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Oxford School Spelling Dictionary

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Introduction

This new edition of the *Oxford School Spelling Dictionary* is designed to help students find correct spellings quickly and easily, without the distractions found in a large dictionary. With explanatory footnotes throughout, the *Oxford School Spelling Dictionary* will give you more support than electronic spellcheckers. It has been updated drawing on the Oxford English Corpus, the largest language research programme in the world. This database provides an extensive picture of current English and enables the dictionary to present the most accurate picture of spelling today. This new edition delivers all the KS2 curriculum vocabulary, the most up-to-date words, and recent spelling and hyphenation patterns.

Generally speaking there are three main areas of spelling difficulty for users of English whatever their age.

- Some words are difficult because they have unusual or unpredictable features. Eighth, guard, and niece are often spelled wrongly because they have awkward letter sequences. Disappear and embarrass are confusing because some letters are doubled while others are not. Words such as desperate and separate seem inconsistent because one has an e in the middle where the other has an a for no apparent reason.
- Then there are words that are easily confused. Vain, vein, and vane sound the same but have very different meanings. Some words change their spelling according to how they are used. For example, dependant as a *noun* is spelled with an a, but as an *adjective*, dependent is spelled with an e.
- The third type of difficulty arises when suffixes and endings are added to words. It is not easy to remember to keep an e in changeable, to replace y with i in happily, and not to double the p in galloping.

With increased interest in spelling, reading, and writing in schools today we hope that the *Oxford School Spelling Dictionary* will provide a valuable tool offering useful strategies for dealing with spelling difficulties. We also hope that it will support teachers and parents whose task is to enable young writers to become confident, accurate spellers and to express themselves with a voice of their own.

How to use this book

Entries

Words are listed alphabetically in blue and the part of speech or word class (e.g. *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*) follows in black. If the word has endings (called inflections), these are also listed in black below the headword.

Decide on the first sound of the word you are looking for. Some first sounds can be confusing. If you cannot find the word you are looking for, use the Try also tips which will guide you to other possible spellings.

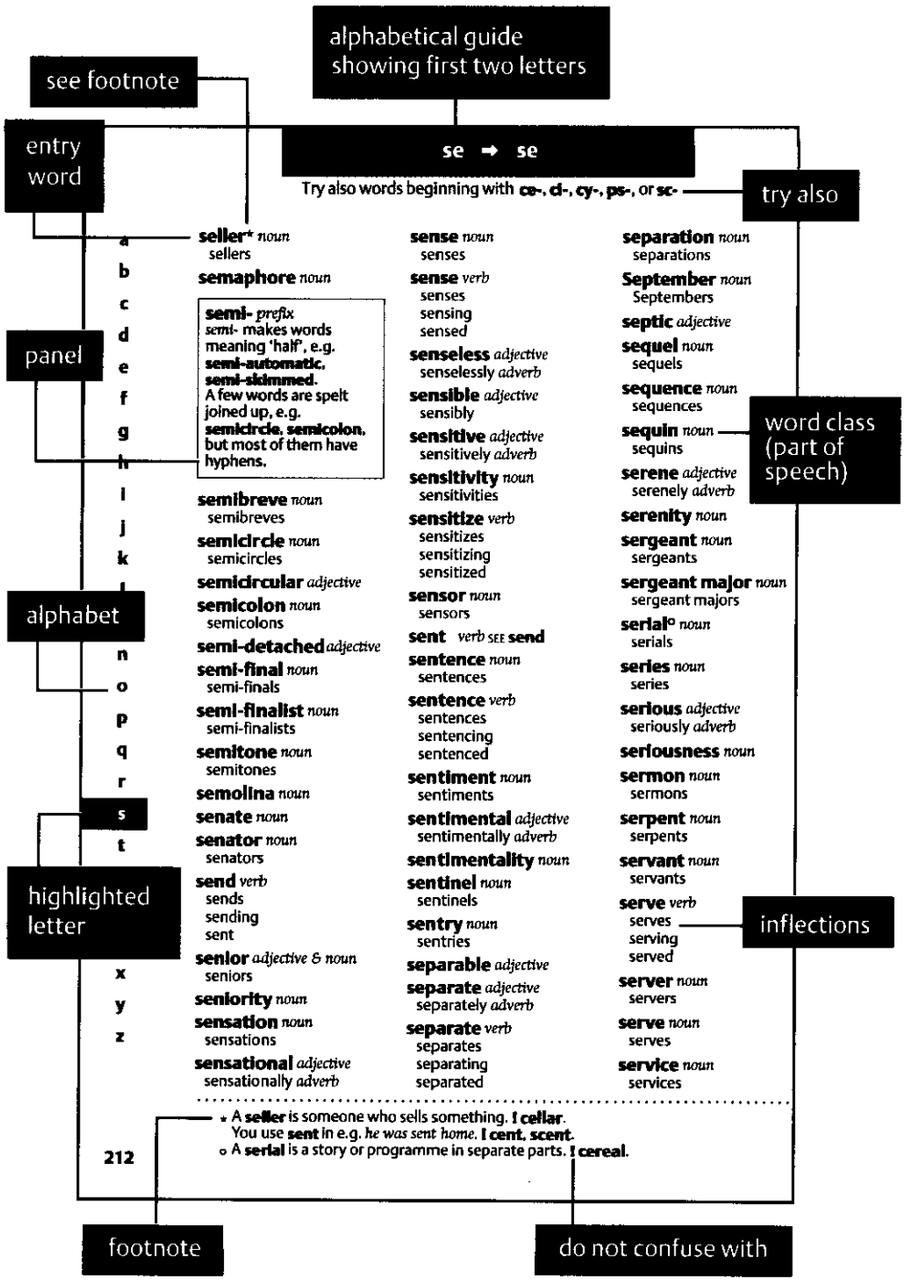
Footnotes

Some words are marked with a small symbol. These identify words that have a footnote attached to them. The footnotes give extra information to help you check that you are using the correct word. For example, at bite you will find a footnote to tell you that there is another word that sounds like it but is spelled a different way, Ibyte. Words that sound the same but are spelled differently are called homophones. Some footnotes also give extra information on usage and grammar.

Panels

There are about 250 panels which highlight particular problems. For example, you may want to know which words are spelled -able like bendable, and which ones are spelled -ible like accessible. Or you may want to know how you form plurals of nouns ending in -f such as calf or roof. Use these information panels to build your knowledge of spelling rules and practices.

It may be useful to keep a spelling jotter for new words. When using a new word, say it aloud several times before you write it down. When you go on to use it in your writing, try not to copy it but to write the word from memory.


alphabetical guide showing first two letters
see footnote
entry word
se ➡ se
Try also words beginning with ce-, ci-, cy-, ps-, or sc-
try also
panel
alphabet
highlighted letter
word class (part of speech)
inflections
footnote
do not confuse with
a
b
c
d
e
f
g
h
i
j
k
l
n
o
p
q
r
s
t
x
y
z
seller* noun
sellers
semaphore noun
semi- prefix
semi- makes words meaning 'half', e.g. semi-automatic, semi-skimmed. A few words are spelt joined up, e.g. semicircle, semicolon, but most of them have hyphens.
semibreve noun
semibreves
semicircle noun
semicircles
semicircular adjective
semicolon noun
semicolons
semi-detached adjective
semi-final noun
semi-finals
semi-finalist noun
semi-finalists
semitone noun
semitones
semolina noun
senate noun
senator noun
senators
send verb
sends
sending
sent
senior adjective & noun
seniors
seniority noun
sensation noun
sensations
sensational adjective
sensationally adverb
sense noun
senses
sense verb
senses
sensing
sensed
senseless adjective
senselessly adverb
sensible adjective
sensibly
sensitive adjective
sensitively adverb
sensitivity noun
sensitivities
sensitize verb
sensitizes
sensitizing
sensitized
sensor noun
sensors
sent verb SEE send
sentence noun
sentences
sentence verb
sentences
sentencing
sentenced
sentiment noun
sentiments
sentimental adjective
sentimentally adverb
sentimentality noun
sentinel noun
sentinels
sentry noun
sentries
separable adjective
separate adjective
separately adverb
separate verb
separates
separating
separated
separation noun
separations
September noun
Septembers
septic adjective
sequel noun
sequels
sequence noun
sequences
sequin noun
sequins
serene adjective
serenely adverb
serenity noun
sergeant noun
sergeants
sergeant major noun
sergeant majors
serial° noun
serials
series noun
series
serious adjective
seriously adverb
seriousness noun
sermon noun
sermons
serpent noun
serpents
servant noun
servants
serve verb
serves
serving
served
server noun
servers
serve noun
serves
service noun
services
* A seller is someone who sells something. ! cellar.
You use sent in e.g. he was sent home. ! cent, scent.
° A serial is a story or programme in separate parts. ! cereal.
212

Aa

-a *suffix*
Most nouns ending in *-a*, e.g. **amoeba**, **gala**, have plurals ending in *-as*, e.g. **amoebas**, **galas**. A few technical words have plurals ending in *-ae*, e.g. **antennae**.

aback *adverb*

abacus *noun*
abacuses

abandon *verb*
abandons
abandoning
abandoned

abbey *noun*
abbeys

abbot *noun*
abbots

abbreviate *verb*
abbreviates
abbreviating
abbreviated

abbreviation *noun*
abbreviations

abdomen *noun*
abdomens

abdominal *adjective*

abduct *verb*
abducts
abducting
abducted

abduction *noun*
abductions

abide *verb*
abides
abiding
abided

ability *noun*
abilities

ablaze *adjective*

able *adjective*
abler
ablest
ably *adverb*

-able and **-ible** *suffixes*
You add *-able* to a verb to make an adjective that means 'able to be done', e.g. **bendable** means 'able to be bent'. Some adjectives that have this meaning end in *-ible*, e.g. **accessible**, **convertible**, and **incredible**. You cannot use *-ible* to make new words as you can with *-able*.

abloom *adjective*

abnormal *adjective*
abnormally *adverb*

abnormality *noun*
abnormalities

aboard *adverb* & *preposition*

abode *noun*
abodes

abolish *verb*
abolishes
abolishing
abolished

abolition *noun*

abominable *adjective*
abominably *adverb*

aboriginal *adjective*

Aborigine *noun*
Aborigines

abort *verb*
aborts
aborting
aborted

abound *verb*
abounds
abounding
abounded

about *preposition*

above *adverb*

abrasive *adjective*

abreast *adverb*

abroad *adverb*

abrupt *adjective*
abruptly *adverb*

abscess *noun*
abscesses

abseil *verb*
abseils
abseiling
abseiled

absence *noun*
absences

absent *adjective*

absentee *noun*
absentees

absent-minded *adjective*
absent-mindedly *adverb*

absent-mindedness *noun*

absolute *adjective*
absolutely *adverb*

absorb *verb*
absorbs
absorbing
absorbed

absorbent *adjective*

absorption *noun*

abstract *adjective* & *noun*
abstracts

abstract *verb*
abstracts
abstracting
abstracted

absurd *adjective*
absurdly *adverb*

absurdity *noun*
absurdities

abundance *noun*

abundant *adjective*
abundantly *adverb*

abuse *verb*
abuses
abusing
abused

abuse *noun*
abuses

abusive *adjective*
abusively *adverb*

abysmal *adjective*
abysmally *adverb*

abyss *noun*
abysses

academic *adjective*

academy *noun*
academies

accelerate *verb*
accelerates
accelerating
accelerated

acceleration *noun*

accelerator *noun*
accelerators

accent *noun*
accents

accent *verb*
accents
accenting
accented

accept* *verb*
accepts
accepting
accepted

acceptable *adjective*
acceptably *adverb*

acceptance *noun*

access *noun*
accesses

access *verb*
accesses
accessing
accessed

accessibility *noun*

accessible *adjective*

accession *noun*
accessions

accessory *noun*
accessories

accident *noun*
accidents

accidental *adjective*
accidentally *adverb*

acclaim *verb*
acclaims
acclaiming
acclaimed

accommodate *verb*
accommodates
accommodating
accommodated

accommodation *noun*

accompaniment *noun*
accompaniments

accompanist *noun*
accompanists

accompany *verb*
accompanies
accompanying
accompanied

accomplish *verb*
accomplishes
accomplishing
accomplished

accomplished *adjective*

accomplishment *noun*
accomplishments

accord *noun*
accords

accordance *noun*

according *adverb*
accordingly

accordion *noun*
accordions

account *noun*
accounts

account *verb*
accounts
accounting
accounted

accountancy *noun*

accountant *noun*
accountants

accumulate *verb*
accumulates
accumulating
accumulated

accumulation *noun*

accuracy *noun*

accurate *adjective*
accurately *adverb*

accusation *noun*
accusations

accuse *verb*
accuses
accusing
accused

accustomed *verb*

ace *noun*
aces

ache *noun*
aches

ache *verb*
aches
aching
ached

achieve *verb*
achieves
achieving
achieved

achievement *noun*
achievements

acid *noun*
acids

acidic *adjective*

acidity *noun*

acknowledge *verb*
acknowledges
acknowledging
acknowledged

* To **accept** something is to take it. **! except**.

acknowledgement *noun*
acknowledgements
acne *noun*
acorn *noun*
acorns
acoustic *adjective*
acoustics *plural noun*
acquaint *verb*
acquaints
acquainting
acquainted
acquaintance *noun*
acquaintances
acquire *verb*
acquires
acquiring
acquired
acquisition *noun*
acquisitions
acquit *verb*
acquits
acquitting
acquitted
acquittal *noun*
acquittals
acre *noun*
acres
acrobat *noun*
acrobats
acrobatic *adjective*
acrobatically *adverb*
acrobatics *noun*
acronym *noun*
acronyms
across *adverb & preposition*
act *noun*
acts
act *verb*
acts
acting
acted
action *noun*
actions
activate *verb*
activates
activating
activated

active *adjective*
actively *adverb*
activity *noun*
activities
actor *noun*
actors
actress *noun*
actresses
actual *adjective*
actually *adverb*
acupuncture *noun*
acute *adjective*
acutely *adverb*
Adam's apple *noun*
Adam's apples
adapt *verb*
adapts
adapting
adapted
adaptable *adjective*
adaptation *noun*
adaptor *noun*
adaptors
add *verb*
adds
adding
added
adder *noun*
adders
addict *noun*
addicts
addicted *adjective*
addiction *noun*
addictions
addictive *adjective*
addition *noun*
additions
additional *adjective*
additionally *adverb*
additive *noun*
additives
address *noun*
addresses
address *verb*
addresses
addressing
addressed

adenoids *plural noun*
adequate *adjective*
adequately *adverb*
adhere *verb*
adheres
adhering
adhered
adhesive *noun*
adhesives
adhesive *adjective*
Adi Granth *noun*
adjacent *adjective*
adjective *noun*
adjectives
adjourn *verb*
adjourns
adjourning
adjourned
adjournment *noun*
adjudicate *verb*
adjudicates
adjudicating
adjudicated
adjudication *noun*
adjudicator *noun*
adjudicators
adjust *verb*
adjusts
adjusting
adjusted
adjustment *noun*
adjustments
administer *verb*
administers
administering
administered
administration *noun*
administrations
administrative *adjective*
administrator *noun*
administrators
admirable *adjective*
admirably *adverb*
admiral *noun*
admirals
admiration *noun*

admire *verb*
admires
admiring
admired

admirer *noun*
admirers

admission *noun*
admissions

admit *verb*
admits
admitting
admitted

admittance *noun*

admittedly *adverb*

ado *noun*

adolescence *noun*

adolescent *noun*
adolescents

adopt *verb*
adopts
adopting
adopted

adoption *noun*

adoptive *adjective*

adorable *adjective*
adorably *adverb*

adoration *noun*

adore *verb*
adores
adoring
adored

adorn *verb*
adorns
adorning
adorned

adornment *noun*

adrenalin *noun*

adrift *adjective & adverb*

adult *noun*
adults

advance *noun*
advances

advance *verb*
advances
advancing
advanced

advanced *verb*

advantage *noun*
advantages

advantageous *adjective*

advent* *noun*

Advent* *noun*

adventure *noun*
adventures

adventurous *adjective*
adventurously *adverb*

adverb *noun*
adverbs

adversary *noun*
adversaries

adverse *adjective*
adversely *adverb*

adversity *noun*
adversities

advertise *verb*
advertises
advertising
advertised

advertisement *noun*
advertisements

advice *noun*

advisable *adjective*

advise *verb*
advises
advising
advised

adviser *noun*
advisers

advisory *adjective*

advocate *noun*
advocates

advocate *verb*
advocates
advocating
advocated

aerial *adjective & noun*
aerials

aero- *prefix*
You use *aero-* to make words to do with the air or aircraft, e.g. **aerobatics**. If the word is a long one you spell it with a hyphen, e.g. **aero-engineering**.

aerobatic *adjective*

aerobatics *plural noun*

aerobics *plural noun*

aerodrome *noun*
aerodromes

aerodynamic *adjective*

aeronautical *adjective*

aeronautics *noun*

aeronaut *noun*
aeronauts

aeroplane *noun*
aeroplanes

aerosol *noun*
aerosols

aesthetic *adjective*
aesthetically *adverb*

affable *adjective*
affably *adverb*

affair *noun*
affairs

affect☆ *verb*
affects
affecting
affected

affection *noun*
affections

affectionate *adjective*
affectionately *adverb*

affirm *verb*
affirms
affirmed
affirming

* Use a capital A when you mean the period before Christmas.
☆ **Affect** means 'to make something change'. **! effect**.

affix *verb*
affixes
affixing
affixed

afflict *verb*
afflicts
afflicting
afflicted

affliction *noun*
afflictions

affluence *noun*

affluent *adjective*

afford *verb*
affords
affording
afforded

affordable *adjective*

afforestation *noun*

afield *adverb*

afloat *adjective & adverb*

afraid *adjective*

afresh *adverb*

African *adjective & noun*
Africans

after *preposition*

aftermath *noun*

afternoon *noun*
afternoons

afterwards *adverb*

again *adverb*

against *preposition*

age *noun*
ages

age *verb*
ages
ageing
aged

aged *adjective*

agency *noun*
agencies

agenda *noun*
agendas

agent *noun*
agents

aggravate *verb*
aggravates
aggravating
aggravated

aggravation *noun*

aggression *noun*

aggressive *adjective*
aggressively *adverb*

aggressor *noun*
aggressors

agile *adjective*

agility *noun*

agitate *verb*
agitates
agitating
agitated

agitation *noun*

aglitter *adjective*

agnostic *noun*
agnostics

ago *adverb*

agonizing *adjective*

agony *noun*
agonies

agoraphobia *noun*

agree *verb*
agrees
agreeing
agreed

agreeable *adjective*
agreeably *adverb*

agreement *noun*
agreements

agriculture *noun*

agricultural *adjective*

aground *adverb & adjective*

ahead *adverb*

ahoy *interjection*

aid *noun*
aids

aid *verb*
aids
aiding
aided

Aids *noun*

ailing *adjective*

ailment *noun*
ailments

aim *verb*
aims
aiming
aimed

aim *noun*
aims

aimless *adjective*
aimlessly *adverb*

air* *noun*
airs

air *verb*
airs
airing
aired

airborne *adjective*

air conditioned *adjective*

air conditioning *noun*

aircraft *noun*
aircraft

airfield *noun*
airfields

air force *noun*
air forces

airgun *noun*
airguns

airline *noun*
airlines

airlock *noun*
airlocks

airmail *noun*

airman *noun*
airmen

airport *noun*
airports

airship *noun*
airships

airstream *noun*
airstreams

airtight *adjective*

* You can use a plural in the phrase *to put on airs.*

airy *adjective*
airier
airiest
airily *adverb*

aisle* *noun*
aisles

ajar *adverb & adjective*

alarm *verb*
alarms
alarming
alarmed

alarm *noun*
alarms

alas *interjection*

albatross *noun*
albatrosses

album *noun*
albums

alcohol *noun*

alcoholic *adjective & noun*
alcoholics

alcoholism *noun*

alcove *noun*
alcoves

alert *verb*
alerts
alerting
alerted

alert *adjective & noun*
alerts

algebra *noun*

algebraic *adjective*

alias *noun*
aliases

alibi *noun*
alibis

alien *adjective & noun*
aliens

alienate *verb*
alienates
alienating
alienated

alienation *noun*

alight *verb*

align *verb*
aligns
aligning
aligned

alike *adjective & adverb*

alive *adjective*

alkali *noun*
alkalis

alkaline *adjective*

alkalinity *noun*

all *adjective & pronoun*

Allah *noun*

allegation *noun*
allegations

allege *verb*
alleges
alleging
alleged

allegedly *adverb*

allegiance *noun*
allegiances

allegorical *adjective*

allegory *noun*
allegories

allergic *adjective*

allergy *noun*
allergies

alley *noun*
alleys

alliance *noun*
alliances

allied *adjective*

alligator *noun*
alligators

alliteration *noun*

allocate *verb*
allocates
allocating
allocated

allot *verb*
allots
allotting
allotted

allotment *noun*
allotments

allow☆ *verb*
allows
allowing
allowed

allowance *noun*
allowances

alloy *noun*
alloys

all right *adjective & adverb*

all-round *adjective*

all-rounder *noun*

ally *noun*
allies

ally *verb*
allies
allying
allied

almighty *adjective*

almond *noun*
almonds

almost *adverb*

aloft *adverb*

alone *adjective & adverb*

along *preposition*

alongside *preposition & adverb*

aloud○ *adverb*

alphabet *noun*
alphabets

alphabetical *adjective*
alphabetically *adverb*

alpine *adjective*

already *adverb*

also *adverb*

altar+ *noun*
altars

* An **aisle** is a passage in a church or cinema. **! isle.**
☆ **Allowed** means to be permitted to do something. **! aloud.**
○ **Aloud** means 'in a voice that can be heard'. **! allowed.**
\+ An **altar** is a raised surface in religious ceremonies. **! alter.**