

# A

## AAE *n*

another term for AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

## AAVE *n*

an abbreviation for AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH  
see AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

## ability grouping *n*

in teaching, the placement of students in groups or classes according to their ability in a skill or subject, e.g. based on their language proficiency. Groups containing students of different ability levels are known as *mixed ability groups* or *heterogeneous groups*, while groups composed of students with similar abilities, achievement, etc., are known as *homogeneous groups*. See GROUPING

## ablaut *n*

a process by which an inflected form of a word is formed by changes in the vowel of the stem. For example, the past tense of *sing* is *sang* and the plural of *goose* is *geese*.

## absolute *n*

an adjective or adverb that cannot have a comparative or superlative form. For example *perfectly* and *unique* already express the idea of “to a maximum degree” and cannot therefore be used with comparative forms as in \*most *perfectly*, or \*more *unique*.

## absolute clause (phrase, construction) *n*

a non-finite adverbial clause or other adverbial construction that is not linked syntactically to the main clause, e.g.  
*As far as I can tell*, she is not having any problems with the course.

## abstract noun *n*

see CONCRETE NOUN

## ABX discrimination *n*

in PSYCHOLINGUISTICS, a task in which three stimuli are presented in a trial. A and B are different (for example, the words *ramp* and *lamp*) and the subject’s task is to choose which of them is matched by the final stimulus.