

# B

**b** /bi:/, **B** *noun* the second letter of the alphabet, between A and C

**baby** /'beɪbi/ *noun* **1.** a very young child  
 ○ *Most babies start to walk when they are about a year old.* ○ *I've known him since he was a baby.* **2.** a very young animal  
 ○ *a baby rabbit* (NOTE: The plural is **babies**. If you do not know if a baby is a boy or a girl, you can refer to it as **it**: *The baby was sucking its thumb.*)

**back** /bæk/ *noun* **1.** the part of the body which is behind you, between the neck and top of the legs  
 ○ *She went to sleep lying on her back.* ○ *He carried his son on his back.* ○ *Don't lift that heavy box, you may hurt your back.* **2.** the opposite part to the front of something  
 ○ *He wrote his address on the back of the envelope.* ○ *She sat in the back of the bus and went to sleep.* ○ *The dining room is at the back of the house.* ■ **adjective** **1.** on the opposite side to the front  
 ○ *He knocked at the back door of the house.* ○ *The back tyre of my bicycle is flat.* **2.** (of money) owed from an earlier date  
 ○ *back pay* ■ **adverb** **1.** towards the back of something  
 ○ *She looked back and waved at me as she left.* **2.** in the past  
 ○ *back in the 1950s* **3.** in the state that something was previously  
 ○ *Put the telephone back on the table.* ○ *She watched him drive away and then went back into the house.* ○ *She gave me back the money she had borrowed.* ○ *I'll phone you when I am back in the office.* (NOTE: **Back** is often used after verbs: **to give back, to go back, to pay back**, etc.) ■ **verb** **1.** to go backwards, or make something go backwards  
 ○ *He backed or backed his car out of the garage.* **2.** to encourage and support a person, organisation, opinion or activity, sometimes by giving money  
 ○ *Her colleagues were willing to back the proposal.* ◇ **to put someone's back up** to annoy someone

**back up** *phrasal verb* **1.** to help or support someone  
 ○ *Nobody would back her up when she complained about the service.* ○ *Will you back me up in the vote?* **2.** to make a car go backwards  
 ○ *Can you back up, please – I want to get out of the parking space.*

**background** /'bækgraʊnd/ *noun* **1.** the part of a picture or view which is behind all the other things that can be seen  
 ○ *The photograph is of a house with mountains in the background.* ○ *His white shirt stands out against the dark background.* Compare **foreground** □ **in the background** while other more obvious or important things are happening **2.** the experiences, including education and family life, which someone has had  
 ○ *He comes from a working class background.* ○ *Her background is in the restaurant business.* **3.** information about a situation  
 ○ *What is the background to the complaint?*

**backward** /'bækwəd/ *adverb* US same as **backwards**

**backwards** /'bækwədz/ *adverb* from the front towards the back  
 ○ *Don't step backwards.* ○ *'Tab' is 'bat' spelt backwards.* □ **backwards and forwards** in one direction, then in the opposite direction  
 ○ *The policeman was walking backwards and forwards in front of the bank.*

**bacon** /'beɪkən/ *noun* meat from a pig which has been treated with salt or smoke, usually cut into thin pieces

**bacteria** /bæk'tɪəriə/ *plural noun* very small living things, some of which can cause disease (NOTE: The singular is **bacterium**.)

**bacterial** /bæk'tɪəriəl/ *adjective* caused by bacteria  
 ○ *a bacterial infection*

**bad** /bəd/ *adjective* **1.** causing problems, or likely to cause problems  
 ○ *Eating too much fat is bad for your health.* ○ *We*

were shocked at their bad behaviour. **2.** of poor quality or skill ○ *He's a bad driver.* ○ *She's good at singing but bad at playing the piano.* **3.** unpleasant ○ *He's got a bad cold.* ○ *She's in a bad temper.* ○ *I've got some bad news for you.* ○ *The weather was bad when we were on holiday in August.* **4.** serious ○ *He had a bad accident on the motorway.* (NOTE: **worse** /wɜːs/ – **worst** /wɜːst/)

**badge** /bædʒ/ *noun* a small sign attached to someone's clothes to show something such as who someone is or what company they belong to

**badly** /'bædli/ *adverb* **1.** not well or successfully ○ *She did badly in her driving test.* **2.** seriously ○ *He was badly injured in the motorway accident.* **3.** very much ○ *His hair badly needs cutting.* (NOTE: **badly** – **worse** /wɜːs/ – **worst** /wɜːst/)

**bag** /bæg/ *noun* **1.** a soft container made of plastic, cloth or paper and used for carrying things ○ *a bag of sweets* ○ *He put the apples in a paper bag.* **2.** same as **handbag** ○ *My keys are in my bag.* **3.** a suitcase or other container used for clothes and other possessions when travelling ○ *Have you packed your bags yet?*

**baggage** /'bæɡɪdʒ/ *noun* cases and bags which you take with you when travelling

**bake** /beɪk/ *verb* to cook food such as bread or cakes in an oven ○ *Mum's baking a cake for my birthday.* ○ *Bake the pizza for 35 minutes.*

**baker** /'beɪkə/ *noun* a person whose job is to make bread and cakes □ **the baker's** a shop that sells bread and cakes ○ *Can you go to the baker's and get a loaf of brown bread?*

**balance** /'bæləns/ *noun* **1.** the quality of staying steady ○ *The cat needs a good sense of balance to walk along the top of a fence.* □ **to keep your balance** not to fall over □ **to lose your balance** to fall down ○ *As he was crossing the river on the tightrope he lost his balance and fell.* **2.** an amount of money remaining in an account ○ *I have a balance of £25 in my bank account.* **3.** an amount of money still to be paid from a larger sum owed ○ *You can pay £100 now and the*

*balance in three instalments.* ○ *The balance outstanding is now £5000.* ■ **verb** **1.** to stay or stand in position without falling ○ *The cat balanced on the top of the fence.* **2.** to make something stay in position without falling ○ *The waiter balanced a pile of dirty plates on his arm.*

**balcony** /'bælkəni/ *noun* **1.** a small flat area that sticks out from an upper level of a building protected by a low wall or by posts ○ *The flat has a balcony overlooking the harbour.* ○ *Breakfast is served on the balcony.* **2.** the upper rows of seats in a theatre or cinema ○ *We booked seats at the front of the balcony.* (NOTE: The plural is **balconies**.)

**bald** /bɔːld/ *adjective* having no hair where there used to be hair, especially on the head ○ *His grandfather is quite bald.* ○ *He is beginning to go bald.*

**ball** /bɔːl/ *noun* **1.** a round object used in playing games, for throwing, kicking or hitting ○ *They played in the garden with an old tennis ball.* ○ *He kicked the ball into the goal.* **2.** any round object ○ *a ball of wool* ○ *He crumpled the paper up into a ball.* **3.** a formal dance ○ *We've got tickets for the summer ball.* ◇ **to start the ball rolling** to start something happening ○ *I'll start the ball rolling by introducing the visitors, then you can introduce yourselves.* ◇ **to play ball** to work well with someone to achieve something ○ *I asked them for a little more time but they won't play ball.* ◇ **to have a ball** to enjoy yourself a lot ○ *You can see from the photos we were having a ball.*

**ballet** /'bæleɪ/ *noun* **1.** a type of dance, given as a public entertainment, where dancers perform a story to music **2.** a performance of this type of dance ○ *We went to the ballet last night.*

**balloon** /bə'lʊn/ *noun* **1.** a large ball which is blown up with air or gas **2.** a very large balloon which rises as the air inside it is heated, sometimes with a container attached for people to travel in ■ **verb** to increase quickly in size or amount

**ban** /bæn/ *noun* an official statement which says that people must not do