

# **Webster's American English Dictionary**

**New Edition**

Created in Cooperation with the Editors of  
MERRIAM-WEBSTER



A Division of Merriam-Webster, Incorporated  
Springfield, Massachusetts

Copyright © by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

Federal Street Press is a trademark of  
Federal Street Press,  
a division of Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

All rights reserved. No part of this book covered by the copyrights hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems—without written permission of the publisher.

This 2011 edition published by Federal Street Press,  
a division of Merriam-Webster, Incorporated  
P.O. Box 281  
Springfield, MA 01102

Federal Street Press books are available for bulk purchase for sales promotion and premium use. For details write the manager of special sales, Federal Street Press, P.O. Box 281, Springfield, MA 01102

ISBN 978-1-59695-114-3

Printed in the United States of America

11 12 13 14 15 NK 5 4 3 2 1

# PREFACE

This new edition contains new words and senses that have become established in the language since publication of the previous edition. It remains an extremely concise reference to those words that form the very core of the English vocabulary. It is intended to serve as a quick reference, especially for questions of spelling, pronunciation, and hyphenation of the most common words in everyday use.

Though small, this work shares many details of presentation with more comprehensive dictionaries. However, conciseness of presentation necessarily requires special treatment of entries, and this book has a number of special features uniquely its own. Users need to be familiar with the following major features of this dictionary.

**Main entries** follow one another in alphabetical order. Centered periods within the entries show points at which a hyphen may be put when the word is broken at the end of a line.

**Homographs** (words spelled the same but having different meanings) are run in to a single main entry when they are closely related. Second and succeeding homographs are represented by a swung dash: ~ Homographs of distinctly different origin (as <sup>1</sup>**perch** and <sup>2</sup>**perch**) are given separate entries with preceding raised numerals.

**Variant spellings** that are quite common appear at the main entry following a comma (as **the·ater**, **the·atre**) and following other boldface entry words, such as inflected forms and run-on entries.

**Inflected forms** of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are shown when they are irregular—as when requiring the dropping of a final *e* or changing a final *y* to *i* before the suffix: (as **prat·ed**; **prat·ing** at **prate**) or when the form of the base word itself changes: (as **swam...;** **swum** at **swim**)—or when there might be doubt about their spelling: (as *pl* **twos** at **two**). They are given either in full (as **worse...;** **worst** at **bad**) or cut back to a convenient point of division (as **-mat·ed**; **-mat·ing** at **es·ti·mate**). Common variants of inflected forms are shown even if they are regular (as **bused** *or* **bussed** at **bus**). When the inflected forms of a verb involve no irregularity except the doubling of a final

consonant, the double consonant is shown instead of full or cut-back inflected forms (as *vb* **-gg-** at **hug**). A variant or inflected form whose alphabetical place is distant from the main entry is entered at its own place with a cross-reference in small capital letters to the main entry (as **laid** *past of LAY*).

Several other kinds of entries are also found in this dictionary. A **run-in entry** is a term related to a main entry that appears within a definition (as **cacao beans** at **ca·cao**). It is essentially defined in the context of the definition and is set off by parentheses. Derivative words, made up usually of the main entry and a common word element, such as a suffix, are shown as **undefined run-on entries** following all definitions of a main entry. These are set off by a dash (as — **man·u·al·ly** at **man·u·al** or — **hill·top** at **hill**). The meaning of an undefined run-on entry can be inferred from the meaning of the main entry where it appears and that of the added word element, shown elsewhere in the book. A **run-on phrase** is a group of two or more words having the main entry as a major element and having a special meaning of its own (as **knock out** at **knock** or **set forth** at **set**). Run-on phrases are always defined.

**Lists of undefined words** formed by the addition of a common English prefix to a word entered in the dictionary and having meanings that can be inferred from the meaning of the root word and that of the prefix will be found in a separate section at the bottom of the page at entries for the following prefixes: *anti-*, *bi-*, *co-*, *counter-*, *extra-*, *hyper-*, *in-*, *inter-*, *mini-*, *multi-*, *non-*, *over-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *re-*, *self-*, *sub-*, *super-*, *un-*, and *vice-*.

**Pronunciation** information is either given explicitly or implied for every entry in the dictionary. Pronunciation respellings are placed within reversed slanted lines (as \jənəˈrælətē\ at **ge·ner·al·i·ty**). Where the pronunciation is not indicated at a particular entry, or is indicated in a cutback form, the full pronunciation is to be inferred from an earlier indicated pronunciation. A full list of the pronunciation symbols used is shown on the page following this Preface.

The grammatical function of entry words is indicated by an italic **functional label** (as *vb*, *n*, or *prefix*).

A **hyphen** that is a fixed part of a hyphenated expression (such as *self-conscious*) is converted to a special “double hyphen” (≠) when the compound expression appears in lightface type and when the fixed hyphen comes at the end of a line in this dictionary. This indicates to you that the hyphen is to be retained when the word is not at the end of a line. Fixed hyphens in boldface

entry words are shown as short boldface dashes, which are a bit larger than ordinary hyphens. These short dashes or long hyphens in boldface words are retained at the end of a line in this dictionary.

**Guide words** are used at the top of pages to indicate the range of entries on those pages. In choosing guide words for a page, we select the alphabetically first and last spelled-out boldface words or phrases on that page. This means that any boldface entry—main entry, variant spelling, inflected form, run-in or run-on entry—can be used as a guide word. Please keep this in mind if the word used as a guide word does not happen to be the first or last main entry on the page. The guide words themselves are in alphabetical order throughout the book, so occasionally it has been necessary to modify this rule. When the alphabetically last entry on one page would come later than the alphabetically first entry on the following page, a different word is chosen as guide word. On pages that contain a substantial number of undefined words derived from a prefix entry, the undefined words are not considered when choosing guide words.

All **abbreviations** used in this book are listed, along with a number of other common abbreviations, in a special section immediately following the dictionary proper.

# A

**1a** \ 'ā \ *n*, *pl a's or as* \ 'āz \ : 1st letter of the alphabet

**2a** \ ə, 'ā \ *indefinite article* : one or some — used to indicate an unspecified or unidentified individual

**aardvark** \ 'ārd,vārk \ *n* : ant-eating African mammal

**aback** \ ə'bak \ *adv* : by surprise

**abacus** \ 'abəkəs \ *n*, *pl abaci* \ 'abə-sī, -kē \ *or abacus-es* : calculating instrument using rows of beads

**abaft** \ ə'baft \ *adv* : toward or at the stern

**abalone** \ ,abə'lōnē \ *n* : large edible shellfish

**1abandon** \ ə'bandən \ *vb* : give up without intent to reclaim — **abandonment** *n*

**2abandon** *n* : thorough yielding to impulses

**abandoned** \ ə'bandənd \ *adj* : morally unrestrained

**abase** \ ə'bās \ *vb* **abased**; **abas-ing** : lower in dignity — **abatement** *n*

**abash** \ ə'bash \ *vb* : embarrass — **abashment** *n*

**abate** \ ə'bāt \ *vb* **abat-ed**; **abat-ing** : decrease or lessen

**abatement** \ ə'bātmənt \ *n* : tax reduction

**abattoir** \ 'abə,twār \ *n* : slaughterhouse

**ab-bess** \ 'abəs \ *n* : head of a convent

**ab-bey** \ 'abē \ *n*, *pl -beys* : monastery or convent

**ab-bot** \ 'abət \ *n* : head of a monastery

**ab-bre-viate** \ ə'brēvĕ,āt \ *vb* **-at-ed**; **-at-ing** : shorten — **ab-bre-via-tion** \ ə,brēvĕ'āshən \ *n*

**ab-di-cate** \ 'abdĭ,kāt \ *vb* **-cat-ed**; **-cat-ing** : renounce — **ab-di-ca-tion** \ ,abdĭ'kāshən \ *n*

**ab-do-men** \ 'abdəmən, ab'dōmən \ *n* **1** : body area between chest and pelvis **2** : hindmost part of an insect — **ab-dom-i-nal** \ əb'dāmən'əl \ *adj* — **ab-dom-i-nal-ly** *adv*

**ab-duct** \ əb'dəkt \ *vb* : kidnap — **ab-**

**duc-tion** \ -'dəkshən \ *n* — **ab-duc-tor** \ -tər \ *n*

**abed** \ ə'bed \ *adv or adj* : in bed

**ab-er-ra-tion** \ ,əbə'rāshən \ *n* : deviation or distortion — **ab-er-rant** \ ə'ber-rənt \ *adj*

**abet** \ ə'bet \ *vb* **-tt-** : incite or encourage — **abet-tor**, **abet-ter** \ -ər \ *n*

**abey-ance** \ ə'bāəns \ *n* : state of inactivity

**ab-hor** \ əb'hôr, əb-\ *vb* **-rr-** : hate — **ab-hor-rence** \ -əns \ *n* — **ab-hor-rent** \ -ənt \ *adj*

**abide** \ ə'bĭd \ *vb* **abode** \ -'bōd \ *or* **abid-ed**; **abid-ing** **1** : endure **2** : remain, last, or reside

**ab-ject** \ 'əbjekt, əb'- \ *adj* : low in spirit or hope — **ab-jec-tion** \ əb-'jekshən \ *n* — **ab-ject-ly** *adv* — **ab-ject-ness** *n*

**ab-jure** \ əb'jūr \ *vb* **1** : renounce **2** : abstain from — **ab-ju-ra-tion** \ ,əbjə-'rāshən \ *n*

**ablaze** \ ə'blāz \ *adj or adv* : on fire

**able** \ 'ābəl \ *adj* **abler** \ -blər \; **ablest** \ -bləst \ **1** : having sufficient power, skill, or resources **2** : skilled or efficient — **abil-ity** \ ə'bĭlətē \ *n* — **ably** \ 'āblē \ *adv*

**-able, -ible** \ əbəl \ *adj suffix* **1** : capable of, fit for, or worthy of **2** : tending, given, or liable to

**ab-lu-tion** \ ə'blūshən, ə'blū-\ *n* : washing of one's body

**ab-ne-gate** \ 'əbni,gāt \ *vb* **-gat-ed**; **-gat-ing** **1** : relinquish **2** : renounce — **ab-ne-ga-tion** \ ,əbni'gāshən \ *n*

**ab-nor-mal** \ əb'nōrməl \ *adj* : deviating from the normal or average — **ab-nor-mal-ity** \ ,əbnər'malətē, -nôr-\ *n* — **ab-nor-mal-ly** *adv*

**aboard** \ ə'bōrd \ *adv* : on, onto, or within a car, ship, or aircraft ~ *prep* : on or within

**abode** \ ə'bōd \ *n* : residence

**abol-ish** \ ə'bəlĭsh \ *vb* : do away with — **ab-o-li-tion** \ ,əbəlĭshən \ *n*

- abom·i·na·ble** \ə'bämənəbəl\ *adj*  
: thoroughly unpleasant or revolting
- abom·i·nate** \ə'bämənāt\ *vb* -**nat·ed**;  
-**nat·ing** : hate — **abom·i·na·tion**  
\ə'bämənāshən\ *n*
- ab·orig·i·nal** \,abə'rijənəl\ *adj* **1**  
: original **2** : primitive
- ab·orig·i·ne** \-'rijənē\ *n* : original in-  
habitant
- abort** \ə'bört\ *vb* : terminate prema-  
turely — **abortive** \-'börtiv\ *adj*
- abor·tion** \ə'börshən\ *n* : spontaneous  
or induced termination of pregnancy
- abound** \ə'baund\ *vb* : be plentiful
- about** \ə'baüt\ *adv* : around ~ *prep* **1**  
: on every side of **2** : on the verge of  
**3** : having as a subject
- above** \ə'bəv\ *adv* : in or to a higher  
place ~ *prep* **1** : in or to a higher  
place than **2** : more than
- above·board** *adv or adj* : without de-  
ception
- abrade** \ə'bräd\ *vb* **abrad·ed**; **abrad·**  
**ing** : wear away by rubbing — **abra·**  
**sion** \-'bräzhən\ *n*
- abra·sive** \ə'bräsiv\ *n* : substance for  
grinding, smoothing, or polishing ~  
*adj* **1** : tending to abrade **2** : causing  
irritation — **abra·sive·ly** *adv* —  
**abra·sive·ness** *n*
- abreast** \ə'brest\ *adv or adj* **1** : side by  
side **2** : up to a standard or level
- abridge** \ə'brij\ *vb* **abridged**; **abridg·**  
**ing** : shorten or condense — **abridg·**  
**ment, abridge·ment** *n*
- abroad** \ə'bröd\ *adv or adj* **1** : over a  
wide area **2** : outside one's country
- ab·ro·gate** \'abrəgät\ *vb* -**gat·ed**; -**gat·**  
**ing** : annul or revoke — **ab·ro·ga·**  
**tion** \,abrə'gāshən\ *n*
- abrupt** \ə'brəpt\ *adj* **1** : sudden **2** : so  
quick as to seem rude — **abrupt·ly**  
*adv*
- ab·scess** \'ab,ses\ *n* : collection of pus  
surrounded by inflamed tissue — **ab·**  
**scessed** \-,ses\ *adj*
- ab·scond** \ab'skänd\ *vb* : run away  
and hide
- ab·sent** \'absənt\ *adj* : not present ~  
**ab·sent** \ab'sent\ *vb* : keep oneself  
away — **ab·sence** \'absəns\ *n* —  
**ab·sen·tee** \,absən'tē\ *n*
- ab·sent·mind·ed** \,absənt'mində\ *adj*  
: unaware of one's surroundings  
or action — **ab·sent·mind·ed·ly** *adv*  
— **ab·sent·mind·ed·ness** *n*
- ab·so·lute** \'absə,lüt, ,absə'-\ *adj* **1**  
: pure **2** : free from restriction **3**  
: definite — **ab·so·lute·ly** *adv*
- ab·so·lu·tion** \,absə'lüshən\ *n* : remis-  
sion of sins
- ab·solve** \əb'zälv, -'sälv\ *vb* -**solved**;  
-**sol·ving** : set free of the conse-  
quences of guilt
- ab·sorb** \əb'sərb, -'zərb\ *vb* **1** : suck  
up or take in as a sponge does **2** : en-  
gage (one's attention) — **ab·sor·ben·**  
**cy** \-'sərbənsē, -'zör-\ *n* — **ab·sor·**  
**bent** \-bənt\ *adj or n* — **ab·sor·bing**  
*adj*
- ab·sorp·tion** \əb'sörpshən, -'zörp-\ *n*  
: process of absorbing — **ab·sorp·**  
**tive** \-tiv\ *adj*
- ab·stain** \əb'stān\ *vb* : refrain from do-  
ing something — **ab·stain·er** *n* — **ab·**  
**sten·tion** \-'stenchən\ *n* — **ab·sti·**  
**nence** \'abstənəns\ *n*
- ab·ste·mi·ous** \əb'stēmēəs\ *adj* : spar-  
ing in use of food or drink — **ab·ste·**  
**mi·ous·ly** *adv* — **ab·ste·mi·ous·**  
**ness** *n*
- ab·tract** \əb'strakt, 'ab,-\ *adj* **1** : ex-  
pressing a quality apart from an ob-  
ject **2** : not representing something  
specific ~ \'ab,-\ *n* : summary ~  
\ab'-, 'ab,-\ *vb* **1** : remove or sepa-  
rate **2** : make an abstract of — **ab·**  
**tract·ly** *adv* — **ab·tract·ness** *n*
- ab·strac·tion** \əb'strakshən\ *n* **1** : act  
of abstracting **2** : abstract idea or  
work of art
- ab·struse** \əb'strūs, ab-\ *adj* : hard to  
understand — **ab·struse·ly** *adv* —  
**ab·struse·ness** *n*
- ab·surd** \əb'sərd, -'zərd\ *adj* : ridicu-  
lous or unreasonable — **ab·sur·di·ty**  
\-ətē\ *n* — **ab·surd·ly** *adv*
- abun·dant** \ə'bəndənt\ *adj* : more than  
enough — **abun·dance** \-dəns\ *n* —  
**abun·dant·ly** *adv*
- abuse** \ə'byüz\ *vb* **abused**; **abus·ing**  
**1** : misuse **2** : mistreat **3** : attack with  
words ~ \-'byüs\ *n* **1** : corrupt  
practice **2** : improper use **3** : mis-  
treatment **4** : coarse and insulting  
speech — **abus·er** *n* — **abu·sive**  
\-'byüsiv\ *adj* — **abu·sive·ly** *adv* —  
**abu·sive·ness** *n*
- abut** \ə'bət\ *vb* -**tt-** : touch along a bor-  
der — **abut·er** *n*
- abut·ment** \ə'bätmənt\ *n* : part of a  
bridge that supports weight
- abys·mal** \ə'bizmə\ *adj* **1** : immea-  
surably deep **2** : wretched — **abys·**  
**mal·ly** *adv*

**abyss** \ə'bis\ *n* : immeasurably deep gulf

**-ac** \ak\ *n* *suffix* : one affected with

**aca·cia** \ə'kāshə\ *n* : leguminous tree or shrub

**ac·a·dem·ic** \akə'demik\ *adj* **1** : relating to schools or colleges **2** : theoretical — **academic** *n* — **ac·a·dem·ic·al·ly** \-iklē\ *adv*

**acad·e·my** \ə'kadəmē\ *n, pl -mies* **1** : private high school **2** : society of scholars or artists

**acan·thus** \ə'kanthəs\ *n, pl acan·thus* **1** : prickly Mediterranean herb **2** : ornament representing acanthus leaves

**ac·cede** \ak'sēd\ *vb -ced·ed; -ced·ing* **1** : become a party to an agreement **2** : express approval **3** : enter upon an office

**ac·cel·er·ate** \ik'selə'rāt, ak-\ *vb -at·ed; -at·ing* **1** : bring about earlier **2** : speed up — **ac·cel·er·a·tion** \,selə'rāshən\ *n*

**ac·cel·er·a·tor** \ik'selə'rātor, ak-\ *n* : pedal for controlling the speed of a motor vehicle

**ac·cent** \ak'sent\ *n* **1** : distinctive manner of pronunciation **2** : prominence given to one syllable of a word **3** : mark (as ' , ` , ^) over a vowel in writing or printing to indicate pronunciation ~ \ak', ak'-\ *vb* : emphasize — **ac·cen·tu·al** \ak'senchəwəl\ *adj*

**ac·cen·tu·ate** \ak'senchə,wāt\ *vb -at·ed; -at·ing* : stress or show off by a contrast — **ac·cen·tu·a·tion** \,senchə'wāshən\ *n*

**ac·cept** \ik'sept, ak-\ *vb* **1** : receive willingly **2** : agree to — **ac·cept·abil·ity** \ik,septə'bilətē, ak-\ *n* — **ac·cept·able** \-septəbəl\ *adj* — **ac·cep·tance** \-septəns\ *n*

**ac·cess** \ak'ses\ *n* : capability or way of approaching — **ac·ces·si·bil·ity** \ik,sesə'bilətē, ak-\ *n* — **ac·ces·sible** \-sesəbəl\ *adj*

**ac·ces·sion** \ik'seshən, ak-\ *n* **1** : something added **2** : act of taking office

**ac·ces·so·ry** \ik'sesərə, ak-\ *n, pl -ries* **1** : nonessential addition **2** : one guilty of aiding a criminal — **acces·sory** *adj*

**ac·ci·dent** \aksədənt\ *n* **1** : event occurring by chance or unintentionally

**2** : chance — **ac·ci·den·tal** \,aksə'dentəl\ *adj* — **ac·ci·den·tal·ly** *adv*

**ac·claim** \ə'klām\ *vb or n* : praise

**ac·cla·ma·tion** \,aklə'māshən\ *n* **1** : eager applause **2** : unanimous vote

**ac·cli·mate** \aklə,māt, ə'klīmət\ *vb -mat·ed; -mat·ing* : acclimatize — **ac·cli·ma·tion** \,aklə'māshən, -,klī-\ *n*

**ac·cli·ma·tize** \ə'klīmə,tīz\ *vb -tized; -tiz·ing* : accustom to a new climate or situation — **ac·cli·ma·ti·za·tion** \,klīmətə'zāshən\ *n*

**ac·co·lade** \akə,lād\ *n* : expression of praise

**ac·com·mo·date** \ə'kämə,dāt\ *vb -dat·ed; -dat·ing* **1** : adapt **2** : provide with something needed **3** : hold without crowding

**ac·com·mo·da·tion** \ə,kämə'dāshən\ *n* **1** : quarters — usu. pl. **2** : act of accommodating

**ac·com·pa·ny** \ə'kəmpənē\ *vb -nied; -ny·ing* **1** : go or occur with **2** : play supporting music — **ac·com·pa·ni·ment** \-nəmənt\ *n* — **ac·com·pa·nist** \-nist\ *n*

**ac·com·plice** \ə'kəmpləs, -'kəm-\ *n* : associate in crime

**ac·com·plish** \ə'kəmplish, -'kəm-\ *vb* : do, fulfill, or bring about — **ac·com·plished** *adj* — **ac·com·plish·er** *n* — **ac·com·plish·ment** *n*

**ac·cord** \ə'kórd\ *vb* **1** : grant **2** : agree ~ *n* **1** : agreement **2** : willingness to act — **ac·cor·dance** \-kórdəns\ *n* — **ac·cor·dant** \-ənt\ *adj*

**ac·cord·ing·ly** \ə'kórdinjlē\ *adv* : consequently

**according to** *prep* **1** : in conformity with **2** : as stated by

**ac·cor·di·on** \ə'kórdiən\ *n* : keyboard instrument with a bellows and reeds ~ *adj* : folding like an accordion bellows — **ac·cor·di·on·ist** \-nist\ *n*

**ac·cost** \ə'kóst\ *vb* : approach and speak to esp. aggressively

**ac·count** \ə'kaunt\ *n* **1** : statement of business transactions **2** : credit arrangement with a vendor **3** : report **4** : worth **5** : sum deposited in a bank ~ *vb* : give an explanation

**ac·count·able** \ə'kauntəbəl\ *adj* : responsible — **ac·count·abil·ity** \,kauntə'bilətē\ *n*

**ac·coun·tant** \ə'kauntənt\ *n* : one skilled in accounting — **ac·coun·tan·cy** \-ənsē\ *n*