

a·buse<sup>1</sup>

S2 W3

/ə'bjʊ:s/

noun

**1** [plural, uncountable] CRUEL cruel or violent treatment of someone:

*several cases of **child abuse***

**physical/sexual/racial abuse**

*Many children **suffer racial abuse** at school.*

*An independent committee will look into alleged **human rights abuses**.*

**2** [uncountable and countable] USE SOMETHING the use of something in a way that it should not be used

**SYN** misuse:

**abuse of**

*government officials' **abuse of power***

*A self-monitoring tax system is clearly **open to abuse** (= able to be used wrongly) .*

**alcohol/drug abuse** (= the practice of drinking too much or taking illegal drugs)

→ SOLVENT ABUSE

**3** [uncountable] INSULT rude or offensive things that someone says when they are angry:

*vandalism and **verbal abuse** directed at old people*

**a torrent/stream of abuse** (= a series of rude or angry words)

**shout/hurl/scream abuse at somebody**

*The other driver started hurling abuse at me.*

# a·buse<sup>2</sup>

/ə'bjʊ:z/

verb [transitive]

**1** CRUEL to treat someone in a cruel and violent way, often sexually:

**sexually/physically abused**

*She was sexually abused as a child.*

**2** USE SOMETHING to deliberately use something for the wrong purpose or for your own advantage:

*Williams **abused** his **position** as Mayor to give jobs to his friends.*

*Morris **abused** the **trust** the firm had shown in him.*

*people who **abuse** the **system***

**abuse alcohol/drugs**

*The proportion of drinkers who abuse alcohol is actually quite small.*

**3** INSULT to say rude or offensive things to someone

**SYN** insult

*Many soldiers in Belfast are **verbally abused**.*

*He came to the help of another driver who was being **racially abused** by three white passengers.*

**4** DESTROY to treat something so badly that you start to destroy it:

*James abused his body for years with heroin and cocaine.*

— **abuser** noun [countable]

## Word origin

**Date:** 1400–1500

**Language:** French

**Origin:** *abuser*, from Latin *abusus*, past participle of *abuti*, from *ab-* ‘away’ + *uti* ‘to use’

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

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