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# **Webster's** **New Explorer** **Student** **Dictionary**

Third Edition

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Created in Cooperation with the Editors of  
MERRIAM-WEBSTER



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*Springfield, Massachusetts*

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## Preface

**T**his dictionary is specially designed to serve the needs of students in the elementary grades. It contains information about the most common words of our language in their most frequently encountered uses. Clarity of presentation and ease of use have been the principal concerns of the editors. Particular attention has been paid to putting the definitions into plain language that students will find easy to understand. Yet this book has many of the features typically found in much larger dictionaries. It is produced by a company that has been publishing dictionaries for more than 150 years and written by a staff of professional lexicographers with years of experience in making dictionaries.

In your dictionary you will find the meanings and uses of more than 36,000 words and phrases. They include all of the words you ordinarily use in talking and in writing and those you are likely to meet in your schoolwork or in your outside reading. In choosing the stock of words to be included in this book, the editors studied school textbooks and general reading material; they also checked studies of the words students know and use to be sure that the book was not only complete but the definitions were also easy to understand.

Once you become familiar with this dictionary, you will discover a lot of information between its covers. You will get help with understanding meanings and with spelling and pronouncing new words. You will learn much about grammar and usage and the differences between words with similar meanings. There are hundreds of examples to show you how words are actually used and more than 400 illustrations, as well. In the back of the book are special sections including English grammar, punctuation, and spelling, tables of signs and symbols, weights and measures, and the planets as well as one of the presidents of the U.S. There is also a greatly expanded section on the names of countries, major cities, and important geographical points.

A dictionary is a very special book, and when you learn to use it properly it can become one of the most useful books you own. It is not a book you will read once and put on a shelf. Instead, it is a book you will want to pick up often. We hope that the more you use your dictionary, the more it will become a resource you go to whenever you have a question or a problem about words. Because there are so many different kinds of information and so little space to put it in, we have had to use different type styles and a number of abbreviations, special words, and symbols, like *pl*, **synonyms**, :, \, and <!>, each of which has a special meaning. These symbols and words are all explained in the section Using Your Dictionary. If you want to get the most from your dictionary, you should study this section.

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<sup>1</sup>**a** \ 'ā \ *n*, *pl* **a's** or **as** \ 'āz \ *often cap* **1** : the first letter of the English alphabet **2** : a grade that shows a student's work is excellent **3** : a musical note referred to by the letter A

<sup>2</sup>**a** \ ə, 'ā \ *indefinite article* **1** : someone or something being mentioned for the first time <There's *a* dog in the yard.> **2** : the same <two of *a* kind> **3** : <sup>1</sup>ANY 1 <It's hard for *a* person to understand.> **4** : for or from each <an apple *a* day> <The new theater charges ten dollars *a* person.> **5** : <sup>2</sup>ONE 3 <*a* dozen doughnuts> <*a* week> <This is *a* third the size of that.> — used before words that do not begin with a vowel sound

**a-** \ ə \ *prefix* **1** : on : in : at <*abed*> **2** : in (such) a state, condition, or manner <*afire*> <*aloud*> **3** : in the act or process of <gone *a*-hunting>

**aard-vark** \ 'ārd-,vārk \ *n* : an African animal with a long snout and a long sticky tongue that feeds mostly on ants and termites and is active at night

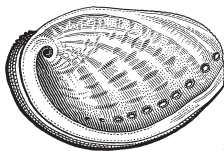
**AB** *abbr* Alberta

**ab-** *prefix* : from : differing from <*abnormal*>

**aback** \ ə-'bak \ *adv* : by surprise <He was taken *aback* by the change in plan.>

**aba-cus** \ 'a-bə-kəs \ *n*, *pl* **aba-ci** \ 'a-bə-,sī \ or **aba-cus-es** : an instrument for doing arithmetic by sliding counters along rods or in grooves

**ab-a-lo-ne** \ ,a-bə-'lō-nē \ *n* : a shellfish that is a mollusk which has a flattened shell with a pearly lining



abalone

<sup>1</sup>**aban-don** \ ə-'ban-dən \ *vb* **aban-doned**; **aban-don-ing** **1** : to leave and never return to : give up completely <They had to *abandon* the sinking ship.> **2** : to stop having or doing <Never *abandon* hope.> <She *abandoned* writing her book.> — **aban-don-ment** \ -mənt \ *n*

**SYNONYMS** ABANDON, DESERT, and FORSAKE mean to give up completely. ABANDON is used when someone has no interest in what happens to the person or thing he or she has given up. <She *abandoned* the wrecked car on the side of the road.> DESERT is used when a person leaves something to which he or she has a duty

or responsibility. <He *deserted* his family.> FORSAKE is used when a person is leaving someone or something for which he or she once had affection. <Don't *for-sake* old friends in times of trouble.>

<sup>2</sup>**abandon** *n* : a feeling of complete freedom <Grandpa drove with reckless *abandon*.>

**aban-doned** \ ə-'ban-dənd \ *adj* : given up : left empty or unused <*abandoned* houses>

**abash** \ ə-'bash \ *vb* **abashed**; **abash-ing** : EMBARRASS

**abate** \ ə-'bāt \ *vb* **abat-ed**; **abat-ing** : to make or become less <The flood *abated* slowly.> — **abate-ment** \ -mənt \ *n*

**ab-bess** \ 'a-bəs \ *n* : the head of an abbey for women

**ab-bey** \ 'a-bē \ *n*, *pl* **abbeys** **1** : MONASTERY, CONVENT **2** : a church that is connected to buildings where nuns or monks live

**ab-bot** \ 'a-bət \ *n* : the head of an abbey for men

**abbr** *abbr* abbreviation

**ab-bre-vi-ate** \ ə-'brē-vē-,āt \ *vb* **ab-bre-vi-at-ed**; **ab-bre-vi-at-ing** : to make briefer : SHORTEN

**ab-bre-vi-a-tion** \ ə-,brē-vē-'ā-shən \ *n* : a shortened form of a word or phrase

**ab-di-cate** \ 'ab-di-,kāt \ *vb* **ab-di-cat-ed**; **ab-di-cat-ing** : to give up a position of power or authority <The ruler was forced to *abdicate*.> — **ab-di-ca-tion** \ ,ab-di-'kā-shən \ *n*

**ab-do-men** \ 'ab-də-mən, ab-'dō- \ *n* **1** : the part of the body between the chest and the hips including the cavity containing the butternutstomach and other digestive organs **2** : the hind part of the body of an arthropod (as an insect)

**ab-dom-i-nal** \ ab-'dā-mə-nəl \ *adj* : relating to or located in the abdomen <*abdominal* muscles>

**ab-duct** \ ab-'dəkt \ *vb* **ab-duct-ed**; **ab-duct-ing** : to take a person away by force : KIDNAP — **ab-duc-tion** \ ab-'dək-shən \ *n*

\ ə \ **abut** \ ə \ **kitten** \ ə-r \ **further** \ ə \ **mat** \ ā \ **take** \ ā \ **cot** \ ār \ **car** \ ə-ū \ **out** \ e \ **pet** \ er \ **fair** \ ē \ **easy** \ g \ **go** \ i \ **tip** \ ir \ **near** \ ī \ **life** \ ŋ \ **sing** \ ō \ **bone** \ ó \ **saw** \ ó-i \ **coin** \ ó-r \ **door** \ th \ **thin** \ th \ **this** \ ü \ **food** \ ú \ **foot** \ ú \ **tour** \ zh \ **vision**

**abed** \ə-'bed\ *adv* or *adj* : in bed <*abed* and asleep> <He was found still *abed* in the middle of the day.>

**ab-er-ra-tion** \,ɑ-bə-'rā-shən\ *n* : an instance of being different from what is normal or usual <The poor test grade was an *aberration* for her.>

**ab-hor** \ab-'hôr\ *vb* **ab-horred**; **ab-hor-ring** : to dislike very much : LOATHE <I *abhor* her phony friendliness.>

**ab-hor-rent** \ab-'hôr-ənt\ *adj* : causing or deserving strong dislike <an *abhorrent* crime>

**abide** \ə-'bīd\ *vb* **abode** \-'bōd\ or **abid-ed**; **abid-ing** **1** : to put up with patiently : TOLERATE <They won't *abide* bad behavior.> **2** : <sup>1</sup>LAST 1, ENDURE <His love for his work *abided* until he died.> **3** : to stay or live in a place — **abide by** : to accept the terms of : OBEY <She was forced to *abide by* the rules.>

**abil-i-ty** \ə-'bi-lə-tē\ *n*, *pl* **abil-i-ties** **1** : power to do something <The cleaner has the *ability* to kill germs.> **2** : natural talent or acquired skill <great musical *ability*>

**SYNONYMS** ABILITY and TALENT mean physical or mental power to do or accomplish something. ABILITY may be used of an inborn power to do something especially well. <Many athletes have the *ability* to run fast.> TALENT is used for an unusual ability to create things. <You should develop your *talent* for writing short stories.>

**-abil-i-ty** *also* **-ibil-i-ty** \ə-'bi-lə-tē\ *n* *suffix*, *pl* **-abil-i-ties** *also* **-ibil-i-ties** : ability, fitness, or tendency to act or be acted upon in (such) a way <*capability*> <*visibility*>

**ab-ject** \'ab-jekt\ *adj* **1** : very bad or severe <*abject* poverty> **2** : low in spirit, strength, or hope <an *abject* coward> — **ab-ject-ly** *adv*

**ablaze** \ə-'blāz\ *adj* **1** : on fire <The forest was *ablaze*.> **2** : glowing with light, color, or emotion <The garden was *ablaze* with blossoms.>

**able** \'ā-bəl\ *adj* **abler** \-blər\; **ablest** \-bləst\ **1** : having enough power, resources, or skill to do something <Are you *able* to swim?> **2** : having the freedom or opportunity to do something <I'll come when I'm *able*.> **3** : having or showing much skill <an *able* dancer>

**SYNONYMS** ABLE and CAPABLE mean having the power to do or accomplish. ABLE may be used for someone who has exceptional skill and has done well in the

past. <She is an *able* surgeon with years of experience.> CAPABLE is usually used to describe someone who has the characteristics suitable for a particular kind of work. <The recruits soon proved to be *capable* soldiers.>

**-able** *also* **-ible** \ə-bəl\ *adj* *suffix* **1** : capable of, fit for, or worthy of being <*lovable*> <*flexible*> **2** : tending or likely to <*changeable*> — **-ably** *also* **-ibly** \ə-blē\ *adv* *suffix*

**able-bod-ied** \,ā-bəl-'bā-dēd\ *adj* : physically fit

**ably** \'ā-blē\ *adv* : in a skillful way <She danced *ably*.>

**ab-nor-mal** \ab-'nôr-məl\ *adj* : differing from the normal usually in a noticeable way <an *abnormal* growth> — **ab-nor-mal-ly** *adv*

**ab-nor-mal-i-ty** \,ab-nôr-'ma-lə-tē\ *n*, *pl* **ab-nor-mal-i-ties** : something that is not usual, expected, or normal <The X-ray showed no *abnormalities*.>

<sup>1</sup>**aboard** \ə-'bôrd\ *adv* : on, onto, or within a ship, train, bus, or airplane <No one *aboard* was injured.>

<sup>2</sup>**aboard** *prep* : on or into especially for passage <Go *aboard* ship.>

<sup>1</sup>**abode** *past of* ABIDE

<sup>2</sup>**abode** \ə-'bōd\ *n* : the place where someone stays or lives

**abol-ish** \ə-'bā-lish\ *vb* **abol-ish-ed**; **abol-ish-ing** : to do away with : put an end to <*abolish* discrimination>

**ab-o-li-tion** \,ɑ-bə-'li-shən\ *n* : a complete elimination of <the *abolition* of war>

**ab-o-li-tion-ist** \,ɑ-bə-'li-shə-nist\ *n* : a person favoring the abolition of slavery

**A-bomb** \'ā-,bām\ *n* : ATOMIC BOMB

**abom-i-na-ble** \ə-'bā-mə-nə-bəl\ *adj* **1** : deserving or causing disgust <*abominable* treatment of animals> **2** : very disagreeable or unpleasant <an *abominable* odor> — **abom-i-na-bly** \-blē\ *adv*

**abom-i-na-tion** \ə-,bā-mə-'nā-shən\ *n* : something that causes disgust

**ab-orig-i-nal** \,ɑ-bə-'ri-jə-nəl\ *adj* **1** : being the first of its kind in a region <*aboriginal* plants> **2** : of or relating to the original people living in a region

**ab-orig-i-ne** \,ɑ-bə-'ri-jə-nē\ *n*, *pl* **ab-orig-i-nes** : a member of the original people living in a region : NATIVE

**abound** \ə-'baund\ *vb* **abound-ed**; **abound-ing** **1** : to be plentiful : TEEM <Salmon *abound* in the river.> **2** : to be fully supplied <The book *abounds* with pictures.>

<sup>1</sup>**about** \ə-'baüt\ *adv* **1** : ALMOST, NEARLY <*about* an hour ago> **2** : on all sides

: AROUND <Bees were swarming *about*.>  
**3** : in the opposite direction <The ship came *about*.> **4** : on the verge of <I was *about* to call you.>

<sup>2</sup>**about** *prep* **1** : having to do with <The story is *about* dogs.> **2** : on every side of : AROUND <There are trees *about* the house.> **3** : over or in different parts of <He traveled *about* the country.> **4** : near or not far from in time <*about* the middle of the month>

<sup>1</sup>**above** \ə-ˈbəv\ *adv* : in or to a higher place <Stars shine *above*.>

<sup>2</sup>**above** *prep* **1** : higher than : OVER <*above* the clouds> **2** : too good for <You're not *above* that kind of work.> **3** : more than <I won't pay *above* ten dollars.> **4** : to a greater degree than <She values her family *above* all else.> **5** : having more power or importance than <A captain is *above* a lieutenant.>

<sup>3</sup>**above** *adj* : said or written earlier <Read the *above* definition.>

<sup>1</sup>**above-board** \ə-ˈbəv-bórd\ *adv* : in an honest open way <All business is done *above-board*.>

<sup>2</sup>**aboveboard** *adj* : free from tricks and secrecy <an *aboveboard* sale>

**ab-ra-ca-dab-ra** \,a-brə-kə-ˈda-brə\ *n* : a magical charm or word

**abrade** \ə-ˈbrād\ *vb* **abraded**; **abrad-ing** : to wear away or irritate by rubbing <The rough fabric *abraded* his skin.>

<sup>1</sup>**abra-sive** \ə-ˈbrā-siv\ *n* : a substance for grinding, smoothing, or polishing

<sup>2</sup>**abrasive** *adj* **1** : causing damage or wear by rubbing **2** : very unpleasant or irritating <an *abrasive* voice>

**abreast** \ə-ˈbrest\ *adv* or *adj* **1** : right beside one another <Cars traveled three *abreast*.> **2** : up to a certain level of knowledge <I try to keep *abreast* of the news.>

**abridge** \ə-ˈbrij\ *vb* **abridged**; **abridg-ing** : to shorten by leaving out some parts <*abridge* a dictionary>

**abridg-ment** or **abridge-ment** \ə-ˈbrij-mənt\ *n* : a shortened form of a written work

**abroad** \ə-ˈbrōd\ *adv* or *adj* **1** : over a wide area <The tree's branches are spread *abroad*.> **2** : in the open : OUTDOORS <Few people are *abroad* at this early hour.> **3** : in or to a foreign country <travel *abroad*> **4** : known to many people <The rumor soon got *abroad*.>

**abrupt** \ə-ˈbrəpt\ *adj* **1** : happening without warning : SUDDEN <The meeting came to an *abrupt* end.> **2** : <sup>1</sup>STEEP **1** <an *abrupt* drop> **3** : rudely brief <an *abrupt* reply> — **abrupt-ly** *adv* — **abrupt-ness** *n*

**ab-sciss** \ˈab-ses\ *n* : a collection of pus with swollen and red tissue around it — **ab-scissed** \-,sɛst\ *adj*

**ab-sence** \ˈab-səns\ *n* **1** : a failure to be present at a usual or expected place **2** : <sup>2</sup>LACK, WANT <There was an *absence* of affection between members of the family.>

**ab-sent** \ˈab-sənt\ *adj* **1** : not present <I missed a field trip when I was *absent*.> **2** : not existing <Trees were *absent* from the desert landscape.> **3** : showing a lack of attention <an *absent* stare>

**ab-sen-tee** \,ab-sən-ˈtē\ *n* : a person who is not present

**ab-sent-mind-ed** \,ab-sənt-ˈmɪn-dəd\ *adj* : tending to forget or not pay attention <Two *absentminded* students forgot their homework today.> — **ab-sent-mind-ed-ly** *adv* — **ab-sent-mind-ed-ness** *n*

**ab-so-lute** \ˈab-sə-ˈlüt\ *adj* **1** : <sup>1</sup>TOTAL **1**, COMPLETE <*absolute* darkness> **2** : not limited in any way <*absolute* power> **3** : free from doubt : CERTAIN <*absolute* proof> — **ab-so-lute-ly** *adv*

**ab-solve** \əb-ˈzälv-, ˈsälv\ *vb* **ab-solved**; **ab-solv-ing** : to make free from guilt or responsibility <He was *absolved* of wrongdoing.>

**ab-sorb** \əb-ˈsɔrb-, ˈzɔrb\ *vb* **ab-sorbed**; **ab-sorb-ing** **1** : to take in or swallow up <A sponge *absorbs* water.> **2** : to hold the complete attention of <She was *absorbed* by the movie.> **3** : to receive without giving back <The walls of the theater *absorb* sound.>

**ab-sor-ben-cy** \əb-ˈsɔr-bən-sē-, ˈzɔr-\ *n* : the quality or state of being able to draw in or soak up

**ab-sor-bent** \əb-ˈsɔr-bənt-, ˈzɔr-\ *adj* : able to draw in or soak up <*absorbent* paper towels>

**ab-sorp-tion** \əb-ˈsɔrp-shən-, ˈzɔrp-\ *n* **1** : the process of drawing in or soaking up : absorbing or being absorbed <the *absorption* of water by soil> **2** : complete attention

**ab-stain** \əb-ˈstān\ *vb* **ab-stained**; **ab-stain-ing** : to choose not to do or have something <*abstain* from voting> — **ab-stain-er** *n*

**ab-sti-nence** \ˈab-stə-nəns\ *n* : an avoidance by choice especially of certain foods or of liquor

\ə\ **abut** \ə\ **kitten** \ər\ **further** \a\ **mat** \ā\ **take** \ä\ **cot** \är\ **car** \aú\ **out** \e\ **pet** \er\ **fair** \ē\ **easy** \g\ **go** \i\ **tip** \ir\ **near** \ī\ **life** \ŋ\ **sing** \ō\ **bone** \ó\ **saw** \ói\ **coin** \ór\ **door** \th\ **thin** \th\ **this** \ü\ **food** \ù\ **foot** \ù\ **tour** \zh\ **vision**

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