

Working with
words from the
new basic
dictionary

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mere
team
plant
glass
week
dwell
large
night
meat
cry distribute
not signify neat
log apply plural
stern niece kilt

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by Rosemary Border

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**Working with words from
the new basic dictionary**

Errata

page 51 crossword 5

3 down is a seven-letter word.

The eighth square should be black.

page 75 crossword 5 *Across*

11 LIP 12 STRANGERS

Introduction

Pronouncing the alphabet

How letters of the alphabet are pronounced depends on what language you speak. ABCD are /a be: se: de:/ in French and /ei bi: si: di:/ in English, so it is worth learning (from the phonetic symbols and examples below) how to pronounce the letters of the alphabet in English.

Aa	ei	able	Nn	en	<i>end</i>
Bb	bi:	<i>bee</i>	Oo	əu	<i>owe</i>
Cc	si:	<i>see, proceed</i>	Pp	pi:	<i>pea</i>
Dd	di:	<i>deed</i>	Qq	kju:	<i>queue</i>
Ee	i:	<i>eager, me</i>	Rr	a:*	<i>car, arm</i>
Ff	ef	<i>effort</i>	Ss	es	<i>essay</i>
Gg	dʒi:	<i>genius</i>	Tt	ti:	<i>tea</i>
Hh	eɪtʃ	<i>Rachel</i>	Uu	ju:	<i>you, uniform</i>
Ii	ai	<i>high, eye, I</i>	Vv	vi:	<i>veal</i>
Jj	dʒei	<i>jay (a bird), Jane</i>	Ww	ˈdʌblju:	<i>double you</i>
Kk	kei	<i>came, cake</i>	Xx	eks	<i>next, extra</i>
Ll	el	<i>elephant</i>	Yy	wai	<i>why, wine</i>
Mm	em	<i>embassy</i>	Zz	zed	

Exercise 1 Now spell these words aloud in English.

make, lazy, quick, John, box, soft, view, pride, jealous, important, god, overcome, dictionary, valuable, phonetic, gaiety, campaign, thief, entertain, definition

■ Pairs of letters – as in *see, room, immense*, etc. are known as *double e, double o, double m*, and so on.

Exercise 2 Spell these words aloud: hitting, cartoon, greenhouse, effective, willing, exaggerate, apparent, carriage, occupy, messenger, abbreviate, puddle, puzzle, grinning

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1 How to use the dictionary

1 Finding words

The words in this dictionary are in *alphabetical order*. *Able* comes before *bad*, because *a* comes before *b* in the alphabet. Similarly, *abandon* comes before *able* because the third letter *a* of *abandon* comes before the third letter *l* of *able*.

Exercise 1 Which of each pair comes first?

EXAMPLE metal/metaphor: *metal* comes first.

uproar/uproot; risk/rise; overflow/overcome; trench/trend;
born/bore; deep/deer; landscape/landlord; glory/glove; note/not;
exist/exhibit

Exercise 2 Put these groups of words into alphabetical order.
Check your answers in the dictionary.

EXAMPLE awful, awkward, barber, bargain, community,
commuter

a axle, aware, active, axe, about, actual, appear, above, awe,
appeal, avenue, awake, avenge, abroad, ancestor

b wheel, waist, when, wild, wait, will, wallet, workshop, willing,
wing, write, wrap, worship, worry, wrong

2 Parts of speech

Each headword in the dictionary has an abbreviation after it, e.g. *commonwealth (n)*. This tells you what *part of speech* the word is – that is, what it does in the sentence. From the list of

abbreviations on page vi of the dictionary you will see that *commonwealth* is a noun.

The exercises that follow will give you some practice in using different parts of speech. Before you do each exercise, make sure you understand how the parts of speech work. If you look up *adj* in the list on page v of your dictionary, you will find notes and examples on adjectives. When you have read and understood these, you will be ready to try the exercise.

■ *Adj* – adjective.

Exercise 3 Look up each of the following words in your NBD, then look at the picture that illustrates each word. Think of two adjectives to describe each one:

EXAMPLE snake: Long, poisonous snake

island, hut, worm, frog, van, turkey, spade, elephant, caterpillar

■ *Pred adj* – predicative adjective. (There are very few which are only used predicatively, i.e. after the verb, not before the noun.)

Exercise 4 Underline all the adjectives in the sentences below and then say which can only ever be used predicatively by writing a *p* after them:

- a The old man was still alive.
- b The fat, grey cat was asleep by the fire.
- c The exam was very easy, and the boy was ashamed when he failed.
- d That tall man and his son are very alike.
- e The room was grey and cold. Stella was still awake. She was afraid of the long shadows.

■ *Adv* – adverb.

Exercise 5 Underline all the adverbs in the following sentences:

- a He plays the piano well.
- b Pick up that vase carefully and put it here on this table.
- c It was a fairly big house and I never thought she would ever consider living there.
- d I didn't particularly like the book, although I definitely enjoyed the film.

■ **Art** – article. The only two articles are *a* (or *an*) and *the*.

Exercise 6 Which of the words in the list below take *a* and which take *an*? Write down the rule for using *a* and *an*, then check your answer by looking up *a* in the dictionary.

amount	elephant	fish	uncle
daisy	idea	orphan	holiday
cow	tape	worm	gale

The is pronounced /ði:/ before a vowel and /ðə/ before a consonant. Decide whether you would say /ði:/ or /ðə/ with each word in the list above.

■ **Conj** – conjunction.

Exercise 7 Put the correct conjunctions from the following list into the spaces in the sentences.

as, after, although, but, because, and, before, unless

a Peter always drives Sarah home he is very tired; then he calls a taxi.

b Peter was very tired, he still drove Sarah home.

c Peter was very tired, he did not drive Sarah home that night.

d Peter was very tired he had been playing tennis all day.

e Peter was tired, he still drove Sarah home.

f Peter was very tired his head ached too.

g he could drive Sarah home, Peter had to check the car lights.

h he had driven Sarah home, Peter went to bed.

■ **N** – noun.

Exercise 8 Make three columns with a ruler. Write *person* at the top of the first column, *thing* at the top of the second and *quality* at the top of the third. Now put each of the following nouns into the column where they belong:

EXAMPLE	<i>person</i>	<i>thing</i>	<i>quality</i>
	Mrs Jones	tòy	patience

crown, fish, Dr Smith, farmer, log, John, love, merchant, Jill, desire, generosity, Mr Miller, honesty, ability, sausage, Mary, scooter, happiness, grief, Shakespeare

■ *Pref* – prefix.

Exercise 9 Look up each of the following prefixes in the dictionary and write down its meaning: anti-, dis-, mis-, pre-, un-, re-. In the following list, separate the prefix from each word and write down the meaning of the whole word.

EXAMPLE misunderstand = mis+understand = to understand wrongly

misuse, disagree, rewrite, uninteresting, disapprove, reread, unhelpful

■ *Prep* – preposition.

Exercise 10 Look up the following prepositions in the NBD and write a short sentence using each one:

behind, above, on, through, along, at, in, under, for, beside, before, in front of, over, after

■ *Pron* – pronoun.

Exercise 11 Here is part of a nonsense rhyme by Lewis Carroll. How many different pronouns does he use? Which pronouns are they?

They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him:
She gave me a good character,
But I said I could not swim . . .

I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Though they were mine before . . .

Don't let him know she liked them best,
For this must always be
A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me.

■ *V* – verb.

Exercise 12 Look up the following verbs and use them in sentences:

venture, solve, kneel, quarrel, neglect, agree

■ **Phrasal v** – phrasal verb. (Phrasal verbs are very common in English.)

Exercise 13 Look up the main verbs *make, get, do, run, be*. Make a list of the phrasal verbs under each, e.g. *make for*. Read the entries in the NBD carefully to make sure you understand the meaning of each phrasal verb. Then use each one in a sentence of your own.

Exercise 14 Can you say what parts of speech the words underlined are?

- a Every morning, the milkman leaves two bottles of milk outside the door.
- b I don't usually get up before eight, unless there is a train to catch.
- c What are you writing about?
- d Sally is terribly afraid of spiders, but she isn't at all afraid of beetles.
- e Remember, when you add un- to a word, you always change the meaning.

3 Definitions

The NBD *defines* each word, except where a picture would be more helpful. For example, it's very hard to show the difference in words between a *duck* and an *eagle*. If you look them up you will see the difference.

Sometimes you know exactly what you want to say, but you don't know the English word. If you can *define* the word you want, all is well. If your *definition* is clear enough, someone will understand and supply the missing word. The next two exercises will help you to practise definitions.

Exercise 15 Without looking at the dictionary, try to define these words. If you think a picture is more helpful than a definition, write *p* beside the word.

remind, daisy, flame, dragon, tense(adj), wink, naked, explain, zip, absent

Exercise 16 Now here are some definitions (a–j). There is a list of words at the end. Find the right word for each definition.

- a** Strong building with high walls which can be defended against enemies
- b** Showing no interest
- c** Put into the ground and cover with earth
- d** The feeling of being pleased
- e** Keep within a small space
- f** Building in which horses are kept
- g** Red or white drink made from grapes or other fruit
- h** Something which makes you better when you are ill
- i** Showing thought for others
- j** High shoe, especially for bad weather

fort, boot, indifferent, bury, confine, pleasure, medicine, kind, wine, stable

4 Words which look the same but have different meanings

A word can mean different things according to how it is used in a sentence. So, in *What kind of dog is this?* the word *kind* means something different from *kind* in *She is always kind to animals*. The dictionary, with its examples, will help you in situations like this.

Exercise 17 With the help of the dictionary, say what each of the words in *italics* means.

- a** I hope that hot dish hasn't left a *mark* on my polished table.
John got twenty *marks* out of twenty for English.
- b** We used a drill to *bore* a hole in the wall.
Poor Sam is such a *bore* when he tells those old jokes.
- c** The *train* to London leaves in ten minutes.
Footballers have to *train* hard for every match.
- d** *Mind* you don't fall.
I don't *mind* walking in the rain.
- e** The suitcase was very *light*.
I shall wear my *light* green coat.

- f** *Turn* left at the church.
Whose *turn* is it to wash the car?
- g** I was not *able* to go to the meeting.
Sally is a very *able* girl, who should pass her exams easily.
- h** That excuse he gave you isn't *true*.
This isn't a *true* diamond; it's made of glass.

5 Look it up

If any definitions, or examples, contain a word you do not know, look it up in the dictionary.

Exercise 18 Look up the meanings of these words:

polished, drill, match, entertaining, wages, sword, church, pass

Is there anything in those definitions, or in the examples, that you do not understand? Look it up.

6 Pronunciation

Beside every item in the dictionary you will see phonetic symbols (e.g. *ordinary* is ['ɔ:dnri]). On page viii you will find a list of the symbols, each with an example of a word in which it is used.

■ English words are not always pronounced as they are spelt, but the phonetic symbols are there to give you the right pronunciation.

Exercise 19 Look up the following words and pay particular attention to the phonetic symbols because the actual spelling will probably mislead you:

cough, meagre, freight, foreign, tough, swamp, quay, odour, nightmare, neighbour

■ Many words are spelt the same, but are pronounced differently. You can [rəʊ] down the river, or have a [raʊ] (argument). Both are spelt *row*.

Exercise 20 Find the right phonetic symbols for each of the words in italics, and then pronounce them out loud. No two words should sound the same.

a *Wind* the string round the stick.

The *wind* blew her hat off.

b *Lead* is a heavy metal.

Will you *lead* the singing?

c I saw a real *live* elephant today.

I *live* in London.

d We *use* wood to make paper.

What's the *use* of worrying?

e The actor took a *bow* at the end of the show.

You play the violin with a *bow*.

7 Stress

There is a mark (ˈ) which tells you where the stress falls on a word. All the words of more than one syllable have the stress mark before the stressed syllable. So *centre* is [ˈsenta] but *cigar* is [siˈga:]

Exercise 21 Every word except one in each group has the same stress pattern. Use your dictionary to find the word which doesn't follow the same stress pattern as the others.

EXAMPLE monument, analyse, magistrate, *incomplete*, possible

a prepare, invoke, essence, accept, engage

b illiterate, caterpillar, colloquial, magnificent, enthusiast

c lecture, adult, effort, modest, outdo

d compose, employ, impart, harvest, molest

Exercise 22 Here are some pairs of words. Some pairs have the same stress patterns, some have not. Can you say which?

EXAMPLES *city/many* have the same pattern; *invest/recent* have not.

surround/forgive; underwear/management; migrate/refuge;

refuse/impart; accent/accept; comprehend/underneath;

challenge/midnight; remedy/develop; offer/polite;

comment/combine

Exercise 23 Some words are stressed differently according to what part of speech they are. So *contract* can be a noun ['kɒntrækt] or a verb [kən'trækt] . Now look up the pronunciation and stress patterns of the following words. Can you find a rule which works for all of them?

transport, conflict, progress, increase, contest, survey, rebel, convict, object, conduct, record, desert, protest

2 Spelling

1 English spelling

English words come from so many different sources that it is hard to make firm rules about spelling. Many words which sound easy to spell are quite difficult (*knife*, *chemist*). Others, although they are longer and sound difficult to spell, are really quite easy, since they are spelt exactly as they are pronounced.

Reading helps you to learn how words should look on the printed page. A correct spelling soon begins to look 'right' to you. A wrong one looks odd.

The best way of checking your own spelling is to use a dictionary. But you may have trouble finding your word if you are not too sure how to spell it. For example, *immediate*. Perhaps you forget that it has two *ms*. You look near *imagine* – it is not there. So you have to ask yourself: one *m* or two? You look again and find *immediate* between *imitate* and *immortal*.

There are, however, a few rules.

■ 'I before E, except after C' is one rule. So you have *believe*, *relief*, *thief*, but *receive*, *deceit*, etc. (Note that this rule applies only when *ie* or *ei* are pronounced /i:/). In words like *vein* and *society* it does not apply.)

Exercise 1 Look these words up in your NBD and put in *ei* or *ie*: an Indian *ch...f*; *gr...f* at someone's death; to *conc...ve* a child; to *bes...ge* a castle; to *perc...ve* a mistake; a cruel *dec...ver*

■ If the word has got just one syllable and has only one vowel, then a final, single consonant is doubled before endings that start with a vowel or vowel sound. For example: *hit+ing =*

hitting, big+er = bigger, rob+ed = robbed, sun+y = sunny, hot+est = hottest.

But, notice, *dread+ed = dreaded* (no double *d* because there are two vowels) and *wreck+ing = wrecking* (no double *k* because there are two consonants at the end, not one).

Double the final consonant, too, if the stress is on the last syllable of longer words. For example: prefer+ing = preferring, occur+ed = occurred.

Exercise 2 Make the present participles (the *-ing* form) for the following:

sob, clean, run, slip, record, dig, refer, pat, stop, drown

Exercise 3 Make the comparatives (the *-er* form) of the following: big, great, dim, hot, cold, red, fit, thin, light

■ *-ise* or *-ize* at the end of a verb is difficult for English people too. Not all publishers use the same spelling, so you may see *realise* in one book and *realize* in another. Both are acceptable. Some words, like *surprise* and *advertise*, take *s* all the time. But always look them up in the dictionary.

Exercise 4 Using your NBD to check, add *ise* or *ize* to the following:

apolog ...; recogn ...; adv ...; exerc ...; organ ...; pract ...; disgu ...; fertil ...; jeopard ...; real ...

■ *-ant/-ent* and *-ance/-ence* endings can be hard too, unless you have learnt and remembered some Latin. But if you check each word in the NBD you will soon find yourself writing *independent* and *ambulance* correctly every time. The word-building games later in the book will help you.

Exercise 5 Checking in your NBD, put *an* or *en* in the following spaces:

a dist ... t star; a faithful serv ... t; an impati ... t man; great assur ... ce; an attractive appear ... ce; suspicious circumst ... ces; an indiffer ... t wine; an innoc ... t man

Here are some exercises to test your spelling:

Exercise 6 There are some pictures from the NBD on p.12. What are the things? Write down the name of each thing pictured.

