# VOCABULARY

**Vocabulary** is a large subject and it really requires a book to itself: in other words, **a dictionary.** In fact, a good monolingual English dictionary is the best book that you, as a student of English, can buy. Many good dictionaries have free online versions of reasonable quality, as well as more detailed fee-based online subscriptions and hardcopy books. Recommended ones, especially compiled for the student of English, are:

- *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*
- *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*
- *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
- *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*
- *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*

Often a wrong word is used because a wrong choice has been made between similar words or *synonyms*. The choice of synonyms will often depend on usage or context, as much as on meaning. A good English dictionary will give examples of usage or context that will help you to choose the correct word. Good dictionaries also often have other features such as a **thesaurus** and **wordlists** designed to help language learners and those looking to increase their vocabulary.

Some attention is given below to a few words which frequently cause difficulty to students. Read the information and examples carefully.

## VERBS

### MAKE AND DO

**Make:** construct, produce, form, shape, create          **Do:** perform, carry out, act

There are large numbers of idiomatic expressions containing these two verbs, many of which can be found in the dictionaries referred to above. Consider these examples:

- He found that he could not **do** the research.
- Many discoveries have been **made** this century.
- He **made** a number of attempts to finish the work.
- She had some difficulty in **doing** her homework.
- Considerable progress has been **made** with the experiment

### RISE, ARISE, RAISE AND INCREASE

| Rise | a) | go up, get up, go higher (intransitive, i.e. without a direct object) | <ul><li>Prices continue to **rise**.</li><li>The cost of living index **rose** by 10% last year.</li><li>The sun usually **rises** at 5 am in the summer.</li></ul> |
| | b) | rise is also a noun, meaning an increase. | <ul><li>There was a **rise** in prices caused by a **rise** in wages.</li></ul> |
| Arise | a) | come into existence, appear (intransitive) | <ul><li>A new problem has **arisen** in the college.</li><li>An unexpected difficulty **arose** when he was analysing the results.</li></ul> |
| Raise | a) | lift up, make higher, cause to rise (transitive, i.e. takes a direct object) | <ul><li>Bus fares were **raised** three times last year.</li><li>The landlord said he was going to **raise** the rent.</li></ul> |
| | b) | to bring up for discussion or attention | <ul><li>He **raised** a new point in the seminar.</li></ul> |
| | c) | to manage to get; obtain | <ul><li>He **raised** a loan.</li><li>He tried to **raise** money for a new project.</li></ul> |
| Increase | a) | make or become greater in size, number, degree, etc. (transitive and intransitive) | <ul><li>The Treasurer **increased** the tax on petrol in his last Budget.</li><li>The population of the Chinese port city of Shenzhen **increased** from 30,000 in 1980 to 7 million in 2005.</li></ul> |
| | b) | increase can sometimes be used instead of raise or rise. | <ul><li>The Treasurer **raised** the tax on petrol in his last Budget.</li><li>The population of the Chinese port city of Shenzhen has **risen** from 30,000 in 1980 to 7 million in 2005.</li></ul> |
| | c) | increase is also a noun, meaning rise. | <ul><li>There was a steady **increase** in population.</li></ul> |

## WORDS OFTEN CONFUSED

# VOCABULARY

| NOUN | ADJECTIVE | | NOUN | VERB | | ADJECTIVE | VERB |
|------|-----------|---|------|------|---|-----------|------|
| politics | political | | practice | practise | | loose | lose |
| mathematics | mathematical | | advice | advise | | | |
| statistics | statistical | | effect | affect | | | |
| logic | logical | | choice | choose | | | |
| economics | economic | | | | | | |

The adjective economical relates to saving money, not to the economy:

- My car is very **economical**. It hardly uses any petrol.

- Prices rose because of the **economic** downturn.

a)  Two adjectives are often confused:

**later**   late, later, latest

- I will see you **later**.
- She wore the **latest** style.

**latter**   the second of two things already mentioned (contrasted with the *former*, meaning the first of two)

- He could not decide between red and green. He chose the **latter**.

b)  Two adverbs are often confused:

**very**   to give emphasis
**too**   excessively

- The seminar was **very** good.
- The car was **too** expensive

| WORD | MEANING | EXAMPLE |
|------|---------|---------|
| **ACCEDE** *(verb)* | to give one's consent or agreement | - They **acceded** to our request. |
| **EXCEED** *(verb)* | to surpass; to go beyond the limit | - The car **exceeded** the speed limit. |
| **ACCEPT** *(verb)* | to agree to [take] something | - They **accepted** my research proposal. |
| **EXCEPT** *(preposition/conjunction)* | aside from; otherwise | - Everyone went **except** John. |
| **ADAPT** *(verb)* | to make suitable | - The machine was **adapted** for indoor use. |
| **ADEPT** *(adjective/noun)* | skilled, expert | - They are **adept** at their job. |
| **ADHERENCE** *(noun)* | clinging quality | - The prime minister was known for his strict **adherence** to the constitution. |
| **ADHERENT** *(noun/adjective)* | a person who clings to something, a supporter; sticking to | - Her life-like depiction of human subjects on canvas has gained her many **adherents**. |
| **ADHESION** *(noun)* | quality of sticking together physically | - Although the operation was successful, he was left with **adhesions**. |
| **ADVERSE** *(adjective)* | unfavourable (thing) | - The **adverse** weather caused them to change their plans. |
| **AVERSE** *(adjective)* | reluctant | - He is **averse** to going to the seaside |

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|---|---|---|
| **AFFECT** *(verb)* | to influence or to pretend | • The weather will **affect** the outcome.<br>• He **affected** not to know what they were talking about. |
| **AFFECT** *(noun)* | (used in psychology) a feeling or emotion | • Depression is a disorder of **affect**. |
| **EFFECT** *(verb)* | to accomplish, to bring about a result | • Please **effect** the following changes. |
| **EFFECT** *(noun)* | result | • Their criticism had a negative **effect**. |
| **AFFLUENT** *(adjective)* | wealthy | • The USA is an **affluent** nation. |
| **EFFLUENT** *(noun)* | waste, outflow | • The **effluent** from the factories has polluted the Parramatta River. |
| **AGGRAVATE** *(verb)* | to make worse or to make someone annoyed | • The bad weather **aggravated** her rheumatism.<br>• What **aggravates** you most about your condition? |
| **ANNOY** *(verb)* | to irritate, upset emotionally | • The bad weather **annoyed** him because he could not go swimming, and he was very angry. |
| **IRRITATE** *(verb)* | to upset emotionally and physically | • The constant noise **irritated** me and made me nervous. |
| **ALL TOGETHER** *(determiner + adverb)* | all in one place or at one time | • We decided to go **all together**. |
| **ALTOGETHER** *(adverb)* | completely, without exception | • The view was **altogether** wonderful. |
| **ALREADY** *(adverb)* | by this time | • The sun had **already** begun to rise when they set out. |
| **ALL READY** *(determiner + adjective)* | prepared, completely ready | • I was all **ready** to go when they arrived. |
| **ALLUDE (to)** *(verb)* | to mention indirectly | • The lecturer did not tell the story directly but **alluded** to it in her talk. |
| **ELUDE** *(verb)* | to avoid, escape | • The outlaws **eluded** the police for several days. |
| **ALLUSION** *(noun)* | an indirect reference | • He made an **allusion** to the story in his talk. |
| **ILLUSION** *(noun)* | unreal image; false impression | • The effect was not real; it was only an **illusion**. |
| **DELUSION** *(noun)* | false belief, especially one held psychologically | • He suffered from the **delusion** that he was the king. |
| **AMONG** *(preposition)* | used when referring to more than two people or objects | • There were several left-handed candidates **among** the participants. |
| **BETWEEN** *(preposition)* | used when referring to two people or objects | • There is little difference **between** the two authors. |
| **AMOUNT** *(noun)* | used when referring to a quantity that cannot be counted | • There was a small **amount** of grain in the bag. |
| **NUMBER** *(noun)* | used for the plural form of something that can be counted | • There was a small **number** of students in the room. |
| **ANY BODY** *(determiner + noun)* | any human form; any corpse; any group | • They looked in the tomb but they could not find **any body**. |
| **ANYBODY** *(noun / pronoun)* | (used in questions and negatives) any single person | • They looked round the room but they could not see **anybody** there.<br>• Is **anybody** home? |
| **ASSENT** *(noun or verb)* | agreement | • He gave a verbal **assent**. |
| **ASCENT** *(noun)* | act of going up | • The **ascent** of Mt Everest is one of the world's hardest climbs. |

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|---|---|---|
| **ASSURE** *(verb)* | to make something certain; to promise | • They **assured** him they would finish the assignment on time. |
| **ENSURE** *(verb)* | to make sure or certain | • Their careful preparation **ensured** the success of the experiment. |
| **INSURE** *(verb)* | to protect against loss, or risk, by payment | • They had to **insure** their car against fire or theft. |
| **ASSURANCE** *(noun)* | policy on life: life assurance (mainly British English); a promise; self-confidence | • Do you have a life **assurance** policy?<br>• The military commander requires an **assurance** that our forces will not attack.<br>• She is an excellent singer but she lacks **assurance**. |
| **INSURANCE** *(noun)* | policy on life; policy on material possessions | • Life **insurance** is a highly competitive industry in Australia.<br>• We have a musical instruments **insurance** policy. |
| **COMPARABLE** *(adjective)* | capable of being compared; worthy of comparison | • Australia is hardly **comparable** with China.<br>• She is **comparable** to a rose. |
| **COMPARATIVE** *(adjective)* | something which relates to a standard | • The meeting was a **comparative** success. |
| **COMPARE** *(verb)* May be used in two ways: | compare to - points out resemblances where they are not apparent | • Life can be **compared to** an actor's role on the stage. |
| | compare with - points out differences essentially of the same order | • Adelaide can be **compared with** Perth. |
| **CONTRAST** *(noun / verb)* | comparison of things which are unlike | • The pictures present a **contrast**. |
| **COMPLEMENT** *(noun)* | complete quantity | • The hotel had a full **complement** of staff. |
| **COMPLEMENT** *(verb)* | to provide completeness | • The written exam will **complement** the oral exam. |
| | to go well with | • Honey, lemon and jam all **complement** the flavour of the pancakes. |
| **COMPLIMENT** *(noun)* | approving comment | • The singer's beautiful performance earned her many **compliments**. |
| **COMPLIMENT** *(verb)* | to praise | • Jim **complimented** Paul on his work. |
| **CONTINUAL** *(adjective)* | always going on or recurring at short intervals | • **Continual** chatter annoys her. |
| **CONTINUOUS** *(adjective)* | incessant, with no break at all | • The **continuous** noise of the compressor was unrelenting. |
| **COUNCIL** *(noun)* | a group of people elected to govern a town or city | • Adelaide has a city **council**. |
| **COUNSEL** *(noun)* | advice | • Listen to an old man's **counsel**. |
| **COUNSEL** *(verb)* | to advise | • They **counselled** him to continue with his studies. |
| **CREDIBLE** *(adjective)* | believable | • It is hardly **credible** that a country as small as the Netherlands won 22 medals at the 2004 Olympics. |
| **CREDITABLE** *(adjective)* | worthy of credit | • That was a **creditable** performance. |
| **CREDULOUS** *(adjective)* | believing anything that is said | • Santa Claus does not really exist. You should not be so **credulous**. |
| **DEPENDENT** *(adjective)* | reliant | • The project is **dependent** on finance. |
| **DEPENDANT** *(noun)* | someone supported financially within a family | • He had two **dependants**: his aged mother and his young son. |

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|------|---------|---------|
| **DEPRECATE** (*verb*) | speak against | • We **deprecate** the actions of the rioters. |
| **DEPRECIATE** (*verb*) | fall in value | • Cars **depreciate** rapidly. |
| **DEVALUATE** (*verb*) | reduce the value of something (usually devalue is used instead) | • The currency was **devaluated**/**devalued**. |
| **DISCREET** (*adjective*) | tactful and judicious | • Fred Gee is not very **discreet** in his remarks. |
| **DISCRETE** (*adjective*) | separate, distinct | • I used several **discrete** steps to solve the problem. |
| **DISINTERESTED** (*adjective*) | impartial, unbiased | • Regarding current events in the Solomon Islands, Australia is by no means a **disinterested** observer. |
| **UNINTERESTED** (*adjective*) | not interested | • We were so **uninterested** in the result that we didn't bother to turn on the TV. |
| **DUE TO** (*adjective*) | because of (*relates to a noun, a noun phrase, or an "–ing" form, not a verb*) | • Ben's accident was **due to** his drinking and driving. |
| **EMINENT** (*adjective*) | distinguished | • Professor Wright was an **eminent** surgeon. |
| **IMMINENT** (*adjective*) | close at hand, threatening | • A storm is **imminent**. |
| **FARTHER** (*adjective / adverb*) | a comparative form of far | • Wanganeen kicked the ball **farther** than McLeod. |
| **FURTHER** (*adjective / adverb*) | a comparative form of far | • Many people live **further** from the city centre than they did in the 1960s. According to the Macquarie Dictionary (1997) further is used more in Australian English than farther. |
| **FORMALLY** (*adverb*) | according to accepted rules | • The chairperson conducted the meeting **formally**. |
| **FORMERLY** (*adverb*) | previously, in time gone by | • Bangladesh was **formerly** known as East Pakistan. |
| **HONORARY** (*adjective*) | a position with no payment | • She was the **honorary** secretary. |
| **HONOURABLE** (*adjective*) | worthy of honour or respect | • He is an **honourable** gentleman. |
| | with capital 'H', a title, meaning a Member of Parliament who has held Cabinet rank. | • Would the **Honourable** Member for Norwood please stand. |
| **IMPLY** (*verb*) | to hint, to suggest, to indirectly indicate something | • The speaker **implied** that there were errors in the previous speech. |
| **INFER** (*verb*) | to come to a conclusion, to gain an impression | • A listener or reader **infers** things from what has been implied. |
| **INCREDULOUS** (*adjective*) | showing disbelief, sceptical | • When I said Santa Claus was real they were **incredulous**. |
| **INCREDIBLE** (*adjective*) | extremely or unusually good | • The radio reception was **incredible**. It was as if the presenter was in the same room. |
| **INGENIOUS** (*adjective*) | clever | • The apple peeling machine is an **ingenious** device. |
| **INGENUOUS** (*adjective*) | innocent, trusting | • He seemed too **ingenuous** to be a used car salesman. |

| WORD | MEANING | EXAMPLE |
|------|---------|---------|
| **IRRELEVANT** *(adjective)* | not connected with what you are discussing or focusing on | • Age is **irrelevant** for this job; it's experience we need. |
| **IRREVERENT** *(adjective)* | lacking in respect, especially for religion | • The comedian Dave Allen had an **irreverent** attitude to religion. |
| **INVALUABLE** *(adjective)* | so valuable as to be beyond price | • Her advice about subject choices was **invaluable** to me. |
| **VALUELESS** *(adjective)* | having no value | • This 'antique' is a **valueless** piece of junk. |
| **LAY** *(verb)* | to produce (an egg) | • The hen **laid** an egg. |
| | to put in position | • She **laid** the book carefully on the table. |
| **LIE** *(verb)* | to be in a horizontal position | • The patient was **lying** in bed. |
| | to tell untruths | • They deliberately **lied** in order to avoid the consequences of their actions. |
| **LEARN** *(verb)* | to gain knowledge | • A student **learns** many things at university. |
| **TEACH** *(verb)* | to give instructions to enable someone to do something | • A lecturer may **teach** several subjects. |
| **LEND** *(verb)* | to give on condition of return | • He asked the bank to **lend** him $10 000. |
| **LOAN** *(noun)* | item borrowed or lent | • The Government **loan** is for $3 billion. |
| **LESS** *(adverb)* | the comparative form of little; indicates a smaller amount of something (frequently also used incorrectly in Australia for a smaller number of people or things) | • The student would have preferred **less** noise in the flat. |
| **FEWER** *(adverb)* | comparative form of few | • James made **fewer** mistakes in this essay. |
| **MAY** *(modal verb)* | indicates permission | • You **may** leave if you have finished. |
| | indicates possibility | • It **may** rain on the weekend. |
| **CAN** *(modal verb)* | indicates permission | • You **can** leave now. |
| | indicates ability | • She **can** run faster than her brother. |
| **OFFICIAL** *(adjective)* | approved by a person in authority | • A passport is an **official** document. |
| **OFFICIOUS** *(adjective)* | too eager to give orders or offer advice | • He became such an **officious** person when he put on his uniform. |
| **PASSED** *(verb)* | to go by (past simple or past participle) | • He **passed** the window. |
| | to succeed in an exam (past simple or past participle) | • They both **passed** the music exam. |
| **PAST** *(preposition)* | further than (Also: adjective / adverb / noun) | • Go **past** the post office and down the street. |

| WORD | MEANING | EXAMPLE |
|------|---------|---------|
| **PRACTICABLE** (adjective) | able to be put into practice | • The Israelis proved it is **practicable** to grow crops in the desert. |
| **PRACTICAL** (adjective) | useful, sensible | • This is a **practical** card-table which folds up and fits into the car boot. |
| **PSYCHOLOGIST** (noun) | person who is trained in the knowledge of mental states and processes | • The parents took the child to a **psychologist**, who diagnosed ADHD. |
| **PSYCHIATRIST** (noun) | doctor trained in the study and treatment of disorders of the mind | • The **psychiatrist** treated the child with medication. |
| **RESPECTABLE** (adjective) | worthy of respect; showing character and standards approved by society | • The mayor was a very **respectable** person. |
| **RESPECTIVELY** (adverb) | in the same order as the items mentioned | • Elisa and John won a gold and silver medal • **respectively**. (i.e. Elisa won gold and John won silver) |
| **RESPECTFULLY** (adverb) | Courteously | • They answered the professor **respectfully**. |
| **SHALL** (modal verb) | used to make offers or suggestions or to ask for advice: I/we only | • **Shall** I buy the vegetables? |
| | used for an intention or promise, or when referring to something you believe is certain to happen (This use is not common in Australia.) | • We **shall** be arriving at 6 pm. |
| **WILL** (modal verb) | used to make offers: you / he / she | • **Will** you have a cup of coffee? |
| | used to ask or tell someone to do something: you | • **Will** you email the pdf to me? |
| | used (like shall) for an intention or promise, or for something you believe is certain to happen: I / you / he / she / it / we / they | • They **will** come tomorrow. |
| | used for something you hope/believe is going to happen in the future | • The car **will** not be fixed until next month. |
| **SHOULD** (modal verb) | expresses advice, obligation or advisability | • If you want to get there tonight you **should** leave soon. |
| **WOULD** (modal verb) | expresses a condition | • I **would** go if I could |
| | used when offering something | • **Would** you like a chocolate? |
| | used when politely requesting something | • **Would** you tell me the time? |
| **SIGHT** (noun) | something which is seen | • The view from Centrepoint Tower at night is a spectacular **sight**. |
| **SITE** (noun) | place, location | • We visited an archaeological **site** during the holidays. |
| **CITE** (verb) | to bring forward as proof, to quote an authority | • He **cited** a short clause in the contract to prove that the company was not responsible. |
| | to provide a citation (academic use) | • Unfortunately he failed to **cite** the author and date following the quote. |
| **STIMULANT** (noun) | agent which makes the body work faster, often by increasing the heart rate | • Avoid taking **stimulants**, such as coffee at night, or you may find it difficult to sleep. |
| **STIMULUS** (noun) | spur, incentive | • Devaluation proved a **stimulus** to overseas trade. |

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| WORD | MEANING | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| **STORY** (*noun*) | tale, narrative | • They always told the children bedtime **stories**. |
| **STOREY** (*noun*) | floor of a building | • The office block had thirty **storeys**. |
| **TO** (*preposition*) | (followed by noun, noun phrase or "–ing" form) may indicate a destination (part of the infinitive, followed by verb) | • We are going **to** the bank.<br>• They are looking forward **to** meeting you.<br>• We have **to** plan carefully. |
| **TOO** (*adverb*) | in addition | • I'm coming **too**. |
|  | more than enough | • That is **too** much. |
| **TWO** (*noun, determiner, pronoun*) | number | • There are **two** types of photocopier in the faculty office. |

# EXERCISE

In the spaces in the following sentences, write the **correct form** of the appropriate word in brackets.

a) He_____a big effort to finish in time.
   (make / made / done)

b) The painting was_____by a famous artist.
   (make / made / done)

c) His supervisor_____him to prepare a talk.
   (tell / told / said)

d) It is possible to_____four books at a time from the library.
   (lend / borrow)

e) The oil crisis_____the price of petrol.
   (rise / arise / raised)

f) Last year the price of food_____by 15%.
   (rise / rose / arise / raise)

g) Tutors often give good _____ but students sometimes_____not to follow it.
   (advice / advise)                              (choice / choose)

h) The former is, perhaps, more _____ than the _____.
   (logic / logical)                          (later / latter)

# ANSWER

a) He **made** a big effort to finish on time.

b) The painting was **done** by a famous artist.

c) His supervisor **told** him to prepare a talk.

d) It is possible to **borrow** four books at a time.

e) The oil crisis **raised** the price of petrol.

f) Last year the price of food **rose** by 15%.

g) Tutors often give good **advice** but students sometimes **choose** not to follow it.

h) The former is, perhaps, more **logical** than the **latter**.