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DICTIONARY OF
**POLITICS AND
GOVERNMENT**

THIRD EDITION

P.H. Collin

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Introduction

When we are constantly told that there is widespread disillusionment with the political system, it is gratifying to observe that it remains a subject of intense study. There is much to examine. Constitutional change is in the air. Politicians are seeking new ways to combat voter apathy. This third edition of the Dictionary comes at a highly relevant time.

The democratic structure of the United Kingdom has changed and is changing. Devolved legislatures and Assemblies are in place in Scotland and Wales. A devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland remains in abeyance until political dialogue is resumed. The devolution process is still evolving. The dividing line between what is devolved and what is reserved will inevitably be subject to ongoing debate. Questions will continue to be raised about the role of MPs at Westminster who represent parts of the United Kingdom which control their own domestic affairs.

Devolution does not necessarily stop at the borders of England. The English regions are expected to have the opportunity of deciding whether they too would prefer a new unit of devolved government. If agreed, this would have a knock-on effect on the existing structure of local government both in metropolitan and shire areas. What is already a non-uniform pattern of provision looks set to become more varied still.

The present Government has re-lit the blue touch paper of House of Lords reform, starting with the partial abolition of the hereditary peers in 1999. It has continued to burn slowly. In a democracy, there should arguably be no contest between the legitimacy of an elected and an appointed second chamber. However, in the United Kingdom the issue is clouded with unresolved questions over powers, systems of election and scope of prime ministerial patronage. Hybrid solutions abound, all with their champions. But when given an opportunity in early 2003, the House of Commons could not resolve the matter of Lords' composition. The end of what was begun is not yet in sight.

The evolution of the European Union also has an impact on internal democratic structures. Whether it is through the pressure of European integration or the wider process of globalisation, there are complaints from people that more is happening which is outwith their control. National parliaments across Europe are stirring as they sense that they are losing ownership of legislation. The much talked about democratic deficit has yet to be addressed to the satisfaction of many parliamentarians and people.

It is perhaps the growing perception that ordinary people have less and less influence in important decisions affecting their lives, which has increased voter alienation and has affected participation in elections. This has prompted debate about ways to make elections more user friendly. E-voting and non-traditional polling stations are under active consideration, but the highest profile experiment to date has been the introduction of all postal ballot elections. Early evidence suggests that turn-out increases, but so allegedly does the risk of fraud. The jury

(in this case the Electoral Commission) is still out. If eventually information technology is fully harnessed to the electoral process, a distant prospect is held out of almost instant elections in which voters will have at their fingertips comprehensive information about parties and candidates. The ramifications for all concerned would be profound.

By a variety of means, contact between the elected and their electors may be increasing, but the quality as well as quantity of those exchanges needs to be addressed. For a democratic system to work properly there has to be dialogue. But can dialogue adequately be achieved by electronic means or paper surveys? Electors and elected need to debate together so that the comparative strengths of various propositions can be tested. Through better two-way communication, it is important to ensure that disappointment does not automatically lead to feelings of rejection. The true test of a democracy is how it deals with minorities. Everyone cannot be in the majority on every issue.

The media might be expected to provide the channels through which information and ideas can flow. Yet too often there is an emphasis on entertainment or controversy for its own sake in reporting parliamentary and political events. Opinion has priority over fact. Parliament is more often sketched than reported.

Members of the public are often candid in admitting that there is much they do not know. A great deal can be picked up from this Dictionary to improve people's confidence in negotiating their way through the system.

But politics and Parliament can only be brought alive through debate, the injection of ideas, the clash of personality and a degree of passion. The political system is not a private club; it is a broad public network which anyone can enter. The more people do so, the healthier democracy will be whether at village, town, city, national and, even international levels. If this Dictionary encourages participation as well as study, it will be doubly welcome.

Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP

Chairman, Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker
House of Commons

Preface

This dictionary provides the user with the basic vocabulary used in the fields of government and politics, especially in the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United States, and also contains some more informal terms used in the media. The subject matter covers national legislatures, elections, local government, parliamentary and council procedure, international affairs and political parties and theories.

Each entry is explained in clear straightforward English. Examples are given to show how the words and phrases are used in normal contexts. Many words also have comments of a more general nature, giving encyclopedic information about procedures and institutions. At the back of the book there are supplements giving information about the political and legislative systems in the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United States.

Pronunciation Guide

The following symbols have been used to show the pronunciation of the main words in the dictionary.

Stress is indicated by a main stress mark (') and a secondary stress mark (,). Note that these are only guides, as the stress of the word changes according to its position in the sentence.

<i>Vowels</i>		<i>Consonants</i>	
æ	back	b	buck
ɑ:	harm	d	dead
ɒ	stop	ð	other
aɪ	type	dʒ	jump
aʊ	how	f	fare
aɪə	hire	g	gold
aʊə	hour	h	head
ɔ:	course	j	yellow
ɔɪ	annoy	k	cab
e	head	l	leave
eə	fair	m	mix
eɪ	make	n	nil
eʊ	go	ŋ	sing
ɜ:	word	p	print
i:	keep	r	rest
i	happy	s	save
ə	about	ʃ	shop
ɪ	fit	t	take
ɪə	near	tʃ	change
u	annual	θ	theft
u:	pool	v	value
ʊ	book	w	work
ʊə	tour	x	loch
ʌ	shut	ʒ	measure
		z	zone

A

AAFC *abbreviation* Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

abandon /ə'bændən/ *verb* to give up or not to continue something □ **to abandon a Bill, an action** to give up trying to promote a Bill

abdicate /'æbdɪkeɪt/ *verb* to give up the position of king or queen of a country

abdication /,æbdɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of giving up the position of king or queen of a country

abide by /ə'baɪd baɪ/ *verb* to obey something such as an order or a rule ○ *The government promised to abide by the decision of the High Court.* ○ *The rebels did not abide by the terms of the agreement.*

abjuration /,æbdʒʊə'reɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of giving up something

abjure /əb'dʒʊə/ *verb* **1.** to give up something **2. US** to swear not to bear allegiance to another country

abode /ə'bəʊd/ *noun* the place where someone lives (*formal*) ◇ **right of abode**

abolish /ə'bɒlɪʃ/ *verb* to put an end to an institution or practice ○ *The Chancellor of the Exchequer refused to ask Parliament to abolish the tax on alcohol.* ○ *The Senate voted to abolish the death penalty.*

abolition /,æbɒ'lɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* an act of putting an end to an institution or practice ○ *to campaign for the abolition of the death penalty* ○ *Anarchists advocate the abolition of the state.*

abrogate /'æbrəgeɪt/ *verb* to overturn a treaty or law

abrogation /,æbrə'geɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of overturning a treaty or law

absence /'æbsəns/ *noun* the fact of not being where you usually are or where you are expected to be. ◇ **leave of absence** □ **in the absence of** when someone is not present ○ *In the absence of the chairman, his deputy took the chair.* □ **apologies for absence** the list of members of a committee or other group who have apologised for not being able to attend a meeting, read out at the beginning of the meeting

absent /'æbsənt/ *adjective* not present

absentee /,æbsən'ti:/ *noun* a person who does not attend a meeting or event when they are expected

absentee ballot /,æbsən'ti: ,bælət/ *noun* same as **postal vote**

absolute government /,æbsəlu:t 'gʌvəmənt/ *noun* government by a person or group of people who exercise total power and where the ordinary population has no vote and no say in the government of the state

absolute majority /,æbsəlu:t mə 'dʒɔrɪti/ *noun* the situation of having more votes than all other candidates or parties combined ○ *In the alternative vote system, if no candidate has an absolute majority at the first count, the second preferences are counted.*

absolute privilege /,æbsəlu:t 'prɪvɪlɪdʒ/ *noun* a privilege which protects an MP speaking in the House of Commons from being sued for defamation or libel

absolutism /'æbsəlu:tɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the political theory that a government should have total power

absolutist /,æbsə'lʊtɪst/ *adjective, noun* a person who believes the government should have total power

abstain /əb'steɪn/ *verb* not to do something deliberately, especially not to vote ○ *Sixty MPs abstained in the vote on capital punishment.*

abstention /əb'stenʃən/ *noun* the act of deliberately not doing something, especially voting ○ *The motion was carried by 200 votes to 150, with 60 abstentions.*

abstract /'æbstrækt/ *verb* to make a summary of a document or speech

abuse *noun* /ə'bjʊ:s/ **1.** the wrong use of something ○ *The Chancellor of the Exchequer has introduced a Bill to correct some of the abuses in the present tax system.* □ **abuse of Parliament** something that breaks accepted parliamentary rules of conduct □ **abuse of power** the use of legal powers in an illegal or harmful way □ **abuse of rules** the use of rules to achieve a purpose which is open to criticism, e.g. the use of the right to introduce a motion into the House of Commons to prevent a debate from continuing **2.** rude or insulting words **3.** bad treatment of a person, often of a sexual nature (NOTE: no plural for (2) or (3)) ■ *verb* /ə'bjʊ:z/ **1.** to use something wrongly ○ *It was claimed that the government whips had abused the rules of the House of Commons by preventing full discussion of the Private Members Bill.* □ **to abuse your authority** to use your authority in an illegal or harmful way **2.** to say rude words to someone ○ *He abused the police before being taken to the cells.* **3.** to treat someone badly, often in a sexual way

ACAS /'eɪkæs/ *abbreviation* Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service

ACC /,eɪ si: 'si:/ *abbreviation* Association of County Councils

accede /æk'si:d/ *verb* **1.** to sign an international treaty or agreement ○ *In 1972 Britain acceded to the European Economic Community.* **2.** to take up an official position, especially as king or queen ○ *accede to the throne* **3.** to accept or agree with something □ **to ac-**

cede to a request or **demand** to do what someone wants

access /'ækses/ *noun* **1.** the opportunity to use or do something ○ *access to education and healthcare* **2.** the opportunity to meet someone important ○ *They have access to the Prime Minister and are said to influence the decisions he takes.* ■ permission to obtain or see private or secret information ○ *to have access to personal records* ■ *noun* **1.** a way of getting to a place ○ *level access to the seating areas* ○ *wheelchair access* **2.** the right of the owner of a piece of land to use a public road which is next to the land ○ *She complained that she was being denied access to the main road.* (NOTE: no plural) ■ *verb* **1.** to get information, e.g. to be able to obtain data from a computer ○ *The staff in the Housing Department can access records on all properties and tenants.* **2.** to get to a place

accession /æk'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the act of signing an international treaty or agreement **2.** the occasion of taking up an official position □ **accession to the throne** the occasion of becoming King or Queen

accession country /æk'seɪʃ(ə)n ,kʌntri/ *noun* a country that will become or has recently become a Member State of the European Union

Accession Treaties /æk'seɪʃ(ə)n ,tri:tɪz/ *plural noun* the international agreements establishing the conditions under which countries become Member States of the European Union

accommodation centre /ə,kɒmə 'deɪʃ(ə)n ,sentə/ *noun* a place where people live while their request to enter and remain in a country is considered

account /ə'kaʊnt/ *noun* **1.** a description of, or explanation for, some event or situation ○ *The minister gave a full account to Parliament of the accident.* **2.** a financial statement (NOTE: Often used in the plural.) ■ *verb* to give an explanation of some event or situation, especially a bad one ○ *They will have to account to their constituents for this failure.* ◇ to consider

something carefully as part of doing something else ○ *The Committee will take account of the report of the Royal Commission or will take the Royal Commission's report into account when drafting the Bill.*

accountability /əˌkaʊntəˈbɪlɪti/ *noun* the situation of being required to explain what has happened and take responsibility for it ○ *the accountability of elected representatives to their electors* ○ *There have been demands for increased accountability for ministers.*

accountable /əˈkaʊntəb(ə)l/ *adjective* being required to explain what has happened and take responsibility for it ○ *Ministers are accountable to Parliament.*

accredit /əˈkredit/ *verb* to appoint somebody as an envoy or ambassador to represent their country abroad

accredited /əˈkreditɪd/ *adjective* **1.** chosen and officially appointed to represent an organisation ○ *an accredited agent* **2.** chosen and appointed by one country to represent it in an official capacity in another country ○ *She is accredited as her country's ambassador to the United Nations.*

acculturation /əˌkʌltʃʊˈreɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the assimilation of parts of a different culture

acknowledge /əkˈnɒlɪdʒ/ *verb* **1.** to accept that something is true or necessary ○ *We acknowledge there were mistakes made in the past and we must learn from them.* **2.** to confirm that something has been received, such as a letter ○ *The office of the Ombudsman has acknowledged receipt of the letter.* **3.** to thank someone publicly or officially for something they have done ○ *I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the hard work that has gone into making this campaign such a success.* **4.** to recognise rights or authority officially ○ *They refused to acknowledge the new regime.*

acknowledgement /əkˈnɒlɪdʒmənt/ *noun* **1.** acceptance that something is true or necessary ○ *There*

is almost universal acknowledgment of the need to take global warming seriously. **2.** a letter or card to say that something has been received ○ *She wrote to her MP and received an acknowledgement immediately.* **3.**

thanks for something that has been done ○ *acknowledgement of her role in the achievement*

acquis communautaire *French words meaning* 'established community rights': the contents of the various treaties agreed to by the Member States of the European Union, which have gradually built up a body of law under which the EU operates

act /ækt/ *noun* a law which has been approved by a law-making body. See Comment at **bill** (NOTE: In the United Kingdom, laws are approved by Parliament and in the USA by Congress.)

COMMENT: Before an Act becomes law, it is presented to Parliament in the form of a Bill. See notes at BILL.

active citizenship /ˌæktɪv 'sɪtɪzənʃɪp/ *noun* the full involvement of people in a variety of forms of politics, including voting, joining a party or pressure group, campaigning or standing for election ○ *It is important for the survival of democracy that active citizenship should be encouraged.*

activism /'æktɪvɪz(ə)m/ *noun* energetic and sometimes aggressive support for a social or political cause

activist /'æktɪvɪst/ *noun* **1.** a person who is very active in pursuing social or political change, sometimes by extreme means **2.** a person who works regularly for a political party, sometimes a person who is in disagreement with the main policies of their party or whose views are more extreme than those held by the majority of their party ○ *The meeting was disrupted by an argument between the chairman and left-wing activists.* ○ *Party activists have urged the central committee to adopt a more radical approach to the problems of unemployment.* Also called **party activist**

Act of Parliament /,ækt əv 'pɑ:ləmənt/ *noun* a decision which has been approved by Parliament and has received the Royal Assent and so becomes law

Act of Union /,ækt əv 'ju:njən/ *noun* the act of 1801, by which the parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland were joined to form the United Kingdom

Act of Union with Scotland /,ækt əv 'ju:njən wɪð 'skɒtlənd/ *noun* the parliamentary act of 1707 which joined England and Scotland together to form Great Britain

actual possession /,æktfuəl pə 'zeɪ(ə)n/ *noun* the occupation and control of land and buildings

actual value /,æktfuəl 'vælju:/ *noun* the real value of something if sold on the open market

actuarial tables /,æktʃueəriəl 'teɪb(ə)lz/ *plural noun* lists showing how long people are likely to live, used to calculate life assurance premiums

additional member system /ə ,dɪf(ə)nəl 'membə ,sɪstəm/ *noun* an electoral system used in elections for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Greater London Assembly, where a proportion of the representatives are elected by the first-past-the-post system, and the others by a party list system, giving additional members to ensure the result is more proportional (NOTE: Note: the system operates in some countries with the constituency representatives elected by a majoritarian system)

address /ə'dres/ *noun* **1.** a formal speech ○ *In his address to the meeting, the mayor spoke of the problems facing the town.* ○ *In his State of the Union address, the president spoke of the problems of terrorism.* ◊ **humble address** ◊ **address of thanks** a formal speech thanking someone such as a well-known person for doing something such as officially opening a new building ◊ the Queen's Speech at the State Opening of Parliament. ◊ **debate**

on the address **2.** the details of number, street and town where an office is or where a person lives ■ **verb** **1.** to speak to ○ *The Leader of the Opposition was asked to address the meeting.* **2.** to speak about or deal with a particular subject or problem ○ *He then addressed the question of government aid to universities.* ◊ **to address yourself to something** to deal with a particular problem ○ *the government will have to address itself to problems of international trade* **3.** to write on an envelope the details of the number, street and town where an office is or a person lives ○ *an incorrectly addressed package*

ad hoc /,æd 'hɒk/ *Latin phrase meaning* 'for this particular purpose' ◊ **an ad hoc committee** a temporary committee set up to study a particular problem. ◊ **standing committee**

ad hoc Select Committee /,æd hɒk sɪ'lekt kə,mɪti/ *noun* a committee of Congress set up to examine a special case or problem

adjourn /ə'dʒɜ:n/ *verb* to stop a meeting for a period or to postpone a legal hearing to a later date ○ *They adjourned the meeting or the meeting was adjourned.* ○ *The chairman adjourned the tribunal until three o'clock.* ○ *The meeting adjourned at midday.* ○ *The appeal was adjourned while further evidence was being produced.* ◊ **the House stands adjourned** the sitting of the House of Commons is adjourned and will resume on the following day

'...the Commons adjourned until January 18 without taking a vote on the Government's resolution'
[*Toronto Globe & Mail*]

adjournment /ə'dʒɜ:nmənt/ *noun* **1.** an act of stopping a meeting for a period or postponing a legal hearing to a later date ○ *The adjournment lasted two hours.* **2.** the act of ending a sitting of the House of Commons or Lords, or of the House of Representatives or Senate, which will meet again on the following day ◊ **motion for adjournment of the debate** a motion to ad-

jour a debate which has the effect of killing the motion being debated □ **motion for the adjournment of the House** motion to adjourn a sitting until the following day □ **adjournment sine die** an adjournment without fixing a date for the next meeting, used in the US Congress to end a session □ **adjournment to a day certain** a motion to adjourn a sitting of Congress to another day

adjournment debate /əˌdʒɜːnmənt dɪˈbeɪt/ *noun* a debate in the House of Commons on a motion to adjourn a sitting, used by backbench MPs to raise points of particular interest to themselves. Also called **debate on the adjournment**

administer /ədˈmɪnɪstə/ *verb* **1.** to control, manage or govern something ○ *The state is administered directly from the capital.* **2.** to be responsible for making sure something happens in the correct way □ **to administer justice** to carry out the law □ **administer an oath** to make someone swear an oath

administration /ədˌmɪnɪˈstreɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the organisation, control or management of a geographical area or of a specific aspect of government, especially by a bureaucracy or group of experts ○ *There has been a lack of effective administration in the province since the riots.* ○ *The administration of justice is in the hands of the government-appointed justices of the peace.* ○ *She took up a career in hospital administration.* **2.** especially in the USA, a particular government ○ *It was one of the main policies of the last administration.* ○ *The Bush administration took office in 2001.*

administrative /ədˈmɪnɪstrətɪv/ *adjective* concerned with the organisation, control or management of a geographical area or with a specific aspect of government

administrative court /ədˌmɪnɪstrətɪv ˈkɔːt/ *noun* in some countries such as France, a court or tribunal which decides in cases where government action is thought to have

affected and harmed the lives or property of citizens. Also called **administrative tribunal**

administrative law /ədˈmɪnɪstrətɪv lɔː/ *noun* the laws relating to the running of government, and the relationship between the government and the citizens

administrator /ədˈmɪnɪstreɪtə/ *noun* a person who works for a government, public body or business as a senior manager ○ *The governor of the province has to be a good administrator.* ○ *The council has appointed too many administrators and not enough ordinary clerical staff.* ○ *The best administrators come from the civil service training school.*

Admiralty /ˈædm(ə)rəlti/ *noun* formerly in the UK, the government office which was in charge of the Navy

Admiralty Board /ˈædmərəltiˌbɔːd/ *noun* a committee which is responsible for the administration of the Royal Navy, forming part of the UK Ministry of Defence

Admiralty law /ˈædm(ə)rəlti lɔːw/ *noun* the law relating to ships and sailors, and actions at sea

admission /ədˈmɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* **1.** the act of accepting someone into a group or organisation ○ *admission into the European Union* **2.** permission to go into a place ○ *Admission to the visitors' gallery is restricted.* **3.** the act of making a statement agreeing that particular facts are correct or saying that something really happened ○ *The Opposition called for an admission of error on the part of the Minister.*

admit /ədˈmɪt/ *verb* **1.** to allow someone to go in ○ *The public is not being admitted at present.* **2.** to agree that an allegation or accusation is correct or to say that something really happened ○ *He admitted his mistake or his liability.* ○ *She admitted that the department was at fault.* ○ *He admitted having connections with the company which had been awarded the contract.* (NOTE: **admitted** – **admitting**.)

adopt /ə'dɒpt/ *verb* **1.** to agree to something or accept something so that it becomes law ○ *The report of the sub-committee was received and the amendments adopted.* ○ *The meeting adopted the resolution.* ○ *The proposals were adopted unanimously.* ○ *The council has adopted a policy of positive discrimination.* **2.** to be adopted, to be chosen by a party as a candidate in an election ○ *The Labour Party adopted more women as candidates for the General Election than ever before.* □ **to be adopted** to be chosen by the party as a candidate for election to a parliamentary constituency

adoption /ə'dɒpʃən/ *noun* **1.** the act of agreeing to something so that it becomes legal or accepted ○ *She moved the adoption of the resolution.* **2.** the act of choosing someone as a candidate in an election

adoption meeting /ə'dɒpʃən ,mi:tɪŋ/ *noun* the meeting at which a local party adopts someone as its candidate for an election

ad valorem /,æd və'lɔ:rəm/ *Latin phrase meaning* 'according to value'

COMMENT: Most taxes are 'ad valorem'; VAT is calculated as a percentage of the charge made, income tax is a percentage of income earned, etc.

ad valorem duty /,æd və'lɔ:rəm ,dju:ti/, **ad valorem tax** /,æd və'lɔ:rəm tæks/ *noun* a tax calculated according to the value of the goods being taxed

adventurism /əd'ventʃərɪz(ə)m/ *noun* intervention by one government in the affairs of another

adversarial politics /,ædvɜ: ,sɛəriəl 'pɒlɪtɪks/ *noun* a system of political activity where two sides oppose each other vigorously. This is said to create the right conditions for effective scrutiny of the government, and for genuine debate.

adversary /'ædvəs(ə)ri/ *noun* a person or organisation who is the opposing side in situation ○ *a powerful political adversary*

advice /əd'vaɪs/ *noun* information or suggestions given by one person to

another on what has happened in the past or on what is the best course of action to follow in the future □ **to take advice** to ask an expert to give information and help about a problem ○ *We'll need to take legal advice before agreeing.*

advise /əd'vaɪz/ *verb* **1.** to suggest to someone what should be done □ **to advise against something** to suggest that something should not be done ○ *The Minister advised against raising the matter in the House.* ○ *The consultants advised against the proposed development plan.* **2.** to tell someone what has happened or what will happen soon ○ *We are advised that the report will be published next week.*

adviser /əd'vaɪzə/, **advisor** *noun* a person who suggests what should be done, by giving information on a specific area where he or she is an expert

advisory /əd'vaɪz(ə)ri/ *adjective* acting as a person who tells someone what to do or informs them about events ○ *He is acting in an advisory capacity.* ■ *noun* US an official warning

advisory board /əd'vaɪz(ə)ri ,bɔ:d/ *noun* a group of people who help others to decide what to do or keep them informed about what is happening

advocacy /'ædvəkəsi/ *noun* active support for a cause or point of view

advocate *noun* /'ædvəkət/ someone who actively supports a cause or point of view ○ *an advocate of relaxing the laws on cannabis* ■ *verb* /'ædvəkət/ to speak or work to support a cause or point of view ○ *Anarchists advocate the abolition of the state.*

Advocate General /,ædvəkət 'dʒen(ə)rəl/ *noun* **1.** one of the two Law Officers for Scotland **2.** in the European Court of Justice, the officer who presents a summary of a case to the judges to help them in coming to a decision

affair /ə'feə/ *noun* **1.** a situation or event ○ *Is she involved in the copyright*

affair? **2.** something shocking that involves public figures ○ *the arms smuggling affair* ○ *the Watergate affair* ■ **plural noun** activities and events related to the government of a country or countries ○ *topics of current importance in world affairs* ◇ **foreign affairs**

affairs of state /əˈfeɪz əv ˈsteɪt/ **plural noun** government business

affiliate /əˈfɪliət/ **verb** to associate with a group or organisation ○ *The trade union was affiliated to the Labour Party*

affiliation /əˈfɪliˈeɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** association with a group or organisation □ **the union has no political affiliation** the union is not linked to any particular political party

affirm /əˈfɜːm/ **verb** **1.** (of a MP) to promise allegiance to the monarch, when the Oath of Allegiance is considered inappropriate on religious or other grounds ○ *Some of the new MPs affirmed, instead of swearing the oath of allegiance.* **2.** to support or approve of something publicly ○ *The report affirms the contribution of many voluntary groups working for racial harmony.* **3.** to confirm that something is correct

affirmation /ˌæfəˈmeɪʃ(ə)n/ **noun** **1.** a statement by an MP showing allegiance to the monarch, when the Oath of Allegiance is considered inappropriate on religious or other grounds **2.** support or approval

affirmative action /əˈfɜːmətɪv ˈækʃən/ **noun** **US** a policy of preventing the unfair treatment of specific groups in society who have a disadvantage, or who have suffered unfair treatment in the past, such as people with disabilities, ethnic groups and women

affirmative instrument /əˈfɜːmətɪv ˈɪnstɹəmənt/ **noun** a form of Statutory Instrument, or order made by a government minister on the authority of a previous act of parliament, which must be approved by both Houses of Parliament

African National Congress /ˌæfrɪkən ˌnæʃ(ə)nəl ˈkɒŋɡres/ **noun** a South African political party that fought against apartheid and formed South Africa's first multiracial, democratically elected government in 1994. Abbr **ANC**

African Union /ˌæfrɪkən ˈjuːnjən/ **noun** an organisation of African states established for mutual cooperation, superseding the Organisation of African Unity in 2002

agency /ˈeɪdʒənsi/ **noun** **1.** a government office or department which is to some extent independent ○ *The Benefits Agency has responsibility for making welfare payments.* (NOTE: In the United Kingdom, under reforms which started under the Thatcher government, a large number of areas were transferred from the direct control of the Civil Service to agencies.) **2.** an independent organisation that deals with social problems ○ *a register of voluntary agencies in the field of mental health*

agenda /əˈdʒendə/ **noun** **1.** a list of things to be discussed at a meeting ○ *the committee agenda* or *the agenda of the committee meeting* ○ *After two hours we were still discussing the first item on the agenda.* **2.** a list of priorities ○ *Education was at the top of the government's agenda.*

agent /ˈeɪdʒənt/ **noun** **1.** a person who represents a company or another person **2.** a party official who works to support a candidate in an election ○ *The party has six full-time election agents.* ○ *The series of meetings was organised by the local agent for the Liberal Democrats.* **3.** a person who works for a branch of government. ◇

secret agent

Agent-General /ˌeɪdʒ(ə)nt ˈdʒen(ə)rəl/ **noun** the official representative of a provincial government of a Commonwealth country in another Commonwealth country ○ *the Agent-General for Quebec in London* (NOTE: The plural is **agents-general** or **agent-generals**.)

agent provocateur /,æʒvɒn prəˌvɒkə'tɜːr/ *French words meaning 'an agent who provokes': a person employed secretly by a government who provokes others to commit a crime, often by taking part in it personally, in order to find out who is not reliable or in order to have his or her associates arrested*

age of consent /,eɪdʒ əv kən'sent/ *noun* the age at which someone can legally agree to have sex

age of majority /,eɪdʒ əv mə'dʒɔːrɪtɪ/ *noun* the age of legal responsibility, at which civil duties and rights such as voting or being on a jury are first undertaken

aggression /ə'ɡresj(ə)n/ *noun* hostile action against another country, especially without provocation ○ *They accused the neighbouring states of aggression.* ○ *Numerous acts of aggression have been reported to the United Nations.* (NOTE: no plural. For the plural, use **acts of aggression**)

aggressor /ə'ɡresə/ *noun* a person or country which attacks another, especially without provocation ○ *The UN resolution condemns one of the superpowers as the aggressor.*

agitate /'ædʒɪteɪt/ *verb* to encourage people to take political action possibly involving protesting, demonstrating or engaging in direct action ○ *The party is agitating for social reforms.*

agitation /,ædʒɪ'teɪf(ə)n/ *noun* the action of encouraging people to protest and demonstrate ○ *There has been widespread agitation in the capital and the northern provinces.* (NOTE: no plural)

agitator /'ædʒɪteɪtə/ *noun* a person who attempts to cause political unrest ○ *Agitators from the right of the party have tried to disrupt the meetings of the council.*

AGM /,eɪ dʒiː 'em/ *abbreviation* Annual General Meeting

agrarian /ə'ɡreəriən/ *adjective* promoting the interests of farmers and encouraging a fair system of land owner-

ship ■ *noun* someone who believes in the fair distribution of land and the redistribution of land owned by rich people

agrarianism /ə'ɡreəriənɪz(ə)m/ *noun* a political movement or philosophy that promotes the interests of farmers, especially the redistribution of land owned by rich people or by government

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada /,æɡrɪkʌltʃə ənd æɡri fuːd 'kænədə/ *noun* a department of the Canadian federal government that conducts research and develops policies and programs to ensure the security of the country's food system. Abbr **AAFC**

Ahern /ə'hɜːn/, **Bertie** (b. 1951) the leader of the Fianna Fáil party since 1994 and Taoiseach (prime minister) of the Republic of Ireland since 1997

aid /eɪd/ *noun* help, especially money, food or other gifts given to people living in difficult conditions ○ *The government has set aside \$20m for aid to under-developed countries.* ○ *The poorer countries depend on aid from richer nations.* ○ *The government will allocate 6% of the gross national product for overseas aid.*

AID /,eɪ aɪ 'diː/ *abbreviation* Agency for International Development

aid agency /'eɪd ,eɪdʒənsi/ *noun* an independent organisation that sends financial or other help to a country which is experiencing difficult conditions or a catastrophic event such as a natural disaster or famine

aide /eɪd/ *noun* an assistant to someone such as a politician, who may also offer advice ○ *a presidential aide*

aid worker /'eɪd ,wɜːkə/ *noun* a person who works for an aid agency

airspace /'eəspeɪs/ *noun* the sky above an area of land or water over which a state claims control ○ *British airspace*

Albion /'ælbɪən/ *noun* Great Britain

alderperson /'ɔːldə,pɜːsən/ *noun* in the United States and Canada, a

member of the legislative body of some towns or cities

alderwoman /ˈɔːldə,wʊmən/ *noun* in the United States and Canada, a woman member of the legislative body of some towns or cities

Al Fatah /,æɪl 'fætə/ *noun* a political group, part of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, that wants to establish an independent Palestinian state

alien /'eɪliən/ *noun* **1.** *mainly US* a person living in a country of which he or she is not a citizen **2.** (*in the UK*) a person who is not a citizen of the UK, not a citizen of a Commonwealth country and not a citizen of the Republic of Ireland ■ *adjective* **1.** *mainly US* from a different country or culture ○ *alien workers* **2.** different from what is usual or familiar ○ *an alien concept*

alienate /'eɪliəneɪt/ *verb* to do something that makes someone stop being friendly towards you ○ *The government has alienated its main supporters.* ○ *The terrorist campaign has alienated the public.*

align /ə'laɪn/ *verb* to give support publicly to a political group or party □ **to align yourself with another country** to follow a policy similar to that of another country ○ *the three neighbouring states aligned themselves with the USA*

allegiance /ə'liːdʒ(ə)ns/ *noun* obedience to the State or the Head of State. ◇ **oath of allegiance**

alliance /ə'laɪəns/ *noun* **1.** a group of two or more countries, people or political parties, that are linked together by a formal agreement **2.** a formal relationship between two or more parties or countries ○ *The country has built up a series of alliances with its larger neighbours.* ◇ **ally**

Alliance /ə'laɪəns/ *noun* in New Zealand, a left-wing political party that has been in coalition government with the Labour Party since 1999

allied /'ælaɪd/ *adjective* **1.** relating to countries that have joined together to fight a common enemy ○ *the allied*

forces **2.** associated or related ○ *building and allied trades*

allowance /ə'laʊəns/ *noun* **1.** an amount of something which you are legally or officially allowed to have ○ *a travel allowance* ○ *a baggage allowance* ◇ **personal allowances** **2.** a payment made for a specific purpose ○ *an allowance for unsociable hours* ○ *an expenses allowance*

all-party /,ɔːl 'pɑːti/ *adjective* including members of all political parties ○ *the report of the all-party committee on procedure* ○ *An all-party group visited the United Nations.*

all-party group /,ɔːl 'pɑːti 'gruːp/ *noun* a group of MPs from different parties who have an interest in a particular subject ○ *the all-party group on telecommunications*

ally /'ælaɪ/ *noun* a country, person, political party or group which is linked to another in a friendly way so that they can support one another ○ *As the invasion seemed likely, the President called on his allies for help.* ○ *The committee has been run by the mayor and his allies in the Workers' Party.* ■ *verb* to link one country, political party, group or person to another □ **to ally yourself with** to become linked to someone or another party or country, for protection ○ *He has allied himself to the left wing of the party.*

ALP *abbreviation* Australian Labor Party

al-Qaeda /,æɪl 'kaɪdə/ *noun* an international Islamic fundamentalist organisation, founded by Osama bin Laden, which has been associated with several terrorist incidents, including the attack on the World Trade Center, New York (2001)

alternative vote /ɔːl'tɜːnətɪv vɔʊt/ *noun* a system of voting used in elections in some countries such as Australia, in which voters show their preferences on the ballot paper by marking candidates with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. If a candidate does not get 50% of the first preference votes in the first round of counting, the votes

for the candidates with the lowest number of votes are given to the candidates shown as second preferences on their ballot papers in a number of further rounds until a single candidate gets 50%. Abbr **AV**

Althing /'æɪθɪŋ/ *noun* the law-making assembly in Iceland

AM *abbreviation* Assembly Member

AMA *abbreviation* Association of Metropolitan Authorities

ambassador /æm'bæsədə/ *noun* a diplomat of the highest level, representing his country in another country
 ○ *the Spanish ambassador* ○ *our ambassador in France* ○ *The government has recalled its ambassador for consultations.*

'...an ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for his country'
 [Sir Henry Wotton]

ambassador at large /æm'bæsədə ət lɑ:dʒ/ *noun* an ambassador whose role is not restricted to one specific country

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary /æm,bæsədə ɪk,stri:d(ə)n(ə)ri ən ,plenɪpə'tenʃəri/ *noun* the official title of an ambassador

ambassadorial /,æmbæsədɔ:riəl/ *adjective* referring to an ambassador ○ *ambassadorial duties*

ambassador plenipotentiary /æm,bæsədə ,plenɪpə'tenʃəri/ *noun* an ambassador with full powers to negotiate and sign treaties on behalf of his or her country

amend /ə'mend/ *verb* **1.** to make changes to a document, plan or policy, in order to correct or improve it **2.** to make an official change to a motion, Bill, Act or constitution

amendment /ə'mendmənt/ *noun* **1.** a change made in a document, plan or policy ○ *to make amendments to the minutes* **2.** a change proposed to a motion or to a bill which is being discussed in Parliament or Congress, or to an existing Act ○ *The amendment was proposed and seconded and put to the vote.* ○ *The government whips per-*

sueded her to withdraw her amendment. (NOTE: Amendments are usually made in the Committee Stage and Report Stage of a bill going through the House of Commons. In the House of Lords they can also be made at Third Reading.) **3.** *US* a new clause added to a written constitution, changing it in some way

'...a constitutional amendment that would acknowledge the commonwealth's right to override the states on matters of economic development' [The Age (Melbourne)]

COMMENT: The first ten amendments to the American Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights. The most important are the First Amendment (which provides for freedom of speech and thought), and the Fifth Amendment (which protects anyone from giving evidence in court which might incriminate himself or herself).

American Revolution /ə,merɪkən ,revə'lu:ʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the War of Independence (1775–83) by which the American colonies of Britain became independent and became the United States of America

Amicus /ə'maɪkəs/ *noun* the UK's largest technical trade union, with more than 1.2 million members. It was formed in 2001 by the merging of AEEU (Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union) and MSF (Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union).

amnesty /'æmnəsti/ *noun* a pardon, often for political crimes, given by the state to several people at the same time
 ■ *verb* to grant a pardon to several people at the same time, often for political crimes ○ *They were amnestied by the president.*

Amnesty International /,æmnəsti ,ɪntə'næʃ(ə)nəl/ *noun* an international pressure group which works for human rights, and against the cruel treatment of prisoners

anarchic /ə'nɑ:kɪk/, **anarchical** /ə'nɑ:kɪk/ *adjective* with no law or order ○ *the anarchic state of the country districts after the coup*

anarchism /'ænəkɪz(ə)m/ *noun* the belief that there is no need for a system of government in a society

COMMENT: Anarchism flourished in the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century. Anarchists believe that there should be no government, no army, no civil service, no courts, no laws, and that people should be free to live without anyone to rule them.

anarchist /'ænəkɪst/ *noun* **1.** a person who believes that there should be no system of government **2.** a person who tries to destroy a government by violent means, without planning to replace it in any way ■ *adjective* referring to anarchists and their aims

anarchy /'ænəki/ *noun* the absence of law and order, because a government has lost control or because there is no government ○ *When the president was assassinated, the country fell into anarchy.*

ANC *abbreviation* African National Congress

ancillary /æ'nɪləri/ *adjective* providing help or support ○ *nursing and ancillary services*

annex /ə'neks/ *verb* to incorporate territory into another country or state

annexation /,ænek'seɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the act of one state taking possession of a territory claimed by another, and claiming it as its own

annexe, annex *noun* a document added or attached to another ■ *verb* **1.** to attach a document **2.** (of a state) to take possession of a territory claimed by another and claim it as its own ○ *The island was annexed by the neighbouring republic.* (NOTE: [all senses] The US spelling is **annex**.)

announce /ə'naʊns/ *verb* to tell something to the public or to a group of people ○ *The returning officer announced the result of the election.* ○ *The Foreign Secretary announced that he would be going to Nigeria shortly.*

announcement /ə'naʊnsmənt/ *noun* **1.** a public statement giving information ○ *An announcement about the date of the election is expected very soon.* □ **to make an announce-**

ment to give information about something publicly ○ *The Home Secretary will make an announcement later today.* **2.** the act of telling something publicly ○ *The chairman of the council made an announcement about the development plans.*

Annual General Meeting /,ænjʊəl ˌdʒen(ə)rəl 'mi:tɪŋ/ *noun* a meeting of all the members of a society or shareholders of a company which takes place once a year to agree the accounts and decide general policy. Abbr **AGM**

Annual Meeting /,ænjʊəl 'mi:tɪŋ/ *noun* a meeting of a local council, which takes place once a year, to approve the accounts and elect a mayor among other things

annulment of adjudication /ə ˌnʌlmənt əv ə,dʒu:dɪ'keɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the cancelling of a legal order such as one making someone bankrupt

another place /ə'nʌðə pleɪs/ ♦ **place**

answer /'ɑ:nsə/ *noun* a reply, letter or conversation coming after someone else has written or spoken □ **written answer** a formal reply to a question put in writing to a Minister ■ *verb* **1.** to speak or write after someone has spoken or written to you **2.** to reply formally to an accusation

answerable /'ɑ:ns(ə)rəb(ə)l/ *adjective* responsible for explaining why actions have been taken ○ *He is answerable to Parliament for the conduct of the Armed Forces.*

anti- /ænti/ *prefix* against ○ *an anti-drug campaign* ○ *the anti-terrorist squad* ○ *Anti-government posters appeared in the streets.*

anticipation /æ'n,tɪsɪ'peɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* doing something before it is due to be done or before something expected happens (NOTE: It is out of order on grounds of anticipation for a motion to be mentioned or discussed in the House of Commons before the day on which it is scheduled for discussion.)

anti-trust /,ænti 'trʌst/ *adjective* attacking monopolies and encouraging competition ○ *anti-trust laws* or *legislation*

AOB *abbreviation* any other business

apartheid /ə'pɑ:theɪt/ *noun* the racist policy, operating until 1993 in South Africa, by which different racial groups were kept apart in most circumstances, largely to benefit the white population

apolitical /,eɪpə'lɪtɪk(ə)l/ *adjective* not interested in politics, or not concerned with politics

apologist /ə'pɒlədʒɪst/ *noun* someone who publicly defends a doctrine or ideology

a posteriori /,eɪ pɒsteri'ɔ:ri/ *Latin phrase meaning* 'from what comes after.' Compare **a priori** □ **a posteriori argument** an argument based on observation

apparatus /'æpə'reɪt/ *noun* the large group of state employees who ran a Communist country

apparatchik /,æpə'rættʃɪk/ *noun* **1.** a government employee in a Communist country **2.** a civil servant who follows rules too closely and works slowly (*disapproving* or *humorous*; *used as criticism*) (NOTE: The plural is **apparatchiki** or **apparatchiks**.)

appeal /ə'pi:l/ *noun* **1.** a challenge to the ruling of the chairman of a meeting ○ *Senator Brown made an appeal against the ruling of the President of the Senate.* **2.** the process of asking a government department to change a decision ○ *The appeal against the planning decision will be heard next month.* **3.** the process of asking a higher court to change a decision of a lower court ○ *an appeal to the House of Lords* ■ *verb* to ask someone to change a decision ○ *The company appealed against the decision of the planning officers.* ○ *She has appealed to the Supreme Court.* (NOTE: you **appeal to** a court or **against** a decision; an appeal is **heard** and **allowed** or **dismissed**)

Appeal Committee /ə'pi:l kə ,mɪti/ *noun* a committee set up by the House of Lords to consider petitions to appeal to the House of Lords from the Court of Appeal

Appeal Court /ə'pi:l kɔ:t/ *noun* the civil or criminal court to which a person may go to ask for a decision made by a lower court to be changed, and the decisions of which are binding on the High Court and lower courts. Also called **Court of Appeal**, **Court of Appeals**

COMMENT: In English law, in the majority of cases decisions of lower courts and of the High Court can be appealed to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal is divided into the Civil Division and the Criminal Division. The Civil Division hears appeals from the County Court and the High Court; the Criminal Division hears appeals from the Crown Court. From the Court of Appeal, appeal lies at present to the House of Lords. In 2004 parliament was debating legislation to replace the House of Lords with another final court of appeal to be called the Supreme Court. Appeals from some Commonwealth countries may be heard from the highest court of these countries by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which is at present in effect made up of the same judges as the House of Lords.

appease /ə'pi:z/ *verb* to make concessions to another person, group or country in order to avoid conflict

appeasement /ə'pi:zmənt/ *noun* the policy of avoiding conflict by making concessions

appellate /ə'pelət/ *adjective* relating to a legal or formal appeal □ **appellate jurisdiction** the jurisdiction of the House of Lords to hear appeals

Appellate Committee /ə'pelət kə ,mɪti/ *noun* the committee of the House of Lords which considers appeals and reports on them to the House

appendix /ə'pendɪks/ *noun* additional text at the end of a document ○ *The map showing the properties covered by the proposal is attached as an Appendix.* ○ *See Appendix B for the list of county councils.* (NOTE: The plural is **appendices**.)

appoint /ə'pɔɪnt/ *verb* to choose someone for a job ○ *The government has appointed a QC to head the inquiry.* ○ *The council has appointed a race relations adviser.*

appointee /ə'pɔɪn'ti:/ *noun* a person who is appointed to a job

appointment /ə'pɔɪntmənt/ *noun*
1. an arrangement to meet □ **by appointment** by arrangement in advance
2. the fact of being given a new job ○ *his recent appointment as an EU Commissioner* □ **by royal appointment** requested by a king or queen as a supplier of goods or services **3.** a job ○ *applied for a government appointment*

apportionment /ə'pɔ:ʃ(ə)nmənt/ *noun* the distribution of seats in the US House of Representatives or a state legislature in proportion to the population of states or electoral districts

appropriation /ə,prəʊpri'eɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the granting of money for a particular purpose, especially allocating money to be spent by a particular government department

appropriation bill /ə,prəʊpri'eɪʃ(ə)n bɪl/ *noun* in the US Congress, a bill which grants money to the government to be used in a way which has been approved in an authorisation bill

appropriations committee /ə,prəʊpri'eɪʃ(ə)nz kə,mɪti/ *noun* especially in the US Congress, a committee which examines government spending

a priori /,ɛɪ praɪ'ɔ:ri/ *Latin phrase meaning* 'from what came before.' Compare **a posteriori** □ **a priori argument** reasoning based on principles or assumptions, not on real examples

Arabism /'ærəbɪz(ə)m/ *noun* support for Arab causes or viewpoints

Arab League /'ærəb li:g/ *noun* a political and economic association of Arab states

arbitrate /'ɑ:bitreɪt/ *verb* to settle a legal dispute between parties by referring it to an outside person instead of going to court, e.g. in a building, ship-

ping or employment dispute ○ *to arbitrate in a dispute*

arbitration /,ɑ:bɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n/ *noun* the settling of a dispute by an outside person, chosen by both sides ○ *to submit a dispute to arbitration* ○ *to refer a question to arbitration* ○ *to take a dispute to arbitration* ○ *to go to arbitration*

arbitration agreement /,ɑ:bɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n ə,ɡri:mənt/ *noun* the agreement by two parties to allow an independent person to try to settle the dispute between them

arbitration award /,ɑ:bɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n ə,wɔ:d/ *noun* the ruling given by an independent person who has been asked to settle a dispute

arbitration board /,ɑ:bɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n bɔ:d/, **arbitration tribunal** /,ɑ:bɪ'treɪʃ(ə)n traɪ,bju:n(ə)/ *noun* an independent group of people involved in settling a legal dispute

arbitrator /'ɑ:bitreɪtə/ *noun* an independent person who is chosen by both sides in a dispute to try to settle it ○ *an industrial arbitrator* ○ *to accept or reject the arbitrator's ruling*

archives /'ɑ:kɑ:vz/ *plural noun* historical records ○ *18th century archives of borough council meetings*

archivist /'ɑ:kɪvɪst/ *noun* a person who is responsible for the official records of a government department, local authority or other group

aristocracy /,æri'stɔ:kɹəsi/ *noun* the class in society composed of families who are landowners and who have inherited titles such as Lord or Duke

aristocrat /'æri'stɔ:kɹæt/ *noun* a member of the aristocracy ○ *Many aristocrats were killed during the revolution.*

aristocratic /,æri'stɔ:kɹætɪk/ *adjective* relating to the aristocracy ○ *aristocratic families*

Aristotle /'æri'stɔ:t(ə)/ *noun* the Ancient Greek philosopher (384–322 BC) who began the study of political constitutions in his book *The Politics* (NOTE: Aristotle claimed that 'man

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