THIS PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE CONTAINS SAMPLE PAGES FROM THE SECOND EDITION OF THE MACMILLAN ENGLISH DICTIONARY:

- a full contents list
- pages from the letter E
- full pages of colour illustrations
- pages from the Improve your Writing Skills section
- pages from the Expand your Vocabulary section
- a Language Awareness article

with additional pages on the features of the dictionary.
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ardor /ˈɑrdər/ (noun) | the American spelling of ardour

ardour /ˈɑrdər/ (noun) | 1 very strong feelings of admiration or determination = love. He carried out the task with ardour. 2 theory very strong feelings of love.

arduous /ˈɑrdʒjʊəs/ adj extremely difficult and involving a lot of effort: an arduous task • The journey was long and arduous. —arduously adv.

are [weak ar], strong a[r] | be

area [noun] | a unit for measuring area in the same: square. 1. The area is equal to 100 square metres.

area [noun] | 1 a part of a city, town, country etc noun. We used to argue over a reason or set of reasons that you use for. 2 [adv] There are powerful arguments against. 3 The surface area of the screen should be very strong feelings of love. 4 part of town/building to discuss something with. “A;(r)gju@b(@)l noun They an improvement in prison. • for/against: The Court of Appeal rejected her arguments.

argue [verb] | 1 if people argue, they speak to each other in an argument +for/against: She tried to defend herself against his attacks on her ideas. • She shut down his argument. 2 That is an indefensible point of view. • I decided to pursue another line of attack. • We had a big fight last night, and I went home early. • There was a lot of conflict over what to do next. • They clashed over who to appoint. • It was a real battle of wits. • We did battle with the council about the plans. • I've crossed swords with them before. • Tom is always the first to leap to her defence. • amphibious, aquatic, marine • arguable [noun] | an argument that is arguable, there is evidence that it is true or that people agree with it. • The judge held that there was an arguable case • argously /ˈɑrgəsli/ adv used for stating your opinion or belief, especially when you think other people may disagree: This is arguably the best club in town.

argyle /ˈɑrgjəl/ (noun) | a pattern on clothing such as socks or sweaters, consisting of different coloured diamond shapes

argument [noun] | 1 [c] an angry disagreement between people. • make your argument: a heated argument (extremely angry disagreement) • without an argument. They won't accept higher prices without a long discussion. 2 • push someone to do something: This is not often used in formal writing. 3 • get into an argument with sb: Every time we visit my family, he gets into an argument with my sister. 4 • win/lose an argument We can win this argument if we • have an argument with sb • push someone to do something: I've managed to argue him out of going to the match.

argue [verb] | consistently, convincingly, passionately, strongly with argue 2 • with sb about/over sth: The party is involved in an argument over economic policy. 1 • in: • for/against: • There are powerful arguments against releasing them from prison. • You could make an argument for working shorter hours.

argot /ˈɑrgət/ (noun) | the usual way of saying or writing 'are not'. This is not often used in formal writing. • We were going to Spain this year. 2 the usual way of saying or writing 'am not' in questions: I'm looking thinner, aren't I?

Argentine /ərˈdʒiənən/ adj. see Nationalities table

Argentina /ərˈdʒiəniən/ noun [c] see Nationalities table

argon /ˈɑrɡən/ noun [c] CHEMISTRY a gas that is in the air and that does not produce a chemical reaction when mixed with other substances. It is sometimes used in electric lights.

arguable /ərˈɡjuːəbl/ adj. 1 if something is arguable, you are not completely certain whether it is true or not. • Whether good students make good teachers is arguable. 2 formal if a fact or statement is arguable, there is evidence that it is true or that people agree with it. • The judge held that there was an arguable case • arguably /ərˈɡjuːəbli/ adv. used for stating your opinion or belief, especially when you think other people may disagree: This is arguably the best club in town.

arid /ˈɛriːd/ adj. not having or containing much water: the desert is arid. • The country has an arid climate. 2 • arid adjective: an arid climate • aridity /ˈɛriːdiəti/ noun the condition of being arid: • the country has an arid climate such as the desert.
### Reasonable

- **Reasonable** (adj) 1236
  - *adj*;
  - *adv*;
  - *n*
  - *adv*
  - *n*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being reasonable is when you try to be fair and not too strict.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It's important to be reasonable when making decisions.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Reasonable* is often used in a formal or polite way to describe someone's behavior or ideas. It suggests that the person is not unreasonable or unreasonable, and is likely to be agreeable or acceptable to others.

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### Reason

- **Reason** (nouns) 1
  - *noun*;
  - *noun*;
  - *noun*;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The reason someone did something is the reason why they did it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The reason we need to act now is because of the crisis.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There are many different reasons for doing something, each one providing a different perspective. Understanding the reasons behind actions or decisions can help clarify the motivations and goals behind them.

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### Rearrange

- **Rearrange** (verbs) 1
  - *verb*;
  - *verb*;
  - *verb*;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rearrange your room when you want to create a more organized space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rearrange your schedule to fit in more activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rearranging can be useful for organizing your time or space more efficiently, helping you to manage your day or environment better.
I'm easy spoken used for saying that you will accept any choice or decision that someone else makes: 'Shall we eat at home or go out?' 'Whatever you like. I'm easy.'

**easy** / 'izI/ adv ★★★

**PHRASES**

breathe/rest easy to relax and stop feeling worried: Just three more questions and then you can breathe easy. • I won't rest easy until I get my passport back.

easy sth comes easy (to sb) used for saying that it is not hard for someone to do something
easier said than done informal used for saying that something is a good idea but will be difficult to achieve: Some people want the UN to withdraw, but that's easier said than done.
easy come, easy go spoken used for saying that someone has spent money quickly, after getting it easily, and that they should not worry because they have spent it
easy does it spoken used for telling someone to do something carefully or gently, especially when they are moving something large
go easy on sb mainly spoken to not be very angry or severe when you are dealing with someone: Go easy on her: she's only a kid.
go easy on/with sth mainly spoken used for telling someone not to use, eat, or drink too much of something: Didn't the doctor tell you to go easy on the salt?
take it easy informal to rest and not do things that will make you tired: Take it easy and don't tire yourself out.

**easy-care adj**

easy-care clothes do not need to be ironed after they are washed
easy chair noun [C] a large comfortable chair
easygoing / 'izI 'goIn/ adj relaxed, calm, and not getting easily upset about things
easy listening / 'izI 'lisInIn/ noun [U] music relaxing music without complicated tunes or a strong beat

easy-peasy / 'izI 'piizI/ adj British informal extremely easy. This word is used mainly by children or when speaking to children = SIMPLE

easy terms noun [plural] BUSINESS British a way of paying for something that involves making several payments over a period of time

eat /it/ (past tense ate /it/, past participle eaten /'ItIn/) verb ★★ to put food into your mouth and swallow it: We sat on the grass and ate our sandwiches.

Don't talk while you're eating. • I've eaten too much. • Finish your lunch – you're hardly eating anything. a. to eat a particular type or amount of food: Do you eat meat/fish/fruit? • I find it difficult to persuade my family to eat more vegetables. b. to eat in a healthy way: a healthy diet. • eat properly/healthily/sensibly (=eat food that is good for you) Many people who live alone don't eat properly. • eating habits/patterns (=what someone eats, and when they eat) It will take time to change your children's eating habits. • eat well (=have a lot of food) We always ate well at Aunt Milly's. b. to have a meal: We don't eat breakfast together, except at the weekends. • Beth ate her evening meal in the hotel.

What time shall we eat? • at We ate at a small Chinese restaurant several streets away. • sth to eat (=food) Where can we get something to eat? • a bite to eat (=a quick meal) Do you want to grab a bite to eat before we go?

eating sb alive 1 eat sb alive/or/for breakfast/lunch to defeat or deal with someone easily 2 eat sb out of house and home humorous to eat too much of someone's food when you are a guest in their house
eat your heart out humorous used for saying that you are doing something much better than a famous person does it
eat your words informal to admit that you were wrong about something
have sb eating out of your hand to make someone like or admire you so much that they agree with everything that you say
what's eating sb? spoken used for asking why someone is annoyed or unhappy

**PHRASAL VERBS**

eat a way [T] eat away or eat into to gradually destroy something = ERODE: Within a few years inflation had eaten away all the economic gains.
eat a way at [T] to make someone feel more and more unhappy or worried: You could see that jealousy was eating away at her.

eat in [i] to have a meal at home instead of in a restaurant ≠ EAT OUT
eat into [T] 1 [eat into sth] if an activity or cost eats into your time or money, it uses more of it than you intended = use up 2 [eat into sth] same as eat away: The river had eaten into the bank, and part of it had collapsed.
eat out [i] to have a meal in a restaurant instead of at home: People are spending more on eating out ≠ EAT IN

eat up 1 [I\[T\]] mainly spoken to eat all of something: Come on, eat up your broccoli. • Eat up, and we'll go for a walk. 2 [I\[T\]] to use large amounts of your available time or money = CONSUME: Having children eats up a lot of a family's income.

eat up sth to travel a particular distance easily and steadily: They drove on, eating up the distance between themselves and home. 4 be eaten up by/with sth to feel a negative emotion so strongly that it is difficult to think about anything else: Paula was eaten up by guilt for days. 5 eat it up informal to like something so much that you want to hear or see more: The press argued over the book, and the public was eating it up.

**Other ways of saying eat**

have breakfast/lunch/dinner to eat a particular meal: Have you had breakfast yet? • He phoned while we were having lunch.

have something to eat to eat something or to have a meal: We'll stop and have something to eat when we get to Newcastle.

snack/have a snack to eat something small between your main meals: We usually have a drink and a snack around 11. • No snacking, now!

grab a bite (to eat) (informal) to eat a snack or small meal when you do not have much time: Maybe we could grab a bite at Charlie's before the film.

eat up to finish all the food you have been given: Eat up! There's plenty more.

nibble (at) to take very small bites from your food: The nibbled at her sandwich politely, waiting for the others to arrive.

chew (on) to use your teeth to break food up slowly in your mouth: He was chewing on a piece of celery.

munch or munch at to eat something noisily and enthusiastically: The kids were munching chips in front of the TV.

stuff yourself (informal) to eat so much that you feel ill or uncomfortable: I'm not surprised you feel sick, the way you stuffed yourself last night.

eatable /'Itəbl/ adj good enough to eat, or safe to eat
eater /'Itər/ noun [C] 1 someone who eats in a particular way: a messy/noisy eater • a healthy/big/hearty eater (=someone who eats a lot) He's small, but he's a healthy eater. • a picky eater (=someone who does not
like many foods. They have a four-year-old child who is a very picky eater. 2 a person or animal that eats a particular type of food: a meat eater
eatery /ˈiːtəri/ noun [C] mainly American mainly journalism a restaurant
eating apple /ˈiːtɪŋ əˈplɔːr/ noun [C] an apple that you eat raw, not a cooking apple
eating disorder /ˈiːtɪŋ dɪˈsɔːdər/ noun [C] a medical condition such as anorexia or bulimia in which someone tries to control their weight in a way that makes them ill
eats /iːts/ noun [plural] informal food or meals, usually at a social event: It won't cost anything, except for booze and eats.
eau-de-cologne /ˈɔː doʊ kələn/ noun [C/U] a liquid with a pleasant smell that you put on your body. It does not smell as strong as perfume.
eaves /iːvz/ noun [plural] the bottom edge of a roof that continues out over the walls
eavesdrop /iːvzˈdrɒp/ verb [] to listen to other people's conversation without them knowing that you are listening

EBV /ˈiːv/; biːˈv/ noun [U] see Epstein-Barr virus

the EC /ˈiːsi/ noun European Community: the old name for the EU or European Union
e-cash noun [U] money that exists in electronic form and is used to pay for things over the Internet
eccentric2 /ˈiːkˈsentri/ adj someone who is eccentric often behaves in slightly strange or unusual ways: She's regarded as being rather eccentric. a eccentric, difficult genius a. used about actions, decisions, or things that people make that are strange or unusual: a rather eccentric decision by the referee. eccentricity noun [C/U] a characteristic of eccentric people

ecclesiastical /ˈiːklɛsiəstɪk/ or ecclesiastic /ˈiːklɛsiəstɪk/ adj relating to the Christian Church

ECG /ˈiːsi/; iːˈsiː/ noun [C] MEDICAL a machine used in hospitals for showing how well someone's heart is beating. The picture it shows or prints is also called an ECG.
echelon /ˈiːʃəlɒn/ noun [C] one of the levels of status or authority in an organization, or the people at that level: upper/lower echelons the upper echelons of power 2 an arrangement of soldiers, ships, or aircraft in which each one is slightly to the right or left of the one in front
echidna /ˈiːkɪdnə/ noun [C] a small Australian animal that eats ants and other insects
echinacea /ˈɛkʃiˈneɪsə/ noun [U] a plant used in alternative medicine to help your immune system fight illness

echo1 /ˈiːkəʊ/; ekəʊ/ verb ★★ 1 [I] if a noise echoes, it is repeated because the sound hits a surface and returns: 2 around/round/through Her question echoed around the room. 3 across The howl of a coyote echoed across the canyon. 4a. if a building, space, or room echoes, noises are repeated there because it is large and empty: She led him along deserted echoing corridors. 5b. if a place echoes with a particular sound, it is filled with that sound: with The theatre echoed with laughter.
2 [T] to express the ideas or feelings that someone else has expressed: Her feelings are echoed by other parents whose kids have left home. 3 [I] to repeat a quality or situation: The Victorian theme is echoed in the furnishings. ★ This pattern of increased sales was echoed across Europe.

PHRASE echo in your mind/head if something that you have heard echoes in your mind, you seem to keep hearing it

echo2 /ˈiːkəʊ/; ekəʊ/ (plural echoes) noun [C] ★ 1 a noise that is repeated because the sound hits a surface and returns: 2 the echo of footsteps in the alley 2 an idea or phrase that is like one that has been expressed before: His argument contains clear echoes of 1a. if an idea finds an echo in a group or country, people there agree with it
eclair /ˈekleɪər/ noun [C] a type of cake shaped like a tube with chocolate on top and cream inside
eclampsia /ˈeklæmpsiə/ noun [U] MEDICAL a medical condition in which a pregnant woman with high blood pressure has convulsions (=violent uncontrolled movements)
eclat /ˈeklæt/ noun [U] literary very great success that everyone knows about

eclastic /ˈiːklæstɪk/ adj formal an eclectic group of people, things, or ideas is interesting or unusual because it consists of many different types: an eclectic...
eclipse /ɪˈklɪps/ verb [T] 1 to make someone or something seem less successful or important, by becoming more successful or important than they are = overshadow: His performance was eclipsed by Francisco’s winning goal. • THIS TRAGIC ACCIDENT HAS ECLIPSED THE TWO DISASTERS ON THE RAILWAYS LAST YEAR. 2 ASTRONOMY to make the sun or moon become partly or completely dark because of the position of the sun, moon, and earth in relation to each other
eclipse noun 1 [C] ASTRONOMY a short period when all or part of the sun or moon becomes dark, because of the positions of the sun, moon, and earth in relation to each other. A TOTAL ECLIPSE is when the sun or moon is completely covered. An eclipse of the sun is called a solar eclipse, and an eclipse of the moon is called a lunar eclipse. 2 [singular/U] a time when someone or something starts to seem less successful or important, because another person or thing has become more successful or important than they are: The rise of one aristocratic family usually meant the eclipse of another. • BE IN ECLIPSE Their political power was in eclipse at the time.
eco- /ɪˈkoʊ/ prefix relating to the environment: used with some nouns and adjectives: eco-sensitive management (= an accident that causes great harm to the environment)
eco-friendly adj designed to cause as little harm as possible to the environment: A new eco-friendly engine
ecolabel /ɪˈkəʊlɛb(ə)l/ noun [C] BUSINESS a label used to mark products that are produced, and that you can use and get rid of, without harming the environment
E. coli /j: ˈkɒlə/ noun [U] BIOLOGY a type of bacteria in the intestines in the stomach that can make you ill if it infects something that you eat or drink
ecological /ɪˈkəʊlɒk(ə)l/ adj [usually before noun] 1 relating to the environment and the way that plants, animals, and humans live together and affect each other: worldwide ecological changes • THE EARTHQUAKE HAS CAUSED AN ECLOGICAL DISASTER. 2 working to protect the environment: It is known as one of the country’s leading ecological groups. • ECOCOLOGICALLY 1a. used ecologically 1b. eco-friendly
ecologist /ɪˈkəʊlɒdʒɪst/ noun [C] 1 a scientist who studies the environment and the way that plants, animals, and humans live together and affect each other 2 someone who believes that protecting the environment is important
ecology /ɪˈkəʊlɒdʒɪ/ noun [U] the study of the environment and the way that plants, animals, and humans live together and affect each other. 1a. [usually singular] the relationship between the plants, animals, and the environment in a particular area: the ecology of the wetlands
E-commerce noun [U] BUSINESS the activity of buying and selling goods on the Internet
economic /ɪˈkɒmɪk/ adj 1 [usually before noun] relating to the economy of a particular country or region: Economic growth is slowing down. • FACTORS THAT HINDER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 1a. relating to business, industry, and trade: an attack on the government’s economic policies 2 New opportunities will emerge as the economic climate improves. 1b. relating to money: Such projects offer social and economic benefits to our local communities.
Collocation
Nouns frequently used with economic 1
• activity, crisis, development, downturn, growth, policy, recovery, reform, slowdown
2 not costing or spending much money = ECONOMICAL: We must live within the means of the economy. 3 making satisfactory profit from business activities ≠ UNECONOMICAL: We are going to have to make some cutbacks in order to continue to be economic.
→ ECONOMICAL
economical /ɪˈkɒmɪk(ə)l/ adj 1 not costing or spending much money: It would be more economical to switch the machine off at night. • the most economical way to run your new business 1a. used about something that is not expensive to make, buy, or use: The material is an economical substitute for plastic or steel. • ECONOMICALLY 1b. used about someone who is careful about spending money: He always was economical when it came to buying presents. 2 not wasting anything: a beautifully economical process 2a. an economical movement is done with as little effort as possible: an economical gesture 2b. an economical way of speaking or writing does not use more words than are necessary: Garland’s prose is economical and expressive.
PHRASE
be economical with the truth info to say things that are not true, or not to tell everything that you know

Get it right: economic
People often confuse economic and economical.
Use economical to describe methods, products, machines etc. that are not expensive or do not waste money or other resources:
✓ They want people to buy more economical cars.
✓ They want people to buy more economical cars.
✓ Email is an efficient and economical way of contacting a large number of people.
✓ Email is an efficient and economical way of contacting a large number of people.
Use economic to describe things that are related to the economy of a country and how well it is performing:
✓ A long period of economical growth
✓ A long period of economical growth
✓ A serious economical crisis
✓ A serious economical crisis

economically /ɪˈkɒmɪkli/ adv 1 relating to economics or to the economy of a particular country or region: They dismiss the idea that high tax rates are economically harmful. • Politically and economically, the country is going through enormous changes. • economically important industry 2 economically depressed/devastated/disadvantaged (=experiencing a lot of economic problems) help for some of the country’s economically depressed communities 1a. in ways relating to money: The project is both technically and economically feasible. 2b. • Is your life going to be economically better than your parents’ lives? • He was still economically dependent on his mother. • economically active people (=who are earning money) 2 in a careful way, so that there is very little waste: The average domestic heating system could be run much more economically. 2a. in a way that does not cost much money = CHEAPLY: You can equip yourself with the necessary tools quite economically.
economic cycle noun [C] ECONOMICS the changes that are repeated continuously in a country’s economy
economic indicator noun [C] ECONOMICS a quantity that is used to measure a particular feature of the economy
economic migrant noun [C] someone who goes to a new country to cause living conditions or opportunities for jobs are not good in their own country. This word is used by governments to show that a person is not considered a refugee (=someone who has been forced to leave their country for political reasons).
economics /ɪˈkɒmɪsɪks/ noun [plural] the subjects that affect the economic success or failure of a company, country etc: The simple economics of the case are easy to explain. • The new developments radically changed the economics of the newspaper industry.
economies of scale noun [plural] BUSINESS reductions in the cost of making and selling products that are made possible because a business is very large
**economist** /ıkˈnomɪst/ noun [C] ★
1 an expert in economics, especially one who advises a government department, business, or organization
2 someone who studies or teaches economics

**economize** /ıkˈnɒmɪzaɪ/ verb [i] to use something such as money or fuel very carefully, so that you waste as little as possible: + on Economizing on food is the only choice we have.

**economy** /ıkˈnɒmɪni/ noun ★★★
1 [C] the system by which a country’s trade, industry, and money are organized: a modern industrial economy
2 [U] the high-growth economies of Southeast Asia
3 a market-oriented economy
4 the whole of a country’s business, industry, and trade, and the money that they produce: Between 1962 and 1988 the economy grew at an average of about 3 per cent per year.
5 boost/stimulate/revive the economy (= make it stronger) The government has promised to boost the flagging economy.
6, 1b. a country considered as an economic system: three of the fastest-growing economies in the Asia-Pacific region
7 [U] the careful use of money, products, or time so that very little is wasted: In those days, fuel economy was a central factor in car design.
8 [U] The audit will concentrate on the economy and efficiency of production.
9a. [U] the use of the smallest number of words or movements needed to express or do something well: + of The play achieves its effects with a terrific economy of language.
9b. [N] plural economies [only before noun] ways of saving money: make economies I’m sure, if we make a few economies, we’ll be able to afford it.
10 [U] THE ECONOMY OF SCALE
11 [U] THE ECONOMY OF PLANNED ECONOMY
12 [C] an economy pack of soap powder
13 Try the new economy size.
14 economy class noun [U] TOURISM the cheapest seats on a plane—economic class adj, adv
15 economy class syndrome noun [U] informal DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

**economy drive** noun [C] a period when you try to spend less money than usual

**ecosystem** /ɛkˈsɪstəm/ noun [C] BIOLOGY all the plants and animals in a particular area, considered as a system with parts that depend on one another

**ecoterrorist** /ɛkˌtɜːrəˈrɪst/ noun [C] someone who tries to stop or damage organizations that cause harm to the environment—ecoterrorism noun [U]

**ecotourism** /ˌɛkəˈtʊərɪzəm/ noun [U] TOURISM the business of creating and selling holidays that give people the chance to learn about a natural environment, and cause as little damage to the environment as possible—ecotourist noun [C]

**ecru** /ˈɛkrə/ adj very pale brown—ecru noun [U]

**ecstasy** /ˈɛkstəsi/ noun [C/U] 1 a feeling of great happiness and pleasure, often sexual pleasure
2 mainly literary an extreme emotional religious state during which you do not realize what is happening around you

**ecstasy** /ˈɛkstəsi/ noun [U] an illegal drug that young people take, especially in NIGHTCLUBS. Ecstasy is often called E.

**ecstatic** /ˈɛkstəstɪk/ adj extremely happy or pleased—ecstatically /rɪˈɛkstətɪkli/ adv

**ECT** /ɛkt/ j: /ˈɛkt/ noun [U] MEDICAL electroconvulsive therapy: a medical treatment for serious mental illness in which electricity is passed through your brain

**ectopic** /ˈɛktəpɪk/ adj MEDICAL an ectopic pregnancy is one in which a baby starts to grow outside its mother’s womb

**Ecuadorian** /ˌɛkwəˈdɔːriən/ adj, noun see Nationalities table

demise /ˈdɛmɪs/ noun [C] 1 death 2 disappear

democracy /ˌdeməˈkrəsɪ/ noun [C] a political system in which the power is held by the people, usually with a representative government

democrat /ˌdeməˈkrɑːt/ noun [C] a supporter of a political system in which the power is held by the people, usually with a representative government

democracy /ˌdeməˈkrəsɪ/ noun [U] a system with parts that depend on one another

**ecotourism** /ˌɛkəˈtʊərɪzəm/ noun [U] the business of creating and selling holidays that give people the chance to learn about a natural environment, and cause as little damage to the environment as possible—ecotourist noun [C]

**edgeways** /ˈɛdʒweɪz/ or edgewise /ˈɛdʒweɪz/ adv sideways: Pack the plates edgeways with plenty of paper between them.

education /ˈɛdʒəkeɪʃən/ noun [U] 1 the process of learning 2 the system in which people are taught

**educational** /ˌɛdʒuˈkeɪʃənl/ adj encouraging different Christian churches to work together—educational conference

**educate** /ˈɛdʒɪteɪt/ verb [T] to teach someone in something such as a competition or election by a small amount: Eileen Petersen edged out Victor Frazer by 27 votes.

**edgy** /ˈɛdʒi/ adj 1 [I/T] to move somewhere slowly, carefully, and with small movements, or to make something do this = INCH
2 towards/away/along etc I looked over and saw Michael edging towards the door.
3 She edged the car out into the street.
4 [I/T] mainly journalism if a number or price edges higher or lower, it moves if a current of water or air eddies, it moves against the main current in a circular pattern
5 a current of water or air that moves against the main current in a circular pattern

**Eden** /ˈɛdən/ noun 1 Eden or the Garden of Eden in the Bible, the beautiful place where the first humans, Adam and Eve, lived 2 [C] a beautiful peaceful place: The city is a remote and beautiful Eden.

**edge** /ˈedʒ/ noun ★★★
1 part furthest out
2 sharp side of blade/tool
3 round, light yellow cheese

**edible** /ˈɛdɪbl/ adj [C] a food that you can eat and cause as little damage to the environment as possible

**EdC** /ˈɛdɪk/ abbrev 1 edition 2 editor 3 education

**Edam** /ˈɛdəm/ noun [C/U] a round, light yellow cheese covered with wax, made in the Netherlands

**EDC** /‘ɛdɛkt/ noun [U] ELECTRONIC computing data capture: the process of collecting information using a computer

**edy** /ˈɛdi/ noun [C] a current of water or air that moves against the main current in a circular pattern

**edge** /ˈedʒ/ noun 1 [C] the part of something that is furthest from its centre: Bring the two edges together and fasten them securely.
2 [U] the railway station was built on the edge of town.
3 [C] the sharp side of a blade or tool that is used for cutting things: the knife’s edge
4 [singular] a quality in the way that someone speaks that shows they are becoming angry or upset: + to/in Had she imagined the slight edge to his voice?
5 [singular] a strange quality that something such as a piece of music or a book has that makes it interesting or exciting: There is an edge to his new album that wasn’t there in the last one.

**edge** /ˈedʒ/ noun
1 on the edge of a life with many dangers and risks, especially because you like to behave in an extreme and unusual way: Despite the apparent respectability, he was a man who liked to live on the edge.
2 nervous and unable to relax because you are worried: The events of the past few days had left her feeling tense and on edge.
3 close to the edge so unhappy or confused that you are close to doing something silly or becoming mentally ill: He came close to the edge after losing his boat and his way of life in the same year.
4 on the edge of sth nearly in a particular state or condition: He seemed to be poised on the edge of Hollywood success.
5 on the edge of sth nearly in a particular state or condition: He seemed to be poised on the edge of Hollywood success.
6 on edge of sth on the edge of your seat.
7 to take the edge off sth to make a strong feeling less strong: Aspirin will usually take the edge off the pain.
8 to move somewhere slowly, carefully, and with small movements, or to make something do this = INCH: She edged the car out into the street.
9 towards/away/along etc I looked over and saw Michael edging towards the door.
10 The thought briefly took the edge off her enjoyment.

**edge** /ˈedʒ/ noun
1 to move somewhere slowly, carefully, and with small movements, or to make something do this = INCH: She edged the car out into the street.
2 towards/away/along etc I looked over and saw Michael edging towards the door.
3 She edged the car out into the street.
4 [I/T] mainly journalism if a number or price edges higher or lower, it moves if a current of water or air eddies, it moves against the main current in a circular pattern
5 a current of water or air that moves against the main current in a circular pattern

**edgeways** /ˈɛdʒweɪz/ or edgewise /ˈɛdʒweɪz/ adv sideways: Pack the plates edgeways with plenty of paper between them.

**edgeways** /ˈɛdʒweɪz/ or edgewise /ˈɛdʒweɪz/ adv sideways: Pack the plates edgeways with plenty of paper between them.
edging

**edging** /ˈɛdɪŋ/ noun [U] something that forms the edge of something else: *table linen with lace edging*

**edgy** /ˈɛdʒə/ adj 1 in a bad mood because you are worried or nervous: *Irrelevantly, 1a, used about a situation when it is difficult to feel calm because people are angry or upset: *Talks between the nations were reportedly edgy today.* 2 music, films, books etc that are edgy are strange in a way that is interesting or exciting

**editor** /ˈɛdɪtər/ noun 1 a person whose job is to edit books, documents, or films: *She worked as a script editor for years.* 2a someone who produces a book by choosing, arranging, and explaining things that other people have written: *the editor of the four-volume History of Literature* 2b someone whose job is to produce books for a publisher by finding writers and working with them. 3 computing a computer program used for writing or editing documents, files, or programs

**editorial** /ˈɛdɪtərɪəl/ adj relating to the process of editing of books, magazines, newspapers etc —editorially adv

**editorialise** /ˈɛdɪtərɪəlaɪz/ a British spelling of editorialize

**editorialize** /ˈɛdɪtərɪəlaɪz/ verb 1 to let your opinions show in a piece of writing where you should only be giving facts

**editor-in-chief** noun [C] the most senior editor working on a newspaper or magazine who decides what will be printed in it

**editor program** noun [C] computing a piece of software that allows the user to choose parts of a file and change them, get rid of them, or add things to them

**editorship** /ˈɛdɪtərʃɪp/ noun [U] the job of being the editor of a newspaper or magazine

**edit suite** noun [C] cinema a room containing equipment for editing films or television programmes

**edu** /ˈɛdjuː/ abbrev computing educational institution: used in the email and website addresses of some colleges and schools, especially in the US

**educate** /ˈɛdʒuːkeɪt/ verb ★★★ [T] often passive to teach someone, usually for several years, especially at a school, college, or university: *educate sb at sth* He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. 1a. more and more parents are choosing to educate their children at home. 1b. *educate sb about sth* The mining museum was built to educate people about their local history. 1c. *educate sb to do sth* Our job is to educate young people to think about the environment.

**education** /ˈɛdʒuːkeʃn/ noun ★★★ 1 [U] the activity of teaching about a particular subject: *education in art and sciences.* 2a. *educational institution:* a college, university, school, or other place where education is given: *a university.* 2b. *educational policy:* the rules and ways in which a country or school decides what children should be taught: *the Scottish education department.* 2c. *educational activity:* books, programs, training etc that teach about a subject: *education is a major concern for the Minister of Education.* 2d. *educational need:* the need for a person to be taught something: *I came over to England to complete my education.* 2e. *educational qualification:* something you need to show that you have been taught something: *she got a university degree.* 3 [U] the activity of teaching about a particular subject: *religious/scholar/sport/sex education* 4 [U] in education in art and design 1b. [C] usually singular someone’s experience of learning or being taught: *I came over to England to complete my education.* 4c. [only before noun] relating to education: the Scottish education department 4d. *the government’s education policies*
produced, for example by a writer, artist, or musician: The bold colours in this room create a dramatic effect.

That's exactly the effect I wanted. 2 get/produce/achieve an effect  Students should learn how they can achieve different stylistic effects in their writing. 2a. effects [plural] CINEMA special artificial images and sounds created for a film = special effects: I didn't think much of the plot, but the effects were amazing. 2b. [C] usually singular an artificial appearance given to a surface or to an object: marble-effect papier-mâché

3 [C] usually singular something that regularly happens, according to a law, for example in science: the Doppler effect  what economists call 'the multiplier effect' 4 effects or personal effects [plural] formal the things that belong to you

PHRASES come into effect if a new rule or law comes into effect, it starts to be used: The law came into effect on New Year's Day. 2 from The new Council Tax rates came into effect from 1st April.

for effect if you do something for effect, you do it in order to impress somebody: 'Still...' she said and paused, for effect.

in effect 1 used for giving a summary of what you think the situation really is: In effect, this means we'll all have to work longer hours for the same pay. 2 if a law or rule is in effect, it is operating: There's still a flood watch in effect across much of southwestern Ohio.

put/bring/carry sth into effect to start to use a plan or idea that it becomes real and has practical results: I hope the government will put the report's main recommendations into effect.

take effect 1 to start to produce the results that were intended: Try to relax for a couple of hours until the pills take effect. 2 Measures to reduce costs are beginning to take effect. 2a. if a new rule or law takes effect, it starts to be used: The new timetable will take effect from the beginning of May.

to the effect that or to this/that effect used for showing that you are giving a general idea of what someone said instead of their actual words: Harry murmured something to the effect that they would all meet Margaret soon enough. 2 Then Sally said, 'Who is this then?' or words to that effect.

to good/full/little etc effect used for saying what kind of result something has: He has used my advice to good effect. 2 The concerto's slow movement was used to memorable effect in the film 2001. 2 He turned the key in the ignition but to no effect.

with effect from formal used for saying when something will start: Section 2 sanctions have been imposed with effect from 1 April. 2 I am resigning from the party with immediate effect.

→ SIDE EFFECT

effect² /ɪˈfɪkt/ verb [T] formal  to make something happen: BRING ABOUT: If correctly administered, such drugs can effect a radical cure.

effective /ɪˈfektɪv/ adj ★★★

1 someone or something that is effective works well and produces the result that was intended ≠ ineffective: You need more effective communication within the organization. 2 Humour is often far more effective than shouting. 2 The troops should be deployed where they will be most effective. 2 against The new vaccine is highly effective against all strains of the disease.

3 effective way/method/means This is a very effective way of controlling pests and weeds. 1a. attractive or impressive and producing a definite effect: The decorations are easy to make, yet very effective.

Collocation
Nouns frequently used with effective 1

deterrent, intervention, means, mechanism, method, strategy, treatment, way

2 formal when a law or agreement becomes effective, it officially begins to be used: from Government ministers reached a 30-month agreement, effective from 1 July.

3 [only before noun] used for saying what the situation really is, although its appearance or official description might be different: The US military is in effective control of the entire region. 3a. used for saying what is really having a particular effect, although other things may be involved in a situation: the effective agents in the spread of the disease

→ effectiveness noun [U]

Collocation
Adjectives frequently used with effect 1

adverse, beneficial, cumulative, damaging, detrimental, dramatic, harmful, immediate, knock-on, major, negative, positive, profound, serious, significant, substantial

2 [C] an appearance or reaction that is deliberately
effectively /ɪˈfɛktɪvlɪ/ adv ★★★
1 used for saying what the situation really is, although its appearance or official description might be different: With Australia 24 points ahead at half-time, the game was effectively over.
2 in a way that works well and produces the result that you intended: The ability to work with people efficiently is very important.
effectual /ɪˈfɛktʃʊəl/ adj formal producing the effect that you intended —effectually adv
effeminate /ɪˈfɛmɪnət/ adj an effeminate man looks, or behaves like a woman —effetely adv
effervescent /ˌɛfərˈvɛsənt/ adj 1 producing a lot of small BUBBLES of air or gas = FIZZY 2 lively and enthusiastic = BUBLY: an effervescent personality —effervescence noun [U]
effete /ˈɛfɪt/ adj weak in moral character —effetely adv
effervescent /ˌɛfərˈvɛsənt/ adj 1 producing a lot of small BUBBLES of air or gas = FIZZY 2 lively and enthusiastic = BUBLY: an effervescent personality —effervescence noun [U]
effete /ˈɛfɪt/ adj weak in moral character —effetely adv
effort /ˈɛfɜːt/ noun [C / U]
1 an attempt to do sth or to achieve something: The aim is to obtain maximum reward for minimum effort. 2 physical/mental effort: The sheer physical effort of shopping is a burden to most of us.
3 take/require effort: Using a book requires a lot of time and effort. 4 put effort into sth Mary put a lot of effort into this project. 5 with an effort Nathan controlled his temper with an effort.

efficiency /ɪˈfɪʃənsi/ noun [U] ★★★ the ability to work well and produce good results by using the available time, money, supplies etc in the most effective way = INEFFICIENCY: the search for lower costs and greater efficiency 2 the inspectors were impressed by the speed and efficiency of the new system. 3 improve/increase efficiency The new technology is aimed at improving efficiency and customer service.
efficient /ɪˈfɪʃnt/ adj ★★★ something that is efficient works well and produces good results by using the available time, money, supplies etc in the most effective way = INEFFICIENT: The new machine is far more efficient than the old one. 2 efficient way/method The most efficient way to plan is to put your tasks in order of priority. 3 efficient use of sth This process makes efficient use of limited resources. a. someone who is efficient works well and quickly and is good at organizing their work in the way that gets the best results: The hotel’s staff are friendly and efficient. 4 highly efficient He became a highly efficient General Secretary.

effigy /ɪˈfɪdʒi/ noun [C] a model of someone, especially one destroyed in a protest against them
effing /ˈɛfɪŋ/ adj, adv impolite used for emphasizing what you are saying, especially when you are angry or annoyed, but want to avoid the more offensive word ‘fucking’: He was calling her an effing this, an effing that.

effusive /ɪˈfjuːsɪv/ adj expressing feelings in an extremely enthusiastic way —effusively adv —effusiveness noun [U]

effluent /ɪˈflʊənt/ noun [C / U] liquid waste such as SEWAGE (=human waste) or waste from a factory

effort /ˈɛfɔːt/ noun ★★★
1 attempt to do sth 2 energy needed to do sth 3 activities towards aim 4 sth produced/created 5 attempt to score goal 6 force used on machine —effortful adj

1 [C / U] an attempt to do something that is difficult or that involves hard work: an effort to do sth The restructuring was part of an effort to boost company profits. 2 in an effort to do sth Detectives are talking to other witnesses in an effort to corroborate her confession. 3 make an effort to do sth I’ve made an effort to drink less tea and coffee. 4 make little/no effort The drivers made no efforts to check their vehicles. 5 an effort of will/imagination/memory She was trembling violently, but with a determined effort of will she stopped. 6 despite sb’s efforts The man died despite the doctors’ efforts to revive him. 7 a concerted/joint effort (=made ‘together’) a concerted effort by the nations of the world to protect our environment

Collocation
Adjectives frequently used with effort
big, brave, combined, concerted, determined, feeble, great, individual, joint, last-ditch, massive, solo, sustained, team, vain, valiant, wasted
egotistical /eɡəˈtɪstɪk/ adj showing disapproval thinking that you are more important than other people and need not care about them = SELF-CENTRED

ego trip noun [C] informal a situation in which you feel important or admired and only care about increasing these feelings: She's a serious writer, not just some kid on an ego trip.

e-government noun [u] the use of the Internet by government, for example, to give information to the public or to allow people to vote from their computer

egregious /ɪɡrɪdʒəs/ adj very formal extremely bad

egress /ɪɡrɛs/ noun [u] very formal the action of leaving a place

egot /ɪɡrət/ noun [C] a white bird with long legs that lives near water

Egyptian /ɪdʒiːpiən/ adj, noun see Nationalities table

Egyptology /ˌɪdʒɪˈpɔːlədʒi/ noun [u] the study of ancient Egypt and its culture, history, and language, as shown by the buildings and objects that still exist. A student of Egyptology is called an Egyptologist.

eh /ɛ/ interjection 1 informal used for showing that you do not understand what someone is saying, or that you are surprised by it: Eh? What's that again? • Eh? You must be joking! 2 used for asking someone to agree with you: Pretty good, eh?

EHIC /ˌɛi.ʃi/ noun [C] (usually singular) TOURISM European Health Insurance Card: a card that allows someone living in the European Union to receive free health treatment in another European Union country

Eid /ɪd/ noun [u] the name of two festivals in the Muslim religion. The more important one, Eid ul-Fitr, is celebrated at the end of RAMADAN.

eiderdown /ˈaɪdədən/ noun [C] a warm cover filled with feathers and put on top of the sheets and BLANKETS on a bed. A warm cover used without sheets or blankets is called a duvet.

eight /eɪt/ number the number 8

eighteen /ˈeɪtɪn/ number the number 18—eighteenth number

eighth /eɪθ/ number 1 in the place or position counted as number 8: the eighth of each month 2 one of 8 equal parts of something: an eighth of an inch

eighth note noun [C] MUSIC American a QUAKER (sense 1)

eighties /ˈeɪtɪz/ plural 1 the years from 1980 to 1989; the eighties: The club went through a bad period in the eighties. • eighties pop music 2 a temperature in the eighties is between 80 and 89 degrees FAHRENHEIT: It’s going to be another scorcher tomorrow, with temperatures in the eighties.

PHRASE in your eighties aged between 80 and 89: My parents are now both in their eighties.

eighty /ˈeɪtɪ/ number the number 80—eightieth number

eina /ˈɛnə/ noun South African 1 [U] pain or difficulty 2 [C] a pain or injury

eisteddfod /ˈaɪstɪdfɔd/ noun [C] a festival of Welsh culture with competitions in music, singing, and poetry

either /ˈaɪðə(ɹ)/ adv, determiner, pronoun ★★★

Either can be used in the following ways:
in the expression either...or: Students could choose either French or Spanish. • You can either come by bus or take a taxi.
as a determiner (followed by a singular countable noun): a long room with a door at either end
as a pronoun: Olive oil and corn oil are both suitable, so you could use either. (followed by ‘of’): Does either of you speak Chinese?
as an adverb (in negative sentences): Jerry wasn’t there either.

When either is the subject of a sentence, it is usually used with a singular verb: Is either of them at home? But in spoken English a plural verb is sometimes used: Are either of them at home?

1 one or the other of two people or things, especially when it does not matter which: Cheque or credit card – you can use either. • Applications are welcomed from people of either sex and any age. • of It was a long time before either of them spoke.

2 used in negative statements referring to both of two people or things: Jackie could play the piano and sing, whereas I couldn’t do either. • Most of the troublemakers
were not supporters of either team. • of I didn't like either of the candidates. 2a. used for adding that a negative statement is also true of another person or thing: We tried another method, but that didn't work either. • It's a problem I can't solve, and I don't think anyone else can either. 2b. used for adding a negative statement that emphasizes how good, bad, impressive etc something is: He did a superb job, and he didn't have any help either.

- ALSO

PHRASAL VERB

either...or (...or) used for showing two or more possibilities or choices: You must answer either yes or no. • You can contact us either by phone, by email, or by letter. • When there's a crisis, they either do nothing or do something totally useless.

either...or used for saying that one of two things has to happen or be true: Either you come with us, or you stay at home with your mother. • Either he forgot about the meeting or he deliberately stayed away — I don't know which.

elastic [el'sistik] /noun [C] a material that stretches easily and can then return to its original shape quickly: The elastic behaviour of some materials depends on the temperature and duration of the stress applied. 3 able to change when the situation changes: a man of rather elastic morals 4. ECONOMICS if the supply of something or the demand for something is elastic, it changes according to the economic conditions it operates in, for example if the price of a product changes

elasticated /`el`staık`id/adj British containing elastic and therefore able to stretch easily: elasticated stockings

elastic band noun [C] British a circle of elastic that you put around several things to hold them together = RUBBER BAND

elasticity /`el`stastı/ /noun [U] 1 PHYSICS the ability of a substance to stretch easily and then return to its original shape quickly: the strength and elasticity of silk 2 the ability to change when the situation changes: the elasticity of the labour market 3 ECONOMICS the degree to which supply, DEMAND etc changes according to other economic conditions that change, for example the price of goods

Elastoplast /`el`stəBl plast/ TRADEMARK British a type of PLASTER used for covering a cut in your skin

ealted /`el`tad/ adj extremely happy and excited = ECSTATIC

elation /`el`teı(n)/ /noun [U] a feeling of great happiness and excitement

elevator /`el`b@t/ /noun [C] ⋆ the part in the middle of your arm, where it bends: She sat with her elbows on the table. a. the part of a sleeve that covers your elbow —picture ➔ C3

PHRASES

at sb's elbow beside someone: Jim was hovering at her elbow, trying to say something.

give sb the elbow British informal to end your relationship with someone ➔ ARSE

elevator /`el`b@t/ /noun [C] ⋆ to make someone leave a job or position so that you or someone else can take their place

elevator grease noun [U] informal hard physical work that you do to clean something

elevator room noun [U] ⋆ enough space around you so that you are comfortable 2 the freedom to do what you want, without other people annoying you

elded /`eld(r)id/ adj [only before noun] ⋆ older than someone, especially someone in your family: The elder son works on a farm. • elder brother/sister advice from my elder brother a. the elder the person who is older, especially one of two people in the same family: The elder of the two had lost his job as a teacher. b. used about something that you do to clean something

elder /`eld(r)/noun [C] usually plural ⋆ someone in your family or community who is older than you: We were always taught to respect our elders. 1a. an elder and more experienced member of a group or organization who gives advice and makes decisions: a council of village elders • He had the support of party elders. 1b. a member of a Christian church or other religious organization who is not a priest but who is in a position of authority ➔ 2 small tree with black berries (≈ small round fruits)

PHRASES

elder's advice from my elder brother

elderly /`eld(r)ı/adj ⋆ an elderly person is old. Many people now think that this word is offensive but it is often used in talking about policies and conditions that affect old people: An elderly gentleman was standing at the reception desk. • Not all elderly people can live with their relatives anymore. This treatment is only available for patients who are elderly and frail. a. the elderly old people. Many people now think that this expression is offensive.

old b. British used about a car or machine that looks old-fashioned or does not work as well as it used to: He was driving an elderly white Mercedes.
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A. ADDING INFORMATION

You sometimes need to discuss several points, present a set of ideas or arguments, or describe a sequence of events. In such cases, you may want to show that you are adding another point. In this section, we describe some of the most useful ways of adding information, and we give advice about using them.

1. Adding information

You can use several expressions to show that you are adding information to the preceding sentence or paragraph. Here are the most common ones.

1.1. Using the adverb in addition

You can use in addition simply to add a new argument or new information. It can be used:

- at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a comma:
  
  After the election, we asked whether the parties should change their leaders, their policies, or both. In addition, we asked about voting preferences.

- inside the sentence, enclosed by commas:
  
  All students of French are required to take the language units each year and, in addition, to choose an integrated programme of study from other units.

BE CAREFUL! Many learners use and at the beginning of a sentence, as a way of adding new information:

People have always tried to turn their dreams into reality. And they still continue to do so.

This structure gives the sentence a rather informal tone and should therefore not be used too often in more formal texts.

1.2. Using the determiners other and another or the adjectives further and next

You can use the determiners other or another to introduce an additional item.

One type of skin cancer is caused when skin that is not used to the sun is exposed to short bursts of strong sunlight. Other types of skin cancer are associated with continued exposure to the sun over a long period.

It is important to get your performers to keep the microphone as still as possible. Another point for them to remember is not to speak directly at the microphone but to aim instead just over the top of it.

Collocation

Nouns frequently used with the determiners other and another

- aspect, example, feature, issue, point, problem, question, reason

Other aspects to consider are charges, possible conflicts of interest, and efficiency in dealing and settlement.

You can use the adjective further with the same function.

It may be helpful to start therapy at home and continue

1.3. Using the prepositions in addition to and besides

A number of prepositions can be used to add new information. The most frequent of these is in addition to, which introduces the point to which you want to add something new. It can be followed by a noun or by a verb in the –ing form:

In addition to imitation, there are a number of other procedures designed to give the therapist some degree of control over the child’s language production.

In addition to imposing its own needs on the medium, advertising has immense ideological implications.

You can use besides in the same way, but it is less frequent than in addition to in academic writing and professional reports.

Besides its political and racial distribution, population density varied greatly.

Besides being paid less per hour, the majority of women employees work fewer hours than their male counterparts.

2. Adding and amplifying: using the adverbs moreover, furthermore, and besides

The expressions we discussed in section 1 are used simply for adding a new argument or new information. Sometimes, however, you may want to add a point – often a final point – that is a more important fact or a more powerful argument than anything you have mentioned previously. In other words, you want to add but also to amplify. Here are some adverbs you can use for this purpose.

Moreover and furthermore are typically used at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a comma, but they sometimes occur within the sentence, usually enclosed by commas.

There was more than enough to do in repairing the faults of the existing system and correcting the injustices of the past. Moreover, the reforms had to be achieved with resources severely diminished by the efforts of war.

There was an assumption that whoever did take up the office would closely reflect Lee’s views. It was likely, moreover, that candidates would be restricted to former ministers and senior civil servants.

Science cannot provide that kind of certainty. Furthermore, it is often overlooked that we can only apply scientific method to a tiny fraction of the impressions upon which we act.
Comparing and Contrasting

Get it right: moreover

Many learners use moreover inappropriately, when they are simply adding new information or reformulating what has just been said.

When the prisoner is released, his situation will be very painful because he will have to re-integrate into society. Moreover, he will have the greatest difficulties of integration because of his past as a prisoner.

When the prisoner is released, his situation will be very painful because he will have to re-integrate into society. He will have the greatest difficulties of integration because of his past as a prisoner.

In this context moreover is not acceptable, because the second sentence is simply used to reformulate, and not for adding a final powerful argument.

BE CAREFUL! Learners often forget the comma after moreover and furthermore at the beginning of a sentence.

Besides introduces a final point or argument, especially one that is decisive. Its most typical position is at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a comma.

Even taped interviews can only be read with caution, since they may have been edited, and the reader will not be told how. Besides, it is an everyday experience that people are sometimes wrong in conversation, and may not remember events well.

BE CAREFUL! Learners often use besides. Although it is sometimes used in academic writing and professional reports, it is more typical of speech and informal writing.

If there is a resemblance or similarity between two or more points, ideas, situations, or people, they share some characteristics but are not exactly the same:

There is a striking resemblance between them.
He would have recognized her from her strong resemblance to her brother.
There is a remarkable similarity of techniques, of clothes and of weapons.

The noun similarity also refers to a particular characteristic or aspect that is shared by two or more points, ideas, situations, or people:

These theories share certain similarities with biological explanations.
The orang-utan is the primate most closely related to man; its lively facial expressions show striking similarities to those of humans.

Collocation

Adjectives frequently used with resemblance and similarity
- certain, close, remarkable, striking, strong, superficial

The distribution of votes across the three parties in 1983 bears a close resemblance to the elections of 1923 and of 1929.

You can also use the noun parallel to refer to the way in which points, ideas, situations, or people are similar to each other:

Scientists themselves have often drawn parallels between the experience of a scientific vocation and certain forms of religious experience.
There are close parallels here with anti-racist work in education.

An analogy is a comparison between two situations, processes etc that are similar in some ways. It is usually made in order to explain something or make it easier to understand:

A useful analogy for understanding Piaget’s theory is to view the child as a scientist who is seeking a ‘theory’ to explain complex phenomena.

Collocation

Adjectives frequently used with analogy and parallel
- close, interesting, obvious

A close analogy can be drawn between cancer of the cell and a society hooked on drugs.

1.2. Using adjectives such as similar and same

You can use the adjectives analogous, common, comparable, identical, parallel, and similar to highlight the similarity between two or more points, ideas, situations, or people:

Animals possess thoughts, feelings and social systems which are analogous, if not identical, to those of humans.
All states share a common interest in the maintenance of international peace and security.
Winston Churchill died in 1965 and was given a State funeral comparable to that which had been given to the Duke of Wellington.
The procedure is identical to that of any other public bill.
A parallel but not identical distinction is between short-term and long-term memory.
The pattern of mortality is broadly similar for men and women.

The adjective same is always used before the noun:
The same pattern is also to be found in the discourse of parliamentary debates about apartheid.

B. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING: DESCRIBING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

When you write an essay, report, or similar document, you often need to link two or more points, ideas, or situations by comparing and contrasting them, that is, by showing the similarities or differences between them. In this section, we describe some of the most useful ways of describing similarities and differences, and we give advice about using them.

1. Comparing: describing similarities

You can use several expressions to show that two or more points, ideas, or situations are similar. Here are the most common ones.

1.1. Using nouns such as resemblance and similarity

You can use the nouns resemblance, similarity, parallel, and analogy to show that two points, ideas, or situations are similar in certain ways.
5. Advice on avoiding errors

5.1 Using the ‘Get it right’ boxes

The Macmillan English Dictionary includes over 100 ‘Get it right’ boxes at individual dictionary entries. These boxes deal with many different issues that cause difficulties for learners. The following ‘Get it right’ boxes deal with problems relating to quantifiers:

- every, few, half, less, most, much, thousand

R. SPELLING

English spelling is not always easy to get right, and everyone – including native speakers – makes mistakes occasionally. Many spelling mistakes (such as writing ‘recieve’ instead of ‘receive’) can be corrected by using a spellchecker. But some cannot, especially when they involve confusion between similar words. In this section, we describe the main categories of word that are regularly spelled wrongly, and we give advice about how to avoid these problems.

1. Homophones

A homophone is a word that sounds the same as another word, but has a different spelling and a different meaning. Homophones are a frequent source of errors, not only for learners of English but for native speakers too. Here are some homophones that learners sometimes confuse:

- **hole and whole**
  
  Hole is a noun, meaning ‘a gap or empty space’, while whole is an adjective, meaning ‘complete’:
  
  - x Imagine spending your hole life with someone who you hate or regret marrying.
  - ✓ Imagine spending your whole life with someone who you hate or regret marrying.

- **it’s and its**
  
  It’s is the short form of ‘it is’ or ‘it has’, while its is the possessive form of it:
  
  - x It’s a time-saving machine.
  - ✓ It’s a time-saving machine.
  - x It was a few hundred years after Caxton’s introduction of printing that censorship started its modern career.
  - ✓ It was a few hundred years after Caxton’s introduction of printing that censorship started its modern career.

- **there and their**
  
  There is an adverb, while their is the possessive form of they:
  
  - x But their are small towns or villages where people simply have no other choice.
  - ✓ But there are small towns or villages where people simply have no other choice.
  - x In a democracy, people have power to make laws and decide their own future.
  - ✓ In a democracy, people have power to make laws and decide their own future.

- **whether and weather**
  
  Whether is a conjunction, while weather is a noun (‘What’s the weather like in Brazil?’):
  
  - x No-one knows weather this is true or not.
  - ✓ No-one knows whether this is true or not.

- **who’s and whose**
  
  Who’s is the short form of ‘who is’ or ‘who has’, while whose is the possessive form of who:
  
  - x There is an international organisation whose role is to keep peace and stability in that continent.

2. Easily confused pairs

There are many pairs of words that are easy to confuse, because they look similar and are (in most cases) related in some way. The ones that learners frequently confuse are described here. Check the dictionary entries for these words if you need more information.

2.1 Related nouns and verbs

Many pairs of nouns and verbs have closely related meanings but slightly different spellings. In most cases, there are differences in pronunciation too. Those pairs that frequently cause problems for learners include the following:

- **advice /ədˈvaɪs/ (verb) and advice /ədˈvaɪs/ (noun)**
  
  x It can ruin your health instead of making you fit and I can only advice you not to let sport take over your life.
  
  ✓ It can ruin your health instead of making you fit and I can only advise you not to let sport take over your life.

- **analyse /əˈneɪləs/ (verb) and analysis /əˈnæləsɪs/ (noun)**
  
  x In favour of the written word, one can argue that it provides a more in-depth analyse, and thus provides even more information than the aural/visual media.
  
  ✓ In favour of the written word, one can argue that it provides a more in-depth analysis, and thus provides even more information than the aural/visual media.

- **believe /bliːv/ (verb) and belief /bliːf/ (noun)**
  
  x To ask of anyone to forget their traditions and believe is to ask person to forget who he is.
  
  ✓ To ask of anyone to forget their traditions and believes is to ask that person to forget who he is.

- **breathe /breɪð/ (verb) and breath /breð/ (noun)**
  
  x If you walk in a big city with thousands of cars passing by, you will feel that you can hardly breathe.
  
  ✓ If you walk in a big city with thousands of cars passing by, you will feel that you can hardly breathe.

- **effect /ɪˈfekt/ (verb) and effect /ɪˈfekt/ (noun)**
  
  x When students are always going to cybercafes, their homework is effected.
  
  ✓ When students are always going to cybercafes, their homework is affected.

- **extend /ɪkˈstend/ (verb) and extent /ɪkˈstent/ (noun)**
  
  x I would put it even more strongly: modern toys to a great extend cause this impoverishment of creativity.
  
  ✓ I would put it even more strongly: modern toys to a great extent cause this impoverishment of creativity.

- **live /lɪv/ (verb) and life /laɪf/ (noun, plural form lives)**
  
  x They will be educated, and not only with books but about live itself.
  
  ✓ They will be educated, and not only with books but about life itself.

- **practise /ˈpræktɪs/ (verb) and practice /ˈpræktɪs/ (noun)**
  
  x Extroverted learners who find many opportunities to practise language skills will be the most successful learners.
  
  ✓ Extroverted learners who find many opportunities to practise language skills will be the most successful learners.

  x Second, this practise implies a cost that many universities cannot pay.
EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY

These pages are designed to show you different ways of writing or speaking about three important areas of vocabulary – communication, emotions, and movement. Each section takes a ‘core’ word that you will probably use most of the time and gives you the most useful synonyms for it, as well as related words with a different part of speech. There are also notes that highlight some differences of register, grammar, and collocation. Some of the words are shown together with their opposites, e.g. satisfied and dissatisfied.

Contents

A. Words that describe Communication
1. Answer 4. Say 7. Tell
2. Argue 5. Speak
3. Ask 6. Talk

B. Words that describe Emotions
5. Enthusiastic/not enthusiastic

C. Words that describe Movement
1. Fast 4. Arrive 7. Travel
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**EV2 Expand your Vocabulary Communication**

### A. WORDS THAT DESCRIBE COMMUNICATION

#### 1. Answer

I asked him where he was going but he didn’t answer. ♦ She failed to answer most of the questions that were put to her. ♦ ’I don’t know,’ she answered truthfully.

**He answered that** he had seen them leaving together.

Answer is also an noun and is used in the phrases give an answer and in answer to: I’ll give you a definite answer tomorrow. ♦ He said nothing in answer to her question, but continued staring out of the window.

1.1 To answer someone

**reply** to answer someone: ‘I know,’ he replied.

♦ They got up and walked out before I had a chance to reply.

♦ When asked where she was going, she replied that it was none of their business. ♦ I asked him how he was, and he replied with a shrug.

**respond** to answer something that someone says, especially when they have challenged or criticized you: ‘I’m telling you it’s not true,’ Martinez responded.

♦ ‘Is there anything you would like to do today?’ he asked, but she didn’t respond. ♦ How do you respond to the suggestion that this is all the government’s fault?

**make a response or give a response** I called out to him, but he made no response. ♦ Being an astute politician, she gave a careful response that completely failed to answer the question.

**Note:** Reply and respond mean more or less the same as answer, but are a little more formal, and are used mainly in written English.

**retort** to answer someone immediately in an angry or humorous way: ‘Mind your own business!’ she retorted.

♦ Democrats retorted that the plan leaves millions of poor Americans out in the cold.

**answer sb back** to reply rudely to someone who has more authority than you: Don’t you dare answer me back!

#### 1.2 To answer someone at a later time

**get back to sb** if you get back to someone, you give them an answer at a later time because you were not able to do it earlier: He said he was busy but promised he would get back to me in the afternoon.

**phone back or call back or ring back** to telephone someone again, or to telephone someone who telephoned you earlier: I’ll call you back as soon as I hear any news.

**Note:** Ring back is used in British English.

#### 1.3 To answer someone in writing

**answer sth** I hate it when people don’t answer my emails. ♦ She answered an advertisement in the newspaper.

**reply** It took them a week to reply to my letter. ♦ I wrote many times but she never replied. ♦ They replied that unfortunately there were no vacancies at present.

**respond** Thousands of readers responded to our questionnaire.

**get back to sb** I’m sorry I didn’t get back to you about that proposal. ♦ We’ll get back to you early next week.

**write back** I wrote back and told them I was no longer interested. ♦ She wrote back to Sarah, giving her all the family’s news.

2. Argue

Those girls are always arguing. ♦ He argues with me about everything. ♦ We used to argue over who should drive.

To argue also means to discuss something with someone who has a different opinion from you: They are still arguing over the details of the contract. ♦ We try to teach children to argue their ideas calmly and rationally.

You can also say that people have an argument: We had a stupid argument and now he’s not speaking to me.

2.1 To argue with someone

**quarrel** to argue: I hate quarrelling with you. ♦ They’re always quarrelling over money.

**have a quarrel** We had the usual family quarrel about who should do the washing up. ♦ He’d had another quarrel with Jamie.

**fight** to disagree in an angry way about something: What are you two fighting about now? ♦ I don’t want to fight over such a trivial matter.

**have a fight** All teenagers have fights with their parents.

**row** to have a short noisy argument: My parents never row.

♦ We rowed constantly about everything. ♦ He has rowed with everyone in the group.

**have a row** They had a row and he walked out.

♦ Our parents were always having rows about money.

**Note:** Row is used mainly in British English.

**bicker or squabble** to argue with someone about things that are not important: The children bickered constantly with each other. ♦ They have been bickering for months over the leadership. ♦ A group of boys were squabbling over the ball. ♦ The other parties are squabbling amongst themselves.

**fall out** to stop being friendly with someone because you have had a disagreement with them: Have you two fallen out? ♦ She’s fallen out with her parents.

**Note:** Fall out is informal and is used in British English.

3. Ask

I wondered where she had got the money, but didn’t like to ask. ♦ If you need help with the translation, why don’t you ask Maria? ♦ Don’t be afraid to ask questions. ♦ ‘Is something the matter?’ he asked gently.

**ask (sb)** how/what/who/why She asked me how I knew about it. ♦ They asked whether I had any objections.

3.1 To ask someone a question

**inquire or enquire** to ask someone for information about something: Why don’t you telephone the theatre and inquire about tickets? ♦ I am writing to inquire whether you have any vacancies in September. ♦ ‘What’s for dinner?’ Brian inquired.

**demand** to ask something in a very firm and angry way: ‘What do you want?’ she demanded. ♦ MPs demanded to know the reason for the delay.

3.2 To ask someone a lot of questions to find out what they know or think

**question sb** to ask someone a lot of questions to find out what they know or what they think about something: Interviewers questioned 1,033 people between the 23rd and 26th of August. ♦ I wish people would stop questioning me about what happened.
interrogate sb to ask someone, especially a prisoner or a suspect, a lot of questions in an angry or threatening way: The suspects were interrogated for four days before being released. • You have no right to interrogate me about my private life.

cross-examine sb to ask someone a lot of questions, usually in an unfriendly way: I don’t like being cross-examined about my private life!
grill sb or give sb a grilling to ask someone a lot of difficult questions over a long period of time, especially in order to make them explain their actions, decisions, or opinions: Police investigators grilled him about his movements on the day of the crime. • Both party leaders were given a 30-minute grilling by a team of interviewers.

3.3 To ask for something
ask to speak or write to someone because you want them to give you something or do something for you: If you want any help, just ask. • ask for sth He’s always reluctant to ask for anyone’s help.
ask sb’s permission or advice or opinion I think we’d better ask your mum’s opinion first. • Always ask the permission of the landowner before camping on their land. • I always ask their advice before taking any big decisions.
request sth to ask for something, or ask someone to do something, in a polite or formal way: The pilot requested permission to land. • The minister has requested a meeting with the Egyptian ambassador. • We specifically requested that you should be informed. • Visitors are requested to register at the front desk.
seek sth to ask someone for something: Seek medical advice if symptoms last more than a week. • You must first seek permission from the authors before publishing their names.

Note: Request and seek are formal, and are used mainly in official contexts.

Collocation
Nouns frequently used as the object of ask (for)
• advice, assistance, clarification, explanation, forgiveness, help, information, permission, opinion, support

Nouns frequently used as the object of request
• assistance, clarification, help, information, meeting, permission

Nouns frequently used as the object of seek
• advice, approval, assistance, clarification, help, permission

demand sth to say in a very firm way that you want something, when you feel that you have a right to expect it: I demand an apology. • MPs are demanding an inquiry into the deal.
nag to keep asking someone to do something that they do not want to do: Stop nagging! • My mum always nags me to tidy my room.
badger sb to ask someone to do something many times, in a way that annoys them: I wish you’d all stop badgering me with your questions!

4. Say
See also Speak, Talk, and Tell.
Say is used for reporting what someone said. There are several verbs that mean more or less the same as say, but say is the most general word:

‘Pleased to meet you,’ he said. • When’s he coming back?’ He didn’t say. • She said that she liked dancing.
• Tell me what he said to you. • say how/what/who/why Did she say who called? • They didn’t say where they were going.

4.1 To say something
announce to say something important and sometimes surprising, usually to a group of people: ‘I’m going to America!’ she announced. • Bill suddenly announced that he would be taking the day off. • She announced, to my dismay, that she was coming to stay for a week.
state to say what you think or what you intend to do in a definite or formal way: I’m not making excuses, I’m simply stating a fact. • The government has stated its intention to abolish child poverty. • Please state clearly your reasons for wanting this job.
declare to say something in an impressive way: ‘I’m leaving tomorrow,’ James declared suddenly. • Brady declared that he had no intention of giving up the fight.
mention to say something during a conversation, but without discussing it much or giving many details: He didn’t mention me, did he? • I’ll mention it to Jan when I see her tomorrow. • Did I mention that I’m going to be away next week?
add to say something in addition to what has been said already: ‘Don’t worry,’ Jenny added hastily. • I should add that I am not happy about this decision.
utter to say something: As soon as he’d uttered the words he regretted them. • They followed her without uttering a single word of protest.

Note: Utter is fairly formal and is mainly used in written English.

3.4 To ask someone to do something
ask sb to do sth to say that you want someone to do something: He asked us to join him. • She asked me not to tell anyone. • The writer has asked not to be named.

plead to ask for something in an urgent or emotional way: ‘Please help us,’ Claire pleaded. • I pleaded with you to stay, but you turned your back on me.

beg or implore sb (to do sth) to ask someone to do something in a way that shows you want it very much: I’m begging you, please help me. • Don’t go,’ she implored. • They implored us to help them. • He begged her not to leave.
call for sth to say publicly that something must happen: Several of the newspapers were calling for his resignation.

appeal for sth to ask people publicly to do something, especially in a difficult situation: Both sides have appealed for calm. • Police have appealed for the mother to come forward.
call on or call upon sb to do sth to officially ask a person or organization to do something in order to end a bad situation: We call upon the government to end this discrimination now. • He called on the kidnappers to release all the hostages.

4.2 To make a written or spoken comment about something
say the most general way of reporting a comment that someone makes: Jane said she’d bring some food. • He
saw that we shouldn’t wait. • Did he say when he was coming back? • The committee said yes, so we can go ahead.

cite to make a written or spoken remark, especially one that gives an opinion: Researchers who read the report commented that it contains many errors. • He commented, ‘Not to use a helmet while abseiling is foolhardy.’

observe to make a written or spoken comment about something, especially something that other people have not noticed: ‘You always arrive at the right time,’ he observed drily. • In his book he observes that the president was an able diplomat.

remark to make a comment or express your opinion about something: ‘This is delicious,’ Louise remarked. • My father remarked that I looked unhappy. • People often remark on how alike we look.

Note: Remark is mainly used in written English, especially fiction.

point out to make a written or spoken comment about something, especially when this is new or surprising information: The author points out that many areas of this vast country remain unexplored. • It seems appropriate to point out some fundamental shortcomings in the technique.

express to tell someone about a feeling, opinion, or aim: His teachers expressed concern about his progress. • I would like to express my thanks to my parents for their support. • The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author alone. • The government has reportedly expressed an interest in the plan.

4.3 To say something using particular words or a particular style

put to say or write something in a particular way: She put it very well when she described him as ‘brilliant but lazy’. • Put simply, it was an offer we couldn’t afford to turn down. • I wouldn’t have put it quite like that myself. • As John put it, life would be so nice if we didn’t have to work.

Phrases using ‘put it’ that are used to say how something is expressed:

how shall I put it or let me put it this way used when you are going to say something honest that may sound rude: How shall I put it? He may be rich, but he certainly isn’t attractive. • Let me put it this way, if she was my daughter I wouldn’t let her go.

to put it another way used when you are going to explain something in a different way: He was too trusting. Or, to put it another way, he had no head for business.

to put it bluntly used when you are going to be honest, even if this might upset people: To put it bluntly, their demands are unreasonable.

to put it in a nutshell used for saying that you are going to explain something complicated in a quick and simple way: To put it in a nutshell, we are not prepared to compromise our principles for the sake of short-term gain.

word to express something in a particular way: I’m not quite sure how to word this. • a strongly-worded message.

phrase to express something in a particular way in speech or writing: I mentally phrased the letter I would write him. • The regulations were badly phrased and gave rise to a lot of confusion.

rephrase to say something again using different words, in order to express your meaning in a way that is more clear or more acceptable: The declaration was rephrased in terms that both sides could agree on.

be couched in sth if something is couched in a particular way, it is expressed in that way: The letter was brief, and couched in the most guarded terms. • The document was couched in language designed to satisfy the government’s critics at home.

Note: Be couched in is formal and is mainly used in written English.

4.4 To say something indirectly

imply to show your opinion about something by the things that you say, but without directly stating what you think: She stressed that her comments did not imply criticism of the study. • Are you implying that he’s not up to the job?

suggest to say that something is likely to exist or be true: Are you seriously suggesting that she did this on purpose? • I would like to suggest an alternative explanation.

Note: The most common meaning of suggest is to offer an idea or plan for someone to consider: I suggest we have dinner first and then watch the film. • Can anyone suggest what we should do to increase sales?

hint to let people know what you are thinking or feeling, but without saying it directly: She hinted that she would like an MP3 player for her birthday. • Officials are hinting at the possibility of an agreement later this week.

4.5 To say something again

repeat to say something again: Can you repeat what you just said? • He repeated that he was not interested in buying a new car.

reiterate to repeat something in order to emphasize it or make it very clear to people: I would just reiterate that the entire international community is strongly united in this. • The minister reiterated his opposition to the plans.

Note: Reiterate is formal and is used in written English and formal spoken contexts.

run through sth again or go over sth again to explain something again in order to help someone understand it or remember it: Before leaving, he ran through the safety instructions once again. • Could you just go over the words one more time with me?

confirm to say something again, especially officially or publicly: We can confirm that a British man has been reported missing. • The writer confirmed he was taking a 12-month break.

5. Speak

Speak, talk, say, and tell are all very similar in meaning, but are used in different ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Focusing on</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPEAK</td>
<td>the act or manner of speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALK</td>
<td>having a conversation or discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAY</td>
<td>reporting what someone says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELL</td>
<td>giving information to someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These pages are designed to give up-to-date information on topics that are relevant to everyone who has any interest in the way the English language is being used at the beginning of the 21st century. They have all been written by people who are experts in the field they are writing about here; indeed, most of the authors have published more detailed work, which you might like to read if you find these pages interesting. They are intended to give you a deeper understanding of such areas as Idioms, Metaphor, and Word Formation, all of which are crucial for users of the English language. Our aim is to encourage you to think about the language, and to realize what an exciting tool it is when you can use it with confidence. There is a lot of food for thought on these pages, and teachers will find there is plenty of scope in these topics for classroom activities and discussion.

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A. UNDERSTANDING IDIOMS

by Professor Frank Boers, University of Antwerp, Belgium

IDIOMS ARE SEMI-FIXED EXPRESSIONS that are typically used in a figurative sense. For example, in the sentence ‘Exams are part of a carrot and stick method’, there are obviously no real carrots and sticks involved. The image is that of a donkey being encouraged to move forward by dangling a carrot in front of it or by hitting it with a stick. We can use this idiom to describe any event that involves more abstract rewards (the carrot) and threats (the stick).

All languages are full of idioms, and native speakers use them spontaneously without even thinking about their figurative nature. Language learners generally find idioms hard to understand, and this is not surprising. For example, learners are often not sure what image the idiom is based on. If a native speaker proposes to show you the ropes and you are not familiar with this expression, you might not immediately understand that she is proposing to teach you how to do a certain job. It would help if you knew that the expression was originally used in the context of sailing, where an experienced sailor had to show a novice how to handle the ropes on a boat.

Are idioms arbitrary?

Linguists used to believe that idioms were completely arbitrary: that is, you could not guess their meaning from the words they consist of. Consequently, teachers used to tell their students that the only way to master idioms was to learn them by heart. Fortunately, we now know that many idioms can be explained after all, and so they can be learned in systematic ways. Research tells us that when idioms are presented as non-arbitrary features of language, students find them much easier to understand and remember. In the following sections we will demonstrate the non-arbitrary nature of idioms.

Why idioms mean what they mean

Many idioms are derived from our general physical experiences (see Metaphor). For example, the expressions hot under the collar, breathe fire, and let off steam all refer to being angry, and they do this through the image of anger as something hot inside us. This makes sense to us, because when people get angry they often get red in the face as a result of rising body temperature. Similarly, the figurative expressions lend someone a hand, try your hand at something, and have your hands tied all use the image of the hand to refer to performing an action. This also makes sense, because we know from everyday experience that most activities involve the use of our hands.

Other idioms are derived from more specific areas of experience (or domains), such as sport, war, or cooking. Some of these domains may no longer be common in present-day life, but if we learn the original context in which the idiom was used and if we understand the image it is based on, we will find it is easier to understand. A helpful way of remembering idioms is to group them according to the domain that they are derived from, as follows:

**Idioms derived from sailing:**
- clear the decks to first finish a job completely
- a leading light a good example to follow
- be on an even keel to make calm, steady progress

**Idioms derived from war:**
- stick to your guns to refuse to change your opinion
- fight a losing battle to be unlikely to succeed
- be in the front line to have an important role

**Idioms derived from entertainment (the theatre, the circus etc.):**
- behind the scenes in secret
- waiting in the wings ready to act when needed
- a balancing act a difficult compromise

Which of the three domains shown above would you associate the following idioms with?
- take something on board
- close ranks
- steer clear of someone
- be centre stage
- a last-ditch effort
- the curtain comes down

If you recognize the origin of an idiom, you will often be able to work out its meaning on your own. For instance, the idiom put something on the back burner originates from the domain of cooking, and take a back seat comes from the domain of driving. Once you recognize these connections, it will be easier to understand sentences like these:
- We put the project on the back burner.
- The students were working well together, so I decided to take a back seat.

**Idioms and culture**

In general, idioms that are derived from our physical experiences, such as those that associate anger with heat, show strong similarities across different cultures, and they tend to be fairly easy to understand. This is not surprising, because basic physical experiences (like being hot or cold, sick or well) are shared universally. This does not mean that these idioms can simply be translated word for word from one language to another: their precise form and wording will often differ across languages. Nevertheless, the general images are often the same.

On the other hand, idioms that are derived from more specific domains are likely to differ across cultures, even cultures that are closely related. That is because not all domains from which idioms are derived have been equally important in all cultures. For example, English is particularly rich in expressions that are derived from the domain of sailing, and this is hardly surprising when we consider England’s long history as a seafaring nation. Another area where cultures differ is in the popularity of certain games and sports. English has a lot of idioms that are derived from the following domains:

**Horse racing:**
- neck and neck it is hard to say who will win
- win hands down to win easily
- go off the rails to go wrong, out of control

**Gambling:**
- raise the ante to increase the risk
- hedge your bets to not take any risks
- pay over the odds to pay too much
Card games:  
come up trumps to perform unexpectedly well  
follow suit to do the same as others  
not miss a trick to not fail a single time

Running contests:  
jump the gun to do something too soon  
have the inside track to have an advantage  
quick off the mark reaching quickly

Hunting:  
don’t beat about the bush be direct, get to the point  
open season on someone it’s a period to criticize someone  
it’s in the bag success is certain

Using idioms effectively  
An idiom derived from a ‘playful’ domain like games or sports is more likely to be used in informal discourse than an idiom derived from a more serious domain, such as warfare. For example, score an own goal is likely to occur more often in informal discourse than break ranks.

An idiom typically evokes a scene that is part of a larger scenario. For example, a debate between two politicians can be described as if it were a boxing match, and – because English has many idioms derived from boxing – you can choose particular phrases to highlight a specific stage or aspect of the contest. So, before the actual debate starts, the two politicians may flex their muscles to frighten the opponent; during the debate one of them may carelessly lower his guard or bravely stick his neck out and perhaps take it on the chin; if the debate gets more intense the opponents will not pull their punches; if it seems that they really want to hurt each other, you can say that the gloves are off; and after a while one of them may be on the ropes (=close to defeat) and may finally admit defeat and throw in the towel.

Idioms and sound patterns  
The above paragraphs help to explain the meaning and use of idioms, but they do not explain, for example, why we say it takes two to tango rather than it takes two to waltz, nor why we say go with the flow rather than go with the stream. Part of the answer lies in sound patterns. For example, up to 20% of English idioms are made up of words that alliterate (=use the same sound at the start of each word) or of words that rhyme. This is a useful fact to know, because alliteration (in idioms such as through thick and thin, spick and span, below the belt, rule the roost, meet your match) and rhyme (in idioms such as an eager beaver, the name of the game, horses for courses, steer clear of) can help you to remember expressions like these. Sound patterns are also at work in many common non-idiomatic expressions, such as compounds (e.g. pickpocket, beer belly); collocations (e.g. tell the truth, wage war); similes (e.g. cool as a cucumber, fit as a fiddle); proverbs (e.g. curiosity killed the cat, where there’s a will there’s a way); and many other phrases (e.g. time will tell, from dawn till dusk).

Word order in idioms  
As we have seen, the meanings and the lexical make-up of idioms can often be explained in systematic ways. But what about word order in idioms of the form ‘X and Y’? For example, why do we say give and take rather than ‘take and give’? Here are some of the reasons why English idioms may choose one order of words rather than another:

1. The word order may be the most ‘logical’, given the origin of the idiom. For example, in the expression swallow something hook, line, and sinker, the image is that of a fish that first swallows the bait on the hook of the fishing rod, and then swallows the line, and finally swallows even the sinker (=small heavy object that makes the line sink in the water). In short, the word order reflects the sequence of events in the literal scenario. So, recognition of the literal origin of the expression may help you to make sense of its word order. You may also want to try this with these idioms: crash and burn, cut and dried, and signed and sealed.

2. The word order may be the most ‘natural’, because a flow of information tends to move from general to specific aspects. For example, the word order alive and kicking makes more sense than kicking and alive, because kicking implies being alive. The first word creates a frame in which the second appears, as in bread and butter (you first need bread to put the butter on), chapter and verse (you first find the chapter and then the verse in that chapter), and cloak and dagger (you first only see the cloak and then – perhaps too late – the dagger).

3. The word order may sound best, because of its rhythm. English shows a preference for putting the longest word last (e.g. part and parcel, belt and braces, rack and ruin).

4. Finally, the word order may simply be the easiest to say. Compare which of the following pairs requires least movement of your tongue when you say them aloud: it’s raining cats and dogs or it’s raining dogs and cats. You can also try this with blood, sweat, and tears; home and dry; rough and tumble; and, of course, give and take.

Conclusion  
It should be clear that idioms are not as arbitrary as we used to think they were. We have shown here several aspects of idiomatic language – especially their source domains and the sound patterns they make – that can help us to tackle idioms in more systematic ways. And when we recognize the systems at work in a language, it becomes easier to understand, learn, and remember things.

Further reading  
Suggestions for the teaching of idioms are made in the following articles:


A collection of research papers on the teaching of idioms can be found in the following book:

Find the meaning of words you read and hear
- menus take you straight to the right meaning
- subject-specific vocabulary, World English and encyclopaedic entries
- clear definitions using the most common words

Write and speak with confidence
- more information about the most frequent 7,500 words – the ideal vocabulary size for an advanced learner – which are printed in red and graded with stars
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