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abnormal ADJECTIVE not normal; unusual
▷ **abnormally** ADVERB **abnormality** NOUN

aboard ADVERB, PREPOSITION on or into a ship or aircraft or train

abolish VERB **abolishes, abolishing, abolished** put an end to a law or custom etc.
▷ **abolition** (ab-ol-ish-on) NOUN

abominable ADJECTIVE very bad or unpleasant
▷ **abominably** ADVERB **abomination** NOUN

aborigine (ab-er-ij-in-ee) NOUN **aborigines** one of the original inhabitants of a country
▷ **aboriginal** ADJECTIVE, NOUN
Aborigine one of the original inhabitants of Australia who lived there before the Europeans arrived
[from Latin *ab origine* = from the beginning]

abort VERB **aborts, aborting, aborted** put an end to something before it has been completed • *They aborted the space flight because of problems.*

abortion NOUN **abortions** an operation to remove an unborn child from the womb before it has developed enough to survive

abortive ADJECTIVE unsuccessful • *an abortive attempt.*

abound VERB **abounds, abounding, abounded** 1 be plentiful or abundant • *Fish abound in the river.* 2 have something in great quantities • *The river abounds in fish.*

about PREPOSITION 1 near in amount or size or time etc. • *It costs about £5.* • *Come about two o'clock.* 2 on the subject of; in connection with • *Tell me about your holiday.* 3 all round; in various parts of • *They ran about the playground.*

about ADVERB 1 in various directions • *They were running about.* 2 not far away • *He is somewhere about.*
be about to be going to do something

above PREPOSITION 1 higher than 2 more than

above ADVERB at or to a higher place

abrasive ADJECTIVE 1 that scrapes things away • *an abrasive wheel.* 2 harsh • *an abrasive manner.*

abreast ADVERB 1 side by side 2 keeping up with something

abridge VERB **abridges, abridging, abridged** shorten a book etc. by using fewer words • *an abridged edition.*
▷ **abridgement** NOUN

abroad ADVERB in or to another country

abrupt ADJECTIVE 1 sudden or hasty • *his abrupt departure.* 2 rather rude and unfriendly; curt • *She has quite an abrupt manner.*
▷ **abruptly** ADVERB **abruptness** NOUN

abscess (ab-sis) NOUN **abscesses** an inflamed place where pus has formed in the body

abscond VERB **absconds, absconding, absconded** go away secretly • *The cashier had absconded with the money.*

absent ADJECTIVE not here; not present • *absent from school.*
▷ **absence** NOUN

absent (ab-sent) VERB **absents, absenting, absented**
absent yourself stay away

Thesaurus

abnormal ADJECTIVE 1 *The tests produced some abnormal results.* ► unusual, untypical, uncommon, extraordinary, exceptional, unrepresentative, aberrant, anomalous, freak 2 *He was surprised by her abnormal beliefs and behaviour.* ► strange, peculiar, odd, weird, curious, eccentric, wayward, perverse, erratic, queer, bizarre AN OPPOSITE IS normal

abnormality NOUN 1 *The study gave evidence of some abnormality.* ► strangeness, peculiarity, irregularity, oddity, oddness, aberration, anomaly, deviation, eccentricity, idiosyncrasy, waywardness, singularity 2 *The baby was born with several abnormalities.* ► deformity, malformation

abolish VERB *a decision to abolish the community charge* ► end, cancel, put an end to, (*more informal*) get rid of, (*more informal*) do away with, (*technical*) abrogate, annul, repeal, remove, rescind, revoke, quash, suppress, terminate, eliminate, eradicate, overturn, withdraw AN OPPOSITE IS create

abominable ADJECTIVE *The revolt was suppressed with abominable cruelty.* ► atrocious, appalling, detestable, hateful, odious, detestable, vile, obnoxious, brutal, dreadful, abhorrent, diabolical, disgusting, repellent, horrifying AN OPPOSITE IS humane

about-turn NOUN *The change in policy amounted to a complete about-turn.* ► reversal, U-turn, volte face, change of direction, change of course, change of mind, sea change

abrupt ADJECTIVE 1 *She gave a cry and came to an abrupt halt.* ► sudden, hurried, unexpected, quick, hasty, rapid, swift, precipitate, unforeseen, unpredicted 2 *Beyond the cliff edge they could see an abrupt drop.* ► sheer, sharp, steep, precipitous AN OPPOSITE IS gradual 3 *He had a decidedly abrupt manner.* ► blunt, harsh, curt, terse, gruff, rude, offhand, brusque, insensitive, outspoken, plain-spoken OPPOSITES ARE polite, courteous

absent ADJECTIVE 1 *The man had been absent from work all week.* ► away, off, missing, (*more informal*) skiving AN OPPOSITE IS present 2 *Her eyes had an absent look.* ► distracted, dreamy, far-away, absorbed, inattentive, preoccupied, absent-minded OPPOSITES ARE attentive, alert

absent-minded ADJECTIVE *Stephen looked absent-minded as he hurried off.* ► forgetful, distracted, preoccupied, inattentive, absorbed, scatterbrained OPPOSITES ARE attentive, alert

absolute ADJECTIVE 1 *The house was an absolute mess.* ► complete, total, utter, sheer, perfect, downright, unmitigated 2 *The venture had been an absolute success.* ► complete, total, outright, categorical, out-and-out, unqualified 3 *Speak only the absolute truth.* ► definite, positive, categorical, undoubted, unquestioned 4 *The country had known only absolute rulers.* ► autocratic, despotic, dictatorial, tyrannical, omnipotent, sovereign, totalitarian, unrestricted, undemocratic

absolutely ADVERB *You are absolutely right.* ► completely, totally, utterly, perfectly, quite, unquestionably, unreservedly

absorb VERB 1 *Wood absorbs wetness and expands.* ► soak up, suck up, assimilate, take in AN OPPOSITE IS emit 2 *It is difficult to absorb so much information at once.* ► assimilate, take in, soak up, digest, comprehend 3 *Getting through the day absorbed all her energies.* ► consume, drain, exhaust, use up, take up, swallow up 4 *Special buffers absorb the impact.* ► cushion, deaden, soften, reduce, lessen 5 *The children were absorbed by their game.* ► preoccupy, engross, captivate, occupy, enthral, fascinate, interest, involve, rivet

abstain VERB **abstain from** *They agreed to abstain from violent action for the time being.* ► go without, give up, forgo, refrain from, eschew, avoid, reject, renounce, deny yourself, desist from AN OPPOSITE IS indulge (yourself)

abstemious ADJECTIVE *They lead an abstemious life.* ► frugal, temperate, austere, ascetic, restrained, sparing, puritanical, strict, spartan, sober AN OPPOSITE IS self-indulgent

abstract ADJECTIVE 1 *Abstract concepts are hard to define.* ► theoretical, conceptual, hypothetical, academic, notional, metaphysical, philosophical, intangible, intellectual, indefinite AN OPPOSITE IS concrete 2 *The pieces are stitched together to form a large abstract design.* ► symbolic, non-pictorial, non-representational AN OPPOSITE IS representational

abstruse ADJECTIVE *He had spent a lifetime poring over abstruse codes.* ► obscure, cryptic, complex, difficult, hard, puzzling, incomprehensible, perplexing, mysterious, unfathomable AN OPPOSITE IS obvious

absurd ADJECTIVE *It was an absurd suggestion.* ► ridiculous, preposterous, ludicrous, unreasonable, nonsensical, incredible, irrational, senseless, insane, mad, anomalous, silly, stupid, illogical, incongruous, meaningless, paradoxical, untenable, laughable, (*more informal*) crazy, (*more informal*) daft, (*more informal*) barmy, (*more informal*) zany OPPOSITES ARE reasonable, sensible

abundant ADJECTIVE *Luckily, there was an abundant supply of things to do.* ► plentiful, copious, ample, liberal, profuse, generous, lavish, rich, bountiful, prolific, inexhaustible OPPOSITES ARE scarce, sparse

absentee NOUN **absentees** a person who is absent
▷ **absenteeism** NOUN

absent-minded ADJECTIVE having your mind on other things; forgetful

absolute ADJECTIVE complete; not restricted • *absolute power.*
▷ **absolutely** ADVERB

absolute zero NOUN the lowest possible temperature, calculated as -27,315°C

absolve VERB **absolves, absolving, absolved** 1 clear a person of blame or guilt 2 release a person from a promise or obligation

absorb VERB **absorbs, absorbing, absorbed** 1 soak up a liquid or gas 2 receive something and reduce its effects • *The buffers absorbed most of the shock.* 3 take up a person's attention or time
▷ **absorption** NOUN

absorbent ADJECTIVE able to soak up liquids easily • *absorbent paper.*

abstain VERB **abstains, abstaining, abstained** 1 keep yourself from doing something; refrain 2 choose not to use your vote
▷ **abstention** NOUN

abstinence NOUN abstaining, especially from alcohol
▷ **abstinent** ADJECTIVE

abstract (ab-strakt) ADJECTIVE 1 concerned with ideas, not solid objects • *Truth, hope, and danger are all abstract.* 2 (said about a painting or sculpture) showing the artist's ideas or feelings, not showing a recognizable person or thing

absurd ADJECTIVE ridiculous or foolish
▷ **absurdly** ADVERB **absurdity** NOUN

abundance NOUN a large amount, plenty

abundant ADJECTIVE plentiful
▷ **abundantly** ADVERB

abuse (ab-yooz) VERB **abuses, abusing, abused** 1 use something badly or wrongly;

misuse **2** hurt someone or treat them cruelly **3** say unpleasant things about a person or thing

abuse (ab-yooss) *NOUN* **abuses** **1** a misuse • *the abuse of power.* **2** ill-treatment **3** physical harm or cruelty done to someone

abusive *ADJECTIVE* rude and insulting • *abusive remarks.*

abysmal (ab-iz-mal) *ADJECTIVE* extremely bad • *abysmal ignorance.*

abyss (ab-iss) *NOUN* **abysses** an extremely deep pit [from Greek *abyssos* = bottomless]

AC *ABBREVIATION* alternating current

academic *ADJECTIVE* **1** to do with education or studying, especially at a school or college or university **2** theoretical; having no practical use • *an academic point.*

academic *NOUN* **academics** a university or college teacher

academy *NOUN* **academies** **1** a school or college, especially one for specialized training **2** a society of scholars or artists • *The Royal Academy.* [from Greek *Akademeia*, the name of the garden where the Greek philosopher Plato taught his pupils The garden was named after *Akademos*, one of the ancient heroes of Athens]

accelerate *VERB* **accelerates, accelerating, accelerated** make or become quicker; increase speed

acceleration *NOUN* **accelerations** **1** the rate at which the speed of something increases **2** the rate of change of velocity

accelerator *NOUN* **accelerators** **1** the pedal that a driver presses to make a motor vehicle go faster **2** a thing used to increase the speed of something

accent (ak-sent) *NOUN* **accents** **1** the way a person pronounces the words of a language • *She has a French accent.* **2** the main emphasis or stress in a word • *In 'strawberry', the accent is on 'straw-'.* **3** a mark placed over a letter to show how it is pronounced, e.g. on *fête*

Thesaurus

abuse *NOUN* **1** *The action amounted to a serious abuse of authority.* ► misuse, misapplication **2** *No society can tolerate the abuse of children.* ► maltreatment, mistreatment, ill-treatment, misuse, (sexual) assault, molestation **3** *A group of mothers yelled abuse.* ► insults, invective, obscenities, curses, slanders

abuse *VERB* **1** *Players on both sides were abusing the referee.* ► insult, be rude to, curse, swear at, call someone names, malign, revile, defame, slander **2** *He was accused of abusing children.* ► mistreat, maltreat, ill-treat, (sexually) assault, molest, interfere with, batter, harm, hurt **3** *The judge had abused his authority in his directions to the jury.* ► misuse, misapply, exploit

abusive *ADJECTIVE* *He was thrown out of the hall for yelling abusive remarks.* ► insulting, derogatory, rude, offensive, opprobrious, pejorative, defamatory, disparaging, scathing, hurtful, impolite, libellous, obscene, scurrilous, slanderous, vituperative OPPOSITES ARE friendly, polite

abysmal *ADJECTIVE* **1** *The service was abysmal.* ► poor, very bad, awful, appalling, dreadful, disgraceful, terrible, worthless **2** *the abysmal ignorance of science in Britain* ► profound, extreme, utter, complete, deep, unfathomable, immeasurable, incalculable, infinite

abyss *NOUN* *There is still a deep abyss to be crossed.* ► chasm, pit, void, gulf, crater, fissure, gap, hole, opening, rift

academic *ADJECTIVE* **1** *She had spent her entire life in an academic environment.* ► educational, scholastic, scholarly, pedagogical **2** *They are academic historians and not writers for the popular market.* ► scholarly, studious, learned, intellectual, erudite, educated, cultured, bookish, clever, highbrow, intelligent, well-read, (*more informal*) brainy **3** *The point is of more than academic interest.* ► theoretical, notional, conceptual, conjectural, hypothetical, speculative AN OPPOSITE IS practical

academic *NOUN* *a group of visiting academics* ► scholar, intellectual, professor, lecturer, thinker, (*more informal*) egghead, (*more informal*) highbrow

academy *NOUN* *The students of the academy were involved in a project to catalogue the papers.* ► college, educational institution, training establishment, conservatory, conservatoire, university, institute

accede *VERB* **accede to** *He acceded to all her demands.* ► agree to, consent to, accept, grant, comply with, concur with

accelerate *VERB* **1** *The vehicle accelerated sharply.* ► go faster, speed up, pick up speed, quicken speed OPPOSITES ARE decelerate, slow down **2** *The oil-producing countries have agreed to accelerate production.* ► increase, step up, stimulate, expedite, promote, spur on

accent *NOUN* **1** *She spoke with a distinct Welsh accent.* ► pronunciation, intonation, inflection, tone, cadence, enunciation **2** *There is an accent on the first syllable.* ► stress, emphasis, accentuation, force **3** *The accent is on economy.* ► emphasis, stress

accept *VERB* **accepts, accepting, accepted** **1** take a thing that is offered or presented **2** say yes to an invitation, offer, etc.
▷ **acceptance** *NOUN*
USAGE Do not confuse with **except**.

acceptable *ADJECTIVE* good enough to accept; pleasing
▷ **acceptably** *ADVERB* **acceptability** *NOUN*

access (ak-sess) *NOUN* **1** a way to enter or reach something **2** the right to use or look at something

access *VERB* **accesses, accessing, accessed** find information that has been stored in a computer

accessible *ADJECTIVE* **1** able to be reached **2** able to be understood easily
▷ **accessibly** *ADVERB* **accessibility** *NOUN*

accessory (ak-sess-er-ee) *NOUN* **accessories** **1** an extra thing that goes with something **2** a person who helps another with a crime

accident *NOUN* **accidents** an unexpected happening, especially one causing injury or damage
▷ **accidental** *ADJECTIVE* **accidentally** *ADVERB*
by accident by chance; without its being arranged in advance

acclaim *VERB* **acclaims, acclaiming, acclaimed** welcome or applaud
▷ **acclaim** *NOUN* **acclamation** *NOUN*

accommodate *VERB* **accommodates, accommodating, accommodated** **1** provide somebody with a place to live, work, or sleep overnight **2** help by providing something • *We can accommodate you with skis.*

Thesaurus

accept *VERB* **1** *I decided to accept the offer.* ► receive, take, get, welcome, (*more informal*) jump at **2** *The council does not accept responsibility.* ► admit, acknowledge, bear, assume, undertake **3** *Reluctantly, he had to accept the decision.* ► agree to, go along with, accede to, acquiesce in, defer to, comply with, consent to, concur with, abide by, acknowledge, be reconciled to, recognize, resign yourself to, submit to, yield to AN OPPOSITE IS reject

acceptable *ADJECTIVE* **1** *The agreement was acceptable to the majority.* ► welcome, agreeable, appreciated, gratifying, pleasant, pleasing, worthwhile **2** *The courses fell below an acceptable standard.* ► adequate, satisfactory, reasonable, tolerable, admissible, appropriate, passable, suitable AN OPPOSITE IS unacceptable

acceptance *NOUN* **1** *The plan found wide acceptance.* ► approval, consent, acquiescence, agreement, welcome AN OPPOSITE IS refusal **2** *Their acceptance of the explanation came as some relief.* ► belief (in), confidence (in)

access *NOUN* **1** *The away fans could not gain access to that end of the stadium.* ► entry, admission, admittance, right of entry **2** *The building has no access at the front.* ► entrance, entry, way in, approach

accessible *ADJECTIVE* **1** *The library has been made accessible for wheelchairs.* ► reachable, within reach, at hand, available, convenient, (*more informal*) get-at-able, (*more informal*) handy AN OPPOSITE IS inaccessible **2** *Ministers want to be more accessible.* ► approachable, available, informal, welcoming

accessory *NOUN* **1** *Accessories include a remote control.* ► attachment, fitting, extra, addition, appendage, extension **2** *He might be charged with being an accessory to the crime.* ► accomplice, associate, collaborator (in)

accident *NOUN* **1** *He died in an accident while working on his boat.* ► misfortune, mishap, disaster, calamity, catastrophe, misadventure **2** *She had witnessed a traffic accident.* ► collision, smash, (*more informal*) pile-up **3** *It was pure accident that we met that day.* ► chance, luck, coincidence, fate, a fluke
by accident *I found it by accident.* ► by chance, accidentally, fortuitously, unwittingly, coincidentally

accidental *ADJECTIVE* *Make sure you avoid accidental erasure of the tape.* ► unintentional, chance, coincidental, fortuitous, inadvertent, unintended, adventitious, arbitrary, casual, lucky, random AN OPPOSITE IS intentional

accidentally *ADVERB* *We met accidentally.* ► by accident, by chance, fortuitously, unintentionally, unwittingly AN OPPOSITE IS intentionally

acclaim *VERB* *The film has been widely acclaimed in the press.* ► praise, applaud, commend, cheer, congratulate, celebrate

acclimatize *VERB* *They soon became acclimatized to their new surroundings.* ► accustom, adjust, familiarize

accolade *NOUN* *He received the accolade of a knighthood.* ► praise, honour, tribute, recognition, admiration, acclamation, plaudits

accommodate *VERB* **1** *We will do our best to accommodate your wishes.* ► serve, help, aid, assist, supply, oblige, provide **2** *The lodge accommodates nine residents.* ► house, lodge, provide for, cater for, shelter, board, take in, hold, (*more informal*) put up

accommodating *ADJECTIVE* *The local tourist office is very accommodating.* ► helpful, obliging, cooperative, considerate