

General and abstract terms

Being, becoming, and happening

N1 verbs : being and existing

[ALSO ⇒ A1]

be 1 [IØ] to exist, happen, etc: 'To be or not to be, that is the question.' Can this really be? 2 [L1, 3, 4, 5a, 6a, 6b, 7, 8, 9; (IØ)] (acts as a connecting verb): I am here now and you are there. They are alone in the house; no one else is with them. Isn't it good? Yes, it is. The food is cooked; it is cooked food. The work is now all done. What is this thing? It's a kind of gun. 3 [I4] (forms the continuous tenses of verbs): I'm going now. You were saying something when I stopped you. Have they been asking a lot of questions? When will you be having dinner? 4 [I4, 8] (forms the passive voice of verbs): Smoking is not permitted. He was told about it yesterday. The house was being painted. She has been invited to the party.

exist [IØ] to live or be real: Do fairies exist? The Roman Empire existed for several centuries. Even if you don't want to believe it, the fact exists. A plant cannot exist without water.

prevail [IØ] *fml* to be common, usual: These ideas prevail throughout the whole country.

N2 verbs : seeming and appearing to be

seem [Wv6] 1 [I3; (it) L (to be) 1, 7, 9] to give the idea or effect of being: She always seems (to be) sad. I seem to have caught a cold. There seems (to be) every hope that business will get better. Things are not always what they seem. You must do whatever seems right to you. 2 [it I5a, b, 6a (as if)] often *fml* to appear to be true: It seems (as if) there will be an election soon. So it seems. It would seem (= it seems) there is no way out of our difficulty. I agree it seems not.

appear [Wv6] 1 often *fml* [I3; (it) L (to be) 1, 7, 9] to seem: He appears to want to leave. You appear well this morning. He appears to be your friend but I doubt if he is. It appears (to be) a true story. It appears true that she will win (= That she will win appears true). 2 [it I5a, b, 6a (as if)] to seem true: It appears (that) she will win (= It appears as if she will win). Will she win?—So it appears.—It appears so.—So it would appear.

purport *usu fml* 1 [T3] to claim (doubtfully); have an (intended) appearance of being: The letters, which purported to be signed by the general, were a trick of the enemy. 2 [T1, 5] to mean or be a probable sign of (something important): The increasing strength of the opposition party may purport the fall of the government.

strike 1 [T1] *not fml* to seem: He strikes me as a difficult person (= He seems to me to be a difficult person). 2 to come suddenly to the mind of: It struck me that we ought to make a new plan.

look as if also look like *usu infml* to seem to be (going to): It looks as if he will come. He looks like coming.

loom [L9, esp. UP] 1 to be seen, but not clearly, and therefore appearing large and dangerous: The trees loomed (up) against the lights of the house. 2 to become suddenly large and frightening: The thought that he would soon have no money loomed (up) before him.

N3 nouns : states and conditions

being [U] often *fml* & *lit* 1 the fact that someone or something is: What is the real nature of being? 2 how someone or something is, feels etc: She felt happy to the (very) depths of her being. The news shook him to the (very) roots of his being.

existence [U] the fact that someone or something exists: He doesn't believe in the existence of God. Several new countries came into existence in 1918.

state [C] the way in which something or someone exists: Different substances exist in different natural states. The noun 'redness' describes the state of being 'red'. He is in a good state of health/mind at the moment.

condition 1 [C (of)] a state of being or existence: They got used to the condition of weightlessness in space. 2 [U; C *usu sing*] a degree of fitness, readiness for use, health, etc: The house is in (a) good condition outside but inside its condition is poor. The child was found in a bad condition, not having eaten for many days.

conditions [P] the way things are: What are conditions like in that country now? Living conditions in the house were not good.

quality [C] something that a person, thing, idea, etc has which makes him, her, or it different, special, interesting, etc: *One quality of wood is that it burns/can burn. He has many good qualities, but his best quality is his kindness.*

consistency [C; U] quality, esp the amount by which an esp thick liquid or a soft material is the same throughout: *The thick liquid had a smooth consistency.*

characteristic [C (of)] a special and easily recognized quality of someone or something: *One of the main characteristics of British politics is the importance of class divisions. A useful characteristic of the cat is its ability to see in the dark.*

attribute [C] esp fml a particular quality, condition, sign, feeling, etc which someone or something has: *Kindness is one of his many fine attributes. Hard work is a necessary attribute in a businessman if he wishes to be a success. Speech is a human attribute not found in other living things.*

feature [C9] an important quality in or part of something: *There are several features in this plan which I don't like.*

trait [C] a special feature, esp as a natural part of something, someone's nature, etc: *One of his best traits is kindness. She inherited this trait from her mother (= Her mother had this trait and now she has it too).*

N4 nouns : appearances

[ALSO ⇒ N352]

appearance [U; C usu sing] the way something or someone appears to the eye: *Her appearance was neat and tidy. In appearance he was tall and strong.*

semblance [S9, esp of] fml an appearance; outward form or seeming likeness: *There was a pile of papers all over the desk with no semblance of order.*

look [(the) S] infml appearance: *He has the look of someone who can do these things well.*

N5 nouns : essence, nature, and character

essence 1 [U (of)] the central or most important quality of a thing, which makes it what it is; inner nature of a thing, by which it can be recognized or put into a class: *The essence of his religious teaching is love for all men. Honesty is the essence of John's character. He's the essence of honesty (= is very honest).* 2 [C; U] the most important part of a drug, food, etc, which remains after taking away the unimportant part: *essence of roses; meat essence* **in essence** fml in its/one's nature; essentially: *Lions are in essence lazy.* **of the essence** fml & pomp very important: *We must hurry. Time is of the essence.*

nature [U; C] 1 the qualities which make some-

one or something different from others: *What is the nature of the new chemical? It's not in her nature to do anything rude; she's polite by nature (= she has a polite nature).* 2 (usu with to + verb) one of those qualities: *It's his nature to be generous. It's only human nature to like money (= everyone likes money).*

character 1 [C; U: (of)] how something is; nature: *What is the exact character of the work? The whole character of the city has (been) changed.* 2 [C; U] how a person is, feels, thinks, behaves, etc: *That man has an evil character. Her character is very good; I've known her for years.* 3 [U] apprec good, strong qualities in a person: *She is a woman of character. What character he showed when he did that noble act!*

kind [U] usu fml basic nature: *They are different in size, but not in kind. A difference in degree can become a difference in kind. This work is of the same kind as that. The two things are of a kind (= the same).*

personality 1 [U; C] the whole nature or character of a particular person: *He has a weak personality. Forceful personality is needed for this job. Children have personalities that are not fully developed.* 2 [U; C] the state of existing as a particular person: *Can a man who has lost his mind and gone mad be said to have a personality?* 3 [U] unusual, strong, exciting character: *People with a great deal of personality often have admiring friends and bitter enemies.*

N6 nouns : kinds and types

kind 1 [C] a group the members of which all have certain qualities: *There are people of many different kinds here. It is the only one of its kind. Haven't you got any other kind/type/sort?* 2 [C of] a group which is part of a larger group: *There are many different kinds of people here. She doesn't want that kind of work. He had a kind of feeling that he'd never had before. (infml) I don't like that kind of a book! those kind of books. (be) someone's kind (to be) of the same kind as someone: How can they be lovers when she's not his kind at all? a kind of infml an unusual kind of; weak or unclear kind of: He had a kind of feeling that he would get a letter from his daughter today. (nonstandard) a kind of a feeling kind of infml fairly; rather; more or less but not completely: He is kind of clever. He kind of smiled at me.*

sort 1 [C (of)] kind: *It's a cheap sort of paper. That's just the sort of thing I want. People of all sorts come here (= all sorts of people come here): I don't like books of that sort/(infml) those sort of books.* 2 [C9 usu sing] infml person: *That was nice of her; she's not such a bad sort after all. a sort of infml a weak, unclear, or unusual kind of: I had a sort of feeling you'd say that. (nonstandard) a sort of a feeling of sorts/a sort of a poor or doubtful kind: It's a painting of sorts, but hard to describe. It was wine of a*

sort, but I couldn't drink it. **it takes all sorts** (to **make a world**) any society consists of people who vary greatly in their habits, characters, opinions, etc: *He has a long beard and wears flowers in his hair!—Well, it takes all sorts.*

type *more fml* [C] **1** a particular kind, class, or group; group or class of people or things very like each other and different from those outside the group or class: *This is a new type of dictionary (= a dictionary of a new type). What type of plant is this? There are many types of large flesh-eating animal. It is a seedless type of orange. This type of wine is only made in France.* **2** a person or thing considered an example of such a group or class: *He is a fine type of politician. Abraham Lincoln is the type of politician who rises to power from humble origins.* **true to type** showing the nature, behaviour, or appearance expected of the group to which a person or thing belongs: *When that sort of person cheats at cards, I am not at all surprised: they're just acting true to type.*

class [C] *fml & tech* a division of people, animals or things for any purpose, but esp according to behaviour or rank: *There is a class of people who think like that. There are various classes of fish. Nouns and verbs are classes of words.* [⇒ C150, 1]

form [C (of)] a kind or type of thing, idea, etc, esp according to shape or plan: *There are many forms of life on earth. What form of help do you need?—Money?*

nature [S] *fml* kind: *They were ceremonies of a very solemn nature.*

N7 nouns : examples and specimens

example [C] **1** something taken from a number of things of the same kind, which shows the usual quality of the rest or shows a general rule: *Her rudeness was a typical example of her usual bad manners. Our teacher gave us some examples of how the word is used.* **2** [(to)] *apprec* a person, or his behaviour, that is worthy of being copied: *Mary's courage is an example to us all. Mary is a wonderful example of courage.* **3** [(to)] a piece of behaviour that may be copied by other people (*often in the phrs set/follow a good/bad example*): *He arrived at the office early, to set an example/a good example to the others. I'm afraid the boy is going to follow his father's bad example.* **4** a warning: *I'm going to send you to prison for three weeks and let this be an example to you!* **for example** here is one of the things or people just spoken of: *A lot of people here, for example John, prefer coffee. Mary's lazy; yesterday for example she stayed in bed all day.*

instance [C (of)] an example or occasion (of something): *Let me give you some instances of what I mean.* **for instance** for example (esp in order to show a special example): *You can't depend on her; for instance, she arrived late for*

that important meeting yesterday. **in the first instance** first of all; as a beginning; at the beginning

specimen **1** [C] a single typical thing or example: *It is a good specimen of 15th-century advertising. He's still a fine specimen of health. These animals are good specimens of their kind.* **2** [C] one or a piece of something for being shown, tested, etc: *They gathered rock and plant specimens. The doctor wanted a specimen of his blood.* **3** [C9] *infml & deprec* a person unusual in some way: *She's a strange specimen, isn't she?*

sample [C] **1** a small part representing the whole; typical small quantity, thing, event, etc: *The nurse took a sample of my blood/a blood sample. I'd like to see some samples of your work. They took a sample of a hundred people for their test of public opinion.* **2** a small trial amount of a product given away free: *He gave away some free samples/sample bottles of a new kind of cooking oil.*

ideal [C] **1** a perfect example: *This is the ideal we all have in mind but never reach.* **2** [often *pl*] a belief in (perfect) standards: *He has very high ideals. She was full of youthful ideals then; not now.* **idealism** [U] **1** belief in ideals: *youthful idealism* **2** the belief that ideas are the only real things **idealist** [C] **1** a person with ideals **2** one who believes in idealism (def **2**) **idealistic** [B] having ideals; believing in idealism **-ally** [adv] **idealize, -ise** [T1; I0] to see (something or things generally) as perfect or better than it is/they are: *He idealizes; he doesn't see life as it really is.* **idealization, -isation** **1** [U] the act of idealizing **2** [C] an example of this; something idealized; something made as a perfect example

quintessence [the S of] *esp fml & lit* the perfect example: *She is the quintessence of kindness.*

N8 verbs : typifying and embodying [T1]

typify **1** to represent in a typical manner (as by an image, form, model, or likeness): *In this book we have tried to typify the main classes of verbs.* **2** [Wv6] to be a typical mark or sign of: *The book showed the care that typifies all his work.* **3** [Wv6] to serve as a typical example of: *Abraham Lincoln typifies the politician who rises from humble origins to a position of power and influence.*

instance to give as an example or instance: *When they asked him for an example, he instanced her actions last summer.*

exemplify **1** to give an example of: *The teacher exemplified the use of the word.* **2** to be an example of: *This exemplifies what I mean.*

represent **1** (esp of a painting) to show; be a picture of: *This painting represents a storm at sea. The tall stone figure represented Victory.* **2** to be a sign of; stand for: *The red lines on the map represent railways.* **3** [usu *pass*] (of a

member of a group) to be present as an example of (that group): *'a soup in which 20 kinds of vegetables were represented'* (Hawthorne) **4** *fml* to act the part of: *He represented Brutus in the school play.*

express [also T6a (how)] to show (a fact, feeling opinion, etc) in words or in some other way: *The prices are expressed in both dollars and pounds. I can't express how grateful I am/ what I mean.*

realize, -ise to carry out; make real (a hope or purpose): *She realized her intention of becoming an actress.*

embody 1 (of words, writings, etc) to express: *Words embody thought. The letter embodied all his ideas. Our laws embody our way of life.*

2 (of things) to contain or include: *The new car embodies many improvements.*

incarnate 1 [*usu pass*] to put (an idea, spirit, etc) into bodily form: *According to the Christian religion, God was incarnated in Jesus Christ. 2 old use to embody*

N9 nouns : representing and embodying

representation [U; C] the act or condition of representing or being represented; something that represents: *'No taxation without representation' means that if people pay taxes they should be represented in Parliament. This painting is a representation of a storm at sea.*

realization, -isation 1 [*the + U of*] becoming real (as of a hope or purpose): *This is the realization of my hopes; it is a great day for me.* **2** [C] something made real: *In English there are many realizations in sound of the letter 'r'.*

embodiment [C] someone or something in which something is embodied (esp in the phr **the embodiment of**): *His enemies called him the embodiment of evil. To them he is an embodiment of evil.*

incarnation 1 [U] the state of being incarnate **2** [C] a form having a body: *They believe he is an incarnation of their god.* **3** [C] a perfect or full example: *She is the incarnation of all good things.*

N10 adjectives : typical and characteristic [B (of)]

typical 1 combining and showing the main signs of a particular kind, group, or class: *It was a typical British summer/a typical 18th century church.* **2** showing the usual behaviour or manner: *It was typical of him to be so rude.* **un- [neg] typically** [adv] **1** in a typical manner: *typically American* **2** on a typical occasion; in typical conditions: *Typically, he would come in late and then say he was sorry.* **3** in a typical case or example; if true to type: *They were*

large vessels made of clay, typically having long curved necks.

characteristic [also B5] typical; representing a person's or thing's usual character: *It was characteristic of her to be rude to you. It is characteristic that such a political movement should favour violence.* **un- [neg] -ally** [adv Wa4]

representative typical; being an example (of what others are like): *This is a representative collection of ancient Greek art. Are your opinions representative of those of the other students?* **un- [neg] -ly** [adv]

N11 nouns : truth and fact

truth 1 [U] the state of being true: *'Truth is important; don't tell lies.'* *he told his son.* **2** [*the U*] what is (believed to be) true: *Tell (me) the truth! The truth is often painful. Is there any truth in his story?—Yes, some truth/No, no truth at all. He says that his religion is the truth and ours is not.* **3** [C] a thing that is (believed to be) true: *Let me tell you a few truths about your friend! to tell the truth* to be honest about something: *Well, to tell the truth, I don't like them.* **in (all) truth** *fml* to tell the truth: *In truth, I must admit I don't like them very much.*

reality 1 [U] the quality or state of being real; real existence: *She believed in the reality of fairies.* **2** [C] something real: *Her dream of marrying Frederick became a reality.* **3** [U] everything that is real: *Don't try to escape from reality.* **in reality** in spite of what was thought: *In reality, he helped them; he was not trying to make life difficult for them at all!*

fact 1 [C, C5] something that has actual existence or an event that has actually happened or is happening: *Scientists attempt to find reasons for facts. Certain facts have become known about the materials on the moon. It is a fact that I am writing this sentence. The fact that I am writing this sentence is not surprising; it is my job.* **2** [C] information regarded as being true and as having reality: *The story of the fire is not an accepted fact.* **3** [U] what is known to be true: *This is fact, not fiction; it happened!* **as a matter of fact, in (actual) fact, in point of fact** really; actually: *Officially he is in charge but in actual fact his secretary does all the work. He doesn't mind. In point of fact he's very pleased. He finished it yesterday, as a matter of fact.*

actuality 1 [U] the state of being real; existence **2** [U; C *usu pl*] something that is real; fact: *He looks poor but in actuality he has plenty of money. You have to accept the actualities of life.*

N12 nouns : fiction and fantasy

fiction 1 [U] things which are not true: *Give me facts, please, not fiction!* **2** [C] an idea, system, etc which is (perhaps) useful for some purposes but which does not really exist in fact:

The Equator [⇒ L10] *doesn't really exist, but it is a convenient fiction.*

imagination [C often with *poss*] the workings of one's mind to form a picture or idea, esp mistakenly: *These difficulties are all in your imagination.*

fantasy [C; U] something very strange, usu in the imagination or a dream: *Her mind is full of fantasies about what will happen to her if she goes abroad. It's all fantasy; nothing like that happened to him.*

fallacy [C; U] a belief, argument, idea, etc that is untrue: *It is a complete fallacy to suppose that the sun goes round the earth.*

N13 adjectives : true and real

true [Wa1] 1 [B] correct in fact: *His story is true; I was there and I saw what happened.* **un-** [neg]

2 [A] exact: *This is a true copy of the letter.* **truly** [adv]: *He is a truly great man.*

real [Wa5; B] actually existing; true, not false: *Is your ring brass or real gold? What was the real reason for your absence? The real amount was only £5.* **-ly** [adv]: *I really do want you to come. Can he really help us?* **realism** [U] 1 the showing (in books, films, etc) of life as it really is 2 the state of mind that deals with life as it really is **realist** [C] a person who believes in being realistic [⇒ N230] and accepts the way life really is

factual [B] based on fact; giving the facts; true: *He gave a factual account of what happened.* **-ly** [adv]

actual [Wa5; A] existing as a real fact: *The actual amount of money was not known although they knew it was large.* **-ly** [adv] *Can he actually help us?* **in actual fact** in reality; in actuality; actually

concrete [Wa5; B] real; being part of things as they can be seen, touched, etc and not as ideas, general rules, etc: *Animals and stones are concrete, but our names for them are not.* **-ness** [U]

apparent [A; (B)] seeming to be something, esp true or real, but not (necessarily) so: *He was our apparent friend, but he actually did not help us. His friendship was more apparent than real.* **-ly** [adv]: *Apparently he went there last week. Did he go?—Apparently.*

virtual [Wa5; A] being more or less something in fact, although not in name: *She is the virtual ruler of the country, although he is the king.* **-ly** [adv]

N14 adjectives : not true or real [B]

[ALSO ⇒ I13]

false [Wa1] esp poet & emph not true or correct: *What she says is false; it is a lie!* **-ly** [adv] **-ness**, **-sity** [U]

fallacious of, like, or caused by a fallacy; *fml* false: *Her argument is completely fallacious.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U]

nonexistent [Wa5] having no existence, except perhaps in someone's imagination: *The things she fears are nonexistent.*

fictitious [Wa5] belonging to fiction [⇒ N12] and not fact; not happening in real life: *These people were fictitious; they never lived.* **-ly** [adv]

imaginary not real, but produced from pictures in someone's mind: *All the characters in this book are imaginary. My daughter has an imaginary friend.*

fabulous [Wa5] belonging to some fantasy and not to real life: *He told us stories about the fabulous things that happened to him when he was abroad.* **-ly** [adv]

fanciful often *deprec* 1 showing imagination rather than reason and experience: *a fanciful poet* 2 unreal; imaginary: *What a lot of fanciful talk!* 3 odd in appearance, esp in being highly ornamented: *fanciful designs* **-ly** [adv]

N15 verbs : becoming and growing

[ALSO ⇒ N92 DEVELOP]

become [L1, 7, 8] to come to be: *He became king. The weather became warmer. The news became known at 10 o'clock. It became necessary for us to go.*

get [L (to be) 1, 7, 8] *infml* to become: *The weather got warmer. I'm getting cold sitting here. The cat got trapped in the tree. You're getting to be a bad influence on my children.*

grow [L7] to become, esp slowly: *The weather grew warmer. I began to grow cold, sitting doing nothing.*

fall [L7, 9] to become, esp quickly or suddenly: *He fell ill and died. She fell silent.*

N16 verbs : happening and taking place

happen 1 [I0 (to)] (of events) to be, continue, etc: *What happened?—Nothing happened. A funny thing happened to me last night. It happened so quickly (that) I didn't know what to do. Be careful; don't let anything happen to that child.* 2 [Wv6; it I5] to be true (as if) by chance: *It (so) happened that I saw him yesterday.* 3 [Wv6; I3] to have the good or bad luck: *You don't happen to have any money with you, do you? I happened to see him yesterday.*

take place [I0] *gentl* to happen, esp in a particular place or at a particular time: *The meeting took place at 10 o'clock as planned. Where did all these things take place?*

occur *usu fml* 1 [I0] (esp of unplanned events) to happen; take place: *A serious accident occurred yesterday.* 2 [L9; (I0); often neg] (esp of something not alive) to exist: *That sound doesn't occur in his language.*

arise [I0] to come into being or into notice; happen; appear: *Problems will arise as we do the work. A strong wind arose and blew our boat on to the rocks.*

turn up [v adv I0] *not fml* to happen: *He hopes something will turn up to help him in his present difficulties.*

crop up [v adv I0] *not fml* to arise, happen, or appear unexpectedly: *Some difficulties have cropped up at work so I'll be late coming home tonight. When did that word first crop up in English? The matter cropped up in the course of our conversation.*

come up [v adv I0] *not fml* to happen, esp suddenly and unexpectedly: *Something new has just come up and I must go and attend to it immediately.*

coincide [I0 (with)] **1** (of two or more things, esp events) to happen at the same time: *My holiday coincides with yours. Our holidays coincide.* **2** to be in agreement: *Their ideas on this matter seem to coincide.*

chance [Wv6; I3; it I5] *esp lit* to take place by chance; happen by accident: *She chanced to be in the park when I was there. If it should chance to rain we'll take a taxi home. It chanced that a doctor was in the room when the woman became ill.*

come to pass [I0, 5] *old use, lit & fml* to happen: *And so it came to pass that he met the king.*

ensue [Wv4; I0 (from)] *esp fml* to happen as a result: *Trouble ensued from his silly actions (= His silly actions caused trouble).*

go on [v adv I0] *infml* to happen, esp over a length of time: *What has been going on here? This has been going on for at least a year.*

become of [v prep T1] to happen to, esp as time passes: *Whatever became of John after he left here? I haven't seen him for years.*

N17 nouns : happenings and events

happening [C] **1** something which happens: *When did these happenings take place?* **2** *esp AmE* an unprepared performance or other event to get people's attention

occurrence [C] a happening: *That was a strange occurrence.* **of . . . occurrence** *fml* frequent to the degree stated: *It was an event of rare occurrence.*

event [C] a happening, usu an important one: *What were the chief events of 1979?* **at all events** in spite of everything; in any case: *She had a terrible accident, but at all events she wasn't killed.* **in either event** whichever happens: *I don't know whether I'm going by car or by train, but in either event I'll need money.* **in that event** if that happens: *It may rain.—In that event, we won't go.* **in the event of (something)** if (something) happens: *He asked his sister to look after his children in the event of his death.* **in the natural/normal course of events** in the way things ordinarily happen: *Aren't you a bit worried? In the natural course of events your daughter should have been married by now.* **(quite) an event** an important and unusual happening: *Meeting you was an event in her life.* **in any event** whatever may happen (in the

future): *I'll probably see you tomorrow, but in any event I'll telephone.* **in the event** *esp BrE* as it happened; when it actually happened: *We were afraid he would be nervous on stage, but in the event he performed beautifully.*

phenomenon [C] **1** a fact or event in nature or society as it appears or is experienced by the senses, esp one that is unusual and/or of scientific interest (often in the *phr* **natural phenomenon**): *Scientists study the phenomena of nature. Snow in Egypt is an almost unknown phenomenon. Unmarried mothers should not be regarded simply as a social phenomenon.* **2** a very unusual person, thing, event, etc: *A child who can play the piano at the age of two would be called a phenomenon.* [⇒ F239 PRODIGY]

incident [C] **1** an event, esp one in a story: *That was one of the strangest incidents in my life.* **2** an event involving violence, such as fighting or explosions: *There were incidents between the soldiers of the two armies even though the war had ended. At a recent incident two bombs exploded.* **incidental** [C: B (to)] **1** (something) happening or appearing as an occasional part of something important which spreads over a period of time: *That scene is quite incidental to the play as a whole. Fish is an incidental in our meals, rather than a regular thing.* **2** (something) unimportant: *That's an incidental; the real point of the story is this.* **an incidental matter** **incidentals** [P] additional things which one needs or which appear to be necessary after the day-by-day things have been done, bought, etc: *I had to buy soap, a toothbrush, and a few other incidentals for the journey. There were the ironing, hanging the curtains, and a few more incidentals like that to do.* **incidentally** [adv] (used to add something interesting to what was said before, either on that or another subject): *I must go now. Incidentally, if you want that book I'll bring it next time.*

contingency [C] *usu fml* an unexpected event or incident: *In such a contingency (= if such a thing happens), telephone me immediately.*

adventure **1** [C] an unusual or exciting event or set of events: *For a child of 10 it is quite an adventure to go away from home for some weeks. He had many adventures when he lived in the mountains studying wild animals.* **2** [U] exciting and interesting happenings: *She has led a life of adventure.* **adventurous** [B] liking or containing adventures: *He is an adventurous child. It was an adventurous holiday.* **un- [neg] -ly** [adv] **-ness** [U] **adventurer** [C] **1** a person who looks for adventure **2** *deprec* a person who lives by deceiving others **adventuress** [C] *deprec* a woman adventurer (*esp def 2*)

affair [C] an event or set of events, esp where some part is a mystery: *It was a strange affair and no one knows exactly what happened. We must try to get to the bottom of (= find out about) this affair.* 'The Mysterious Affair at Styles' (Agatha Christie)

coincidence [C; (by) U] a happening at the same time of two or more events, esp when not planned, expected, or probable: *What a coincidence, meeting you here! These things often happen by coincidence. She doesn't believe in coincidences; she thinks everything is planned.* **coincidental** [B] of, concerning, like, or happening as a coincidence **-ly** [adv]

N18 nouns : situations and circumstances

situation [C] **1** a position or condition at the moment: *He made some remarks on the political situation. I'm in a difficult situation and I don't know what to do.* **2** a position in certain surroundings: *The defence of Britain is helped by its island situation.*

state of affairs [S] often emot a situation (def 1): *What a terrible state of affairs! What can we do in a state of affairs like this?*

circumstance [C] a fact, detail, condition, or event concerned with and usu influencing another event, person, or course of action: *Weather is a circumstance we must take into account when choosing where to go for our holidays. When it's a question of life or death, money isn't an important circumstance. You haven't mentioned one circumstance that might account for his behaviour. The circumstances suggest a sexual crime. The police want to consider each circumstance in turn.*

circumstances [P] **1** the state of affairs, esp the sum of all conditions, facts, or events which are beyond one's control: *The circumstances forced me to accept a very low price when I sold the house.* **in/under no circumstances** never; regardless of events: *Under no circumstances will there be wage control while I head the government.* **in/under the circumstances** because of the conditions; because things are as they are: *I wanted to leave quickly but under the circumstances (my uncle had just died) I decided to stay another night.* **2** the state of a person's material affairs, esp with regard to the amount of money he has: *What are his circumstances? He seems to be in easy circumstances since he had his pay increase. The family lived in reduced circumstances after they lost their property.*

things [P] *infnl* circumstances: *I'm afraid that as things are at the moment, I can't help you. Hello, John. How are things (with you)?*

N19 nouns : accidents and disasters

[C]

[ALSO ⇒ M112]

accident something, esp something unpleasant, undesirable, or damaging that happens unexpectedly or by chance: *He was killed in a car accident. I had an accident in the kitchen and broke all the glasses.* **by accident of** by the

chance, luck, or fortune of: *By accident of birth he was rich.* **accidental** [B] happening as an accident; not intended: *What happened was accidental; he didn't mean to do it.* **-ly** [adv]: *She was accidentally hurt by a piece of glass from the broken window.*

disaster [also U] (a) sudden great misfortune: *The loss of the ship was a disaster. The election results will bring political disaster.* **disastrous** [B] of or like a disaster; terrible: *His accident had a disastrous effect on the family. The farmers suffered a disastrous loss of crops, animals, and money because of the bad weather.* **-ly** [adv]

catastrophe a terrible disaster: *The loss of all those ships was a catastrophe.* **catastrophic** [B] of or like a catastrophe: *The terrible weather caused catastrophic damage.* **-ally** [adv Wa4]

cataclysm a terrible disaster, esp in nature: *The floods were a cataclysm from which the local people never recovered.* **cataclysmic** [B] of or like a cataclysm **-ally** [adv Wa4]

holocaust the loss of many lives, esp by burning: *The factory fire turned into a holocaust when the wind changed direction.*

N20 nouns : emergencies and trouble

[ALSO ⇒ F91]

emergency [C] an unexpected and dangerous happening, situation, or threat: *Ring the bell in an emergency. They went out through the emergency exit. They lived on emergency rations.*

crisis [C] **1** a turning point in the course of anything; uncertain time or state of affairs; moment of great danger or difficulty: *That country has many governmental/political crises. We must bring things to a crisis if we want a decision to be made.* **2** the turning point in a serious illness, at which there is a sudden change for better or worse: *As soon as he reaches the crisis we'll know if he's going to live or die.* [⇒ N45]

trouble [U] *infnl* any emergency, crisis, etc: *We had some trouble in the city last night, but it's all right now.*

jam also **spot** [C *usu sing*] *infnl* an emergency, usu for one person: *I'm in a (bit of a) jam; can you help me? She's in a spot and needs help.*

Possibility, chance, and necessity

N30 adjectives & nouns : possible and probable

[ALSO ⇒ N313]

possible **1** [B] that can exist, happen, or be done: *There are only two possible causes of*

this. It isn't possible to divide a 5-inch stick into 3 parts each 2 inches long. I'll do everything possible to help you. I'll do every possible thing I can. I'll help you if possible (=if it is possible). Be as kind to her as possible. **2** [B] that may or may not be, happen, or be expected: It is possible but not probable that I shall go there next week. There will be a possible change in the weather tomorrow. **3** [B] acceptable; suitable: one of many possible answers; A new dress would be a possible gift for Mary's birthday. **4** [the U] that which can be or can be done: Politics has been called the art of the possible. Let's not talk about wild plans, but concern ourselves only with the possible. **5** [C] a person who or thing that might be suitable: He is a possible for the cricket team. **im-** [neg]: It is impossible for us to go. **-bly** [adv] **possibility** [U; C] that which is possible: It is beyond possibility that he can come! What are the possibilities; could he win? **im-** [neg]

feasible [B] possible in some particular way: According to some scientists, it is feasible to travel to the stars. That's a feasible plan! **-bly** [adv] **-ibility** [U]

probable **1** [B] that may be expected to happen; that has a good chance of being true; likely: It's possible that it will rain if the wind changes but with such a cloudless sky it doesn't seem probable. It's probable that he won't return to England because he's been offered a good job in Scotland. **2** [C] a probable choice, winner, etc: Before Saturday's football team is chosen there will be a match between the probables and the possibles. **im-** [neg] **-bly** [adv] **probability** **1** [U (of); U5] the degree of being probable: What is the probability of life/that there is life on other worlds? **2** [C] a probable event or result: War became a probability. **im-** [neg]

likely [Wa2] **1** [F, F3, 5] probable; expected: Are we likely to arrive in time? Is it likely that he'll arrive so late?—No, it's not very likely. It seems likely that they're out. **2** [B] suitable to give results: This is a likely plan! He's the most likely of the people who've asked for the job. **3** [adv] probably (esp in the phrs **very likely**, **most likely**) They'll very likely come by car. As likely as not (= probably) they'll come by car. They'll quite likely do that. **likelihood** [U] the condition of being likely; something likely: Is there any likelihood of him/his coming?—No, no likelihood at all.

apt [Wa2;F3] having the nature to do or probability of doing something; likely: This kind of shoe is apt to slip on wet ground. **-ness** [U]

N31 adverbs & modals : possible

perhaps [adv Wa5] **1** it may be; possibly: Perhaps I am wrong, but I think he is 41 years old. **2** (in making polite requests): Perhaps you would be good enough to read this (= Would you be . . . ?)

maybe [adv Wa5] not *fml* perhaps: Will they

come?—Maybe not. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think he'll do it.

may [10, 2] **1** to be in some degree likely to: He may come or he may not. This news is so strange that you may not believe it. Wherever you may go you may find examples of his evil doings. Why hasn't he come?—He may have been hurt (= we still don't know whether he has or not). **2** to have permission to; be allowed to: May I leave this with you? May I come in?—Yes, you may. She may have visitors in hospital, but they mayn't stay for more than a few minutes. I may say I find your questions rather rude (= it is my opinion that they are rude). **3** (usu with the subject following the v) I/We hope very much that: May there never be another world war! **4** also **might** although . . . do/does: You may think you're very clever, but that doesn't give you the right to order me about (= although you think you're clever, that doesn't . . .) **5** (in clauses) **a** (expressing purpose) can: Sit here, so that I may see your face more clearly. **b** (with words expressing hope, wish, or fear) will: The doctor fears that she may not live much longer. **may well** to be very likely to: His appearance has changed so much that you may well not recognize him. The team may well have won the football match, but I don't know because I wasn't there. **may/might (just) as well** to have no strong reason not to: There's nothing to do, so I may as well go to bed.

might [10, 2] **1 a** to be in some small degree likely to: He might come or he might not. This news is so strange that you might not believe it. **b** to have been in some degree likely to: Did you see how that car nearly hit me? I might have been killed (= but I wasn't). **2** *polite* (in questions) to have permission to; be allowed to: Might I come in?—Yes, you may. **3** (in clauses) **a** (expressing purpose) could: I wrote down his telephone number, so that I might remember it. **b** (with words expressing hope, wish, or fear) would: The prisoner had hopes that he might be set free. **4** (suggesting that a person should do something, behave in a certain way, etc) should: You might at least say thank you when someone helps you. **5** could have been expected to (in the phr **might have** + *past p*): You might have known she'd refuse. I might have known he'd do something silly; he's been acting strangely all week. **6** (in reported speech) may (defs **1, 2, 3, 5**): He told us that he might come, but he might not. He asked whether he might leave it with him. He said he feared that she might not live much longer. (*fml*) He said I might go if I wished. **7** may (def **4**): You might think you're very clever, but that doesn't give you the right to order me about. **might well** to be likely to: We lost the football match, but we might well have won if one of our players hadn't been hurt, **might (just) as well** may (just) as well: No one will eat this food; it might just as well be thrown away. **8** *becoming rare past t of may*: In former times the king

might do nothing without asking the permission of parliament (= was not allowed to do anything). **9** *pomp or humor* (in questions) do/does: *And what might this mean* (= what does this mean)? *Who might you be* (= who are you)?

can [IØ, 2] **1** to know how to: *I can swim well. I couldn't/wasn't able to do that new job; it was too difficult. Can you sing?*—*Of course I can.* **2** to be able to: *I can see you easily from here. This man could heal all diseases. Let's go where we can practise our religion freely. I'll see what can be done. She has everything that money can buy. It can be expressed in different words. This car can hold six people comfortably.* **3** to be allowed to (by rules): *You can't pick the ball up in football. 'I can and I will dismiss the government,' said the angry king.* **4** to allow oneself to: *You can hardly blame him for doing that. I can't take your coat without paying you for it.* **5** to have permission to; may: *The teacher said we could go to the shops for sweets. (infml) Can we go to the shops for sweets, please, Miss?* **6** (used for expressions of surprise in question form): *What(ever) can it possibly be?* **7** to have to; must: *If you don't be quiet you can leave the room.* **8** (expressing doubt about a possibility) may; might: *What can the police want with me; I've done nothing wrong. Can he still be alive after all these years?* **9** (with verbs expressing actions of the five senses and of the mind): *I can see you easily from here. I couldn't understand him when he spoke very fast.* **10** (with requests) will: *Can you hold on a minute, please?*

could [IØ, 2] **1** past t of **can**: *I can't sing now, but I could when I was young. I couldn't get the tickets yesterday (Compare: Luckily, I was able to get the tickets yesterday).* **2** (used instead of **can** in reported speech): *I can't go. He said he couldn't go.* **3** (used, often with **if**, to say that something would or might be possible): *I could come tomorrow (if you like).* (Compare: *I can come tomorrow*, which shows more desire to come). *You could earn more if you could work a little harder. The car won't start!—Couldn't you try pushing it? This could be your only chance to go.* **4** (with requests) would (more polite than **can**): *Could you please hold on a minute?* **5** (suggesting that a person should do something, behave in a certain way, etc) should; ought to (have): *You could at least have met me at the station, couldn't you?* **6** (in clauses expressing purpose) might; would be able to: *I wrote down his telephone number so that I could remember it.*

N32 modals : probable

should [IØ, 2] **1** (expressing what is likely) will probably: *The effect of the tax should be felt in higher prices. We needn't get ready yet; the guests shouldn't come for another hour.* **2** (used for expressing what is possible but not likely, in

conditional sentences about the future): *I don't think it will happen, but if it should, what shall we do? (fml) Should you be interested* (= If you should be interested). *I have a book on the subject you might like to see.*

ought [IØ, 3] will probably; can be naturally expected (to do something): *Prices ought to come down soon. You ought to be hungry by now. The car ought to go all right now. What are you doing here? You ought to be in Bristol!*

will [IØ, 2] **1** may likely (be); is probably: *The person you mentioned will be the father of the boy of the same name, is that right? This will be just what she wants.* **2** is/are proved or expected (to): *These things will happen. Oil will float on water. If people study, they will learn* (= If people study, they learn). **3** is/are suited to; has/have the power to: *This car will hold six people comfortably.*

would [IØ, 2] (past of **will** & expressing less certainty, more politeness, etc): *The person you mentioned would be the father, is that right? That would be in 1976, I think. If people studied, they would learn (but they don't).*

N33 adjectives : certain and sure

certain **1** [B] established beyond all doubt or question; known: *There's no certain cure for this illness. What will happen is not yet certain.*

un- [neg] **2** [F] having no doubt: *I'm certain she saw me yesterday. He was too certain of her love to be deceived by such talk.* **un-** [neg] **3** [B; F3, 5] sure to happen: *It's almost certain that the government will lose the next election. It is certain death to go there!* **4** [F3, 5a] (of people) sure: *Be certain to tell him, please. She's certain to do well at that job.* **make certain** **a** to enquire: *Make certain (that) you know what time the train goes.* **b** to do something in order to be sure (of getting something): *We went to the theatre early and made certain we all got seats!*

made certain of getting seats. **5** [f] rare clever; practised; unfailing: *His ear for music was certain.* **certainly** [adv] **1** without doubt: *He's certainly the best king we've ever had!* **2** (as a polite or strong way of answering a question) yes; of course: *Will you help me?*—*Certainly I will.* **certainly not** (as a strong way of answering); of course not: *Will you lend me your comb?*—*Certainly not.* **certainty** **1** [U] the state of being certain; freedom from doubt: *I can't say with certainty what my plans are.* **2** [C] a clearly established fact: *It's a certainty that the government will win the next election. It is a certainty that this horse will win the race. Are there any certainties in life?*

sure [Wa1] **1** [F] having no doubt: *I think so, but I'm not sure.* **2** [F3] certain (to happen): *He is sure to come. It's sure to rain.* **3** [B] certain in effect; to be trusted: *One thing is sure; he can't have gone far. He made a sure step out of the mud.* **un-** [neg] **make sure of something/that** **a** to find out for certain: *Make sure of the time*

b to arrange: *Make sure that you get here.* **c** esp old use to believe as certain: *He made sure it was true.* **surely** [adv] **1** as expected; certainly: *She'll surely win!* **2** [Wa5] (suggesting hope that something will happen): *Surely he can do it.* *Surely you don't expect me to do it?* **3** [Wa5] esp AmE certainly (def **2**): *Will you do it?—Surely.* **sure** of certain of having, being right about, etc: *Are you sure of these things?* **sure of oneself** confident in life: *She seems very sure of herself, but she isn't really.* **to be sure** it must be accepted (that): *To be sure, some people may disagree but that doesn't mean I'm wrong.* **ensure** [T1, 5] to make sure or certain: *His help ensured our success/ensured that we were successful.*

confident [B; F (of, 5a)] sure (esp of one's own or someone's abilities, good intentions, etc): *She was confident (that) she would win.* *He had a confident look on his face.* **confidence** [U] sure belief: *I have the fullest confidence in him.* *His confidence (in himself) will help him do well.* **diffident** [B (about)] not confident: *She is very diffident about her abilities.* **diffidence** [U] lack of confidence

definite [B] **1** having very clear limits: *He set definite standards for his students.* **2** without any uncertainty or unclearness: *We demand a definite answer.* **3** unquestionable; undoubted: *That book of his will be a definite success.* **4** having or showing firmness of opinion and willingness to act quickly: *They are very definite people.* **in-** [neg] **-ly** [adv]

positive [B] very definite; sure: *Are you positive about what happened?—Yes, quite positive.* **-ly** [adv]

express [Wa5; A] **1** (of a command, wish, etc) clearly stated: *It was her express wish that you should have her jewels after her death.* **2** (of an intention or purpose) special; clearly understood: *I came here with the express purpose of seeing you.* **3** (of a likeness) exact: *Everything the child does is an express copy of her elder sister's behaviour.*

conclusive [B] allowing a decision to be made; final and clear: *He gave us conclusive proof that she murdered the man.* **in-** [neg] **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U]

flat [Wa5; B] complete; firm; with no more argument (esp in the phr **a flat refusal**): *I'm not coming and that's flat.* *He gave us a flat refusal to help.* **-ly** [adv]: *He flatly refused to help.*

decided [B] definite; clear: *There has been a decided improvement in his health/the weather.* **-ly** [adv]: *His health has decidedly improved.*

N34 modals : certain and sure

bound [F3] quite certain (to do something): *He's bound to come if we ask him.* *It isn't bound to happen just because you want it to.* *You're bound to lose your money if you do that.*

must [I2] to be, do, etc, very probably or certainly: *You must know the reason.* *You must*

live near my friend, if you live in New Street. *I must look funny in this hat!* *There must be some more tea in the pot.* *I think they must have left early.*

N35 nouns : luck, fortune, and misfortune

[ALSO ⇒ L154]

luck [U] **1** that which happens, either good or bad, to a person in the course of events by, or as if by, chance: *Luck was with us and we won easily.* *What luck did you have in your search?* *I can't find any work here so I'll try my luck in the city.* *I've had bad luck all week.* **2** success as a result of chance: *I wish you luck.* *I have had no luck today.* *What luck I met you!* **be down on one's luck** to have bad luck, esp to be without money: *He's down on his luck; we should help him.* **be in/out of luck** to have/not have good fortune: *You're in luck; we have what you want!* *I'm quite out of luck today.* **for luck** to bring good fortune: *I am giving you this ring for luck.* **worse luck** unfortunately: *He reached the food before I did, worse luck.*

chance [U] the way in which things happen seemingly without any cause: *Leave it to chance* (= Don't plan; just wait and see what happens). *I met him by chance.*

fortune **1** [U] chance, esp as an important influence on one's life; luck; fate: *It's never been his fortune to travel far from home.* *The car broke down on a lonely road, but by good fortune another car came along and its driver offered to help.* *She had the good fortune to be free from illness all her life.* **2** [C often pl] whatever comes by chance, good or bad; that which will happen to a person in the future: *Through all his changing fortunes he never lost courage.* *The fortunes of war bring death to many, while others escape unharmed.* *That old woman tells fortunes* (= claims to tell about a person's future by examining his hand, studying a pack of cards, a glass ball, etc). *I had my fortune told last week.* **3** [U] success; good luck: *Fortune smiled on him* (= everything went well for him). *Fortune favours the brave* (= brave people often succeed).

misfortune **1** [U] bad luck, often of a serious nature: *His failure in business was due not to misfortune, but to his own mistakes.* **2** [C] a very unfortunate accident or event: *She believed that the greatest of her misfortunes was that she'd never had any children.*

mercy [C usu sing] not fml a fortunate happening: *It's a mercy we didn't know of her illness till afterwards, as we would have been so worried.*

N36 nouns : opportunities and chances

opportunity [C (for, of), C3; U] a favourable moment or occasion (for doing something):

What a wonderful opportunity! He had several good opportunities to go, but he never took them. (fml) May I take this opportunity to thank you all for coming? (fig) Opportunity knocks (at the door) only once.

chance 1 [C (of), C3] *not fml* an opportunity: *Can I have a chance to try? Give me another chance, please. She had the chance to go, but she decided not to.* 2 [C; U: (of, 5)] possibility or probability: *What chance is there that she will come? Is there any chance that he can do it?—No; no chance (at all).*

prospect 1 [U9, esp of] a reasonable hope or possibility: *There is no prospect of more money at the moment.* 2 [U9; S9] something expected or probable: *He doesn't like the prospect of leaving this town.* **prospects** [P] chances (of success): *What are his prospects in his new work?*

advantage [C; U] something which makes or may make someone or some other thing better, happier, luckier, etc than others, than before, etc: *Are there any special advantages to/for us if we follow your plan? There is no advantage in doing that. I may get some advantage if I go.* **dis-** [neg]: *Poor eyesight is a disadvantage in life.* **advantageous** [B] *fml* causing an advantage: *It will be more advantageous to you if you go now.* **dis-** [neg] **-ly** [adv] **have an advantage over** to have a better chance of doing or getting something than: *He had an advantage over us; he had more money.* **take advantage of** to make good use of: *You should take advantage of the low prices and buy now.*

turn also shot [C] a chance (to do something), esp after others have done it: *It's my turn now! Can I have a shot?*

go [C] esp *BrE infml* a chance (to do something): *Can I have a go now, please? Is it my go now?*

N37 adjectives : lucky and random

lucky [Wa1; B] having, resulting from, or bringing good luck: *He's a lucky man! It was lucky for me that I saw you when I did.* **-ily** [adv]: *Luckily I saw him just when I needed him.*

fortunate [B] having or bringing good fortune; lucky: *She's fortunate enough to have very good health. He's fortunate in having a good wife. It was fortunate for her that she met the doctor just when she needed him. He's fortunate in business (= all his affairs succeed). She won the tennis game by a fortunate stroke that put the ball just inside the line.* **un-** [neg] **-ly** [adv]: *Fortunately for me he was at home when I needed him. Fortunately she found the money she had lost.*

auspicious [B] *fml* 1 of good fortune; lucky: *This is an auspicious day for us!* 2 giving, promising, or showing signs of future success: *The opening of the railway was an auspicious event since it brought wealth to the town.* **in-** [neg] **-ly** [adv]

opportune [B] fortunate, because happening at the right time: *Your coming here was really opportune! He waited for a more opportune moment to speak to her.* **in-** [neg] **-ly** [adv]

random [A] unplanned; happening by chance [⇒ N35]: *Don't ask random questions. They used random numbers, not numbers in a particular order.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U] **at random** by chance; in no special order: *He spoke to people at random.*

haphazard [B] 1 *emot & emph* random 2 *deprec* without organization: *He works in a very haphazard way.* **-ly** [adv]

chance [Wa5; A] happening quite accidentally: *We had a chance meeting about a month ago.*

N38 nouns : dangers and threats

[ALSO ⇒ F135]

danger 1 [U] the possibility of harm or loss: *The sign says 'Danger: Falling Rocks'. This is a place where children can play without danger. The man's life had been in danger, but now he was out of danger. He is in (great, real, etc) danger of losing all his money if he continues to buy useless objects.* 2 [C] a case or cause of danger: *What are the dangers of smoking? This building is a danger to the public; it could fall down any time.*

risk esp *emot* 1 [S; U: (of, 5)] a danger (of); something that may have a (stated) bad result: *There's some/a great/no/not much risk (of fire). There's a certain risk that he may find out the truth.* 2 [C] a danger: *Fishermen face a lot of risks in their daily lives.* 3 [C9] (in insurance and insurance contracts) **a** a (stated) danger: *fire risk/war risk* **b** someone or something that is a (stated) danger to the insurance company: *I'm afraid she's a poor risk for life insurance; her health is so bad.* **at one's own risk** agreeing to bear any loss or danger: *'Anyone swimming in this lake does so at his own risk' (notice).* **at owner's risk** (of things kept for other people) with the owner agreeing to bear any loss or damage: *We send these goods at owner's risk.* **at risk** *fml* in danger: *The disease is spreading, and all children under 5 are at risk.* **at the risk of** **a** with danger of: *He saved my life at the risk of losing his own. At the risk of seeming rude, I must say . . .* **b** also **at risk to** with danger to: *He saved my life at the risk of his own/at (great) risk to his own.* **run/take risks/a risk** to do dangerous things; take chances/a chance: *You have to take a lot of risks in my job. You're running a big risk in trusting him. We'll just have to take the risk that George may come home.* **run/take the risk of doing something** to do (something dangerous): *I don't want to run the risk of meeting George.*

peril esp *poet* 1 [U] (great) danger: *She faced terrible peril in the forest that night. They went in peril of their lives from wild animals. The city is in peril!* 2 [C] a (great) danger: *He feared the perils of the sea.*

jeopardy [U] *esp fml, lit & pomp* danger (*esp in the phr in jeopardy*): *His foolish behaviour may put his whole future in jeopardy. He faced great jeopardy in the city.*

hazard [C; (U)] danger: *Life is full of hazards. Ice on the roads is a hazard to drivers in cold countries in wintertime.*

N39 verbs : dangers and threats

endanger [T1] to cause danger to: *You will endanger your health if you work so hard.*

risk *esp emot* 1 [T1] to place in danger: *You will risk your health if you work so hard. He is always risking his money at cards! He risked his own life to save mine.* 2 [T1, 4] to take the chance of: *He risks failure doing that. She risked losing her money at cards. He risked his parents' anger by marrying her.*

imperil [T1] *esp poet* to put (something or someone) in danger: *She imperilled his life.*

jeopardize, -ise [T1] *esp fml, lit & pomp* to endanger: *His foolish behaviour may jeopardize his whole future.*

hazard [T1] *esp poet & emot* to endanger: *He hazarded his life to save the child.*

chance [T1, 4; (V4)] to take a chance with; risk: *You shouldn't chance all your money at once. I'll chance another game of cards if you will. Let's chance getting wet and walk home. chance it infml* to take a chance of success, though failure is possible; take a risk: *She only had five minutes to get to the station but she wanted a book so she chanced it and went into a shop. I don't know if we can get it but let's chance it.*

threaten [I0; T1] (of danger, etc) to seem to be about to happen (to): *If danger threatens, call me. Trouble was threatening the city.*

N40 adjectives : dangerous [B]

dangerous able or likely to cause danger: *He is a dangerous person; keep away from him. It's dangerous to smoke. -ly [adv]*

risky [Wa2] *esp emot & not fml* (esp of actions) dangerous: *Robbing banks is risky as well as wrong. riskily [adv]*

perilous *esp emot, poet & lit* dangerous; risky. *-ly [adv]*

hazardous *esp poet & emot* dangerous: *They went on a hazardous journey in small boats down the River Zaire. -ly [adv]*

chancy [Wa1] *infml* dangerous; risky: *That's a chancy business and I'm not doing it!*

dicey [Wa1] *sl* risky and uncertain: *Don't mention it to him, it's too dicey; he might be angry.*

N41 adjectives : threatening [B]

threatening suggesting a threat or danger: *He behaved/spoke in a threatening way to her. -ly [adv]: He behaved threateningly.*

forbidding having a fierce, 'unfriendly, or dangerous look: *Because she has a forbidding manner she's slow in making friends. The travellers' way was blocked by a forbidding range of mountains. -ly [adv]*

fateful *esp lit* (of a day, event, or decision) important (*esp in a bad way*) for the future: *I remember that fateful night when I met her. -ly [adv]*

ominous being an omen [= L160], *esp of something bad*: *Ominous black clouds filled the sky. -ly [adv]: He spoke ominously about the future.*

ill-omened *esp lit & poet* bringing bad luck: *I don't want to see that ill-omened place again!*

N42 verbs : being important [usu nonassertive]

matter [(it) I0 (to)] to be important: *It doesn't matter if I miss my train, because there's another later. I don't think anybody matters to her apart from herself. It doesn't matter to me whether they come or not. 'Nothing matters now,' he said sadly.*

signify [I0 (to)] *fml or emph* to matter: *It doesn't signify to him whether you come or go. 'Nothing signifies since he died,' she said sadly.*

weigh [L9, *esp with*] *esp emot or emph* to matter: *Does it weigh with you at all what she does?—No; it doesn't weigh much with me.*

N43 adjectives : important [B]

important 1 which matters a lot: *It's important to find out what he is doing. It's important that you know about this.* 2 (of people) powerful; having influence: *He is an important man in the church. un- [neg] importance [U]* (the reason for) being important: *The importance of washing one's hands is to prevent infection.*

significant *esp fml* important and full of meaning: *These are very significant points which we must consider carefully. in- [neg] -ly [adv] significance [U; S]* *esp fml* importance: *Is there any significance in what he said?—No; no significance at all. I find it of some significance that she did not come.*

weighty [Wa1] having or seeming to have importance: *He made a weighty speech to the party. -iness [U]*

serious 1 of an important kind; needing or having great skill or thought: *This subject has never been paid any serious attention. He is a serious artist and this is a serious piece of art. Let's have a serious talk about your future.* 2 not (to be) easily or lightly dealt with; not slight: *Serious damage was done by the storm. Serious crime is increasing in the city.* 3 not joking or funny; (intended) to be considered as sincere: *Let's go for a walk.—In this storm? Are you serious? You can't be serious! After a few jokes his speech turned serious.* 4 (*esp of a person's manner or character*) thoughtful; sol-

emn; not gay or light-hearted: *You look very serious today; is anything wrong?* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U]: *I must tell you in all seriousness to be more careful with your money.*

grave [Wai] **1** important and needing attention, and (often) worrying: *This is grave news. The sick man's condition is grave. He has grave responsibilities.* **2** serious or solemn in manner: *His face was grave as he told them about the accident. He is as grave as a judge, I've never seen him laugh.* **-ly** [adv] *She is gravely ill.* **-ness** [U]: *The graveness of his face worried her.* **gravity** [U] *fml* graveness: *He spoke with great gravity.*

solemn **1** (esp of persons) serious and not smiling: *He looked at her with a solemn expression.* **2** (esp of ceremonies, etc) done in a serious way: *Burial of the dead is usually a solemn ceremony.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U] **solemnity** **1** [U] *fml* solemnness **2** [C usu pl] a solemn ceremony

sober [Wa2] quiet, serious, or morally good: *He leads a sober life. She looked at him with a sober expression.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U] **sobriety** [U] *fml* soberness **in-** [neg]

intent [(on)] doing things with great seriousness: *He had an intent look on his face. She was intent on her work and heard nothing.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U]

basic most important; on which everything depends; from which everything else develops: *These points are basic; without them, the plan cannot work.* **-ally** [adv]

fundamental *fml* basic: *These are fundamental questions; we must think about them. They want to make fundamental changes in the law.* **fundamentals** [P] the basic parts of or facts about something: *He does not understand the fundamentals of modern scientific work.*

N44 adjectives & nouns : necessary and essential

necessary [B] **1** [(to, for)] that must be had or obtained; needed: *Food is necessary for life. This is the power necessary to a government. He made the necessary changes. It's necessary for him to go. It's necessary that he (should) do it.* **2** [Wa5] that must be; that cannot be different or avoided; determined or fixed by the nature of things: *Death is the necessary end of life.* **un-** [neg] **-arily** [adv] **necessary evil** *fml* something bad or unpleasant which, however, produces good results that could not be obtained in any other way: *I don't like work, but it's a necessary evil.* **necessity** **1** [C esp pl] something that one must have, esp in order to live: *Where do they get the necessities of life?* **2** [U] great need: *This is a matter of necessity; it must be done.* **3** [U] lack of food, money, etc: *The family is in a state of real necessity.*

essential [B] **1** [(to, for)] esp *emph* necessary: *We can live without clothes, but food and drink are essential to life for the preservation of life.* **2** forming the central part of: *Her most essen-*

tial quality is kindness. **3** [C often pl] something which is essential: *Food is one of the essentials of life.* **in-, non-** [neg] **-ly** [adv]

vital **1** [B (to, for)] very necessary (for some purpose expressed or suggested); of the greatest importance: *If you're to avoid being discovered, it's vital that you should hide immediately. This point is vital to my argument. Your support is vital for the success of my plan. I believe you're hiding one of the vital facts; without a knowledge of that, I can't help you.* **2** [B] full of life and force: *Their leader's vital and cheerful manner filled his men with courage.* **3** [Wa5;A] necessary for life (in order to stay alive): *The dead girl's body had lost all its vital heat. He was lucky that the bullet hadn't entered a vital organ (= any organ, such as the heart, etc, without which life cannot continue).* **-ly** [adv]

key [Wa5;A] very important; that is necessary for success: *He is a very important man with a key position in the company. He is a key man in the company. We are in danger because the enemy hold all our key towns.*

indispensable [B (to)] completely necessary; without which or whom nothing can be done: *Books are indispensable things in our way of life. He is indispensable to our work; we cannot do it without him.*

must [C, usu sing] *not fml* something necessary; something that a person should see, hear, do, etc: *Don't miss seeing that film; it's a must.*

N45 adjectives : very important or necessary, etc [B]

acute very serious and needing immediate action: *The problem is now acute and you must do something!* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U]

pressing **1** demanding or needing attention, action, etc now: *Pressing business matters prevented him from taking a holiday.* **2** asking for something and urging it strongly: *My friends gave me a pressing invitation. They were so pressing that I couldn't refuse them.*

urgent badly needing attention, action, etc now: *He received an urgent telephone call to go home. It's urgent; come quick!* **urgency** [U] the state of being urgent: *In a matter of urgency telephone me immediately.*

crucial [(to, for)] very necessary; of deciding importance: *He came at a crucial moment/at a crucial point in the talks. The answer to this question is crucial for the future of the human race.* **-ly** [adv]

imperative *usu fml* very necessary; urgent; which must be done: *It's imperative to drink in hot weather if you don't want to be ill.*

critical **1** of, related to, or being the deciding moment (crisis [⇒N20]) in the course of anything: *He reached a critical stage of the fever. It was a critical point in the fighting. This is of critical importance! It was a critical time in our history.* **2** very serious or dangerous: *He*

was suffering from a critical illness. His condition is reported as being critical. **3** necessary: Courage, honesty, and firmness are critical qualities that no politician should lack. **4** [Wa5] tech (in science) of, being, or related to a fixed value as of pressure, temperature, etc at which a substance changes suddenly: Critical pressure is the smallest amount of pressure that can make a gas at critical temperature liquid. Critical temperature is the temperature above which a gas cannot become liquid even if the pressure changes. **-ly** [adv] critically ill

drastic having a strong or serious effect: The doctors took drastic action to stop the disease from spreading. If you don't help him, he may do something drastic to get the money! **-ally** [adv Wa4]

N46 adjectives : not very important [B]

trivial of little worth or importance: It was a trivial offence. Why do you get angry over such trivial matters? He is rather a trivial young man. **-ly** [adv] **triviality** [C] something trivial: She only talks about the trivialities of life.

trifling of slight importance; of little value: It was a trifling matter/sum of money; forget it. **-ly** [adv]

petty usu deprec not important: 'Don't ask me to think about such petty matters!' he said angrily. **-tiness** [U]

mere [Wa5;A] no more or better than and therefore not important: She is a mere child; she doesn't understand. **-ly** [adv Wa5]: He is merely here to help; nothing more.

General, usual, unusual, etc

N50 adjectives : absolute and general

absolute [Wa5;B] **1** not depending on or measured by comparison with other things: Is there such a thing as absolute truth? **2** without any conditions: I have made you an absolute promise that I will help you. **3** not allowing any doubt; completely certain: The police have absolute proof that he was the murderer. **-ly** [adv]

overall [Wa5;A;E] **1** including everything: What are the overall measurements of the room? The fish measured 5 feet 3 inches overall. **2** [adv] on the whole; generally: Overall, prices are still rising.

general **1** [A; (B)] not detailed; describing the main thing(s) only: Give me a general idea of the work. The school's general timetable does not include German, but a special timetable will be made for you. **2** [Wa5;A;(B)] not limited to one thing, place, etc: There is a general increase in crops during good weather.

N51 adverbials : generally

generally [adv] for most things, in most places, at most times, for most people, etc: Well, generally, I agree, but not on this point. He generally goes there on Wednesdays. Generally speaking/Speaking generally, I agree.

in general also as a whole generally; under most conditions; in most cases: People in general/as a whole don't do things like that.

all in all also **by and large** also **on the whole** when (something is) considered fully: Well, all in all, I think he's right. By and large, your idea is a good one. On the whole, he is a good worker.

altogether [Wa5] **1** considering all things; on the whole: It was raining, but altogether it was a good trip. **2** completely; thoroughly: It is not altogether bad. This is an altogether different state of affairs. It was altogether the best trip of my life! **3** everyone or everything included: Twenty-one people were there altogether, counting us.

in all with everything or everyone included: Twenty-one people were there in all.

for the most part with most things understood or most people considered: I think that for the most part he's right. People for the most part agreed with him.

N52 adjectives : relative and conditional [B]

relative **1** [Wa5] compared to each other or to something else: What are the relative costs of building in stone and in brick? After his troubles, he's now living in relative comfort. His good health is only relative; he's better than he was, but not well yet. Is truth absolute (⇒ N50), or relative? **2** [to] fml connected (with); on the subject (of): What are the facts relative to this question? **-ly** [adv] **-tivity** [U]

dependent [(up)on] depending on certain things happening: Well, this is all dependent on whether he says 'yes' or 'no'.

conditional [(up)on] depending upon certain conditions and therefore not absolute or necessarily always so: His agreement is conditional on your help. These things are conditional; they depend on many other things. **-ly** [adv]

contingent [(up)on] fml dependent; conditional: The payment of the money is contingent upon your good behaviour.

N53 adjectives : general and common

general [B] concerning or happening to everyone or in most places: These difficulties are general among people of his age; everyone has them. The price of food is a matter of general anxiety. The general opinion is that he is a good chairman. She is a general favourite. At

first only a few people wanted to go, but now interest has become general. **-ly** [adv]

common [B] happening or found everywhere or in many places: *These birds are very common here. It is quite common for people to do things like that.* **un-** [neg] **-ly** [adv]

prevalent [B (among, in)] usu fml existing commonly, generally, or widely (in some place or at some time): *The habit of travelling by aeroplane is becoming more prevalent each year. Eye diseases are prevalent in some tropical countries.* **-ly** [adv] **-lence** [U]

prevailing [Wa5;A] **1** (of a wind) that blows over an area most of the time: *The prevailing winds on this coast are from the west and often bring rain.* **2** most common or general (in some place or at some time): *He wore his hair in the prevailing fashion.*

widespread [B] found, placed, etc in many places: *Such ideas are very widespread.*

sweeping [B] general; not particular and lacking in useful details or enough thought and care: *Her sweeping statements about life show that she is still very young.*

N54 adjectives : particular and specific

particular **1** [Wa5;A] worthy of notice; special; unusual: *I'm in a particular hurry today. There was nothing in the letter of particular importance.* **2** [Wa5;A;(B)] single and different from others; of a certain sort: *I don't like this particular hat, but the others are quite nice.* **3** [B (about, over)] **a** careful and exact: *Give me a full and particular description of what happened.* **b** showing (too) much care or interest in small matters: *He is very particular about having his breakfast at exactly 8 o'clock.* **c** hard to please: *He is very particular about his food.* **in particular** especially: *I noticed his eyes in particular, because they were very large.* **-ly** [⇒:]

local [B] belonging to a particular place: *These difficulties are not just local, they are widespread* [⇒ N53]. *He is one of the local men, not a visitor.* **-ly** [adv]

individual [Wa5;A] **1** (often with *each*) single; particular; separate: *Each individual leaf on the tree is different.* **2** suitable for each person or thing alone: *Individual attention must be paid to every fault in the material.* **3** (of manner, style, ways of doing things) particular to the person, thing, etc concerned and different from others: *She has her own individual style of doing things, and an individual walk/way of walking.* **-ly** [adv]

specific **1** [B] detailed and exact; clear in meaning; careful in explanation: *Be specific in your examination answers. He gave us a specific statement of the case.* **2** [Wa5;A] particular; certain; fixed, determined, or named: *He uses a specific tool for each job.* **-ally** [adv]

N55 adjectives : special and unique

[B]

special **1** [Wa5] of a particular kind: *Do you have a special reason for the request? There is a special train to Liverpool for the football match. This is a special case deserving special treatment.* **2** particularly great or fine: *Tonight is a special occasion, and we have something very special for dinner. He is a special friend of mine. There was no special difficulty.* **-ly** [adv]

rare [Wa1] **1** unusual; uncommon: *This is a rare event. She collects rare books. It's very rare for him to be late.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U] **2** infml esp ScotE unusually good: *The party was rare fun.* **3** (esp of air) thin; light: *He found the rare air of the mountains difficult to breathe.* **rare old** infml esp BrE unusually good, strong, etc: *She was having a rare old time at the party, wasn't she?*

unique **1** [Wa5] being a single one of its type **2** infml unusual: *I am in a rather unique position, as my job is different from anyone else's.* **-ly** [adv] **-ness** [U]

N56 adjectives : usual and habitual

usual [B] that is expected; that happens most of the time: *We will meet at the usual time. We paid the usual amount. Is it usual to have milk with meals?—Wine would be more usual.* **-ly** [adv] **as usual** as is common or has happened before: *As usual, he arrived last.*

normal [B] **1** according to what is expected: *Normal working hours are from 9 to 5. The normal order of words is subject—verb. What are normal temperatures during November? It's perfectly normal to get angry with your mother sometimes. Rainfall has been about below normal this July.* **2** (of a person) developing in the expected way; without any disorder in mind or body: *He is a normal child in every way.* **-ly** [adv]

habitual [Wa5] **1** [A] happening all the time: *She gave her habitual greeting.* **2** [A;(B)] (done) by habit: *He's a habitual liar. His lying is habitual.* **-ly** [adv]: *He is habitually late.*

customary [B] established by or according to custom; usual; habitual: *He sat in his customary place on the bus going to work. It is customary to give people gifts on their birthday.*

N57 adjectives, etc : standard and average

standard **1** [B] of the usual kind; not rare or special: *These nails come in three standard sizes. On this car, a three-litre engine is standard. We have a standard way of acting in these cases.* **2** [A] generally recognized as excellent, correct, or acceptable: *It's one of the standard books on the subject. This is the standard spelling/pronunciation.* **non-** [neg]: *That kind of English is non-standard.*