



韦氏高阶 英语词典

Merriam-Webster's
Advanced
LEARNER'S
ENGLISH DICTIONARY



中国大百科全书出版社

Encyclopedia of China Publishing House

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序

又一本新词典问世了。这就是大家手上的这本《韦氏高阶英语词典》。

韦氏词典系列英文版最初出版于1831年，具有100多年的悠久历史。其系列词典的出版是划时代的，标志着美语体系的独立。韦氏词典深得美国读者青睐，在美国同类词典市场中占60%的市场份额，是美国最畅销的词典，数代美国人在它的哺育下长大。同时，它也成为同类词典的标准，即韦氏标准。在美国市场也有一些以“韦氏”为名的词典，但这类词典只是以韦氏标准编撰的同类词典。只有梅里亚姆—韦伯斯特公司出版的带有“*Merriam-Webster™*”标识的词典才代表着美语词典的历史和权威。

我很高兴地看到，作为美国最权威的词典品牌，“*Merriam-Webster™*”词典终于首次被引进中国了。可以说，这本《韦氏高阶英语词典》是权威词典出版公司的最新英语学习工具书。这“新”字有两重含义。首先，此书原版于2008年在美国出版，今年由中国大百科全书出版社引进出版了。第二，历史悠久的美国梅里亚姆—韦伯斯特公司针对本国人的需要编写、出版过多种词典，而此书是其核心编辑团队专为帮助外国人学英语而编写的词典。

《韦氏高阶英语词典》收录了约10万单词，16万例句，22000个习语、动词词组、常用短语，12000个用法标注、注释和段落，是一部以美式英语为主，英式英语为辅，针对母语非英语的学习者的权威工具书。它所包含的英式英语是通用而广泛的，而它所包含的美式英语则是独一无二的。词典中标有US字样的成千上万个词条、句子、短语和例句为学习者掌握惯用的美式用法提供了更准确、更简明的描述，这是其他任何同类词典都无法比拟的。

若问这本词典究竟新在哪里？这就要从我们怎样学英语说起。我们在国内学英语，都希望直接跟外国老师学，因为这样可以学到地道的英语。而这本韦氏词典就是你想找的老师，而且是一位很不错的老师，因为他处处为外国学生着想，针对外国学生学习英语时遇到的困难和需要，通过精准的释义、丰富的例句、详细的用法说明给予指导和帮助。

比如，这本词典选词以超过1亿语词的引语数据库为依据。同时选出人们在日常生活中最需要、最常用的3000个基本词汇，以蓝色下划线标注，一目了然。用心的学生看到这个标志，就会想到这个词属于基本词汇，需要重点掌握。释义均用常用的语言写成。包含多种释义的单词不仅能帮助学习者扩大词汇量，同时还能通过区分其中细微的差别来全面掌握一个单词的含义。大量使用各种注释，以阐明和强调不能通过释义简要说明和表达的各种用法。

再比如，这本词典重视例句。其中有一些来源于美国和英国文学名著的引文，但大多数是根据英语语料编写的。这些例句经过认真编辑，以显示词语在适当的上下文中如何使用，反映了在真实的对话和文章中的用法。正如编者在原书的序言中所说：“在编写本书的过程中，我们花费了大量心血设计简明精确的定义，但我们一直觉得本书真正的精华在于其中的例句。”编者的确在例句上下了很大的工夫。最突出的一点是他们不仅提供大量例句，介绍各种不同的搭配，而且有重点地对例句中的词语乃至全句用加方括号的方式加以解释。读者通过方括号里的解释可以加深对例句的理解，还可以学到表达同样意思的另一种说法。读者可能是带着一个具体的小问题来查词典，寻求答案，而得到的却不仅是答案，还有从更深层次理解英语的机会，而这正是英语学习者求之不得的。这本词典大量采用这种对例句略作解释的做法，对读者的帮助是非常之大的。

此外，这本词典还具有其他许多优点。其一，知识点丰富，词目一般带有注音、定义、用法说明、用法例句、习语等，帮助学习者全面理解和掌握词语用法。再有，这本词典不但十分注重收录新生词汇，更妙的是对于一些原有词汇的释义，也体现了与时俱进的原则，如，对于 **marriage** 的释义，增加了新的义项“**a similar relationship between people of the same sex**”（同性婚姻），**text** 的义项增加了 **text** 作动词（发信息）的用法。此外，这本词典的版式设计也体现了编者力求为读者提供一个友好的阅读界面的良苦用心。比如，词典采用双色印刷，例句用蓝色字体与释义等其他内容加以区分。蓝色字体不仅突出例句，还有助于轻松辨别词条中的其他元素，如释义、用法说明等，并有助于快速浏览长词条以找到所需的特定内容；再如，词目的编排也力求醒目，说明性标签和注释的使用让词语的含义一目了然等。这里就不一一赘述了。

总之，有这样一本词典在手，宛如一位外籍老师在你身旁，随时可为你解惑释疑，引导你学习地道的英语。

北京外国语大学 教授

庄绎传

2009年6月

Preface

Merriam-Webster's Advanced Learner's English Dictionary is not only an entirely new dictionary created by the editorial staff of America's oldest dictionary publisher; it also marks the beginning of a new kind of publishing for this company. Over the past 160 years, Merriam-Webster has produced hundreds of dictionaries and other reference books, and many of those books have been useful to learners of English as a second or foreign language, but this dictionary is the first one that we have produced specifically to meet the needs of those learners. The creation of this dictionary reflects the reality that English has become an international language, and that American English, in particular, is now being used and studied every day by millions of people around the world. We believe that we have a unique opportunity to help students of English—in the U.S. and elsewhere—to understand our language and to use it more clearly and effectively.

This dictionary provides coverage of both American and British English. Its coverage of British English is current and comprehensive. Its coverage of American English is, we believe, unparalleled. The thousands of entries, senses, phrases, forms, and examples that are labeled *US* in this dictionary will provide learners with a clearer and more precise description of idiomatic American usage than has ever before been available in a dictionary of this kind.

The approximately 100,000 entries in this dictionary include a broad selection of words from all major areas of interest, including popular culture, business, sports, science, and technology, among others. Our main focus in choosing entries has been to include the language that people are most likely to need and encounter in their daily lives. The evidence used to make decisions about which words and senses to include was drawn, first of all, from our continually growing database of citation text, now numbering more than 100 million words. That evidence was augmented in essential ways by the resources that are available to us over the Internet, and in particular by the enormous databases of Lexis-Nexis, which provided editors with ready access to vast amounts of material from both American and British sources. Not so long ago dictionary editors had to rely entirely on evidence that had been painstakingly collected over a period of years by a program of reading. That program continues at Merriam-Webster, providing the basis of our citation database, and we continue to find great value in the traditional methods of evidence-gathering, but we also have fully embraced the power of the electronic tools

that have become available in recent decades. The use of computers now makes it possible for dictionary editors to examine and describe language at a level of detail that was never before imaginable.

The definitions in this dictionary are written in simple language. In many cases, a single use of a word will be given more than one definition. Very often a word will be defined by a quite simple definition, followed by a definition that is perhaps somewhat less simple or that shows how the defined word is related to another word. For example, the verb *pioneer* is defined both as “to help create or develop (new ideas, methods, etc.)” and as “to be a pioneer in the development of (something).” The first definition can certainly stand alone, but the second definition enhances it by underscoring the close connection between the verb *pioneer* and the noun *pioneer*—a connection that native speakers are unconsciously aware of, but that learners may not sense so strongly. The inclusion of multiple definitions thus helps learners both to expand their vocabularies and to gain a fuller picture of a word's meaning by approaching it from a slightly different direction. Notes of various kinds are also used abundantly throughout the dictionary to clarify and emphasize aspects of usage that cannot be easily captured or expressed in a definition.

True fluency in any language, of course, is not acquired by memorizing dictionary definitions, but by hearing and seeing how words are used in combination with each other to express meaning. In writing this book we have devoted a great deal of care and attention to creating simple and accurate definitions, but our feeling throughout has been that the real heart of the dictionary is its examples. We know from experience that dictionary users, whether native speakers or learners, want more examples. They want examples for common words, and they want examples for difficult words. Although not every entry in this dictionary includes an example—there is usually very little value in providing an example for, say, a noun like *microchip* or *monoplane*—the great majority of the entries do, and a large percentage of them include more than one. There are more than 160,000 usage examples in this dictionary. A few of them are quotations taken from well-known works of American and British literature, but most are made-up examples, based on evidence of real English, that have been carefully written to show words being used in appropriate contexts which accurately reflect their uses in actual speech and writing.

A large number of the examples in this dictio-

nary do not simply illustrate usage, they also explain it and expand upon it in other ways. Many examples include synonymous words or phrases shown within brackets, thus allowing the reader either to learn a new word or to have the connection between the meanings of words reinforced. Examples also often include glosses, so that phrases and compound terms whose meanings are not obvious can be explained clearly and simply. And we have very frequently explained the meaning of entire phrases and sentences by restating them with other, simpler words. Many examples also show how the same word can be used in slightly different ways—or how related words can be used in different ways—to say the same thing. We believe that such examples are of great value to the learner; they are the next best thing to having a native speaker available by your side to help clarify what you are seeing and hearing.

Any comprehensive dictionary contains an enormous amount of information, and dictionary editors have typically been required to use a variety of abbreviations and other shortcuts to fit all that information into the limited space available between the covers of a book. Two of our main goals in creating the entries for this dictionary were to keep the use of such shortcuts to a minimum and to employ conventions that are readily understandable. We set out to create a dictionary that could be easily used without frequent reference to explanatory materials. To achieve that, we have minimized the use of abbreviations and symbols (although we were not able to eliminate them entirely) and we have tried to use labels and notes whose meanings are immediately clear. We have also made every effort to organize entries in a way that allows users to find the information they want quickly. The most obvious convention we have adopted for this purpose is the use of blue text for examples. The blue text not only highlights the examples, it also makes it much easier to identify the other elements of an entry—the definitions, usages notes, and so on—and to navigate through long entries to find the particular information that you need.

It can sometimes be easy to forget that a large dictionary like this one has to be written word by word and line by line. Each definition, each example, each note that appears in this dictionary is the product of careful and strenuous thought by at least one person, and often by many people, since the nature of the writing and editing process is such that multiple stages of review are required before the work is truly finished. The names of the many people who worked on this book are listed in the following paragraphs.

The length of this project has meant that some of the people who were with us when it began had moved on to other parts of their lives by the time it ended. The Merriam-Webster editors credited here include both current and former staff members. Former Director of Defining E. Ward Gilman and former Editor in Chief Frederick C. Mish, both now retired, provided helpful suggestions when the project was in its initial planning stages, as did consultant Robert Ison. President

and Publisher John M. Morse was also involved in the initial planning of the project and provided support and encouragement throughout it.

The editors who had the first crack at creating entries included, in no particular order, Karen L. Wilkinson, Susan L. Brady, Thomas F. Pitoniak, Kathleen M. Doherty, Emily A. Brewster, G. James Kossuth, Emily B. Arsenault, Penny L. Couillard-Dix, Emily A. Vezina, Benjamin T. Korzec, Ilya A. Davidovich, Judy Yeh, Rose Martino Bigelow, Kory L. Stamper, Peter A. Sokolowski, Neil S. Serven, Deanna Stathis, Anne Eason, Joanne M. Despres, Rebecca Bryer-Charette, and myself. Dr. Ison undertook a complete review of the work that was done at that early stage, and he made many valuable corrections and additions. He was particularly helpful in providing good examples and in augmenting our coverage of British English by identifying distinctions (often very subtle ones) between American and British usage.

The pronunciations throughout the dictionary were provided by Joshua S. Guenter. The essential task of checking and re-checking cross-references was handled by Maria Sansalone, Donna L. Rickery, and Adrienne M. Scholz. The work of copyediting the entries that had been created by the definers was done by editors Wilkinson, Brady, Brewster, Couillard-Dix, Korzec, Yeh, Stamper, Sokolowski, Serven, Eason, Despres, Bryer-Charette, and me. The complexity of this project was such that an additional reviewing stage was added following copyediting. That work was done by editors Bryer-Charette, Korzec, Brewster, Stamper, Brady, Couillard-Dix, Wilkinson, and Madeline L. Novak. The responsibility for final review of the manuscript fell to me.

The proofreading of the galleys and page proofs was done by many of the editors mentioned above and by Anne P. Bello and Paul S. Wood. The primary proofreader for the in-house keying of revisions was Kathleen M. Doherty. Specialized editing assistance was provided by editors Wood and Doherty. Most of the illustrations that appear throughout were newly created for this book. The new black-and-white illustrations were drawn by Tim Phelps of Johns Hopkins Univ., and the color illustrations were researched and drawn by Merriam-Webster editor Diane Caswell Christian. Mark A. Stevens oversaw the creation of the new illustrations and planned the black-and-white illustrations along with Lynn Stowe Tomb, who also coordinated work with Mr. Phelps and converted the drawings to electronic form for typesetting. Freelancer Loree Hany and editors Jennifer N. Cislo and Joan I. Narmontas assisted in art research. The selection of the 3,000 entry words that are highlighted as being most important for learners to know was based in large part on initial recommendations provided by James G. Lowe and Madeline L. Novak. Additional research was carried out and final selections were made by John M. Morse. The Geographical Names section was prepared by Daniel J. Hopkins. The other back matter sections were prepared by Mark A. Stevens, C. Roger Davis, and outside contributor Orin Hargraves. Robert D. Copeland arranged for

Content Data Solutions, Inc., to convert the dictionary data files to a suitable format before typesetting them. The converted files were checked by Donna L. Rickerby. Daniel B. Brandon keyed revisions into the converted data files and contributed other technical help. Thomas F. Pitoniak directed the book through its typesetting stages. Project coordination and scheduling were handled by Madeline L. Novak, who was also chiefly responsible for the book's typography and page design.

Our notions about what this book could and should be continued to develop as we progressed through the different stages of editing, and many of the people named above made useful suggestions that led to changes, both minor and major, in the book's style and content. Further changes were implemented thanks to comments and suggestions from a group of consultants who reviewed a selection of entries at a fairly late stage in the project. We gratefully acknowledge the important contributions of those consultants, whose names are listed below.

We want first of all to express our thanks to Jerome C. Su, President of the Taiwan Association of Translation and Interpretation and Chair of Bookman Books, Taiwan, China, for all of his advice and good suggestions at the reviewing stage and throughout the project. Our other consult-

ants, all of whom provided us with carefully considered and valuable feedback, were Virginia G. Allen, author and educator, Ohio State Univ.; James H. Miller, ESL teacher; Elizabeth Niergarth, ESL instructor/consultant, Harvard Univ.; Susan Despres Prior, ESL teacher; Caroline Wilcox Reul, lexicographer and ESL teacher; Maggie Sokolik, Director, Technical Communication Program, College of Engineering, Univ. of California, Berkeley; Yukio Takahashi, English teacher, Sendai Shirayuri Gakuen High School, Sendai, Japan; Gregory Trzebiatowski, Headmaster, Thomas Jefferson School, Concepción, Chile (and his students Felipe Opazo, Paula Reyes, and Carolina Sanhueza); and Rob Waring, author and educator, Notre Dame Seishin Univ., Okayama, Japan.

All of the editors who worked on this book have of course had the experience of studying a foreign language, with varying degrees of success. This project has given us renewed opportunities to understand what it is like to approach English—with all its complexities, subtleties, and apparent inconsistencies—as a learner rather than as a native speaker, and that experience has reminded us again of just how challenging the task of learning a new language truly is. We hope and believe that *Merriam-Webster's Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* is a resource that will make that task easier for students of English.

Stephen J. Perrault
Editor

Using the Dictionary

Entries

The entries in the dictionary are arranged in alphabetical order according to their **headwords**.

Headwords are the boldface words — at the beginning of an entry.

bane /'beɪn/ *noun* [singular]: a cause of trouble, annoyance, or unhappiness — usually used in the phrase *the bane of* • The ugly school uniforms were *the bane of* the students' lives. • She was *the bane of* my existence. [=she made my life very unhappy, difficult, etc.]

Dots within headwords show the places where you can break a word and add a hyphen if all of it will not fit at the end of a line of print or writing.

gar-gan-tuan /gɑː'gæntʃəwən/ *adj* [more ~; most ~]: very large in size or amount : GIGANTIC • a creature of gargantuan proportions • a gargantuan appetite

A blue underline highlights the headwords of **3,000 basic English words** selected by Merriam-Webster editors as being the most important for learners to know.

achieve /ə'fɪ:v/ *verb* **achieves; achieved; achiev-ing**
1 [+ obj]: to get or reach (something) by working hard • This year, our company was able to *achieve* [=accomplish, attain] all of its production goals. • He worked hard and *achieved* success. [=became successful]

You will sometimes find two or more headwords that are spelled exactly alike and that have small numbers attached to them. These entries are called **homographs**.

Homographs often are related words that have different parts of speech. For example, the noun *lecture* and the verb *lecture* are entered in this dictionary as separate homographs.

¹lec-ture /'lektʃə/ *noun, pl -tures* [count]
1: a talk or speech given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject • a *lecture* about/on politics • She's planning to give/deliver a series of *lectures* on modern art. • Several hundred people are expected to attend the *lecture*.
2: a talk that criticizes someone's behavior in an angry or serious way • I came home late and got a *lecture* from my parents. • I gave her a *lecture* about doing better in school.
²lecture *verb -tures; -tured; -tur-ing*
1 [no obj]: to give a talk or a series of talks to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject • She *lectures* (to undergraduates) on modern art at the local college. • She *lectures* in art at the local college.
2 [+ obj]: to talk to (someone) in an angry or serious way • They *lectured* their children about/on the importance of honesty. • I *lectured* her about doing better in school.

Some homographs are words that are spelled the same way but are not related at all. For example, there are two different nouns in English that are spelled *calf*. Those two nouns are not related to each other and are treated as separate entries in this dictionary.

¹calf /'kæf, Brit 'kɑ:f/ *noun, pl calves* /'kævz, Brit 'kɑ:vz/ [count]
1: a very young cow
2: the young of various other large animals (such as the elephant or whale)
— compare ²CALF
²calf *noun, pl calves* [count]: the muscular back part of the leg below the knee — see picture at HUMAN — compare ¹CALF

Idioms and phrasal verbs are shown in alphabetical order at the end of the entry that they relate to.

pave /'peɪv/ *verb* **paves; paved; pav-ing** [+ *obj*] : to cover (something) with a material (such as stone, tar, or concrete) that forms a hard, level surface for walking, driving, etc. • The crew was *paving* the road. • Some of the roads were *paved over*. • The driveway is *paved* with concrete. • a *paved* highway/road • It was said that this country was so rich, the streets were *paved with/in gold*.

pave over [*phrasal verb*] **pave over (something) or pave (something) over** *disapproving* : to cover (an area) with roads, parking lots, buildings, etc. • All this beautiful farmland will be *paved over*.

pave the way for (something or someone) : to make it easier for something to happen or for someone to do something • The discovery *paves the way for* the development of effective new treatments.

Some words are shown without definitions at the very end of an entry. The meaning of these words can be understood when you know the meaning of the main entry word that they are related to. For example, when a word ends in a suffix like *-ly* or *-ness*, you can understand the word's meaning by combining the meaning of the base word (the main entry) and the meaning of the suffix.

con-cise /kən'saɪs/ *adj* [*more ~; most ~*] : using few words : not including extra or unnecessary information • a clear and *concise* account of the accident • a *concise* summary • a *concise* definition

— **con-cise-ly** *adv* — **con-cise-ness** *noun* [*noncount*]

Pronunciations

The **pronunciations** in this dictionary are written using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The symbols used are listed in a chart on page 22a.

Pronunciations are shown between a pair of slashes / / following the entry word. Only one pronunciation is given for most words. This is the most commonly used pronunciation.

fal-la-cious /fə'leɪʃəs/ *adj* [*more ~; most ~*] *formal* : containing a mistake : not true or accurate • a *fallacious* [=false] set of assumptions • *fallacious* [=misleading] arguments

— **fal-la-cious-ly** *adv* — **fal-la-cious-ness** *noun* [*noncount*]

Additional pronunciations are shown when the word can be pronounced in different ways that are equally common.

apri-cot /'æprə,kɑ:t, 'eɪprə,kɑ:t/ *noun, pl -cots* [*count*] : a small orange-colored fruit that is related to the peach and plum — see color picture on page C5

Pronunciations are not shown at every entry. If homographs have the same pronunciation, the pronunciation is written only at the first homograph (as the entries above for *calf* show). If the homographs are pronounced differently, a pronunciation is written at each homograph.

¹pres-ent /'preznt/ *noun, pl -ents* [*count*] : something that you give to someone especially as a way of showing affection or thanks : GIFT • a birthday/Christmas/anniversary/wedding *present* • Here's a *present* for you from John. • I gave/got her a book as a *present*. • Did you wrap the *presents*? — compare ¹PRESENT

²pre-sent /prɪ'zent/ *verb -sents; -sent-ed; -sent-ing* ¹ [+ *obj*] : to give something to someone in a formal way or in a ceremony • He *presented* the queen with a diamond necklace. • He was *presented* with a medal at the ceremony. • She *presented* a check for \$5,000 to the charity.

Pronunciations are not usually shown for entries like *gag order* that are compounds of two or more words which have their own entries.

gag order *noun*, *pl* ~ **-ders** [*count*] chiefly US, law : an order by a judge or court saying that the people involved in a legal case cannot talk about the case or anything related to it in public ▪ The judge has issued a *gag order*. — called also (*Brit*) *gagging order*

Pronunciations are not shown for most undefined words that end in a common suffix, such as *-ly* or *-ness*. Pronunciations are also not shown for the plurals of nouns, the past tenses of verbs, etc., if they are formed in a regular way.

bar-ba-rous /'bɑ:bərəs/ *adj* [*more* ~; *most* ~]
1 : not polite or proper : very rude or offensive ▪ His behavior was *barbarous*. ▪ They used *barbarous* language.
2 : very cruel and violent ▪ It was a *barbarous* [=barbaric] crime. ▪ a *barbarous* custom
- bar-ba-rous-ly *adv* — **bar-ba-rous-ness** *noun* [*non-count*]

'gab /'gæb/ *verb* **gabs**; **gabbed**; **gab-bing** [*no obj*] *informal* : to talk a lot in an informal way usually about things that are not important or serious ▪ They stayed up late *gabbing* (away) on the phone. ▪ *gabbing* about the weather
- gab-ber *noun*, *pl* **-bers** [*count*] ▪ talk radio *gabbers*

When only the last part of a pronunciation is shown, the missing part can be found in a full pronunciation shown earlier in that same entry. In this example, only the last syllable is shown for the pronunciation of the plural *formulae*. The pronunciation of the first two syllables of *formulae* is the same as the pronunciation of the first two syllables of the singular *formula*.

for-mu-la /'fɔ:mjələ/ *noun*, *pl* **-las** also **-lae** /-li:/

Most of the pronunciations in this dictionary should be considered standard American pronunciations, showing how words are typically pronounced in many parts of the United States. For some words, a British pronunciation is also provided.

British pronunciations are shown when the most common British pronunciation is very different from the American pronunciation.

flask /'flæsk, Brit 'flɑ:sk/ *noun*, *pl* **flasks** [*count*]
1 : a container that is shaped like a flattened bottle and that is used to carry alcohol ▪ a *flask* of whiskey — called also *hip flask*
2 : a glass bottle used in scientific laboratories
3 *Brit* : THERMOS

Spelling

Some words can be spelled in different ways. These additional spellings are called **variants** and are entered after the main entry words and after either *or* or *also*.

The word **or** is used when the variant is as common as the main entry word.

han-kie or **han-ky** /'hæŋki/ *noun*, *pl* **-kies** [*count*] *informal* : HANDKERCHIEF

1 **sa-vor** (US) or *Brit* **sa-vour** /'seɪvə/ *noun*, *pl* **-vors** *formal*
1 [*count*] : a good taste or smell — usually singular ▪ She enjoys the *savor* of a baking pie. ▪ There was a *savor* in the dish that I couldn't identify. ▪ a *savor* of mint ▪ an earthy *savor*
2 [*noncount*] *literary* : the quality that makes something interesting or enjoyable ▪ Without her love, life has lost its *savor* for me.

The word **also** is used when the variant is less common than the main entry word.

Ha-nuk-kah also **Cha-nu-kah** /'hɑ:nəkə/ *noun*, *pl* **-kahs** [*count*, *noncount*] : an eight-day Jewish holiday that is celebrated in November or December

A label in parentheses () after a headword tells you where that spelling is used. The example shown here indicates that the spelling *ampule* is used in U.S. English. Notice that the spelling *ampoule* does not have a *US* or *Brit* label. This means that it is common in both U.S. and British English.

am-pule (US) or **am-poule** /'æm.pju:l/ *noun*, *pl* **-pules** or **-poules** [count] : a small glass container used to hold a fluid that is injected into someone through a needle

The word *chiefly* is used to tell you that a word or variant is very common in a specified country or region but that it is also sometimes used in other countries or regions. The example shown here indicates that the British spellings *grey* and *greyish* are also sometimes used in U.S. English.

²gray (US) or *chiefly Brit grey* *noun*, *pl* **grays**
1 [count, noncount] : a color that is between black and white : a color that is like the color of smoke * wearing *gray* * shades of *gray* — see color picture on page C1
2 [count] : something (such as an animal) that is gray
 — **gray-ish** (US) or *chiefly Brit grey-ish* /'greɪʃ/ *adj*

Definitions

The definitions in this dictionary are written in simple and clear language. If you are unsure about the meaning of a word that is used in a definition, you can look that word up at its own entry in the dictionary and find its meaning explained there.

Most definitions begin with a boldface colon.

gait /'geɪt/ *noun*, *pl* **gaits** [count] : a particular way of walking * He has an awkward *gait*. * an easy/unsteady *gait*

Some definitions are written as notes that describe how a word or phrase is used. Those definitions begin with a dash.

earliest *noun*
at the earliest — used to indicate the earliest possible time when something will happen or be done * The job will not be finished until next year **at the (very) earliest**. [=it will not be finished before next year] — compare **LATEST**

Some definitions are written as complete sentences and begin with the ♠ symbol.

¹gorge /'gɔːdʒ/ *noun*, *pl* **gorg-es** [count]
1 : a deep, narrow area between hills or mountains
2 ♠ If **your gorge rises** you feel sick, disgusted, or angry. * My *gorge rises* [=I feel very angry] when I think of children living in such bad conditions. * a disgusting odor that **made my gorge rise** [=made me feel like vomiting]

Synonyms and Antonyms

Synonyms are words that have the same meaning. A word that is shown in small capital letters in a definition is a synonym of the word that is being defined. The example shown here indicates that the word *seafarer* has the same meaning as *sailor*.

sea-far-er /'siː,fərə/ *noun*, *pl* **-ers** [count] *old-fashioned* : someone who works or travels on a boat or ship on the sea
 : SAILOR

For some words, the only definition shown is a synonym. You can read a full definition by looking at the entry for the synonym.

dust-cart /'dʌst,kɑːt/ *noun*, *pl* **-carts** [count] *Brit* : GARBAGE TRUCK

The synonyms of an entry are often shown at the end of the entry or sense in a **called also** note.

garbage truck *noun, pl ~ trucks* [count] *US* : a truck used to take away garbage that people put outside their houses, buildings, etc., in bags or cans — called also (*Brit*) *dustcart*; see picture at **TRUCK**

Synonyms are also frequently shown in square brackets within examples.

ram-bunc-tious /ræmˈbʌŋkjəs/ *adj* [*more ~; most ~*] *US* : uncontrolled in a way that is playful or full of energy • a class full of *rambunctious* [=boisterous, (*Brit*) *rumbustious*] children • a *rambunctious* crowd/audience

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. When a word has an antonym, it is shown at the end of the entry or sense.

op-ti-mist /ˈɑ:ptənist/ *noun, pl -mists* [count] : a person who usually expects good things to happen • You have to be a bit of an *optimist* to start a business. • Somehow he remained an *optimist* despite all that had happened to him. — opposite **PESSIMIST**

Examples

Examples of how a word is used are provided at most of the entries and are printed in blue.

flustered *adj* [*more ~; most ~*] : upset or nervous • She seemed *flustered* when he asked about her past. • Don't do anything to get him *flustered*. • He was too *flustered* to speak.

Some examples have explanations that are given in square brackets.

ga-lo-re /gəˈlɔ:/ *adj, always used after a noun, informal* : in large numbers or amounts • The store promises bargains *galore* [=promises that there will be many bargains] during its weekend sale.

Some examples show different ways of saying the same thing.

2 game *adj* **gam-er; -est**
1 : willing or ready to do something • "Do you feel like going to the movies tonight?" "Sure, I'm *game*." • They were *game* for anything. = They were *game* to try anything.

Many **common phrases** are highlighted in examples and are sometimes followed by explanations.

be-hav-ior (*US*) or *Brit* **be-hav-iour** /bɪˈheɪvjə/ *noun, pl -iors*
1 : the way a person or animal acts or behaves [*noncount*] I'm surprised by her bad *behavior* toward her friends. • Students will be rewarded for good *behavior*. • scientists studying the *behavior* of elephants • normal adolescent *behavior* • criminal *behavior* • an interesting *pattern of behavior* = an interesting *behavior pattern* • The children were all *on their best behavior* [=were all behaving very well and politely] at the museum. • Inmates may be released from prison early *for good behavior*. [=because they have followed prison rules and have not caused problems]

Examples that show collocations and other common word groups are introduced by a brief note.

in-struct /ɪnˈstrʌkt/ *verb* **-structs; -struct-ed; -struct-ing** [+ *obj*] *formal*
1 : to teach (someone) a subject, skill, etc. — usually + *in* or *on* • His friend *instructed* him *in* English. • Many doctors are *instructing* their patients *on* the importance of exercise. • She *instructed* us *on* how to interpret the text.
2 a : to give (someone) an order or command • She *instructed* us that we were to remain in our seats. — usually followed by *to* + *verb* • She *instructed* us *to remain* in our seats. — often used as (*be*) *instructed* • We were *instructed to remain* in our seats. **b law** : to give an order or an explanation of a law to (a jury) • The judge *instructed* the jury that they should disregard the testimony of the last witness.
3 Brit : to hire (a lawyer) to represent you in a legal case • She advised him to *instruct* a solicitor.

Words that are shown in parentheses in an example are optional words, which means that they can be included or omitted without changing the basic meaning of the example.

²hiss *verb* **hisses; hissed; hiss-ing**

- 1** [*no obj*] : to produce a sound like a long "s" : to make a hiss • The radiator *hissed* as it let off steam. • a *hissing* noise
2 : to show that you dislike or disapprove of someone (such as a performer or speaker) by making a hiss [*no obj*] The audience booed and *hissed* (at him) when he came on stage. [+ *obj*] The audience *hissed* him off the stage.
3 [+ *obj*] : to say (something) in a loud or angry whisper • "Leave me alone!" he *hissed*.

A slash / is used between words in an example or phrase when either of the words can be used in the same place in that example or phrase. Words separated by slashes in examples do not always have the same meaning.

cat-nap /'kæt,næp/ *noun, pl -naps* [*count*] : a short period of sleep ; a brief nap • He took/had a *catnap*.
 – **cat-nap** *verb -naps; -napped; -nap-ping* [*no obj*] • She closed her eyes to *catnap* while her friend drove the car.

flu-o-res-cent /flu'resnt/ *adj*

- 1** : producing light when electricity flows through a tube that is filled with a type of gas • a *fluorescent* light/lamp
2 : very bright • *fluorescent* colors/clothing • *fluorescent* tape/paint

Forms and Tenses

When a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb has different forms or tenses, those forms or tenses are shown in boldface at the beginning of the entry immediately after the label *noun, verb, adj, or adv*.

A noun's **plural form** is shown when one or more of its senses can be plural. The abbreviation *pl* is used to mean *plural*. Often just the last part of the plural form is shown.

ho-tel /hou'tel/ *noun, pl -tels* [*count*] : a place that has rooms in which people can stay especially when they are traveling : a place that provides food, lodging, and other services for paying guests • check into a *hotel* • check out of a *hotel*

ho-tel-i-er /hou'teljə/ *noun, pl -iers* [*count*] : a person who owns or operates a hotel

When the plural form of a compound noun is shown, a special symbol ~ is used to represent the first word or words of the noun. In the example shown here, the plural form of the noun *flower bed* is *flower beds*.

flower bed *noun, pl ~ beds* [*count*] : an area where flowers are planted

All verb entries show these three forms: the **present third-person singular form**, the **past tense**, and the **present participle**. [See pages 1936–38 for grammar help on verb tenses.] In many cases, only the last parts of the forms are shown.

¹blink /'blɪŋk/ *verb* **blinks; blinked; blink-ing**

ga-lumph /gə'lʌmf/ *verb -lumphs; -lumphed; -lumph-ing* [*no obj*] *informal* : to move in a loud and clumsy way • I could hear him *galumphing* around in the attic.

When the **past participle** and the past tense of a verb are different, the past participle is also shown after the past tense.

¹drive /'draɪv/ *verb* **drives; drove** /'droʊv/; **driv-ing** /'drɪvɪŋ/

Some **adjectives** and **adverbs** have **comparative** and **superlative** forms which are shown in boldface at the beginning of the entry. These forms are often created by adding **-er** or **-est** to the main entry word. The entry for *short* indicates that the comparative form is *shorter* and the superlative form is *shortest*. [See also *Grammatical Labels* (below) for more information about the treatment of comparative and superlative forms.]

1 short /'ʃɔ:t/ *adj* **short-er**; **-est**

Sometimes the comparative and superlative forms are very different from the main entry word.

1 good /'gʊd/ *adj* **bet-ter** /'betə:/; **best** /'best/

When an entry has both an American and a British spelling, the forms and tenses are shown only for the American spelling in order to save space. For example, the entry for *harbor* shows only the American plural *harbors*. If you are using the British spelling, of course, the plural should be *harbours*.

1 har-bor (US) or Brit **har-bour** /'hɑ:bə/ *noun*, *pl* **-bors** [*count*]

Grammatical Labels

In addition to having a part of speech label, such as *noun*, *verb*, or *adj*, many entries include one or more **grammatical labels** which are shown in square brackets and which tell you the different forms or uses of a particular noun, verb, adjective, etc. When these labels appear at the beginning of the entry, they describe the entire entry. They can also appear at individual senses in an entry, and they can be used to introduce a particular example or group of examples.

Most nouns are labeled [*count*], [*noncount*], [*count, noncount*], [*singular*], or [*plural*]. [See pages 1927–28 for grammar help on nouns.]

An entry or sense for a noun is labeled [**count**] when it has both a singular and a plural form.

heart-beat /'hɑ:t,bi:t/ *noun*, *pl* **-beats** [*count*] : the action or sound of the heart as it pumps blood • The patient had a rapid *heartbeat*. • irregular *heartbeats*

An entry or sense for a noun is labeled [**noncount**] when it does not have a plural form and when it refers to something that cannot be counted.

heart-burn /'hɑ:t,bɜ:n/ *noun* [*noncount*] : an unpleasant hot feeling in your chest caused by something that you ate • I like spicy food, but it gives me *heartburn*.

When a noun can be used as both a count and a noncount noun, it is sometimes given a [**count, noncount**] label.

sedge /'sedʒ/ *noun*, *pl* **sedg-es** [*count, noncount*] : a plant like grass that grows in wet ground or near water

An entry or sense for a noun that is always used in its plural form is labeled [**plural**].

long johns /'lɔ:n,dʒɑ:nz/ *noun* [*plural*] : underwear that covers your legs and that is worn in cold weather — called also (US) *long underwear*; see color picture on page C12

An entry or sense for a noun that refers to one thing and is never used in a plural form is labeled [**singular**].

2 glow *noun* [*singular*]

1 : a soft and steady light • We could see the *glow* of the lamp in the window. • The town's lights cast a *glow* on the horizon.

Most **verbs** in this dictionary are labeled as either [+ *obj*] or [no *obj*] or both. Other types of verbs have these labels: [*modal verb*], [*linking verb*], or [*auxiliary verb*]. Verbs labeled [*phrasal verb*] are entered as phrases at the end of a verb entry. [See pages 1930–31 for grammar help on verbs.]

An entry or sense for a verb that has an object is labeled [+ *obj*]. A verb of this kind is known as a **transitive verb**.

²graze *verb* **grazes; grazed; grazing** [+ *obj*]
¹ : to touch or hit (something) while moving past it • The car's wheel *grazed* the curb. • He was *grazed* by a bullet.

An entry or sense for a verb that does not have an object is labeled [no *obj*]. A verb of this kind is known as an **intransitive verb**.

¹gab /'gæb/ *verb* **gabs; gabbed; gab-bing** [no *obj*] *informal*
 : to talk a lot in an informal way usually about things that are not important or serious • They stayed up late *gabbing* (away) on the phone. • *gabbing* about the weather
 – **gab-ber** *noun*, *pl* **-bers** [count] • talk radio *gabbers*

An entry or sense that is labeled [*linking verb*] does not express action but is used to say that something exists or is in a particular state. It connects an object with an adjective or noun that describes or identifies a subject.

be-come /bi'kʌm/ *verb* **-comes; -came** /-'keɪm/; **-come; -com-ing**

¹ [*linking verb*] : to begin to be or come to be something specified • Although I've known him for years, we didn't *be-come* close friends until recently. • She won the election, *be-come*ing the first woman to be President of the nation. • They both *became* teachers.

An entry or sense that is labeled [*auxiliary verb*] is used with another verb in order to show the verb's tense, to form a question, etc.

be /'bi:/ *verb*...

¹⁰ [*auxiliary verb*] — used with the past participle of a verb to form passive constructions • The money was *found* by a child. • They *were* [=got] *married* by a priest. • Don't *be* *fooled* by what he says. • Please *be* *seated*. [=please sit down] • The election was *expected* to produce a very close result. • God *be* *praised!* [=let God be praised] • I *was* *surprised* by her rudeness.

An entry or sense that is labeled [*modal verb*] is used with another verb to express an idea about what is possible, necessary, etc.

¹can /kən, 'kæn/ *verb*, *past tense* **could** /kəd, 'kʊd/ *present tense for both singular and plural* **can; negative can-not** /'kænat, kə'nɑ:t, *Brit* 'kænət/ or **can't** /'kænt, *Brit* 'kɑ:nt/ [*modal verb*]

¹ : to be able to (do something) • I don't need any help. I *can* do it myself. • I *can't* decide what to do. • All we *can* do [=the only thing we can do] now is wait. : to know how to (do something) • She *can* read, *can't* she? • I *can* whistle. : to have the power or skill to (do something) • A weight lifter *can* lift a very heavy weight. • She *can* play the piano. • Only Congress *can* do that. : to be designed to (do something) • a car that *can* hold five people [=a car that has enough room for five people] • How fast *can* [=does, will] the car go?

A verb that is labeled [*phrasal verb*] is a verb that is used with a preposition, an adverb, or both.

²pal *verb* **pals; palled; pal-ling**
pal around with [*phrasal verb*] *informal* **pal around with (someone)** chiefly *US* : to spend time with (someone) as a friend • She's been *pal-ling around with* a girl she met at school.
pal up [*phrasal verb*] chiefly *Brit*, *informal* : to become friends with someone • They *palled up* when they were neighbors long ago. • He *pals up* with anyone who can help his career.

The **comparative** and **superlative** forms of some **adjectives** and **adverbs** are formed by adding the letters *-er* and *-est* at the end of the word or by changing the word completely. Other adjectives and adverbs are given their comparative and superlative forms by using the words *more* and *most*. [See pages 1931–34 for grammar help on adjectives and adverbs.]

When a word has comparative and superlative forms that use the words *more* and *most*, the word is given the label [*more* ~; *most* ~]. This label also means that an adjective or adverb can be used with words like *very* and *slightly*. The example shown here means that you can say that one thing is “more complicated” than another, that something is the “most complicated” one of a group, that something is “very complicated,” etc.

com-pli-cat-ed /'kɑ:mplə'keɪtəd/ *adj* [*more* ~; *most* ~] : hard to understand, explain, or deal with ▪ The game's rules are too *complicated*. ▪ a *complicated* situation ▪ a very *complicated* issue : having many parts or steps ▪ The machine has a *complicated* design. ▪ a *complicated* plan ▪ a *complicated* mathematical formula

Sometimes the comparative and superlative forms of an adjective or adverb can be formed in two different ways. The word *or* is included in the label when the *more/most* forms are as common as the *-er/-est* forms. When the *more/most* forms are much less common, *also* is used.

drea-ry /'dri:ri/ *adj* **drea-ri-er; -ri-est** [*or more* ~; *most* ~] : causing unhappiness or sad feelings : not warm, cheerful, etc. ▪ It was a gray, *dreary* morning. ▪ She longed to leave her *dreary* [=gloomy, dismal] hometown. ▪ The family struggled through *dreary* economic times.

¹**small** /'smɑ:l/ *adj* **small-er; -est** [*also more* ~; *most* ~] **1** : little in size ▪ They live in a *small* house. ▪ a *small* glass of soda ▪ She moved to a *smaller* town. ▪ The toy is *small* enough to fit in my pocket. ▪ He has *small* hands. ▪ This room is a little *smaller* than that one.

Sometimes the label [*more* ~; *most* ~] is shown only at a specific sense. In the example shown here, the first sense of *muscular* cannot be used with words like *more*, *most*, and *very*, but the second sense can.

mus-cu-lar /'mʌskjələ/ *adj*
1 : of or relating to muscles ▪ *muscular* strength/weakness ▪ a *muscular* injury
2 [*more* ~; *most* ~] : having large and strong muscles ▪ a *muscular* athlete ▪ He has a *muscular* physique. ▪ His legs are very *muscular*.
– **mus-cu-lar-i-ty** /'mʌskjələ'ri:ti/ *noun* [*noncount*]

When an adverb is shown at the end of the entry for an adjective that has a [*more* ~; *most* ~] label, the label is not repeated for the adverb, but it also describes how the adverb can be used. In the example shown here, both the adjective *querulous* and the adverb *querulously* can be used with words like *more*, *most*, and *very*.

quer-u-lous /'kwɛəjələs/ *adj* [*more* ~; *most* ~] *formal* : complaining in an annoyed way ▪ The child said in a *querulous* [=whining] voice that he didn't like carrots. ▪ *querulous* customers
– **quer-u-lous-ly** *adv* – **quer-u-lous-ness** *noun* [*noncount*]

Other Labels

Many entries include labels such as *formal*, *informal*, *US*, *Brit*, etc. [See page 21a for a list of the labels that are commonly used in this dictionary.]

When a label appears at the beginning of an entry, it describes the entire entry, including any undefined words that may appear at the end of the entry. In the example shown here, the label *formal* means that both senses of *mendacious* are formal, and that the adverb *mendaciously* and the noun *mendaciousness* are also formal words.

men-da-cious /mɛn'deɪʃəs/ *adj* [*more* ~; *most* ~] *formal*
1 : not honest : likely to tell lies ▪ a *mendacious* businessman
2 : based on lies ▪ The newspaper story was *mendacious* and hurtful. ▪ a *mendacious* political campaign
– **men-da-cious-ly** *adv* – **men-da-cious-ness** *noun* [*noncount*]