

『図解英語語義辞典』について

政 村 秀 實
(英文研究室)

On “An Illustrated Dictionary of Basic English Words”

Hidemi MASAMURA

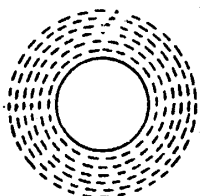
1. Introduction

We published “An Illustrated Dictionary of Basic English Words” from Kirihara Shoten, a publisher in Tokyo, in the fall of 1989, which we are, hereafter, going to introduce to the readers how it is devised and how it works in terms of acquiring the world or scope of meaning in the English language. We claim that it is quite and literally unique, being this sort of dictionaries never existed before. The word “illustration” seen in a story book or a dictionary reminds you of diagrams, drawings, pictures etc. that are easy to be pictured in your mind. Illustration is to help you make out things vividly and clearly and reinforces your understanding by supplying pictures and diagrams. These are the things and functions you usually associate “illustration” with, which we accept without any hesitation, but in our new dictionary “illustration” deals with the world of meaning or things — abstract world — that are hardly seen in the form of concrete pictures as well as things to be perceived by our sense of vision. Illustration is often more useful than definition for showing not only what things mean but also what words mean. In this point lies the reason for being of our new dictionary.

We tried to cover almost all of the basic and important words, amounting to exactly 500 words, regardless of their parts of speech. We challenged to describe or depict the abstract and shapeless world of meaning not by words but by pictures. As you will see in the following specimens the process of visualizing the semantic world hinted us a great deal to survey and discover the system and scope of the semantic world, which cannot be gained or observed through verbal definitions. We Japanese have an expression that we do get or understand things or situations as though they were really seen in the image of pictures to the effect that complete and perfect understanding has been attained. It would be safe to say that perfect understanding of a thing or a situation never fails to bring about some tangible images or pictures, however abstract it may be. With this belief in mind, we have been on a journey in the world of meaning during the past several years, part of which we are going to share with the readers in the following section.

2. How the words are illustrated and explained in the dictionary :

about prep. of; having something to do with; around

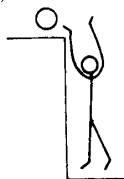


about shows the state in which the subject is being surrounded with something or something exists around it.

- They live somewhere *about* here. (surrounding a place)
- I know nothing *about* him. (information surrounding a person)
- I will arrive *about* eight o'clock. (time surrounding a certain fixed time)
- There is an air of mystery *about* her. (atmosphere surrounding a person)
- Be quick *about* it. (a thing we touch upon)

Note: Prepositions like "to" and "from" are often pictured, but some (like "about") are not, because of the difficulty of the visualization.

afford v. have the means; have the money, time, or strength

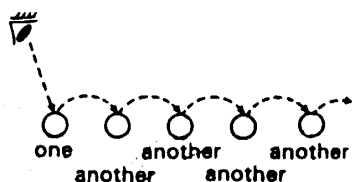


With an easy effort, one can reach an object and obtains it.

- They walked all the way because they couldn't *afford* a taxi. (all the money available is not enough for the fare to be paid)
- The liner *affords* enough space for 500 people. (space used to the maximum can hold as many as 500 people)

Note: Most definitions for "afford" have tried to convey its delicate but essential nuance in vain, but it comes out clearly when illustrated.

another a. one more; a different

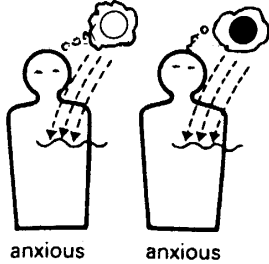


When the speaker gives his first glance to a thing, it is regarded as "one" and each of the rest as "another".

- Would you like *another* tea? (one tea after his or her first helping)
- He bought *another* car. (one's second or third or fourth car)
- Would you show me *another* dictionary? (one other dictionary available)
- We are going to have *another* beautiful day. (fine weather continuing from the previous day(s).)

Note: In some situations, "another" signifies "to be average or routine", and the above illustration still works in conveying the nuance to be *one of them* (= to be average or routine) .

anxious a. uneasy in mind; eagerly wanting



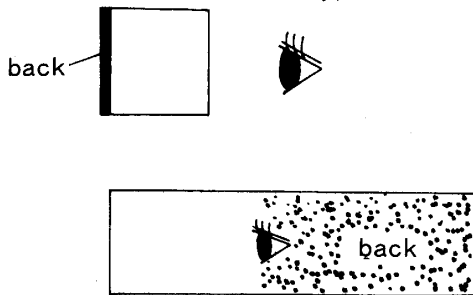
One's mind wavers, if one faces a thing that brings about uneasiness or expectation.

The mother was *anxious* about letting her only daughter go abroad alone. (being unstable in mind)

We are all *anxious* about meeting our old friends again for the first time in 30 years. (being excited over happy things to take place)

Note: Through the illustration, one can grasp the whole range of the meaning of the word, which, seemingly, has two different meanings.

back n. rear surface of human body; situated behind



(1) the part or place which one's eyesight cannot reach when one looks facing an object.
 (2) the part or place which one's eyesight cannot reach when one looks forward.

(1) My lifeline extends to the *back* of my hand. (the part of the hand one cannot see if seen from the side of the palm)

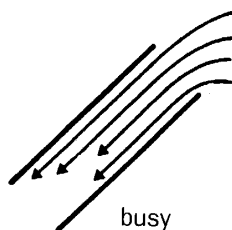
I wonder who is at the *back* of this plot. (the part one cannot see from the surface of the matter)

(2) He is in the *back* of this line. (being situated in the place one cannot see if one looks forward)

Passive and half-hearted students usually take seats at the *back* of the classroom. (the position one's glance doesn't reach when one looks forward)

Note: "back" is mostly seen from the view point of space or position, but it can also be observed from another point as shown above.

busy a. having plenty to do; full of work; in use



Physical and mental devotion to describe (1) "working on" when seen from the side of a person, and to depict (2) "being occupied" when seen from the side of the object.

(1) He is *busymending* the vacuum cleaner. (working on)

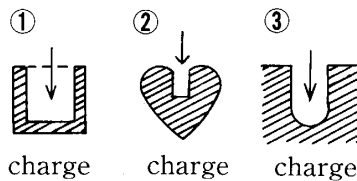
Let's get *busy*. (*working on*)

(2) The street is *busy* today. (being occupied)

It's a great day and you can see how *busy* the boat is. (being occupied with lots of passengers)

Note: We are liable to say "The traffic is busy today." to tell about heavy traffic on the street. Through the help of the illustration one can instantly learn that the subject of the sentence ought not to be the "traffic", but the "street".

charge v. fill with; accuse; ask (amount) as price



If the subject is not complete on its content, it produces a partial vacancy that (1) sucks or takes *things* in (2) takes *blame* in (3) takes *demand* in.

(1) The soldiers *charged* their rifles as the enemy advanced. (physical vacancy to take in things)

Father *charged* the battery for me. (physical vacancy to take in electricity)

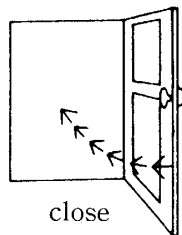
(2) He is *charged* with fabricating the document. (fault in mind to take claim)

They *charged* the chemical factory with polluting the air and water. (fault in mind to take claim)

(3) They *charged* us 5,000 yen for repairing the videotape recorder. (debt to take demand in)

Charge the bill to my account. (debt to take demand in)

close v. shut; block up



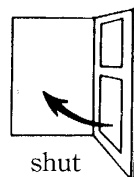
To cause a thing to move so as to cover an opening. The motion is slow and gradual.

Close the window a little more, please. (gradual motion to cover an opening)

Close your mouth. (rather slow shutting of the mouth)

She *closed* the book when she finished reading it. (quiet movement of shutting a book)

Note: The synonymous word "shut" is to be pictured as follows:



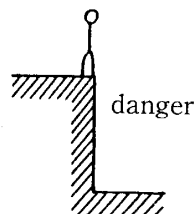
It depicts the motion of covering an opening as "close" does. The movement is quicker and more instantaneous.

She *shut* the door and ran out of the house in anger. (sudden and rude closing of the door)

Shut your mouth. (Instantaneous closing of the mouth)

He has been *shutting* himself up all day in his room. (complete and fast closing oneself from others)

danger n. nearness to harm; chance of harm or injury



Chance of suffering harm, damage, loss, injury, etc.

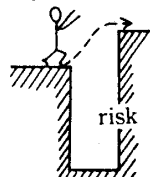
Her mother's life is in *danger*. (liability or exposure to loss)

If you cross here, you are in *danger* of being hit by a car. (exposure to injury)

Children used to play on the street without feeling any *danger*. (chance of harm)

That man is a *danger* to society. (a thing that causes harm)

Note: The synonymous word "risk" is to be illustrated as follows.

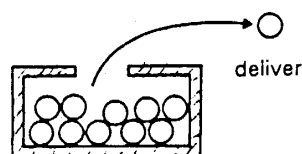


It describes the possibility of incurring misfortune or loss, but it should be challenged so as to step into a new stage.

To succeed in business one must be prepared to run *risks*. (possibility of loss that ought to be challenged)

He was determined to leave the country even at the *risk* of his life. (possibility of loss that ought to be overcome)

deliver v. distribute letters ; utter speech; hand over to another ; assist



Dispatching or being dispatched from an enclosure

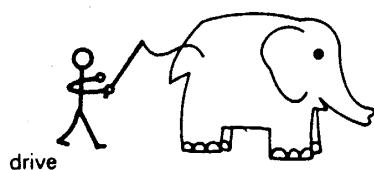
Letters are *delivered* twice a day. (enclosure = a post office)

The U.S. president will *deliver* a speech on the reforms in the educational system.
(enclosure = his mind or brain)

He *delivered* the baby from the burning house. (enclosure = the burning house)

Dr. Smith *delivered* my baby. (enclosure = the womb)

drive v. urge in some direction by threats; control the movement of cars



To force something heavy or uncontrollable into a state of being directed or controlled.

He *drove* the nail with a hammer. (things hard to direct = the nail)

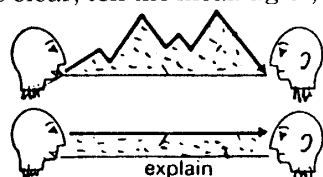
He *drove* the cattle. (thing hard to control = the cattle)

She can *drive* a truck. (a thing hard to control = a truck)

You should *drive* away your cares. (things hard to remove from oneself = one's cares)

Christ *drove* the devil out of the girl. (a thing hard to remove from oneself = the devil)

explain v. make clear; tell the meaning of; tell how to do



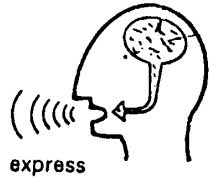
Making something flat in order to be understood clearly.

He *explained* the rule to us. (making the complicated things plain)

Could you *explain* (to me) how to fill in the form? (making the troublesome procedure plain)

Note: By tracing etymological meaning of a word, we can draw an image of the word as is exemplified here.

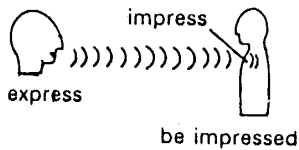
express v. put into words



To push what we think or have in mind out of oneself. The thing existing between the sender and the receiver can be either the air or the pencil and paper.

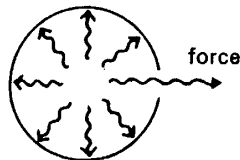
- John *expressed* a strong desire to study economics at a college in England. (medium = air)
- The president *expressed* his views on nuclear armament at a press conference. (medium = air)
- You have to *express* yourself clearly when you are interviewed. (medium = air)
- I failed to *express* my idea clearly in the exam of philosophy. (medium = pencil and paper)

Note: if the process of expression is seen from the receiver, it turns out to be "impressed". "Impress" can be pictured like this:



- We were much *impressed* by his **inaugural** speech.
- Let me *impress* upon you that the experiment must be continued to assure our future success in business.

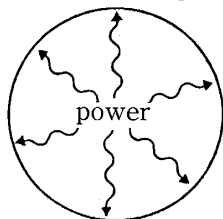
force n. power; strength



Power turns into force when executed.

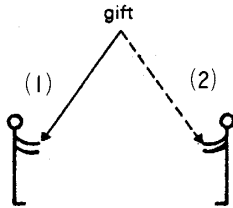
- The truck struck the fence with great *force*. (*power executed in the form of speed*)
- The trees around the house break the *force* of the wind. (*power executed in the form of striking wind*)
- Magnetic *force* moves the iron. (*power to be executed near metals*)
- The police used *force* to disperse the rioters. (*power executed by men*)
- Don't use *force*. (*power to be executed in violence*)

Note: the synonymous word "power" could be illustrated as follows.



Running water can be used to produce electric *power*.
 Every healthy person has *power* to think.
 This job is beyond my *power*.
 He claims to have the *power* to see the future
 The *power* of the party has lessened.

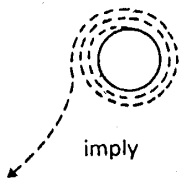
gift n. present; natural talent



Something given from (1) a person — present
 and from (2) God — talent.

(1) She gave him a *gift*.
 He made a *gift* of picture books to the library.
 (2) He has a *gift* for drawing.
 He is a man of many *gifts*.

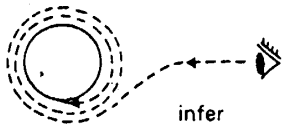
imply v. suggest, hint



What means comes out without saying it outright

Silence often *implies* consent.
 The father's smile *implied* that he had accepted his daughter's association with her boyfriend.

Note: The party who receives what is implied is to infer (=read) what it means.



The daughter *inferred* from her father's smile that he had accepted her association with her boyfriend.
 I *inferred* from his facial expression that he hadn't enjoyed the journey.

keep v. have and not let go; have and take care of; prevent



Trying to maintain a thing as it is which is apt to lose its balance or stability

You should *keep* a secret.
 He *keeps* a diary.
 You should *keep* early hours.
 They *kept* quiet during the speech.

Keep an eye on the bag, please.

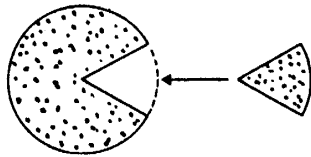
She *keeps* all the letters from her parents.

The police *kept* the crowd back.

Keep that car in sight.

Note: Note that all of the objects of the verb "keep" have the liability of losing its present condition or standing.

need v. be in want of; ought to have



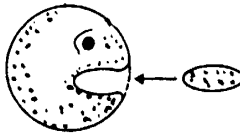
To want something objectively.

We *need* some more money.

I *need* you to work overtime today.

This video *needs* repairing.

Note: "Want" could be illustrated as follows.

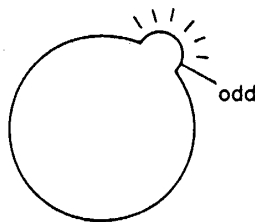


want

We *want* some more money.

I *want* you to work overtime today.

odd a. strange; peculiar; unusual



Being strange in that it trespasses the limit of being ordinary or common.

He and I are the same age; it's *odd* that he still reads nothing but comics for boys.

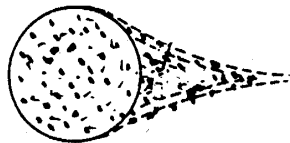
I heard an *odd* noise late last night.

Note: "Odd" can also mean to be uneven as are seen in the following examples.

The boy always wears *odd* socks.

Seven is an *odd* number as it cannot be divided exactly by two.

of prep. belonging to; made from; that has; away from



To leave away from something having some lingering influence behind it.

Some *of* them were absent.

She came *of* a noble family.

He died *of* cancer.

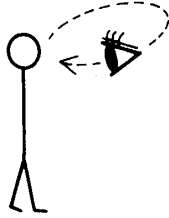
This house is made *of* wood.

The doctor cured him *of* his pains.

Who is guilty *of* this error?

This is *of* no importance.

oneself n. one's own self



To be seen from his own eye. Physically impossible, except when one sees himself in the mirror.

One you see in the photo is not 'oneself' because one at present is different from one in the past.

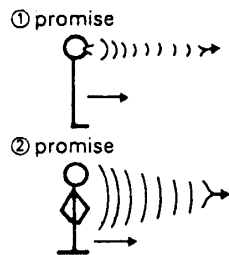
He hurt *himself*.

He killed *himself*.

He washed *himself*.

He found *himself* working on the project.

promise v. give one's word; give hope of



Having (1) a word to precede one's act or action.

and (2) a likelihood to precede the present situation.

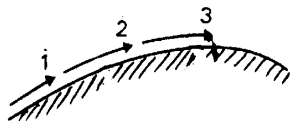
He *promised* to be back by five.

The company *promised* us financial aid.

The evening glow *promises* fine weather tomorrow.

He *promises* to be a brilliant painter.

succeed v. turn out well; do well; come next after; take the place of



Managing to reach or attain the next stage to get to the final stage or goal.

He *succeeded* in the project.

A momentary stir *succeeded* his words.

He *succeeded* his father and became a doctor.

3. Conclusion

We showed some specimens in order to let the readers experience how our new project works. Because of the limited space allowed we only demonstrated a portion of the whole work. We are to close this paper, hoping you are interested in our approach.

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