

**L O N G M A N**

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**DICTIONARY**  
*OF AMERICAN ENGLISH*

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**A DICTIONARY FOR  
LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**



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Longman 

# LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

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## Preface

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This *Dictionary* is for people who are learning English as a second or foreign language. If you are learning English you need a dictionary that gives you special kinds of information. This *Dictionary* has been written to help you as much as possible, both as a reference book and as an active learning tool.

### How the *Dictionary* is helpful

**The *Dictionary* is monolingual.** Knowing the translation of a word gives you some information, but an English-English dictionary gives you complete definitions to help you understand words fully. This *Dictionary* gives clear definitions and many example sentences to explain the different meanings of a word. This will make it easier for you to understand and use English words.

**The *Dictionary* is easy to understand.** The definitions and examples are written using only 2,000 common English words. This means that you will be able to use the *Dictionary* even if you have been studying English for only a short time.

**The *Dictionary* helps you use English.** Of course, you must know the meanings of words, but you must also know how they are used in English grammar. This *Dictionary* gives clear, useful grammatical information. It also has ten full-page *Study Notes* that explain important but sometimes difficult points of grammar.

**The *Dictionary* is easy to use,** even if you have never used an English-English dictionary before. To help you get the information you need out of the *Dictionary*, there is a *Dictionary Skills Workbook* from page 12a to page 38a. The *Workbook* is your introduction and guide to the dictionary.

**The *Dictionary* helps you build your vocabulary.** There are cross-references to other words, such as synonyms (words with similar meanings) and antonyms (words with opposite meanings). In addition, there are 15 full-page illustrations of scenes from everyday life. Many objects in each picture are labeled. If you look at the illustration of an airport (page 17), for example, you will find many common words and phrases related to airports and travel.

### How to get acquainted with your *Dictionary*

**Turn to the *Table of Contents*** and look at the parts of the *Dictionary* listed there. Look up a *Study Note* that interests you and see the kind of information it gives. Then look up an *Illustration* and see what you can learn from it. Notice the sections on *Word Building* and *Irregular Verbs* in the back of the *Dictionary*. Turn to these so you will know where to find them when you need them later.

**Read a few entries.** Look up several words. Try some you know and some you don't know. Read through the entries and note the kinds of information given.

**Look at the inside covers.** Important information on abbreviations, grammar, and pronunciation is given there.

**Start doing the exercises in the *Dictionary Skills Workbook*.** The information in these exercises is very important. If they seem too easy at first, keep going. Try to do a little work in the *Workbook* every time you use your *Dictionary*, or do it in class with your teacher. All of the answers to the exercises are printed at the end of the *Workbook*.

As you use your *Dictionary*, remember that it contains a lot of information not found in other dictionaries. By learning to use this *Dictionary* well, you will gain an important resource in your study of English.

Arley Gray, Sponsoring Editor

# Guide to the dictionary

## Spelling

### Different spelling

**judg-ment, judgement** /'dʒʌdʒmənt/ *n* 1  
an official decision given by a judge or a court of law: *The court passed judgment on the prisoner.*

Different spellings are shown here –see page 15a

### American and British spelling

**color**<sup>1</sup> *AmE* || **colour** *BrE* /'kʌlə/ *n* 1 [U]  
the quality which allows one to see the difference between (for example) a red flower and a blue flower when both are the same size and shape

British spellings are shown like this –see page 16a

### Irregular plurals

**po-ta-to** /pə'teɪtəʊ/ *n* -**toes** [C;U] a  
roundish root vegetable with a thin brown or yellowish skin, that is cooked and served in many different ways

Is the plural -**os** or -**oes**? We show the correct spelling here –see page 29a

### Irregular verbs

**hope**<sup>1</sup> /hoʊp/ *v* **hoped, hoping** [I;T +*to-v* /*(that)/for*]  
to wish and expect; desire in spite of doubts: *We're hoping to visit England this year.*

Does the spelling change? We show it here if it does –see page 31a

## Sound/pronunciation

### Sound

**ap·ple** /'æpəl/ *n* a hard round fruit with white juicy flesh, and a red, green, or yellow skin

The pronunciation of each word is shown like this –see page 16a

### Stress

**a·bil-i-ty** /ə'biləti/ *n* -**ties** [C;U] power and skill, esp. to do, think, make, etc.: *She has the ability to go to college, but she doesn't want to.*

Do you say **a**bility or **a**bility? –see page 19a

## Meaning

Clear and simple explanations

**egg** /ɛɡ/ *n* **1** [C] a rounded object with a hard shell, which comes out of a female bird, snake, etc., and which contains a baby animal before it is born (HATCHED)  
**2** this when eaten as food: *I had a boiled egg for breakfast.*

Word meanings are simply explained and easy to understand. Words that you may not know are written in large letters like this. You can find all these words in the dictionary –see page 20a

More than one meaning

**a-cute** /ə'kyu:t/ *adj* **1** (of the mind or the senses) able to notice small differences, esp. of meaning or sound; working very well; sharp: *Dogs have an acute sense of smell.* | *She has very acute hearing.*  
**2** severe; very great: *an acute lack of water* **3** (of a disease) coming quickly to a dangerous condition –compare CHRONIC **4** *tech* (of an angle) being less than 90 degrees –compare OBTUSE

Many words have more than one meaning. The first meaning is the most common one, but don't forget to check the others too –see page 22a

Examples of use

**flinch** /flɪntʃ/ *v* [I *from*] to move back a little when shocked by pain or fear: *Jane didn't flinch once when the doctor cleaned the cut in her arm.* | *He flinched when I raised my hand suddenly. He thought I was going to hit him.*

Many helpful examples show you how to use the word –see page 21a

## Grammar

Parts of speech

**age**<sup>1</sup> /eɪdʒ/ *n* **1** the period of time a person has lived or a thing has existed: *He is ten years of age.*  
**age**<sup>2</sup> *v* **aged, aging or ageing** [I;T] to (cause to) become old: *After his wife's death he aged quickly.*

These letters tell you if the word is a noun or a verb –see page 28a

Word families

**a-brupt** /ə'brʌpt/ *adj* **1** sudden and unexpected: *The train came to an abrupt stop, making many passengers fall off their seats. . . . –abruptly adv: The train stopped abruptly. –abruptness n* [U]

Words which are part of the same word family and which have different parts of speech are often shown like this –see page 27a

Grammar codes:  
countable and  
uncountable  
nouns

**ac·tion** /'ækʃən/ *n* **1** [U] movement using force or power for some purpose; doing things: *We have to take action* (=begin to act) *before it is too late.* **2** [C] something done; deed: *Actions are more important than words.*

These letters tell you if you can use the noun in the plural. [C] means you can. [U] means you cannot use this meaning in the plural –see page 29a

Transitive and  
intransitive verbs

**ar·rive** /ə'raɪv/ *v* **-rived, -riving** [I] **1** to reach a place, esp. at the end of a journey: *We arrived safely.*

These letters tell you if the word is followed by a direct object. [I] means you cannot use this verb with an object, [T] means you must use this verb with an object –see page 30a

**ar·rest** /ə'rest/ *v* [T] **1** to seize in the name of the law and usu. put in prison: *The policeman arrested the thief.*

Verbs followed by  
a preposition or  
adverb

**ac·cuse** /ə'kyuːz/ *v* **-cused, -cusing** [T *of*] to charge (someone) with doing wrong or breaking the law; blame: *The police accused him of murder.*

This means that the verb is often followed by the preposition *of* –see page 31a

Verbs followed by  
another verb

**en·joy** /ɪn'dʒɔɪ/ *v* **-joyed, -joying** [T] **1** [+*v-ing*] to get happiness from; like: *I always enjoy going to the cinema.*

These letters tell you that *enjoy* is often followed by a verb in the *-ing* form, and that *want* is often followed by a verb in the infinitive form –see page 32a

**want¹** /wʌnt/ *v* **1** [T +*to-v*] to have a strong desire to or for; feel a strong desire to have: *I want to go to the movies tonight.*

Phrasal verbs

**account for** sthg. *v prep* [T +*v-ing*] to give an explanation or reason for: *How do you account for all these mistakes?*

These letters tell you that the object always follows the preposition when you use *account for*. The arrow ⇨ means that you can say *thrash the problem out* or *thrash out the problem* –see page 33a

**thrash** sthg. ⇨ **out** *v adv* [T] to reach agreement about (a problem) or produce (a decision) by much talk and consideration: *After a long discussion we were able to thrash out a plan.*



## Choosing the right word

Formal and informal

**kid<sup>1</sup>** /kɪd/ *n* 1 [C] *informal* a child: *There were three kids playing in the street.*

Would it be correct to use this word in a school essay? –see page 23a

American and British words

**bulletin board** /ˈbʊlɪn bɔːrd/ *AmE* || **notice board** *BrE* – a board on a wall on which notices and advertisements are placed

Shows the British word with the same meaning –see page 24a

Usage notes

**a-lone** /əˈloʊn/ *adv, adj* [F] 1 without others: *He lives alone.* | *The house stands alone on a hill.* . . .

Usage Note explains the meaning and use of similar words –see page 26a

USAGE **Alone** is neither good nor bad: *She reads a lot when she's alone.* **Solitary** and **lone**, when used of things, mean that there is only one: *a solitary/lone tree in the garden*, but when used of people they may show sadness, like **lonely** or **lonesome** (*esp. AmE*): *Come over and see me, I'm feeling a bit lonely.*

Synonyms

**ab-surd** /əbˈsɜːrd, -ˈzɜːrd/ *adj* against reason or common sense; clearly false or foolish; **RIDICULOUS**: *It's absurd not to wear a coat in such cold weather.*

This shows another word you can use with the same meaning –see page 23a

**fore-fin-ger** /ˈfɔːfɪŋɡər, ˈfoʊr-/ also **index finger** – *n* the finger next to the thumb, with which one points

Opposites

**hap-py** /ˈhæpi/ *adj* -**pier**, -**piest** 1 feeling, giving, or showing pleasure or contentment: *She is a happy child.* | *They have a happy marriage.* –opposite **unhappy**

Shows a word with the opposite meaning –see page 25a

Related words

**home-work** /ˈhoʊmwɜːrk/ *n* [U] schoolwork, such as essays, which is done outside the classroom, *esp. at home*, in a library, etc. –see also **HOUSEWORK**

Shows a word which is related or which might be confused –see page 24a

# Dictionary Skills Workbook

This dictionary tells you a lot about English words and how to use them – in writing and speaking English, as well as in reading. Like any dictionary, it tells you the meaning of words and how to spell them, but it can also help you with grammar, pronunciation, word-building, and other important parts of the language.

To use your dictionary well, you need to know how to find all the information in it. It is easy to do this once you understand how the dictionary works. These exercises will help you to learn how to use the dictionary and to understand the most important language points that you need to know. You can do them by yourself or with your teacher in class. The answers to the exercises are on pages 35a–38a.

## Spelling

The words in this dictionary are listed in alphabetical order. Here is the alphabet:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

To put words in alphabetical order, look at the first letter of each word. The word whose first letter comes closest to the beginning of the alphabet is first in alphabetical order. The word whose first letter is next in the alphabet is second, and so on. For example, **able** comes before **be**, and **country** comes before **door**.

**EXERCISE 1** Can you put these words in order? We have done the first two for you:

fight	<u>arm</u>
end	<u>bend</u>
arm	_____
car	_____
date	_____
bend	_____

**EXERCISE 2** Now do the same with these words:

wind	<u>tell</u>
under	_____
zoo	_____
yellow	_____
Xmas	_____
visit	_____
tell	_____

When two words begin with the same letter, like **able** and **add**, you have to look at the second letter to find the word in the dictionary. So **able** comes before **add**, **man** comes before **meat**, and **wise** comes before **wood**.

**EXERCISE 3** Can you put these words in order?

<b>pen</b>	_____
<b>place</b>	_____
<b>pretend</b>	_____
<b>page</b>	_____
<b>poor</b>	_____
<b>piece</b>	_____
<b>pull</b>	_____

If both the first and the second letters are the same, as in **grass** and **great**, then look at the third letter, and so on. So **grass** comes before **great**, and **through** comes before **throw**.

**EXERCISE 4** Rewrite this list with all the words in the correct order:

<b>illness</b>	_____
<b>month</b>	_____
<b>old</b>	_____
<b>money</b>	_____
<b>ill</b>	_____
<b>like</b>	_____
<b>kill</b>	_____
<b>jar</b>	_____
<b>name</b>	_____
<b>quick</b>	_____
<b>jam</b>	_____
<b>plate</b>	_____

When you have done these exercises, turn to the answers on page 35a to see if you have listed them correctly.

## Finding a word quickly

Because the words in this dictionary are listed in alphabetical order, this means that words beginning with **a** are listed at the front of the dictionary, words beginning with **z** are listed at the back, and words beginning with **m** are listed around the middle. So if you want to find the word **menu** you can turn straight to the middle of the dictionary. You don't have to start at the front and look through all the pages.

To help you to find words quickly, in the top corner of each page we print the first or the last word on that page. So you can work through the dictionary quickly just looking at these words until you find one which is spelled like the one you are looking for. You can then read down the page to find the word you want. For example, if you want to find the word **beetle**, turn the pages until you find **beet**. Then look down the page, and you will find **beetle**.

### beet

**beet** /bi:t/ *n* 1 [C;U] *AmE* || **beetroot** *BrE*- a plant with a large red round root, cooked and eaten as a vegetable  
2 [C] also **sugar beet**- a plant which grows under the ground and from which beet sugar is obtained  
**beetle** /'bi:tl/ *n* an insect with hard wing coverings

## Two-word entries

Sometimes words are joined together with a hyphen, like **blue-collar**, and sometimes they are written as two words, like **ice cream** and **right angle**. Words like these are listed alphabetically as though they were just one word, so **ice cream** is listed after **icebox** and before **icicle**.

**icebox** *n* 1 *AmE infml* for REFRIGERATOR 2 a box where food is kept cool with blocks of ice  
**ice cream** *n* a sweet mixture which is frozen and eaten cold, usu. containing milk or other fat products: *chocolate ice cream*  
**ice hockey** || also **hockey** *esp. AmE*- a team game like FIELD HOCKEY played on ice  
**icicle** *n* a pointed stick of ice formed when water freezes as it runs or DRIPS down: *icicles hanging from the roof*

**EXERCISE 5** Put these two-word expressions in the right place in the lists below.

ice cream	absent-minded	all right	power station
ice	absent	allowable	power
ice age	absentee	allowance	powerful
iceberg	absently	alloy	powerless
<i>ice cream</i>			
icicle	absolute	allude to	pp.

Phrasal verbs

In English there are many two- or three-word verbs. These verbs (PHRASAL VERBS) have a different meaning from the main verb on its own, so they are listed separately, under the main verb, like this:

**add** *v* to put together with something else so as to increase the number, size, importance, etc.  
**add to** *v prep* to increase: *The increase in electricity costs has added to our difficulties.*  
**addendum** *n* something that is added or is to be added, as at the end of a speech or book

EXERCISE 6 Put these words in alphabetical order:

add up	<i>act</i>
act	
actual	
addition	
add	
act out	
act up	

Abbreviations

Abbreviations, like **CIA**, **a.m.**, and **e.g.** are listed in the dictionary in the usual way, so you will find **a.m.**, and **AM**, listed between **am** and **amalgamate**:

**am** *1st person sing. present tense of BE*  
**AM** *abbrev. for amplitude modulation; ...*  
**a.m.** *abbrev. for Latin ante meridiem (= before midday)*  
**amalgamate** *v* (esp. of businesses, societies, groups, etc.) to join together

Different spelling

If you look up the word **judgment** in the dictionary, you will see that there are two different spellings for this word. Both of them are correct, but **judgment** is the more common one, so it is written first:

**judgment, judgement** *n* **1** an official decision given by a judge or a court of law: *The court passed judgment on the prisoner.* **2** an opinion: *to form a judgment* **3** the ability to judge correctly: *an ERROR (=mistake) of judgment*

EXERCISE 7 Find these words in the dictionary. Check (✓) the more common spellings:

judgment	✓	inquire		enroll	
judgement		enquire		enrol	
generalise		hankie		yogurt	
generalize		hanky		yoghurt	

## American and British spellings

If you look up the word **color**, you will see that there are two spellings for this word, and that **color** is used in American English (*AmE*), while **colour** is used in British English (*BrE*).

**color** *AmE* || **colour** *BrE* *n* the quality which allows one to see the difference between (for example) a red flower and a blue flower when both are the same size and shape

In this dictionary American and British spelling differences are always shown with the sign ||; the American spelling is on the left of this sign, with the label *AmE*, the British spelling is on the right, with the label *BrE*.

**EXERCISE 8** Look up the following words in the dictionary. Which spelling would an American person use? Which spelling would a British person use? Write *AmE* for the American spelling, and *BrE* for the British.

center AmE

centre BrE

rumor \_\_\_\_\_

rumour \_\_\_\_\_

defense \_\_\_\_\_

defence \_\_\_\_\_

cheque \_\_\_\_\_

check \_\_\_\_\_

## Sound/Pronunciation

As well as telling you how to spell words, the dictionary tells you how to pronounce them.

We use a special alphabet to show pronunciation, which is printed between sloping lines /.../, after the word, like this: **apple** /'æpəl/

**apple** /'æpəl/ *n* a hard round fruit with white juicy flesh, and a red, green, or yellow skin

## Vowels and consonants

Look at the list of special (PHONETIC) letters on the inside back cover of this dictionary. You can see that this alphabet contains some letters that are the same as the English alphabet on page 12a, and some different ones.

In the list you will see common words next to the symbols. These words help you to learn to pronounce the sounds. For example:

VOWELS	
Symbol	Key Word
i <sup>y</sup>	beat
i	bit

CONSONANTS	
Symbol	Key Word
p	pan
b	ban

This means that the phonetic letter /p/ is said like the **p** at the beginning of the word **pan**, and that the phonetic letter /b/ is said like the **b** at the beginning of the word **ban**. The phonetic letter /i<sup>y</sup>/ is said like the **ea** in **beat**, and /i/ is said like the **i** in **bit**. You don't have to learn all of the phonetic letters. Just remember to look at the list on the inside back cover when you're not sure how to say them.

**EXERCISE 9** The words below contain one of these vowel sounds: /i<sup>y</sup>/ as in **team**, /ε/ as in **bed**, /a/ as in **pot**, and /u<sup>w</sup>/ as in **do**. Look in the dictionary to see which sound each word uses, then write the word in one of the lists below, under the correct vowel:

**bed, blue, boot, box, bread, bury, do, father, field, friend, group, key, move, people, pot, said, scene, sheep, shoe, team, watch**

/i <sup>y</sup> /	/ε/	/a/	/u <sup>w</sup> /
<i>field</i>	<i>bed</i>	<i>box</i>	<i>blue</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

When you have made your lists, turn to the inside back cover to see how to say each sound.

Did you notice that the words **bed, bread, bury, friend**, and **said** all have the same /ε/ sound, even though they are spelled differently?

**EXERCISE 10** The words in the list below contain one of these consonant sounds: /s/ as in **soon**, /f/ as in **few**, and /k/ as in **cool**. Look in the dictionary to see which sound each word uses for the underlined letters, then write the word in one of the lists below, under the correct consonant:

**check, city, coffee, cool, cough, few, key, mice, photograph, psychology, queen, school, soon, science**

/s/	/f/	/k/
<u>city</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Now check the sounds on the inside back cover, and practice saying the words in the lists.

Did you notice that the words **coffee, cough, few, and photograph** all contain the same /f/ sound, even though they are spelled differently?

## Spelling notes

Because many different letters can have the same sound in English, it is often difficult to know how to spell a word that you have not seen in writing. To help you to find these words, the dictionary contains a number of Spelling Notes, like the one shown here. This tells you that if you have heard a word that begins with the sound /f/, it may actually be spelt **ph-**, like **photograph**.

## F, f

### SPELLING NOTE

Words with the sound /f/ may be spelled **ph-**, like **photograph**

**F, f** the 6th letter of the English alphabet

**fable** *n* a short story, esp. about animals, that teaches a lesson (a **MORAL**) or truth

## Words with the same spelling, but different sound

Look at the two entries for **row** here. You will see that they are both nouns, one meaning “a neat line (of people or things),” and one meaning “a noisy quarrel.” If you look at the pronunciations of these two words you will see that they are said differently, even though they are spelled exactly the same. **Row** meaning “line” has a sound like **no**, and **row** meaning “quarrel” has a sound like **now**:

**row** /roʊ/ *n* a neat line (of people or things) side by side

**row** /rau/ *n* a noisy quarrel, sometimes with violent actions



**EXERCISE 11** The words **lead** and **bow** can both be said in two different ways. Use your dictionary to decide how they should be pronounced in the sentences below. First find the correct meaning, then look at the pronunciation guide. Check (✓) the correct pronunciation.

Shall I <b>lead</b> the way? _____	{ /liːd/ /led/	✓ _____
<b>Lead</b> is a dull gray soft metal. _____	{ /liːd/ /led/	_____ _____
The ribbon in the girl's hair was tied in a <b>bow</b> . _____	{ /baʊ/ /boʊ/	_____ _____
You must <b>bow</b> when the President enters the room. _____	{ /baʊ/ /boʊ/	_____ _____

## Stress

Most of the words in the exercises so far have been very short, and contain just one vowel sound. But many words, like **about**, **afraid**, and **alone** have two vowel sounds. They consist of two parts (or SYLLABLES).

**about** /əˈbaʊt/      **afraid** /əˈfreɪd/      **alone** /əˈloʊn/

If you look at the pronunciation guides for these words, you will see that they have an extra sign, a little bar /' like the one in front of the /b/ in **about**. This means that when we say these words we put more force (or STRESS) on the second part (or SYLLABLE) of the word:

about      afraid      alone

Look at the pronunciation guides for **able**, **almost**, and **angry** below:

**able** /ˈeɪbəl/      **almost** /ˈɔlmoʊst/      **angry** /ˈæŋɡri/

Look for the sign /'/. It's at the beginning of these words. This means that we put more force (STRESS) on the first SYLLABLE of these words:

able      almost      angry

Practice saying the words **about**, **afraid**, and **alone**, and then say **able**, **almost**, and **angry**. Can you hear the difference? Remember to look for the sign /'/.

**EXERCISE 12** Look up the pronunciation guides for the words listed below. All of them have more than one SYLLABLE, so look for the sign /'/. Underline the part of the word that has the stress put on it:

<u>ability</u>	<u>advantage</u>	<u>afternoon</u>	<u>afterwards</u>
----------------	------------------	------------------	-------------------

For more information on STRESS turn to page 792.