

The Outline of Science, Vol. 1 (of 4) / A Plain Story Simply Told — Key Vocabulary

by J. Arthur Thomson

48 key English words, graded A2–C2 — each with a simple definition and an example. Learn them before you read, or review them after.

A2 words (10)

abandon /ə'bændən/

A2

the trait of lacking restraint or control

“she danced with abandon”

abroad /ə'brɔ:d/

A2

in a foreign country

“markets abroad”

absence /'æbsəns/

A2

the state of being absent

“he was surprised by the absence of any explanation”

absolutely /,æbsə'lutli/

A2

completely and without qualification

“an absolutely magnificent painting”

accident /'æksədənt/

A2

an unfortunate mishap

“winning the lottery was a happy accident”

accompany /ə'kæmpəni/

A2

be present or associated with an event or entity

“French fries come with the hamburger”

acknowledge /æk'nɒlɪdʒ/

A2

declare to be true or admit the existence or reality or truth of

“He admitted his errors”

acquire /ək'waɪər/

A2

come into the possession of something concrete or abstract

"She got a lot of paintings from her uncle"

active /'æktɪv/

A2

chemical agent capable of activity

"The boy threw the ball' uses the active voice"

actual /'æktʃwəl/

A2

presently existing in fact and not merely potential or possible

"the predicted temperature and the actual temperature were markedly different"

B1 words (10)

ability /ə'biləti/

B1

the quality of being able to perform; a quality that permits or facilitates achievement or accomplishment

"danger heightened his powers of discrimination"

absolute /'æbsə,lut/

B1

something that is conceived or that exists independently and not in relation to other things

"no mortal being can influence the absolute"

accept /ək'sept/

B1

consider or hold as true

"I cannot accept the dogma of this church"

acceptance /ək'septəns/

B1

the mental attitude that something is believable and should be accepted as true

"he gave credence to the gossip"

accomplish /ə'kʌmplɪʃ/

B1

put in effect

"carry out a task"

accordance /ə'kɔrdəns/

B1

concurrence of opinion

"we are in accord with your proposal"

accurate /'ækjərət/

B1

conforming exactly or almost exactly to fact or to a standard or performing with total accuracy

"an accurate reproduction"

achieve /ə'tʃiːv/

B1

to gain with effort

"she achieved her goal despite setbacks"

acquisition /,ækwə'zɪʃən/

B1

the act of contracting or assuming or acquiring possession of something

"the acquisition of wealth"

activity /æk'tɪvɪti/

B1

any specific behavior

"they avoided all recreational activity"

B2 words (10)

abandonment /ə'bændənmənt/

B2

the act of giving something up

"his abandonment of his wife and children left them penniless"

abdominal /əb'damənəl/

B2

the muscles of the abdomen

"abdominal muscles"

aboriginal /,æbər'ɪdʒənəl/

B2

a dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived

"the art of the natives of the northwest coast"

abrupt /ə'brʌpt/

B2

marked by sudden changes in subject and sharp transitions

"abrupt prose"

absent /'æbsənt/

B2

go away or leave

"He absented himself"

absorb /əb'zɔːrb/

B2

become imbued

"The liquids, light, and gases absorb"

absorption /əb'zɔːrʃən/

B2

(chemistry) a process in which one substance permeates another

"the absorption of photons by atoms or molecules"

abundance /ə'bʌndəns/

B2

the property of a more than adequate quantity or supply

"an age of abundance"

abundant /ə'bʌndənt/

B2

present in great quantity

"an abundant supply of water"

abundantly /ə'bʌndəntli/

B2

in an abundant manner

"they were abundantly supplied with food"

C1 words (9)

abbreviate /ə'brɪvi,eɪt/

C1

reduce in scope while retaining essential elements

"The manuscript must be shortened"

absurdly /əb'sɜːdli/

C1

in an absurd manner or to an absurd degree

"an absurdly rich young woman"

accentuate /æk'sentʃueɪt/

C1

to stress, single out as important

"Dr. Jones emphasizes exercise in addition to a change in diet"

accretion /ə'krɪʃən/

C1

an increase by natural growth or addition

"he scraped away the accretions of paint"

accustom /ə'kʌstəm/

C1

make psychologically or physically used (to something)

"She became habituated to the background music"

acquiesce /,ækwi'ɛs/

C1

to agree or express agreement

"The Maestro assented to the request for an encore"

admirably /'ædmərəbli/

C1

in an admirable manner

"the children's responses were admirably normal"

afresh /ə'frɛʃ/

C1

again but in a new or different way

"start afresh"

agitate /'ædʒə'teɪt/

C1

try to stir up public opinion

"The speaker charged up the crowd with his inflammatory remarks"

C2 words (9)

acceptation

C2

acceptance as true or valid

"its adoption by society"

aerate

C2

expose to fresh air

"aerate your old sneakers"

amalgams /ə'mælgəmz/

C2

an alloy of mercury with another metal (usually silver) used by dentists to fill cavities in teeth; except for iron and platinum all metals dissolve in mercury and chemists refer to the resulting mercury mixtures as amalgams

"his theory is an amalgam of earlier ideas"

anatomise

C2

dissect in order to analyze

"anatomize the bodies of the victims of this strange disease"

appreciatively /ə'prɪʃjətɪvli/

C2

with appreciation

"he accepted my offer appreciatively"

atomism

C2

(psychology) a theory that reduces all mental phenomena to simple elements (sensations and feelings) that form complex ideas by association

"the ancient Greek philosophers Democritus and Epicurus held atomic theories of the universe"

betoken

C2

be a signal for or a symptom of

"These symptoms indicate a serious illness"

bewilder /bɪ'wɪldə/

C2

be a mystery or bewildering to

"This beats me!"

changeful

C2

such that alteration is possible

"changeable behavior"

Read it along with audio — tap any word to hear it and see it highlighted in the sentence:

<https://readingcorner.uk/books/the-outline-of-science-vol-1-of-4-a-plain-story-simply-told/vocabulary>