

Oxford School Thesaurus

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How to use this thesaurus

headwords are in blue to find words easily

labels encourage accurate use of language

word classes are given to build grammatical skills

different meanings are numbered clearly

OVERUSED WORD panels provide alternatives for words that are used a lot

sack
sadness

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sack *NOUN*
In the corner was a large sack of potatoes.
 • bag, pack, pouch
 > **the sack**
(informal) If the boss finds out, he'll get the sack.
 • dismissal, discharge, redundancy
(informal) the boot, the axe

sack *VERB*
They threatened to sack the whole workforce.
 • dismiss, discharge, let go
(informal) fire, give someone the sack

sacred *ADJECTIVE*
The Koran is the sacred book of Muslims.
 • holy, religious, hallowed, divine, heavenly
 [OPPOSITE] secular

sacrifice *VERB*
 ① *She sacrificed her career to bring up the children.*
 • give up, surrender, forfeit, go without
 ② *Animals were sacrificed on this altar.*
 • offer up, slaughter, kill

sad *ADJECTIVE*

OVERUSED WORD

① **A sad mood, sad feeling:**

> unhappy > sorrowful > miserable > depressed > downcast > downhearted > despondent > crestfallen > dismal > gloomy > glum	> blue > low > down > dejected > forlorn > morose > desolate > doleful > wretched > woeful > woebegone
--	--

> tearful
> heartbroken
(informal) down in the dumps, down in the mouth
He has been miserable since his dog died.
 [OPPOSITES] happy, cheerful

② **A sad situation, sad news:**

> unfortunate > upsetting > distressing > painful > disheartening > discouraging > regrettable > lamentable	> broken-hearted > grim > serious > grave > desperate > tragic > grievous
--	---

I'm afraid I have some upsetting news.
 [OPPOSITES] fortunate, good

③ **A sad story, sad tune:**

> depressing > melancholy > mournful > moving > touching > heartbreaking	> heart-rending > pitiful > pathetic > plaintive > wistful
---	--

She stayed in her room, listening to mournful music.
 [OPPOSITES] cheering, uplifting

sadden *VERB*
I was saddened by how much the town had changed.
 • depress, upset, dispirit, dishearten, discourage, grieve
 [IDIOM] break your heart
 [OPPOSITE] cheer up

sadness *NOUN*
There was sadness and despair in her eyes.
 • unhappiness, sorrow, grief, misery, depression, dejection, melancholy, gloom
 [OPPOSITES] happiness, joy

phrases and idioms are given to increase vocabulary

opposites are given to extend vocabulary further

synonyms are given in appropriate order

scent

scent *NOUN*
There was an overpowering scent of vanilla.
 • smell, fragrance, perfume, aroma, odour
 (SEE ALSO: **smell**)

sceptical *ADJECTIVE*
At first, I was sceptical about these results.
 • disbelieving, doubtful, doubting, dubious, incredulous, unconvinced, suspicious
 (OPPOSITES) **certain, convinced**

schedule *NOUN*
We have a busy training schedule.
 • programme, timetable, plan, calendar, diary
 – A schedule for a meeting is an **agenda**.
 – A schedule of places to visit is an **itinerary**.

scheme *NOUN*
They worked out a scheme to raise more money.
 • plan, proposal, project, strategy, tactic, method, procedure, system

scheme *VERB*
She felt they were all scheming against her.
 • plot, conspire, intrigue

school *NOUN*
He goes to a school for international students.
 • academy, college, institute

science *NOUN*
He is an expert in the science of genetics.
 • discipline, subject, field of study, branch of knowledge

science fiction

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ecology > electronics > engineering > environmental science > food science > forensic science > genetics > geography > geology > information technology > mathematics > mechanical engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > medical science > meteorology > nuclear science > oceanography > pathology > physics > psychology > robotics > space technology > veterinary science > zoology
---	---

science fiction *NOUN*

WRITING TIPS

WRITING SCIENCE FICTION

Characters:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > alien life-form > android > artificial life-form > astronaut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > cyborg > robot > space traveller > time traveller
---	--

Setting:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > alien planet > deep space > mother ship > outer space > parallel universe > space colony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > spacecraft > spaceship > space shuttle > space station > starship > time machine
---	---

Useful words and phrases:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > bionic > black hole > extraterrestrial > force field > futuristic > galactic > home planet > humanoid > hyperspace > intelligent life > inter-galactic > inter-planetary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > inter-stellar > light year > orbit > portal > post-apocalyptic > spacesuit > space-time continuum > space walk > suspended animation > telepathic
---	--

WORD WEB

Some branches of science:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > aeronautics > anatomy > astronomy > biochemistry > biology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > botany > chemistry > computer science > earth science
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context is given to explain how to use particular synonyms

WRITING TIPS give useful words for creative writing

up-to-date example sentences and phrases show how words are used in context

WORD WEBS give extra vocabulary around topic words

Bb

babble VERB

What was that man babbling about?

- chatter, prattle, gabble, jabber, burble
- (informal) witter

baby NOUN

The woman was holding a baby.

- infant, child, newborn
- (poetic) babe
- A baby just learning to walk is a **toddler**.
- The time when someone is a baby is their **babyhood**.

babyish ADJECTIVE

She is too old for such babyish toys.

- childish, immature, infantile
- OPPOSITES** grown-up, mature

back NOUN

① *We always sit at the back of the bus.*

- rear, end, tail end
- The back end of an animal is its **hindquarters**, **rear** or **rump**.
- The back of a ship is the **stern**.

OPPOSITES front, head

② *I wrote a shopping list on the back of an envelope.*

- reverse, underside
- OPPOSITES** front, face

back ADJECTIVE

The back door of the house was unlocked.

- rear, rearmost
- The back legs of an animal are its **hind** legs.

OPPOSITE front

back VERB

① *I began backing towards the door.*

- go backwards, reverse, retreat, step back, draw back

OPPOSITE advance

② *The government is backing the city's bid to host the Games.*

- support, endorse, favour, advocate, sponsor

IDIOMS give your blessing to, throw your weight behind

OPPOSITE oppose

③ *Which horse did you back?*

- bet on, put money on

> **back down**

We've come too far to back down now.

- give in, surrender, concede defeat

> **back off**

The men backed off at the sight of the dog.

- retreat, withdraw, retire, recoil, give way

> **back out of**

They now want to back out of the deal.

- withdraw from, pull out of, drop out of

> **back up**

① *I'll back you up if you need help.*

- support, stand by, second
- ② *The new evidence backs up his story.*
- confirm, substantiate, corroborate, bear out

backfire VERB

His plan backfired spectacularly.

- fail, go wrong, go awry

IDIOM blow up in your face

background NOUN

① *You can see a steeple in the background.*

- backdrop, setting, distance

OPPOSITE foreground

② *The first chapter deals with the background to the war.*

- circumstances surrounding, lead-up to, history of

③ *There are people from many different backgrounds living here.*

- family circumstances, environment, upbringing, tradition, culture, class

backing NOUN

The new manager has the backing of the players.

- support, endorsement, approval, blessing

backward ADJECTIVE

1 She walked off without a backward glance.

- towards the rear, rearward

OPPOSITE forward

2 It is an economically backward country.

- underdeveloped, undeveloped

OPPOSITES advanced, progressive

bad ADJECTIVE**OVERUSED WORD**

1 **Bad in quality, bad at doing something:**

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| > poor | > hopeless |
| > inferior | > terrible |
| > unsatisfactory | > dreadful |
| > substandard | > useless |
| > second-rate | > worthless |
| > inadequate | > abysmal |
| > weak | > woeful |
| > incompetent | > pathetic |
| > imperfect | > shoddy |
| > awful | > slipshod |

(informal) rubbish, lousy, duff

The film was spoilt by the incompetent acting.

OPPOSITES excellent, fine

2 **A bad experience, bad news:**

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| > unpleasant | > terrible |
| > unwelcome | > dreadful |
| > disagreeable | > appalling |
| > upsetting | > shocking |
| > horrific | > hideous |
| > horrendous | > ghastly |
| > disastrous | > frightful |
| > horrible | > abominable |
| > awful | |

– Another word for a bad experience is an ordeal.

Some patients experienced unwelcome side effects.

OPPOSITES good, excellent

3 **A bad accident, bad illness:**

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| > severe | > serious |
|----------|-----------|

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| > grave | > critical |
| > profound | > acute |

She sometimes suffers from severe headaches.

OPPOSITES minor, slight

4 **A bad habit, something that is bad for you:**

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| > harmful | > dangerous |
| > damaging | > hazardous |
| > detrimental | > injurious |

The sun's rays are damaging to your eyes.

5 **A bad smell, bad taste:**

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| > disgusting | > repugnant |
| > revolting | > foul |
| > repulsive | > loathsome |
| > sickening | > offensive |
| > nauseating | > vile |

A nauseating smell invaded our nostrils.

OPPOSITES pleasant, appetizing

6 **Bad timing, a bad moment:**

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| > inconvenient | > inappropriate |
| > unsuitable | > inopportune |
| > unfortunate | |

Is this an inconvenient time to call?

OPPOSITES convenient, opportune

7 **Bad weather, a bad reception:**

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| > harsh | > adverse |
| > hostile | > miserable |
| > unfavourable | |

(formal) inclement

The adverse weather is forecast to continue.

OPPOSITES fine, favourable

8 **A bad person, bad deed:**

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| > wicked | > corrupt |
| > evil | > sinful |
| > malevolent | > nefarious |
| > malicious | > monstrous |
| > villainous | > diabolical |
| > cruel | > immoral |
| > vicious | > detestable |

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building *NOUN*

It is one of the tallest buildings in New York.

- construction, structure, dwelling
- A person who designs buildings is an **architect** and the process of designing buildings is **architecture**.



WORD WEB

Some types of building:

- > apartment block
- > bungalow
- > cabin
- > castle
- > cinema
- > cottage
- > factory
- > fort
- > hut
- > lighthouse
- > mansion
- > mill
- > observatory
- > palace
- > school
- > shed
- > shop
- > skyscraper
- > stadium
- > tenement
- > terrace
- > theatre
- > tower
- > tower block
- > townhouse
- > villa
- > warehouse

For religious buildings see **religion**.



WRITING TIPS

DESCRIBING BUILDINGS

Parts of a building:

- > arch
- > balcony
- > balustrade
- > bay window
- > bow window
- > buttress
- > chimney
- > colonnade
- > column
- > courtyard
- > cupola
- > dome
- > dormer window
- > drainpipe
- > eaves
- > foundations
- > gable
- > gutter
- > masonry
- > parapet
- > pediment
- > pillar
- > pipes
- > porch
- > quadrangle
- > roof
- > shutter
- > spire
- > storey
- > terrace
- > tower
- > turret
- > vault
- > veranda

- > wall
- > window
- > windowsill
- > wing

Parts you might find inside a building:

- > attic
- > basement
- > ceiling
- > cellar
- > conservatory
- > corridor
- > crypt
- > dungeon
- > foyer
- > gallery
- > garret
- > lobby
- > mezzanine
- > room (*old use chamber*)
- > staircase
- > stairwell

Adjectives:

- > airy
- > compact
- > cramped
- > crumbling
- > forbidding
- > grand
- > imposing
- > ramshackle
- > rickety
- > ruined
- > run-down
- > solid
- > spacious
- > sprawling
- > squalid
- > stark
- > stately
- > towering
- > tumbledown

bulge *NOUN*

Asian elephants have two bulges on their foreheads.

- bump, hump, lump, swelling, protuberance

bulge *VERB*

His eyes bulged with excitement.

- stick out, swell, protrude, balloon, curve outwards

bulk *NOUN*

① *The sheer bulk of a blue whale is staggering.*

- size, dimensions, magnitude, mass, largeness

② *We did the bulk of the work ourselves.*

- main part, most part, majority

IDIOM the lion's share

OPPOSITE minority

bulky *ADJECTIVE*

The parcel is too bulky to post.

- unwieldy, cumbersome, awkward,

unmanageable, hefty

OPPOSITE compact

bulletin *NOUN*

- 1 We listened to the news bulletin.
- report, announcement, broadcast
- 2 The society publishes a quarterly bulletin.
- newsletter, review, magazine, gazette

bully *VERB*

Some of the other children used to bully him.

- persecute, intimidate, torment, terrorize
- (informal) push around

bump *VERB*

- 1 He bumped his head on the low ceiling.
- hit, strike, knock, bang
- 2 My bicycle was bumping up and down over the cobbles.
- bounce, shake, jerk, jolt
- **bump into**
- 1 I nearly bumped into a lamp post.
- collide with, bang into, run into, crash into
- 2 We bumped into some friends in town.
- meet, come across, run into

bump *NOUN*

- 1 We felt a bump as the plane landed.
- thud, thump, bang, blow, knock
- 2 How did you get that bump on your head?
- lump, swelling, bulge, protuberance

bumpy *ADJECTIVE*

- 1 The car jolted up and down on the bumpy road.
- rough, uneven, irregular, lumpy
- OPPOSITES** smooth, even
- 2 We had a bumpy ride in the back of a truck.
- bouncy, jerky, jolting, jarring, lurching, choppy

bunch *NOUN*

- 1 He handed me a bunch of keys.
- bundle, collection, set, cluster, clump

- 2 She picked a bunch of flowers.
- bouquet, posy, spray
- 3 (informal) They're a friendly bunch of people.
- group, set, circle, band, gang, crowd

bundle *NOUN*

- I found a bundle of old newspapers.
- bunch, batch, pile, stack, collection, pack, bale

bundle *VERB*

- 1 I quickly bundled up the papers that were on the desk.
- pack, tie, fasten, bind, wrap, roll
- 2 They bundled him into the back of a taxi.
- shove, push, jostle, thrust, manhandle

burden *NOUN*

- 1 Each mule was carrying a heavy burden.
- load, weight, cargo
- 2 We should share the burden of all the work that needs doing.
- responsibility, obligation, duty, pressure, stress, trouble, worry

burden *VERB*

- 1 She staggered in, burdened with shopping.
- load, weigh down, encumber, lumber
- 2 I won't burden you with my problems.
- bother, worry, trouble, distress, afflict, oppress
- (informal) saddle

burglar *NOUN*

- The burglars got in through the window.
- robber, thief, housebreaker

burglary *NOUN*

- There have been reports of burglaries in the area.
- robbery, theft, break-in, stealing

burly *ADJECTIVE*

- Two burly security guards appeared.
- well built, strapping, sturdy, muscular, beefy

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Young Writer's Toolkit

► Get started	566
Punctuation	566
Sentences	570
Paragraphs	570
Formal language	571
Informal language	571

► Be creative	572
Descriptive words	572
Overused words	572
Accurate words	573
Phrases and idioms	573
Metaphors and similes	574
Create new words	575

► Check your writing	576
British and North American spelling	576
Irregular plurals	578
Tricky spellings	579
Quick tips	580



Get started

Punctuation

Punctuation marks are used to make meaning clear. Even a slight change in punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence. Punctuation can also help you to create different effects in your writing.

full stop

.

A **full stop** comes at the end of a sentence. The first word in a sentence starts with a capital letter.

Short sentences can make writing seem dramatic and add pace and longer sentences are often descriptive. Be careful not to use too many short simple sentences. It can make your writing seem childish.

- *The door slammed shut. We were trapped.*
- *The house looked as though it hadn't been lived in for years, with its peeling paint and broken windows.*

question mark

?

A **question mark** is used at the end of a sentence to show that it is a question. If you are writing dialogue, remember the question mark goes inside the inverted commas.

- *Where are you?*
- *'Do you like football?' she asked.*

exclamation mark !

An **exclamation mark** is used to show that a sentence is about something urgent or surprising or to show a strong emotion such as delight or anger.

An exclamation mark can also show that a sentence is a **command** or **instruction**.

Even in informal writing, only one **exclamation mark** is needed.

- *What a lovely present!*
- *I can't believe you just said that!*
- *Run!*

comma ,

A **comma** is used to separate items in a list:

- *Javed wanted to visit Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal.*

A **comma** is often used before a **coordinating conjunction** such as *or*, *and* or *but* in a **multi-clause** sentence. It introduces a pause and helps clarify meaning.

- *We're just waiting for Cheri, and then we'll set off.*

Commas are used after a **subordinate clause** or **adverb** or **adverbial** at the start of a sentence:

- *When he realized how much money I had spent, my dad went mad!*
- *Suddenly, I saw how much trouble I was in.*

Commas make a difference to the meaning of a sentence.

In the examples below, the sentence with the commas means that all zombies attack people and all will be prosecuted. The sentence without commas means that only some zombies always attack people and only those will be prosecuted.

- *Zombies who always attack people will be prosecuted.*
- *Zombies, who always attack people, will be prosecuted.*

The bestselling school thesaurus

✓ Easy to use

Clear signposting that helps you to find words fast

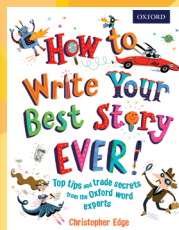
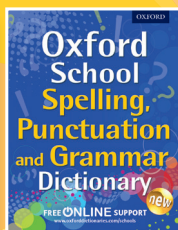
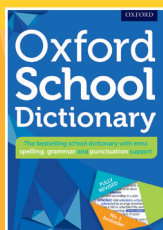
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