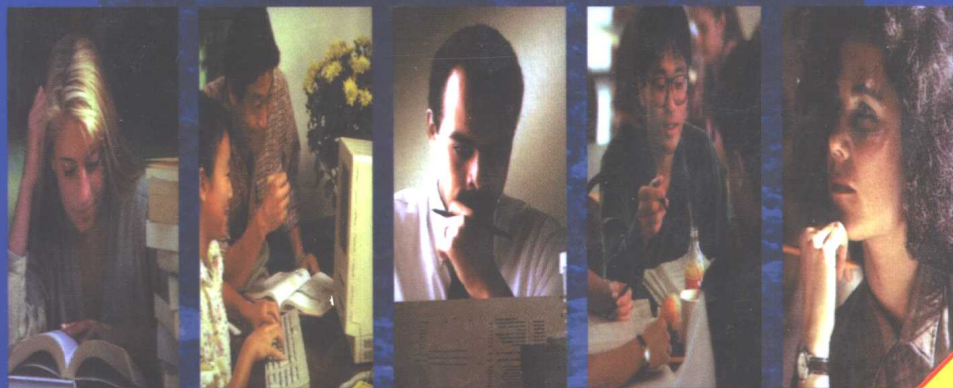


COLLINS
COBUILD

柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典

ENGLISH
DICTIONARY

Helping learners with real English



NEW EDITION
COMPLETELY REVISED

Why
外教社

上海外语教育出版社

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典 / (英) 辛克莱尔编. —上海: 上海
外语教育出版社, 2000

书名原文: Collins (COBUILD) English Dictionary (New Edition)

ISBN 7-81046-907-X

I. 柯… II. 辛… III. 英语—词典 IV. H316

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2000) 第43752号

图字: 09-2000-227号

出版发行: **上海外语教育出版社**

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 65423031 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 梁泉胜

印 刷: 上海古籍印刷厂
经 销: 新华书店上海发行所
开 本: 787×960 1/16 印张 124.75 字数 8805 千字
版 次: 2000年10月第1版 2002年1月第2次印刷
印 数: 5 100 册

书 号: ISBN 7-81046-907-X / H · 703
定 价: 170.00 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题,可向本社调换

COLLINS
COBUILD
ENGLISH
DICTIONARY



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM



COLLINS
COBUILD

HarperCollins*Publishers*

HarperCollins Publishers
77-85 Fulham Palace Road
London W6 8JB

COBUILD is a trademark of William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd

This Edition, First published in Great Britain 1995
© HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, 1995
Reprinted 1995, 1998 (twice), 1999

10 9 8 7 6 5

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the Publisher.

ISBN 0 00 370941 8 paperback
ISBN 0 00 375029 9 hardback
Norway ISBN 0 00 375054 X hardback

Computer Typeset by
Morton Word Processing, Scarborough, England
Printed in Great Britain by
Caledonian International Book Manufacturing Ltd, Glasgow G64

Corpus Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of the many hundreds of individuals and companies who have kindly given permission for copyright material to be used in the Bank of English. The written sources include many national and regional newspapers in Britain and overseas, magazines and periodical publishers; and book publishers in Britain, the United States and Australia. Extensive spoken data has been provided by radio and television broadcasting companies, research workers at many universities and other institutions; and numerous individual contributors. We are grateful to them all.

Entered words that we have reason to believe constitute trademarks have been designated as such. However, neither the presence nor absence of such designation should be regarded as affecting the legal status of any trademark.

www.cobuild.collins.co.uk

This edition of *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* is published by arrangement with
HarperCollins Publishers Limited.

Licensed for sale in the People's Republic of China only.
本书由哈珀-柯林斯出版社授权上海外语教育出版社出版。
仅供在中华人民共和国境内销售。

出版前言

自 20 世纪 80 年代末起,世界各国的英语教学界就对以全新构想编写的“柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典系列”表示出极大的兴趣,并一致认为,该系列词典开创了高科技时代词典编纂的先河。这一系列词典是在世界著名的哈珀-柯林斯出版社(HarperCollins Publishers Limited)的支持下,由英国伯明翰大学(Birmingham University)词典编纂组经过十余年的努力,精心编纂而成。参与编写工作的有数百名英语教学、词典编纂和电脑软件专家。从词典的研制到出版花费了巨额的资金。

“柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典系列”之所以被称为“以全新的构想编写而成的新一代辞书”,是因为英国伯明翰大学词典编纂组首先意识到电脑时代的到来对于词典编纂的意义,并将大型电脑运用于词典的编纂工作。由于电脑的发展,利用电脑庞大的存储和检索功能对大量语言现象作具体详尽的分析成为可能。以往,词典编纂人员只能根据个别语言现象推断出词义和用法;现在,他们可以利用先进的电脑设备,输入和检索数以亿万字计的语料,根据大量而确切的语言数据来确定词义和用法。英国伯明翰大学词典编纂组就是根据上述原则,编纂了这一系列新颖独特的词典。

本系列词典中所有的例词和例句均取材于 COBUILD 英语语料库(The Bank of English)。该英语语料库的名称 COBUILD 系 COLLINS BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE DATABASE 的首字母缩略词,如果直译应该是“柯林斯-伯明翰大学国际语料库”。该语料库包含了小说和非小说类的多种语体,如广播和电视用语、日常自然会话、报刊杂志文章,也包含了英国英语、美国英语和澳大利亚英语及多种英语方言。

伯明翰大学的词典编纂组正是依据了该语料库所提供的词频,确定了哪些是最常用词,哪些是次常用词;哪些是美国英语用法,哪些是英国英语或澳大利亚英语的用法。词典中越是常用的词,解释越是详细,不仅提供该词的语义和句法特征,提供常用的习语和词语的搭配,还专门辟出栏目以说明用法,并尽可能用简洁明了的句子来解释词目和习语。

本社引进出版的《柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典(新版)》在第一版的基础上进行了全面修订。1987 年出版的《柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典》(第一版)在其当时所依据的语料库的 2 000 万词次的语流量中选取了真实的例句 9 万余条。而本词典所依据的语料库则更地道、更可靠,而且选择余地更大。在拥有 33 000 万词次的语料库中精选的例句增加到了 10 万有余。本词典顺应侧重客观描述(descriptive)的国际辞书编纂的趋势,以 2 000 个最常用的词汇界定所收词目,侧重描述英语在不同文体和语境中的使用情况。因此,易于理解的释义辅以详实的例句,更恰到好处

处地说明了词目的意义和用法。

此外,本词典收录的当代英语词目从第一版的 70 000 余条增至 75 000 余条,其中 4 000 余条为近年来进入英语的新词,比较充分地反映了世界政治、经济、科技、文化等方面日新月异的变化。

《柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典(新版)》版面设计新颖,特别是以醒目的五个菱形标明词频,非常适合各级英语测试的应试者和英语教师等检索使用。

为了提高我国的英语教学和科研水平,更好地为读者服务,上海外语教育出版社引进了“柯林斯 COBUILD 英语词典系列”,以让我国广大英语学习者和从事相关工作的人员能够获得更多更新颖的工具书。为此,上海外语教育出版社的编辑和哈珀-柯林斯出版社的编辑通力合作,对本系列词典中的例句进行了修订,使之更符合我国的国情。毋庸置疑,如同其他词典一样,本系列词典在编校过程中难免仍有疏漏和失误,敬请广大读者批评指正。

需要说明的是,本词典的例证均取自 COBUILD 英语语料库,采用这些例句的目的是为了说明词目的语义和语法特征及用法,并不代表原出版者和本社的观点。

Editorial Team

Editor in Chief

John Sinclair

Editorial Director

Gwyneth Fox

Editorial Manager

Stephen Bullon

Senior Editor

Elizabeth Manning

Editors

Jane Bradbury
Rosalind Combley
Ramesh Krishnamurthy

Carole Murphy
Michael Murphy
Elizabeth Potter
Christina Rammell

Jenny Watson
Laura Wedgeworth
John Williams

Assistant Editors

Michael Lax
Dawn McKen
Deborah Orpin

Luisa Plaja
Jim Ronald
Miranda Timewell

Grammar

Gill Francis
Susan Hunston

Pragmatics

Joanna Channell
Alice Deignan

Pronunciation

Jonathan Payne

Computer Staff

Jeremy Clear
Zoe James
Tim Lane
Andrea Lewis

The Bank of English

Sue Smith

Secretarial Staff

Sue Crawley
Michelle Devereux

Publishing Manager

Debbie Seymour

Design and Production

Ted Carden
Jill McNair

Managing Director,

Collins Dictionaries

Richard Thomas

We would especially like to thank Rosamund Moon, Editorial Manager at COBUILD, for her invaluable contribution to all aspects of this project during its latter stages.

We would also like to thank Diana Bankston, Julia Penelope, Julie Plier, Debbie Posner, and Lynda Thomas for their advice and assistance on American English.

We gratefully acknowledge the editorial assistance of Catherine Brown, Helen Bruce, Jane Clarke, Ann Hewings, Ceri Hewitt, David Lee, Annelet Lykles, Sean Lynch, Clare Marson, Héloïse McGuinness, David Morrow, and Michael Stocks.

We also owe a debt of gratitude for editorial assistance to the following people from Collins Bilingual Dictionaries: Harry Campbell, Phyllis Gautier, Janet Gough, Bob Grossmith, Gavin Killip, Cordelia Lilly.

We would also like to thank Fred Karlsson and his team at the University of Helsinki for their work on tagging and parsing The Bank of English.

We have continued to receive academic support from our colleagues in the School of English, University of Birmingham, in particular from Malcolm Coulthard. Two visiting scholars contributed significantly to the development of our editorial policies: Flor Aarts of the Katholieke Universiteit, Nijmegen, and Bill Louw of the University of Zimbabwe.

Staff and students of the following institutions kindly took part in a research project on dictionary use, the results of which were used in the writing of this dictionary: English for Overseas Students Unit, University of Birmingham; Formalangues, Paris; Languacom, Paris; Ecole de Langues de Nouvelles Frontières, Paris; International Language Centre, Paris; International Language Centre, Hastings; E.F. International, Brighton; Swan School, Stratford-upon-Avon.

From the First Edition (1987)

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR IN CHIEF

John Sinclair

MANAGING EDITOR

Patrick Hanks

EDITORS

Gwyneth Fox

Rosamund Moon

Penny Stock

SENIOR COMPILERS

Andrew Delahunty

Sheila Dignen

Ramesh Krishnamurthy

Elaine Pollard

COMPILERS

Stephen Bullon

Deborah Kirby

Helen Liebeck

Elizabeth Manning

John Todd

SENIOR COMPUTING OFFICER

Jeremy Clear

COMPUTING OFFICER

Eileen Fitzgerald

CLERICAL STAFF

Lynne Farrow

Janice Johnson

Brenda Nicholls

Pat Smith

COLLINS PUBLISHING DIRECTOR

Richard Thomas

Foreword

The Project Team

The final project team is set out above. Several other colleagues made a notable contribution in the early years, and continued to provide support throughout the life of the project. Antoinette Renouf, the original Project Co-ordinator led the team from 1980-83 and established the text corpus and maintained and developed corpus work. Dr Michael Hoey gave a great deal of help in administration and policy guidance in the early period and continued with strong academic guidance. From Collins, Beryl T Atkins played a formative role in the design of the project and in the general training; continuing in her capacity as General Editor she commented on draft dictionary texts throughout.

Some members of the team moved on before the work was completed. Wendy Morris and Clive Upton were two of the original editors. Nigel Turton, Martin Manser, Dieter Wachendorff, Judy Amanthis, Duncan Marshall, Emily Driver, Kathy Kavanagh and Michael Rundell were compilers for substantial periods. Ian Sedwell helped with the computing. Heather Champion, Lorraine Dove, Cheryl Evans and Sue Smith were secretaries.

The project has also benefited greatly from people who, while not regular members of the team, acted in a consultative capacity or provided a specialist service. In particular Marcel Lemmens, grammar consultant, must be mentioned, Cathy Emmott, who helped with the Extra Column, and also Ela Bullon, Helmut Hirschmüller, Debbie Krishnamurthy, Clare Ramsey, and Louise Ravelli.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank many other people whose names do not appear on the team credits but who made a significant contribution to the compilation of the dictionary.

This project was part of the work of the English Department and its successful completion owes much to

the support of the Head of the Department throughout, Professor J T Boulton. In various ways every one of the staff helped and encouraged the work and one or two must be singled out for specific contributions. Dr David Brazil devised the system of recording pronunciations, and transcribed most of them. Tim Lane ensured their transfer to electronic form and gave support on the computational side. Tim Johns encouraged the use of real examples and made experimental classes available. Chris Kennedy, Tony Dudley-Evans, Dr Mike McCarthy, Charles Owen, Phillip King, Dr Kirsten Malmkjaer and Martin Hewings all read drafts, picked holes in them and offered many suggestions for improvement.

Many colleagues in the University of Birmingham contributed notably to the project. Three Pro-Vice Chancellors in turn guided the project through various committees; Professor Harry Prime, Professor John Fage and Professor John Samuels. The Centre for Computing and Computer Sciences was deeply involved throughout and eased problems in the complex final editing.

I would also like to thank the past and present members of Collins staff who have helped in the project.

This dictionary is based on evidence and the evidence comes from hundreds of documents and conversations, kindly made available by the copyright holders. A full list is provided on page xxii.

Such a fundamental re-appraisal of a language requires a high degree of teamwork and large-scale co-ordination of resources. The success of this book and other books to come will owe a great deal to the people and groups mentioned above, and I am very grateful to them for their contributions.

John M Sinclair
Professor of Modern English Language
Editor in Chief

Introduction

A new dictionary

This is a new book, a completely new edition of the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary, which was published in 1987. That dictionary was based on a corpus of 20 million words of the English of the 1980s. Since then we have built a new corpus, The Bank of English, which now stands at over 200 million words of English of the 1990s. So we have analysed every word again, looking at our new corpus data, and this book is the result.

The method which we worked out for the original dictionary, and which we explained in detail in *Looking Up* (HarperCollins 1987), proved very successful. But the opportunities of today's technology have made it possible to improve the method. Looking at the new corpus data, we decided which words and phrases to put in, and then we examined the language word by word and phrase by phrase, in order to give a clear account of each meaning and use. We then wrote a definition, chose typical examples, and added information about the pronunciation, grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and frequency to complete the entry.

So the information about English in this book is either new, or it has been recently checked against the large amount of corpus data that gives COBUILD its reliability and authority. In general, the new analysis confirms the picture of the language that we gave in 1987, but the larger corpus enables us to make statements about the meanings, patterns, and uses of words with much greater confidence and accuracy of detail.

Although the changes in a huge vocabulary like that of English are not dramatic over a decade or so, when you get down to detail there are a lot of points to make. Even core words can acquire new uses, and new words and combinations are constantly entering the mainstream of the language. Many words for which we had very little evidence in the 20 million word corpus have been included in this dictionary because we now have much more information about them.

In the compilation and editing, all the policies of the 1987 Dictionary have been reconsidered. Although we have retained most of them, there has been a lot of detailed updating and improvement. We have looked carefully at the many comments made by reviewers and correspondents about the original dictionary. Many users have written to me, and COBUILD has taken all their points into account. I think this new dictionary is much improved as a result.

The evidence

A dictionary must start with its evidence, its facts. Speakers of a language know a lot about it, since they read and speak it effortlessly for hours every day. But they may not be able to explain what they do, any more than they can explain how they walk, without falling over. Using a language is a skill that most people are not conscious of; they cannot examine it in detail, but simply use it to communicate.

Those who learn to observe language carefully can express and organize some of the facts about it on the basis of their experience, and that is the origin of many descriptions of English through the centuries. However, there are many facts about language that cannot be discovered by just thinking about it, or even reading and listening very intently, and COBUILD was established in 1980 to use computers to identify them.

A corpus

The result of this was that COBUILD established a new kind of evidence for English in the 80s – a collection of English texts called a corpus, held in a computer so that they can be consulted instantly. We knew that we needed millions of words of recent English, spoken and written, British and American, formal and informal, fact and fiction, and so on. This evidence, gathered over several years, allowed us to find out which words and expressions were most commonly used at the time. Where a word has many meanings – like several on each page of this Dictionary – we were able to see which were the important ones, and which phrases we should be sure to put in.

We learned an early lesson in lexicography from this work. It made us aware that all the details of a natural use of a word were essential, and cannot be faked. We realized that we would have to use real examples, in the tradition of the great English lexicographers, rather than make them up. It is not always easy to find suitable examples, but we thought that it was worthwhile, and it is now a cornerstone of the COBUILD approach to language.

At that time, 20 million words was so much bigger than any other corpus that it seemed like the ultimate in modern technology. However, by going through this process, COBUILD realized that with more evidence the job could be done even better. There would be more examples to choose from, so that the ones chosen would be simpler and more typical of the patterning; there would be more instances of the less common words, so that their definitions could be checked and refined; the idiomatic phrases would be easier to find and explain accurately.

The Bank of English

This book has been written using the evidence of over *two hundred million words* – ten times the corpus made for the original dictionary. The new corpus is called The Bank of English, and it covers a vast range of current English. As a result the definitions and examples in this book are even clearer and more authoritative than in our previous works.

A few years ago it became much easier to gather large quantities of spoken and written English. The publishers of books, magazines, and newspapers became aware that large amounts of language passed through their hands, and there could be many good reasons for keeping it in electronic form as well as printing it out in what is now known as 'hard copy'. A market grew up for electronic language among people who want to find or check

statements, particularly in news, magazines, and legal language. Gradually, with the emergence of compact disks – the CD-ROMs that are now familiar – words in their millions became available to students of language. Nowadays the problem is not finding the language, but managing and controlling it, and making sensible and balanced selections for the analytical tasks that COBUILD has to do.

There are about five hundred million words in the COBUILD archives, most of them from newspapers or the radio. In designing the present shape of The Bank of English we balanced a number of factors – spoken and written, UK, USA and other varieties from predominantly native speaker communities, books and magazines, and other classifications within those.

Within the spoken component, the most difficult kind of language to collect was, as always, the informally recorded conversations of people going about their daily lives, without thought of their language being preserved in a corpus. Each conversation has to be recorded and transcribed by experts, and then entered in the computer – the technology for this has hardly advanced since corpora began. Nevertheless, this kind of impromptu language is of particular interest to dictionary makers. The Bank of English, with a total of 15 million words of this kind of recorded speech, has the most extensive evidence available.

The headword list

It is much easier to decide which words and phrases to include, and which to omit, when we have accurate figures from such a large amount of language. Our computers can instantly check the language activity of thousands of speakers and writers, rather than just a handful of experts. A dictionary – even a big dictionary – is able to choose only the most important facts of the language to present, and the compilers need good evidence for their selections.

For this edition, COBUILD made available a lot of space for new and additional entries, by increasing the size of the book and also the efficiency of presentation. You will find many new words such as *care worker*, *carjacking*, and *multimedia*; *hand-held*, *multi-tasking*, and *video conferencing*; *neural network*, *photo opportunity*, and *talking head*; *imaging*, *off-the-wall*, and *wetland* – many more than we were able to include in 1987. These are all words that have occurred recently, often enough, and in a sufficient variety of sources to earn their place; we do not include words just because they are odd or interesting. COBUILD specializes in presenting the words and phrases that are frequent in everyday use, and everything in the book is worth learning for mastery of contemporary English. COBUILD is not a historical record of the language, and it is not a list of all the peculiar words that help you finish a crossword.

Frequency

For the first time in a major dictionary, COBUILD gives information about the frequency of the headwords. Five frequency bands have been established (details are on page xiii). Starting with the very common words, we move through a basic

vocabulary to an intermediate one, and on until we have covered the core vocabulary of the language. Headwords with no frequency marker are less common, but are still worth including in the dictionary. If you look at any page of the dictionary, you will see that we have included a large number of these words, unmarked for frequency.

The point is that English uses a fairly small number of words for most purposes, but it also has available a large and rich vocabulary when that is needed. So you will find that *be* is quite naturally in the commonest band, as is *because*, a common function word. Words like *barracuda*, *basalt*, *bas-relief* and *bassoon* are not frequent, and are not placed in a band. They are clearly of the type that are only used on particular occasions. Again I must emphasize that these too have been chosen for their relative usefulness from many thousands of possible entries.

So, if you see that a headword is marked for frequency, you will know that it is worth learning; if it has two or more black diamonds it is part of the essential core vocabulary of the language; the more marked it is, the more frequently you will come across it.

Examples

All of the examples in this book are newly selected from The Bank of English. As before, the examples are chosen carefully to show the patterns that are frequently found alongside a word or phrase. The compiler has dozens, hundreds or thousands of examples available, and quickly picks out the *collocates* – the particular words that are found near the headword – and the typical structures in which the word or phrase is most often found.

This means that the examples perform several functions. Of course, they help to show the meaning of the word by showing it in use. Research suggests that a large number of users start with the examples as a short cut to the meaning anyway; but in the COBUILD style of defining, the definitions ought to be clear enough in themselves, and the examples can be used to show the characteristic phrasing round the word. Since the examples are genuine pieces of text, and they have been chosen against the background of a full display of the usage of the word, they can be trusted to show the word in use in a natural context.

Coverage

A language used by many people has many varieties, and part of the use of a corpus is to study the kinds of variation that occur. The Bank of English is divided into 15 components, and the compilers can see the coverage of a word every time they look it up in the corpus. They can readily see if a usage is characteristic of just one or two varieties, and if so they can make a note that this is American, or informal, or the like.

As far as possible COBUILD gives priority to the English of most general utility worldwide. Dialect words are not featured, nor is the language of small social groups or specialists; instead space is reserved for international English, predominantly British English but with a lot of American usage recorded.

English is the most widespread language in the world and is used by hundreds of millions of speakers who have another mother tongue. This makes the core vocabulary very important, because it is likely to be shared by most users of English. The value of COBUILD'S frequency information is that we can list the words that a worldwide user is most likely to need.

Adaptability

The Bank of English also makes it possible to study the way words and their surrounding patterns fit together into connected speech or writing. The large amount of evidence makes it possible to see what makes a natural utterance, and what can be changed around or omitted altogether. This feature is one of the most important advances in preparing this new dictionary – the ability to see the regular patterns in the midst of all the natural variation.

The entries always begin by pointing out the main patterns, and illustrating them with examples; where there is some room for variation you will probably find it in the later examples. So, for example, **true** 5 has the regular pattern *It is true that...*, but in the third example the use of the word *true* on its own or repeated at the beginning of a sentence is shown to be a short form of the phrase: *'Things are a bit different in my country.' 'True, true, but we're not in your country, are we?'*

Phraseology

For the first time the compilers have been able to see the phraseology of the language clearly. There are many idioms in a language, and many more expressions which are more common and more ordinary than idioms. But combinations of words are much less frequent than the individual words, so a large corpus is necessary to define them accurately. Without it, we might not have found that your *true feelings* are usually hidden – the occurrence of verbs like *express*, *show*, and *reveal* indicate that (see **true** 2). Another example is **lap** 1, where both a preposition and a possessive adjective must come in front of the word in natural use: *She waited quietly with her hands in her lap... Hugh glanced at the child on her mother's lap.*

Bold face

The word or phrase being defined in each paragraph is printed in **bold face**. This convention allows us to point out where words other than the headword are really part of the expression being defined. The corpus makes it clear when such an action is justified, and the user is helped in several ways. Principally, the association between the exact phrasing and the meaning is a big help to recognition and learning – there is nothing more daunting than a word that has several meanings, with nothing to tell you which one is relevant to your needs on a particular occasion. For example in the entry for **count**, sense 11 deals with recording or remembering things. Nearly always this meaning occurs with the verb **keep** or **lose**, so these words also are put in bold face to emphasize the collocation.

Long entries

The commonest words of a language have many uses, and to explain them in a dictionary results in some very long entries. Many users of the original COBUILD Dictionary felt that the long entries were particularly difficult to understand. We therefore studied this problem, and made a number of changes in order to make it easier to find the information you need even in the longest and most complicated entry. As mentioned above, we have tried to print more words in bold face to help you find the sense you are looking for. For example, the entry for **thing** is long, and many of the meanings and uses of the word are difficult to explain and recognize. Notice how often there are one or more other words in bold face in that entry – senses 3 and 5 indicate some variable expressions, and then from sense 18 to the end there are a large number of relatively fixed phrases.

Superheadwords

This is a new feature. One of the most controversial features that COBUILD has become committed to is the strict policy of 'one word, one entry'. It is common practice in dictionaries to have two different entries for *call*, noun, and *call*, verb, even though the meanings overlap a lot. Also it is normal where there are two pronunciations, like *bow* (rhyming with *cow* or *toe*) to have two entries. Some dictionaries have several separate entries for the same word.

COBUILD decided on the opposite policy, so that the user can have confidence that all the information about a word will be there in a single entry. This resulted in some features that occasionally irritated users – for example, the verb forms *mean*, *means*, *meaning*, *meant* were put together with the adjective forms *mean*, *meaner*, *meanest*, and so on.

For these cases we have devised a 'superheadword' structure. There is, as before, only one entry, so you will not have to look anywhere else, but the entry is divided into several sub-entries, each of which gives a list of forms and has all the features of a regular entry. We have considered every entry that has ten or more senses for superheadword status, as well as the obvious ones. So **mean** is now divided into three sections, corresponding to its verb, adjective, and noun uses.

The same principle is used for a word like **fancy**, where there is a fairly major sense distinction running through its uses. One group of meanings deals with liking and preference, and the other group with elaborateness and expensiveness. Where a word such as **do** has quite distinct uses as an auxiliary verb and a main verb, this is also set out as a superheadword.

If this feature is found to be helpful we hope to extend it in the future. It makes the structure of an entry more flexible, and allows us to give a general guide to the longer and more complex or unusual entries.

Grammatical words

These are the most difficult words for compilers, because they are usually very frequent and have a lot of meanings and uses, but are extremely difficult to define. At first we tried to set out each word in all

its detail, and we set aside a large proportion of the dictionary for this. But since we have now published two grammar books that treat the grammar words in an organized sequence of structural patterns, in this dictionary we talk mainly about their usage.

We therefore present a summary of the most prominent uses of the grammar words in the dictionary, and we hope that the user will refer to the grammars for all the structural details. We have tried very hard to make these entries really useful as dictionary entries. Consider the new entry for **down**, for example.

Grammatical information

Almost every sense of every entry in this dictionary has alongside it a grammatical classification, usually a word class, and often a structural note as well. For this information COBUILD has established an Extra Column so that the technical information can be set out economically in notes, separate from the definitions. This feature has been well received, and we have concentrated on simplifying and improving the grammar notes in this new Edition.

A few notes are quite long, but it is worth understanding them because they are important in the way a word is used to give a particular meaning. So one pattern under **mean** 3 reads '*it V amount to-inf*'. This means that the word *it* is followed by the verb *means* and a word or phrase that expresses an amount of something, such as *a lot*. In turn this is followed by a to-infinitive. This pattern is also shown in the example: *It would mean a lot to them to win*.

The conventions used in the grammatical notes are set out on the inside of the cover. They compress a lot of very helpful information into a small space, and the abbreviations that are used are nearly all familiar to any learner.

Pragmatics

Many uses of words need more than a statement of meaning to be properly explained. People use words to do many things: to make invitations, to express their feelings, to emphasize what they are saying, and so on. The corpus gives us evidence for such uses that are difficult to get from any other source, because we only notice them when we see many examples of them gathered together.

The study and description of the ways in which people use language to do things is called pragmatics. This aspect of language is very important, and easy to miss. This is where the language is giving added meaning. COBUILD has always had a lot of information on pragmatics in its pages, but we have not previously drawn attention to it except in the case of insults, swear words, and things like that. In this new Edition we frequently use a 'pragmatics' sign in the Extra Column, and if you look carefully at such entries you will see the point being made. For example, you will find the phrase used above in this paragraph *and things like that* explained at **thing** 2, where we say that it is used to widen the range of a list. This use has the 'pragmatics' sign in the Extra Column. Indeed, many of the senses of **thing** have a 'pragmatics' sign.

Defining style

The most distinctive feature of the original dictionary was the use of full English sentences in the definitions, setting out the meaning in the way one ordinary person might explain it to another. We had a lot of favourable comments on this feature, and we have revised and extended it in this new edition.

For some users who expected the brief traditional definitions, COBUILD definitions were so generous that they seemed almost wasteful. But when you look closely at the way the definitions are phrased you will see that every word is chosen to illustrate some aspect of the meaning. And as far as possible, the words used in a definition are more frequent than the word being defined.

Shorter definitions just do not tell you as much. For example, the first verb sense of **mean** might be defined as just 'signify', which is true, but is not all that can be said. The COBUILD Dictionary puts this in the setting 'If you want to know...' – that is to say such a sense arises when someone is seeking information. The word 'if' indicates that this is an option, but a perfectly normal one, and 'you' tells us that it is not characteristic of any particular group of people (compare 'If a *policeman* arrests you...'). Then the definition says that you may want to know the meaning of a 'word, code, signal or gesture', indicating that these are the typical kinds of subject that this sense of **mean** will be found with. Only after all this information do we come to the equivalent of 'signify': 'what it refers to or what message it conveys'. So there are 12 words before the headword in this sense, but every one of them conveys vital information that would be very difficult to put into a shorter definition.

Hence there is no apology for full sentence definitions – far from it. Users expect more and more from their dictionaries, and in particular want to gain confidence in using a word by looking it up in a dictionary. The kind of help that the COBUILD definitions give is of great importance.

I hope, then, that this new edition is found to be even more useful, and easier to use, than the one it replaces; there are more words and more senses, simplified notes on grammar, new features showing frequency and pragmatics. Above all, it refers throughout to the massive authority of The Bank of English, and so I can offer it with confidence.

No book is perfect, however, and I would like to repeat my request for comments and criticisms of this new book. We have established an e-mail address (editors@cobuild.collins.co.uk) to make it easier for users to correspond with us.

I would also like to thank personally all those who have allowed their texts to be placed in The Bank of English. Without them there would be no dictionary.

John Sinclair
Editor in Chief
Professor of Modern English Language
University of Birmingham



The Bank of English

The Bank of English is a collection, or corpus, of over 200 million words of written and spoken English held on computer for the study of language use. The first edition of the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1987) was the first dictionary to present a comprehensive account of English vocabulary derived from direct observation of the way the language is being used. Since then, the COBUILD team has continued to collect texts from all kinds of sources to create the largest English corpus of its kind in the world – The Bank of English.

The Bank of English contains a wide range of different types of writing and speech from hundreds of different sources. The material is up to date, with most of the texts dating from 1990 onwards. Although most of the sources are British, approximately 25% of our data comes from American English sources, and about 5% from other native varieties of English – such as Australian and Singapore.

Written texts come from newspapers, magazines, fiction and non-fiction books, brochures, leaflets, reports, and letters. Two-thirds of the corpus is made up of media language: newspapers, magazines, radio and TV; this is a significant category in view of the millions of people who read and listen to the language presented in the media. International, national, and local publications are included to capture a broad range of subject matter and style. There are thousands of books and special interest magazines in The Bank of English which reflect hundreds of topics of general interest, from aerobics to zoology. However, technical or scientific textbooks, manuals, directories, and so on are not included in the corpus.

Informal spoken language is represented by recordings of everyday casual conversation, meetings, interviews, and discussions. Currently, about 15 million words of The Bank of English are transcriptions of spoken

language of this kind. These are selected to include a wide range of subject matter and speech situations.

Using The Bank of English

The purpose of collecting all this valuable data on our computers was to enable the lexicographers – the dictionary writers – to have access to as much information as possible about each of the words being defined. Of course, lexicographers are chosen because of their skill with language, but even the most experienced lexicographer cannot deduce from his or her own intuition all the relevant facts about all the words in the language. The corpus, and the software we use to analyse it, helps the COBUILD team to sort through the information and gain valuable insights into the way words are actually used: their meanings, their typical grammar patterns, and the ways in which they relate to other words.

The corpus lies at the heart of each entry. As a lexicographer begins writing an entry, he or she can call up onto the computer screen all the occurrences of the word in question. These appear in the form of concordance lines, and the lines can be examined in a number of different ways to show different aspects of the word's behaviour.

Here, for example, are some concordance lines for **play**, **plays**, **playing**, and **played**. This is, of course, only a small sample of the thousands of lines available, but you will see how lexicographers are able to use the lines to see the behaviour of a word. For example, this sample seems to show that **play** often occurs with *role* or *part*, in the expressions *play a role* and *play a part*.

Further investigation confirms this finding, and shows that *important* or words that mean 'important' often occur in front of *role* or *part*.

...It would appear that hormones	play a crucial role in precipitating...
...area, and politics has to	play a part in the Deputy Speaker's...
...it wasn't him. He obviously	played a role, but it was those young...
...on this issue would He's	playing a waiting-game He'll hope to...
...unknown, but hereditary factors	play an important part in triggering...
...take such a step if it wanted to	play an active part in the search for...
...Every day this week we'll be	playing an exclusive track from the...
...developments. New Zealand has been	playing an active role in getting the...
...An eccentric cricket game was	played at Timsgarry in the Outer...
...Butcher was forced to quit	playing because of a knee injury after...
...keeps the same tunes the band	played before Sandmelle was born...
...and most popularly used to	play computer games...
...teams. Our top teams already	play far too many games and need to...
...the full England squad. Taylor	plays for Northamptonshire; Ilott for...
...role that the government has	played in gathering investment...
...eyes. 'He bet on games he	played in. Sometimes he bet on his...

Many words have more than one grammatical word class and it is often helpful for the lexicographers to look at only one word class at a time. In order to help them do this, software has been developed which shows the word class of the keyword in each corpus line. The lexicographers can look at either all

NN	...their car at a traffic	light, stripped and beaten, and shot...
NN	...Later, alone, by lantern	light and by flashlight she strained...
JJ	...Possessed of a lovely,	light gracefulness, Brook's...
NN	...as are all tips. If	light conditions change, simply slot...
NN	...on the river. There was	light and air to be sure, big...
JJ	...4.50 metre, looks	light and fresh and is also...
NN	...the Haggadah in a new	light. And whenever we do, we find...
VB	...pile it up with peat and	light it you see. Er er er...
NN	...Photograph. AS the cold	light of dawn slowly broke over...

Software such as this allows lexicographers to make decisions about the different senses of words, the language of the definitions, the choice of examples, and the grammatical information given. We could, of course, make statements about these things without a corpus, but having a corpus enables us to

the data, with the word class code, or they can ask to see only verbs, nouns, and so on. This is how we arrived at the lines for play you saw above. Here are some lines for the word light, which are coded according to their word class. In the sample, NN means 'noun', JJ means 'adjective' and VB means 'verb'.

make them with confidence and accuracy. And the larger the corpus, the more confident and accurate we can be.

The result is a dictionary which describes with authority the way the English language works in the 1990s.

Frequency bands

In this dictionary, we have added some new information from The Bank of English – information on frequency. This means that when you look up a word, you can immediately see how important it is.

There are five frequency bands, shown by black diamonds in the Extra Column. The most frequent words have five black diamonds, the next most frequent four, and so on. Words which occur less frequently, but which still deserve an entry in the dictionary, do not have any black diamonds.

Note that the individual sections of words which have been treated as superheadwords are given their own frequency bands. Words which belong to recognizable sets, such as nationality adjectives, have generally been put into the same band.

◆◆◆◆ Many of the words in this band are the common grammar words such as **the, and, of, and to**, which are an essential part of the way we put words together. Also in this band are the very frequent vocabulary items, such as **like, go, paper, return**, and so on. There are approximately 700 words in this band.

◆◆◆◇ This band includes words such as **argue, bridge, danger, female, obvious, and sea**. There are approximately 1200 words in this band.

The words in the top two bands account for approximately 75% of all English usage – so their importance is obvious.

◆◆◆◇ This band includes words such as **aggressive, medicine, and tactic**. There are approximately 1500 words in this band.

Knowing the words in this band extends the range of topics which you can talk about.

◆◆◆◇ This band includes words such as **accuracy, duration, miserable, puzzle, and rope**. There are approximately 3200 words in this band.

◆◆◆◇ This band includes words such as **abundant, crossroads, fearless, and missionary**. There are approximately 8100 words in this band.

The bottom two bands contain words which you are likely to use less frequently than words in the other bands, but which are still important.

The entries that have no frequency diamond are words which you will probably read or hear rather than words which you will often need to use yourself. They are mostly nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Of course, there are thousands of words which we could have included in the dictionary, but because it is based on a corpus you can be sure that we have chosen only those which you are most likely to come across.

The words in the five frequency bands are of immense importance to learners because they make up 95% of all spoken and written English. These frequency bands therefore will be an invaluable aid to anyone who is interested in using natural English.

Guide to the Dictionary Entries

Romeo
romp
romper suit
roof

reflector /rɪfɪktər/ **reflectors**

1 A reflector is a small piece of specially patterned glass or plastic which is fitted to the back of a bicycle or car or to a post beside the road, and which glows when light shines on it.

rabbinical /ræbɪnɪkəl/ or **rabbinic** /ræbɪnɪk/.

re-form, **re-forms**, **re-forming**, **re-formed**; also spelled **reform**.

reformist /rɪfɔːmɪst/ **reformists**.

refrain /rɪfɪn/ **refrains**, **refraining**, **refrained**

runny /rʌni/ **runnier**, **runniest**

revel /rɪvəl/ **revels**, **revelling**, **revelled**; spelled **reveling**, **reveled** in American English.

run /rʌn/ **runs**, **running**, **ran**. The form **run** is used in the present tense and is also the past participle of the verb.

refresh /rɪfrefʃ/ **refreshes**, **refreshing**, **refreshed**

rewind, **rewinds**, **rewinding**, **rewound**. The verb is pronounced /rɪˈwaɪnd/. The noun is pronounced /rɪˈwaɪnd/.

refreshing /rɪfrefʃɪŋ/

1 You say that something is **refreshing** when it is pleasantly different from what you are used to. *It's refreshing to hear somebody speaking common sense... It made a refreshing change to see a good old-fashioned movie. † refreshingly He was refreshingly honest.*

2 A **refreshing** bath or drink makes you feel energetic or cool again after you have been uncomfortably tired or hot. *Herbs have been used for centuries to make refreshing drinks.*

Order of entries: in alphabetical order, taking no notice of capital letters, hyphens, apostrophes, accents, or spaces between words.

Headwords: the main form of the headword appears in large bold face letters, starting in the left hand margin.

Variant forms of a headword are given after the headword, in smaller bold face letters.

Alternative spellings are given at the end of the information about the headword.

Inflected forms: given in smaller bold face letters, for noun, verb, adjective, and adverb forms.

Notes about inflected forms.

Pronunciation: see pages xxviii-xxxix for details.

Notes about pronunciation.

Paragraph numbers: for words with more than one meaning or use.

Definitions: given in full sentences, showing the commonest ways in which the headword is used. See pages xviii-xix for details.

Examples: in italics, taken from The Bank of English. See pages xxii-xxiii for details.

Derived words: formed with common suffixes such as '-ly' or '-ness' and not involving a change in meaning are given after the diamond symbol ♦.

Changes in word class which do not involve any change in meaning are introduced by a triangle symbol ►.

The triangle symbol ► is also used to introduce a meaning which is closely connected with another meaning.

The triangle symbol ► is also used to introduce phrasal verbs which have the same meaning as the verb which is the headword.

5 A **radio** is a piece of equipment that is used for sending and receiving messages. *Judge Bruce Laughland praised the courage of the young constable, who managed to raise the alarm on his radio... The radio message was brief.*

6 If you **radio** someone, you send a message to them by radio. *The officer radioed for advice... A few minutes after take-off, the pilot radioed that a fire had broken out.*

refusal /rɪ'fju:zəl/ **refusals**

1 Someone's **refusal** to do something or **refusal** of something is the fact of them showing or saying that they will not do it, allow it, grant it, or accept it. *Her country suffered through her refusal to accept change... His letter in response to her request had contained a firm refusal. ...the Council's refusal of planning permission for a major shopping centre... We would appreciate confirmation of your refusal of our invitation to take part.*

play /pleɪ/ **plays, playing, played**

17 If something or someone **plays** a part or **plays** a role in a situation, they are involved in it and have an effect on it. *They played a part in the life of their community... The UN would play a major role in monitoring a ceasefire. ...the role played by diet in disease.*

regal /rɪ'ɡəl/. If you describe something as **regal**, you mean that it is suitable for a king or queen, because it is very splendid or dignified. *He sat with such regal dignity... Never has she looked more regal. ♦ regally He inclined his head regally.*

raw /rɔ:/ **rawer, rawest**

5 If you describe something as **raw**, you mean that it is simple, powerful, and real. *...the raw power of instinct. ...the raw vitality of his earlier painting. ♦ rawness Recorded almost live, there's a certain seductive rawness about the whole thing.*

1 If something **reeks** of something else, usually something unpleasant, it smells very strongly of it. *Your breath reeks of stale cigar smoke... The entire house reeked for a long time. ► Also a noun. He smelt the reek of whisky.*

rand /rænd/ **rande; rand** can also be used as the plural form. The **rand** is the unit of currency used in South Africa. *...12 million rand. ► The rand is also used to refer to the South African currency system. The rand slumped by 22% against the dollar.*

6 When a horse **rears**, it moves the front part of its body upwards, so that its front legs are high in the air and it is standing on its back legs. *The horse reared and threw off its rider. ► Rear up means the same as rear. ...an army pony that didn't rear up at the sound of gunfire.*

6 You can use *as regards* to indicate the subject that is being talked or written about. *As regards the war, Halg believed in victory at any price.*

7 You can use *with regard to* or *in regard to* to indicate the subject that is being talked or written about. *The department is reviewing its policy with regard to immunisation.*

8 You can use *in this regard* or *in that regard* to refer back to something you have just said. *In this regard nothing has changed... I may have made a mistake in that regard.*

9 **Reflection** is careful thought about a particular topic. Your *reflections* are your thoughts about a particular topic. *After days of reflection she decided to write back... He paused, absorbed by his reflections.* • If someone admits or accepts something on reflection, they admit or accept it after having thought carefully about it. *On reflection, he says, he very much regrets the comments.*

reel in. If you reel in something such as a fish, you pull it towards you by winding around a reel the wire or line that it is attached to. *Glouchar reeled in the first fish... The crew of the US space shuttle Atlantis were preparing to reel in the craft.*
reel off. If you reel off information, you repeat it from memory quickly and easily. *She reeled off the titles of a dozen or so of the novels.*

2 If you **rustle** something up, you provide or obtain it quickly, with very little planning; an informal use.

rutabaga /ruːtəˈbeɪɡə/ rutabagas. In American English, a rutabaga is a round yellow root vegetable with a brown or purple skin. The usual British word is swede.

rata /rɑːtə/. See *pro rata*.

1 **Rustling** is the activity of stealing farm animals, especially cattle; used especially in American English. *Her thievery was confined mostly to cattle rustling and horse stealing.*

2 See also *rustle*.

5 • *to rant and rave*: see *rant*.

59 • *to run amok*: see *amok*. • *to make your blood run cold*: see *blood*. • *to run counter to something*: see *counter*. • *to run its course*: see *course*. • *to cut and run*: see *cut*. • *to run deep*: see *deep*. • *to run someone to earth*: see *earth*.

Phrases: usually the last paragraph or paragraphs of an entry, before phrasal verbs.

If the phrase is closely connected with another use or meaning, it may be included within the same paragraph, after the symbol •.

Phrasal verbs: in alphabetical order at the end of an entry. Sometimes phrasal verbs are explained earlier in the entry, after the symbol ▶ (see above).

Style and usage: information about who uses a word or expression, and in what situation. See pages xx-xxi for details.

Cross-references: indicating that relevant information can be found at another entry.

Cross-references often follow the symbol •.