

Pronunciation

American English

This dictionary shows pronunciations used by most American speakers. Sometimes more than one pronunciation is shown. For example, many Americans say the first vowel in *data* as /eɪ/, while many others say this vowel as /æ/. We show *data* as /ˈdeɪtə, ˈdætə/. This means that both pronunciations are possible and are commonly used by educated speakers. We have not, however, shown all possible American pronunciations. For example, *news* is shown only as /nuz/ even though a few Americans might pronounce this word as /nyuz/. In words like *caught* and *dog* we show the vowel /ɔ/, but many speakers use the vowel /ɑ/ in place of /ɔ/, so that *caught* and *cat* are both said as /kæt/.

Use of the Hyphen

When more than one pronunciation is given for a word, we usually show only the part of the pronunciation that is different from the first pronunciation, replacing the parts that are the same with a hyphen: **economics** /ˌekəˈnɒmiks, ɪ-/. The hyphen is also used for showing the division between syllables when this might not be clear: **boyish** /ˈbɔɪ-ɪʃ/, **drawing** /ˈdɹɔ-ɪŋ/, **clockwise** /ˈklɒk-waɪz/.

Symbols

The symbols used in this dictionary are based on the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with a few changes. The symbol /y/, which is closer to English spelling than the /j/ used in the IPA, is used for the first sound in *you* /yu/. Other changes are described in the paragraph **American English**.

Abbreviations

No pronunciations are shown for most abbreviations. This is either because they are not spoken (and are defined as “written abbreviations”), or because they are pronounced by saying the names of the letters, with main stress on the last letter and secondary stress on the first: **DVD** /ˌdi vi ˈdi/. Pronunciations have been shown where an abbreviation is spoken like an ordinary word: **RAM** /ræm/.

Words that are Forms of Main Words

A form of a main word that is a different part of speech may come at the end of the entry for that word. If the related word is pronounced by saying the main word and adding an ending (see list on page A49), no separate pronunciation is given. If the addition of the ending causes a change in the pronunciation of the main word, the pronunciation for the related word is given. For example:

impossible /ɪmˈpəsəbəl/, **impossibility** /ɪm.pəsəˈbɪləti/.

There are some pronunciation changes that we do not show at these entries, because they follow regular patterns: (1) When an *-ly* or *-er* ending is added to a main word ending in /-bəl/, /-kəl/, /-pəl/, /-gəl/, or /-dəl/, the /ə/ is usually omitted. For example, **practical** is shown as /ˈpræktɪkəl/. When *-ly* is added to it, it becomes **practically** /ˈpræktɪkli/. This difference is not shown. (2) When *-ly* or *-ity* is added to words ending in *-y* /i/, the /i/ becomes /ə/: **angry** /æŋɡri/ becomes **angrily** /æŋɡrəli/. This is not shown.

Stress

In English words of two or more syllables, at least one syllable is said with more force than the others.

The sign /ˈ/ is put before the syllable with the most force. We say it has *main stress*: **person** /ˈpɜːsən/, **percent** /pɜːˈsent/. Some words also have a stress on another syllable that is less strong than the main stress. We call this *secondary stress*, and the sign / ˌ/ is placed before such a syllable: **personality** /ˌpɜːsəˈnæləti/, **personify** /pɜːˈsənəˌfaɪ/. Secondary stress is not usually shown in the second syllable of a two-syllable word, unless it is necessary to show that the second syllable must not be shortened, as in **starlit** /ˈstɑːlɪt/ compared to **starlet** /ˈstɑːlɪt/.

Unstressed Vowels

/ə/ and /ɪ/

Many unstressed syllables in American English are pronounced with a very short unclear vowel. This vowel is shown as /ə/ or /ɪ/; however, there is very little difference between them in normal connected speech. For example, the word *affect* /əˈfekt/ and *effect* /ɪˈfekt/ usually sound the same. The word *rabbit* is shown as /ˈræbɪt/, but it may also be pronounced /ˈræbət/.

/ə/ and /ʌ/

These sounds are very similar. The symbol /ə/ is used in unstressed syllables, and /ʌ/, which is longer, is used in stressed and secondary stressed syllables. When people speak more quickly, secondary stressed syllables become unstressed so that /ʌ/ may be pronounced as /ə/. For example, *difficult* /ˈdɪfɪkʌlt/ and *coconut* /ˈkəʊkəˌnʌt/ may be pronounced as /ˈdɪfɪkəlt/ and /ˈkəʊkənət/. Only the pronunciation with /ʌ/ is shown.

Compound Words with a Space or Hyphen

Many compounds are written with either a space or a hyphen between the parts. When all parts of the compound appear in the dictionary as separate main words, the full pronunciation of the compound is not shown. Only its stress pattern is given. For example: **bus stop**, **town hall**. Sometimes a compound contains a main word with an ending. If the main word is in the dictionary, and the ending is a common one, only a stress pattern is shown. For example: **washing machine**. *Washing* is not a main word in the dictionary, but *wash* is; so only a stress pattern is shown because *-ing* is a common ending. But if any part is not a main word, the full pronunciation is given: **helter-skelter** /ˈheltəˌskeltə/.

Stress Shift

Some words may have a shift in stress. The secondary stress becomes the main stress when the word comes before a noun. The mark / ˈ/ shows this. For example: **artificial** /ɑːtɪˈfɪʃəl/, **artificial intelligence** /ˌɑːtɪfɪʃəl ɪnˈtelədʒəns/.

Syllabic Consonants

The sounds /n/ and /l/ can be syllabic. That is, they can themselves form a syllable, especially when they are at the end of a word (and follow particular consonants, especially /t/ and /d/). For example, in **sudden** /ˈsʌdn/ the /n/ is syllabic; there is no vowel between the /d/ and the /n/, so no vowel is shown. In the middle of a word, a hyphen or stress mark after /n/ or /l/ shows that it is syllabic: **botanist** /ˈbɒtˈn-ɪst/ and **catalog** /ˈkætɪˌɡ/ are three-syllable words.

The sound /r/ can be either a consonant, /r/, or a vowel, /ɹ/. When /ɹ/ is followed by an unstressed vowel, it may be pronounced as a sequence of two vowels, /ɛə/ plus the following vowel, or as /ə/ followed by a syllable beginning with /r/. For example, the word **coloring** may be pronounced as /ˈkʌləɪŋ/ instead of /ˈkʌləɪrɪŋ/. Only the pronunciation, /ˈkʌləɪrɪŋ/, is shown.

Short Forms Used in the Dictionary

Parts of Speech

Some parts of speech have short forms:

<i>adj.</i>	adjective	<i>prep.</i>	preposition
<i>adv.</i>	adverb	<i>pron.</i>	pronoun
<i>n.</i>	noun	<i>v.</i>	verb
<i>phr. v.</i>	phrasal verb		

Other Short Forms

<i>etc.</i>	et cetera (=and so on)
<i>U.S.</i>	United States
<i>s/he</i>	she or he
<i>sb</i>	somebody/someone
<i>sth</i>	something
<i>sb/sth</i>	someone or something

Grammar Patterns

Grammar patterns are shown in **dark letters** in the example sentences.

Grammar Codes Used in the Dictionary

Nouns – to learn more about the grammar of nouns, see the LEARNER'S HANDBOOK on pages A52–A53.

[C]

COUNTABLE nouns such as **chair** and **store** are the most common type of noun in English. Their plural is usually formed by adding *-s*, and they are used with a plural verb:
Most of the smaller stores in the area have closed down.

[U]

an UNCOUNTABLE noun, such as **happiness** and **furniture**. Uncountable nouns cannot be used with *a* or *an*. They do not have plural forms, and are used with a singular verb:
The new furniture is being delivered on Friday.

[C,U]

a noun that has both countable and uncountable uses, such as **wine**:
Our wines are specially chosen by our own buyer.
This is great wine – where did you buy it?

[singular]

a SINGULAR noun, such as **electorate**. Singular nouns can be used with *a*, *an*, or *the*, or without any determiner. They have no plural form, and they are used with a singular verb:
A majority of the electorate is undecided on how to vote.

She represents an electorate of over 750,000 Israelis

[plural]

a PLURAL noun, such as **pajamas**. Plural nouns do not have a singular form, and are used with a plural verb:
Your red pajamas are in the wash.

[C usually singular]

a noun such as **setting** that is countable, but is not used in the plural very often:
It was a lovely setting for a wedding.

[C usually plural]

a noun such as **qualm** that is countable, and is usually used in the plural:
She had no qualms about taking the job.

[singular, U]

a noun that has both singular and uncountable uses, such as **calm**:
The Smiths preferred the calm of the country.
Marta reacted with amazing calm.

Verbs – to learn more about the grammar of verbs, see the LEARNER'S HANDBOOK on page A54.

[I]

an INTRANSITIVE verb, such as **exist**. Intransitive verbs are not followed by objects:
The internet didn't even exist in the 1980s.

[T]

a TRANSITIVE verb, such as **take**. Transitive verbs are followed by objects:
Will you take my jacket to the dry cleaners for me?

[I,T]

a verb that has both intransitive and transitive uses, such as **decide**:
It's so hard to decide.
I can't decide what to wear.

[linking verb]

a verb such as **be**, **become**, **seem**, etc.:
Jared's father is a teacher.
Dana seems really sorry.

Adjectives

[only before noun]

an adjective, such as **amateur**, that is only used before a noun:
This picture was taken by her husband Larry, a gifted amateur photographer.

[not before noun]

an adjective, such as **afraid**, that is never used before a noun:
Small children are often afraid of the dark.

Labels Used in the Dictionary

approving and disapproving

Words and phrases are labeled *approving* or *disapproving* if people use them in order to show that they like or dislike someone or something. For example, both **childlike** and **childish** describe behavior that is typical of a child, but **childlike** shows approval and **childish** shows disapproval.

formal

Formal words and phrases, such as **await** and **moreover**, are used only in formal speech and writing, for example in essays or official announcements, not in normal conversation.

humorous

Humorous words and phrases, such as **on the warpath**, are intended to be funny.

informal

Informal words and phrases, such as **grungy** and **long shot**, are used in normal conversation and informal letters or emails to friends. Do not use these words and phrases in essays.

literary

Literary words and phrases, such as **foe** and **inferno**, are used mostly in poetry and other types of literature. They are not usually suitable for essays.

nonstandard

Nonstandard words and phrases do not follow the rules of grammar, but are still used a lot. For example, many people use **real** instead of **really**. Do not use nonstandard language in essays.

offensive

Offensive words and phrases are likely to make someone upset if you use them. People often use them when they intend to insult other people, but these can also be words and phrases that only particular people consider to be offensive.

old-fashioned

Old-fashioned words and phrases are ones that people still know, but that are not used very often in modern speech or writing.

slang

Slang words and phrases are used by a particular group of people, especially young people, but not by everyone. They are extremely informal and should not be used in essays.

spoken

Spoken words and phrases, such as **I mean** and **by the way**, are hardly ever used in writing. They are always informal, unless they have the label *spoken formal*. Do not use these words and phrases in essays.

technical

Technical words and phrases, such as **tautology** or **pro rata**, are used by experts in a particular subject, not by everyone.

trademark

A trademark is an official name for a product made by a particular company. It is always spelt with a capital letter.

written

Written words and phrases, such as **ablaze** or **exclaim**, are usually only used in written English.

Subject Labels

ALGEBRA equations and other mathematical systems that use letters and signs to represent numbers

BIOLOGY the study of all living things

CHEMISTRY the study of gases, liquids, and solids, what they are composed of and how they react with each other

EARTH SCIENCES the study of the Earth, its weather systems, and the environment

ECONOMICS finance and business, and the ways in which money and goods are produced and used

ENG. LANG. ARTS languages, literature, art, sculpture, music and the performing arts

GEOGRAPHY physical land features and processes that form the land, sea, etc.

GEOMETRY shapes, angles, circles, etc.

HISTORY significant events and institutions from the past

IT computers, data storage and processing, and communications

LAW institutions and principles relating to the legal system

MATH arithmetic and general terms

MEDICINE the causes of diseases and the treatments for diseases

PHYSICS the study of the universe, what it consists of, and the forces that affect it

POLITICS political institutions and activity

SCIENCE the aspects of science that go across the boundaries of biology, chemistry, and physics

SOCIAL STUDIES the study of society and how particular social groups think and behave

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LONGMAN

Dictionary of American English

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5TH EDITION

Key to the Dictionary

If a word can be spelled in different ways or has different forms, both are shown at the beginning of an entry.

Words that are spelled the same but have different parts of speech have separate entries.

Words with similar meanings (synonyms) and words with opposite meanings (antonyms) are shown after the definition.

The meanings of each word are listed in order of frequency. The most common meaning is shown first.

The meaning of a word is explained in clear simple language, using the 2,000-word Longman Defining Vocabulary whenever possible.

Useful natural examples show how you can use the word.

Thesaurus boxes explain the difference between words that have similar meanings, or between words that belong to a particular topic.

Dots show how words are divided into syllables.

Subject labels show that a word has a specialized meaning in a particular subject area.

Pronunciation is shown using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

The most important 9,000 words to learn are highlighted in red.
 ●●● indicates the top 3,000;
 ●●○ indicates the next most important 3,000 words;
 ●○○ indicates the other less frequent but still important words.

Collocation boxes show the most common word combinations. Words are listed according to their parts of speech and frequency, showing the most common collocations first.

back-ward¹ /ˈbækwəd/ ●●● also **backwards**
 adv. **1** in the direction that is behind you
 [ANT] **forward**: She took a step backwards.
2 toward the beginning or the past: Can you say the alphabet backward? **3** with the back part in front: Your T-shirt is on backwards.

backward² adj. **1** [only before noun] made toward the direction that is behind you
 [ANT] **forward**: She left without a backward glance.
2 developing slowly and less successfully than others: a backward country

bad¹ /bæd/ ●●● adj. (comparative **worse**, superlative **worst**) **1** not good or not nice [ANT] **good**: I'm afraid I have some bad news for you.

THESAURUS

awful — very bad or unpleasant: The weather was awful.

terrible — extremely bad: The hotel food was terrible.

horrible — very bad or upsetting: What a horrible thing to say!

appalling/horrific formal — very bad and very shocking: She suffered appalling injuries. | We are getting reports of a horrific plane crash.

lousy informal — very bad in quality: That was a lousy movie.

horrendous formal — very bad and very frightening or shocking: He was fatally injured in a horrendous crash.

→ GOOD, HORRIBLE

bad-lands¹ /ˈbædˌlændz/ n. [plural] GEOGRAPHY, EARTH SCIENCE an area of rocks and hills where no crops can be grown

ba-sis¹ /ˈbeɪsɪs/ ●●● n. (plural **bases** /ˈbeɪsɪz/) [C]
1 on a weekly/voluntary/freelance etc. basis happening at a particular time or in a particular way: Meetings are held on a monthly basis. | She still works, but on a part-time basis. **2** the facts, ideas, or things from which something develops: The video will provide a basis for class discussion.

COLLOCATIONS

VERBS

to be/form the basis of sth Farming forms the basis of the country's economy.

to have a basis in sth The movie has no basis in fact — it is drama, not history.

to provide a basis for sth The class provides the basis for understanding politics.

ADJECTIVES

a good basis Love and trust form a good basis for marriage.

a sound/firm/solid basis The police had information which gave them a solid basis on which to act.

beat /bi:t/ ●●● v. (past tense **beat**, past participle **beaten** /bi:t'n/)

1 DEFEAT [T] to get more points, votes, etc. than other people in a game or competition: *New York beat Boston 4-1.* | *Stuart usually **beats me** at chess.* | *Has anyone ever **beaten the record** for home runs set by Babe Ruth?*

2 HIT SB [T] to hit someone many times with your hand, a stick, etc.: *He used to come home and **beat us**.* | *The woman had been **beaten to death**.*

SPOKEN PHRASES

8 [T] to be better or more enjoyable than something else: *It's **not the greatest job, but it **beats** waitressing.*** | ***You can't beat** (=nothing is better than) San Diego for good weather.*

beat down phr. v.

1 if the sun beats down, it shines brightly and is hot
2 if the rain beats down, it rains very hard

beat sb/sth ↔ **off** phr. v. to hit someone who is attacking you until s/he goes away

be-come /bɪ'kəm/ ●●● v. (past tense **became** /-keɪn/, past participle **become**) **1** [linking verb]

to begin to be something, or to develop in a particular way: *The weather had **become warmer**.* | *In 1960, Kennedy **became the first Catholic president**.* | *It is **becoming harder to find good housing for low-income families**.* | *It **became clear** that she was lying.* | *She **started to become anxious about her son**.* ▶ Don't say "She started to be anxious about her son." ◀ **2 become of sb/sth** to happen to someone or something: ***Whatever became of Grandma's dishes?*** | ***No one knows what will become of him when his mother dies.***

WORD CHOICE

Become is used in both written and spoken

English: *Their music has **become** very popular.* | *He quickly **became** very rich.*

Get and **go** are less formal than **become**, and are used more often in spoken English: *I'm **getting tired**.* | *Have you **gone crazy**?*

bor-row /'barou, 'bərrou/ ●●● v. [I, T] **1** to use something that belongs to someone else and give it back to him/her later → **LEND**: *Can I **borrow your bike**?* | *Wallace **borrowed money from his father to start a business**.* | *They **borrowed heavily** (=borrowed a lot of money) to cover their losses.* → see Word Choice box at **LEND** **2** to take or copy ideas or words: *English has **borrowed many words from French**.* [Origin: Old English *borgian*] — **borrower** n. [C]

brev-i-ty /'brevəti/ [AWL] n. [U] formal **1** the quality of expressing something in very few words: *The speech was praised for its **brevity**.* **2** the quality of continuing for only a short time: *the **brevity of the meeting*** [Origin: 1400-1500 Latin *brevitas*, from *brevis* "short"]

Information about irregular forms of a verb, noun, or adjective is shown at the beginning of an entry.

Parts of speech are shown in italics, then information about whether a word is transitive, intransitive, countable, uncountable, etc.

Grammar patterns and collocations (words that are typically used together) are shown in bold at examples.

Signposts in long entries help you find the meaning you need quickly.

Groups of phrases that are only used in spoken English are explained together, each with its own definition.

Phrasal verbs are listed in alphabetical order after the main verb.

Usage notes help you avoid making common errors.

Idioms and fixed phrases are shown in dark type with a definition that explains the whole phrase.

Word choice boxes help you choose between words with similar meanings, showing the most appropriate use of each word.

References to related words are shown after an arrow.

Derived words are shown at the end of an entry when the meaning is clear from the definition of the main form.

Origin notes tell you when a word first entered the English language or which foreign language or languages it came from.

Labels before a definition show if a word is typically used in informal, formal, written, etc. English.

The AWL label shows that a word is in the *Academic Word List*. These are important words which students need to understand and be able to use in written academic assignments.

Preface

The 5th edition of the **Longman Dictionary of American English** now offers extensive information on collocations to help learners expand their vocabulary and express themselves better and more accurately.

REAL LANGUAGE

The **Longman Dictionary of American English** is based on the **Longman Corpus Network**. This unique computerized language database now contains over 400 million words from all types of written texts, and from real conversations recorded across the U.S. The Corpus tells us how frequently words and phrases are used. It also shows which grammar patterns are the most important to illustrate, which important new words and idioms people use every day, and which words are frequently used together (*collocations*).

The Longman 9,000 Word List – Corpus frequency and learners' needs

In this dictionary, we show the most important 9,000 words to learn in English. To help decide which words are important for students to learn, they are divided into three bands and marked with circles:

- high frequency words – indicates the top 3,000 words
- mid frequency words – indicates the next most important 3,000 words
- low frequency words – indicates the less frequent yet important next 3,000 words on our list

We use frequency when talking about how common a word is in English. Words such as **good**, **beautiful**, and **say** are very common, “high frequency” words. Other words such as **discrepancy** and **encompass** are much less common, “low frequency” words. There is also another large group of “mid-frequency” words, for example **orchestra**, **portrait**, and **fiction**, which are essential to English language learning.

Word families and frequency

Research into vocabulary acquisition (by Paul Nation, and Diane Schmitt and Norbert Schmitt) has shown that the size of vocabulary needed for a reader to be able to understand a wide variety of authentic texts may be as large as 8,000 – 9,000 word families.

A word family includes the basic word form (*analyze*), its inflections (*analyzed*, *analyzes*, *analyzing*) and its derivatives (*analysis*, *analyst*, *analysts*, *analytic*, *analytical*, *analytically*). Assuming that each base form of a word has an average of four to five inflections and/or derivatives, the total number of individual words could potentially be as high as 34,000–45,000 individual words. Not all the words in a word family are of equal importance, however. For example, it seems much more important for a student to know *analyze* and *analysis* than *analytically*. Statistical analysis can tell us which members of each word family are most frequent, and which a student needs to learn.

REAL CLARITY

The definitions in the **Longman Dictionary of American English** are written using only the 2,000 most common English words – the **Longman American Defining Vocabulary**. Longman pioneered the use of a limited vocabulary as the best way to guarantee that definitions are clear and easy to understand.

REAL HELP

Collocation boxes show combinations of words that are often used together. For example when talking about the rain, you talk about **heavy rain** (= a lot of rain) or **light rain** (= a small amount of rain). In order to talk about a **speech**, you need to know that you say that someone **makes a speech** or **gives a speech**. Just knowing the word *speech* on its own is not enough.

➤ See **Collocations** on page A30 in the Writing Guide for more information.

Thesaurus boxes explain thousands of synonyms and antonyms to help users expand their vocabulary, so that instead of using the same words all the time, such as the word *angry*, for example, they learn how to use related words such as *annoyed*, *irritated*, *furious*, etc.