

THE ROUTLEDGE DICTIONARY OF

MODERN AMERICAN

SLANG

AND UNCONVENTIONAL ENGLISH



SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY TOM DALZELL

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ROUTLEDGE

The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English

The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English offers the ultimate record of modern, post-WW2 American slang.

The 25,000 entries are accompanied by citations that authenticate the words as well as offer examples of usage from popular literature, newspapers, magazines, movies, television shows, musical lyrics, and Internet user groups. Etymology, cultural context, country of origin and the date the word was first used are also provided. In terms of content, the cultural transformations since 1945 are astounding. Television, computers, drugs, music, unpopular wars, youth movements, changing racial sensitivities and attitudes towards sex and sexuality are all substantial factors that have shaped culture and language.

This new edition includes over 500 new headwords collected with citations from the last five years, a period of immense change in the English language, as well as revised existing entries with new dating and citations.

No term is excluded on the grounds that it might be considered offensive as a racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or any kind of slur. This dictionary contains many entries and citations that will, and should, offend.

Rich, scholarly and informative, *The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English* is an indispensable resource for language researchers, lexicographers and translators.

Tom Dalzell is a lawyer and leading expert on American slang.



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The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English

Second edition

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PREFACE

This dictionary is an intended consequence of a larger project, the *New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, in which Terry Victor and I updated the work of Eric Partridge. Contributors from around the globe supported us as we recorded and defined the slang of the English-speaking world since the end of World War 2. We worked hard to continue the Partridge tradition, observing his high standards of lexicography while producing an accessible work informed by, and infused with, the humor, mischief and energy that are endemic to slang. Partridge's body of work, scholarship and dignity of approach led the way and set the standard for every other English-language slang lexicographer of the twentieth century, and we tried to do as we thought he would have done.

Partridge limited his work to the language of Great Britain and her dominions. He explicitly decided to exclude American slang, and this decision created increasingly difficult problems for him as the years passed and the influence of American slang grew.

Because Partridge did not record American slang, my task for the *New Partridge* was to start from scratch, not to review and cull Partridge's previous work and then update it. To some extent I relied on reference works, but for the most part I read extensively from popular literature. I mined fiction, non-fiction, screenplays, scripts, newspapers (especially underground newspapers), magazines, and popular song lyrics for headwords and citations.

For this dictionary, I extracted the American entries from *New Partridge* and reviewed each entry, definition, and citation. I ultimately excluded many entries from *New Partridge*, and many others benefited from new citations or new first-usage dating information. I added several thousand new entries, and then trimmed the whole to fit our extent parameters.

Criteria for inclusion

I use three criteria for including a term or phrase in this dictionary. I include (1) slang and unconventional English; (2) used in the United States; and (3) after 1945.

Rather than focus too intently on a precise definition of slang or on whether a given entry is slang, jargon or colloquial English, I borrow the wide net cast by Partridge when he chose to record "slang and unconventional English" instead of just slang, which is, after all, without any settled test of purity. I have considered for inclusion all unconventional English that has been used with the purpose or effect of either lowering the formality of communication and reducing solemnity and/or identifying status or group and putting oneself in tune with one's company. A term recorded here might be slang, slangy jargon, a colloquialism, an acronym, an initialism, a vulgarism or a catchphrase.

In all instances, an entry imparts a message beyond the text and literal meaning. If there was a question as to whether a potential entry fell within the target register, we erred on the side of inclusion. I present my evidence of usage to the reader who is free to determine if a candidate passes probation. I chose to avoid the slang of sports. Entire

dictionaries are devoted to sports slang, and there was little that I could add to this work. Because golf and bowling are such social sports, I was tempted to dabble in their slang, but in the end chose not to.

Secondly, all entries were used in the United States. Regardless of the country of origin, if the word or phrase was used in the United States, it is a candidate for inclusion. A number of entries show countries of origin other than the United States, which simply reflects the fact that globalization has affected many facets of life, not the least of which is our language. I also include pidgin, Creolized English and borrowed foreign terms used by English-speakers in primarily English-language conversation.

Thirdly, I include slang and unconventional English heard and used at any time after 1945. I chose the end of the war in 1945 as my starting point primarily because it marked the beginning of a series of profound cultural changes that produced the lexicon of modern and contemporary slang. The cultural transformations since 1945 are mind-boggling. Television, computers, drugs, music, unpopular wars, youth movements, changing racial sensitivities and attitudes towards sex and sexuality are all substantial factors that have shaped culture and language.

No term is excluded on the grounds that it might be considered offensive as a racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or any kind of slur. This dictionary contains many entries and citations that will, and should, offend. To exclude a term or citation because it is offensive is to deny the fact that it is used.

Using The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English

I hope that my presentation is self-evident and that it requires little explanation. I use only a few abbreviations and none of the stylistic conceits near and dear to the hearts of lexicographers.

Headwords

I use indigenous spelling for headwords. For Yiddish words, I use Leo Rosten's spelling, which favors "sh-" over "sch-". An initialism is shown in upper case without periods (for example, BLT), except that acronyms (pronounced like individual lexical items) are lower case (for example, snafu). Including every variant spelling of a headword seemed neither practical nor helpful to the reader. For the spelling of headwords, I chose the form found in standard dictionaries or the most common forms, ignoring uncommon variants as well as common hyphenation variants of compounds and words ending in "ie" or "y". For this reason, citations may show variant spellings not found in the headword.

Placement of phrases

As a general rule, phrases are placed under their first significant word. However, some invariant phrases are listed as headwords; for example, a stock greeting, stock reply or

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catchphrase. Terms that involve a single concept are grouped together as phrases under the common headword; for example, burn rubber, lay rubber and peel rubber are all listed as phrases under the headword "rubber."

Definition

I use conventional English in the definitions, turning to slang only when it is both substantially more economical than the use of conventional English and is readily understood by the average reader. If a term used in a definition or gloss is itself defined in the dictionary, it appears in **SMALL CAPS BOLD**.

Gloss

The gloss is the brief explanations that Partridge used for "editorial comment" or "further elucidation." Partridge warned against using the gloss to show what clever and learned fellows we are – a warning that I tried to heed.

Country of origin

As is the case with dating, further research will undoubtedly produce a shift in the country of origin for a number of entries. I resolutely avoided guesswork and informed opinion.

Dating

Even Paul Beale, who as editor of the 8th edition of Partridge was the direct inheritor of Partridge's trust, noted that Partridge's dating "must be treated with caution." I recognise that the accurate dating of slang is far more difficult than dating conventional language. Virtually every word in our lexicon is spoken before it is written, and this is especially true of unconventional terms. The recent proliferation of electronic databases and powerful search engines will

undoubtedly permit the antedating of many of the entries. Individualised dating research, such as Allen Walker's hunt for the origin of "OK" or Barry Popik's exhaustive work on terms such as "hot dog," produces dramatic antedatings: I could not undertake this level of detailed research for every entry.

Conclusion

In the preface to his 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language*, Samuel Johnson noted that "A large work is difficult because it is large," and that "Every writer of a long work commits errors." In addition to improvements in my dating of terms and identification of the country of origin, it is inevitable that some of my definitions are incorrect or misleading, especially where the sense is subtle and fleeting, defying paraphrasing, or where kindred senses are interwoven. It is also inevitable that some quotations are included in a mistaken sense. For these errors, I apologise in advance. I carry the flame for words that are usually judged only by the ill-regarded company they keep.

Just as Partridge did for the sixteenth-century beggars and rakes, for whores of the eighteenth century, and for the armed services of the two world wars, I try to do for the slang users of the last 60 years. I embrace the language of beats, hipsters, hippies, GI's in Vietnam, pimps, druggies, whores, punks, skinheads, ravers, surfers, Valley Girls, dudes, pill-popping truck drivers, hackers, rappers and more. I have tried to do what Partridge saw as necessary, which was simply to keep up to date.

*Tom Dalzell, Berkeley, California
January 2008*

PREFACE TO THIS EDITION

Additions that we made in 2016 demonstrate a robust and creative stream of new words entering the American slang lexicon. Hip hop continues to contribute vocabulary more than 30 years after rap music burst onto the scene in the early 1980s. Words that make it from hip hop into broader slang usage often transcend hip hop, serving as markers of a generation or hipness without necessarily invoking hip hop culture. Social media plays a greater and greater role in the lives of young Americans, and it serves as a testing ground for language. Thousands of terms and initialisms are used in social media, while only the most clever and thought-provoking make it into vocalized speech.

Secondarily, the work and lifestyle of the increasing number of techies involved in social media have provided slang for broader use. The alternative culture of artistic self-expression and participation by all, epitomized by Burning Man and electronic dance music festivals, pumps words and phrases into the broader body of slang. Lastly, catchphrases from popular culture work their way into our informal, vernacular usage, bringing with them, as Leslie Savan suggests in her work, an imagined laugh track. These are the major, but not the only, sources of the latest generation of American slang, as diverse in their origins as is American culture in general.



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Aa

A noun

1 amphetamine *US, 1967*

- “A” is considered very bad news, “it rots your teeth and your mind.” — Ruth Bronsteen, *The Hippie’s Handbook*, p. 12, 1967
- — *Look*, p. 13, 8th August 1967
- [T]hat would come later, when he kicked A in terror after his toenails dropped off. — Ed Sanders, *Tales of Beatnik Glory*, p. 59, 1975

2 LSD *US, 1977*

- An abbreviation of **ACID**.
- — Walter Way, *The Drug Scene*, p. 105, 1977
- Street names [ː] A, acid, blotter[.] — James Kay and Julian Cohen, *The Parents’ Complete Guide to Young People and Drugs*, p. 141, 1998

A adjective

1 reserved for the best; the best *US, 1945*

- He went through what Hollywood calls Treatment A, i.e. the works for top visitors, without a mistake. — *Fortune*, p. 225, October 1945
- And part of the magic at Malibu was that Mickey’s dinner was unseated which, as any “A” hostess knows, can be hazardous. — *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18th August 1975
- Oh my God Michele, look at the A group. — *Romy and Michele’s High School Reunion*, 1997

2 anal *US, 1997*

- Now every scene I do is pretty much an “A” scene. (Quoting Nici Sterling.) — Anthony Petkovich, *The X Factory*, p. 33, 1997

a2m noun

a scene in a pornographic movie in which an object or body part is withdrawn from a rectum and taken into a mouth without either washing or editing *US, 2005*

- Shorthand for “ass-to-mouth.”
- She tea-bags his balls before an A2M. — Editors of *Adult Video News*, *The AVN Guide to the 500 Greatest Adult Films of All Time*, p. 27, 2005

AAA noun

an amphetamine tablet *US, 1993*

In the US, the AAA is the national automobile club, which, like an amphetamine tablet, helps you get from one place to another.

- — Peter Johnson, *Dictionary of Street Alcohol and Drug Terms*, p. 1, 1993

A and A noun

in the military, a leave for rest and recreation *US, 1966*

- A jocular abbreviation of “ass and alcohol.”
- They had put in two months’ patrol in the steam-bath heat of the jungle and were due to go next morning to exotic old Hong Kong for some R & R — or A & A (Ass and Alcohol), as they put it. — Elaine Shepard, *The Doom Pussy*, p. 41, 1967
- Commonly known as R&R in the military, or rest and relaxation, some called it P&P (Pussy and Popcorn), A&A (Ass and Alcohol). — Edmund Ciriello, *The Reluctant Warrior*, p. 254, 2004

A and B noun

assault and battery *US, 1986*

- You wanna file A-and-B on the sonofabitch? — Carl Hiaasen, *Tourist Season*, p. 55, 1986

ab noun

an abscess, especially as a result of injecting drugs *US, 1952*

- — *American Speech*, p. 24, February 1952: “Teen-age hophead jargon”
- — Eugene Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, p. 21, 1971

AB noun

the Aryan Brotherhood, a white prison gang in the US *US, 1972*

- According to the Los Angeles Police Department’s Gang Awareness School training manual, “the Aryan Brotherhood (AB) is the most violent of the prison gangs.” — Bernard Campbell, *Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man*, p. 77, 1972
- I had been disillusioned upon my return to prison with the AB, and this is when I just decided to drop out completely. — Report to the Senate, *California Senate Committee on Civil Disorder*, p. 38, 1975
- “But I’m aces with the A.B. here at Coldwater,” Joe objected. — Seth Morgan, *Homeboy*, p. 369, 1990

abandonium noun

an abandoned building where squatters are living *US*

- *Urban Dictionary*, 17th August 2014
- “They’ve pushed them out of tents and into ‘abandoniums,’” says King. — Cherry Hill (New Jersey) *Courier-Post*, 17th August 2014

abba-dabba noun

chatter, gossip *US, 1967*

Undoubtedly originated with the song “The Aba-Daba Honeymoon,” written in 1913 and rereleased with great success by Larry Clinton and His Orchestra in March 1948, in which “abba-dabba” is the chatter of monkeys.

- Abba-dabba: In and out of our town in a hurry this week was Guy Lewis. — *San Francisco Chronicle*, p. 50, 12th May 1967

abbott noun

a capsule of pentobarbital sodium (trade name Nambuta™), a central nervous system depressant *US, 1971*

- From the name of the manufacturer.
- — Eugene Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, p. 21, 1971

- — Donald Wesson and David Smith, *Barbiturates*, p. 121, 1977

Abby Singer noun

in television or movie making, the next-to-last shot of the day *US, 1990*

Singer was active in US television from the early 1950s until the late 1980s; his name became an eponym when he was an Assistant Director in the 1950s.

- — Ralph S. Singleton, *Filmmaker’s Dictionary*, p. 1, 1990

ABC noun

1 an American-born Chinese *US, 1984*

- — Judi Sanders, *Faced and Faded, Hanging to Hurl*, p. 1, 1993
- “Yellow outside, white inside. Like ABC, American Born Chinese.” “Jim’s not marrying a gwaillu (foreign devil) or a banana. He’s marrying a real Chinese.” — Howard Marks, *Mr Nice*, p. 230, 1997

2 in poker, the ace, two and three *US, 1988*

- — George Percy, *The Language of Poker*, p. 4, 1988

ABC adjective

of a piece of chewing gum, Already Been Chewed *US, 1983*

- Childish usage.
- “ABC. Already Been Chewed. It was the best idea Alvin had heard in days.” — Stephen Manes, *The Hooples’ Haunted House*, p. 101, 1983
- “Exactly! It’s ABC gum—Already Been Chewed! Get it?” — Matt Christopher, *Master of Disaster*, p. 2, 2003

ABCs noun

underwear *US, 1949*

- I took off the a b c’s and her stockings. — Hal Elson, *Duke*, p. 11, 1949

ABC-ya

used as a farewell *US, 1947*

Intended as a clever variant of “I’ll be seeing you.”

- — *San Francisco Examiner*, p. 19, 5th January 1947
- — Alonzo Westbrook, *Hip Hojtonary*, p. 1, 2002

Abdul noun

any male Arab *US, 1991*

Gulf war usage.

- — *American Speech*, p. 382, Winter 1991: “Among the new words”

Abe Lincoln noun

a five-dollar bill *US, 1966*

The bill bears an engraving of President Lincoln.

- If these good people have no objection we’ll call it an off the record sidebet. One Abe Lincoln it is. — Robert Edmond Alter, *Corny Kill*, p. 36, 1966

abercrombie noun

1 a person devoted to prep-school fashions and style *US, 2004*

- An Abercrombie is a gorgeous but terminally preppy boy (often blond) who looks like he just stepped out of the pages of A&F Quarterly. — Brittany Kent, *O.C. Undercover*, p. 137, 2004

2 someone who strives at creating the impression of knowing all *US, 1945*

- — Lou Shelly, *Hepcats Jive Talk Dictionary*, p. 7, 1945

Abigail noun

a staid, traditional, middle-aged homosexual man *US, 1972*

- — Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens’ Vernacular*, p. 17, 1972
- — *Maledicta*, p. 222, 1979: “Kinks and queens: linguistic and cultural aspects of the terminology for gays”

able Grable noun

a sexually attractive girl *US, 1945*

- — *Yank*, p. 18, 24th March 1945

ABM noun

an angry black male *US*

- Oh yeah, there’s always an ABM who’ll call IA, his councilman, and maybe long distance to Al Sharpton. — Joseph Wambaugh, *Hollywood Station*, p. 4, 2006

aboard adverb

present, part of an enterprise *US, 1957*

- McDougal led off the tenth. He turned around at the plate and shook hands with the kid. Gil said: “I’m from San Francisco, Commerce High. Glad to have you aboard.” — *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11th July 1957
- They met for a couple of days in the plush Lake Tahoe layout of Henry Kaiser—deliberately without any party organization officials or other statewide Democratic candidates aboard. — *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, p. 13, 15th August 1958

about preposition

used as a humorous attempt to duplicate a Canadian saying “about” *US, 1995*

- This is not about deals. This is about dignity. This is about freedom. This is about respect. — *South Park*, 1995

about verb

to defecate after being the passive partner in anal sex *US, 1972*

- — Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens’ Vernacular*, p. 17, 1972

abortion *noun*

- a misfortune; an ugly person or thing *US, 1943*
- He scanned around his workshop, dropped the plane, reached for an old beaten-up thing with a lot of notches in it and lifted it up with one hand. "What about this abortion?" — Frederick Kohner, *Gidget*, p. 18, 1957
- — Collin Baker et al., *College Undergraduate Slang Study Conducted at Brown University*, p. 69, 1968

about-face *noun*

- a 180-degree turn executed while driving fast *US, 1965*
- It was Junior Johnson specifically, however, who was famous for the "bootleg turn" or "about face." — Tom Wolfe, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamlined Baby*, p. 128, 1965

about it; 'bout it *adjective*

- in favor of something *US, 2001*
- — Don R. McCreary (Editor), *Dawg Speak*, 2001

abracadabra, please and thank you

- used as a humorous embellishment of "please" *US, 1996*
- A signature line from the *Captain Kangaroo* children's television show (CBS, 1944–84). Repeated with referential humor.
- Abracadabra. Please and thank you. Hilary took a deep sigh, closed her eyes. — Tyle Corland, *The Nurses*, p. 96, 1996

abs *noun*

- the abdominal muscles *US, 1956*
- Danny and the man begin talking about the relative merits of "frog kicks" for the "abs" as opposed to regular situps[.] — John Rechy, *Numbers*, p. 66, 1967
- That is, if you mention a strong stomach, you must have cut abs. — John Preston, *Hustling*, p. 121, 1994
- He had the most awesome set of abs I'd ever seen. — Missy Hyatt, *Missy Hyatt*, p. 126, 2001

absotively; absitively *adverb*

- certainly *US, 1914*
- A jocular blend of "positively" and "absolutely."
- — Bill Davis, *Jawjacking*, p. 9, 1977
- "Absotively," he would say. — Marilyn Greene, *Finder*, p. 135, 1988

Abyssinian polo *noun*

- a game of dice *US, 1962*
- — Frank Garcia, *Marked Cards and Loaded Dice*, p. 250, 1962
- Dice were sometimes called "African dominoes," and one game was dubbed "Abyssinian polo." — Karl Johnson, *The Magician and the Cardsharp*, p. 20, 2006

AC *noun*

- an Acura Legend car *US, 2003*
- I used to drive an AC and kept a mac in the engine. — Mobb Deep, "The Start of Your Ending," 1995

Academy Award *noun*

- recognition of excelling in a field *US, 1958*
- Tuohy became a jailbird early in life and got his academy award, so to speak, when the FBI rated him Public Enemy No. 1 in 1934. — *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, p. 10, 18th April 1958
- "We won't win any academy awards with our showing in Baltimore," he said disgustedly today. — *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, p. 45, 17th September 1968

Academy Award *adjective*

- excellent *US, 1958*
- But with the club averaging 7½ runs a game, Academy award pitching may not be necessary. — *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, p. 19, 21st April 1958

Acapulco gold *noun*

- golden-leaved marijuana from southwest Mexico *US, 1965*
- A popular, well-known strain of cannabis. The song "Acapulco Gold" by the Rainy Daze was released in 1967 and had just begun its climb on the pop charts when program directors figured out what it was about and pulled it off play lists.
- "Gold. It's Acapulco Gold," White Rabbit corrected the doctor, who was mixing up the slang names for different kinds of marijuana. — Nicholas Von Hoffman, *We Are The People Our Parents Warned Us Against*, p. 23, 1967
- We are free to go, but have to be very sneaky and ditch Bruce somewhere inside the Pentagon maze so he won't find the Acapulco Gold in the car. — Abbie Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, p. 44, 1968
- Is that Acapulco gold or Bangkok gold? — Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in America*, p. 40, 20th February 1968: Letter from Oscar Acosta
- About midnight she came to me and asked would I like some Acapulco gold, I said yes. — Babs Gonzales, *Movin' On Down De Line*, p. 115, 1975

accelerator *noun*

- 1 an amphetamine tablet *US, 1993*
- — Peter Johnson, *Dictionary of Street Alcohol and Drug Terms*, p. 1, 1993
- 2 an arsonist *US, 1992*
- — William K. Bentley and James M. Corbett, *Prison Slang*, p. 34, 1992

ace of hearts; ace of spades *noun*

- heroin *US*
- Two bags were labeled ace of spades and ace of hearts, which is street slang for heroin. — Nancy Grace, 3rd February 2014

accommodation arrest *noun*

- a prearranged, consensual raid of an illegal gambling operation, designed to give the appearance of strict enforcement of laws *US, 1961*
- And if you could impose reasonable jail sentences, I think you could stop the stand-in and the accommodation arrest. — Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime, *Investigation of Organized Crime*, p. 1027, 1951
- If a juice joint is very conspicuous, an accommodation arrest may occasionally be necessary. — New York Knapp Commission, *The Knapp Commission Report on Police Corruption*, p. 145, 1973

accordion act *noun*

- collapsing under pressure *US, 1989*
- Unlike their previous two games against the Rangers, the Devils didn't do an accordion act after allowing an early goal, and scored the next three goals of the first period. — *Record (Bergen County, New Jersey)*, p. E1, 10th January 1989
- If Tech doesn't get things figured out in a hurry, a possible repeat of the 1997 club's late-season accordion act looms. — *Roanoke (Virginia) Times & World News*, p. C1, 9th November 2001

accordion war *noun*

- US tactics during the Korean war: accordion-like movements up and down Korea by land forces *US, 1951*
- It was an accordion war where the Americans went three steps ahead and two steps back. — Kurt Singer, *Spy Stories from Asia*, p. 180, 1955
- So MacArthur began sniping at Ridgway and his "accordion war." — Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea*, p. 478, 1982

AC/DC; AC-DC *adjective*

- bisexual *US, 1960*
- A pun on electricity's AC (alternating current) and DC (direct current).
- — Frank Prewitt and Francis K. Schaeffer, *Vocabulary of Inmates' Usages*, 1963
- I don't trust any of those AC-DC guys. — Mickey Spillane, *Return of the Hood*, p. 124, 1964
- But, all AC-DC folk welcome. — *Screw*, p. 7, 7th March 1969
- She started out in one of his deluxe AC-DC cathouses in the suburbs of Havana. — Edwin Torres, *After Hours*, p. 325, 1979

ace *noun***1 a police officer** *US, 1949*

- "The punk saw that ace 'n ducked without givin' me the word," Frankie decided bitterly. — Nelson Algren, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, p. 182, 1949

2 a good and reliable friend *US, 1932*

- One day after we became aces, we had our first fight in over a year[.] — Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*, pp. 79–80, 1965
- It really bugged me when the paddies call us Puerto Ricans the same names they called our colored aces. — Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*, p. 120, 1967
- "You're pals with Tommy Dunphy, right, Carlito?" "Yeah, we're aces." — Edwin Torres, *Carlito's Way*, p. 47, 1975
- "But I'm aces with the A.B. here at Coldwater," Joe objected. — Seth Morgan, *Homeboy*, p. 369, 1990

3 one dollar *US, 1900*

- "An ace for two sticks." — Chandler Brossard, *Who Walks in Darkness*, p. 11, 1952
- I want to play the nine ball for five dollars, but we decide on a fucking ace. — Jim Carroll, *Forced Entries*, p. 65, 1987

4 one-eighth of an ounce of a drug *US, 1989*

- — Geoffrey Froner, *Digging for Diamonds*, p. 70, 1989

5 phencyclidine, the recreational drug known as PCP or angel**dust** *US, 1981*

- — Ronald Linder, *PCP*, p. 9, 1981

6 in dice games, a rolled one *US, 1999*

- Three crap three, ace-deuce, no use. — Chris Fagans and David Guzman, *A Guide to Craps Lingo*, p. 12, 1999

7 in the theater, a one-night engagement *US, 1918*

- — Don Wilmeth, *The Language of American Popular Entertainment*, p. 3, 1981

8 in pool, the number one ball *US, 1878*

- Fifteen in the corner. Ace in the side. — *The Hustler*, 1961
- — Mike Shamos, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Billiards*, p. 1, 1993

9 the grade "A" *US, 1964*

- — Collin Baker et al., *College Undergraduate Slang Study Conducted at Brown University*, p. 69, 1968

ace *verb***1 to outsmart someone** *US, 1929*

- But there was something personal about it if the guy was driving down Telegraph grinning, thinking he'd aced him. — Elmore Leonard, *Swag*, p. 2, 1976

2 to work your way somewhere, to engineer something *US, 1929*

- The scheme is said to have originated among one or more influential groups in San Francisco's Chinatown, one of which for several years has been acing itself into a favored position with the Nationalist China regime. — *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, p. 1, 2nd September 1953

3 to do well in an examination *US, 1957*

- — Collin Baker et al., *College Undergraduate Slang Study Conducted at Brown University*, p. 69, 1968
- You may think that you aced the exam, but then you get back scores only acceptable to a college that advertises in the back of MAD magazine. — Joanne Kimes, *Dating Sucks*, p. 153, 2005

4 to kill someone *US, 1975*

- Then Amalia told her about the woman's husband ripping off the Casino Latino with Louis Palo and how Charley had to ace the husband[.] — Richard Condon, *Prizzi's Honor*, p. 88, 1982
- A more likely scenario had the kid getting aced with a gun of his own, a .38 taken off him in a struggle with an arresting officer. — David Simon, *Homicide*, p. 27, 1991
- Of all the words American troops used to describe death in Vietnam, aced, blown away, bought it, croaked, dinged, fucked up, greased, massaged, porked, stitched, sanitized, smoked, snuffed, terminated, waxed, wiped out, zapped—the one I heard most was "wasted." — John Laurence, *The Cat from Hue*, p. 442, 2002

ace *adjective***exceptional, expert, excellent** *US, 1930*

- I am glad that the newspaper boys, who later liked to refer to me as an ace reporter, never heard the story of my first big pinch. — William J. Spillard and Pence James, *Needle in a Haystack*, p. 7, 1945
- I became an ace young reporter for the Cincinnati Post and Times-Star. — Jerry Rubin, *Do It!*, p. 12, 1970

- One of my ace informants tells me to see a guy at Charity in there with a gunshot wound he says was from a hunting accident. — Elmore Leonard, *Bandits*, p. 139, 1987

ace boon coon; ace boon poon *noun*

- a very close friend *US*, 1958
- I knew K.B. about a year before we became ace boon coons. — Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*, p. 79, 1965
- “What happened to your ace-boon-coon, that other writer fella?” — John Williams, *The Man Who Cried I Am*, p. 172, 1967
- Now my ace-boon-poon / was a young boy named Spoon. — Lightnin’ Rod, *Hustlers Convention*, p. 10, 1973
- Margo got up to greet him. “Lobo. How’s my ace boon coon?” — Robert Deane Pharr, *Giveadamn Brown*, p. 14, 1978

ace cool *noun*

- a very close and trusted friend *US*, 1988
- Your client seemed to be indicating to me over the phone last night that his “Ace Cool,” which means best friend, told him that he was part of the killing at Trenton Towers and that some Italian mobsters did the work. — Stephen Cannell, *King Con*, p. 66, 1997

ace-deuce *noun*

- a fellow prisoner upon whom you rely without question *US*, 1989
- — James Harris, *A Convict’s Dictionary*, p. 28, 1989

ace-deuce *adjective*

- 1 cross-eyed *US*, 1955
 - They had eleven bowlegged children whose glims [eyes] were ace-deuce and won bingo games on strangers’ cards. — *San Francisco Examiner*, p. 6, 20th March 1955
- 2 riding a racehorse with the right stirrup higher than the left *US*, 1948
 - Acaro uses what is called the “ace deuce” technique in which the right stirrup is about two inches higher than the left. — *Time*, p. 82, 17th May 1948

ace-deuce *adverb*

- on an angle, with one side higher than the other *US*, 1948
- There’s vomit all over the bed, all in my hat, and that’s sittin’ ace-deuce on my head! — Henry Williamson, *Hustler!*, p. 62, 1965
- He broke the stingy brim down and set the hat ace-deuce across his head. — Donald Goines, *Dopefiend*, p. 182, 1971

ace-douche *noun*

- in craps, a first roll of three *US*, 1999
- “Douche” is an intentional corruption of “deuce”; a come-out roll of three loses — Chris Fagans and David Guzman, *A Guide to Craps Lingo*, p. 13, 1999

ace high; aces high *adjective*

- the very best *US*, 1896
- From poker.
- I said, “You’re aces high with me, Duke.” — Dan Jenkins, *Semi-Tough*, p. 177, 1972

ace in *verb*

- to manipulate someone or something into a situation *US*, 1971
- — Eugene Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, p. 21, 1971

ace in the hole *noun*

- an undisclosed resource *US*, 1908
- Colonel Calls Gems His “Ace in Hole” — *San Francisco Examiner*, p. 3, 7th February 1947
- One of the first things I did was borrow \$800 from Lillian, my rich ace in the hole. — Dick Gregory, *Nigger*, p. 112, 1964

aceman *noun*

- a respected fighter in a youth gang *US*, 1953
- — Dale Kramer and Madeline Kari, *Teen-Age Gangs*, p. 174, 1953
- [A]cemen (secondary leaders or top fighters in the gang). — Howard Polsky, *Cottage Six*, p. 24, 1962

ace note *noun*

- a one-dollar bill *US*, 1929
- — Joe McKennon, *Circus Lingo*, p. 11, 1980

ace out *verb*

- 1 to exclude someone *US*, 1964
 - — J. R. Friss, *A Dictionary of Teenage Slang*, 1964
- 2 in poker, to win a hand by bluffing while holding a relatively low-value hand *US*, 1983
 - — Thomas L. Clark, *The Dictionary of Gambling and Gaming*, p. 2, 1987

ace up your sleeve *noun*

- a resource that is yet to be revealed *US*, 1927
- From the popular belief that card cheats hide cards up their sleeves.
- I still had a few aces up my sleeve. — Max Shulman, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, p. 115, 1951

aces *adjective*

- excellent *US*, 1901
- I said it in this very sincere voice. “You’re aces, Ackley kid,” I said. — J.D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*, p. 50, 1951
- Paddy, why he’s aces, a real saint, like; you know? — George Mandel, *Flee the Angry Strangers*, p. 56, 1952

acey-deucey *noun*

- 1 in craps, a roll of a one and a two *US*, 1974
 - — John Savage, *The Winner’s Guide to Dice*, p. 89, 1974
- 2 a bisexual *US*, 1980
 - A probable elaboration of **AC/DC**.
 - — Joe McKennon, *Circus Lingo*, p. 11, 1980

acey-deucey *adjective*

- 1 bisexual *US*, 1972
 - A probable elaboration of **AC/DC**.
 - — Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens’ Vernacular*, p. 32, 1972
 - — Alonzo Westbrook, *Hip Hoptony*, p. 1, 2002
 - 2 acceptable, satisfactory *US*, 1975
 - — Report to the Senate, *California Senate Committee on Civil Disorder*, p. 226, 1975
- **throw acey-deucey to die** *US*, 1960
- An allusion to a losing roll of the dice in the game of craps.
 - “You’re going to throw acey-deucey pretty soon, looks like. Okay, so how are your fixed for insurance?” — George Clayton Johnson, *Ocean’s Eleven*, p. 77, 1960

achiever *noun*

- a devoted fan of the movie *The Big Lebowski* *US*, 2004
- In the movie, the rich Lebowski sponsors a program named the “Little Lebowski Urban Achievers.”
- Many of the faithful—who call themselves Achievers after “The Little Lebowski Urban Achievers” in the movie—showed up dressed as their favorite characters. — *Tallahassee (Florida) Democrat*, p. D1, 11th April 2004

acid *noun*

- LSD *US*, 1965
- [T]hen got up late that night, got loaded on acid & went bar-hopping to hear some great Rock & Roll. — Neal Cassady, *The First Third*, p. 218, 1965
- Last night as I left the U.C. theater on University Avenue, a guy walking behind me said to his friend: “That was better than acid, man.” — *The Berkeley Barb*, p. 2, 17th December 1965
- I can’t really recommend acid because acid has become an almost meaningless chemical. — *The Last Supplement to the Whole Earth Catalog*, p. 83, March 1971
- Well, Donny’s in a coma. He had a very bad acid experience. — *Manhattan*, 1979

acid freak *noun*

- a habitual user of LSD *US*, 1966
- freak: devotee: 1. originally of a particular drug: acid freak. — Ethel Romm, *The Open Conspiracy*, p. 243, 1970
- In a town full of bedrock crazies, nobody even notices an acid freak. — Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, p. 24, 1971

acid funk *noun*

- a depression brought on by LSD use *US*, 1971
- Acid funk—an LSD induced depression. — Edward Bloomquist, *Marijuana: The Second Trip*, p. 332, 1971

acid head *noun*

- a habitual user of LSD *US*, 1966
- For some in the group, it was a weekend party. For others, it was their first trip and several were true “acidheads.” — Richard Alpert and Sidney Cohen, *LSD*, p. 100, 1966
- What they’ll do is arrest the blacks, the acid heads, and the vagrants. — *Berkeley Barb*, p. 5, 30th December 1966
- Black militants, New Leftists, acid-heads, tribunes of the gay, families of the Mafia[.] — Norman Mailer, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, p. 33, 1968
- Steve gave a talk at Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, tickets were sold in the Free Press office and I met acid heads galore. — Eve Babitz, *Eve’s Hollywood*, p. 192, 1974

acid mung *noun*

- the sensation while under the influence of LSD of having an oily face *US*, 1971
- — Eugene Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, p. 22, 1971

acid rock *noun*

- a genre of rock music *US*, 1966
- Folk etymology claims the music to be inspired by the altered states of consciousness induced by ACID (the hallucinogenic drug LSD); certainly this was a commercial style of music being marketed to the mass audience when high-profile musicians were experimenting with LSD
- I was talking recently to a member of one of America’s top acid-rock bands, who had just returned from England. — Timothy Leary, *The Politics of Ecstasy*, p. 103, 1968

acid test *noun*

- an event organized to maximize the hallucinatory experiences of LSD *US*, 1966
- Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters organized acid tests in Palo Alto, Portland (Oregon), Los Angeles and Mexico in 1966
- Several members of the “Acid Test” dance beneath a flashing stroboscope light which heightens the effects of LSD. — Richard Alpert and Sidney Cohen, *LSD*, p. 97, 1966
- Curiously, after the first rush at the Acid Test, there would be long intervals of the most exquisite boredom. — Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, p. 218, 1968

ack *noun*

- a pimple *US*, 1968
- — Collin Baker et al., *College Undergraduate Slang Study Conducted at Brown University*, p. 70, 1968

ack-ack *noun*

- anti-aircraft artillery *US*, 1926
- An initialism, using the phonetic alphabet that was current until 1941. Usage survived the new alphabet rather than being amended to “fable able.”
- To the sound of ack-ack shells are bursting in the sky, and tracer bullets stream upwards. — Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, p. 72, 1949
- And came in low with ack-ack taunting him on. — Nelson Algren, *The Neon Wilderness*, p. 177, 1960

- I had a cross-eyed cousin, an organizer for the farmworker's union, who had been with an ack-ack battery in the defense of Madrid[.] — Clancy Sigal, *Going Away*, p. 119, 1961
- Down the lazy valley where the ack-ack hides / The lazy lazy valley on the other side. — Joseph Tuso, *Singing the Vietnam Blues*, p. 75, 1990: Down the Lazy Valley

ack-ack *verb*to shoot someone or something *US, 1947*

- They barge in ack-ack the wolf an Ridinghood is in the groove forever after! — Harry Haenigsen, *Jive's Like That*, 1947

A-condition *noun*air conditioning *US, 2002*

- "Cain't a muthafucka get some A-condition? It be hot as a crack ho's mouth up in here!" — Jimmy Lerner, *You Got Nothing Coming*, p. 39, 2002

acorn *noun***1** in a casino, a generous tipper *US, 1984*

- — Thomas L. Clark, *The Dictionary of Gambling and Gaming*, p. 3, 1987

2 an inexperienced gambler *US*

- A newbie, one who can be taught and molded by a dealer. — "Read This Before the Next Time You Go to the Casino," *Playboy*, December 2015

acorns *noun*the testicles *US, 1975*

- "I loaned you part of the down payment!" reminded Harold and shrieked as the spray hit him in the acorns[.] — Joseph Wambaugh, *The Chairboys*, p. 213, 1975

act *verb*▶ **act as if**in twelve-step recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, used as a slogan for new participants in the program *US, 1998*

- They're told to act as if they were sane, or not wanting to use, because all you can really change for the moment is your actions, not your feelings[.] — Christopher Cavanaugh, *AA to Z*, p. 43, 1998

acting Jack *noun***1** a lance sergeant *US, 1917*

- I took my "acting jack" job most seriously, and was thought to be a shoin for the "best trainee" (an honor that included a promotion to PFC on completion of the course until a week before basic was over[.] — David H. Hackworth, *About Face*, p. 41, 1989

2 a soldier temporarily appointed to higher rank, especially to serve as a platoon leader in basic training *US, 1942*

- — Carl Fleischhauer, *A Glossary of Army Slang*, p. 1, 1968

action *noun***1** sexual activity *US, 1956*

- As far as I'm concerned there ain't no difference. Action's action[.] — Malcolm Braly, *On the Yard*, p. 88, 1967
- I therefore denounced the idea of conjugal visits as inherently unfair; single prisoners needed and deserved action just as married prisoners did. — Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, p. 7, 1968
- Where did he go to study when he saw the tie placed on the doorknob of our room (the traditional signal for "action within")? — Erich Segal, *Love Story*, p. 36, 1970
- "If somebody comes into town and they want a little action, contact me over at the radio station." — Wolfman Jack (Bob Smith), *Have Mercy!*, p. 85, 1995

2 activity, especially of the kind to arouse interest or excitement *US, 1951*

Often in the greetings "where's the action?" and "what's the action?"

- Man, that chick is ruttin' down some action! — William "Lord" Buckley, *Nero*, 1951
- — Richard McAlister, *Rapper's Handbook*, p. 1, 1990

3 betting, gambling *US, 1985*

- You looking for action? — *The Hustler*, 1961
- Every now and then I would go on the road looking for a little action. — Minnesota Fats, *The Bank Shot*, p. 31, 1966
- The sina qua non is that he is a good "money player," can play his best when heavy action is riding on the game (as many non-hustlers can't). — Ned Polsky, *Hustlers, Beats, and Others*, p. 55, 1967
- And I'll take all the action I can get. — *Diner*, 1982

4 the amount that a gambler is willing to bet *US, 1991*

- For example, one hundred bets of \$5 each is \$500 in action. — Michael Dalton, *Blackjack*, p. 25, 1991

5 in pool, a game played with wagers *US, 1990*

- — Steve Rushin, *Pool Cool*, p. 5, 1990

6 in pool, spin imparted on the cue ball to affect the course of the object ball or the cue ball after striking the object ball *US, 1973*

- — Mike Shamos, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Billiards*, p. 2, 1993

7 a political act, often confrontational or violent *US, 1971*

- On that same point, I'd like to say first of all, as Billy mentioned, letters are going to be going to the men whose [draft] files were destroyed, and this in itself is, I think, an action, because it is giving these men a chance to make their own choice. — *The Last Supplement to the Whole Earth Catalog*, p. 18, March 1971

▶ **piece of the action; share of the action**an involvement in an activity; a share in the profits of something *US, 1957*

- Triads never helped anyone out without a promise of a piece of the action. — Lung Cheng, *I Am Jackie Chan*, p. 261, 1998

action beaver *noun*a movie featuring full nudity and sexual activity short of intercourse *US, 1974*

- The action beaver, the next logical cinematic step, featured increasingly explicit sexual activity along with complete nudity. — Kenneth Turan and Stephen E. Zito, *Sinema*, p. 78, 1974

action faction *noun*a subset of the political left that advocated forceful, confrontational tactics *US, 1968*

- The Labor Committee is sometimes referred to as the thought faction, as opposed to the action faction, of SDS. — James Simon Kunen, *The Strawberry Statement*, p. 102, 1968
- The Progressive Labor people, "the action faction," believed that nothing short of the active overthrow of the Establishment was warranted. — James Davis, *Assault on the Left*, p. 70, 1997

action player *noun*a gambler who bets heavily, frequently and flamboyantly *US, 2003*

- — Victor H. Royer, *Casino Gamble Talk*, p. 5, 2003
- But should the credit risk pay back his gambling debts at that line and show the casino he's an action player so that he obtains a new higher line of credit, the person vouching for his credit is let off the hook as to any future credit. — Edwin Silberstang, *The Winner's Guide to Casino Gambling*, p. 54, 2005

action room *noun*a poolhall where betting is common *US, 1967*

- Graney's was the action room—that's where the money was changing hands. — Robert Byrne, *McGoorty*, p. 118, 1972
- — Mike Shomos, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Billiards*, p. 2, 1993

actor-proof *adjective*denoting a part in a play or performance so well written that no amount of bad acting can ruin it *US, 1973*

- — Sherman Louis Sergel, *The Language of Show Biz*, p. 4, 1973

act-right spray *noun*Chemical Mace or any aerosol self-defense spray *US*

- Which you proved the time you hit me with act-right spray instead of the roided-up primate I was doing a death dance with. — Joseph Wambaugh, *Hollywood Crows*, p. 6, 2008
- Once the perp was caught, he "resisted arrest" and got a face full of act right spray as punishment. — *sportsandwrestling.mywowbb.com*, 7th December 2013

actual *adjective*used for emphasis *US, 2011*

- What the actual fuck? — Connie Eble, *Campus Slang: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, Fall 2015

actual factual *adjective*true, real *US*

Popularized by a character, Professor Actual Factual, in the Berenstain Bears children's books.

- I recently heard my son use the phrase "actual factual" the other day. — *msgborder.snopes.com*, 19th July 2004
- Denny Hastert Going to Actual-Factual Prison. — *Wonkette.com*, 27th April 2016

Ada from Decatur; Ada Ross, the Stable Hoss *noun*In a game of dice, a roll of eight *US, 1918*

A homophonic evolution of "eighter."

- In craps, the dice-thrower will call for "Ada from Decatur." — S.I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*, p. 202, 1964
- "Ada from Decatur!" a little sawed-off MP pleaded. — John Oliver Killens, *And Then We Heard the Thunder*, p. 448, 1983

Ad Alley *nickname*the advertising industry, especially that located in New York and commonly known in the US as "Madison Avenue" after the New York street where many advertising agencies had their offices *US, 1952*

- Ulcers now run second (along Ad Alley) to crackups among ad agency execs — *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, p. 8G, 3rd October 1952
- The urgently felt need to "stimulate" people brought new power, glory, and prosperity to the professional stimulators or persuaders of American industry, particularly the skilled gray-flanneled suiters of New York's Madison Avenue, known as "ad alley." — Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*, p. 21, 1957

Adam *noun***1** MDMA, the recreational drug best known as ecstasy *US, 1985*

A near-anagram.

- — Bruce Eisner, *Ecstasy*, p. 1, 1989
- CALL IT... Adam, brownies, burgers, disco biscuits, doves, eekies, tulips, X[.] JUST DON'T CALL IT... MDMA—too scientific — *Drugs: An Adult Guide*, p. 34, December 2001

2 a homosexual's first sexual partner *US, 1972*

From Adam as the biblical first man.

- — Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular*, p. 18, 1972

Adam and Eve *noun*a pill of MDEA and MDMA, the recreational drug best known as ecstasy *UK, 1996*

- — Gareth Thomas, *This Is Ecstasy*, p. 54, 2002

Adam and Eve on a raft *noun*two eggs on toast *US, 1909*

Bestallanting.

- "I'd like two scrambled eggs on toast, and a cup of tea with lemon, please."
- "Adam and Eve on a raft, wreck 'em, and a spot with a twist." — Alexandra Day, *Frank and Ernest*, 1988

Adam's off-ox *noun*

a complete stranger *US, 1894*

Used in the expression "he wouldn't know me from Adam's off-ox."

- The first time I stepped in, he was behind the counter and didn't know me from Adam's off ox. — *Christian Science Monitor*, p. 20, 29th April 1983
- You don't know me from Adam's off ox — *USA Today*, p. 6D, 24th February 2004

ADASTW *adjective*

arrived dead and stayed that way *US, 1991*

- "He didn't say anything in the ambulance or once he got here?" "A-D-A-S-T-W," says the nurse. — David Simon, *Homicide*, p. 287, 1991

addy *noun*

an address *US, 2002*

- — Alonzo Westbrook, *Hip Haptonary*, p. 1, 2002
- [H]is e-mail addy disappeared due to the overwhelming flood of support against the global giant. — *Idaho Statesman*, p. 36, 27th January 2004

A-deck *noun*

a prison cell used for solitary confinement *US, 1984*

- — Inez Cardozo-Freeman, *The Joint*, p. 479, 1984

adger *verb*

in computing, to make an avoidable mistake *US, 1991*

- — Eric S. Raymond, *The New Hacker's Dictionary*, p. 31, 1991

adios motherfucker

used as a farewell *US, 1986*

Jocular or defiant; sometimes abbreviated to **AMF**.

- Ten days from now I am adios, motherfucker, so till then I'm playing catch-up. — James Ellroy, *Suicide Hill*, p. 585, 1986
- "Adios, motherfucker," he said, his voice distorted by the OBA mask. — Peter Deutermann, *The Edge of Horror*, p. 563, 1995

adjuster *noun*

a hammer *US, 1990*

- — Elena García, *A Beginner's Guide to Zen and the Art of Snowboarding*, p. 121, 1990

ad-lib *verb*

to date indiscriminately *US, 1960*

- — *San Francisco Examiner*, p. III-2, 22nd March 1960

admiral's watch *noun*

a good night's sleep *US, 1918*

- Although the night's sleep was not his customary "Admiral's watch," he found himself refreshed. — Randall Platt, *The Cornerstone*, p. 221, 1998

adorbs *adjective*

adorable *US*

- — *Urban Dictionary*, 18th June 2009
- — Connie Eble, *Campus Slang: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, Spring 2014
- "Which makes him totes adorbs!" Bry smiled. — Jade Hemsworth, *Project Mc2: Smart is the New Cool*, 2016

adorkable *noun*

cute in an unconventional, slightly odd way *US, 2002*

- Mr. Neil Diamond besides being a very cute and fluffy adorkable man? — *alt.native*, 24th July 2002
- — Connie Eble (Editor), *UNC-CH Campus Slang*, Fall 2005

a-double-scribble *noun*

used as a euphemism for "ass" in any of its senses *US, 1996*

- — Claudio R. Salvucci, *The Philadelphia Dialect Dictionary*, p. 27, 1996

adult *verb*

to behave in a responsible, mature manner *US*

- We have a 9-month-old little girl named Cecilia Sunshine (yes, that's her real name) who has done everything in her power to prove that we don't actually know anything about adulting. — Jessica Saggio, *Florida Today*, 22nd October 2015
- — Connie Eble, *Campus Slang: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, Spring 2016

advertise *verb*

1 to signal your intentions unwittingly but plainly *US, 1931*

- Relax, Please. This is just another day. Stop advertising. — Horace McCoy, *Kiss Tomorrow Good-bye*, p. 8, 1948

2 in poker, to bluff in a manner that is intended to be caught, all in anticipation of a later bluff *US, 1949*

- — Albert H. Morehead, *The Complete Guide to Winning Poker*, p. 255, 1967

3 in gin, to discard in a manner that is designed to lure a desired card from an opponent *US, 1971*

- — Irwin Steig, *Play Gin to Win*, p. 138, 1971

adzine *noun*

a single-interest fan magazine containing only advertising *US, 1982*

- — *American Speech*, p. 23, Spring 1982: "The language of science fiction fan magazines"

aerial *adjective*

used as a modifier for any sexual position where at least one participant is off the ground *US, 1995*

- — *Adult Video News*, p. 40, August 1995

Aesop *noun*

in poker, any player who tells stories while playing *US, 1996*

- — John Vorhaus, *The Big Book of Poker Slang*, p. 3, 1996

AF *adverb*

extremely *US, 2014*

An abbreviation of "as fuck."

- — "20 things That Make Guys Sexy AF That Have Nothing to Do With Looks." *Commonality*, September 28, 2015

- Goals! Actual goals! AF — EvaAsMyLife, "Literally, My Life" 2015
- Life has me so fucked up af man. — antonio lmao, *Twitter.com*, 22nd May 2016
- The point being—dolls can be quirky, very quirky, and—sorry Charlotte—quirky AF. — "Lanesplitter Family Action Figures/Dolls Can Be Quirky AF" *Quirkyberkeley.com*, 28th May 2016

AFAIC

used as shorthand in Internet discussion groups and text

messages to mean "as far as I'm concerned" *US, 1991*

- Bottom line, AFAIC (as far as I'm concerned): All activism is needed at all levels. — *soc.motss*, 18th October 1991
- — Gabrielle Mander, *WAN2TLK?*, p. 42, 2002

AFF *noun*

an attraction to Asian females *US, 1997*

An abbreviation of "Asian female fetish."

- — Pamela Munro, *U.C.L.A. Slang*, p. 20, 1997

afgay *noun*

a homosexual *US, 1972*

Formed by a pig Latin-like construction called "Anyway"

- — Robert A. Wilson, *Playboy's Book of Forbidden Words*, p. 15, 1972

▷ see: AGFAY (NOUN)

AFK

used as shorthand in Internet discussion groups and text

messages to mean "away from keyboard" *US, 2002*

- AFK away from keyboard—*alk.folklore.computers*, 28th November 1990
- — Gabrielle Mander, *WAN2TLK?*, p. 42, 2002

afoot or ahossback *adjective*

unsure of the direction you are going to take *US, 1895*

- — Charles F. Hayward, *Yankee Dictionary*, p. 2, 1963

African dominoes *noun*

dice *US, 1919*

- Then the colored gamblers set in to pleading with the African dominoes[.] — Guy Owen, *The Film-Flam Man and the Apprentice Grifter*, p. 117, 1972
- — John Scarne, *Scarne on Dice*, p. 459, 1974

African golf *noun*

the game of craps *US, 1919*

- In Chicago, police arrested a twenty-year-old white girl and called her the world's best craps shooter, a designation that had hitherto been reserved for black experts at "African golf." — Roy Wilkins, *Standing Fast*, p. 73, 1994

African grape *noun*

a watermelon *US, 1980*

Based on the stereotypical association between rural black people and a love of watermelon.

- — Edith A. Folb, *runnin' down some lines*, p. 227, 1980

Afro *noun*

a bushy, frizzy hairstyle embraced by black people as a gesture of resistance in the 1960s *US, 1966*

- — *Current Slang*, p. 1, Spring 1967
- But real Afros, not the ones that have been shaped and trimmed like a topiary hedge, and sprayed until they have a sheen like acrylic wall-to-wall—but like funky, natural, scraggly. — Tom Wolfe, *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, p. 7, 1970
- I knew everything about O.J. from reading that 90-page book that third graders could order from the Weekly Reader. I remember knowing that he had a fine wife and an Afro. — Chris Rock, *Rock This!*, p. 206, 1997

Afro pick *noun*

a gap-toothed comb used for an Afro hairstyle *US, 1986*

- Two black guys are about to tear into each other with Afro picks[.] — Josh Alan Friedman, *Tales of Times Square*, p. 64, 1986

after *noun*

afternoon *US, 1974*

- "Look," Cogan said, "this after, I'm supposed to meet a kid, all right?" — George Higgins, *Cogan's Trade*, p. 184, 1974

afterburner *noun*

a linear amplifier for a citizens' band radio *US, 1976*

- — Lawrence Teeman, *Consumer Guide Good Buddy's CB Dictionary*, p. 23, 1976

after-hours *adjective*

open after bars and nightclubs close at 2am *US, 1947*

- [T]hose highways which in their time have known throngs of sight-seers, which in the heyday of Harlem hotspots housed cabarets and after-hour joints known around the world[.] — Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, *New York Confidential*, p. 96, 1948
- I had always stayed away from after-hours joints because I was afraid they would be busted by the police[.] — Dick Gregory, *Nigger*, p. 139, 1964
- One night, me and Reggie closed up my joint and then went over to this after-hours joint downtown Manhattan. — Edwin Torres, *Carillo's Way*, p. 81, 1975
- In the early morning hours, before the city has washed her face, people stream out of after-hours clubs like Jump-Offs along Seventh Avenue[.] — Terry Williams, *The Cocaine Kids*, p. 97, 1989

afterlater *adverb*

later *US, 1997*

- I can't go witcha now, how about afterlater? — Amy and Denise McFadden, *CoalSpeak*, p. 1, 1997

afternoon delight *noun*

extramarital sex *US, 1982*

- adultery: afternoon delight — Sherri Foxman, *Classified Love*, p. 128, 1982

ag *adjective*angry *US, 2000*

An abbreviation of "aggravated."

- *Ebony Magazine*, p. 156, August 2000: "How to talk to the new generation"

against the wall *adjective*said of a confidence swindle which is perpetrated without a fake office, extras, props, etc. *US, 1940*

- We're gonna do the play-off somewhere else. The play-off is against the wall. — Stephen Cannell, *Big Con*, p. 341, 1977

A-game *noun*in a casino or cardroom, the poker game with the highest stakes *US, 1949*

- George Percy, *The Language of Poker*, p. 5, 1988

agate *noun***1** a marble in the slang sense of sanity *US, 1951*

- He didn't have all his agates and eventually went nuts. — *San Francisco News*, p. 22, 19th December 1951

2 a small penis *US, 1967*

- Dale Gordon, *The Dominion Sex Dictionary*, p. 17, 1967

A-gay *noun*a prominent, sought-after homosexual man *US, 1982*

- Chuck Lord's addiction to Negroes was a matter of common knowledge among the A-Gays in San Francisco. — Armistead Maupin, *Further Tales of the City*, p. 9, 1982

age *noun*in poker and other card games, the person to the immediate left of the dealer *US, 1963*

- Irwin Steig, *Common Sense in Poker*, p. 181, 1963

-age *suffix*used as an embellishment without meaning at the end of nouns *US, 1981*The suffix got a second wind with the US television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*.

- Connie Eble (Editor), *UNC-CH Campus Slang*, p. 4, March 1981
- Lady Kier Kirby, *The 376 Deee-liteful Words*, 1992

age card *noun*proof of legal age *US, 1968*

- New girl, Jane, she fresh up from Alabama an still funky—she ain't got no age card, can't buy herself a drink t'nurse[.] — Robert Gover, *JC Saves*, p. 17, 1968

agent *noun***1** the operator of a rigged carnival game *US, 1985*

- A good Agent can be listed among the elite super salesmen to be found in any field. Cars, vacuum cleaners or wheeling land dealers, I'll put a Carny Agent against them anytime. — Gene Sorrows, *All About Carnivals*, p. 6, 1985

2 in casino gambling, a confederate of a cheat *US, 1996*

- Frank Scoblete, *Best Blackjack*, p. 252, 1996

Agent Scully *noun*oral sex *US, 2001*A reference to the name of the female lead in the X-Files television series, punning on her name and **SKULL** (oral sex).

- Brooks and his colleagues also provide police with glossaries of street slang—"Agent Scully" = "oral sex," "getting my cake" = "dating my girl." — *Washington Post*, p. A1, 20th August 2001

agfay *noun*a homosexual man *US, 1942*Pig Latin for **FAG**.

- There were plenty of similar names that he had to live down: Nola, pix, flit, queer, fag, faggot, agfay[.] — Etienne Leroux, *The Third Eye*, p. 42, 1969

aggie *noun*an aggressive, domineering male *US, 1968*

From the conventional "aggressive."

- Collin Baker et al., *College Undergraduate Slang Study Conducted at Brown University*, p. 70, 1968

aggie *adjective*angry, agitated *US, 2002*

- Alonzo Westbrook, *Hip Hoptiary*, p. 2, 2002

aginner *noun*a person morally opposed to carnivals and the circus *US, 1981*

- Don Wilmet, *The Language of American Popular Entertainment*, p. 7, 1981

agitate *verb*▶ **agitate the gravel**to leave *US, 1958*

Teen slang.

- *San Francisco News*, p. 6, 25th March 1958
- Agitate the Gravel—beat it. — Art Unger, *The Cool Book*, p. 110, 1961

a-gunner *noun*an assistant gunner *US, 1981*

- It's up to my a-gunner to keep up with the situation. — Mark Baker, *Nam*, p. 61, 1981

A-head *noun***1** an amphetamine abuser *US, 1971*

- Edward R. Bloomquist, *Marijuana*, p. 331, 1971
- There's A-heads and there's speedfreaks[.] — Lester Bangs, *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*, p. 178, 1975

- She was a bit of an A-head and was a familiar figure at the fountain in her uniform after work. — Ed Sanders, *Tales of Beatnik Glory*, p. 121, 1975

2 a frequent user of LSD *US, 1971*

- Eugene Landy, *The Underground Dictionary*, p. 22, 1971

ahhh, Rooshanused as a youth-to-youth greeting *US, 1949*

A short-lived fad greeting associated with bebop jazz.

- *Time*, 3rd October 1949

a-hole *noun***1** the anus *US, 1942*"A" as in **ASS**.

- Dale Gordon, *The Dominion Sex Dictionary*, p. 17, 1967
- Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular*, p. 18, 1972
- "[I'll stick that dang pecker-bat up his lard-ass A-hole!" — Terry Southern, *Texas Summer*, p. 110, 1991
- Cum dribbles down her crack, ultimately resting upon her a-hole. — Anthony Petkovich, *The X Factory*, p. 193, 1997

2 by extension, a despised person *US, 1942*

- You know Jackie is an Aye Hole. — Howard Stern, *Miss America*, p. 192, 1995
- "If a-hole is on time, we'll be long gone 'fore it hits." — Carl Hiaasen, *Skinny Dip*, p. 428, 2004

a-ightused for expressing agreement or affirmation *US, 1995*

- Lois Stavsky et al., *A2Z: The Book of Rap and Hip-Hop Slang*, p. 1, 1995
- "He's aight!" I used to yell back from my grandmother's window. — Earl "DMX" Simmons, *E.A.R.L.*, p. 167, 2002
- Roots was like, "Aight." — 50 Cent, *From Pieces to Weight*, p. 140, 2005

ain't no shame in my gameused for expressing a lack of shame when engaged in an activity that might shame others *US, 2002*

- Alonzo Westbrook, *Hip Hoptiary*, p. 2, 2002

ain't no thang; ain't no big thangused for dismissing something as not problematic *US, 1985*

- Connie Eble, *UNC-CH Campus Slang*, Fall 1985
- Richard McAllister, *Rapper's Handbook*, p. 1, 1990
- O-Dog: How's the shoulder, nigga? Caine: Fucked up, but it ain't no thang. — *Menace II Society*, 1993
- Kenn "Naz" Young, *Naz's Dictionary of Teen Slang*, p. 2, 1993

ain't that a bite!isn't that too bad! *US, 1951*

Teen slang.

- *Newsweek*, p. 28, 8th October 1951

ain't the beer cold!used for conveying that all is well in the world *US, 1982*

Popularized by baseball radio announcer Chuck Thompson, who used the phrase as the title of his autobiography. Repeated with referential humor.

- Thompson is the kind of announcer you listen to while wearing your slippers. He's homey and conversational. An Oriole hits a homer and he says, "Hmmm! Ain't the beer cold!" — *Washington Post*, p. E12, 27th June 1982
- When your first two opponents lose their starting quarterbacks in August, well, ain't the beer cold? — *Washington Times*, p. F5, 3rd September 2003

AIO *noun*a college student who does not belong to a fraternity *US, 1968*

- AIO, Ain't In One, is the way non-Greeks refer to themselves. — Fred Hester, *Slang on the 40 Acres*, p. 16, 1968

air *noun***1** a jump while snowboarding *US, 1996*

- Mike Fabbro, *Snowboarding*, p. 93, 1996

2 air support, air power, bombing *US*

- Linda Reinberg, *In the Field*, p. 5, 1991

3 in the pornography industry, an ejaculation that cannot be seenleaving the penis and traveling through the air *US, 1995*

In a situation which calls for visual proof of the ejaculation, air is not good.

- *Adult Video News*, p. 40, August 1995

4 the mood created by a person or persons *US, 1988*

There is "good air" and there is "bad air."

- Michael V. Anderson, *The Bad, Rad, Not to Forget Way Cool Beach and Surf Discretionary*, p. 2, 1988

▶ **in the air**(used of the flank of an army) unprotected by natural or man-made obstacles *US, 1982*

- In Marine parlance, their flanks were "hanging in the air" with no contact save an occasional patrol. — Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea*, p. 348, 1982

▶ **on air**(said of a bet) made on credit *US, 2005*

- "I let you bet on air," I told Antoine. — 50 Cent, *From Pieces to Weight*, p. 114, 2005

▶ **up in the air**(used of a pair in a game of poker) formed with help from the communal face-up cards *US, 1992*

- Edwin Silberstang, *Winning Poker for the Serious Player*, p. 221, 1992

air *verb*

▶ **air the house out**
to shoot a gun *US*

Then disarm him and start airing the house out. But he got away before I could get to him. — thefiringline.com/forums/archive, 28th June 2002

▶ **air the house out**
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▶ **air the house out**
to shoot a gun *US*

Then disarm him and start airing the house out. But he got away before I could get to him. — thefiringline.com/forums/archive, 28th June 2002

- Some members of Cash Out Boyz began talking about leaving, coming back, and fighting and “airing the house out.” — *South Bend Tribune*, 2nd December 2011

airbag *noun*

a person who talks too much *US*, 2004

- To think. When I got out of the joint, I thought an airbag was Paulie Walnuts. — *The Sopranos (Episode 60)*, 2004

airbags *noun*

the lungs *US*, 1945

- — Lou Shelly, *Hepcats Jive Talk Dictionary*, p. 7, 1945

air ball *noun*

1 in pinball, a ball that is lost out of play without having been flipped *US*, 1977

- — Bobbye Claire Nation and Steve Kirk, *All About Pinball*, 1977

2 in pool, a shot in which the cue ball does not hit any other ball *US*, 1993

- — Mike Shamos, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Billiards*, p. 3, 1993

air barrel *noun*

in pool, that which backs a bet made without money to back the bet *US*, 1990

- A **BARREL** is a betting unit; an “air barrel” is thus an illusory betting unit.

- — Steve Rushin, *Pool Cool*, p. 5, 1990

air biscuit *noun*

a fart *US*, 2001

- — Pamela Munro, *U.C.L.A. Slang*, p. 31, 2001
- — *The A-Z of Rude Health*, 18th January 2002

air dance *noun*

suicide by hanging *US*

- Charlie Gifford had arrived, pissed off for having to leave his TV just because some old cruiser did an air dance. — Joseph Wambaugh, *Hollywood Crows*, pp. 59–60, 2008

airedale *noun*

1 a Wall Street gentleman *US*, 1925

An extension of the symbol of the Airedale as an aristocratic dog.

- — *New York Times Magazine*, p. 76, 13th March 1955

2 a navy pilot *US*, 1942

- The pilots are in fact a pleasant, easy-going, affable lot known affectionately to surface sailors as “Airedales” or “birdmen.” — *Life*, p. 85, 26th March 1945
- Despite a Navy directive to cut it out, Navy pilots remain “Airedales” and Marines are still “Gyrenes.” — *New York Times Magazine*, p. 76, 13th March 1955
- “Got it from a pilot over at the airstrip,” the first sergeant said. “Those airedales sure live well.” — Robert A. Anderson, *Cooks & Bakers*, p. 123, 1982
- Looks like you Airedale guys aren’t gonna take no for an answer today, are YOU? — Gerry Carroll, *North S*A*R*, p. 88, 1991

3 a plane handler on an aircraft carrier *US*, 1943

- The battle-scarred hangar deck of the carrier *Enterprise*, cleared of planes and shouting airedales (airplane handlers), has been converted into this gigantic bunk room. — *Time*, p. 24, 10th December 1945
- The air officers, plane handlers who shift and push and manhandle the planes a dozen times a day around the deck. These are ordinarily known as “airedales,” but the term isn’t much used on our ship. — *San Francisco News*, p. 10, 19th March 1945

air guitar *noun*

an imagined guitar used to mimic a rock guitar player *US*, 1982

- The three Figures look at each other, do a ferocious AIR GUITAR, and run OUT OF FRAME. — *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*, p. 91, 1989

airhead *noun*

a person who is not inclined to think, not equipped to think, or both *US*, 1972

- [T]here’s a good proportion of air heads and space cadets in those courses, too. — *Wesleyan Alumnus*, p. 29, Spring 1981
- I’m sorry about your friend. I thought she was your usual airhead bitch. — *Heathers*, 1988
- Look at all these airheads! — *Airheads*, 1994
- What am I, some sort of mentally challenged airhead? — *Clueless*, 1995

airmail *noun*

1 garbage thrown from the upper windows of a building to the courtyard below *US*, 1952

- Throwing garbage out of windows is referred to as AIRMAIL. — Hubert Selby Jr., *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, p. 253, 1957

2 objects thrown by prisoners down onto guards or other prisoners below *US*, 1992

- — William K. Bentley and James M. Corbett, *Prison Slang*, p. 99, 1992

airmail *verb*

to throw garbage from the upper windows of a building to the courtyard below *US*, 1968

- [F]rom the back windows of the tenements beyond several people were busy “airmailing,” throwing garbage out of the window, into the rubble, beer cans, red shreds, the No-Money-Down Eames roller stand for a TV set, all flying through the air into the scagg — Tom Wolfe, *The Pump House Gang*, p. 240, 1968

airplane *noun*

a device used for holding a marijuana cigarette that has burnt down to the stub *US*, 1970

An abbreviation of the fuller **JEFFERSON AIRPLANE**.

- — William D. Alsever, *Glossary for the Establishment and Other Uplight People*, p. 30, December 1970

airplane *verb*

to inhale through the nose the smoke of the stub of a marijuana cigarette *US*, 1970

- — *Current Slang*, p. 12, Spring 1970

airs *noun*

a pair of Nike Air Jordan™ sneakers *US*, 1990

- — Richard McAlister, *Rapper’s Handbook*, p. 1, 1990

air-to-mud *adjective*

(used of shots fired or bombs dropped) from the air to the ground *US*, 1961

- We would like to give it modest air-to-mud capability — Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Department of Defense Appropriations*, p. 72, 1961
- Air-to-ground bombing or shooting missiles from an airplane to a target on the ground. Sometimes called air-to-mud. — Robert Wilcox, *Scream of Eagles*, p. 293, 1990

airy *adjective*

marijuana-intoxicated *US*, 1949

- I just got a little high and airy with the sticks and they made me feel better[.] — Hal Ellson, *Duke*, p. 3, 1949

aitch *noun*

1 hell *US*, 1950

A euphemism.

- As he told his president who wanted to know why the aitch Fresno State wasn’t good enough for the track coach’s son, it broke his heart to lose a kid who had already thrown the javelin — *Fortnight*, p. 17, 6th January 1950
- “It was boring as aitch,” says Hewitt, who does not use profanity, liquor, tobacco or coffee but has a weakness for candy bars. — *Life*, p. 144, 12th April 1954

2 heroin *US*, 1945

- The price of pure heroin (“aitch”) has gone up from \$60 an ounce to \$500. — *Time*, p. 48, 16th April 1945

ai te guacho

I’ll see you later *US*, 1950

“Guacho” pronounced “watch-o,” a pure invention. Border Spanish used in English conversation by Mexican-Americans.

- — George Carpenter Baker, *Pachuco*, p. 40, January 1950
- “Ay te watcho, man.” “Easy.” — Thurston Scott, *Cure it with Honey*, p. 14, 1951
- Cruz shook his head and said, “Ahi te huacho,” which is anglicized slang meaning I’ll be seeing, or rather, watching for you. — Joseph Wambaugh, *The Blue Knight*, p. 61, 1973

ajax *noun*

in hold ‘em poker, an ace and a jack as the first two cards dealt to a particular player *US*, 1981

Punning on the brand name of a cleaning agent.

- — Thomas L. Clark, *The Dictionary of Gambling and Gaming*, p. 5, 1987

AK *noun*

1 a sycophant *US*, 1939

An abbreviation of **ASS KISSER**.

- — Robert A. Wilson, *Playboy’s Book of Forbidden Words*, p. 15, 1972

2 a mean and nasty old man *US*, 1942

An abbreviation of the Yiddish **ALTER KOCKER**.

- Two A.K.’s had sat in silence on their favorite park bench for hours, lost in thought. Finally, one gave a long and languid “Oy!” The other replied, “You’re telling me?” — Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish*, p. 14, 1968

3 an AK-47 semi-automatic rifle *US*, 1990

- — Richard McAlister, *Rapper’s Handbook*, p. 1, 1990
- — Bill Valentine, *Gang Intelligence Manual*, p. 74, 1995

AK *verb*

to curry favor by obsequious behavior *US*, 1939

An abbreviation of “ass-kiss.”

- — *American Speech*, p. 154, May 1959: “Gator (University of Florida) slang”

AKA *noun*

an alias *US*, 1955

An acronym of “also known as”; from police jargon.

- It was the very lack of embellishment to his aka that established him as a man of distinction. — Marc Savage, *Paradise*, p. 206, 1993
- Reggie Jackson, Reggie Miller—I think ‘cause he was given a movie star name at birth he has to pick celebrity names as his a.k.a.s, like they his peers. — Elmore Leonard, *Be Cool*, p. 247, 1999

► go AKA

to assume an alias *US*, 1983

- “The moral of the story,” Chucky said, “the punto, any time you go a.k.a. you better be sure everybody with you does too.” — Elmore Leonard, *Stick*, p. 121, 1983

ala-ala’s *noun*

the testicles *US*, 1981

Hawaiian youth usage.

- Wow, da guy when keeck mah ala-ala! Ah t’ought da buggah goin bus’! — Douglas Simonson, *Pidgin to da Max*, 1981

Alabama Kleenex *noun*

blood spattered toilet paper *US*, 1967

- Blood spurted from his face, so a pilot from Montgomery went to the bathroom to get some Alabama Kleenex. — Elaine Shepard, *The Doom Pussy*, p. 46, 1967

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