

WEBSTER'S Thesaurus for Students

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Using This Book

READ THIS to get the most from your thesaurus! This book is packed with a wealth of information explained in the following paragraphs to help you find the right word to brighten up your prose.

As with any thesaurus, the heart of the book is the list of **synonyms (Syn)**, words that have the same essential meaning as the one you have in mind. Yet sometimes you may be looking for a word that means the same and sometimes looking for a word that is only similar to your word. Thus, at many entries you will find a list of **related words (Rel)**, or near synonyms, words that may be close to your notion when an exact match is not quite right. And many times you may be thinking of a word with opposite meaning, and that is where a list of **antonyms (Ant)** will be helpful.

This book contains more than 122,000 synonyms, related words, and antonyms to cover any of your needs, and all of the entries in this book are in alphabetical order. Every thesaurus main entry contains a full list of at least two synonyms and often a list of antonyms, so no matter what word you start with, you will find its synonyms listed.

adjacent • having a border in common *Syn* abutting, adjoining, bordering, contiguous, flanking, fringing, joining, juxtaposed, skirting, touching, verging *Rel* close, closest, immediate, near, nearby, nearest, neighboring, next, next-door, nigh *Ant* nonadjacent

contiguous *Syn* ADJACENT, abutting, adjoining, bordering, flanking, fringing, joining, juxtaposed, skirting, touching, verging *Ant* nonadjacent

The word *contiguous*, in the synonym list at the principal entry **adjacent**, has its own entry with the same synonyms and antonyms.

A unique feature of this book not found in many thesauruses is the appearance of the **meaning core**, marked by a small black diamond. The meaning core is a definition-like statement of the central meaning shared by all of the words in the synonym list. The main entry for the **principal** synonym of the list will contain the meaning core and often the list of related words as well (as at *adjacent* above). At a main entry for a synonym that is not the principal synonym, that principal synonym will be listed first, in small capitals, (as at *contiguous* above) and this tells you where to look if you want to read the meaning core for that list or to see if there are any listed related words.

Entry words ordinarily conform to normal dictionary practice: nouns are normally styled as singulars; verbs as infinitives. **Homographs** (words spelled the same but having a different part of speech) are given separate entries with a functional label, indicating whether noun (*n*), verb (*vb*), adjective (*adj*), preposition (*prep*), or conjunction (*conj*).

contrary *adj* 1 • given to opposing or resisting wishes, commands, conditions, or circumstances *Syn* balky, froward, perverse, restive, wayward *Rel* headstrong, intractable, recalcitrant, refractory, unruly *Ant* complaisant, good-natured. . . .

contrary *n* *Syn* OPPOSITE, antipode, antithesis, antonym, contradictory, converse, counter, reverse

Whenever two homographs come together and have the same part of speech but have different origins, they are marked with a superscript homograph number and a part of speech label.

desert¹ *n Syn* DUE, merit

desert² *n Syn* WASTE, badlands, wilderness

Here, the first homograph for **desert**, related to the verb *to deserve*, is separate from the second homograph, which is related to the verb *to desert, abandon*.

Headwords that are synonyms and alphabetically close to each other are sometimes listed together.

summon, summons • to demand or request the presence or service of *Syn* call, cite, convene, convoke, muster *Rel* bid, command, enjoin, order

Parentheses enclose a particle or particles usually associated with a word. They may accompany a main entry word or a word in a list.

approve (of) • to have a favorable opinion of *Syn* accept, care (for), countenance, favor, OK (*or* okay), subscribe (to) *Rel* acclaim, applaud, laud, praise, salute *Ant* disapprove (of), discountenance, disfavor, frown (on or upon)

Parentheses also enclose material indicating a typical or, occasionally, a sole object of reference.

chaste • free from all taint of what is lewd or salacious *Syn* decent, modest, pure ... *Ant* bizarre (*of style, effect*), immoral, lewd, wanton

recant *Syn* ABJURE, forswear, renounce, retract *Ant* pledge (*allegiance, a vow*), elect (*a way of life, a means to an end*)

Spelling variants are labeled as such at the main entry or in lists.

specter or **spectre** *Syn* GHOST apparition, bogey, phantasm, phantom, poltergeist, shade, shadow, spirit, spook, vision, wraith

adequate 1 • of a level of quality that meets one's needs or standards *Syn* acceptable, all right, decent, fine, OK (*or* okay), passable, respectable, satisfactory ...

Plural usage is indicated in the spelling of the main entry or when necessary at a specific sense.

means 1 . . . 2 *Syn* POSSESSIONS, assets, belongings, effects, resources ...

movie 1 • a story told by . . . *Syn* film, motion picture . . . **2 movies** *pl* • the art or business of mak-

ing a movie *syn* cinema, film, motion pictures . . .
rel show business

The editors of Merriam-Webster, America's premier publisher of dictionaries and thesauruses, have created this book to help you add variety to your writing and to use as a tool to expand your vocabulary.

English and the Thesaurus

A Brief Look at the English Language

The English language is peculiarly rich in synonyms, which is not surprising considering its history. Over its history of more than a thousand years the language of England has woven together strands of the Celtic language, of earlier Roman words and later church Latin, and then of the Germanic tongues of the early invaders from the European continent.

Because English has so many words derived from Latin and from Greek by way of Latin, the casual observer might guess that English would be—like French, Spanish, and Italian—a Romance language derived from the Latin spoken by the ancient Romans. But although the Romans made a few visits to Britain in the first century A.D., long before the English were there (before there even was an England), English is not a Romance language. English is actually a member of the Germanic group, and thus a sister of such modern languages as Swedish, Dutch, and German.

We often speak of English as having its beginnings with the conquest and settlement of a large part of the island of Britain by Germanic tribes from the European continent in the fifth century, although the earliest written documents of the language belong to the seventh century. Of course these Germanic peoples did not suddenly begin to speak a new language the moment they arrived in England. They spoke the closely related Germanic languages of their continental homelands. And it was from these languages that the English language developed. In fact, the words *English* and *England* are derived from the name of one of these early Germanic peoples, the Angles.

From its beginnings English has been gradually changing and evolving, as language tends to do. To get a sense of how far evolution has taken us from the early tongue, we need only glance at a sample of Old English. Here is the beginning of the Lord's Prayer:

Fæder ure, þu þe eart on heofonum: si þin nama gehālgod.
Tōbecume þin rīce. Geweorþe þin willa on eorþan swāswā on heofonum.

There is a certain continuity between the vocabularies of Old English and Modern English. Of the thousand most common Modern English words, four-fifths are of Old English origin. Think of such words as *asleep* and *awake* or *alive* and *dead*, words relating to the body, *blood*, *flesh*, *arm*, *leg*, *bone*, *tooth*—even words for the daily activities of farming, *acre*, *barn*, *plow*, *till*, or for after the harvest, *drink*, *eat*, *meal*.

Of the foreign languages affecting the Old English vocabulary, the most influential was Latin. Church terms especially, like *priest*, *vicar*, and *mass*, were borrowed from Latin, the language of the church. But words belonging to aspects of life other than the strictly religious, like *cap*, *inch*, *kiln*, *school*, and *noon*, also entered Old English from Latin. The Scandinavians, too, influenced the language of England during the Old English period. From the eighth century on, Vikings from Scandinavia raided and eventually settled in England, especially in the north and the east. In a few instances the influence of a Scandinavian word gave an English word a new meaning. Thus our *dream*, which meant "joy" in Old English, probably took on the now familiar sense "a series of thoughts, images, or emotions occurring during sleep" because its Scandinavian relative *draumr* had that meaning. A considerable number of common words, like *cross*, *fellow*, *ball*, and *raise*, also became naturalized as a result of the Viking incursions over the years. The initial consonants *sk-* often reveal the Scandinavian ancestry of words like *sky*, *skin*, and *skirt*, the last of which has persisted side by side with its native English relative *shirt*.

Additional foreign influence on English came about principally as a result of the Norman Conquest of 1066, which brought England under the rule of French speakers. The English language, though it did not die, was for a long time of only secondary importance in political, social, and cultural matters. French became the language of the upper classes in England. The lower classes continued to speak English, but many French words were borrowed into English. To this circumstance we owe, for example, a number of distinctions between the

words used for animals in the pasture and the words for those animals prepared to be eaten. Living animals were under the care of English-speaking peasants; cooked, the animals were served to the French-speaking nobility. *Swine* in the sty became *pork* at the table, *cow* and *calf* became *beef* and *veal*. This Anglo-French also had an influence on the words used in the courts, such as *indict*, *jury*, and *verdict*.

English eventually reestablished itself as the major language of England, but the language did not lose its habit of borrowing. English still derives much of its learned vocabulary from Latin and Greek. We have also borrowed words from nearly all of the languages in Europe. From Modern French we have such words as *bikini*, *cliché*, and *discotheque*; from Dutch, *easel*, *gin*, and *yacht*; from German, *delicatessen*, *pretzel*, and *swindler*; from Swedish, *ombudsman* and *smorgasbord*. From Italian we have taken *carnival*, *fiasco*, and *pizza*, as well as many terms from music (including *piano*).

From the period of the Renaissance voyages of discovery through the days when the sun never set upon the British Empire and up to the present, a steady stream of new words has flowed into the language to match the new objects and experiences English speakers have encountered all over the globe. English has drawn words from India (*bandanna*), China (*gung ho*), and Japan (*tycoon*). Arabic has been a prolific source of words over the centuries, giving us *hazard*, *lute*, *magazine*, and a host of words beginning with the letter *a*, from *algebra* to *azimuth*.

How Meaning Has Developed

Whether borrowed or created, a word generally begins its life in English with one meaning. Yet no living language is static, and in time words develop new meanings and lose old ones. A word used in a specific sense may be extended, or generalized, to cover a host of similar senses. Our word *virtue* is derived from the Latin *virtus*, which originally meant “manliness.” But we apply the term to any excellent quality possessed by man, woman, or beast; even inanimate objects have their *virtues*. In Latin, *decimare* meant “to select and kill a tenth part of” and described the Roman way of dealing with mutinous troops. Its English descendant, *decimate*, now simply means “to destroy a large part of.”

The development of meaning can easily be followed in this example. Today when we think of the word *fast* we probably think of the sense involving great speed. But the word’s oldest meaning is quite different: “firmly placed” or “immovable,” as in “tent pegs set fast in the ground” and “a fast and impassable barrier.” It is easy to see how this sense developed expanded uses, such as “a door that is stuck fast and won’t open.” We see something of this sense in the expression “fast asleep.”

In time, users added senses, some of which are common today, from being “unable to leave something, as one’s bed” to being “stable and unchangeable,” which we find in such uses as “hard and fast rules” or “clothes that are colorfast.” Then came the sense of being “steadfast” or “firmly or totally loyal,” as in “they were fast friends.”

The sense that is most common today, “quick, speedy,” came later. It probably developed from an obsolete sense of the adverb meaning “near at hand,” which may have led to another meaning “soon.” From this obsolete sense of “soon” it is just a short step, in terms of language development, to the sense meaning “quick.”

In addition to what could be thought of as a horizontal dimension of change—the extension or contraction of meaning—words also may rise and fall along a vertical scale of value. Perfectly unobjectionable words are sometimes used disparagingly or sarcastically. If we say, “You’re a fine one to talk,” we are using *fine* in a sense quite different from its usual meaning. If a word is used often enough in negative contexts, the negative coloring may eventually become an integral part of the meaning of the word. A *villain* was once a peasant. His social standing was not high, perhaps, but he was certainly not necessarily a scoundrel. *Scavenger* originally designated the collector of a particular kind of tax in late medieval England. *Puny* meant no more than “younger” when it first passed from French into English and its spelling was transformed. Only later did it acquire the derogatory meaning more familiar to us now.

The opposite process seems to take place somewhat less frequently, but change of

meaning to a more positive sense does occasionally occur. In the fourteenth century *nice*, for example, meant “foolish.” Its present meaning, of course, is quite different, and the attitude it conveys seems to have undergone a complete reversal from contempt to approval.

What Qualifies as a Synonym?

It is not surprising that with so much to work with, users of English have long been interested in synonyms as an element both in accuracy and in elegance in their expression. Synonyms relieve monotony and enhance expressiveness.

Earlier writers were clear on the meaning of *synonym*. They viewed synonyms as words meaning the same thing. Unfortunately, during the last century or so this simple, clear-cut meaning has become blurred. To many publishers of thesauruses the term has come to mean little more than words that are somewhat similar in meaning. But this loose definition is unsuitable for many people, since it deprives them of the guidance needed for finding the precise word in a particular context.

This thesaurus takes a different approach to describing the nature of a synonym. Groups of synonyms are organized around a segment of meaning that two or more words have in common. In order to create these groups, one has to analyze each word carefully, ignoring nonessential aspects such as connotations and implications and try to isolate the basic meaning, which we call an *elementary meaning*.

When we look at the synonymous relationship of words in terms of elementary meanings, the process of choosing synonyms is simpler and more exact. For example, it is easy to see that no term more restricted in definition than another word can be its synonym. For example, *station wagon* and *minivan* cannot be synonyms of *automobile*, nor can *biceps* be a synonym of *muscle*. Even though a very definite relationship exists between the members, *station wagon* and *minivan* are types of automobile and *biceps* is a type of muscle. So these words are narrower in their range of application. On the other hand, a word more broadly defined than another word in the dictionary may be considered a synonym of the other word so long as the two words share one or more elementary meanings. In order to pin down the area of shared meaning for you, each main entry in this work contains before its synonym list a *meaning core* which states the elementary meaning shared by all the words in that particular synonym group.

What is an Antonym?

Like the word *synonym*, *antonym* has been used by some writers with a great deal of vagueness and often applied loosely to words which show no real oppositeness when compared one to another. As in the case of synonyms, the relation needs to be seen as one between segments of meaning that can be isolated, rather than between words or dictionary senses of words. As is the case with synonyms, antonyms need to have one or more elementary meanings precisely opposite to or negating the same area of meaning of another word. This definition excludes from consideration as antonyms several classes of words that are sometimes treated as antonyms but that actually contain words which neither directly oppose nor directly negate the words with which they are said to be antonymous.

For example, some terms have such a relationship to each other that one can scarcely be used without suggesting the other (as *husband* and *wife*, *father* and *son*, *buyer* and *seller*), yet there is no real opposition or real negation between such pairs. These are merely *relative terms*—their relation is reciprocal or correlative rather than antonymous.

Complementary terms in a similar way are usually paired and have a reciprocal relationship to the point that one seems incomplete without the other (as in such pairs as *question* and *answer*, *seek* and *find*). This relation which involves no negation is better seen as sequential than antonymous.

And contrastive terms differ sharply from their “opposites” only in some parts of their meaning. They neither oppose nor negate fully, since they are significantly different in range of meaning and applicability, in emphasis, and in the suggestions they convey. An example is *destitute* (a strong word carrying suggestions of misery and distress) which is con-

trastive rather than antonymous with respect to *rich* (a rather neutral and matter-of-fact term), while *poor* (another neutral and matter-of-fact term) is the appropriate antonym of *rich*. Basically, contrastive words are only opposed incidentally; they do not meet head on.

What then is considered an antonym? True antonyms can be classified in three ways:

Opposites without intermediates: What is *perfect* can be in no way *imperfect*; you cannot at the same time *accept* and *reject* or *agree* and *disagree*.

Opposites with intermediates: Such words make up the extremes in a range of difference and are so completely opposed that the language allows no wider difference. Thus, a scale of excellence might include *superiority*, *adequacy*, *mediocrity*, and *inferiority*, but only *superiority* and *inferiority* are so totally opposed that each exactly negates what its opposite affirms.

Reverse opposites: These are words that are opposed in such a way that each means the undoing or nullification of what the other affirms. Such reverse opposites exactly oppose and fully negate the special features of their opposites. Thus, *disprove* so perfectly opposes and so clearly negates the implications of *prove* that it fits the concept of antonym, as does *unkind* with respect to *kind*.

In this book, antonyms, when they fit one of these criteria, are listed after the synonym to which they apply.

A

A1 *Syn* EXCELLENT, bang-up, banner, capital, classic, crackerjack, dandy, divine, fabulous, fine, first-class, first-rate, grand, great, groovy, heavenly, jim-dandy, keen, marvelous (*or* marvellous), mean, neat, nifty, noble, par excellence, prime, sensational, splendid, stellar, sterling, superb, superior, superlative, supernal, swell, terrific, tip-top, top, top-notch, unsurpassed, wonderful *Ant* poor

aback *Syn* UNAWARES, suddenly, unaware, unexpectedly

abaft • toward or at the stern (of a vessel) *Syn* aft, astern *Rel* after, back, hind, hinder, posterior, rear *Ant* afore

abandon *n* • carefree freedom from constraint *Syn* abandonment, ease, lightheartedness, naturalness, spontaneity, unrestraint *Rel* ardor, enthusiasm, exuberance, fervor, spirit, warmth, zeal *Ant* constraint, restraint

abandon *vb* **1** • to quit absolutely *Syn* desert, forsake *Rel* cast, discard, junk, scrap *Ant* reclaim **2** *Syn* RELINQUISH, cede, leave, resign, surrender, waive, yield *Ant* keep

abandoned **1** • utterly depraved *Syn* disolute, profligate, reprobate *Rel* debased, debauched, depraved, perverted *Ant* redeemed, regenerate **2** • left unoccupied or unused *Syn* derelict, deserted, disused, forgotten, forsaken, rejected, vacated *Rel* ignored, neglected, unattended, untended

abandonment *Syn* ABANDON, ease, lightheartedness, naturalness, spontaneity, unrestraint *Ant* constraint, restraint

abase • to lower in one's own estimation or in that of others *Syn* debase, degrade, demean, humble, humiliate *Rel* cower, cringe, fawn, toady, truckle *Ant* exalt, extol (*especially oneself*)

abash *Syn* EMBARRASS, discomfit, disconcert, faze, rattle *Ant* facilitate, relieve

abate **1** • to die down in force or intensity *Syn* ebb, subside, wane *Rel* decrease, diminish, dwindle *Ant* revive, rise **2** *Syn* DECREASE, diminish, dwindle, lessen, reduce *Ant* increase

abatement *Syn* DEDUCTION, discount, rebate

abbey *Syn* CLOISTER, convent, monastery, nunnery, priory

abbreviate *Syn* SHORTEN, abridge, curtail, retrench *Ant* elongate, extend, lengthen, prolong, protract

abdicate • to give up formally or definitely a position of trust, honor, or glory *Syn* renounce, resign *Rel* abandon, leave, relinquish, surrender *Ant* assume, usurp

abdomen *Syn* STOMACH, belly, gut, solar plexus, tummy

aberrant *Syn* DEVIANT, abnormal, anomalous, atypical, irregular, unnatural *Ant* natural, normal, regular, standard, typical

aberration **1** • mental disorder *Syn* alienation, derangement *Rel* dementia, insanity, lunacy *Ant* soundness (*of mind*) **2** *Syn* DEVIATION, deflection, divergence

abet *Syn* INCITE, foment, instigate *Ant* restrain

abettor **1** *Syn* ACCOMPLICE, accessory, cohort, confederate **2** *Syn* ALLY, backer, confederate, supporter, sympathizer

abeyance • a state of temporary inactivity *Syn* doldrums, dormancy, latency, quiescence, suspense, suspension *Rel* inaction, inertia, inertness, motionlessness *Ant* continuance, continuation

abeyant *Syn* LATENT, dormant, potential, quiescent *Ant* patent

abhor *Syn* HATE, abominate, detest, loathe *Ant* love

abhorrence • a feeling of extreme disgust or dislike *Syn* abomination, detestation, hate, hatred, loathing *Rel* distaste, repugnance, repugnance *Ant* admiration, enjoyment

abhorrent **1** *Syn* HATEFUL, abominable, detestable, odious *Ant* lovable, sympathetic **2** *Syn* REPUGNANT, distasteful, invidious, obnoxious, repellent *Ant* congenial

abide **1** *Syn* BEAR (sense 2), brook, endure, stand, suffer, tolerate **2** *Syn* CONTINUE, endure, last, persist **3** *Syn* STAY, linger, remain, tarry, wait

ability • the physical or mental power to do something *Syn* capability, capacity, competence, competency, faculty *Rel* aptitude, aptness, endowment, facility, gift, knack, talent *Ant* disability, inability, incapability, incapacity, incompetence, incompetency, ineptitude, ineptness

abject *Syn* MEAN, ignoble, sordid

abjure • to abandon irrevocably and usually with solemnity or publicity *Syn* forswear, recant, renounce, retract *Rel* eschew, forbear, forgo *Ant* pledge (*allegiance, a vow*), elect (*a way of life, a means to an end*)

able *Syn* COMPETENT, capable, fit, good, qualified, suitable *Ant* incompetent, inept, poor, unfit, unqualified

abnegate *Syn* FORGO, eschew, forbear, sacrifice

abnegation *Syn* RENUNCIATION, self-abnegation, self-denial *Ant* indulgence, self-indulgence

abnormal *Syn* DEVIANT, aberrant, anomalous, atypical, irregular, unnatural *Ant* natural, normal, regular, standard, typical

abode *Syn* HABITATION, domicile, dwelling, home, house, residence

abolish • to put an end to by formal action *Syn* abrogate, annul, cancel, dissolve, invalidate, negate, nullify, quash, repeal, rescind, void *Rel* countermand, override, overrule, overturn, veto

abominable *Syn* HATEFUL, abhorrent, detestable, odious *Ant* lovable, sympathetic

abominate *Syn* HATE, abhor, detest, loathe *Ant* love

abomination 1 • a person or thing from which one shrinks with intense dislike *Syn* anathema, bête noire, bugbear *Rel* annoyance, pest, plague *Ant* joy 2 *Syn* ABHORRENCE, detestation, hate, hatred, loathing *Ant* admiration, enjoyment

aboriginal *Syn* NATIVE, autochthonous, endemic, indigenous *Ant* alien, foreign

abortion *Syn* CANCELLATION, calling, calling off, dropping, recall, repeal, rescission, revocation *Ant* continuation

abortive *Syn* FUTILE, bootless, fruitless, vain *Ant* effective, effectual, efficacious, efficient, fruitful, productive, profitable, successful

abound *Syn* TEEM, overflow, swarm

abounding *Syn* RIFE, flush, fraught, replete, swarming, teeming, thick, thronging

about *adv* 1 *Syn* ALMOST, more or less, most, much, near, nearly, next to, nigh, practically, some, virtually, well-nigh 2 *Syn* AROUND (sense 2), over, round, through, throughout

about *prep* 1 • in reference to *Syn* concerning, regarding, respecting 2 *Syn* AROUND (sense 1), by, near, next to

above • to or in a higher place *Syn* aloft, over, overhead, skyward *Ant* below, beneath, under

aboveboard *Syn* STRAIGHTFORWARD, forthright *Ant* devious, indirect

abracadabra *Syn* GIBBERISH, hocus-pocus, mummery

abrade • to affect a surface by rubbing, scraping, or wearing away *Syn* chafe, excoriate, fret, gall *Rel* grate, grind, rasp, scrape, scratch

abridge *Syn* SHORTEN, abbreviate, curtail, re-*tract* *Ant* elongate, extend, lengthen, prolong, protract

abridgment • a condensation of a larger work *Syn* abstract, brief, conspectus, epitome, synopsis *Rel* compendium, digest, précis, sketch, syllabus *Ant* expansion

abrogate *Syn* ABOLISH, annul, cancel, dis-

solve, invalidate, negate, nullify, quash, repeal, rescind, void

abrupt 1 *Syn* PRECIPITATE, hasty, headlong, impetuous, sudden *Ant* deliberate 2 *Syn* STEEP, precipitous, sheer

abscess • a localized swollen area of infection containing pus *Syn* boil, carbuncle, furuncle, pimple, pustule

abscond *Syn* ESCAPE (sense 1), decamp, flee, fly

absence *Syn* LACK, dearth, defect, privation, want

absent *Syn* ABSTRACTED, absentminded, distraught, preoccupied *Ant* alert

absentminded *Syn* ABSTRACTED, absent, distraught, preoccupied *Ant* alert

absolute 1 • exercising power or authority without external restraint *Syn* arbitrary, autocratic, despotic, tyrannical, tyrannous *Rel* authoritarian, totalitarian *Ant* limited, restrained 2 *Syn* PURE, sheer, simple *Ant* adulterated, applied (*of science*), contaminated, polluted 3 *Syn* ULTIMATE, categorical

absolution *Syn* PARDON, amnesty, forgiveness, remission, remittal *Ant* penalty, punishment, retribution

absolve *Syn* EXCULPATE, acquit, exonerate, vindicate *Ant* accuse, inculpate

absorb 1 • to take (something) in so as to become imbued with it or to make it a part of one's being *Syn* assimilate, imbibe *Rel* impregnate, saturate, soak *Ant* exude, give out 2 *Syn* MONOPOLIZE, consume, engross

absorbed *Syn* INTENT, engrossed, rapt *Ant* distracted

absorbing *Syn* INTERESTING, arresting, engaging, engrossing, enthralling, fascinating, gripping, immersing, intriguing, involving, riveting *Ant* boring, drab, dry, dull, heavy, monotonous, tedious, uninteresting

abstain *Syn* REFRAIN, forbear

abstemiousness *Syn* TEMPERANCE, abstinence, continence, sobriety *Ant* excessiveness, immoderacy, intemperance, intemperateness

abstinence *Syn* TEMPERANCE, abstemiousness, continence, sobriety *Ant* excessiveness, immoderacy, intemperance, intemperateness

abstract *adj* 1 • having conceptual rather than concrete existence *Syn* ideal, transcendent, transcendental *Rel* general, generic, universal *Ant* concrete 2 • dealing with or expressing a quality or idea *Syn* conceptual, theoretical *Rel* conjectural, hypothetical, speculative *Ant* concrete

abstract *n* *Syn* ABRIDGMENT, brief, conspectus, epitome, synopsis *Ant* expansion

abstract *vb* 1 *Syn* DETACH, disengage *Ant* affix, attach 2 *Syn* SUMMARIZE, digest, en-

capsulate, epitomize, outline, recap, recapitulate, sum up, wrap up

abstracted • inattentive to what presently claims or demands consideration *Syn* absent, absentminded, distraught, preoccupied *Rel* engrossed, intent *Ant* alert

abstruse *Syn* RECONDITE, esoteric, occult

absurd *Syn* FOOLISH, preposterous, silly *Ant* sensible

abundant *Syn* PLENTIFUL, ample, copious, plenteous *Ant* scant, scanty

abuse *n* • vehemently expressed condemnation or disapproval *Syn* billingsgate, invective, obloquy, scurrility, vituperation *Rel* animadversion, aspersion, reflection, stricture *Ant* adulation

abuse *vb* **1** • to use or treat a person or thing improperly or wrongfully *Syn* ill-treat, maltreat, mistreat, misuse, outrage *Rel* damage, harm, hurt, impair, injure, mar, spoil *Ant* honor, respect **2** *Syn* ATTACK (sense 2), assail, belabor, blast, castigate, excoriate, jump (on), lambaste (*or* lambast), scathe, slam, vituperate

abusive • coarse, insulting, and contemptuous in character or utterance *Syn* contumelious, opprobrious, scurrilous, vituperative *Rel* affronting, insulting, offending, outraging *Ant* complementary, respectful

abutment *Syn* BUTTRESS, pier

abutting *Syn* ADJACENT, adjoining, bordering, contiguous, flanking, fringing, joining, juxtaposed, skirting, touching, verging *Ant* nonadjacent

abysm *Syn* GULF, abyss, chasm

abysmal *Syn* DEEP, profound

abyss *Syn* GULF, abysm, chasm

academic **1** • of or relating to schooling or learning especially at an advanced level *Syn* educational, scholarly, scholastic *Rel* bookish, pedantic, professorial *Ant* nonacademic, unacademic **2** *Syn* PEDANTIC, bookish, scholastic **3** *Syn* THEORETICAL, speculative

accede *Syn* ASSENT, acquiesce, agree, consent, subscribe *Ant* dissent

accelerate *Syn* HURRY (sense 1), hasten, quicken, rush, speed (up), whisk *Ant* decelerate, retard, slow (down)

accent *n* **1** *Syn* EMPHASIS, accentuation, stress **2** *Syn* INFLECTION, intonation

accent *vb* *Syn* EMPHASIZE, accentuate, feature, highlight, play (up), point (up), stress, underline, underscore *Ant* play (down)

accentuate *Syn* EMPHASIZE, accent, feature, highlight, play (up), point (up), stress, underline, underscore *Ant* play (down)

accentuation *Syn* EMPHASIS, accent, stress

accept **1** *Syn* APPROVE (OF), care (for), countenance, favor, OK (*or* okay), subscribe (to) *Ant* disapprove (of), discountenance,

disfavor, frown (on *or* upon) **2** *Syn* RECEIVE, admit, take

acceptability *Syn* SUFFICIENCY, adequacy, satisfactoriness *Ant* inadequacy, insufficiency

acceptable *Syn* ADEQUATE, all right, decent, fine, OK (*or* okay), passable, respectable, satisfactory, tolerable *Ant* deficient, inadequate, lacking, unacceptable, unsatisfactory, wanting

acceptation *Syn* MEANING, import, sense, significance, signification

accession *Syn* ADDITION, accretion, increment

accessory *adj* *Syn* AUXILIARY, adjuvant, ancillary, contributory, subservient, subsidiary

accessory *n* **1** *Syn* ACCOMPLICE, abettor, cohort, confederate **2** *Syn* APPENDAGE, adjunct, appurtenance

accident **1** • chance or a chance event bringing injury or loss *Syn* casualty, mishap *Rel* catastrophe, disaster **2** *Syn* CHANCE, fortune, hap, hazard, luck *Ant* law, principle

accidental • happening by chance *Syn* casual, chance, fluky, fortuitous, inadvertent, incidental, unintended, unintentional, unplanned, unpremeditated, unwitting *Rel* coincidental *Ant* deliberate, intended, intentional, planned, premeditated

acclaim **1** • to declare enthusiastic approval of *Syn* applaud, cheer, hail, laud, praise, salute, tout *Rel* ballyhoo *Ant* knock, pan, slam **2** *Syn* PRAISE, eulogize, extol, laud *Ant* blame

acclamation *Syn* APPLAUSE, cheering, cheers, ovation, plaudit(s), rave(s) *Ant* booing, hissing

acclimate *Syn* HARDEN (sense 2), acclimatize, season *Ant* soften

acclimatize *Syn* HARDEN (sense 2), acclimate, season *Ant* soften

accommodate **1** *Syn* ADAPT, adjust, conform, reconcile *Ant* unfit **2** *Syn* CONTAIN, hold **3** *Syn* OBLIGE, favor *Ant* disoblige

accompany • to go along with in order to provide assistance, protection, or companionship *Syn* attend, chaperone (*or* chaperon), convoy, escort, squire *Rel* associate, consort, pal (around), team (up)

accomplice • one associated with another in wrongdoing *Syn* abettor, accessory, cohort, confederate *Rel* collaborationist, collaborator, informant, informer

accomplish *Syn* PERFORM, achieve, discharge, effect, execute, fulfill

accomplished *Syn* CONSUMMATE, finished *Ant* crude

accomplishment **1** *Syn* ACQUIREMENT, acquisition, attainment **2** *Syn* FRUITION, achievement, actuality, attainment, consum-

mation, fulfillment, realization *Ant* naught, nonfulfillment

accord *n* 1 *Syn* AGREEMENT, understanding 2 *Syn* HARMONY, concord, consonance *Ant* conflict

accord *vb* 1 *Syn* AGREE (sense 2), conform, correspond, harmonize, jibe, square, tally *Ant* differ (from) 2 *Syn* GRANT (sense 1), award, concede, vouchsafe

accordingly *Syn* THEREFORE, consequently, hence, so, then

accost *Syn* ADDRESS, greet, hail, salute

account *n* • a statement of actual events or conditions or of purported occurrences or conditions *Syn* chronicle, report, story, version

account *vb* 1 *Syn* CONSIDER (sense 2), deem, reckon, regard 2 *Syn* USE (sense 1), advantage, avail, profit, service

accountable *Syn* RESPONSIBLE, amenable, answerable, liable

account (for) *Syn* EXPLAIN (sense 2), explain away, rationalize

accoutre or **accouter** *Syn* FURNISH (sense 1), equip, fit (out), outfit, rig, supply *Ant* hold (back), keep (back), reserve, retain, withhold

accredit 1 *Syn* APPROVE, certify, endorse, sanction *Ant* disapprove 2 *Syn* ASCRIBE, assign, attribute, charge, credit, impute, refer 3 *Syn* AUTHORIZE, commission, license

accretion *Syn* ADDITION, accession, increment

accumulate 1 • to bring together so as to make a store or great quantity *Syn* amass, hoard *Rel* collect, gather *Ant* dissipate 2 *Syn* INCREASE (sense 2), appreciate, balloon, build (up), burgeon, enlarge, escalate, expand, mount, multiply, mushroom, proliferate, rise, snowball, swell, wax *Ant* contract, decrease, diminish, lessen, wane

accumulative *Syn* CUMULATIVE, additive, summative

accuracy *Syn* PRECISION, closeness, delicacy, exactitude, exactness, fineness, preciseness, rigorousness, veracity *Ant* coarseness, impreciseness, imprecision, inaccuracy, inexactness, roughness

accurate *Syn* CORRECT, exact, nice, precise, right *Ant* incorrect

accursed *Syn* EXECRABLE, cursed, damnable

accuse • to make a claim of wrongdoing against *Syn* charge, impeach, incriminate, indict *Rel* blame, castigate, censure, condemn, criticize, damn, denounce, fault, impugn, reproach, reprobate *Ant* absolve, acquit, clear, exculpate, exonerate, vindicate

accustom *Syn* HABITUATE, addict, inure

accustomed 1 • being in the habit or custom *Syn* given, habituated, used, wont *Rel* apt,

inclined, liable, prone *Ant* unaccustomed, unused 2 *Syn* USUAL, customary, habitual, wonted

ace *Syn* EXPERT, adept, artist, authority, crackerjack, maestro, master, past master, scholar, shark, virtuoso, whiz, wizard *Ant* amateur

acerbity *Syn* ACRIMONY, asperity *Ant* suavity

ache *Syn* PAIN, pang, stitch, throe, twinge

achieve 1 *Syn* PERFORM, accomplish, discharge, effect, execute, fulfill 2 *Syn* REACH, attain, compass, gain

achievement 1 *Syn* FEAT, exploit 2 *Syn* FRUITION, accomplishment, actuality, attainment, consummation, fulfillment, realization *Ant* naught, nonfulfillment

acid *Syn* SOUR, acidulous, dry, tart

acidulous *Syn* SOUR, acid, dry, tart

acknowledge *Syn* ADMIT, agree, allow, concede, confess, grant, own (up) *Ant* deny

acknowledgment *Syn* CONFESSION, admission, avowal, concession

acme *Syn* SUMMIT, apex, apogee, climax, culmination, meridian, peak, pinnacle, zenith

acoustic or **acoustical** *Syn* AUDITORY, aural, auricular

acquaint *Syn* ENLIGHTEN (sense 1), advise, apprise, brief, clue, familiarize, fill in, inform, instruct, tell, wise (up)

acquaintance 1 • knowledge gained by personal experience *Syn* cognizance, familiarity *Rel* association, experience, exposure, intimacy, involvement *Ant* unfamiliarity 2 *Syn* FRIEND, confidant, intimate *Ant* foe

acquiesce *Syn* ASSENT, accede, agree, consent, subscribe *Ant* dissent

acquiescence *Syn* COMPLIANCE, resignation *Ant* forwardness

acquiescent 1 *Syn* COMPLIANT, resigned *Ant* forward 2 *Syn* PASSIVE, nonresistant, resigned, tolerant, tolerating, unresistant, unresisting, yielding *Ant* protesting, resistant, resisting, unyielding

acquire *Syn* EARN, attain, capture, carry, draw, gain, garner, get, land, make, obtain, procure, realize, secure, win *Ant* forfeit, lose

acquirement • a power or skill that is the fruit of exertion or effort *Syn* accomplishment, acquisition, attainment *Rel* achievement, feat

acquisition *Syn* ACQUIREMENT, accomplishment, attainment

acquisitive *Syn* COVETOUS, avaricious, grasping, greedy

acquisitiveness *Syn* GREED, avarice, avariciousness, avidity, covetousness, cupidity, greediness, rapaciousness, rapacity

acquit 1 *Syn* BEHAVE, comport, conduct, demean, deport, quit *Ant* misbehave 2 *Syn* EX-

CULPATE, absolve, exonerate, vindicate *Ant* accuse, inculpate

acrid *Syn* CAUSTIC, mordant, scathing *Ant* genial

acrimony • temper or language marked by irritation or some degree of anger or resentment *Syn* acerbity, asperity *Rel* bitterness *Ant* suavity

across • so as to intersect the length of something *Syn* athwart, crossways, crosswise

act *n* **1** *Syn* ACTION, deed **2** *Syn* FUNCTION, perform, serve, work

act *vb* **1** • to perform especially in an indicated way *Syn* behave, function, operate, react, work **2** • to assume the appearance or role of another person or character *Syn* impersonate, play **3** *Syn* SEEM, appear, look, make, sound

acting *Syn* TEMPORARY, ad interim, provisional *Ant* permanent

action **1** • something done or effected *Syn* act, deed *Rel* procedure, proceeding, process **2** *Syn* BATTLE, engagement **3** *Syn* SUIT, case, cause, lawsuit

activate **1** • to cause to function *Syn* actuate, crank (up), drive, move, propel, run, set off, spark, start, touch off, trigger, turn on *Rel* charge, electrify, energize, fire, fuel, generate, power, push *Ant* cut, deactivate, kill, shut off, turn off **2** *Syn* VITALIZE, energize *Ant* atrophy

active • at work or in effective action *Syn* dynamic, live, operative *Rel* agile, brisk, nimble *Ant* inactive

actor • one who, for the entertainment or edification of an audience, takes part in an exhibition simulating happenings in real life *Syn* impersonator, mime, mimic, mummer, performer, player, thespian, troupier

actual • existing in fact and not merely as a possibility *Syn* concrete, existent, factual, real, true, very *Rel* attested, authenticated, confirmed, demonstrated, established, proven, substantiated, validated, verified *Ant* conjectural, hypothetical, ideal, nonexistent, possible, potential, theoretical

actuality **1** *Syn* EXISTENCE, being *Ant* nonexistence **2** *Syn* FRUITION, accomplishment, achievement, attainment, consummation, fulfillment, realization *Ant* naught, nonfulfillment

actualize *Syn* REALIZE, embody, externalize, hypostatize, incarnate, materialize, objectify, reify

actuate *Syn* ACTIVATE, crank (up), drive, move, propel, run, set off, spark, start, touch off, trigger, turn on *Ant* cut, deactivate, kill, shut off, turn off

act up *Syn* CUT UP, clown (around), fool

(around), horse (around), monkey (around), show off, skylark

acumen *Syn* DISCERNMENT, discrimination, insight, penetration, perception

acute **1** • of uncertain outcome *Syn* critical, crucial *Rel* climactic, culminating **2** *Syn* SHARP, keen *Ant* blunt, dull **3** *Syn* SHRILL, high-pitched, piping, screeching, shrieking, squeaking, squeaky, treble, whistling *Ant* bass, deep, low, throaty

ad *Syn* ANNOUNCEMENT, advertisement, bulletin, notice, notification, posting, release

adage *Syn* SAYING, aphorism, apothegm, epigram, maxim, motto, proverb, saw

adamant *Syn* OBSTINATE, adamant, dogged, hard, hardened, hardheaded, hardhearted, headstrong, immovable, implacable, inflexible, mulish, obdurate, opinionated, ossified, pat, peevish, pertinacious, perverse, pigheaded, rigid, self-willed, stubborn, unbending, uncompromising, unrelenting, unyielding, willful (*or* wilful) *Ant* acquiescent, agreeable, amenable, compliant, complying, flexible, pliable, pliant, relenting, yielding

adamantine *Syn* OBSTINATE, adamant, dogged, hard, hardened, hardheaded, hardhearted, headstrong, immovable, implacable, inflexible, mulish, obdurate, opinionated, ossified, pat, peevish, pertinacious, perverse, pigheaded, rigid, self-willed, stubborn, unbending, uncompromising, unrelenting, unyielding, willful (*or* wilful) *Ant* acquiescent, agreeable, amenable, compliant, complying, flexible, pliable, pliant, relenting, yielding

adapt **1** • to bring into correspondence *Syn* accommodate, adjust, conform, reconcile *Rel* moderate, qualify, temper *Ant* unfit **2** *Syn* EDIT, compile, redact, revise, rewrite

adaptable *Syn* PLASTIC, ductile, malleable, pliable, pliant

add **1** • to combine (numbers) into a single sum *Syn foot (up), sum, total *Rel* calculate, cast, cipher, compute, figure, reckon, tally **2** • to join (something) to a mass, quantity, or number so as to bring about an overall increase *Syn* adjoin, annex, append, tack (on) *Rel* affix, attach, fasten, fix, graft, hitch, tie *Ant* deduct, remove, subtract, take*

added *Syn* ADDITIONAL, another, else, farther, further, more, other

addendum *Syn* APPENDIX, supplement

addict *n* **1** • a person who by habit and strong inclination indulges in something or the pursuit of something *Syn* devotee, habitué, votary **2** *Syn* FAN, aficionado, buff, bug, devotee, enthusiast, fanatic, fancier, fiend, freak, lover, maniac, nut

addict *vb* *Syn* HABITUATE, accustom, inure