The word thesaurus comes from the Greek word *thesauros*, meaning ‘storehouse’ or ‘treasure’. This is an apt description, because a thesaurus is a kind of treasure trove of the language, allowing you to explore its richness and variety. By listing groups of words that have similar meanings to each other, a thesaurus offers a choice of alternative words (synonyms) that can be used in place of one that you already have in mind.

Thus a thesaurus helps you to express yourself more accurately and in more interesting and varied ways. It is an invaluable tool for anyone who writes, whether for memos and reports at work, essays and dissertations at school and college, letters to business contacts, friends, or potential employers, or creative writing for a living or for pleasure. A thesaurus can provide the answer when a word is on the tip of your tongue, or it can expand your vocabulary to help you find new ways of saying what you want to. A thesaurus can also help in solving crossword puzzles and with many other word games.

The *Oxford Thesaurus of English*, first published in 2000 and now appearing in its second edition, contains an unrivalled number of alternative and opposite words: well over 600,000 in total. It is the most comprehensive one-volume thesaurus available, including not only everyday words but also unusual and colourful words, specialist terms, and archaic and obsolete terms. There are more than 16,000 entries, arranged A–Z, which means that you only have to go one place to find what you are looking for, and there is no need for a bulky index. For each of those 16,000 entries, there is an average of 38 alternatives, carefully chosen, sorted, and arranged to help you find the word you need as quickly as possible.

In addition to the standard entries, the *Oxford Thesaurus of English* offers an array of special features designed to enhance the usefulness and accessibility of the book. ‘Choose the Right Word’ panels explore in detail the differences between close synonyms such as *brusque*, *abrupt*, * curt*, and *terse*; the findings presented here, new to this edition, are the result of sophisticated computational analysis of how these words are used in real English, giving the user the fullest and most accurate account available. Also new to this edition are over 1300 Word Links, at 720 entries, to words which are not synonyms but which have another kind of relation to the headword: for example, at *cat* there are terms for the male and female cat (*tom, queen*) as well as the adjective relating to cats (*feline*).

Lastly, there is a new Word List section in the centre of the book, offering hundreds of lists covering everything from types of cheese to species of bird and names of dances. These are cross-referenced from within the main text but can also be used independently, ideal for crossword and word-game enthusiasts.

For a quick tour of the main features of the *Oxford Thesaurus of English*, look at ‘How to use this thesaurus’ on pp. xi–xii. The Introduction on the next few pages gives more details on the contents and organization of *OTE* and how to get the most out of it.
How to use this thesaurus

headword

book

part of speech of headword noun

example of use

1. He published his first book in 1610.

form of the headword for which synonyms are given

noun phrase entered under noun section

by the book

phrasal verb entered under verb section

book in

article explaining the difference between a confusable pair of words

flaunt or flout?

It is a common error to use flaunt as though it meant the same as flout. Flout means 'display ostentatiously', as in tourists flaunting their wealth. Flaunt, on the other hand, means 'defy or disobey (a rule)', as in timber companies are continuing to flout environmental law. Saying that someone flaunts the rules is an error due to similarity in sound and to the element of ostentation involved in flouting a regulation.

pronunciation

lead

list of words, in centre section, for different types of rock

Rocks

See also Gems Minerals

sedimentary

arenite argillite

breccia claystone

chert diatomite
dolomite

flint ironstone limestone

matt...
peculiar adjective 1 something even more peculiar began to happen strange, unusual, odd, funny, curious, bizarre, weird, unexpected, unfamiliar, abnormal, atypical, anomalous, unusual, different, out of the ordinary, out of the way, exceptional, rare, extraordinary, remarkable; puzzling, mystifying, mysterious, perplexing, baffling, unaccountable, inconceivable, uncommon, irregular, singular, deviant, aberrant, freak, freakish, suspicious, dubious, questionable; eerie, unnatural; Scottish unce; French l'etre; Italian fisso; German tief; Scottish informal rum; N. Amer. informal bizarrro.

4 attitudes and numerals peculiar to the islands characteristic of, typical of, representative of, belonging to, indicative of, symptomatic of, suggestive of, exclusive to, like, in character with.

5 Elena added her own peculiar contribution distinctive, characteristic, distinct, different, individualistic, distinguishing, typical, special, specific, representative, unique, idiosyncratic, personal, private, essential, natural; identifiable, unmistakable, conspicuous, notable, remarkable, rare singular.

cross-reference to lists of words for different types of rock

rock noun 1 a narrow gully strewn with rocks boulder, stone; Austral. informal gookie.

2 a castle built on a rock crag, cliff, tor, outcrop, outcropping.

3 he was the rock on which his whole family relied foundation, cornerstone, support, prop, mainstay, backbone; tower of strength, pillar of strength, bulwark, anchor, source of protection, source of security.

4 (informal) she was wearing a massive rock on her fourth finger diamond, precious stone, jewel.

on the rocks (informal) 1 Sue's marriage was on the rocks in difficulty, in trouble, breaking down, practically over, heading for divorce, heading for the divorce courts; in tatters, in pieces, destroyed, shattered, ruined, beyond repair.

2 he ordered a Scotch on the rocks with ice, on ice.

WORD LINKS
related prefixes litho- (e.g. lithography), petro- (e.g. petroleum)
related suffix -lite (e.g. hyalite)
study of rocks lithology, petrology, petrography

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD

Strange, odd, curious, peculiar

These words are all applied to things that are unusual or unfamiliar; they generally also suggest that something is in some way surprising.

- Strange is the most neutral term for something that is not expected or is hard to understand or explain (this is strange behaviour for a left-wing party; he looked at her with a strange expression). This is the only word of the four that can be used in the expression strange to say, as in I went to see 'Fallen Angels', which, strange to say, is a hit.

- Odd gives a stronger sense that the speaker or writer is perplexed (do you think it odd that I pay her bills?) they were an odd family).

- Describing something as curious implies that one finds it not only strange or puzzling but also interesting or appealing (this church has a curious history; the room is filled with a curious mixture of people). It rarely has the connotation of devise that the other words can have.

- Something described as peculiar is felt to be very strange, even disturbingly so (he was struck by the peculiar appearance of a group of birds; whoever thought up that joke has a peculiar sense of humour).
dishonest, disinclined, disinterested

dishonest | adjective he is accused of dishonest business practices | a dishonest accountant.
dishonesty | noun he lost money as a result of his solicitor’s dishonesty.
dishonourable | adjective he is accused of dishonest conduct.
dishonour | noun he has betrayed our master and dishonoured the banner.
dishonourable | adjective he is accused of conduct.
dishonesty | noun he lost money as a result of his solicitor’s dishonesty.
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Dishonest, disinclined, disinterested

Dishonesty, dishonesty, disinclination, disinclined
flotsam | fluency

flotsam | verb 1 we were still finding interesting pieces of flotsam on the beach
wreckage. lost cargo, floating remains.
2 the room was cleared of boxes and other flotsam rubbish, debris, detritus, waste, waste matter, discarded matter, dross, refuse, remains, scrap, lumber, odds and ends; N Amer trash, garbage; Aust/NZ mullock; informal dreck, junk;
 brit. informal grot, gash; vulgar shit; crisp; Archaeology; debitage; rare draft, raffle, ruff, cultch, orts.

flounce | verb 1 she rose from the table in a fury and flounced out
storm; angrily, sweep, stomp, stamp, march, strut, stalk.
2 this was not the first time she had flounced out
in a rage.
3 flounces the dress was trimmed with flounces
at the hem of the skirt.

flounder | verb 1 the dragons were floundering in the boggy ground
struggle, thrash, flail, toss and turn, twist and turn, pitch, splash, stagger, stumble, falter, lurch, blunder, fumble, grope, squirm, writh.
2 you may find yourself floundering as you try to answer a question you have not
really understood. she floundered in the crowd.
3 more firms are floundering
struggle financially, be in dire straits, face financial ruin, be in difficulties, face bankruptcy/insolvency.
4 the flounder is a valuable fish
flounder, flounder fish, flatfish, turbot.

flourish | verb 1 rainforests flourish because of the heat and the rain
grow, thrive, prosper, do well, develop, increase, multiply, profligate; spring up, shoot up, bloom, blossom, bear fruit, burst forth, run riot; put on a spurt, boom, mushroom.
2 the arts flourished in this period
thrive, prosper, bloom, be in good shape, be in good health, be well, be strong, be vigorous, be in its heyday; ascendancy, climax, culmination, crowning point, perfection, heyday, springtime, boom, flowering, saldy days.
3 the flower of the nation's youth
best, finest, top, pick, choice, choicest, prime, cream, pride, treasure, pearl, gem, jewel, the jewel in the crown, the flower of the age, golden age, most accomplished, first class, elite, elect; informal the tops.
4 the shrub produces blue flowers in early summer
bloom, flourish, floweret, floret.
5 the flower of the nation's youth
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flourish, thrive, prosper

joining the right word
flourish, thrive, prosper

flow | verb 1 the water flowed down the channel she had dug run, move, go
along, course, pass, proceed, glide, slide, drift, circulate, trickle, dribble, drizzle, spurt, gurgle, bubble, ripple; stream, surge, sweep, flow, cascade, pour, roll, rush, whirl, well, spurt, spout, spew, jet; leak, seep, ooze, percolate, drip.
2 many questions flow from today's announcement
result, proceed, arise, follow, ensue, derive, stem, accurse, originate, emanate, spring, emerge; be caused by, be brought about by, be produced by, originate
in.

flow | noun 1 the water produced a good flow of water
movement, motion, course, passage, current, flux, drift, circulation; stream, swirl, surge, sweep, gush, roll, rush, welling, spate, tide, spurt, squirt, jet, outpouring, overtop, overflow, trickle, leak, seepage, ooze, percolation, drip.

flow | verb 2 she pushed back her long flowing hair
loose, free, unconfined; limp, flaccid, floppy.

flow | verb 3 they flowed stiff, curly.
2 the new model will have soft, flowing lines and no hard edges
streamlined, trim, aerodynamic, smooth, clean, uncluttered, uncluttered; elegant, graceful, technical fair.
3 he writes in an easy, flowing style
fluid, free-flowing, effortless, easy, natural, smooth, unbroken, uninterrupted, continuous; graceful, elegant.
4 the flower of the nation's youth
best, finest, top, pick, choice, choicest, prime, cream, pride, treasure, pearl, gem, jewel, the jewel in the crown, the flower of the age, golden age, most accomplished, first class, elite, elect; informal the tops.

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Poisonous Plants and Fungi

- aconite
- banana
- belladonna
- black brony
- buttercup
- cowbane
- deadly nightshade
- death cap
destroying angel
dog’s mercury
fly agaric
fool’s parsley
foxglove
greater celandine
hellobore
hemlock
henbane
Indian poke
laburnum
lucky bean
manchinel
meadow saffron
mezereon
monkshood
naked boys
naked ladies
oleander
panther cap
poison ivy
privet
the sickener
spurge laurel
stavesacre
thorn apple
upas (tree)
water dropwort
water hemlock
white snakeroot
wolfbane

Poisonous Substances and Gases

- aconitine
diazomethane
diborane
digoxin
dioxane
endrin
ethylene oxide
fluorine
formaldehyde
hydrocyanic acid
hydrogen cyanide
hydrogen sulphide
hydroxycamine
iodine
lewisite
lindane
mercuric chloride
methanol
muscarine
nerve gas
nitrile acid
nitrogen dioxide
oxygen tetroxide
ouabain
oxalic acid
paraphen
parathion
Paris green
perchloric acid
perchloroethylene
phenol
phosgene
quinine
rat poison
ricin
rotenone
santoin
sarin
solarine
stophanthin
strychnine
sulphur dioxide
tartar emetic
tetrodotoxin
turpentine
veratrine
warfarin
white spirit
zinc chromate

Poker Hands

- royal flush
- full house
- straight
- flush
- 4 of a kind
- 2 pairs
- 1 pair

Police Officers and Forces

- askari
- assistant chief constable
- bomb squad
- Bow Street Runner/Older
cadet
- captain
- carabiner/el carabiniere
- chief (of police)
- chief constable
- chief inspector
- CID (Criminal Investigation
- Department)
- commander
- commissioner
- constable
- community police officer
crime squad
- deputy chief constable
desk sergeant
deputy chief inspector
detective chief inspector
detective chief superintendent
detective constable
detective inspector
detective sergeant
detector superintendent
drug/drugs
faujdar/faujdar
flying squad
fraud squad
Garda/Gardai
gendarmerie
Gestapo
GPU
havildar
Homicide
inspector
investigating officer
Keystone Kops
KGB
LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department)

Poisonous Plants and Fungi

- aconite
- banana
- belladonna
- black brony
- buttercup
- cowbane
- deadly nightshade
- death cap
destroying angel
dog’s mercury
fly agaric
fool’s parsley
foxglove
greater celandine
hellobore
hemlock
henbane
Indian poke
laburnum
lucky bean
manchinel
meadow saffron
mezereon
monkshood
naked boys
naked ladies
oleander
panther cap
poison ivy
privet
the sickener
spurge laurel
stavesacre
thorn apple
upas (tree)
water dropwort
water hemlock
white snakeroot
wolfbane

Poisonous Substances and Gases

- aconitine
diazomethane
diborane
digoxin
dioxane
endrin
ethylene oxide
fluorine
formaldehyde
hydrocyanic acid
hydrogen cyanide
hydrogen sulphide
hydroxycamine
iodine
lewisite
lindane
mercuric chloride
methanol
muscarine
nerve gas
nitrile acid
nitrogen dioxide
oxygen tetroxide
ouabain
oxalic acid
paraphen
parathion
Paris green
perchloric acid
perchloroethylene
phenol
phosgene
quinine
rat poison
ricin
rotenone
santoin
sarin
solarine
stophanthin
strychnine
sulphur dioxide
tartar emetic
tetrodotoxin
turpentine
veratrine
warfarin
white spirit
zinc chromate

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- full house
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- 1 pair

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- chief (of police)
- chief constable
- chief inspector
- CID (Criminal Investigation
- Department)
- commander
- commissioner
- constable
- community police officer
crime squad
deputy chief constable
desk sergeant
deputy chief inspector
detective chief inspector
detective chief superintendent
detective constable
detective inspector
detective sergeant
detector superintendent
drug/drugs
faujdar/faujdar
flying squad
fraud squad
Garda/Gardai
gendarmerie
Gestapo
GPU
havildar
Homicide
inspector
investigating officer
Keystone Kops
KGB
LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department)