

3 Help yourself

Vocabulary reference

Glossary of vocabulary terms

Adjectives are words that describe a person or thing.

- adjectives can normally be used before a noun: an *important* finding, a *strong* relationship
- adjectives can normally be used after a linking verb such as *be* or *seem*: the weather was *cold*, the results were *conclusive*

Adverbs are words that add more information to adjectives, verbs, phrases, or other adverbs: *surprisingly* difficult, work *hard*, *just* in time, *quite* happily

- adverbs are often formed by adding *-ly* or *-ally* to adjectives: *visibly*, *drastically*
- adverbs can occur in different places in a sentence: I'm *definitely* buying a new TV, She drove *slowly*
- linking phrases are adverbs: *however*, *in addition*

Articles in English are the words *a*, *an* (indefinite articles) and *the* (definite article) which occur before nouns. Use of articles can be complicated, but the following general rules can be followed:

- *the* is used to say that the speaker implies that the listener knows which they mean: *the* experiment was successful
- *a* or *an* are used with singular nouns when the speaker implies that the listener doesn't know which: *a* study on insects was published last year

Collocation is a relationship between two words where they combine together often.

- collocations are common between adjectives and nouns (*a sorry sight*), verbs and nouns (*throw a party*), and adverbs and adjectives (*bitterly disappointed*)
- collocations are normally habitual rather than grammatical: we say *pleasantly surprised* not *enjoyably surprised*, but both are grammatical

Conjunctions are words that join words, phrases, or sentences, such as *and*, *but*, *or*, and *while*.

Determiners are words such as *those*, *any*, and *your* which come before nouns and indicate how the noun is being used: *those books*, *any chance*, *your future*

Homonyms are words which are written and pronounced the same way but which have different meanings: *bank* meaning an institution which holds and distributes money, and *bank* meaning the side of a river or canal.

Homophones are words which are written differently but are pronounced the same way and which can cause confusion in spelling: *sight*, *site*, and *cite*.

Idioms are fixed expressions the meaning of which cannot normally be easily guessed from the words that they include.

- some idioms are colourful expressions, such as *a storm in a teacup* (= worry and concern about something unimportant) or *raining cats and dogs* (= raining heavily)
- some idioms are less colourful fixed phrases that are common in English, such as *on the other hand*, or *take note of something*
- many phrasal verbs are idioms: *take over* (= get control of), *put on* (= pretend)

Linking expressions are phrases used to connect sentences or part of sentences. They help emphasize the structure of texts.

- linking expressions sometimes indicate a sequence of items: *firstly*, *next*, *then*, *later*, *finally*
- linking expressions sometimes indicate concession: *although*, *however*, *despite this*, *nevertheless*
- linking expressions sometimes indicate cause and result: *consequently*, *due to*, *since*, *as a result*

Nouns are words which refer to people, places, things, qualities, or activities: *doctor*, *town*, *TV*, *happiness*, *football*

- nouns are normally classified as either countable (*pen*, *people*, *programme*) or uncountable (*water*, *satisfaction*)
- compound nouns are formed by combining other nouns: *notebook*, *workshop*, *mailbox*

Opposites are words that have meanings that are different as possible from one another: *heavy*–*light*, *dull*–*bright*

Parts of speech are the categories of grammar into which words are divided: *adjective*, *adverb*, *noun*, *preposition*, etc.

Phrasal verbs consist of a verb plus one or two other small words called particles: *put out*, *take in*, *look up to*

- many phrasal verbs are idioms: *take over* (= get control of), *put on* (= pretend)
- some phrasal verbs are more literally understood: *switch something off*, *put something out*
- some phrasal verbs can be separated by other words: *put a sweater on*, *take off your shoes*

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Prefixes are groups of letters that are added to the start of a word to change the meaning: *un-*, *anti-*, *over-*

Prepositions are words that normally occur before nouns to indicate place, position, time, or method: *in* the middle, *between* them, *at* six, *through* effort

- a verb can be adapted for use after a preposition by using an *-ing* ending: John's good *at skiing*
- combinations of prepositions and other words are often fixed: *depends on* (not *of*), *clever at* (not *in*)

Pronouns are words which replace nouns in sentences.

- personal pronouns include both subject forms (*I*, *we*) and object forms (*me*, *us*)
- possessive adjectives (*my*, *your*) are used before nouns, whereas possessive pronouns can be used alone (*mine*, *yours*)
- reflexive pronouns are used to indicate doing something to yourself (*myself*, *himself*)
- demonstrative pronouns are used to talk about this near and far from the speaker (*this*, *these*, *that*, *those*)

Suffixes are groups of letters that are added to the end of a word to change the meaning or the part of speech: *-able*, *-less*, *-er*

Synonyms are words which have a meaning that is the same, or nearly the same: *little—small*, *word—term*

Verbs are words that express an action, event, or state: *play*, *arrive*, *seem*

- some verbs are transitive and require an object: Sue *hit* the target
- some verbs are intransitive and can be used without an object: Tom *slept*
- some verbs such as *have*, *make*, *go*, and *do* are used in fixed combinations with other words: *have a shower*, *make a mess*, *go fishing*, *do the cleaning*