

CHAMBERS

UNIVERSAL

LEARNERS'

DICTIONARY

CHAMBERS UNIVERSAL LEARNERS' DICTIONARY

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Pronunciation under the direction of
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CHAMBERS

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Preface

Chambers Universal Learner's Dictionary has been specially created for learners of English who already have some knowledge of English and who are at the stage of requiring particular help with how to use the language. Copious and detailed examples of usage have, therefore, been given to show words in their usual context. These examples are interesting, modern and lively and will encourage the student to become familiar with English usage.

Another feature of the dictionary which will help the learner to use English correctly is the inclusion of labels which indicate in what kind of situation a particular word is suitable. Learners of English as a foreign language often have difficulty with this aspect of English. The aim of this dictionary is to provide comprehensive information in as simple a form as possible. This is shown in the simply-worded definitions, in the clear and uncomplicated pronunciation scheme, and in the helpful grammatical information which has been provided at the individual entries in such a way that it is easy to understand immediately. This is a dictionary which individual learners will be able to use by themselves without necessarily relying on the help of a teacher.

Arrangement of Entries

To be able to use an individual dictionary it is important to know how the information is arranged. Different dictionaries have different ways of arranging the material provided. The following instructions will help the user to make full use of this particular dictionary.

Headwords

Each separate entry in the dictionary begins with a word in bold (or black) type which is placed further out into the margin than the other words in the column, *eg almost, must, real*. These words are called **headwords**, being the chief words in the entries, and are arranged in alphabetical order.

Sometimes you will find words in the list of headwords which are followed by a small number, *eg bear*¹. These numbers have been used to mark words which have the same form as each other and so look exactly the same. Sometimes they are pronounced in the same way as each other, *eg light*¹, *light*², *light*³, and sometimes they are pronounced differently, *eg lead*¹ [li:d], *lead*² [led].

Sometimes a word appears in the list of headwords which is not actually defined there. Instead of a definition you will find a cross-reference to where the word is defined. So in the list of headwords you will find **naval** *see navy* because **naval** is defined at **navy** from which it is formed. Similarly you will find **barmaid** *see bar* in the list of headwords since **barmaid** is defined at **bar**.

In some cases words appear in the list of headwords which are not explained in the text of the dictionary but in the Appendices, the section at the end of the dictionary. In such cases cross-references have been given in the list of headwords, *eg Venezuela, Venezuelan* *see Appendix 2*.

Many of the words which are defined in the dictionary do not appear as headwords because words and phrases which belong to the same word-family as a particular headword are listed under it. These include:

Derivatives

Derivatives are words which are formed from the headword or from the main part of the headword by adding a suffix or ending. So you will find **accurately** and **accuracy** under the headword **accurate**, **absurdity** and **absurdness** under **absurd**, **naughtily** under

naughty. Some derivatives, such as those just mentioned, are not defined since their meanings are obvious from the headword.

Derivatives which have been defined are given in alphabetical order and begin on a separate line to make them easier to find in the entry, *eg* **moody** under **mood**, **perishable** under **perish**. Derivatives which are not defined but which have been given an example of usage are also in alphabetical order and begin on a separate line, *eg* **abdominal** and **adjustment**.

Compounds

After the derivatives you will find a list of compounds in alphabetical order. Compounds are words which are made up of two elements — the headword, or a derivative of the headword; plus another word, *eg* **air-conditioned**, **air hostess**, **airmail** and **airy-fairy** are all under the headword **air**, and **national anthem** and **nation-wide** are under the headword **nation**. As you will see from these words some compounds are hyphenated (*eg* **air-conditioned**), some are one word, and some are two words — in English it is often a matter of personal choice whether compounds are hyphenated or not. All have been given a grammatical label. Two-word compounds which do not begin with the headword, *eg* **grand piano**, **upright piano**, are often treated as phrases.

Note Compounds formed from phrasal verbs (see under **Phrases** below) are not always defined separately. Frequently they are placed in a bracket after the appropriate verb, *eg* **take off** ... 2 vi ... *The plane took off for Rome (nc take-off).*

Phrases

Following the compounds is a list of phrases in alphabetical order. Phrases are groups of words containing the headword or a derivative of the headword, *eg* **dead set on**, **dead to the world** under **dead**; **not at all**, **not that** under **not**; **pop the question**, **pop up** under **pop**; **in relation to** under **relate**. The words **a** and **the** at the beginning of a phrase have been ignored for purposes of alphabetical order, *eg* **a far cry**, **the Bar**.

Phrases are not always listed under the first word of the phrase, *eg* **pay through the nose** appears under **nose**. If the phrase is not listed under the first word of the phrase you should try looking up the other words in the phrase. Often a phrase is listed under the word which is considered to be the most important word in the phrase. There will often be a cross-reference, *eg* **at pay** you will find **pay through the nose** *see* **nose**. Grammatical labels have not been given for phrases except for phrasal verbs.

Phrases which are made up of verbs plus adverbs or prepositions and act in the same way as verbs are called **phrasal verbs**, *eg* **come across** under **come**; **put up with** under **put**; **take in** under **take**. For further information on these see **Grammatical labels** below.

The Entries

Spelling and alternative forms of words

If we look at the actual form of headwords and derivatives it will be seen that more than one spelling is sometimes given. Many verbs in English can be spelt with either **-ize** or **-ise** as their ending. Which you use is a matter of choice. This dictionary gives the **-ize** spelling first but indicates that the **-ise** form is quite acceptable in the following way: **realize**, **-ise**; **baptize**, **-ise**; **centralize**, **-ise**. Derivatives of such verbs have the alternative form indicated simply by **-a-** since derivatives of a word are assumed to follow the spelling pattern of that word, *eg* **realization**, **-a-**. The **-ize** spelling is common particularly in American English.

Note Some verbs do not have an **-ize** form and can only be spelt with **-ise**, *eg* **advise**, **supervise**.

Some words which can be spelt correctly in more than one way sometimes appear in the dictionary like this: **acknowledg(e)ment**. This indicates that this word is correctly spelt with or without **(e)** and so both **acknowledgement** and **acknowledgment** are acceptable. Sometimes both spellings have been written out in full, separated by a comma, *eg* **omelette**, **omelet**.

Sometimes alternative forms of phrases have been shown by the use of an oblique (**/**), *eg* **all/just the same**. This means that **all the same** and **just the same** have the same meaning.

Pronunciation

The headword is followed immediately by a group of letters or symbols in square brackets and in roman (ordinary) type. This shows the pronunciation of the word. The pronunciation scheme is explained in detail on pp xv-xix.

All headwords have been given pronunciation but not all derivatives *etc* have. Frequently these have just been given stress marks to indicate which part of the word should be emphasized when being pronounced, eg **'neatly**. For further information on stress marks see p. xvii.

Grammatical labels

Labels giving grammatical information, eg parts of speech, are in *italic* type. If the part of speech label comes immediately after one of the numbers in a series of definitions then the label applies only to the definition with that number:

accident 1 *nc* an unexpected happening, often harmful, causing injury *etc*. 2 *nu* chance.

This indicates that the first meaning of **accident** is a countable noun and the second meaning of **accident** is an uncountable noun. Similarly at **provide** we have:

provide 1 *vt* to give or supply. 2 *vi* to supply or prepare what is necessary.

This indicates that the first meaning of **provide** is a transitive verb and that the second meaning is an intransitive verb. If the part of speech label applies to all of the numbered definitions following it the label comes before the numbering sequence begins, ie before the number 1:

admire *vt* 1 to look at with great pleasure and often to express this pleasure. 2 to have a very high opinion of (someone or something).

This indicates that both meanings of **admire** are transitive verbs. For further information on the position of labels see p. xiii. A full list of labels and abbreviations is given on p. xx.

Labelling of nouns

Learners of English frequently have difficulty in deciding which nouns may be used in the plural form and which may not. It is sometimes very difficult even for those whose mother tongue is English to make such decisions. However to give as much help as possible to the user of the dictionary we have labelled the nouns in the following ways.

nc This is short for *noun countable* and means that a noun (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way may be used in the plural form, eg **daisy**, **drum** or **notice** 1.

nu This is short for *noun uncountable* and means that a noun (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way may not be used in the plural form, eg **information**, **luggage**, **movement** 2 and 3.

ncu This is short for *noun countable and uncountable* and means that a noun (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way may or may not take a plural form depending on the meaning, eg **movement** 1.

nc (no pl) This is short for *noun countable (no plural)* and indicates that a noun labelled in this way could take a plural form but in practice does not, eg **buzz** 2, **small screen**, **time** 5.

n sing This is short for *noun singular*. A noun labelled in this way is one that looks plural in form but in fact is treated as singular, being accompanied by a singular verb, eg **mumps**, **mathematics**.

n pl This is short for *noun plural*. A noun labelled in this way is one which is plural in form and is accompanied by a plural verb, eg **scissors**.

n This is short for *noun* and is the label used where the question of countability is not relevant, eg in titles such as **Home Office**, **Christendom** *etc*.

(*attrib*) When used in the labelling of nouns this is short for *attributively* and means that the noun (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is commonly used as an adjective before another noun. Many nouns in English can be used as adjectives in this way. Usually the label (*attrib*) has been placed before an example of usage showing the noun used as an adjective. So at the first meaning of the noun **dance** we have given two examples of the word used as a noun: *Have you done this dance before?*; *Will you have the next dance with me?*; and two examples of the noun used as an adjective: (*attrib*) **dance music**; (*attrib*) **dance steps**. Sometimes the noun labelled (*attrib*) will be joined by a hyphen to the word it describes, eg **shopping** and **shipping** as in **shopping-basket**, **shipping-agent**. Where a particular

noun is always, or almost always, used as an adjective the whole noun and not just an example of usage is labelled, *eg casement* (*usu attrib*).

pl This is short for *plural*. The plural forms of nouns have been given where these are irregular (*ie* where they do not just add *s* or *es*), *eg mouse* – *pl mice*; where there might be some doubt as to whether the plural is regular or not, *eg house* – *pl houses*; where there are common spelling problems, *eg flamingo* – *pl flamingo(e)s* (the bracket shows that both **flamingoes** and **flamingos** are possible), *folio* – *pl folios*; and where there are alternative plurals, *eg fish* – *pls fish*, (*rare*) *fishes*. Alternative plurals are usually given in order of frequency, *ie* the more common form coming first. In some cases where more than one plural form has been given it indicates that certain meanings of the noun have a different plural form from other meanings, *eg foot* – *pl feet* (*defs 1–3*), *foot* (*def 3*), *ie* the first, second and third meanings of **foot** all take the plural form **feet** but the third meaning can also take the plural form **foot**.

fem This is short for *feminine* and indicates that the word following this label is the word applied to the female equivalent of the word before the label, *eg abbot* – *fem abbess*; *conductor 3* (*fem conductress*).

(*with cap*) This is short for *with capital* and indicates that the noun labelled in this way is spelt with a capital letter, *eg arts* (*often with cap*), *artillery 2* (*often with cap*), *president* (*with cap in titles*).

(*in cmpds*) This is short for *in compounds* and indicates that the word labelled in this way is used as a part of another word or compound, *eg boat 3* as in **gravy-boat**, **box** as in **matchbox** or **letterbox**, **pan 1** as in **frying-pan**. See also section on labelling of adjectives below.

Labelling of verbs and phrasal verbs

(a) Verbs are labelled in the following way:

vt This is short for *verb transitive* and means that a verb (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way takes a direct object, *eg include* as in *Does that include him?*; *invent* as in *Who invented the telephone?*

vi This is short for *verb intransitive* and means that a verb (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way does not take a direct object, *eg reappear* as in *She suddenly reappeared*; *appeal* as in *He appealed to the judge*; *apologize* as in *She apologized to him for being late*.

vtr This is short for *verb transitive and intransitive* and means that a verb (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way is capable of either taking or not taking a direct object, *eg dance* as in *She began to dance as soon as she heard the music* and in *Can you dance the waltz?*

v refl This is short for *verb reflexive* and means that the verb (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way is followed by a reflexive pronoun, *ie* a pronoun object that refers back to the subject, as in *abandon 2 v refl* . . . *He abandoned himself to despair*.

pt, ptp These are short for *past tense*, *past participle* and have been given at the beginning of some verb entries. Where the past tense and past participle are the same they appear like this: *flee* – *pt, ptp fled*. Otherwise they have been separated, *eg come* – *pt came; ptp come*. Past tenses and past participles have been given for irregular (strong) verbs, *eg fight* – *pt, ptp fought*; *fly* – *pt flew; ptp flown*, or for verbs whose past tense or past participle might cause difficulty because of spelling, *eg abet* – *pt, ptp abetted*; *abhor* – *pt, ptp abhorred*; *grab* – *pt, ptp grabbed*.

Some verbs are shown as having more than one past tense and past participle. This sometimes indicates that the verb has alternative past tenses and past participles, *eg* the past tense of **cleave** is either **cleft**, **cleaved** or **clove** and similarly the past participle is either **cleft** or **cloven**. Usually these are given in order of frequency, *ie* the most common form is placed first.

In some cases where more than one past tense and past participle have been given it indicates that certain meanings of the verb have a different past tense and past participle from other meanings, *eg hang* – *pt, ptp hung* (*defs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7*), *hanged* (*def 3*), *ie* all meanings except the third meaning have **hung** as the past tense and past participle but the third meaning has **hanged** as the past tense and past participle.

ppr This is short for *present participle*. Present participles have been given only where the spelling is not obvious from that of the past tense. So you will find that **travelling** has not been given as it is assumed to follow the spelling pattern of **travelled**. However such present

participles as **running** have been given as help is needed with the spelling and this help is not given by the past tense **ran** or the past participle **run**.

(*not used with is, was etc and -ing*) This means that verbs (or meanings of verbs) labelled in this way are not usually found in the progressive tenses. Thus you say *He knows everything*, but not *He is knowing everything*. Likewise you say *I do not understand what he is saying*, but not *I am not understanding what he is saying*, and *That sounded like a car*, but not *That was sounding like a car*.

(b) **Phrasal verbs** (see under **Phrases** above) are labelled in the following way:

vi A phrasal verb labelled *vi* is simply a phrase which acts like an intransitive verb. Examples are **go off** as in *The little boy was injured when the rifle went off in his hand* and **set to** as in *They set to and finished the work the same day*.

vt fus This is short for *verb transitive fused*. A fused transitive phrasal verb is a phrase which acts like a transitive verb and whose object can never come between the verb and its accompanying preposition, eg **spy on** as in *Our next-door neighbours are always spying on us*. A fused phrasal verb may be made up of a verb plus an adverb and preposition, eg **put up with** where the adverb and the preposition cannot be separated from each other or from the verb itself by the object, as in *I cannot put up with all this noise*. You cannot say *I cannot put all this noise up with* or *I cannot put up all this noise with*.

vt sep This is short for *verb transitive separable*. A separable transitive phrasal verb is a phrase which acts like a transitive verb whose object can either come between the verb and its accompanying adverb or after the accompanying adverb, eg **put aside**. You can say either *She put aside her work* or *She put her work aside*. If the object is a pronoun it must come between the verb and the adverb. You must say *She put it aside*. You cannot say *She put aside it*.

vt oblig sep This is short for *verb transitive obligatorily separated*. This refers to a separable transitive phrasal verb in which the object must come between the verb and adverb, eg **push around** = to treat roughly. You say, in this sense, *He pushes his young brother around*, not *He pushes around his young brother*.

vt usu sep This is short for *verb transitive usually separated*. This refers to a separable phrasal verb in which the object usually comes between the verb and adverb, eg **bring round** as in *The smelling salts brought him round* and *Smelling salts usually bring unconscious people round*. It is possible but unusual to say *Smelling salts bring round unconscious people*.

Note Not all phrases consisting of verbs and prepositions or adverbs have been treated as phrasal verbs. Verb phrases consisting of verb plus object followed by preposition plus object have not usually been treated as phrasal verbs but as ordinary phrases and so do not have grammatical labels, eg **put (someone) off (something)**, **put (something) down to (something)**.

Sometimes a preposition or adverb which (usually) accompanies a certain verb has been placed in brackets after it, eg **abstain** (*often with from*), **accord** 1 (*with with*), **pose** 2 (*with as*).

Labelling of adjectives

(*attrib*) This is short for *attributive* and means that an adjective (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way comes before the noun which it describes, eg all the meanings of **advance** or **dead** 3. So you can say *He made an advance payment*, but not *The payment he made was advance*; *This is an advance copy of this book*, but not *The copy of this book is advance*; *He came to a dead stop*, but not *The stop he came to was dead*; *There was a dead silence*, but not *The silence was dead*.

(*pred*) This is short for *predicative* and means that an adjective (or a particular meaning) labelled in this way does not come before the noun which it describes, eg all the meanings of **asleep** or **dead** 2. So you can say *The people are asleep*, but not *The asleep people were not disturbed by the noise*; *My foot is asleep*, but not *My asleep foot is uncomfortable*; *The engine is dead*, but not *They are trying to repair his dead engine*.

Sometimes certain adjectives are accompanied by a particular preposition. This has been indicated in the labelling of the adjectives, eg **deaf** 2 is labelled (*pred with to*) *He was deaf to all our arguments*, **bad** 5 is labelled (*pred with for*) *Smoking is bad for your health*, and **good** 4 is labelled (*with at* or *with when pre t*) *He's good at tennis*; *He's good with children*.

Most adjectives in English can be either attributive or predicative. In this dictionary

adjectives which are not labelled (*attrib*) or (*pred*) can be used in either position and are usually accompanied by examples indicating this, *eg deaf 1 She has been deaf since birth; a deaf old man.*

(*neg*) This is short for *negative*. The negative form of some adjectives has been given simply by placing after the adjective the prefix which makes the adjective negative, *eg abashed (neg un-)*; the first meaning of *friendly (neg un-)*. Some negative forms have been thought to need separate articles and these have been cross-referred from the positive form, *eg appropriate ... See also inappropriate; able ... See also unable; fertile ... See also infertile.*

(*compar*), (*superl*) These are short for *comparative* and *superlative*. The comparative and superlative forms have been given only where these are irregular, *eg good – compar better: superl best.*

(*in cmpds*) This is short for *in compounds* and indicates that the word labelled in this way is used as part of another word or compound, *eg -bodied* as in *able-bodied, full-bodied; Anglo-* as in *Anglo-American.*

Other labels

Often there is a label in italic type in brackets which does not refer to any aspect of grammar. Such labels tell you, for example, which field or subject a word belongs to or in what kind of situation a particular word is suitable.

The most helpful way to deal with these is to list in alphabetical order all those labels which are in need of explanation.

(*Amer*) This is short for *American* and means that the word labelled in this way is the American equivalent of a British word.

(i) Sometimes it is used to indicate that the word following the label is the American spelling of a word, *eg colour, (Amer) color*. This means that *colour* is the British, and *color* the American, way of spelling it.

The American spelling has been given only for the headword, and derivatives are assumed to follow the spelling pattern of the headword; *eg* since *colour* has the American equivalent *color* it follows that *coloured, colourful, colouring* are spelt *colored, colorful, coloring* in American English.

(ii) Sometimes the (*Amer*) label is used to indicate that what follows is the American pronunciation of a word, *eg tomato [tə'ma:tou, (Amer) -mei-]*.

(iii) Sometimes the (*Amer*) label is used to show that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is the American equivalent of a British word, *ie* that in America the thing being defined is called something completely different from what it is called in Britain, *eg faucet (Amer) a tap; hood 3 (Amer) the bonnet of a car.*

(iv) Sometimes the (*Amer*) label is used to indicate that the word in bold (or black) type following the label is the American equivalent of a British word, *eg pavement (Amer sidewalk).*

(*arch*) This is short for *archaic* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is no longer commonly used in modern English although it was common in the past, *eg knave 2 = a dishonest person.*

(*Brit*) This is short for *British* and is used to indicate something which is specifically British, *eg Premium Bond, sausage roll.*

(*derog*) This is short for *derogatory* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is used only when the user is expressing disapproval or scorn of the person or thing about which he is speaking or writing, *eg brat (derog) a child; bookworm (sometimes derog) a person who reads a lot.*

(*dial*) This is short for *dialectal* and indicates that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is a word used only in some parts of Britain and so is a part of a British dialect, *eg wee.*

(*euph*) This is short for *euphemistic* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is a more pleasant, less direct way of expressing something that is unpleasant in some way, *eg pass away (euph) to die; breathe one's last (euph) to die.*

(*facet*) This is short for *facetious* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is intended to be funny or humorous, *eg wherewithal*. Often a word which can be used facetiously can also be used in formal English where no humour is intended, *eg*

- palatial.** This can either be used as a formal adjective from **palace** or as a facetious word to describe something large and magnificent, so we have labelled this (*formal* or *facet*).
- (*fig*) This is short for *figurative* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is not used in a literal, ordinary way, *eg make someone's hackles rise* (*fig*) to make someone angry. As a human being does not actually have hackles which rise when he is angry this phrase is clearly not literal. Sometimes it is only an example of usage that is labelled (*fig*), *eg bring down* to cause to fall: *The storm brought all the trees down*; (*fig*) *That will bring down the dictator*. The (*fig*) label here is to show that the dictator will be defeated and that he will not physically fall down.
- (*formal*) This means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is usually used in formal situations or contexts. It is very important to label such words, *eg countenance* *nc* (*formal*) the face, as the use of formal words in an ordinary or informal situation (or the use of informal words in a very formal situation) is a common error when learners are speaking English. You would use the word **countenance** only when intending to be very formal. As will be seen from the note on (*facet*) many nouns marked (*formal*) can also be used facetiously in an ordinary or informal way. Some words are used in very formal situations indeed and these have been labelled (*very formal*), *eg palpable*. Some words which are not particularly formal but which have a less formal, more commonly used equivalent have been labelled (*more formal than*), *eg acquire* is labelled (*more formal than get*); *regret* is labelled (*more formal than be sorry*). Similarly some words have been labelled (*less formal than*), *eg phone* (*less formal than telephone*).
- (*hist*) This is short for *historical* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way refers to something that is no longer to be found, used *etc*, but which was quite common in the past, *eg chariot, gibbet*.
- (*inf*) This is short for *informal* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is used only in an informal situation or context, *eg pal* (*inf*) a friend; *tipsy* (*inf*) slightly drunk. You would never use **pal** or **tipsy** in a formal situation. You would particularly not use such language when writing a formal letter.
- (*ironic*) This indicates that a word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way means the opposite of what it seems to be saying, *eg pretty* 2 (*ironic*) fine: *This is a pretty mess!*; *fine* 8 (*ironic*) wonderful: *This is a fine state of affairs!*
- (*legal*) This means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way applies to a term used in matters dealing with law, *eg the accused, the burden of proof*.
- (*liter*) This is short for *literary* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is usually found in English literature, *eg poems, novels, plays etc*, rather than in ordinary speech or writing, *eg bondage* (*liter*) slavery; *bough* (*liter*) a branch of a tree; *breast* 3 (*liter*) heart or feelings.
- (*loosely*) This means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is used in an inexact or loose way, *eg boat* 1 a small vessel for travelling over water. 2 (*loosely*) a larger vessel for the same purpose; a ship; *hundreds of* 1 several hundred. 2 (*loosely*) very many.
- (*offensive*) This means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way should not be used unless the user is intending to be very insulting, *eg nigger* (*offensive*) a Negro; *papist* (*offensive*) a Roman Catholic.
- (*old*) This means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way applies to something which is no longer commonly used although it was in the past. It refers to words and things more recent than those labelled (*arch*) or (*hist*), *eg boudoir, gramophone*.
- (*orig*) This is short for *originally* and indicates that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way originally had a meaning other than its modern meaning, *eg card-carrying* 1 openly showing support for or membership of an organization, point of view *etc*. 2 (*orig*) holding a membership card of a political party *etc*.
- ® This symbol, which is placed immediately after the word to which it refers, indicates that a word labelled in this way is a registered trademark, ie that it is a name which may be used to refer only to a particular article made by a particular company (who have registered the name) and may not be used to refer to an article, however similar, made by another company, *eg Tannoy®*, *Xerox®*, *Valium®*.

- (*sl*) This is short for *slang* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is used **only** in very informal situations or contexts. The term *slang* in this dictionary is used for words that are **more informal than those marked informal**. Words marked *slang* must never be used in formal situations and particularly not when writing formal letters, *eg* **booze** (*sl*) alcoholic drink.
- (*tech*) This is short for *technical* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is used in a particular specialist field. Words labelled (*tech*) often have a more commonly used, less technical, equivalent, *eg* **caries** (*tech*) decay or rottenness of the bones or *esp* the teeth; **campanology** (*tech*) (the study of) bell-ringing. Some words or meanings are labelled (*not a tech term*). This means that the word labelled in this way, *eg* **painkiller**, is not the term used by specialists.
- (*vulg*) This is short for *vulgar* and means that the word (or particular meaning) labelled in this way is acceptable only in some situations and by certain sections of society. Many people find such words *indecent* and are *offended* by their use, *eg* **cunt** (*vulg*) the female sexual organs.

Position of labels

If the label applies to all of the meanings of a particular part of speech of a word in an entry the label comes before the numbering sequence begins, *ie* before the number 1:

animate *vt* (*formal*) 1 to make lively. 2 to be the cause of.

This indicates that both the meanings of the verb **animate** are formal.

If the label applies to more than one part of speech in an entry the label is repeated before the numbering sequence, if any, of each new part of speech:

accord (*formal*) 1 *vi* (*with with*) to agree with. 2 *vt* to grant or give to (a person). – *nu* (*formal*) agreement.

This indicates that all meanings of **accord**, whether it is a verb or a noun, are formal.

If the label is placed immediately after one of the numbers in a definition it indicates that the label applies only to the meaning immediately following:

address *vt* 1 to put a name and address on (an envelope *etc*). 2 (*formal*) to speak or write to. – *nc* 1 the name of the house, street, town *etc* where a person lives. 2 (*formal*) a speech.

This indicates that only the second meaning of the verb **address** and the second meaning of the noun **address** are formal.

If there is a label after one of the numbers in a definition and there is also a label which comes before the whole numbering sequence then both labels apply to the definition so labelled:

superficial *adj* (*formal*) 1 on, or affecting, the surface only. 2 (*sometimes derog*) not thorough. 3 (*derog*) (of a person) incapable of deep thought or feeling.

This indicates that all the meanings of **superficial** are formal, that the second meaning is always formal and sometimes derogatory, and that the third meaning is always both formal and derogatory.

Of course, where there is no numbering sequence it is obvious that the label applies to the word or part of speech labelled, *eg* **fragrant** (*formal*) having a sweet smell.

Where more than one label is given within the same bracket all labels apply, *eg* **supercilious** (*formal derog*) contemptuous or disdainful. This indicates that **supercilious** is both formal and derogatory.

Definitions

After the headword or derivative, pronunciation and part of speech comes the definition, which gives the meaning of the word or phrase in simple words and is in roman (ordinary) type.

Some words, *eg* **obvious**, have only one meaning but many have more than one meaning, *eg* **again** *adv* 1 once more or another time. 2 as in a previous condition, situation *etc*. 3 in addition. 4 on the other hand. It will be seen from this example that individual meanings are numbered in bold 1, 2, 3, 4 *etc*. The meanings are arranged as far as possible in order of frequency, *ie* with the most common meaning coming first and the least common last.

Sometimes two meanings have been put together in one definition by the use of brackets, *eg* **move** 1 *vt* to (cause to) change position or go from one place to another; **movement** 1 *ncu* (an act of) changing position or going from one point to another.

Some words, *eg* **open**, can be more than one part of speech. In such cases the most common

part of speech with its definition is given first, followed by other parts of speech with their definitions. The parts of speech (with their numbered definitions) are separated from each other by a dash (-), *eg* **open** *adj* 1 allowing things or people to go, or be taken or put, through, in or out; not shut. 2 allowing the inside to be seen. 3 ready for business; able to be used. 4 which can be entered, seen *etc* by anyone. 5 (of cloth *etc*) with (wide) spaces between the threads . . . *etc.* - *vt* 1 to make or become open. 2 to begin. 3 to start, begin business *etc.*

Examples of usage

Very often after a definition, and separated from it by a colon (:), you will find a sentence or phrase (or several of them) in *italics* showing how the word which has just been defined is commonly used. Where more than one example of a particular meaning of a word has been given, the examples are separated from each other by a semi-colon (;), *eg* **now** *adv* 1 (at) the present time: *I am living in England now; Now would be a good time to go to France.* 2 . . . We have given a large number of examples in this dictionary since it is extremely important that learners of English should learn how words are used as well as how they are pronounced and what they mean.

Where an example of usage, for some reason, requires further explanation than that provided by the basic definition, a short explanatory phrase has been given in roman (ordinary) type in brackets preceded by the symbol (=) meaning 'is equal to': *eg* under **ability** *to the best of my ability* (= as well as I can); under **ovation** *They gave the president a standing ovation* (= They stood and applauded him).

Other information

At the end of some entries you will find that your attention has been directed to other entries by means of cross-references, in some cases to words which are the negative or opposite of the headword or of one of its derivatives, *eg* **accurate** . . . *See also* **inaccurate**, in other cases to words which are connected with the headword in some way, *eg* to words which are part of its word-family, *eg* **ability** . . . *See also* **disable**, **inability**, **unable**.

Pronunciation

The pronunciation of every headword and of many other words has been given in square brackets immediately after the word.

The variety of English pronunciation that has been used as a model in this dictionary is that which is commonly known as **Received Pronunciation** or **RP**. The symbols used for the transcriptions are those of the alphabet of the International Phonetic Association (IPA); they are explained in the table below. The particular style of transcription used in this dictionary is that which is known as the 'simplified' or 'extra-broad' IPA transcription of English, devised by Daniel Jones and recommended by him for use in teaching English to foreign learners.

Pronunciation key

symbol	example	
ə	[bæg]	bag
ɑ:	[bɑ:θ]	bath
e	[hed]	head
i	[mɪlk]	milk
i:	[fi:l]	feel
ɒ	[bɒks]	box
ɔ:	[hɔ:l]	hall
u	[fʊt]	foot
u:	[blu:]	blue
ʌ	[lʌv]	love
ə	[ˈrɪbən]	ribbon
ɑ:	[fɑ:st]	first
ɑ̃	[avɑ̃'ga:d]	avant-garde
ɛ̃	[pɛs'nei]	pince-nez
õ	[reizõ'detr]	raison d'être

Note The symbols *ã*, *ẽ* and *õ* are used for the vowels of the French words **blanc**, **vin** and **bon** respectively.

ai	[faɪn]	fine
au	[laʊd]	loud
ei	[peɪn]	pain
eə	[heə]	hair
iə	[hiə]	here
oi	[dʒɔɪn]	join
ou	[gou]	go
uə	[puə]	poor
p	[peɪdʒ]	page
b	[bɔ:l]	ball
t	[teɪbl]	table
d	[dɒg]	dog
k	[kɪk]	kick

g	[get]	get
m	[mad]	mad
n	[neim]	name
ŋ	[baŋ]	bang
l	[leik]	lake
r	[reis]	race
f	[fi:t]	feet
v	[vois]	voice
θ	[θiŋ]	thing
ð	[ðou]	though
s	[seif]	safe
z	[zu:]	zoo
ʃ	[ʃip]	ship
ʒ	[ˈmeʒə]	measure
h	[ha:f]	half
w	[weit]	wait
j	[jʌŋ]	young
x	[lox]	loch
tʃ	[tʃi:z]	cheese
dʒ	[ˈdʒakit]	jacket

The pronunciation of every headword is indicated by a phonetic transcription immediately after the word.

The pronunciation of derivatives, whether defined or undefined, generally follows the pattern of the headword, and in such cases no transcription is given for the derivatives. Consider the following examples:

ornate [o:'neit] *adj* with a lot of ornament ... **or'nately** *adv.* **or'nateness** *nu.*

(This means that **ornately** is to be pronounced [o:'neitli], and **ornateness** [o:'neitnis].)

partner ['pa:tnə] *nc* 1 a person who shares the ownership of ...

partnership 1 *ncu* the state of being or becoming partners ...

(This means that **partnership** is to be pronounced ['pa:tnəʃip].)

Where there is a change of pronunciation, *eg* in cases where a vowel in a headword is unstressed but the corresponding vowel in a derivative is stressed, the change in pronunciation is indicated by a transcription of all or part of the derivative, as can be seen in the following examples:

angel ['eindʒəl] *nc* 1 a messenger or attendant of God ...

angelic [an'dʒelik] *adj* like an angel ...

partial ['pa:ʃəl] *adj* 1 not complete ...

partiality (-'ʃi'æləti] *nu* 1 a liking for ...

(It is to be understood that the part of the derivative which is not transcribed is to be pronounced in the same way as the corresponding part of the headword: thus **partiality** is to be pronounced [pa:ʃi'æləti].)

There are three exceptions to these rules:

(i) Where a derivative has a different stress pattern from that of the headword, but this

change in stress pattern does not cause any other change in the pronunciation of the word, no transcription is given for the derivative, as in the following example:

anecdote ['anikdout] *n* a short, interesting or amusing story ...

anecdotal *adj* like, of, or full of, anecdotes ...

(From this, it can be assumed that **anecdotal** is to be pronounced [anik'doutl].)

Note For an explanation of the use of stress marks to indicate the pronunciation of vowels, see the section on Stress below.

(ii) Where a derivative has a different stress pattern from that of the headword, with an unstressed 'weak' vowel in the derivative corresponding to a stressed vowel in the headword, the pronunciation of the unstressed vowel is predictable, and therefore no transcription is given to indicate the change, as in the examples which follow:

acid ['asid] *adj* sharp or sour ...

a'cidity *nu* the quality of containing acid ...

(**Acidity** is to be pronounced [ə'sidəti], but no transcription is given to indicate the change from [a-] to [ə-], as this is entirely predictable following the rules of English pronunciation.)

prophecy ['profəsi] *1 nu* the power of foretelling the future ...

pro'phetic [-'fe-] *adj* of or concerning prophecy ...

(**Prophetic** is to be pronounced [prə'fetik], but again the change from ['pro-] to [prə-] is not indicated because it is predictable from the change in stress pattern.)

rhetoric ['retərik] *nu 1* the art of speaking ...

rhe'torical [-'to-] *adj*.

(The word **rhetorical** is to be pronounced [ri'torikəl]: again the change from ['re-] to [ri-] is predictable from the change in stress pattern.)

The commonest correspondences between vowels in stressed syllables and 'weak' vowels in unstressed syllables can be summarized as follows:

in a position corresponding to stressed [a, ɑ:, ɒ, ɔ:, ʌ, ə:, eɪ, ou], one usually finds unstressed [ə];

in a position corresponding to stressed [e, i, i:], one usually finds unstressed [i];

in a position corresponding to stressed [u:], one often finds unstressed [ʊ].

(iii) Undefined words which are derivatives of words which are themselves derivatives can be assumed to follow the pronunciation pattern of the word from which they are derived rather than the pronunciation of the headword, and so their pronunciation has not been indicated by a transcription:

prophecy ['profəsi] *1 nu* the power of foretelling the future ...

pro'phetic [-'fe-] *adj* of or concerning prophecy ... **pro'phetically** *adv*.

(Thus **prophetically** is to be pronounced [prə'fetikəli], following the pattern of **prophetic** not the pattern of the headword **prophecy**.)

In the case of compounds, the elements which together make up the compound are generally to be pronounced in the same way as they would be if they were independent words, eg **home** = [həʊm], **work** = [wɜ:k], **homework** = ['həʊmwɜ:k].

However, in the case of the combining elements **-body**, **-land**, **-man**, and **-men**, it is to be assumed that they have [ə] as their vowel when unstressed unless otherwise shown in a transcription. Thus we have **everybody**, **Highland**, **fireman** (= [-bɒdi], [-lənd], [-mən]) but **bogeyman** [-man], **bogeymen** [-men], **busybody** [-bɒdi] and **overland** [-lənd].

Note See Appendix 9 for the pronunciation of many common suffixes and combining elements.

Stress

A stress mark denoting **primary stress** (') is placed just before that syllable in each word which is pronounced with **greatest force** or **stress**; this symbol is used both in the bold words and inside the square brackets, eg **abate** [ə'beɪt]; **a'batement**.

A stress mark denoting **secondary stress** (,) is placed just before that syllable (if any) in a word

which is pronounced with a certain degree of stress, but with less than primary stress. This symbol is only used on the words in bold, eg **abdication**, since one of the functions of the secondary stress mark is to indicate that a particular syllable in a derivative has a certain degree of stress and that the vowel of that syllable should be the same as the corresponding stressed vowel of the headword rather than being replaced by an unstressed 'weak' vowel. Where the pronunciations of derivatives are indicated by transcriptions, such information is not necessary, and it will moreover be obvious from the vowel symbols in the transcriptions which syllables have secondary stress since these syllables will contain the 'full' vowels of stressed syllables rather than the unstressed 'weak' vowels listed above. Consider the following examples:

providence ['prɒvɪdəns] *nc* (an event showing) God's care for all creatures ...

providential [-'denʃəl] *adj* fortunate ...

(This means that **providential** is to be pronounced [prɒvi'denʃəl]; without the secondary stress, this would be [prəvi'denʃəl].)

aspire [ə'spaɪə] *vi* to try very hard to reach ...

aspiration [aspi-] *nc* an ambition ...

(This means that **aspiration** is to be pronounced [aspi'reɪʃən], not [əspi'reɪʃən]; although the secondary stress on the first syllable is clear from the presence of [a] rather than [ə] in the transcription, it is also marked on the bold word along with the primary stress to show the full stress pattern of the word.)

anonymous [ə'nɒnɪməs] *adj* without the name of the author ...

anonymity [ənə'nɪməti] *nc* the state of not making one's name known ...

(That the first syllable has secondary stress is clear from the presence of the vowel [a] rather than [ə] in the pronunciation, and therefore secondary stress is not marked on the bold word.)

Primary (and sometimes also secondary) stress is also indicated in certain other cases:

(i) on two-word, unhyphenated compounds, when the stress pattern is not the normal one of secondary on the first element followed by primary on the second element (eg **false alarm** [fə:l'sɔ:lɑ:m]). Therefore, stress is indicated on **eg** **fairy light**, **luncheon voucher**, and (at **e**) **state-car**, **station wagon**. The same principle applies to the marking of stress on phrasal verbs, which have the same 'normal' pattern of secondary stress on the first element followed by primary stress on the second element; therefore, stress is not usually shown on verbs such as **fall apart** [fə:l'spɑ:t], **fall away** [fə:l'səwei], etc which have this stress pattern, but is shown on verbs such as **'fall for** and **'fall on/upon** which do not have it. (Note that in the case of phrasal verbs comprising more than one particle, the primary stress is generally on the first particle, as in **go 'back on**, **put 'up with** etc.)

In cases where **abbreviations** are given, the stress pattern of the abbreviation is again secondary followed by primary (eg **JP** = **'JP**) unless otherwise shown, and it can also be assumed that the pronunciation of the abbreviation is merely that of the individual letters (see Appendix 7). However, rare exceptions can be found, for example **VAT** [vi:'eɪtɪ, vət].

(ii) on phrases where it was felt that some clarification of the stress pattern was necessary, for example on many phrases where there is only one (primary) stress in the entire phrase, despite its containing more than one word, eg **by far** (not **'by 'far** or **'by 'far**), **down with** (not **'down 'with** or **'down 'with**), and in cases where the position of the stress(es) would be difficult for a foreign learner to predict, eg **'far**, **be it from 'me**, **the 'fact of the matter**.

(iii) in examples of usage given at entries marked (in *cmpds*), where the example given is not entered elsewhere in the dictionary, eg **evil-'minded**, **evil-'smelling** (at **evil**-under **evil**), and **Anglo-A-'merican** (at **Anglo**-). Note that in these cases, the stress pattern is given for the adjective in predicative position; when used attributively, and especially when followed by a word with primary stress on the first syllable, the stress pattern would typically change as follows:

'foul and 'evil-'smelling; an 'evil-'smelling 'liquid.

Thus, at certain other entries, we find, for example, an *'eight-page' document* (at **eight-** under **eight**) and a *'four-sided' figure* (at **-sided** under **side**).

(iv) exceptionally, where stress 'changes with meaning, as is the case with **fag-end** (definition 1 = *'fag-end*; definition 2 = *'fag'-end*).

American pronunciation

There are many differences between Received Pronunciation and the particular variety of American English pronunciation (referred to after this as **Amer**) with which it has been compared in this dictionary, and a number of these differences have been indicated in the text. However, certain patterns of difference are more easily stated as general rules which the user can himself apply, and these are indicated below:

[r] **Amer** pronounces those **r**'s which **RP** generally does not, for example in word-final position, *eg acquire* [(*Amer*) ə'kwaiəɹ], or before a consonant, *eg absorb* [(*Amer*) əb'zɔ:rb].

[a:] **Amer** tends to pronounce the vowel symbolized [a:] in **RP**, except before [r], as a sound similar to **RP** [a], *eg advance* [(*Amer*) əd'vans].

[o] **Amer** pronounces the vowel symbolized [o] in **RP** as a sound similar to **RP** [a:] in many cases, *eg got* [(*Amer*) gɑ:t], but in some cases, mostly where **RP** [o] is followed by [f, θ, s, r, g, ŋ], as a sound similar to **RP** [o:], *eg dog* [(*Amer*) dɔ:g], *coffee* [(*Amer*) 'kɔ:fi].

[ju:] After the sounds [t, d, n, l, s], **Amer** has [u:] where **RP** has [ju:], *eg tune* [(*Amer*) tu:n], *new* [(*Amer*) nu:]. (In **RP**, [u:] is more common than [ju:] after [l]).

[əri] **Amer** gives greater stress than **RP** does to endings in **-ary** and **-ory**, and often also **-ery**. This *usu* gives rise to pronunciations which are slightly different from **RP**, *eg monetary* [(*Amer*) -teri], *confectionery* [(*Amer*) -neri], *obligatory* [(*Amer*) -to:ri].

[ail] **Amer** pronounces the endings of the majority of **-ile** words [-əl] as opposed to **RP**'s [-ail], as in, for example, *fragile* [(*Amer*) -dʒəl], *hostile* [(*Amer*) -təl]. In some cases, *eg infantile* and *juvenile*, [-ail] is most frequent in **Amer** also, with [-əl] occurring less frequently; and certain words, *eg gentile*, are always pronounced [-ail] in both **Amer** and **RP**. An exception to all these patterns, however, is *mercantile* [(*Amer*) -ti:l].

[i] Where **RP** has [i] in final position, **Amer** has [i:], *eg happy* [(*Amer*) 'hapi:].