

# **SPEL L**

**Marion Field**

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and your  
confidence**

# **WELL**

**Second edition**

Spell Well

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# Spell Well

*Boost your word power and  
your confidence*

*Second edition*

**MARION FIELD**

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email: [info@howtobooks.co.uk](mailto:info@howtobooks.co.uk)  
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## Preface

English spelling is extremely complex because it owes so much to other languages. There *are* rules but unfortunately there are just as many exceptions to the rules. This book has been written in an attempt to help you sort out the problems. It gives examples of spelling variations and lists of frequently misspelled words as well as providing you with some fascinating background information on the origin of certain words.

There are chapters on forming plurals, hyphenating words, using apostrophes and discovering homophones – words that sound the same but are spelt differently. There are also chapters dealing with the dictionary and the thesaurus – both indispensable tools for anyone who wishes to improve his or her spelling. Finally you will find a chapter on American spelling and one on jargon and slang.

At the end of most chapters there are exercises to help you practise what you have learnt. Suggested answers are given at the back of the book. It is hoped this book will be indispensable for those who wish to master English spelling.

*Marion Field*

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# 1

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## Identifying Different Sounds

English spelling is complex. There *are* some rules but these are often broken so the spelling of many words has to be learnt. Of the 26 letters in the alphabet, five are **vowels** and the rest are **consonants**. However there are other 'sounds' composed of combinations of letters. The vowels are a, e, i, o, u and all words have to contain at least one vowel. Some words use a 'y' instead, although 'y' is classed as a consonant.

Two vowels can be combined to make a single sound and these are known as **diphthongs** or **digraphs**. A consonant can also be used in a digraph but not in a diphthong.

### USING THE 'A' SOUND

An 'a' can be used alone between two consonants or combined with another vowel to produce a diphthong.

Short 'a' sound:

bag	bap	brat	cat	fad	grab
lack	mass	mat	pad	lap	van

For a long 'a' sound an 'e' is often added at the end of the word:

cake	frame	lace	lane	mate	pale
sale	take	tale	tape	wake	wane

### Using 'ai' and 'ay'

The combination of 'a' followed by an 'i' or 'y' produces a long 'a' sound:

<i>ai:</i>	bail	bailiff	claim	failure	faint
	faith	rail	rain	sail	
<i>ay:</i>	affray	bay	day	delay	hay
	may	pray	relay	say	tray

**Using 'ei'**

The following words break the rule 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'; in this case the combination of 'e' and 'i' is pronounced as a long 'a' sound:

beige	deign	eight	feign	freight	
feint	neighbour	rein	sleigh	veil	vein

**Using 'ea' and 'ey'**

In the following examples the 'ea' and 'ey' are both pronounced as long 'a' sounds:

ea:	break	great			
ey:	convey	obey	prey	survey	they

**USING THE 'E' SOUND**

The 'e' is usually short when it is between consonants:

bent	bet	deck	fed	fell	kept
wreck					

By itself it usually has a 'long' sound as in the following:

be	he	me	we
----	----	----	----

**Using 'ea'**

The diphthong 'ea' can produce a short 'e' sound as in the following:

bread	breath	death	endeavour	head
health	pheasant	pleasant	tread	wealthy

In the following examples it has a long sound:

beat	creak	flea	grease	heap	meal
meat	peach	peace	peak	peat	reveal
sea	seal	tea	teak	treat	veal

**Using the 'ee' and 'ey'**

A double 'e' and 'ey' can also produce long 'e' sounds:

ee:	cheese	feel	free	peek	peel	reek
	sleep	sleeve	tee	sheet		
ey:	donkey	key	lackey	monkey		

**'i' before 'e' except after 'c'**

The following words contain a 'c' and therefore the 'i' follows the 'e':

ceiling	conceit	conceive	deceive	perceive
receipt	receive			

The following words have no 'c' immediately before the vowels so the 'i' precedes the 'e' and follows the rule:

believe	brief	chief	field	grief	niece
piece	priest	shield	shriek	siege	wield
yield					

*Exceptions to the rule*

The 'i' follows the 'e' although there is no 'c' in the following words:

protein	seize	sheikh
---------	-------	--------

**USING THE 'I' SOUND**

There is a short 'i' sound when the 'i' is between two consonants:

bit	dig	fill	flick	hit	kick
sick	sit	stick	whip		

**Using 'ui'**

A short 'i' sound can be produced when placing a 'u' before the 'i':

biscuit	build	guild	guillotine	guilt
guitar				

**Using the long 'i' sound**

There is a long 'i' sound when there is an 'e' at the end of the word:

bite	hike	kite	site	spite	like
nice	rile				

**Breaking the rule with 'ei'**

In the following words the rule of 'i' before 'e' except after 'c' is broken again and the 'ei' is pronounced with a long 'i' sound:

either	feisty	geisha	height	neither
--------	--------	--------	--------	---------

**Using 'igh' and 'ie'**

The letters 'igh' and 'ie' also produce long vowel sounds as in 'eye':

<i>igh:</i>	fight	light	right	sigh	sight	tight
<i>ie:</i>	lie	pie	tie			

**USING THE 'O' SOUND**

There is a short 'o' sound when 'o' is between two consonants:

box	hop	god	lob	lock	log
long	pod	spot			

There is a long vowel sound when there is an 'e' at the end of the word:

choke	hope	joke	lone	pole	spoke
-------	------	------	------	------	-------

**Using the long 'o' sound in 'oa', 'oe', 'oo', 'ou' and 'ow'**

The letter 'o' followed by an 'a', an 'e', another 'o', a 'u' or a 'w' can produce a long 'o' sound as in 'hope':

<i>oa:</i>	boast	boat	coach	coal	coax	foam
	goal	groan	oak	road	toad	toast
<i>oe:</i>	doe	foe	hoe	roe	toe	woe
<i>oo:</i>	brooch					
<i>ou:</i>	boulder	mould	soul	though		
<i>ow:</i>	barrow	blow	bow (weapon)		crow	flow
	furrow	grow	low	mow	row (line)	
	sown	swallow	tallow	throw	tow	
	yellow					

The three vowels, 'eau', can also produce a long 'o' sound. They derive from the French language and the plural form is sometimes an 'x' at the end of the word instead of an 's'.

beau	gateau	tableau
------	--------	---------

**USING THE 'U' SOUND**

Short vowel sound as in:

cup	duck	publish	suck	sup	up
-----	------	---------	------	-----	----

**Using 'ou'**

The vowels 'ou' can also be pronounced as a short 'u' sound:

double	couple	courage	flourish	rough
tough	young			

**USING THE 'Y' SOUND**

A 'y' is often pronounced as a vowel. It can be used to produce a short 'i' sound:

cyclamen	cynical	cyst	gymnast	hysterical
krypton				

In the following words it is pronounced as a long 'e' sound:

baby	happy	litany	literacy	lovely	puppy
------	-------	--------	----------	--------	-------

It can also produce a long 'i' sound:

by	byte	crucify	cycle	cyclone	dynamite
fry	hydrate				

**MAKING OTHER VOWEL SOUNDS**

As well as the 'short' and 'long' sounds produced by the five vowels, other vowel sounds can be made by combinations of letters.

**Using the 'ar' sound as in 'car'**

The digraph 'ar' and the combination of 'ear' can produce this sound:

<i>ar:</i>	bar	barter	card	cart	dark	darn
	embark	garter	hard	hark	mar	march
	partner	remark				
<i>ear:</i>	heart	hearth				

**Using the 'air' sound**

The following combinations of letters can all produce an 'air' sound: air, are, ear, eir:

<i>air:</i>	chair	fair	hair	lair	pair	stair
<i>ear:</i>	bear	pear	tear	wear		



<i>eir:</i>	heir		
<i>are:</i>	care	dare	mare

### Using the 'ear' sound

'ear' and 'eer' can both be pronounced as 'ear':

<i>ear:</i>	appear	beard	dear	hear	near	spear
<i>eer:</i>	beer	career	leer	queer	seer	steer
	volunteer					

### Using the 'er' sound

A number of digraphs can be used to produce an 'er' sound as in 'her': ar er ir or our re ur:

<i>ar:</i>	circular	grammar	nectar	particular	regular	sugar
<i>er:</i>	barter	berth	better	butter	cutter	garter
	jerk	lawyer	mercy	merge	teacher	verse
	wetter	writer				
<i>ir:</i>	bird	dirt	fir	first	flirt	girdle
	whirl					third
						thirst
<i>or:</i>	actor	author	conductor		contractor	doctor
	hector	inspector	instructor		professor	solicitor
<i>our:</i>	armour	colour	favour		glamour	humour
	savour					
<i>re:</i>	acre	centre	metre		sceptre	sombre
	spectre	theatre				
<i>ur:</i>	burn	burr	church	cur	curd	curtsey
	curve	fur	furnish	hurt	lurch	
	murder	nurse	purse	slurp	turkey	

The letters 'ear' and 'our' can also produce an 'er' sound:

<i>ear:</i>	earn	earth	heard	learn	search	yearn
<i>our:</i>	courteous	journal	journey	scourge		

### Using the 'ew' sound

The digraphs 'eu' and 'ue' are pronounced as if there is a 'y' before it as in 'yew':

<i>eu:</i>	chew	dew	few	hew	knew	pewter
	spew	stew	steward			
<i>ue:</i>	cue	due	hue	sue		

The letters 'ieu' and 'iew' also produce a similar sound:

*ieu:* lieu

*iew:* review view

### Using the 'oo' sound as in 'too'

There are several combinations of vowels that make the 'oo' sound:

*ew:* brew crew flew threw

*oe:* shoe

*oo:* bloom broom choose croon food groom  
moo mood shoot voodoo zoo

*ou:* bouquet group soup souvenir through

*ui:* fruit juice recruit

### Using 'oo' as in 'book'

The 'oo' combination as in 'book' sounds halfway between a short 'o' and a short 'u' – an 'uh' sound:

cook crook foot good rook wool

### Using the 'oi' and 'oy' sounds

These two digraphs are usually pronounced as in 'boy':

*oi:* boil choice coil coin goitre join  
loin noise point soil toil voice

*oy:* boy coy destroy employ joyful loyal  
royalty toy

### Using 'ou' and 'ow' as in 'cow'

*ou:* about aloud bough bounce bound found  
ground grouse hour round

*ow:* allowed brown crowd crowned down  
drown frown powder prowler row (noise)  
rowdy town

### Using the 'or' sound

The following digraphs produce an 'or' sound: al, au, aw, or, ou:

*al:* call chalk fall hall recall talk  
tall walk wall

*au:* applause caught daughter distraught fraught  
naughty slaughter taught taut

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<i>aw:</i>	awful	brawl	caw	claw	dawn	draw
	fawn	flaw	lawn	lawyer	paw	pawn
	saw	shawl	yawn			
<i>or:</i>	before	bore	for	more	lore	torch
	torn	torpid	sorbet	sordid	sore	
<i>ou:</i>	bought	brought	thought			

The 'or' sound is also produced by using three letter combinations: 'oar' and 'oor':

<i>oar:</i>	boar	hoary	hoard	hoarse	roar
<i>oor:</i>	door	moor	poor	spoor	

### Using the 'our' sound

The 'our' sound can also be made by 'ough' and 'ower':

<i>our:</i>	flour	hour	scoured	sour
<i>ough:</i>		bough		
<i>ower:</i>	flower	tower		

### Making separate vowel sounds

Sometimes two vowels together are not pronounced as one sound but each vowel represents one **syllable** (single unit in a word). All the following words use two vowel sounds and have been divided into syllables for clarity:

be.ing	de.i.fy	de.i.ty	do.ing	
glac.i.er	ob.ed.i.ent	qui.et	re.in.force	re.i.ter.ate
sci.ence	spon.tan.e.ous	var.i.e.ty		

The word 'ga.ie.ty' has three syllables; the middle one contains two vowels but creates one sound

## CHECKING THE CONSONANT SOUNDS

There are more consonant sounds than there are letters in the alphabet.

### Using digraphs

A digraph is two letters – either consonants or vowels – which together produce a single sound. Following are some examples of consonant combinations:

<i>ch:</i>	chain	chair	chase	cheat	choose	mischief
	torch					
<i>sh:</i>	shake	shell	shoe	shoot	shut	push
<i>th:</i>	path	pithy	the	these	though	thought
	throw					

*Using 'tch'*

Sometimes a 't' is added before the 'ch' but the pronunciation remains the same:

crutch	ditch	hatch	hitch	hutch	pitch
witch	watch				

*Using 'ph'*

The combination of 'p' and 'h' is usually pronounced as an 'f' sound:

phone	phonetic	phoney	photograph
phosphate	phosphorescence	phosphorus	phrase
physics			

*Using 'gh'*

Using 'gh' at the end of a word is also often pronounced as an 'f' sound:

cough	laugh	rough
-------	-------	-------

**Using consonants and vowel combinations**

The combination of consonants and vowels can also produce specific consonant sounds.

*Using 'q'*

Remember that 'q' is *always* followed by a 'u' and is usually pronounced 'kw':

equal	equity	queen	quick	quiet	quite
-------	--------	-------	-------	-------	-------

*Using 'ion'*

A 't' or 's' or 'sh' followed by 'ion' at the end of a word is usually pronounced 'sh':

<i>tion:</i>	detention	information	mitigation	obligation
	plantation	pollution	sensation	station
	transition	translation		

<i>sion:</i>	comprehension	confusion	decision	discussion
	division	erosion	impression	incision
	mission	occasion	passion	pension
	precision	profession	progression	session
<i>shion:</i>	cushion	fashion		

If the word ends in the sound 'ā-shun', nine times out of ten the ending will be with a 't' – 'ation':

accommodation	administration	creation
imagination	population	punctuation
relaxation	stimulation	transformation

### Using 'cian'

The ending 'cian' is usually used for a person's job:

beautician	dietician	electrician	magician
musician	mathematician	optician	paediatrician
physician	politician	statistician	technician

### Using 'tian'

The 'tian' ending is used for only a few adjectives, usually formed from proper nouns and therefore written with a capital letter:

Alsatian	Dalmatian	Egyptian	Haitian	Martian
----------	-----------	----------	---------	---------

## INTRODUCING SILENT CONSONANTS

Some consonants at the beginning of digraphs are not pronounced at all. Only the second letter is pronounced.

### Ignoring the 'g', 'k' and 'w'

In words that begin with 'gn' and 'kn' the 'g' and 'k' are silent:

gnarled	gnash	gnat	gnaw	gnocchi
gnome	Gnostic	gnu		
knack	knapsack	knave	knee	kneel
knell	knew	knickers	knife	knight
knit	knock	knoll	knot	know
knowledge		known	knuckle	

In words that begin with 'wr' the 'w' is also silent

wraith	wrap	wrangle	wreck	wrapper
wreak	wreath	wreathe	wreckage	
wrench	wrest	wrestle	wretch	wretched
wriggle	wright	wring	wrinkle	wrist
writ	write	writer	writhe	wrong
wrote	wrought	wry		

### Ignoring the 'p'

In a few cases the 'p' at the beginning of a word is 'silent'. The following letter is usually an 'n' or more often an 's':

pneumatic	pneumonia		
psalm	psalter	pseudo	pseudonym
psychedelic	psychiatry	psychic	psychologist
psychopath	psychotic		

### Ignoring the 'd'

A silent 'd' sometimes appears before 'g' when there is a short vowel sound before it:

bridge	budge	budgerigar	budget	dodge
fudge	grudge			

A long vowel sound is usually followed by 'ge':

age	cage	page	rage	sage
-----	------	------	------	------

### Finding the soft 'c'

When 'e', 'i' or 'y' follows a 'c', the pronunciation is like an 's':

central	centigrade	centimetre	centre	centipede
cinch	cinders	cinema	cyanide	cybernetics
cynic				

All other vowels produce a 'hard' sound:

cat	care	cave	cavalry	coat	cute
-----	------	------	---------	------	------

When adding 'ed' or 'ing' to a word ending in 'c', it is usually necessary to add a 'k' so that the 'hard' sound is retained:

mimic	mimicked	mimicking
picnic	picnicked	picnicking
traffic	trafficked	trafficking

### Finding the soft 'g'

An 'e' following a 'g' usually but not always suggests a 'soft' sound:

age	cringe	gem	gender	genealogy
general	generation	gentle	geology	singe

When a suffix is added, the 'e' at the end of the word is usually retained:

ageing      singeing

Other words are usually pronounced with a hard 'g':

gate	gaze	grate	grateful	gravel
grave	graze	grease	greed	
green	grey	guess	guard	guide

In the following words the first 'g' is hard and the second is soft as it precedes an 'e':

garage      greengage      gauge

### CHECKLIST

- The five vowels, a, e, i, o, u can be 'long' or 'short'.
- A diphthong is when two vowels are combined to make a single vowel sound.
- A digraph is when any two letters are combined to make a single sound.
- The rule 'i' before 'e' except after 'c' can be broken.
- A 'y' is sometimes used instead of a vowel.
- Some consonants are 'silent'.

### PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

1. Add either 'ei' or 'ie' to the following words:  
Bel..ve, br..f, c..ling, ch..f, dec..ve, ..ght, fr..ght, gr..ve, n..ce,  
n..ghbour, pr..st, prot..n, rec..ve, r..n, s..ze, sh..kh, sh..ld, v..l,  
v..n, y..ld.

2. Correct any wrong spellings in the following sentences:
- a. He opened the biskit tin but the biuscits were stale.
  - b. Niether Jane nor her brother was aloud to go to the mach.
  - c. She became histerical when her handbag was stolen.
  - d. The docter was called when the child became ill.
  - e. The hier to the throne visited the docks and wachted the frieght being wieghed.
  - f. He found the comprehension in his exam paper easy but the translacion was more difficult.
  - g. The opening of the new stashun was an impressive occation.
  - h. The group was queit as the ice slid down the glasier.
  - i. There was a spontaneous burst of applause as the winer crossed the finishing line.
  - j. The mach was abandoned as the pich was waterlogged.



## 2

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### Checking Capital Letters

**Capital letters** are used for a variety of reasons and it is very important to identify the times when they are necessary.

#### PUNCTUATING YOUR WORK

A capital letter is, of course, always used after a full stop to start a new sentence.

—The bridge was old and had to be replaced. Both rail and road traffic were disrupted for several days.

Capital letters are also usually used after question marks and exclamation marks.

—How long will the traffic disruption last? She has to travel to London next week.

—How disgraceful! We should have been told the road was closed to traffic.

#### Writing direct speech

Direct speech is when words are enclosed in inverted commas to indicate what someone is saying. The first word of a person's speech always starts with a capital letter even if it is preceded by a comma.

—Tracy remarked, 'It's going to be a lovely day.'

If a question mark or exclamation mark is placed within inverted commas and followed by the person speaking, a capital letter is not used.

—'I was held up for two hours!' she exclaimed.

—'I don't believe it!' he exclaimed.

—'Why don't you drive to London?' asked Lucy. 'It's much quicker.'

Notice that both 'exclaimed' and 'asked' begin with small letters although they are preceded by an exclamation mark and a question mark. This is because the words are connected to the person who is speaking.

Remember that the personal pronoun 'I' is *always* written with a capital letter.

### Utilising other punctuation marks

A capital letter is not used after a comma, a semicolon or a colon.  
—Because it was pouring with rain, the tennis match was postponed.

—She shuddered; there was a frightening atmosphere in the house.

—Your spelling is weak: you must learn the basic rules.

### USING PROPER NOUNS

A **proper noun** is the name of a person, place, institution or brand name. They are always written with capital letters:

Anne	Ben	British Museum	Cooke
Denmark	England	Farnham	Guildford
Kellogg's	Persil		

Capitals are also used when there are two main words as in a street or a river:

Brecon Beacon	Castle Street	Forest of Dean
Heathrow Airport	High Street	River Thames
Table Mountain	Vale of Evesham	

### Writing days and months

The days of the week and the months of the year should *always* be written with a capital letter:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
January	February	March	April
May	June	July	August
September	October	November	December

It is not necessary to use capitals when writing the seasons of the year:

spring	summer	autumn	winter
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**Forming adjectives from proper nouns**

A capital letter is always used if an **adjective** is formed from a proper noun as in the following:

<i>Proper noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>
America	American
Denmark	Danish
England	English
France	French
Germany	German
Spain	Spanish

**WRITING TITLES**

Capital letters are always used for people's titles:

Mr Grey	Mrs Brown	Miss Green	Ms White
Duke of Kent	Lady Jones	St Francis	Earl of Arran

Capitals are also used for the main words in institutions:

British Library	Conservative Party	Labour Party
London University	Royal Academy	St Mary's Church
St Paul's Cathedral	Surrey County Council	Tate Gallery
Victoria and Albert Museum	Woking Borough Council	

When writing the title of books, plays, films, magazines, newspapers or songs, use capital letters for the main words:

Bless this House	Brighton Rock	Gone with the Wind
Lettice and Lovage	The Merchant of Venice	
Shakespeare in Love	The Sound of Music	Streetcar named Desire
Tale of Two Cities	The Times	Woman's Own

**USING GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS**

If you are writing about a specific region use capital letters:

- There is some spectacular scenery in the *South West*.
- There is a lot of industry in the *North East*.
- Houses are very expensive in the *South East*.
- It was colder in the *North* than the *South*.

If you are using the terms as directions only, there are no capital letters and the words are hyphenated if there are two:

- Gatwick Airport is *south-west* of London.
- Cornwall is *south* of Somerset.
- You travel *north* on the M1 to drive to Scotland.

## CHECKLIST

- Always use capital letters after a full stop.
- Don't use capital letters after a comma unless you are writing direct speech.
- Don't use capital letters after semi-colons or colons.
- Use capital letters after question marks and exclamation marks unless you are writing direct speech.
- Use capital letters for proper nouns, and adjectives formed from them.
- Use capital letters for titles and geographical locations.

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

Correct the following sentences:

1. It was very cold. the crowds were hurrying home.
2. 'how are you?' She asked. 'i haven't seen you for ages.'
3. The roar of the planes grew louder; The boys covered their ears.
4. The english team lost the match.
5. Jobs in the north east are scarce.
6. She only used persil automatic in her washing machine.
7. The british museum was closed for renovation.
8. The group went on a trip on the river thames.
9. She sent a number of articles to *woman's own* but they were returned by the editor, ms jenny ashton.
10. The film *shakespeare in love* won seven oscars.

# 3

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## Forming Plurals and Changing Verbs

To make a plural it is usually necessary to add an 's' to the word and to make no other changes.

### ADDING AN 'S'

Nouns that end in an 'e' usually only require an 's' to form a plural:

bone	bones	plate	plates
case	cases	rate	rates
date	dates	resource	resources
envelope	envelopes	sale	sales
file	files	scene	scenes
game	games	shape	shapes
globe	globes	spice	spices
guide	guides	table	tables
house	houses	toe	toes
magazine	magazines	tree	trees
niece	nieces	wine	wines
nurse	nurses		

Many **nouns** that end in consonants are also made plural by adding an 's':

block	blocks	pen	pens
book	books	pencil	pencils
brain	brains	plan	plans
colour	colours	seat	seats
desk	desks	stamp	stamps
director	directors	street	streets
doctor	doctors	ticket	tickets
girl	girls	torrent	torrents
letter	letters	victim	victims
light	lights	wheel	wheels
newspaper	newspapers	whisk	whisks

## CHANGING OR KEEPING THE 'Y'

If a noun ends in 'y' and is preceded by a consonant, change the 'y' into an 'i' and add 'es' to make the plural:

ally	allies	lady	ladies
baby	babies	library	libraries
berry	berries	lorry	lorries
body	bodies	penny	pennies
company	companies	pony	ponies
enemy	enemies	ruby	rubies
enquiry	enquiries	sky	skies
estuary	estuaries	society	societies
family	families	story	stories
ferry	ferries	tragedy	tragedies
fly	flies		
gallery	galleries		
glory	glories		

### Looking at the exceptions

Surnames ending in 'y' need only an 's' to make the plural:

- The *Perrys* are moving to Taunton.
- The *Doubtys* are holding a party.

A carriage drawn by a single horse was known as a 'fly'. The plural of this is 'flies'.

### Keeping the 'y'

If the 'y' is preceded by a vowel, retain the 'y' and add 's' to make the plural:

alley	alleys	attorney	attorneys
chimney	chimneys	covey	coveys
donkey	donkeys	key	keys
journey	journeys	lackey	lackeys
tray	trays	trolley	trolleys
spray	sprays	storey	storeys.

## LOOKING AT WORDS ENDING IN 'O'

If the 'o' at the end of a word is preceded by a vowel, an 's' only is usually needed to form a plural:

cameo	cameos	cuckoo	cuckoos
curio	curios	impresario	impresarios
oratorio	oratorios	patio	patios
radio	radios	rodeo	rodeos
stereo	stereos	studio	studios
taboo	taboos	tattoo	tattoos
video	videos	zoo	zoos

### An 'o' preceded by a consonant

Unfortunately, when a consonant precedes the 'o', there is no definite rule to help you decide whether to add 's' alone or 'es'. The following words end in 'es'.

buffalo	buffaloes	cargo	cargoes
halo	haloes	hero	heroes
echo	echoes	mango	mangoes
mosquito	mosquitoes	negro	negroes
potato	potatoes	tomato	tomatoes
tornado	tornadoes	torpedo	torpedoes

The following words need only an 's' to make them plural:

casino	casinos	concerto	concertos
contralto	contraltos	dynamo	dynamos
embryo	embryos	libretto	librettos
manifesto	manifestos	photo	photos
memo	memos	solo	solos
soprano	sopranos		

### DISCOVERING DIFFICULT PLURALS

With some words you will find it necessary to add 'es' because the word would be difficult to pronounce without the addition of the 'e'. 'Es' has to be added to words ending in 's', 'ch', 'sh', 'x' and 'z':

ass	asses	brass	brasses
cross	crosses	duchess	duchesses
grass	grasses	pass	passes
princess	princesses	witness	witnesses
bench	benches	church	churches
crutch	crutches	dispatch	dispatches
hutch	hutches	leech	leeches
lunch	lunches	porch	porches

torch	torches	trench	trenches
witch	witches		
brush	brushes	bush	bushes
crash	crashes	crush	crushes
dash	dashes	flush	flushes
box	boxes	cox	coxes
fix	fixes	fox	foxes
hoax	hoaxes		
buzz	buzzes	fizz	fizzes
waltz	waltzes		

## KEEPING OR CHANGING THE 'F'

If a noun ends in 'f', in some cases you will only need to add an 's' as in the following:

brief	briefs	chef	chefs
chief	chiefs	cliff	cliffs
dwarf	dwarfs	handkerchief	handkerchiefs
muff	muffs	proof	proofs
roof	roofs	staff	staffs

## Changing to 'ves'

Other nouns require you to change the 'f' to 'v' and add 'es':

calf	calves	half	halves
knife	knives	leaf	leaves
life	lives	loaf	loaves
scarf	scarves	sheaf	sheaves
shelf	shelves	yourself	yourselves
wife	wives	wolf	wolves

## MAKING PLURALS

### Making plurals of hyphenated words

A **hyphen** is a dash placed between two words that are closely linked. In most cases the 's' is added to the second word as in the following:

back-bencher	back-benchers	by-law	by-laws
corner-stone	corner-stones	ear-ring	ear-rings
fun-fair	fun-fairs	hair-line	hair-lines



hair-style	hair-styles	head-dress	head-dresses
heart-break	heart-breaks	kick-off	kick-offs
knick-knack	knick-knacks	notice-board	notice-boards
post-mortem	post-mortems	press-stud	press-studs
set-up	set-ups	wage-earner	wage-earners
waiting-room	waiting-rooms		

In the following words the 's' is added to the first word because it is the most important:

court-martial	courts-martial	lady-in-waiting	ladies-in-waiting
passer-by	passers-by	mother-in-law	mothers-in-law
sister-in-law	sisters-in-law		

When 'ful' is added to a word, the 's' is usually placed after it:

bucketfuls	fistfuls	handfuls	pocketfuls	spoonfuls
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### Keeping the same word for the plural

In some cases the same word is used for both the singular and the plural as in the following:

deer	deer	sheep	sheep
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### Changing the word

Some words do not require an 's' to form the plural: the word itself changes.

child	children	foot	feet
goose	geese	louse	lice
man	men	mouse	mice
tooth	teeth	woman	women

### Using foreign words

As many English words are derived from foreign languages, particularly French and Latin, you will have to adapt the endings accordingly. Words ending in 'eau' usually derive from French and the plural has an 'x' added instead of an 's':

bureau	bureaux	chateau	chateaux
gateau	gateaux	tableau	tableaux

Latin words which end in 'um' usually change to 'a' for the plural:

addendum	addenda	crematorium	crematoria
curriculum	curricula	datum	data
erratum	errata		

'Is' often becomes 'es':

analysis	analyses	axis	axes
basis	bases	crisis	crises
oasis	oases	metamorphosis	metamorphoses
parenthesis	parentheses	synopsis	synopses

'On' often becomes 'a':

criterion	criteria	phenomenon	phenomena
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'Us' can become an 'i':

cactus	cacti	calculus	calculi
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## ALTERING A VERB

A **verb** is a 'doing' or a 'being' word. The 'being' verb is 'to be'. To remind you, the past and present tenses of the verb 'to be' are set out below.

<i>Present tense</i>	<i>Past tense</i>
I am	I was
you are	you were
he, she, it is	he, she, it was
we are	we were
they are	they were

Some 'doing' verbs are: to bury, to dance, to play, to run, to spray, to write. As when making a plural, verbs also change their form when changing tense.

## Coping with the 'y'

Some verbs end in 'y' and sometimes, to change tense, you may have to add other letters. If there is a consonant before the

'y', change the 'y' into an 'i' before adding the other letters. However, you need to keep the 'y' before adding 'ing' as a double 'i' is very rare in English spelling. Some verbs that follow this pattern are:

accompany	bury	copy	glory	marry
occupy	remedy	worry		

### Examples

- When will she *marry*?
- She was *married* yesterday.
- Did he *copy* the answers?
- He *copied* her work.
- We must *bury* the treasure before the enemy comes.
- They *buried* the treasure under the old oak tree.
- He will *worry* if I am late.
- She is *worrying* about her daughter.

If there is a vowel before the 'y', it is not usually necessary to change it. Add the letters after it.

### Examples

- It was necessary to *spray* the crops.
- He *sprayed* the crops.
- She loves to *play* with her baby sister.
- She *played* with her baby sister.
- He is *playing* the piano.

### Exceptions

As usual there are exceptions! The 'y' is sometimes replaced by 'i' as in the following examples:

pay	paying	<i>but</i>	paid
lay	laying	<i>but</i>	laid
say	saying	<i>but</i>	said

Other exceptions do the opposite! In the following cases where verbs end in 'ie', it is necessary to replace the two vowels with 'y'.

die	dying
lie	lying
tie	tying
vie	vying

## CHECKLIST

- A plural is usually made by adding 's' to words ending in 'e' or a consonant.
- Change the 'y' into 'i' and add 'es' if a consonant precedes the vowel.
- Keep the 'y' if a vowel precedes it.
- In some cases 'f' changes to 'v' before adding 'es'.
- Add the 's' at the end of hyphenated words except in certain cases.

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

1. What is the plural of the following words?

alley	ally	baby	chimney	company
doctor	donkey	enemy	enquiry	file
journey	key	lackey	niece	nurse
pencil	pony	ruby	scene	sky
spray	storey	story	ticket	tragedy
tray	trolley	victim	whale	wheel
whisk				

2. Correct any mistakes in the following sentences:
  - a. The soldiers were told their court-martials were to be held the following day.
  - b. Comedians often make jokes about their mother-in-laws.
  - c. The passer-bys ignored the speaker on his soap-box.
  - d. All the farmers' wives cut off the mouses' tails.
  - e. The thieves took the knives from the waiting-rooms.
  - f. The leafs turn brown in the autumn and the sheafs of wheat are harvested.
  - g. The wolfs chased the childs who were in fear of their lifes.
  - h. The sopranoes and the contraltoes were late for the concert because they couldn't find their librettoes.
  - i. There were two tornados in quick succession.

3. Put the following sentences into the past tense:
  - a. She (glory) in her misdemeanours.
  - b. The examiner (remedy) the mistake.
  - c. The mother (worry) because her daughter was late home.
  - d. The victims of the plague were (bury) in a mass grave.
  - e. Her brother (accompany) her to the audition.
  - f. They were (marry) last year.

# 4

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## Using Prefixes, Suffixes and Hyphens

A **prefix** is a group of letters placed before a word to qualify its meaning while a **suffix** appears at the end of a word. A hyphen is a dash placed between two words to link them. In some cases you have a choice. You may use a hyphen or you may join the two words into one. A hyphen may also be used between a prefix or a suffix and the main word.

### STARTING WITH A PREFIX

There are a number of prefixes which sometimes but not always require a hyphen before the main word. Some of these are ‘ante-’, ‘anti-’, ‘bi-’ and ‘by’.

#### The prefix ‘ante-’

‘Ante-’ means ‘before’: following are some words that require a hyphen between the two branches of the word:

ante-room	ante-mortem	ante-post
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Words that do *not* need a hyphen with this prefix are:

antecedent	antechamber	antechapel	antedate
antediluvian	antemeridian	antenatal	

The words ‘antenna’ and ‘antelope’ start with the same letters but the ‘ante’ does not mean ‘before’ as in the previous examples.

#### The prefix ‘anti-’

The prefix ‘anti-’ means against and is used to suggest opposition to the main word. The following words use a hyphen between the prefix and the root words:

anti-aircraft	anti-apartheid	anti-gravity	anti-hero
anti-novel	anti-Semite	anti-racial	

There are more words that do not require a hyphen:

antibiotic	antibody	antichrist	antichristian
anticlimax	anticlockwise	anticyclone	antidote
antifreeze	antipope	antiseptic	antisocial
antistatic	antitheses		

### The prefix 'bi-'

'Bi' means two or twice and words starting with 'bi' do not usually need hyphens:

biannual	biathlon	biaxial	bicarbonate
bicentenary	biceps	bicultural	bicuspid
bicycle	biennial	bifurcate	bilateral
bilingual	bimonthly	binary	binoculars

The following do use a hyphen:

bi-weekly	bi-yearly
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### The prefix 'by-'

'By' suggests something that is secondary or incidental to the root word. The following words require hyphens:

by-blow	by-election	by-lane	by-play
by-product	by-road	by-law	

You do not need a hyphen in the following words:

bygone	byline	bypass	bypath
bystander	byway	byword	

### The prefix 'co-'

When using the prefix 'co-', a hyphen is usually used for convenience if the root word – usually a verb or its noun derivative – begins with an 'o':

co-operate	co-operation	co-opt	co-operative
co-ordinate	co-ordination	co-ordinator	

It is also used when the meaning might not be clear as in the following:

co-belligerent	co-respondent
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If the root word is a noun and the 'co-' is used to denote joint participation, a hyphen is usually used:

co-author	co-driver	co-signatory
co-pilot	co-star	

A hyphen is not required in the following words:

coagulate	coalesce	coalition	coeducation
coefficient	coequal	coexist	

### **The prefix 'counter-'**

The prefix 'counter-' is used to suggest opposition. The following words require hyphens:

counter-attack	counter-attraction	counter-claim
counter-culture	counter-espionage	counter-intelligence
counter-productive	counter-reformation	counter-revolution
counter-sign	counter-tenor	

The following words are written as one word:

counteract	counterbalance	counterblast
countercharge	counterfeit	counterfoil
countermand	countermarch	countermeasure
countermine	counterpoint	

### **The prefix 'cross-'**

The following words require a hyphen:

cross-bearer	cross-bench	cross-bones	cross-breed
cross-check	cross-country	cross-cultural	cross-cut
cross-dating	cross-examine	cross-eyed	cross-fertilise
cross-fire	cross-grain	cross-keys	cross-legged
cross-over	cross-patch	cross-piece	

The following words are written as one word:

crossbar	crossbill	crossbow	crossroads	crossword
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### **The prefix 'de-'**

The prefix 'de-' indicates a move away from or to undo something. The hyphen is usually used only when the root word begins



with a vowel and there might be confusion without it as in the following:

de-escalate      de-ice      de-aerate

The following words do not require a hyphen:

deactivate	debrief	decaffeinated	decapitate
decolonise	deceased	decentralise	declare
decompose	deduct	defend	defuse
defamation	degeneration	degrade	dehydration
delouse	denude	demerit	demoralise
deodorant	depend	depopulate	depressurise
deride	desegrate	dethrone	devolution

### The prefix 'dis-'

This prefix can be added to a word to produce the opposite meaning:

able	disable	arm	disarm
appear	disappear	believe	disbelieve

### The prefix 'ex-'

The prefix 'ex-' meaning 'out' is not usually followed by a hyphen. An exception is 'ex-directory'. When the prefix is linked to a noun and means 'former', as in the following, a hyphen is used:

ex-captain	ex-chairman	ex-convict	ex-headmistress
ex-husband	ex-minister	ex-serviceman	ex-sailor
ex-soldier	ex-wife		

### Separating the prefix

In a few cases where 'ex' precedes a word of Latin origin, the prefix is separated from the root word and no hyphen is needed:

ex anima	from the mind – earnestly
ex cathedra	with authority, as from the Pope
ex curia	out of court
ex gratia	voluntary
ex hypothesis	by hypothesis
ex lege	arising from the law
ex parte	one sided
ex post facto	after the fact
ex voto	an offering made as a result of a vow

**The prefix 'extra-'**

The prefix 'extra-' suggests something 'outside' the root word and usually requires a hyphen:

extra-curricular	extra-marital	extra-sensory
extra-vehicular		

But 'extraordinary' does *not* need a hyphen.

**The prefix 'far-'**

The prefix 'far-', which suggests distance of space or time, requires a hyphen in the following words:

far-away	far-famed	far-fetched	far-flung
far-off	far-out	far-reaching	far-seeing
far-sighted			

**The prefix 'il-'**

The prefix 'il-' is usually used with words beginning with 'l' to express the opposite. Remember that the negative word will have a double 'l'.

legal	illegal	legitimate	illegitimate
logical	illogical	legible	illegible
liberal	illiberal	literate	illiterate

**The prefix 'im-'**

The prefix 'im-' is usually used before root words beginning with the following letters: b, m, p:

balance	imbalance	material	immaterial
mature	immature	mobile	immobile
modest	immodest	moral	immoral
mortal	immortal	partial	impartial
passable	impassable	passive	impassive
patient	impatient	perfect	imperfect
personal	impersonal	pious	impious
polite	impolite	possible	impossible
practical	impractical	probable	improbable
proper	improper	prudent	imprudent

**The prefix 'ir-'**

The prefix 'ir-' is used before root words starting with 'r':

rational	irrational	reconcilable	irreconcilable
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regular	irregular	relevant	irrelevant
religious	irreligious	resolute	irresolute
respective	irrespective	responsible	irresponsible
reverent	irreverent	reversible	irreversible

### The prefix 'in-'

The prefix 'in-' expresses inclusion within space, time or circumstances; it is used as a prefix in many words and in most cases a hyphen is not used. It is, however, required in the following words:

in-built	in-depth	in-group	in-house	in-swing
in-tray	in-law	in-patient		

In some words 'in' can suggest the opposite to the root word as in the following where no hyphens are required:

indiscipline	inedible	insane	inseparable
insignificant	insoluble	invisible	

### Exception

A notable exception to the above rule is the word *invaluable* which means the opposite to *not valuable*. It is in fact *very valuable* indeed. A price cannot be placed upon it.

### The prefix 'mis-'

The prefix 'mis-' suggests a negative and is often added to suggest the opposite of the root word:

alliance	misalliance	align	misalign
apply	misapply	appropriate	misappropriate

### The prefix 'neo-'

The prefix 'neo-' refers to something that is new or revived from an earlier period. It is often added to the reviving of certain philosophies or historical periods whose art or ideas have been revived. In these cases a hyphen is usually added:

neo-classical	neo-colonial	neo-Hellenism
neo-Platonism	neo-scholasticism	neo-Nazism
neo-Victorianism		

The following words do not need a hyphen:

neologism	the coining of new words
neophyte	new convert or newly ordained priest (mainly Roman Catholic)
neolithic	stone age

### The prefix 'non-'

'Non-', which forms the opposite of the root word when added as a prefix, usually requires a hyphen:

non-acceptance	non-aggression	non-alcoholic
non-alignment	non-appearance	non-attendance
non-belligerent	non-combatant	non-commissioned
non-committed	non-compliance	non-delivery
non-essential	non-event	non-existent
non-fiction	non-flammable	non-human
non-fulfilment	non-interference	non-member
non-observance	non-playing	non-operational
non-professional	non-productive	non-returnable
non-slip	non-smoking	non-starter
non-stick	non-uniform	non-verbal
non-violence		

Some words which do not need a hyphen are:

nonagenarian (someone in their nineties)	nonchalant
nonconformist	nondescript
nonsense	nonentity

### The prefix 'off-'

The prefix 'off-' is sometimes followed by a hyphen as in the following:

off-beat	off-glide	off-key	off-load
off-peak	off-putting	off-stage	off-licence
off-centre	off-day	off-season	off-time
off-year			

The following words do not need a hyphen:

offdrive	offprint	offset	offshore	offshoot	offside
offspring	offstreet				

### Exception

'Off white' is written as two words.

### The prefix 'on-'

The following require a hyphen:

on-off      on-licence      on-line      on-stage      on-street

Hyphens are not required in the following words:

oncoming      ongoing      onlooker      onrush      onset  
onside      onslaught

### The prefix 'over-'

The following words require a hyphen:

over-abundance      over-active      over-anxious      over-blown  
over-burden      over-careful      over-confident      over-land  
over-populate      over-react      over-sensitive      over-sexed  
over-simplify      over-subscribe

The following words do not require a hyphen:

overact      overall      overate      overarm  
overawe      overbalance      overbearing      overblouse  
overboard      overcast      overcoat      overcrowded  
overdo      overdress      overeat      overhaul  
overhear      overjoyed      overlord      overshadow  
oversight      oversleep      overtime      overvalue  
overwhelm      overwork

### The prefix 'pre-'

'Pre-' means before and the prefix is sometimes followed by a hyphen but not always:

pre-arrangement      pre-cast      pre-Christian      pre-condition  
pre-cook      pre-date      pre-elect      pre-engagement  
pre-establish      pre-exist      pre-heat      pre-menstrual  
pre-millennial      pre-natal      pre-prandial      pre-ordain  
pre-pack      pre-Raphaelite      pre-record      pre-tax  
pre-school      pre-select      pre-set      pre-sharing  
pre-stress      pre-war

The following words do not require a hyphen:

preamble      precaution      precede      precedence  
precept      predecessor      precursor      prehistory  
preoccupy      prescribe

**The prefix 'post-'**

'Post', meaning 'after', is sometimes followed by a hyphen but there are a number of words that do not require it.

*Words requiring a hyphen*

post-box	post-classical	post-haste
post-Impressionism	post-mortem	post-paid
post-war		

*Words not requiring a hyphen*

postcare	postgraduate	posthorn	posthumous
postmaster	postmistress	postnatal	postoffice
postposition	postprandial	postscript	

**The prefix 'pro-'**

This prefix is not usually followed by a hyphen:

probate	probation	probity	problem
proceed	process	proclaim	proconsul
procreate	procurator	progression	prohibit
pronoun	protest	protract	protrude

If 'pro-' is used in the sense of substitution or supporting, there is usually a hyphen:

pro-cathedral	pro-proctor	pro-Labour	pro-Market
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**The prefix 're-'**

This means doing something again. The hyphen is usually used if the root word begins with an 'e' so that pronunciation is not confused:

re-echo	re-edit	re-educate	re-elect	re-emerge
re-enact	re-enforce	re-establish	re-examine	re-export

A hyphen is also sometimes used when forming a compound word. This is to avoid confusion as the word would change meaning if there was no hyphen. Look at the following examples; the words on the left have a different meaning from those on the right.

react	re-act
recover	re-cover

reform	re-form
resign	re-sign
recede	re-cede
recount	re-count
recreate	re-create

When an 'a' or a consonant follows the prefix, no hyphen is usually required:

reappear	reappoint	reappraisal	rearrange
reascend	reassure	rebaptise	rebind
rebound	rebut	recapitulate	recant
recompense	recommit	reconcile	reconnaissance
recoup			

### **The prefix 'self-'**

The prefix 'self-' which refers to acting of one's own accord is usually followed by a hyphen:

self-abuse	self-addressed	self-affirmation
self-aggrandisement	self-analysis	self-appointed
self-assertive	self-coloured	self-confident
self-conscious	self-educated	self-esteem
self-examination	self-explanatory	self-importance
self-reliant	self-sacrifice	self-satisfied
self-service	self-starter	self-supporting
self-taught	self-willed	

### *Exceptions*

The following words require no hyphen:

selfsame	selfless
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### **The prefix 'semi-'**

The prefix 'semi-', meaning half, sometimes requires a hyphen and at other times does not.

### *Words needing a hyphen*

semi-automatic	semi-bold	semi-chorus
semi-civilised	semi-detached	semi-furnished
semi-invalid	semi-official	semi-permanent

*Words not requiring a hyphen*

semibreve	semicircle	semicolon	semifinal
semitone	semiprecious	semitransparent	semitropical
semiquaver			

**The prefix 'sub-'**

This denotes a lower position. Some words that require a hyphen are:

sub-edit	sub-editor	sub-branch	sub-machine-gun
sub-plot	sub-lieutenant		

Words that do not require a hyphen are:

subaltern	subcontinent	subcontract	subculture
subdeacon	subdivide	subdue	subject
subjugate	subjunctive	subkingdom	submarine
sublimate	submit	subnormal	subordinate
subscribe	substitute	subtitle	subway

**The prefix 'un-'**

The prefix 'un-' suggests the opposite meaning to the root word:

unabridged	unaccompanied	unaccomplished
unadorned	unannounced	unattached
unaware	unbroken	unclean
uncluttered	uncomfortable	unconscious
uncrowned	undamaged	unhappy
unguarded	unhealthy	unhooked
uninspired	unlaced	unleashed

**The prefix 'under-'**

This is usually written as one word but there are exceptions as in the following:

under-part	under-secretary	under-sexed	under-shrub
under-side	under-surface		

The following words do not need a hyphen:

underachieve	underact	undercarriage	underclothes
undercoat	undercover	undercurrent	undercut



underdeveloped	underdog	underemphasise
underemployed	underestimate	underexpose
underground	undergrowth	underhand

### The prefix 'vice-'

When 'vice' is used to mean next in rank to a particular post, a hyphen is usually used:

vice-admiral	vice-chairman	vice-chamberlain
vice-captain	vice-chancellor	vice-president

In the following words no hyphen is required:

viceregent (someone who exercises delegated power)  
 vicereine      viceroy

## ENDING WITH A SUFFIX

A suffix is a group of letters placed at the end of a word to qualify its meaning. In some cases a hyphen is placed before it to clarify the meaning. Below are some of the most common suffixes which require hyphens.

### The suffix '-all'

be-all      end-all

### The suffix '-away'

far-away      give-away      take-away

### The suffix '-back'

out-back      play-back      throw-back

### The suffix '-by'

lay-by      stand-by

### The suffix '-down'

back-down	broken-down	close-down
crack-down	put-down	run-down
show-down	shut-down	sit-down

**The suffix '-in'**

built-in	check-in	drive-in	phone-in	run-in
stand-in	trade-in			

**The suffix '-less'**

The suffix '-less' suggests 'without' the root word:

doubt	doubtless	guilt	guiltless
home	homeless	joy	joyless
life	lifeless	number	numberless
power	powerless	relent	relentless
shame	shameless	tire	tireless

**The suffix '-ness'**

The suffix '-ness' is usually added to an adjective to make an **abstract noun**. Remember that the 'y' at the end of the adjective has to be changed into an 'i'. Remember also that if the root word ends in 'n', this letter will be doubled.

<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Noun</i>
bright	brightness	dark	darkness
empty	emptiness	great	greatness
happy	happiness	kind	kindness
lazy	laziness	lean	leanness
sore	soreness	still	stillness
ugly	ugliness	weak	weakness

**The suffix '-off'**

brush-off	bully-off	cut-off	kick-off	lay-off	lift-off
pay-off	play-off	rip-off	show-off	take-off	tip-off
turn-off	well-off	write-off			

**The suffix '-on'**

follow-on	hanger-on	head-on	knock-on
roll-on	try-on	turn-on	walk-on

**The suffix '-out'**

black-out	check-out	cut-out	fall-out
hand-out	hide-out	knock-out	look-out
share-out	shoot-out	throw-out	try-out
wash-out	way-out	wipe-out	

### The suffix '-over'

change-over

take-over

walk-over

### The suffix '-up'

brush-up

build-up

call-up

clean-up

close-up

cover-up

fry-up

hang-up

hold-up

line-up

link-up

lock-up

make-up

pile-up

pin-up

press-ups

set-up

slap-up

slip-up

smash-up

stand-up

toss-up

warm-up

wind-up

write-up

Other suffixes that do not need hyphens will be dealt with later.

## HYPHENATING COMPOUND WORDS

A hyphen is usually used if two words are placed together to create a new word. Here are some of the combinations:

- two nouns (naming words)
- two adjectives (describing words)
- two verbs (doing words)
- a noun joined to an adjective.

### Joining two nouns

The following nouns require a hyphen to join the two words together:

baby-sitter

baby-walker

back-door

belly-flop

blood-guilt

blood-money

book-ends

book-rest

bench-mark

catch-phrase

chair-lift

coal-box

coal-bunker

coal-cellar

corner-stone

duck-boards

dust-sheet

eye-shade

folk-dance

joy-ride

notice-board

price-list

rose-bud

rose-bush

scrum-half

sky-dive

time-scale

Note that bookmark is one word and does not have a hyphen.

### Joining two adjectives

Two adjectives may also be joined together with a hyphen:

blue-eyed	cold-blooded	deep-rooted	long-sighted
right-handed	middle-aged	old-fashioned	short-sighted

### Joining two verbs

Sometimes two verbs linked together heighten the meaning:

crash-land	drip-dry	dry-clean	force-feed
hang-glide	test-drive		

### Joining a noun to an adjective

The following nouns are combined with an adjective:

back-bencher	cut-price	half-back	loose-leaf
open-air			

A colour may be qualified by the use of a noun attached to it although some of these are very well used:

blood-red	rose-red	coal-black	sky-blue
snow-white			

You may wish to create some original adjectives:

mould-green	leaf-brown	slush-grey
-------------	------------	------------

### Joining a noun to a verb

The form of a verb varies according to the **tense**. Sometimes the **participles** of the verb can be added to a noun to form a new word. The **present participle** ends in ‘-ing’ and the **past participle** usually ends in ‘-ed’ although there are many exceptions.

#### *Adding the present participle*

The nouns in this case are linked to the present participle of the verb to make a new word:

back-breaking	blood-letting	joy-riding
mud-raking	cheese-paring	filling-station
nerve-racking		

#### *Adding the past participle*

The past participle is added to the noun to create a new word:

bow-legged	grant-aided	hand-picked
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### Using a preposition

Sometimes there are more than two words linked by hyphens and in these cases a preposition is used. This is a word which indicates the position of one word to another. Look at the following examples:

down-to-earth	lady-in-waiting	brother-in-law
man-of-war	matter-of-fact	mother-in-law
out-of-date	right-of-way	sister-in-law
stick-in-the-mud		

### Using fractions and compound numbers

You should use a hyphen when writing fractions and compound numbers.

three-quarters	four-tenths	five-eighths
twenty-one	thirty-two	forty-three
fifty-four	sixty-five	seventy-six
eighty-seven	ninety-eight	ninety-nine

### Combining French words

Some French words which have passed into our language are hyphenated:

avant-garde	bric-a-brac	cul-de-sac	eau-de-cologne
mange-tout	pied-à-terre	sang-froid	vol-au-vent

## CHECKLIST

- A prefix is placed *in front of* a word to qualify its meaning.
- A suffix appears at the *end* of a word.
- A hyphen links two words together.
- A hyphenated word may be:
  - two nouns
  - two adjectives
  - two verbs
  - noun and adjective.
- Use hyphens for fractions and compound numbers.

**PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT**

1. What do the following prefixes mean?

ante      anti      extra      far      neo

2. In the following sentences which words need hyphens?

- The subeditor reappeared waving the manuscript which was dotted with semicolons.
- When she reentered, she was accompanied by the vicechairman.
- The viceadmiral criticised the undersecretary for his underhand behaviour.
- She could not reach the checkout because of the blackout.
- The accident produced a knockon effect and Jane's car was a writeoff.

3. Add prefixes to the following words:

abridged	act	adorned	appear
appoint	arm	attached	broken
clean	colon	conscious	create
crowned	final	hooked	laced
marine	please	title	way

4. Add suffixes to the following words:

adorn	attach	beauty	doubt	happy
hate	pain	pity	power	rest

# 5

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## Sorting Out the Changes

If a prefix or suffix is added to a root word, the word itself may in some cases have to be modified.

### ADDING TO THE ROOT WORD

If two words are combined to create a **compound word**, you may have to drop some letters. If the prefix ends in a double 'l', remove one 'l' before completing the word:

all	already	all	almost
all	also	all	although
all	always	full	fulfil
skill	skilful	well	welcome
well	welfare		

### USING '-FUL' OR '-FULL'

The word 'full' when written alone is always spelt with two 'ls'. When it is added to a noun or a verb to make the word into an adjective, only one 'l' is used as in the following:

beauty	beautiful	boast	boastful
care	careful	duty	dutiful
help	helpful	hope	hopeful
faith	faithful	fancy	fanciful
forget	forgetful	grace	graceful
hate	hateful	hope	hopeful
joy	joyful	truth	truthful
pain	painful	pity	pitiful
plenty	plentiful	rest	restful
tear	tearful	truth	truthful
spite	spiteful	success	successful
master	masterful	mercy	merciful

mourn	mournful	use	useful
waste	wasteful	wonder	wonderful

Sometimes 'ful' is added to a noun to create another noun:

bag	bagful	cup	cupful
fist	fistful	hand	handful
plate	plateful	mouth	mouthful
sack	sackful	spoon	spoonful

## ENDING WITH '-LY'

'-ly' is usually added to adjectives to make an **adverb** which qualifies a verb. If the root word ends in 'l', don't forget to leave the 'l' and add 'ly' so you have a double 'l'. This can also apply to words ending in 'ful':

actual	actually	beautiful	beautifully
careful	carefully	cruel	cruelly
faithful	faithfully	fatal	fatally
final	finally	formal	formally
general	generally	gradual	gradually
occasional	occasionally	personal	personally
real	really	special	specially
total	totally	usual	usually

If the word ends in a consonant, there is also no change to the word before adding '-ly':

bad	badly	bright	brightly
cold	coldly	correct	correctly
frequent	frequently	glad	gladly
humorous	humorously	imperious	imperiously
inept	ineptly	jubilant	jubilantly
vivid	vividly		

## Keeping the 'e'

If there is an 'e' at the end of a word, it is usually retained before adding 'ly'. It is a common mistake either to omit it or to put it before the 'y'; this is particularly the case in some words, so remember this rule:



complete	completely	definite	definitely
desperate	desperately	fortunate	fortunately
grave	gravely	immediate	immediately
love	lovely	separate	separately
sincere	sincerely		

### Changing the 'e'

If a word ends in 'le', the 'l' is retained and the 'e' replaced by 'y':

bubble	bubbly	capable	capably
despicable	despicably	double	doubly
gentle	gently	humble	humbly
incredible	incredibly	knowledgeable	knowledgeably
possible	possibly	probable	probably
remarkable	remarkably	single	singly
terrible	terribly		

### Changing the 'y'

If the word ends in 'y', in most cases the 'y' is changed into an 'i' before adding '-ly':

busy	busily	crazy	crazily
extraordinary	extraordinarily	hazy	hazily
healthy	healthily	heavy	heavily
hungry	hungrily	merry	merrily
necessary	necessarily	shabby	shabbily

### Looking at exceptions

As with many rules, there are exceptions to the above.

The adjective 'coy' ends with 'y' but this is not changed before adding 'ly': coyly.

'Day' and 'gay' end in 'y' and, as in the earlier examples, the 'y' is changed to an 'i' although there is only one syllable (a single unit of sound): daily, gaily.

If the word already ends in a double 'l', you need only add a 'y':

dull	dully	full	fully
------	-------	------	-------

'Due', 'true' and 'whole' all end in 'e' so remove this before adding 'ly':

due	duly	true	truly
whole	wholly		

### Using 'friendly'

The word 'friendly' is an adjective and describes a noun although it is now sometimes used incorrectly as an adverb. To form the adverb 'ly' has to be added to the adjective 'friendly' and the 'y' changed to an 'i' to produce the word 'friendlily'. It is a clumsy word and it is often better to reword your sentence to avoid using it. Look at the following examples:

- She behaved *friendlily* towards me.
- She behaved in a *friendly manner* towards me.

The adverb in the first sentence is awkward. It is better to use the adjective in the second one. 'Manner' is an abstract noun.

### Looking at words ending in '-ic'

If a word ends in '-ic', it is usually necessary to add '-ally' instead of just '-ly':

automatic	automatically	basic	basically
characteristic	characteristically	comic	comically
critic	critically	drastic	drastically
enthusiastic	enthusiastically	frantic	frantically
heroic	heroically	pathetic	pathetically
rhythmic	rhythmically	scientific	scientifically
specific	specifically	stoic	stoically
tragic	tragically	music	musically
mechanic	mechanically		

### DOUBLING THE CONSONANT

If a word ends in a single consonant and you wish to add a suffix beginning with a vowel, you will usually need to double the consonant before adding it if there is only one syllable or if the stress falls on the last syllable.

annul	annulled	annulling
bat	batted	batting
bit	bitter	bitten
cancel	cancelled	cancelling

compel	compelled	compelling
counsel	counselled	counselling
drop	dropped	dropping
enrol	enrolled	enrolling
hop	hopped	hopping
intial	initialled	initialling
label	labelled	labelling
libel	libelled	libelling
propel	propelled	propelling

### Looking at the exceptions

Where the stress in a multi-syllable word does not fall on the last syllable, it is not usually necessary to double the consonant:

benefit	benefited	benefiting
bias	biased	biasing
blanket	blanketed	blanketing
carpet	carpeted	carpeting
cricket	cricketer	cricketing
docket	docketed	docketing
fillet	filleted	filleting
focus	focused	focusing
gallop	galloped	galloping
market	marketed	marketing
offer	offered	offering
picket	picketed	picketing
target	targeted	targeting

Some consonants are *not* doubled before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. These are: w, x and y:

cox	coxed	coxing
cloy	cloyed	cloying
fray	frayed	fraying
stay	stayed	staying
tax	taxed	taxing
tow	towed	towing
toy	toyed	toying
vex	vexed	vexing

If the consonant is preceded by two vowels, it is not doubled when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel:

beat	beaten	beating
break		breaking
creak	creaked	creaking
creep		creeping
droop	drooped	drooping
fail	failed	failing
flail	flailed	flailing
greet	greeted	greeting
group	grouped	grouping
hail	hailed	hailing
heap	heaped	heaping
hoot	hooted	hooting
sail	sailed	sailing
seat	seated	seating
soar	soared	soaring
sleep		sleeping
trail	trailed	trailing
treat	treated	treating

If the root word ends with two consonants, it is obviously unnecessary to double the last one before adding the suffix.

bang	banged	bang
clock	clocked	clocking
crash	crashed	crashing
dash	dashed	dashing
fast	fasted	fasting
fault	faulted	faulting
fight		fighting
light	lighted	lighting
lack	lacked	lacking
lurch	lurched	lurching
prick	pricked	pricking
sack	sacked	sacking
search	searched	searching
sight	sighted	sighting
track	tracked	tracking
turn	turned	turning

### Adding a suffix starting with a consonant

A suffix starting with a consonant usually changes the meaning of the word and converts it into a different part of speech. In most cases you can leave the root word as it is and just add the suffix:

annul	annulment	allot	allotment
abridge	abridgement	advertise	advertisement
amaze	amazement	bitter	bitterness
brother	brotherhood	child	childhood
commit	commitment	companion	companionship
court	courtship	coy	coyness
doubt	doubtless	duke	dukedom
earl	earldom	false	falsehood
fellow	fellowship	free	freedom
friend	friendship	hard	hardship
odd	oddment	member	membership
official	officialdom	power	powerless
scholar	scholarship	sister	sisterhood

### COPING WITH THE 'E'

Many words end with a silent 'e' and in single syllable words the preceding vowel is usually a 'long' one. When adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, it is usually necessary to remove the 'e':

bite	biting	brake	braking
date	dating	dupe	duping
flake	flaking	flame	flaming
grate	grating	grope	groping
hate	hating	hike	hiking
hope	hoping	tape	taping

### Looking at the exceptions

When a word ends in a 'soft' 'g' sound instead of a 'hard' one, the 'e' is retained as in the following:

age	ageing	courage	courageous
singe	singeing		

Occasionally the 'e' at the end of a word is pronounced as an extra syllable:

anemone	apostrophe	catastrophe	simile
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## CHANGING THE TENSE

Verbs ('doing' or 'being' words) can be used in the past, present or future and letters are often added to change the tense. To change a 'doing' verb from the present to the past, it is usually necessary to add 'd' or 'ed' to the end. Remember that you may have to double the consonant at the end.

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past participle</i>
I dance	I danced	(have) danced
you play	you played	(have) played
he travels	he travelled	(has) travelled
she criticises	she criticised	(has) criticised
it chases	it chased	(has) chased
we plan	we planned	(have) planned
they move	they moved	(have) moved

Notice that in the above examples, the past participle is the same word as the past tense. This is not so in all cases.

### Looking at the exceptions

The verb 'to be' changes the word in the past tense (refer to Chapter 3). Some 'doing' words also change the word instead of adding 'ed' and the past participle is sometimes different again. Look at the following examples:

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past participle</i>
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
light	lit	lit
ride	rode	ridden
rise	rose	risen

see	saw	seen
shake	shook	shaken
shine	shone	shone
sit	sat	sat
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
steal	stole	stolen
strive	strove	striven
swear	swore	sworn
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
write	wrote	written

### *Keeping the same word*

The verbs 'to read' and 'to beat' retain the same word for both present and the past tenses but 'read' (present tense) is pronounced with a long 'ee' sound while the past tense is a short 'e' as in 'red'.

### **Changing the vowels**

In the following verbs the 'a' in the past tense is changed to 'u' for the past participle:

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past participle</i>
begin	began	begun
drink	drank	drunk
run	ran	run
shrink	shrank	shrunk
spring	sprang	sprung
stink	stank	stunk
swim	swam	swum

### *Using 't' instead of 'ed'*

The following verbs use 't' instead of 'ed' to form the past tense and the past participle:

<i>Present</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Past participle</i>
build	built	built
burn	burnt	burnt
creep	crept	crept
deal	dealt	dealt
feel	felt	felt
learn	learnt	learnt
lean	leant	leant
sleep	slept	slept
sweep	swept	swept
weep	wept	wept

## LOOKING AT ENDINGS

The endings of some words are confusing and you may not know which is the correct one to use. Unfortunately there are few rules to help you so the words have to be learnt or you will have to use a dictionary.

### Is it ‘-able’ or ‘-ible’?

The endings ‘-able’ and ‘-ible’ usually form adjectives. It may help you to find the correct ending if you think of the noun that relates to the adjective. If the last syllable contains an ‘a’ towards the end, the word will usually end in ‘-able’. Similarly if there is an ‘i’, the ending is likely to be ‘-ible’.

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>
adoration	adorable	accession	accessible
admiration	admirable	admission	admissible
abomination	abominable	comprehension	comprehensible
inflation	inflatable	digestion	digestible
irritation	irritable	division	divisible

### *Other words with ‘-able’ endings*

acceptable	adaptable	arguable	available
comfortable	considerable	inflammable	laughable
objectionable	perishable	pleasurable	regrettable
tolerable	undeniable	unmistakable	variable



*Other words with ‘-ible’ endings*

admissible	audible	collapsible	combustible
compatible	contemptible	convertible	corruptible
credible	edible	fallible	flexible
feasible	incomprehensible	indelible	infallible
intangible	invincible	legible	permissible

*Exceptions*

Some words retain the ‘e’ before adding ‘-able’. This is so if there is a soft ‘c’ or ‘g’ at the end of the root word:

notice	noticeable	peace	peaceable
pronounce	pronounceable	service	serviceable
trace	traceable	replace	replaceable
bridge	bridgeable	charge	chargeable
change	changeable	knowledge	knowledgeable
marriage	marriageable		

*Other exceptions*

Other words that keep the ‘e’ before ‘-able’ are:

blame	blameable	give	giveable
like	likeable	name	nameable
rate	rateable	sale	saleable
share	shareable	size	sizeable
shake	shakeable	tame	tameable

Note that if ‘-ing’ is added to some of the above words the ‘e’ is removed:

blaming	giving	liking	naming	rating
sharing	sizing	shaking	taming	timing

**Is it ‘-ce’ or ‘-se-’?**

In most cases the noun ends in ‘-ce’ and the verb ends in ‘-se’.

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>
advice	advise
device	devise
licence	license
practice	practise

The following words end with 'y' instead of 'e' and both are pronounced as an extra syllable:

*noun*: prophecy (ee sound)      *verb*: prophesy (long 'i' sound)

### Is it 'a' or 'e'?

It is not always easy to decide whether an 'a' or an 'e' introduces the suffix. There are, unfortunately, no rules to help you so the words have to be learnt.

#### *Some adjectives ending in '-ant'*

abundant	adamant	arrogant	blatant
buoyant	constant	distant	dominant
elegant	extravagant	exuberant	flagrant
poignant	pregnant	redundant	repentant
relevant	reluctant	repugnant	resonant
significant	vacant	vibrant	

#### *Some nouns ending in '-ant'*

assistant	celebrant	claimant	deodorant
dependant	descendant	emigrant	militant
peasant	pendant	pheasant	tenant
transplant	truant	tyrant	vagrant

#### *Some adjectives ending in '-ent'*

absent	apparent	ardent	belligerent
coherent	consistent	decadent	dependent
effluent	diligent	eminent	evident
expedient	fluorescent	frequent	independent
obedient	reminiscent		

#### *Some nouns ending in '-ent'*

ascent	content	convent	delinquent
equivalent	extent	incumbent	patient
portent	president	recipient	superintendent
tangent			

### Is it '-ance' or '-ence'?

Nouns often use the above suffix. If applicable the 'a' or 'e' will follow the same pattern as the previous examples.

*Nouns ending in '-ance'*

abundance	arrogance	appearance	assonance
assurance	defiance	distance	disturbance
elegance	entrance	extravagance	grievance
insurance	performance	perseverance	resistance
resonance	semblance	surveillance	temperance

*Nouns ending in '-ence'*

absence	commence	consequence	correspondence
eminence	essence	evidence	excellence
expedience	impudence	presence	pretence
reminiscence	reverence	sentence	sequence

**Using 's' or 'z'**

There is often confusion as to whether words should end with '-ise' or '-ize'. If the 'i' is pronounced with either a short vowel sound as in 'lip' or a long 'e' sound as in 'see', the ending is usually '-ise':

premise    promise    expertise    reprise

The problem often arises with words which end with a 'long' 'i' sound. The following words always take the 's' ending.

*Verbs*

advertise	apprise	arise	chastise	circumcise
devise	emphasise	franchise	improvise	revise

*Nouns*

demise    enterprise    merchandise

The following words can be both nouns and verbs:

compromise    disguise    exercise (can also be an adjective)  
surprise

The following words have traditionally been spelt with an '-ize' ending but the alternative '-ise' is now acceptable and is becoming increasingly popular:

agonize (-ise)	appetizer (-iser)	civilize (-ise)
colonize (-ise)	criticize (-ise)	fertilizer (-iser)
legalize (-ise)	recognize (-ise)	standardize (-ise)

Note the following words:

apprise (verb)	to inform	apprize (verb)	to value
prise (verb)	to open	prize (noun)	a reward

### Ending with ‘-le’

If two consonants follow a short vowel sound, the ending is usually ‘-le’:

angle	battle	bramble	bristle	brittle	cattle
crumple	cuddle	dazzle	fiddle	handle	humble
hurtle	mantle	middle	muscle	nestle	nettle
nimble	paddle	prattle	raffle	rattle	riddle
ruffle	saddle	simple	single	thimble	thistle
twiddle	wrestle	wriggle			

Words whose root ends in ‘c’ or ‘k’ also usually take the ‘-le’ ending:

ankle	article	barnacle	buckle	bicycle	castle
chuckle	crackle	fickle	icicle	miracle	obstacle
rankle	sparkle	spectacle	sprinkle	suckle	twinkle
uncle	vehicle	winkle	wrinkle		

Other words which have an ‘-le’ ending are:

beetle	beadle	bible	bridle	girdle	liable
needle	stable	table			

### Other endings

Other words might end with ‘-el’ ‘-il’ or ‘-ol’ but unfortunately there is no rule to help you to decide on the correct ending. However the following letters are *never* followed by ‘-le’: m, n, v, w.

The spelling of the following words may have to be learnt:

angel	camel	cannibal	chisel	crystal	hospital
hotel	label	marvel	model	novel	original
parallel	pedal	peril	petal	pistol	pupil
rascal	royal	sandal	tunnel	usual	visual
vowel					

**Ending words with ‘-ous’**

A number of words end in ‘-ous’ and many are preceded by a consonant. They are usually adjectives:

ambidextrous	anonymous	blasphemous
callous	credulous	dangerous
enormous	fabulous	famous
garrulous	grievous	humorous
infamous	jealous	marvellous
murderous	nervous	perilous
preposterous	rapturous	ridiculous
scurrilous	solicitous	sonorous
treacherous		

Some words have an ‘i’ before the ‘-ous’ and the following words are pronounced with a ‘sh’ sound:

anxious	atrocious	conscious	ferocious
gracious	luscious	obnoxious	precious
spacious	superstitious	suspicious	tenacious
voracious	vicious		

In other cases the ‘i’ is pronounced as ‘ee’ thus creating another syllable:

curious	delirious	fastidious	furious
glorious	hilarious	illustrious	impervious
luxurious	previous	salubrious	sanctimonious
serious	spacious	supercilious	various
vicarious	victorious		

There are also words which have an ‘e’ before the ‘-ous’ and in this case the vowel is pronounced as ‘ee’:

beauteous	bounteous	courteous	erroneous
hideous	miscellaneous	nauseous	piteous
simultaneous	spontaneous		

In the following words the ‘e’ or the ‘i’ is retained because the ‘g’ is soft:

advantageous	courageous	gorgeous	outrageous
contagious	religious	sacrilegious	

**Ending with ‘-ion’**

Words ending with ‘-ion’ are invariably nouns and whatever the preceding consonant the suffix is usually pronounced ‘sh’.

*Words ending in ‘-tion’*

action	addiction	administration	attention
civilisation	communication	competition	conception
condition	description	diction	education
fraction	generation	genuflection	graduation
identification	imagination	induction	installation
matriculation	motion	nation	obstruction
occupation	partition	personification	prescription
position	promotion	pronunciation	punctuation
radiation	reception	rejection	remuneration
restitution	resurrection	revolution	sanction
solution	station	suggestion	termination
transportation	transcription	translation	tribulation
vacation	vaccination	veneration	vocation

*Words ending with ‘-sion’*

There are fewer words ending with ‘-sion’:

collision	comprehension	condescension	derision
mansion	mission	pension	permission
persuasion	profusion	suspension	transfusion

*Words ending with ‘-xion’*

A few words end with ‘-xion’ but some may also use ‘ct’ instead of ‘x’:

crucifixion	deflexion (deflection)	fluxion
genuflexion (genuflection)	inflexion (inflection)	

**Ending with ‘-ian’**

Some words end with ‘-ian’ and the preceding consonant is usually a ‘c’ and it is pronounced ‘sh’. These are usually job titles.

*Words ending ‘-cian’*

beautician	electrician	magician	mathematician
musician	optician	paediatrician	politician
statistician	technician		

## CHECKLIST

- Retain the 'e' at the end of word before adding 'ly'.
- Change the 'y' into an 'i' before adding 'ly'.
- Add 'ally' after 'ic'.
- Apart from w, x and y, double the consonant before adding a suffix unless two vowels precede it.
- Remove the 'e' at the end when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel.

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

Correct the spelling mistakes in the following passage:

She was so *beautifull* that he was *allmost* in love with her. He knew she was a *dutyful* daughter but he was *hopefull* that she would *finaly* agree to go out with him. He knew she *usualy* walked in the park in the morning. When she appeared, he *immediatly* went towards her and asked if he could join her. She shook her head *gentley* and went on her way. He was *terribley* hurt but realised that she would not *automaticly* become his friend. His brain was racing *franticly* as he *planed* his next move and *hopped* she would speak to him.

# 6

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## Avoiding Common Mistakes

Because English spelling is complicated, there are many common mistakes to avoid. To make life more difficult some words with different meanings are pronounced in the same way but spelt differently. It is necessary to learn the ones that cause you problems.

### **SORTING OUT PROBLEM WORDS**

Words that are pronounced the same but spelt differently are called **homophones**.

#### **Dealing with homophones**

Homophones have to be learnt. There are rarely rules to help you with the correct spelling:

air	gaseous substance	heir	successor
aisle	passage between seats	isle	land surrounded by water
allowed	permitted	aloud	audible
altar	table at end of church	alter	change
bare	naked	bear	an animal
bark	sound dog makes covering of tree trunk	barque	sailing ship
bean	a vegetable	been	past tense of the verb 'to be'
be	verb	bee	insect
beech	a tree	beach	sand or shingle beside sea
beer	an alcoholic drink	bier	wooden plank bearing corpse
bite	to use teeth	byte	a computer term
blew	past tense of 'blow'	blue	a colour
board	<i>noun</i> : piece of timber <i>verb</i> : to lodge	bored	finding something dull
boy	a young male	buoy	marker in sea for ships



bow	to bend head	bough	branch of tree
bread	food made from flour	bred	past tense of breed
by	at side of something	buy	purchase
		bye	a run in cricket awarded by umpire
caught	past tense of catch	court	space enclosed by buildings
cent	monetary unit	sent	past tense of send
		scent	perfume
check	sudden stop to inspect	cheque	written order to bank to pay money
council	an administrative body	counsel	to give advice
current	water or air moving in a particular direction	currant	dried fruit
ewe	female sheep	yew	a tree
		you	second person pronoun
dear	loved; expensive	deer	animal
faint	become unconscious	feint	to make a diversionary move
fare	money charged for journey	fair	opposite to dark beautiful gathering of people for trade and entertainment
feat	notable achievement	feet	plural of foot measurement
fir	a tree	fur	an animal's covering
grate	<i>noun</i> : metal frame for fuel <i>verb</i> : produce small pieces by rubbing against something	great	huge; famous
herd	a group of cattle	heard	past tense of hear
here	in this place	hear	to be aware of sound
hole	a cavity	whole	something complete
idle	lazy	idol	object of worship
know	to have knowledge	no	opposite of yes
passed	past tense of pass	past	time gone by to pass by
peace	freedom from war	piece	a portion
peal	a ring of bells	peel	rind of fruit
place	particular area	plaice	a fish

poor	opposite to rich	pore	tiny opening in skin
		pour	tip liquid out of container
quay	landing place for ships	key	implement for locking
rain	water from clouds	reign	monarch's rule
		rein	lead for controlling horse
read	understand written words	reed	grass-like plant
right	correct	rite	religious ceremony
wright	craftsman	write	put words on paper
road	highway	rode	past tense of ride
root	part of plant in soil	route	course followed to a destination
rough	not gentle	ruff	frilly collar worn in sixteenth century
sail	sheet of material on a ship	sale	noun from the verb to sell
	to travel on water		
sea	expanse of salt water	see	to have sight of
seam	place where two pieces of material are joined	seem	to appear to be
sew	stitches made by needle and thread	sow	to plant seeds
		so	indicating extent of something
sole	fish	soul	spirit
	underneath of foot		
some	a particular group	sum	the total
son	male offspring	sun	source of light
stake	wooden stave	steak	cooked meat
suite	furniture	sweet	confectionery
	piece of music		dessert
tail	end of animal	tale	story
tare	a type of corn weed	tear	to rip
taught	past tense of teach	taut	tight
team	group working together	teem	overflowing with
tear	salt water from eyes	tier	rows placed above each other
thyme	a herb	time	duration

threw	hurled	through	pass into one side and out of the other
tire	to become weary	tyre	rubber covering on a wheel
to	in direction of	too	as well or excessively
vain	conceited	two	the number
		vein	vessel in body for carrying blood
		vane	weathercock
waist	middle part of body	waste	rubbish or uncultivated land
weather	atmospheric conditions	whether	introduces an alternative
whine	high pitched sound	wine	alcoholic drink
wood	timber	would	past tense of will

### Looking at other problem words

There are a number of other words which can cause problems because of their similarity in sound. Some of these are:

accept	to receive	except	apart from
affect	to influence	effect	to bring about
bridal	adjective from bride	bridle	a horse's lead
canvas	thick material	canvass	to persuade voters
complement	to make complete	compliment	express admiration
desert	expanse of sand	dessert	pudding, sweet
ensure	to make sure	insure	to protect from loss
envelop	to cover something	envelope	wrapping for letter
formally	conventionally	formerly	previously
gorilla	an animal	guerrilla	fighter in small force
lightening	to make lighter	lightning	flash before thunder
loose	not restrained	lose	to mislay
lumbar	lower part of back	lumber	move awkwardly
			rubbish
persecute	to cause suffering	prosecute	to take to court

principal	head of a college	principle	rule or standard
stationary	to be still	stationery	paper and other goods
storey	floor of a building	story	tale

### Confusing 'their', 'there' and 'they're'

'Their' is a possessive adjective and is placed before a noun to indicate ownership.

– *Their* books are on the table.

'There' is an adverb of place and shows *where* something is.

– *There* is my house.

'They're' is an abbreviation short for 'they are'. The apostrophe replaces the 'a'.

– *They're* moving today.

### Confusing 'were', 'where' and 'wear'

'Were' is the past tense of the verb 'to be'.

– They *were* a happy couple.

'Where' is an adverb of place.

– *Where* is my pen?

– This is the place *where* the battle started.

'Wear' is the present tense of the verb 'to wear'.

– I *wear* my poppy with pride.

### Making it easy

One way to avoid confusion is to find, if possible, a link between words. The words ending in 'ere' usually denote place:

here            there            where

The figure two is often confused with to and too. If you think of the following words, you should remember there must be a 'w' in the number.

twice            twenty            twins

### Distinguishing between 'who's' and 'whose'

'Who's' is short for 'who is'.

– Who's that handsome man?

Do not confuse it with 'whose' which is usually linked to a noun.

– The girl, whose arm was broken, walked on to the platform.

**Shortening 'have'**

In some cases 'have' can be shortened to 've' and because this sounds like 'of' another common mistake is to use 'of' instead of 've'. Try to avoid this error.

Could have = could've  
 Might have = might've  
 Would have = would've

**Shortening 'are'**

'Are' can also be shortened by removing the 'a' when it is joined to another word.

You are = you're  
 They are = they're  
 We are = we're

**Joining words incorrectly**

Small words are sometimes incorrectly joined together. Frequent mistakes are:

abit      alot      alright      incase      infront

These should be two words:

a bit      a lot      all right      in case      in front

**Using 'bought' or 'brought'**

There is sometimes confusion as to whether the 'r' should be included in the above words

'Bought' is the past tense of the verb 'to buy'. There is no 'r'.

– I *bought* fresh bread yesterday.

'Brought' is the past tense of the verb 'to bring'. An 'r' is necessary.

– I *brought* my new dress for you to see.

**Using 'speak' and 'speech'**

'Speak' is the verb and is spelt with 'ea'.

– I will *speak* to her.

'Speech' is the noun and is spelt with double 'e'.

– His *speech* was excellent.

**Deleting the 'u'**

When a suffix is added to a word ending in '-our', the 'u' is sometimes omitted:

glamour	glamorous	humour	humorous
---------	-----------	--------	----------

*but*

colour	colourful
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**Using the '-cede' suffix**

The suffix that sounds like 'seed' is usually spelt 'cede'.

precede	recede
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*Exceptions*

The exceptions are:

<i>sede</i> :	supersede		
<i>ceed</i> :	exceed	proceed	succeed

**LOOKING AT COMMONLY MISSPELT WORDS**

There are a number of words that are frequently misspelt and many of these have to be learnt as there are often no rules to help you:

absence	abysmal	acquaint	acquire
across	address	advertisement	aggravate
alleluia	annual	appearance	archaeology
arrangement	auxiliary	awkward	because
beginning	believe	beautiful	business
character	carcass	centre	cemetery
cellar	chameleon	choose	committee
computer	condemn	conscious	daily
definitely	description	desperate	develop
diarrhoea	difference	dining	disappear
disappoint	discipline	desperate	dissatisfied
doctor	doubt	eerie	eight
eighth	embarrass	empty	encyclopaedia
exaggerate	exceed	exercise	excitement
exhaust	exhibition	existence	familiar
February	fierce	first	foreigner
forty	fortunately	frightening	fulfil

government	glamorous	gradually	grammar
guard	haemorrhage	haemorrhoids	harass
height	honorary	humorous	idea
immediately	independence	island	jewellery
journey	khaki	knowledge	laboratory
lacquer	language	league	leisure
liaison	lonely	lovely	maintenance
massacre	metaphor	miniature	miscellaneous
mischievous	miserably	misspell	necessary
neighbour	neither	ninth	occasion
occur	occurred	occurrence	omit
opportunity	opposite	paid	paraffin
parallel	particularly	playwright	possess
precede	preparation	procedure	preferred
privilege	probably	profession	professor
pronunciation	pursue	questionnaire	queue
receipt	receive	recognise	restaurant
rhyme	rhythm	said	schedule
science	scissors	secretary	separate
sergeant	similar	simile	sincerely
skilful	spaghetti	strength	subtle
succeed	surprise	suppress	temporary
thief	though	tragedy	tried
truly	unnecessary	until	usage
usual	vacuum	vehicle	vigorous
vicious	Wednesday	weird	woollen
womb	yield		

### Sorting out the confusion

The following words are also often spelt incorrectly:

Britain:	<i>not</i> Britian
brain:	an organ inside the skull
Brian:	a name
diary:	a book in which you keep a record of your life
dairy:	a place where milk is churned and made into butter and cheese
lightning:	this comes before thunder
lightening:	this means to lighten something – to make it lighter
lose:	verb: to mislay or fail to win
loose:	adjective: not held tightly by any bonds

### Using mnemonic devices

A mnemonic device is an aid for improving your memory. The ‘m’ is silent. You could think up your own to help you to remember difficult spellings.

#### *Examples*

- I *hear* with my *ears*.
- I like having *tea* by the *sea*.
- A *stationer* sells *stationery*.

## HOMING IN ON YOUR PROBLEM WORDS

There are probably words you frequently misspell. Most people, however accurate they are usually, have a ‘mental block’ about certain words. Researchers into spelling problems have dubbed these words FOMs – an acronym for **frequent occurrence misspelling**.

### Identifying your FOMs

Once you have identified your FOMs, you are on the way to improving your spelling. Write down on several large pieces of paper or card the correct spelling of six or seven of your FOMs. Then scatter them throughout the house. Prop up a card on your desk, use a magnet to attach it to your fridge, pin it on your notice board and hang it over your bed!

The constant awareness of your FOMs should help you to spell the words correctly when next you use them. However, if this doesn’t work for you try to find a mnemonic device to help you. This can be as silly as you like; the sillier the better as you are more likely to remember it!

The combination of the lists and the mnemonic devices should improve your spelling. When you have mastered your first list of FOMs, follow the same pattern with another set. If you persevere, you will be amazed at the improvement in your spelling.

## USING A SPELL-CHECK

The **spell-check** on your computer is useful but it will only pick up incorrect spelling. It won’t tell you whether you have used the correct word. You must check your work manually as well or you may end up with something like this!



– Thank yew for you're letter. Wood yew like too go two Corn-wall for a weak when the whether improves?

You may also find that the spell-check occasionally differs from the dictionary. It will sometimes suggest a hyphen when the dictionary has one word. In case of doubt, always use the dictionary spelling.

## CHECKLIST

- A homophone is a word that is spelt differently but pronounced the same as another word.
- Don't confuse 'their', 'there' and 'they're'.
- The abbreviation for 'have' is 've' *not* 'of'.
- 'Brought' is from 'bring': 'bought' is from 'buy'.
- A spell-check will only *correct* words – not replace them.

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

Correct the following passage:

Dick was not *aloud* to go to the *see*. He wanted to *sea* it but he had been *court* being *ruff* with a playmate. He was *board*. He tried to *right* his *dairy* but he was *lonley*. He wanted to *right* a *storey* but there was a flash of *lightening* and he had left his *stationary* inside.

The sky was no longer *blew* so he *immediatley* ran into the school. He *new* the *principle* would be angry with him. In his class room sat Jacques, the *foriegner*. He was doing some *grammer* exersises but he found *riting sentences* difficult.

*Miserably*, Dick sat down. He was not *suprised* that Jaques *mispelled* so many words. He pulled on his *woolen* mitts because his hands were cold.

## Using Apostrophes and Abbreviations

**Apostrophes** are used to show possession and also to replace letters if words are abbreviated.

### SHOWING POSSESSION

There are some rules you can learn which will help you to know where to put the apostrophe when it is used to show possession.

#### Dealing with the singular

When a singular noun shows possession, an 's' is added and the apostrophe is placed *before* it. It must be followed by another noun although in some cases there may be an adjective before the noun:

- Jack's house was burnt down.
- The book's pages were torn.
- The girl's ball was lost.
- Her father's will was a surprise.
- The thief stole Lucy's valuable necklace.
- All the old lady's treasured possessions were placed in a bag.

Apostrophes are also required in the following cases:

- She was given a week's leave.
- The Smiths had a month's holiday.
- He felt exhausted after his day's work.
- There would be a year's delay before her book was published.
- Yesterday's storm caused much damage.
- Tomorrow's weather forecast is good.
- Today's matches were cancelled.
- Her term's work was wasted.

If there are two nouns which share the possession you need only put an apostrophe in the second one.

- Jo and Sarah's examination results were good.
- Peter and Clive's footwork helped to win the match.

An apostrophe should also be used in the following:

- She has an appointment at the hairdresser's. (Salon' is 'understood'.)
- I must buy a paper at the newsagent's. ('Shop' is 'understood'.)
- She always buys her meat from the butcher's. ('Shop' is 'understood'.)

If a noun showing possession ends in a single 's', in most cases you have a choice. You may add the apostrophe alone after the word or you may add the extra 's' as well.

- King James' (s) comments on tobacco are still remembered.
- Charles' (s) dog had died.
- King Louis' (s) new palace was magnificent. (In this case it is probably better to omit the 's'.)

If the noun ends in double 's', it is necessary to add the extra 's' for ease of pronunciation.

- The princess's funeral service was very moving.
- The class's behaviour was disgraceful.
- The duchess's ball gown was beautiful.
- The witness's testimony caused uproar in the court.

### Dealing with the plural

Most nouns add an 's' to make the plural so the apostrophe to show possession is placed *after* it.

- The boys' playground was flooded.
- The ladies' cloakroom was closed.
- The waiters' duties were heavy.

Remember to add 'es' to make the plural if the word ends in double 's'.

- The guests complained about the waitresses' poor service.
- The jury listened carefully to the witnesses' detailed testimony.

However, 'for goodness' sake' always omits the extra 's' as it would not be pronounced.

Do *not* use an apostrophe unless the word is showing possession. Do *not* use it because the word ends in 's'.

### Looking at the exceptions

Some words do not add an 's' to make a plural. In this case the word is treated in the same way as a singular noun. An 's' is added and the apostrophe is placed before it.

Some words whose plurals do not end in 's' are:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
child	children
deer	deer
goose	geese
louse	lice
man	men
mouse	mice
ox	oxen
person	people
policeman	policemen
sheep	sheep
woman	women

- The children's coats were on the floor.
- The rubber tubes looked like mice's tails.
- The geese's loud cackling was giving her a headache.
- The women's waiting room was closed.
- The policemen's uniforms were badly made.

### Dealing with exceptions

'Its' is a possessive pronoun and never takes an apostrophe.

It's = it is or it has.

- Its fur was wet (possessive).
- It's (is) very hot today.
- It's (has) been named Bruno.

**Pronouns** are parts of speech which take the place of nouns. Apart from 'mine', the other possessive pronouns are: hers, his, theirs, yours, ours. None of these takes an apostrophe as each already shows possession.

- That book is hers.
- That beautiful house is theirs.
- Ours was the best score.
- Yours has won the race.

## ABBREVIATING WORDS

### Using apostrophes

Apostrophes are also used if words are shortened or combined. The apostrophe replaces the missing letter or letters:

cannot	can't
could have	could've (not 'of')
do not	don't
might have	might've
shall not	shan't
will not	won't
would have	would've
would not	wouldn't

### Using the full stop

If a word is abbreviated, a full stop is usually placed at the end to indicate this:

adjective	adj.
adverb	adv.
document	doc.
et cetera	etc.
including	incl.
information	info.
language	lang.
plural	pl.
singular	sing.

The same thing applies when abbreviating a county:

Berkshire	Berks.
Buckinghamshire	Bucks.
Cambridgeshire	Cambs.
Gloucestershire	Glos.
Hampshire	Hants.
Lancashire	Lancs.
Nottinghamshire	Notts.
Oxfordshire	Oxon.

Some titles also require full stops if they are abbreviated. However, in some cases the title should only be abbreviated if it is followed by the person's full name.

Capt. Anthony Wells or Captain Wells  
*not*  
 Capt. Wells

Col. Peter Barrington or Colonel Barrington

*not*

Col. Barrington

Rev. James Bywaters or Reverend Bywaters

*not*

Rev. Bywaters.

Prof. William Reynolds or Professor Reynolds

*not*

Prof. Reynolds

## HANDLING CONTRACTIONS

Words that are abbreviated by using the first and last letters are contractions and do not usually require a full stop at the end:

Doctor	Dr	
Miss	Ms	
Mister	Mr	
Mistress	Mrs	Ms
Road	Rd	
Saint	St	
Street	St	

## USING ACRONYMS AND OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

**Acronyms** are words formed from the initial letters of other words. These have become so common that it is easy to forget their origin and sometimes they are no longer written in capital letters or with full stops between them:

AIDS:	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ANZAC:	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
ASH:	Action on Smoking and Health
ERNIE:	Electronic random number indicator equipment (used to select Premium Bonds)
GATT:	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
LAMDA:	London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art
LASER:	Light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation
NASA:	National Aeronautic and Space Administration

NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
RADA:	Royal Academy of Dramatic Art
RADAR:	Radio detection and ranging
RAF:	Royal Air Force
SCATS:	Schools', Christian Assembly Teams
SCUBA:	Self-contained underwater breathing apparatus
SONAR:	Sound navigation and ranging
UCCA:	Universities' Central Council on Admissions
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VAT:	Value Added Tax

There are other abbreviations whose initial letters do not form words but the letters themselves are still more familiar than their derivation:

AGM:	annual general meeting
CPS:	Crown Prosecution Service
BBC:	British Broadcasting Corporation
GCSE:	General Certificate of Secondary Education
POW:	Prisoner of war
TUC:	Trades Union Congress
TV:	Television
MOD:	Ministry of Defence
VIP:	Very important person

## CHECKLIST

- Use apostrophes when a letter is omitted.
- Use apostrophes to show something belongs.
- The apostrophe goes *before* the 's' when the word is singular and *after* the 's' when plural.
- In words that do not end in 's' for the plural, add an 's' and place the apostrophe *before* it.
- 'Its' possessive requires *no apostrophe*.
- Use full stops at the end of abbreviations but not contractions.
- Full stops are no longer necessary in familiar acronyms.

## **PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT**

Correct the following sentences:

1. The childs ball was thrown into the neighbours garden.
2. The duchess memoirs were published last year.
3. I always buy my paper at the newsagents.
4. Her months annual leave was cancelled.
5. The childrens outing was a great success.
6. James parents were furious.
7. The ladies fashion department was closed.
8. Don't forget your umbrella for goodness sake.
9. We should of won the match.
10. The cat always licks it's fur when it comes in.
11. Her's was the victory.
12. You might of told me you were going to London.
13. The child wouldnt eat her lunch.
14. Dr. Jones went to South St. to visit Rev. Cauldwell at St. Cuthberts Church.



# 8

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## Revising the Chapters

This chapter recaps the work that has been covered in the previous seven chapters. The exercise at the end contains a combination of work from all seven chapters.

### IDENTIFYING DIFFERENT SOUNDS

Although there are only 26 letters in the alphabet, there are many more sounds that are formed by the combination of two letters; these are known as diphthongs or digraphs. The vowel is usually pronounced as a short sound when it is between two consonants and long when there is an 'e' at the end of the word.

Short vowel sounds:	bat	bet	hill	hot	sup
Long vowel sounds:	hate	cede	bite	hope	tube

### Producing long 'a' sounds

As well as words which end in 'e', the following combinations of letters are used for long 'a' sounds: ai, ay, ei, ey.

ai:	hail	grail	tail
ay:	crayon	pay	pray
ei:	beige	eight	neighbour
ey:	grey	obey	survey

### Producing the 'e' sounds

The diphthong 'ea' can produce either a short or a long 'e' sound.

Short 'e':	breath	bread	pleasant	tread
Long 'e':	bead	heap	meal	peace

Other long 'e' sounds are produced by the following combinations: ee, ea, ei, ey, ie.

ee:	breeze	feel	heel	sleeve
ea:	heave	leave	tea	sea
ei:	ceiling	deceive	perceive	receive

ey:	chimney	donkey	key	monkey
ie:	brief	field	grieve	siege

### Producing the 'i' sounds

A short 'i' can be produced by the 'ui' combination:

biscuit	guilt	guitar
---------	-------	--------

The long 'i' sound can be produced by the following combination of letters: ei, ie, igh.

ei:	either	height	neither
ie:	lie	pie	tie
igh:	fright	right	tight

### Producing the long 'o' sound

Long 'o' sounds are produced by the following combination of letters: oa, oe, oo, ou, ow, eau.

oa:	boat	toad	toast
oe:	doe	foe	woe
oo:	brooch		
ou:	boulder	soul	
ow:	bow	crow	throw
eau:	gateau		

### Producing the 'u' sound

A short 'u' can also be produced by ou as in the following:

double	trouble
--------	---------

### Using the 'y'

A 'y' can be used in the following ways:

- Short 'i' sound: cynic
- Long 'e' sound: happy
- Long 'i' sound: cycle

### Revising other vowel sounds

There are other combinations of letters which produce other vowel sounds:

'ar' sound:	bar	car	hard
'air' sound:	hair	heir	dare

'ear' sound:	appear	near	beer	career	
'er' sound:	teacher	bird	actor	burn	
'oo' sound:	brew	bloom	group	shoe	juice
'oo' sound:	book	wool			
'oi' sound:	boil	coil	oil		
'ou' sound:	about	aloud	allowed	town	
'oy' sound:	alloy	boy	coy		
'or' sound:	applause	awful	before	boar	bought
	call	door			
'our' sound:	flour	bough	flower		

### Revising the consonant sounds

ch:	chair	church
sh:	hush	shake
th:	path	these
tch:	batch	ditch

'Ph' is pronounced as an 'f' sound:

photograph	phrase
------------	--------

'Q' is always followed by 'u':

equal	queen	quick
-------	-------	-------

Some consonants are sometimes silent at the beginning of words. These are: g, k, w, p.

gnarled	knew	wreath	pneumonia
psalm			

'C' and 'g' can both be pronounced with a hard or a soft sound:

soft sound:	central	cinema	age	singe
hard sound:	cat	care	grate	greed

### USING CAPITAL LETTERS

Remember to use capital letters for the following:

- after a full stop
- for proper nouns

- for adjectives formed from proper nouns
- for titles of people, plays, books etc.
- for geographical terms.

## REVISING PLURALS

To form a plural, an 's' is usually added to the following types of words:

- Words ending in 'e'  
crone                      crones
- Words ending in consonants  
desk                      desks
- Words ending in a vowel followed by 'y'  
monkey                  monkeys
- The second part of a hyphenated word  
back-bencher          back-benchers.

'Es' is added to words ending in the following: ss, ch, sh, x, z

ss:	ass	asses
ch:	batch	batches
sh:	brush	brushes
x:	box	boxes
z:	waltz	waltzes

Some words ending in 'f' change the 'f' to 'v' before adding 'es' for the plural:

calf	calves	wolf	wolves
------	--------	------	--------

## CHANGING THE VERB

If other letters have to be added to a verb, the 'y' at the end is sometimes changed into an 'i'.

worry      worried                      marry      marries

It is kept when adding 'ing':

worry      worrying                      marry      marrying

Some verbs change their form for the past tense and the past participle. There is no rule for this so these have to be learnt (refer to Chapter 5).

## ADDING SUFFIXES

Prefixes and suffixes are often added to words to modify their meaning. If adding a suffix to a word ending in 'y', remember that you may have to change the 'y' into an 'i'.

angry      angrily                      happy      unhappy

Don't forget that you usually have to double the consonant at the end of a word before adding a suffix.

plan      planned                      run      running

The 'e' at the end of a word usually has to be removed when adding a suffix.

date      dating                      hope      hoping

## CHECKING THE WORDS

Take care when dealing with homophones, words that sound the same but are spelt differently. Make sure you are using the correct form of the word. Refer to Chapter 6 to refresh your memory. Don't rely on a spell-check as this will not know which word you require. It will only highlight incorrect spelling.

Learn the list of words near the end of Chapter 6.

## REVISING APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are used to show that letters have been omitted.

did not	didn't
cannot	can't
would have	would've

They are also used to show possession and an 's' is added.

- The apostrophe goes before the 's' if the word showing possession is singular.  
– The boy's book.
- The apostrophe goes after the 's' if the word showing possession is plural.  
– The ladies' cloakroom.

Plurals which do not add an 's' are treated the same as singular nouns. An 's' is added and the apostrophe is placed before it.

- The children's coats
- The mice's tails.

Possessive pronouns do not require an apostrophe:

hers   his   its   theirs   yours   ours

Remember that 'its' possessive never has an apostrophe.

## USING ABBREVIATIONS AND CONTRACTIONS

There is a full stop at the end of an abbreviation but not a contraction.

Abbreviation:	information	info.
Contraction:	Doctor	Dr

Many acronyms no longer require a full stop between the letters:

AIDS                      LAMDA                      NATO

**PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE REVISED**

Correct the following passage:

Sarah dressed carefully. She knew she looked glamorous. It was a beautifull day when she court the train to london. She opend her handbag although it's clasp was broken. She should of had it mended but she hadnt had time. Inside, she found a leaflet about the schools' exibition. She was dissapointed she would miss it. Their was a seperate sheet containing the childrens' comments. It was quiet humourous because the grammer was so bad and there was alot of misspelling.

The train was beggining to slow down. She hopped Dr. Jones, who was at the top of his proffesion, would see her immediatley she arrived. Taking out her dairy, she checked the time of her apointment which she had enterd as soon as she had recieved the letter.

She new she was early. When she apeared at the door, the secetary asked if she prefered tea or coffee and then left Sarah to read a book of poems which had no ryme or regular rythm. She put it down and stared at the decorative cieling persuing her own thoughts.

# 9

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## Exploring the Dictionary

Make time to browse through your dictionary. It can be a fascinating experience and you may be amazed at the variety of information it contains.

### LOOKING AT THE BACKGROUND

Until the fifteenth century all books were hand-written and few people owned one. The Latin Bibles were chained up in the churches and only the priests read from them.

#### Standardising spelling

In 1476 William Caxton introduced the printing press and attempted to standardise the spelling of English. Much of his arbitrary spelling has not survived but it is due to him that the short 'u' sound in some words is now written as an 'o'. Apparently the 'u' on Caxton's primitive printing press was unsatisfactory and he preferred not to use it! The following words probably owe their current spelling to him.

come      done      dove      glove      love      wonder

There were other attempts to standardise and simplify spelling. In the fifteenth century there was an attempt by a monk to make spelling phonetic and in the seventeenth century a bishop attempted a phonetic alphabet. Even in the twentieth century there were unsuccessful attempts to reform spelling. A hilarious paper produced recently suggested our vowel and consonant sounds should be revised to cater for European speakers of English. Among the suggestions were:

- 'c' would be abolished and replaced by 's' or 'k'
- 'ph' would no longer be used instead of 'f'
- the silent 'e' would be dropped



- 'w' should be replaced by 'v'
- 'th' would be replaced by 'z'.

The examples given were unrecognisable as English!

### Compiling a dictionary

Although there was an attempt at compiling rudimentary dictionaries in the Middle Ages, it was not until 1604 that Robert Cawfray produced his *Table Alphabetical* – a rudimentary dictionary intended for 'ladies . . . or any other unskilfull persons'! We do not know how successful this was!

The first dictionaries only contained 'difficult' words, particularly those derived from foreign languages. It was assumed that words in common usage needed no definition. In 1658 Edward Phillips, a nephew of John Milton, produced *New World of English Words*. He described it as 'containing the interpretation of such hard words as are derived from other languages.'

It was in the following century that England followed the pattern set by the Academies of Italy and France and decided to 'purify' the English language. It was felt that, at that time, the language had reached such perfection that it would deteriorate unless it was standardised by a recognised authority. As England had no 'Academy' for this purpose as had Italy and France, the task was given to Dr Samuel Johnson, whose reputation as a man of learning was widely recognised. When he started work, he is said to have found the language 'copious without order and energetick without rules'. He set about changing this!

His dictionary first appeared in 1755 and was the forerunner of those we use today. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Johnson recognised that language was constantly changing. It could not be set in stone and preserved like a museum antiquity. A dictionary has to be frequently updated and, with the advent today of so much new technology, a vast number of words have been added to our vocabulary and have to be included in revised dictionaries. Another name for a dictionary is a lexicon and the compiling of one is called lexicography.

The first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* was edited by Sir James Murray between 1884 and 1928. Today this famous dictionary has been computerised.

### Spelling badly is not new!

The introduction of the dictionary did not apparently eradicate bad spelling. In the eighteenth century Susanna Wesley wrote to her son, John, that 'few are taught to *spell* their mother tongue correctly'. She referred scathingly to 'some original letters of lords and ladies . . . where the writing is elegant and the spelling execrable'.

*The Practical Speller* published in 1881 complained that school leavers 'shock society by their bad spelling' and at the end of the century poor spelling apparently caused the majority of failures in a Civil Service examination. Has anything changed at the beginning of the twenty-first century?

## DISCOVERING THE ROOTS OF WORDS

English is a difficult language to learn because so many of its words are derived from other languages. Sometimes words fall into disuse and in this case they are identified in the dictionary by 'arch'. This stands for archaic and means that the word is no longer in use.

The two languages which have contributed most to English are Latin and French.

### Finding Latin contributions

Latin was the language of the mediaeval church and the first 'dictionaries' were attempts by monks in the fifteenth century to produce English equivalent for Latin words. Words that end in 'a', 'i', 'um' and 'us' are often derived from a Latin word. Latin words are still used in the following disciplines today: biology, botany, chemistry, medicine, music, physics.

The following Latin phrases are still in use today:

<i>ad hoc</i>	– for this purpose
<i>ad infinitum</i>	– for ever
<i>ad nauseam</i>	– to an excessive degree
<i>alter ego</i>	– one's other self
<i>bona fide</i>	– in good faith
<i>compos mentis</i>	– sane
<i>curriculum vitae</i>	– an account of one's career
<i>deus ex machina</i>	– the unexpected saving of an impossible situation
<i>dramatis personae</i>	– list of characters in a play

<i>et alibi</i> (et al.)	– and elsewhere
<i>et cetera</i>	– and so on
<i>ex curia</i>	– not in open court
<i>habeas corpus</i>	– produce the body (a person must be brought into court)
<i>in absentia</i>	– while absent
<i>in camera</i>	– not in open court
<i>infra dig</i>	– beneath one's dignity
<i>in loco parentis</i>	– taking the place of a parent
<i>in memoriam</i>	– in memory
<i>in situ</i>	– in its original place
<i>magnum opus</i>	– great work of art
<i>nota bene</i>	– note well
<i>rigor mortis</i>	– stiffening of corpse
<i>status quo</i>	– the same state as at present
<i>terra firma</i>	– dry land
<i>viva voce</i>	– oral examination

### Finding French contributions

After the Norman conquest in 1066 French was introduced into England by the conquerors whose language it was. It became the language of the ruling classes, government and the law. However, the dour Anglo Saxons had no intention of losing their own language and English was still spoken by the natives, but it was inevitable that French words and phrases would creep in and eventually become common usage. A number of words still currently in use are derived from French while some French words and phrases have passed into our language as they are.

### Examples of French words and phrases in common use

<i>affaire de coeur</i>	– affair of the heart
<i>agent provocateur</i>	– someone employed to trap a suspect
<i>aide de camp</i>	– officer assisting a senior officer
<i>à la carte</i>	– separate items on a menu
<i>amour propre</i>	– self-esteem
<i>après-ski</i>	– done or worn after skiing
<i>au gratin</i>	– cooked in breadcrumbs and grated cheese
<i>au naturel</i>	– uncooked
<i>avant-garde</i>	– new progressive ideas
<i>bête noire</i>	– a pet aversion
<i>carte blanche</i>	– full discretionary powers given to a person

<i>c'est la vie</i>	– life's like that
<i>chargé d'affaires</i>	– ambassador's deputy
<i>corps de ballet</i>	– company of ballet dancers
<i>corps diplomatique</i>	– diplomatic corps
<i>coup de grace</i>	– a fatal blow
<i>coup d'état</i>	– a sudden change in government
<i>cul-de-sac</i>	– a blind alley
<i>déjà vu</i>	– a feeling of having experienced something before
<i>en bloc</i>	– all at the same time
<i>enfant terrible</i>	– unruly child
<i>en masse</i>	– all together
<i>en route</i>	– on the way
<i>en suite</i>	– forming a single unit
<i>entre nous</i>	– between us – in private
<i>fait accompli</i>	– something done that cannot be changed
<i>faute de mieux</i>	– for lack of something better
<i>faux pas</i>	– a blunder
<i>femme fatale</i>	– dangerously attractive woman
<i>hors de combat</i>	– out of the fight
<i>hors d'oeuvre</i>	– appetiser before main course
<i>maître d'hotel</i>	– head waiter
<i>mot juste</i>	– the right word
<i>noblesse oblige</i>	– privilege brings responsibility
<i>nom de plume</i>	– pen name
<i>sang-froid</i>	– calmness in danger
<i>savoir faire</i>	– knowing how to behave in any situation
<i>table d'hôte</i>	– fixed price menu
<i>tête à tête</i>	– private conversation
<i>objet d'art</i>	– a work of artistic value
<i>on dit</i>	– gossip
<i>petit four</i>	– a small fancy cake
<i>petit mal</i>	– a mild form of epilepsy
<i>petit point</i>	– embroidery using small stitches
<i>pot-pourri</i>	– a mixture
<i>rendezvous</i>	– a meeting place
<i>tour de force</i>	– a feat of strength or skill
<i>vis-à-vis</i>	– face to face

### Looking at other languages

If you browse through the dictionary you will find many words which come from all over the world. The British have always been

great travellers and while, on the whole, they do not excel at learning other languages, they have frequently picked up interesting words and phrases which, over the years, have been incorporated into English to make it the rich language it is. Words that are derived from other languages are identified in the dictionary.

At the front of most dictionaries you will find a list of abbreviations that are used in the work. Some of these represent foreign languages. You will be astonished at the variety!

### *Abbreviations for foreign languages*

Afrik. (Afrikaans)	Arab. (Arabic)	Aram. (Aramaic)
Assyr. (Assyrian)	Bret. (Breton)	Burm. (Burmese)
Chin. (Chinese)	Dan. (Danish)	F. (French)
Flem. (Flemish)	G. (German)	Gael. (Gaelic)
Gk. (Greek)	Hung. (Hungarian)	Icel. (Icelandic)
It. (Italian)	Jap. (Japanese)	L. (Latin)
Pers. (Persian)	Peru. (Peruvian)	Pol. (Polish)
Port. (Portuguese)	Skr. (Sanskrit)	Sw. (Swedish)
Teut. (Teutonic)	Turk. (Turkish)	

### *Examples of words from other languages*

Here are some words that have originated in other countries:

Afrikaans:	apartheid	commando	spoor	trek
Arabic:	Algebra	assassin	cipher	cotton
	magazine	mattress	tariff	
Chinese:	kowtow	silk	tycoon	typhoon
Japanese:	geisha	harakiri	judo	karate
	kimono			
Persian:	bazaar	caravan	shawl	taffeta
Turkish:	caviar	jackal	kiosk	yoghurt

## **FINDING THE PARTS OF SPEECH**

Each word in English is a 'part of speech' and plays a particular part in the sentence. Your dictionary will identify each word for you using the appropriate abbreviation.

### *Defining the parts of speech*

To refresh your memory, the parts of speech with their abbreviations are set out below:

- **Noun** (n.): a person, place or thing.
- **Pronoun** (pron.): a word that replaces a noun.
- **Verb** (v.t. and v.i.): an 'action' or 'being' word; v.t. is a transitive verb and takes an object. (It is followed by a noun. 'He wrote a letter': letter=object.) v.i. is an intransitive verb and does not take an object. (It is not followed by a noun. 'She dances beautifully'.) Some verbs can be both transitive and intransitive. Look at the following:
  - (Transitive) She danced the waltz. (waltz = object)
  - (Intransitive) She dances beautifully. (no object)
- **Adjective** (adj.): a word that describes a noun.
- **Adverb** (adv.): a word that qualifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb.
- **Conjunction** (conj.): a word that joins two ideas (clauses) in a sentence.
- **Preposition** (prep.): a word that shows the relationship between one word and another.

## LEARNING PRONUNCIATION

The dictionary will also help you to pronounce words with which you are unfamiliar. Does the stress fall on the first or second syllable? Are there 'silent' letters? Is 'c' pronounced as a 'k'?

### Using 'received pronunciation'

The pronunciation used by most dictionary compilers is known as 'received pronunciation'. It takes no account of the variations used in different parts of the British Isles or indeed in other parts of the English speaking world although some may refer to American spelling and pronunciation. 'Received pronunciation' is standard English 'without any accent' associated with speakers from the South of England. (Others may, of course, consider this itself is an 'accent'!)

The phonetic pronunciation, where necessary, is shown in brackets:

*Using stress marks*

The symbol ' is used after the stressed vowel:

chron'icle      fo'lder      my'stery      ri'ddle      spo'rran

Short vowel sounds are shown by a little semi-circle above the letter:

bat      bitter      butter      chin      dog      fatten  
höt      hōp      līt      nūt

The word 'love' would be shown as (luv).

The same symbol over a 'y' shows that the letter is pronounced as 'ee':

factōry      libēty      happŷ      prettŷ

Long vowel sounds have a line over the top:

fāte      hōpe      gō      nōte      nō      nūde  
ōde      rāte      rōpe      rōse

A vertical stroke between two letters is sometimes used to identify a syllable (unit of a word).

ine'bri/ate      magne'si/a      medi/ate      nu'cle/us

*Examples of pronunciation*

blun'derbuss      blu'bber      co'ma      fa'ctor  
fa'ctual      fa'culty      ha'bit

**CHECKING THE MEANING**

On most occasions you will probably use the dictionary either to check the spelling of a word or to find its meaning. The main words will be in alphabetical order in bold type and the definition will follow.

**compel** v.t.      to force  
**leather** n.      tanned animal skin

**Adding extra words**

Some words have other words and phrases linked to them. In this case the original word is represented by the symbol ~ in bold type

and the other words follow – also in bold type. Each has a definition, for instance:

‘**wash**’ can be followed by other words linked by hyphens:

--basin    --bowl    --house    --leather  
--pot      --rag      --stand    --tub

Expressions using **wash** are also given:

--up          won't~      ~ed out    ~up  
~out

There may also be examples to clarify the meaning. These are usually shown in *italics*:

- *He was washed overboard.*
- *It was washed up by the sea.*
- *She washed down the tablet with a sip of water.*

### Looking at different meanings

If a word has more than one meaning it will appear more than once in bold type in the margin of the page and the different definitions will be given. Each will usually be a different part of speech.

#### *Examples*

- anger 1 (n.) extreme displeasure
- anger 2 (v.t.) to make someone angry
- fast 1 (v.i.) to go without food
- fast 2 (n.) the act of going without food
- fast 3 (a.) firmly attached to something
- fast 4 (adv.) quickly
- grate 1 (n.) metal frame holding fuel in a fireplace
- grate 2 (v.t.) to reduce a substance to small pieces by rubbing on a rough surface
- grate 3 (v.i.) to create a harsh sound which has an irritating effect
- land 1 (n.) solid part of earth: a particular country
- land 2 (v.i.) to disembark from a ship or bring a plane down to earth.



## ADDING NEW WORDS

New words are constantly being added to our language. Lewis Carroll is credited with introducing 'portmanteau' words in his children's classic *Alice through the Looking Glass*. 'Portmanteau' words are words that combine two known words:

– chortle: a combination of chuckle and snort.

Today these have become very popular and we have:

brunch – breakfast and lunch  
medicare – medical and care  
motel – motor and hotel  
Oxbridge – Oxford and Cambridge  
transistor – transfer and resistor

## Shortening words

Another modern trend is to shorten words. A syllable is deleted and the 'new' word becomes accepted while its original is often forgotten

cello – violoncello  
fridge – refrigerator  
lunch – luncheon  
phone – telephone  
taxi – taxicab  
wig – periwig

## USING THE DICTIONARY

A dictionary, as we have seen, has many uses:

- defines the word
- gives the definition
- indicates the pronunciation
- shows the part of speech.

## Finding other uses

In the front of a dictionary you will find a list of abbreviations used and some notes on how pronunciation is indicated. There

will also be a piece on etymology (the derivation of words) and this will show you how the origins of certain words are identified.

At the back of the dictionary you may also find the following:

- list of the chemical elements
- list of weights and measures
- temperature
- list of world monetary units
- Roman numerals
- countries of the world
- States of the USA
- rulers of England and the UK
- Prime Ministers of Great Britain and the UK
- Presidents of the USA
- books of the Bible
- days of the week and months of the year with their derivations
- signs of the zodiac with an explanation of it
- wedding anniversaries
- terms for some groups of animals and birds
- foreign words and phrases that have passed into our language.

The *Oxford Popular English Dictionary* published in 1998 also contains the following helpful information:

- some points of English usage:
  - pronunciation
  - spellings
  - meanings
  - plurals
  - grammar.
- Punctuation:
  - apostrophe
  - colon

- comma
- dash
- exclamation mark
- full stop
- hyphen
- question mark
- quotation marks
- semicolon.

### **Looking at other dictionaries**

The *Oxford Dictionary* in its entirety runs to 20 volumes and carries a comprehensive list of words. However, you can also find a number of specialised dictionaries which could be useful if you are studying a particular subject or are interested in language and how it has developed. Below is a list of some of the dictionaries you might find in your local library.

*Dictionary of Jargon*

*Dictionary of Contemporary Slang*

*Rhyming Dictionary*

*Dictionary of New Words*

*Dictionary of Music*

*Dictionary of Chemistry*

*Dictionary of Physics*

*Dictionary of Biology*

*Dictionary of Art and Artists*

*Biographical Dictionary*

*Bible Dictionary*

*Medical Dictionary*

*Dictionary of Abbreviations*

*Dictionary of Foreign Expressions*

*Five Language Technology Dictionary* (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish)

### **WIDENING YOUR VOCABULARY**

You will increase your vocabulary by reading widely. Make a list of words you don't understand and look them up. Remember to note the context in which they are used or you may become confused. Use them in your own writing or speaking as soon as possible.

## CHECKLIST

- Many English words are derived from a number of different languages.
- Foreign words and phrases are still used.
- A dictionary gives parts of speech, pronunciation, definition and derivation.

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

1. Look up the following words and write down their derivation, part of speech and definition:

circus	dunce	entrepreneur	envelope	fossil
nucleus	relaxation	scribble	shock	silicon

2. What do the following letters stand for?

n.	adj.	adv.	v.i.	v.t.
----	------	------	------	------

# 10

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## Discovering the Thesaurus

The word 'thesaurus' comes from a Greek word referring to treasure that is hoarded – an appropriate name for this treasure of a book which will help you to widen your vocabulary and improve your writing by finding **synonyms** to replace well-used words. A synonym is a word which has a similar meaning to another.

### LOOKING AT ROGET AND HIS THESAURUS

Peter Mark Roget produced the first thesaurus. Born in London in 1779, he studied medicine at Edinburgh, went on to become professor of physiology at the Royal Institution and became Secretary of the Royal Society. He was active in founding the University of London and remained on the Senate of the University until his death in 1869.

Early in his career he had compiled a thesaurus for his own use and he completed the first draft in 1806. During the next 40 years he continually added to his list of synonyms. He retired from medical practice in 1840 but it was not until 1849 that he started to concentrate on the work for which he is remembered.

His *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* was eventually published by Longmans in 1852. He explained that it was 'classified and arranged so as to facilitate the expression of ideas and assist in literary composition'. Twenty-eight editions were published during his lifetime. The edition of 1879 contains his final work. After his death his son edited the *Thesaurus* and later passed this responsibility on to *his* son. The pattern of the *Thesaurus* is logical and easy to follow. Roget aimed to produce a 'collection of words . . . arranged, not in alphabetical order as they are in a dictionary, but according to the ideas which they express'. He wished 'to find the word or words by which (an) idea may be most fittingly and aptly expressed'.

*Roget's Thesaurus* is still a vital reference book for everyone interested in the English language and, like the dictionary, it

is frequently updated. Longman's no longer retain the outright copyright and now other publishers produce their own thesauri.

## USING ROGET'S THESAURUS

*Roget's Thesaurus* is divided into two main parts. The first section of the book is divided into the following classifications:

- abstract relations
- space
- matter
- intellect
- volition
- affection.

The second part is the index which, like a dictionary, is in alphabetical order. You will find all words and phrases followed by numbers which refer to the first section.

### Finding your way around

Your first task will be to look up the word or phrase you wish to replace. Having found it, you will discover a variety of other words below it in italics. Beside each one is a number and the abbreviation which identifies the part of speech. Look up the number of the correct part of speech that you require. When you find it, you will discover the word in bold type. Underneath, also in bold type, is the part of speech. Remember that some words can be used as different parts of speech depending on their context.

Following the abbreviation for the part of speech are a number of synonyms from which you can choose. Cross references to other numbers which are appropriate are also given. The later *Thesauri* may contain over 100,000 words so you have a wide variety from which to choose.

### Example

'Nice' is a very overworked word. Looking this up in the index will give you a variety of synonyms, all of which are adjectives:

pleasant	careful	discriminating	accurate
clean	beautiful	fastidious	amiable

Each is followed by a number so that you can find even more related words.

'Beautiful' might be number 841. Turning to this number in the first section of the book, you will find the bold heading is 'beauty' because the noun is usually placed first. Following are a number of synonyms with cross references to other numbers. Below this is the adjective 'beautiful' which you require. Among the synonyms given are:

lovely	fair	bright	radiant	pretty
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Here, too, will be cross references to other related words.

Although at first you may find it confusing, persevere and it will soon become easier. You will find you are adding to your vocabulary every time you use the *Thesaurus*.

## CHECKING OTHER THESAURI

Since Longmans no longer have a monopoly on publishing *Roget's Thesaurus*, other publishers have now taken it up and are also publishing their own versions. Sometimes these are combined with a dictionary.

Harper Collins have produced a useful pocket dictionary with 34,000 words and a thesaurus with 75,000 synonyms. It is easy to use as the word in bold type is followed by several synonyms. There may be several uses of the word which are identified.

### Looking at an example

grasp: 1. v. clasp, clutch, grip, bold, seize.  
 2. v. understand, comprehend.  
 3. n. grip, hold, possession.  
 4. n. comprehension, understanding.

### Identifying other publishers

Oxford University Press and Chambers are two other publishers who produce thesauri but there are others as well. The small pocket editions are useful but are not replacements for *Roget's Thesaurus*.

## WIDENING YOUR VOCABULARY

Browsing through the thesaurus can be an interesting exercise. You can learn many new words in the process. However, the best way to widen your vocabulary is by finding new words to replace ones you have used many times before. Having identified new words, use them.

## CHECKLIST

- A thesaurus helps you to find synonyms for well-used words.
- Some small thesauri are combined with dictionaries.
- Use a thesaurus to widen your vocabulary.

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNT

1. In the following passage find synonyms for 'nice', without using the same one twice.

It was a *nice* day so the Browns decided to go for a *nice* picnic. It was *nice* by the sea and they had brought some *nice* food. In the evening they decided to go to a *nice* restaurant and have a *nice* meal. They arrived home late after a *nice* day.

2. Find several synonyms for each of the following words:

book (n)	end (v)	freedom (n)	gloomy (adj)
house (n)	laugh (v)	path (n)	play (v)
ship (n)			



## Enhancing Your Writing

Having sorted out your spelling problems and learned all the uses of the dictionary and thesaurus, you should now be in a position to make your writing more varied and interesting.

### READING WIDELY

The best way of enlarging your vocabulary so that you can improve your writing is to read as much as possible. Try to read a variety of material. By doing so, you will consciously and subconsciously absorb new words that you can use.

You have to learn words in context. As we have already noticed, many words have several meanings; you have to make sure you are aware of the various ways a word can be used so that you can use it correctly.

### Keeping up with the news

Try to look at a newspaper every day. You will find the broadsheets are likely to provide you with a greater challenge as the vocabulary is more varied than the tabloids.

#### **Broadsheets**

*The Guardian*

*The Independent*

*The Telegraph*

*Times*

#### **Tabloids**

*The Daily Mail*

*The Daily Mirror*

*News of the World*

*The Sun*

Most of the papers produce a Sunday edition; *The Observer* is recognised as the Sunday edition of *The Guardian*.

### Studying magazines

If you are a magazine addict, try to absorb new words you discover and notice how they are used.

## Enjoying books

Escaping into another world through books is a delightful way of passing the time and it is, of course, mainly from books that you will add to your vocabulary. Vary your reading so that you stretch yourself. Don't always read the same type of book. If you are able to do so, try to have two books available at the same time. One may be for lighter recreational reading, while the other could be a book that needs more concentration.

In both books you will probably find new words. Notice how the writer has used them. Be critical as you read. This does not mean that you are constantly criticising the author. It means that you are looking carefully at how the words and phrases have been used. Has the *mot juste* always been found or do you think a different word would have been more appropriate in the context?

## EXPERIMENTING WITH WORDS

It is essential that you keep a list of each new word you think you might be able to use. It would also be useful to note down the part of speech and give an example of its use. Try to learn two or three new words each day. Write them on cards and put them where you can see them; try to use them as soon as possible. Don't be afraid to try out words you have discovered. If you develop a love of words, your vocabulary will be swiftly enlarged as you become hungry for new additions to it.

## Asking questions

In 1988 *The Oxford University Press* launched *The Oxford Word and Language Service* (OWLS). Its aim was to answer questions about the meaning, origin and use of English words. The service is used by a variety of people, all of whom are fascinated by the English language. OWLS receives hundreds of queries every year and the Oxford Dictionaries team attempts to answer any questions that are thrown at it. So if you have a query about a word to which you cannot find the answer, write to The Oxford University Press at Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

In 1994 *Questions of English* was published by *The Oxford University Press*. This is a fascinating book which answers questions from lecturers, students, historians, word-game enthusiasts, foreign students, schoolchildren and many others. The questions cover a wide range of topics:

- the origin and meaning of words
- their correct usage
- coined words
- unusual facts about words.

If you are fascinated by the English language, this would be a helpful addition to your library.

## GETTING THE DICTIONARY HABIT

Nothing can replace the use of the dictionary for enlarging your vocabulary. Get into the habit of using it regularly, not only to look up new words but also to discover other meanings of familiar words. Make a note of them for future use and always check the spelling of words that have caused you problems.

### Avoiding Malapropisms

Don't fall into the same trap as Mrs Malaprop, a character in Sheridan's play *The Rivals*. She loved using long words but unfortunately she usually found the wrong one; this resulted in some hilarious expressions. When she objected to one of her nieces' suitors, she told Lydia to 'illiterate' (obliterate) him from her memory. When Lydia starts to object, she exclaims, 'Now don't attempt to extirpate (extricate) yourself from the matter'. Later she explains how she would wish her daughter to be educated:

- She should have a *supercilious* (superficial) knowledge of accounts.
- She should be instructed in *geometry* (geography) so that she might know something about the . . . countries.
- She should be able to *reprehend* (comprehend) the true meaning of what she is saying.

Words used incorrectly in this way have become known as Malapropisms.

### Avoiding tautologies

A tautology is when the same thing is repeated in different ways.

- The two babies were born simultaneously, at exactly the same time. (Simultaneously means at the same time so you do not need the latter.)
- The prizes were awarded consecutively, one after the other.

(Consecutively means one after the other so the latter phrase is unnecessary.)

## MAKING USE OF THE THESAURUS

The larger your vocabulary, the greater the choice you have when producing your work. Remember that enlarging your vocabulary does not mean that you write more. It means you choose your words more carefully and make sure you are using the correct vocabulary for the piece you are writing.

This is where the thesaurus is invaluable. If you are not happy with your choice of word, you can select the right synonym from a wide range. For those who wish to improve their writing skills, the thesaurus is as important as the dictionary.

### Writing literally

Some pieces of writing are factual and require no 'colour'. They are reports, summaries and straightforward accounts of events. You will need to choose words that convey your message succinctly. Don't pad your work with unnecessary words and expressions. You are writing a literal account with no embroidery.

### Writing figuratively

If you are writing fiction or you wish to evoke the atmosphere of a place or an event, you can use phrases and words to bring your writing to life. We use **figurative** language every day but it is so normal that we are often not aware of it. Any expression that is not *literally* true is figurative. There are a number of figures of speech which produce this language, the most common of which are:

- **Simile:** a comparison using 'like' or 'as'. She looked like a cat who'd swallowed the cream.
- **Metaphor:** an implied comparison. The heat was so intense I was boiling ('boiling' suggests boiling water – obviously not literal).
- **Personification:** giving an inanimate object human characteristics. The wind screamed round the house ('screamed' usually refers to a person; most personification is also metaphorical).

Many metaphorical expressions that are in everyday use become clichés – well-worn phrases. To enhance your writing create your own metaphors and similes.

## **CHECKLIST**

- Read as widely as possible.
- Note down new words with their meanings.
- Get into the dictionary habit.
- Use the thesaurus to find the right synonym.

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## Looking at American Spelling

American spelling differs from English spelling in a variety of ways. Frequently, nowadays, the American spelling is also given in English dictionaries and in some cases both spellings are now acceptable.

### DOUBLING CONSONANTS – OR NOT

Before a suffix is added, the consonant is often not doubled.

#### Dropping the ‘l’ and the ‘p’

Look at the following examples. The ‘l’ and the ‘p’ are not doubled as they would be in English spelling.

#### *English spelling*

annulled  
annulling  
cancelled  
cancelling  
handicapped  
handicapping  
kidnapped  
kidnapper  
kidnapping  
panelled  
quarrelled  
quarrelling  
signalled  
signaller  
signalling  
travelled  
traveller  
travelling  
worshipped  
worshipper  
worshipping

#### *American spelling*

annuled  
annuling  
canceled  
canceling  
handicaped  
handicaping  
kidnaped  
kidnaper  
kidnaping  
paneled  
quarreled  
quarreling  
signaled  
signaler  
signaled  
traveled  
traveler  
traveling  
worshiped  
worshiper  
worshipping

The following **root word** appears in English dictionaries both with a single 'l' and a double one although the usual English spelling is with a double 'l'. However, when the suffix '-ment' is added, the Americans use a double 'l' while the English use only one.

*Usual English spelling*

install

instalment

*American spelling*

instal

installment

In the following words the rule is reversed. The English use a single 'l' while the Americans double it.

*English spelling*

enrol

enthrall

instil

*American spelling*

enroll

enthrall

instill

### Adding an 's'

In some cases an 's' is doubled where the English word would retain the single consonant. In the following cases the American spelling is also accepted in some English dictionaries.

*English spelling*

biased

biasing

focused

focusing

*American spelling*

biassed

biassing

focussed

focussing

### Adding 'ful'

When 'ful' is added to a word that ends in 'll', the double consonant is usually retained in American spelling.

*English spelling*

skilful

fulfil

*American spelling*

skillful

fullfil

## IGNORING THE DIPHTHONGS

The ignoring of the 'ae' and 'oe' diphthongs, pioneered by the Americans, is now becoming acceptable in some English words. The 'a' and the 'e' are dropped.

<i>Original English spelling</i>	<i>American spelling</i>
anaesthesia	anesthesia
anaesthetic	anesthetic
archaeology	archeology
diarrhoea	diarrhea
encyclopaedia	encyclopedia
faeces	feces
foetus	fetus
gynaecology	gynecology
manoeuvre	maneuver
mediaeval	medieval
paediatrician	pediatrician
paediatrics	pediatrics
palaeography	paleography
palaeolithic	paleolithic

The 'ou' diphthong is not used in the following words. The 'u' is dropped.

<i>English spelling</i>	<i>American spelling</i>
mould	mold
moult	molt

## REMOVING THE HYPHEN

When the prefix 'co-' is used, American spelling does not usually include a hyphen even when the root word begins with 'o'.

<i>English spelling</i>	<i>American spelling</i>
co-operate	cooperate
co-operation	cooperation
co-opt	coopt
co-ordinate	coordinate
co-respondent	correspondent

## DELETING THE 'U'

In American spelling the 'u' is usually removed if the English word ends in 'our'.

<i>English spelling</i>	<i>American spelling</i>
behaviour	behavior
candour	candor



clamour	clamor
colour	color
demeanour	demeanor
endeavour	endeavor
favourite	favorite
flavour	flavor
glamour	glamor
honour	honor
humour	humor
labour	labor
neighbour	neighbor
rancour	rancor
rigour	rigor
savour	savor
succour	succor
valour	valor
vigour	vigor

## USING 'ER' INSTEAD OF 'RE'

A number of English words end in 're' but the American spelling usually inverts the two letters.

<i>English spelling</i>	<i>American spelling</i>
calibre	caliber
centimetre	centimeter
centre	center
fibre	fiber
goitre	goiter
litre	liter
lustre	luster
manoeuvre	maneuver
meagre	meager
metre	meter
millimetre	millimeter
mitre	miter
ochre	ocher
reconnoitre	reconnoiter
sabre	saber
sceptre	scepter
sombre	somber

spectre  
theatre

specter  
theater

## USING 'S' INSTEAD OF 'C'

A number of words ending in 'ce' are often spelt 'se' in America.

### *English spelling*

defence  
offence  
pretence  
vice

### *American spelling*

defense  
offense  
pretense  
vise

## LOOKING AT OTHER WORDS

There are a number of other words where American spelling differs from English. Look at the following examples.

### *English spelling*

aluminium  
analyse  
catalogue  
cheque  
curb  
dialogue  
dived (past tense of dive)  
got  
gauge  
jewellery  
omelette  
paralyse  
to prize open  
privilege  
programme  
pyjamas  
speciality  
tyre

### *American spelling*

aluminum  
analyze  
catalog  
check  
kerb  
dialog  
dove  
gotten  
gage  
jewelry  
omelet  
paralyze  
to prize open  
privelege  
program  
pajamas  
specialty  
tire

## Changing the words

There are also a number of words which are different in America from England. Look at the following examples:

<i>English word</i>	<i>American word</i>
autumn	fall
bill	check
biscuit	cookie
caretaker	janitor
crisps	chips
cupboard	closet
curtains	drapes
drawing pin	thumb tack
dustbin	garbage can
ex-directory	unlisted
flat	apartment
hair grip	bobby pin
holiday	vacation
ill	sick
lift	elevator
lorry	truck
nappy	diaper
number plate	license plate
off-licence	liquor store
pavement	sidewalk
petrol	gas
post	mail
pram	baby carriage
railway	railroad
roundabout	traffic circle
shop assistant	sales clerk
somewhere	someplace
sweets	candy
tap	faucet
tin	can
trousers	pants
underground	subway
windscreen	windshield
zip	zipper

## CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

You will see that there are a number of differences. Some are now acceptable for English spelling but if you are unsure about the usage it is safer to use the traditional English spelling. Some American words are also commonly used.

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## Exploring New Words, Jargon and Slang

Language changes all the time and new words and phrases are constantly being added, and words adapted and changed. Yesterday's jargon and slang may well become acceptable and no longer recognised as colloquial.

### COINING NEW WORDS

Words are introduced into the language from many different sources. People and places often give their names to nouns and, with the advent of new technology, many new words have been coined.

#### **Naming by a person**

Many words in the English language are derived from people's names. These are known as **eponyms**. Individuals frequently gave their names to items of clothing with which they were associated. Some food and drink also bears people's names. Other names have also passed into our language.

#### *Examples*

**Bramley:** a cooking apple first grown by Matthew Bramley in the mid-nineteenth century.

**Benedictine:** a liqueur first made by Benedictine monks in the sixteenth century.

**Bloomers:** the ancestor of women's pants named after American feminist Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818–1894).

**Boycott:** to ostracise a person or organisation: Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott was ostracised when he refused to reduce his tenants' rents.

**Cardigan:** knitted, buttoned jacket named after the seventh Earl of Cardigan, a British Cavalry officer (1797–1868): his men wore the garment in the Crimean War.

- Garibaldi: a biscuit with currants named after Italian soldier, Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882).
- Leotard: tight, one-piece garment worn by acrobats and dancers: named after the French acrobat, Jules Leotard (1842–1870).
- Levis: trademark for a type of jeans named after Levi Strauss, an American immigrant from Bavaria (1830–1902).
- Mackintosh: a raincoat named after Scottish chemist, Charles Macintosh (1793–1843) (he did *not* spell his name with a ‘k’!).
- Pavlova: meringue dessert with cream and fruit named after the Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova: it was a delicacy created to be served during her ballet tours.
- Plimsoll: rubber-soled canvas shoe named after Samuel Plimsoll (1824–98).
- Quisling: a traitor who collaborates with the enemy: the Norwegian Vidkun Abraham Quisling (1887–1945) collaborated with the Germans in the Second World War.
- Sandwich: two slices of bread separated by a filling: named after the fourth Earl of Sandwich (1718–1792): because he hated to leave the gambling table to eat, his valet brought him beef between two slices of bread.
- Saxophone: brass musical instrument named after its Belgian inventor, Adolphe Sax (1814–1894).
- Stetson: wide-brimmed felt hat named after the designer, John Batterson Stetson (1830–1906).
- Teddy bear: a soft stuffed toy bear named after American President, Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt (1858–1919): he once saved the life of a bear cub.
- Watt: unit of power named after Scottish engineer and inventor, James Watt (1736–1819).
- Wellington: waterproof rubber knee boot named after the first Duke of Wellington (1769–1852).

### Naming from a place

Some words take their names from places. This is particularly true of words identifying food and drink. These are called **toponyms** and some examples follow.

#### *Examples of drink*

- Amontillado: a dry sherry originating from the Spanish town of Montilla.
- Beaujolais: a red wine produced in the Beaujolais district of France.

Bordeaux: wine from the Bordeaux region of France.

Burgundy: wine produced in the Burgundy region of France.

Champagne: sparkling white wine originally made in the Champagne province of France.

Manhattan: cocktail of whisky, vermouth and bitters originally concocted in Manhattan in the late nineteenth century.

Port: fortified red wine originally produced in the seventeenth century in Oporto in Portugal.

Sherry: fortified Spanish wine originally produced in Jerez in Spain: sherry is a corruption of Jerez.

### *Examples of fruit and vegetables*

The following obviously take their names from their place of origin:

Brazil nuts	Brussels sprouts	Seville oranges	swede
tangerine			

### *Examples of cattle*

Alderney	Friesian	Guernsey	Hereford
Jersey			

### *Examples of dogs*

Afghan	Alsatian	Labrador	Pekinese
Rottweiler			

## **ADDING TO THE LANGUAGE**

With the advent of new technology there have been many changes during the latter part of the twentieth century. As well as new words, some words have changed their meaning.

### **Examples of new words**

Ageism: n.	discrimination on account of age
Aromatherapy: n.	massage using oils
Bar code: n.	printed code on shop goods that can be scanned
Blitz: n.	devastating attack on something
Born-again: adj.	enthusiasm of a new convert – particularly to Christianity

Buyout: n.	a group of managers purchase a company
Camcorder: n.	portmanteau word created by the combination of camera and recorder: a portable video: camera combined with a sound recorder
Chocoholic: n.	someone who is addicted to chocolate
Contraflow: n.	two-way traffic on one carriageway of motorway
Credit card: n.	a card which allows customer to spread payments over a period of time
Debit card: n.	a card which enables money to be taken automatically from a customer's bank account
Designer: adj.	fashionable
Desktop publishing: n.	publishing straight from a computer and a laser printer
Dinky: n.	an acronym from 'double income, no kids'
E-mail: n.	electronic mail sent by computer through a telephone line
Ersatz: n.	an artificial substance replacing a natural one
Fax: n. v.	printed documents sent via the telephone
Flagship: n.	the most important building or item within a group
Flak: n.	anti-aircraft fire
Green: adj.	used of those who wish to conserve and improve the environment
Greenhouse effect: n.	the increase in the earth's temperature
Hands-on: adj.	involvement at a personal, practical level
Insider trading: n.	illegal buying and selling of shares by those who have inside information
Laptop: n.	small personal computer that can be used on the lap
Litterbug: n.	someone who is always dropping litter
Networking: v.	making business contacts during social engagements
New Age: n.	a modern philosophy that suggests the 'old age' has had its day: it combines ideas from various religions
Ozone-friendly: adj.	item that does not damage the ozone layer
Package-holiday: n.	everything for your holiday is included: travel, hotel, etc.
Racism: n.	discrimination on account of race

Roadhog: n.	someone who shows no consideration to other road users
Sexism: n.	discrimination on account of sex
Sound bite: n.	short extract from speech or broadcast
State-of-the-art: adj.	up-to-date achievement
Tapas: n.	Spanish hors d'oeuvres
Toy boy: n.	young male lover of an older woman
User-friendly: adj.	easy to understand
Workaholic: n.	someone who is addicted to work

## USING JARGON

The word **jargon** is derived from a Middle English word meaning 'meaningless chatter' or 'babble'. Today the English language would probably be poorer without it as many 'jargon' words and expressions have passed into common usage. The ending of '-ise' on to many words, for example, is obviously here to stay.

marginalise    nationalise    normalise    prioritise    privatise

The Americans have coined a delightful word: quietise – to make quiet.

Jargon expressions pass into the language and often become clichés while we forget their origins. Members of particular groups, professions and organisations have their own jargon but sometimes these are so vivid that they become generally used. Those who play games have their own jargon and so do people who work in the theatre. Members of professions create jargon which is often unintelligible to anyone outside the group.

Many expressions from sport are now in common usage. Look at the following examples.

## Finding sporting images

*From cricket*

- it's not cricket
- knocked for six
- play the game



*From boxing*

- hitting below the belt
- the gloves are off
- saved by the bell

*From football*

- kick into touch
- score an own goal
- move the goalposts.

**Noting jargon words**

It is difficult to distinguish between 'new' words and 'jargon' words. Some of the following could have been put in the previous section of 'new' words but the following list may be considered to be more recent words.

Down-market: adj.	descriptive of the poor and unsuccessful
Headhunter: n.	one who tries to persuade high-flyers to work for his client company
In-depth: adj.	detailed
Infrastructure: n.	the complete structure of an organisation or institution
Input: n.	contribution
Feed-back: n.	response to some undertaking or conference
Junk food: n.	food with little nutritional value
Minder: n.	bodyguard
Monetarism:	the philosophy of controlling money in a certain way
On going: adj.	continuing
Pilot project: n.	the first attempt at a project
Political correctness: n.	showing sensitivity to minority groups
Pressure group: n.	a group whose aim is to further its particular ideas
Quality time: n.	the time devoted by those with careers to their families
Real terms (in): n.	the absolute value of something as against the apparent value
Recycle: v.	to collect and re-use certain materials
Scenario: n.	the conditions in which something can happen
Sell-by-date: n.	the date by which a product must be sold

Shelf life: n.	the length of time an article stays on the shop shelf
Solvent-abuse: n.	glue sniffing
Spin doctor: n.	someone employed (by a politician, for example) to influence public opinion
Sub-text: n.	the hidden text that is read between the lines
Sweetener: n.	a polite word for a bribe
Top up: v.	to supply extra material
Tabloid: n.	easy to read small newspaper with many pictures
Take on board: v.	to take account of
Tactical voting: n.	voting against your own party to prevent another party winning
Terminal: adj.	fatal, final
Tax haven: n.	a place one can go to avoid paying income tax
Up-market: adj.	descriptive of those who are wealthy and successful
Zero tolerance: n.	refusing to let anyone get away with anything you consider wrong.

## EXPLORING SLANG

In one dictionary slang is described as 'colloquial language that rarely lasts long'. It has also been described as very informal language and language that originates from a particular group. Many words become popular for a short period and then disappear without trace; others are local and rarely travel beyond a particular area. However, some words are so evocative that they pass the test of time and sometimes pass into general usage.

There are a number of dictionaries of contemporary slang and, like all dictionaries, these have to be frequently up-dated. Some of them give fascinating insights into the origins of slang terms so if you have some free time you might find a browse through one an enlightening experience.

Following are some examples that are currently used. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between slang and jargon so some words could probably have fitted into the jargon section of this chapter.

**Examples of slang**

Ace: adj.	excellent
Dozy: adj.	slow witted
Auntie: n.	BBC
Aussie: n.	an Australian
Babe: n.	a sweetheart
Bag: n.	an unattractive woman
Ballistic: adj.	furiously, uncontrolled
Bananas: adj.	crazy
Banged-up: adj.	imprisoned
Baron: n.	a prisoner who exercises power over other inmates
Beak: n.	the nose; a person in authority
Beatnik: n.	someone following a 'beat' form of dress
Beeb: n.	BBC
Beef: n./v.	a complaint/to complain
Beetle: v.	to hurry
Bell: n./v.	a phone call/to telephone
Bender: n.	a bout of heavy drinking
Biddy: n.	an old woman
The Bill: n.	the police
Bimbo: n.	an empty-headed woman
Bin: v.	to throw away
Black Maria: n.	a prison van
Blighty: n.	Britain
Bloke: n.	a man
Blotto: adj.	drunk
The blower: n.	the telephone
Blown away: v.	killed
Blow-out: n.	over-indulgence when eating
Cack-handed: adj.	clumsy
Chicken: n./adj.	a coward/cowardly
Clever-clogs: n.	a know-all
Clippie: n.	a bus conductress
Cock-up: n.	mistake
Dishy: adj.	very attractive
Dosh: n.	money
Doss: n.	a place to sleep
Drop-out: v.	to opt out from normal society
n.	someone who opts out
Eyeball: v.	to stare

Fab: adj.	wonderful
Feisty: adj.	spirited, tough
Flash: adj.	ostentatious
Flip: v.	to lose control
Freebie: n.	a free newspaper or a free item given for promotion purposes
Gig: n.	a musical entertainment
Glitzy: adj.	glamorous
Gob: n.	mouth
Gunge: n.	mucky substance
Hack: n.	a journalist
Hooray Henry: n.	a loud, empty-headed, upper class man
Hooter: n.	the nose
Hot: adj.	stolen
Howler: n.	a bad mistake
Iffy: adj.	questionable
Keen: adj.	excellent
Kip: n.	a short sleep
Knees-up: n.	a lively party
Kosher: adj.	correct, acceptable
Laid back: adj.	very relaxed
Leg it: v.	to run away
Legless: adj.	drunk
Loaded: adj.	very wealthy
Lolly: n.	money
Loo: n.	the lavatory
Loopy: adj.	eccentric
Macho: adj.	aggressively masculine
Magic: adj.	superlative
Mega: adj.	huge, wonderful
Monkey suit: n.	a uniform
Mug: n.	the face
Naff: adj.	shoddy, tasteless
Neck: v.	to embrace
Oddball: n.	an eccentric person
Pad: n.	one's home
Park: adj.	cold
Quack: n.	a doctor
Recce: n.	a preliminary reconnoitre
Rip off: v.	to cheat
Sack: n.	a bed
Scam: n.	a fraud

Scarper: v.	to run away
To shop: v.	to betray someone
Shrink: n.	psychiatrist
Sleaze: n.	immorality or sordid behaviour
Sound: adj.	excellent
Spare: adj.	very angry
Sprog: n.	a child
Spud: n.	a potato
Spud-bashing: n.	the peeling of potatoes
Stiff: n.	a corpse
Swot: n.	a student who works hard
Tacky: adj.	shabby
Tad: n. adj. adv.	a little, very slightly
Tearaway: n.	a reckless young person
Tight: adj.	mean with money, miserly
Towrag: n.	a person who is regarded with contempt
Toff: n.	a socially superior person
Togs: n.	clothes
Tranny: n.	transistor radio
Trick cyclist: n.	psychiatrist
Uptight: adj.	tense, stressed
Way-out: adj.	extreme, eccentric
Wimp: n.	a derogatory term for a timid person
Wind-up: n./v.	provocation/to provoke
Wrinkly: n.	an old person
Zap: v.	to destroy
Zilch: n.	nothing
Zit: n.	a spot on the skin

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# Suggested Answers

## CHAPTER 1

1. Adding 'ei' or 'ie'  
Believe, brief, ceiling, chief, deceive, eight, freight, grieve, niece, neighbour, priest, protein, receive, rein, seize, sheikh, shield, veil, vein, yield.
2. Correcting the spelling
  - a. He opened the biscuit tin but the biscuits were stale.
  - b. Neither Jane nor her brother was allowed to go to the match.
  - c. She became hysterical when her handbag was stolen.
  - d. The doctor was called when the child became ill.
  - e. The heir to the throne visited the docks and watched the freight being weighed.
  - f. He found the comprehension in his examination paper easy but the translation was more difficult.
  - g. The opening of the new station was an impressive occasion.
  - h. The group was quiet as the ice slid down the glacier.
  - i. There was a spontaneous burst of applause as the winner crossed the finishing line.
  - j. The match was abandoned as the pitch was waterlogged.

## CHAPTER 2

### Correcting the sentences

1. It was very cold. The crowds were hurrying home.
2. 'How are you?' she asked. 'I haven't seen you for ages.'
3. The roar of the planes grew louder; the boys covered their ears.
4. The English team lost the match.
5. Jobs in the North East are scarce.
6. She only used Persil Automatic in her washing machine.
7. The British Museum was closed for renovation.
8. The group went on a trip on the River Thames.

9. She sent a number of articles to *Woman's Own* but they were returned by the editor, Ms Jenny Ashton.
10. The film *Shakespeare in Love* won seven Oscars.

## CHAPTER 3

### 1. Plurals

alley	alleys	ally	allies
baby	babies	chimney	chimneys
company	companies	doctor	doctors
donkey	donkeys	enemy	enemies
enquiry	enquiries	file	files
journey	journeys	key	keys
lackey	lackeys	niece	nieces
nurse	nurses	pencil	pencils
pony	ponies	ruby	rubies
scene	scenes	sky	skies
spray	sprays	storey	storeys
story	stories	ticket	tickets
tragedy	tragedies	tray	trays
trolley	trolleys	victim	victims
whale	whales	wheel	wheels
whisk	whisks		

### 2. Correcting the sentences

- a. The soldiers were told their courts-martial were to be held the following day.
- b. Comedians often make jokes about their mothers-in-law.
- c. The passers-by ignored the speaker on his soap-box.
- d. All the farmers' wives cut off the mice's tails.
- e. The thieves took the knives from the waiting-rooms.
- f. The leaves turn brown in the autumn and the sheaves of wheat are harvested.
- g. The wolves chased the children who were in fear of their lives.
- h. The sopranos and the contraltos were late for the concert because they couldn't find their librettos.
- i. There were two tornadoes in quick succession.

### 3. The past tense

- a. She gloried in her misdemeanours.
- b. The examiner remedied the mistake.
- c. The mother worried because her daughter was late home.

- d. The victims of the plague were buried in a mass grave.
- e. Her brother accompanied her to the audition.
- f. They were married last year.

## CHAPTER 4

### 1. Prefixes

ante	before
anti	against
extra	something outside the 'root' word
far	distance of space or time
neo	new

### 2. Which words need hyphens?

- a. The sub-editor reappeared waving the manuscript which was dotted with semicolons.
- b. When she re-entered, she was accompanied by the vice-chairman.
- c. The vice-admiral criticised the under-secretary for his underhand behaviour.
- d. She could not reach the check-out because of the black-out.
- e. The accident produced a knock-on effect and Jane's car was a write-off.

### 3. Adding prefixes

abridged	unabridged	underact	overact
adorned	unadorned	appear	disappear
appoint	disappoint	disarm	underarm
attached	unattached	broken	unbroken
clean	unclean	colon	semicolon
conscious	unconscious	create	recreate
crowned	uncrowned	final	semifinal
hooked	unhooked	laced	unlaced
marine	submarine	please	displease
title	subtitle	way	subway

### 4. Suffixes

adorn	adornment	attach	attachment
beauty	beautiful	doubt	doubtless (ful)
happy	happiness	hate	hateful
pain	painful (less)	pity	pitiless (ful)
power	powerless (ful)	rest	restful (less)



## CHAPTER 5

Correct the spellings

She was so *beautiful* that he was *almost* in love with her. He knew she was a *dutiful* daughter but he was *hopeful* that she would *finally* agree to go out with him. He knew she *usually* walked in the park in the morning. When she appeared, he *immediately* went towards her and asked if he could join her. She shook her head *gently* and went on her way. He was *terribly* hurt but realised that she would not *automatically* become his friend. His brain was racing *frantically* as he *planned* his next move and *hoped* she would speak to him.

## CHAPTER 6

Correct the passage

Dick was not *allowed* to go to the *sea*. He wanted to *see* it but he had been *caught* being *rough* with a playmate. He was *bored*. He tried to *write* his *diary* but he was *lonely*. He wanted to *write* a *story* but there was a flash of *lightning* and he had left his *stationery* inside.

The sky was no longer *blue* so he *immediately* ran into the school. He knew the principal would be angry with him. In his class room sat Jacques, the *foreigner*. He was doing some *gram-mar* exercises but he found *writing sentences* difficult.

*Miserably* Dick sat down. He was not *surprised* that Jacques *misspelled* so many words. He pulled on his *woollen* mitts because his hands were cold.

## CHAPTER 7

Correcting the sentences

1. The child's ball was thrown into the neighbour's (neighbours') garden.
2. The duchess's memoirs were published last year.
3. I always buy my paper at the newsagent's.
4. Her month's annual leave was cancelled.
5. The children's outing was a great success.
6. James' (s) parents were furious.

7. The ladies' fashion department was closed.
8. Don't forget your umbrella for goodness' sake.
9. We should have ('ve) won the match.
10. The cat always licks its fur when it comes in.
11. Hers was the victory.
12. You might have ('ve) told me you were going to London.
13. The child wouldn't eat her lunch.
14. Dr Jones went to South St to visit Reverend Cauldwell at St Cuthbert's Church.

## CHAPTER 8

Correcting the passage:

Sarah dressed carefully. She knew she looked glamorous. It was a beautiful day when she caught the train to London. She opened her handbag although its clasp was broken. She should've had it mended but she hadn't had time. Inside she found a leaflet about the school's exhibition. She was disappointed she would miss it. There was a separate sheet containing the children's comments. It was quite humorous because the grammar was so bad and there was a lot of misspelling.

The train was beginning to slow down. She hoped Dr Jones, who was at the top of his profession, would see her immediately she arrived. Taking out her diary, she checked the time of her appointment which she had entered as soon as she had received the letter.

She knew she was early. When she appeared at the door, the secretary asked if she preferred tea or coffee and then left Sarah to read a book of poems which had no rhyme or regular rhythm. She put it down and stared at the decorative ceiling pursuing her own thoughts.

## CHAPTER 9

### 1. Looking up words

circus:

noun, from Latin.

1. Arena where exhibitions take place.
2. Travelling show of performing animals, clowns etc.

dunce:	noun, from John Duns Scotus whose followers in the fourteenth century were ridiculed as enemies of learning.
entrepreneur:	noun, from French. Person in effective control of a business.
envelope:	noun, from French. A cover for a letter.
fossil:	noun/adjective, from Latin. remains of plant or animal dug up centuries later.
nucleus:	noun, from Latin. Central part of something round which others are collected.
relaxation:	noun, from Latin. Recreation or cessation from work.
scribble:	verb, from Latin. To write hurriedly and carelessly. noun. Careless handwriting.
shock:	noun, from French. Sudden physical or mental disturbance. verb. To affect suddenly with a strong emotion.
silicon:	noun, from Latin. Non-metallic element.

## 2. Abbreviations

n. noun	adj. adjective	adv. adverb
v.i. verb intransitive	v.t. verb transitive	

## CHAPTER 10

### 1. Synonyms

It was a *sunny* day so the Browns decided to go for a *pleasant* picnic. It was *delightful* by the sea and they had brought some *mouth-watering* food. In the evening they decided to go to a *luxurious* restaurant and have a *delicious* meal. They arrived home late after a *lovely* day.

### 2. Synonyms

book:	manual	scroll	tome	tract	volume
end:	cease	complete	conclude	finish	terminate
freedom:	emancipation		independence		liberty
gloomy:	depressing		dark	dim	overcast
	shadowy				
house:	abode	dwelling	mansion	residence	
	villa	cottage			

laugh:	chortle	chuckle	giggle	snigger	
path:	avenue	byway	road	route	street
play:	caper	gambol	frolic	revel	romp
ship:	boat	liner	vessel	yacht	

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## Glossary

**Abstract noun.** The name of an emotion, state or quality.

**Acronym.** Word formed from the initial letters of other words.

**Adjective.** A word that describes a noun.

**Adverb.** A word that modifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

**Cliché.** An overused phrase.

**Compound word.** A word containing more than one syllable.

**Digraph.** Two letters – vowels or consonants – which together produce a single sound.

**Consonants.** All the letters that aren't vowels.

**Diphthong.** Two vowels which together produce a single sound.

**Direct speech.** The actual words spoken by someone.

**Eponyms.** Words derived from someone's name.

**Figurative.** Something that is not literally true.

**Homophones.** Words that are pronounced the same but spelt differently.

**Hyphen.** A small dash placed between two words to link them.

**Jargon.** Language used by a particular class or profession.

**Malapropism.** A word that sounds similar but has a different meaning.

**Metaphor.** Implied comparison.

**Noun.** The name of a thing or person.

**Participle.** Part of a verb that can sometimes be used as an adjective but cannot stand alone.

**Past participle.** The part of the verb that can be used with the auxiliary verb 'to have'.

**Personification.** Giving human characteristics to something inanimate.

**Prefix.** Letters placed before the root word to modify its meaning.

**Present participle.** The part of the verb that ends in 'ing'.

**Pronoun.** A word that takes the place of a noun.

**Root word.** The main stem of a word to which can be added other letters.

**Simile.** Comparison using 'like' or 'as'.

**Slang.** Very informal language.

**Spell check.** A program on the computer which highlights incorrect spelling.

**Suffix.** Letters added to the root word to modify its meaning.

**Syllable.** The smallest unit of a word containing at least one vowel.

**Synonym.** A word that is similar in meaning to another word.

**Tautology.** The same thing repeated in different ways.

**Tense.** The verb showing past, present or future.

**Toponyms.** Words derived from a place name.

**Verb.** A 'doing' or 'being' word.

**Vowel.** The vowels are a, e, i, o, u.

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## Further Reading

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