Oxford Student's Dictionary of Current English

A S Hornby Christina Ruse

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What this dictionary can tell you about English

Spelling

gorg-eous / go:doss/adj 1 nchly coloured magnificent: a superiors surset. 2 (informal) system pleasure and suppriors surset. 2 (informal) system participations gorg-eous-ly adv.

bur-glar, / psglo(r), ic a person who meaks into a house clear night in order tusteal. 'burglar alarm' nc a device used to want of bursglars.

NASA / mass/ acconyer. National A cromstress and Space Administration (the 198 are station) department for space exploration).

mkt written abbr (commerce) market.

col-our (US = col-or) /kale(r) in the (also

for-til-ize (also -ise) / familiar/ vt 1 to make

mys-tery / miston/ n (pl -ies) 1 nc something of

ba-sis /'besss/ no (pl bases /-si:z/) If the basic ad-mit /sd'mu/ ν (-tt-) 1 νt , νt admit (stb; to

eat /i:t/ v (pt ate /et/, pp eaten /'i:tn/) 1 vi to

un-hap-py /,an'hapi/ adj (-ier, -iest) not happy.

For detailed information, read Appendices 1 and 2.

headword

derivative

For an explanation of these words, read pages F7–8.

compound

abbreviations are given in the main text of the dictionary with full information

American spelling

correct alternative spelling

plural form

an irregular plural

the last letter is doubled before you add -ed or -ina

irregular verb forms

comparative and superlative forms

Meaning

bake /beik/ v 1 vavi (of fish, vegetables, cakes etc) to cook, be cooked, by dry heat in an oven: bake bread/potatoes/apples.

al-so ['o:lsou] adv 1 in addition: I love chips and I also like peas. Also, I like tomatoes. I can also hold a spider.

how /bao/ adv . . .

In what state of health (when referting to a person): How's your mother? (N) 'How' always refers to health. When asking about a person's character, appearance etc use What is . . . like? as in What's your new teacher like? a simple explanation

examples of how the word is used in sentences

a full note, with examples, on a common error when this word is used in sentences

Grammar

how or craft //havelcraft/ nc a vehicle that neil? /hed/ vt 1 to theren, join etc (something)

EEC /i: i: 'si: ſ abbr (the —) the European Economic Community. ⇔ the Common Market.

con-sist /kon'sist/ vi (no passive) (N) Not used in the continuous tenses, e.g. 'is/was -ing'. 1 consist

III /il/ adj 1 (pred) in poor health: He's very ill. Unwashed fruit can make you seriously ill. She's been ill-with measles/worry. Does society care about mentally ill people? Compare well(1). be taken/fall ill to become ill. 2 (attrib) bad: She suffers from ill health. The ill effects of the weather are obvious: He's noted for his ill manners. Com-

con trary | / kontrori | adj (pred) contrary to sth opposite to something: What you have done is

de-pend-ance /dr'pendens/ nu dependence (on sb/sth) 1 the state of being supported by

edge2 /edg/ v 1 vt edge sth (with sth) to

press² /pres/ v

press ahead (with sth) to continue (an activity) using a determined effort: press ahead with urgent reforms.

press down on sb to be a heavy burden: The new taxes pressed down on everyone.

press (sb) for sth to demand (from a person) action, a decision etc often and strongly: press for a new enquiry, be pressed for sth to have (almost) too little of something; be pressed for ime/money/space.

press on (with sth) = press ahead (with sth).

Usage

min-ute¹/mar'nju:t/ adj (no comp, but the minutest can be used for emphasis) 1 very small: minute particles of dust. 2 giving small details; careful and exact; the minutest details.

be) paid for something: the cost of repairs/of renting a flat/of tearning to drive; without regard to cost (= without considering how much money would be needed). (A) 'Cost' is used when referring to an amount to be paid (e.g. for building, repairs, paying fees etc) which involves paying people for labour, materials, rent, meals etc. 'Price' is used when referring to payment to be paid when buying individual things as in shops. 'Cost' is also used for general expenses such as running a car, living expenses etc.

parts of speech — for an explanation of vt and vi or nc and nu, read pages F14–16

'the' is always used before 'EEC'

'I am consisting. . .', 'It has been consisting. . .' etc are not possible

this meaning of 'ill' is used after a verb. . .

this meaning of 'ill' is used before a noun — for detailed information, read pages F17–18

shows that a particular preposition is used after the word

the uses of verbs with an adverb or preposition are listed at the end of the entry for the verb — for detailed information, read pages F14-15

the special use of the superlative

a simple explanation of a common difficulty with choosing between two words that have similar meanings

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orate /o:'reit/ vi (formal) to speak in public.

fiv-or /farva(r)/ nc (informal) a £5 note.

data bertalisase nc (computers) a collection of information ready for processing in a computer.

car-ni-vore /kannvor(r)/ne (science) an artisti that eats meat. Gompare herbivore, installative, omnivore.

pro-tag-on-let /pre'tagonst/ nc (literature) the main character in a drama or novel. Compare entagonist(2).

econ-omi-cal /i:ka'nomikl/ adj careful in using money, time, supplies etc: an economical statem for heating water. Opp uneconomical.

grave¹ /grerv/ adj (—r, —et) serious; very sad and disappointing; grave news. ⇒ gravity(2).

real /riol/adj existing in fast; not imagined or artificial: Was it a real man you saw or a glocal. Things that happen in real life are sometimes stronger than in stories. Who is the real manager of the business? Tell me the real (= true) reason for your anger. Compare genuine, unreal.

fa-mous /'femas/ adj known widely; having fame: a famous scientist. Compare infamous.

words that are used in particular situations are labelled

references to opposites, related words and words that are often confused

Spoken English

read-or /'ri:da(r)/ nc 1 a person who reads, esp

'day-long adj, adv (lasting) for the whole day. ,day-re'turn nc (also attrib) a ticket to travel to a place and back on the same day.

May /mei/ n (also attrib) the fifth month of the year, with 31 days: He came on 6 May. (1) '6 May' is spoken as 'May the sixth' or 'the sixth of May'.

special symbols show how each word is spoken, and the marks, and 'show stress for detailed information, read page F20

a note on special problems when saying a written sentence or phrase

Make the best use of your dictionary

These notes will show you how to use this dictionary. Read all of this section so that you know the ways in which this dictionary can help you.

You can use this dictionary to find a spelling or meaning of a word but you can also use it to increase your vocabulary, learn English grammar and improve your ability to form many kinds of sentences.

Find the word you need

If you have any problems with the spelling of the word, read Appendix 1 at the back of this dictionary.

Use the word in the top corner of each page (called a *running head*) to find the page that has the word you are looking for.

For example, brand is on page 75:

bow

74 75

broad

low bow.

bows /ban/nc (often pl) the front end of a boat or ship.

bows /ban/nc 1 wi to bend the head or body for-

bows /bau/ v 1 vi to band the head or body forward (as a greeting etc): They bowed low. bow and scrape to behave with too much respect in order to get a person's favour. 2 vt to bend ('head) forward: They bowed their heads in pr

disgrace. 6 a piece of burning which (in a fire).
brand² /brand/ vt 1 to mark (cattle, goods etc)
with a brand⁴(3). 2 (fig) to give (a person) a bad
name: She has been branded as a thief.

bread /bred/ nu 1 (also attrib) a kind of food made by mixing flour with water and yeast and

The running heads show the words that are included in pages 74–75 of the dictionary.

A single word

The word you are looking for is in **thick black letters**. It is put into the dictionary in one of three ways:

A word such as bottle, happy, run, through has a complete entry in the dictionary with numbered meanings and examples. It is in thick black letters and is called a headword:

hap-py /hæpi/ adj (-ier, -iest) 1 feeling or expressing pleasure, contentment, satisfaction etc: a happy face/child. Their marriage has been a happy one.

headword

If a word is used in two or more grammatical forms (e.g. as a *noun* and a *verb*, or as an *adj*, *adv* and *pron*), each form is given a separate entry in alphabetical order (e.g. the *noun* entry comes before the *verb* entry) and the headwords are numbered:

bottle¹ /'botl/ nc 1 a container with a narrow neck, used for liquide a filter totale; a bottle of (= filled with) wine. 2 a much as a bottle holds:

Many drinks two bottles of will a day.

bottle² /botl/ vi 1 to out, more, (something) in bottles; bottle file. 2 house at any file) to be unable of unwilling to cappen feelings, anger.

numbered headwords

If a word has two or more completely different meanings, each meaning is given a separate entry and the headwords are numbered:

grate / /great/ se (a metal frame for holding coal ctcin) a trechees

grate² (grent/ n sing a banch noise made by scraping (esp metals). Here are of a door on its larges,
grate² (grent/ v 1 into min (esp food) into small
pieces; grate classes. The grate (or stif) to make
a barsh moise by rubbing: The grate grates on its
hinges. 3 vi grate (or ab) (fig.) to have an irritating offect (on a person): The bad manners grated
on everyone. on everyone.

numbered headwords

☐ A word such as happily, laziness, rearrangement is formed by adding -ly, -ness, -ment etc to a word. This changes the grammatical form (e.g. happy (adjective) becomes happily (adverb)) but the meaning is almost the same. A word of this kind is called a derivative and it is in thick black letters at the end of the entry for the main word (e.g. happy):

hap py /hepif adj hap-pily /-alif adv hap-pi-ness

derivatives in alphabetical

☐ A word such as air letter, face-cloth, haircut is formed by joining two words together. It can be written as two words, as one word with a hyphen or as a single word. This new word has a different meaning from the meaning of the words that form each part. A word of this kind is called a compound and it is in thick black letters at the end of the entry for the word that forms the first part:

Tace-1 /fes/ no
Tace-ache no (his deve) an annoying person.

Tace-cloth is a small square towel used for
machine the last and bands.

washing the face and bands face-cream may time of deam for cleaning and

softening the me
'face-lift at is a form of surgery to make the
face look younger. (b) (fig) an improvement to
the appearance (of a building etc)
face-less day (fig) unknown to the public: the
faceless leaders of commerce and industry.
'face-powder nu cosmetic powder for the face.
'face-saving adj ⇒ face¹(2).

compounds in alphabetical order

A group of words

The word you are looking for may be part of a group of words, e.g. check on a person/something, be in good hands, hold one's tongue, the man in the street, first of all, and these are in thick black sloping letters. There are many kinds of groups but it will help you to remember that they are usually one of three kinds:

☐ A group of words such as check on a person/something, be in good hands, hold one's tongue is a verb with a special meaning. The meaning

is not the same as the meaning for a verb (e.g. check, be, hold) that forms part of the group. There are two kinds of groups like these:

a verb followed by a word like about, down, in, on, up (e.g. check on a person/something). This is in thick black sloping letters in the entry for the verb. If there are more than two of these in an entry, they are put at the end of the entry for the verb:

check2 /t fek/ v 1 vt, vt to examine (something) in order to learn whether it is correct: check the bill; check the time. ⇒ check on sb/sth. 2 vt to cause (an emotion, feeling etc) to stop. He couldn't (an emonon, teening eit) to stop. He committee this anger, a unchecked. 3 vt, vi (chess) to call, make, a check(d).

check in (at sth) to arrive and register at a notel, airport, Hence 'check-in nc a place at an airport ets where one checks in for a flight.

check sb/sth off to mark a person, item et as, correct, present, dealt with etc using a list: check off their names. \ich checklist.

of their names, a creatives, check on sb/sth to examine, confirm, something, a person's health etc. check on the score; check on the baby; check on a candidate, check out (of sth) to pay the bill, return keys etc and leave (a hotel) check sb/sth out (informal) = check on sb/sth; \$\to\$ also check-out. check sb/sth over (informal) = check on sb/sth.

check through sth to check(1) a list or series (to find errors, identify one item, person etc). check up (on sb/sth) = check on sb/sth. ⇒ also

in alphabetical order ('on' comes before 'out', 'over' etc)

a verb with a noun like hand, tongue in the group (e.g. be in good hands, hold one's tongue). This is in thick black sloping letters in the entry for the noun. It is put at the end of the meaning of the noun that is nearest to the meaning of the group (e.g. hold one's tongue is at the end of tongue, meaning 1):

tongue /tan/ n 1 nc the movable organ in the mouth, used in talking, tasting, licking etc: A mouth, user in taking, tasting, texting etc: A white layer on your tongue can be a sign that you are ill. have a rough tongue to have a habit of being rude or bad-tempered, on the tip of one's tongue \$ ip^1(1), have one's tongue in one's cheek to say something that one does not intend to be taken seriously. have lost one's tongue to be too say to speak, have a sheer tongue to be too say to speak. have a sheer tongue to be seedle angreed critical etc. sharp tongue to be easily angered, critical etc. hold one's tongue to be silent, stop talking. put one's tongue out (at sb) to do this as a rude sign. 2 nc.nu (also attrib) an animal's

in alphabetical order ('have' comes before 'hold' etc)

☐ A group of words such as the man in the street has a special meaning. The meaning is not the same as the meanings for the separate words that form the group. This is in thick black sloping letters in the entry for the first main word, usually a noun (e.g. man). It is put at the end of the meaning that is nearest to the meaning of the group (e.g. the man in the street is at the end of man1, meaning 1):

man' /mæn/ n (pl man /men/) 1 nc (often used in combinations) an adult male human being: a postman/clergyman. There's a man at the door. man and boy from boyhood onwards: He has worked for the firm, man and boy, for thirty years. the man in the street a person regarded as representing the interests and opinions of ordinary people. a man of the world a person with wide experience of business and society. 2 (usually pl;

in alphabetical order ('street' comes after 'boy' and before 'world')

Because it is often very difficult to know where to find a group like this in the dictionary, there are references (using \Rightarrow) to send you to the right place:

boy /boi/nc 1 a male person up to the age of 17 or 18.

boyish. jobs for the boys (informal) appointing one's own supporters, the people one likes etc to (senior) jobs. man and boy
man¹(1). 2 a son: He has two boys and one girl.

Look at the entry for man1.

☐ A group of words such as *first of all* has a special meaning. It is in **thick black sloping letters** in the entry for the first main word (e.g. *first*). It is put at the end of the meaning that is nearest to the meaning of the group (e.g. **first of all** is at the end of **first²**, meaning 1):

first² /f3:st/ adv 1 before any other or others: I saw her first. What will do you first? First, I'd like to thank my wife. Compare last²(1), next²(1). first of all (used for emphasis): First of all we must rescue the children. first and foremost (used for emphasis) before anything else: First and foremost you must check that the electricity is off. 2 for the first time: I first met her in Paris

in alphabetical order ('all' comes before 'foremost')

Because it is often very difficult to know where to find a group like this in the dictionary, there are references (using \Rightarrow) to send you to the right place:

all³ /o:l/ pron. nu . . . first/last/ second of all < first²(1), last²(1), second². 2 Look at the entry for **first**² meaning **1**.

Look inside the front cover of the dictionary. There is a chart that has the information about how to find the word you need.

Find the meaning you need

You have found the word you need but you need the right meaning or use:

Each meaning in a main entry begins with a thick black number, 1, 2, 3 etc (called a *definition number*). The meanings are organized so that the one used most often and in most situations comes first. The last meanings are

ones that are less used, more formal or used in special situations like science or a particular sport. Read each numbered meaning until you find the one you need.

If you are still not sure about which meaning to choose, read all the examples that follow the meanings. These will help you to understand the meanings better.

of) an expectation or hope: I see no/little/not much prospect of his recovery. There are good prospects for me if I accept the job. 2 nc a wide-ties over land or sea. 4 m senetling that is likely. We must face the prospect of higher bus farer. 4 nc a person who is likely to be successful, to buy one's goods etc. He's a good prospect for

definition number, meaning, examples

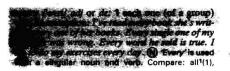
Some entries have information about when the word is used (e.g. formal, informal; science, sport) to help you choose the right meaning or use of a word.

Choose the word you need

You have found the word you were looking for but you are not sure that it is the word you need:

First, you must read the entry carefully because you may find information that will make you sure.

You may be given a reference to another entry for a word that is used in similar ways. For example, at **every** you are asked to compare the use of *all*:



Compare the meaning and use of 'all'.

If you look at **all**¹, you will find information to help you choose between every and all:

If adj or det ... If who is number of: All students need a good distinguity. (I) 'All' and 'every' can have the same meaning but 'all' is used with a plural noun, as in All towns have a post office, and 'every' is used with a singular noun, as in Every town has a post office. Similarly, in the negative, 'not all' is used with a plural noun and 'not every' with a singular noun, as in Not all towns have/Not every town has a hospital.

an explanation of the differences between 'all' and 'every' and how each word is used in a sentence

You may be given a reference to the entry for another word that is often confused with the word you have found. For example, at **continuous** you are asked to compare 'continual':

constinu-ous/kartmins/adj going on withous stopping: a continuous struggle for human rights.

Compare continual.

Look at the meaning and use of 'continual'.

When you have read the meanings and examples for both words, you can decide which one to choose.

You may be given the more usual word as the explanation but only if that word is very easy:

commence (ke) mens/ it (format) to begin (the more usual word). (N) For a comperison of commence, begin and start, ⇒ the note at begin(1).

'Commence' means 'begin' and 'begin' is used much more often. Look at begin for detailed information.

Write the word you have chosen

The biggest problems when you write a word in a sentence are spelling and grammar.

Spelling

There is information in thick black letters about spelling the forms of a word when it is used in sentences:

For details about spelling forms of verbs, look at the section on spelling in Appendix 2 at the back of this dictionary.

For details about spelling forms of other words, look at Appendix 1 at the back of this dictionary.

Word-division

There is one special problem when you write words. Near the end of a line of writing you may find that you do not have enough room to write the next word. The best thing to do is to begin that word on the next line.

Sometimes, especially if you are typing, you may want to divide the word at the end of a line and put part of it on the next line. This is called word-division. The places where a word can be divided are shown in the headword using a thick black dot:

every-body ex-amine ex-cla-ma-tion

You can divide the word at a place where there is a · by putting the part before the · at the end of a line and adding a hyphen (e.g. every-) and then putting the part after the · at the beginning of the next line (e.g. body). Always divide a compound at the place where the two words that form it are joined:

eye-shadow love-letter ring-leader

Grammar

There is a great deal of information about grammar in this dictionary. To help you make the most use of it, there are no codes, no difficult labels and no complicated abbreviations. Here is an explanation of how grammar is described for verbs, nouns and adjectives.

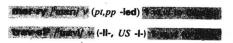
Verbs

We have most difficulty with verbs. This dictionary gives detailed information that is easy to learn and use.

Look at Appendix 2 at the back of the dictionary where there is a chart that shows all the verb tenses and their passive forms. This chart will help you to identify the tenses and choose the one you need. If you are not sure about which tense to use, look at the entry for the tense (e.g. past perfect) in the dictionary.

Under the chart there is useful information about particular verbs and sentences.

There is also a section in Appendix 2 on spelling verb forms (e.g. -d, -ed and -ied) and doubling last letters (e.g. dragged, beginning). These forms are also given in thick black letters at the entry for the verb in the dictionary:



The past forms are 'married'.

In British English the final letter is doubled in the past tenses and the -ing form.

At the end of Appendix 2, there is a complete list of verbs with irregular forms. These forms are also given at the entry for the verb in the dictionary:

(pt sang /sæŋ/, pp sung /sʌŋ/)

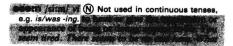
irregular forms for the past tense (e.g. I sang) and the past participle (e.g. I have sung) When you look at the entry for a verb, you will see vt or vi or vt, vi.

vt means that the verb (or a particular meaning of the verb if vt follows a definition number) is always followed by a noun or a noun phrase (e.g. I broke the cup). This is called a transitive verb. You cannot use a verb or meaning of a verb that is marked vt unless you use a noun or a noun phrase after it (e.g. I sold my bike, not 'I sold.').

vi means that the verb (or a particular meaning of the verb if vi follows a definition number) cannot be used before a noun or a noun phrase (e.g. I laughed or I laughed at her, not 'I laughed her dress.') This is called an intransitive verb.

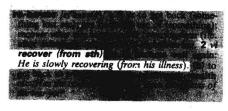
vt, vi means that the verb can be used with a noun or a noun phrase (e.g. I burned the wood) or without a noun or a noun phrase (e.g. It burned easily).

Other special difficulties when using a particular verb are given at the entry in the dictionary:



'It is seeming', 'He was seeming' etc are not possible. Use a tense that does not have -ing such as 'It seems all right', 'He seemed to be working'.

If the verb is used with a particular group of words, this is given in **thick** black sloping letters in the entry for the verb:



'Recover' is used on its own or with 'from something' as shown in the example. No other addition (e.g. 'in something', 'to something' etc) is possible.



'Rely' is always used with 'on a person' or 'on something'. 'I rely.' is not possible.

() round some words in the group shows that these words can be used with the verb or you can leave them out (e.g. Will he recover? and Will he recover from his illness? are both possible). If there are no (), you must use all the words in the group (e.g. You can rely on me, not 'You can rely.').

/ in a group of words shows that you have a choice. Rely on sb/sth means that You can rely on me and You can rely on this dictionary are both possible.

Sometimes you will find () and / used in the same group:

sth) to save (a person, thing) (from danger, disaster, attack, being field presoner etc): resculing a child (from drowning); rescue a business by lending money. The following choices are possible: rescue a person, rescue something, rescue a person from another person, rescue a person from something, rescue something from a person, rescue something from something.

This use of () and / is the same in every entry (for nouns, adjectives etc as well as verbs) and every part of an entry (in explanations, examples, idioms etc).

If you remember these easy rules about the use of () and /, you can often use a verb in many ways in sentences and you will quickly increase your use of English.

Nouns

There is a section in Appendix 1 on spelling noun forms (e.g. -s, -es, and -ies).

All -ies forms and irregular plural forms are given in thick black letters at the entries for nouns in the dictionary:

fly /flar/ nc (pl flies) a kind of two-winged insect

one fly, two flies

child /t[aid/ nc (pl children /tfildren/) 1 a

one child, two children

When you look at the entry for a noun, you will see nc or nu or nc, nu.

nc means that the noun (or a particular meaning of the noun if nc follows a definition number) can be used with a/an/one and in the plural. This is called a *countable noun*.

nu means that the nouns (or a particular meaning of the noun if nu follows a definition number) cannot be used with a/an/one and cannot be used in the plural. This is called an uncountable noun.

houses /hasa/nc (pl - e /haszz/). I a building for people to live in: New houses are going up everywhere.

in for me them (into meisn/ nu news, facts or knowings given: Tracts a systal piece/bit of information

stance in the form of sheets, used for writing, printing, drawing, wrapping, packing etc: a sheet of paper, a page tas 2 nc = newspaper: the

'A house', 'the house', 'two houses' etc are possible.

Only 'information' and 'the information' are possible.

Only 'paper' and 'the paper' are possible with this meaning

'A paper', 'two papers' etc are possible with this meaning.

nc,nu means that the noun (or a particular meaning of the noun if nc,nu follows a definition number) can be used in the singular (with or without a/an/one) and in the plural:

mar-riage /meridy/n 1 nc, nu (an instance of) a legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife; the state of being martied: Do you believe in marriage? (= Do you think people should marry?) A marriage has been arranged between Jane and Tom. a broken marriage one that has 'Marriage' can be used in either way, as shown by the examples.

Some nouns are always plural:

par-ticu-lars /po'tikjoloz/ n pl details: We need

'Particulars' is always used with a plural verb, e.g. are.

Some nouns are always singular:

man-ner/mæno(t)/n 1 nc a way in which something is done or happens: Do it in this manner. 2 n sing a person's way of behaving towards others: I don's like his manner. 3 (pl) social behaviour:

'a manner', 'his manner' etc but no plural

Some nouns are used with the (e.g. the police) and this is shown by (the —) at the entry for the noun:

po-lice /police/ npl (the —) an official group of

You must use 'the police' and not 'a police' or 'police'.

Other nouns are the names of unique things, e.g. the planet 'Earth', and these are marked n:

earth 1/3:0/ n 1 n (often E-) the planet on which

There is only one.

Some nouns are always used with a capital letter (e.g. *Highness*) or are often used with a capital letter (e.g. *Parliament*). These are shown at the entry in the dictionary:

high ness /hanns/ n 1 nu the state or quality of being high. 2 nc (H-) a title used of and to a royal person: His/Her/Your Royal Highness.

Only 'Highness' is possible with this meaning.

par lia ment / patement/ nc (also P-) a

'Parliament' is also used.

If the noun is used with a particular group of words, this is given in **thick** black sloping letters in the entry for the noun:

| lec-ture | /lektja(t) | nc | lecture | (about/on sth) a talk for the purpose of teaching it could be philosophy lectures.

The following choices are possible: a lecture, a lecture about something, a lecture on something

give sb a lecture and the person off or state one's disapproval

All the words in the group must be used.

() round some words in a group, e.g. **get (hold of) the wrong end of the stick**, shows that these words can be used with the noun or you can leave them out (e.g. He got the wrong end of the stick is also possible). If there are no (), you must use all the words in a group (e.g. I gave him a lecture) and you cannot change any (e.g. 'I wrote him a lecture' or 'I gave the lecture' are not possible with this meaning of lecture).

/ in a group of words shows that you have a choice (e.g. lecture (about/on sth) means that a lecture about something and a lecture on something are both possible).

Sometimes you will see () and / used in the same group as shown here (and so listen to a lecture is also possible).

Adjectives

There is a section in Appendix 1 on spelling comparative and superlative forms (e.g. -r, -st; -er, -est; -ier, -iest). These forms are given in thick black letters in the entry for the adjective in the dictionary:

fine: /fam/ ad (-r, -st) 1 (of weather) bright.

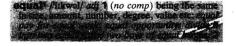
great /great ad (-er, -est) 1 well above aver
hap by /hap/ ad (-ier, -iest) 1 feeling or happier, happiest

Unusual comparative and superlative forms are also shown in **thick black** letters:

good god ad (better /'betə(r)/, best /best/) irregular forms

fact /bet/ ad (-ter, -test) 1 baving much fatter, fattest

Some adjectives have (no comp) which means that they cannot be used as a comparative or superlative (i.e. -r, -st etc and more . . ., most . . . are not possible).



'Equal' used with this meaning has no comparative or superlative.

In English we can use most adjectives before a noun or after a verb (e.g. 'It's a *red* ball' or 'The ball is *red*'). But when you look at an entry for an adjective, you will sometimes see (*attrib*) or (*pred*).

(attrib) means that the adjective (or a particular meaning of the adjective if (attrib) follows a definition number) can only be used before a noun (e.g. advance in an advance warning). This is called an attributive position.

Another common use of (attrib) is to show that a noun (e.g. family) is often used as an attributive (e.g. a family discussion = a discussion between members of a family):