

A

inhabitant of North America or South America
esp : a citizen of the United States
 2 *American* *adj* 1 : of or relating to America or its
 inhabitants (the *American* coastline) 2 : of or relating
 to the United States or its inhabitants

B

1 **book** \ 'bʊk \ *n* 1 **a** : a set of written, printed, or
 blank sheets of paper bound together into
 a volume **b** : a long written or printed literary
 composition **c** : a major division of a literary
 work **d** : a volume of business records (as
 a ledger) 2 *cap* : BIBLE 1...

C

com • pa • ny \ 'kəmp-nē, -ə-nē \ *n, pl -nies* 1 **a** :
 association with another : FELLOWSHIP **b** : persons
 with whom one regularly associates **c** : visitors
 2 **a** : a group of persons or things **b** : a body
 of soldiers, *esp* : a unit especially of infantry consisting
 usually of a headquarters and two or more platoons...

D

Webster's **School**

Dictionary

Webster's **School** Dictionary



A Merriam-Webster®

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Introducing . . . WEBSTER'S SCHOOL DICTIONARY

Webster's School Dictionary is a list of some of the words in the English language arranged in alphabetical order. However, it is more than just a list. It is also a source book of information about the words it lists.

Webster's School Dictionary is organized so that you can quickly and easily find (1) the word you are looking for and (2) different kinds of information about that word. The questions and answers that follow will help you acquire some of the skills needed to make *Webster's School Dictionary* a useful reference tool.

What Kinds of Words Can You Find in *Webster's School Dictionary*?

THE ENTRY WORD AND THE ENTRY

Words listed in the *School Dictionary* are printed in **boldface type** and are located on the left side of each column on the page. Each boldface word listed in this position is known as an entry word.

When you look up a word in the *School Dictionary*, most of the time you will be looking for a boldface entry word.

All the information about the entry word immediately follows it. An entry word and information that follows it are together called an *entry*.

When you look for information about a word, you will be consulting the entry. In this introduction to your dictionary, the term *entry word* refers to the word only. The term *entry* refers to the word and all the information that follows it.

KINDS OF ENTRY WORDS

In most of the entry words in the *School Dictionary*, centered dots show how these words may be divided at the end of a written or printed line. In the section on spelling (page 14a), you will read more about these centered dots. Now, however, you are going to look quickly at some of the different kinds of entry words found in the *School Dictionary*.

- Single letters, such as **f**, **n**, and **z**.
- Combinations of two or more letters, such as **LP**, **IOU**, and **RNA**.
- Single words, such as **cat**, **lub•ber**, and **chro•mo•some**.
- Words containing apostrophes, such as **I'm**, **o'clock**, and **shouldn't**.
- Arabic numerals, or entry words containing Arabic numerals, such as **1080**, **A1**, and **cobalt 60**.
- Compound words spelled without spaces, such as **egg•beat•er**, **on•ion•skin**, and **type•writ•er**.
- Compound words spelled with hyphens, such as **right•hand**, **low•ten•sion**, and **fore•and•af•ter**.
- Compound words made up of words separated by spaces, such as **flying saucer**, **tongue in cheek**, and **dol•man sleeve**.
- Combinations of any of the above kinds of entry words, such as **V•eight**, **PA system**, **fool's gold**, **Star•Spangled Banner**, and **cat•o'•nine•tails**.
- Word parts, such as **re-** and **-ness** and **astro-** and **-lo•gy** that are used only when attached to whole words or to other word parts.

How Can You Find Entry Words in *Webster's School Dictionary*?

ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Entry words in the *School Dictionary* are listed in alphabetical order. Entry words beginning with the letter *a* are listed first, those beginning with the letter *b* are listed next, and so on from *c* to *z*.

Entry words beginning with the same letter are then listed in alphabetical order according to the second letter, the third letter, and so on.

For example, you will find **mat** before **melt**, **melt** before **mem-ber**, **meek** before **meet**, and **me-lod-i-ous** before **mel-o-dy**.

Entry words that contain Arabic numerals are listed in alphabetical order as though the numerals were spelled out.

For example, **4-H** comes between **four-foot-ed** and **four-hand** just as though it were spelled *four-H*.

Hyphens, spaces, and apostrophes do not affect the alphabetical order of entry words.

If you turn to page 230, you will find these words at the top of the page:

230 **deal • decagram**

These words are called *guide words* because they guide you to the word you want to find by putting an alphabetical limit on the page. Most often, the *first* guide word is alphabetically the first entry words on the page and the *second* guide word is alphabetically the last entry word on the page. All the entry words that fall alphabetically between the two guide words can be found on that page.

For example, the entry words **dean**, **de-bate**, **de-bris**, **de-cade**, and **deca-gon** can all be found on page 230 because they fall alphabetically between the guide words **deal** and **decagram**.

What Should You Know About the Entry Words in Webster's School Dictionary?

Sometimes two or more main entries are spelled exactly the same. Words that are spelled alike but are different in meaning or function are called *homographs*.

In the *School Dictionary* homographs are identified by a small raised numeral before the entry word. Homographs are numbered in the order in which they became part of the English language.

For example, look at the entries for *blubber* on page 96. The noun **¹blub-ber**, meaning "the fat of large sea mammals (as whales)," was used in English before the verb **²blubber**, meaning "to weep noisily."

Occasionally you will find an entry word joined to another entry word by *or* or *also*. The two forms are called *variants*.

When variants joined by *or* are in alphabetical order, both variants are equally acceptable.

For example, look at these partial entries for *catalog* and *delft*:

¹cat-a-log or cat-a-logue
delft . . . or delft-ware

Here the variants are in alphabetical order and are equally acceptable.

When variants joined by *or* are not in alphabetical order, both are acceptable, but the first form is somewhat more common than the second.

For example, look at these partial entries for *gunwhale* and *loathe*:

gun-whale or gun-nel
loathe or loth

Here the variants are not in alphabetical order. The first form is therefore more common.

GUIDE WORDS

HOMOGRAPHS

VARIANTS

When variants are joined by *also*, both are acceptable, but the first form is much more common than the second.

For example, look at these partial entries for *patty* and *ticktack-toe*:

pat·ty *also* **pat·tie**
tick·tack·toe *also* **tic·tac·toe**

CROSS-REFERENCES

Some variants are also listed as entry words. A *cross-reference* at the variant entry refers you to another entry word for complete information about both forms.

For example, look at this partial entry for *loth*:

loth . . . *variant of* **LOATHE**

When you see a word printed in small capital letters (**LOATHE**), you will know that you are being referred to another entry word.

RUN-ON ENTRIES

Sometimes a boldface word appears at the end of an entry after a dash. This kind of entry is called a *run-on entry* because it is run on after the definition.

For example, look at this partial entry for *metrical*:

met·ri·cal \ 'me-tri-kəl\ *adj* **1 a** : of or relating to meter (as in poetry or music) **b** : arranged in meter (*metrical* verse) **2** : of or relating to measurement — **met·ri·cal·ly** \ -kə-lē, -klē\ *adv*

Here the run-on entry is **met·ri·cal·ly**, and it is run on at the end of the definition.

Some entries include more than one run-on entry.

For example, look at these partial entries for *dreamy* and *vanquish*:

dreamy \ 'drē-mē\ *adj* **dream·i·er**; **-est 1** : full of dreams (*dreamy* sleep) **2** : given to or marked by dreaming or fantasy **3 a** : having the quality or characteristics of a dream **b** : quiet and soothing (*dreamy* music) **c** : DELIGHTFUL (a *dreamy* car) — **dream·i·ly** \ -mə-lē\ *adv* — **dream·i·ness** \ -mē-nəs\ *n*
van·quish \ 'vāŋ-kwɪʃ, 'vān-\ *vt* **1** : to overcome in battle : subdue completely **2** : to gain mastery over (as an emotion or temptation or a competitor) : DEFEAT [Middle French *venquis*, preterit of *veindre* "to conquer", from Latin *vincere*] **syn** see CONQUER — **van·quish·able** \ -ə-bəl\ — **van·quish·er** *n*

Some run-on entries are short phrases that use a form of the main entry.

For example, look at this partial entry for *wolf*:

¹**wolf** \ 'wʊlf\ *n*, *pl* **wolves** \ 'wʊlvz\ *also* **wolf 1** : any of several large erect-eared bushy-tailed predatory mammals that resemble the related dogs and tend to hunt in packs — compare COYOTE, JACKAL **2 a** (1) : a person resembling a wolf (as in ferocity or guile) (2) a man forward and zealous in attentions to women **b** : dire poverty (trying to keep the *wolf* from the door) [Old English *wulf*] — **wolf·ish** \ 'wʊl-fɪʃ\ *adj* — **wolf·like** \ 'wʊl-,flik\ *adj* — **wolf in sheep's clothing** : one who hides a hostile intention behind a friendly manner

How Does Webster's School Dictionary Help You to Pronounce Words?

PRONUNCIATION SYMBOLS

Most entries in the *School Dictionary* show the pronunciation immediately after the entry word. Pronunciations are shown between slanted lines:

go \ 'gō\ . . .
rum·ple \ 'rəm-pəl\ . . .
ju·bi·lee \ 'jü-be-,lē\ . . .

A complete list of the symbols used to show pronunciation is printed on the flyleaf and on the inside back cover of this book. A shortened list is printed in the lower right-hand corner of each right-hand page:

\ə\	abut	\aú\	out	\i\	tip	\ó\	saw	\ú\	foot
\er\	further	\ch\	chin	\i\	life	\oi\	coin	\y\	yet
\a\	mat	\e\	pet	\j\	job	\th\	thin	\yü\	few
\ä\	take	\ë\	easy	\ng\	sing	\th\	this	\yü\	cure
\ä\	cot, cart	\g\	go	\ô\	bone	\ŭ\	food	\zh\	vision

Following the symbols on both the complete and the shortened lists are words containing the sound of the symbol they follow:

\aú\ out
 \ch\ chin

The boldface letters in these words are the letters that stand for the same sound as the symbol.

If you say *out* and *chin* in your normal voice, for example, you will be able to hear the sounds meant by \aú\ and \ch\. The letters *ou* stand for the sound \aú\ and the letters *ch* stand for the sound \ch\.

Many of the symbols used in the *School Dictionary* look exactly like the letters you use to write words. Remember, though, that when you find \a\, \e\, \f\, \g\, etc. between slanted lines, they are not letters. They are pronunciation symbols. Here are some important differences between letters and pronunciation symbols:

The same letter can stand for different sounds in different words.

For example, the letter *g* stands for two different sounds in the words *go* and *gem*.

A pronunciation symbol stands for one sound and only one sound.

For example, the symbol \j\ always stands for the sound you hear at the beginning of *gem* and at the end of *fudge*. The symbol \g\ always stands for the sound you hear at the beginning of *go* and at the end of *pig*.

Every sound in English is represented by one pronunciation symbol. But many sounds in English can be spelled with different letters.

For example, the symbol \ô\ stands for the vowel sound you hear at the end of *go*, *know*, *sew*, *toe*, and *though*. But as you can see, that same vowel sound is spelled differently in each word: -o, -ow, -ew, -oe, and -ough.

Hyphens are used with pronunciation symbols to show the syllables of a word.

For example, look at these partial entries for *beast*, *because*, *castaway*, and *despotism*.

beast *bēst\ (1 syllable)
be-cause \bi-*kôz\ (2 syllables)
cast-away *kas-tə-,wā\ (3 syllables)
des-po-tism *des-pə-,tiz-əm\ (4 syllables)

Notice that in two of the above examples (*castaway* and *despotism*) the number and position of the hyphens do not match the number and position of the centered dots. The centered dots do not separate syllables (see page 7a). Syllables are shown only with the hyphens in the pronunciation for a word.

STRESS

In pronouncing a word of more than one syllable, you naturally say some syllables with more force or emphasis than others. This emphasis is called *stress*.

For example, in pronouncing the word *lovely*, you naturally put more stress on the first syllable than on the second syllable. But in pronouncing *conceal*, you stress the second syllable more than the first.

HYPHENS IN PRONUNCIATIONS

What Does Webster's School Dictionary Tell You About the Function and Forms of Words?

PART-OF-SPEECH AND OTHER FUNCTION LABELS

The way in which a word is used in speaking and writing is called its *function*. In each entry a function label immediately following the pronunciation (if there is one) tells you something about how the entry word is used. Most often the function label indicates the part of speech of the entry word.

Some entries in the *School Dictionary* show two function labels for the same entry word.

For example, look at this partial entry for *afloat*:

afloat \ə-'flōt\ *adv or adj*

Double part-of-speech labels are used when separate definitions are not needed for the different functions.

INFLECTED FORMS

In English there are three major inflections: (1) a change in the form of a noun to show a change in number; (2) a change in the form of a verb to show a change in tense or for another reason; and (3) a change in the form of an adjective or adverb to show a degree of comparison. In the *School Dictionary*, inflected forms of some nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are shown.

In the *School Dictionary*, inflected forms are printed in boldface type.

For example, look at these partial entries for *buggy*, *hem*, and *portly*:

²buggy *n, pl buggies*
²hem *vb hemmed; hem·ming*
port·ly \ 'pōrt-lē, 'pōrt-\ *adj port·li·er; -est*

The plural *buggies* is an inflected form of the noun *buggy*. The tense forms *hemmed* and *hemming* are inflected forms of the verb *hem*. The forms *portlier* and *portliest* are inflected forms of the adjective *portly*.

On pages 10a–12a, you will read more about inflected forms of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Now, however, you are going to take a general look at how inflected forms are shown in the *School Dictionary*.

Inflected forms are shown sometimes in full and sometimes in part.

For example, look at these partial entries for *bandy*, *villainy*, and *lucky*:

¹ban·dy \ 'ban-dē\ *vb ban·died; ban·dy·ing*
vil·lainy \ 'vil-ə-nē\ *n, pl -lain·ies*
lucky \ 'lək-ē\ *adj luck·i·er; -est*

Some entries show variant inflected forms.

For example, look at these partial entries for *swell*, *dozen*, and *learn*:

¹swell \ 'swel\ *vb swelled; swelled or swol·len . . . ; swelling*
doz·en \ 'dəz-ən\ *n, pl dozens or dozen*
learn \ 'lɜrn\ *vb learned . . . also learnt . . . ; learn·ing*

Or and *also* have the same meaning when they join variant inflected forms as when they join variant entry words (see page 10a).

The pronunciations of inflected forms are shown sometimes in full, sometimes in part, and sometimes not at all.

For example, look at these partial entries for *antipode*, *arcanum*, and *happy*:

an·ti·pode \ 'ant-ə-,pōd\ *n, pl an·tip·o·des* \ an-'tip-ə-; -dēz\
ar·ca·num \ ār-'kā-nəm\ *n, pl -na* \ -nə\
hap·py \ 'hap-ē\ *adj hap·pi·er; -est*

In each case, by putting two entries together, you can figure out that the full pronunciation of *astrology* is \ə-'sträl-ə-jē\ and the full pronunciation of *radarscope* is \rā-,där-'sköp\.

Some run-ons show only partial pronunciation when part of the run-on is pronounced the same as the entry word or another run-on.

For example, look at this partial entry for *inexhaustible*:

in-ex-haust-ible \,in-ig-'zô-stə-bəl\ *adj* 1 : plentiful enough not to give out or be used up : UNFAILING (an *inexhaustible* supply)
2 : not subject to fatigue or wear — **in-ex-haust-ibil-i-ty** \-,zô-stə-'bīl-ət-ē\ *n* — **in-ex-haust-ibly** \-'zô-stə-blē\ *adv*

The first two syllables of the run-ons are pronounced as shown after the entry word.

When a word in an open compound is not listed as an entry word, the pronunciation of that word is shown.

For example, look at this partial entry for *rhesus monkey*:

rhe-sus monkey \rē-səs-\

The word *monkey* is an entry word, but *rhesus* is not.

Some entries in the *School Dictionary* show more than one pronunciation for the entry word. Each pronunciation is called a variant pronunciation.

For example, look at the variant pronunciations for *battery*:

bat-tery \bat-ə-rē, 'ba-trē\

The order of variant pronunciations does not mean that one is better than the other. All the variants shown in the *School Dictionary* are acceptable. Each of these variants is used by a large number of educated English speakers.

A variant pronunciation preceded by *also* is less common than other variants but is still acceptable:

saucy \sas-ē *also* 'sôs-ē\

A variant pronunciation preceded by *sometimes* is much less common than other variants but is still acceptable:

the-ater or **the-atre** \thē-ət-ər, *sometimes* 'thē-,āt-ər\

Other labels tell you where or when a particular variant pronunciation is more commonly used:

great \grāt, *in South also* 'greet, 'gret\
get \get, 'get; *often* git, *without stress when a heavily stressed syllable follows, as in "get up"*\

In many entries, the pronunciation changes only in part of the word. For these words only the syllables that change are shown.

For example, look at these partial entries for *apricot* and *homo sapiens*:

ap-ri-cot \ap-rə-,kāt, 'ā-prə-\
ho-mo sa-pi-ens \,hō-mō-'sap-ē-ənz, -'sā-pē-, -,enz\

The second variant of \ap-rə-,kāt\ is \ā-prə-,kāt\. The second variant of \,hō-mō-'sap-ē-ənz\ is \,hō-mō-'sā-pē-ənz\. The final syllable in both variants may be pronounced \,enz\.

Usually a partial pronunciation of a variant consists of one or more whole syllables. Sometimes, however, when the stress of a syllable changes but the pronunciations otherwise stay the same, only the change in stress is shown.

For example, look at this partial entry for *excess*:

ex-cess \ik-'ses, 'ek-,\

The full pronunciation of the second variant is \'ek-,ses\.

VARIANT PRONUNCIATIONS

Verbs that are not inflected as described above are called irregular verbs. Inflected forms of irregular verbs are shown in this dictionary.

Here are examples of entries for irregular verbs:

¹burst \ˈbɜrst\ *vb* **burst**; **burst-ing** . . .
bring \ˈbrɪŋ\ *vb* **brought** \ˈbrɒt\; **bring-ing** \ˈbrɪŋ-ɪŋ\ . . .
¹keep \ˈkeɪp\ *vb* **kept** \ˈkeɪpt\; **keep-ing** . . .
send \ˈsend\ *vb* **sent** \ˈsent\; **send-ing** . . .
¹show \ˈʃoʊ\ *vb* **showed**; **shown** \ˈʃɒn\ or **showed**; **show-ing** . . .

Note that a verb that has more than one past or past participle form shows both even when one is regular.

Some irregular principal parts are entered at their own alphabetical places. A cross-reference guides you to the correct entry word.

For example, look at this entry for *bought*:

bought *past of buy*

ADJECTIVE AND ADVERB FORMS

English adjectives and adverbs are inflected to show degrees of comparison. Most adjectives and adverbs form (1) the comparative degree by adding *-er* to the simple form and (2) the superlative degree by adding *-est* to the simple form. The comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives and adverbs that are inflected this way are not shown in the *School Dictionary*.

For example, look at these partial entries for *cool* and *hard*:

¹cool \ˈkuːl\ *adj*
²hard *adv*

Knowing how regular comparisons are formed, you are able to figure out that the inflected forms of the adjective *cool* are *cooler* and *coolest* and that the inflected forms of the adverb *hard* are *harder* and *hardest*.

Inflected forms of adjectives and adverbs that involve a spelling change like doubling a final consonant or changing *y* to *i* are shown.

For example, look at these partial entries for *hot* and *early*:

hot \hɑt\ *adj* **hot-ter**; **hot-test**
¹ear-ly \ˈɛr-lē\ *adv* **ear-li-er**; **-est**

Adjectives and adverbs that are inflected in some way other than by adding *-er* and *-est* are considered irregular. Inflected forms of irregular adjectives are shown in the *School Dictionary*.

For example, look at these partial entries for *bad* and *good*:

¹bad \ˈbɑd\ *adj* **worse** \ˈwɜrs\; **worst** \ˈwɜrst\
¹good \ˈɡʊd\ *adj* **bet-ter** \ˈbet-ər\; **best** \ˈbest\

How Does Webster's School Dictionary Help You Find the Meanings of Words?

The definition of a word tells you the meaning or meanings of that word. In the *School Dictionary*, various devices guide you to meanings of words.

Every definition is preceded by a boldface colon.

For example, look at these partial entries for *fritter*, *pen*, *anti-quary*, and *stable*.

¹frit-ter \ˈfrit-ər\ *n* : a small quantity of fried or sautéed batter
often containing fruit, vegetables, or meat . . .
⁵pen *n* : a female swan
an-ti-quary \ˈant-ə-,kwɛr-ē\ *n*, *pl* **-quar-ies** : a person who
collects or studies antiquities
²stable *vb* **sta-ble-d**; **sta-ble-ing** \-bə-ling, -bling\ : to put, keep,
or live in or as if in a stable

PRECEDING BOLDFACE COLON

SENSE NUMERALS

Many entries in the *School Dictionary* show more than one definition for the entry word. When a word has more than one meaning, boldface arabic numerals are used to separate the meanings. These numbered meanings are called *senses* and are given in the order in which they came into the English language.

Inflected forms sometimes show variant pronunciations.
For example, look at this partial entry for *ample*:

am·ple \ 'am-pəl\ *adj* **am·pler** \ -pə-lər, -plər\; **am·plest** \ -pə-ləst, -pləst\

PLURAL NOUNS

Most nouns in English form their plurals by adding -s or -es to the unchanged singular form. Such plurals are considered *regular* and are not shown in the *School Dictionary*.

For example, look at these partial entries for *shoe* and *loss*:

¹shoe \ 'shū\ *n*
loss \ 'lós\ *n*

Knowing how regular plurals are formed, you are able to figure out that the plural of *shoe* is *shoes* and the plural of *loss* is *losses*.

Plurals that are formed in other ways are called *irregular*. Irregular plurals are shown in the *School Dictionary*.

Here are just a few examples of the many types of irregular plurals found in the *School Dictionary*:

el·lip·sis \ i-'lip-sēs, e-\ *n*, **pl -lip·ses** \ -'lip-,sēz\
¹knife \ 'nīf\ *n*, **pl knives** \ 'nīvz\
mid·dy \ 'mid-ē\ *n*, **pl mid·dies**

Note that the irregular plurals *knives* and *middies* involve spelling changes (*f* to *v* + *es* and *y* to *i* + *es*).

Nouns which have more than one plural form show both variants, even if one is regular.

For example, look at this partial entry for *appendix*:

ap·pen·dix \ ə-'pen-diks\ *n*, **pl -dix·es** or **-di·ces** \ -də-,sēz\

Some irregular plurals are entered at their own alphabetical places with cross-references to the appropriate entry words.

For example, look at this entry for *lice*:

lice *pl of LOUSE*

Plural forms are also shown for some noun suffixes and noun combining forms.

For example, look at these partial entries for *-ity* and *-metry*:

-ity \ ət-ē\ *n suffix*, **pl -ities**
-m·e·try \ m-ə-trē\ *n combining form*, **pl -metries**

VERB FORMS

Most English verbs are inflected to show tense. The great majority of these form their past and past participle by adding -ed to the present tense form (sometimes dropping the final *e*). Such verbs form the present participle by adding -ing to the present tense form (sometimes dropping the final *e*). Verbs that are inflected in this way are called *regular*, and their inflected forms (or principal parts) are not shown in the *School Dictionary*.

For example, look at these partial entries for *lubricate* and *knock*:

lu·bri·cate \ 'lū-brē-,kāt\ *vb*
¹knock \ 'nāk\ *vb*

The inflected forms of the regular verb *lubricate* are *lubricated* and *lubricating* (note that the final *e* has been dropped). The inflected forms of the regular verb *knock* are *knocked* and *-knocking*.

Inflected forms of regular verbs that involve a spelling change like the doubling of a final consonant or the changing of *y* to *i* are shown.

For example, look at these partial entries for the regular verbs *marry* and *rob*:

¹mar·ry \ 'mar-ē\ *vb* **mar·ried**; **mar·ry·ing**
rob \ 'rāb\ *vb* **robbed**; **rob·bing**

For example, look at this entry for *rather*:

rath·er \ˈrath-ər, ˈræth-, ˈrāth\ *adv* **1** : more willingly : **PREFERABLY** (I would *rather* not go) **2** : on the contrary : **INSTEAD** (things did not turn out well; *rather*, they turned out very badly) **3** : more exactly : more properly : with better reason (my friend, or, *rather*, my former friend) (to be pitied *rather* than blamed) **4** : **SOMEWHAT** (*rather* cold today) [Old English *hrathor*, comparative of *hrathe* "quickly"]

Here, verbal illustrations are given for four of the four senses of the adverb *rather*.

What Other Information About Words Can You Find in *Webster's School Dictionary*?

HOW TO SPELL WORDS

All entry words in the *School Dictionary* represent acceptable spellings. Some entries also include acceptable variant spellings.

For example, look at these partial entries for *theater* and *license*:

1li·cense or li·cense \ˈlīs-ns\ *n*
2license also licence *vt*
the·ater or the·atre \ˈthē-ət-ər, sometimes ˈthē-āt-ər\ *n*

In entries with variant spellings, *or* and *also* have the meaning explained on page 5a under "Variants."

The *School Dictionary* provides a guide for spelling compound words.

For example, look at these partial entries for *life raft*, *lifesaving*, and *life-size*.

life raft *n*
life·sav·ing \ˈlīf-,sā-ving\ *n*
life·size \ˈlīf-ˈsiz\ or life·sized \-ˈsīzd\ *adj*

The *School Dictionary* also shows the spelling of inflected forms of some nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (see page 10a) and the spelling of run-ons (see page 6a).

In the entry word, centered dots show where a hyphen may be used to divide a word at the end of a written or printed line.

For example, look at this partial entry for *horizontal*:

1hor·i·zon·tal \,hór-ə-ˈzänt-l, ,här-\ *adj*

The entry word **hor·i·zon·tal** has three centered dots. You know, therefore, that you can divide *horizontal* at any one of three places: after *r*, after *i*, or after *n*.

In the *School Dictionary*, a single letter at the beginning or end of an entry word is not divided from the rest of the word by a centered dot.

For example, look at these partial entries for *away* and *bleary*:

1away \ə-ˈwā\ *adv*
bleary \ˈbliər-ē\ *adj*

If *away* were divided at the end of a line, the letter *a* would be on a line by itself. If *bleary* were divided, the letter *y* would be on a line by itself. Therefore, divisions are not indicated for either word. Note that in each instance, syllables are shown in the pronunciation.

If all the homographs in a group are pronounced the same, only the first homograph shows end-of-line divisions.

For example, look at these partial entries for *effective*:

1ef·fec·tive \i-ˈfēk-tiv\ *adj*
2effective *n*

End-of-line divisions are not usually shown for the words in an open compound. To find out how the words in an open compound are divided at the end of a line, look up each word in the compound at its own alphabetical place.

HOW TO HYPHENATE WORDS

SENSE LETTERS

For example, look at this partial entry for *apprentice*:

1ap-pren-tice \ə-'prent-əs\ *n* **1** : a person legally bound to serve a master for a specified period to receive instruction in an art or trade **2** : one who is learning a trade, art, or calling by practical experience under skilled workers

Note that each sense is preceded by a boldface number and a boldface colon.

A numbered sense is sometimes further divided into subsenses by small boldface letters.

For example, look at this partial entry for *flashlight*:

flash-light \'flash-,lit\ *n* **1** : a flash of light or a light that flashes
2 a : a sudden bright artificial light used in taking photographic pictures **b** : a photograph taken by such a light **3** : a small battery-operated portable electric light

Note that each subsense is preceded by a boldface letter and a boldface colon.

SYNONYMOUS CROSS-REFERENCES

Each sample definition above is a phrase. In the *School Dictionary*, such definitions follow boldface colons and are printed in roman type. Sometimes, however, a boldface colon is followed by a *synonymous cross-reference* printed in SMALL CAPITALS. A synonymous cross-reference refers you to another entry word for the definition.

For example, look at this entry for *fava bean*:

fa-va bean \,fä-v-ə-\ *n* : BROAD BEAN

The synonyms *fava bean* and *broad bean* mean the same thing. Instead of printing the same definition twice, the *School Dictionary* refers you to the entry for *broad bean*:

broad bean *n* : the large flat edible seed of an Old World upright vetch; *also* : this plant widely grown for its seeds and as fodder

An entry sometimes contains a combination of (1) definitions that are phrases and (2) synonymous cross-references.

For example, look at this partial entry for *gulf*:

gulf \'galf\ *n* **1** : a part of an ocean or sea extending into the land **2** : a deep hollow in the earth : CHASM, ABYSS **3** : WHIRLPOOL **4** : an unbridgeable gap

Note that senses **1** and **4** contain definitions that are phrases. Sense **3** contains a synonymous cross-reference only. Sense **2** contains both.

Sometimes a synonymous cross-reference includes a homograph numeral and/or a sense numeral. These numerals save time by referring you to the entry word or the sense that has an appropriate definition.

For example, look at these entries for *bounce* and *castle*:

2bounce *n* **1 a** : a sudden leap or bound **b** : a bouncing back
: REBOUND **2** : ENERGY **1**, LIVELINESS
1cas-tle \'kas-əl\ *n* **1 a** : a large fortified building or set of buildings **b** : a massive or imposing house **2** : ³ROOK

In the entry for *bounce*, note the sense numeral after *energy*. In the entry for *castle*, note the raised homograph numeral before *rook*.

VERBAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Many definitions in the *School Dictionary* include *verbal illustrations*. A verbal illustration is a phrase or a sentence that shows how a particular sense of a word is used in context. Verbal illustrations are enclosed in angle brackets: < > The word being defined or a form of it is printed in italics.

Note that a verbal illustration is given for each synonym.

In the entries for the other synonyms in the synonym paragraph, a cross-reference refers you to the entry which includes the synonym paragraph:

ur-bane \,ər-ˈbān\ *adj* : notably polite or finished in manner
: SUAVE [*Latin urbanus* "urban, urbane"] **syn** see SUAVE — **ur-bane-ly** *adv*

HOW CERTAIN WORDS CAME INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The origin of a word is called its *etymology*. In *Webster's School Dictionary*, an etymology appears after a definition and is enclosed in square brackets:

For example, look at *Vandyke*:

Van-dyke \van-ˈdik\ *n* : a trim pointed beard [*Sir Anthony Vandyke*]

Note that in an etymology, the words from which the English word came are printed in italic type. The meanings of these words are set off by quotation marks

Some entries are followed by *origin paragraphs* that explain more fully the etymologies of the main entries.

For example, look at this entry for *bully*:

1bul-ly \ˈbūl-ē\ *n, pl bullies* : a rough browbeating person; esp : one habitually cruel to others who are weaker [*probably from Dutch boel* "lover"]

△ **origin** The earliest meaning of English *bully* was "sweet-heart". The word was probably borrowed from Dutch *boel* "lover." Later *bully* was used for anyone who seemed a good fellow, then for a blustering daredevil. Today, a bully is usually one whose claims to strength and courage are based on the intimidation of those who are weaker.

What Other Kinds of Information

Can You Find in *Webster's School Dictionary*?

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

If you look at the table of contents on page 3a, you will see that the *School Dictionary* has an appendix that includes some common abbreviations and symbols. A note on page 1100 will tell you what kind of information you will find in this section of this dictionary.

NAMES OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

The table of contents also indicates that the *School Dictionary* includes the names of people and places. Again, a note on page 1119 will tell you what kind of information is included in these sections.

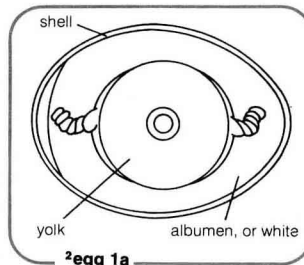
ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

Within the A–Z listing of main entries, the *School Dictionary* includes illustrations and tables that will help you to understand better the meanings of some words.

An illustration appears next to the word being illustrated or at the top of the next column. A caption indicates the word and sometimes the sense that is being illustrated.

For example, look at this entry for *egg*:

2egg n 1 a : the hard-shelled reproductive body produced by a bird and especially by domestic poultry
b : an animal reproductive body consisting of an ovum with its nutritive and protective envelopes and being capable of development into a new individual
c : OVUM **2** : something resembling an egg **3** : PERSON, INDIVIDUAL (a good egg) [*Old Norse*]



Note that homograph and sense numerals tell you the specific meaning of *egg* that is being illustrated.

Several entries in the *School Dictionary* are accompanied by tables. For example, see page 566 for the table accompanying the entry for *metric system*.

For example, turn to the entry for *respiratory system* on page 777. To find out how this open compound is divided, you will have to find the entry word **res•pi•ra•to•ry** on page 777 and the entry word **sys•tem** on page 945.

When a word in an open compound is not listed as an entry word, the end-of-line divisions in that word are shown in the entry word for the compound.

For example, look at this partial entry for *Ferris wheel*:

Fer•ris wheel \ˈfer-əs- \ n

The word *wheel* is a main entry, but *Ferris* is not.

Most entry words in the *School Dictionary* begin with a lowercase letter. Such words are usually not capitalized in writing.

chiv•al•ry . . . It was a tale of chivalry and romance.

Some entry words that begin with a lowercase letter are labeled to tell you when and what to capitalize.

For example, look at these partial entries for *yanqui*, *bill of rights*, and *nile green*:

yan•qui \ˈyäng-kē \ n, often cap
bill of rights often cap B&R
nile green \ˈnīl- \ n, often cap N

The label *often cap* indicates that the word may be capitalized but that either form is acceptable.

Entry words that begin with a capital letter are usually capitalized when written.

Oc•to•ber . . . My birthday is in October.

WHEN TO CAPITALIZE WORDS

HOW WORDS ARE USED

Sometimes a word or a sense of a word is used in a limited context.

The *School Dictionary* signals these special uses with *usage labels*. Among the usage labels used are the following:

<i>dialect</i>	nary \ˈnaər-ē, ˈneər- \ adj, <i>dialect</i> : not one [alteration for <i>ne'er a</i>]
<i>obsolete</i>	1dress•er \ˈdres-ər \ n 1 obsolete : a table or sideboard for preparing and serving food
<i>archaic</i>	reave \ˈrēv \ vb reaved or reft \ˈreft \; reav•ing <i>archaic</i> : PLUNDER, ROB
<i>chiefly substandard</i>	2suspicion vt sus•pi•cioned ; sus•pi•cion•ing \-ˈspish-ning, -ə-ning \ <i>chiefly substandard</i> : SUSPECT
<i>slang</i>	saw•buck \ˈsō-,bək \ n 1 : SAWHORSE 2 slang : a 10-dollar bill

Another device used to give more information about how a word is used is the *usage note*. This note is preceded by a dash and begins with the word "used." It sometimes takes the place of a definition.

For example, look at this partial entry for *hi*:

hi \ˈhī, ˈhī-ē \ *interj* — used especially as a greeting

HOW TO USE SYNONYMS

Some entries in the *School Dictionary* are followed by *synonym paragraphs*. A synonym paragraph explains the precise difference in meaning between the main entry and its synonyms.

For example, look at this entry for *suave*:

suave \ˈswäv \ adj : smoothly but often superficially polite and agreeable [Middle French, "pleasant, sweet", from Latin *suavis*] — **suave•ly** adv — **suave•ness** n — **sua•vi•ty** \ˈswäv-ət-ē \ n

- syn** SUAVE, URBANE, BLAND, SMOOTH mean pleasingly tactful and well-mannered. SUAVE implies a specific ability to deal with others easily and without friction (a *suave* headwaiter) URBANE suggests courtesy and poise developed by wide social experience (an *urbane* outlook on life) BLAND emphasizes mildness of manner and absence of irritating qualities (a *bland*, kindly old soul) SMOOTH usually suggests a deliberately assumed suavity (a *smooth* liar)

A

a—azygous

¹**a** \ə\ *n*, *pl* **a's** or **as** \əz\ *often cap* **1** : the 1st letter of the English alphabet **2** : the musical tone A **3** : a grade rating a student's work as superior

²**a** \ə, ā, 'ā\ *indefinite article* **1** : some one unspecified (a person overboard) (a dozen) **2** : the same : ONE (two of a kind) (birds of a feather) **3** : ANY (a person who is sick can't work) — used in all senses before words beginning with a consonant sound; compare ¹**AN** [Middle English *an*, *a*, from Old English *ān* "one"]

³**a** \ə\ *prep* **1** *chiefly dialect* : ON, IN, AT **2** : in, to, or for each — used before words with an initial consonant sound (twice a week) (dime a dozen) [Old English *an*, *on*, *a-*]

¹**a-** \ə\ *prefix* **1** : on : in : at (abed) **2** : in (such) a state or condition (afire) (asleep) **3** : in (such) a manner (aloud) **4** : in the act or process of (gone a-hunting) [Old English]

²**a-** \ā, 'ā, a, 'a, ā, 'ā, 'ā\ *or* **an-** \an, 'an\ *prefix* : not : without (asexual) — *a-* before consonants other than *h* and sometimes even before *h*, *an-* before vowels and usually before *h* (anastigmatic) (anhydrous) [Greek]

aard-vark \ārd-ˌvārk\ *n* : a large burrowing African mammal with a long sticky tongue which it uses to feed on ants and termites [Afrikaans, literally, "earth pig"]

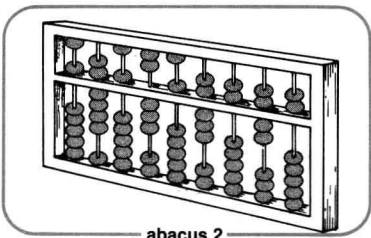
Aa-ron-ic \a-ˈrān-ik, e-\ *adj* : of or relating to the lower order of the Mormon priesthood [Aaron, brother of Moses]

ab- *prefix* : from : away : off (abnormal) [Latin *ab-*, *abs-*, *a-*]

ab-a-ca \ab-ə-ˈkɑ\ *n* : MANILA HEMP [Spanish *abacá*, from Tagalog *abaká*]

aback \ə-ˈbæk\ *adv* **1** *archaic* : BACK, BACKWARD **2** : by surprise : UNAWARES (taken aback by the turn of events)

aba-cus \ə-ˈbək-əs, ə-ˈbək-əs\ *n*, *pl* **aba-ci** \ə-ˈbək-əs, -kē; ə-ˈbək-ī\ *or* **aba-cus-es** **1** : a slab that forms the uppermost part of the capital of a column **2** : an instrument for making calculations by sliding counters along rods or in grooves [Latin, from Greek *abax* "board, slab"]



abacus 2

¹**abaft** \ə-ˈbæft\ *adv* : toward or at the stern : AFT [¹*a-* + obsolete *baft* "behind"]

²**abaft** *prep* : to the rear of; *esp* : toward the stern from

ab-a-lo-ne \ab-ə-ˈlō-nē\ *n* : any of several mollusks with flattened slightly spiral shells perforated along the edge and lined with mother-of-pearl [American Spanish *abulón*]

¹**aban-don** \ə-ˈbān-dən\ *vt* **1** : to give up completely (abandon a difficult task) **2** : to withdraw from often in the face of danger (abandon ship) **3** : to withdraw protection, support, or help

from **4** : to give (oneself) over to a feeling or emotion without restraint [Middle French *abandoner*, from a *bandon* "in one's power"] — **aban-don-er** *n* — **aban-don-ment** \-den-mənt\ *n*

• **syn** ABANDON, DESERT, FORSAKE mean to leave or go away from. ABANDON may stress withdrawing protection or care from (abandon a property) DESERT implies leaving in violation of a duty or promise (desert a sentry post) FORSAKE implies breaking ties with something familiar or cherished.

²**abandon** *n* **1** : a complete yielding to natural impulses **2** : care-free enthusiasm : EXUBERANCE

aban-doned \ə-ˈbān-dənd\ *adj* **1** : that has been deserted : FORSAKEN (an abandoned house) **2** : wholly given up to wickedness or vice (an abandoned criminal)

abase \ə-ˈbās\ *vt* : to lower in rank or position : HUMBLE, DEGRADE [Middle French *abaisser*] — **abase-ment** \-mənt\ *n*

abash \ə-ˈbāsh\ *vt* : to destroy the self-possession or self-confidence of : DISCONCERT [Middle French *esbaiss-*, stem of *es-bair* "to be astonished", from *ex-* + *baer* "to yawn"] **syn** see EMBARRASS — **abash-ment** \-mənt\ *n*

abate \ə-ˈbāt\ *vb* : to reduce or decrease in degree, amount, or intensity : MODERATE [Old French *abatre* "to beat down"] — **abat-er** *n*

abate-ment \ə-ˈbāt-mənt\ *n* **1** : the act or process of abating : the state of being abated **2** : an amount abated; *esp* : a deduction from the full amount of a tax

ab-at-toir \ə-ˈbāt-twār\ *n* : SLAUGHTERHOUSE [French, from *abattre* "to beat down"]

ab-ba-cy \ə-ˈbā-sē\ *n*, *pl* **-cies** : the office, term of office, position, or jurisdiction of an abbot

ab-ba-tial \ə-ˈbā-shel, a-\ *adj* : of or relating to an abbot, abbess, or abbey

ab-bé \ə-ˈbā, ˈab-,ā\ *n* : a French cleric not in a religious order — used as a title [French, from Late Latin *abbas* "abbot"]

ab-bess \ə-ˈbəs\ *n* : the superior of a convent of nuns

ab-bey \ə-ˈbē\ *n*, *pl* **abbeys** **1** : a monastery governed by an abbot **2** : a convent governed by an abbess **3** : a church that once belonged to an abbey (Westminster Abbey) [Old French *abaie*, from Late Latin *abbatia*, from *abbas* "abbot"]

ab-bot \ə-ˈbət\ *n* : the superior of a monastery [Old English *abbod*, from Late Latin *abbas*, from Late Greek, from Aramaic *abbā* "father"]

ab-bre-vi-ate \ə-ˈbrē-vē-,āt\ *vt* : to make briefer; *esp* : to reduce (as a word or phrase) to a shorter form intended to stand for the whole [Late Latin *abbreviare*, from Latin *ad-* + *brevis*]

\ə\ abut	\aú\ out	\i\ tip	\ó\ saw	\ú\ foot
\er\ further	\ch\ chin	\i\ life	\oi\ coin	\y\ yet
\a\ mat	\e\ pet	\j\ job	\th\ thin	\yú\ few
\ā\ take	\ē\ easy	\ng\ sing	\th\ this	\yú\ cure
\ä\ cot, cart	\g\ go	\ö\ bone	\ü\ food	\zh\ vision