

act<sup>1</sup>

S1 W1

/ækt/

noun

1 **action** [countable] one thing that you do:

*The new president's first act should be to end the war.*  
*a thoughtless act*

**act of (doing) something**

*an act of violence*  
*her many acts of kindness*

*The act of writing a list can help to calm you down.*

**in the act of doing something** (= at the moment that you are doing something)

*Lindsay paused in the act of putting down the phone.*

In everyday English, people usually say **a thoughtless/kind/stupid etc thing to do** rather than **a thoughtless/kind/stupid etc act**.

2 **law** (also / **Act**) [countable] a law that has been officially accepted by Parliament or Congress:

*the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977*  
*an act of Parliament*

3 **pretending** [singular] insincere behaviour in which you pretend to have a particular kind of feeling or to be a particular kind of person:

*Mike played the loving husband in front of the children but it was all an act.*

*Be natural. Don't feel you have to **put on an act**.*

4 **get your act together** (informal)

to become more organized and behave in a more effective way, especially in order to achieve something:

*You need to get your act together if you're going to find the right house to buy.*

- 5 | play** [countable] one of the main parts into which a stage play, OPERA etc is divided:

*I arrived at the theatre late and missed the first act.  
the beginning of Act 3*

- 6 | performance** [countable] a short performance on stage or television by someone who plays music or tells jokes:

*The argument was just part of their act.*

- 7 | performer** [countable] a performer or a group of performers who perform together:

*The band is one of many acts that have been booked for the concert.*

- 8 a hard/tough etc act to follow**

someone who does such an excellent job that it would be difficult for someone doing the same job after them to be as good:

*He has been a very successful captain and will be a hard act to follow.*

- 9 get in on the act** (informal) TAKE PART/BE INVOLVED

to take part in an activity that someone else has started, especially in order to get a share of the advantages for yourself

- 10 act of God**

an event that is caused by natural forces, such as a storm, flood, or fire, which you cannot prevent or control

- 11 act of worship**

an occasion when people pray together and show their respect for God

- 12** TIME/AT THE SAME TIME **balancing/juggling act**

a situation in which you are trying to do several different types of work at the same time

- 13 do a disappearing/vanishing act**

to be impossible to find when you are needed

→ **catch somebody in the act** AT CATCH<sup>1</sup> (3) ,

→ **clean up your act** AT CLEAN UP (3)

## COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 1

### nouns

an act of violence/ aggression *Incidents of sexual harassment and acts of violence against women were on the increase.*

an act of kindness/ love *We were grateful for her act of kindness.*

an act of faith (= when you do something that shows you trust someone completely) *The signing of the treaty with Britain was an act of faith.*

an act of terrorism (= when someone kills people or bombs a place for political reasons) *It was the worst act of terrorism in US history.*

an act of vandalism (= when someone deliberately damages things, especially public property) *These mindless acts of vandalism affect the whole community.*

an act of defiance (= when you refuse to obey or respect someone) *As an act of defiance Leigh dropped out of high school a month before graduation.*

an act of courage/ bravery *The men were awarded the medals for acts of courage.*

### adjectives

a criminal/ illegal/ unlawful act *Starting the fire was a highly irresponsible criminal act.*

a violent/ aggressive act *We will track down those responsible for this violent act.*

terrorist acts *terrorists acts like the Oklahoma City bombing*

a cowardly act (= not at all brave) *The United States strongly*

*condemns this cowardly act by murderous extremists.*

a heroic act (= very brave) *Ordinary people sometimes find themselves performing heroic acts.*

a deliberate/ conscious act *Clearly this was a deliberate act of vandalism.*

a symbolic act (= something you do to express an idea or feeling) *The Tibetan climber will pass the Olympic flame to his Chinese partner in a symbolic act of friendship.*

## verbs

commit an act (formal) (= do something wrong or illegal) *Anyone committing an illegal act deserves to be punished.*

perform an act (= do something, especially something difficult or useful) *The nurses performed many small acts of kindness.*

## COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 2

### verbs

pass an act *Once Parliament has passed an act, it becomes the law of the land.*

introduce an act *In 1961, before the Divorce Law Reform Act was introduced, the divorce rate was only 2.1%.*

amend an act (= make small changes) *In 1978 the act was amended to make the earliest mandatory retirement age 70.*

repeal an act (= officially end it) *The Act was repealed by the incoming Labour government.*

an act becomes law *In the 40 years since the Abortion Act became law there have been repeated attempts to amend or repeal it.*

an act comes into force *Since the act came into force, all public buildings must have disabled access.*

an act prohibits something *Section 47 of the Act prohibits the making of misleading statements to the police.*

## Word origin

**Date:** 1300–1400

**Language:** Latin

**Origin:** *actus* 'doing, act' and *actum* 'thing done, record', from the past participle of *agere* 'to drive, do'

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