LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

The up-to-date learning dictionary

LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

Longman

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Preface

Editing a dictionary today—above all, a dictionary of the world language, English—is a highly skilled and highly professional task. Central to it is the sensitive anticipation of the users' needs: and then, of course, devising the best way of satisfying them. When the users are envisaged as predominantly (yet not exclusively) those for whom English is a foreign language, the task becomes still more demanding, since the range of the users' proficiency, age, national background, and other variables must inevitably set up formidable problems.

It is precisely such problems that the editors of this *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* have kept realistically before them as they selected a "core" lexicon, the predominant meanings, the terms in which these meanings should be defined, and the supplementary information that is considered desirable. Untrammelled by a previous edition that might prescribe form or content and inhibit innovation, they have energetically engaged themselves in fundamental principles. They have evolved a lucid defining vocabulary which will help the user in two respects: first, his knowing this small set of words (about 2,000) is the only prerequisite for understanding the definitions of every word in the dictionary; second, the strict use of the defining vocabulary has in many cases resulted in a fresh and revealing semantic analysis.

The editors have been encouraged to consult widely with experts in many fields, both in Britain and abroad, and they have had frequent recourse to the Survey of English Usage at University College London. The fact that they combine among themselves expertise in linguistic research, in modern linguistic theory, and in English language teaching has indeed resulted in a further striking feature of this dictionary: a delicate system of grammatical coding. By this means, the user is offered, unobtrusively and economically, a great deal of information on the normal syntactic use of words, so that the typical dictionary entry valuably exhibits the interface of grammar and meaning.

Elegantly compact yet admirably comprehensive, the *Dictionary* represents a distinct achievement on which the publisher and editorial team alike merit warm congratulation.

Randolph Quirk
March 1978

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General Introduction

0. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* combines the best principles of British and of American lexicography to present to the student a broad description of English as used throughout the world. In many respects it is a revolutionary work because it has used the findings of modern linguistics to give a fuller and more precise description of language than that found in traditional dictionaries. It is however in no way a difficult work. Most of the efforts of the compilers have gone into giving as complete a description as possible of the English language in the clearest ways that can be devised. It is the belief of the editors and publisher that simplicity of description is not at all incompatible with presentation of the complex and intricate patterns of language.

Although the dictionary is intended primarily for the foreign student, its design and the new features it contains make it particularly suitable as a small reference dictionary for any person—whether teacher, student, linguist, or writer—who requires as much information about the central "core" of the language as can be conveniently presented in an alphabetic list. For example, as described below, the definitions are presented with controlled simplicity of structure and vocabulary: this requires the greatest lexicographic skill, but also provides the greatest possible benefit to the user, whether native speaker or foreign learner. The grammatical information, which gives a comprehensive description of the syntactic behaviour of the individual items of vocabulary, is intended primarily for teachers and students of English as a foreign or second language, although others concerned with language will also find such a complete description of interest.

0.1 Treatment of structure

Although dictionaries have in general failed to describe adequately the syntactic behaviour of words, they have not hesitated to apply parts of speech (such as noun, adjective, and verb) to them. These labels are convenient and as such have been retained in this book. We have however provided a description of the finer distinctions in grammatical behaviour in the form of codes shown within square brackets [ ]: this refers the user to full tables (page xxviii) where sentences and phrases are given showing other English words which behave in the same way. The codes consist of a capital letter (which usually stands for an easily remembered term, such as L for *linking verb*) followed by a number, and one of the great advantages of the system is that the numbers always mean the same thing whatever letter they follow (thus 3 always means *to* + infinitive). *The result is a system which is easily remembered and which requires no knowledge of grammatical theory to be fully understood* but which nevertheless provides a thorough analysis that is fully acceptable to modern linguists and grammarians.

0.2 Idioms, special phrases, phrasal verbs, compounds, and associated words

It is unlikely that any general dictionary has ever before provided so thorough a description of the many important ways in which English words are used together, whether loosely bound or occurring in fixed phrases. The main emphasis has been to record current use among native speakers, although literary and old-fashioned usages, so important in reading, have not been neglected. The main types described are:

0.2.1 *Idioms, proverbs,* and other groups of words with a special meaning—see page xxvi.

0.2.2 *Special phrases* in which a word is usually (or always) found—see page xxvii.

0.2.3.1 *Phrasal verbs* (consisting of a verb together with an adverb, a preposition, or both an adverb and a preposition)—these are all treated as separate main entries in the dictionary, with the addition of a cross-reference from the entry for the verb from which they come, unless they appear close to this verb in the alphabetical list. One of the main advantages of this placement is to make it possible for a full grammatical description to be given, as for verbs consisting of only one word, so that the verbs in the two sentences

1. They *discovered* that she was mad
2. They *found out* that she was mad

can both be described with same code, [T5], although the part of speech of the first is *v*, whereas that of the second is *v adv*.

Another advantage of the placement at main entry is that the student will find phrasal verbs (such as **make up** and **get away**) next to the compounds derived from them (as in *a box of* **makeup** and *a* **getaway** *car*).

0.2.3.2 *Compounds and derived words*—these, whether spelt as one word, hyphenated, or as more than one word (with spaces), are all treated as separate main entries. Among the advantages of placing phrasal verbs and compounds as main entries are that the student will soon learn where to look for a particular item whether he finds it with or without a hyphen (if it is a compound) or spelt as one word and that the student will not be expected to know that one word (such as **madden**) is derived from another (**mad**), but will find it at its exact alphabetic position.

0.2.4 *Associated words*—another extremely important area of word grouping is that of association between nouns, adjectives, and verbs, with other words which have little meaning such as prepositions, adverbs, the articles *the* and *a/an*, and the pronoun *it*. These words are included within the square brackets which contain the grammatical codes. Since they are often not found with every grammatical structure available to a particular meaning, they are placed next to the codes to which they apply. Thus [T1 (*as*)] will tell the user that when **serve** means "to do a useful job for" the word *as* is very often found with it, as in the example sentence *He served the committee as its chairman.* Similarly, [*the* + R] will tell the student that **lash** meaning "the punishment of whipping" is used with the definite article *the*, as in *They gave him the lash.*

0.3 Controlled vocabulary

This very important feature marks this dictionary out from any but the smallest of its predecessors as a tool for the learner and student of language. All the definitions and examples in the dictionary are written in a controlled vocabulary of approxi-

mately 2,000 words which were selected by a thorough study of a number of frequency and pedagogic lists of English, particular reference having been made to *A General Service List of English Words* (Longman, 1953, reprinted 1977) by Michael West. Furthermore, a rigorous set of principles was established to ensure that only the most "central" meanings of these 2,000 words, and only easily understood derivatives, were used. The development and application of the vocabulary has benefited from Longman experience in publishing English-language teaching material for the foreign learner of English. The vocabulary can be found at the back of the dictionary.

The result of using the vocabulary is the fulfilment of one of the most basic lexicographic principles—*that is that the definitions are always written using simpler terms than the words they describe*, something that cannot be achieved without a definite policy of this kind. The vocabulary is however applied flexibly; by an extensive *cross-referencing system* the user is encouraged to look elsewhere in the text for synonyms and related words which will be useful to him.

Small capitals are used for cross-references, for example in the definition of **spaghetti**, which reads:

> an Italian food made of flour paste (PASTA) in long strips, usu. sold in dry form, for making soft again in boiling water—compare MACARONI, VERMICELLI

Further, the compilers of the dictionary have used an absolute minimum of abbreviations or specialized grammatical or linguistic terms in the text, so that the student may (with a relatively small vocabulary) understand the whole of each entry.

0.4 Treatment of structural words

This very important section of the vocabulary has been treated in great detail and with extreme care.

We are very fortunate in having been able to use the files of *The Survey of English Usage* at University College London, and to benefit from the advice and experience of Professor Randolph Quirk, the Director of the Survey (and our chief linguistic adviser on the dictionary), and his colleagues. In addition, Dr Robert Ilson and Mrs Janet Whitcut worked on the Survey before joining us. Much of the detailed work on structural words was done by Janet Whitcut, who has devoted many hours to them and presented a very detailed treatment of the prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and other parts of speech which the student must learn to use correctly in order to construct acceptable English sentences. Where we quote actual examples of structural words in use from the Survey files, the examples are marked (SEU W.) for quotations from written texts, and (SEU S.) for quotations from recordings of English speech.

0.5 Guidance to the user on the context in which he may expect to find or should use a word

A system of labelling has been adopted which gives the student, wherever possible, an indication of the situation in which he is likely to find a particular word or meaning. Those items that are not labelled may be assumed to be normal in writing and in relatively formal speech. For further details, see page xxiv.

0.6 Coverage of different national varieties of English (especially British and American)

In pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary, the book presents the user with all the most important and distinctive differences between British and American usage. All items that are not labelled *BrE* (British English) or *AmE* (American English) and carry no other national or regional label may be assumed to be acceptable throughout the world.

Care has also been taken to ensure that there is some coverage of words selected from English spoken in other parts of the world. The main areas covered where English is the native language are Australia and New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and the Caribbean. See the front inside cover for the labels used.

0.7 Choice of main spellings

Wherever possible, the spellings for the main entry are those that are equally acceptable in Britain and the United States, although common variants are shown as well. Examples of such spellings are **criticize** (with **criticise** shown as an alternative) and **judgment** (with **judgement** as alternative).

0.8 The spelling of compound words

The way in which compound words are spelt in English has not developed according to any neat system. Different words which are made up of the same type of parts are written as one word, separate words, or hyphenated. Even the same word may often be seen written in any of these three ways. In this dictionary we provide systematic guidelines to enable the user to choose the most appropriate form, taking the following factors into account: (a) the part of speech of the whole compound (b) the parts of speech of its various elements (c) the stress pattern of the compound (d) the number of syllables in each element, and (e) the nature of the letters at the boundary between elements.

Nearly all the compound words in the dictionary are spelt according to this system except for a few well-established exceptions. You will sometimes see such compounds spelt differently elsewhere, but the spellings given in the entries of the dictionary are suggested for your use, and will always be found acceptable.

0.9 Use of the computer

The dictionary has been compiled with the help of computer-checking programs, an aid which enables some lexicographic principles to be carried out with complete thoroughness. For example, every single word in the dictionary in an example or definition has been machine-checked to ensure that it is part of the controlled vocabulary.

0.10 Acknowledgments

A very large number of people have been involved in constructing this dictionary and many of them are listed in the special section dealing with acknowledgments. The main work of course has been done by the dedicated team of Longman lexicographers, supported in matters of detail and of broad policy by the group of linguistic advisers headed by Randolph Quirk.

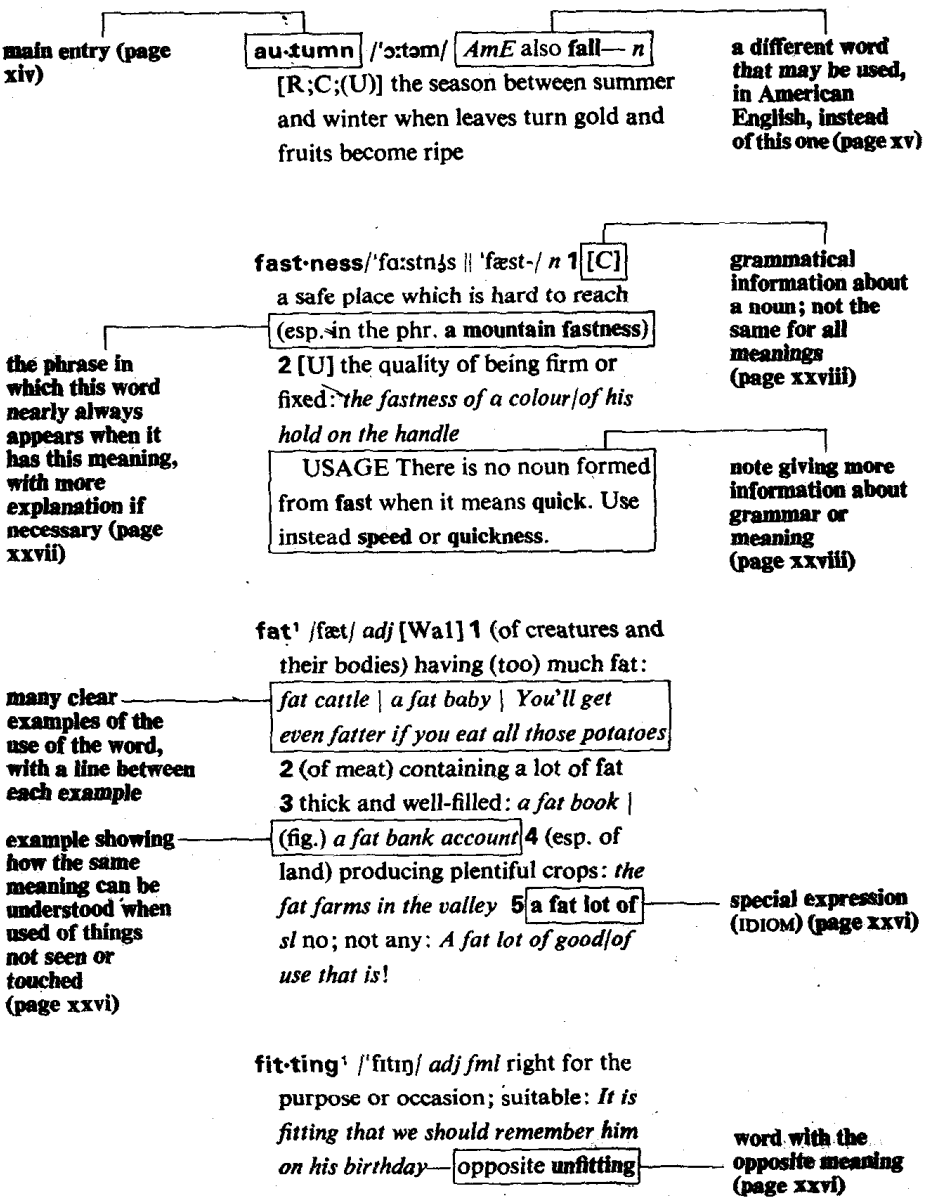
Particular mention should be made of the original author of a manuscript which helped to form something of the basis of the current text. This was A. W. Frisby, author of two small dictionaries for the foreign learner of English, who died early in 1973.

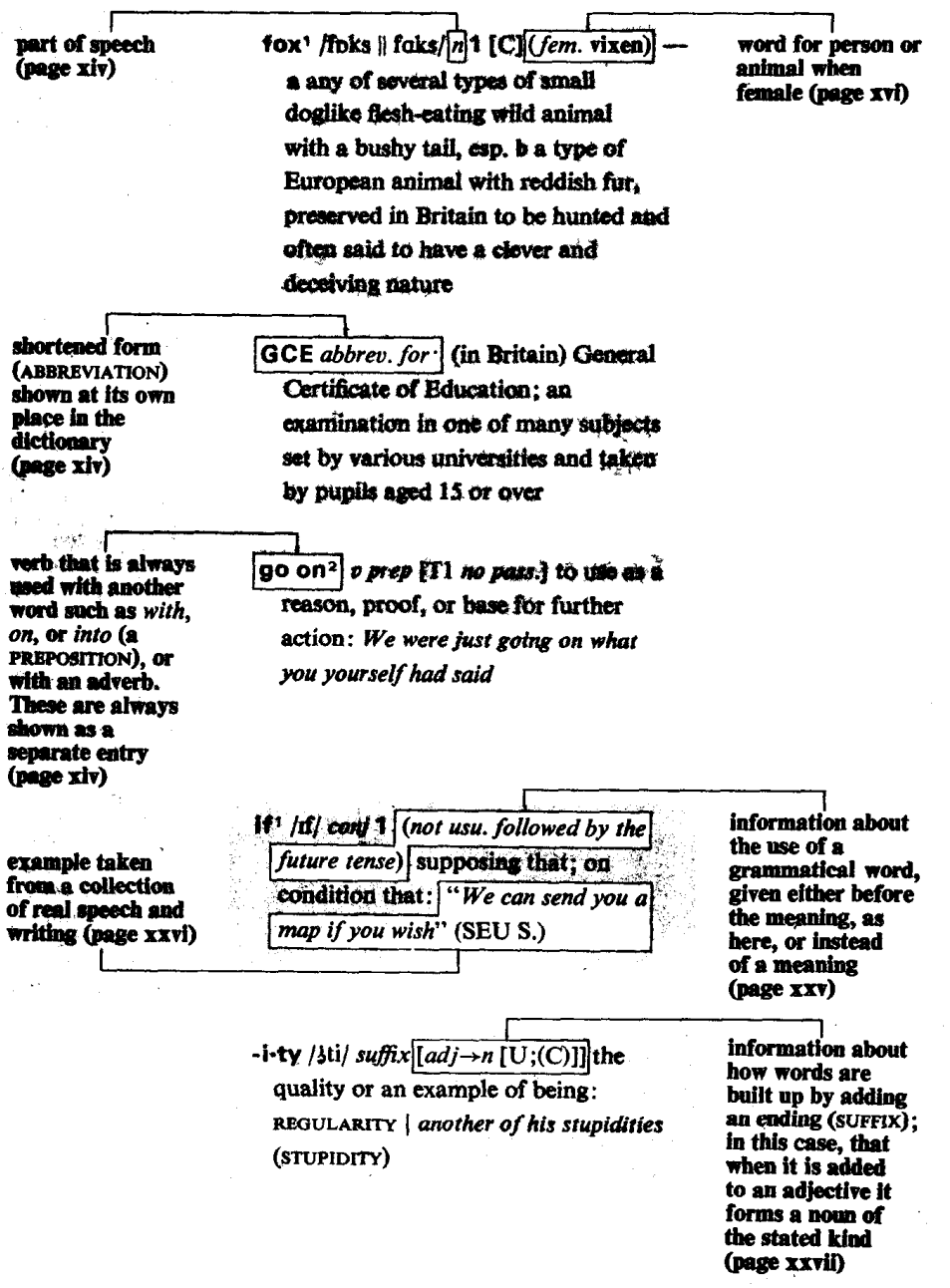
Mention should also be made of the dedicated clerical and secretarial staff involved in the project and of the computer personnel who have been involved in devising systems and in programming.

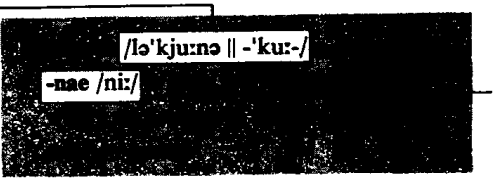
Paul Procter
Editor-in-Chief

Guide to the Dictionary

1 Explanatory chart

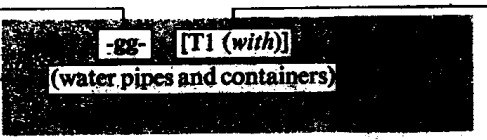



part of speech (page xiv)
fox¹ /fɒks || fɑks/ n 1 [C] (fem. vixen) — a any of several types of small doglike flesh-eating wild animal with a bushy tail, esp. b a type of European animal with reddish fur, preserved in Britain to be hunted and often said to have a clever and deceiving nature
word for person or animal when female (page xvi)
shortened form (ABBREVIATION) shown at its own place in the dictionary (page xiv)
GCE abbrev. for (in Britain) General Certificate of Education; an examination in one of many subjects set by various universities and taken by pupils aged 15 or over
verb that is always used with another word such as with, on, or into (a PREPOSITION), or with an adverb. These are always shown as a separate entry (page xiv)
go on² v prep [T1 no pass.] to use as a reason, proof, or base for further action: We were just going on what you yourself had said
if¹ /ɪf/ conj 1 (not usu. followed by the future tense) supposing that; on condition that: "We can send you a map if you wish" (SEU S.)
information about the use of a grammatical word, given either before the meaning, as here, or instead of a meaning (page xxv)
example taken from a collection of real speech and writing (page xxvi)
-i·ty /ətɪ/ suffix [adj→n [U;(C)]] the quality or an example of being: REGULARITY | another of his stupidities (STUPIDITY)
information about how words are built up by adding an ending (SUFFIX); in this case, that when it is added to an adjective it forms a noun of the stated kind (page xxvii)



pronunciation, with American form after the double line (||) (page xviii)

irregular plural and its pronunciation (page xxiii)



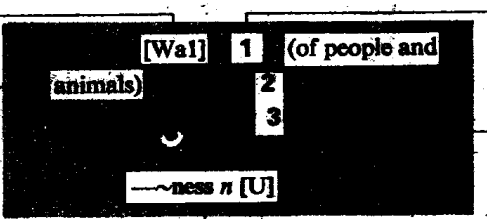
double consonants in the past and present participles of a verb (*lagged, lagging*) (page xxii)

type of object with which this verb is used (page xxv)

grammatical information about a verb; used sometimes, but not always, with other words such as *with, on,* or *into* (PREPOSITIONS), or with certain adverbs (page xxxv)

a different spelling that is not so common (page xv)

use in English limited to the country stated (page xxiv)

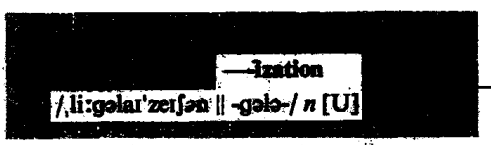


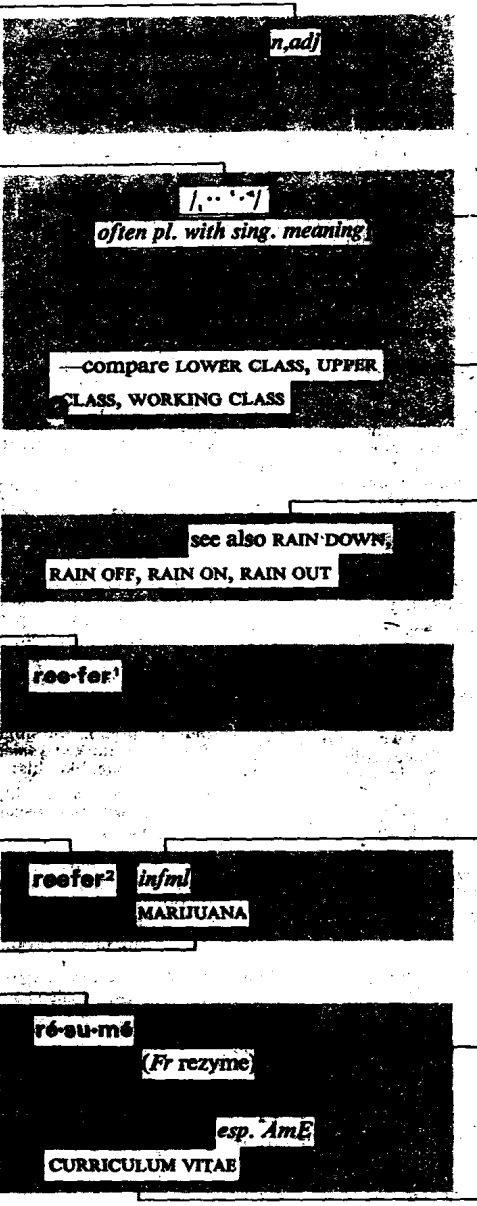
information about possible other forms of the word (in this case, that *leaner* and *leanest* are possible forms); the same for all meanings (page xxxi)

each meaning of a word given a number and clearly explained in words taken from a list of about 2000 common English words (page xxiii)

endings that are to be added to the main word to make a new word, shown after a long straight line. A bent line (~) before the ending means that the ending is added to the whole word; a shorter straight line (-) before the ending means that the ending is added to part of the word. The part of speech and other grammatical information are then given, and the pronunciation if it is not regular. An example of the use of the word is also shown

type of noun with which this meaning of an adjective is used (page xxv)





combination of 2 parts of speech (page xiv)

n,adj

pattern showing the strength of pronunciation (STRESS) of the parts of a compound word or phrase. Here the ◄ shows that the pattern changes when the adjective is used before a noun (page xviii)

/ˌ·· ˈ·ˌ/

often pl. with sing. meaning

—compare LOWER CLASS, UPPER CLASS, WORKING CLASS

word that has the same meaning in its plural form; in this case *the middle class = the middle classes*

instruction to look at related entries

see also RAIN DOWN, RAIN OFF, RAIN ON, RAIN OUT

list of related compound verbs (page xxvi)

[illegible] with the [illegible] (page xvi)

ree·fer[1]

[illegible] or specialist word not in the [illegible] word list (page xxvi)

reefer[2] *infml* MARIJUANA

use limited to the stated period, level, field of meaning, etc. (page xxiv)

places at which the word should be broken, as at the end of a line (page xv)

ré·su·mé (*Fr* rezyme) *esp. AmE* CURRICULUM VITAE

foreign pronunciation for a borrowed foreign word (page xxi)

a meaning that is acceptable in Britain but most common in American English (page xvi)

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2 Order of entries

2.0 The words described in this dictionary are entered in alphabetical order. This means that, for example, if you want to know the meaning of the PHRASAL VERB *prepare for* you should look up not **prepare** but **prepare for** in its own place after **preparedness**; and that you will find **lawsuit** in its alphabetical place after **lawn tennis**, not as part of the entry for **law**. This is true of all main entries, whether they are a single word, an entry made up of more than one word, or HYPHENATED. If you cannot find a fixed group of words in its alphabetical place, this may be because it is an IDIOM; in this case look for it under one of the other words in the group. Thus, **racehorse**, which is a type of horse, will be found at its own place under the letter "r", but **dark horse**, which is not a horse at all, is shown under **horse** as a special meaning. See also **Idioms** (page xxvi).

2.1 Many words in English are spelt alike, but are in other ways completely different—they may be pronounced differently, they may have different jobs to do in a sentence (as a noun, verb, etc.), and they may even be historically unrelated, in which case their meanings will probably be completely different. Most words like this are entered separately in this dictionary, with raised numbers after them, like this:

lead[1] /li:d/ *v* ... to show somebody the way; ...

lead[2] *n* ... the act of leading ...

lead[3] /led/ *n* ... a soft easily melted greyish-blue metal ...

The order in which these are entered is usually historical; the one used earliest in English is entered first.

2.2 In some cases, when such words are different only in that they have different jobs to do in a sentence, they are combined in one entry, like this:

ab·la·tive /'æblətɪv/ *adj, n* (of or concerning) a particular form of a Latin noun ...

2.3 Sometimes when a word has two parts of speech, like **swish** below, we explain only one part of speech and show the other one, which is spelt exactly the same, at the end. The meaning should be clear when the part of speech is taken into account. Thus:

swish /swɪʃ/ *v* ... to (cause to) to cut through the air making a sharp whistling noise ... —**swish** *n*

The noun **swish** means "an example of swishing". See also **Related words listed without explanation** (page xxvii).

2.4.1 If 2 words are different only in that one is always written with a CAPITAL LETTER, they are treated as 2 separate entries, like this:

ref·or·ma·tion /ˌrefə'meɪʃən || ˌrefər-/ *n* [C;U] (an) improvement...

Reformation *n* [*the* + R] (the period of) the religious movement in Europe in the 16th century ...

2.4.2 If a meaning of a word is sometimes, often, or usually written with a CAPITAL LETTER, but not always, it is not shown as a separate entry, but is marked *sometimes cap.*, *often cap.*, or *usu. cap.*, like this:

dev·il[1] /devəl/ *n* 1 [*the* + R] (*usu. cap.*) the most powerful evil spirit; Satan ...

2.5.1 If 2 words are spelt the same but differ only in that one is always used in the plural form in one meaning, they are treated as 2 separate entries, like this:

bitter[3] *n* [U] *BrE* bitter beer ...

bit·ters /'bɪtəz || -ərz/ *n* [U;P] a usu. alcoholic mixture of bitter-tasting plant products used ...

2.5.2 If a meaning of a word is sometimes, often, or usually used in the plural form, but not always, it is not shown as a separate entry, but is marked *sometimes pl.*, *often pl.*, or *usu. pl.*, like this:

stud·y[1] /'stʌdi/ *n* ... 2 [U;C *often pl.*] a subject studied: *to give time to one's studies* ...

2.5.3 A few words have the same meaning whether they are used in the singular or in the plural form. These are marked *sometimes/ often/ usu. pl. with sing. meaning*, like this:

middle class /ˌ.. '.◦/ *adj, n* [B; (*the*) GU *often pl. with sing. meaning*] (of) the social class to which ...

2.6 Letters that stand for a group of words (ABBREVIATIONS) are shown at their own place in the dictionary:

GCE *abbrev. for*: (in Britain) General Certificate of Education ...

2.7 AFFIXES and COMBINING FORMS, such as **-ness** and **Russo-**, are also shown at their own place.

3 Types of word

All the words shown in this dictionary are described according to their use in grammar—that is, whether they are nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. Each type is given a particular sign or set of signs, as shown below.

abbrev. for	=	ABBREVIATION for (a shortened form of (a word), which is often used in speech, just like an ordinary word. These are usually spoken simply as a set of letters, but for those which do not follow this rule we give the pronunciation): **PhD**
adj	=	adjective: **tall**
adv	=	adverb: **partly**
comb. form	=	COMBINING FORM (a form that combines with a word or part of a word to make a new word): **Sino-**
conj	=	CONJUNCTION (a word that connects parts of sentences, phrases, etc.): **and, but**
contr. of	=	CONTRACTION of (the shortened form of (a word or words)): **shan't**
determiner	=	DETERMINER (a word that limits the meaning of a noun and comes before adjectives that describe the same noun): **many, our**

interj	=	INTERJECTION (a phrase, word, or set of sounds used as a sudden remark): **ouch**
n	=	noun: **dog, wine**
predeterminer	=	PREDETERMINER (a word that can be used before *a* or *the*): **all, such**
prefix	=	PREFIX (an AFFIX that is placed at the beginning of a word or base): **un-, re-**
prep	=	PREPOSITION (a word used with a noun, PRONOUN, or *-ing* form to show its connection with another word): **in, of**
pron	=	PRONOUN (a word that is used in place of a noun or noun phrase): **it, me, them**
suffix	=	SUFFIX (an AFFIX that is placed at the end of a word): **-ity, -phile**
v	=	verb: **make, run, sew**
v adv	=	verb + adverb (a PHRASAL VERB made up of a verb and an adverb): **throw away, work out**
v adv prep	=	verb + adverb + PREPOSITION (a PHRASAL VERB made up of a verb, an adverb, and a PREPOSITION): **put up with, do away with**
v adv; prep	=	verb + adverb *or* verb + PREPOSITION (a PHRASAL VERB in which the second part (such as *through*) can be used either as an adverb or as a PREPOSITION): **lay off**
v prep	=	verb + PREPOSITION (a PHRASAL VERB made up of a verb and a PREPOSITION): **come into, fall for**
written abbrev. for	=	written ABBREVIATION for (a shortened form of (a word), which is used only in writing, never in speech): **s.a.e.** *written abbrev. for:* stamped addressed envelope

Note that many of these signs can be used in combination. This is shown by means of a COMMA (,). Thus, for example, if a word is described as *adj, n*, it means that it can be used both as an adjective and as a noun.

4 Syllable division

4.1 Words are made up of one or more separately-pronounced parts, called SYLLABLES. If you know what the separate parts of any particular word are, you will more easily be able to read the word and to understand how it is pronounced. In this dictionary, therefore, all the SYLLABLES of every word are shown. This is done by dividing each word up by means of dots, like this:

syl·la·ble

Thus, the word "syllable" has 3 SYLLABLES: *syl, la,* and *ble.*

4.2 If you find any long word hard to read, you will find it helpful to look at what its separate parts are; and if you are in doubt about the exact meaning of the pronunciation we have given to the word, you will find that by pronouncing each SYLLABLE separately, you will arrive at the correct way of saying it.

4.3 The SYLLABLE dots have one further use. They show where a word can be broken up (HYPHENATED) if you do not have enough room at the end of a line. Thus, **syl·la·ble** may be ended on one line with

syl-
or
sylla-

and continued on the next with

-lable
or
-ble

But there are 2 very important points to remember when using the dots for this purpose:

4.3.1 It is not considered correct to separate only one letter from the beginning or end of a word. Thus, for example, although the words **a·lone** and **pris·m** have 2 SYLLABLES, they should never be broken up at the end of a line.

4.3.2 The possible end-of-line divisions we show are not the only acceptable ones. You will often find words broken up differently. But it is not practical, in the limited space we have, to show all the possibilities. If you follow the ones we show, you will not go wrong.

4.4 When a word appears more than once as a HEADWORD we do not repeat the SYLLABLE dots after the first one, unless one of the later ones has a different pronunciation. Thus **lim·it**[1] /'lɪmɪt/ *n* and **limit**[2] *v* have the same SYLLABLES. But **present**[1] & [2] have different pronunciations: thus

pres·ent[1] /'prezənt/ *n* **1** a gift ...
and
pre·sent[2] /prɪ'zent/ *v* **1** ... to give (something) away ...

5 Variants

5.0 Many words have more than one spelling, or share their meaning with one or more other words (have SYNONYMS). It is useful to know about such words, and therefore in this dictionary we give information about them all together in one place: the main form of any particular set of forms.

5.1.1 Information about different spellings of a particular word is given immediately after that word, like this:

caf·tan, kaftan /'kæftæn/ *n* a long loose garment ...

This means that the usual spelling is *caftan*, but that *kaftan* can also be used.

5.1.2 In the case of long words, only that part of the word which is spelt differently is shown:

gen·e·ral·ize, -ise /'dʒenərəlaɪz/ *v* ...

This means that the usual spelling is *generalize*, but that *generalise* can also be used.

5.2.1 Information about words that share the meaning of another word is given after the word "also", like this:

lap·wing /'læp,wɪŋ/ also **pewit, peewit**— *n* a type of small bird ...

This means that *lapwing* is the usual word, but that both *pewit* and *peewit* have the same meaning, and can be used instead.

5.2.2 In the case of a pair of adjectives, one ending in *-ic* and the other in *-ical*, the less common form is shown like this:

i·ron·ic /aɪ'rɒnɪk || aɪ'rɑ-/also **i·ron·i·cal** /-ɪkəl/ *—adj* ...

This means that *ironic* and *ironical* have the same meaning, but that the former is the more commonly used.

5.2.3 Often a word introduced by "also" may not have the same meaning as all the meanings of the main form. In this case it is shown after the number for the particular meaning to which it belongs, like this:

la·dy /'leɪdi/ *n* **1** ... *polite* a woman, esp. a woman of good social position ... **2** also **woman**— female: *a lady doctor*

This means that for the first meaning you can use only *lady*, but for the second you may use *woman* as well: *a woman doctor.*

5.3 Many of the words differently spelt or introduced by "also" are slightly different from their main form in other ways: they may be *fml*, while the main form is not, or they may be *AmE*, while the main form is *BrE*. In 5.6 you will find an explanation of the styles we use to show you the exact differences between a main form and a differently spelt form or one introduced by "also"

5.4 For many types of animal and person there is a general word that is used for both sexes and a more particular word that is used for only one sex. In such cases, we show the general word as the main form, followed by the particular word, whether this is used for the female, as is common with words for people and animals:

fox[1] /fɒks || fɑks/ *n* **1** [C] (*fem.* **vixen**)— **a** any of several types of small doglike flesh-eating wild animal ...

or for the male, as is more usual for birds:

duck[1] /dʌk/ *n* **1** [Wnl;C] (*masc.* **drake**)— any of various common swimming birds ...

5.5.1 If a differently spelt form, a form introduced by "also", or a masc. or fem. form would have come less than 10 places away from the main form in the dictionary, it is not given a separate place of its own; all the information about it, such as its pronunciation, STRESS, and SYLLABLE division, is therefore given under the main form, like this:

freez·er /'friːzəʳ/ *n* ... **2** also **freezing com·part·ment** /'·· ˌ··/— ...

5.5.2 But when such a form would be entered 10 or more places away from the main form, it is given a separate place of its own, where such information as its pronunciation is given, and where you are told what the main form is so that you can go to it to find out the meaning, like this:

lap·wing /'læpˌwɪŋ/ also **pewit, peewit**— *n* ... **pe·wit, pee-** /'piːwɪt/ *n* LAPWING

5.6.0 The following styles are used, where necessary, to explain the exact differences between a main form and a second form that is differently spelt or is a completely different word:

5.6.1 Levels of formality

When a word shares the meaning of another word, but is more *fml* or *infml*, it is shown like this:

tel·e·vi·sion /'telɪˌvɪʒən, ˌtelɪ'vɪʒən/ also (*infml*) **telly**— *n* ...
tel·ly ... /'teli/ *n infml* TELEVISION

5.6.2 British and American differences

The main form shown in the dictionary is always one that is used in British English. We show the relationship of other *BrE* and *AmE* forms in the following ways:

5.6.2.1 Spelling differences

1. *AmE* uses only the differently spelt form:
   col·our, *AmE* **color** /'kʌləʳ/ *n* ...
2. The differently spelt form is commoner in *AmE*:
   axe, *AmE* usu. **ax** /æks/ ...
3. Both forms are used fairly equally in *AmE*:
   a·moe·ba, *AmE* also **ameba** /əˈmiːbə/ *n* ...
4. Both forms are used fairly equally in *BrE*:
   jail, *BrE* also **gaol** /dʒeɪl/ ...

5.6.2.2 Word differences

1. The main form is only *BrE*; the second form is only *AmE*:
   lad·der[1] /'lædəʳ/ *n* ... **2** (*AmE* **run**)— *BrE* a ladder-shaped fault in a stocking ...
   run[2] *n* ... **15** *AmE* LADDER[1] (2)
2. The main form is used generally in world English, except in *AmE*, which uses the second form:
   pave·ment /'peɪvmənt/ *n* **1** *AmE* **side·walk**— a PAVED surface or path
   side·walk /'saɪdwɔːk/ *n AmE* PAVEMENT (1)
3. The main form is used generally in world English, but the second form is commoner in *BrE*:
   egg·plant /'egplɑːnt || 'egplænt/ *BrE* usu. **aubergine**— *n* **1** a type of plant...
4. The main form is used generally in world English, but the second form is commoner in *AmE*:
   gear le·ver /'· ˌ··/... *AmE* usu. **gear shift**— *n*
5. The main form is used generally in world English, but *AmE* also uses the second form:
   au·tumn /'ɔːtəm/ *AmE* also **fall**— *n* the season between summer and winter ...
   fall[2] *n* ... **8** *AmE* AUTUMN
6. The main form is used generally in world English; the second form is also used generally, but it is commoner in the stated area than elsewhere:
   las·so[1] /ləˈsuː, 'læsəʊ/also (*esp. AmE*) **lar·iat**— *n* ...
   la·ri·at /'lærɪət/ *n esp. AmE* LASSO[1]

For British and American pronunciation differences, see **Pronunciation,** page xviii.

6 Pronunciation

6.1 Main Symbols

The International PHONETIC Alphabet is used to represent the pronunciation of every main word in the dictionary, for both British and American varieties of English. The main signs (SYMBOLS) that we use are:

CONSONANTS		VOWELS				
Symbol	Key Word	Number	This Dictionary	*Concise Pronouncing Dictionary*	*English Pronouncing Dictionary* (13th ed.)	Key Word
p	pen	1	iː	i	iː	sheep
b	back	2	ɪ	ɪ	i	ship
t	tea	3	e	e	e	bed
d	day	4	æ	æ	æ	bad
k	key	5	ɑː	ɑ	ɑː	calm
g	gay	6	ɒ	o	ɔ	pot
tʃ	cheer	7	ɔː	ɔ	ɔː	caught
dʒ	jump	8	ʊ	ʊ	u	put
f	few	9	uː	u	uː	boot
v	view	10	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ	cut
θ	thing	11	ɜː	ɜ	əː	bird
ð	then	12	ə	ə	ə	cupboard
s	soon	13	eɪ	eɪ	ei	make
z	zero	14	əʊ	əʊ	əu	note
ʃ	fishing	15	aɪ	ɑɪ	ai	bite
ʒ	pleasure	16	aʊ	ɑʊ	au	now
h	hot	17	ɔɪ	ɔɪ	ɔi	boy
m	sum	18	ɪə	ɪə	iə	here
n	sun	19	eə	eə	ɛə	there
ŋ	sung	20	ʊə	ʊə	uə	poor
l	led	—	eɪə	eɪə	eiə	player
r	red	—	əʊə	ɔʊə	əuə	lower
j	yet	—	aɪə	ɑɪə	aiə	tire
w	wet	—	aʊə	ɑʊə	auə	tower
		—	ɔɪə	ɔɪə	ɔiə	employer

6.2.1 British pronunciations

The form of British speech (ACCENT) that we represent is called *Received Pronunciation*, or "RP". This is the kind of English recorded by Daniel Jones in his *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (EPD). It is common among educated speakers in England, although not in most other parts of the British Isles. Indeed, the general speech of both Scotland and Ireland is nearer to the pronunciation of American English given here than to Received Pronunciation. We use the same form of the International PHONETIC Alphabet to represent this ACCENT as Professor A.C. Gimson (our pronunciation adviser) uses in the 14th EDITION of the EPD (Dent, 1977). The above table shows the SYMBOLS that we use. It also gives the vowel SYMBOLS used in *A Concise Pronouncing Dictionary of British and American English* (OUP, 1972) by J. Windsor Lewis, and those used in earlier EDITIONS of the EPD.

The consonant SYMBOLS are the same in all 3 systems, and the same consonant SYMBOLS are used for American pronunciations too. In most cases we also use the same vowel

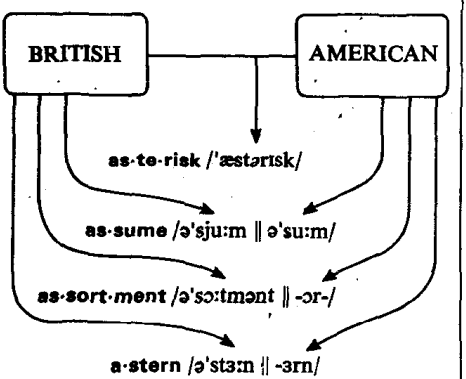
SYMBOLS for American and British pronunciations, except for a few special cases. These will be explained later.

6.2.2 American pronunciations

Unlike British English, there is no single standard of pronunciation for American English. We have therefore chosen to represent simply one of the more common forms of American pronunciation.

In many cases, the same pronunciation can be used for both British and American. Where there is a difference, the British form is given first, in full, and the American form follows after the *double bar* /‖/. This bar therefore means that the pronunciation on the *left* is British, and that on the *right* is American (although sometimes one form can be used by speakers of the other ACCENT).

Unless the word is short, we do not repeat for American English those parts of the word that are the same as in British. For example:



For American pronunciations, we have often used *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (8th EDITION). We thank John Bollard, the Merriam-Webster pronunciation EDITOR, and also Professor Arthur J. Bronstein, of Lehman College, The City University of New York, for their help with certain difficulties; though, as reasons of space have forced us to describe American pronunciation without showing every word in the dictionary twice, we may not always have done justice to the excellent advice we have received.

6.3.1 Stress

In English words of 2 or more SYLLABLES, at least one SYLLABLE stands out from the rest. We say it has greater STRESS. The mark /'/ is placed before the SYLLABLE that carries the *main* STRESS of the word. For example:

let·ter /'letə'/ **as·te·risk**/'æstərɪsk/

Some words also have SECONDARY STRESS (a weaker STRESS) on another SYLLABLE. The mark /ˌ/ is placed before such a SYLLABLE. For example:

arch·bish·op /ˌɑ:tʃ'bɪʃəp ‖ ˌɑr-/
an·ti·mat·ter /'æntiˌmætə'/

Even in very long words only one SECONDARY STRESS is usually shown:

com·pre·hen·si·bil·i·ty /ˌkɒmprɪhensə'bɪlɪti ‖ ˌkɑm-/
in·com·pat·i·bil·i·ty /ˌɪnkəmpætə'bɪlɪti/

The third SYLLABLES of those words do have a little more STRESS than the other unmarked ones, but it is not necessary to show this because they contain "strong" vowels, which always have a certain amount of stress.

But sometimes 2 SECONDARY STRESSES are shown, as in:

con·tra·in·di·ca·tion /ˌkɒntrəˌɪndɪ'keɪʃən/

This is because /ɪ/ may be "strong" or "weak". In that word, the first /ɪ/ is "strong", not "weak". (/ɪ/ may be strong or weak, and /ə/ is always weak. All the other vowels are always strong.) When 2 SECONDARY STRESSES are shown, the *first always has more STRESS than the second.*

6.3.2 Compounds with space or hyphen

Many compounds are written with either a space or a HYPHEN (-) between the parts. When all parts of such a compound also appear in the dictionary as separate main words (in their proper alphabetical place), the full pronunciation of the compound is not shown. Only its STRESS *pattern* is given. Each SYLLABLE is represented by a dot /·/, and the main STRESS mark /'/ is placed before the dot that represents the SYLLABLE with main STRESS (in the compound). Where necessary, a SECONDARY STRESS mark is also used. For example:

bus stop /'· ·/ **town hall** /ˌ· '·/
Association Foot·ball /ˌ·,···· '··/

Sometimes a compound contains a main word with an ending. If the main word is in the dictionary and the ending is a common one, still only a STRESS pattern is shown. For example:

lending li·bra·ry /'·· ˌ···/

Lending is not a main word in the dictionary, but **lend** is; so only a STRESS pattern is shown, because *-ing* is a common ending. But if any part is not a main word, the full pronunciation is given:

jig·ge·ry-po·ke·ry /ˌdʒɪgəri 'pəʊkəri/

The stress patterns of PHRASAL VERBS are not shown, because their STRESS varies in accordance with, for example, their place in the sentence.

6.3.3 Stress Shift

A number of compounds may have a SHIFT (= "movement") *in* STRESS when they are used before nouns. For example, *plate glass* would have the pattern /ˌ· '·/ when spoken by itself, or in a sentence like *The window was made of plate glass.* But the phrase *plate glass window* would usually have the pattern /ˌ· · '··/ —that is, with the main STRESS of the whole phrase on *window*; *glass* loses its STRESS completely. The syllable with most STRESS in *plate glass* is now *plate*—but it has only SECONDARY STRESS in the phrase as a whole. The mark /ˈ/ is used after words where this happens. For example:

plate glass /ˌ· '· ˈ/

There is no STRESS SHIFT when the main STRESS of the whole phrase is not on the following noun. For example, *plate glass window* has the pattern /ˌ· · ˈ· ·/, but *plate glass manufacturer* would be /ˌ· ˈ· ·ˌ· · ·/, because the main stress of the whole phrase is on *plate glass*. So it keeps its UNSHIFTED pattern.

The STRESS pattern that is shown is always the one that would be used when the word is said by itself. For example, even though *left-hand* is nearly always used before a noun in a sentence (with the STRESS-SHIFTED pattern /ˈ· ·/), it is shown in the dictionary as:

left-hand /ˌ· ˈ· ˠ/

This is because it has the pattern /ˌ· ˈ· /ˠ when said by itself, not in a phrase or sentence.

STRESS SHIFT can also happen with some single words, such as:

dif·fe·ren·tial /ˌdɪfəˈrenʃəlˠ/
in·de·pen·dent /ˌɪndɨpendəntˠ/

6.4.0 Use of symbols and special symbols

There are important differences between the American and British ACCENTS that we represent. There are also important regular differences that are made by different speakers with the same ACCENT. To cover this, we use some SYMBOLS in a special way, and we use some special SYMBOLS.

6.4.1 /r/
In the kind of American speech we represent, *r* in the spelling is usually pronounced. In RP it is pronounced only when a vowel follows. So:

6.4.1.1 at the end of a word, we use the special SYMBOL /ʳ/, above the ordinary line. For example:

far /fɑːʳ/

This means that in RP a phrase like *far down* is pronounced /ˌfɑː ˈdaʊn/, while *far away* would be /ˌfɑːr əˈweɪ/. In American *far* is /fɑr/ in both cases, but to save space the form/fɑːʳ/ represents this.

6.4.1.2 In the middle of a word, when a consonant follows, American usually uses /r/ and RP never does. This is always clearly shown. For example:

part·ner·ship /ˈpɑːtnəʃɪp ‖ ˈpɑrtnər-/
harm·less /ˈhɑːmləs ‖ ˈhɑrm-/

We do not repeat those parts of the words that are the same in both ACCENTS, unless the word is short. For example:

farm /fɑːm ‖ fɑrm/

6.4.2 /ɨ/
In both ACCENTS, there are many words where some speakers use /ɪ/ and others use /ə/. The special SYMBOL /ɨ/ therefore represents both pronunciations.
For example:

busi·ness /ˈbɪznɨs/
de·fi·ni·tion /ˌdefɨˈnɪʃən/
hel·met /ˈhelmɨt/

6.4.3 /i/
At the end of many words, a lot of RP speakers use /ɪ/ but many Americans use /iː/. We use the special SYMBOL /i/ to represent this. Remember that if you are learning RP you should try to pronounce this SYMBOL as /ɪ/, but if you are learning American English you should pronounce it as /iː/. For example:

hap·py /ˈhæpi/: usually pronounced /ˈhæpɪ/ in RP but /ˈhæpiː/ in American

The same thing is true when many endings are added:

hap·pi·ness /ˈhæpinɨs/
fai·ry·land /ˈfeərilænd/

But when *-ly* is added, the /i/ changes to /ɨ/. To save space we do not show this, but *happily*, for example, is pronounced /ˈhæpɨli/.

There is one exception. /ɪə/ is pronounced like that in RP, but in American it is pronounced /iːə/ quite often. We do not show this.

6.4.4 /ə/
This special SYMBOL is used in two ways. In both, the meaning is that /ə/ may be either used or missed out.

6.4.4.1 After a consonant: The sounds /m, n, l, r/ can be SYLLABIC: that is, they can themselves form a SYLLABLE. For example, it is possible to pronounce *travel* with the vowel /ə/ in the second SYLLABLE: /ˈtrævəl/. But this word is usually pronounced /ˈtrævl/. This pronunciation also has two SYLLABLES, but only the first contains a vowel sound; the second SYLLABLE is simply /-vl/. We show both of these possibilities by using /ə/ in such SYLLABLES. So:

1. **trav·el** /ˈtrævəl/ can represent:
   (i) /ˈtrævəl/ (*2* SYLLABLES: *2 vowels*)
   (ii) /ˈtrævl/ (*2* SYLLABLES: *1 vowel and 1* SYLLABIC *consonant*)

When a vowel sound follows such a consonant, there is a third possibility. It is also represented by /ə/, and means that the consonant may simply begin the following SYLLABLE. For example:

2. **mem·o·ry** /ˈmeməri/ can represent:
   (i) /ˈmeməri/ (*3* SYLLABLES: *3 vowels*)
   (ii) /ˈmemri/ (*3* SYLLABLES: *2 vowels and 1* SYLLABIC *consonant, here shown as* /r̩/)
   (iii) /ˈmemri/ (*2* SYLLABLES: *2 vowels*)

Where a pronunciation with /ə/ is shown in the dictionary, we suggest the use of a SYLLABIC consonant if possible (that is, without /ə/). So *travel* should be pronounced /ˈtrævl/ if possible.

6.4.4.2 After a vowel: Some speakers, especially in America, pronounce *vary* as /ˈveri/; others say /ˈveəri/. Again, the use of /ə/ means that /ə/ may or may not be used. For example:

fir·ing /ˈfaɪərɪŋ/
ap·pear·ance /əˈpɪərəns/
hair·y /ˈheəri/

This happens only after a vowel, and before /r/ except in a few words like **real·ly** /ˈrɪəli/.

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