

# The Souls of Black Folk — Key Vocabulary

by W. E. B. Du Bois

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

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## A2 words (10)

**abandon** /ə'bændən/

A2

the trait of lacking restraint or control

*“she danced with abandon”*

**abroad** /ə'brɔd/

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”*

**abuse** /ə'bjuz/

A2

cruel or inhumane treatment

*“the child showed signs of physical abuse”*

**academic** /,ækə'demɪk/

A2

an educator who works at a college or university

*“the academic curriculum”*

**accident** /'æksədənt/

A2

an unfortunate mishap

*“winning the lottery was a happy accident”*

**accommodation** /ə,kamə'deɪʃən/

A2

making or becoming suitable

*“they reached an accommodation with Japan”*

**accompany** /ə'kæmpəni/

A2

be present or associated with an event or entity

*"French fries come with the hamburger"*

**accuse** /ə'kjuz/

A2

bring an accusation against

*"The neighbors accused the man of spousal abuse"*

## **B1 words** (10)

**acceptable** /ək'septəbəl/

B1

worthy of acceptance or satisfactory

*"acceptable levels of radiation"*

**accomplish** /ə'kæmplɪʃ/

B1

put in effect

*"carry out a task"*

**accurate** /'ækjərət/

B1

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

*"an accurate reproduction"*

**adapt** /ə'dæpt/

B1

make fit for, or change to suit a new purpose

*"Adapt our native cuisine to the available food resources of the new country"*

**adequate** /'ædək,weɪt/

B1

having the requisite qualities or resources to meet a task

*"she had adequate training"*

**adjust** /ə'dʒəst/

B1

alter or regulate so as to achieve accuracy or conform to a standard

*"Adjust the clock, please"*

**adjustment** /ə'dʒəstmənt/

B1

making or becoming suitable

*"an allowance for profit"*

**advocate** /'ædvə,keɪt/

B1

a person who pleads for a cause or propounds an idea

*"The travel agent recommended strongly that we not travel on Thanksgiving Day"*

**agricultural** /,ægrɪ'kʌltʃərəl/

B1

relating to or used in or promoting agriculture or farming

*“agricultural engineering”*

**alarm** /ə'lɑːm/

B1

fear resulting from the awareness of danger

*“I was horrified at the thought of being late for my interview”*

## B2 words (10)

**abandonment** /ə'bændənmənt/

B2

the act of giving something up

*“his abandonment of his wife and children left them penniless”*

**abide** /ə'baɪd/

B2

dwell

*“You can stay with me while you are in town”*

**abolish** /ə'bɒlɪʃ/

B2

do away with

*“Slavery was abolished in the mid-19th century in America and in Russia”*

**abolition** /,æbə'liʃən/

B2

the act of abolishing a system or practice or institution (especially abolishing slavery)

*“the abolition of capital punishment”*

**abomination** /ə,bəmə'neɪʃən/

B2

a person who is loathsome or disgusting

*“his treatment of the children is an abomination”*

**abound** /ə'baʊnd/

B2

be abundant or plentiful

*“The room abounded with screaming children”*

**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”*

**absurdity** /əb'sɜːdətɪ/

B2

a message whose content is at variance with reason

*"the crowd laughed at the absurdity of the clown's behavior"*

**abundance** /ə'bʌndəns/

B2

the property of a more than adequate quantity or supply

*"an age of abundance"*

### C1 words (9)

**abatement** /ə'beɪtmənt/

C1

an interruption in the intensity or amount of something

*"laws enforcing noise abatement"*

**ablaze** /ə'bleɪz/

C1

keenly excited (especially sexually) or indicating excitement

*"his face all ablaze with excitement"*

**abscond** /æb'skænd/

C1

run away

*"The thief made off with our silver"*

**accustom** /ə'kʌstəm/

C1

make psychologically or physically used (to something)

*"She became habituated to the background music"*

**acme** /'ækmi/

C1

the highest level or degree attainable

*"his landscapes were deemed the acme of beauty"*

**acquaint** /ək'weɪnt/

C1

cause to come to know personally

*"permit me to acquaint you with my son"*

**admittance** /əd'mɪtəns/

C1

the right to enter

*"the surgery was performed on his second admission to the clinic"*

**afterthought** /'æftər,θɔːt/

C1

thinking again about a choice previously made

*"he had second thoughts about his purchase"*

**aggravate** /'ægrə,veɪt/

C1

make worse

*"This drug aggravates the pain"*

## C2 words (9)

**accost** /ə'kɒst/

C2

speak to someone

*"he was solicited by a prostitute"*

**adroitness**

C2

skillful performance or ability without difficulty

*"his quick adeptness was a product of good design"*

**antedate**

C2

be earlier in time

*"Stone tools precede bronze tools"*

**antiquate** /'æntə,kweɪt/

C2

make obsolete or old-fashioned

*"antique furniture"*

**appal**

C2

strike with disgust or revulsion

*"The scandalous behavior of this married woman shocked her friends"*

**athwart** /əθ'wɔ:t/

C2

at right angles to the center line of a ship

*"the sun shone aslant into his face"*

**befoul**

C2

spot, stain, or pollute

*"The townspeople defiled the river by emptying raw sewage into it"*

**bejewel**

C2

adorn or decorate with precious stones

*"jeweled dresses"*

**bewilder** /bɪ'wɪldə:/

C2

be a mystery or bewildering to

*"This beats me!"*

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

<https://readingcorner.uk/books/the-souls-of-black-folk/vocabulary>