

a·fraid

S1 W2

/ə'freɪd/

adjective [not before noun]

- 1** **FRIGHTENED** frightened because you think that you may get hurt or that something bad may happen

SYN scared

There's no need to be afraid.

afraid of (doing) something

kids who are afraid of the dark

He was afraid of being caught by the police.

afraid to do something

*Zoe was **half afraid** (= a little afraid) to go back in the house.*

In everyday English, people often say **scared** rather than **afraid**:
*I'm **scared** of heights.*

- 2** **FRIGHTENED** worried about what might happen, or that something bad will happen:

afraid (that)

He was afraid that the other kids would laugh at him.

afraid of (doing) something

I didn't tell her because I was afraid of upsetting her.

The government was afraid of a public outcry.

afraid to do something

Don't be afraid to ask for help.

- 3** **afraid for somebody/something**

worried that something bad may happen to a particular person or thing:

*Her father looked ill and she was suddenly afraid for him.
Many of us were afraid for our jobs.*

4 I'm afraid (spoken) FRIGHTENED

used to politely tell someone something that may annoy, upset, or disappoint them:

That's the most we can offer you, I'm afraid.

afraid (that)

I'm afraid you've come to the wrong address.

'Is she very ill?' 'I'm afraid so' (= yes) . '

'Did you see him?' 'I'm afraid not' (= no) . '

Grammar

Afraid to do something means 'unwilling to do something, because you are frightened or worried':

They are afraid to express their political views.

Afraid of doing something can also mean this:

When I was a child, I was afraid of going to sleep.

However, it more often means 'frightened or worried that something might happen as a result of your action':

They were afraid of damaging their careers.

Word origin

Date: 1300–1400

Origin: Past participle of *affray* 'to frighten' (14–19 centuries), from Old French *affreer*;

→ AFFRAY