

Choose the Right Dictionary

In addition to the general purpose dictionary and the thesaurus, consider using specialty dictionaries for your discipline. Note that different parts of the English-speaking world use different versions of English; Make sure you are using a dictionary of American English.

Read the Introduction

The introductory section of your dictionary will explain important information such as the abbreviations and pronunciation symbols used throughout the entries.

Learn the Abbreviations

Dictionaries often have abbreviations in the definitions for a word. This can be confusing if you don't know what the abbreviations stand for. Typically, a dictionary will have a list of abbreviations near the front of the book -- either in the introduction, or after it.

Learn the Guide to Pronunciation

If you immediately jump right into reading the dictionary without understanding the pronunciation guide, it can be difficult to figure it out. Having an idea about the symbols of pronunciation will make it a lot easier for you.

Review English Alphabetization

Dictionaries follow alphabetical order. If you're not entirely sure what the first letter is, start with the letter it sounds like. If you can't find the word under that section, then try other sections.

Read the Guide Words

These are the two words at the top of each page that tell you what groups of words are on the page. These words will help you find the word you're looking for in the right letter section.

Read the Definitions

Once you've located the word it will tell you exactly what it means (and if it has more than one meaning, it will tell you the most common one first), how to pronounce it, how to capitalize it (if it's a proper noun), what part of speech it is, its origins, its synonyms and antonyms, etc.

Look for Collocations

Learning the meaning of a single word is not usually enough. English is a subtle language, and the meanings of words often shift depending on which other words appear with it. Learn words in combination to expand your vocabulary and understanding faster.

Sample Page

new buses. | A major Hollywood studio has acquired the rights to the novel. ▶ see THESAURUS box at **buy**¹, **get**² to get or gain knowledge, skills, qualities etc.: *Research helps us acquire new insight on the causes of diseases.* | Many inner cities have acquired reputations for violent crime. **3 acquire a taste for sth** to begin to like something: *She had acquired a taste for beer.* **4 an acquired taste** something that people only begin to like after they have tried, heard, seen etc. it a few times, and that some people may never begin to like: *For many people, opera is an acquired taste.* [Origin: 1400–1500 Old French *acquere*, from Latin *acquirere*, from *ad-* to + *quaerere* to look for, obtain]

acquired immune deficiency syndrome *n.* [U] MEDICINE AIDS

acqui-si-tion /əkwə'zɪʃən/ *n.* [C] (U) the act of getting land, power, money etc.: +of the acquisition of new sites for development | *The government has approved the company's acquisition of its rival.* **2** [C] something that you have bought or obtained, especially a valuable object or something such as a company that costs a lot of money: *Funds will be used for new museum acquisitions.* | *In the past two years, the industry spent \$70 billion in mergers and acquisitions.* **3** [U] the act of getting new knowledge, skills etc.: *second language acquisition*

ac-quis-i-tive /ə'kwɪzɪtɪv/ *adj.* FORMAL showing too much desire to get new possessions —**acquisitiveness** *n.* [U]

ac-quit /ə'kwɪt/ *v.* acquitted, acquitting. **1** [I] (usually passive) LAW to give a decision in a court of law that someone is not guilty of a crime [OPP] **convict**: *All the defendants were acquitted.* | **acquit sb of sth** Bennett was acquitted of murder. **2** **acquit yourself well/honorably etc.** FORMAL to do something well, especially something difficult that you do for the first time in front of other people: *Although Perkins isn't known as a singer, he acquits himself admirably on this CD.* [Origin: 1200–1300 Old French *acquiter*, from *quite* free of]

ac-quit-tal /ə'kwɪtəl/ *n.* [C,U] LAW an official statement in a court of law that someone is not guilty [OPP] **conviction**: *Ben was surprised by Carter's acquittal.*

a-cre /'eɪkə/ [S3] [W3] *n.* [C] a unit for measuring areas of land, equal to 4,840 square yards (4,047 square meters): *They own 1,500 acres of farmland.* | a 2,000-acre ranch

a-cre-age /'eɪkərɪdʒ/ *n.* [U] the area of a piece of land measured in acres

ac-rid /'ækrɪd/ *adj.* an acrid smell or taste is strong and bad and stings your nose or throat: *a cloud of acrid smoke*

ac-ri-mo-ni-ous /,ækrə'moʊniəs/ *adj.* FORMAL an acrimonious meeting, argument etc. is full of angry remarks because people feel very strongly about something: *an acrimonious divorce* —**acrimoniously** *adv.* —**acrimoniousness** *n.* [U]

ac-ri-mo-ny /'ækrə'moʊni/ *n.* [U] FORMAL angry feelings between people



ac-ro-bat /'ækrə'bæt/ *n.* [C] someone who entertains people by doing difficult physical actions such as walking on their hands or balancing on a high rope, espe-

across-the-board

Guide Words

A

cially at a CIRCUS [Origin: 1800–1900 French *acrobate*, from Greek *akrobatos* walking on the ends of the toes]

ac-ro-bat-ic /,ækrə'bætɪk/ *adj.* acrobatic movements involve moving your body in a very skillful way, for example by jumping through the air or balancing on a rope: *an acrobatic catch* —**acrobatically** /-kli/ *adv.*

ac-ro-bat-ics /,ækrə'bætɪks/ *n.* [plural] acrobatic movements

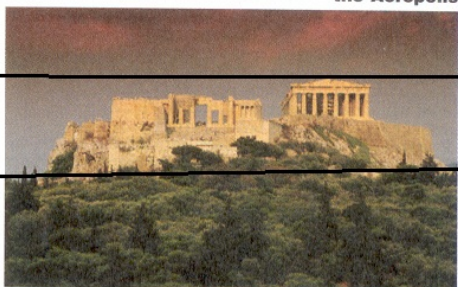
ac-ro-nym /'ækrə'nɪm/ *n.* [C] ENG. LANG. ARTS a word made up from the first letters of the name of something such as an organization. For example, NASA is an acronym for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. [Origin: 1900–2000 *acr-* beginning, end (from Greek *akr-*) + *-onym* (as in *homonym*)]

Accented Syllable Symbol

Count Noun

Pronunciation Guide

the Acropolis



Noncount Noun

Part of Speech

a-crop-o-lis /ə'krəpəlɪs/ **1** the Acropolis an ancient CITADEL (=a strong building defended by soldiers, where people could go if their city was being attacked) built on a hill in the center of Athens, Greece. There are many important historical religious buildings on the Acropolis. **2** [C] (historical) in ancient Greek cities, a hill with walls or towers built on it, that could be defended if the city was being attacked

Antonym

a-cross¹ /ə'krɒs/ [S1] [W] *prep.* **1** going, looking etc. from one side of a space, area, or line to the other side: *She took a ship across the Atlantic.* | *We gazed across the valley.* | *Would you like me to help you across the street* (=help you to cross it)? **2** reaching or spreading from one side of an area to the other: *Slowly a smile spread across her face.* | *Do you think this shirt is too tight across the shoulders?* | *There is a deep crack all the way across the ceiling.* **3** on or toward the opposite side of something: *My best friend lives across the street.* | *Jim yelled across the street to his son.* | **across sth from sth** *Across the street from where we're standing, you can see the old churchyard.* | *Hoboken is right across the river* (=directly opposite, on the other side) *from New York.* | *Miguel knew that just across the border lay freedom.* **4** in every part of a country, organization etc.: *The TV series became popular across five continents.* [Origin: 1200–1300 Anglo-French *acros* in *cross*]

Part of Speech

Etymology

across² [S2] [W3] *adv.* **1** from one side of something to the other: *She came in the room, walked across, and opened the window.* **2** if you go, look, shout etc. across to someone, you go, look, or shout toward the other side of an area, to the place where they are: *to/at* *looked across at the other driver.* | *Tim shouted across to his friends.* **3** 10 feet/20 miles etc. **across** if something is 10 feet, 20 miles etc. across, that is how wide it is: *At its widest point, the river is two miles across.* **4** **across from sb/sth** on the opposite side of a table, room, street etc. from someone or something: *I looked up at the woman sitting across from me on the subway.* → see Word Choice box at FRONT¹

Collocation

a,across-the-board *adj.* [only before noun] affecting everyone or everything in a situation or organization: *an across-the-board pay increase* —**across the board** *adv.*