Lesson 1

1. **abdicate** — 10. **addiction**

1. **ab-di-cate**  *verb*  āb'-dī-kāt

   *(ab (Latin), "away" + dicare, dicatus (Latin), "proclaim")*

   **Definition:** To give up formally, as an office, duty, power, or claim.
   The first Romanov czar of Russia was crowned in 1613; the last was forced to **abdicate** in 1917.
   However heavy the burden may be, you cannot **abdicate** your responsibilities as the head of this household.

   **Related Form:** (noun) abdication

   **Synonyms:** (verbs) resign, renounce, relinquish, divest oneself of;
                  (nouns) resignation, renunciation, relinquishment

   **Antonyms:** (verbs) retain, hold on to

   **Related Phrases:** renounce a claim or title, relinquish (or waive) a right, resign from a job, divest oneself of power

   **Usage Note:** **Abdicate** is usually used of a **crowned** head of state; **resign** is used of an **elected** official. Thus, Edward VIII **abdicated**, but Richard Nixon **resigned**.

2. **a-bet**  *verb*  ā-bēt'

   *(a, from ad (Latin), "to" + beter (Germanic), "bait or incite")*

   **Definition:** To encourage or assist, especially in wrongdoing.
   In Shakespeare's *Richard III* Buckingham knowingly **abets** Gloucester's plans to seize the throne.
   At that memorable concert the great singer's efforts were ably **abetted** by her accompanist.

   **Phrase:** to aid and abet

   **Synonyms:** (verbs) egg on; promote, further, advance, help, aid

   **Antonyms:** (verbs) dissuade, discourage, deter, restrain, curb, inhibit, hinder, block, frustrate, thwart (Word 376)

   **Related Phrases:** with the connivance of, in league with

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1For a full listing of the basic words in each lesson, see the Basic Word List, pages 21-25.
3. **ab-hor**  
   *verb*  
   āb-hôr’  
   [ab (Latin), “from; at” + horrere (Latin), “shiver, shudder”]

**Definition:** To regard with horror and loathing; to hate intensely.

Religious prejudice is something decent people abhor.

**Related Forms:** (adjective) abhorrent; (noun) abhorrence

**Usage Note:**
Because abhor implies strong moral condemnation, it should properly be reserved for attitudes or actions that really do offend a person’s sense of right and wrong (e.g., racism, child abuse). This, of course, is not to say that the word cannot be applied to other things. On the contrary, it is frequently used of trifling matters that normally would not be thought to grate on one’s moral sensibilities—for example, spinach or TV game shows.

**Synonyms:** (verbs) loathe, despise, detest, abominate; (noun) aversion

**Antonyms:** (verbs) like, fancy, relish, love, cherish, delight in, be fond of, dote on

**Related Phases:** look askance at, make a wry face at, turn up one’s nose at, turn thumbs down at

**Usage Note:**
Do not confuse the verb loathe, meaning “dislike intensely,” and the adjective loath, meaning “reluctant, disinclined.” Note the following pair of sentences:

The human vice I loathe most deeply is insincerity.
I am loath to sign your petition.

4. **ab-ject**  
   *adjective*  
   āb’-jēkt or āb-jēkt’  
   [ab (Latin), “down; from” + jacere, jactus (Latin), “throw”]

**Definition:**

a. Wretched, miserable; degrading, humiliating.

Many people around the world live in such abject poverty that they cannot afford even the most essential items of food and clothing.

b. Mean-spirited, base; despicable, contemptible.

Only an abject coward would stand idly by as a defenseless person was mugged.

c. Complete and unrelieved.

At the slightest sound of thunder, my dog dives under the bed in a state of abject terror.

**Phrases:** an abject flatterer, an abject liar, an abject imitator, abject surrender, abject apologies

**Synonyms:** (adjectives) disheartening, debasing, hopeless, helpless; vile, shameless, ignoble, craven; utter, sheer, downright, thoroughgoing
5. **ab-solve** *verb* āb-sōlv'

[ab (Latin), “from” + solvere (Latin), “loosen; release”]

**Definition:** To clear of guilt or blame.

“The evidence I will present,” the lawyer told the jury, “clearly **absolves** my client of any complicity in the crime.”

The most effective way we can **absolve** our society of the charges of racism and prejudice is to remedy the injustices of the past.

**Related Form:** (noun) absolution

**Usage Note:**
In a religious sense, **ab-solve** and **absolution** refer to granting a pardon, especially for a sin.

**Synonyms:** (verbs) acquit, exonerate, exculpate, vindicate; (nouns) acquittal, exoneration, vindication

**Antonyms:** (verbs) incriminate, inculpate; indict, impeach; convict, condemn; (nouns) indictment; conviction, condemnation

6. **ab-stain** *verb* āb-stān'

[abs, a form of ab (Latin), “from” + tenere (Latin), “hold; keep”]

**Definition:** To refrain completely and voluntarily.

Only ten members of the Security Council voted on the resolution; the others **abstained**.

If you want to lose some weight, you’ll have to **abstain** from eating those rich desserts you love so much.

**Related Forms:** (nouns) abstinence, abstention; (adjective) abstinent

**Usage Note:**
**Abstain** and **abstinence** are often used in reference to strong drink, with the meaning “refrain completely from drinking.” A common synonym for **abstinence** in this sense is **temperance**. Persons who never drink intoxicating beverages are sometimes referred to as **teetotalers**.

**Synonyms:** (verbs) forgo, forbear, avoid, shun, eschew; (nouns) self-restraint, self-denial, forbearance, abstemiousness; (adjectives) abstemious, forbearing, temperate, sparing, moderate; ascetic

**Antonyms:** (verbs) indulge (in), partake (of); (noun) indulgence; (adjectives) self-indulgent, intemperate, immoderate

**Usage Notes:**

a. **Abstemious**, **forbearing**, **temperate**, and **sparing** all indicate moderation in indulging one’s appetites. **Abstinent**, on the other hand, indicates a total avoidance of the thing in question.

b. Be careful not to confuse the verb **forbear**, meaning “to restrain oneself,” with the noun **forebear**, meaning “ancestor.” The noun, which is usually plural, has a slightly different pronunciation, with the accent on the **first** syllable (for‘-bār).
7. **academic** adjective ąk-ə-dēm'-ĭk

[From *Akademia*, the name of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato’s school outside Athens. It was located in a grove or park dedicated to the hero Akademos.]

**Definition:**

a. Pertaining to a college or other institution of learning; scholarly.

The role of a scholar in modern society is a subject of abiding concern in academic circles everywhere.

b. Theoretic rather than practical; unrealistic.

What we need to do is develop a solid plan of action, not engage in academic debates over purely theoretical questions.

**Related Forms:** (nouns) academy, academician; (adverb) academically

**Phrases:** academic freedom, the halls of academe; an academic question

**Synonyms:** (adjectives) scholastic; speculative

An academic procession during the graduation exercises at an American university.

**From the Halls of Academe**

*Academy* applies to institutions of higher learning, secondary schools, or any place where special subjects, arts, and skills are taught (*e.g.*, military academies, riding academies). The word is also used to refer to societies of learned individuals who have united to advance learning, literature, the arts, and the sciences (*e.g.*, the National Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences).

The phrase *academic freedom* refers to the freedom of a teacher or student to discuss or express his or her views on political, social, or economic issues without interference from public or school officials.

An *academician* is a member of a learned society.

An *academic question* is one that is purely theoretical and has little or no bearing on practical problems or real situations.
8. **ac-cede**  
**verb**  āk-sēd’  
[ad (Latin), “to” + cedere (Latin), “go; yield”]

**Definition:**

a. To yield to; to agree to.

It took no little persuasion to get my parents to **accede** to my plan for a trip to California on my own.

b. To enter upon an office or dignity.

Queen Elizabeth II **acceded** to the throne of Great Britain upon the death of her father, George VI, in 1952.

**Related Forms:** (nouns) access, accession, accessory; (adjective) accessible

**Synonyms:** (verbs) agree, assent, consent, concur, acquiesce, comply

**Antonyms:** (verbs) dissent, demur, balk at

9. **ac-cli-mate**  
**verb**  ā-kli’-māt or āk’-lē-māt  
[acclimater (French), “get used to”]

**Definition:** To get used to (usually an environment or situation).

Coming from the Pacific Northwest, we found it difficult to **acclimate** ourselves to the heat and humidity of a New York summer.

**Related Forms:** (verb) acclimatize; (nouns) acclimation, acclimatization

**Synonyms:** (verbs) adjust, adapt, orient, orientate, familiarize, accustom, habituate; (noun) orientation

10. **ad-dic-tion**  
**noun**  ā-dik’-shən  
[addictus (Latin), “given over to”; from ad (Latin), “to” + dicere, dictus (Latin), “say”]

**Definition:** A habit-forming practice or pursuit, usually one that is bad for a person’s health or morally objectionable; habitual use of, or devotion to, something.

Cigarette smoking is an **addiction** that may prove difficult to overcome.

The speaker at last Thursday’s assembly discussed a number of problems relating to young people, including drug **addiction**.

**Related Forms:** (noun) an addict; (adjectives) addictive, addicted to

**Usage Note:**

Addiction and addicted to are much used today in connection with drugs, but neither expression is limited to that area alone. One may, for example, be addicted to gambling, television, or coffee. In addition, both terms may be employed semihumorously, as in “addicted to detective stories” or “an addiction to chocolate marshmallow sundaes.”
Using the Words

Exercise I. Syllabication and Pronunciation
Syllabicate the following words correctly, and place the major stress mark (') after the syllable that is accented when the word is pronounced. Two answers are correct in some instances.

Example: a-bet'
1. addiction 3. academic 5. accede
2. abject 4. acclimate 6. absolve

Exercise II. Words Out of Context
In each of the following groups, select the item that best expresses the meaning of the numbered word at the left.

1. abstain a. transfer b. refrain c. indulge
d. vote
2. abhor a. relish b. release c. frustrate
d. detest
3. abet a. encourage b. initiate c. deplore
d. hamper
4. accede a. offer b. renew c. demur
d. yield
5. abject a. proud b. temperate c. wretched
d. scholarly

Exercise III. Completing Sentences
Complete each of the following sentences by selecting the most appropriate word from the group of words given below. Make whatever adjustments are necessary to fit the words into the sentences properly.

absolve academic acclimate
abject addiction abdicate

1. I chose an _________ career rather than business because I felt that I was better suited to the life of a teacher and scholar.
2. Convinced by the evidence presented by the defense, the jury _________ the defendant of all wrongdoing.
3. Long accustomed to their own traditional way of life, the refugees found it difficult to _________ themselves to a new language and strange customs.
4. Many a crime is committed by someone who has developed an ______ to drugs and must have large sums of money to support this habit.

5. "I'd rather resign from my job," Professor Harris declared, "than ______ my right to speak out publicly on such an important social problem."

Exercise IV. Synonyms and Antonyms
Classify each of the following pairs of words as S for synonyms or A for antonyms.

1. absolve—convict 4. accede—consent
2. familiarize—acclimate 5. abet—encourage
3. relinquish—retain 6. relish—abhor

Exercise V. Word Roundup
1. What is the difference between an abstemious person and a person who is abstinent? Complete each of the following with one of these words.
   a. Henry takes a drink once in a long while. He is ________.
   b. Henry never touches liquor. He is ________.

2. Define each of the following phrases. Consult a dictionary or other reference book if necessary.
   a. academic robes  c. academic freedom
   b. a riding academy  d. an academic question

3. Explain the difference in meaning between the terms in each of the following word pairs.
   a. forbear—forebear  b. loathe—loath

Exercise VI. Framing Sentences
A. Use each of the following words in a short illustrative sentence.
   1. abet  3. accede
   2. abject  4. addiction

B. Give a noun form of each of the following words, and use it in a short illustrative sentence.
   1. abdicate  3. absolve  5. academic
   2. abhor  4. abstain  6. acclimate
Dissecting the Words

At this point in half the lessons in this book, there is a section devoted to etymology. **Etymology** is the study of where words come from and how they are formed or change. Accordingly, each of these sections focuses attention on some of the prefixes, roots, and suffixes that make up the bulk of the words on the Basic Word List. The reason for studying these word elements is simple: They form the backbone of a substantial proportion of the English words in current use. For that reason, one effective way to expand your word power is to learn the meanings of such word elements and to use them as "keys" to a wider understanding of new words that crop up in your reading and school studies.

**Prefix**

The Latin prefix **ab, abs**, meaning "away from, off," is found in numerous English words. A few of them, including *abdicate* and *abject*, appeared in this lesson. Here are some more:

- *abduct* (literally, "to lead away")—to take away by force
- *abscond*—to depart secretly
- *abrupt*—(literally, "broken off")—sudden or hasty
- *abstract*—to draw from. The noun *abstract* means "a brief summary or a shorter form of the original."

Other English words containing this prefix include *abrasion, absent, abrogate,* and *absurd.*

*Sir James A. Murray* (1837–1915), the editor of the multivolume *New (Oxford) English Dictionary*, probably the most authoritative and certainly the most complete English dictionary in existence.
**Roots**

1. **Cedi** is a Latin root meaning "go" or "yield." It provides the core meaning of many English words, including *accede*, studied in this lesson. (Note that this root appears as *ceed* in some English words.) Here are some other words from the same root:

   - *concede*—to grant or admit. Noun: *concession*
   - *secede*—to break away from; to withdraw from membership in. Noun: *secession*
   - *exceed*—to go beyond what is necessary or proper. Noun: *excess*; adjective: *excessive*; adverbs: *exceedingly, excessively*
   - *recede*—to go back, to withdraw. Noun: *recession*
   - *proceed*—to go forward. Noun: *procession*
   - *antecedent*—going before. A person's *antecedents* are his ancestors or forerunners.
   - *procedure*—the regular, definite order by which something is done.

   Other words from this root are *intercede, precedent, cession*.

2. The root *dic, dict*, which is found in the Latin verb *dicere*, "to say," and in the related verbs *dicare*, "to indicate, consecrate, devote, dedicate," and *dictare*, "to declare; to order," is the basis of the words *abdicate* and *addiction*, studied in this lesson. Note the following English words also formed from this root:

   - *contradict* (literally, "to speak against")—to oppose, to deny
   - *valedictory* (literally, "saying be well")—farewell
   - *indict* (literally, "to declare against")—to charge with guilt
   - *interdict* (literally, "to say between")—to prohibit
   - *dictum* (literally, "a thing said")—an authoritative statement

   Other English words containing this root include *edict, dedicate, benediction, predict, malediction* (a curse), *predicament, indicate, dictionary, and dictator*.

**Exercise**

1. Select the word that does not contain the prefix *ab*.
   - a. abhor  b. abscond  c. abide  d. abject

2. Give **three** English words that are derived from the same root as *accede*. Use each in a short illustrative sentence.

3. Explain the origin of each of the following words: *indict, dictum, contradict, benediction*.

4. Explain the meaning of each of the following phrases, with particular reference to the etymology of the word in *italics*. Consult a dictionary or other reference book if necessary.
   - a. the class *valedictorian*  c. *abstract* art
   - b. a *receding* hairline  d. the *antecedent* of a pronoun
Enriching the Lesson

Exercise I. It's the Law!

This lesson includes a number of legal terms, such as *absolve* and *accessory*. The following exercise may help you widen your knowledge of the language of the law. Consult a dictionary or other reference book for the meanings of the words indicated; then do the exercises.

A. Match the legal term in Column A with the phrase that defines it in Column B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. indictment</td>
<td>a. a law passed by a duly authorized law-making body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. subpoena</td>
<td>b. one who is guilty of a crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. statute</td>
<td>c. a formal written accusation of a crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. culprit</td>
<td>d. a temporary delay in carrying out a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. affidavit</td>
<td>e. a written order summoning a person to a court to give testimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. plaintiff</td>
<td>f. to call before a court to answer a formal charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. reprieve</td>
<td>g. to expel from the practice of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. arraign</td>
<td>h. a written statement made under oath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. contraband</td>
<td>i. the person who makes the complaint in a lawsuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. disbar</td>
<td>j. smuggled goods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Now complete each of the following.

1. What is the difference between an *accessory before the fact* and an *accessory after the fact*?

2. What is a *quitclaim*? Show how *quit* in this word is related etymologically to *acquit*.

3. Why would a respected lawyer object to being called a *shyster*? In which country is the term *barrister* used?

4. What is a *writ*? Define *writ of habeas corpus* and *writ of mandamus*.

5. What is the difference between *impeach* and *convict*? Which branch of Congress has the power to *impeach* a president of the United States? Which is authorized to *try and judge* him?
6. What is a plea? Define plea bargaining and to cop a plea.

7. Legally speaking, what is a misdemeanor? a felony? What is the difference between the two? Define tort.

8. If the defendant in a criminal case is seeking a change of venue, what is he or she asking for? Why might a judge grant such a request?

9. Define the following: petit jury, grand jury, hung jury.

10. What principle of constitutional law is usually referred to by the phrase double jeopardy?

Exercise II. Place Names in Common Use

A fair number of common English words—for example, academic, studied in this lesson—are derived from the names of places. Some of these expressions are listed below. With or without the aid of a dictionary, define each as it is used in present-day English. Then give the place name from which the word is derived. Finally, choose any five of the items, and for each compose an original sentence that clearly illustrates the expression's meaning.

1. limerick 6. hackneyed 11. blarney
2. varnish 7. limousine 12. mayonnaise
3. mecca 8. bedlam 13. gasconade
4. cologne 9. sybaritic 14. tawdry
5. bunkum 10. donnybrook 15. sardonic

Exercise III. Expanding Your Word Power

The words listed below are not on the Basic Word List, but they were mentioned in passing in Lesson 1. All of them would make useful additions to your working vocabulary. Define each, give its etymology, list two synonyms and two antonyms (where possible), and use in a short sentence that clearly illustrates its meaning.

1. waive 5. connive 9. acquiesce
2. deter 6. incriminate 10. orientation
3. aversion 7. ascetic 11. indulge
4. ignoble 8. eschew 12. demur