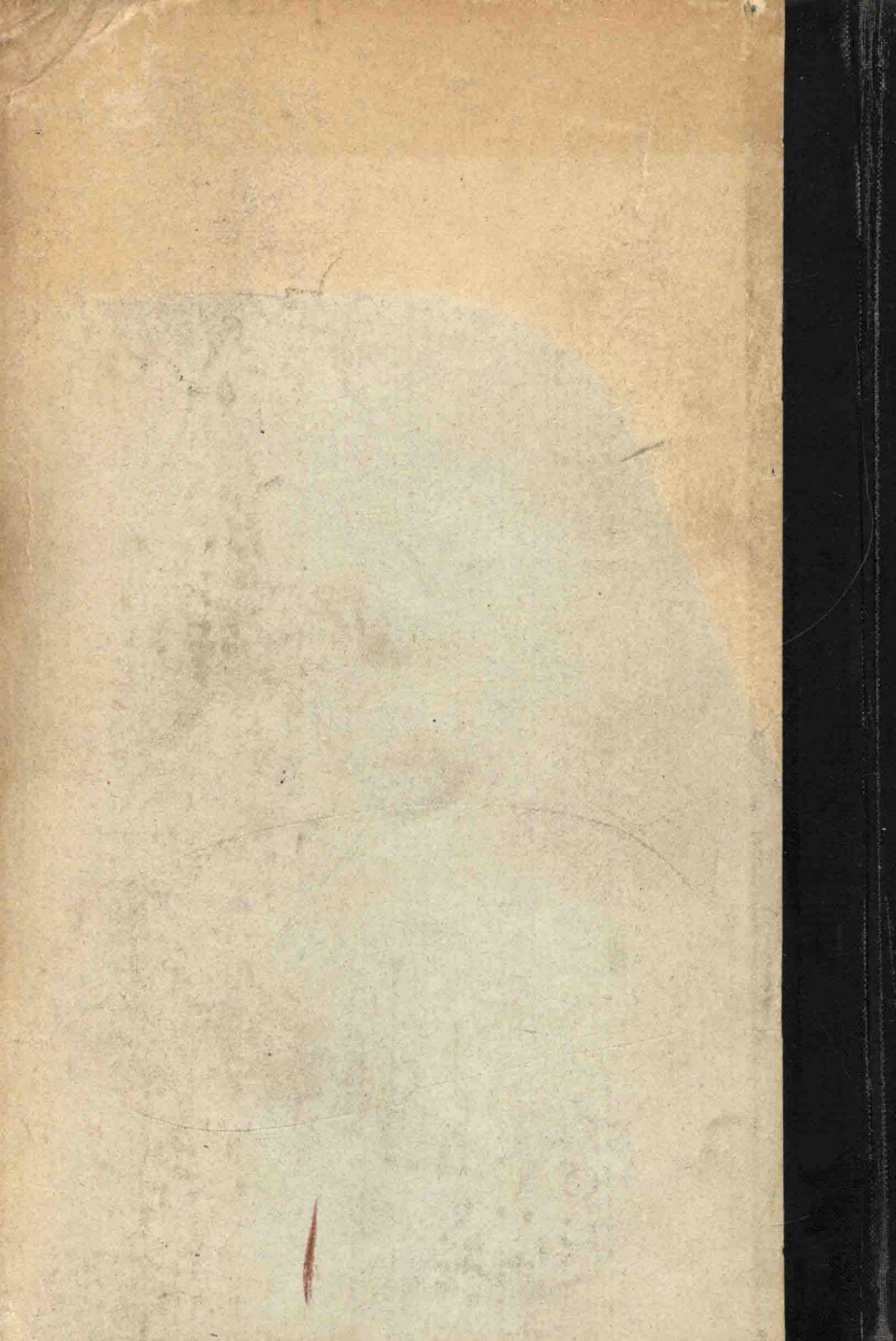


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## Foreword

When *Collins English Dictionary* was published in 1979 it was widely praised for its modern approach to dictionary-making and its clarity of presentation. The present book is a Concise edition of that work, and with over one and a half million words of text and over 96,000 references, is itself an important new dictionary that provides a balanced, up-to-date survey of contemporary English.

Like its parent, this Concise version differs in one aspect of fundamental importance from most general-purpose dictionaries of similar dimensions. Though the first priority, as always, has been accuracy, the second has not been to cram as much content as possible into the pages, but rather to ensure that every item included can be easily and quickly found.

A dictionary whose contents are not completely accessible to all users is only semi-useful. Complicated typographical codes and symbols and complex cross-references serve to conceal rather than reveal the contents of some dictionaries. The *New Collins Concise* takes pains to ensure that no reader will retire baffled in his attempt to find an item, uncertain whether it is included or not. If it is in this Dictionary it will be found, and without uncertainty; if it is not found, it is not included.

The most important way in which accessibility has been ensured is the large number of headwords or main entries. The fact that there are over 53,000 of them (a larger percentage of total entries than in other dictionaries) means that compound words (like *coastguard*, *knife edge*, *parking meter*, *sightscreen*, *structural formula*) and derived words with their own meaning (like *clueless*, *collectivism*, *dichroism*, *fallacious*, *fascinator*, *fastening*, *laboured*, *lagging*) are all to be found as main entries in their alphabetical places. They are not buried in the body of other entries, and perhaps there not even printed in full.

In addition to words, however, the user must be able to find meanings quickly and accurately. Here again the *New Collins Concise* takes pains to be helpful. Numbered definitions and a generous provision of field labels (*Chess*, *Maths.*, *Music*, *Physics*, and so on) help to guide the reader to the meaning he is searching for.

Again, the large number of main entries means that the average length of article is less than in other dictionaries; and this significantly speeds the search for a particular meaning or derivative.

As in the larger *Collins English Dictionary*, so here, too, the user is helped by our sensible practice of placing the common modern meanings of a word first in the entry and, only after these have been established, going on to treat less common, specialized, and older meanings. This is primarily a dictionary of *current* English, where 90 per cent of user requirements lie.

The strategy by which the content of the *Collins English Dictionary* has been reduced to the practical and workmanlike compass of this Concise version has carefully avoided wholesale deletion. It involved four stages:

- the omission of proper names as a class
- the omission of some rare, obsolete, and very technical words
- judicious omission of some rare, obsolete, and technical senses
- all further reduction in size has been obtained by skilful merging of

## Foreword

related senses and by reducing the length of individual definitions while preserving the meaning

In this way the central core of the language, as regards both words and meanings, is retained and along with it those features that distinguish the parent volume and contributed to the ready acceptance of *Collins English Dictionary* by academic and general users alike.

In addition, of course, the vocabulary of English since the publication of *Collins English Dictionary* has been monitored and the word store of the Dictionary has been reassessed and updated by additions like *auto-teller*, *black economy*, *bubble memory* (Computers), *chip-based*, *dioxin*, *endorphin*, *eventing*, *fast food*, *floppy disk*, *Jacuzzi*, *managed bonds*, *own brand*, *positive discrimination*, *professional foul*, *secondary picketing*, *video game*, *word processor*, *workaholic*, *zimmer*; not to speak of (the CB radio) *breaker*, (the economic) *corset* and *snake*, (the political) *wet*, and the person who is completely *laid-back*.

The resulting NEW COLLINS CONCISE ENGLISH DICTIONARY, with its balanced view of contemporary English and its excellent coverage of today's science and technology, has been produced for all who want a comprehensive dictionary relevant to today's needs, in a convenient, easily-handled format.

The editors are indebted to the many consultants and specialist editors who contributed to *Collins English Dictionary* and in particular to Laurence Urdang, its Editorial Director; but none of these is responsible for any errors that may, in spite of our vigilance, have crept into the work. To any reader interested enough in the result of our endeavours to comment and offer suggestions for improvement we tender our thanks.

W.T.M.

# Guide to the Use of the Dictionary

## 1 The Headword

### 1.1 Order of entries

1.1.1 The headwords are listed in strictly alphabetical order. This rule applies even if the headword consists of more than one word. Thus *bear*<sup>1</sup> and the related entries, *bearable* and *bear down*, are separated by intervening entries occurring in strict alphabetical order.

*bear*<sup>1</sup>  
*bear*<sup>2</sup>  
*Bear*  
*bearable*  
*bear-baiting*  
*beard*  
*beardless*  
*bear down*

1.1.2 Words that have the same spelling but are derived from different sources etymologically (homographs) are entered separately with superscript numbers after the headwords.

*saw*<sup>1</sup> (sɔ:) *n.* 1. any of various hand tools. ...  
*saw*<sup>2</sup> (sɔ:) *vb.* the past tense of *see*.  
*saw*<sup>3</sup> (sɔ:) *n.* a wise saying, maxim, or proverb. ...

1.1.3 A word with a capital initial letter, if entered separately, follows the lower-case form. For example, *Union* follows *union*.

### 1.2 Plural headwords

Words that are always or usually used in the plural are entered in the plural form.

*trousers* (traʊzəz) *pl.* *n.* a garment shaped to cover the body from the waist. ...

### 1.3 Multiword headwords

Phrases regarded as referring to a unit or a single concept are entered separately as headwords in strict alphabetical order.

*elementary particle* *n.* any of several entities, such as electrons, neutrons, or protons. ...

### 1.4 Variant spellings

Common acceptable variant spellings of English words are given as alternative forms of the headword.

*characterize or -ise* (kærɪkəˈraɪz) *vb.* ...

Where it is different, the U.S. spelling of a word is also recorded in the headword.

*centre or U.S. center* (ˈsentə) *n.* ...

## 2 The Pronunciation

Pronunciations of words in this dictionary represent mostly those that are common in educated British English speech. They are transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). A *Key to the Pronunciation Symbols* is printed at the end of this Guide. See also the article on *The Pronunciation of British English* by Professor Gimson on p. xvii.

### 2.1 Stress

The stress pattern is marked by the symbols ' for primary stress and ' for secondary stress. The stress mark precedes the syllable to which it applies.

### 2.2 Variant pronunciations

When a headword has a common acceptable variant pronunciation or stress pattern, the variant is shown in full or by repeating only the syllable or syllables that change.

*amok* (ə'mak, ə'mɒk) *n., adv.* ...  
*controversy* (ˈkɒntrəˌvɜːsi, kən'trɒv-) *n., pl.* ...

### 2.3 Naturalized foreign words and phrases

A word or phrase of recent foreign origin that is regarded as having been accepted into English is printed in large boldface roman type and is given an anglicized pronunciation.

*au pair* (əʊ 'peɪ) *n.* ...

### 2.4 Foreign words and phrases

Foreign words or phrases are otherwise printed in boldface italic type and are usually given foreign-language pronunciations only.

*baut monde* French. (o 'mɔːd) *n.* ...

### 2.5 Pronunciations with different parts of speech

When two or more parts of speech of a word have different pronunciations, the pronunciations are shown in parentheses before the relevant group of senses.

*record* *n.* (ˈrekɔːd). 1. an account in permanent form. ... *vb.* (rɪ 'kɔːd). (mainly tr.) 18. to set down in some permanent form. ...

### 2.6 Pronunciation of individual senses

If one sense of a headword has a different pronunciation from that of the rest, that pronunciation is given in parentheses after the sense number.

*conjure* ('kandʒə) *vb.* 1. (intr.) to practise conjuring. 2. (intr.) to call upon supposed supernatural forces by spells and incantations. 3. (tr.) (kən'dʒʊə). to appeal earnestly to: *I conjure you to help me.* ...

## 3 Inflected Forms

Inflected forms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives are shown immediately after the part-of-speech label if they are irregular or, in certain cases, if they are regular but might cause confusion.

### 3.1 Irregular and unfamiliar inflections

Inflected forms are shown for the following:

## Guide to the Use of the Dictionary

3.1.1 Nouns and verbs whose inflections involve a change in internal spelling.

**goose**<sup>1</sup> (gu:s) *n.*, *pl.* **geese**...

**drive** (draɪv) *vb.* **driving**, **drove**, **driven**...

3.1.2 Nouns, verbs, and adjectives that end in a consonant plus *y*, where *y* is changed to *i* before inflectional endings.

**augury** (ˈɔ:gjuri) *n.*, *pl.* **-uries**...

3.1.3 Nouns having identical singular and plural forms.

**sheep** (ʃi:p) *n.*, *pl.* **sheep**...

3.1.4 Nouns that closely resemble others that form their plurals differently.

**mongoose** (ˈmɒŋɡu:s) *n.*, *pl.* **-gooses**...

3.1.5 Nouns that end in *-ful*, *-o*, and *-us*.

**handful** (ˈhændfʊl) *n.*, *pl.* **-fuls**...

**potato** (pəˈteɪtəʊ) *n.*, *pl.* **-atoes**...

**prospectus** (prəˈspektəs) *n.*, *pl.* **-tuses**...

3.1.6 Nouns whose plurals are not regular English inflections.

**basis** (ˈbeɪsɪs) *n.*, *pl.* **-ses** (-si:z)...

3.1.7 Plural nouns whose singulars are not regular English forms.

**bacteria** (bækˈtɪəriə) *pl. n.*, *sing.* **-rium** (-rɪəm)...

3.1.8 Nouns whose plurals have regular spellings but involve a change in pronunciation.

**house** *n.* (haʊs), *pl.* **houses** (ˈhaʊzɪz)...

3.1.9 Multiword nouns when it is not obvious which word takes a plural inflection.

**attorney-at-law** *n.*, *pl.* **attorneys-at-law**...

3.1.10 Adjectives that change their roots to form comparatives and superlatives.

**good** (ɡʊd) *adj.* **better**, **best**...

3.1.11 Adjectives and verbs that double their final consonant before adding endings.

**fat** (fæt)... *~adj.* **fatter**, **fattest**...

**control** (kənˈtrəʊl) *vb.* **-trolling**, **-trolled**

3.1.12 Verbs and adjectives that end in a vowel plus *e*.

**canoe** (kəˈnuː)... *~vb.* **-noeing**, **-noed**...

**free** (friː) *adj.* **freer**, **freest**... *~vb.* **freeing**, **freed**...

## 4 Parts of Speech

A part-of-speech label in *italics* precedes the account of the sense or senses relating to that part of speech.

### 4.1 Standard parts of speech

The following parts of speech, with abbreviations as shown, are standard and need no further explanation: adjective (*adj.*), adverb (*adv.*), conjunction (*conj.*), interjection (*interj.*), noun (*n.*), preposition (*prep.*), pronoun (*pron.*), verb (*vb.*).

### 4.2 Less traditional parts of speech

Certain other less traditional parts of speech have been adopted in this dictionary. They are as follows:

4.2.1 **determiner**. This denotes such words as *the*, *a*, *some*, *any*, *that*, *this*, possessives like *my*, *his*, and *your*,

and the numerals. Many determiners can have a pronoun function without change of meaning, and this is shown thus:

**some** (səm; unstressed səm) *determiner*... 2. a. an unknown or unspecified quantity or amount of: *he owns some horses*. b. (as pronoun; functioning as sing. or pl.): *we'll buy some*.

4.2.2 **sentence connector**. This denotes words like *however* and *therefore*, which have been traditionally classed as adverbs but which function as conjunctions, linking sentences, without being restricted, as are conjunctions, to the initial position in their clause.

4.2.3 **sentence substitute**. Sentence substitutes comprise words such as *yes*, *no*, *perhaps*, *definitely*, and *maybe*, which can stand as meaningful utterances by themselves.

## 4.3 Words used as more than one part of speech

If a word can be used as more than one part of speech, the account of the senses of one part of speech is separated from the others by a swung dash.

**lure** (luə) *vb.* (*tr.*)... 2. *Falconry*. to entice (a hawk or falcon) from the air to the falconer by a lure. *~n.* 3. a person or thing that lures.

## 5 Descriptive, Grammatical, and Contextual Information

### 5.1 Adjectives and Determiners

Some adjectives and determiners are restricted by usage to a particular position relative to the nouns they qualify. This is indicated by the following labels:

5.1.1 **postpositive** (used predicatively or after the noun, but not before the noun):

**ablaze** (əˈbleɪz) *adj.* (*postpositive*), *adv.* 1. on fire; burning.

5.1.2 **immediately postpositive** (always used immediately following the noun, qualified and never used predicatively):

**galore** (ɡəˈləː) *determiner*, (*immediately postpositive*) *Inf.* in great numbers or quantity: *there were daffodils galore in the park*...

5.1.3 **pronominal** (used before the noun, and never used predicatively):

**chief** (tʃi:f)... *~adj.* 3. (*pronominal*) a. most important; principal. b. highest in rank or authority.

### 5.2 Intensifiers

Adjectives and adverbs that perform an exclusively intensifying function, with no addition of meaning, are described as (*intensifier*) without further explanation.

**blooming** (ˈblu:mɪŋ) *adv.*, *adj.* *Brit. inf.* (*intensifier*): *a blooming genius*; *blooming painful*...

### 5.3 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are divided into two classes, marked by the following labels placed in parentheses:

## Guide to the Use of the Dictionary

**5.3.1 coordinating.** Coordinating conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses that perform an identical function and are not dependent on each other. They include *and*, *but*, and *or*.

**5.3.2 subordinating.** Subordinating conjunctions introduce clauses that are dependent on a main clause in a complex sentence. Examples are *where*, *until*, and *before*.

**5.3.3** Some conjunctions, such as *while* and *whereas*, can function as either coordinating or subordinating conjunctions.

## 5.4 Singular and plural labelling of nouns

**5.4.1** Headwords and senses that are apparently plural in form but that take a singular verb, etc., are marked "functioning as sing."

**physics** ('fiziks) *n.* (functioning as sing.) 1. the branch of science. . . .

**5.4.2** Headwords and senses that appear to be singular but take a plural verb, etc., are marked "functioning as pl."

**cattle** ('kætəl) *n.* (functioning as pl.) 1. bovid mammals of the tribe Bovini. . . .

**5.4.3** Headwords and senses that may take either a singular or a plural verb, etc., are marked "functioning as sing. or pl."

**bellows** ('beləʊz) *n.* (functioning as sing. or pl.) 1. Also: **pair of bellows.** an instrument consisting of an air chamber. . . .

## 5.5 Modifiers

A noun that is commonly used with adjectival force is labelled *modifier*.

**5.5.1** If the sense of the modifier is strictly inferable from the sense of the noun, the modifier is shown without further explanation, with an example to illustrate its use; otherwise an account of its meaning and/or usage is given in a separate numbered definition.

**key**<sup>1</sup> (ki:) *n.* 18. (modifier) of great importance: a key issue. . . .

## 5.6 Verbs

**5.6.1** The account of the meaning of a verb is given without subdivision into separate groupings for transitive and intransitive senses. Instead, each definition is worded so as to take account of transitivity or intransitivity.

When a sense of a verb (*vb.*) is restricted to transitive use, it is labelled (*tr.*); if it is intransitive only, it is labelled (*intr.*). If all the senses of a verb are either transitive or intransitive, the appropriate label appears before the first numbered sense and is not repeated. Absence of a label indicates that the sense or verb may be used both transitively and intransitively. If nearly all the senses of a verb are transitive, the label (*mainly tr.*) appears immediately before the first numbered sense. This indicates that, unless otherwise labelled, any given sense of the verb is transitive. Similarly, all the senses of a verb may be labelled (*mainly intr.*).

### 5.6.2. Copulas

A verb that takes a complement is labelled *copula*.

**seem** (si:m) *vb.* (may take an infinitive) 1. (*copula*)

to appear to the mind or eye. . . .

### 5.6.3 Phrasal verbs

Verbal constructions consisting of a verb and a preposition or a verb and an adverbial particle are given headword status if the meaning of the phrasal verb cannot be deduced from the separate meanings of the verb and the particle.

**5.6.3.1** Phrasal verbs are labelled to show four possible distinctions:

a transitive verb with an adverbial particle (*tr., adv.*); a transitive verb with a preposition (*tr., prep.*); an intransitive verb with an adverbial particle (*intr., adv.*); an intransitive verb with a preposition (*intr., prep.*).

**turn on.** . . . 1. (*tr., adv.*) to cause (something) to operate by turning a knob, etc.

**take for.** . . . 1. (*tr., prep.*) . . . to consider or suppose to be, esp. mistakenly: *the fake coins were taken for genuine; who do you take me for?*

**play up.** . . . 3. (*adv.*) *Brit. inf.* (of a machine, etc.) to function erratically: *the car is playing up again.*

**turn on.** . . . 2. (*intr., prep.*) to depend or hinge on: *the success of the party turns on you.*

As with the labelling of other verbs, the absence of a label is significant. If there is no label (*tr.*) or (*intr.*), the verb may be used either transitively or intransitively. If there is no label (*adv.*) or (*prep.*), the particle may be either adverbial or prepositional.

**5.6.3.2** Any noun, adjective, or modifier formed from a phrasal verb is entered under the phrasal-verb headword. In some cases, where the noun or adjective is more common than the verb, the phrasal verb is entered after the noun/adjective form:

**breakaway** ('breikə wei) *n.* 1. a. loss or withdrawal of a group of members from an association, club, etc. b. (*as modifier*): a breakaway faction. . . . ~*vb.* **break away.** (*intr., adv.*) . . . 4. to withdraw or secede.

## 6 Restrictive Labels and Phrases

### 6.1 Placement

**6.1.1** If a particular sense requires to be restricted as to appropriateness, connotation, subject field, etc., an italicized label is placed immediately before the account of the relevant meaning.

**hang on** *vb.* (*intr.*) . . . 5. (*adv.*) *Inf.* to wait: *hang on for a few minutes.*

**6.1.2** If a label applies to all senses of one part of speech, it is placed immediately after the part-of-speech label.

**assured** (ə'ʃʊəd) *adj.* . . . ~*n.* *Chiefly Brit.* 4. a. the beneficiary. . . . b. the person whose life is insured.

**6.1.3** If a label applies to all senses of a headword, it is placed immediately after the pronunciation (or inflections).

**con**<sup>1</sup> (kən) *sl.* ~*n.* 1. a. short for confidence trick. b. (*as modifier*): *con man.* ~*vb.* **conning, coned.** 2. (*tr.*) to swindle or defraud.

### 6.2 Temporal labels

**6.2.1** *Arch. (Archaic).* This label denotes a word or

sense that is no longer in common use but may be found in literary works or used to impart a historical colour to contemporary writing.

**6.2.2 Obs. (Obsolete).** This label denotes a word or sense that is no longer in use. In specialist or technical fields the label often implies that the term has been superseded.

**6.2.3** The word "formerly" is placed in parentheses before a sense or set of senses when the practice, concept, etc., being described, rather than the word itself, is obsolete or out-of-date.

## 6.3 Usage labels

**6.3.1 Sl. (Slang).** This label refers to words or senses that are racy or extremely informal. The appropriate contexts in which slang is used are restricted: it is appropriate, for example, among members of a particular social or cultural group or those who share a particular activity or interest. Slang words are inappropriate in formal speech or writing.

**6.3.2 Inf. (Informal).** This label applies to words or senses that may be widely used, especially in conversation, letter-writing, etc., but that are not common in formal writing. Such words are subject to fewer contextual restrictions than slang words.

**6.3.3 Taboo.** This label applies to words that are not acceptable in polite use. The reader is advised to avoid the use of such words if he wishes to be sure of not giving offence.

**6.3.4** A number of other usage labels, such as *Ironical*, *Facetious*, and *Euphemistic*, are used where appropriate.

**6.3.5 Not standard.** This label is given to words or senses that are frequently encountered but widely regarded as incorrect and therefore avoided by careful speakers and writers.

## 6.4 Connotative labels

**6.4.1 Derog. (Derogatory).** This label implies that the connotations of a word are unpleasant with intent on the part of the speaker or writer.

**6.4.2 Offens. (Offensive).** This label indicates that a word may be regarded as offensive by the person described or referred to, even if the speaker uses the word without any malicious intention.

## 6.5 Subject-field labels

A number of italicized labels are used to indicate that a word or sense is used in a particular specialist or technical field.

# 7 The Account of the Meaning

## 7.1 Wording

**7.1.1** The definitions are written in lucid English prose, and every word used in explaining a meaning is itself entered in the dictionary, except for the New Latin words occasionally used for the taxonomy of plants and animals (see section 7.4.2 below) and certain scientific compound words, the meaning of which is deducible from the combining forms of which they are made up.

**7.1.2** Generally, the account of each sense is so worded that it may be substituted for the headword in any appropriate collocation. However, this practice has not been followed where it has seemed more useful to give an account of the word's syntactic function, usage, etc.

**thank** (θæŋk) *vb.* (tr.) 1. to convey feelings of gratitude to. . .

**ouch** (aʊtʃ) *interj.* an exclamation of sharp sudden pain.

**7.1.3** Example sentences and phrases illustrating the use of a sense are given at the end of many definitions.

## 7.2 Numbering of senses

**7.2.1** Where a headword has more than one sense, an account of each sense is given separately and each account is numbered to avoid confusion.

**7.2.2** In certain cases numbered definitions have been subdivided into parts, marked a., b., c., etc. These subdivisions are used for the following purposes:

**7.2.2.1** To show the use of a word as a different part of speech without change of meaning:

**beige** (beɪʒ) *n.* 1. a. a very light brown, sometimes with a yellowish tinge. b. (as adj.): beige gloves. . .

**7.2.2.2** To show distinct but closely related senses:  
**counter**<sup>1</sup> (kaʊntə) . . . 3. a. a small flat disc of wood, metal, or plastic, used in various board games. b. a similar disc or token used as an imitation coin.

**7.2.2.3** To show that a restrictive label, such as *Inf.* or *Geol.*, applies to a number of senses:

**commission** (kə'mɪʃən) . . . 4. *Mil.* a. a document conferring a rank on an officer. b. the rank granted.

**7.2.2.4** To number the senses of an idiom.

## 7.3 Order of senses

**7.3.1** As a general rule, where a headword has more than one sense, the first sense given is the one most common in current usage.

**complexion** (kəm'plekʃən) *n.* 1. the colour and general appearance of a person's skin, esp. of the face. 2. aspect or nature: the general complexion of a nation's finances. 3. *Obs.* temperament.

**7.3.2** Where the editors consider that a current sense is the "core meaning," in that it illuminates the meaning of other senses, the core meaning may be placed first.

**think** (θɪŋk) *vb.* **thinking, thought.** 1. (tr.; may take a clause as object) to consider, judge, or believe: he thinks my ideas impractical. 2. (intr.; often foll. by about) to exercise the mind in order to make a decision; ponder. 3. (intr.) to be capable of conscious thought: man is the only animal that thinks.

**7.3.3.** Subsequent senses are arranged so as to give a coherent account of the meaning of a headword. If a word is used as more than one part of speech, all the senses of each part of speech are grouped together in a single block. Within a part-of-speech block, closely related senses are grouped together; technical senses generally follow general senses; archaic and obsolete senses follow technical senses; idioms and fixed



phrases are generally placed last. But see also 9.1.)

## 7.4 Scientific and technical definitions

**7.4.1 Units, physical quantities, formulas, etc.** In accordance with the recommendations of the International Standards Organization, all scientific measurements are expressed in SI units (*Système International d'Unités*). Measurements and quantities in more traditional units are often given as well as SI units.

**7.4.2 Plants and animals.** When scientific (Latin) names are used in definitions, they are printed in italic type and all except the specific name have an initial capital letter.

**accipiter** (æk'ɪptɪtə) *n.* any hawk of the genus *Accipiter*, ...

## 7.5 Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations and symbols are entered as headwords in the main alphabetical list.

## 7.6 Acronyms

Abbreviations formed from the initial letters of the name of an organization, a scientific term, etc., but pronounced as words (acronyms) are treated as entries in the appropriate alphabetical place.

**NATO** ('neɪtəʊ) *n.* acronym for North Atlantic Treaty Organization: an international organization established (1949) for ...

## 7.7 Affixes and combining forms

Prefixes (e.g. in-, pre-, sub-), suffixes (e.g. -able, -ation, -ity), and combining forms (e.g. psycho-, -ictry) have been entered as headwords if they are still used freely to produce new words in English.

## 8 Cross-references

### 8.1 Numbered cross-references

If a cross-reference entry applies to a particular sense of a headword, the number of the sense in question is given.

**ambrosia** (æm'brəʊziə) *n.* 1. *Classical myth.* the food of the gods, said to bestow immortality. Cf. nectar (sense 2). ...

### 8.2 Comparisons

Cross-references introduced by "See also" or "Cf." (Compare) refer the reader to additional information elsewhere in the dictionary. If the cross-reference is preceded by a boldface swung dash, it applies to all the senses of the headword that have gone before it, unless otherwise stated. If there is no swung dash, the cross-reference applies only to the sense immediately preceding it.

### 8.3 Variant spellings

Variant spellings are generally entered as cross-

references if their place in the alphabetical list is more than ten entries distant from the main entry.

**aether** ('i:θə) *n.* a variant spelling of **ether** (senses 3, 4).

## 8.4 Alternative names

Alternative names are printed in boldface type and introduced by the words "Also" or "Also called". If the alternative name is preceded by a boldface swung dash, it applies to the entire entry.

## 8.5 Related adjectives

Certain nouns of Germanic origin have related adjectives that are derived from Greek, Latin, or French. For example, **mural** (from Latin) is an adjective related in meaning to **wall**. Such adjectives are shown in a number of cases after the sense (or part-of-speech block) to which they are related.

**bishop** ('bɪʃəp) *n.* 1. a clergyman having spiritual and administrative powers. ... Related adj.: **episcopal**.

## 9 Idioms

### 9.1 Placement

Fixed noun phrases and certain other idioms are given full headword status.

**dark horse** *n.* 1. a competitor in a race or contest about whom little is known. ...

Other idioms are placed under the key word of the idiom, as a separate sense, generally at the end of the appropriate part-of-speech block.

**ground**<sup>1</sup> (graʊnd) *n.* ... 17. **break new ground**, to do something that has not been done before. ...

When an idiom is closely related in meaning to a particular sense, it is usually entered immediately following that sense.

**gas** (ɡæs) *n.* ... 7. the usual U.S., Austral., & N.Z. word for petrol. 8. **step on the gas**. *Inf.* a. to accelerate a motor vehicle. b. to hurry. ...

## 10 The Etymology

### 10.1 Placement and selection

Etymologies are placed in square brackets after the account of the meaning. They are given for most headwords except those that are derivative forms (consisting of a base word and a suffix or prefix), compound words, inflected forms, and some chemical compounds. Thus, the headword **manage** has been given an etymology but the related headwords **manageable** (equivalent to **manage** plus the suffix **-able**), **management** (**manage** plus **-ment**), **manager** (**manage** plus **-er**), **manageress** (**manager** plus **-ess**), etc., do not have etymologies. Inflected forms such as **saw**<sup>2</sup> (the past tense of **see**) and obvious compounds such as **mothball** are not given an etymology. Many headwords, such as **enlighten** and **prepossess**, consist of a prefix and a base word and are not accompanied by etymologies since the essential etymological information is shown for the component parts, all of which are entered in the dictionary as headwords in their own right (in this instance, **en-**<sup>1</sup>, **light**<sup>1</sup>, **-en**<sup>1</sup> and **pre-**, **possess**).



Words printed in SMALL CAPITALS within etymologies refer the reader to other headwords where relevant or additional information, either in the definition text or in the etymology, may be found:

## 10.2 Dating

The etymology records the first known occurrence (a written citation) of a word in English. Words first appearing in the language during the Middle English period or later are dated by century, abbreviated C.

**mantis** ... [C17: NL, < Gk: prophet, alluding to its praying posture]

This indicates that there is a written citation for **mantis** in the seventeenth century, when the word was in use as a New Latin term in the scientific vocabulary of the time. The absence of a New Latin or Greek form in the etymology means that the form of the word was the same in those languages as in English.

Native words from Old English are not dated, written records of Old English being comparatively scarce, but are simply identified as being of Old English origin.

## 10.3 Biographical information

Words formed from a person's name are etymologized and brief biographical details are given for the person in question.

**Möbius strip** ... [C19: after August Möbius (1790–1868), G mathematician]

## 11 Derived Words or Run-on Entries

Words derived from a base word by the addition of

suffixes such as *-ly*, *-ness*, etc., are entered in boldface type at the end of the entry for the base word. The meanings of such words may be deduced from the meanings of the suffix and the headword. Where a derived word has developed a specialized or restricted meaning, it is entered as a headword and defined, e.g. **absolutely**, **arrangement**.

## 12 Listed Entries

In English many words are formed by adding productive prefixes such as *non-*, *over-*, *pre-*, *un-*, etc., to existing words. In most cases, the meanings of these words are obvious. A selection of such words is listed alphabetically, without further explanation, at the foot of the page on which the prefix in question is entered as a headword and of the following page.

## 13 Usage Notes

A brief note introduced by the label **Usage** and the marginal sign ▷ has been added at the end of a number of entries in order to comment on matters of usage. These comments are based on the observed practice or preference of the majority of educated speakers and writers.

▷ **Usage.** Careful writers and speakers avoid using *materialize* to mean *happen* or *occur*, esp. in formal contexts: *they talked for several hours but nothing happened* (not *materialized*). The word is often used, however, in the sense of taking shape: *after many hours of discussion, the project finally began to materialize*.

# Pronunciation Key

The symbols used in the pronunciation transcriptions are those of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The following consonant symbols have their usual English values: *b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, z*. The remaining symbols and their interpretations are listed below.

## English Sounds

- ɑ:** as in *father* ('fa:ðə), *alms* (ɑ:mz), *clerk* (kla:k), *heart* (ha:t), *sergeant* ('sɜ:dʒənt)
- æ** as in *act* (ækt), *Caedmon* ('kædmən), *plait* (pleɪt)
- aɪ** as in *dive* (daɪv), *aisle* (aɪl), *guy* (gaɪ), *might* (maɪt), *rye* (raɪ)
- aɪə** as in *fire* (faɪə), *buyer* (baɪə), *liar* (laɪə), *tyre* (taɪə)
- au** as in *ow* (aʊt), *bough* (baʊ), *crowd* (kraʊd), *slouch* (slaʊtʃ)
- auə** as in *flour* (flaʊə), *cower* (kaʊə), *flower* (flaʊə), *sour* (saʊə)
- ɛ** as in *bet* (bet), *ate* (et), *bury* ('beri), *heifer* ('heɪfə), *said* (sed), *says* (sez)
- eɪ** as in *paid* (peɪd), *day* (deɪ), *deign* (deɪn), *gauge* (geɪdʒ), *grey* (greɪ), *neigh* ('neɪ)
- ɛə** as in *bear* (beə), *dare* (deə), *prayer* (preɪ), *stairs* (steəz), *where* (weə)
- g** as in *get* (get), *give* (gɪv), *ghoul* (gu:l), *guard* (gɑ:d), *examine* (ɪg'zæmɪn)
- i** as in *pretty* ('prɪtɪ), *build* (bɪld), *busy* ('bɪzɪ), *nymph* (nɪmf), *pocket* ('pɒkɪt), *sieve* (sɪv), *women* ('wɪmɪn)
- i:** as in *see* (si:), *aesthete* ('i:stheɪt), *evil* ('i:vəl), *magazine* ('mægə'zi:n), *receive* (rɪ'si:v), *siege* (si:dʒ)
- ɪə** as in *fear* (fɪə), *beer* (biə), *mere* (miə), *tier* (tiə)
- j** as in *yes* (jes), *onion* ('ʌnjən), *vignette* (vɪ'net)
- ɒ** as in *pot* (pɒt), *botch* (bɒtʃ), *sorry* ('sɒrɪ)
- əʊ** as in *note* (nəʊt), *beau* (bəʊ), *dough* (daʊ), *hoe* (həʊ), *slow* (sləʊ), *yeoman* ('jəʊmən)
- ɔ:** as in *thaw* (θɔ:), *broad* (brɔ:d), *drawer* ('dɹɔ:ə), *fault* (fɔ:lt), *halt* (hɔ:lt), *organ* ('ɔ:gən)
- ɔɪ** as in *void* (vɔɪd), *boy* (bɔɪ), *destroy* (dɪ'strɔɪ)
- ʊ** as in *pull* (pʊl), *good* (gʊd), *should* (ʃʊd), *woman* ('wʊmən)
- u:** as in *zoo* (zu:), *do* (du:), *queue* (kju:), *shoe* (ʃu:), *spew* (spju:), *true* (tru:), *you* (ju:)
- ʊə** as in *poor* (puə), *skewer* ('skjuə), *sure* (ʃʊə)
- ə** as in *potter* ('pɒtə), *alone* (ə'ləʊn), *furious* ('fjuəriəs), *nation* ('neiʃən), *the* (ðə)
- ɜ:** as in *fern* (fɜ:n), *burn* (bɜ:n), *fir* (fɜ:), *learn* (lɜ:n), *term* (tɜ:m), *worm* (wɜ:m)
- ʌ** as in *cut* (kʌt), *flood* (flʌd), *rough* (rʌf), *son* (sʌn)
- ʃ** as in *ship* (ʃɪp), *election* (ɪ'lekʃən), *machine* (mə'ʃɪn), *mission* ('mɪʃən), *pressure* ('preʃə), *schedule* ('ʃedju:l), *sugar* ('ʃuɡə)
- ʒ** as in *treasure* ('treʒə), *azure* ('æʒə), *closure* ('kləʒə), *evasion* (ɪ'veɪʒən)
- tʃ** as in *chew* (tʃu:), *nature* ('neɪtʃə)
- dʒ** as in *jaw* (dʒɔ:), *adjective* ('ædʒɪktɪv), *lodge* (lɒdʒ), *soldier* ('səʊldɪə), *usage* ('ju:sɪdʒ)
- θ** as in *thin* (θɪn), *strength* (streŋθ), *three* (θri:)
- ð** as in *these* (ði:z), *bathe* (beɪð), *lather* ('la:ðə)
- ŋ** as in *sing* (sɪŋ), *finger* ('fɪŋɡə), *sling* (slɪŋ)

indicates that the following consonant (*l* or *n*) is syllabic, as in *bundle* ('bʌnd\*l) and *button* ('bʌt\*n)

## Foreign Sounds

The symbols above are also used to represent foreign sounds where these are similar to English sounds. However, certain common foreign sounds require symbols with markedly different values, as follows:

- a** *a* in French *ami*, German *Mann*, Italian *pasta*: a sound between English (æ) and (ɑ:), similar to the vowel in Northern English *cat* or London *cut*.
- ɛ** *é* in French *été*, *eh* in German *sehr*, *e* in Italian *che*: a sound similar to the first part of the English diphthong (eɪ) in *day* or to the Scottish vowel in *day*.
- i** *i* in French *il*, German *Idee*, Spanish *filo*, Italian *signor*: a sound made with a tongue position similar to that of English (i:), but shorter.
- ɔ** *o* in Italian *no*, French *bonne*, German *Sonne*: a vowel resembling English (ɒ), but with a higher tongue position and more rounding of the lips.
- o** *o* in French *rose*, German *so*, Italian *voce*: a sound between English (ɔ:) and (u:), with closely rounded lips, similar to the Scottish vowel in *so*.
- y** *u* in French *tu*, *ü* in German *über* or *fünf*: a sound made with a tongue position similar to that of English (i:) but with closely rounded lips.
- ø** *eu* in French *deux*, *ö* in German *schön*: a sound made with the tongue position of (e) but with closely rounded lips.
- œ** *œu* in French *œuf*, *ö* in German *zwölf*: a sound made with a tongue position similar to that of English (ɛ) but with open rounded lips.
- above a vowel indicates nasalization, as in French *un* (ʌ̃), *bon* (bɔ̃), *vin* (vɛ̃), *blanc* (blɑ̃).
- x** *ch* in Scottish *loch*, German *Buch*, *j* in Spanish *Juan*.
- ç** *ch* in German *ich*: a (j) sound as in *yes*, said without voice; similar to the first sound in *huge*.
- β** *b* in Spanish *Habana*: a voiced fricative sound similar to (v), but made by the two lips.
- ʎ** *ll* in Spanish *llamar*, *gl* in Italian *consiglio*: similar to the (lj) sequence in *million*, but with the tongue tip lowered and the sounds said simultaneously.
- ɥ** *u* in French *lui*: a short (y).
- ɣ** *gn* in French *vigne*, Italian *gnocchi*, *ñ* in Spanish *España*: similar to the (nj) sequence in *onion*, but with the tongue tip lowered and the two sounds said simultaneously.
- ɣ** *g* in Spanish *luego*: a weak (g) made with voiced friction.

## Length

The symbol : denotes length and is shown together with certain vowel symbols when the vowels are typically long.