
Concise Oxford Thesaurus

second edition

edited by
Maurice Waite

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford ox2 6dp

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.

It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai

Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata

Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi

São Paulo Shanghai Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto

with an associated company in Berlin

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States

by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© Oxford University Press 1995, 2002

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First edition 1995

Second edition 2002

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 0-19-860453-x

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Typeset in Swift and Arial

by Morton Word Processing

Printed in Great Britain

by Clays Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk

Editorial staff

Maurice Waite

Sara Hawker

Catherine Bailey

Chris Cowley

Preface

For this Second Edition, the Thesaurus has been revised in the light of recent research that has shown how words are really used and has made it possible to give better-matching sets of synonyms than ever before. This has been achieved using computational techniques to analyse a very large body of English—the 100-million-word British National Corpus and the Oxford Reading Programme database, which currently consists of 70 million words and is growing by about 5 million words a year.

The examples of use have been replaced by generally fuller examples taken from real evidence, making it easier for the reader to identify the appropriate set of synonyms.

The number of opposites (antonyms) has been increased, and entries now also include related words, prefixes, and suffixes, such as *nocturnal* at the entry for ‘night’, *labio-* at ‘lip’, and *-cide* at ‘kill’.

The lists of words and names (of birds and animals, types of food, famous people, etc.) have been expanded in number and scope as well as updated.

m j w

February 2002

Guide to the Thesaurus

Arrangement of synonyms

The synonyms in each entry are grouped in numbered 'synonym sets'. Major synonym sets correspond roughly to different senses of the word in a dictionary, and many sets contain finer distinctions, which are signalled by semicolons.

The synonyms in each set that are closest in meaning to the entry word are given first, usually starting with a 'core synonym' in SMALL CAPITALS. Some synonym sets have more than one core synonym if two synonyms are very close to the entry word but neither covers the whole sense; for example at *audience*, both *spectators* and *listeners* are given as core synonyms. Two different core synonyms may also emphasize slightly different aspects of the meaning of the entry word. For example, at *prosperous*, the first core synonym given is *thriving*, followed by a group of words closely related to that aspect of its meaning, such as *flourishing* and *successful*. Then, after a semicolon, a second core synonym, *affluent*, is given, with an allied group of synonyms such as *wealthy* and *rich*.

Guidance on the use of synonyms

Most of the synonyms given are part of standard English, but some are suitable only in certain contexts. These are grouped at the end of their synonym set and given the following labels:

informal, e.g. *swig*, *dodgy*: the kind of vocabulary normally only used in informal speech or writing.

formal, e.g. *perquisite*, *adjure*: normally only used in writing, in contexts such as official documents.

technical, e.g. *occlusion*, *admixture*: Words used in specific specialist fields are labelled *Medicine*, *Nautical*, etc.

poetic/literary, e.g. *forsake*, *plenteous*: normally only found in poetry or literature.

dated, e.g. *toodle-oo*, *rotter*: no longer used by the majority of English speakers, but still encountered, especially among the older generation.

historical, e.g. *serfdom*, *ballista*: still used today, but only to refer to some practice or article that is no longer part of the modern world.

humorous, e.g. *retail therapy*, *transmogrify*: normally used with humorous intent.

archaic, e.g. *bootless*, *in sooth*: very old-fashioned language, not used today except for effect.

rare, e.g. *funambulist*, *reprehend*: not in normal use today or in previous times.

Synonyms are also labelled if they are used exclusively or mainly in the English spoken in a particular part of the world, namely: British (abbreviated to *Brit.*), North American (*N. Amer.*), United States (*US*), Canadian, Australian (*Austral.*), New Zealand (*NZ*), South African (*S. Afr.*), or West Indian (*W. Ind.*).

Note on trademarks and proprietary status

This thesaurus includes some words which have, or are asserted to have, proprietary status as trademarks or otherwise. Their inclusion does not imply that they have acquired for legal purposes a non-proprietary or general significance, nor any other judgement concerning their legal status. In cases where the editorial staff have some evidence that a word has proprietary status this is indicated by the label *trademark*, but no judgement concerning the legal status of such words is made or implied thereby.

Major features

part of speech of the entry word	assign ► verb ❶ <i>a young doctor was assigned the task</i> : ALLOCATE, allot, give, set; charge with, entrust with. ❷ <i>she was assigned to a new post</i> : APPOINT, promote, delegate, commission, post, co-opt; select for, choose for, install in; <i>Military</i> detail. ❸ <i>we assign large sums of money to travel budgets</i> : EARMARK, designate, set aside, reserve, appropriate, allot, allocate, apportion. ❹ <i>he assigned the opinion to the Prince</i> : ASCRIBE, attribute, put down, accredit, credit, chalk up, impute; pin on, lay at the door of. ❺ <i>he may assign the money to a third party</i> : TRANSFER, make over, give, pass, hand over/down, convey, consign; <i>Law</i> attorn, devise.	example of use, to help distinguish different senses
	bag ► noun ❶ <i>I dug around in my bag for my lipstick</i> : HANDBAG, shoulder bag, clutch bag, evening bag, pochette; <i>N. Amer.</i> pocketbook, purse; <i>historical</i> reticule, scrip. ❷ <i>she began to unpack her bags</i> : SUITCASE, case, valise, portmanteau, holdall, grip, overnighter; backpack, rucksack, knapsack, haversack, kitbag, duffel bag; satchel; (bags) luggage, baggage. ► verb ❶ <i>locals bagged the most fish</i> : CATCH, land, capture, trap, snare, ensnare; kill, shoot. ❷ <i>he bagged seven medals</i> : GET, secure, obtain, acquire, pick up; win, achieve, attain; commandeer, grab, appropriate, take; <i>informal</i> get one's hands on, land, net.	label indicating the specialist field in which the following synonym(s) are used
form of the entry word for which the following synonym(s) can be substituted	infrequent ► adjective RARE, uncommon, unusual, exceptional, few (and far between), like gold dust, as scarce as hens' teeth; unaccustomed, unwonted; isolated, scarce, scattered; sporadic, irregular, intermittent; <i>informal</i> once in a blue moon; <i>dated</i> seldom. —OPPOSITES common.	label indicating the region of the world in which the following synonym(s) are used (see opposite for abbreviations)
core synonym—the closest synonym to the entry word	lip ► noun ❶ <i>the lip of the crater</i> : EDGE, rim, brim, border, verge, brink. ❷ <i>(informal) I'll have no more of your lip!</i> INSOLENCE, impertinence, impudence, cheek, rudeness, audacity, effrontery, disrespect, presumptuousness; <i>informal</i> mouth; <i>Brit. informal</i> sauce, backchat. —RELATED TERMS labial, labio- ■ keep a stiff upper lip KEEP CONTROL OF ONESELF, not show emotion, appear unaffected; <i>informal</i> keep one's cool.	label indicating the style of English in which the following synonym(s) are used
word(s) meaning the opposite of the entry word; most have entries of their own, where a wider choice can be found	night ► noun night-time; (hours of) darkness, dark. —RELATED TERMS nocturnal. —OPPOSITES day. ■ night and day ALL THE TIME, around the clock, {morning, noon, and night}, {day in, day out}, ceaselessly, endlessly, incessantly, unceasingly, interminably, constantly, perpetually, continually, relentlessly; <i>informal</i> 24–7.	combined synonym group standing for <i>hand over</i> and <i>hand down</i>
words, prefixes, or suffixes with meanings that are closely related to the entry word but are not actual synonyms		label indicating the style of English in which this sense of <i>lip</i> is used
brackets showing that the phrase they contain is one complete synonym		