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ass, n.²

Frequency (in current use):

Etymology: vulgar and dialect sp. and pronunciation of ARSE

Now chiefly *U.S.*

Cross Reference

1.

a. ARSE *n.* 1a.

(Webster 1961 'often considered vulgar'.)

arse, n.

The fundament, buttocks, posteriors, or rump of an animal.

- 1860 H. STUART *Seaman's Catech.* 37 The ass of the block is known by the scoring being deeper in that part to receive the splice. [Cf. 1721 Bailey, *Arse*, (among sailors) the Arse of a Block or Pulley, through which any Rope runs, is the lower end of it.]
- 1930 J. DOS PASSOS *42nd Parallel* l. 100 My ass to habeas corpus.
- 1934 J. O'HARA *Appointment in Samarra* (U.S. ed., 1953) iv. 119 You give me a pain in the ass.
- 1949 'N. BLAKE' *Head of Traveller* ii. 37 Put it to rights in two shakes of a cat's ass, you would.
- 1959 W. GOLDING *Free Fall* iv. 96 You sit on your fat ass in your 'ouse all the week.
- 1967 *Observer* 8 Oct. 31/2 All our trousers are designed to fit round the ass and not sag at the crutch.

b. Sexual gratification. Also, a woman or women, regarded as an object affording this.

- 1942 L. V. BERREY & M. VAN DEN BARK *Amer. Thes. Slang* §362/1 *Copulation*,...piece, piece or hunk of tail, -skirt, -ass or butt.
- 1960 J. UPDIKE *Rabbit, Run* (1961) 163 Then he comes back from the Army and all he cares about is chasing ass.
- 1970 R. D. ABRAHAMS *Positively Black* ii. 47 When we got upstairs I threw her on the floor I was anxious to get some ass off that frantic whore.
- 1976 N. THORNBURG *Cutter & Bone* i. 14 It made him almost wish he was sixteen again,..embarking on that long road of teenage ass.
- 1986 P. BOOTH *Palm Beach* iii. 77 Word is there's more ass up in the North End on the weekends than Heinz has varieties.

2.

a. one's ass: one's self or person. Usu. with *get* and an advb. (phr.), as a synonym for 'go'.

- 1958 G. LEA *Somewhere there's Music* xxi. 180 If I knew it'd kill my ass, I'd follow.
- 1968 W. LABOV et al. in A. Dundes *Mother Wit* (1973) 337 Don't worry while they got your ass up there Breakin' up rocks like a grizzly bear.
- 1972 *Language* 48 914 Get your ass in here, Harry! The party's started!
- 1975 *Toronto Star* 27 Sept. B5/4 I protested at being told to 'get your ass home'.
- 1978 J. CARROLL *Mortal Friends* l. ii. 19 'Collins'll be off in America,' he bellowed, 'giving speeches while kids at football get their asses shot!'

b. Freq. as second element in contemptuous expressions, as *poor-*, *punk-*, *sad-ass* (see under first element). See also JIVE-ASS *n.*, SMART-ASS *n.*

3. Phrases.

a. to kiss (a person's) ass: see *KISS v.* 6l; also **to lick (a person's) ass** in the same sense.

1973 C. MULLARD *Black Brit.* II. iv. 44 We were treated like filth, not good enough to lick their asses.

1975 *Maclean's Mag.* Feb. 40/3 The guys who are returning to work are rookies. They're in there ass-licking. But when we get back, if they want to lick asses, they'll be licking our asses.

b. Used casually in various phrases as an intensifier, esp. to indicate strength of feeling, action, etc.: to work (run, etc.) one's ass off; to chew ass, to reprimand severely; to tear ass, to move fast, to hurry.

1946 T. BELL *There comes Time* ix. 57 Here's a smart apple like you working your ass off for a lousy forty bucks a week.

1946 *Amer. Speech* 21 198 *Chew ass*, reprimand severely.

1949 'H. ROBBINS' *Dream Merchants* vii. 199 'Come on, kid,' he said. 'Let's break their asses!' And then he was running zig-zag across the field.

1954 *Amer. Speech* 29 103 *Tear ass*, to drive fast or recklessly.

1958 J. BARTH *End of Road* xi. 196 I've run my ass off today getting it set up.

1970 R. D. ABRAHAMS *Positively Black* iii. 67 So John packed up his bags and tore ass the next day.

1973 *Black Panther* 17 Nov. 7/4 Maybe if he saw it, some pig might..get his ass chewed.

1976 *National Observer (U.S.)* 20 Mar. 11/2 You work your ass off for years so the kid can get a college education.

1984 *Melody Maker* 6 Oct. 13/2 You want to..retire to your bedroom and practise your ass off for a year till you become competent enough to try it.

c. up your ass: an exclamation of contemptuous rejection (often used *imp.*).

Similarly in various descriptive phrases (see quotes.). Cf. *STICK v.*¹ 18d and *UP adv.*²

3b.

1965 N. MAILER *Amer. Dream* i. 15 'Ain't you got any consideration?' he asked. 'Up your ass, friend.'

1970 R. D. ABRAHAMS *Positively Black* ii. 26 I'd 'a told that white motherfucker to fly up his own ass!

1971 A. HAILEY *Wheels* ii. 28 You can stuff a surrender flag up your ass and wave goodbye to any discipline around this place from this day on.

COMPOUNDS

Special Combinations.

asshole *n.* (*a*) = ARSEHOLE *n.*; (*b*) someone or something foolish or contemptible; an uncompromising term of abuse; also *attrib.*

1935 D. THOMAS *Let. July in Sel. Lett.* (1966) 159 The best socialists suck all they can from the jaundiced ass-hole of an anti-socialist state.

1948 *Amer. Speech* 23 319 *Ass hole buddy*, comrade-in-arms.

1962 J. BALDWIN *Another Country* I. ii. 111 Of course, he's an asshole too.

1977 J. D. MACDONALD *Condominium* xxiv. 208 'What did you call me?' McGinnity demanded. Branhammer studied him and said distinctly, 'I called you an ass hole, you ass hole! I don't trust one of you overeducated ass holes sitting there in a goddam row.'

1981 R. SCHOENSTEIN et al. *I-Hate-Preppies Handbk.* 20 Two distinct kinds of Nerds are indigenous to America today: the

asshole with a high IQ and the asshole with a low one.

ass-kissing *adj.* and *n.* toadying, flattering.

1974 A. LURIE *War between Tates* xii. 195 It is bad enough to hear Jeffrey..call his teacher an 'ass-kissing idiot'.

1977 *Rolling Stone* 16 June 6/4 Glossy fringe publishing, T-shirt peddling and political ass kissing.

ass-kiss *v.* (*trans.*) to flatter, truckle to.

1984 S. BELLOW *Him with his Foot in his Mouth* 128 If it could have been done by ass-kissing his patrons and patronesses, B. B. would have dried away a good many tears.

ass-kisser *n.* one who does this.

1978 S. BRILL *Teamsters* i. 28 He had to watch the ass-kissers court Fitzsimmons.

ass-licker *n.* a toady.

1939 H. MILLER *Tropic of Capricorn* 18 Besides, I wasn't a good ass-licker.

ass-lick *v. intr.*

1970 R. LOWELL *Notebk.* 218 Not ass-licking for medals on the peacock lawn.

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