

# LONGMAN

DICTIONARY OF

COMMON

ERRORS



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ND Turton

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# Longman Dictionary of Common Errors

N D Turton and J B Heaton



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## Acknowledgements

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Finally, we must thank the countless foreign students of English who have provided the content of both editions.

## Preface

The *Longman Dictionary of Common Errors* provides learners and teachers of English with a practical guide to common errors and their correction. It contains the words and phrases which regularly cause difficulty for foreign learners, regardless of nationality and language background. Arranged alphabetically for ease of use, the entries deal with those errors that regularly appear in the written English of learners at the intermediate level of proficiency and above. Each error is accompanied by a correction and a short, simple explanation.

Since the appearance of the first edition of this dictionary almost a decade ago, dictionary making has been transformed by major developments in information technology. Today's dictionary makers are able to draw upon huge computerized databanks to discover exactly how language is used. This new edition of the *Longman Dictionary of Common Errors* owes its authority to two such databanks: the Longman Learners' Corpus and the British National Corpus.

The Longman Learners' Corpus contains samples of the written English produced by students from over 70 different countries. With this carefully coded corpus of ten million words, it is possible to identify more clearly than ever before the words and phrases which cause problems for particular groups of learners and for learners in general. As a result, this second edition contains a large number of new entries, while first edition entries which are insufficiently supported by the corpus have been removed.

The investigation of common errors sometimes raises questions about usage for which there are no readily available answers. For example, what do native speakers usually say – 'I disagree that heart transplants should be stopped.' or 'I don't agree that heart transplants should be stopped'? According to modern usage, is it usual to say 'She failed her examination.' or 'She failed in her examination'? Is it incorrect to say 'More houses are built yearly.' and, if so, why is yearly unacceptable here? In helping us to answer questions such as these, the British National Corpus has been an indispensable source of information. This large corpus of modern British English usage has been particularly useful in revealing the subtle differences that make one word or phrase exactly right in a particular context, and others unsuitable.

Despite the recognized usefulness of computerized corpora in dictionary making, this application of information technology is still relatively new. Accordingly, while we believe that this new edition is a major advance on the original, we welcome all comments and suggestions.

## Guide to the Dictionary

### Finding the information you need

The entries in this dictionary are in alphabetical order: **about** is at the front of the book and **youth** is at the back. To help you find an entry quickly, there is a word in heavy type at the top of each page. The word at the top of a left-hand page is the name of the first entry; the word at the top of a right-hand page is the name of the last entry.

To use this dictionary to correct errors, you need to know which word to look up. In many cases, you will find the information you need at the entry for the **keyword**. This is the most important word in a group of words which regularly occur together. For example, to find out why 'a hole on my sock' is incorrect, you should look up the entry for **hole** (not **on**).

To find out what is wrong with 'He'll be here at December', you should turn to the entry for **at** (not **December**). In cases like this, there is no fixed group of words and therefore no keyword.

Sometimes, the keyword is separated from the part of the sentence containing the error. For example, in: 'She never lets the children to go out on their own', your teacher may underline **to** or **to go**. In cases like this, the information you need is to be found at the entry for the word or phrase which requires a particular form to be used later on in the sentence. For example, you **allow** someone **to do** something, but you **let** someone **do** something (not 'to do').

keyword	<b>study</b> 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Next July I'm going to the USA to continue my study.</li> <li>✓ <b>Next July I'm going to the USA to continue my studies.</b></li> </ul> <p>To refer to the work that a student does at a college or university, use <b>studies</b>: 'After the war he resumed his studies at the University of Turin.' Compare: 'They are conducting a study of sex education in local secondary schools.'</p>	Explains how to use the word correctly.
Shows the sentence containing the error.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x She's studying history in Oxford University.</li> <li>✓ <b>She's studying history at Oxford University.</b></li> </ul> <p>See in 5</p>	
Shows the corrected sentence	<b>stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x He'd left all his tennis stutts at home.</li> <li>✓ <b>He'd left all his tennis stuff at home.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Stuff</b> is an uncountable noun: 'He asked if he could bring his stuff over to my place.'</p>	Shows that there is more information at the entry for IN, at sub-entry number 5.
Shows that the particular usage is inappropriate in some contexts	<b>style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>? I'd like to live abroad and have a different style of life.</li> <li>? <b>I'd like to live abroad and have a different lifestyle.</b></li> <li>? I find this living style very attractive.</li> <li>✓ <b>I find this lifestyle very attractive.</b></li> </ul> <p>See note at LIFE 2</p>	Shows that there is more information at the explanation of the entry for LIFE.
Explains the word that has been used incorrectly and tells you which word should have been used	<b>subcon- scious</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x The driver of the car was taken to hospital subconscious.</li> <li>✓ <b>The driver of the car was taken to hospital unconscious.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>subconscious</b> (of a thought or desire) = existing or occurring in the mind without the person being aware of it: 'His dream about crossing the ocean single-handed probably arose from a subconscious desire for fame.' <b>unconscious</b> (of a person) = in a sleep-like state, especially because you are ill or have been hit on the head: 'The cleaner found him lying unconscious on the bathroom floor.'</p>	Shows examples of correct usage.
Here, the word which has been used incorrectly is directly next to the word <b>succeed</b> that controls it.	<b>subject</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x The subject of my thesis is about women in the popular press.</li> <li>✓ <b>The subject of my thesis is women in the popular press.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Subject</b> is not followed by <b>about</b>. Note the alternative: 'My thesis is about women in the popular press.'</p>	Here, the word which has been used incorrectly is separated from the word <b>subject</b> that controls it.
	<b>succeed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Not many of us succeed to achieve our ambitions.</li> <li>✓ <b>Not many of us succeed in achieving our ambitions.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>succeed in doing sth</b> (NOT to do sth): 'Having finally succeeded in mounting the horse, I was determined to stay on it.'</p>	
	<b>such</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x She was always a such intelligent woman.</li> <li>✓ <b>She was always such an intelligent woman.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Such</b> always comes at the beginning of a noun phrase: 'It's such a good film that I'd like to see it again.'</p>	If the explanation contains a technical term that you do not understand, look in the glossary on page 370.
	<b>suddenly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Late one evening, as I was getting into the bath, suddenly I heard a strange noise.</li> <li>✓ <b>Late one evening, as I was getting into the bath, I suddenly heard a strange noise.</b></li> </ul> <p>See Language Note at ALWAYS</p>	Shows that there is more information at the Language Note for ALWAYS.

Some entries have sub entries, each with their own numbers. Errors involving vocabulary usually come before errors in grammar, and very common errors come before those which occur less frequently.

### will 1

- X When capital punishment was abolished, people thought that murders **will** become more numerous.
- ✓ When **capital punishment was abolished, people thought that murders would become more numerous.**  
A reporting verb in the past tense (e.g. 'thought') is usually followed by **would/could** (NOT **will/can**). Compare: 'I think she will accept any job that comes along.' 'I thought she would accept any job that came along.'

### 2

- X If a developing country will become a developed country, it has to attract foreign investors.
- ✓ **If a developing country is to become a developed country, it has to attract foreign investors.**  
When you are talking about what must happen in order to make something possible, use **if ... am/is/are to do sth** (NOT **will**): 'If we are to get there by six o'clock, we'll have to get a taxi.'

### 3

See Language Note below

#### Talking about the future

- When you talk about something happening in the future, you often use one of the following conjunctions:

TIME            **after, as soon as, before, immediately, once, the moment, until, when, whenever, while**

CONDITION   **if, whether, as long as, in case, unless**

- To refer to the future after these conjunctions, use the present simple tense (NOT **will/shall**):

I'll phone you as soon as I arrive at the airport.  
The plane should be taking off shortly, as long as there aren't any delays.

#### Note:

- 1 Sometimes it is possible to use the present perfect tense instead of the present simple. The present perfect expresses a sense of completion:

She **doesn't** want to buy a car until she's **passed** her driving test.  
Once you've **made** a few friends, you won't feel so lonely.

- 2 When the clause beginning with **if, whether, when**, etc is the object of the sentence, **will** may be used:

I doubt **whether David will still recognize me.**  
I don't know **when they'll be back.**

- Also, **if ... will** is possible when **will** expresses the idea of willingness:

What are you going to do if she won't help you?  
If you'll take a seat for a moment, I'll tell Mr Fox you're here.

When there is a lot of information about a group of related errors, this is presented in a Language Note.





# Aa

- a 1**
- X I hope you all have a enjoyable stay.
  - ✓ **I hope you all have an enjoyable stay.**  
Always use **an** (NOT **a**) before a word beginning with a vowel sound: 'an egg' /ən eɡ/, 'an envelope' /ən 'envələʊp/.
- 2**
- X My husband is doing a MSc in civil engineering.
  - ✓ **My husband is doing an MSc in civil engineering.**  
Use **an** (NOT **a**) before an abbreviation that begins with a vowel sound: 'an MSc' /ən ,em es 'si:/, 'an MP' /ən ,em 'pi:/.
- 3**
- X Sometimes it is difficult to live a honest life.
  - ✓ **Sometimes it is difficult to live an honest life.**  
Use **an** (NOT **a**) before words beginning with **h** when the **h** is not pronounced: 'an honour' /ən 'ɒnə/, 'an hour' /ən aʊə/.

- a/an 1**
- X The child had been a deaf since birth.
  - ✓ **The child had been deaf since birth.**
  - X One of the girls I share with is a British.
  - ✓ **One of the girls I share with is British.**  
Do not use **a/an** before an adjective (e.g. 'deaf', 'British') unless the adjective is followed by a noun: 'Her husband is disabled.'  
Compare: 'The footbridge cannot be used by the disabled.' (= all people who are disabled)

**2** See ANOTHER 6

- abandon 1**
- X Since capital punishment was abandoned, the crime rate has increased.
  - ✓ **Since capital punishment was abolished, the crime rate has increased.**  
**abandon** = give up a plan, activity or attempt to do something, without being successful: 'Bad weather forced them to abandon the search.' 'Without government support, the project will have to be abandoned.'  
**abolish** = remove a law, tradition or system, often by introducing a new law; do away with: 'In which year was slavery abolished in the United States?' 'I'd hate to see the monarchy abolished.'
- 2**
- X It is difficult to reach abandoned places such as small country villages.
  - ✓ **It is difficult to reach remote places such as small country villages.**  
**abandoned** = left for ever by the owners or occupiers: 'The field was littered with abandoned cars.' 'Some of these old abandoned coal mines could be dangerous.'

## 2 ability

**remote** = far away and difficult to reach: 'The tribe lives in a small remote mountain village.' 'We have now managed to bring famine relief to people in even the most remote areas.'

### ability 1

- X These machines are destroying our ability of thinking.
- ✓ **These machines are destroying our ability to think.**  
**ability to do sth (NOT of doing):** 'Nobody doubts his ability to get the job done.' 'We need someone with the ability to work under pressure.'

### 2

- X I want to improve my ability of reading.
- ✓ **I want to improve my reading ability.**
- ✓ **reading/writing/teaching/acting ability:** 'Her acting ability was recognized at a very early age.'

### 3

- X I want to improve my ability of English.
- ✓ **I want to improve my ability in English.**  
**ability in a language or subject:** 'Sarah has demonstrated considerable ability in both maths and chemistry.'

### able 1

- X One man is able to destroy the whole world.
- ✓ **One man is capable of destroying the whole world.**  
If someone is **able to do something**, they can do it and it is not unusual or surprising if they do it: 'The doctor said that after a few days I'd be able to get out of bed.' 'Will you be able to play on Saturday?'  
If someone is **capable of (doing) something**, they do not usually do it, but it is possible for them to do it if they want to: 'I'm sure he's quite capable of getting here on time, but he can't be bothered.' 'The power station is capable of generating enough electricity for the whole region.'

### 2

- X There are so many places to visit in London that I'm not able to decide where to go.
- ✓ **There are so many places to visit in London that I can't decide where to go.**
- X We weren't able to stop laughing.
- ✓ **We couldn't stop laughing.**  
With verbs of perception (e.g. **see, hear, smell**) and verbs of the mind (e.g. **understand, decide, remember**), we usually use **can, can't**, etc: 'I can't hear you. Could you speak a bit louder, please?' 'I think I can smell something burning.' 'Having met her new boss, I can see why she doesn't like him.' Note also the phrase **can't/couldn't stop doing something**: 'The book was so fascinating I couldn't stop reading it.' See also COULD 1

### 3

- X In some countries you are not able to drink until you are 21.
- ✓ **In some countries you can't drink until you are 21.**  
For actions that are controlled by laws or rules, use **can, can't**, etc, or **be (not) allowed to**: 'Now that they are both sixteen, they can get married.' 'The goalkeeper can touch the ball, but nobody else can.'

### 4

- X Technology has made them able to grow their own food.
- ✓ **Technology has enabled them to grow their own food.**  
**enable** = make someone able to do something: 'This scheme is designed to enable young people to find work.'  
Note also the phrase **can't/couldn't stop doing something**: 'The book was so fascinating I couldn't stop reading it.' See also COULD 1

## about 1

- x I am always delighted when I receive a letter from you. About the party on December 26th, I shall be very pleased to attend.
- ✓ **I am always delighted when I receive a letter from you. With regard to the party on December 26th, I shall be very pleased to attend.**
- x People usually sleep with the doors and windows closed. About public transport, the bus and train services are excellent.
- ✓ **People usually sleep with the doors and windows closed. As for public transport, the bus and train services are excellent.**

**About** may be used to introduce a topic (or change of topic), but only in informal styles: 'About that book you asked for – I'll get you a copy when I go to London.'

In other styles, use **with regard to**, **regarding**, **as for**, **as regards** or **as far as ... is concerned**: 'With regard to the matter of unemployment, I would like to add a few remarks to those of the previous speaker.' 'I regret to inform you that *Language and Culture* is out of print. As regards your second question, I suggest that you write to the British Museum.'

## 2

- x It all depends on how different the new country is from your own. About myself, I haven't experienced any culture shock but then this is my second trip to the States.
- ✓ **It all depends on how different the new country is from your own. In my own case, I haven't experienced any culture shock but then this is my second trip to the States.**

To show that you are going to start talking about your own personal experience or situation, use **in my own case** or (especially in informal styles) **as for me/myself**: 'Many people have benefited from the operation. In my own case, I began to feel better immediately.' 'Most of my friends like school. As for me, I can't wait to leave.'

## 3

- x I was about leaving when the telephone rang.
- ✓ **I was about to leave when the telephone rang.**  
**be about to do sth** (NOT doing)  
Compare: 'I was just leaving when the telephone rang.'

## above 1

- x There were above a hundred people in the crowd.
- ✓ **There were over a hundred people in the crowd.**

Do not use **above** with numbers (unless referring to points on a scale): 'He is over eighty years of age.' 'I receive over twenty letters a day.' Compare 'Don't let the temperature get above thirty degrees.'

## 2

- ? I like to stay at home on a Sunday, as I've said above.
- ✓ **I like to stay at home on a Sunday, as I've already said.**
- ? What do you think of the above suggestion?
- ✓ **What do you think of my/this suggestion?**

**Above** is used in formal writing to refer to something that has been mentioned earlier: 'From the above arguments it can be seen that supporters of the dam project fall into two camps.' In informal styles, this use of **above** is inappropriate.

## 3

- ? Taking all the above into account, one could say that tourism does more harm than good.

## 4 above all

- ✓ **Taking all the above arguments into account, one could say that tourism does more harm than good.**

Instead of using **the above** as a loose reference to something mentioned earlier, make the reference more precise by using **the above + noun** (or **the + noun + above**): 'the above reasons', 'the statement above'.

**above all 1** X He likes reading, above all novels.

- ✓ **He likes reading, especially novels.**

**Above all** means 'most importantly': 'Get plenty of sleep, eat lots of good food, and above all try to relax.' 'There were many qualities that made him a great leader. Above all, he had charisma.'

**2** X This year English is above all my most important subject.

- ✓ **This year English is by far my most important subject.**

With a superlative form ('the most important'), use **by far**: 'The riot was by far the most horrific scene I'd ever witnessed.'

**3** X Where would you like to go above all?

- ✓ **Where would you like to go most of all?**

When you mean 'more than anywhere/anything/anyone else', use **most of all** or **the most**: 'What worries me most of all is that the car is not roadworthy.' 'The one I liked the most was too expensive.'

**above-mentioned** X I would be grateful if you would send it to the address above-mentioned.

- ✓ **I would be grateful if you would send it to the above-mentioned address.**

**Above-mentioned** comes before the noun: 'the above-mentioned person', 'the above-mentioned company'.

Note that **above** may be used before or after the noun: 'the above address', 'the address above'.

**abroad** X Since I was small, I've always wanted to go to abroad.

- ✓ **Since I was small, I've always wanted to go abroad.**

X I would like to continue my studies in abroad.

- ✓ **I would like to continue my studies abroad.**

**go/live/be abroad** (WITHOUT **to, at, in** etc)

The only preposition that is used before **abroad** is **from**: 'She came back from abroad saying how much she had missed her home and family.'

**absent** X It's a pity that you were absent from the training session.

- ✓ **It's a pity that you missed the training session.**

- ✓ **It's a pity that you weren't at the training session.**

**be absent** = not be present at something that you are officially supposed to attend: 'Her teacher wanted to know why she'd been absent.'

**miss** = not be present at something: 'She's missed a lot of classes this term because of illness.' 'I wouldn't miss Sandro's party for the world!' (= I really want to go to it).

**be at** = be present at something: 'John won't be at the meeting. He's had to fly to Rome on business.'

**absolutely** X It is absolutely important that you see a doctor immediately.

- ✓ **It is very important that you see a doctor immediately.**

- ✓ **It is absolutely essential that you see a doctor immediately.**

See note at VERY 2

- accept 1**
- X The company will not accept to buy new machines.
  - ✓ **The company will not agree to buy new machines.**  
You **accept** someone's advice, opinion, or suggestion BUT you **agree** (= say you are willing) to do something. Compare: 'I accepted her suggestion and agreed to see the doctor that evening.'
- 2**
- X The driver did not accept me to get on the bus.
  - ✓ **The driver did not allow me to get on the bus.**
  - X We can't accept a motorway to be built through our town.
  - ✓ **We can't allow a motorway to be built through our town.**  
You **allow/permit** someone to do something, or **let** them do it: 'Many parents do not allow/permit their children to watch violent films.' 'Many parents do not let their children watch violent films.'
- access**
- X Computers give us an easier access to information.
  - ✓ **Computers give us easier access to information.**  
**Access** is an uncountable noun: 'The entrance has been widened to provide easier access for disabled people.' 'They have no right to refuse us access to the files.'
- accident**
- X Her car was involved in a big accident.
  - ✓ **Her car was involved in a serious accident.**  
a **bad/dreadful/nasty/serious/fatal accident** (NOT big)
- accommodation**
- X Could you help me look for an accommodation?
  - ✓ **Could you help me look for accommodation?**
  - X Accommodations in London are very expensive.
  - ✓ **Accommodation in London is very expensive.**  
In British English **accommodation** (= a place to stay or live in) is always uncountable: 'For the first year we stayed in rented accommodation.'  
In American English both **accommodation** and **accommodations** (plural) are used.
- accomplish**
- X To accomplish world unity, we need peace.
  - ✓ **To achieve world unity, we need peace.**
  - X A balanced diet is accomplished by eating many different kinds of food.
  - ✓ **A balanced diet is achieved by eating many different kinds of food.**  
When you **accomplish** something, you manage to do it or complete it, especially something that gives you satisfaction: 'She felt that she could accomplish more through journalism.' 'During his five years as President, he accomplished very little.'  
When you **achieve** something, you manage to do or obtain what you have planned to do or obtain, especially after a lot of effort: 'The company intends to achieve all these goals within the next five years.' 'By the age of twenty, she had already achieved her ambition.'  
Note that **achieve** is also used to mean 'accomplish': 'By the end of the course, you will feel that you've really achieved something.'
- according to 1**
- X According to me, we should spend more money on education.
  - ✓ **In my opinion, we should spend more money on education.**  
**according to + the writer/Dr Owen/her teachers/them etc** (NOT me/us): 'According to Charles Anderson, the government should pay



## 6 account

closer attention to public opinion.'

To introduce your own opinion, use **in my/our opinion**: 'In my opinion, he didn't deserve a prison sentence.'

2 See OPINION 1, POINT OF VIEW 1

### account

- x We also have to take into account that the schools are overcrowded.
  - ✓ **We also have to take into account the fact that the schools are overcrowded.**
- take into account + the fact + that-clause**: 'They should take into account the fact that these archaeological treasures are extremely valuable.'

### accurate

- x I cannot give you the accurate date of my arrival yet.
  - ✓ **I cannot give you the exact date of my arrival yet.**
- Accurate** is mainly used (1) to describe something said or written that contains no errors: 'Her novels are always historically accurate.' 'These figures can't be accurate, surely.' (2) to describe something that produces no errors: 'Are you sure the bathroom scales are accurate?' When you mean 'correct and as detailed as possible', use **exact**: 'The exact time is three minutes to seven.' 'Do you remember his exact words?' 'They'll be arriving next week – on Friday at three, to be exact.'

### accustom 1

- x I am beginning to accustom to the British way of life.
  - ✓ **I am beginning to get accustomed to the British way of life.**
- be/become/get/grow accustomed to sth**: 'Within a few minutes, my eyes had grown accustomed to the dark.'
- Note that, apart from in formal styles, most people prefer **be/become/get/grow used to**: 'I am beginning to get used to the British way of life.'
- 2 x Where I come from, we are not accustomed to see so many things in the shops.
- ✓ **Where I come from, we are not accustomed to seeing so many things in the shops.**
- be accustomed to doing sth (NOT to do)**: 'He was accustomed to leading a life of luxury.'

### ache

- x After the run, I had an ache in my legs.
  - ✓ **After the run, my legs were aching.**
- Ache** is usually used either as a verb or in compounds with **tooth, ear, head, back, stomach**: 'I did some weight training on Monday and my shoulders have been aching ever since.' 'That radio of yours is giving me a headache.'
- Compare: 'After the run, I had pains in my legs.'

### act 1

- x I am interested in the way people act towards each other.
  - ✓ **I am interested in the way people behave towards each other.**
  - x It is time that human beings learned how to act properly, without killing each other.
  - ✓ **It is time that human beings learned how to behave properly, without killing each other.**
- When you are talking about what someone does on a particular occasion, **act** and **behave** are interchangeable: 'Passengers who left the

flight in Rhodes said that they had seen two men acting/behaving very suspiciously.'

When you are talking generally about what someone does or what people do, use **behave**: 'You can't expect all babies to behave the same.' 'From the way he behaves, anyone would think that he doesn't get paid.'

- 2    x He refused to accept responsibility for his acts.  
       ✓ **He refused to accept responsibility for his actions.**

The noun **act** is usually used when you want to comment on a particular thing that someone has done: 'It was an act of great courage.' 'These cowardly terrorist acts bring death and suffering to the innocent.'

When you are talking about someone's general behaviour, use **actions**: 'You can't be blamed for your parents' actions.' 'Her words and actions have not gone unnoticed.' See also ACTION 2

- action 1**    x The actions that we do everyday are made easier by computers.  
               ✓ **The things that we do everyday are made easier by computers.**  
               x If someone has done a wrong action, he should be punished.  
               ✓ **If someone has done something wrong, he should be punished.**

**Do** and **action** cannot be used together. Use **do + things/something/anything** etc: 'She's always doing things for charity.' 'Don't do anything that might upset them.'

- 2    x It is difficult to forgive those responsible for actions of terrorism.  
       ✓ **It is difficult to forgive those responsible for acts of terrorism.**  
       x Blackmail is the action of trying to obtain money from someone by threatening to expose them.  
       ✓ **Blackmail is the act of trying to obtain money from someone by threatening to expose them.**

**an/the act of (doing) sth** (NOT **action**): 'Such acts of violence will not be tolerated.' 'For some people, the very act of talking to a doctor can help them to feel better.'

- 3    x Few people are aware that an urgent action is needed.  
       ✓ **Few people are aware that urgent action is needed.**  
       x The government should take an action to reduce the birth rate.  
       ✓ **The government should take action to reduce the birth rate.**

When you are talking about the idea or process of doing something, **action** is uncountable: 'There is too much talk and not enough action.' In the phrase **take action**, **action** is always uncountable: 'This illegal trade will continue unless action is taken to stop it.'

- actual**    x We'd like to know more about the actual crisis (Not the economic problems of the past).  
               ✓ **We'd like to know more about the present crisis (Not the economic problems of the past).**  
               x My actual job involves a lot of administration.  
               ✓ **My present job involves a lot of administration.**

**actual** = real (as opposed what is believed, planned or expected): 'People think he is over fifty but his actual age is forty-eight.' 'Although



## 8 actually

buses are supposed to run every fifteen minutes, the actual waiting time can be up to an hour.'

**present/current** = happening or existing now: 'No one can drive that car in its present condition.' 'Her current boyfriend works for Shell.'

- actually 1**    *x* I never get bored by this city. Actually, each time I return I find something new to interest me.  
✓ **I never get bored by this city. In fact, each time I return I find something new to interest me.**

When **actually** means 'in fact', it is usually used to correct a misunderstanding: 'People think we've got lots of money, but actually we're quite poor.' 'I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.' - 'Well actually I've only just arrived.'

When you simply want to develop a previous statement, use **in fact** or **as a matter of fact**: 'The winter of 1940 was extremely bad. In fact most people say it was the worst winter in living memory.' 'The company is doing very well. As a matter of fact, our sales have doubled.' See also

ACTUAL

- 2**    *x* We need to produce and export more than we do actually.  
✓ **We need to produce and export more than we do at present.**  
When you mean 'at the present time', use **at present**, **at the moment** or **currently** (NOT **actually**): 'At present the company is very short of staff.' 'At the moment I'm working part-time in a travel agency.'

- add**    *x* The other ingredients are then added into the mixture.  
✓ **The other ingredients are then added to the mixture.**  
**add sth to sth** (NOT **into**): 'They are demanding that a new clause be added to the contract which will give them a share of the profits.' 'When a prefix is added to a word, you make a new word.'

- admire 1**    *x* One hour is not long enough to admire all the exhibits.  
✓ **One hour is not long enough to see all the exhibits.**  
*x* I enjoyed admiring all the old buildings.  
✓ **I enjoyed looking at all the old buildings.**  
Do not use **admire** when you just mean 'see' or 'look at'. **Admire** means 'look at someone or something with a strong feeling of pleasure'. This meaning of **admire** is found mainly in novels and tourist brochures: 'Come and admire the magnificence of the Niagara Falls.' 'Rupert was sitting outside on the verandah, admiring the many jewels in the night sky.'

- 2**    *x* Although it was a sad film, I admired it very much.  
✓ **Although it was a sad film, I enjoyed it very much.**  
*x* Everybody admired your talk because it was lively and interesting.  
✓ **Everybody enjoyed your talk because it was lively and interesting.**

Do not use **admire** when you mean 'enjoy'. **Admire** means 'have a very high opinion of someone': 'I've always admired people who think for themselves.' 'Lewis was probably best known and admired for his work on medieval literature.'

- adore**    *x* I adore meeting new people.  
✓ **I like/enjoy/love meeting new people.**

- x I adore reading too.
- ✓ **I like/enjoy/love reading too.**

**Adore** usually expresses a very strong feeling: 'She adores her grandchildren and is always buying them presents.' 'The one singer I absolutely adore is Whitney Houston.' If you use **adore** to mean 'like/enjoy/love', you may sound insincere.

**advance**

See THANK 3

**advantage**

- x Although the film has its advantages, it also has a serious flaw.
- 1 ✓ **Although the film has its merits/good points, it also has a serious flaw.**

**advantage** = something that puts you in a better position than other people: 'A healthier lifestyle is just one of the advantages of living in the country.' 'The main advantage of using word processors is the amount of time you save.'

**merit** = a good quality; a strength: 'The merits of the new health programme are gradually being recognized.' 'We should judge each application on its own merits.'

- 2 x Television provides many advantages.
- ✓ **Television provides many benefits.**

**benefit** = a good result which improves your life or situation: 'Belonging to a union has a number of important benefits.' 'It's over a month since I got back from holiday, but I still feel the benefit.'

- 3 x What are the advantages in studying in the United States?
- ✓ **What are the advantages of studying in the United States?**
- x There are many advantages of having your own computer.
- ✓ **There are many advantages to/in having your own computer.**

**the advantage/s of (doing/having) sth:** 'He described the advantages of renewing the contract.' 'The advantages of independence soon became clear.'

**there are (several/many etc) advantages to/in (doing/having) sth:** 'There are advantages to working in a supermarket.' 'There are clear advantages to such an approach.' 'Are there any advantages in appointing coordinators?'

**advertisement**

- x I have just seen your advertisement about a Chinese cook.
- ✓ **I have just seen your advertisement for a Chinese cook.**
- x I am writing in reply to your advertisement of a part-time sales assistant.
- ✓ **I am writing in reply to your advertisement for a part-time sales assistant.**

**an advertisement for sb/sth:** 'an advertisement for Heinz tomato soup'

**advice 1**

- x I advised him to tell the police.
  - ✓ **I advised him to tell the police.**
- Advice** /əd'vaɪs/ is a noun. **Advise** /əd'vaɪz/ is a verb.

**2**

- x She gave me a good advice.
- ✓ **She gave me some good advice.**
- x It is full of good advices on healthy eating.
- ✓ **It is full of good advice on healthy eating.**

## 10 advise

**Advice** is an uncountable noun: 'I could do with some advice.'  
Compare: 'She gave me a good piece of advice.'

### advise 1

- X I asked my lawyer for her advise.
  - ✓ **I asked my lawyer for her advice.**
- See note at **ADVICE 1**

### 2

- X Nowadays many doctors advise to live in the countryside.
  - ✓ **Nowadays many doctors advise living in the countryside.**
  - ✓ **Nowadays many doctors advise people to live in the countryside.**
- advise sb to do sth: 'I advised her to see a lawyer.'  
advise doing sth (NOT to do): 'I would advise leaving very early. Then you'll miss all the traffic.'

### affect 1

- X The programme is about computers and their affect on our lives.
  - ✓ **The programme is about computers and their effect on our lives.**
- To **affect** something (verb) is to have an **effect** on it (noun): 'Smoking affects your health.' (= smoking has an effect on your health)

### 2

- X This problem has also affected on the automobile industry.
  - ✓ **This problem has also affected the automobile industry.**
- affect sb/sth (WITHOUT on): 'Fortunately these new tax laws don't affect us.'  
Compare: 'This problem has also had an effect on the automobile industry.'

### afford

- X My father couldn't afford paying for my education.
  - ✓ **My father couldn't afford to pay for my education.**
- afford (to do) sth: 'Not many couples can afford to run two cars nowadays.'

### afraid

- X The road to the airport was very busy and we were afraid to miss the plane.
  - ✓ **The road to the airport was very busy and we were afraid of missing the plane.**
- be afraid to do sth = be unwilling to do something because you are frightened about what may happen: 'She was afraid to eat it in case it was poisonous.' 'Don't be afraid to ask for help.'  
be afraid of doing sth = be worried or anxious about something which might happen: 'Most criminals are afraid of being caught.' 'He says that he is afraid of losing his job.'

### after 1

- X After a week we're going to Italy.
  - ✓ **In a week's time we're going to Italy.**
  - X I hope that I'll still be healthy after ten years.
  - ✓ **I hope that I'll still be healthy in ten years' time.**
- When you mention a time in the future that is measured from 'now' (the moment of speaking), use **in a month's time, in three weeks' time**, etc (or just **in a month, in three weeks**): 'She'll be back again in a couple of weeks' time.'

Note the alternatives: 'A week (from) today we're going to Italy.' 'I hope that I'll still be healthy ten years from now.'

- 2
- ✗ I promised to meet Hitomi at the exhibition a week after.
  - ✓ **I promised to meet Hitomi at the exhibition a week later.**
  - ✗ I returned to Germany after two years' time.
  - ✓ **I returned to Germany two years later.**
- When you mention a time in the past that is measured from an earlier time in the past, use **a month later, three months later**, etc: 'Six months later they got married.'
- 3
- ✗ After 1961 the consumption of cheese has increased each year.
  - ✓ **Since 1961 the consumption of cheese has increased each year.**
- To refer to a period of time that begins in the past and continues up to 'now' (the moment of speaking), use **since** (NOT **after**): 'I've been standing here waiting for you since half past three.' 'She hasn't been to see us since she got married.'
- 4
- ✗ My first aim is to get a master's degree. After I would like to go and work in Canada.
  - ✓ **My first aim is to get a master's degree. Afterwards, I would like to go and work in Canada.**
  - ? A police car arrived within minutes and soon after an ambulance came.
  - ✓ **A police car arrived within minutes and soon afterwards an ambulance came.**
- After** is used instead of **afterwards** only in informal styles, usually in phrases such as 'soon after', 'not long after' or 'just after'. Careful users generally prefer **afterwards**, especially at the beginning of a sentence: 'Shortly afterwards it was announced that the bank had collapsed.'  
In American English **after** is often used instead of **afterwards**.
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In American English **after** is often used instead of **afterwards**.
- 6
- ? I studied English for 2 years. After that I got a job as a stewardess on an American airline.
  - ✓ **After studying English for 2 years, I got a job as a stewardess on an American airline.**
  - ? We could all meet at my house for lunch. After doing this, we could go to the beach.
  - ✓ **We could all meet at my house for lunch and afterwards we could go to the beach.**
- The meaning 'then' can be expressed in a number of ways, e.g. **afterwards, then, later on, subsequently, after + v-ing**. Avoid the repeated use of **after that** and **after doing this/that**.

## 12 after all

7

- x After you will leave, we will write to you every day.
- ✓ **After you leave/have left, we will write to you every day.**  
See Language Note at WILL

after all

- x First we got stuck in a traffic jam and then our car broke down. After all we decided to cancel the trip and went back home.
- ✓ **First we got stuck in a traffic jam and then our car broke down. In the end, we decided to cancel the trip and went back home.**
- x We stopped for a meal on the way and after all we didn't arrive until midnight.
- ✓ **We stopped for a meal on the way and in the end we didn't arrive until midnight.**  
See Language Note at END

afternoon

- x Afternoon we have classes until five o'clock.
- ✓ **In the afternoon we have classes until five o'clock.**
- x School finishes at five in afternoon.
- ✓ **School finishes at five in the afternoon.**
- x The afternoon I met them at the hotel and we went to the beach.
- ✓ **In the afternoon I met them at the hotel and we went to the beach.**  
See Language Note at TIME

afterwards 1 ?

- ? We started going out together just to have fun, as friends. Afterwards we both realized that there was more than just friendship.
- ✓ **We started going out together just to have fun, as friends. Later on we both realized that there was more than just friendship.**  
**Afterwards** suggests that the next thing happens as soon as the last thing has finished: 'On Saturday morning I went to see Adrian in hospital. Afterwards I drove into town to do some shopping.'  
When there is a long interval or delay between two actions or events, use **later on**: 'I couldn't understand why she hadn't answered my letters. Later on I discovered that she had moved to a new address.'

2 ?

- ? First you draw a long straight line. Afterwards you draw another line, parallel to the first one.
- ✓ **First you draw a long straight line. Then you draw another line, parallel to the first one.**  
To introduce the next action in a process or series of actions, use **then**: 'Check that the paper is properly loaded. Then press the start button.'  
Compare: 'We all had lunch together at one o'clock. Afterwards we went to the beach.'

again 1

- x It's time I gave you your photographs again.
- ✓ **It's time I gave you your photographs back.**
- ? He'd like to have his bicycle again if you've finished with it.
- ✓ **He'd like to have his bicycle back if you've finished with it.**  
If you give something to the person who gave it to you, you **give it back** to them. When you mean 'to the person who had it before', 'to the place where something was before' etc, use **back** (NOT **again**): 'He took the