

WEBSTER'S
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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.

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* dissolute, 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, discredit, 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, mummerly

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, trench *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* collaborator, 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-