

OXFORD  
ADVANCED LEARNER'S  
DICTIONARY  
OF  
CURRENT ENGLISH

A S Hornby

FOURTH EDITION

Chief Editor: A P Cowie

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## ABBREVIATIONS

abbr	abbreviation	n	noun
adj	adjective	neg	negative
adv	adverb	NZ	New Zealand
adv part	adverbial particle	pers	person, personal
app	appendix	phr v	phrasal verb(s)
approv	approving	pl	plural
arch	archaic	possess	possessive
art	article	pp	past participle
attrib	attributive	pred	predicative
Austral	Australian	pref	prefix
aux	auxiliary	prep	preposition
Brit	British (spelling, pronunciation, etc)	pres p	present participle
comb form	combining form	pres t	present tense
compar	comparative (form of an adjective, adverb)	pron	pronoun
		prop	proprietary
		pt	past tense
conj	conjunction	reflex	reflexive
def	definite	rel	relative
derog	derogatory	rhet	rhetorical
det	determiner	sb	somebody
emph	emphatic	Scot	Scottish
esp	especially	sing	singular
euph	euphemistic	sl	slang
fem	feminine	sth	something
fig	figurative	suff	suffix
fm	formal	superl	superlative (form of an adjective, adverb)
idm	idiom(s)		
illus	illustration	symb	symbol
indef	indefinite	US	United States (spelling, pronunciation, etc)
infin	infinitive		
inform	informal	usu	usually
interj	interjection	v	verb
interrog	interrogative	!	taboo
joc	jocular		
masc	masculine		

The tilde ( ~ ) is used in certain parts of an entry to replace the word in bold at the head of the entry.

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They are also grateful to Henning Madsen, managing director of Compulexis Ltd, and his staff, for their assistance in developing and supplying the software system used in the preparation of the dictionary.

## PREFACE

It is just over forty years since OUP published its first edition of the late A S Hornby's *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. This was a remarkable pioneering work, based on detailed research into aspects of English usage (including construction patterns and collocations) known to cause difficulties for foreign students, and reflecting a clear understanding of their needs as readers and writers of the language. Hornby perceived that proficiency in English implied the ability to compose as well as to understand, and that the learner's dictionary must be designed to develop both kinds of skill.

In planning the present edition I have built on the strengths of the Hornby tradition, giving close attention to grammatical words and patterns and even greater prominence than before to illustrative examples. But there are some major innovations, including a completely revised verb pattern scheme and a redesigned entry structure, facilitating access to idioms, derivatives and compounds, as well as to the individual senses of polysemous words. The dictionary has benefited from a four-year programme of basic research carried out by the OUP Lexical Research Unit at the University of Leeds, especially in its thematic treatment of verbs and nouns in the new Notes on Usage. It has profited greatly, too, from access to the very rich resources of the Oxford English Dictionary archive.

The fourth edition has drawn on the expert knowledge of several specialists. The late Professor A C Gimson was among the first to be involved in planning, but his untimely death deprived us of his guidance as work proceeded. The job of Phonetics Editor was taken on and very ably carried out by a close colleague, Dr Susan Ramsaran. She has provided, as a new feature, a full treatment of variant pronunciations and of stress in idioms and illustrative phrases.

This comprehensive revision has also called for collaborative effort by a large group of specialist editors and computer staff at Oxford. The result testifies to the commitment and professional skill of the whole team; but particular thanks are due to Moira Hardcastle, Richard Milbank and Ann Watson for carrying the responsibility for specific aspects of the revision over very long periods.

To the OALD Unit Manager, Jonathan Crowther, an additional measure of thanks is due. He has played a key role at every stage of the project and I pay tribute to him, in particular for his co-ordination of a complex computer program, his meticulous attention to the detail of dictionary organization and his exemplary editing.

A P Cowie  
*University of Leeds*

## KEY TO ENTRIES

← headword

**car-di-gan** /'kɑ:dɪgən/ *n* knitted woollen jacket, usu  
with no collar and with buttons at the front. ← definition of the headword

**pur-sue** /pə'sju:; US-'su:/ *v* [Tn] (*/ml*) 1 follow (sb/sth)  
esp in order to catch or kill; chase: *pursue a wild animal, one's prey, a thief* ◦ *The police pursued the stolen vehicle along the motorway.* ← examples of different uses of the headword

← alternative spelling of the headword

**fa-clia** (also **fas-clia**) /'feɪʃə/ *n* 1 = DASHBOARD (DASH').  
2 board, etc with a name on it, put above the front entrance of a shop.

← different word used with the same meaning

**lime** /laɪm/ *n* [U] 1 (also 'quicklime) white substance (calcium oxide) obtained by heating limestone, used in making cement and mortar and as a fertilizer. 2 = BIRDLIME (BIRD).

← number of the definition

**march** /mɑ:tʃ/ *v* 1 (a) [I, Ipr, Ip] walk as soldiers do, with regular steps of equal length: *Quick march!* is a military command to start marching ◦ *Demonstrators marched through the streets.* ◦ *They marched in and took over the town.* ◦ *march by, past, in, out, off, away, etc* ◦ *The army has marched thirty miles today.* (b) [I, Ipr, Ip] walk purposefully and determinedly: *She marched in and demanded an apology.* (c) [Tn-pr, Tn-p] cause (sb) to march: *march the troops up and down* ◦ *They marched the prisoner away.* ◦ *She was marched into a cell.* 2 (idm) **get one's marching orders**; **give sb his/her marching orders** (*informal or joc*) be told/tell sb to go; be dismissed/dismiss sb: *She was totally unreliable, so she got/was given her marching orders.* 3 (phr v) **march past (sb)** (of troops) march ceremonially past (an honoured guest, a high-ranking officer, etc), eg in a parade. ◦ **marcher** *n*: *freedom marchers* ◦ *civil-rights marchers.*

← letters to show closely related meanings

← start of the Idioms section

← idioms shown in bold print

la·bor·at·ory /lə'brɔ:təri/; US 'læbrətɔ:ri/ *n* room or building used for (esp scientific) research, experiments, testing, etc.

pronunciation of the headword with the different pronunciation used by speakers of American English

pi·geon /'pɪdʒɪn/ *n* 1 (a) [C] any of several types of

wild or tame bird of the dove family: a 'carrier-/'  
'*homing-pigeon*, ie one trained to carry messages or to race as a sport. ⇨ illus at App 1, page iv. (b) [U] flesh of a wild pigeon eaten as food: [attrib] *pigeon pie*.

2 (idm) 'one's pigeon (*informal*) one's responsibility or business: *I don't care where the money comes from: that's not 'my pigeon*.

put/set the cat among the pigeons ⇨ CAT¹.

stress marks in idioms and examples

reference to the headword where an idiom is defined

champ¹ /tʃæmp/v 1 [I, Tn] (esp of horses) chew (food)

noisily. 2 [Ipr, Tn] ~ (at/on)sth (of horses) bite at sth nervously or impatiently: *horses champing at the bit*.

3 [I, Ipr, It] ~ (at sth) (used esp in the continuous tenses) be eager or impatient, esp to begin sth: *He was champing with rage at the delay*. ○ *The boys were champing to start*. 4 (idm) *champ at the 'bit (informal)* be restlessly impatient to start doing sth.

champ² /tʃæmp/ *n* (*informal*) = CHAMPION (2).

headwords with the same spelling separated by different numbers

information about which preposition to use after the headword

special note on grammar or usage

part of speech label

headword and definition number where the meaning is given

shake¹ /ʃeɪk/ *v* (*pt shook /ʃuk/, pp shaken /'ʃeɪkən/*)

1 (a) [La, I, Tn, Tn-p, Cn-a] ~ sb/sth (about/around)

(cause sb/sth to) move quickly and often jerkily from side to side or up and down: *a bolt shaking loose in an engine*.

irregular forms of a verb with pronunciation

codes showing the verb patterns

safe¹ /seɪf/ *adj* (-r, -st) 1 [pred] ~ (from sth/sb)

protected from danger and harm; secure: *You'll be safe here*. ○ *safe from attack/attackers*. 2 [pred]...

comparative and superlative forms of the adjective

grammatical information about adjectives



**mouse** /maʊs/ *n* (pl **mice** /maɪs/) 1 (often in compounds) (any of several kinds of) small rodent with a long thin tail: a *house mouse* ◦ a *field-mouse* ◦ a *harvest-mouse* ◦ *illus.* 2 (*fig esp joc or derog*) shy, timid person: *His wife, a strange little mouse, never said anything.* ◦ *Are you a man or a mouse* (ie brave or cowardly)? 3 (*computing*) small hand-held device that is moved across a desk-top, etc to produce a corresponding movement of the cursor, with buttons for entering commands. ◦ *illus* at **COMPUTER.**

Irregular plural form of a noun with pronunciation

reference to an illustration on the page

labels giving information about usage

label showing specialist subject area

reference to an illustration at another entry

**ash** æʃ *n* (a) [C] tree commonly found in forests, with silver-grey bark and hard close-grained wood. ◦ *illus* at **App 1, page i.** (b) [U] its wood, used for tool handles, etc.

grammatical information about nouns

reference to an illustration in the Appendices

**ring** /rɪŋ/ *v* (pl **rang** /ræŋ/ *pp rang* /ræŋ/) 1 [I] make a clear resonant sound, usu like .hat of a bell being struck: *Will you answer the telephone if it rings?* ◦ *The metal door rang as it slammed shut.* ◦ *The buzzer rang when the meal was ready.* 2 [Tn, Tn-pr] cause (a bell, etc) to sound: *ring the fire alarm* ◦ *ring the bell for school assembly.* 3 [L.A] produce a certain effect when heard: *Her words rang hollow...*

start of the phrasal verbs section

10 (phr v) **ring off** (Brit) end a telephone conversation: *He rang off before I could explain.* **ring out** sound loudly and clearly: *a pistol shot rang out.* **ring sth up** record (an amount, etc) on a cash register: *ring up all the items, the total. £6.99.*

phrasal verbs (special uses of a verb with a particle or preposition) shown in bold print

**sad** sæd *adj* (-**dder**, -**dest**) 1 showing or causing sorrow; unhappy: *a sad look, event, story* ◦ *John is sad because his dog has died.* ◦ *I'm sad you're leaving.* ◦ *It was a sad day for us all when the school closed down.* ◦ *Why is she looking so sad?*

doubling of consonants in the comparative and superlative forms of the adjective

**chat** tʃæt *n* [C, U] (usu pl) informal conversation: *I had a long chat with her (about her job).* ◦ *That's enough chat - get back to work.* ◦ Usage at **TALK!**

reference to a usage note where words with similar meanings are compared

doubling of consonants before adding -ed and -ing to the verb

**chat** t-(tt)- [I] (pl tʃɒt-s (away)) *v* (to with sb) (about sth) have a chat: *They were chatting in the corner.*

**NOTE ON USAGE:** Both **long** and **a long time** are used as adverbial expressions of time. 1 **Long** is not used in positive sentences unless it is modified by another adverb, eg *too, enough, ago*: *You've been sleeping too long/long enough.* ◦ *She waited there (for) a long time.* 2 Both can be used in questions: *Have you been here long/a long time?* 3 In negative sentences there can be a difference in meaning. Compare: *I haven't been here for a long time* (ie it is a long time since I was last here) and *I haven't been here long* (ie I arrived here only a short time ago).

special paragraph explaining the differences between similar words and phrases

**re-ject** ˈrɪdʒekt v 1 [Tn, Cn-n/a] refuse to accept (sb/sth): *reject a gift, a possibility, an opinion, a suggestion* ◦ *a rejected candidate, applicant, etc* 2 [Tn] not give due affection to (sb/sth); rebuff: *The child was rejected by its parents.*

start of the derivative section

▷ **re-ject** ˈrɪdʒekt/ n rejected person or thing: *rejects from an officers' training course* ◦ *export rejects, ie damaged or imperfect goods* ◦ [attrib] *reject china, earthenware, etc.*

derivatives of the headword with pronunciation

**re-jection** ˈrɪdʒekʃn/ n (a) [U] rejecting or being rejected. (b) [C] instance of this: *Her proposal met with continual rejections.*

start of the compound section

□ **rejection slip** formal note from an editor or a publisher accompanying a rejected article, book, etc.

compound of the headword with a mark showing where the main stress falls

**pa-tho-logical** ˌpæθəˈlɒdʒɪkəl/ n 1 of or relating to pathology. 2 of or caused by a physical or mental illness. 3 (informal) unreasonable; irrational: *a pathological fear of spiders, obsession with death, hatred of sb* ◦ *a pathological (ie compulsive) liar.*

dots showing where a word can be divided when writing or typing

**pa-tho-logic-ally** kli/adv: *pathologically jealous, inebriated, etc.*

gloss in example to make clear the meaning of the headword in a particular case

**inch** ɪntʃ/ n 1 (abbr: in) measure of length equal to 2.54 cm or one twelfth of a foot: *a pile of books 12 inches high* ◦ App A, 5 2 small amount or distance:

reference to sections of the appendices

**jo-vial** /dʒəʊviəl/ *adj* very cheerful and good-humoured; merry. *a friendly jovial fellow* ◦ *in a*

*jovial mood.* → **jo-vi-al-ity** /dʒəʊvi'æləti/ *n* [U].

**jo-vi-ally** /-i:li/ *adv.*

derivatives that are close in meaning to the headword and are undefined

**au-tumn** /'ɔ:təm/ (*US fall*) *n* (U, C) the third season of the year, coming between summer and winter.

different word used in American English

**col-our** (*US color*) /'kɒlə(r)/ *n* 1 (a) [U] visible quality that objects have, produced by rays of light of different wavelengths being reflected by them:

different spelling used in American English

**joiner** /dʒɔɪnə(r)/ *n* (*Brit*) skilled workman who makes the wooden fittings of a building, eg window frames and doors. Cf **CARPENTER**.

reference to another headword with a related meaning

# USING THE DICTIONARY - A PRACTICAL GUIDE

This practical user's guide to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* has been written especially for students. The Guide does not try to provide a full explanation of all the kinds of information that are given, or how they are arranged. (If you need a detailed description you should turn to the section headed *Using the Dictionary - A Detailed Guide to the Entries* at the back.) Instead, it is written from the point of view of a student (ie you) wishing to find answers to the problems that you meet when trying to understand or use English. Generally, these problems are of two kinds:

A You need to know **how to look up words and their meanings** in the dictionary.

B You need to know **how to use words in speech or writing correctly** and appropriately.

You should try following the steps in this guide and looking up the examples shown before you start using the dictionary regularly. In this way you will begin to develop the reference skills needed to become a successful dictionary user.

## A FINDING WORDS AND MEANINGS

### SIMPLE WORDS

#### 1 What is a simple word?

A SIMPLE WORD (sometimes called a ROOT) is a word like *perhaps*, *read* or *police*. Roots cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful parts - unlike *reader* (a DERIVATIVE), which consists of *read* and *-er*, or *policeman* (a COMPOUND), which consists of *police* and *man*.

#### 2 How to look up simple words

Let us suppose that you've met this sentence:

*Perhaps your student will win a prize next year.*

This sentence consists entirely of simple words - there are no derivatives or compounds. Each word has its own special section (its own ENTRY) in the dictionary, and each appears at the top of its entry (in bold print) in the same spelling as in the sentence. Here are two entries which show this:

**per-haps** / pə'hæps, also præps *adv*: it may be (that); possibly ...

**stu-dent** /'stju:dnt; US 'stu:-/ *n* 1(a) person who is studying for a degree, diploma, etc at a university or some other place of higher education or technical training: a BA student ◦ a medical student...

#### 3 Simple words in the plural form, in the past tense, etc

Simple words, and derivatives and compounds too, take special endings (called INFLECTIONS) when they are being used in the plural or in a different tense, etc. Look at this example:

*Perhaps your students will win prizes next year.*

Here, *students* and *prizes* are the PLURAL forms of *student* and *prize*. But the entries you should refer to are those for **student** and **prize** (SINGULAR forms), as before. Now look at this:

*Your students won prizes last year.*

Here, *won* is the PAST TENSE form of *win*, and **win** is the entry you need to turn to. However, just in case you don't know that *win* and *won* are related, a special entry is provided at **won** to direct you to **win**:

**won** *pt, pp* of **win**.

#### 4 Different spellings of the same simple word

Sometimes a word has different spellings. Compare *banian* and *banyan* (the name of a kind of fig-tree). Now suppose that you

meet *banyan* for the first time, and want to find out its meaning. This spelling is given as an alternative at the entry for **banian**, like this:

**ban-ian** (also **ban-yan**) ... *n* Indian fig-tree ...

However **banian** and **banyan** are quite a long way from each other in alphabetical order (*banish, banjo, bank and banquet* all come in between). It is unlikely you would find the above entry if all you had was the spelling *banyan*. So a special entry is given at **banvan** to redirect you:

**ban-yan** → BANIAN.

### 5 Different words which have the same form

Sometimes, the same spelling of a word can be used in two or more different ways. *Fine*, for instance, can be a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb. In order to check its meaning you must know which entry to look at. Now suppose that you are faced with this sentence:

*Everyone thought that the fine was too heavy.*

You refer to **fine** in the dictionary and you find three numbered entries, including four part-of-speech labels (*n, v, adj, adv*):

**fine** ... *n* ... *Offenders may be liable to a heavy fine.*

**fine** *v* ... *The court fined him £500.*

**fine** ... *adj* ... *a very fine performance.*

**fine** ... *adv* ... *That suits me fine.*

Which of these entries will explain the meaning of *fine* as it is used in the sentence? Here are two strategies you can use: (a) Try to work out the part of speech of *fine* from clues in the sentence itself. Since *fine* is preceded by *the* and described by *heavy*, it is a noun. Or you can try: (b) Compare the words of your sentence with those of the examples. You will notice that *heavy* appears in your sentence and in an example in the noun section of the first entry (where it describes *fine*). So *fine* in your sentence is a noun meaning 'a sum of money that must be paid as a punishment'.

### 6 Looking for a meaning when a word has several meanings

Suppose that you read or hear the following sentences:

*Have you checked all the details of the report?*

*The attack has been checked on the central front.*

In both sentences *check* is used as a verb, not as a noun, so you need to refer to **check**<sup>1</sup>, not **check**<sup>2</sup> or **check**<sup>3</sup>. But the verb entry has several meanings. How do you decide which one is being used in each sentence? A helpful approach is to compare the words which accompany *check* in each sentence with those which accompany it in the various examples. Here is part of the entry:

**check**<sup>1</sup> ... *v* 1 ... (b) [Tn] examine (sth) in order to make sure that it is correct, safe, satisfactory ... *check the items against the list* ... *He must check his work more carefully* ... 2 (a) cause (sb; sth) to stop or go more slowly ... *check the enemy's advance* ...

If you now look back at your first sentence, you will notice that *details* (the object of *check*) is close in meaning to *items* in the first of the dictionary examples given here. You may notice too that if you turn round the second sentence (*We have checked the attack* ...) it is very like *check the enemy's advance* (the last example). From this, it is not hard to work out that in the first sentence *check* means 'examine in order to make sure ...', while in the second it means 'cause to stop or go more slowly'.

### IDIOMS

#### 1 What is an idiom?

An IDIOM is a phrase which has a special meaning of its own. (It is difficult to work out the meaning of the whole phrase from the meanings of the individual words.) Examples are: *as a matter of fact* (= in reality; to tell the truth) and *with a vengeance* (= with unusual speed or

enthusiasm). Idioms are often unchangeable: we don't say *as a matter of truth* or *with a retaliation*.

## 2 How to find idioms in the dictionary

Let's suppose that you read or hear the following sentences:

*Of course it's important - it's a matter of life and death.*

*I managed to get these shirts on the cheap.*

Perhaps you are puzzled by the phrases at the ends of these sentences: you sense that *life and death* does not literally mean 'living or dying' and you have never seen *cheap* used after *the* (ie as a noun). So what should you do? (a) Turn to the entry for the first important word (the first noun, verb, adjective or adverb) that puzzles you. In the first sentence this is probably *matter*. (b) Look through the numbered sections of that entry till you find '(idm)' (= IDIOMS), like this:

**matter** ... 5 (idm) as a matter of fact ...  
be no laughing matter ... for that matter ...

(c) Then read through the list of phrases in bold print till you find a **matter of life and death** in its alphabetical place

a **matter of life and death** an issue that is crucial to survival, success, etc:  
*Of course this must have priority - it's a matter of life and death. a matter of opinion ...*

What happens if you decide to look up **life**? Again, look for the numbered section labelled '(idm)'. You will find:

**life** ... 15 (idm) ... a **matter of life and death** ⇨ **MATTER**!

(This takes you to **matter**<sup>1</sup>, which as we have seen is the first important word in the idiom and is the entry where the idiom is explained.)

Next you want to find the meaning of *on the cheap*. You may perhaps look in the entry for **on**, but the idiom is not there. (This is

because *on* is a preposition, not a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb.) So you turn to **cheap**, follow the procedure already explained, and find:

**cheap** ... 7 (idm) ... **hold sth 'cheap** ...  
**make oneself 'cheap** ... **on the cheap** (infml) without paying the usual, or a fair, price: *buy, sell, get sth on the cheap.*

## PHRASAL VERBS

### 1 What is a phrasal verb?

In English, verbs often combine with prepositions (eg *into, from, of, out of*) or adverbs (eg *away, back, up, out*) of position or direction. Some combinations have meanings which are not easy to understand from those of the individual words. Those combinations are called **PHRASAL VERBS**. Examples are *make (something) up* (= invent), *come across (somebody or something)* (= discover), *break down* (= collapse). Some phrasal verbs consist of three words, e.g. *put up with (somebody or something)* (= tolerate).

### 2 How to find phrasal verbs in the dictionary

First it is important to be able to tell whether *go over, walk out, run on*, etc are phrasal verbs or not. Look at this sentence:

*The waiter went over to a cupboard and took some glasses out.*

Here, *went over* and *took ... out* are not phrasal verbs, because they express ordinary 'movement' meanings of the verbs and ordinary 'direction' meanings of the adverbs. Those meanings can be referred to in the numbered sections of the entries for **go, over, take** and **out**. But suppose you meet this sentence:

*Do you mind going over my maths homework?*

Here, *going over* obviously has nothing to do with movement; it is a phrasal verb and has a special meaning of its own. Locating phrasal verbs in the dictionary is simple: (a) Find the entry for the first word (here,

## FINDING WORDS AND MEANINGS

the verb *go*). (b) Read through the numbered sections till you find the heading '(phr v)'. (c) Individual phrasal verbs are listed alphabetically. You will find *go over sth* between *go over* and *go over (to...)*. There you will see it is defined as 'examine the details of sth; check sth' as the second of its definitions.

## DERIVATIVES

### 1 What is a derivative?

A **DERIVATIVE** is a word that is formed from a simple word (or root) by adding a **SUFFIX**, like this: *embarrass* + *-ment* = *embarrassment*, *dirt* + *-y* = *dirty*. Sometimes the form of the simple word does not change, as when *shoulder* (noun) becomes *shoulder* (verb), or *poor* (adjective) becomes *the poor* (noun).

### 2 How to look up derivatives

Suppose that you want to look up *wavy* and *packer*. (a) First, find out if there are separate entries for these words. (There aren't.) This tells you that *wavy* and *packer* don't have special meanings of their own, but are closely related in meaning (and in spelling) to simple words. (b) Try to guess what these simple words are (*wave* and *pack*). (c) Search towards the end of the *wave* entry and the two *pack* entries for a triangle: ▽. The derivatives are listed after the triangle.

### 3 Derivatives which have entries of their own

You meet the adverb *scarcely* in the sentence:

*I've scarcely had time to look at the report yet.*

(a) You start by guessing that *scarcely* is a derivative (it looks like *quickly* and *roughly*), and that it is formed from *scarce* (adjective).

(b) So you look in the entry for *scarce*, but the adverb is not there.

(c) What is the reason for this? *Scarcely* is quite unrelated in meaning to *scarce*, so it has an entry of its own.

Now take the noun *explosion*. (a) You think that this may be close in meaning to the verb *explode*. (It is.) (b) So you look for the noun in the verb entry. (It is not there.) (c) Why? *Explosion* is so different in spelling from *explode* that some people might not look for it at the entry *explode*. So it has its own separate entry. (You have now learnt an important rule of arrangement: a derivative is included in the same entry as its root unless they are very different in meaning, or spelling, or both.)

### 4 Derivatives formed without adding a suffix

Suppose that you meet the word *boost*, used like this:

*The government's policies will give trade a boost.*

In the dictionary *boost* is a verb, but in the sentence it is a noun. Now, where do you look for the noun? (a) You wonder if the noun is related to the verb or not, and you look for a separate entry for *boost* (noun). (There isn't one.) (b) You now look for the noun in the **SAME** entry as the verb, and find it there. (c) You can now see that they are together because the words are close in meaning, as well as being identical in spelling.

## COMPOUNDS

### 1 What is a compound?

A **COMPOUND** is made up of two or more simple words. So *swim-suit* (*swim* + *suit*) is a compound, and so are *footpath* (*foot* + *path*) and *headache* (*head* + *ache*). A compound can be a noun (*policeman*), an adjective (*easygoing*), a verb (*baby-sit*) or an adverb (*helter-skelter*). Some compounds are written as one single unit and some with a hyphen (as in the examples above). But some appear as two separate words (*money order*, *town hall*).

### 2 How to look up compounds

Imagine you have just met *chicker-run*, and wish to look up its meaning. (a) First you check to see whether the compound has a separate entry. (It hasn't, so you now

know that *chicken-run* doesn't have a special meaning of its own, but is related to a meaning of *chicken* and of *run*.) (b) You expect that the compound is listed in the entry for *chicken*, because this is the first part, and you look down that entry. (c) At the bottom you find a box: ☐. Below that, the compounds are listed alphabetically:

- ☐ **chicken-feed...**
- chicken-hearted...**
- chicken-pox...**
- chicken-run...**
- chicken-wire...**

### 3 Compounds with entries of their own

You have met the word *chickweed*. (a) You assume this 'is a compound because you have met *chick* and *weed* as separate words. (b) You look up the entry for *chick*, but *chickweed* is not there. (c) You assume then that *chickweed* has a special meaning unconnected with *chick* (= a young bird). (It has.) (d) You look for a separate entry for *chickweed*, and find it.

## B WRITING AND SPEAKING ENGLISH

### SPELLING

#### 1 Where to divide a word

You may need to know where to divide a long word at the end of a line of writing. You can find out by using the dictionary. (a) Let us suppose that the word is *imperialism*. Does this divide after *imper-*, after *imperi-*, or in another place? (b) You refer to the entry for the word and notice a number of raised dots:

**im-peri-al-ism**

(c) These dots indicate that, at the end of a line, the word may be broken as in *im-perialism*, *imperi-alism*, *imperial-ism*.

#### 2 Irregular forms of nouns

You suspect that the plural of the noun *phenomenon* is irregular (ie that it is NOT *phenomenons*). (a) Turn to the entry for *phenomenon* and look for the part of speech label (*n*). (b) In round brackets just after it you will find the plural ending *-ena* and its pronunciation:

**phenomenon** /fə'nɒmɪnən.../ *n* (*pl* -ena/-ɪnə/) ...

You also want to check whether the form of a particular noun, eg *grouse*, remains the same when it refers to several birds. Again you look for round brackets:

**grouse** /graʊs/ *n*... (*pl* unchanged)

#### 3 Irregular forms of verbs

You are not sure whether verbs ending in *-t* double the *t* in the past tense. (Is *transmitted* or *transmited* correct? And which of *debitted* and *debited* is right?) (a) Look up the entries for *transmit* and *debit*. (b) Look for round brackets after the *v* label. You find this:

**transmit** /trænz'mɪt/ *v* (-tt)...

**debit** /'deɪbɪt/... *v*...

(c) The bold *-tt-* at *transmit* means that you double the *t*, as in *transmitted*. The absence of the *-tt-* from the *debit* entry means that *debited* (single *t*) is right. *Debit* forms a regular past tense, just adding *-ed*; so NO extra information is given.

Suppose you're aware that the verb *drink* is irregular, and you want to check the spellings of the irregular forms. Again, you look in the entry for round brackets after the *v* label:

**drink** /drɪŋk/ *v* (*pt* drank /dræŋk/, *pp* drunk /drʌŋk/)...

#### 4 Irregular forms of adjectives

You know that some adjectives take a final *-er* or *-est* to express the ideas of 'more' or 'most'. You want to check that a particular adjective does this (eg *high*). (a) You look up the entry for *high*. (b) You search for round brackets after the label *adj*. There you find the two endings in bold print:

**high** /haɪ/ *adj* (-er, -est)

You are not sure whether an adjective ending in *-y* (eg *pretty*) changes the *-y* to *-i* before adding *-er* or *-est*. Again you look for round brackets after the label *adj*, and find an *-i-* shown as part of the endings:

**pretty** /'prɪti/ *adj* (-ier, -iest).



PRONUNCIATION

1 Alternative pronunciations

You have heard the word *against* pronounced in two ways by British speakers. Are both equally acceptable? Look up the entry for *against*, and you will find two pronunciations, with no comment added. Both can be safely used.

**against** /ə'genst, ə'geɪnst/...

You have also met *amenity* pronounced in two ways. Are both of these acceptable? Look up the entry:

**amenity** /ə'mɪ.nə.ti, əlso ə'menə.ti/...

Here, the use of *also* means that the second form is less often used, but it is not incorrect.

2 British and American pronunciation

You know that British speakers pronounce *tomato* in one way, but have heard that Americans use another pronunciation. You turn to the entry:

**to-mato** /tə'mɑ:təʊ; US tə'mentəʊ/...

Here, the normal British pronunciation has no label, while the normal American one is marked *US*.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WORD

1 Words which differ slightly in meaning or use

You wonder whether it is appropriate to use the word *trader* in the sentence:

*He's a trader in rare stamps.*

or whether *dealer* or *merchant* might be better choices in this context. (a) If you look up *trader* (in the entry at *trade*<sup>3</sup>) you will notice an arrow referring you to a USAGE note at *dealer*. (b) Now compare carefully the definitions and examples in this note, and notice that a *dealer* sells 'individual objects and has a specialized knowledge of these'. (c) It is clear that *rare stamps* fits this definition (and also matches the example *antique dealer*). *Dealer*, then, is the best choice.

2 Words which are opposite in meaning

You have met the word *down* used in this sentence.

*She has just come down from Oxford.*

(a) You turn to the entry for *down*<sup>1</sup> (adverbial particle) and find the numbered definition which explains the meaning of *down* in your sentence: 'away from a university'. (b) You wonder if *up* can be used in the opposite meaning and at the end of that section there is a cross-reference to the corresponding meaning of *up*:

**down**<sup>1</sup>... *adv part.*... Cf *up*.

(c) You turn to *up* and find that meaning: 'to or in a university'

3 Words which are different in style

You have met the word *galore*, meaning 'in plenty' and wonder if it reflects a special attitude on the part of the writer. (a) You look up the entry, and search for a note in *italics* in front of the definition:

**ga-lo-re**... (*usu approv*) (following *ns*) in plenty: *to have books, food, friends, money galore*...

(b) You see from this note that *He has money galore* is usually used approvingly of a person, his position, etc.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PATTERN OR STRUCTURE

1 Composing sentences according to the correct patterns

You already know that it is correct to use a 'that' clause after the verb *imagine* - like this:

*I always imagined that she was taller than her sister.*

Now you wonder whether it is also possible to use *her* (or *him*) plus *to be*, *to have*, etc:

*I always imagined her to be taller than her sister.*

To check, you refer to the entry for *imagine* and the meaning 'form a mental