

**A****abase**

(v.) to humiliate, degrade

(After being overthrown and abased, the deposed leader offered to bow down to his conqueror.)

**abate**

(v.) to reduce, lessen

(The rain poured down for a while, then abated.)

**abdicate**

(v.) to give up a position, usually one of leadership

(When he realized that the revolutionaries would surely win, the king abdicated his throne.)

**abduct** (v.) to kidnap, take by force

(The evildoers abducted the fairy princess from her happy home.)

**aberration** (n.) something that differs from the norm (In 1918, the Boston Red Sox won the World Series, but the success turned out to be an aberration, and the Red Sox have not won a World Series since.)

**abet** (v.) to aid, help, encourage

(The spy succeeded only because he had a friend on the inside to abet him.)

**abhor**

(v.) to hate, detest (Because he always wound up kicking himself in the head when he tried to play soccer, Oswald began to abhor the sport.)

**abide** 1. (v.) to put up with

(Though he did not agree with the decision, Chuck decided to abide by it.)

## 2. (v.) to remain

(Despite the beating they've taken from the weather throughout the millennia, the mountains abide.)

**abject** (adj.) wretched, pitiful

(After losing all her money, falling into a puddle, and breaking her ankle, Eloise was abject.)

**abjure** (v.) to reject, renounce

(To prove his honesty, the President abjured the evil policies of his wicked predecessor.)

**abnegation** (n.) denial of comfort to oneself (The holy man slept on the floor, took only cold showers, and generally followed other practices of abnegation.)

**abort** (v.) to give up on a half-finished project or effort

(After they ran out of food, the men, attempting to jump rope around the world, had to abort and go home.)

**abridge** 1. (v.) to cut down, shorten

(The publisher thought the dictionary was too long and abridged it.)

## 2. (adj.) shortened

(Moby-Dick is such a long book that even the abridged version is longer than most normal books.)

**abrogate** (v.) to abolish, usually by authority (The Bill of Rights assures that the government cannot abrogate our right to a free press.)

**abscond** (v.) to sneak away and hide (In the confusion, the super-spy absconded into the night with the secret plans.)

**absolution** (n.) freedom from blame, guilt, sin (Once all the facts were known, the jury gave Angela absolution by giving a verdict of not guilty.)

**abstain** (v.) to freely choose not to commit an action

(Everyone demanded that Angus put on the kilt, but he did not want to do it and abstained.)

**abstruse** (adj.) hard to comprehend (Everyone else in the class understood geometry easily, but John found the subject abstruse.)

**accede** (v.) to agree (When the class asked the teacher whether they could play baseball instead of learn grammar they expected him to refuse, but instead he acceded to their request.)

**accentuate**

(v.) to stress, highlight (Psychologists agree that those people who are happiest accentuate the

positive in life.)

**Accessible** (adj.) obtainable, reachable

(After studying with SparkNotes and getting a great score on the SAT, Marlana happily realized that her goal of getting into an Ivy-League college was accessible.)

**acclaim** (n.) high praise

(Greg's excellent poem won the acclaim of his friends.)

**accolade** (n.) high praise, special distinction (Everyone offered accolades to Sam after he won the Noble Prize.)

**accommodating** (adj.) helpful, obliging, polite

(Though the apartment was not big enough for three people, Arnold, Mark, and Zebulon were all friends and were accommodating to each other.)

**accord** (n.) an agreement

(After much negotiating, England and Iceland finally came to a mutually beneficial accord about fishing rights off the coast of Greenland.)

**accost** (v.) to confront verbally

(Though Antoinette was normally quite calm, when the waiter spilled soup on her for the fourth time in 15 minutes she stood up and accosted the man.)

**accretion** (n.) slow growth in size or amount (Stalactites are formed by the accretion of minerals from the roofs of caves.)

**acerbic** (adj.) biting, bitter in tone or taste (Jill became extremely acerbic and began to cruelly make fun of all her friends.)

**acquiesce** (v.) to agree without protesting (Though Mr. Correlli wanted to stay outside and work in his garage, when his wife told him that he had better come in to dinner, he acquiesced to her demands.)

**acrimony** (n.) bitterness, discord

(Though they vowed that no girl would ever come between them, Biff and Trevor could not keep acrimony from overwhelming their friendship after they both fell in love with the lovely Teresa.)

**acumen** (n.) keen insight

(Because of his mathematical acumen, Larry was able to figure out in minutes problems that took other students hours.)

**acute** 1. (adj.) sharp, severe

(Arnold could not walk because the pain in his foot was so acute.)

2. (adj.) having keen insight (Because she was so acute, Libby instantly figured out how the magician pulled off his "magic.")

**adamant** (adj.) impervious, immovable, unyielding (Though public pressure was intense, the President remained adamant about his proposal.)

**adept** (adj.) extremely skilled

(Tarzan was adept at jumping from tree to tree like a monkey.)

## A

**Adhere** 1. (n.) to stick to something

(We adhered the poster to the wall with tape.)

2. (n.) to follow devoutly

(He adhered to the dictates of his religion without question.)

**admonish**

(v.) to caution, criticize, reprove

(Joe's mother admonished him not to ruin his appetite by eating cookies before dinner.)

**adorn** (v.) to decorate

(We adorned the tree with ornaments.)

**adroit** (adj.) skillful, dexterous

(The adroit thief could pick someone's pocket without attracting notice.)

**adulation** (n.) extreme praise

(Though the book was pretty good, Marcy did not believe it deserved the adulation it received.)

**adumbrate** (v.) to sketch out in a vague way

(The coach adumbrated a game plan, but none of the players knew precisely what to do.)

**adverse** (adj.) antagonistic, unfavorable, dangerous

(Because of adverse conditions, the hikers decided to give up trying to climb the mountain.)

**advocate** 1. (v.) to argue in favor of something

(Arnold advocated turning left at the stop sign, even though everyone else thought we should turn right.) 2. (n.) a person who argues in favor of something (In addition to wanting to turn left at every stop sign, Arnold was also a great advocate of increasing national defense spending.)

**aerial** (adj.) somehow related to the air (We watched as the fighter planes conducted aerial maneuvers.)

**aesthetic** (adj.) artistic, related to the appreciation of beauty (We hired Susan as our interior decorator because she has such a fine aesthetic sense.)

**affable** (adj.) friendly, amiable (People like to be around George because he is so affable and good-natured.)

**affinity** (n.) a spontaneous feeling of closeness (Jerry didn't know why, but he felt an incredible affinity for Kramer the first time they met.)

**affluent** (adj.) rich, wealthy (Mrs. Grebelski was affluent, owning a huge house, three cars, and an island near Maine.)

**affront** (n.) an insult (Bernardo was very touchy, and took any slight as an affront to his honor.)

**aggrandize** (v.) to increase or make greater (Joseph always dropped the names of the famous people his father knew as a way to aggrandize his personal stature.)

**aggregate** 1. (n.) a whole or total (The three branches of the U.S. Government form an aggregate much more powerful than its individual parts.) 2. (v.) to gather into a mass (The dictator tried to aggregate as many people into his army as he possibly could.)

**aggrieved** (adj.) distressed, wronged, injured (The foreman mercilessly overworked his aggrieved employees.)

**agile** (adj.) quick, nimble (The dogs were too slow to catch the agile rabbit.)

**agnostic** (adj.) believing that the existence of God cannot be proven or disproven (Joey's parents are very religious, but he is agnostic.)

**agriculture** (n.) farming (It was a huge step in the progress of civilization when tribes left hunting and gathering and began to develop more sustainable methods of obtaining food, such as agriculture.)

**aisle** (n.) a passageway between rows of seats (Once we got inside the stadium we walked down the aisle to our seats.)

**alacrity** (n.) eagerness, speed (For some reason, Chuck loved to help his mother whenever he could, so when his mother asked him to set the table he did so with alacrity.)

**alias** (n.) a false name or identity (He snuck past the guards by using an alias and fake ID.)

**allay** (v.) to soothe, ease (The chairman of the Federal Reserve gave a speech to try to allay investors' fears about an economic downturn.)

**allege** (v.) to assert, usually without proof (The policeman had alleged that Marshall committed the crime, but after the investigation turned up no evidence, Marshall was set free.)

**alleviate** (v.) to relieve, make more bearable (This drug will alleviate the symptoms of the terrible disease, but only for a while.)

**allocate** (v.) to distribute, set aside (The Mayor allocated 30 percent of the funds for improving the town's schools.)

**aloof** (adj.) reserved, distant (The scientist could sometimes seem aloof, as if he didn't care about his friends or family, but really he was just thinking about quantum mechanics.)

**altercation** (n.) a dispute, fight (Jason and Lionel blamed one another for the car accident, leading to an altercation.)

**amalgamate** (v.) to bring together, unite (Because of his great charisma, the presidential candidate was able to amalgamate all democrats and republicans under his banner.)

**ambiguous** (adj.) uncertain, variably interpretable (Some people think Caesar married Cleopatra for her power, others believe he was charmed by her beauty. His actual reasons are ambiguous.)

**ambivalent** (adj.) having opposing feelings (My feelings about Calvin are ambivalent because on one hand he is a loyal friend, but on the other, he is a cruel and vicious thief.)

**ameliorate** (v.) to improve (The tense situation was ameliorated when Sam proposed a solution everyone could agree upon.)

**amenable** (adj.) willing, compliant (Our father was amenable when we asked him to drive us to the farm so we could go apple picking.)

**amenity** (n.) an item that increases comfort (Bill Gates's house is stocked with so many amenities, he never has to do anything for himself.)

**amiable** (adj.) friendly (An amiable fellow, Harry got along with just about everyone.)

**amicable** (adj.) friendly (Claudia and Jimmy got divorced, but amicably and without hard feelings.)

**amorous** (adj.) showing love, particularly sexual (Whenever Albert saw Mariah wear her slinky red dress, he began to feel quite amorous.)

**amorphous** (adj.) without definite shape or type (The effort was doomed from the start, because the reasons behind it were so amorphous and hard to pin down.)

**anachronistic** (adj.) being out of correct chronological order (In this book you're writing, you say that the Pyramids were built after the Titanic sank, which is anachronistic.)

**analgesic** (n.) something that reduces pain (Put this analgesic on the wound so that the poor man at least feels a little better.)

**analogous** (adj.) similar to, so that an analogy can be drawn (Though they are unrelated genetically, the bone structure of whales and fish is quite analogous.)

**anarchist** (n.) one who wants to eliminate all government (An anarchist, Carmine wanted to dissolve every government everywhere.)

**anathema** (n.) a cursed, detested person (I never want to see that murderer. He is an anathema to me.)

## A

**anecdote** (n.) a short, humorous account (After dinner, Marlon told an anecdote about the time he got his nose stuck in a toaster.)

**anesthesia** (n.) loss of sensation (When the nerves in his spine were damaged, Mr. Hollins suffered anesthesia in his legs.)

**anguish** (n.) extreme sadness, torment (Angelos suffered terrible anguish when he learned that Buffy had died while combating a strange mystical force of evil.)

**animated** (adj.) lively (When he begins to talk about drama, which is his true passion, he becomes very animated.)

**annex** 1. (v.) to incorporate territory or space (After defeating them in battle, the Russians annexed Poland.)

2. (n.) a room attached to a larger room or space (He likes to do his studying in a little annex attached to the main reading room in the library.)

**annul** (v.) to make void or invalid (After seeing its unforeseen and catastrophic effects, Congress sought to annul the law.)

**anomaly** (n.) something that does not fit into the normal order ("That rip in the spacetime continuum is certainly a spatial anomaly," said Spock to Captain Kirk.)

**anonymous** (adj.) being unknown, unrecognized (Mary received a love poem from an anonymous admirer.)

**antagonism** (n.) hostility (Superman and Bizarro Superman shared a mutual antagonism, and often fought.)

**antecedent** (n.) something that came before (The great tradition of Western culture had its antecedent in the culture of Ancient Greece.)

**antediluvian** (adj.) ancient (The antediluvian man still believed that Eisenhower was president of the United States and that hot dogs cost a nickel.)

**anthology** (n.) a selected collection of writings, songs, etc. (The new anthology of Bob Dylan songs contains all his greatest hits and a few songs that you might never have heard before.)

**antipathy** (n.) a strong dislike, repugnance (I know you love me, but because you are a liar and a thief, I feel nothing but antipathy for you.)

**antiquated** (adj.) old, out of date (That antiquated car has none of the features, like power windows and steering, that make modern cars so great.)

**antiseptic** (adj.) clean, sterile (The antiseptic hospital was very bare, but its cleanliness helped to keep patients healthy.)

## A

**antithesis** (n.) the absolute opposite (Your values, which hold war and violence in the highest esteem, are the antithesis of my pacifist beliefs.)

**anxiety** (n.) intense uneasiness (When he heard about the car crash, he felt anxiety because he knew that his girlfriend had been driving on the road where the accident occurred.)

**apathetic** (adj.) lacking concern, emotion (Uninterested in politics, Bruno was apathetic about whether he lived under a capitalist or communist regime.)

**apocryphal** (adj.) fictitious, false, wrong (Because I am standing before you, it seems obvious that the stories circulating about my demise were apocryphal.)

**appalling** (adj.) inspiring shock, horror, disgust (The judge found the murderer's crimes and lack of remorse appalling.)

**appease** (v.) to calm, satisfy (When the child cries, the mother gives him candy to appease him.)

**appraise** (v.) to assess the worth or value of (A realtor will come over tonight to appraise our house.)

**apprehend** 1. (v.) to seize, arrest (The criminal was apprehended at the scene.)

2. (v.) to perceive, understand, grasp (The student has trouble apprehending concepts in math and science.)

**approbation** (n.) praise (The crowd welcomed the heroes with approbation.)

**appropriate** (v.) to take, make use of (The government appropriated the farmer's land without justification.)

**aquatic** (adj.) relating to water (The marine biologist studies starfish and other aquatic creatures.)

**arable** (adj.) suitable for growing crops (The farmer purchased a plot of arable land on which he will grow corn and sprouts.)

**arbiter** (n.) one who can resolve a dispute, make a decision (The divorce court judge will serve as the arbiter between the estranged husband and wife.)

**arbitrary** (adj.) based on factors that appear random (The boy's decision to choose one college over another seems arbitrary.)

**arbitration** (n.) the process or act of resolving a dispute (The employee sought official arbitration when he could not resolve a disagreement with his supervisor.)

**arboreal** (adj.) of or relating to trees (Leaves, roots, and bark are a few arboreal traits.)

## A

**arcane** (adj.) obscure, secret, known only by a few (The professor is an expert in arcane Lithuanian literature.)

**archaic** (adj.) of or relating to an earlier period in time, outdated (In a few select regions of Western Mongolian, an archaic Chinese dialect is still spoken.)

**archetypal** (adj.) the most representative or typical example of something (Some believe George Washington, with his flowing white hair and commanding stature, was the archetypal politician.)

**ardor** (n.) extreme vigor, energy, enthusiasm (The soldiers conveyed their ardor with impassioned battle cries.)

**arid** (adj.) excessively dry (Little other than palm trees and cacti grow successfully in arid environments.)

**arrogate** (v.) to take without justification (The king arrogated the right to order executions to himself exclusively.)

**artifact** (n.) a remaining piece from an extinct culture or place (The scientists spent all day



searching the cave for artifacts from the ancient Mayan civilization.)

**artisan** (n.) a craftsman (The artisan uses wood to make walking sticks.)

**ascertain** (v.) to perceive, learn (With a bit of research, the student ascertained that some plants can live for weeks without water.)

**ascetic** (adj.) practicing restraint as a means of self-discipline, usually religious (The priest lives an ascetic life devoid of television, savory foods, and other pleasures.)

**ascribe** (v.) to assign, credit, attribute to (Some ascribe the invention of fireworks and dynamite to the Chinese.)

**aspersion** (n.) a curse, expression of ill-will (The rival politicians repeatedly cast aspersions on each others' integrity.)

**aspire** (v.) to long for, aim toward (The young poet aspires to publish a book of verse someday.)

**assail** (v.) to attack (At dawn, the war planes assailed the boats in the harbor.)

**assess** (v.) to evaluate (A crew arrived to assess the damage after the crash.)

**assiduous** (adj.) hard-working, diligent (The construction workers erected the skyscraper during two years of assiduous labor.)

**assuage** (v.) to ease, pacify (The mother held the baby to assuage its fears.)

## A

**astute** (adj.) very clever, crafty (Much of Roger's success in politics results from his ability to provide astute answers to reporters' questions.)

**asylum** 1. (n.) a place of refuge, protection, a sanctuary (For Thoreau, the forest served as an asylum from the pressures of urban life.) 2. (n.) an institution in which the insane are kept (Once diagnosed by a certified psychiatrist, the man was put in an asylum.)

**atone** (v.) to repent, make amends (The man atoned for forgetting his wife's birthday by buying her five dozen roses.)

**atrophy** (v.) to wither away, decay (If muscles do not receive enough blood, they will soon atrophy and die.)

**attain** (v.) to achieve, arrive at (The athletes strived to attain their best times in competition.)

**attribute** 1. (v.) to credit, assign (He attributes all of his success to his mother's undying encouragement.) 2. (n.) a facet or trait (Among the beetle's most peculiar attributes is its thorny protruding eyes.)

**atypical** (adj.) not typical, unusual (Screaming and crying is atypical adult behavior.)

**audacious** (adj.) excessively bold (The security guard was shocked by the fan's audacious attempt to offer him a bribe.)

**audible** (adj.) able to be heard (The missing person's shouts were unfortunately not audible.)

**augment** (v.) to add to, expand (The eager student seeks to augment his knowledge of French vocabulary by reading French literature.)

**auspicious** (adj.) favorable, indicative of good things (The tennis player considered the sunny forecast an auspicious sign that she would win her match.)

**austere** (adj.) very bare, bleak (The austere furniture inside the abandoned house made the place feel haunted.)

**avarice** (n.) excessive greed (The banker's avarice led him to amass a tremendous personal fortune.)

**avenge** (v.) to seek revenge (The victims will take justice into their own hands and strive to avenge themselves against the men who robbed them.)

**aversion** (n.) a particular dislike for something (Because he's from Hawaii, Ben has an aversion to autumn, winter, and cold climates in general.)