

Longman

Dictionary of

English  
Language  
and  
Culture

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This Dictionary has been produced to help students of English understand the words and phrases that make up the complex fabric of English-speaking life and culture.

The full text of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* is the basis for the book, but we have included a further 15,000 people, places, events, and institutions in order to provide advanced learners of English with a full reference resource in one book.

This is because we believe that when students come across references to *Rodeo Drive*, *triffids*, *Reuters*, *PSBR*, the *Teamsters' Union* or *Clarence Darrow* in their reading, they should be able to look them up in their dictionary just as they would other, more general language words.

The range of words and phrases included here should help students extend the breadth of their understanding of English, but information is also provided to increase the depth of their understanding.

The *connotations* of some of the items entered here, many of them for the first time in a reference book, are often essential to the full understanding of a passage. For example, what associations do native-speakers of English naturally have with items such as *Rolls Royce* or the *National Enquirer*? It is surely necessary to understand the reputation for high quality associated with the name *Rolls Royce* in order to understand a sentence like *Our company provides a Rolls Royce service*, and so this information is clearly stated in the definition.

The lexicographic work that has gone into the creation of this book is based on the analysis of authentic language as found in the many books and newspapers from Britain and America included in the Longman Corpus Network, an extensive resource of computerized language data collected over many years at Longman. The use of this data in our dictionaries ensures that the content is both up-to-date and accurate.

We very much hope that the understanding of language by advanced learners of English will be greatly enhanced by the use of the new Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture.

Della Summers  
Editorial Director

**a-board** /ə'bo:rd||-ɔ:rd/ *adv, prep* on or into (a ship, train, aircraft, bus, etc.): *The boat is ready to leave. All aboard!* | *The plane crashed, killing all 200 people aboard.*  
– compare **on board** (BOARD')

British and American pronunciations:  
page F30

**an-ti-bi-ot-ic** /,æntɪbaɪ'ɒtɪk◀||-'ɑ:-/ *n* a medical substance, such as PENICILLIN, that is produced by living things and is able to destroy or stop the growth of harmful bacteria that have entered the body: *a course of antibiotics to clear an infection* –**antibiotic** *adj*

word class (or "part of speech") labels:  
page F16

**bad-ger**<sup>1</sup> /'bædʒə/ *n* 1 [C] an animal which has black and white fur, lives in holes in the ground, and is active at night 2 [U] the skin or hair of this animal

words with the same spelling but different use or meaning: page F10

**badger**<sup>2</sup> *v* [T (into)] to (try to) persuade by asking again and again; PESTER: *The children badgered me into taking them to the cinema.* [+obj+to-v] *They kept badgering him to get a home computer.*

**Ad-ams** /'ædəmz/, An-sel /'ænsəl/ (1902–84) an American photographer known esp. for his photographs of the scenery of the West of the US

people with the same name: page F11

**Adams**, John (1735–1826) the second president of the US and an influential political leader of the movement towards independence from the British

**blot-ter** /'blɒtə/||'blɑ:-/ *n* 1 a large piece of blotting paper against which writing paper can be pressed to dry the ink 2 *AmE* a book where records are written every day, before the information is stored elsewhere (often in the phrase **police blotter**)

words having more than one meaning: page F13

**clam-our**<sup>1</sup> *BrE* || **clamor** *AmE* /'klæmə/ *n* 1 [S] a loud continuous, usu. confused noise or shouting: *a clamour of voices* of bells

spelling variation: page F11

**cri-te-ri-on** /kraɪ'tɪəriən/ *n* -**ria** /riə/ or -**rions** an established standard or principle, on which a judgment or decision is based

meanings explained in clear language: page F14

**damage**<sup>2</sup> *v* [T] to cause damage to: *to damage someone's reputation* | *The building was severely damaged by the explosion.* | *Smoking can damage your health.* | *The incident had a damaging effect on East-West relations.*

useful natural example sentences: page F15

**birth-day** /'bɜ:θdeɪ||'bɜ:r-/ *n* 1 a day which is an exact year or number of years after one was born: *my 21st birthday* | *a birthday party* | *Happy birthday to you!* –compare ANNIVERSARY

Cultural Notes: page F27

► **CULTURAL NOTE** People, esp. children, often celebrate their birthdays with a **birthday party** where people play games, sometimes wear special paper hats, eat **birthday cake**, and sing a special song called *Happy Birthday to you*. People are usu. given presents and **birthday cards** on their birthday. ◀

**drawing pin** /'drɪŋ- / *BrE* || **thumbtack** *AmE*– *n* a short pin with a broad flat head, used esp. for putting notices on boards or walls –see picture at PIN

British and American word differences: page F26

**dry-clean** /,ɪ-' / *v* [T] to clean (clothes, material, etc.) with chemicals instead of water

**dry clean-er's** /,ɪ-' / *n* a shop where clothes, curtains, etc., can be taken to be dry-cleaned

compound words shown as separate entries:  
page F10

**dry dock** /ɪ-' / *n* a place in which a ship is held in position while the water is pumped out, leaving the ship dry for repairs: *The ship is in dry dock being painted.*

stress patterns shown for compound words:  
page F29

**flag**<sup>2</sup> *v* -gg- [T] to put a special mark on (something) so it can be picked out from among others

**flag** sthg./sbdy. ↔ **down** *phr v* [T] to cause (a vehicle or its driver) to stop by waving at the driver: *I tried to flag down a taxi.*

phrasal verbs: page F11

**frying pan** /'fɪɪ·/ also **skillet** *AmE* - *n* 1 a flat pan with a long handle, used for frying food: *a non-stick frying pan*  
2 out of the frying pan into the fire out of a bad position into an even worse one —see picture at PAN

idioms: page F12

**fisher** /'fɪʃə/ *n* I will make you fishers of men a phrase used in the Bible by Christ, telling his followers, who were fishermen, that they should stop trying to catch fish and instead should try to attract more people to follow him

well known sayings and quotations: page F12

**furtive** /'fɜːtɪv/ | 'fɜːr- *adj* quiet and secret; trying to escape notice or hide one's intentions: *She cast a furtive glance down the hotel corridor before leaving her room.* —ly *adv*  
—ness *n* [U]

derived words shown without definitions: page F13

**gap** /gæp/ *n* [(in, between)] 1 an empty space between two objects or two parts of an object: *The gate was locked but we went through a gap in the fence.*

**guarantee**<sup>2</sup> *v* [T] 1 to give a guarantee: *The manufacturers guarantee the watch for three years.* [+ (that)] *They have guaranteed that any faulty parts will be replaced free of charge.* [+to-v] *Our products are guaranteed to last for years.* [+obj+adj] *All our food is guaranteed free of artificial preservatives*

grammar codes: page F18

**hit man** /'hɪ·/ *n* *informal, esp. AmE* a criminal who is employed to kill someone

labels showing style, region, etc.: page F23

**hope-ful-ly** /'həʊpəli/ *adv* 1 in a hopeful way: *The little boy looked at her hopefully as she handed out the sweets.*  
2 if our hopes succeed: *Hopefully we'll be there by dinnertime.*

Usage Notes: page F27

▷ USAGE This second meaning of **hopefully** is now very common, especially in speech, but it is thought by some people to be incorrect.◁

**frog** /frɒg/ | 'frɑːg, 'frɔːg/ *n* 1 a small hairless tailless animal, usu. brownish-green, that lives in water and on land, has long back legs for swimming and jumping, and CROAKS (=makes a deep rough sound). People sometimes make jokes about kissing frogs to make them turn into an attractive prince, because this happens in some children's fairy stories. —see also FROG PRINCE

"cross-references" directing you to other words: page F26

**in-ci-dent** /'ɪnsɪdənt/ *n* 1 an event; a happening, esp. one that is unusual: *one of the strangest incidents in my life* | *We completed the journey without further incident.* (=with nothing unusual happening)

words often used together, shown in dark type, page F15  
explanation of example: page F15

**lb** *written abbrev. for:* pound (weight)

abbreviations and words using capital letters: page F10

**lbw** /lɛl biː 'dʌbəljuː/ *abbrev. for:* leg before wicket (LEG<sup>1</sup>)

**LCD** /lɛl siː 'diː/ *n* liquid crystal display; part of an APPARATUS on which numbers, letters, etc. are shown by passing an electric current through a special liquid, so that they light up

**mal-** see WORD FORMATION

prefixes and suffixes: page F11

**out-do** /aʊt'duː/ *v* -did /'dɪd/, -done /'dʌn/, 3rd person sing. present tense -does /'dʌz/ [T] to do or be better than (someone else):

irregular verb forms: page F17

**o-vum** /'əʊvəm/ *n* ova /'əʊvə/ *tech* an egg, esp. one that develops inside the mother's body

nouns with irregular plurals: page F17

## 1 Finding words and phrases

All dictionaries follow alphabetical order, but they do not all list words in exactly the same way. For example, in some dictionaries the expression **part of speech** may be listed in the entry for **part**, and in others it may come at **speech**. In this dictionary it has its own separate entry in the main alphabetical list, between **partnership** and **partook**. These main entries are called "headwords", but not all words and phrases appear as full headwords – you may have to look for them under another headword. In order to use this dictionary effectively, you need to know how the words are listed, and the purpose of this section is to explain exactly where to find the word or phrase you are looking for:

- 1.1 Homographs
- 1.2 Compound words
- 1.3 Plural nouns
- 1.4 Words that start with capital letters
- 1.5 Abbreviations
- 1.6 Prefixes and suffixes
- 1.7 Different spellings
- 1.8 Irregular inflections
- 1.9 Phrasal verbs
- 1.10 Idioms, Sayings and Quotations
- 1.11 Derived words without definitions

### 1.1 Homographs

"Homographs" are words that have the same spelling but are different in some other way. They may have a different pronunciation, they may belong to a different word class (noun, verb, adjective, etc.), or they may be completely different in meaning. Homographs are shown as separate headwords and each one is given a raised number, like this:

**flock**<sup>1</sup> /flok||flɑ:k/ *n* [C+*sing./pl. v*] **1** a group of sheep, goats, or birds –compare **HERD**<sup>1</sup> (1) **2** [+*of*] *infrm* a crowd; large number of people: *a flock of tourists* **3** the group of people who regularly attend a church: *The priest warned his flock against breaking God's law.*

**flock**<sup>2</sup> *v* [I+*adv/prep*] to gather or move in large numbers: *People are flocking to the cinema to see the new film.*

**flock**<sup>3</sup> *n* [U] **1** small pieces of wool, cotton, etc., used for filling **CUSHIONS**, etc. **2** soft material that forms decorative patterns on the surface of wallpaper, curtains, etc.

In this example, **flock**<sup>1</sup> and **flock**<sup>2</sup> are closely related in meaning, but they are shown as separate headwords because they belong to different word classes. And **flock**<sup>3</sup> is completely unrelated in meaning to the other two, so it also has a separate entry. The order in which homographs are listed depends on how common they are: the most frequently used words come first.

### 1.2 Compound words

A "compound word" is a combination of two or more separate words that functions as a single word and has its own special meaning.

**hot air** /j, 'ɔ:/ *n* [U] *infrm derog* meaningless talk or ideas

**hot-bed** /'hɒtbed||'hɔ:t-/ *n* [+*of*] a place or condition where the stated undesirable thing can exist and develop: *The city is a hotbed of crime.* | *a hotbed of intrigue*

**hot-blooded** /j, 'ɒ-, 'ɔ:/ *adj* having strong excitable feelings; **PASSIONATE**

**hotch-potch** /'hɒt|pɒt||'hɔ:t|pɔ:t/ *esp. BrE* || *usu.* **hodge-podge** *AmE* – *n* [S] a number of things mixed up without any sensible order or arrangement

**hot-cross bun** /j, 'ɒ-, 'ɔ:/ *n* a small sweet cake made of bread with a cross-shaped mark on top, which is eaten on Good Friday, just before Easter

**hot dog** /j, 'ɒ-, 'ɔ:/ *n* a cooked **FRANKFURTER** or other **SAUSAGE** in a long bread **ROLL**. In the US hot dogs and **HAMBURGERS** are considered to be very American foods and are very popular.

**hot flush** /j, 'ɒ-, 'ɔ:/ *esp. BrE* || *usu.* **hot flash** *AmE* – *n* a sudden feeling of heat in the skin, esp. as experienced by women at the **MENOPAUSE** (=the time when they stop being able to bear children)

In this dictionary, compound words are always treated as separate headwords (not as part of another main headword like **hot**), whether they are written as a single word (like **hotbed**), or as two or three separate words (like **hot air**), or joined by hyphens (like **hot-blooded**).

It is important to distinguish between compound words, which have a fixed form and a special meaning, and groups of words that simply appear together in a particular sentence. Expressions like "a hot day", "a hot room", and "hot weather" are not shown as headwords because they are "free" combinations of an adjective and noun. Their form is not fixed, so one could equally say "the day was hot", "the weather was hot", and so on. This would not be possible with true compounds like **hot air** and **hot dog**.

### 1.3 Plural nouns

If a noun is always used in the plural form in one of its meanings, this meaning is shown as a separate headword:

**bend**<sup>2</sup> *n* **1** a curved part, esp. in a road or stream: *a bend in the road/river* **2** an act of bending: *forward bends to stretch the spine* **3** *around/round the bend* *infrm, often humor mad.* *This pink wallpaper would drive/send me around/round the bend.* | *That old man next door must be/have gone round the bend – he's been cutting the grass with a pair of scissors!*

**bends** /benz/ *n* [*the+sing./pl. v*] a painful and occasionally fatal condition caused by gas in the tubes through which blood flows, suffered esp. by deep-sea **DIVERS** who come to the surface too quickly

### 1.4 Words that start with capital letters

Some words are always written with capital letters, for example if they are the name of a particular place, organization, or event. These words are shown as separate headwords, even if they have the same spelling as another headword:



**ref-or-ma-tion** /ˌrefəˈmeɪʃən||-fər-/ *n* [C;U] (an) improvement; the act of reforming or state of being reformed: *a complete reformation in his character*

**Reformation** *(the)* the religious movement in Europe in the 16th century leading to the establishment of the Protestant churches

Words that begin with capital letters may sometimes have more than one meaning. Each meaning has its own definition number and definition.

Entries for people are always shown as separate headwords, not as different meanings under one headword. They are listed in alphabetical order of the person's first name:

**Arm-strong** /ˈɑːmstrɒŋ||ˈɑːrmstrɔːŋ/, **Lou-is** /ˈluːi/ (1900–71) an American JAZZ musician, singer, and bandleader, known esp. for the rough sound of his voice

**Armstrong, Neil** /niːl/ (1930– ) an American ASTRONAUT who was the first man to step on the moon in 1969. He is remembered for saying “one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind” as he first stepped onto the moon.

## 1.5 Abbreviations

“Abbreviations” are either shortened forms of words (like **Dr** for **Doctor**) or groups of letters made up from the first letters of the name of something (like **AIDS** for **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**). In both cases, they appear as headwords in their own alphabetical place, even if they have the same spelling as another headword:

**haz-y** /ˈheɪzɪ/ *adj* **1** misty; rather cloudy: *The mountains were hazy in the distance.* **2** unclear; uncertain: *I'm rather hazy about the details of the arrangement.* —**ily** *adv* —**iness** *n* [U]

**H-bomb** /ˈheɪtʃ bɒm||-bɔːm/ *n* a HYDROGEN BOMB

**HCF** /ˌeɪtʃ sɪː ˈeɪ/ *abbrev. for:* highest common factor —see FACTOR (2)

**he** <sup>1</sup> /i, hi, strong hiː/ *pron* (used as the subject of a sentence)

**vat** /væt/ *n* a very large barrel or other container for holding liquids, such as WHISKY, DYE, etc., esp. when they are being made

**VAT** /ˌviː eɪ ˈtiː, væt/ *n* [U] value-added tax; (in Britain and many other European countries) a tax added to the price of an article, and paid by the buyer to the seller, who then pays it to the government —compare SALES TAX

**Vat-ican** /ˈvæɪtɪkən/ *(the)* **1** the large palace in which the Pope (=head of the Roman Catholic Church) lives, in Rome: *At last, white smoke could be seen coming from the Vatican chimney.* **2** the government or office of the Pope: *The Vatican is taking a hard line on birth control.*

## 1.6 Prefixes and suffixes

There is a full list of prefixes and suffixes in the Word Formation section at the back of the dictionary (on page B4). But the most common ones are also shown in the main part of the dictionary with a note directing you to the full list, like this:

**vice**<sup>2</sup> *esp. BrE* || **vise** *AmE*— *n* a tool with metal jaws that can be tightened, used for holding something firmly so that it can be worked on with both hands

**vice**—see WORD FORMATION

**vice-chan-cel-lor** /ˌɪː.../ *n* **1** (*often cap. V and C*)

## 1.7 Different spellings

If a word has more than one spelling, the full definition is given at the most common spelling. But there will also be a short headword at the other spelling, directing you to the main entry:

**caf-tan**, **kaftan** /ˈkæftæn||kæfˈtæn/ *n* a long loose garment, usu. of cotton or silk, worn in the Near and Middle East.

**kaftan** /ˈkæftæn||kæfˈtæn/ *n* a CAFTAN

## 1.8 Irregular inflections

“Inflections” are the changes that are made in the form of a word according to the way the word is being used in a sentence. For example, **dog** becomes **dogs** when it is used in the plural, and **carry** becomes **carried** when it is used in the past tense. These are REGULAR inflections because they are formed according to regular rules. Regular inflections are not listed separately in the dictionary. But many words have IRREGULAR inflections, and to help you find the main entry these inflections are shown as separate headwords like this:

**bounc-y** /ˈbaʊnsɪ/ *adj* **1** full of life and confidence, and eager for action: *a bouncy person|manner* **2** that bounces well: *a bouncy ball* —**ily** *adv* —**iness** *n* [U]

**bound**<sup>1</sup> /baʊnd/ *past tense & participle of* BIND<sup>1</sup>: *The prisoner was bound to a stake and shot.*

**bound**<sup>2</sup> *adj* **1** [F+to-v] very likely; certain

This means that the full definition of **bound**, when it is used as a verb, can be found at the headword for **bind**.

## 1.9 Phrasal verbs

A “phrasal verb” (sometimes called a two-part verb) is a fixed expression that consists of a verb followed by an adverb (like **give out**), or a preposition (like **look after**), or sometimes both (like **put up with**). Phrasal verbs have their own special meanings, and these are often quite different from the meaning of the main verb from which they are formed. Phrasal verbs are very common in English.

In this dictionary, phrasal verbs are shown as separate entries in a list following the main verb, like this:

**back**<sup>4</sup> *v* **1** [I;T] (to cause to) go backwards: *She backed the car through the gate/into the parking space.* . . . . . **5** [I] *tech*

(of the wind) to change direction, moving round the COMPASS in the order North–West–South–East —compare VEER (2) **6** **back the wrong horse** to support the loser

**back away** also **back off** *AmE*— *phr v* [I (from)] to move away or back because of fear or dislike: *The dog backed away as the man raised his stick.* | (fig.) *The government has backed away from radical reshaping of the tax system.*

**back down** *phr v* [I (over, on)] to accept defeat in an argument, opinion, or claim; admit that one was wrong: *I saw that she was right, so I had to back down.*

**back off** *phr v* [I] *AmE* to stop trying to make (someone) to do or think (something): *I saw I was upsetting her so I backed off.* | *Just back off and leave me alone!*

In some cases, there is no simple verb form: that is, the verb is only ever found as part of a phrasal verb. In cases like this, the simple verb form is given, and the phrasal verbs are listed under it, like this:

### knuckle<sup>2</sup> *v*

**knuckle down** *phr v* [I (to)] to start working hard: *You'll really have to knuckle down if you want to pass the exam. | We knuckled down to the job to finding the answer.*

**knuckle under** *phr v* [I (to)] to be forced to accept the orders of someone more powerful: *He refused to knuckle under (to any dictatorship).*

It is important to distinguish between true phrasal verbs, which are fixed combinations of verb + adverb/preposition, and other expressions in which verbs freely combine with adverbs or prepositions in a particular sentence. In sentences like:

*I ran across the field*  
*She ran into the room*  
*We ran up the hill*

the verb **run** is being used with its usual meaning, and is followed by a phrase that begins with a preposition (*across the field, into the room, up the hill*). But the same expressions can also be used as phrasal verbs, and in this case their meaning is very different:

*I ran across* (= happened to meet) *an old friend today*  
*She ran into* (= began to experience) *a few problems*  
*We ran up* a big bill (= got it as a result of buying things) *at the restaurant*

It is only these SPECIAL meanings that are explained at the definitions for phrasal verbs:

**run across** sbdy./sthg. *phr v* [T] to find or meet (esp. someone or something pleasant) by chance: *I ran across an old friend in the street.* —compare **COME ACROSS** (1)

For more information about phrasal verbs, see section 3.4 (Grammar and phrasal verbs).

## 1.10 Idioms, Sayings, and Quotations

An idiom is a fixed phrase that has its own special meaning. It is often impossible to guess the meaning of the whole phrase from the meanings of the separate words that it is formed from. For example, to **kick the bucket** is an idiom meaning “to die” – it has no connection with either kicking or buckets.

### How to find idioms

In this dictionary idioms are printed in **dark type** and they are listed in alphabetical order after all the other meanings of a headword, like this:

**jump**<sup>1</sup> /dʒʌmp/ *v* [I] to push oneself into the air or away from a surface by the force of one's legs; spring: *The children jumped up and down.* .....  
..... **10 jump a claim** *esp. AmE* to try to claim valuable land which someone else already owns  
**11 jump down someone's throat** *infml* to attack someone in words, strongly and unexpectedly, esp. before they have finished talking **12 jump rope** *AmE for SKIP*<sup>1</sup>(5)  
**13 jump the gun** *infml* to take action too soon or before the proper time: *I know he's a suspect, but isn't it jumping the gun a bit to arrest him immediately?* **14 jump the queue** *BrE* || **cut in line** *AmE* to obtain an unfair advantage over others who have been waiting longer **15 jump to it** *infml* to hurry: *You'll have to jump to it if you want to catch the train.*

The dictionary lists idioms at the first MAIN word in the phrase (that is, not at words like **the, something,** or **with**), so **kick the bucket** has its definition at **kick**. But if you look for it at **bucket** you will find a note directing you to the right place:

**bucket**<sup>1</sup> /'bʌkɪt/ *n* **1** an open metal, plastic, or wooden container with a handle for carrying liquids. ....  
..... **2** [(of) also **bucket-ful** /-fʊl/— the quantity held by a bucket: *She poured a bucket/two bucket-fuls of water over me. | (fig.) The rain came down in buckets. (=it rained very hard) —see also kick the bucket* (KICK<sup>1</sup> (11)) **3** a drop in the bucket a small amount which is not enough: *The money budgeted is a drop in the bucket compared to what is needed.*

There are two exceptions to this rule:

- 1 if the idiom starts with a VERY common verb (such as **have, get, make,** or **take**) it is shown at the next main word. So **have one's head screwed on** (= to be sensible and practical) is shown at **head**, not at **have**.
- 2 if one of the words in the idiom is variable, the idiom is shown at the main INVARIABLE word. So **take something with a pinch/grain of salt** (= not to believe something) is shown at **salt**, not at **pinch** or **grain**

When a noun is often used to form a suffix, in expressions like **left-handed, clear-headed,** or **well-mannered**, this suffix is treated like an idiom, and is shown under the noun as the last idiom in the list:

**heart** /hɑ:t||hɑ:rt/ *n* **1** [C] the organ inside the chest which controls the flow of blood by pushing it round the body: .....  
..... **19 to one's heart's content** as much as one wants: *It's the weekend, so you can sleep to your heart's content.* **20-hearted** /hɑ:tɪd||hɑ:rt-/having a heart or character of the stated kind: *kind-hearted | cold-hearted* (=without kind feelings) | *stout-hearted* (=full of determination)

A saying is a fixed phrase that is usually used in a particular situation to give advice or to state a general truth. Sayings are shown in this dictionary in the same way as idioms, but they are labelled *saying*. The definition tells you what the saying means and in which situations it is used:

**life** /laɪf/ *n* **lives** /laɪvz/ **1** [U] the active force in animals and plants that makes them different from all other forms of matter, such as stones or machines or dead bodies: .....  
(CREMATE) **22 life begins at forty** *saying* you can start to enjoy life once you are 40 years old

A quotation is a fixed phrase taken from a well known book, play, poem, speech, etc. Quotations are shown in this dictionary in the same way as idioms and sayings, but are labelled *quote*:

**death** /deθ/ *n* **1** [C;U] the end of life; time or manner of dying: .....  
..... **11 till death us do part** *BrE* || **till us do us part** *AmE* *quote* a phrase from the Christian marriage service. The two people getting married promise that they will stay together and love each other “till death us do part” (=until one of them dies).

### 1.11 Derived words without definitions

The dictionary shows all the members of a word family, but they are not always treated as separate headwords. In many cases, related forms are shown under the main entry, like this:

**grace-ful** /'grɛɪsfəl/ *adj* 1 attractively and usu. effortlessly fine and smooth; full of grace: *a graceful dancer | her graceful movements* 2 showing a willingness to behave fairly and honourably: *a graceful apology* —see GRACIOUS (USAGE) — -ly *adv* — -ness *n* [U]

In this case, **gracefully** and **gracefulness** are not given their own separate entries because their meaning can easily be guessed from the base form (**graceful**) and the added endings:

**graceful** + **-ly** means "in a graceful way"  
**graceful** + **-ness** means "the fact or quality of being graceful".

Derived forms come at the end of a headword entry, after all the definitions of the main word.

They NEVER have a definition.

They ALWAYS have a word class label (*adv*, *n*, etc.).

They SOMETIMES have a pronunciation and/or a grammar code and/or an example sentence.

**af-firm** /ə'fɜ:m||-ɜ:rm/ *v fml* 1 [T] to declare (usually again, or in answer to a question or doubt): *The minister affirmed the government's intention to reduce taxes.* [+that] *She affirmed that she was telling the truth.* —compare DENY (1) 2 [I] to promise to tell the truth in a court of law, but without mentioning God or religion in the promise — -ation /,ɛfə'meɪʃən||,æfə-/ *n* [C;U]

In this case, the pronunciation is given because the pronunciation of the base form (**affirm**) changes when the suffix (**-ation**) is added. The grammar code shows that the derived noun can be either countable or uncountable.

**in-ves-ti-gate** /ɪn'vestɪ'geɪt/ *v* [I,T] to try to find out more information about; examine the reasons for (something), the character of (someone), etc.: *The police are investigating the crime.* | *He has been investigated and found blameless.* | to investigate the causes of cancer — **gator** *n* — **gation** /ɪn'vestɪ'geɪʃən/ *n* [C;U (into)] — **gative** /ɪn'vestɪ'gətɪv||-geɪtɪv/ *adj*: *investigative journalism* (=where newspapers try to find out things of public importance, uncover secrets, etc.)

In this case, an example is given to illustrate a common use of the derived form **investigative**, and there is also an added explanation to make the meaning as clear as possible.

Derived forms can be shown in three different ways:

1 with a wavy line, like this:

**grace-ful** ~ -ness *n* [U]

In this case, the ending **-ness** is added directly to the base form **graceful**.

2 with a hyphen, like this:

**greas-y** —iness *n* [U]

In this case, the base form changes slightly before the ending **-ness** can be added (the **y** becomes an **i**). The hyphen means that the derived word is formed by adding the ending shown (**-iness**) to the base word WITHOUT its last syllable. So in this example, the last syllable **-y** is removed from **greasy** and the ending **-iness** is added to it.

3 as a complete word, like this:

**ar-chives** /'ɑ:kɪvz||'ɑ:r-/ *n* [P] (a place for storing) historical materials, such as old papers, letters, and reports concerning a government, family, organization, etc., kept esp. for historical interest: *an interesting old news-reel from the BBC archives* — **archive** *adj* [A]: *archive material*

In this example, the derived form is shown in full because it is shorter than the base word. In some cases, the derived form is actually the SAME as the base form, but it is shown (in full) because it belongs to a different word class:

**am-e-thyst** /'æməθɪst/ *n* [C;U] (the colour of) a purple stone, used in jewellery — **amethyst** *adj*

The adjective form simply means "made of, or having the colour of amethyst", so it is shown as a derived form without a separate definition.

## 2 Understanding meaning

There are two ways in which the dictionary can help you to understand the meaning of a word or phrase. The definitions explain the meaning in clear and simple language. And the examples show how the word is normally used. The purpose of this section is to explain all the different kinds of information that the dictionary provides in its definitions and examples. This will help you to use the dictionary effectively as a guide to understanding meaning:

- 2.1 Words with more than one meaning
- 2.2 Definitions
- 2.3 Synonyms
- 2.4 Brackets in definitions
- 2.5 Examples
- 2.6 Figurative examples
- 2.7 Brackets in examples

### 2.1 Words with more than one meaning

Most words have more than one meaning, and each meaning is given a number, like this:

**horse** /'hɔ:s||hɔ:rs/ *n* 1 [C] a large strong four-legged animal with hard feet (HOoves), which people ride on and use for pulling heavy things: *learning to ride a horse* | *A male horse is called a stallion, and a female horse is a mare.* | *We went to see the horse races.* —see BICYCLE (USAGE); see also FOAL, NEIGH 2 [C] an exercise apparatus for jumping over; VAULTING HORSE 3 [P] *old use, esp. BrE* soldiers riding on horses; CAVALRY: *a regiment of horse* 4 [U] *sl for* HEROIN 5 **a horse!** **a horse!** **my kingdom for a horse!** *quote* a phrase from Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, said by the King when he needs a horse very badly and now often used humorously when someone needs something badly 6 **a horse of another/a different colour** a completely different thing or situation

The most common or most basic meanings are always shown first. These are followed by other meanings that are less common or more limited in their use: for example, they may be old-fashioned or literary or technical, or they may be used in only one variety of English (such as American English). Finally, if there are any idioms, these are listed in alphabetical order AFTER all the other definitions.

## 2.2 Definitions

### Definitions in simple language

Definitions are the explanations of what words mean. All the definitions in this dictionary are written in clear and simple language, using a small "defining vocabulary" of about 2000 common words. This means that you will have no trouble in understanding even difficult or unfamiliar words, such as:

**ped-i-ment** /'pedɪmənt/ *n* a three-sided piece of stone or other material placed above the entrance to a building, found esp. in the buildings of ancient Greece

The list of words that are used in the definitions is shown at the back of the dictionary on page B15. Every definition has been computer-checked to make sure that it is written ONLY using words from the list.

### The use of words from outside the defining vocabulary

It is sometimes necessary in a definition to refer to a less common word that is not in the 2000-word defining vocabulary. When this happens, the word is written in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS to show that it does not belong to the special list, like this:

**white wed-ding** /'wɪt·'ɪŋ/ *n esp. BrE* a wedding at which the BRIDE (=woman being married) wears a long white dress

This means that **bride** is not one of the 2000 defining words. You may need to check its meaning at its own entry in the dictionary, but you already have some help from the words in brackets (= woman being married) which give a short explanation of what **bride** means.

Sometimes a definition includes a word that has its own definition very close by. If the other definition is no more than three entries away, the word is written in ordinary type, even if it is not in the 2000-word defining vocabulary. For example:

**auc-tio-neer** /'ɔ:kə'niə/ *n* a person who is in charge of an auction and who calls out the prices as they are reached

The word "auction" is not on the special list of defining words, but its own definition is only two entries away, so it can be found very easily.

## 2.3 Synonyms

A synonym is a word that has the same meaning, or almost the same meaning, as another word. In this dictionary, synonyms are usually shown directly after the full definition, like this:

**plod** /plɒd|plɔ:d/ *v -dd-* **1** [I+adv|prep] to walk slowly along, esp. with difficulty and great effort; TRUDGE: *The carthorse plodded along plodded up the hill pulling the load behind it.* **2** [I+adv|prep, esp. AWAY, ON] to work steadily, esp. at something uninteresting: *She plods away quietly in her corner. | I'll plod on (=continue to work) for another hour and then take a break.*

This means that "trudge" is another way of saying "plod". Sometimes the added synonym at the end of a definition will be a more familiar word than the word you are looking up. If so, it will help you understand the definition better. For example:

**rally<sup>3</sup>** *v* [T (about, on)] *old use* to make fun of (a person) in a friendly way; TEASE: *They rallied him about/on his strange appearance.*

On the other hand, the synonym may be a LESS common word than the one you are looking up, and in this case it will help to increase your vocabulary. For example:

**hide<sup>1</sup>** /haɪd/ *v* **hid** /hɪd/, **hidden** /'hɪdn/ [(from)] **1** [T] to put or keep out of sight; prevent from being seen or found; CONCEAL: *I hid the broken plate in the drawer. | The house was hidden from view by a row of tall trees. |*

## 2.4 Brackets in definitions

Sometimes part of a definition is shown in round brackets, like this:

**pal-pi-tate** /'pæl.pɪ.teɪt/ *v* [I] **1** *med* (of the heart) to beat fast and irregularly **2** [(with) *fml*] (of a person or the body) to tremble: *He was positively palpitating with excitement.*

The definition explains what **palpitate** means, but the part in brackets shows that this word is only used when talking about the heart.

Brackets are used in definitions:

- 1 to give information about how and when a word is normally used
- 2 to show that part of a definition can be either included or left out

Here are some examples:

### Information on word use

**glau-cous** /'glɔ:kəs/ *adj tech* (of a leaf, fruit, etc.) covered with a fine whitish powdery surface

This means that **glaucous** is normally used to describe things like plants and fruit.

**glean** /gli:n/ *v* **1** [T] to gather (facts or information) in small amounts and often with difficulty: *From what I was able to glean, it appears they don't intend to take any action yet.* **2** [I;T] to collect (grain that has been left behind) after crops have been cut

This means that the usual object of this verb is "facts" or "information".

**huh** /hʌh/ *interj infml* (used for asking a question or for expressing surprise or disapproval): *It's pretty big, huh?*

Words like **huh**, **ouch**, and **shh** are not given proper definitions because they have no real meaning. Instead, they are given a note in brackets that explains the kind of situation in which they are normally used.

### Inclusion or exclusion

**pars-nip** /'pɑ:snɪp||'pa:r-/ *n* [C;U] (a plant with) a thick white or yellowish root that is used as a vegetable

The brackets here are used to show that the first half of the definition can be left out. So **parsnip** can mean EITHER "a type of root that is used as a vegetable" OR "the plant that produces this root".

**hur-ry**<sup>1</sup> /'hʌrɪ||'hɜ:ri/ *v* 1 [I;T] to (cause to) be quick in action or movement, sometimes too quick: *There's no need to hurry; we're not late.* | *She hurried across the road to catch the bus.* | *Don't hurry me; I'm working as fast as I can!*

The brackets show that **hurry** can mean EITHER "to move quickly" (*She hurried across the road*) OR "to make someone move quickly" (*Don't hurry me*).

## 2.5 Examples

The dictionary includes a great many examples of words in use. The examples may be short phrases or whole sentences, and they are written in *italic letters* after the definition, like this:

**ran-sack** /'rænsæk/ *v* [T] 1 to search (a place) thoroughly and roughly, causing disorder: *The police ransacked the house, looking for drugs.* 2 to go through (a place) stealing and causing widespread damage: *Enemy soldiers ransacked the town.*

Examples are normally written in simple language, but if a difficult word or phrase is included it is usually explained by a note in brackets, like this:

**groom**<sup>2</sup> *v* 1 [T] to take care of (horses), esp. by rubbing, brushing, and cleaning them . . . . . 4 [T (for)] to prepare (someone) for a special position or occasion: *They were grooming her for stardom.* (=to play big parts in plays or films)

The examples are used to help you understand the meaning of a new word and to show how it is actually used.

They have special functions:

- 1 to show context – the kinds of situation in which the headword is typically used
- 2 to show grammar – the way the headword can combine with other words in clauses or sentences
- 3 to show collocation – the particular words that are often used with the headword

Here are some examples:

### Context

**pelt**<sup>1</sup> /pelt/ *v* 1 [T (with)] to attack (someone) by throwing a lot of things at them, quickly and repeatedly: *They pelted the speaker with rotten tomatoes.*

This example gives a typical situation in which **pelt** might be used, and it also shows the kind of things that people throw when they **pelt** someone.

### Grammar

**guess**<sup>1</sup> /ges/ *v* 1 [I (at); T] to form a judgment (about) or risk giving an opinion (on) without knowing or considering all the facts: "*I don't know the answer.*" "*Well just guess!*" | *Can you guess (at) the price?* [+ (that)] *I guessed I'd find you in here!* [+wh-] *You'll never guess how much/what it cost.* [+obj+to-v] *I'd guess it to be about £300.*

These examples show how **guess** can be used as a transitive or intransitive verb (with or without an object) or with various kinds of clause. The sloping line (/) is used to show different uses of a word that are equally common or equally correct. So you can say:

*You'll never guess what it cost.*  
OR *You'll never guess how much it cost.*

### Collocation

**herd**<sup>1</sup> /hɜ:d||hɜ:rd/ *n* 1 [C+sing./pl. v] a group of animals of one kind which live and feed together: *a herd of cattle/elephants* – compare **FLOCK**<sup>1</sup> (1)

The definition explains what **herd** means, but it is the example that shows the kinds of animal that **herd** is used in connection with. This is an example of "collocation", or the way that some words are regularly used in combination with others. If a particular combination is very common or very fixed, it is shown in **dark type**, like this:

**harm**<sup>1</sup> /hɑ:m||hɑ:rm/ *n* [U (to)] 1 damage or wrong: *His film was a complete failure, and this did his reputation a lot of harm.* . . . . . | *I don't think you should punish them for this – it would probably do more harm than good.* (=have a damaging rather than helpful effect) – see also **GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM** 2 **come to harm** [usu. in negatives] to be hurt: *My brother's ship was caught in a storm but he came to no harm.* 3 **out of harm's way** in a position in which one is a safe from harm or b unable to cause harm

This means that the expression **do more harm than good** is a particularly common use of the noun **harm**. The note in brackets at the end of the example helps to make the meaning completely clear.

## 2.6 Figurative examples

Some words are used in an imaginative or "figurative" way, to suggest a meaning that is not the literal meaning but has some similarities with it. If a word is often used like

this, the examples will include a figurative use, and this is shown by the note (fig.):

**grab**<sup>1</sup> /græb/ *v* -bb- [T] **1** to take hold of (a person or thing) with a sudden rough movement, esp. for a bad or selfish purpose: *He grabbed the money and ran off.* | *They grabbed her by the arm and forced her into their car.* | (fig.) *Don't miss this chance to travel – grab it before the boss changes her mind.*

As the definition shows, **grab** describes a physical action or movement. But **grab** can also be used to express the idea of eagerly accepting a chance or opportunity. This is not a physical process, so the example is figurative.

## 2.7 Brackets in examples

Brackets are used in examples:

- 1 to make the meaning of the example sentence completely clear
- 2 to show the situation in which a particular expression would be used
- 3 to show that part of an example can be either included or left out

Here are some examples:

### Explanation

**ram**<sup>2</sup> *v* -mm- [T] **1** to run or drive into (something) very hard: *His car rammed mine.* **2** [+obj+adv/prep] to force into place with heavy pressure: *rammed down the earth round the newly planted bush.* | (fig.) *The terrorist attack rammed home the need for fighter security.* (=forced people to recognize this need)

Explanations like this are often given as an additional way of making the meaning clear, and they are especially common if the example is figurative or includes a strong collocation in dark type.

### Situation

**suppose**<sup>1</sup> /sə'pəʊz/ *v* [T not usu. in progressive forms] **1** [+ (that); obj] to consider to be probable; ASSUME: *As she's not here, I suppose she must have gone home.* | *There's no reason to suppose that his new book will be any better than his last one.* | *"He must have missed the train, then."* "Yes, I suppose so." | *I don't suppose she'll agree.* | (in polite requests) *I don't suppose you could give me a lift to the station, could you?*

In this case, the note in brackets explains that **suppose** is often used in expressions like this as a polite way of making a request.

### Inclusion or exclusion

**pass**<sup>1</sup> /pɑ:s/|pæs/ *v* **1** [I (BY); T] to reach and move beyond (a person or place) .....  
**6** [I; T (to)] (in various sports) to kick, throw, hit, etc. (esp. a ball), esp. to a member of one's own side: *He passed (the ball) back to the goalkeeper.*

**Pass** can be used here either with or without an object. So "the ball" can be left out of this sentence, and is therefore shown in brackets.

## 3 Grammar

As well as explaining the meaning of words, the dictionary provides a great deal of information about grammar. It tells you the word class that a headword belongs to – whether it is a noun, an adjective, a verb, or some other type of word. It gives information about the inflections of words – how their form changes when they are used in the plural, or in the past tense, or in some other way. And it gives a full description of the word's syntax – the various patterns in which it can combine with other words to form sentences. The purpose of this section is to explain how to use the grammatical information in the dictionary.

- 3.1 Word classes
- 3.2 Inflections
- 3.3 Grammar codes
- 3.4 Grammar and phrasal verbs

### 3.1 Word classes

Most words in the dictionary are given a special sign to show their word class (or "part of speech"), like this:

**harm-less** /'hɑ:m-ləs/|'hɑ:rm-/ *adj* unable or unlikely to cause harm: *The dog seems fierce, but he's harmless.* – *-ly adv* – *-ness n* [U]

This means that **harmless** is an adjective. Derived forms are also given word class labels: **harmlessly** is an adverb and **harmlessness** is a noun. Some words belong to more than one word class, and these are usually shown as separate headwords, like this:

**for-mat**<sup>1</sup> /'fɔ:mæt/|'fɔ:r-/ *n* **1** the size, shape, etc., in which something, esp. a book, is produced **2** the general plan or arrangement of something: *a new format for the six o'clock TV news* | *Official reports are usually written to a set format.*

**format**<sup>2</sup> *v* -tt- [T] to arrange (a book, computer information, etc.) in a particular format

But occasionally a word belonging to two different word classes is dealt with in a single combined entry, like this:

**fric-a-tive** /'frɪkətɪv/ *adj, n* *tech* (a consonant sound such as [f] or [z]) made by forcing air out through a narrow opening between the tongue or lip and another part of the mouth

**Fricative** can be a noun or an adjective. The full definition describes its use as a noun. If the words in brackets are left out, the part that remains describes its use as an adjective.

Words referring to people, places, organizations, institutions, etc. are given no sign to show word class and no grammar code, e.g.:

**High-grove House** /,haɪgrəʊv 'haʊs/ a house in Gloucestershire, England, which is owned by the Prince and Princess of Wales

If the name of a place, institution, etc. is usually used with "the", it is given the grammar code [the]:

**Grand National-al** /,grænd 'næʃənəl/ [the] a famous horse race held each year at the Aintree course near Liverpool. Many people who never usu. show interest in racing risk their money on the horse they think will win the Grand National.

Table 3.1 shows the word classes used in the dictionary. You can find the exact meanings of these terms by looking up their definitions in the dictionary.

**Table 3.1 Word classes**

sign	word class	examples
<i>abbrev.</i>	abbreviation that can be written or spoken	<i>domestic animals, e.g. cows and sheep</i> <i>Washington DC</i>
<i>adj</i>	adjective	<i>a fast car</i> <i>a run-of-the-mill book</i> <i>smiling happily</i> <i>Put it away.</i>
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>You won't pass unless you work.</i> <i>this week</i> <i>my younger brother</i> <i>Hello Jane!</i> <i>Ouch!</i> <i>a black dog</i> <i>a few odds and ends</i> <i>I've given up smoking.</i> <i>Hand the books out.</i> <i>I won't put up with this.</i>
<i>conj</i>	conjunction	<i>all the students</i> <i>half an hour</i> <i>Put it in the drawer.</i> <i>Don't drive after drinking.</i>
<i>determiner</i>	determiner	<i>She bought it for herself.</i> <i>Who said that?</i> <i>I'll do it.</i> <i>They'd already left.</i>
<i>interj</i>	interjection	
<i>n</i>	noun	
<i>phr v</i>	phrasal verb	
<i>predeterminer</i>	predeterminer	
<i>prep</i>	preposition	
<i>pron</i>	pronoun	
<i>short for</i>	shortened form of a pronoun + verb combination	
<i>v</i>	verb	<i>She teaches English.</i> <i>You need a rest.</i> <i>Fri. 20th October</i> <i>13,000 Hz</i>
<i>written abbrev.</i>	abbreviation that can be written but not spoken	

## 3.2 Inflections

### General notes

Inflections are the changes that are made in the form of a word according to how it is being used in a sentence. Most words form their inflections according to regular rules. For example, nouns usually add **-s** or **-es** to make the plural, and verbs usually end in **-ed** when they are used in the past tense. These "regular inflections" are not shown in the dictionary, except where there is a possibility of confusion or if the regular inflection has a difficult pronunciation.

"Irregular inflections" are always shown. They come directly after the word class sign and they are written in **dark type**, like this:

**sheep** /ʃi:p/ *n* **sheep** 1 a grass-eating animal that is farmed for its wool and its meat

This means the plural of **sheep** is **sheep** (NOT **sheeps**, which would be a regular plural).

For words of two or more syllables, only the part that changes is usually shown, like this:

**hy-pothe-sis** /haɪ'pəθəsɪs|-'pɑ:z/ *n* -ses /sɪz/

So the plural of **hypothesis** is **hypotheses**.

Inflections that are formed by doubling the consonant at the end of a word are shown like this:

**grab**<sup>1</sup> /græb/ *v* -bb-  
**grim** /grɪm/ *adj* -mm-

This means that **grab** becomes **grabbed** in the past, **grabbing** in the present participle, and so on. And **grim** becomes **grimmer** and **grimmiest** when used in the comparative and superlative.

If an irregular inflection is very different from the base form, it also has its own separate entry directing you to the base form, like this:

**fought** /fɔ:t/ *past tense & participle of FIGHT<sup>1</sup>*

### Special rules for nouns, verbs, and adjectives

#### Noun inflections

If two or more plural forms are possible, they are shown like this:

**hoof** /hu:f||hʊf/ *n* **hoofs** or **hooves** /hu:vz||hʊfs/

Inflections are always shown for nouns ending in **-o** because it is impossible to know whether the plural of a particular noun will be **-os** or **-oes**:

**ga-ze-bo** /gə'zi:bəʊ||-'zeɪ-, -'zi:z/ *n* -bos a shelter or hut, usu. in a garden, where one can sit and look at the view

#### Verb inflections

If only one inflection is shown at a verb, it is both the past tense and the past participle:

**catch**<sup>1</sup> /kætʃ/ *v* **caught** /kɔ:t/

This means that **caught** is used for the past tense (*She caught the ball*) AND for the past participle (*The ball has been caught*).

If two inflections are shown, the first one is the past tense and the second one is the past participle:

**for-give** /fə'gɪv||fə:z/ *v* -gave /'gæv/, -given /'gɪvən/

If any variation is possible, it is shown like this:

**sow**<sup>1</sup> /səʊ/ *v* **sowed**, **sown** /səʊn/ or **sowed**

This means that the past tense is **sowed**, but the past participle can be either **sown** or **sowed**.

If other irregular inflections are shown in addition to the past tense and past participle, they come after these two and are fully explained.

**go**<sup>1</sup> /gəʊ/ *v went* /went/, **gone** /gɒn||gɔ:n|3rd person sing. present goes

There is a full list of verbs with irregular inflections at the back of the book on page B23.

### Adjective inflections

A small number of adjectives have irregular forms when used in the comparative and superlative. These irregular inflections are shown like this:

**bad**<sup>1</sup> /bæd/ *adj worse* /wɜ:s||wɜ:rs/, **worst** /wɜ:st||wɜ:rst/

The comparative is shown first, the superlative second.

In all other cases, the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives are produced EITHER by adding **-er** and **-est** (or **-r**, **-st**, **-ier**, **-iest**) OR by using **more** and **most** before the adjective. The choice of inflection types is governed by these general rules:

for words of one syllable

**-er**, **-est** are usual; **more**, **most** are possible but uncommon:

**rich richer richest**

for words of two syllables

**-er**, **-est** and **more**, **most** are equally common:

**wealthy wealthier wealthiest**

OR **more wealthy most wealthy**

for words of three or more syllables

**more**, **most** are always used:

**affluent more affluent most affluent**

There are occasional exceptions to these general rules. The two main exceptions are:

1 adjectives formed from participles never use **-er**, **-est**:

**bored more bored most bored**  
**tiring more tiring most tiring**

2 adjectives which have three syllables but start with **un-** can use **-er**, **-est**:

**unhappy unhappier unhappiest**

## 3.3 Grammar codes

The dictionary uses a special system of easy-to-understand grammar codes. These codes give a complete description of the various ways in which a word can combine with other words to form sentences. The grammar codes are shown in square brackets, like this:

**a-woke**<sup>1</sup> /ə'weɪk/ *adj* [F] not asleep: *She lay awake for hours thinking about him.* | *The children are still wide awake.* (=not at all sleepy) | (fig.) *The company is awake to (=conscious of) these new developments.*

This code means that **awake** can only be used AFTER the noun it describes, not before it. So you can say:

*The children are awake and making a lot of noise but NOT*

*The awake children are making a lot of noise.*

There is a full list of all the grammar codes at the front of the dictionary.

This section will explain:

- The main types of code
- Where to find the codes in a dictionary entry
- What the special signs in codes mean
- The relationship between the codes and the examples
- How the codes are used with adjectives, nouns and verbs

### The main types of code

The code system consists of four main types of information. These are:

- 1 the letter codes, like [I] [T] [C] [U]  
These give basic grammatical information, such as whether a verb is transitive or intransitive, and whether a noun is countable or uncountable.
- 2 Prepositions or adverbs, like [(to)] [(with)], that can or must be used after a particular word
- 3 sentence pattern codes like [+to-v] [+v-ing]  
These show the types of clause that can follow a word.
- 4 other limitations on a word's use, e.g. [*usu. sing.*] [*usu. in negatives*] [*not in progressive forms*]

### Where to find the codes

Codes can be shown at three different places in an entry. These are:

- 1 before ALL the definitions, like this:

**fox**<sup>2</sup> *v* [T] *infml* **1 BrE** to confuse; to be too difficult for (someone) to understand: *The second question on the exam paper completely foxed me.* **2** to deceive cleverly; trick: *He managed to fox them by wearing a disguise.*

This means that, although **fox** has two separate meanings, they both have the same code.

- 2 at the beginning of a particular definition, like this:

**rarity** /'reəri:tɪ/ *n* **1** [U] the state or quality of being RARE<sup>1</sup> (1): *These stamps have great rarity value.* **2** [C] something uncommon: *People who bake their own bread have become a rarity|something of a rarity.*

- 3 directly before a particular example, like this:

**hunch**<sup>1</sup> /hʌntʃ/ *n* an idea based on feeling rather than on reason or facts: *"How did you know that horse was going to win?" "It was just a hunch."* [+ (that)] *I have a hunch that she didn't really want to go.*

This means that **hunch** can be followed by a clause with *that*, and an example of this pattern is shown straight after the code.



### What the special signs in codes mean

#### Brackets

Round brackets ( ) are used to show parts of a code that can either be included or left out. Their main use is to show the prepositions or adverbs that are frequently used after a particular word, like this:

**gap** /gæp/ *n* [(in, between)] **1** an empty space between two objects or two parts of an object: *The gate was locked but we went through a gap in the fence.*

This means you can say:

*We went through a gap in the fence*

OR *We went through a gap **between** the houses.*

But the brackets show that these prepositions are only "optional" – they do not have to be used – so you can also say, simply:

*We went through a gap.*

Note that **in** and **between** are written in **dark type** because they are prepositions. When adverbs are shown in codes, they are written in **SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS**, like this:

**heal** /hi:l/ *v* **1** [(OVER, UP)] (of a wounded part of the body) to become healthy again, esp. to grow new skin

The code here means you can say:

*The wound healed up*

*The wound healed over*

OR simply

*The wound healed.*

#### The plus sign

The plus sign + is used to show part of a code that **MUST** be included. For example:

**fraught** /frɔ:t/ *adj* **1** [F+with] full of something unpleasant: *The expedition through the jungle was fraught with difficulties and danger.* **2** *informal* troubled by anxieties; very **TENSE**

The code shows that **with** is 'obligatory' here. It **MUST** be used after **fraught** in this meaning, so you cannot say:

*The expedition **was** fraught.*

Here is another example:

**hared**<sup>2</sup> *v* [(I+adv|prep)] **BrE** *informal* to run very fast: *He hared off down the road.*

The code [(I)] shows that **hared** is an intransitive verb, but in this case it **MUST** also be followed by an adverb or preposition. So you can say:

*We hared off down the road/She hared along the street// hared after the bus, and so on.*

But you cannot simply say:

*We hared.*

Note that the + sign has a different function when it is used in codes that come directly before examples.

In these cases, the pattern shown is **NOT** obligatory: the + here simply means that this pattern can be used as well as any others that have already been mentioned.

### The relationship between the codes and the examples

The codes give a complete description of the grammar of each word and each meaning. The examples illustrate most of the information shown in the codes, but simple grammatical points are not always illustrated with an example. For instance, if a noun can be both countable and uncountable, examples of each use will not necessarily be given, or if a code shows that a particular word can be used with several different prepositions, there will not always be an example of every one. But if the codes include a sentence pattern, such as [+v-ing] or [+to-v], this will always be shown in an example.

When there is a wide range of grammatical information for a particular word or meaning, the examples usually start by illustrating the simple uses and then move on to those which are more difficult or less common, like this:

**re-mem-ber** /rɪ'membəʃ/ *v* [not usu. in progressive forms]

**1** [I;T (as)] to (be able to) bring back to one's mind (information, past events, etc.); keep in the memory: "What's her name?" "I can't remember." | I'll always remember that wonderful day. | I remember her as (=I think she was, if my memory is correct) rather a tall woman. [+ (that)] She suddenly remembered that she had not locked the door. [+wh-] Can you remember where he lives/how to get there? [+v-ing] I don't remember agreeing to that. | Certainly I posted your letter – I remember posting it. [+obj+v-ing] Do you remember me asking you that same question?

These examples show **FIRST** simple intransitive and transitive **USES**, **THEN** a sentence that shows how the verb can be used with the preposition **as**, and **LASTLY** some sentences that show the four different sentence patterns which can be used with **remember**.