

THE
CHAMBERS
THESAURUS

Edited by
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CHAMBERS

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Preface

A thesaurus is a dictionary that provides alternatives to a particular word or phrase. It is the essential companion for anyone who wants to create something satisfying out of words – a quick, convenient source of synonyms and related terms that will help users express themselves in as precise, succinct and yet varied a manner as possible.

It was in 1852 that Peter Mark Roget published his *Thesaurus*. Its full original title was *The Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases Classified and Arranged so as to Facilitate the Expression of Ideas and Assist in Literary Composition*. His purpose was to provide readers not only with synonyms for a word, but, more generally, with a wide choice of expressions relevant to a particular concept. His method was to classify these within a framework of ideas on 17th-century philosophical and scientific principles. This meant that a very full alphabetical index was needed to open up the classified lists to the user. It was probably the complications of this system that ensured the continued popularity of the more ‘user-friendly’ type of word-finding book already in production in Roget’s time – the simple alphabetical list of words, each followed by its own group of synonyms. More recently there has emerged the type of thesaurus that, while preserving the alphabetical arrangement, acknowledges the value of Roget’s approach by supplying related words within each entry on a rather broader, more comprehensive basis than that of mere synonymy.

The Chambers Thesaurus belongs to this last type – it lists the commonest, most synonym-rich words in the language, arranged alphabetically, each with a plentiful supply of alternative and connected expressions. Selected antonyms have also been added wherever appropriate. It has all the recognized usefulness of any thesaurus – but its special advantage is that it draws on the rich resources of *The Chambers Dictionary*, known to dictionary connoisseurs and wordgame enthusiasts alike as a mine of useful, interesting and diverting items of vocabulary.

In this second edition, the text has been enlarged by 20 per cent, with many entries revised, and over 1500 new entries. Over 70,000 new synonyms and antonyms have been added, including many spellings and words from varieties of English around the world, old (obsolete, archaic or literary) words, and technical terms and expressions. It is recommended that *The Chambers Thesaurus* should be used in conjunction with *The Chambers Dictionary*, to which it is the perfect companion volume, since the words listed are only rarely completely interchangeable alternatives.

A thesaurus jogs the memory – it offers help to the person struggling to encapsulate a meaning in a forgotten *mot juste* that might remain tantalizingly on the tip of the tongue. It is indispensable to the student, writer or reporter. A thesaurus is fun to use, and with the fun comes the opportunity to enhance a personal command of words and increase general knowledge. Words that may not be well known to the reader will trigger off investigations in a dictionary, leading to an exploration of the remoter corners of the language. Finally, a thesaurus is a tool that the word-gamster – player, solver or compiler – cannot do without.

It is hoped that readers will enjoy using this thesaurus not only to discover the exact word or phrase for an appropriate context but also to appreciate more fully the rich diversity of the English language.

Martin H Manser
Aylesbury 2004

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Features of the thesaurus

The following features are shown in context on pages vi–vii.

Clear distinction of senses

Senses within an entry are distinguished by numbered sections and by either a key synonym in SMALLCAPITALS or an example in **bold italics**, eg

sad *adj*

1 UNHAPPY, sorrowful...

2 *sad news*

upsetting, distressing...

Example phrases or sentences are based on citations from the British National Corpus.

Synonyms grouped by register

Synonyms are listed by range of context ('register') to show the appropriate styles within which words are used.

TECHNICAL

indicates a word that is restricted to a certain subject area such as music, philosophy, medicine or law, eg **codicil** (a supplement to a will) at **supplement**

OLD

indicates a word that is no longer in common use, be it obsolete, archaic or literary, eg **spoffish** at **fussy**

Shakesp and *Spenser* are extra labels used to annotate words featured in the works of Shakespeare and Spenser.

FORMAL

indicates a formal word, eg **discourse** and **colloquium** at **discussion**

COLLOQ.

indicates an informal word, eg **powwow** at **discussion**

SLANG

indicates a word used only very informally, eg **dough** and **dosh** at **money**

derog, *offensive*, *vulgar* and *taboo* are extra labels used to annotate words considered particularly vulgar or which may give offence.

Countrywide and worldwide English

Terms from varieties of English from around Britain and around the world are included (eg North American **ornery** at **stubborn**), and labelled as

dialect (usually indicates Northern English dialects)

Scot (Scottish)

Welsh

Irish

N Am (used mainly in the United States and, sometimes, Canada)

Can (used mainly in Canada, rather than the United States)

Aust (Australian)

NZ (New Zealand)

SAfr (South African)

Related adjectives

Where a headword has an adjective related to it, a note is included. For example, the entry **meaning** gives the related adjective **semantic**.

Confusable words

Where a headword is sometimes confused with another word, eg **cancel** or **cancel**, **fatal** or **fateful**, concise explanatory notes are included to distinguish them.

The explanations are backed up by example phrases and sentences based on citations from the British National Corpus.

Hyponym panels

Around 500 special panels show word families ('hyponyms'), and give lists of related words presenting:

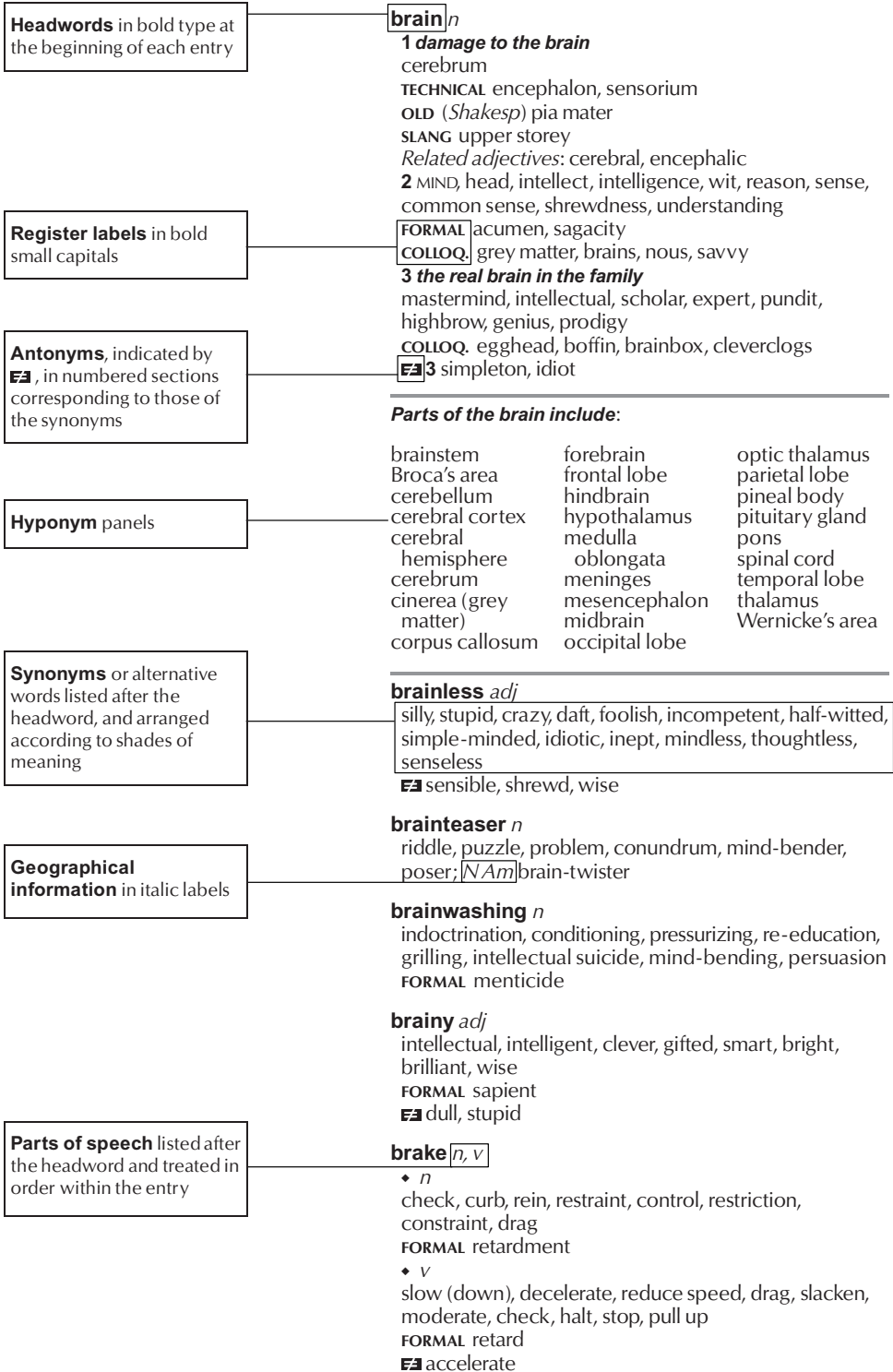
- different types of, eg **film**, **food** and **sport**
- parts of, eg the **brain**, a **flower** and a **motor vehicle**
- the terminology used in particular subject areas, eg **cooking**, **football** and **medicine**
- informative encyclopedic information, eg **longest rivers**, **highest mountains** and **active volcanoes**

Synonym nuance panels

Synonym nuance panels distinguish shades of meaning among synonyms in over 300 entries, identifying and exemplifying words that:

- have particular associations or convey certain suggestions:
 - unworldly** suggests a vulnerability arising from lack of experience: *a schoolgirl who was unworldly in the extreme*.
- have a particular tone or convey an attitude on the part of the speaker:
 - both **gullible** and **credulous** further imply a tendency to be duped and are rather more contemptuous in tone: *he treated her as a credulous imbecile*.
- usually have a specific referent or context:
 - consort** is a formal term which tends to be reserved for a spouse: *the queen's consort*.

Structure of thesaurus entries



branch *n, v*♦ *n*

1 BOUGH, limb, sprig, shoot, stem, offshoot, arm, leg, lobe, loop, wing, prong, whip, withy; *Scot* cow, scrog
TECHNICAL ramus, axis, cladode, phylloclade

OLD branch, rice**Related adjectives:** ramal, rameal, rameous, ramous**2 a different branch of the company**

department, office, local/regional office, agency, bureau, part, section, division, subsidiary, subsection, subdivision, affiliate, corps, wing, discipline

FORMAL succursal, ramification**3 the branch of a river**

tributary, fork, division

■ **branch off**

divide, fork, diverge, deviate, separate

FORMAL bifurcate, furcate■ **branch out**

diversify, subdivide, vary, develop, expand, enlarge, spread out, extend, add to, broaden out, increase, multiply, proliferate

FORMAL ramify**Related adjective** notes**Idioms and phrasal verbs**

highlighted separately at the end of entries

brand *n, v*♦ *n***1 different brands of soap**

make, brand-name, tradename, trademark, line, logo, symbol, sign, emblem, label, stamp, hallmark, marque

2 **KIND**, quality, class, type, sort, line, variety, species**3** **MARK**, tag, identification, identifying mark♦ *v***1 branded as a troublemaker**

mark, stamp, label, typecast, stigmatize, stain, taint, disgrace, discredit, denounce, censure

FORMAL besmirch**2 brand cattle**

mark, stamp, burn (in), sear

Different meanings in

numbered sections

Key synonyms in small

capitals

Example phrases in bold

italics

brandish *v*

wave, flourish, shake, raise, swing, wield, flash, flaunt, exhibit, display, parade

OLD wag, wampish; (*Spenser*) bless, hurtle**Additional information** in

bracketed italic labels

bravery *n*

courage, pluck, fearlessness, boldness, courageousness, daring, stalwartness, hardiness, fortitude, resolution, tenacity, stout-heartedness, valour, gallantry, chivalry, heroism, indomitability, mettle, spirit, dauntlessness, audacity, bravado, prowess

FORMAL intrepidity, valiance**COLLOQ.** guts, grit, spunk**FE** cowardice, fearfulness, faint-heartedness, timidity**Bravery or bravado?***Bravery* is courage: *soldiers decorated for bravery.*

Bravado is a boastful act of bravery intended to impress or intimidate or a boastful pretence of bravery aimed at concealing cowardice: *She felt her defiant bravado disintegrate like shattered glass.*

Notes on words easily confused indicated by **FE****Synonym nuances**

Courage is used in general contexts, whereas **pluck** has a very positive aspect of spiritedness, and is often

Synonym nuances panels

Abbreviations used in the thesaurus

<i>adj</i>	adjective	<i>NAm</i>	North American English
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>NZ</i>	New Zealand English
<i>Aust</i>	Australian English	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>Can</i>	Canadian English	<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>colloq.</i>	colloquial	®	trademark
<i>conj</i>	conjunction	<i>S</i>	south, southern
<i>derog</i>	derogatory	<i>SAfr</i>	South African English
<i>E</i>	east, eastern	<i>Scot</i>	Scottish English
<i>interj</i>	interjection	<i>Shakesp</i>	found in Shakespeare's works
<i>N</i>	north, northern	<i>v</i>	verb
<i>n</i>	noun	<i>W</i>	west, western