


# Aa

**A**<sup>1</sup> the first letter of the alphabet.  **A1, A2, A3, A4** standard paper sizes, each half of the previous one, e.g. A4 = 297 × 210 mm. **from A to Z** from beginning to end.

**A**<sup>2</sup> *abbreviation* ampere(s).

**Å** *abbreviation* ångström(s).

**a** *adjective* (**an** - is used before a vowel sound) (called the *indefinite article*) **1** one person or thing but not any specific one, *I need a knife.* **2** per, we pay \$40 a year; twice a day.

**a**<sup>-1</sup> *prefix* **1** on; to; towards (as in *afoot, ashore, aside*). **2** in the process of (as in *a-hunting*).

**a**<sup>-2</sup> *prefix* not, without (as in *amoral, asymmetrical*). [from Greek *a-* = not]

**aardvark** (**ahd-vahk**) *noun* an African termite-eating animal with a bulky piglike body and a thick tail. [from Afrikaans *aarde* = earth, + *vark* = pig]

**Aaron** (**air-ruhn**) brother of Moses and traditional founder of the Jewish priesthood.

**ab-** *prefix* (changing to **abs-** before *c* and *t*) away; from (as in *abduct, abnormal, abstract*). [from Latin *ab-* = away]

**aback** *adverb* **taken aback** disconcerted.

**abacus** (**ab-uh-kuhs**) *noun* (*plural abacuses*) a frame containing parallel rods with beads that slide along them, used for counting.

**abalone** (**ab-uh-loh-nee**) *noun* an edible mollusc with an ear-shaped shell lined with mother-of-pearl.

**abandon** *verb* **1** to go away from (a person or thing or place) without intending to return; *abandon ship*, leave a sinking ship. **2** to give up, to cease work on, *abandon the attempt*. **3** to yield completely to an emotion or impulse, *abandoned himself to despair*. - **abandon** *noun* careless freedom of manner. **abandonment** *noun*

**abandoned** *adjective* (of behaviour) showing abandon, lacking restraint, depraved.

**abase** *verb* to humiliate, to degrade. **abasement** *noun*

**abashed** *adjective* embarrassed, ashamed.

**abate** *verb* to make or become less; *the storm abated*, died down. **abatement** *noun*

**abattoir** (**ab-uh-twah**) *noun* a place where animals are killed for food, a slaughterhouse. [French]

**abbess** (**ab-ess**) *noun* a woman who is head of an abbey of nuns.

**abbey** *noun* **1** a building occupied by monks or nuns living as a community. **2** the community itself. **3** a church or house that was formerly an abbey, *Westminster Abbey*.

**abbot** *noun* a man who is head of an abbey of monks.

**abbreviate** *verb* to shorten (especially a word or title).

**abbreviation** *noun* **1** abbreviating, being abbreviated. **2** a shortened form of a word or title.

**ABC** *noun* **1** the alphabet. **2** the elementary facts of a subject, *the ABC of music*. **3** an alphabetically arranged guide. - **ABC** *abbreviation* Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

**abdicate** *verb* to resign from a throne or other high office; to give up (office, responsibility, etc.). **abdication** *noun*

**abdomen** (**ab-duh-muhn**) *noun* **1** the part of the body below the chest and diaphragm, containing most of the digestive organs. **2** the hindmost section of the body of an insect, spider, or crustacean, *head, thorax, and abdomen*. **abdominal** (**uhb-dom-uh-nuhl**) *adjective* **abdominally** *adverb*

**abduct** *verb* to carry off (a person) illegally by force or fraud. **abduction** *noun* **abductor** *noun* [from *ab-*, + Latin *ductum* = led]

**Abelian** (**uh-bee-lee-uhn**) *adjective* (of a mathematical group) in which the operation applied to the elements is commutative, as in (4 + 3) and (3 + 4), which are equal.

**aberrant** (**ab-uh-ruhnt**) *adjective* deviating from the normal type or accepted standard. [from *ab-*, + Latin *errare* = wander]

**aberration** (**ab-uh-ray-shuhn**) *noun* **1** a deviation from what is normal. **2** a mental or moral lapse. **3** distortion, e.g. of an image produced through an imperfect lens.

**abet** *verb* (**abetted**, **abetting**) to encourage or assist in committing an offence. **abeter** *noun* (or, in legal use) **abbetor** *noun*, **abetment** *noun*

**abeyance** (uh-bay-uhns) *noun* **in abeyance** (of a right or rule or problem etc.) suspended for a time.

**abhor** (uhb-haw) *verb* (**abhorred**, **abhorring**) to detest. [from Latin *abhorre* = shrink in fear]

**abhorrent** (*rhymes with torrent*) *adjective* detestable. **abhorrence** *noun* detestation.

**abide** *verb* (**abided** (in sense 1 **abode**), **abiding**) 1 (*old use*) to remain, to dwell. 2 to bear, to endure, *can't abide opera*.  **abide by** to act in accordance with; *abide by a promise*, keep it; *abide by the consequences*, accept them.

**abiding** *adjective* long-lasting, permanent.

**Abidjan** (ab-uh-jahn) the capital and chief port of Ivory Coast.

**ability** *noun* 1 the quality that makes an action or process possible, the capacity or power to do something. 2 cleverness, talent.

**abiotic** (ay-by-ot-ik) *adjective* not having life. [from *a-*, + Greek *bios* = life]

**abject** (ab-jekt) *adjective* 1 wretched, without resources, *abject poverty*. 2 lacking all pride, *an abject coward*; *an abject apology*, a very humble one. **abjectly** *adverb* [from *ab-*, + Latin *-jectum* = thrown]

**abjure** (uhb-joor) *verb* to renounce; to repudiate. **abjuration** *noun* [from *ab-*, + Latin *jurare* = take an oath]

**Abkhazia** (ab-kah-zee-uh) a self-governing republic in NW Georgia, south of the Caucasus mountains on the Black Sea.

**ablative** (ab-luh-tiv) *noun* the grammatical case (especially in Latin) that indicates the agent, instrument, or location of an action.

**ablaze** *adjective* blazing.

**able** *adjective* 1 having the ability to do something. 2 having great ability, competent.  **able-bodied** *adjective* fit and strong. **ably** *adverb*

**ablution** (uh-bloo-shuhn) *noun* ceremonial washing of hands, vessels, etc. **ablutions** *plural noun* (*informal*) 1 washing of the body, *perform one's ablutions*. 2 a place for doing this.

**ABN** *abbreviation* Australian business number.

**abnegation** (ab-nuh-gay-shuhn) *noun* renunciation; self-denial.

**abnormal** *adjective* different from what is normal. **abnormally** *adverb* **abnormality** *noun*

**aboard** *adverb* & *preposition* on or into a ship or aircraft or train.

**abode**<sup>1</sup> *noun* (*old use*) a dwelling place.

**abode**<sup>2</sup> *see* **abide**.

**abolish** *verb* to put an end to, *abolish slavery*. **abolition** (ab-uh-lish-uhn) *noun*

**abolitionist** *noun* a person who favours the abolition of a practice or institution, especially capital punishment or (formerly) slavery.

**abominable** *adjective* 1 detestable, loathsome. 2 very bad or unpleasant.

**Abominable Snowman** = **yeti**.

**abominably** *adverb*

**abominate** *verb* to detest, to loathe.

**abomination** *noun* 1 loathing. 2 something loathed.

**aboriginal** *adjective* 1 indigenous, inhabiting a land from the earliest times, *aboriginal inhabitants* or *plants*. 2 (usually **Aboriginal**) of Australian Aboriginal people. – **Aboriginal** *noun* 1 an aboriginal inhabitant. 2 (usually **Aboriginal**) an aboriginal inhabitant of Australia. 3 (*informal*) an Australian Aboriginal language.  **Aboriginal English** English, as used by an aboriginal people, often in combination with words and constructions from one or more Aboriginal languages. **Aboriginality** *noun*

**aborigine** (ab-uh-rjij-uh-nee) *noun* 1 an aboriginal inhabitant. 2 (usually **Aborigine**) an aboriginal Australian. [from Latin *ab origine* = from the beginning]

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**Usage** Both *Aborigine(s)* and *Aboriginal(s)* are used to refer to the indigenous people of Australia. In many contexts, however, it is preferable to use the terms *Aboriginal person* and *Aboriginal people*.

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**abort** (uh-bawt) *verb* 1 to cause an abortion of or to; to suffer abortion. 2 to end or cause to end prematurely and unsuccessfully.

**abortion** *noun* 1 the expulsion (either spontaneous or induced) of a foetus from the womb before it is able to survive, especially in the first 28 weeks of pregnancy. 2 a misshapen creature or thing.

**abortionist** *noun* a person who practises abortion, especially illegally.