



# 1001 Words You Need to Know and Use

An A–Z of  
Effective  
Vocabulary

Martin Manser

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An A-Z of Effective Vocabulary

Martin H. Manser

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# How to use this book

If you are a student writing an essay ... if you are in business and need inspiration on how to express yourself in a report or want to persuade colleagues to adopt your proposal ... if you are a team leader needing to motivate your staff ... if you are a voluntary worker writing a fundraising bid ... if you are applying for a job and are preparing your CV ... if you are negotiating terms for a contract ... if you are writing publicity material ... then in each of these settings you need to use words convincingly. In such situations, you may find yourself:

- expressing your opinion
- writing clearly
- discussing a topic
- describing an event
- informing an audience
- talking about yourself
- evaluating a point of view
- speaking in an interview
- motivating personnel

but you may well also find yourself unable to think of words that would be positive and effective. This is the benefit of this book.

You can begin by turning to the **Index**. On the contents page are listed all the headings of the Index. For example, if you are *writing a report*, you can turn to page 162 and you will find a list of words you could use in your report, to help present your explanation or argument in a persuasive way. For example, you could choose *accurate*, *compelling*, *enterprise*, or *significant*. By then turning to the main A-Z sequence you will find guidance on the meaning and use of these words.

Each main entry word consists of the following:

**headword**, part of speech (word class), definition, and examples. The open square symbol '□' is used for clarity to separate multiple parts of speech and multiple example sentences. Where some words are used in particular contexts, e.g. *formal*, this is shown (see for example **propensity**). Many entries also include comments on **Usage** with advice on, for example, similar words, spelling tips, pitfalls to avoid, and words that combine with the headword in particular contexts. Under **Word family** are listed words that are related to the main headword.

## **important** adjective

**1** having a great effect on people or things; of great value: *Listening is an important part of the job.* **2** (of people or groups) having a lot of power or influence: *Some disabled people hold important jobs in industry.*

**Usage *important* or *significant*?** *Important* is the more general of these words. Things that are *significant* are important within a particular context or from a particular point of view. *Significant* is often used when someone wants to suggest that the level of importance of something has been measured in some way. Figures can be *statistically significant* but not *statistically important*. *Significant* but not *important* can mean 'great in degree': *a significant (not: important) proportion of the population*.

**Word family *importance*** *noun*: *The signing of the trade agreement was an event of immense importance.* ***importantly*** *adverb*: *More importantly, how much will it cost?*

***significant*** *adjective*

large or important enough to have an effect or be noticed: *There are no significant differences between the two groups of students.* □ *The results of the experiment are not statistically significant.* □ *These views are held by a significant proportion of the population.*

**Usage *significant* or *important*?** See ***important***.

**Word family *significance*** *noun*: *Tourism is of considerable significance in this area.* ***significantly*** *adverb*: *High calcium concentrations in drinking water have been correlated with a significantly reduced risk of developing breast cancer.*

Note that only a selection of the senses of a word that are relevant to this book are included, rather than an exhaustive list of all possible senses.

Note too that in some cases a word relevant to a particular use in the Index may be listed under the **Word family** part of an entry.

### Key to pronunciation

A few words show the pronunciation where this might cause difficulty. Foreign pronunciations are shown in the way an English speaker would say them. For example:

***penchant*** *noun*

a strong or habitual liking for something or tendency to do something: *He has a penchant for adopting stray dogs.* □ *the company's penchant for system integration.*

**Usage** The word *penchant* is pronounced **pon-shon**.

Pronunciations are divided into syllables by means of hyphens. The main stress is shown in **bold** type.

### List of respelling symbols

Vowels	Examples	Vowels	Examples
a	as in <b>cat</b>	oh	as in <b>most</b>
ah	as in <b>calm</b>	oi	as in <b>join</b>
air	as in <b>hair</b>	oo	as in <b>soon</b>
ar	as in <b>bar</b>	oor	as in <b>poor</b>
aw	as in <b>law</b>	or	as in <b>corn</b>
ay	as in <b>say</b>	ow	as in <b>cow</b>
e	as in <b>bed</b>	oy	as in <b>boy</b>
ee	as in <b>meet</b>	u	as in <b>cup</b>
eer	as in <b>beer</b>	uh	as in the 'a' in <b>along</b>
er	as in <b>her</b>	uu	as in <b>book</b>
ew	as in <b>few</b>	y	as in <b>cry</b>
i	as in <b>pin</b>	yoo	as in <b>unit</b>
l	as in <b>eye</b>	yoor	as in <b>Europe</b>
o	as in <b>top</b>		

Consonants	Examples	Consonants	Examples
b	as in <b>bat</b>	p	as in <b>pram</b>
ch	as in <b>chin</b>	r	as in <b>red</b>
d	as in <b>day</b>	s	as in <b>sit</b>
f	as in <b>fat</b>	sh	as in <b>shop</b>
g	as in <b>get</b>	t	as in <b>top</b>
h	as in <b>hat</b>	th	as in <b>thin</b>
j	as in <b>jam</b>	th	as in <b>this</b>
k	as in <b>king</b>	v	as in <b>van</b>
kh	as in <b>loch</b>	w	as in <b>will</b>
l	as in <b>leg</b>	y	as in <b>yes</b>
m	as in <b>man</b>	z	as in <b>zebra</b>
ng	as in <b>sing, finger</b>	zh	as in <b>vision</b>
nk	as in <b>thank</b>		

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# Aa

## able adjective

**1** with the power, skill, or means to do something: *He was able to read Greek at the age of eight.* **2** having considerable skill, proficiency, or intelligence: *a very able public speaker.*

**Usage** **able**, **capable**, or **competent**? If you describe someone as **able**, you emphasize the intellectual capacity: *The university attracts able students from across the world.*

Describing someone as **capable** conveys a sense of confidence that a task entrusted to them will be done well: *She delegated management tasks to her highly capable deputy.* Someone described as **competent** has the necessary skills or knowledge to perform a certain task: *a team of competent trainers.*

**Word family** **ability** noun **ably** adverb

## abundant adjective

**1** existing or available in large quantities; plentiful: *There was abundant evidence to support the theory.* **2 (abundant in)** having plenty of: *riverbanks abundant in beautiful wild plants.*

**Word family** **abundance** noun: *The tropical island boasts an abundance of wildlife.*

**abundantly** adverb extremely: *She made her wishes abundantly clear.*

## accelerate verb

**1** to start to go faster: *The car accelerated to overtake me.* **2** to make something happen faster or sooner than expected: *The key question is whether stress accelerates ageing.*

**Usage** The opposite, **decelerate**, is used in more formal, especially written, contexts than **accelerate**: *Economic growth decelerated sharply in January.*

**Word family** **acceleration** noun: *a car with good acceleration.* □ *an acceleration in the rate of growth.*

## accentuate verb

to make more noticeable or prominent; to emphasize: *A deep tan accentuated his blue eyes.*

**Word family** **accentuation** noun: *The conflict led to an accentuation of social divisions.*

## access noun, verb

noun **1** the way or means of approaching or entering a place: *The staircase gives access to the top floor.* **2** the right or opportunity to use something or to see something: *We grant awards to help people gain access to good training.* □ verb **1** to enter a place: *Single rooms have private facilities accessed via the balcony.* **2** to obtain data stored in a computer: *the program used to access the data.*

**Usage** The verb **access** is standard and common in computing and related terminology. But its use outside computing contexts, although well established, is sometimes criticized as being 'jargon': *You must use a password to access the account.* If you want an alternative, you could use a word or phrase such as **enter** or **gain access to**: *to gain access to the information.*

## accessible adjective

**1** able to be reached or used: *The building has been made accessible to disabled people.*

**2** friendly and easy to talk to; approachable: *He is more accessible than most tycoons.*

**3** easily understood or enjoyed; clear: *The programme tries to make science more accessible to young people.*

**Word family** **accessibility** noun: *Internet accessibility is available.* □ *to monitor the accessibility of information.*

## acclaim verb, noun

verb to praise enthusiastically and publicly: *The car was acclaimed as the best in its class.*

□ noun enthusiastic public praise: *She has won international acclaim for her commitment to democracy.*

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Word family **acclaimed** adjective: a widely acclaimed novelist.

**accolade** noun

something given as a special honour or as a reward for excellence: *He was finally awarded the ultimate accolade—British Hairdresser of the Year, 2007.*

**accomplish** verb

to succeed in doing or completing something: *The first part of the plan has been safely accomplished.*

Word family **accomplished** adjective having become very good at something through training or experience; expert: *He was an accomplished linguist, fluent in six languages.*

**accomplishment** noun

something impressive that has been done or achieved after a lot of work: *The reduction of inflation was a remarkable accomplishment.*

Usage **accomplishment** or **achievement**? *Accomplishment* is often used to describe a great success which has benefited others, especially in politics, and in contexts in which important intentions or discoveries are described: *the technical accomplishment of modern medicine.* *Achievement* is usually used to describe a person's academic, professional, artistic, or sporting success: *It was an extraordinary achievement for such a young player.*

**accountability** noun

the fact of being responsible for your decisions and expected to explain them when asked: *There have been proposals for greater police accountability.*

Word family **accountable** adjective: *Ministers were held accountable to parliament for the food shortage.*

**accredited** adjective

officially recognized or approved; working with official permission: *The former business school is now a fully accredited university.*

Word family **accreditation** noun: *the accreditation of engineering qualifications.*

**accurate** adjective

correct in every detail: *Accurate records must be kept at all times.*

Usage **accurate**, **exact**, or **precise**? An *accurate* statement has been put together with great care and corresponds to the facts:

*an accurate and intelligible technical drawing.* *Exact* emphasizes that something has been definitely identified, with no margin for vagueness or error: *We may never know the exact number of deaths.* *Precise* refers to minute attention to detail and implies that something can be measured or quantified: *We have no precise details of job losses yet.*

Word family **accuracy** noun: *They questioned the accuracy of the information.* **accurately** adverb: *The article accurately reflects public opinion.*

**achieve** verb

to succeed in bringing about or reaching a desired object or result by effort, skill, or courage: *He achieved his ambition to become a press photographer.*

Usage **achievement** or **accomplishment**? See **accomplishment**.

**active** adjective

**1** always busy doing things, especially physical activities: *Although he's nearly 80, he is still very active.* **2** giving a lot of time or attention to something; making a determined effort and not leaving something to happen by itself: *They take an active part in school life.* **3** doing something regularly; functioning: *sexually active teenagers.*

Usage The opposites of *active* in sense **2** are *inactive* and *passive*: *The area has a large, but politically inactive population.* □ *He played a passive role in the relationship.*

**activist** noun

a person who works to achieve political or social change, especially as a member of an organization with particular aims: *Gay activists marched in London today to protest against the new law.*

Usage **activist** or **campaigner**? In many cases, you can use either word: *a human-rights/pro-democracy activist/campaigner.* An *activist* is likely to belong to an organization with particular aims, especially representing a particular group of people: *union activists.* A *campaigner* may belong to an organization or may work as an individual, sometimes for a specific aim: *He has long been a campaigner for better communication between doctors and patients.*

**adapt** verb

to change something in order to make it suitable for a new use or situation: *Most of*

these tools have been specially adapted for use by disabled people. □ These styles can be adapted to suit individual tastes.

**Usage *adaptable* or *flexible*?** *Adaptable* is used more to describe how people, animals, etc. manage when conditions change in the longer term, e.g. if the climate becomes much colder or warmer: *The spider plant is perhaps the most adaptable of houseplants.* *Flexible* is used especially to describe working situations in which people and systems need to be able to change frequently to suit conditions such as customer requirements or financial restrictions: *job sharing and other flexible working arrangements.*

**Word family *adaptability* noun *adaptable* adjective** able to change or be changed in order to deal successfully with new situations: *Older workers can be as adaptable and quick to learn as anyone else.*

### adjust verb

to change something slightly to make it more suitable for a new set of conditions or to make it work better: *This button is for adjusting the volume.*

**Usage *adjust* or *modify*?** The word *adjust* is used especially to talk about changing the setting on a piece of equipment: *to adjust the speed.* It is often a continuous process, in response to changing conditions: *to adjust the settings constantly.* *Modify* is used especially to talk about making a more permanent change to a piece of equipment in order to make it perform a new function. You can also either *adjust* or *modify* your language or behaviour according to the situation you find yourself in.

**Word family *adjustable* adjective:** *fully adjustable seat belts.* ***adjustment* noun:** *I've made a few adjustments to the design.*

### admire verb

**1** to respect someone for what they are or for what they have done: *I admire your courage.*

**2** to look at something that is attractive and/or impressive: *He stood back to admire his handiwork.*

**Usage *admire* or *respect*?** *Admire* expresses a stronger feeling than *respect*. If you *admire* someone, it usually means you agree with them and/or want to be like them: *You have to admire the way he handled the situation.* If you *respect* someone you might not agree

with them or want to be like them, but you still recognize their good qualities: *These academics may be respected as experts in their field, but they can also be quite arrogant.*

**Word family *admirable* adjective:** *She made her point with admirable clarity.* ***admiration* noun:** *I have great admiration for her as a writer.* ***admiring* adjective:** *She was used to receiving admiring glances from men.*

### advance noun, verb

**noun** progress or development in a particular activity or area of understanding: *We live in an age of rapid technological advance.* □ **verb** **1** (of knowledge or technology) to develop and improve: *Our knowledge of the disease has advanced considerably in recent years.* **2** to help something to succeed; to further: *They worked together to advance the cause of democracy.* **3** to suggest an idea, a theory, or a plan for other people to discuss: *The article advances a new theory to explain changes in climate.*

**Usage** The noun *advance* or *advances* is used especially to refer to scientific, technological, and medical achievements.

**Word family *advanced* adjective** **1** using the most recent technology, methods, or designs: *Even in advanced technological societies, poverty persists.* **2** (of a course of study) at a high or difficult level: *There were only three of us on the advanced course.*

***advancement* noun (formal)** the process of helping something to make progress or succeed; progress, e.g. in a job or social class: *There are good opportunities for advancement if you have the right skills.*

### advantage noun

a condition or factor that puts someone or something in a more favourable position: *Our technology will give you a competitive advantage.*

**Word family *advantaged* adjective** being in a good social or financial position: *We aim to improve opportunities for the less advantaged in society.* ***advantageous* adjective** good or useful for a particular person or group: *An agreement would be advantageous to both sides.* ***take advantage of* 1** to make unfair use of something for your own benefit: *You mustn't let them take advantage of your generosity.* **2** to make good use of the opportunities offered by something: *He took advantage of his colleague's absence and tidied his office.*



## a

**adventure** *noun*

**1** an unusual, exciting, and daring experience: *his recent adventures in Italy.* **2** excitement arising from this: *She travelled the world in search of adventure.*

**Word family** **adventurer** *noun* a person who enjoys exciting new experiences, especially going to unusual places: *He's a born adventurer.* **adventurous** *adjective* **1** (of a person) willing to try new things or enjoying being in exciting new situations: *For the most adventurous tourists, there are trips into the mountains with a local guide.* **2** (of a thing) new and exciting or unusual and sometimes dangerous: *The menu contained traditional favourites as well as more adventurous dishes.*

**advice** *noun*

an opinion or a suggestion about what someone should do in a particular situation: *Can you give me some advice on where to buy good maps?*

**Usage** Advice is usually given by someone with greater experience or authority than the person they are advising. If you say *take my advice* to someone who is older or more experienced than you, they may be offended.

**Usage** **advise** or **recommend**? See **recommend**.

**Word family** **advisable** *adjective* sensible and a good idea to achieve something: *Early booking is advisable.* **advise** *verb* to tell someone what they should do in a particular situation: *I'd advise you not to go out on your own.* **adviser** *noun* a person who gives advice, especially someone who knows a lot about a particular subject: *As your legal adviser, it is my duty to warn you against it.* **advisory** *adjective* having the role of giving professional advice: *He acted in a purely advisory capacity.*

**advocate** *verb, noun*

*verb* to request or recommend something publicly: *The group does not advocate the use of violence.* □ *noun* **1** a person who supports a speaker in favour of someone or a public plan or action: *a staunch advocate of free speech.* **2** a person who defends someone in court: *Those charged should be represented by trained, qualified legal advocates.*

**affinity** *noun*

**1** (*formal*) a strong feeling that you understand and like someone or something: *He has a natural affinity with animals and birds.*

**2** a close relationship between two people or things that have similar qualities, structures, or features: *There is a close affinity between Spanish and Italian.*

**affirm** *verb*

**1** to state emphatically or publicly: *He affirmed the country's commitment to peace.* **2** to declare your support for; to uphold or defend: *The charter affirmed the rights of national minorities.* **3** to value someone highly; to recognize: *Children need to be affirmed by their parents.*

**Usage** **affirm** or **assert**? You *affirm* something in order to reassure people that it is true. You *assert* something when you want other people to believe and support you: *I can affirm no one will lose their job.* □ *He asserted he had no intention of resigning.*

**Word family** **affirmation** *noun*: *an affirmation of basic human values.*

**agenda** *noun*

a list of items to be discussed at a meeting: *The next item on the agenda is the publicity budget.*

**Usage** The phrase *hidden agenda* is used with disapproval to refer to the secret intentions behind what someone says or does: *There may be a hidden agenda behind this new proposal.*

**agree** *verb*

**1** to have the same opinion as another person or people: *I agree with your analysis.* **2** to be willing to accept or do something suggested by another person: *Do you think they'll agree to my proposal?* **3** (of two or more people) to decide on something: *Can we agree a price?* **4** (**agree with**) to be consistent with: *Your body language doesn't agree with what you are saying.*

**Usage** **agree** or **approve**? To *agree* is to say that you will do what someone wants or that you will allow something to happen: *He agreed to let me go early.* To *approve* is to officially agree a plan, suggestion, or request: *The committee unanimously approved the plan.*

**Word family** **agreeable** *adjective*

**1** enjoyable and pleasant. **2** willing to agree to do something: *Do you think they will be agreeable to our proposal?* **3** able to be agreed on; acceptable: *a compromise which is agreeable to both employers and unions.*

**agreement** *noun*: An agreement was finally reached between management and employees.

### aim *noun, verb*

*noun* what someone is trying to achieve; what something is supposed to achieve: *Our main aim is to increase sales.* □ *verb* **1** to try or plan to achieve a particular goal: *The government is aiming at a 50% reduction in unemployment.*

**2** to direct someone at something as an aim: *These measures are aimed at preventing violent crime.* **3** (of a product, service, or remark) to direct at a particular person or group; to intend for: *The book is aimed at young children.*

**Usage** **aim** or **purpose**? Your *aim* is what you want to achieve. Your *purpose* for doing something is your reason for doing it. *She set out the company's aims in her speech.* □ *The main purpose of the campaign is to raise money.*

### alive *adjective*

**1** continuing in existence or use: *Fortunately the old recipes are still very much alive.* **2** alert and active; animated: *Ken comes alive when he hears his music played.* **3** having interest and meaning: *We hope we will make history come alive for the children.* **4** (**alive to**) aware of and interested in; responsive to: *She was always alive to new ideas.*

**Usage** The word *alive* is not used in front of a noun.

### all-purpose *adjective*

that can be used for several different purposes: *Cheddar is an all-purpose cheese for cooking and eating.*

**Usage** **all-purpose** or **multi-purpose**? Both words are used only before nouns. *Multi-purpose* is a more positive word than *all-purpose* and emphasizes how useful and versatile a thing is: *The concert hall is actually a multi-purpose building that serves as a theatre, exhibition hall, and community centre.*

An *all-purpose* thing is more likely to be something quite ordinary that you just use for everything because you cannot afford or cannot be bothered to make or get something different for each purpose: *Each child had one pair of all-purpose shoes.* *All-purpose* is used more in American English.

### all-round *adjective*

**1** having very many abilities or uses; versatile: *an all-round artist.* **2** in many or all respects: *his all-round excellence.* **3** on or from every side

or in every direction: *The car's large glass area provides excellent all-round vision.*

**Usage** The word *all-round* is only used before a noun. In American English, the equivalent is *all-around*.

**Word family** **all-rounder** *noun* a person with a wide range of skills and abilities.

### alter *verb*

**1** to make different: *This development will alter the character of the town.* **2** to become different: *He had not altered greatly in the last ten years.*

**Usage** **alter** or **change**? *Change* is used more widely and frequently than *alter*. *Change* often suggests a complete change, whereas *alter* can suggest a smaller change: *The law needs to be altered* (= changed slightly to improve it). □ *The law needs to be changed* (= changed completely). *Alter* is also used when something does not change: *It doesn't alter the way I feel.*

**Word family** **alteration** *noun*: *The dress will not need much alteration.*

### alternative *noun, adjective*

*noun* something that you can choose to have or do out of two or more possibilities: *There is a vegetarian alternative on the menu every day.*

□ *adjective* **1** that can be used instead of something else: *Do you have an alternative solution?* **2** different from the usual or traditional way of doing something: *people attracted to alternative lifestyles.*

**Usage** **alternative**, **choice**, or **option**? *Alternative* is slightly more formal than *option*; *choice* is slightly less formal than *option*. *Choice* is most often used for 'the freedom to choose', although you can sometimes use *option* (but not *alternative*): *She doesn't have much option but to learn.*

**Word family** **alternatively** *adverb*

### amaze *verb*

to surprise very much: *What amazes me is how long she managed to hide it from us.*

**Usage** **amaze** or **astonish**? In most cases, you can use either word. If you are talking about something that both surprises you and makes you feel ashamed, you should use *astonish*: *He was astonished by his own stupidity.*

**Word family** **amazed** *adjective*: *She was amazed how little he had changed.* **amazement** *noun*: *To my amazement, he was able to recite the whole poem from memory.* **amazing**

## a

**adjective** very surprising, especially in a way that makes you feel pleasure or admiration: *An amazing number of people registered.*

**ambition** *noun*

**1** a strong desire to do or achieve something: *Her ambition was to become a model.* **2** desire and determination to achieve success: *young men and women with ambition.*

**Usage** **ambition** or **aspiration**? An **ambition** is usually a particular thing, often connected with success in your career. **Aspirations** are more general than **ambitions**: **aspirations** are all the things you hope to achieve in life, considered especially in terms of material possessions and social and career success.

**Word family** **ambitious** *adjective*

**1** determined to achieve success: *a ruthlessly ambitious business executive.* **2** requiring a great deal of effort, time, or money to succeed: *an ambitious six-year development plan.*

**amenable** *adjective*

**1** willing to cooperate or be influenced to do something; easy to control: *The manager was very amenable; nothing was too much trouble.*

**2 (amenable to)** able to be affected by: *conditions that are amenable to medical intervention.*

**Usage** The word **amenable** is used in rather formal, especially written, contexts, and is used showing that you feel approval or admiration for this quality.

**Word family** **amenability** *noun*

**amend** *verb*

to change a law, document, or statement slightly in order to correct a mistake or improve it: *He asked to see the amended version.*

**Word family** **amendment** *noun*: *Parliament passed the bill without further amendment.*

**amenity** *noun*

**1** a feature that makes a place pleasant, comfortable, or easy to live in: *The property is situated in a convenient location, close to all local amenities.* **2** the pleasantness or attractiveness of a place: *Gravel working means lorries, dust, noise, and a general loss of amenity.*

**analogy** *noun*

a comparison of one thing or another that has similar features, especially in order to explain

it: *The teacher drew an analogy between the human heart and a pump.*

**Word family** **analogous** *adjective* comparable in certain respects: *Sleep has often been thought of as being in some way analogous to death.*

**analyse** *verb*

to examine the nature of something, especially by separating it into its parts, in order to understand or explain it: *The job involves gathering and analysing data.*

**Word family** **analysis** *noun*: *an analysis of popular culture.* **analyst** *noun* a person whose job is to watch and consider events and situations in a particular area such as finance or politics so that they can give an opinion on them: *City analysts forecast pre-tax profits of £40 billion this year.* **analytical** *adjective*: *an analytical mind/approach.*

**animated** *adjective*

**1** full of life or excitement: *an animated conversation.* **2** (of a film) made to look as if pictures are moving: *an animated version of a classic fairy tale.*

**Word family** **animation** *noun*: *They started talking with animation.*

**announce** *verb*

to tell people officially about a decision or plans: *They haven't formally announced their engagement yet.*

**Usage** **announce** or **declare**? **Announce** is used more for giving facts; **declare** is used more for giving judgements: *The company's financial results were announced this afternoon.* □ *The painting was declared to be a forgery.*

**Word family** **announcement** *noun*: *An announcement by the minister is expected this afternoon.*

**anticipate** *verb*

**1** to believe that something will happen or that someone will do something: *We don't anticipate any major problems.* **2** to see what might happen in the future and try to take action to prepare for it: *We need someone who can anticipate and respond to changes in the fashion industry.*

**Usage** Some people prefer to limit the use of **anticipate** to sense **2** as there is a risk of ambiguity in certain contexts, e.g. *I anticipated his resignation, which could mean 'I expected it' or 'I expected and took action to prepare for it'.*

**Word family** **anticipation** *noun*: People are buying extra groceries in anticipation of heavy snowstorms.

### apparent adjective

**1** clearly seen or understood; obvious: She laughed for no apparent reason. **2** seeming real, but not necessarily so: his apparent lack of concern.

**Word family** **apparently** *adverb* as far as you know or can see: The child nodded, apparently content with the promise.

### appeal verb, noun

*verb* **1** to make a serious or heartfelt request:

Police are appealing for information about the incident. **2** to be attractive or interesting: It's a book that appeals to people of all ages.

*noun* **1** a serious or heartfelt request: His mother made an appeal for the return of the ring. **2** the quality of being attractive or interesting: the popular appeal of football.

**Word family** **appealing** *adjective* attractive or interesting: Village life is somehow more appealing.

### applaud verb

to express praise for someone or something because you strongly approve of them: We applaud his decision not to resign.

**Usage** This verb is not usually used in progressive tenses: I applaud her [not: I am applauding her] for having the courage to refuse.

### applicable adjective

directly connected with someone or something; likely to be true of someone or something: The same considerations are equally applicable to accident claims.

**Word family** **applicability** *noun*

### applied adjective

(especially of a subject or study) used in a practical way: applied mathematics.

**Usage** The word *applied* is usually used before a noun. The opposites are *theoretical* and *pure*, which are used to describe subjects that people study to increase their knowledge of the subject rather than to use that knowledge in a practical way: to study technology as opposed to pure science.

### apply verb

**1** to make a formal request, usually in writing, for something such as a job or a place at a

college or university: You can apply for the position by letter or online. **2** to be relevant: The regulations apply to all member states.

**3 (apply yourself)** to put all your effort into a task: If he applied himself, he could be the best in the world.

**Word family** **applicant** *noun* a person who is applying for something such as a job or a place at a college or university: There were over 500 applicants for the job. **application** *noun* **1** a formal, often written request for something, such as a job, permission to do something, or a place at a college or university: We put in our planning application over six weeks ago.

**2** the practical use of something, especially a theory, discovery, or invention: This essay examines the application of new technology to teaching.

### appoint verb

to choose someone for a job, especially an important one, or for a position of responsibility: They have appointed a new principal at my son's school.

**Word family** **appointment** *noun*: She took up an appointment as head of communications.

### appraisal noun

an assessment of the quality, performance, or nature of something: She carried out a thorough appraisal of the work.

**Usage** *Appraisal* is also the usual term in British English for a performance review, a meeting in which an employee discusses with their manager how well they have been doing their job: I've got my appraisal tomorrow.

**Word family** **appraise** *verb* **1** to assess the quality or nature of: There is a need to appraise existing techniques. **2** to give an employee an appraisal.

### appreciate verb

**1** to recognize the full worth of: She feels that he doesn't appreciate her. **2** to be grateful for; to welcome: I'd appreciate any information you can give me. **3** to understand a situation fully; to grasp the full implications of: I don't think you appreciate the difficulties we are facing.

**Word family** **appreciation** *noun*: Candidates should have a broad appreciation of contemporary issues. **appreciative** *adjective* feeling or sharing gratitude or pleasure: They were the most appreciative audience we'd played to.

a

**approach** *verb, noun*

*verb* to start to deal with in a particular way; to tackle: *you must approach the matter with caution.* □ *noun* **1** a way of dealing with something: *the traditional British approach to controlling air pollution.* **2** an initial proposal or request: *Doctors are considering an approach to the High Court.*

**Word family** **approachable** *adjective* friendly and easy to talk to: *Most students said they found the staff approachable.*

**appropriate** *adjective*

acceptable or correct for a particular situation or person: *Jeans are not appropriate for a formal interview.*

**Usage** The word *appropriate* may convey pleasure or satisfaction at the particular relevance of something: *It is appropriate that healing should still be considered important in the village where the Red Cross was born.* It can also be used to persuade others, sometimes by slight subterfuge, to agree with you that something is desirable: *We consider it is now appropriate to consult interested individuals and agencies.*

**Usage** **appropriate** or **suitable**? See **suitable**.  
**Word family** **appropriately** *adverb*

**approve** *verb*

**1** to agree officially to or accept as satisfactory: *The budget was approved by parliament.* **2** (**approve of**) to think that someone or something is good, acceptable, or suitable: *His boss doesn't approve of his party-boy lifestyle.*

**Usage** **approve** or **agree**? See **agree**.

**Word family** **approval** *noun*: *Proposals for the new licensing system will now go forward to the ministry for approval.* **approving** *adjective* showing that you think someone or something is good or acceptable: *He gave me an approving nod.*

**apt** *adjective*

suitable for a particular situation: *The theme could not be more apt.*

**Word family** **aptly** *adverb*: *the aptly named Grand Hotel.*

**aptitude** *noun*

a natural ability to do something well: *children with an aptitude for painting and drawing.*

**Usage** The word is used in rather formal, especially written, contexts.

**Word family** **aptitude test** *noun* a test designed to show whether someone has the natural ability for a particular job or educational course.

**arbitrate** *verb*

to officially settle an argument or disagreement between two people or groups: *The board has the power to arbitrate in disputes.*

**Word family** **arbitration** *noun*: *Both sides in the dispute agreed to go to arbitration.*

**arbitrator** *noun* a person who is chosen to settle a dispute: *When no agreement can be reached, the matter will be referred to an independent arbitrator.*

**archetype** *noun*

the most typical or perfect example of a particular kind of person or thing: *She is the archetype of an American movie star.*

**Usage** *Archetype* is not usually used with words that describe qualities such as *kindness* or *style*. It is more often used with concrete nouns to refer to how people and things match what we expect from someone or something of a particular class, profession, or type.

**Word family** **archetypal** *adjective*: *Blackpool is the archetypal British seaside resort.*

**ardent** *adjective*

very enthusiastic; passionate: *an ardent supporter of organic agriculture.*

**Usage** The word *ardent* is used in rather formal, especially written, contexts.

**Word family** **ardently** *adverb* **ardour** *noun*: *The rebuff did little to dampen his ardour.*

**arena** *noun*

a place or scene of activity, debate, or conflict: *He has re-entered the political arena.*

**Usage** The word *arena* is more commonly used in written than spoken contexts and especially where there is opposition between different groups or countries: *Space became an arena for global competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.*

**argue** *verb*

**1** to give reasons or evidence in support of something: *Sociologists argue that inequalities in industrial societies are being reduced.* **2** to speak angrily to someone because you disagree with them: *We're always arguing with each other about money.*

**Word family** **arguable** *adjective* **1** able to be argued or asserted: *It is arguable that the*



company was already experiencing problems.

**2** open to disagreement: *a highly arguable assumption.* **argument** *noun* **1** a reason or set of reasons that someone uses to show that something is true or correct: *There are strong arguments for and against childhood vaccinations.* **2** an angry disagreement.

### aroma *noun*

a pleasant, fairly strong smell, especially of food or drinks such as coffee: *the tantalizing aroma of fresh coffee.*

**Usage** **aroma**, **fragrance**, or **scent**? All three words describe a pleasant smell. **Aroma** is a fairly strong smell, especially of food, or drink such as coffee: *The aroma of fresh coffee wafted toward them.* **Fragrance** is a pleasant smell, for example of flowers or fruit: *These flowers were chosen for their delicate fragrance.* **Scent** is a light, pleasant smell: *The air was filled with the scent of wild herbs.*

**Word family** **aromatic** *adjective*: aromatic oils/herbs.

### arrange *verb*

**1** to put tidily or in a particular order: *The columns are arranged in rows.* **2** to organize or plan something: *A news conference was hastily arranged.*

**Word family** **arrangement** *noun*

**1** (usually **arrangements**): *I made arrangements for them to be met at the airport.* **2** an agreement to do something. **3** something that has been arranged in a neat or attractive way.

### array *noun*

a group or collection of things or people, often one that is large or impressive: *There is a vast array of literature on the subject.*

**Usage** The word **array** is usually used with an adjective that suggests that the large number of things makes a strong impression on someone: *faced with a bewildering array of choices.*

### arrest *verb*

to attract the attention of: *The church's stillness arrested her.*

**Word family** **arresting** *adjective* striking; eye-catching: *At 6 ft 6 in he was an arresting figure.* □ *another arresting performance by the movie star.* **arrestingly** *adverb*: *arrestingly beautiful.*

### articulate *adjective, verb*

**adjective** **1** (of a person) good at expressing ideas or feelings clearly in words: *He was unusually articulate for a ten-year-old.* **2** (of speech) clearly expressed or pronounced: *All we could hear were loud sobs, but no articulate words.* □ **verb** **1** to pronounce clearly and distinctly: *He articulated each word with precision.* **2** to express clearly in words: *The president articulated the feelings of the majority.* **Word family** **articulately** *adverb*

### artistic *adjective*

**1** having natural creative skill: *He applied his artistic abilities to connect with his family's cultural heritage.* **2** relating to or characteristic of art or artists: *an artistic temperament.* **3** pleasing to look at: *artistic designs.*

**Word family** **artistically** *adverb* **artistry** *noun* the skill of an artist: *I admired her exquisite musical artistry.*

### ascertain *verb*

to find out for certain the facts of a situation: *an attempt to ascertain the cause of the accident.*

**Usage** **ascertain** or **establish**? **Ascertain** is an even more formal way of saying **establish**. However, **establish** is usually only used in the context of official or scientific investigations; **ascertain** can also be used when you are trying to find out about someone's intentions and feelings, although it is still very formal: *Could you ascertain whether she will be coming to the meeting?* □ *The police have established that his injuries were caused by a fall.*

### aspect *noun*

**1** a particular part or feature of something: *a training course covering all aspects of the business.* **2** a particular appearance or quality: *The black eyepatch gave his face a sinister aspect.* **3** the side of a building facing a particular direction: *a summer house with a southern aspect.*

**Usage** In grammar, **aspect** is also used to show the form of a verb. There are three aspects in English: the progressive or continuous aspect (expressing duration, typically using the auxiliary verb **be** with a form in **-ing**, as in *I was reading a book*), the perfect (expressing completed action, typically using the auxiliary verb **have** with a past participle, as in *I have read the book*), and unmarked aspect (as in *He reads books*).

## a

**aspire verb**

to have a strong desire to achieve or become something: *She aspired to a scientific career.*  
**Word family** **aspiration** *noun* (usually **aspirations**) a strong desire to do or have something: *He never had any aspirations to enter politics.* **aspiring** *adjective*: *advice to aspiring writers.*

**assert verb**

to state clearly and firmly that something is true: *She continued to assert her innocence.*  
**Usage** **assert** or **affirm**? See **affirm**.  
**Word family** **assertion** *noun* a statement of an opinion that you strongly believe to be true, although it has not been proved: *I questioned his assertion that the risk was minimal.*

**assertive adjective**

expressing opinions or desires strongly and with confidence, so that people take notice: *You need to learn to be assertive and stand up for your rights.*

**Usage** **assertive** or **forceful**? **Assertive** emphasizes the confidence you have. **Forceful** emphasizes that you are strongly trying to persuade other people to believe the opinions that you express clearly and firmly. Note that both adjectives are used with approval in contrast to the adjectives **aggressive** and **pushy**. Those words are usually disapproving in tone and are used to describe someone who is trying too hard and may appear rude.  
**Word family** **assertiveness** *noun*: *an assertiveness training programme for women managers.*

**assess verb**

**1** to evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, or quality of: *The committee must assess the relative importance of the issues.* **2** to calculate or estimate the price or value of: *The damage was assessed at £5 billion.* **3** to test a student's knowledge or ability by giving them written work, examinations, or practical exercises: *Students will be assessed on their use of these skills.*  
**Word family** **assessment** *noun*: *undertake a detailed assessment of students' abilities.*

**asset noun**

a useful or valuable thing or person, especially because they help you to be successful: *She'll be a great asset to any company she works for.*

**Usage** The **assets** of a person or company are the property owned by them. The opposite of **asset** is **liability**. The **liabilities** of a person or company are the amount of money they owe. A **liability** is also a person or thing that causes a lot of problems: *Since his injury, Jones has become more of a liability than an asset to the team.*

**assiduous adjective**

(*formal*) showing or done with great care and thoroughness: *She was assiduous in pointing out every feature.*

**Word family** **assiduity** *noun* **assiduously** *adverb*

**assign verb**

**1** to give someone something that they can use, or to give them a task or responsibility: *Work duties were assigned at the beginning of the shift.*

**Word family** **assignment** *noun* a task that someone is given to do, usually as part of their job or studies: *You will be expected to complete three written assessments.*

**assist verb**

to make it easier or possible for someone to achieve something by doing something for them: *I spend much of my time assisting the chef.*

**Usage** The word **assist** is a more formal word for **help**. It is used in rather formal, especially written, contexts. It can also be used specifically to show that someone plays a subordinate role in a joint action: *A subcommittee should be appointed to assist the chairman.*

**Word family** **assistance** *noun*: *The work was completed with the assistance of carpenters.*

**assistant** *noun* **1** a person who ranks below a senior person. **2** a person who provides help in a particular role or type of work: *an administrative assistant.*

**associate verb, noun**

*verb* to connect in your mind: *I associated wealth with freedom.* □ *noun* a work partner or colleague: *The bank was run by his business associate.*

**Usage** **associate** or **colleague**? See **colleague**.

**Usage** **associate**, **connect**, or **relate**? When you **associate** two things in your mind, the connection just happens, often because of experiences you have already had. When you **relate** or **connect** two things in your mind, it

requires more of an effort because the connection is not so obvious or natural to you: *I always associate the smell of baking with my childhood.* □ *I found it hard to relate/connect the two ideas in my mind.* **Relate** can also be used to talk about a deliberate decision to make two things dependent on each other: *Pay increases will be related to productivity.* **Connect** can also be used to talk about facts or evidence that provide a link between things: *There was nothing to connect him with the crime.*

**Word family *associated* adjective** connected with someone or something because the two things often happen or exist together or because one thing causes the other: *Young people need to be made aware of the risks associated with drugs.* **association** *noun* **1** a group of people organized for a joint purpose. **2** a connection or relationship: *his close association with the university.* **3** an idea, memory, or feeling that is connected to someone or something: *The name had unpleasant associations for him.*

### **assume** verb

**1** to accept as true without having any proof: *I think we can safely assume the situation will continue.* **2** (formal) to take or begin to have power or responsibility: *The court assumed responsibility for the girl's welfare.* **3** (formal) to begin to have: *Foreign trade has assumed greater importance in recent years.* **4** to pretend to have: *He assumed an air of indifference.*

**Word family *assumed* adjective** that you believe to be true or to exist: *This report takes into account the assumed differences between the two states.* **assumption** *noun* a belief or feeling that something is true or that something will happen, although there is no proof: *They made certain assumptions about the market.*

### **assure** verb

**1** to tell someone that something is definitely true: *She's perfectly safe, I can assure you.* **2** to make something certain to happen: *Victory would assure her a place in the finals.*

**Word family *assurance* noun** *They asked for assurance on the safety of the system.* **assured** *adjective* certain to happen: *The French team are now assured of a place in the next round.*

### **astonish** verb

to surprise someone very much: *The news astonished everyone.*

**Usage *amaze* or *astonish*?** See **amaze**.

**Word family *astonished* adjective**: *He was astonished to learn he'd won the competition.*  
**astonishment** *noun*: *To my utter astonishment, she remembered my name.*

### **astound** verb

to surprise or shock someone very much: *His arrogance astounded her.*

**Word family *astounding* adjective** surprisingly impressive or notable: *The summit offers astounding views.*

### **astute** adjective

good at making accurate judgements about what to do in a particular situation: *An astute politician, he understood the need to get them on his side.*

**Word family *astutely* adverb *astuteness* noun**

### **atmosphere** noun

the way that a particular place or situation feels to you; feeling between two people or in a group of people: *In this playgroup, your children will play with other children in a warm friendly atmosphere.*

**Usage *atmosphere* or *mood*?** An atmosphere belongs especially to a place, and may stay the same over a period of time; a mood belongs to a group of people at a particular time and may change as time passes: *The mood of the meeting was distinctly pessimistic.*

### **attention** noun

the act of listening to, looking at, or thinking about someone or something carefully: *Now, please sit up and pay attention to what I am going to say.*

**Word family *attentive* adjective** listening or watching someone or something carefully and with interest: *Never before had she had such an attentive audience.*

### **attract** verb

(of a thing) to have qualities that you notice and like; (of a person) to have qualities that make you like and admire them: *The tall trees are what first attracted me to the place.*

**Word family *attraction* noun** a feature, quality, or person that makes something seem interesting and enjoyable and worth having or doing: *The apartment's main attraction is the large pool.*



## a

**attractive adjective**

**1** pleasant to look at: *This is a big house with an attractive garden.* **2** having qualities that arouse interest: *an attractive investment proposition.*

**Usage** The word *attractive* is used when the speaker or writer does not want to give the impression of being influenced by strong personal feelings.

**Word family** **attractively** adverb

**audacious adjective**

showing a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks: *a series of audacious takeovers.*

**Usage** **audacious**, **bold**, or **daring**? See **bold**.

**Word family** **audaciously** adverb **audacity** noun: *The sheer audacity of the plan amazed everyone.*

**audition noun, verb**

**noun** an interview for an actor, singer, etc. in which they give a practical demonstration of their skills: *He went for an audition with the Royal Ballet.* □ **verb** to assess or be assessed by means of an audition: *I auditioned and was lucky enough to be given the part.*

**augur verb**

(**augur well/badly**) (*formal*) to be a sign of a good/bad outcome: *Conflicts among the various groups do not augur well for the future of the peace talks.*

**Usage** The word *augur* should not be confused with the noun *auger*, a tool for boring holes.

**aura noun**

a quality or feeling that is very noticeable and seems to surround a person or place: *There was a faint aura of mystery about him.*

**auspicious adjective**

(*formal*) showing signs that something is likely to be successful in the future: *It seemed an auspicious start to the new year.*

**Usage** The word *auspicious* usually describes a time or occasion; it is used with such nouns as *day*, *moment*, *occasion*, *start*, and *beginning*.

**Usage** **auspicious**, **opportune**, or **timely**? See **opportune**.

**austere adjective**

**1** simple and plain, with no decoration, usually because that is what someone prefers: *the austere simplicity of the building.* **2** without

comforts or luxuries: *their austere living conditions.*

**Usage** When used to refer to a person to mean 'strict and serious in appearance and behaviour' (*My father was a distant austere man*) the word *austere* tends to be used with disapproval. This is in contrast to the more approving sense **1** above, which is used to refer to things. Sense **2** above is more neutral in tone.

**Word family** **austerely** adverb **austerity** noun

**authentic adjective**

**1** known to be real, genuine, and not a copy: *I don't know if the painting is authentic.* **2** true and giving an accurate and realistic description of something: *an authentic account of life in the desert.* **3** made to be exactly the same as the original: *an authentic model of the ancient town.*

**Word family** **authentically** adverb

**authenticate** verb to prove or show something to be true, genuine, or valid: *He must produce evidence that will authenticate his claim.* **authenticity** noun

**authoritative adjective**

**1** that you can trust and respect as true and correct: *He is credited with writing the most authoritative and up-to-date book on the subject.* **2** commanding and self-confident: *His voice was calm and authoritative.*

**Word family** **authoritatively** adverb **authoritativeness** noun

**authority noun**

a person with special knowledge of a subject: *She is an authority on early musical instruments.*

**Usage** **authority** or **expert**? An *expert* is usually someone who is very skilled at something, and/or is able to give useful advice or training to someone else. An *authority* is usually someone who knows a lot about an academic subject, which may be very interesting, but may not be necessary or useful for other people to know about or be advised about.

**authorization noun**

**1** official permission to do something:

*Authorization to attend courses must be obtained from the education chairman.*

**2** a document that gives someone official permission to do something: *Can I see your authorization please?*

**Usage authorization, permission, or consent?**

Superiors within some institution or system give *authorization*, which often involves an actual delegation of authority: *Authorization of credit card transactions in the UK typically takes about 3 to 5 seconds. Permission is generally given by someone with power because of their position, authority, or ownership who does not usually intend to participate in the activity for which it is sought: They are seeking planning permission for a supermarket on the site. Consent is typically used when what is at issue is not a difference in power, but rather whether someone is able or allowed to make a free choice that is informed by at least some knowledge of possible alternatives and consequences: In English law, a woman may not be given in marriage without her consent.*

**authorize verb**

to give official permission for something, or for someone to do something: *I can authorize payments up to £5,000.*

**Word family** *authorized* adjective done with or having the permission of someone in authority; official: *The family agreed to an authorized biography of the artist.*

**autonomy noun**

**1** the freedom to make decisions and do things without being controlled by anyone else: *Schools have gained greater autonomy from government control. 2* freedom for a country or region to govern itself independently: *There has been a campaign for greater autonomy for the region.*

**Usage** In sense **1**, the word *autonomy* is used especially about organizations or classes of people being free from official control; it is used less about individual people. In sense **2**, *autonomy* is usually a degree of freedom that is less than complete independence.

**Word family** *autonomous* adjective: *The federation included 16 autonomous republics.*

**available adjective**

**1** that you can get, buy, or find: *A few seats are still available. 2* free to do something: *The nurse is only available in the mornings.*

**Word family** *availability* noun: *the availability of cheap flights.*

**avant-garde adjective, noun**

adjective (in the arts) new and experimental: *The theatre shows a lot of avant-garde work.*

□ *noun* (the *avant-garde*) new and experimental ideas or artists.

**Word family** *avant-gardism* noun *avant-gardist* noun

**avid adjective**

showing great enthusiasm for something such as a hobby: *I have always been an avid reader.*

**Usage** If you are *avid* for something, you want to get it very much: *She was avid for more information.* In British English, *avid* is a rather formal word and the word *keen* is usually used in its place in less formal contexts; in American English, *avid* is the usual word.

**Word family** *avidly* adverb

**award noun, verb**

*noun* something, such as money or a special title, given to someone for something they have done or achieved: *the company's annual award for high-quality service.* □ *verb* to give something officially as a prize, payment, or reward: *A 3.5% pay rise was awarded to staff.*

**aware adjective**

knowing or realizing something; noticing that something is present or that something is happening: *Most people are aware of the dangers of sunbathing.*

**Word family** *awareness* noun: *There is a growing awareness of the links between diet and health.*

**awe noun**

a feeling of great respect and slight fear because you are very impressed by someone or something: *They gazed in awe at the beauty of the scene.*

**Word family** *awe-inspiring* adjective: *awe-inspiring scenery. awesome* adjective very impressive or very difficult and perhaps rather frightening: *the awesome power of the atomic bomb.* The sense of *awesome* meaning 'very good' (*The show was just awesome!*) is informal and should not be used in formal contexts. *awestruck* adjective: *Caroline was too awestruck by her surroundings to reply.*

**axiom noun**

a statement regarded or accepted as obviously true: *the axiom that sport builds character.*

**Word family** *axiomatic* adjective: *It is axiomatic that dividends have to be financed.*