, (of a radio station) broadcasting; **up in the air**, 'the decision is still up in the air' (= uncertain).

airborne *adjective* being in the air.

aircraft *noun*, plural is **aircraft**, any vehicle which is capable of flight, such as an aeroplane or helicopter.

airdrop *noun* the dropping of troops or supplies by parachute from an aircraft.

Airedale *noun* any of a breed of large, wire-haired terriers.

airfield *noun* a large, open, level area with runways, buildings, etc. for the

alderman

operation and maintenance of aircraft.

airforce *noun* the armed forces of a country concerned with fighting in the air.

airgun *noun* a gun using compressed air to fire pellets or darts.

airlift *noun* the transporting of large numbers of people or goods by aircraft.

airline *noun* any organisation which provides scheduled air transport.

airlock *noun* 1. an airtight chamber. 2. a stoppage of the flow of liquid in a pipe, caused by an air bubble.

air mail the carrying of post in aircraft. Compare SURFACE MAIL. ▶ **airmail**, *adjective*.

air-pocket *noun* a downward current of air causing an aircraft to drop suddenly.

airport *noun* a large airfield with runways, hangars, workshops and one or more passenger terminals.

air-raid *noun* an attack by enemy aircraft, especially bombers.

airship *noun* any aircraft lighter than air, containing hydrogen or helium gas, driven by propellers and able to be steered. A **zeppelin** has a rigid structure, whereas a **blimp** is non-rigid.

airspace *noun* the space above an area or country.

airtight *adjective* not allowing the passage of air.

airy *adjective* 1. open to the passage of air: 'this is a very airy room'. 2. light or carefree: 'she apologised in an airy manner'. ▶ **airiness**, *noun*; **airily**, *adverb*.

aisle (say ile) *noun* any passage between blocks of seats, as in a theatre.

ajar (say a-*jar*) *adverb*, *adjective* (of a door) partly open.

akimbo *adverb* having the hands on the hips, with the elbows pointed outwards.

akin (say a-*kin*) *adjective* similar or related.

alabaster *noun* a white or tinted, fine-grained chalk-like substance.

alacrity (say a-*lak*-ra-tee) *noun* a prompt and cheerful willingness.

alarm *noun* 1. any noise or signal used as a warning. 2. a sudden fear or apprehension caused by an awareness of danger. ▶ **alarm**, *verb*.

alarmist *noun* a person with a habit of causing alarm, especially with little reason.

alas (say a-*lass*) *interjection* a cry of sorrow, grief or pity.

albatross *noun* 1. a large, long-winged seabird found especially in the Pacific regions. 2. an inescapable burden: 'the mortgage turned out to be an albatross round his neck'.

albino (say al-*be*-no) *noun* a person or animal without pigment in the skin, hair, eyes, etc.

album *noun* 1. a book or similar container for storing stamps, photographs, etc. 2. a long-playing record.

albumen (say al-*be*-men) *noun* See EGGWHITE.

alchemy (say al-*ka*-mee) *noun* 1. a medieval science which attempted to change ordinary metals into gold. 2. any strange or magical process, change, etc. ▶ **alchemist**, *noun*.

alcheringa (say al-*cha*-ringa) *noun*, also called **alchera**, the Dreaming. [Aboriginal]

alcohol (say al-*ka*-hol) *noun* any of a variety of intoxicating drinks made by the fermentation of sugar with fruits, etc.

alcoholic (say al-*ka*-hol-ik) *noun* 1. a person who compulsively drinks alcohol. ▶ *adjective* 2. of or containing alcohol. 3. of or relating to an alcoholic. ▶ **alcoholism**, *noun*.

alcove *noun* a section of a room or other space which is set back from the main part.

alderman (say awl-*da*-m'n) *noun* a member of a county, borough or city council in Australia, Britain or America.

ale *noun* 1. any of various types of beer, as pale ale, brown ale, etc. 2. beer.

alert *adjective* 1. wide-awake or attentive. ▶ *noun* 2. a state of readiness or caution. 3. a warning or alarm, as before an air-raid or attack. ▶ *adverb*; *alertness*, *noun*.

alfalfa *noun* See LUCERNE.

alga *noun*, plural is **algae** (say al-je). *Biology*: any of a group of simple plants with single-celled reproductive structures, growing in fresh water, seawater or damp places. ▶ *algal*, *adjective*.

algebra (say alji-bra) *noun* the branch of maths which uses symbols such as letters of the alphabet to represent quantities. ▶ *algebraic*, *adjective*.

algorithm (say al-go-rithm) *noun*, *Mathematics*: a clearly-defined sequence of operations for solving a particular mathematical problem.

alias (say ay-lee-ass) *noun* an assumed or false name. ▶ *alias*, *adverb*.

alibi (say ala-by) *noun*, plural is **alibis**. 1. *Law*: a defence by an accused person that he or she was elsewhere at the time the crime was committed. 2. (*informal*) an excuse.

alien (say ay-lian) *noun* 1. a foreigner or unnaturalised citizen. 2. any person or thing that is strange or unfamiliar. ▶ *adjective* 3. foreign or strange: 'his ideas are alien to our standards'. ▶ *alienable*, *adjective*.

alienate (say ay-lee-a-nate) *verb* to turn away or make hostile: 'that attitude will alienate your friends'. ▶ *alienation*, *noun*.

alight (1) *verb* to get out of or down from a vehicle.

alight (2) *adverb*, *adjective* lit up or burning: 'is your pipe alight?'

align (say a-line) *verb* to arrange in a line: 'these posts are not quite aligned'. ▶ *alignment*, *noun*.

alike *adverb*, *adjective* similar or in the same way: 'I think all politicians are alike'.

alimentary (say ali-menta-ree) *adjective* relating to food, nutrition and digestion. ▶ *alimentary canal*, the passage by which food passes through the body.

alimony (say ala-moe-nee) *noun*, *Law*: any regular payment of money due to a separated or divorced person from his or her spouse.

alive (*rhymes with arrive*) *adjective* 1. living or active. 2. alert.

alkali (say alka-lie) *noun* any of a class of substances that neutralise acids to form salts. ▶ *alkaline*, *adjective*; *alkalinity*, *noun*.

all *adjective*, *adverb*, *pronoun* being the whole quantity or number of anything: (as an adjective) 'all people are equal'; (as an adverb) 'he sat all alone'; (as a pronoun) 'we all laughed'.

Allah *noun* the Muslim name for God.

allay (say a-lay) *verb* to relieve or reduce: 'the pilot tried to allay their fears'.

allege (say a-lej) *verb* to declare or assert, often without actual proof. ▶ *allegation*, *noun*; *allegedly*, *adverb*.

allegiance (say a-lee-j'nce) *noun* a loyalty or duty, especially to a government or ruler of a country.

allegory (say ala-gree) *noun* a story which represents, through its characters, events or qualities, other characters, events or qualities. ▶ *allegorical*, *allegoric*, *adjective*.

allegretto *adverb* (say ali-gre-toe). *Music*: briskly or quickly.

alleluia (say ala-loo-ya) *noun* See HALLELUJAH.

allergy (say al-a-jee) *noun* 1. an abnormal physical sensitivity to any substance, such as to certain fruits, plants, etc. ▶ *allergic* (say a-ler-jik) *adjective* 2. having an allergy: 'I am allergic to pollen'.

alleviate (say a-lee-vi-ate) *verb* to lessen or make easier to bear: 'nothing could alleviate her misery'. ▶ *alleviation*, *noun*.

alley (say al-ee) *noun* 1. a narrow path or street. Short form of *alleyway*. 2. a long, narrow, enclosed lane used for bowling.

alliance (say a-lie'nce) *noun* an association or union, usually made by formal agreement.

allied (say al-ide) *verb* the past tense and past participle of the verb *ally*.

alligator (say ali-gayta) *noun* any of various large amphibian freshwater reptiles with a broad rounded snout and growing up to about 5 metres long.

alliteration (say a-litta-ray-sh'n) *noun* the commencement of two or more closely connected words with the same letter or sound, especially a consonant. *Example*: 'five miles meandering with a mazy motion' (S. T. Coleridge). ▶ *alliterate*, *verb*; *alliterative*, *adjective*.

allocate (say al-a-kate) *verb* to set aside for a particular purpose: 'the city council has allocated money for public transport'. ▶ *allocation*, *noun*.

allot (say a-lot) *verb* (*allotted*, *allotting*) 1. to share out or distribute: 'you have been allotted several tickets'. ▶ *allotment* *noun* 2. a person's share of anything: 'a teacher's allotment of classes'. 3. an area of land.

allow (*rhymes with cow*) *verb* 1. to permit or agree to. 2. to admit: 'I allow I was wrong'. ▶ *allowance* *noun* 3. the act of allowing: 'the allowance of a claim'. 4. a sum of money, etc. given for particular needs. ▶ *allow for*, 'you have not allowed for his forgetfulness' (= taken into consideration).

alloy (say aloy) *noun* 1. any substance consisting of a metal mixed with one or more other elements. ▶ (say a-loiy) *verb* 2. to mix metals to form an alloy.

all right satisfactory or in good order.

allude (say a-lood) *verb* to refer to something indirectly: 'several times he alluded to his past, but he told us nothing'. ▶ *allusion*, *noun*.

allure (say a-loor) *verb* to attract or entice. ▶ *allurement*, *noun*.

alluvial (say a-loo-viul) *adjective* made of soil, sand, etc. deposited by flowing water.

alluvium (say a-loo-vi-um) *noun* the silt carried by a river and deposited in its valley or delta.

ally (say al-eye) *noun* 1. a person or group united with another, especially by formal agreement: 'Australia's trade allies'. 2. any close friend or supporter. ▶ *ally* (*allied*, *allying*), *verb*.

almanac (say alma-nak) *noun* a yearly calendar giving information about the sun, moon, tides, etc.

almighty (say awl-my-tee) *adjective* 1. having absolute power. 2. (*informal*) very great: 'what an almighty noise!'. ▶ *the Almighty*, God. [Christian]

almond (say ah-m'nd) *noun* 1. an edible, oval nut with a mild taste. 2. a pale creamish-brown colour. ▶ *almond*, *adjective*.

almost (say awl-most) *adverb* very nearly: 'we are almost there'.

alms (say ahms) *plural noun* any money or gifts given to the poor.

aloft *adverb* high up or in the air.

alone *adjective*, *adverb* by oneself: 'do not leave me penniless and alone'. ▶ *let alone*, 'he can hardly walk, let alone run' (= not to mention). ▶ *aloneness*, *noun*.

along *preposition*, *adverb* 1. following the length of: 'the guide asked us to move along the path'. 2. on or onwards: 'they went along together'.

aloof *adverb* 1. apart or at a distance, especially from people. ▶ *adjective*: 2. showing no interest in others. ▶ *aloofness*, *noun*.

aloud *adverb* 1. in a voice to be heard: 'recite the poem aloud'. 2. loudly: 'she cried aloud for joy'.

alp *noun* a high mountain. ▶ *alpine*, *adjective*.

alpha (say alfa) *noun* 1. the first letter of the Greek alphabet. 2. the

beginning of anything. Compare OMEGA.

alphabet (say alfa-bet) *noun* 1. the letters or signs of a particular language, set in an established order. 2. the basic principles of anything: 'the alphabet of survival'. ▶ *alphabetical* (say alfa-betti-k'l) *adjective* 3. being in the order of the alphabet, as in a dictionary. ▶ *alphabetically*, *adverb*; *alphabetise*, *verb*.

alphanumeric *adjective* consisting of both letters and numbers.

already (say awl-red-di) *adverb* by or before a particular time: 'when we arrived he was already there'.

Alsatian (say al-say-sh'n) *noun*, also called *German shepherd*, any of a breed of large, strong, wolf-like dogs.

also (say awl-so) *adverb* as well or in addition: 'we also brought you a present'.

altar (say awl-ta) *noun* a raised structure where sacrifices are offered or religious rites are performed.

alter (say awl-ta) *verb* 1. to make or become different: 'we must alter our plans'. ▶ *alteration* *noun* 2. the act of altering. 3. a change or modification. ▶ *alterable*, *adjective*; *alterably*, *adverb*.

altercation (say awl-ta-kay-sh'n) *noun* an angry or noisy quarrel. ▶ *altercate*, *verb*.

alternate (say awl-ta-nate) *verb* 1. to replace each other by turns: 'her moods alternate between joy and depression'. ▶ (say awl-ter-nit) *adjective* 2. (of two things) first one and then the other: 'we play squash on alternate Saturdays'. ▶ *alternation*, *noun*. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with ALTERNATIVE.

alternative (say awl-ter-nat-iv) *noun* 1. a choice between two possibilities. 2. any choice: 'are there no other alternatives?'. 3. something other than what is generally accepted. ▶ *alternatively*, *adjective*; *alternatively*, *adverb*. ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with ALTERNATE.

although (say awl-tho) *conjunction* even though: 'I will go although I would prefer not to'.

altimeter (say alti-meeta) *noun* an instrument used to measure altitude.

altitude *noun* the height of anything, especially above sea-level. ▶ *altitudinal*, *adjective*.

alto (say al-toe) *noun*, *Music*: 1. the range between tenor and soprano. 2. a contralto, the lowest female singing voice. 3. a countertenor, a high, adult male singing voice. 4. any instrument having the range between tenor and soprano.

altogether (say awl-ta-getha) *adverb* entirely or completely.

altruism (say al-troo-izm) *noun* an unselfish generosity to, or concern for, other people. ▶ *altruist*, *noun*; *altruistic*, *adjective*.

aluminium (say al-yoo-min-y'm) *noun* a lightweight, rust-resistant metal.

always *adverb* at all times or continually.

Alzheimer's Disease (say alts-high-mers diz-eez) a brain disease leading to a decrease in mental powers.

am *verb* the first person singular, present tense of the verb *be*.

amalgamate (say a-malga-mate) *verb* to combine or mix: 'the three companies amalgamated last week'. ▶ *amalgamation*, *noun*.

amass *verb* to collect or heap together, especially for oneself.

amateur (say amma-ter) *noun* 1. a person who engages in any activity for enjoyment as distinct from making money. 2. a person who lacks skill or ability. ▶ *amateurish*, *adjective*.

amaze *verb* to surprise or astonish. ▶ *amazement*, *noun*; *amazing*, *adjective*; *amazingly*, *adverb*.

amazon (say amma-zon) *noun* 1. *Greek mythology*: (*capital*) a member of a race of female warriors and hunters. 2. a physically strong or powerful woman.

ambassador *noun*, *Politics*: the chief representative of a government, sent to a foreign country. Compare CONSUL. ▶ *ambassadorial*, *adjective*.

amber *noun* 1. the yellow, reddish or brown fossilised resin used in jewellery. 2. an orange to yellowish-brown colour.

ambidextrous *adjective* able to use both hands equally well.

ambiguous (say am-big-yew-us) *adjective* having two or more possible meanings. ▶ *ambiguity*, *noun*; *ambiguously*, *adverb*.

ambit *noun* the boundary or range of anything.

ambition *noun* a strong desire for success, fame, etc. ▶ *ambitious*, *adjective*.

ambivalent (say am-bivva-l'nt) *adjective* having opposite and conflicting feelings about something: 'she loves him but is ambivalent about marriage'. ▶ *ambivalence*, *noun*.

amble *verb* to walk at a relaxed or easy pace. ▶ *amble*, *noun*.

ambulance (say am-bew-l'nce) *noun* a vehicle equipped to carry sick or injured people.

ambush (say am-bush) *verb* to lie in wait in order to make a surprise attack. ▶ *ambush*, *noun*.

ameliorate (say a-mee-ia-rate) *verb* to make or become better: 'prison conditions may be ameliorated by the new law'. ▶ *amelioration*, *noun*.

amenable (say a-menna-b'l or a-mee-na-b'l) *adjective* 1. willing or agreeable: 'he was not amenable to the suggestion'. 2. responsible or answerable: 'all members are amenable to club rules'. ▶ *amenability*, *amenableness*, *nouns*; *amenably*, *adverb*.

amend *verb* 1. to make changes in a law, etc.: 'the committee has amended the rule'. 2. to correct or improve: 'here is an amended version of the original script'. ▶ *amendment*, *amends*, *nouns*. ▶ *make amends*, 'how can I make amends for my carelessness?' (= make up). ▶ *Common Error*: do not confuse with EMEND.

amenity (say a-menna-tee or a-mee-na-tee) *noun* (usually *plural*) anything which adds to comfort, ease or pleasure: 'the cooking amenities in this flat are excellent'.

amenorrhoea (say ay-men-o-ree-a) *noun*, *Medicine*: the absence of menstruation.

American Standard Code for Information Interchange, short form is **ASCII** (say as-kee), *Computers*: a code used for the transmission of data which helps different computer systems recognise the same text characters such as numbers and letters.

amethyst (say amma-thist) *noun* a purple or violet quartz, used as a gem.

amiable (say aymia-b'l) *adjective* friendly or kind. ▶ *amiably*, *adverb*; *amiability*, *noun*.

amicable (say ammika-b'l) *adjective* peaceful and friendly. ▶ *amicably*, *adverb*; *amicability*, *noun*.

amid, **amidst** *preposition* among or in the middle of.

amiss *adverb*, *adjective* wrong or faulty.

ammonia (say a-mo-nee-a) *noun* a colourless, strong-smelling gas which is very soluble in water. In this form it is often used as a cleaning agent.

ammunition (say am-yoo-nish'n) *noun* any of the materials, e.g. shot, shells, etc. used in firing guns.

amnesia (say am-nee-zia) *noun* a loss of memory.

amnesty (say amna-ste) *noun* a general pardon, especially for crimes against a government.

amoeba (say a-mee-ba) *noun*, plural is *amoebae* or *amoebas*, a microscopic, single-celled animal which moves by changing its shape, and reproduces by simple division into two parts. ▶ *amoebic*, *adjective*.

amok

amok (say a-mok or a-muk) **amuck** *adverb* **run amok**, to rush about wildly or violently.

among, amongst *preposition* **1.** in the midst or in the middle of: 'the children played among the trees'. **2.** in the number or group of: 'among the mountains, it is the highest'. **3.** between: 'they agreed among themselves'.

★ **Common Error: AMONG, BETWEEN.** *Between*, and never *among*, is used when referring to two people or things: 'a strong friendship developed between Julio and Sandy'. Depending on the meaning of a sentence, it is possible to use both *among* and *between* when referring to more than two people or things: 'the players discussed strategy among themselves', 'the camp is located between the lake, the forest and the mountain range'.

amoral (say ay-morr'l) *adjective* of or relating to behaviour which is not based on any moral standards. ▶ **amorally**, *adverb*; **amoralism**, *noun*. ▶ **Common Error:** do not confuse with **IMMORAL**.

amorous (say amma-rus) *adjective* **1.** of or showing love: 'an amorous glance'. **2.** inclined or disposed to love: 'his intentions were clearly amorous'. ▶ **amorously**, *adverb*; **amorosity**, *noun*.

amorphous (say a-morfus) *adjective* having no definite form or shape. ▶ **amorphously**, *adverb*; **amorphousness**, *noun*.

amount *noun* **1.** the extent or total of anything: 'the amount of effort required is minimal'. ▶ **verb** **2.** to add up or be equal to: 'her debts amounted to \$1500'.

ampere (say am-pair) *noun, short form is **amp**, the base SI unit of electric current. See SI UNIT.*

ampersand *noun* the sign (&), meaning *and*.

amphetamine (say am-fetta-meen) *noun* a drug used as a stimulant.

amphibian (say am-fibbi-an) *noun* **1.** any of a group of animals, with a backbone, able to live in water and on land. **2.** a vehicle which can travel on land or water. ▶ **amphibian**, **amphibious**, *adjectives*.

amphitheatre (say amfi-theerta) *noun* a circular or oval area with sloping sides rising around it, such as a theatre gallery, sports arena, etc.

ample *adjective* large or plentiful. ▶ **amply**, *adverb*.

amplify (say amfli-fie) *verb* (**amplified**, **amplifying**) **1.** to enlarge, extend or increase: 'could you amplify that statement?'. **2.** to make louder. ▶ **amplifier**, **amplification**, *nouns*.

amply *adverb* See **AMPLE**.

amputate (say am-pew-tate) *verb* to cut off a diseased or injured limb, etc. by surgical operation. ▶ **amputation**, *noun*.

amputee *noun* a person who has had a limb amputated.

amuck *adverb* See **AMOK**.

amulet (say am-yoo-let) *noun* an ornament or charm believed to protect the wearer from misfortune.

amuse (say a-mewz) *verb* **1.** to cause to smile or laugh. **2.** to make time pass pleasantly: 'can you amuse yourself until we return?'. ▶ **amusement**, *noun*; **amusingly**, *adverb*.

an article, *Grammar:* an indefinite article. See **ARTICLE**.

anabolic steroid (say anna-bol-ic steroid) any of a group of usually synthetic hormones sometimes taken by sports competitors to increase muscle size.

anachronism (say a-nakra-nizm) *noun* **1.** the assigning of something to a wrong period of time or history. **2.** something out-of-date. ▶ **anachronistic**, *adjective*.

anaconda (say anna-konda) *noun* a very large South American snake related to the boa.

anaemia (say a-neemia) *noun* **1.** a shortage of red blood cells causing weakness and a pale colouring of the

skin. ▶ **anaemic** *adjective* **2.** suffering from anaemia. **3.** colourless or weak.

anaesthesia (say annis-theez-ya) *noun* **1.** a general loss of feeling, especially of pain. ▶ **anaesthetic** (say annis-thettik) *noun* **2.** any substance, such as ether or chloroform, producing a general or local loss of feeling, pain, etc. ▶ **anaesthetise**, *verb*; **anaesthetist**, *noun*.

anagram (say anna-gram) *noun* a word formed by rearranging the letters of another word. *Example:* *march* is an anagram of *charm*.

anal (say ayn'l) *adjective* See **ANUS**.

analgesia (say annal-jeez-ya) *noun* **1.** an inability to feel pain. ▶ **analgesic** (say annal-jeezik) *noun* **2.** any substance which relieves pain.

analogue (say an-a-log analog) *noun* **1.** something which has an analogy to something else. ▶ *adjective* **2.** *Electronics:* (of a quantity or measurement) being directly measurable and continuously variable, such as voltage, pressure, depth, etc. Compare **DIGITAL**. **3.** indicating a measurement by hands on clocks, watches, etc.

analogy (say a-nalla-jee) *noun* **1.** an agreement or partial correspondence in things between which a comparison may be made: 'there is an analogy between the heart and a pump'. ▶ **analogous** (say a-nallagus) *adjective* **2.** comparable in several respects. ▶ **analogical**, *adjective*; **analogically**, *adverb*; **analogise**, *verb*; **analogously**, *adverb*.

analyse (say anna-lize) *verb* **1.** to examine critically the essential features of: 'we all tried to analyse his motives'. **2.** to divide into the constituent parts and examine each part: 'to analyse a chemical compound'.

analysis (say a-nalla-sis) *noun* **1.** the process of separating something into its constituent parts, so as to examine or describe it. Compare **SYNTHESIS**. **2.** See **PSYCHOANALYSIS**. ▶ **analyst**, *noun*; **analytic**, **analytical**, *adjectives*; **analytically**, *adverb*.

anarchy (say anna-kee) *noun* **1.** a lack of established government or control, usually leading to disorder. **2.** a general state of disorder or uproar. ▶ **anarchist** (say anna-kist) *noun* **3.** a person who believes that all organised authority should be abolished. ▶ **anarchism**, *noun*; **anarchic**, *adjective*.

anathema (say a-nathema) *noun* **1.** *Christian:* a curse by God or the Church. **2.** anything which is detested or loathed.

anatomy (say a-matta-mee) *noun* **1.** the internal structure of anything. **2.** the study of the structure of an organism. Compare **PHYSIOLOGY**. ▶ **anatomical**, *adjective*.

ancestor (say ansesta) *noun* a person from whom descent can be traced through either of one's parents. ▶ **ancestral**, *adjective*.

ancestry (say an-sess-tree) *noun* **1.** a line of descent. **2.** all one's ancestors.

anchor (say anka) *noun* **1.** a heavy object attached to a ship by a rope or chain and lowered into the seabed to prevent the ship drifting. ▶ **verb** **2.** to lower an anchor. **3.** to hold or be held fast by an anchor. ▶ **anchorage**, *noun*.

anchovy (say an-cho-vee or anchavee) *noun* any of a group of small, edible, oily fish.

ancient (say ane-sh'nt) *adjective* **1.** existing or occurring in times long past, especially before the fall of the Western Roman Empire in A.D. 476. **2.** very old.

ancillary (say an-silla-ree) *adjective* auxiliary.

and *conjunction* **1.** a word used to indicate the following: a) (connection or joining of ideas, etc.) 'we ate dinner and then we left'. b) (continuation) 'we talked and talked for hours'. c) (addition) 'seven and eight equals fifteen'. **2.** as well as: 'when we returned the house was dark and cold'.

anecdote (say annek-dote) *noun* a short, interesting or amusing story about a particular person or event. ▶ **anecdotal**, *adjective*.

anemone (say a-nemman-nee) *noun* **1.** a small garden flower resembling a poppy. **2.** See **SEA-ANEMONE**.

angel (say ane-j'l) *noun* **1.** a divine or spiritual being who is an attendant or messenger of God. **2.** (*informal*) any beautiful or kind person. ▶ **angelic**, *adjective*; **angelically**, *adverb*.

anger *noun* a strong feeling of displeasure and often hostility. ▶ **anger**, *verb*.

angle (1) *noun* **1.** the space between two lines or planes which diverge from a point. **2.** an aspect or point of view. ▶ **verb** **3.** to move or direct at an angle.

angle (2) *verb* **1.** to fish. **2.** to scheme. ▶ **angler**, *noun*.

Anglican Church See **CHURCH OF ENGLAND**. ▶ **Anglican**, **Anglicism** *nouns*.

anglicise (say angli-size) *verb* to make or become English in character, habits, etc.

Anglophile (say an-glo-file) *noun* a person who has an admiration for Britain and British things.

Anglo-Saxon *noun* **1.** a person of English descent. **2.** an inhabitant of England during the six centuries before the Norman Conquest (A.D. 1066).

angora (say an-gawra) *noun* **1.** a cat, goat or rabbit having long, silky hair. **2.** the yarn of fabric made from the coat of an Angora goat, etc.

angry *adjective* full of anger. ▶ **angrily**, *adverb*.

angst *noun* a condition of anxiety or dread, often consisting of feelings of guilt, remorse or hopelessness. [*German*]

anguish (say ang-gwish) *noun* an extreme pain or suffering: 'the bushfires caused many people great anguish'. ▶ **anguish**, *verb*.

angular (say ang-gewla) *adjective* **1.** having, consisting of or forming an angle. **2.** measured by an angle: 'the angular distance'. **3.** (of a person) bony or awkward. ▶ **angularity**, *noun*.

animal *noun* **1.** any living thing, usually other than human, that can move around in a voluntary way. **2.** any beast-like or uncivilised person. ▶ *adjective* **3.** of or relating to animals. **4.** of one's physical rather than intellectual nature: 'food is an animal need'.

animate *verb* to make alive or lively: 'her face was animated by her smile'. ▶ **animate**, *adjective*; **animately**, *adverb*; **animation**, *noun*.

animated cartoon See **CARTOON**.

animosity (say anni-mossi-tee) *noun* a feeling of hostility or aggression.

ankle *noun* **1.** the joint connecting the lower leg to the foot. **2.** the slender part of the leg immediately above the foot.

annals *plural noun* **1.** a history of events recorded year by year. **2.** the books containing such records. ▶ **annalist**, *noun*.

annelid (say an-ellid) *noun* any of a group of segmented (ringed) worms, e.g. the earthworm.

annex (say a-neks) *verb* **1.** to attach or join to something larger. **2.** to take over or attach land to one's own. ▶ **annexation**, *noun*.

annexe (say an-eks) **annex** *noun* **1.** a building or structure added to or situated near a larger one. **2.** anything which has been added or joined.

annihilate (say a-nigh-a-late) *verb* to completely destroy or defeat. ▶ **annihilation**, *noun*.

anniversary (say anni-versa-ree) *noun* the annual return of the date of an event: 'a wedding anniversary'.

annotate *verb* to make notes upon, e.g. in explanation, criticism, etc.: 'this book is annotated in the margins'. ▶ **annotation**, *noun*.

anterior

announce *verb* to state or make known publicly. ▶ **announcement**, **announcer**, *nouns*.

annoy (say a-noy) *verb* to displease or irritate. ▶ **annoyance**, *noun*.

annual *adjective* **1.** occurring once a year. **2.** happening over the course of a year: 'the annual journey of the planets'. ▶ *noun* **3.** a book published once a year. **4. Biology:** any plant which completes its life cycle within one season or one year.

annuity (say a-new-it-ee) *noun* a sum of money paid as a regular yearly income from an insurance policy.

annul (say a-nul) *verb* (**annulled**, **annulling**) to abolish or make void, e.g. a law or marriage. ▶ **annulment**, *noun*.

anode (say an-ode) *noun* a positive electrode. Compare **CATHODE**.

anoint *verb* to put oil on as a sign of consecration, especially in a religious ceremony. ▶ **anointment**, *noun*.

anomaly (say a-nomma-lee) *noun* anything which is irregular or different from what is normal. ▶ **anomalous**, *adjective*.

anon (1) *adverb* an old word meaning soon.

anon. (2) *adjective* short form of **ANONYMOUS**.

anonymous (say a-nonni-mus) *adjective* **1.** having no known or acknowledged name or authorship: 'an anonymous poem'. Short form is **anon.** **2.** lacking individuality. ▶ **anonymously**, *adverb*; **anonymity**, *noun*.

anorexia (say anna-reksia), also called **anorexia nervosa**, *noun* an illness causing complete loss of appetite. ▶ **anorexic**, *adjective*.

another (say a-nutha) *adjective* **1.** an additional: 'pass me another cake'. **2.** a different: 'come another day'. ▶ *pronoun* **3.** an additional one: 'choose another'. **4.** a different one: 'going from one place to another'. **5.** a similar or identical one.

answer (say ahnsa) *noun* **1.** a reply or response. **2.** a solution to a problem. ▶ *verb* **3.** to respond. **4.** to suit or serve a purpose. **5.** to correspond to: 'this man answers to your description'. ▶ **answerable** *adjective* **6.** responsible or accountable: 'who is answerable for this child's behaviour?' **7.** able to be answered. ▶ **answer for**, to accept responsibility for.

ant *noun* any of a group of very small insects which form, and live in, communities.

antagonism (say antagga-nizm) *noun* **1.** any active opposition or hostility. ▶ **antagonist** *noun* **2.** a person actively opposed to, or in competition with, another. ▶ **antagonise**, *verb*; **antagonistic**, *adjective*.

antarctic *adjective* at or near the South Pole.

Antarctica *noun* the continent around the South Pole.

anteater *noun* any of various animals which live on ants, such as the echidna.

antecedent (say anti-see-d'nt) *noun* **1.** (*plural*) one's ancestors or past history. ▶ *adjective* **2.** occurring before or earlier.

antelope (say anta-lope) *noun* any of various horned, ruminant mammals similar to deer, such as the chamois, gazelle and gnu.

ante meridiem (say anti mer-riddi-em), short form is **a.m.**, the time before midday. Compare **POST MERIDIEM**.

antenatal (say anti-nay-t'l) *adjective* during pregnancy but before birth.

antenna (say an-tenna) *noun* **1. Biology:** either of the pair of jointed outgrowths occurring on the heads of insects and some other animals. Plural is **antennae** (say anten-nee). **2. Electronics:** an aerial. Plural is **antennas**.

anterior (say an-teeria) *adjective* **1.** situated before or to the front: 'an anterior room'. **2.** preceding in time.

anthem

anthem *noun* a short, solemn song of praise, often expressing patriotism.

anther *noun, Biology:* the end of a stamen containing the pollen.

anthology (*say an-tholla-jee*) *noun* a collection of poems or literary extracts. ▶ **anthologist**, *noun*.

anthracite (*say anthra-site*) *noun* a coal which is almost pure carbon.

anthrax *noun* an often fatal, bacterial infection of cattle and humans.

anthropoid *adjective* 1. of or resembling human beings. ▶ *noun* 2. an ape which resembles a human being.

anthropology (*say anthra-polla-jee*) *noun* the study of human beings and the customs, characteristics, etc. of human societies. ▶ **anthropological**, *adjective*; **anthropologist**, *noun*.

anthropomorphic (*say an-throppo-morfik*) *adjective* attributing human characteristics to something which is non-human, such as a god.

antibiotic (*say anti-by-ottik*) *noun* a substance, such as penicillin, used against bacterial infection.

antibody (*say anti-body*) *noun, Medicine:* a protein produced to combat any foreign substance which enters the body.

antic *noun (often plural)* any ludicrous or absurd behaviour: 'journalists love the antics of politicians'.

anticipate (*say antissi-pate*) *verb* to expect or realise beforehand: 'I anticipated a better response'. ▶ **anticipation**, *noun*; **anticipatory**, *adjective*.

anticlimax *noun* 1. the weakening of an effect, especially in a literary work. 2. a disappointing outcome or conclusion. ▶ **anticlimactic**, *adjective*.

anticlockwise *adjective, adverb* in a direction opposite to the movement of the hands of a clock.

anti-discrimination *adjective* (of a policy) being designed to work against discrimination.

antidote *noun* 1. *Medicine:* any substance that will counteract the effects of a poison, disease, etc. 2. any remedy: 'time is the only antidote for a broken heart'.

antifreeze *noun* a substance added to the water in car radiators, etc. to prevent freezing.

antihistamine (*say anti-hista-meen*) *noun* any of a group of drugs which neutralise histamines, used to treat allergies.

antipathy (*say an-tippa-thee*) *noun* a strong, fixed dislike or aversion. ▶ **antipathetic**, *adjective*.

antiperspirant (*say anti-perspi-r'nt*) *noun* any substance which is used to prevent or decrease sweating.

antipodes (*say an-tippa-deez*) *plural noun* 1. any two points directly opposite each other on a globe, such as the North and South Poles. 2. (*often capital*) Australia and New Zealand. ▶ **antipodean**, *adjective, noun*.

antiquarian (*say anti-kwair-ian*) *adjective* of or relating to the study of antiquities. ▶ **antiquarian**, **antiquary**, *nouns*.

antiquated (*say anti-kwaytid*) *adjective* old-fashioned, quaint or obsolete.

antique (*say an-teek*) *noun* 1. any rare or valued object from the past, especially one more than 100 years old. ▶ *adjective* 2. of or relating to antiques. 3. of or relating to the distant past. ▶ **antiquity** (*say anti-kwi-tee*) *noun* 4. any ancient time or remote period. 5. (*usually plural*) any work of art or ruins from the distant past: 'we studied the Greek antiquities in the museum'.

anti-Semitism (*say anti-semma-tizm*) *noun* a hostility towards or ill-treatment of Jews. ▶ **anti-Semitic**, *adjective*; **anti-Semite**, *noun*.

antiseptic (*say anti-septik*) *adjective* of or relating to the killing of micro-organisms. ▶ **antiseptic**, *noun*.

antisocial (*say anti-so-sh'l*) *adjective* withdrawn from or actively hostile to others or social institutions.

antithesis (*say an-titha-sis*) *noun* the direct opposite of something:

'certainty is the antithesis of doubt'. ▶ **antithetical**, **antithetic**, *adjective*.

antler *noun* either of the bony growths on the skull of deer, covered by soft, velvety skin during growth and shed and renewed annually. Compare HORN.

antonym (*say anta-nim*) *noun* a word with the opposite meaning to another: 'good is an antonym of bad'. Compare SYNONYM.

anus (*say ay-nus*) *noun, Anatomy:* the ring of muscle at the lower end of the alimentary canal through which solid waste matter is excreted. ▶ **anal**, *adjective*.

anvil *noun* a heavy iron block on which metals are hammered into shape.

anxiety (*say ang-zie-a-tee*) *noun* a state of worry or apprehension.

anxious (*say ang-shus*) *adjective* 1. suffering from or causing anxiety. 2. eager. ▶ **anxiously**, *adverb*.

any *adjective* 1. one or some: 'do you have any friends?'. 2. every: 'any fool knows that'. 3. a great or unlimited amount: 'any number of things could still go wrong'. ▶ *pronoun* 4. any person: 'do any of you know him?'. ▶ *adverb* 5. at all: 'are you feeling any better?'

anybody *pronoun* any person: 'didn't anybody help you?'

anyhow *adverb* 1. in any case: 'anyhow, the contract was already signed'. 2. in a careless manner: 'the table was put together anyhow'.

anyone *pronoun* anybody.

anything *pronoun* any thing whatever: 'did anything strange happen last night?'

anyway *adverb* however or in any case: 'anyway, I'll see you tomorrow'.

anywhere *adverb* in, at or to any place: 'we can't find it anywhere'.

Anzac *noun* a soldier from Australia or New Zealand in World War I. [from A(ustralian) and N(ew) Z(ealand) A(rmy) C(orps)]

aorta (*say ay-orta*) *noun, Anatomy:* the largest artery in the body, which carries blood from the heart. ▶ **aortic**, **aortal**, *adjectives*.

apart *adverb* separated or at a distance: a) 'let's take the engine apart'; b) 'joking apart, what did you think of my speech?'. ▶ **apart**, *adjective*.

apartheid (*say a-paritee*) *noun* a policy or law segregating racial groups in South Africa.

apartment *noun* 1. a suite of furnished rooms. 2. a home unit or flat.

apathy (*say appa-thee*) *noun* a lack of interest or energy. ▶ **apathetic**, *adjective*; **apathetically**, *adverb*.

ape *noun* 1. any of the tail-less primates closest to human beings in evolutionary development. Compare MONKEY. ▶ *verb* 2. to imitate or mimic.

aperture (*say appa-cher*) *noun* a gap or opening.

apex (*say ay-peks*) *noun*, plural is **apexes** or **apices** (*say ay-pa-seez*), the highest point or summit.

aphid (*say ayfid*) **aphis** *noun* any of a group of small insects which suck plant juices.

aphorism (*say aff-o-rizm*) *noun* a short, cleverly expressed saying which sums up a truth, such as a proverb.

aphrodisiac (*say afra-dizzi-ak*) *noun* any food, drink or drug arousing sexual desire.

Aphrodite (*say af-ro-di-tee*) *noun, Greek mythology:* the goddess of beauty, fertility and sexual love, identified with the Roman goddess Venus.

apiary (*say ape-y'ree*) *noun* an area, usually containing beehives, in which bees are kept. ▶ **apiarian**, *adjective*; **apiarist**, *noun*.

apiece (*say a-peece*) *adverb* each, or for each one: 'the chairs at the sale were \$100 apiece'.

aplomb (*say a-plom*) *noun* poise or self-possession.

apocalypse (*say a-pokka-lips*) *noun* any revelation or remarkable disclosure. ▶ **apocalyptic**, *adjective*.

apology (*say a-polla-jee*) *noun* an expression of regret for some wrong or injury: 'please accept my apologies for being so late'. ▶ **apologise**, *verb*; **apologetic**, *adjective*.

apostle (*say a-poss'l*) *noun* 1. any of the early Christian disciples, missionaries and teachers. 2. any reformer, pioneer or leader of a cause. ▶ **apostolic**, *adjective*.

apostrophe (*say a-postra-fee*) *noun* a punctuation mark ('), used to indicate the following: a) possession: 'that is John's book'. b) the omission of letters: 'I'll tell him'. c) the formation of certain plurals: 'plural contains two l's'.

appal (*say a-pawl*) **appall** *verb* (**appalled**, **appalling**) to shock or fill with horror.

apparatus (*say appa-rah-tis*) *noun*, plural is **apparatus** or **apparatuses**, a set of instruments, machinery or appliances for a particular task.

apparel (*say a-parr'l*) *noun* any clothing or dress.

apparent (*say a-parr'nt*) *adjective* 1. clearly seen or understood. 2. seeming: 'her confidence is apparent rather than real'. ▶ **apparently**, *adverb*.

apparition (*say appa-rish'n*) *noun* a sudden or frightening vision, especially of a ghost.

appeal (*say a-peel*) *verb* 1. to call upon or make an earnest or desperate plea. 2. to offer interest or attraction: 'does that book appeal to you?'. 3. *Law:* to apply for a case to be heard again by a higher court. ▶ **appeal**, *noun*.

appear (*say a-peer*) *verb* 1. to become clear or visible. 2. to look like: 'try not to appear frightened'. 3. to come or perform before the public. ▶ **appearance** *noun* 4. the act of appearing. 5. (*plural*) any outward signs or indications: 'you shouldn't judge by appearances'.

appease (*say a-peeze*) *verb* to quiet or calm, especially to placate someone who is hostile. ▶ **appeasement**, *noun*.

append *verb* 1. to add, join or attach. ▶ **appendage** *noun* 2. a subordinate or subsidiary part.

appendicitis (*say a-pendi-sigh-tis*) *noun* an inflammation of the appendix causing severe abdominal pain.

appendix (*say a-pendiks*) *noun*, plural is **appendices** (*say a-pendiceez*) or **appendixes**. 1. any material added at the end of a book, such as lists, tables, etc. 2. a small tubular part of the lower intestine.

appertain (*say appa-tane*) *verb* to pertain, belong or relate to.

appetiser *noun* any food or drink served before a meal to stimulate the appetite.

appetising *adjective* stimulating or appealing to the appetite: 'an appetising smell from the kitchen'.

appetite (*say appa-tite*) *noun* a desire or craving, especially for food.

applaud (*say a-plawd*) *verb* to express approval or praise, especially by clapping. ▶ **applause**, *noun*.

apple *noun* a round fruit with crisp, firm flesh and a green, yellow or red skin. ▶ **she's apples**, all is well.

appliance (*say a-ply-ance*) *noun* a device designed for a special use.

applicable (*say a-plikka-b'l*) *adjective* suitable or relevant. ▶ **applicability**, *noun*.

applicant (*say apli-k'nt*) *noun* a candidate or person who applies: 'applicants for the position must supply references'.

application *noun* 1. a request: 'further information will be supplied on application to the organisers'. 2. the use or relevance of something for a particular purpose: 'past grievances have no application now'. 3. a thing applied, especially a preparation. 4. the act of applying. 5. any sustained effort or

apricot

concentration. 6. *Computers:* a type of program, such as a word processor or a spreadsheet, which is designed to help users carry out a specific kind of task.

applicator (*say apli-kayta*) *noun* an instrument for applying something, such as a brush used to apply make-up.

apply (*say a-ply*) *verb* (**applied**, **applying**) 1. to put on or into use. 2. to request or ask to be given. 3. to have reference to: 'the pay rise applies to all employees'. ▶ **applied** *adjective* put into or designed for practical use: 'applied maths'. Compare PURE. ▶ **to apply oneself**, 'he applied himself to the task with gusto (= devoted himself).

appoint *verb* 1. to select for a post. 2. to equip: 'a well-appointed study'. ▶ **appointment** *noun* 3. an arrangement to meet or visit. 4. an office or position to which a person is appointed. ▶ **appointee**, *noun*.

apportion (*say a-por-sh'n*) *verb* to divide or distribute. ▶ **apportionment**, *noun*.

apposite (*say appa-zit*) *adjective* particularly relevant or pertinent.

apposition (*say appa-zish'n*) *noun* the act of adding to or placing together. ▶ **appose**, *verb*.

appraise (*say a-praze*) *verb* to estimate the value, quality or price of something. ▶ **appraisal**, *noun*.

appreciate (*say a-preeshi-ate*) *verb* 1. to value something highly. 2. to understand. 3. to rise in value. Compare DEPRECIATE. ▶ **appreciable**, *adjective* 4. noticeable. 5. fairly large. ▶ **appreciation**, *noun*; **appreciative**, *adjective*.

apprehend (*say ap-ree-hend*) *verb* 1. to arrest or seize a person. 2. to grasp the meaning of something. ▶ **apprehension**, *noun*.

apprehensive (*say ap-ree-hensiv*) *adjective* fearful about something which may happen. ▶ **apprehensively**, *adverb*; **apprehensiveness**, *noun*.

apprentice (*say a-prentis*) *noun* 1. a person who undertakes to work in a trade for a specified period, in return for instruction. 2. any learner or beginner. ▶ **apprenticeship**, *noun*; **apprentice**, *verb*.

apprise (*say a-prize*) *verb* to inform: 'he apprised me of the fact that legal action would be taken'.

approach *verb* 1. to move nearer or draw near. 2. to make a request. 3. to begin or set about something. ▶ *noun* 4. the act of approaching: 'the approach of winter'. 5. any way or means of access: 'the approach to the camp site was like a steaming jungle'. ▶ **approachable**, *adjective*; **approachability**, *noun*.

approbation (*say apro-bay-sh'n*) *noun* formal approval.

appropriate (*say a-pro-pritee-it*) *adjective* 1. suitable or fitting. ▶ (*say a-pro-pritee-ate*) *verb* 2. to set aside for a special purpose: 'funds for the new project have already been appropriated'. 3. to take, especially without permission: 'his book merely appropriates my ideas'. ▶ **appropriately**, *adverb*; **appropriateness**, **appropriation**, *nouns*.

approval (*say a-proo-v'l*) *noun* 1. any agreement or confirmation. 2. the act of approving. ▶ **on approval**, 'she took the chair home on approval before deciding to buy it' (= without obligation to buy).

approve (*say a-proov*) *verb* to agree to or consider as worthy, correct, etc.: 'I do not approve of such behaviour'.

approximate (*say a-proksi-mit*) *adjective* 1. nearly correct or accurate. ▶ (*say a-proksi-mate*) *verb* 2. to approach or be nearly equal to. ▶ **approximation**, *noun*; **approximately**, *adverb*.

apres-ski (*say ap-ray-skee*) **après-ski** *noun* any activities such as dining, dancing or drinking which people take part in after snow skiing.

apricot (*say ay-prikkot*) *noun* 1. a small, round fruit with orange flesh and a pit or stone. 2. a yellowish-orange colour. ▶ **apricot**, *adjective*.

April

April *noun* the fourth month of the year.

apron *noun* a loose piece of clothing worn over clothes to protect them, usually tied at the back.

apse *noun*, *Architecture*: a recess in a church, usually vaulted and semicircular.

apt *adjective* 1. relevant or appropriate. 2. having a tendency to: 'he is apt to talk too much'. 3. intelligent or quick to learn. ▶ **aptly**, *adverb*; **aptness**, *noun*.

aptitude *noun* a natural ability or skill.

aqua (*say* akwa) *noun*, *Colour*: see AQUAMARINE.

aqualung (*say* akwa-lung) *noun*, also called a **scuba**, an apparatus used by a diver to breathe underwater.

aquamarine (*say* akwa-ma-reen) *noun* 1. *Colour*: a light bluish-green colour. Short form is **aqua**. 2. *Geology*: a translucent, pale blue or green precious stone, used as a gem. ▶ **aquamarine**, *adjective*.

aquanaut (*say* akwa-nawt) *noun* a skin-diver.

aquaplane (*say* akwa-plane) *noun* a single, wide board used as a water-ski. ▶ **aquaplane**, *verb*.

aquarium (*say* a-kwairi-um) *noun*, plural is **aquariums** or **aquaria**, a pond, tank or building in which living aquatic animals and plants are kept and displayed.

Aquarius (*say* a-kwairi-us) *noun*, also called the **Water-bearer**. 1. *Astronomy*: a constellation, one of the 12 parts of the zodiac. 2. *Astrology*: the eleventh sign of the zodiac.

aquatic (*say* a-kwottik) *adjective* living or growing in or near water.

aqueduct (*say* akwa-duk) *noun* a constructed channel for carrying water, e.g. on a bridge across a valley.

aqueous (*say* akwi-us) *adjective* relating to or containing water.

aquiline (*say* akwa-line) *adjective* (of a nose) curved or hooked like the beak of an eagle.

Arabic numerals, also called **Arabic figures**, the numerical symbols, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 0.

arable (*say* arra-b'l) *adjective* (of land) suitable for cultivation.

arachnid (*say* a-raknid) *noun* any of various arthropods, such as spiders, mites, etc., with the body divided into two parts and having four pairs of walking legs. ▶ **arachnoid**, *adjective*.

Aranda (*say* a-run-da) *noun*, also called **Arunta**, an Aboriginal language still widely spoken throughout central Australia.

arbiter (*say* ar-bitta) *noun* 1. a person who leads, decides or establishes: 'French designers are the arbiters of fashion'. 2. an arbitrator.

arbitrary (*say* arbit-raree) *adjective* 1. based on personal opinion or whim rather than reason, etc. 2. despotic or tyrannical: 'the arbitrary rule of a dictator'. ▶ **arbitrarily**, *adverb*; **arbitrariness**, *noun*.

arbitrate *verb* 1. to judge or decide, especially in order to settle a dispute. ▶ **arbitrator** (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

arbitrator (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

arbitrary (*say* arbit-raree) *adjective* 1. based on personal opinion or whim rather than reason, etc. 2. despotic or tyrannical: 'the arbitrary rule of a dictator'. ▶ **arbitrarily**, *adverb*; **arbitrariness**, *noun*.

arbitrate *verb* 1. to judge or decide, especially in order to settle a dispute. ▶ **arbitrator** (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

arbitrator (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

arbitrary (*say* arbit-raree) *adjective* 1. based on personal opinion or whim rather than reason, etc. 2. despotic or tyrannical: 'the arbitrary rule of a dictator'. ▶ **arbitrarily**, *adverb*; **arbitrariness**, *noun*.

arbitrate *verb* 1. to judge or decide, especially in order to settle a dispute. ▶ **arbitrator** (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

arbitrator (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

arbitrary (*say* arbit-raree) *adjective* 1. based on personal opinion or whim rather than reason, etc. 2. despotic or tyrannical: 'the arbitrary rule of a dictator'. ▶ **arbitrarily**, *adverb*; **arbitrariness**, *noun*.

arbitrate *verb* 1. to judge or decide, especially in order to settle a dispute. ▶ **arbitrator** (*say* arba-trayta) *noun*, also called an **arbiter**. 2. a person appointed to settle disputes. ▶ **arbitration**, *noun*.

playful way. ▶ **archly**, *adverb*; **archness**, *noun*.

archaeology (*say* arki-olla-jee) *noun* the study of history, especially ancient cultures, by digging up and describing remains, such as buildings, coins, etc. ▶ **archaeologist**, *noun*; **archaeological**, *adjective*.

archaic (*say* ar-kay-ik) *adjective* being from long ago and therefore not in modern use. ▶ **archaism**, *noun*.

archangel (*say* ark-ane-j'l) *noun* an angel of the highest rank.

archbishop *noun*, *Christian*: a bishop of the highest rank.

archdeacon *noun*, *Christian*: a church administrative official next below a bishop.

archer *noun* a person who shoots with a bow and arrow, especially for sport.

archery *noun* the sport of shooting with bows and arrows.

archetype (*say* arki-tipe) *noun* a first, perfect type or form from which copies may be made. ▶ **archetypal**, *adjective*.

archipelago (*say* arki-pella-go) *noun* 1. a large group of islands. 2. a sea which contains a large group of islands.

architecture (*say* arki-tekcher) *noun* 1. the art or science of designing buildings, etc. 2. a particular style of building: 'Gothic architecture'. ▶ **architect**, *noun*; **architectural**, *adjective*.

archives (*say* ar-kives) *plural noun* a) any public documents or historical records relating to a particular organisation or country. b) the place where such records are kept. ▶ **archivist**, *noun*.

archly *adverb* See ARCH (2).

archway *noun* 1. the passage beneath an arch. 2. an arch forming an entrance, etc.

arctic *adjective* at or near the North Pole. ▶ **arctic**, *noun*.

ardent *adjective* full of ardour or enthusiasm. ▶ **ardently**, *adverb*.

ardour (*say* arda) *noun* an eagerness or passion.

arduous (*say* ard-veyus) *adjective* requiring great effort or energy. ▶ **arduously**, *adverb*; **arduousness**, *noun*.

are (*say* ar) *verb* 1. the second person singular, present tense of the verb **be**. 2. the plural, present tense of the verb **be**.

area (*say* ari-a) *noun* 1. the surface measurement: 'what is the area of the paddock?'. 2. a particular extent or piece of land. 3. the scope of an activity, operation or concept.

arena (*say* a-reena) *noun* 1. a field or space set aside for sports, contests, etc. 2. any area of activity, conflict, etc.

argot (*say* argo) *noun* the particular language or vocabulary of a group, especially of thieves, vagabonds, etc.

arguable (*say* ar-gewa-b'l) *adjective* 1. capable of being maintained or asserted. 2. open to dispute or argument. ▶ **arguably**, *adverb*.

argue (*say* ar-gew) *verb* (**argued**, **arguing**) 1. to give reasons for or against something. 2. to exchange angry words.

argument (*say* argew-m'nt) *noun* 1. the act of arguing. 2. a series of reasons given to explain or prove. 3. a theme or subject: 'the introduction sets out the book's argument'. ▶ **argumentative**, *adjective*; **argumentatively**, *adverb*.

aria (*say* ari-a) *noun* an opera song for one person. [Italian]

arid *adjective* 1. very dry. 2. dull or uninteresting. ▶ **aridity**, **aridness**, *nouns*.

Aries (*say* air-eez) *noun*, also called the **Ram**. 1. *Astronomy*: a constellation, one of the 12 parts of the zodiac. 2. *Astrology*: the first sign of the zodiac.

aright *adverb* an old word meaning properly or correctly.

arise *verb* (**arose**, **arisen**, **arising**) 1. to appear or come into existence,

especially as a result of something: 'new problems may arise during your investigations'. 2. to get up or move upwards.

aristocracy (*say* arri-stokra-see) *noun* 1. the upper or privileged classes, usually hereditary. 2. the governing of a state or country by the aristocracy. 3. any superior group or class. ▶ **aristocrat**, *noun*; **aristocratic**, *adjective*; **aristocratically**, *adverb*.

arithmetic (*say* a-rithma-tik) *noun* the branch of maths which studies numbers and their combination, using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. ▶ **arithmetic**, **arithmetical**, *adjectives*; **arithmetician**, *noun*.

ark *noun* (often *capital*) the boat built by Noah in order to survive the Biblical Flood.

arm (1) *noun* 1. *Anatomy*: the part of the body between the wrist and the shoulder. 2. the part of a garment covering the arm. 3. something which has the shape or function of an arm.

arm (2) *noun* 1. (usually *plural*) any weapons. ▶ *verb* 2. to equip with weapons.

armada (*say* ar-mahda) *noun* a fleet of warships.

armadillo (*say* arma-dillo) *noun* a burrowing, South American mammal, which is covered with bony plates like armour.

armament (*say* arma-m'nt) *noun* (often *plural*) the weapons with which a military unit, vehicle, etc. is equipped.

armistice (*say* armi-stis) *noun* a temporary peace agreement between countries.

armour (*noun*) 1. any protective covering, such as chain mail for the body, steel plating on battleships, etc. 2. anything which protects or keeps something safe. ▶ **armour**, *verb*; **armourer**, *noun*.

armoury (*say* arma-ree) *noun* a place where weapons and military equipment are stored.

armpit *noun*, *Anatomy*: the hollow beneath the shoulder, where the arm joins the trunk.

arms *plural noun* See ARM (2).

army *noun* 1. an organised group trained and equipped to fight on land. 2. any large, organised group: 'we need an army of cleaners'.

aroma (*say* a-ro-ma) *noun* 1. a sweet or pleasant smell. 2. a characteristic quality: 'he has an aroma of wealth'. ▶ **aromatic**, *adjective*.

arose *verb* the past tense of the verb **arise**.

around *adverb*, *preposition* 1. on all sides of: 'there were people all around us'. 2. from one place to another: 'we walked around the city'. 3. (*informal*) approximately.

arouse (*say* a-rowze) *verb* to wake or stir up: 'his behaviour aroused her suspicions'. ▶ **arousal**, *noun*.

arpeggio (*say* ar-pejio) *noun*, *Music*: the playing of the notes of a chord in quick succession instead of simultaneously. [Italian]

arraign (*say* a-rane) *verb* to accuse or put on trial.

arrange *verb* 1. to set in a certain or proper order: 'arrange those chairs around the table'. 2. to prepare, organise: 'who will arrange the details of the trip?'. 3. to adapt: he arranged this composition for an orchestra'. 4. to agree or settle: 'we arranged to meet later'. ▶ **arrangement**, *noun*.

array (*say* a-ray) *verb* 1. to place in order or position: 'the tribes arrayed themselves against the army'. 2. to clothe or adorn: 'the bride was arrayed in white'. ▶ **array**, *noun*.

arrears (*say* a-reerz) *plural noun* something which still remains to be paid, fulfilled, etc.

arrest (*say* a-rest) *verb* 1. to stop or catch: 'her words arrested our attention'. 2. to take a person into legal charge or keeping 'arrested for stealing'. ▶ **arrest**, *noun*.

artificial insemination

arrive (*say* a-rive) *verb* to reach or be reached: 'at last we arrived at a decision'. ▶ **arrival**, *noun*.

arrogant (*say* arra-g'nt) *adjective* overbearingly proud: 'his arrogant manner made him unpopular'. ▶ **arrogantly**, *adverb*; **arrogance**, *noun*.

arrow *noun* 1. a long, slender shaft with a point at one end and often feathers at the other, shot from a bow as a missile. 2. something with the shape of an arrow.

arsenal (*say* arsa-n'l) *noun* a place where weapons and ammunition are manufactured or stored.

arsenic (*say* arse-nik) *noun* a brittle, highly poisonous metal whose compounds are used in insecticides and weedkillers.

arson *noun*, *Law*: the act of deliberately burning or setting fire to something, especially a building. ▶ **arsonist**, *noun*.

art *noun* 1. any objects or activities in which feelings and ideas about life are expressed through some imaginative form. 2. a particular skill or technique: 'the art of diplomacy'.

artefact (*say* arta-fakt) *noun* an object made by humans, such as a tool or work of art.

artery (*say* arta-ree) *noun* 1. *Anatomy*: any of the thick-walled tubes carrying oxygenated blood away from the heart to other parts of the body. Compare VEIN and CAPILLARY. 2. a major road or similar part in a system of communication or transportation. ▶ **arterial**, *adjective*.

artesian well (*say* ar-tee-zh'n well) a well in which water rises, under pressure, from the water-bearing rock to the earth's surface.

artful *adjective* sly or crafty. ▶ **artfully**, *adverb*; **artfulness**, *noun*.

arthritis (*say* ar-thry-tis) *noun* an inflammation of the joints causing pain and difficulty in movement. ▶ **arthritic**, *adjective*, *noun*.

arthropod (*say* arthra-pod) *noun* any of a large group of segmented invertebrate animals, such as insects, spiders, etc., with jointed legs and sometimes a hard, external skeleton.

artichoke *noun* a plant with a leaf-like flower, which is used as a vegetable.

article *noun* 1. an individual thing or object. 2. *Grammar*: any of three words (*a*, *an* [indefinite articles] or *the* [definite article]) used before a noun. 3. a piece of writing which gives information or an opinion and forms part of a magazine, newspaper, etc.. 4. *Law*: a) a section of a document. b) (*plural*) a document, especially a contract.

★ *Common Error*: A, AN. Generally, *an* is used before a word beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o or u): 'an eagle', 'an interesting book'; whereas *a* is used before a word beginning with a consonant (any letter that is not a vowel): 'a book', 'a practical joke'. Exceptions to the above rules are: a) *an* can appear before some words beginning with soft or vowel-like sounds: 'an hour', 'an honest person'; and b) *a* can appear before some words beginning with hard or consonant-like sounds: 'a used car', 'a one-time friend'.

articulate (*say* artik-yoo-lit) *adjective* 1. clear in one's speech or expression. 2. able to speak. ▶ (*say* artik-yoo-late) *verb* 3. to pronounce words distinctly. 4. to unite by a joint or joints. ▶ **articulateness**, *noun*; **articulately**, *adverb*; **articulation**, *noun*.

articulated vehicle a jointed vehicle, such as a semi-trailer.

artifice (*say* arti-fis) *noun* 1. a clever trick or device. 2. any skillful trickery. ▶ **artificer**, *noun*.

artificial (*say* arti-fish'l) *adjective* made by humans, as distinct from naturally occurring. ▶ **artificially**, *adverb*; **artificiality**, *noun*.

artificial insemination the placing of sperm in a female to make her

artificial intelligence

pregnant without direct sexual contact.

artificial intelligence a branch of computer science which focuses on the development of hardware and software so that they solve problems in a human-like manner.

artillery (*say ar-tilla-ree*) *noun* 1. any large-calibre guns, such as cannons, howitzers, etc. 2. the branch of an army which uses such guns. ▶ **artillery**, *adjective*.

artisan (*say arti-zan*) *noun* a trained or skilled manual worker.

artist *noun* 1. a painter, sculptor or other person who creates works of art. 2. an entertainer, especially a singer or dancer. Also called an **artiste**. ▶ **artistic**, *adjective*; **artistically**, *adverb*.

artistry *noun* the degree of skill in practising an art.

artwork *noun*, *Printing*: any material prepared for reproduction in a publication.

as *adverb* 1. to the amount or degree that: 'hard as he tries, he never wins'. 2. for example: 'cities such as London and Sydney'. ▶ **conjunction** 3. when or while: 'as we approached, the door opened'. 4. because: 'as he was late, we could not start'. 5. like or in the manner of: 'quick as lightning'. ▶ **pronoun** 6. in the function or position of: 'let this serve as a warning'. ▶ **as for**, **as to**, 'as for his work, nothing more can be said' (= with regard to).

asbestos (*say az-bestos*) *noun* a heat-resistant, fibrous mineral used to make fireproof and heatproof articles.

ascend (*say a-send*) *verb* to rise or climb. ▶ **ascend**, **ascension**, *nouns*.

ascendant (*say a-sen-d'nt*) *noun* 1. a position of influence, control, etc.: 'in the ascendant'. ▶ **adjective** 2. having influence, power or control: 'prosperity is ascendant in our society'. 3. rising: 'an ascendant star'. ▶ **ascendance**, **ascendancy**, *noun*.

ascertain (*say assa-tane*) *verb* to find out. ▶ **ascertainable**, *adjective*; **ascertainment**, *noun*.

ascetic (*say a-settik*) *adjective* 1. severely strict and self-denying. ▶ **noun** 2. a person who practises strict self-denial. ▶ **ascetically**, *adverb*; **asceticism**, *noun*. ▶ **Common Error**: do not confuse with AESTHETIC.

ascribe *verb* to attribute: 'that discovery is ascribed to a German scientist'.

asexual *adjective* 1. having no sex or sexual organs. 2. unrelated to sex or sexual processes. ▶ **asexually**, *adverb*; **asexuality**, *noun*.

ash (1) *noun* 1. the powdery remains of anything which has been burnt: 'cigarette ash'. 2. (*plural*) any ruins or remains especially of a human body after cremation.

ash (2) *noun* any of a group of trees with grey bark and hard, tough wood used for timber.

ashamed *adjective* feeling shame or guilt. ▶ **ashamedly**, *adverb*.

ashen *adjective* grey or pale: 'his face was ashen with shock'.

ashore (*say a-shore*) *adverb* on or to land: 'they went ashore from the boat'.

ashtray *noun* a small dish or bowl for tobacco ash.

aside *adverb* 1. on or to one side: 'put aside some money for the holiday'. ▶ **noun** 2. a word or words spoken so that only certain people will hear.

asinine (*say assi-nine*) *adjective* silly or stupid.

ask *verb* 1. to seek a reply or response from or concerning: 'may I ask how old you are?'. 2. to invite. 3. to require.

askance (*say a-skance*) *adverb* with a sideways glance, especially one showing disapproval or mistrust: 'mother looked askance at our plan'.

askew (*say a-skew*) *adverb* crooked or out of position.

asleep *adverb*, *adjective* in or into a state of sleep.

asp *noun* any of various small poisonous snakes.

asparagus (*say a-sparra-gus*) *noun* the long, edible, soft-tipped shoots of a plant related to the lily.

aspect *noun* 1. the look or appearance of anything: 'he has a serious aspect'. 2. a particular point of view: 'we must consider all aspects of the matter'. 3. the view or direction to which something faces: 'the front rooms have a northerly aspect'.

asperity (*say a-sperri-tee*) *noun* a harshness or severity.

aspersion (*say a-sper-sh'n*) *noun* (*often plural*) any unkind or damaging criticism.

asphalt (*say ash-falt* or *ass-falt*) *noun* a mixture of bitumen and small stones used for road surfaces, etc. Also called **tarmac**. ▶ **asphalt**, *verb*.

asphyxiate (*say ass-fiksi-ate*) *verb* to produce difficulty in breathing, unconsciousness or death through a lack of oxygen. ▶ **asphyxia**, **asphyxiation**, *nouns*.

aspic *noun* a clear, savoury jelly made of meat, fish or vegetable stock, and often gelatine.

aspirate (*say aspa-rate*) *verb* 1. *Language*: to begin a word or syllable with an *h* sound, as in *hiss* or *hit*. ▶ **noun** 2. the sound of the letter *h*.

aspiration (*say aspa-ray-sh'n*) *noun* 1. an eager desire or ambition. 2. the act of aspirating.

aspire *verb* to seek or desire ambitiously: 'she aspires to a leading role'. ▶ **aspirant**, *noun*.

aspirin (*say ass-prin*) *noun* a white crystalline drug used to relieve pain, fever, etc.

ass *noun* 1. a donkey. 2. (*informal*) a stupid person.

assail *verb* 1. to attack: 'she was assailed by doubts'. ▶ **assailant** *noun* 2. an attacker. ▶ **assailable**, *adjective*.

assassin (*say a-sassin*) *noun* a person who murders another, especially for political reasons. ▶ **assassinate**, *verb*; **assassination**, *noun*.

assault (*say a-salt*) *verb* 1. to attack violently. 2. *Law*: to threaten or attempt to injure another person. ▶ **assault**, *noun*.

assemblage (*say a-sem-blaj*) *noun* a collection of people or things.

assemble (*say a-sem-bl*) *verb* 1. to meet or gather. 2. to put together.

assembly (*say a-sem-blee*) *noun* 1. a group of people gathered together for a particular purpose. 2. the putting together of something, especially parts of machines, etc.

assent (*say a-sent*) *verb* to agree. ▶ **assent**, *noun*.

assert (*say a-sert*) *verb* to claim positively: 'he still asserts his innocence'. ▶ **assertion**, **assertiveness**, *nouns*; **assertive**, *adjective*.

assess (*say a-sess*) *verb* 1. to estimate or judge: 'let's assess the situation'. 2. to work out or estimate an amount to be paid, a value, etc. ▶ **assessor**, **assessment**, *nouns*.

asset *noun* 1. anything which is useful or valuable. 2. (*usually plural*) any property with monetary value.

assiduous (*say a-sid-yewus*) *adjective* diligent or hard-working. ▶ **assiduity**, *noun*; **assiduously**, *adverb*.

assign (*say a-sine*) *verb* 1. to appoint or allocate: 'we must assign a day for the next meeting'. 2. *Law*: to transfer property, or property rights.

assignment (*say a-sine-m'nt*) *noun* 1. the act of assigning. 2. a particular task or duty.

assimilate (*say a-simmi-late*) *verb* to absorb, especially into a system: 'the immigrants were assimilated into their new society'. ▶ **assimilation**, *noun*; **assimilable**, *adjective*.

assist *verb* 1. to help or support. ▶ **assistant** *noun* 2. a helper. ▶ **assistance**, *noun*; **assistant**, *adjective*.

associate (*say a-so-she-ate*) *verb* 1. to connect, as in the mind: 'I associate swimming with summer'. 2. to spend one's time: 'he associates with some odd people'. ▶ (*say a-so-*

she-it) *noun* 3. a partner or colleague. 4. a person who is granted partial membership of an organisation.

association *noun* 1. a group of people joined or organised together for a common purpose. 2. the act of associating: 'the association of ideas'. 3. the state of being associated: 'working in close association with my publisher'.

assonance (*say assa-n'nce*) *noun* a similarity between sounds, especially vowel sounds.

assort *verb* 1. to arrange or classify according to size, kind, etc. ▶ **assorted** *adjective* 2. of different sorts or kinds: 'assorted chocolates'. ▶ **assortment**, *noun*.

assuage (*say a-swayj*) *verb* to satisfy or make less severe: 'what will assuage my thirst?'. ▶ **assuagement**, *noun*.

assume *verb* 1. to suppose to be a fact, especially without proof: 'let us assume you are right'. 2. to take on: 'he assumed command of the group'. ▶ **assumption** *noun* 3. the act of assuming. 4. something which is assumed: 'that is an assumption, not a fact'.

assurance (*say a-sure'nce*) *noun* 1. a positive declaration that something will be done, etc.: 'he has given his assurance of payment'. 2. confidence or courage, especially in oneself. 3. life assurance.

assure (*say a-sure*) *verb* 1. to convince or tell earnestly: 'he assured us that he would return'. 2. to make sure or secure. ▶ **assuredly**, *adverb*.

Common Error: ASSURE, INSURE have different yet related meanings. *Assure* means to make someone sure or confident about an outcome: 'I assure you that she will be on time'. *Ensure* means to make certain: 'can you ensure that this parcel will arrive on time?'. *Insure* means to protect against loss: 'I have insured my car against theft'.

asterisk (*say asta-risk*) *noun* a mark (*) used beside a word in writing or printing, to refer the reader to a footnote, etc.

asteroid (*say asta-royd*) *noun* any of a vast number of small planetary bodies all less than 500 kilometres in diameter, between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

asthma (*say assma*) *noun* a disorder due to narrowing of air passages, causing shortness of breath and wheezing. ▶ **asthmatic**, *adjective*; **asthmatic**, *noun*; **asthmatically**, *adverb*.

astigmatism (*say a-stig-ma-tizm*) *noun* a faulty deflection of light rays producing poor focusing or vision in an eye, lens, etc.

astonish *verb* to surprise greatly. ▶ **astonishment**, *noun*; **astonishingly**, *adverb*.

astound *verb* to overcome with amazement. ▶ **astoundingly**, *adverb*. **astral** *adjective* of or relating to the stars.

astray (*say a-stray*) *adverb*, *adjective* away from the right path: 'he was led astray by criminals'.

astride (*say a-stride*) *preposition* with one leg on each side of: 'he sat astride the chair'. ▶ **astride**, *adverb*.

astrigent (*say a-strin-j'nt*) *adjective* 1. causing skin or tissue to contract. 2. harsh, severe. ▶ **noun** 3. any of various substances which cause skin or tissue to contract, used in medicine, cosmetics, etc. ▶ **astrigently**, *adverb*; **astringency**, *noun*.

astrology (*say a-strolla-jee*) *noun* the study of the possible influence of the stars on human events. Compare ASTRONOMY. ▶ **astrologer**, *noun*; **astrological**, *adjective*; **astrologically**, *adverb*.

astronaut (*say astra-nawt*) *noun* 1. a person trained to operate and travel in spacecraft. ▶ **astronautics** *plural noun* 2. (*used with singular verb*) the study of flight outside the earth's atmosphere.

astronomy (*say a-stronna-mee*) *noun* 1. the study of planets and stars,

attain

their movements, relative positions and composition. Compare ASTROLOGY. ▶ **astronomical** (*say astra-nommi-k'l*) **astronomic** *adjective*

2. of or relating to astronomy. 3. immensely large or numerous: 'an astronomical rise in prices'. ▶ **astronomer**, *noun*; **astronomically**, *adverb*.

astute (*say a-stewt*) *adjective* shrewd or mentally alert. ▶ **astutely**, *adverb*; **astuteness**, *noun*.

asunder (*say a-sunda*) *adverb* apart or into separate pieces.

asylum (*say a-sigh-l'm*) *noun* 1. a hospital or home for people with mental disorders, etc. 2. the protection given by one country to a political refugee from another. 3. any place of shelter or refuge.

asymmetrical (*say ay-sim-metri-k'l*) **asymmetric** *adjective* not symmetrical. ▶ **asymmetry**, *noun*.

at *preposition* 1. used to indicate place: 'we will meet at home'. 2. used to indicate time: 'be there at noon'. 3. during: 'my dog barks at night'. 4. used to indicate action, state or manner: a) 'set your mind at rest'; b) 'he came at a run'.

ate *verb* the past tense of the verb **eat**.

atheist (*say ay-thee-ist*) *noun* a person who does not believe in the existence of a god or gods. Compare AGNOSTIC. ▶ **atheism**, *noun*; **atheistic**, *adjective*.

athlete (*say ath-lect*) *noun* a person trained to take part in competitive sports, especially athletics.

athletic (*say ath-letik*) *adjective* 1. of or relating to physical sports or activities. 2. physically strong and active. ▶ **athletics** (*say ath-letiks*) *plural noun* 3. physical sports or activities such as running, jumping, etc.

atlas *noun*, *plural* is **atlases**, a book of maps.

atmosphere (*say atmos-feer*) *noun* 1. the mixture of gases surrounding the earth, a star or a planet. 2. the dominant feeling or mood of a situation, etc. ▶ **atmospheric**, **atmospherical**, *adjectives*.

atoll (*say attol*) *noun* a circular coral reef, usually forming one or more islands around a lagoon.

atom (*say at'm*) *noun* 1. *Physics*: the smallest unit of a chemical element. 2. anything which is extremely small. ▶ **atomic**, *adjective*.

atomic bomb See NUCLEAR WEAPON.

atomic energy See NUCLEAR ENERGY.

atomiser *noun* a device for converting a liquid, such as perfume, into a fine spray under pressure.

atone *verb* to make amends, especially for a sin or offence: 'you must atone for your mistake'. ▶ **atonement**, *noun*.

atrocious (*say a-tro-shus*) *adjective* 1. extremely cruel or wicked. 2. (*informal*) very bad. ▶ **atrociously** *adverb* 3. an atrocious act. ▶ **atrociously**, *adverb*.

atrophy (*say atra-fee*) *noun* a wasting away or diminishing, especially of all or part of an organism. ▶ **atrophy**, *verb*.

attach *verb* 1. to connect or fasten: 'the cupboards are attached to the wall'. 2. attribute: 'I attach little importance to it'. ▶ **attached** *adjective* 3. fastened. 4. bound by affection: 'we are rather attached to that painting'. ▶ **attachment** *noun* 5. the act of attaching. 6. a bond of affection between people. 7. something which is attached, such as an extra part or device.

attaché (*say a-tashay*) *noun*, *Politics*: a member of an embassy or legation: 'a press attaché'.

attack *verb* 1. to set upon with force. 2. to strongly criticise. 3. to begin energetically: 'we all hungrily attacked our meal'. ▶ **noun** 4. the act of attacking. 5. an occurrence: 'a sudden attack of measles'. ▶ **attacker**, *noun*.

attain *verb* to reach or accomplish by one's efforts: 'he finally attained his ambition'. ▶ **attainment**, *noun*; **attainable**, *adjective*.