


Merriam- Webster's Elementary Dictionary



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Aa

Sounds of A. The letter A makes several sounds. The short A is the sound heard in *apple*, while the long A is the sound heard in the word *lake*. The long A is indicated in pronunciations by the symbol *ā*. Letter A also makes the schwa sound, which is indicated by the symbol *ə*, in words like *ability* and *comma*. The sound of A that is heard in *watch* is indicated by *ä*, and the sound of A that is heard in *cart* is indicated by *är*. In *call* and *law*, letter A makes a sound indicated by the symbol *ö*.

1 *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

2 *a* \ ə, 'ä \ *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** : ¹ANY **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** : ²ONE **3** <*a* dozen doughnuts> <*a* week> <This is *a* third the size of that.> *Hint*: *A* is 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 \ 'ärd-,värk \ *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

1 **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.> <... Mr. Popper had *abandoned* his telephoning ... —Richard and Florence Atwater, *Mr. Popper's Penguins*> — **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 *forsake* old friends in times of trouble.>

2 **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-'bat \ *vb* **abat-ed**; **abat-ing** : to make or become less <The flood *abated* slowly.> — **abate-ment** \ -mənt \ *n* <The noise continued without *abatement*.>

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



abbey 2

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

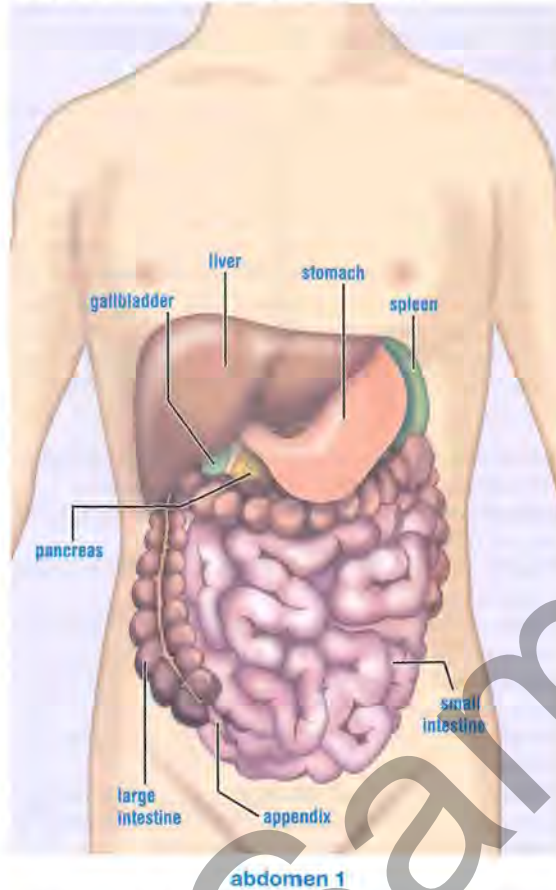
ab-bre-vi-a-tion \ ə-,brē-vē-'ā-shən \ *n* : a shortened form of a word or phrase

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

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



ab-dom-i-nal \ab-ˈdā-mə-nəl\ *adj* : relating to or located in the abdomen <abdominal muscles>
ab-duct \ab-ˈdʌkt\ *vb* **ab-duct-ed**; **ab-duct-ing** : to take a person away by force : KIDNAP — **ab-duc-tion** \ab-ˈdʌk-shən\ *n*
abed \ə-ˈbed\ *adv* or *adj* : in bed <abed and asleep> <... she meant to lie abed... for a good long rest... —Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*>
ab-er-ra-tion \ə-bə-ˈrā-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-ˈhɔr\ *vb* **ab-horred**; **ab-hor-ring** : to dislike very much : LOATHE <He abhorred the idea of eating live worms... —Brian Jacques, *Redwall*>
ab-hor-rent \ab-ˈhɔr-ənt\ *adj* : causing or deserving strong dislike <an abhorrent crime>
abide \ə-ˈbīd\ *vb* **abode** \-ˈbɔd\ or **abid-ed**; **abid-ing** **1** : to put up with patiently : TOLERATE <They won't abide bad behavior.> **2** : 'LAST 1, ENDURE <His love for his work abided until he

died.> **3** : to stay or live in a place <... I shall abide near her all through the night. —E. B. White, *The Trumpet of the Swan*> — **abide by** : to accept the terms of : OBEY <She was forced to abide by the rules.>

abil-i-ty \ə-ˈbi-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-ˈbi-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 \ˈab-jekt\ *adj* **1** : very bad or severe <abject poverty> **2** : low in spirit, strength, or hope <an abject coward> — **ab-ject-ly** *adv* <He stared abjectly at his ruined home.>

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

able \ˈā-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** <adorably>

able-bodied \ā-bəl-ˈbā-dēd\ *adj* : physically fit
ably \ā-blē\ *adv* : in a skillful way <She danced ably.>

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

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

ˈaboard \ə-ˈbɔrd\ *adv* : on, onto, or within a ship, train, bus, or airplane <No one aboard was injured.>

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

¹**abode** *past of* ABIDE

²**abode** \ə-ˈbōd\ *n* : the place where someone stays or lives

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

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

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

A-bomb \ˈā-ˈbām\ *n* : ATOMIC BOMB

abom-i-na-ble \ə-ˈbā-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-ˈbā-mə-ˈnā-shən\ *n* : something that causes disgust <... she said horse racing was an *abomination*... —Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*>

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

abound \ə-ˈbaʊnd\ *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.> (**ROOT**) *see* UNDULATE

¹**about** \ə-ˈbaʊt\ *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.>

²**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>

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

²**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.>



abolitionist:
John Brown was an
American abolitionist
in the 1800s.

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

¹**above-board** \ə-ˈbæv-ˌbɔrd\ *adv* : in an honest open way <All business is done *aboveboard*.>

²**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* **abrad-ed**; **abrad-ing** : to wear away or irritate by rubbing <The rough fabric *abraded* his skin.>

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

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

abreast \ə-ˈbrɛst\ *adv or adj* **1** : right beside one another <The street was only wide enough for four people to walk *abreast*. —Katherine Paterson, *Jacob Have I Loved*> **2** : up to a certain level of knowledge <I try to keep *abreast* of the news.>

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

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

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

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

ab-sence \ˈab-səns\ *n* **1** : a failure to be present at a usual or expected place **2** : 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 *absent-minded* students forgot their homework today.> — **ab-sent-mind-ed-ly** *adv* <He *absentmindedly* drove past his exit.> — **ab-sent-mind-ed-ness** *n*

ab-so-lute \ˈab-sə-ˈlüt\ *adj* **1** : TOTAL **1**, COMPLETE <*absolute* darkness> **2** : not limited in <absolute power> **3** : free from doubt

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