

a·void

S2 W1

/ə'vɔɪd/

verb [transitive]

1 AVOID to prevent something bad from happening:

Road safety is taught to young children to avoid road accidents.

It is important to take measures to avoid the risk of fire.

avoid doing something

The refugees left to avoid getting bombed.

*Alan **narrowly avoided** an accident.*

2 AVOID to stay away from someone or something, or not use something:

Everyone seemed to be avoiding Nick.

She carefully avoided his eyes (= did not look directly at his face).

Pregnant women should avoid certain foods such as raw eggs.

*Why did you speak to him? You usually **avoid him like the plague** (= try hard to avoid him).*

3 AVOID to deliberately not do something, especially something wrong, dangerous, or harmful:

There are ways of legally avoiding taxes.

avoid doing something

You should avoid over-spending in the first half of the year.

THESAURUS

to avoid a person or place

avoid to deliberately not go near a person or place: *Why have you been avoiding me? | We avoided Park Street because of the traffic.*

stay away/keep away to avoid a person or place, especially a dangerous one: *She walked along the path, keeping well away from the edge of the cliff. | That man is trouble – I'd stay away from him.*

steer clear of somebody/ something (informal) to avoid a person or place, because there could be problems if you do not: *I usually steer clear of the kitchen when Alan's cooking. | I'd steer clear of Matthew if I were you.*

make a detour to avoid a place by travelling around it instead of through the centre: *We had to make a long detour because of the floods.*

to avoid doing something

avoid to find a way of not doing something that you should do: *Some people will do anything to avoid work.*

get out of something to avoid doing something you should do or something you promised to do. **Get out of** is more common than **avoid** in everyday spoken English: *We promised we'd go – we can't get out of it now.*

wriggle out of something (also wriggle out of something AmE) to avoid doing something you should do by making up excuses. Used to show disapproval: *He always seems to wriggle out of helping with the kids.*

evade (formal) to avoid doing something that legally or morally you should do – used especially about taxes or responsibilities: *It is an offence to evade taxes. | The US cannot evade its responsibility for the war.*

Word origin

Date: 1300–1400

Language: Old French

Origin: *esvuidier*, from *vuidier* 'to empty'

