

Pronunciation

American English

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

Use of the Hyphen

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

Symbols

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

Abbreviations

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

Words that are Forms of Main Words

A form of a main word that is a different part of speech may come at the end of the entry for that word. If the related word is pronounced by saying the main word and adding an ending (see list on page A43), no separate pronunciation is given. If the addition of the ending causes a change in the pronunciation of the main word, the pronunciation for the related word is given. For example:

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

Stress

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

The sign /' / is put before the syllable with the most force. We say it has *main stress*: **person** /'pɜːsn/, **percent** /'pɜːsent/. Some words also have a stress on another syllable that is less strong than the main stress. We call this *secondary stress*, and the sign / ɪ / is placed before such a syllable: **personality** /,pɜːsə'neɪləti/, **personify** /'pɜːsənə'faɪ/. Secondary stress is not usually shown in the second syllable of a two-syllable word, unless it is necessary to show that the second syllable must not be shortened, as in **starlit** /'stɑːlɪt/ compared to **starlet** /'stɑːrlɪt/.

Unstressed Vowels

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

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

Compound Words with a Space or Hyphen

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

Stress Shift

Some words may have a shift in stress. The secondary stress becomes the main stress when the word comes before a noun. The mark / ɹ / shows this. For example: **artificial** /,ɑːtɪ'fɪʃəl /, **artificial intelligence** /,ɑːtɪ'fɪʃəl ɪn'telɪdʒəns/.

Syllabic Consonants

The sounds /n/ and /l/ can be syllabic. That is, they can themselves form a syllable, especially when they are at the end of a word (and follow particular consonants, especially /t/ and /d/). For example, in **sudden** /'sʌdn/ the /n/ is syllabic; there is no vowel between the /d/ and the /n/, so no vowel is shown. In the middle of a word, a hyphen or stress mark after /n/ or /l/ shows that it is syllabic: **botanist** /'bɒt'nɪst/ and **catalog** /'kætɪ,ɹg/ are three-syllable words.

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

Short Forms Used in the Dictionary

Parts of Speech

Some parts of speech have short forms:

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

Other Short Forms

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

Grammar Patterns

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

Grammar Codes Used in the Dictionary

Nouns – to learn more about the grammar of nouns, see the LEARNER'S HANDBOOK on pages A46–A47.

[C]

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

[U]

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

[C,U]

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

[singular]

a SINGULAR noun, such as **outcome**. Singular nouns can be used with *a*, *an*, or *the*, or without any determiner. They have no plural form, and they are used with a singular verb:
No one knew what the outcome of the discussion was.

We never dreamed there would be such a good outcome.

[plural]

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

[C usually singular]

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

[C usually plural]

a noun such as **resource** that is countable, and is usually used in the plural:
The country is rich in natural resources.

[singular, U]

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

Verbs – to learn more about the grammar of verbs, see the LEARNER'S HANDBOOK on page A48.

[I]

an INTRANSITIVE verb, such as **exist**. Intransitive verbs are not followed by objects:
Only five railroads from the old network still exist.

[T]

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

[I,T]

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

[linking verb]

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

Adjectives

[only before noun]

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

[not before noun]

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

Labels Used in the Dictionary

approving and disapproving

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

formal

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

humorous

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

informal

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

literary

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

nonstandard

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

offensive

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

old-fashioned

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

slang

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

spoken

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

taboo

Taboo words and phrases are extremely rude, offensive to everyone, and should be avoided.

technical

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

trademark

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

written

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

Subject Labels

BIOLOGY the study of all living things

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

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

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

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

HISTORY significant events and institutions from the past

IT computers, data storage and processing, and communications

LAW institutions and principles relating to the legal system

MATH arithmetic, algebra, and geometry

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

POLITICS political institutions and activity

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

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

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LONGMAN

Dictionary of American English



Key to the Dictionary

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

Definitions explain the meaning of the word in clear simple language, using the 2000-word Longman Defining Vocabulary whenever possible.

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

The most common words in spoken and written English are shown in red letters. This shows you which are the most important words to know.

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

Useful natural examples show how you can use the word.

Thesaurus boxes explain the differences between words with similar meanings, or between words related to a particular topic.

Synonyms (=words with the same meaning), antonyms (=words with the opposite meaning), and related words are shown after the definition.

Pronunciation is shown using the International Phonetic Alphabet

Usage notes help you avoid making common errors.

Dots show how words are divided into syllables.

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

back-ward¹ /'bækwəd/ *also* **backwards**
adv. **1** in the direction that is behind you (**ANT** **for-ward**): *She took a step backwards.* **2** toward the beginning or the past: *Can you say the alphabet backwards?*

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

bac-te-ri-um /bæk'tɪəriəm/ *n.* (plural **bacteria** /-riə/) [C usually plural] **BIOLOGY** a very small living thing consisting of a single cell. Some bacteria cause disease, but others are important in many natural processes. The plural form, "bacteria," is much more common than the singular form. [ORIGIN: 1800—1900 Modern Latin, Greek *bakterion* "stick, rod;" because of their shape]

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

THESAURUS

awful – very bad or unpleasant: *The weather was awful.*

terrible – extremely bad: *The hotel food was terrible.*

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

appalling/horrific (formal) – very bad and very shocking: *She suffered appalling injuries.* | *a horrific plane crash*

lousy (informal) – very bad in quality: *a lousy movie*

horrendous (formal) – very bad and very frightening or shocking: *a horrendous crash*

atrocious (formal) – extremely bad and often very severe: *Her driving is atrocious.* | *atrocious weather conditions*

abysmal (formal) – very bad, used especially to describe the standard of something: *The quality of care at the hospital was abysmal.* → **GOOD**¹, **HORRIBLE**

2 of a low quality or standard (**ANT** **good**): *That was the worst pizza I ever ate.* | *Brian is really bad at sports.* **3** morally wrong or evil (**ANT** **good**): *He plays one of the bad guys in the movie.*

bad-ly /'bædli/ *adv.* (comparative **worse**, superlative **worst**) **1** in a way that is not good (**ANT** **well**): *a badly written book* | *She did badly on the exam.* ▶ Don't say "I sing very bad." Say "I sing very badly." **2** to a great or serious degree: *The refugees badly need food and clean water.* | *Our house was badly damaged during the storm.*

baf-fle /'bæfəl/ *v.* [T] if something baffles you, you cannot understand it: *Scientists were baffled by the results.* —**baffling** *adj.* —**baffled** *adj.*

THESAURUS

confused, bewildered, puzzled → **CONFUSED**

ba·nal /bəˈnæl, bəˈnəl, ˈbeɪnəl/ *adj.* ordinary and not interesting → BORING: *a banal love song* [ORIGIN: 1800–1900 French, Old French *ban* “military service that everyone must do, something common”] — **banality** /bəˈnæləʒi/ *n.* [C,U]

References to related words, pictures, and Thesaurus Boxes are shown after an arrow.

beat /bit/ *v.* (past tense **beat**, past participle **beaten** /ˈbiːtən/)

Information about irregular forms of verbs, nouns, and adjectives is shown at the beginning of the entry.

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

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

THESAURUS

defeat – to win a victory over someone: *I don't think anybody will be able to defeat Kennedy in a Senate election.*

trounce – to defeat someone completely: *The Bears trounced Nebraska 44–10.*

lobber/cream (informal) – to defeat someone easily: *We got creamed in the finals.*

vanquish (formal) – to defeat someone or something completely: *The allies vanquished the enemy.*

overcome – to fight and win against someone or something: *Union troops finally overcame rebel forces in the south.*

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

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

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

3 HIT STH [I,T] to hit against the surface of something continuously, or to make something do this: *waves beating on/against the shore*

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

SPOKEN PHRASES

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

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

9 (it) beats me used in order to say that you do not understand or know something: *"Where's Myrna?" "Beats me."*

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

10 beat it! an impolite way to tell someone to leave at once

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

beat down *phr. v.*

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

beat sb ↔ **out** *phr. v.* (informal) to defeat someone in a competition: *Lange beat out Foster for the award.*

The Ac label shows that a word is in the Academic Wordlist. These are important words which students need to understand, and be able to use in academic assignments.

ben·e·fi·cial /ˌbenəˈfiʃjəl/ **[Ac]** *adj.* good or useful: *The agreement will be beneficial to both groups.* | *Garlic has a beneficial effect in reducing harmful cholesterol.* [ORIGIN: 1400–1500 Latin *beneficium* “kindness, favor,” from *bene* “well” + *facere* “to do”]

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

blonde /ˈblɒnd/ *adj.* **1** blonde hair is pale or yellow **2** someone who is blonde has pale or yellow hair

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

Preface

The 4th edition of the **Longman Dictionary of American English** has been researched and revised to meet the real needs of learners of English. The up-dated text now includes thousands of words for **content areas** such as Science, Economics and Social Science, as well as **Word Origins** and updated **thesaurus boxes** that give extra help with vocabulary acquisition.

Real Language

All Longman dictionaries are based on the authentic language data in the **Longman Corpus Network**. This unique computerized language database now contains over 400 million words from all types of written texts, and from real conversations recorded across the US.

The Corpus tells us how frequently words and phrases are used, so there is no guesswork in deciding which ones students need to know most. The Corpus also shows which grammar patterns are the most important to illustrate, which important new words and idioms people use every day, and which words are frequently used together (*collocations*). We take our example sentences from the Corpus, and this makes the language come alive as never before.

Real Clarity

The definitions in Longman dictionaries are written using only the 2,000 most common English words – the **Longman American Defining Vocabulary**. Longman pioneered the use of a limited vocabulary as the best way to guarantee that definitions are clear and easy to understand. The meaning you want is easy to find. Words that have a large number of meanings have short, clear **signposts** to guide you to the right meaning quickly.

The comprehensive grammatical information is easy to understand and use. Important patterns are highlighted in the example sentences, so that you can see at a glance how to use a word in a sentence.

Real Help

The 4th edition of the **Longman Dictionary of American English** is the result of extensive research into learners needs and abilities. Thesaurus boxes explain thousands of synonyms and antonyms to help users expand their vocabulary, so that instead of using the same words all the time, such as the word *angry*, for example, they learn how to use related words such as *annoyed*, *irritated*, *furious*, etc. Additional Thesaurus boxes now also help learners expand their **academic** and **content vocabulary**.

The writers have also used their knowledge from years of teaching to analyze the **Longman Learner's Corpus**, which is a computerized collection of over 8 million words of writing in English by learners. By studying the errors students make in essays and exams, the writers were able to give clear, helpful usage information throughout the dictionary – in the definitions, example sentences, and usage notes – to help students avoid common errors.

The grammar codes and labels are inside the front cover, and the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) pronunciation charts are inside the back cover, so they are always easy to find and use.

Whether you are writing an essay, sending an e-mail, or talking with friends, the **Longman Dictionary of American English** will help you choose the right words, understand them clearly, and use them correctly.