



Merriam- Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary

TENTH EDITION

Merriam-Webster, Incorporated
Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.



A GENUINE MERRIAM-WEBSTER

The name *Webster* alone is no guarantee of excellence. It is used by a number of publishers and may serve mainly to mislead an unwary buyer.

Merriam-Webster[™] is the name you should look for when you consider the purchase of dictionaries or other fine reference books. It carries the reputation of a company that has been publishing since 1831 and is your assurance of quality and authority.

Copyright © 1995 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

Philippines Copyright 1995 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. — 10th ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-87779-708-0 (unindexed). — ISBN 0-87779-709-9 (indexed).

— ISBN 0-87779-710-2 (deluxe). — ISBN 0-87779-707-2 (laminated cover).

1. English language—Dictionaries. I. Merriam-Webster, Inc.

PE1628.M36 1995

423—dc20

94-30967

CIP

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate[®] Dictionary, Tenth Edition principal copyright 1993

COLLEGIATE is a registered trademark of Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

All rights reserved. No part of this book covered by the copyrights hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems—without written permission of the publisher.

Made in the United States of America

1112131415RMcN95

acti-non \ˈak-tə-nən\ *n* [NL, fr. *actinium*] (1926): a gaseous radioactive isotope of radon that has a half-life of about 4 seconds
action \ˈak-shən\ *n* (14c) **1**: the initiating of a proceeding in a court of justice by which one demands or enforces one's right; *also*: the proceeding itself **2**: the bringing about of an alteration by force or through a natural agency **3**: the manner or method of performing: *a*: the department of an actor or speaker or his expression by means of attitude, voice, and gesture *b*: the style of movement of the feet and legs (as of a horse) *c*: a function of the body or one of its parts **4**: an act of will **5** *a*: a thing done: **DEED** *b*: the accomplishment of a thing usu. over a period of time, in stages, or with the possibility of repetition *c pl*: **BEHAVIOR, CONDUCT** (unscrupulous ~s) *d*: **INITIATIVE, ENTERPRISE** (a man of ~) **6** *a* (1): an engagement between troops or ships (2): combat in war (gallantry in ~) *b* (1): an event or series of events forming a literary composition (2): the unfolding of the events of a drama or work of fiction: **PLOT** (3): the movement of incidents in a plot *c*: the combination of circumstances that constitute the subject matter of a painting or sculpture **7** *a*: an operating mechanism *b*: the manner in which a mechanism or instrument operates **8** *a*: the price movement and trading volume of a commodity, security, or market *b*: the process of betting including the offering and acceptance of a bet and determination of a winner *c*: an opportunity for financial gain (a piece of the ~) **9**: the most vigorous, productive, or exciting activity in a particular field, area, or group (they itch to go where the ~ is — D. J. Henahan)
action-able \ˈak-sh(ə)-nə-bəl\ *adj* (1591): subject to or affording ground for an action or suit at law — **action-ably** \-blē\ *adv*
action-less \ˈak-shən-ləs\ *adj* (ca. 1817): marked by inaction: **IMMOBILE**
action painting *n* (1952): abstract expressionism marked esp. by the use of spontaneous techniques (as dribbling, splattering, or smearing) — **action painter** *n*
action potential *n* (1926): a momentary change in electrical potential (as between the inside of a nerve cell and the extracellular medium) that occurs when a cell or tissue has been activated by a stimulus
activate \ˈak-tə-vā\ *vb* -vat-ed; -vat-ing *vt* (1626): to make active or more active: *as* *a* (1): to make (as molecules) reactive or more reactive (2): to convert (as a provitamin) into a biologically active derivative *b*: to make (a substance) radioactive *c*: to treat (as carbon or alumina) so as to improve adsorptive properties *d* (1): to set up or formally institute (as a military unit) with the necessary personnel and equipment (2): to put (an individual or unit) on active duty ~ *vi*: to become active — **acti-va-tion** \ˈak-tə-ˈvā-shən\ *n* — **acti-va-tor** \ˈak-tə-ˈvā-tər\ *n*
activated carbon *n* (1921): a highly adsorbent powdered or granular carbon made usu. by carbonization and chemical activation and used chiefly for purifying by adsorption — called also *activated charcoal*
activation analysis *n* (1949): **NEUTRON ACTIVATION ANALYSIS**
activation energy *n* (1940): the minimum amount of energy required to convert a normal stable molecule into a reactive molecule
active \ˈak-tiv\ *adj* [ME, fr. MF or L; MF *actif*, fr. L *activus*, fr. *actus*, pp. of *agere* to drive, do — more at **AGENT**] (14c) **1**: characterized by action rather than by contemplation or speculation **2**: producing or involving action or movement **3** *a of a verb form or voice*: asserting that the person or thing represented by the grammatical subject performs the action represented by the verb (*hits* in "he hits the ball" is ~) *b*: expressing action as distinct from mere existence or state **4**: quick in physical movement: **LIVELY** **5**: marked by vigorous activity: **BUSY** (the stock market was ~) **6**: requiring vigorous action or exertion (~ sports) **7**: having practical operation or results: **EFFECTIVE** (an ~ law) **8** *a*: disposed to action: **ENERGETIC** (took an ~ interest) *b*: engaged in an action or activity (an ~ club member) *c of a volcano*: currently erupting or likely to erupt — compare **DORMANT** **2a**, **EXTINCT** **1b** *d*: characterized by emission of large amounts of electromagnetic energy (an ~ galactic nucleus) **9**: engaged in full-time service esp. in the armed forces (~ duty) **10**: marked by present operation, transaction, movement, or use (~ account) **11** *a*: capable of acting or reacting: reacting readily (~ nitrogen) *b*: tending to progress or to cause degeneration (~ tuberculosis) *c of an electronic circuit element*: capable of controlling voltages or currents **d** (1): requiring the expenditure of energy (~ calcium ion uptake) (2): functioning by the emission of radiant energy (radar is an ~ sensor) **12**: still eligible to win the pot in poker **13**: moving down the line: visiting in the set — used of couples in contredanses or square dances — **active** *n* — **active-ly** *adv* — **active-ness** *n*
active immunity *n* (ca. 1903): usu. long-lasting immunity that is acquired through production of antibodies within the organism in response to the presence of antigens — compare **PASSIVE IMMUNITY**
active transport *n* (1963): movement of a chemical substance by the expenditure of energy through a gradient (as across a cell membrane) in concentration or electrical potential and opposite to the direction of normal diffusion
act-iv-ism \ˈak-ti-vi-zəm\ *n* (1915): a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action esp. in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue — **act-iv-ist** \-vist\ *n or adj* — **act-iv-is-tic** \ˈak-ti-ˈvis-tik\ *adj*
act-iv-ity \ˈak-ti-ˈvə-tē\ *n, pl -ties* (1530) **1**: the quality or state of being active **2**: vigorous or energetic action: **LIVELINESS** **3**: natural or normal function: *as* *a*: a process (as digestion) that an organism carries on or participates in by virtue of being alive *b*: a similar process actually or potentially involving mental function; *specif*: an educational procedure designed to stimulate learning by firsthand experience **4**: an active force **5** *a*: a pursuit in which a person is active *b*: a form of organized, supervised, often extracurricular recreation **6**: an organizational unit for performing a specific function; *also*: its function or duties
act of God (ca. 1859): an extraordinary interruption by a natural cause (as a flood or earthquake) of the usual course of events that experience, prescience, or care cannot reasonably foresee or prevent
ac-to-my-o-sin \ˈak-tə-ˈmi-ə-sən\ *n* [ISV *actin* + *-o-* + *myosin*] (1942): a viscous contractile complex of actin and myosin concerned together with ATP in muscular contraction
actor \ˈak-tər\ *also* -tōr\ *n* (15c) **1**: one that acts: **DOER** **2** *a*: one who represents a character in a dramatic production *b*: a theatrical

performer *c*: one that behaves as if acting a part **3**: one that takes part in any affair — **actor-ish** \-tō-rish\ *adj*
act out *vt* (1611) **1** *a*: to represent in action (children *act out* what they read) *b*: to translate into action (unwilling to *act out* their beliefs) **2**: to express (as an impulse or a fantasy) directly in overt behavior without modification to comply with social norms
act-ress \ˈak-trəs\ *n* (1676): a woman who is an actor — **act-ress-ly** \-trə-sē\ *adj*
Acts \ˈakts\ *n pl but sing in constr*: a book in the New Testament narrating the beginnings of the Christian Church — called also *Acts of the Apostles*; see **BIBLE** table
actual \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wəl, -sh(ə)-wəl\ *adj* [ME *actuel*, fr. MF, fr. LL *actualis*, fr. L *actus* act] (14c) **1** *obs*: **ACTIVE** **2** *a*: existing in act and not merely potentially *b*: existing in fact or reality (~ and imagined conditions) *c*: not false or apparent (~ costs) **3**: existing or occurring at the time: **CURRENT** (caught in the ~ commission of a crime)
actual cash value *n* (ca. 1946): money equal to the cost of replacing lost, stolen, or damaged property after depreciation
actu-al-ity \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wəl-ə-tē, -sh(ə)-wəl-ə-tē\ *n, pl -ties* (1652) **1**: the quality or state of being actual **2**: something that is actual: **FACT, REALITY** (possible risks which have been seized upon as actualities — T. S. Eliot)
actu-al-ize \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wəl-ə-līz, -sh(ə)-wəl-ə-līz\ *vb -ized; -iz-ing* *vt* (1701): to make actual: **REALIZE** ~ *vi*: to become actual — **actu-al-iza-tion** \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wəl-ə-līz-ə-shən, -sh(ə)-wəl-ə-līz-ə-shən\ *n*
actu-al-ly \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wəl-ə-lē, -sh(ə)-wəl-ə-lē; ˈaksh-lē, ˈaksh-lē\ *adv* (15c) **1**: in act or in fact: **REALLY** (nominally but not ~ independent — Karl Loewenstein) (don't know how old they ~ are) (~, they just arrived) **2**: in point of fact: in truth — used to suggest something unexpected (I have ~ been invited) (he could ~ read the Greek)
actu-ary \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wər-ē-əl, -sh(ə)-wər-ē-əl\ *adj* (1869) **1**: of or relating to actuaries **2**: relating to statistical calculation esp. of life expectancy — **actu-ary-al-ly** \-ē-əl-ē\ *adv*
actu-ary \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wər-ē, -sh(ə)-wər-ē\ *n, pl -aries* [L *actuarius* shorthand writer, alter. of *actarius*, fr. *actus* record — more at **ACT**] (1553) **1** *obs*: **CLERK, REGISTRAR** **2**: one who calculates insurance and annuity premiums, reserves, and dividends
actu-ate \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wāt, -sh(ə)-wāt\ *vt -at-ed; -at-ing* [ML *actuatus*, pp. of *actuare* to execute, fr. L *actus* act] (1645) **1**: to put into mechanical action or motion **2**: to move to action **syn** see **MOVE** — **actu-a-tion** \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wā-shən, -sh(ə)-wā-shən\ *n*
actu-ator \ˈak-tʃ(ə)-wā-tər, -sh(ə)-wā-tər\ *n* (ca. 1864): one that actuates; *specif*: a mechanical device for moving or controlling something
act up *vt* (1903) **1**: to act in a way different from that which is normal or expected: *as* *a*: to behave in an unruly, recalcitrant, or capricious manner *b*: **SHOW OFF** *c*: to function improperly (this typewriter is *acting up* again) **2**: to become active or acute after being quiescent (her rheumatism started to *act up*)
actu-ity \ˈak-ti-ty-ē, -a\ *n, pl -ities* [MF *acuité*, fr. LL *acuitat-, acuitas*, fr. L *acuere*] (1543): keenness of perception: **SHARPNESS**
acule-ate \ˈak-kyū-lē-ət\ *adj* [L *aculeatus* having stings, fr. *aculeus* sting, fr. *acus*] (1875): relating to or being hymenopterans (as bees, ants, and many wasps) of a division (*Aculeata*) typically having the ovipositor modified into a sting
acumen \ˈak-kyū-mən, ˈak-kyū-mən\ *n* [L *acumin-, acumen*, lit., point, fr. *acuere*] (ca. 1580): keenness and depth of perception, discernment, or discrimination esp. in practical matters: **SHREWDNESS** **syn** see **DIS-CERNMENT**
acu-mi-nate \ˈak-kyū-mə-nət\ *adj* (1646): tapering to a slender point
acu-pressure \ˈak-kyū-ˈpre-shər, ˈak-kyū-ˈpre-shər\ *n* (1859): **SHIATSU**
acu-punc-ture \-pən(k)-char\ *n* [L *acus* + E *puncture*] (1684): an orig. Chinese practice of puncturing the body (as with needles) at specific points to cure disease or relieve pain (as in surgery) — **acu-punc-tur-ist** \-pən(k)-chə-rɪst\ *n*
acute \ˈak-kyūt\ *adj* **acute-er; acute-est** [L *acutus*, pp. of *acuere* to sharpen, fr. *acus* needle; akin to L *acer* sharp — more at **EDGE**] (14c) **1** *a* (1): characterized by sharpness or severity (~ pain) (2): having a sudden onset, sharp rise, and short course (~ disease) *b*: lasting a short time (~ experiments) **2**: ending in a sharp point: *as* *a*: being or forming an angle measuring less than 90 degrees (~ angle) *b*: composed of acute angles (~ triangle) **3** *a of an accent mark*: having the form *b*: marked with an acute accent *c*: of the variety indicated by an acute accent **4** *a*: marked by keen discernment or intellectual perception esp. of subtle distinctions: **PENETRATING** (an ~ thinker) *b*: responsive to slight impressions or stimuli (~ hearing) **5**: felt, perceived, or experienced intensely (~ distress) **6**: seriously demanding urgent attention — **acute-ly** *adv* — **acute-ness** *n*
syn **ACUTE, CRITICAL, CRUCIAL** mean of uncertain outcome. **ACUTE** stresses intensification of conditions leading to a culmination or breaking point (an *acute* housing shortage). **CRITICAL** adds to **ACUTE** implications of imminent change, of attendant suspense, and of decisiveness in the outcome (the war has entered a *critical* phase). **CRUCIAL** suggests a dividing of the ways and often a test or trial involving the determination of a future course or direction (a *crucial* vote). **syn** see in addition **SHARP**
acy-elic \ˈ(j)ä-si-ˈklik, -ˈsi-\ *adj* (1878): not cyclic: *as* *a*: not disposed in whorls or cycles *b*: having an open-chain structure: **ALIPHATIC** (an ~ compound)
acy-clo-vir \ˈ(j)ä-si-ˈklō-vɪr\ *n* [*a-* + *cycl-* + *virus*] (1979): a cyclic nucleoside C₈H₁₁N₅O₃ used esp. to treat the symptoms of the genital form of herpes simplex
acyl \ˈä-səl\ *n, often attrib* [ISV, fr. *acid*] (1899): a radical RCO— derived usu. from an organic acid by removal of the hydroxyl from all acid groups — often used in combination
acyl-ate \ˈä-sə-lāt\ *vt -at-ed; -at-ing* (1907): to introduce an acyl group into — **acyl-a-tion** \ä-sə-lā-shən\ *n*
ad \ˈad\ *n, often attrib* (1841) **1**: **ADVERTISEMENT** **2**: **ADVERTISING** **2ad** *n* (1947): **ADVANTAGE** **4**
ad- or **ac-** or **af-** or **ag-** or **al-** or **ap-** or **as-** or **at-** *prefix* [ME, fr. MF, OF & L; MF, fr. OF, fr. L, fr. *ad-* more at **AT**] **1**: to: toward — usu. *ac-* before *c, k, or q* (*acculturation*) and *af-* before *f* (*affluent*) and *ag-* before *g* (*aggradation*) and *al-* before *l* (*aliteration*) and *ap-* before *p* (*apportion*) and *as-* before *s* (*assuasive*) and *at-* before *t* (*attune*) and *ad-* before other sounds but sometimes *ad-* even before one of the listed