

Nota Bene: A

A

a capella: singing without musical accompaniment

a fortiori: for a still stronger reason; even more certain; all the more

à la: in the manner of

a priori: from the former, independent of observation, experience, or sense perception (deduction)

a posteriori: from the latter, dependent upon observation, experience, or sense perception (induction)

abash: to humiliate or shame

abate: to end or reduce

abderian: given to incessant or idiotic laughter

abdicate: to formally give up a position or responsibility

abdormition: numb feeling in a limb

aberration: to deviate from the normal

abet: to encourage or assist a plan or activity

abeyance: a temporary lapse in activity

abhorrent: loathsome or contemptible

abject: utter hopelessness, destitution, or resignation

abjure: to renounce or reject

ablution: washing or cleansing of the body as a religious rite; any cleansing, purification, or purging

abnegate: to renounce, surrender, or deny privilege to oneself

aboriginal: indigenous or native to an area; the first of its kind in a region

absolute: unconditioned by qualifications or limitations

absolutize: to make any aspect, viewpoint, or principle absolute

abrade: to irritate by rubbing

abridge: to shorten or reduce

abrogate: to nullify or abolish

abscond: to secretly depart

absolve: to formally pronounce guiltless or blameless

abstemious: consuming food or drink in moderation

abstinence: to voluntarily do without food, drink, or pleasure

abstruse: complex or difficult to understand

absurdum: absurd

accede: to give one's consent

accentuate: to intensify or accent

accidens: a nonessential but primary quality or the external manifestation of a substance

accolade: a mark of acknowledgment or expression of praise

accord: a formal reaching of agreement

accretion: a slow build up or enlargement

actuate: to incite or move to action; to motivate

acculturation: alteration of one culture traceable to interaction with another

acquiescence: the act of passive agreement or assent without objection

acrid: biting or harsh in odor or taste; deeply or violently bitter

acrimonious: mean-spirited, bitter, or ill-natured

acronym: a word formed from the initial letters or groups of letters or words in a set phrase or series of words

acrophobia: an abnormal fear of heights

acrophonic: the use of a word as the name of the alphabetic symbol representing the initial sound of that word

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acropolis: upper city
acumen: keenness of judgment
acute: sharp, shrewd, or severe
ad captandum vulgus: to appeal to the crowd
ad hoc: for this particular purpose (common usage: improvise)
ad libitum: at will or freely or at pleasure (abbreviated ad lib.)
ad locum: at the place (abbreviated ad loc.)
ad hominem: to the person; i.e., to appeal to feelings rather than reason
ad infinitum: endlessly, infinity
ad nauseum: to a sickening or excessive degree
adage: a short proverb or saying
adamant: unwilling to submit; stubborn and unyielding; historically, a legendary stone of infinite hardness
addendum: something additional
adduce: to cite as an example of justification
adherent: someone who ascribes to an opinion or belief
adjudicate: to employ judicial procedure as a means of hearing and settling a case; to judge
adjunct: an associate or assistant; something added to another thing
adjure: to command solemnly as if under oath under threat of penalty
adroit: skillful, adept
adulterate: to corrupt or make impure
aesthete: someone devoted to beauty or beautiful things
affability: the quality of being easy to talk to and gracious
affected: false, artificial
affinity: a feeling of shared attraction
aflunters: state of disorder
agape: an early Christian (New Testament) word from the Greek meaning God's love for humanity or human love that transcends ordinary boundaries
aggrandize: to make bigger or greater; inflate
agnosticism: the belief that it is impossible to know with certainty the existence of ultimate cause; i.e., the being of God
akin: showing a similar feature or quality
alacrity: eager, cheerful rapidity or promptness
albatross: a significant impediment, handicap, or burden
algebra: to set bones (as a doctor); the methodology used to balance, set or solve a general equation
allay: to ease or put something (a doubt or concern) to rest; to calm
alia iacta est: the die is cast
alias: an assumed name
allude: to make passing reference to
alter ego: another self
alogos: irrational
altruism: selflessness, good-natured action intended for the betterment of others
amalgamate: to blend thoroughly
ambience (ambiance): a feeling or atmosphere associated with a place or individual
ambiguous: unclear; an informal logical fallacy committed when the inference to the conclusion relies upon shifting meanings within the course of an argument (also called a sophism)
ambivalent: of two minds; uncertain
ameliorate: to make something better or tolerable
amenable: agreeable

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amend: to formally alter from the original
amenity: a pleasant manner or custom
amiable: possessing a pleasant, cordial nature
amoral: without moral discretion or standards
amorous: strongly disposed toward love in sexual terms
amorphous: formless, without shape
amortize: to pay off or reduce a debt gradually through regular payments
annus: a year (a circuit of the sun), **annual**
anachronistic: out of the proper time
analogous: similar to to such a degree that an analogy may be drawn
analysis: a way of thinking that begins with general propositions and derives consequent constituent conclusions or properties (deduction)
anarchy: absence of law or order
anathema: detestable and unacceptable; a formal curse or denunciation
ancien régime: the political and social system of France before the revolution of 1789
ancillary: secondary or subordinate
androgynous: showing the characteristic traits of both man and woman
anecdote: a short account of an event
anomaly: something different or irregular
antebellum: the period preceding the American Civil War
antecedent: what came before; also called the *implicans* or the *protasis*; what follows the “if” in a conditional statement
antediluvian: the period of time before the worldwide flood of Noah’s time
antinomy: an "apparent" contradiction between two equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles (e.g., divine sovereignty and human accountability)
antipathy: a long-held feeling of dislike or aversion
antiquity: the quality of pertaining to a long time ago; dating back to ancient times
antithesis: the opposite or highest possible contrast
antonym: a word opposite in meaning to another
apeiron: the boundless (from the Greek philosophy Anaximander of Miletus)
aphorism: a short saying that illustrates an important principle or observation
aplomb: assurance
apocalyptic: revelation; foretelling imminent disaster
apocryphal: dubious authenticity
apparition: a spirit or a ghost; a supernatural appearance
appellation: title or name
apposite: suitable, well-adapted, pertinent, relevant
apropos: opportunely
arabesque: intricate decorative patterns involving intertwining lines and sometimes incorporating flowers, animals, and fruits
arbiter: a person who acts as a judge to mediate a dispute
arbitrary: a purely personal preference
archaic: old-fashioned, obsolete
archetype: the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based, a prototype
ardent: intense, passionate, devoted

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ardor: a strong feeling of passion, energy, or zeal
arduous: requiring exceptional effort or care
argument: in logic, any group of propositions of which one (the conclusion) is claimed to follow in truth from the others (the premise or premises)
arithmetica: (Greek) the theory of numbers
arratos: (Greek) terms without a ratio
arrhetos: inexpressible
ars gratia artis: art for art's sake
articulate: to express oneself clearly and effectively
ascetic: a person who chooses a life of strict self-denial
aseity: existence originating from and having no source other than itself
asperity: harshness, severity
aspersion: slander
assay: to analyze for particular components; to determine weight, quality, etc.
assiduous: constant, persistent
assimilate: to absorb into a system or culture
assuage: to ease, to pacify
astrology: the study of the stars
astronomy: the law of the stars
ataraxia: a state of pleasant well-being attained by rational disciplined moderation (from the philosophy of Epicurus)
atom: indivisible
audacious: bold, daring, adventurous, brazen, fearless
augmentation: a process of increasing in extent, size, or scope
auspices: support, encouragement, or patronage
auspicious: promising, likely to be accompanied by good fortune
austere: self-disciplined or strict
authoritarian: the demand of blind obedience to a leader
authoritative: official or conclusion; carrying the weight of truth
autonomous: self law (being a law unto oneself); characterized by self-sufficiency or independence from outside (especially transcendent) authority
avant-garde: relating to the latest trends, especially in the world of art; of a new or experimental nature
avarice: lust for riches
avenge: to exact punishment for or on behalf of someone
aver: to claim to be true; to avouch
avow: to declare boldly
axiom: a common notion that underlies logical thinking as a fundamental, unproveable assumption