

A

a

- 1 ✖ I hope you all have a enjoyable stay.
 ✓ **I hope you all have an enjoyable stay.**

*Always use **an** (NOT **a**) before a word beginning with a vowel sound: 'an egg' 'an envelope'.*

- 2 ✖ My husband is doing a MSc in civil engineering.
 ✓ **My husband is doing an MSc in civil engineering.**

*Use **an** (NOT **a**) before an abbreviation that begins with a vowel sound: 'an MSc' 'an MP'.*

- 3 ✖ Sometimes it is difficult to live a honest life.
 ✓ **Sometimes it is difficult to live an honest life.**

*Use **an** (NOT **a**) before words beginning with h when the h is not pronounced: 'an honour', 'an hour'.*

a/an

- 1 ✖ The child had been a deaf since birth.
 ✓ **The child had been deaf since birth.**
 ✖ One of the girls I share with is a British.
 ✓ **One of the girls I share with is British.**

*Do not use **a/an** before an adjective (e.g. 'deaf', 'British') unless the adjective is followed by a noun: 'Her husband is disabled.' Compare: 'The footbridge cannot be used by the disabled.' (= all people who are disabled)*

- 2 *See ANOTHER 6*

abandon

- 1 ✖ Since capital punishment was abandoned, the crime rate has increased.
 ✓ **Since capital punishment was abolished, the crime rate has increased.**

abandon = give up a plan, activity or attempt to do something, without being successful: 'Bad weather forced them to abandon the search.' 'Without government support, the project will have to be abandoned.'

abolish = remove a law, tradition or system, often by introducing a new law; do away with: 'In which year was slavery abolished in the United States?' 'I'd hate to see the monarchy abolished.'

- 2 ✖ It is difficult to reach abandoned places such as small country villages.
 ✓ **It is difficult to reach remote places such as small country villages.**

abandoned = left for ever by the owners or occupiers: 'The field was littered with abandoned cars.' 'Some of these old abandoned coal mines could be dangerous.'

remote = far away and difficult to reach: 'The tribe lives in a small remote mountain village.' 'We have now managed to bring famine relief to people in even the most remote areas.'

ability

- 1 ✖ These machines are destroying our ability of thinking.
 ✓ **These machines are destroying our ability to think.**

ability to do sth (NOT **of doing**): 'Nobody doubts his ability to get the job done.' 'We need

someone with the ability to work under pressure.'

- 2 ✕ I want to improve my ability of reading.
✓ **I want to improve my reading ability.**

reading/writing/teaching/acting ability: 'Her acting ability was recognized at a very early age.'

- 3 ✕ I want to improve my ability of English.
✓ **I want to improve my ability in English.**

ability in a language or subject: 'Sarah has demonstrated considerable ability in both maths and chemistry.'

able

- 1 ✕ One man is able to destroy the whole world.
✓ **One man is capable of destroying the whole world.**

If someone is **able to do something**, they can do it and it is not unusual or surprising if they do it: 'The doctor said that after a few days I'd be able to get out of bed.' 'Will you be able to play on Saturday?' If someone is **capable of (doing) something**, they do not usually do it, but it is possible for them to do it if they want to: 'I'm sure he's quite capable of getting here on time, but he can't be bothered.' 'The power station is capable of generating enough electricity for the whole region.'

- 2 ✕ There are so many places to visit in London that I'm not able to decide where to go.
✓ **There are so many places to visit in London that I can't decide where to go.**
✕ We weren't able to stop laughing.
✓ **We couldn't stop laughing.**

With verbs of perception (e.g. **see, hear, smell**) and verbs of the mind (e.g. **understand, decide, remember**), we usually use *can, can't*, etc: 'can't hear you. Could you speak a bit louder, please?' 'I think I can smell something burning.' 'Having met her new boss, I can see why she doesn't like him.' Note also the phrase **can't/couldn't stop doing something**: 'The book was so fascinating I couldn't stop reading it.' See also **COULD 1**

- 3 ✕ In some countries you are not able to drink until you are 21.
✓ **In some countries you can't drink until you are 21.**

For actions that are controlled by laws or rules, use *can, can't*, etc, or be **(not) allowed to**: 'Now that they are both sixteen, they can get married.' 'The goalkeeper can touch the ball, but nobody else can.'

- 4 ✕ Technology has made them able to grow their own food.
✓ **Technology has enabled them to grow their own food.**

enable = make someone able to do something: 'This scheme is designed to enable young people to find work.'

Note also the phrase **can't/couldn't stop doing something**: 'The book was so fascinating I couldn't stop reading it.' See also **COULD 1**

about

- 1 ✕ I am always delighted when I receive a letter from you. About the party on December 26th, I shall be very pleased to attend.
✓ **I am always delighted when I receive a letter from you. With regard to the party on December 26th, I shall be very pleased to attend.**
✕ People usually sleep with the doors and windows closed. About public transport, the bus and train services are excellent.
✓ **People usually sleep with the doors and windows closed. As for public transport, the bus and train services are excellent.**

About may be used to introduce a topic (or change of topic), but only in informal styles: 'About

that book you asked for - I'll get you a copy when I go to London.'

In other styles, use **with regard to, regarding, as for, as regards** or **as far as ... is concerned**: 'With regard to the matter of unemployment, I would like to add a few remarks to those of the previous speaker.' 'I regret to Information that Language and Culture is out of print. As regards your second question, I suggest that you write to the British Museum.'

- 2 ✖ It all depends on how different the new country is from your own. About myself, I haven't experienced any culture shock but then this is my second trip to the States.
 ✓ **It all depends on how different the new country is from your own. In my own case, I haven't experienced any culture shock but then this is my second trip to the States.**

To show that you are going to start talking about your own personal experience or situation, use **in my own case** or (especially in informal styles) **as for me/myself**: 'Many people have benefited from the operation. **In my own case**, I began to feel better immediately.' 'Most of my friends like school. **As for me**, I can't wait to leave.'

- 3 ✖ I was about leaving when the telephone rang.
 ✓ **I was about to leave when the telephone rang.**

be about to do sth (NOT doing)

Compare: 'I was just leaving when the telephone rang.'

above

- 1 ✖ There were above a hundred people in the crowd.
 ✓ **There were over a hundred people in the crowd.**

Do not use **above** with numbers (unless referring to points on a scale): 'He is over eighty years of age.' 'I receive over twenty letters a day.' Compare 'Don't let the temperature get above thirty degrees.'

- 2 ? I like to stay at home on a Sunday, as I've said above.
 ✓ **I like to stay at home on a Sunday, as I've already said.**
 ? What do you think of the above suggestion?
 ✓ **What do you think of my/this suggestion?**

Above is used in formal writing to refer to something that has been mentioned earlier: 'From the above arguments It can be seen that supporters of the dam project fall into two camps.' In informal styles, this use of **above** is inappropriate.

- 3 ? Taking all the above into account, one could say that tourism does more harm than good.
 ✓ **Taking all the above arguments into account, one could say that tourism does more harm than good.**

Instead of using **the above** as a loose reference to something mentioned earlier, make the reference more precise by using **the above** + noun (or **the** + noun + **above**): 'the above reasons', 'the statement above'.

above all

- 1 ✖ He likes reading, above all novels.
 ✓ **He likes reading, especially novels.**

Above all means 'most importantly': 'Get plenty of sleep, eat lots of good food, and above all try to relax.' 'There were many qualities that made him a great leader. Above all, he had charisma.'

- 2 ✖ This year English is above all my most important subject.
 ✓ **This year English is by far my most important subject.**

With a superlative form ('the most important'), use **by far**: 'The riot was by far the most horrific

scene I'd ever witnessed.'

- 3 ✖ Where would you like to go above all?
 ✓ **Where would you like to go most of all?**

*When you mean 'more than anywhere/anything/anyone else', use **most of all** or **the most**: 'What worries me **most of all** is that the car is not roadworthy.' 'The one I liked the most was too expensive.'*

abovementioned

- ✖ I would be grateful if you would send it to the address abovementioned.
 ✓ **I would be grateful if you would send it to the abovementioned address.**

Above-mentioned comes before the noun: 'the above-mentioned person', 'the above-mentioned company'.

*Note that **above** may be used before or after the noun: 'the above address', 'the address above'.*

abroad

- ✖ Since I was small, I've always wanted to go to abroad.
 ✓ **Since I was small, I've always wanted to go abroad.**
 ✖ I would like to continue my studies in abroad.
 ✓ **I would like to continue my studies abroad.**

go/live/be abroad (WITHOUT to, at, in etc)

The only preposition that is used before abroad is from: 'She came back from abroad saying how much she had missed her home and family.'

absent

- ✖ It's a pity that you were absent from the training session.
 ✓ **It's a pity that you missed the training session.**
 ✓ **It's a pity that you weren't at the training session.**

be absent = not be present at something that you are officially supposed to attend: 'Her teacher wanted to know why she'd been absent.'

miss = not be present at something: 'She's missed a lot of classes this term because of illness.' 'I wouldn't miss Sandro's party for the world!' (= I really want to go to it).

be at = be present at something: 'John won't be at the meeting. He's had to fly to Rome on business.'

absolutely

- ✖ It is absolutely important that you see a doctor immediately.
 ✓ **It is very important that you see a doctor immediately.**
 ✓ **It is absolutely essential that you see a doctor immediately.**

See Note at VERY 2

accept

- 1 ✖ The company will not accept to buy new machines.
 ✓ **The company will not agree to buy new machines.**

*You **accept** someone's advice, opinion, or suggestion BUT you **agree** (= say you are willing) to do something. Compare: 'I accepted her suggestion and agreed to see the doctor that evening.'*

- 2 ✖ The driver did not accept me to get on the bus.
 ✓ **The driver did not allow me to get on the bus.**
 ✖ We can't accept a motorway to be built through our town.
 ✓ **We can't allow a motorway to be built through our town.**

*You **allow/permit** someone to do something, or **let** them do it: 'Many parents do not allow/permit*