

Opening extract from

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hurdl

hurdl

the athletic sport of racing over hurdles

▷ hurdl

hurl

to throw something with great force

Christopher peeled the rumpled sleeve from his arm, and hurled the coat down on the floor.

—Anne Fine, *Madame Doubtfire*

hurly-burly

a rough bustle of activity

hurray

a shout of joy or approval; a cheer

hurricane

a storm with a violent wind

hurry

1 to move or do something quickly

2 to make someone be quick

▷ hurried

▷ hurriedly

hurry

the act of hurrying; a need to hurry

hurt

1 to cause pain or injury to someone

2 to feel painful ♦ *My leg is hurting.*

3 to upset or offend someone ♦ *I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.*

hurt

physical or mental pain or injury

hurtful

a hurtful remark or action is one that upsets or offends someone

▷ hurtfully

hurtle

to move rapidly in a wild, barely controlled way

Mother came hurtling down the steps, her expression dour and fierce as always. —Malorie Blackman, *Noughts and Crosses*

husband

the man a woman is married to

husbandry

1 the cultivation of crops and breeding of farm animals

2 the careful management of resources

hush

to become silent or quiet, or to make someone do this

to hush something up is to prevent it from becoming generally known

hush

a silence and lack of activity

hush-hush

(informal) highly secret or confidential

hydraulic

husk

the dry outer covering of some seeds and fruits

husky

a husky voice is low-pitched and slightly hoarse

▷ huskily

▷ huskiness

husky

a large powerful dog with a thick coat, used in the Arctic for pulling sledges

hustings

a meeting for political speeches and campaigning just before an election

hustle

1 to hurry

2 to push or jostle someone roughly

hut

a small roughly made house or shelter

hutch

a box or cage for keeping rabbits or other animals as pets

hyacinth

a plant that grows from a bulb and produces bell-shaped fragrant flowers

WORD HISTORY from *Hyacinthus*, a youth in Greek legend who was accidentally killed by Apollo: the flower sprang from his blood

hybrid

1 a plant or animal produced by combining two different species or varieties

2 something made by combining parts or characteristics of two different things

hydra

a microscopic freshwater animal with a tubular body and a ring of tentacles round the mouth

WORD HISTORY named after the *Hydra* in Greek mythology, a water snake with many heads that grew again if they were cut off (because if a hydra is cut up, each section can grow into a whole animal)

hydrangea

a shrub with pink, blue, or white flowers growing in large clusters

hydrant

a water pipe with a nozzle that a fire hose can be attached to

hydraulic

worked by the force of water or other fluid under pressure

hydrochloric acid

hydrochloric acid

(Science) a strong colourless acid containing hydrogen and chlorine

hydroelectric

using water power to produce electricity

▷ hydroelectricity

hydrofoil

a boat fitted with special vanes that lift it clear of the water, enabling it to travel at speed over the surface

hydrogen

a lightweight highly flammable gas that combines with oxygen to form water

hydrogen bomb

a very powerful bomb using energy created by the fusion of hydrogen isotopes (deuterium and tritium)

hydrolysis

(Science) the chemical reaction of a substance with water, usually resulting in decomposition

hydrometer

an instrument for measuring the density of liquids

hydrophobia

extreme fear of water, as a symptom of rabies

hyena

a wild doglike animal that hunts in packs and makes a shrieking howl

hygiene

the practice of keeping things clean in order to remain healthy and prevent disease

▷ hygienic

▷ hygienically

hymn

(Religion) a religious song, usually a Christian song praising God

▷ hymn book

hype

(informal) extravagant publicity or advertising

hyperactive

a hyperactive person is unable to relax and is always moving about or doing things

hyperbola

(Mathematics) the curve formed when a cone is cut by a plane that makes a larger angle with the base than the side of the cone does

hyperbole

a deliberate exaggeration that is not meant to be taken literally, e.g. 'I've got a stack of work a mile high'

hypermarket

a very large supermarket, usually outside a town

hypocrisy

hypertext

(ICT) a system allowing many links between related sections of text

hyphen

a short dash used to join words or parts of words together

hyphens

Hyphens connect two or more words which make up a compound noun or adjective. Sometimes, the hyphen is part of a fixed compound, like *close-up*, *free-range*, or *orang-utan*; but hyphens can join any pair or group of words to form a new compound: an *ultra-squidgy sandwich*; that *morning-after-the-night-before feeling*.

Hyphens are often useful to avoid ambiguity. Note, for example, the difference between a *cross-section of the audience* (= a typical sample) and a *cross section of the audience* (= an annoyed group). You do not need a hyphen for compound adjectives which follow a noun (an *out-of-date hairstyle* but a *hairstyle which looks out of date*), or for compounds which begin with an -ly adverb (a *well-written autobiography* but a *badly scripted film*).

Hyphens are also used in compound numbers and fractions, such as *thirty-two* and *four-fifths*, and in some place names, such as *Henley-on-Thames* and *Aix-en-Provence*.

See also the panel on [compounds](#).

hyphenate

(Language) to write a word or group of words with a hyphen

▷ hyphenation

hypnosis (say hip-noh-sis) a specially induced state like a deep sleep, in which a person can be made to follow the commands of someone else

hypnotize

to put someone in a state of hypnosis, so that their thoughts and actions may be influenced

▷ hypnotism

▷ hypnotic

▷ hypnotist

USAGE NOTE This word can also be spelled *hypnotise*.

hypochondriac

a person who is abnormally anxious about their health and believes they are ill even though there is nothing wrong with them

▷ hypochondria

WORD HISTORY from Greek *hypochondrios* 'under the breastbone' (because the organs there were once thought to be the source of depression and anxiety)

hypocrisy

the pretence that you are more virtuous or have higher standards than is really the case