
Compact Oxford Thesaurus

for University and
College Students

FIRST EDITION

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eccentric adjective *eccentric behaviour*: unconventional, abnormal, irregular, aberrant, anomalous, odd, queer, strange, peculiar, bizarre, outlandish, extraordinary; idiosyncratic, quirky, offbeat, nonconformist, outré; informal weird; Brit. informal rum.

OPPOSITES: conventional.

▷ **noun** *he was something of an eccentric*: oddity, individualist, nonconformist, free spirit; misfit; informal oddball.

eccentricity noun *unconventionality*, oddness, strangeness, quirkiness; peculiarity, foible, idiosyncrasy, quirk.

ecclesiastical adjective *his ecclesiastical duties*: priestly, ministerial, clerical, canonical, sacerdotal; church, religious, spiritual, holy, divine.

echelon noun *he reached the upper echelons of government*: level, rank, grade, step, rung, tier, position, order.

echo noun

1 *the hills sent back a faint echo of my shout*: reverberation, reflection, repetition, repeat.

2 *he saw an echo of his own childhood experience in Smith's troubled family life*: suggestion, reminder; parallel, similarity, repetition, repeat.

▷ **verb**

1 *his laughter echoed round the room*: reverberate, resonate, resound, reflect, ring.

2 *Bill echoed Rex's words*: repeat, restate, reiterate; quote, reproduce.

eclectic adjective *her musical tastes are eclectic* | *the college offers an eclectic mix of courses*: wide-ranging, broad-based, extensive, comprehensive, encyclopedic; varied, diverse, catholic, all-embracing, multifaceted, multifarious, heterogeneous, miscellaneous, assorted.

eclipse verb

1 *the sun was eclipsed by the moon*: blot out, block, cover, obscure, hide, conceal, obliterate, darken; shade.

2 *the success of this opera was eclipsed by the triumph of his next work*: outshine, overshadow, put into the shade, surpass, exceed, outclass, outstrip, outdo, top, trump, transcend, upstage.

economic adjective

1 *the government's economic policy*: financial, monetary, budgetary, fiscal.

2 *the firm cannot remain economic*: profitable, moneymaking; solvent, viable, cost-effective.

OPPOSITES: unprofitable.

economical adjective

1 *an economical car* | *economical prices*: cheap, inexpensive, low-cost, budget, economy, economic; cut-price, discount, bargain.

2 *a very economical shopper*: thrifty, provident, prudent, sensible, careful, frugal, sparing.

OPPOSITES: expensive, spendthrift.

economize verb *they economized by growing their own vegetables*: save money, cut costs; cut back, make cutbacks, retrench, budget, make economies, be thrifty, be frugal, scrimp, tighten your belt, draw in your horns, watch the/your pennies.

economy noun

1 *the nation's economy*: wealth, financial resources; financial system, financial management.

2 *one can combine good living with economy*: thrift, thriftiness, providence, prudence, careful budgeting, economizing, saving, restraint, frugality.

OPPOSITES: extravagance.

ecstasy noun *there was a look of ecstasy on his face* | *they went into ecstasies over the view*: rapture, bliss, elation, euphoria, joy, jubilation, exultation; transports, rhapsodies.

OPPOSITES: misery.

ecstatic adjective *ecstatic fans filled the stadium*: euphoric, elated, in raptures, rapturous, joyful, overjoyed, blissful; on cloud nine, in seventh heaven, beside yourself with joy, jumping for joy, delighted, thrilled, exultant; informal over the moon, on top of the world, blissed out.

eddy noun *the current was forming eddies along the bank*: swirl of water; whirlpool, vortex.

▷ **verb** *cold air eddied around her*: swirl, whirl, spiral, twist; flow, ripple.

edge noun

1 *the edge of the lake*: border, boundary, fringe, margin, side; lip, rim, brim, brink, verge; perimeter, circumference, periphery, limits, bounds, extremity.

2 *she had an edge in her voice*: sharpness, pointedness, severity, bite, sting.

3 *they have an edge over their rivals*: advantage, lead, head start, the whip hand, the upper hand; superiority, dominance, ascendancy, supremacy.

OPPOSITES: middle, disadvantage.

▷ **verb**

1 *poplars edged the orchard*: border, fringe; surround, enclose, encircle, circle, bound, encompass.

2 *a shawl edged with lace*: trim, pipe, decorate, finish; border, fringe; bind, hem.

3 *he edged closer to the fire*: creep, inch, work your way, pick your way, ease yourself; sidle, steal, slink.

□ **on edge**

the crowd was on edge: tense, nervous, edgy, anxious, apprehensive, uneasy, unsettled; twitchy, jumpy, nervy, keyed up, restive, skittish; informal uptight, wired.

edgy adjective

1 she seemed edgy and paced to and fro: **tense**, nervous, on edge, anxious, apprehensive, uneasy, unsettled; twitchy, jumpy, nervy, keyed up, restive, skittish; irritable, touchy, tetchy, prickly; informal uptight, wired.

2 (informal) the track confirms that the band has lost none of its edgy style: **unconventional**, original, innovative, cutting-edge, contemporary, sharp; avant-garde, experimental; informal left-field.

OPPOSITES: calm.

edible adjective are these mushrooms

edible? **safe to eat**, fit for human consumption, eatable; digestible, palatable.

OPPOSITES: inedible.

edict noun in 1762 a royal edict compelled

the clergy to contribute a fifth of their income to charitable purposes: **decree**, order, command, commandment, mandate, dictate, fiat; ruling, injunction, law, statute, act.

edifice noun (formal) **building**, structure, construction, erection, pile; property, development, premises.**edit** verb

1 parts of the text still need to be edited: **correct**, check, copy-edit, emend; modify, adapt, revise, rewrite, reword, rework, redraft; shorten, condense, cut, abridge; informal clean up.

2 he is currently editing a collection of essays on the poet Ronald Johnson: **select**, choose, assemble, organize, put together.

3 he edited *The Times* for many years: **be the editor of**, direct, run, manage, head, lead, preside over.

edition noun the early editions of tomorrow's papers: **issue**, number, impression, publication; version, revision; volume.**educate** verb they decided to educate their children at home | a plan to educate young people on the dangers of drugs: **teach**, school, tutor, instruct, train; guide, inform.**educated** adjective he was an educated and articulate man: **informed**, well read, learned, knowledgeable, enlightened, cultivated, cultured, erudite; literate.**education** noun the education of young children: **teaching**, schooling, tuition, tutoring, instruction, coaching, training, tutelage, guidance.

WORD LINKS

pedagogic relating to education

educational adjective

1 an educational establishment: **academic**, scholastic, teaching, pedagogic; instructional.

2 an educational experience: **instructive**, educative, informative, illuminating, enlightening.

eerie adjective an eerie silence descended over the house: **uncanny**, sinister, ghostly, unnatural, unearthly, weird, other-worldly; strange, abnormal, odd; frightening, spine-chilling, hair-raising, blood-curdling, terrifying; informal creepy, scary, spooky.**efface** verb

1 the words were effaced by the rain: **erase**, eradicate, expunge, blot out, rub out, wipe out, remove, eliminate, obliterate.

2 he attempted to efface himself: **make yourself inconspicuous**, keep out of sight, keep out of the limelight, lie low, keep a low profile.

effect noun

1 the effect of rapid social change: **result**, consequence, upshot, outcome, repercussions, ramifications; end result, corollary, aftermath; fruits, product, by-product; formal concomitant; informal pay-off.

2 the effect of the drug was wearing off:

impact, action, effectiveness; power, potency, strength; formal efficacy.

3 the experience had a profound effect on all three men: **impact**, influence; impression.

4 they went through the dead man's effects: **belongings**, possessions, worldly goods, chattels; property, paraphernalia; informal gear, things, stuff.

OPPOSITES: cause.

► **verb** they effected many changes: **bring about**, carry out, implement, put into effect, achieve, accomplish, execute, engineer, perform; cause, create, produce, make, initiate.

□ **in effect**

1 the ban has been in effect since last June: **in force**, effective, in operation, operational.

2 in effect, he called the president a liar: **really**, in reality, in truth, in fact, effectively, essentially, in essence, basically.

□ **take effect**

1 these measures will take effect in May: **come into force**, come into operation, be implemented, begin, become valid, become law, apply, be applied.

2 the drug started to take effect: **work**, act, be effective, produce results.

USAGE

Do not confuse **effect** and **affect**. **Effect** is used both as a noun meaning 'a change which is the result of something' and as a verb meaning 'to bring something about'. **Affect** is a verb whose chief meaning is 'to make a difference to' (*climate change will affect the lives of millions*).

effective adjective

1 an effective treatment for a wide range of psychological conditions: **successful**, effectual, potent, powerful; helpful, beneficial, advantageous, valuable, useful; formal efficacious.

2 a more effective argument: **convincing**,

SECTION 2:

Vocabulary solutions: how to use a thesaurus

This section of the thesaurus has been specially written to help you make the most of the information contained in the main part of the book. It provides detailed guidance about:

- how the entries are structured
- the different types of information they contain
- how to use this information to make your writing clear, interesting, and effective.

2.1 PARTS OF SPEECH (OR WORD CLASSES)

Here is the thesaurus entry for **alternative**:

alternative adjective

1 *an alternative route*: **different**, other, another, second, possible, substitute, replacement; standby, emergency, reserve, backup, auxiliary, fallback.

2 *an alternative lifestyle*: **unorthodox**, unconventional, bohemian, non-standard, unusual, uncommon, out of the ordinary; radical, revolutionary, nonconformist, avant-garde, offbeat.

► **noun** *there are a number of alternatives available*: **option**, choice, other possibility; substitute, replacement.

The first piece of information given after the entry word is its part of speech (or word class). Notice that the parts of the entry are separated out to show that **alternative** can be both an adjective and a noun: make sure you are looking at the right section of the entry for the sense you have in mind. If you want another way of saying **alternative**, is it the adjective (as in *an alternative route for cyclists*) or the noun (as in *there are a number of alternatives available*) that you are interested in? You can also use the example sentences to guide you to the right place.

2.2 SENSES AND EXAMPLES

Many words have more than one meaning or sense, each with their own set of synonyms. In this thesaurus, where an entry has more than one sense, the synonyms for each of these senses are introduced by an example (or examples) of real English showing how the word is actually used. These examples of words ‘in action’ help you to identify the meaning you are looking for, and so guide you to the most appropriate selection of alternatives to choose from. Here is the entry for **pale**:

pale¹ adjective

1 *he looked pale and his breathing was laboured*: **pallid**, white, pasty, wan, colourless, anaemic, bloodless, washed out, ashen, grey, whey-faced, drained, sickly, sallow, as white as a sheet, deathly pale; Brit. peaky; informal like death warmed up.

2 *the red velvet dress accentuated the pale skin of her neck*: **creamy**, milky, ivory, white, milk-white, alabaster

3 *pale colours*: **light**, light-coloured, pastel, muted, subtle, soft; faded, bleached, washed out.

4 *the pale light of morning*: **dim**, faint, weak, feeble.

5 *the film is a pale imitation of the original*: **feeble**, weak, insipid, bland, poor, inadequate, unimpressive, lacklustre.
OPPOSITES: dark.

▶ verb

1 *his face paled*: **go/turn white**, grow/turn pale, blanch, lose colour.

2 *everything else pales by comparison*: **decrease in importance**, lose significance, pale into insignificance.

Consider which of the example sentences is closest to the idea you want to express and then look at the selection of synonyms following it. Are you looking for a word to describe the complexion of a person who looks unwell (*he was pale and his breathing was laboured*), or to describe attractively light skin (*the red velvet dress accentuated the pale skin of her neck*). Do you want a word to describe light colours, or is it the meaning of ‘inferior’ that you are looking for (*the film is a pale imitation of the original*)?

! All the examples used in this thesaurus are genuine, typical uses of the entry words and you may find that some of them are quite similar to the sentence you are writing yourself. Remember that this does not mean that every synonym provided will be suitable for you to use: you must still make a careful selection according to the situation or context in question. If you are unsure about a synonym, look it up in a dictionary. A dictionary will give you more information about the meaning of a word and the way it is used than is possible in a thesaurus.