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abaissement du niveau mental *n.* In *analytical psychology, a reduced state of concentration and attention, accompanied by a loosening of inhibitions and relaxation of restraints, in which unexpected contents may emerge from the *unconscious (2). It usually occurs spontaneously but can be deliberately encouraged in preparation for *active imagination. Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) borrowed the term from his teacher, the French psychologist and neurologist Pierre Janet (1859–1947). [French: literally reduction of mental level]

abasia *n.* Inability to walk. *Compare* DYSBASIA. [From Greek *a-* without + *basis* a step, from *baínein* to step or go + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

abbreviated reaction time *n.* Another name for *central reaction time.

ABC *abbrev.* 1. A model used in *rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) for analysing a client's problems systematically into: *A*, the *activating event; *B*, the mediating evaluative *beliefs; and *C*, behavioural and emotional consequences. It is sometimes extended to *ABCDE*, with the addition of: *D*, disputing; and *E*, effect of practising rational thinking. 2. Shorthand for the sequence of effects in *behaviour therapy: antecedent, behaviour, consequence.

abderite *n.* A simpleton. [Named after Abdera, a town in the ancient country of Thrace whose inhabitants were reputed to be stupid]

abducens nerve *n.* Either of the sixth pair of *cranial nerves controlling the lateral *rectus muscles of the eyes, turning the eye outwards for a sidelong direction of gaze. Paralysis of this nerve causes convergent squint of the affected eye. Also called the *pathetic nerve*. [From Latin *abducere* to lead away, from *ab* away + *ducere* to lead or carry]

aberration *n.* 1. A deviation from what is normal, usual, or right. *See also* CHROMOSOMAL ABERRATION. 2. A temporary lapse of behaviour or mental function. 3. A defect of the *crystalline lens of the eye, or of any other lens or mirror, also called *astigmatism* or *dioptric aberration*, in which rays of light do not all converge on to a single focal point. In *chromatic aberration*, different wavelengths of light are refracted through different angles and focused at different distances, leading to blurred images with coloured fringes—*see also* ACHROMATIC (2), refraction. In *spherical aberration* light passing through the lens near its edge is focused at a different point from light passing near the lens's centre, resulting in a distorted visual image, the defect arising from the surface of the lens being spherical. [From Latin *aberrare* to wander away, from *ab* away + *errare* to wander + *-ation* indicating a process or condition]

ability *n.* Developed skill, competence, or power to do something, especially (in psychology) existing capacity to perform some function, whether physical, mental, or a combination of the two, without further education or training, contrasted with *capacity, which is latent ability. *See also* COGNITIVE ABILITY. *Compare* APTITUDE. [From Latin *habilitas* ability, from *habilis* able, from *habere* to have or to hold]

ability test *n.* A test that measures a person's current level of performance or that estimates future performance. The term sometimes denotes an *achievement test, sometimes an *aptitude test, and sometimes an *intelligence test.

abiogenesis *n.* The generation of living from non-living matter. *Compare* BIOGENESIS. [Coined in 1870 by the English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95), from Greek *a-* without + English *biogenesis*]

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abiosis *n.* Absence of life. **abiotic** *adj.* Lifeless or inanimate. [From Greek *a-* without + *bios* life + *-osis* indicating a process or state]

ablation *n.* Surgical removal of a structure or part of the brain or other organ of the body.

ablate *vb.* [From Latin *ab* from + *latum* taken + *-ion* indicating an action, process, or state]

ablation experiment *n.* A basic research method of physiological psychology based on *ablation, especially during the first three-quarters of the 20th century, in which an attempt is made to determine the functions of a specific region of the nervous system by examining the behavioural effects of its surgical removal. It was pioneered in 1824 by the French physiologist Marie Jean Pierre Flourens (1794–1867) and is also called a *lesion experiment*.

ableism *n.* Discrimination against people who are not able-bodied, or an assumption that it is necessary to cater only for able-bodied people. The term was coined by US feminists in the 1980s and was later used by the Council of the London Borough of Haringey in a press release in 1986. Also spelt *ablism*. Compare AGEISM, ETHNOCENTRISM, FATTISM, HETEROSEXISM, RACISM, SEXISM, SPECIESISM. **ableist** or **ablist** *n.* 1. One who practises or advocates *ableism. *adj.* 2. Of or relating to *ableism. [From *able* + Greek *-ismos* indicating a state or condition, on the model of words such as *ageism*]

Abney effect *n.* 1. The slight change in the *hue of *monochromatic light when its *lightness changes as a result of white light being added to it. 2. A perceptual phenomenon whereby a large surface that is suddenly illuminated appears to brighten first near its centre and then near its edges, and if the illumination is suddenly extinguished it appears to darken first near its edges and then near its centre. [Named after the English chemist and physicist Sir William de Wiveleslie Abney (1843–1920)]

Abney's law *n.* The principle according to which the total luminance of light composed of several wavelengths is equal to the sum of the luminances of its *monochromatic components. [Named after the English chemist and physicist Sir William de Wiveleslie Abney (1843–1920)]

abnormal *adj.* Departing from what is usual or what is the rule or *norm (1, 2). [From Latin *ab* from + *norma* a rule + *-alis* of or relating to]

abnormality *n.* Anything that is *abnormal. A psychological abnormality is a manifestation of *cognition, *emotion, or *behaviour that deviates from an accepted norm or is a *sign (1) or *symptom of a *mental disorder. See also ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY.

abnormal psychology *n.* A branch of psychology devoted to the study of the classification, aetiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of *mental disorders and disabilities. Also called *psychopathology*. Compare CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

abortion *n.* An operation to terminate a pregnancy prematurely (also called an *induced abortion*), or a premature expulsion of an embryo or foetus occurring naturally (also called a *spontaneous abortion*). **abort** *vb.* [From Latin *ab-* badly or wrongly + *oriri* to appear or arise + *-ion* indicating an action, process, or state]

ABO system See under BLOOD GROUP.

aboulia *n.* A variant spelling of *abulia.

Abraham Lincoln effect *n.* The tendency for a *block portrait to be difficult to recognize as a meaningful image when viewed close up but to become more recognizable when viewed from a distance or when blurred by half closing the eyes, for example, loss of information paradoxically increasing the recognizability of the image. See BLOCK PORTRAIT (and accompanying illustration). [Named by the US biomedical engineer Leon D(avid) Harmon (1922–82) after Abraham Lincoln (1809–65), the 16th US president, whose image he used to construct the first block portrait, published in a technical report in 1971 and in an article in *Scientific American* magazine in 1973]

abreaction *n.* In *psychoanalysis, a release or discharge of emotional energy following the recollection of a painful memory that has been repressed. It can occur spontaneously or during psychotherapy, especially under *hypnosis, and may lead to *catharsis. As a therapeutic procedure, it was discovered in 1880–82 by the Austrian physician Josef Breuer (1842–1925), and during the infancy

of psychoanalysis it was believed to be therapeutic in itself. *See also* PRINCIPLE OF CONSTANCY. [From German *abreagieren* to abreact or (metaphorically) let off steam, from Latin *ab* from + German *reagieren* to respond, coined in 1893 by Breuer and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in an article ‘On the Psychological Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication’ (*Standard Edition*, II, pp. 3–17)]

absence *n.* The state or condition of being away from a place. In abnormal psychology and neurology, a brief period of loss of attention or consciousness, often followed by *amnesia for the period of absence, characteristic of minor (formerly called *petit mal*) *epilepsy. *Compare* TONIC–CLONIC.

absent-mindedness *n.* Preoccupation to the point of being inattentive to one’s own behaviour and surroundings, often characterized by *action slips arising from *open-loop control of actions that demand *closed-loop control for accurate implementation. *See also* COGNITIVE FAILURES QUESTIONNAIRE.

absolute acuity *n.* The maximum keenness or sharpness of a sense organ to detect weak stimuli, usually expressed in terms of the *absolute threshold. *See also* ACUITY. *Compare* DIFFERENTIAL ACUITY.

absolute error *n.* In *psychophysics, the difference between the judged value of a stimulus and its true value, ignoring the direction of the difference. *Compare* RELATIVE ERROR. [Alluding to the mathematical sense of *absolute*, referring to a magnitude disregarding its positive or negative sign]

absolute judgement method *See* METHOD OF ABSOLUTE JUDGEMENT.

absolute limen *n.* Another name for the *absolute threshold. [From Latin *limen* a threshold]

absolute pitch *n.* The ability to identify the *pitch of a musical tone, or to produce a specified tone at its correct pitch, without reference to another tone. *See also* PERFECT PITCH. *Compare* RELATIVE PITCH.

absolute reflex *n.* The name given on occasions by the Russian physiologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849–1936) to what is usually called the *unconditioned response.

absolute refractory period *n.* A *refractory period (2), lasting up to 2 milliseconds after the onset of an *action potential, during which no *stimulus (5) can initiate another nerve impulse in the neuron. *Compare* RELATIVE REFRACTORY PERIOD.

absolute scale *n.* In statistics and measurement theory, a *ratio scale in which the unit of measurement is fixed. In practice, values on an absolute scale are usually if not always obtained by counting. *See also* MEASUREMENT LEVEL, SCALE (1). *Compare* INTERVAL SCALE, LOG-INTERVAL SCALE, NOMINAL SCALE, ORDINAL SCALE, RATIO SCALE.

absolute thinking *n.* Interpreting personal fears and desires in absolutes (for example, describing oneself as being absolutely devastated by a setback); regarded in some branches of *counselling as a cognitive error that limits *insight (3).

absolute threshold *n.* In *psychophysics, the smallest intensity of a sensory stimulus that can be detected or can reliably evoke a sensation, a typical example being the average human absolute threshold for sound intensity at 1,000 hertz (about two octaves above Middle C), which is an intensity of about 6.5 dB SPL (*see under* DECIBEL). The original concept of a sharply defined limit below which nothing can be perceived was discredited and largely abandoned after the development of *signal detection theory, the absolute threshold being redefined as the magnitude that can be detected on a specified proportion of presentations (often 50 or 75 per cent, though other percentages are sometimes used). Also called the *absolute limen* or *Reiz limen (RL)*. *See also* ACUITY, AUDIBILITY FUNCTION, AUDIOGRAM, BONE CONDUCTION THRESHOLD, CONTRAST SENSITIVITY FUNCTION, CONTRAST THRESHOLD, DARK ADAPTATION, DECIBEL, HEIMDALLR SENSITIVITY, LIGHT ADAPTATION, PIPER’S LAW, PSYCHOPHYSICS, RICCO’S LAW, SUBLIMINAL. *Compare* DIFFERENCE THRESHOLD.

absorbance *See under* REFLECTANCE.

abstinence *n.* 1. Avoidance of alcohol or some other drug of dependence, or more generally self-restraint from some indulgence. *See also* ABSTINENCE SYNDROME, WITHDRAWAL. 2. In psychodynamic counselling and therapy, the practice of the counsellor or therapist of holding back from uninhibited interaction and

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conversation with the client or patient. [From Latin *abstinere* to abstain]

abstinence rule *n.* In *psychoanalysis, the organization of treatment to minimize the substitutive satisfaction of needs related to symptoms that the patient finds outside the analytic situation, in spite of the frustration and suffering that can result. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) introduced the rule in an article on ‘Observations on Transference-Love’ (1915): ‘I shall state it as a fundamental principle that the patient’s need and longing should be allowed to persist in her, in order that they may serve as forces impelling her to do work and to make changes, and that we must beware of appeasing these forces by means of surrogates’ (*Standard Edition*, XII, pp. 159–71, at p. 165).

abstinence syndrome *n.* A pattern of signs and symptoms associated with *withdrawal in a drug-dependent person who is suddenly deprived of a regular supply of the drug and is forced to practise *abstinence (1).

abstract attitude *n.* A term introduced by the German psychiatrist Kurt Goldstein (1878–1965) to denote the ability to use conceptual categories in order to classify things according to their attributes and to think symbolically rather than concretely. This ability is impaired in many forms of brain damage and mental disorder. Also called *categorical attitude*.

abstraction *n.* 1. The act or process of formulating a general concept by identifying common *features (1) from specific instances or examples, or a concept formed in this way. 2. A state of *absent-mindedness or preoccupation. 3. In general, the act of withdrawing or removing something. [From Latin *abstractus* drawn off, from *ab* away from + *trahere*, *tractum* to draw + *-ion* indicating an action, process, or state]

abstract measurement theory *n.* Another name for *axiomatic measurement theory.

absurdity test *n.* Any psychological test in which the respondent attempts to identify what is wrong or illogical about a verbal or a pictorial stimulus, such as a missing leg in a drawing of a spider or a missing numeral in a drawing of a clock face. It is often included as an item or subtest of an *IQ test.

abulia *n.* A deficit of will or motivation, often leading to an inability to make decisions or plans. [From Greek *a-* without + *boule* will + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

abuse (alcohol, child, elder, spouse, substance) *See under* ALCOHOL ABUSE, CHILD ABUSE, ELDER ABUSE, SPOUSE ABUSE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

ABX paradigm *n.* In *psychophysics, a method of determining a *difference threshold by presenting two stimuli (A and B) and a third (X) that is the same as one of the others, the observer’s task being to decide whether it matches A or B.

academic problem *n.* A *learning difficulty, usually in a schoolchild, that does not amount to a *learning disability.

academic skills disorders *n.* An alternative name for *learning disabilities.

acalculia *n.* Impairment of ability to do arithmetic. *See also* AGRAPHIA, ALEXIA, SPECIFIC DISORDER OF ARITHMETIC SKILLS. *Compare* DYSCALCULIA. [From Greek *a-* without + Latin *calcularē* to count, from *calculus* diminutive of *calx* a stone + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

acatamathesia *n.* An obscure synonym for *agnosia; an inability to comprehend sensory information. Also spelt *akatamathesia*. *Compare* AGNOSIA. [From Greek *a-* without + *kata-mathanein* to observe or understand, from *kata* thoroughly + *mathanein* to learn + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

accent *n.* 1. A characteristic pronunciation of a language, especially one associated with a geographical region or social group, to be distinguished from a *dialect. 2. The *stress (2) or prominence given to a spoken syllable, usually through a rise in pitch, loudness, or sound quality, or a written mark to indicate this. [From Latin *ad* to + *cantus* a song]

acceptor *n.* A chemical substance that receives and combines with another substance, as in an oxidation–reduction reaction where the oxygen is the acceptor of the substance that is oxidized and hydrogen is the acceptor of the substance that is reduced.

access consciousness *n.* According to a distinction introduced by the US philosopher

Ned J(oel) Block (born 1942) in a co-edited book entitled *The Nature of Consciousness* (1997), a non-*phenomenal category of consciousness involving *cognitions and *representations that are poised or ready for use in *controlled processing. A state is A-conscious if it is not experienced directly but is poised for the control of thought and action, as might occur if a thirsty person with *blindsight responded spontaneously (without prompting) by reaching for a drink perceived without conscious visual experience. Representations that would be available for use if re-activated are not necessarily access-conscious unless they are poised and ready to control behaviour. Also called *A consciousness*. Compare PHENOMENAL CONSCIOUSNESS. **access-conscious** or **A-conscious** *adj.* [From Latin *accessus* an approach, from *accedere* to agree, from *ad* to + *cedere* to yield + English *consciousness*]

accessibility *n.* 1. In cognitive psychology, the ease with which information in long-term memory can be retrieved. An *accessible memory* is one that can be retrieved without *cues (3) or *prompts. Compare AVAILABILITY. 2. In *modal logic, the property of a *possible world of being open to scrutiny from some other world in such a way that the truth value of *propositions (1) about it can be known. 3. In general, the ease with which something can be approached, reached, or obtained. **accessible** *adj.* [From Latin *accessus* an approach + *-ibilitas* capacity, from *habilis* able]

accessory cell *n.* Any of a number of cells in the nervous system that contribute to the support, maintenance, and repair of *neurons. See ASTROCYTE, EPENDYMAL CELL, MICROGLIA, OLIGODENDROCYTE, SCHWANN CELL.

accessory nerve *n.* Either of two pairs of eleventh *cranial nerves, the motor nerves arising partly from the lateral walls of the medulla oblongata and partly from the cervical (neck) region of the spinal cord, divided into the cranial accessory nerves, distributed by the *vagus nerve to the muscles of the larynx and pharynx, and the spinal accessory nerves, supplying muscles in the neck, shoulder, and upper back.

accidence *n.* Inflections of words or changes in the forms of words to indicate different grammatical functions, as in *write*, *wrote*, *writing*. [From Latin *accidentia* accidental matters]

accidental sample *n.* A *non-probability sample drawn haphazardly from a population by a procedure such as stopping the first hundred passers-by on a particular street corner. See also CONVENIENCE SAMPLE, OPPORTUNITY SAMPLE, QUOTA SAMPLE, SELF-SELECTED SAMPLE, SNOWBALL SAMPLE. Compare CLUSTER SAMPLE, PROBABILITY SAMPLE, RANDOM DIGIT DIALLING, SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLE, STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLE.

accommodation *n.* 1. The voluntary or involuntary adjustment of the curvature of the *crystalline lens of the eye to keep an image focused on the fovea with changes in the distance of the object being viewed; more specifically, one of the monocular cues of visual *depth perception, the degree of curvature of the lenses providing information about the distances of objects focused on the retinas. Also called *visual accommodation*. See also ACCOMMODATION REFLEX, DARK FOCUS, FAR POINT, NEAR POINT, PURKINJE-SANSON IMAGE, RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION. 2. In the writings of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and his followers, a form of *adaptation (3) in which psychological structures or processes are modified to fit the changing demands of the environment, as when an infant adapts its perceptual processes and behavioural repertoire to a new toy that is introduced into its milieu. See also EQUILIBRATION. Compare ASSIMILATION (2). 3. A decrease in a neuron's propensity to produce an action potential, the reduced responsiveness being caused by repeated stimulation. **accommodate** *vb.* **accommodative** *adj.* Compare ASSIMILATION (2). [From Latin *accommodare* to accommodate, from *ad* to + *commodus* fitting + *-ation* indicating a process or condition]

accommodation reflex *n.* A reflex adjustment of the eyes for *near vision that occurs in response to an object appearing suddenly in front of the face and that consists of pupillary constriction, ocular convergence, and increased convexity of the lenses. See also ACCOMMODATION (1), PILLARY REFLEX.

acculturation *n.* The process of assimilating the ideas, beliefs, customs, values, and knowledge of another culture through direct contact with it, usually after migration from one place to another.

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acculturation difficulty *n.* Any problem of *acculturation that falls short of being an *adjustment disorder.

accumbens nucleus *n.* Another name for the *nucleus accumbens.

accuracy test *n.* Any test in which the correctness of responses, rather than the speed of performance, is measured. *Compare* POWER TEST.

acephalous *adj.* Headless, or having only an indistinct or degenerate head, like certain insect larvae. Figuratively, without a ruler or leader. [From Greek *a-* without + *kephale* a head + *-ous* having or characterized by]

acetaldehyde *n.* A colourless volatile noxious liquid that accumulates in the body of a person who drinks alcohol while taking the drug *Antabuse, resulting in nausea, vomiting, pounding of the heart, shortness of breath, and other unpleasant symptoms. Formula CH_3CHO . *See also* PARALDEHYDE. [From Latin *acet(um)* vinegar + *al(cohol) dehyd(rog)e(natum)* dehydrogenated alcohol]

acetic acid *n.* A colourless pungent-tasting liquid that occurs in the fermentation of alcohol, and as a *metabolite of *acetylcholine and *serotonin. It can be diluted with water to form vinegar and is widely used in the manufacture of vinyl acetates, plastics, and pharmaceuticals. *See also* ACETYL. [From Latin *acetum* vinegar]

acetyl *n.* The *radical (2) group $-\text{COCH}_3$ formed by removing $-\text{OH}$ from *acetic acid. [From *acet(ic) acid* + *-yl* indicating a chemical group or radical, from Greek *hyle* wood]

acetylcholine *n.* A *neurotransmitter substance secreted from the ends of many neurons and functioning as the main chemical messenger for *motor neurons in the *peripheral nervous system, including the *autonomic nervous system, and as a significant neurotransmitter in the *central nervous system, functioning to excite *skeletal muscles and to inhibit *cardiac muscle, remaining in existence only long enough for the impulse to cross from one cell to another before being broken down by *acetylcholinesterase into acetic acid and choline. *See also* ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, CARBACHOL, CHOLINERGIC, CHOLINOMIMETIC, MUSCARINE, MUSCARINIC RECEPTOR, NICOTINIC RECEPTOR, VAGUSSTOFF. **ACh** *ab-*

breve. [From Latin *acetum* vinegar + Greek *hyle* wood or material + *chole* bile + *-ine* indicating an organic compound]

acetylcholinesterase *n.* An enzyme that hydrolyses *acetylcholine to acetic acid and choline. By destroying acetylcholine after its release from the terminal *boutons of *presynaptic neurons and from *postsynaptic receptors after a nerve impulse has been triggered, it stops further postsynaptic nerve impulses. Also called *cholinesterase*. *See also* NERVE GAS, PHYSOSTIGMINE. **AChE** *abbrev.* [From *acetylcholine* + *ester* + *-ase* denoting an enzyme, from Greek *diastasis* separation]

acetylsalicylic acid *n.* The chemical name for *aspirin.

achievement motivation *n.* Another name for *need for achievement.

achievement test *n.* Any test of acquired ability or skill, a typical example being a test of scholastic attainment. *See also* COMPETENCY TEST. *Compare* ABILITY TEST, APTITUDE TEST.

Achilles tendon reflex *n.* A *deep tendon reflex occurring in response to a tap on the Achilles tendon at the back of the ankle. It is often absent in people with diabetes, diseases of the peripheral nervous system, pyramidal tract disease, or hyperthyroidism. Also called the *ankle reflex*.

achromatic *adj.* 1. Without *hue, or represented in black, white, and grey. An *achromatic colour*, also called a *neutral grey* or *neutral colour*, is a mixture of black and white without any *chroma and is the *lightness component of any colour. *See also* HERING GREY, SATURATION (1). 2. Capable of refracting or reflecting light without chromatic *aberration (3). [From Greek *a-* without + *chroma* colour]

achromatic interval *n.* For light of a particular *hue, the range of light intensities from its *absolute threshold to the lowest intensity at which its hue can be detected; analogously, for a *pure tone of a particular frequency, the range of *amplitudes from its absolute threshold to the lowest intensity at which its pitch can be detected.

achromatic system *n.* In the *opponent-process theory of colour vision, the pathway that carries information about an object's lightness. *Compare* CHROMATIC SYSTEM.

achromatopsia *n.* Total *colour-blindness resulting from lesions, usually in areas V2 and V4 of the *visual cortex, resulting in an inability to see colours, with an intact ability to see shapes and movement. People who acquire this condition usually lose the ability even to imagine colours. *See also* COLOUR AGNOSIA (under AGNOSIA), DYSCHROMATOPSIA, MONOCHROMATISM, PARACHROMATOPSIA. *Compare* CHROMATOPSIA. **achromatopsic** *adj.* [From Greek *a-* without + *chroma* colour + *ops* an eye + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

acid *n.* 1. Any substance that when dissolved in water releases positively charged hydrogen *ions and produces a corrosive solution having a *pH of less than 7. *Compare* ALKALI. 2. A common street name for *LSD. **acidic** *adj.* Of, relating to, or consisting of an acid (1). **acidity** *n.* The degree to which a solution is *acidic. [From Latin *acidus* sharp or sour]

acid odour *n.* One of the primary odours in the *Crocker–Henderson system. US *acid odor*.

A consciousness *See* ACCESS CONSCIOUSNESS.

acoustic *adj.* Of or relating to sound. Also called *acoustical*. **acoustics** *n.* The study of sound. [From Greek *akoustikos* of or relating to sound, from *akouein* to hear + *-ikos* of, relating to, or resembling]

acoustic coding *n.* Remembering something by storing the sound of its verbal expression rather than its meaning or the physical movements required to articulate it. *Compare* ARTICULATORY CODING, SEMANTIC CODING.

acoustic confusion *n.* Erroneous perception or memory resulting from the substitution of an incorrect but similar-sounding word, as when someone mishears or misremembers *it's my turn to cook* when in fact it is that person's turn to *book* theatre tickets. *Compare* SEMANTIC CONFUSION.

acoustic cue *n.* 1. An acoustic property of a speech sound, such as a *formant, used to identify the sound and to distinguish it from other speech sounds. *See also* DISTINCTIVE FEATURE, MINIMAL PAIR, NEUTRALIZATION. 2. A *cue (3) that prompts recall of a remembered word by evoking its sound.

acoustic feature *n.* Any physical property or *feature (1) of a sound, such as its *fundamental frequency or its *amplitude. *Compare* ACOUSTIC CUE (1), DISTINCTIVE FEATURE.

acoustic generalization *n.* *Stimulus generalization of auditory stimuli, as when a response to a sound (such as a word or a tune) that has been learned, is evoked by a similar sound.

acoustic-mnestic aphasia *See under* APHASIA.

acoustic nerve *n.* Another name for the *vestibulocochlear nerve.

acoustic reflex *n.* An involuntary contraction of the *tensor tympani and *stapedius muscles within the middle ears, occurring simultaneously in both ears in response to intense noise presented to either ear, stiffening the eardrum and restricting movements of the *ossicles, causing a *temporary threshold shift and protecting against damage to the organs of hearing. It is similar to the pupillary light reflex in response to bright light. Also called the *tympanic reflex*.

acoustic similarity effect *n.* The tendency for lists of similar-sounding words to be more difficult to remember than lists of dissimilar-sounding words.

acoustic store *n.* A general term for the *postcategorical acoustic store and the *pre-categorical acoustic store, though there is some doubt about their existence. More generally, a hypothetical repository of memories produced by *acoustic coding. *Compare* SUBVOCAL REHEARSAL LOOP.

acquaintanceship knowledge *n.* A category of *knowledge that is distinct from both *declarative knowledge (knowing that) and *procedural knowledge (knowing how). It consists of knowledge of people, places, and things, and although it may include declarative knowledge it need not necessarily do so, as when one knows a colour, or a smell, or a face, but cannot state any facts about it. This class of knowledge was discussed by the Welsh philosopher Bertrand (Arthur William) Russell (1872–1970) in *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912) and is poorly understood in psychology.

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acquiescence response set *n.* In psychometrics, a consistent tendency to respond to yes/no questionnaire items by answering *Yes*, irrespective of the content of the questions. Properly constructed questionnaires generally control for this response set by *counterbalancing (2). Also called *acquiescence response style*. See also BALANCED SCALE, COUNTERBALANCING (2), RESPONSE SET (2).

acquired distinctiveness *n.* A learnt differentiation or discrimination between items that were previously indistinguishable, as when a person attends a wine-tasting course and acquires the ability to discriminate wines that previously tasted the same. Compare ACQUIRED SIMILARITY.

acquired dyslexia *n.* One of the two major categories of *dyslexia, this form of the disorder resulting directly from brain damage, usually to the left cerebral hemisphere. See also COGNITIVE NEUROPSYCHOLOGY, DEEP DYSLEXIA, SURFACE DYSLEXIA. Compare DEVELOPMENTAL DYSLEXIA. [From Greek *dys-* bad or abnormal + *lexis* a word + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

acquired similarity *n.* A tendency for items that were previously perceived as dissimilar to be perceived as the same as a result of learning to use them for the same purpose or to classify them in the same category or with the same label. For example, in Japanese, /r/ and /l/ are *allophones that do not give distinct meanings to different words, and as a result Japanese speakers often lack the ability to distinguish between them, but this causes problems for native Japanese speakers of English, because in English /r/ and /l/ distinguish *minimal pairs such as *right* and *light* and are therefore different *phonemes. Compare ACQUIRED DISTINCTIVENESS.

acrasia See AKRASIA.

acrolect *n.* The most prestigious variety of a language within a speech community, such as *Received Pronunciation in Britain. See also DIALECT, IDIOLECT, LECT. Compare BASILECT, MESOLECT. [From Greek *akros* highest + *legein* to speak]

acromegaly *n.* Enlargement of the bones in the head, hands, and feet, caused by an excessive secretion of growth hormone by the pituitary gland, sometimes associated with

*cerebral gigantism. **acromegalic** *adj.* [From Greek *akros* highest + *me-gas* big]

acronym method *n.* A memory aid based on acronyms. See under MNEMONIC. [From Greek *akros* topmost + *onoma* a name]

acroparaesthesia *n.* A persistent sensation of numbness, tingling, or pins and needles in the extremities (hands or feet), sometimes caused by compression or inflammation of nerves in the affected area. US *acroparesthesia*. See also PARAESTHESIA. [From Greek *akron* extreme, alluding to the hands and feet (extremities) + *para* beside or beyond + *aisthesis* sensation + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

acrotomophilia *n.* A *paraphilia characterized by recurrent sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviour associated with having a partner with an amputated leg. It is found among both heterosexual and homosexual men and women and should be carefully distinguished from *apotemnophilia. People with acrotomophilia often refer to themselves as *devotees*. Also called *monopede mania*, *monopedophilia*, or *unipedophilia*, but the latter two forms are liable to cause confusion with *paedophilia*. [From Greek *akron* a tip + *tome* a cut + *morphe* a form or shape + *philos* loving, from *philein* to love + *-ia* indicating a condition or quality]

ACT* *abbrev.* (pronounced *act-star*). Adaptive Control of Thought, an advanced version of a *network model of *information processing first put forward in 1976 by the Canadian-born US psychologist John R(obert) Anderson (born 1947). It includes two distinct *long-term memory stores: (a) a *declarative memory, modelled by a semantic network of interconnected *concepts represented by *nodes (2), containing *declarative knowledge, the active part of the declarative memory system constituting *working memory; and (b) a *procedural memory, modelled by a *production system, containing the system's procedural knowledge. See also FAN EFFECT.

actin *n.* A protein that interacts with *myosin to form the contractile protein *actomyosin in muscles and is also involved in other physiological processes. [From *act* + Latin *-in(a)* indicating an organic compound]

acting in *n.* A term sometimes used in *psychoanalysis to denote *acting out (1, 2) when it

occurs within an analytic session rather than in ordinary life.

acting out *n.* 1. In *psychoanalysis, the enactment rather than recollection of past events, especially enactments relating to the *transference during therapy. It is often impulsive and aggressive, and it is usually uncharacteristic of the patient's normal behaviour. The concept was introduced by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1938/40): the patient 'acts it [the past event] before us, as it were, rather than reporting it to us' (*Standard Edition*, XXIII, pp. 144–207, at p. 176). *See also* ACTING IN. 2. A *defence mechanism in which unconscious emotional conflicts or impulses are dealt with by actions, including *parapraxes, rather than thought or contemplation. **act out** *vb.*

action (drug) *See* DRUG ACTION.

action potential *n.* The momentary change in the voltage difference across the membrane of a *neuron, usually triggered by nerve impulses from several other neurons at *synapses (1), characterized by an influx of positively charged sodium ions through the cell membrane, resulting in an impulse being propagated along the neuron's *axon, reversing its *resting potential of approximately –70 millivolts (mV), the inner surface being negative relative to the outer surface and the membrane more permeable to potassium ions than to sodium ions, and changing it to approximately +40 mV, increasing the permeability of the membrane to sodium ions and resulting in the influx of positively charged ions, thereby propagating the potential from the *axon hillock down the axon at a speed ranging from about 0.1 to 10 metres per second. Also called a *nerve impulse*. *See also* ALL-OR-NONE LAW, DEPOLARIZATION, EXCITATORY POSTSYNAPTIC POTENTIAL, INHIBITORY POSTSYNAPTIC POTENTIAL, REFRACTORY PERIOD (2), SALTATION (1), SODIUM PUMP. *Compare* GRADED POTENTIAL.

action research *n.* A term coined in the 1940s by the Polish/German-born US psychologist Kurt Lewin (1890–1947) for a form of *applied research in which experimental techniques are combined with programmes of social action to bring about desired social changes. *See also* PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH. *Compare* BASIC RESEARCH, DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH, EVALUATION RESEARCH, EXPLORATORY RESEARCH.

action slip *n.* An unintended action or behavioural sequence, often resulting from failure of attention in *absent-mindedness, and generally involving *open-loop control of an action that requires *closed-loop control for its correct implementation. *See also* PARAPRAXIS.

activated gene *n.* A gene whose expression has been enhanced by a *gene activator.

activating event *n.* In *rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), something that is believed to happen, to have happened, or to be about to happen, and that triggers irrational beliefs leading to emotional problems. *See also* ABC (1).

activator gene *n.* A *regulator gene that synthesizes a *gene activator capable of binding to a *gene operator and enhancing the expression of a *structural gene by increasing the synthesis of its protein product. *Compare* REPRESSOR GENE.

active analysis *n.* A style of *psychoanalysis in which the analyst offers frequent *interpretations (2). *Compare* PASSIVE ANALYSIS.

active avoidance conditioning *n.* Learning to respond in a way that results in the avoidance of a punishing or aversive stimulus, as when a rat is trained to jump over a barrier whenever a light comes on in order to avoid electric shock that follows shortly after. Also called *active avoidance learning*. *Compare* ESCAPE CONDITIONING, PASSIVE AVOIDANCE CONDITIONING. *See also* AVOIDANCE CONDITIONING.

active imagination *n.* In *analytical psychology, a term introduced by Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) in the Tavistock lectures, delivered in London in 1935, to denote a process of allowing *fantasies (2) to run free, as if dreaming with open eyes. He had expounded the concept (though not the terminology) earlier (*Collected Works*, 6, paragraphs 712–14, 723*n*). *See also* ABAISSEMENT DU NIVEAU MENTAL.

active sleep *n.* Another name for *REM sleep.

active technique *n.* In *psychoanalysis, a set of technical procedures presented by the Hungarian psychoanalyst Sandor Ferenczi (1873–1933) to the 1920 Psychoanalytic Congress in The Hague, with the approval of

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Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), in which the analyst is encouraged to go beyond *interpretation (2) and on occasions to issue instructions and prohibitions to patients.

active transport *n.* The movement of particles up an electrochemical potential gradient, such as the movement of sodium ions across a *cell membrane from a region where they are in a low concentration to a region of high concentration. This process requires metabolic energy and is assisted by *enzymes, often called pumps when they serve this function. See CARRIER PROTEIN, IONOPHORE, SODIUM PUMP.

active vocabulary *n.* The set of words that a person uses in speech and writing. Compare PASSIVE VOCABULARY.

activity wheel *n.* A drum, suspended horizontally and free to rotate, into which an animal may be placed to measure arousal or activity.

actomyosin *n.* A protein synthesized from *actin and *myosin in skeletal muscles that, when stimulated, shrinks and causes muscle contraction, the energy being supplied by *ATP.

actor–observer difference *n.* An *attributional bias tending to cause people to attribute their own actions to situational factors and observers to attribute those same actions to internal personality dispositions. It is explained partly by the greater amount of information available to actors than observers, partly by differences between actors and observers in perceptual focus, and partly by motivational factors that might induce actors to emphasize external causes and observers internal causes. The phenomenon was first reported in 1972 by the US psychologists Edward Ellsworth Jones (1926–93) and Richard E. Nisbett (born 1941). See also ATTRIBUTION, ATTRIBUTION THEORY.

act psychology *n.* A doctrine, first propounded by the German psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano (1838–1917), according to which psychology should study not merely the elements of consciousness as in *structuralism (2) but also mental acts and the way they are directed towards entities other than themselves. Brentano published his ideas in 1874 in his book *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Psychology from an

Empirical Standpoint), and was an important forerunner of *phenomenology. See also INTENTIONALITY (1). Compare CONTENT PSYCHOLOGY.

actualization *n.* The realization of latent potential. Compare SELF-ACTUALIZATION.
actualize *vb.* [From Latin *actualis* of or relating to acts, from *actus* an act + Greek *-izein* cause to become or to resemble]

actual neurosis *n.* In *psychoanalysis, a form of *neurosis that does not have its origin in infantile conflicts but in the present, the *symptoms resulting directly from the absence or inadequacy of sexual satisfaction and not appearing as symbolic forms of expression. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who introduced the concept in 1898 in an article on ‘Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses’ (*Standard Edition*, III, pp. 263–85, at p. 279), originally identified anxiety neurosis (*generalized anxiety disorder) and *neurasthenia as the actual neuroses, and he later added *hypochondria. Compare PSYCHONEUROSIS. [From German *aktual* present-day]

actuarial prediction *n.* Any prediction of behaviour based on purely statistical information and not subjective judgement. It is characterized by mechanical processing of information, leading to probabilities representing empirically determined relative frequencies, as when psychometric test scores are compared with tables of *normative (2) data to make a prediction that the probability is *p* that an individual will succeed on a training programme, reoffend when released from prison, develop a certain mental disorder, or commit suicide, the prediction being based on the relative frequencies of such outcomes among people with similar test scores. It was first systematically analysed and compared with *clinical prediction by the US psychologist Paul Everett Meehl (1920–2003) in his book *Clinical Versus Statistical Prediction: A Theoretical Analysis and a Review of the Evidence* (1954). Meehl was the first to point out that it is almost always more accurate than clinical prediction. Also called *statistical prediction*. See also BOOTSTRAPPING. [From Latin *actuarium* a keeper of records, from *acta* chronicles or records]

actus reus *n.* A legal term denoting a criminal act in contradistinction to a criminal intent and knowledge of the wrongness of the crimi-