

Clear Definitions

The aim of Macmillan Dictionary is to make every definition as clear and easy to understand as possible. To achieve this, we write the definitions using a special defining vocabulary of just 2,500 words. These are among the most frequent words in the English language, and they are words that all students of English become familiar with in the first year or two of their studies.

How were the words in the defining vocabulary chosen?

These are the most common and basic words in English. We have chosen them by examining word-frequency information from hundreds of millions of words of English, including the English used in books written for advanced learners.

Which forms of these words are used in the definitions?

All the normal forms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives: for example, the list includes *enter* and *large*, so definitions may include forms like *entered* or *entering* and *larger* or *largest*. Apart from this, all the words and forms we use are actually shown in the defining vocabulary list: there are no prefixes or suffixes that can make additional words.

Which meanings of these words are used in the definitions?

Only the most basic and central meanings: for example, the adjective *cold* can sometimes mean 'unfriendly', but in our definitions it only refers to something at a low temperature.

What about phrases and phrasal verbs?

We use only the ones listed here: for example, the list includes a few simple phrasal verbs like *put on* and *take off* (for talking about clothes), and a few simple phrases like *in order to* and *pay attention*. If they are not listed, we do not use them.

Do definitions ever include other words?

Definitions sometimes need to refer to words outside the defining vocabulary. This is rare. Sometimes we refer to the names of real people or places (for example, *Jesus Christ* or *England*). Proper nouns like this are not listed in the defining vocabulary.

A

a	abbreviation	ability	able	about
above	academic	accept	acceptable	accident
accidental	accidentally	according to	account	accurate
accurately	accuse	achieve	achievement	acid
across	act	action	active	activity
actor	actress	actual	add	addition
additional	address	adjective	admiration	admire
admit	adult	advanced	advantage	adverb
advertise	advertisement	advertising	advice	advise
adviser	affect	afraid	after	afternoon
again	against	age	ago	agree
agreement	ahead	aim	air	aircraft
air force	airport	alcohol	alcoholic	alive
all	allow	almost	alone	along
alphabet	alphabetical	already	also	although
always	American	American football	among	amount
an	ancient	and	anger	angle
Anglican	angrily	angry	animal	announce

announcement	annoy	annoyed	annoying	another
answer	any	anyone	anything	anywhere
apart	appear	appearance	apple	apply
approval	approve of	April	are	area
argue	argument	arm	armed forces	army
around	arrange	arrangement	arrest	arrive
art	article	artificial	artificially	artist
as	ashamed	ask	aspect	astronomy
at	atmosphere	atom	attach	attack
attempt	attention	attitude	attract	attractive
audience	August	authority	automatic	automatically
autumn	available	average	avoid	awake
away				

B

baby	back	background	backward	backwards
bacteria	bad	badly	bag	bake
balance	ball	band	bank	bar
base	baseball	based on	basic	basket
basketball	bath	bathroom	battle	be
beach	beak	bean	bear	beat
beautiful	beauty	because	become	bed
bedroom	beer	before	begin	beginning
behave	behaviour	behind	belief	believe
bell	belong to	below	belt	bend
benefit	beside	best	better	between
beyond	bicycle	big	bill	biology
bird	birth	birthday	bit	bite
bitter	bitterness	black	blade	blame
blind	blindness	block	blood	blow
blue	board	boat	body	boil
bomb	bone	book	boot	border
bored	boring	born	borrow	both
bottle	bottom	bowl	box	boy
boyfriend	brain	branch	brave	bread
break	breakfast	breast	breath	breathe
brick	bridge	bright	brightly	brightness
bring	British	broadcast	broken	brother
brown	brownish	brush	Buddhism	Buddhist
build	building	bullet	burn	burnt
burst	bury	bus	bush	business
businessman	businesswoman	busy	but	butter
button	buy	buyer	by	by means of

C

café	cake	calculate	calculation	call
calm	calmly	camera	camp	can
cancer	cannot	capable of	capital	car
card	care	career	careful	carefully
careless	carelessly	carelessness	carpet	carry

case	castle	cat	catch	Catholic
cause	CD	ceiling	celebrate	celebration
celebrity	cell	central	centre	century
ceremony	certain	certainly	chain	chair
chance	change	character	characteristic	charge
chase	cheap	cheat	check	cheek
cheese	chemical	chemistry	cheque	chest
chicken	child	children	chin	chocolate
choice	choose	Christian	Christianity	church
cigarette	cinema	circle	circular	citizen
city	claim	class	classical music	classroom
clay	clean	clear	clearly	clever
cliff	climb	clock	close	closely
cloth	clothes	clothing	cloud	club
coal	coast	coat	coffee	coin
cold	collar	collect	collection	college
colour	colourful	combination	combine	come
comfortable	comment	commit	committee	common
communicate	communication	Communism	Communist	community
company	compare	comparison	compete	competition
complain	complaint	complete	completely	complicated
computer	computing	concentrate	concerning	concert
condition	confidence	confident	confidently	confused
confusing	conjunction	connect	connection	conscious
conservative	consider	consist of	contain	container
continue	continuous	continuously	contract	control
controlled	convenient	conversation	cook	copy
corner	correct	correctly	cost	cotton
cough	could	council	count	country
countryside	course	court	cover	cow
crack	crash	crazy	cream	create
creature	crime	criminal	criticism	criticize
crop	cross	crowd	crowded	cruel
crush	cry	culture	cup	cupboard
cure	curl	curly	currency	current
curtain	curve	curved	custom	customer
cut				

D

damage	damaged	dance	dancer	danger
dangerous	dark	darkness	data	date
daughter	day	dead	deaf	deafness
deal	deal with	death	debate	decay
December	decide	decision	decorate	decoration
deep	defeat	defence	defend	definite
definitely	degree	delay	deliberate	deliberately
delicate	deliver	democracy	democratic	department
depend on	depth	describe	description	desert
deserve	design	designer	desk	despite
destroy	destruction	detail	detailed	determination
determined	develop	development	dictionary	die

difference	different	difficult	difficulty	dig
direct	direction	directly	director	dirt
dirty	disabled	disadvantage	disagree	disagreement
disappear	disappointed	disappointing	disappointment	discover
discovery	discuss	discussion	disease	dish
dishonest	dishonestly	dislike	dissatisfied	distance
distant	district	divide	division	divorced
do	doctor	document	dog	dollar
door	double	doubt	down	download
downwards	draw	drawer	drawing	dream
dress	dressed	dried	drink	drive
driver	drop	drug	drum	drunk
dry	dull	during	dust	duty
DVD				

E

each	ear	early	earn	earth
easily	east	eastern	easy	eat
economic	economics	economy	edge	educate
educated	education	educational	effect	effective
effectively	effectiveness	effort	egg	eight
eighth	either	elbow	elect	election
electric	electrical	electricity	electronic	element
elephant	else	email	embarrassed	embarrassing
emergency	emotion	emotional	emphasis	emphasize
employ	employee	employer	employment	empty
enclose	enclosed	encourage	end	enemy
energy	engine	engineering	English	enjoy
enjoyable	enjoyment	enough	enter	entertain
entertainer	entertainment	enthusiasm	enthusiastic	entrance
envelope	environment	environmental	equal	equally
equipment	escape	especially	essential	establish
even	evening	evenly	event	ever
every	everyone	everything	everywhere	evidence
evil	exact	exactly	examination	examine
example	excellent	except	exchange	excited
excitement	exciting	excuse	exercise	exhibition
exist	existence	expect	expensive	experience
experienced	experiment	expert	explain	explanation
explode	explosion	express	expression	extra
extreme	extremely	eye		

F

face	fact	factory	fail	failure
fair	fairly	fall	false	familiar
family	famous	far	farm	farmer
farming	fashion	fashionable	fast	fasten
fat	father	fault	fear	feather
feature	February	feed	feel	feeling
female	fence	fertilizer	festival	fever

few	fibre	field	fifth	fight
fighting	file	fill	film	final
finally	financial	find	find out	finger
finish	fire	firm	firmly	first
fish	fishing	fit	five	fix
fixed	flag	flame	flash	flat
flavour	flesh	flight	float	flood
floor	flour	flow	flower	fly
flying	fold	follow	follower	food
foot	football	for	force	forehead
foreign	forest	forget	forgive	fork
form	formal	formally	forward	forwards
four	fourth	frame	free	freedom
freeze	frequent	frequently	fresh	Friday
friend	friendly	friendship	frighten	frightened
frightening	from	front	fruit	fuel
full	fun	funeral	funny	fur
furniture	furry	further	furthest	future

G

gain	game	garage	garden	gas
gate	gather	gay	gene	general
generally	generous	generously	genetic	gentle
gently	geography	get	get rid of	get up
girl	girlfriend	give	give birth	give up
glass	glue	go	goal	goat
god	go down	gold	golden	golf
good	goodbye	goods	go up	govern
government	graceful	gradual	gradually	grain
gram	grammar	grandfather	grandmother	grandparents
grass	grateful	great	green	greenish
greet	greeting	grey	ground	group
grow	growth	grow up	guard	guess
guest	guilty	guitar	gun	

H

habit	hair	half	hall	hammer
hand	handle	hang	happen	happen to
happily	happiness	happy	hard	harm
harmful	harmless	hat	hate	have
he	head	head teacher	health	healthy
hear	heart	heat	heating	heaven
heavy	heel	height	helicopter	hello
help	helpful	her	here	herself
hidden	hide	high	hill	him
himself	Hindu	hire	his	historical
history	hit	hold	hole	holiday
holy	home	homework	honest	honestly
honesty	honour	hook	hope	hopeful
horn	horse	hospital	hot	hotel

hour	house	how	human	humorous
humorously	humour	hungry	hunt	hurry
hurt	husband			

I

ice	idea	if	ignore	ill
illegal	illegally	illness	image	imaginary
imagination	imagine	immediate	immediately	immoral
impatient	impolite	importance	important	impossible
impress	impressive	improve	improvement	in
in charge of	include	including	income	incorrect
increase	independence	independent	indirect	indirectly
individual	indoor	industrial	industry	in fact
infect	infection	infectious	infinite	influence
inform	informal	information	injure	injured
injury	ink	inner	in order to	insect
inside	instance	instead	instead of	institution
instruction	instrument	insult	insulting	insurance
intelligence	intelligent	intend	intention	interest
interested	interesting	international	Internet	interrupt
interruption	interview	into	introduce	introduction
invent	invention	invest	invitation	invite
involve	inwards	iron	Islam	Islamic
island	issue	it	its	itself

J

jacket	January	jaw	jazz	jewel
jewellery	Jewish	Jews	job	join
joke	journalism	journalist	journey	judge
judgment	juice	July	jump	June
junior	just	justice		

K

keen	keep	key	keyboard	kick
kidney	kill	kilogram	kilometre	kind
kindness	king	kiss	kitchen	knee
knife	knock	knot	know	knowledge

L

label	laboratory	lack	lake	land
language	large	last	late	laugh
laughter	law	law-making	lawyer	layer
lazy	lead	leader	leadership	leading
leaf	lean	learn	learner	least
leather	leave	leave out	lecture	left
left-wing	leg	legal	legally	lemon
lend	length	less	lesson	let

letter	level	liberal	library	lid
lie	life	lift	light	like
likely	limit	limited	line	link
lion	lip	liquid	list	listen
literary	literature	litre	little	live
lively	liver	load	loan	local
lock	loneliness	lonely	long	look
look after	look for	loose	lose	loss
lot	loud	loudly	loudness	love
low	lower	loyal	loyalty	luck
lucky	lump	lunch	lung	

M

machine	magazine	magic	main	mainly
major	majority	make	make up	male
man	manage	management	manager	manner
many	map	march	March	mark
market	marriage	married	marry	mass
match	material	mathematics	maths	matter
may	May	me	meal	mean
meaning	measure	measurement	meat	medical
medicine	meet	meeting	member	memory
mental	mentally	mention	menu	mess
message	metal	method	metre	midday
middle	middle-class	midnight	military	milk
millimetre	million	mind	mine	minister
minor	minute	mirror	miss	missile
missing	mistake	mix	mixed	mixture
mobile phone	model	modern	molecule	moment
Monday	money	monkey	month	monthly
mood	moon	moral	morally	more
morning	most	mostly	mother	motor
motorway	mountain	mouse	mouth	move
movement	movie	much	multiply	murder
muscle	museum	music	musical	musician
Muslim	must	my	mysterious	mystery

N

nail	name	narrow	nation	national
natural	naturally	nature	navy	near
nearly	necessary	neck	need	needle
negative	neighbour	neither	nerve	nervous
nervousness	net	never	new	news
newspaper	next	nice	night	nine
ninth	no	noise	noisily	noisy
no longer	none	nonsense	no one	nor
normal	normally	north	northern	nose
not	note	nothing	notice	noticeable
noun	novel	November	now	nowhere
nuclear	number	nurse	nut	

O

obey	object	obligation	obtain	obvious
occasion	ocean	o'clock	October	of
off	offence	offend	offensive	offer
office	officer	official	officially	often
oil	old	old-fashioned	on	once
one	onion	only	onto	open
opera	operate	operation	opinion	opponent
opportunity	oppose	opposite	opposition	or
orange	orchestra	order	ordinary	organ
organization	organize	origin	original	originally
other	our	ours	out	outdoor
outer	outside	outwards	oven	over
owe	own	owner	oxygen	

P

page	pain	painful	paint	painter
painting	pair	pale	palm	pan
paper	paragraph	parallel	parcel	parent
park	parking	parliament	part	participle
particular	partly	partner	party	pass
passage	passenger	passive	passport	password
past	pasta	path	patient	pattern
pause	pay	pay attention	payment	peace
peaceful	pen	pencil	pension	people
pepper	percent	percentage	perfect	perform
performance	performer	perhaps	period	permanent
permanently	permission	person	personal	personality
persuade	pet	petrol	phone	photograph
photographer	phrase	physical	physically	physics
piano	pick up	picture	piece	pig
pile	pill	pilot	pin	pink
pipe	place	plain	plan	plane
planet	planned	planning	plant	plastic
plate	play	player	pleasant	please
pleased	pleasure	plural	point	pointed
poison	poisonous	pole	police	police officer
policy	polite	politely	political	politician
politics	polluted	pollution	pool	poor
popular	popularity	population	port	position
positive	possession	possibility	possible	possibly
post	potato	pound	pour	poverty
powder	power	powerful	practical	practice
practise	praise	pray	prayer	prefer
pregnant	preparation	prepare	prepared	preposition
present	preserve	president	press	pressure
pretend	prevent	previous	previously	price
priest	prime minister	prince	princess	principle
print	printer	prison	prisoner	private
prize	probably	problem	process	produce

producer	product	production	profession	professional
profit	program	programme	progress	project
promise	pronoun	pronounce	pronunciation	proof
properly	property	proposal	protect	protection
protein	protest	Protestant	proud	proudly
prove	provide	public	publicly	publish
publisher	pull	pump	punish	punishment
pure	purple	purpose	push	put
put down	put on	qualification		

Q

quality	quantity	quarter	queen	question
quick	quickly	quiet	quietly	

R

race	radio	railway	rain	raise
range	rank	rare	rarely	rate
rather	raw	reach	react	reaction
read	ready	real	realize	really
reason	reasonable	receive	recent	recently
recognize	record	red	reduce	reduction
refer to	reflect	refusal	refuse	region
regular	regularly	related	relating to	relation
relationship	relative	relax	relaxed	relaxing
relevant	reliable	religion	religious	remain
remark	remember	remind	remove	rent
repair	repeat	replace	reply	report
represent	representative	republic	reputation	request
research	respect	responsibility	responsible	rest
restaurant	result	return	reward	rice
rich	ride	rider	right	right-wing
ring	rise	risk	river	road
rock	roll	romantic	roof	room
root	rope	rose	rough	roughness
round	row	royal	rub	rubber
rubbish	rude	rudely	rule	run
runner				

S

sad	sadness	safe	safety	sail
sailor	salad	salary	sale	salt
same	sand	sandwich	satisfaction	satisfactory
satisfied	Saturday	sauce	save	say
saying	scene	school	science	scientific
scientist	scissors	score	screen	screw
sea	search	season	seat	second
secret	secretary	secretly	section	see
seed	seem	sell	seller	send
senior	sensible	sensitive	sentence	separate

separately	September	series	serious	seriously
seriousness	servant	serve	service	set
settle	seven	seventh	several	severe
severely	sew	sewing	sex	sexual
sexually	shadow	shake	shape	shaped
share	sharp	she	sheep	sheet
shelf	shell	shelter	shine	shiny
ship	shirt	shock	shocked	shocking
shoe	shoot	shop	shopping	short
shot	should	shoulder	shout	show
shower	shut	shy	sick	side
sideways	sight	sign	signal	silent
silk	silly	silver	similar	simple
simply	since	sincere	sing	singer
single	singular	sink	sister	sit
situation	six	sixth	size	skilful
skilfully	skill	skilled	skin	skirt
sky	sleep	sleeve	slide	slight
slightly	slip	slope	slow	slow down
slowly	small	smell	smile	smoke
smooth	smoothly	smoothness	snake	snow
so	soap	social	socially	society
sock	soft	software	soil	soldier
solid	solution	solve	some	someone
something	sometimes	somewhere	son	song
soon	sooner	sore	sorry	sound
soup	sour	sourness	south	southern
space	speak	speaker	special	specific
speech	speed	spell	spelling	spend
spin	spirit	spiritual	spoil	spoken
spoon	sport	spot	spread	spring
square	squeeze	staff	stage	stair
stamp	stand	standard	star	start
state	statement	station	status	stay
steadily	steady	steal	steam	steel
steep	stem	step	stick	stick out
sticky	stiff	still	sting	stitch
stolen	stomach	stone	stop	store
storm	story	straight	strange	stream
street	strength	stretch	strict	strictly
string	strong	strongly	structure	student
study	stupid	style	subject	substance
succeed	success	successful	successfully	such
such as	suck	sudden	suddenly	suffer
sugar	suggest	suggestion	suit	suitable
suitcase	summary	summer	sun	Sunday
sunny	supermarket	supply	support	supporter
sure	surface	surprise	surprised	surprising
surround	swallow	swear	sweet	swell
swim	swimmer	swing	switch	switch off
switch on	swollen	sword	symbol	sympathetic
sympathy	system			

T

table	tail	take	take off	take part in
take place	talk	tall	taste	tax
taxi	tea	teach	teacher	team
tear	technical	technology	teenager	telephone
television	tell	temperature	temporarily	temporary
ten	tend	tendency	tennis	tense
tent	tenth	test	than	thank
thank you	that	the	theatre	their
them	themselves	then	theory	there
therefore	these	they	thick	thief
thin	thing	think	third	thirsty
this	thorough	thoroughly	those	thought
thousand	threat	threaten	threatening	three
throat	through	throw	thumb	Thursday
ticket	tidily	tidy	tie	tight
tightly	time	tired	tiring	title
to	tobacco	today	toe	together
toilet	tomato	tongue	tonight	too
tool	tooth	top	total	touch
tourist	towards	tower	town	toy
track	trade	tradition	traditional	traditionally
traffic	train	trained	training	translate
translation	transparent	transport	travel	traveller
treat	treatment	tree	trial	trick
tropical	trouble	trousers	truck	true
trust	truth	try	tube	Tuesday
tune	tunnel	turn	twice	twist
two	type	typical	tyre	

U

ugly	unable	uncomfortable	unconscious	uncontrolled
under	underground	underneath	understand	underwear
unemployed	unemployment	unexpected	unexpectedly	unfair
unfairly	unfriendly	unhappy	uniform	unimportant
union	unit	unite	universe	university
unkind	unless	unlikely	unnecessary	unpleasant
unreasonable	unsuccessful	unsuitable	untidy	untie
until	unusual	unwilling	up	upper
upright	upset	upside down	upstairs	upwards
urgent	us	use	used	useful
useless	user	usual	usually	

V

valley	valuable	value	van	variety
various	vegetable	vehicle	verb	very
victory	video	view	village	violence
violent	violently	visit	visitor	vocabulary
voice	vote	voter	vowel	

W

waist	wait	wake	wake up	walk
wall	want	war	warm	warmth
warn	warning	wash	waste	watch
water	wave	way	we	weak
weapon	wear	weather	weave	website
wedding	Wednesday	week	weekend	weigh
weight	welcome	well	well-known	west
western	wet	what	whatever	wheat
wheel	when	whenever	where	wherever
whether	which	while	whip	white
who	whole	whom	whose	why
wide	width	wife	wild	will
willing	win	wind	window	wine
wing	winner	winter	wipe	wire
wise	wish	with	within	without
woman	wood	wooden	wool	word
work	worker	working-class	world	worried
worry	worse	worship	worst	worth
would	woven	wrap	wrist	write
writer	writing	written	wrong	wrongly

Y

year	yellow	yellowish	yes	yet
you	young	your	yours	yourself

Z

zero