

The
AMERICAN
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the
English
Language

FIFTH
EDITION

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

BOSTON NEW YORK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The American Heritage dictionary of the English language. -- 5th ed.
p. cm.

Previous ed.: 2000.

ISBN 978-0-547-04101-8

1. English language--Dictionaries.

PE1628.A623 2011

423--dc22

2011004777

Manufactured in the United States of America

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10-QGV-18 17 16 15 14

< *actus*, past participle of *agere*, to drive, do; see **ag-** in App. I.]

act-tress (ăk'trīs) *n.* A woman who is an actor. See Usage Note at **-ess**.

Acts of the Apostles (ăkts) *pl.n.* (used with a *sing. verb*) See table at **Bible**.

ac-tu-al (ăk'chōō-əl) *adj.* **1a.** Existing in reality and not potential, possible, simulated, or false: *The actual damages were less than first reported. In the actual test, the mechanism did not work as the computer model predicted.* See Synonyms at **real**. **b.** Based on fact: *The actual history of the voyage is different from the popular accounts.* **2.** Conforming to the characteristics of a group or type; typical: *Is he an actual doctor or a fake?* [Middle English < Old French, active < Late Latin *actualis* < Latin *actus*, past participle of *agere*, to drive, do; see **ag-** in App. I.]

ac-tu-al-i-ty (ăk'chōō-ăl'i-tē) *n., pl. -ties* **1.** The state or fact of being actual; reality. See Synonyms at **existence**. **2.** often **actualities** Actual conditions or facts.

ac-tu-al-ize (ăk'chōō-ə-līz') *v.* **-ized, -iz-ing, -izes** —*tr.* **1.** To realize in action or make real: *"More flexible life patterns could . . . nurture and renew our spirits through opportunities to actualize personal dreams"* (Fred Best). **2.** To describe or portray realistically. —*intr.* To become actual. —**ac'tu-al-i-za'tion** (-ə-lī-zā'shən) *n.*

ac-tu-al-ly (ăk'chōō-əl'ē) *adv.* **1.** In fact; in reality: *That tree is actually a fir, not a pine.* **2.** Used to express wonder, surprise, or incredulity: *I actually won the lottery!*

ac-tu-ar-y (ăk'chōō-ēr'ē) *n., pl. -ies* A statistician who computes insurance risks and premiums. [Latin *actuarius*, secretary of accounts < *acta*, records < neuter pl. past participle of *agere*, to drive, do; see **ag-** in App. I.] —**ac'tu-ar'i-al** (-ăr'ē-əl) *adj.* —**ac'tu-ar'i-al-ly** *adv.*

ac-tu-ate (ăk'chōō-ăt') *tr.v. -at-ed, -at-ing, -ates* **1.** To put into motion or action; activate: *electrical relays that actuate the elevator.* **2.** To cause to take action: *a speech that actuated dissenters.* [Medieval Latin *actuāre*, *actuāt-* < Latin *actus*, act; see **ACT-**.] —**ac'tu-a'tion** *n.*

ac-tu-a-tor (ăk'chōō-ăt'ər) *n.* One that activates, especially a device responsible for actuating a mechanical device, such as one connected to a computer by a sensor link.

a-cu-i-ty (ə-kyōō'i-tē) *n.* Acuteness of vision or perception; keenness. [Middle English *acute* < Old French, ultimately < Latin *acūtus*, sharp; see **ACUTE**.]

a-cu-le-ate (ə-kyōō'lē-īt, -ăt') *adj.* **1.** Biology Having a stinger, as a bee or wasp. **2.** Botany Having sharp prickles. [Latin *aculeātus* < *aculeus*, sting, diminutive of *acus*, needle; see **ACUMEN**.]

ac-u-men (ăk'yə-mən, ə-kyōō'-) *n.* Quickness, accuracy, and keenness of judgment or insight: *"A brilliant acumen in agricultural matters . . . had made the old man a legend in the district"* (James Herriot). [Latin *acūmen* < *acuere*, to sharpen < *acus*, needle; see **ak-** in App. I.]

✦ **USAGE NOTE** The pronunciation (ə-kyōō'mən), with stress on the second syllable, is an older, traditional pronunciation reflecting the word's Latin origin. The Anglicized pronunciation with stress on the first syllable, (ăk'yə-mən), was accepted as standard by the entire Usage Panel in the 1997 survey and was the preferred pronunciation of two thirds of the Panelists. The older pronunciation was considered unacceptable by 40 percent of the Panel, suggesting that eventually this pronunciation will fall into disuse.

a-cu-mi-nate (ə-kyōō'mə-nīt, -năt') *adj.* Tapering gradually to a sharp point, as the tips of certain leaves. ♦ *tr.v. (-năt') -nat-ed, -nat-ing, -nates* To sharpen or taper. [Latin *acūminātus*, past participle of *acūmināre*, to sharpen < *acūmen*, acuteness; see **ACUMEN**.] —**a-cu'mi-na'tion** *n.*

ac-u-pres-sure (ăk'yə-prēsh'ər) *n.* See **shiatsu**. [ACU(PUNCTURE) + **PRESSURE**.]

ac-u-punc-ture (ăk'yōō-pŭngk'chər) *n.* A procedure used in or adapted from Chinese medical practice in which specific body areas are pierced with fine needles for therapeutic purposes or to relieve pain or produce regional anesthesia. ♦ *tr.v. -tured, -tur-ing, -tures* To subject to acupuncture. [Latin *acus*, needle; see **ak-** in App. I + **PUNCTURE**.] —**ac'u-punc'tur-ist** *n.*

a-cute (ə-kyōō'tē) *adj.* **1a.** Reacting readily to stimuli or impressions; sensitive: *His hearing was unusually acute.* **b.** Keenly perceptive or discerning: *an acute critic of music; a critic with acute judgment.* See Synonyms at **sharp**. **2.** Extremely sharp or severe; intense: *acute pain; acute pleasure.* **3.** Of great importance or consequence; critical: *an acute shortage of funds.* **4.** Medicine **a.** Having a rapid onset and following a short but severe course: *an acute disease.* **b.** Afflicted by a disease exhibiting a rapid onset followed by a short, severe course: *acute patients.* **5.** High in pitch; shrill: *an acute scream.* **6a.** Narrowly pointed; sharp: *an acute leaf.* **b.** Having an acute angle: *an acute triangle.* [Latin *acūtus*, past participle of *acuere*, to sharpen < *acus*, needle; see **ak-** in App. I.] —**a-cute'ly** *adv.* —**a-cute'ness** *n.*

acute accent *n.* A mark (´) indicating: **a.** that a vowel is close or tense, as *é* in French *été*. **b.** that a vowel or syllable has a high or rising pitch, as in Chinese or Ancient Greek. **c.** that a vowel is long, as in Czech *dobrá*. **d.** that the syllable in which the vowel appears is stressed, as in Spanish *fácil*.

acute angle *n.* An angle of less than 90°.

acute care *n.* Short-term medical treatment, usually in a hospital, for patients having an acute illness or injury or recovering from surgery.

acute stress disorder *n.* Posttraumatic stress disorder that occurs immediately or soon after a traumatic event.

ACV *abbr.* 1. actual cash value 2. air-cushion vehicle

a-cyc-lic (ă-sīk'lik, ə-sī'klik) *adj.* **1.** Botany Not cyclic. Used especially

of flowers whose parts are arranged in spirals rather than in whorls, as in magnolias. **2.** Chemistry Having an open-chain molecular structure rather than a ring-shaped structure.

a-cy-clo-vir (ă-sī'klō-vīr, -klā-) *n.* A synthetic purine nucleoside analog, C₈H₁₀N₅O₃, derived from guanine and used in the treatment of herpes simplex, herpes zoster, and varicella-zoster virus infections. [acyclo(guanosine) (A-¹ + CYCLO- + GUANOSINE) + (ANTI)VIR(AL).]

ac-yl (ăs'əl)-*n.* Chemistry An organic group having the general formula RCO-, derived from an organic acid. [AC(ID) + -YL.]

ad¹ (ăd) *n.* An advertisement.

ad² (ăd) *n.* An advantage in tennis.

AD *abbr.* 1. active duty 2. air-dried 3. or **AD** anno Domini 4. A/D analog/digital 5. athletic director

ad- *pref.* 1. or **ac-** or **af-** or **ag-** or **al-** or **ap-** or **as-** or **at-** Toward; to. Before c, f, g, k, l, p, q, s, and t, *ad-* is usually assimilated to *ac-*, *af-*, *ag-*, *ac-*, *al-*, *ap-*, *ac-*, *as-*, and *at-*, respectively. **2.** Near; at: *adrenal*. [Latin < *ad*, to; see **ad-** in App. I.]

-ad *suffix.* In the direction of; toward: *cephalad*. [< Latin *ad*, to; see **ad-** in App. I.]

A-da (ă'də) *n.* A programming language, similar to Pascal and developed for the US Department of Defense. [After Ada LOVELOCK.]

ADA *abbr.* 1. American Dental Association 2. Americans with Disabilities Act

ad-age (ăd'ij) *n.* A saying that sets forth a general truth and that has gained credit through long use. See Synonyms at **saying**. See Usage Note at **redundancy**. [French < Old French < Latin *adagium*.]

a-da-gio (ə-dă'jō, -jē-ō', -zhō, -zhē-ō) *adv. & adj. Music* In a slow tempo, usually considered to be slower than *andante* but faster than *larghetto*. Used chiefly as a direction. ♦ *n., pl. -gios* **1.** Music A slow passage, movement, or work, especially one using *adagio* as the direction.

2a. A section of a pas de deux in which the ballerina and her partner perform steps requiring lyricism and great skill in lifting, balancing, and turning. **b.** A succession of slow, fluid movements performed as an exercise in ballet. [Italian: *ad-*, at (< Latin; see **AD-**) + *agio*, ease (< Old Provençal *aize*; akin to Old French *aize*; see **EASE**).]

A-dak Island (ă'dăk') An island of southwest Alaska in the central Aleutian Islands. It was an important World War II military base.

Ad-am¹ (ăd'əm) In the Bible, the first man and the husband of Eve. [Late Latin *Adam*, *Ādam* < Hebrew *ādām*, human being, Adam; see **'dm** in App. II.]

Ad-am² (ăd'əm) *adj.* Relating to or characteristic of the neoclassic style of furniture and architecture originated by Robert and James Adam.

Adam, Robert 1728–1792. British architect who led the neoclassical movement in England and is noted for his elegant interior designs and for collaborations with his brother James (1730?–1794).

Ad-am-and-Eve (ăd'əm-and-ēv') *n.* See **puttyroot**.

ad-a-mant (ăd'ə-mənt, -mănt') *adj.* Not willing to change one's opinion, purpose, or principles; unyielding. ♦ *n.* **1.** A stone once believed to be impenetrable in its hardness. **2.** An extremely hard substance. [< Middle English, a hard precious stone < Old French *adamaunt* < Latin *adamās*, *adamant-* < Greek, unconquerable, hard steel, diamond; see **demə-** in App. I.] —**ad'a-mance**, **ad'a-man-cy** *n.* —**ad'a-mant-ly** *adv.*

ad-a-man-tine (ăd'ə-mănt'ēn', -tīn', -tīn) *adj.* **1.** Made of or resembling adamant. **2.** Having the hardness or luster of a diamond. **3.** Unyielding; inflexible: *"If there is one dominant trait that emerges from this account, it is adamant willpower"* (Eugene Linden).

A-da-ma-wa Plateau (ăd'ə-mă'wə) An extensive upland of west-central Africa in north-central Cameroon and eastern Nigeria.

Ad-ams (ăd'əmz), **Abigail Smith** 1744–1818. First lady of the United States (1797–1801) as the wife of President John Adams. Her letters to her husband provide a vivid picture of life in colonial Massachusetts.

Adams, Ansel Easton 1902–1984. American photographer noted for his black-and-white photographs of the American wilderness.

Adams, Brooks 1848–1927. American historian who theorized that civilizations rise and fall according to a pattern of economic growth and decline.

Adams, Henry Brooks 1838–1918. American historian noted for his nine-volume *History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* (1889–1891). He also wrote a famous autobiography, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918).

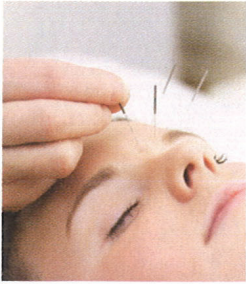
Adams, John 1735–1826. The first vice president (1789–1797) and second president (1797–1801) of the United States. He was a major figure during the American Revolution, the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, and the shaping of the Constitution.

Adams, John Quincy 1767–1848. The sixth president of the United States (1825–1829). As secretary of state (1817–1825) he helped formulate the Monroe Doctrine. After his presidency he served in the House of Representatives (1831–1848), where he advocated antislavery measures.

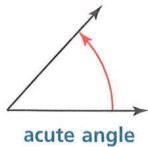
Adams, Mount A peak, 3,742 m (12,276 ft) high, in the Cascade Range of southwest Washington.

Adams, Samuel 1722–1803. American Revolutionary leader whose agitations spurred Bostonians toward rebellion against British occupation and rule. He was a member of the First and Second Continental Congresses, signed the Declaration of Independence, and served as governor of Massachusetts (1794–1797).

Ad-am's apple (ăd'əmz) *n.* The slight projection at the front of the throat formed by the largest cartilage of the larynx, usually more prominent in men than in women. [Ultimately translation of French *pomme d'Adam*, pomegranate, Adam's apple (sense influenced by Arabic *rummāna*, pomegranate, Adam's apple): *pomme*, apple + *de*, of + *Adam*, Adam.]



acupuncture



acute angle



Abigail Adams

c. 1766 pastel portrait by Benjamin Blyth (1740?–1787?)



John Adams

portrait by George Peter Alexander Healy (1813–1894)



John Quincy Adams

portrait by George Peter Alexander Healy (1813–1894)