

Working with an English dictionary

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horseman

draw/pull your horns in to start being more careful in your behaviour, especially by spending less money than before **on the horns of a dilemma** in a situation in which you have to make a choice between things that are equally unpleasant—more at **BULL**, **LOCK** *v.*

horn-beam /'hɔ:nbim; AmE 'hɔ:rn-/ *noun* [C,U] a tree with smooth grey bark and hard wood

horned /hɔ:nd; AmE hɔ:rd/ *adj.* having horns or having sth that looks like horns

hornet /'hɔ:nit; AmE 'hɔ:rnit/ *noun* a large wasp (= a black and yellow flying insect) that has a very powerful sting **IDM** a **'hornet's nest** a difficult situation in which a lot of people get very angry: *His letter to the papers stirred up a real hornet's nest.*

horn of plenty *noun* = CORNUCOPIA

horn-pipe /'hɔ:npaɪp; AmE 'hɔ:rn-/ *noun* a fast dance for one person, traditionally performed by sailors; the music for the dance

horn-rimmed *adj.* (of a pair of glasses) with frames made of material that looks like horn

horny /'hɔ:ni; AmE 'hɔ:rnɪ/ *adj.* **1** (informal) sexually excited: *to feel horny **2** (informal) sexually attractive: *to look horny **3** made of a hard substance like horn: *the bird's horny beak* **4** (of skin, etc.) hard and rough: *horny hands***

horoscope /'hɔ:skəʊp; AmE 'hɔ:skəʊp; 'hɑ:r-/ *noun* a description of what is going to happen to sb in the future, based on the position of the stars and the planets when the person was born

horrendous /'hɔ:rendəs; AmE hɔ:'r:; hɑ:r-/ *adj.* **1** extremely shocking; terrible: *horrendous injuries* **2** extremely unpleasant and unacceptable: *horrendous traffic* **HELP** Some people use *an* instead of *a* before this word and then usually do not pronounce the 'h'. This now sounds old-fashioned. ► **horrendously** *adv.*: *horrendously expensive*

horrible /'hɔ:rəbl; AmE 'hɔ:r; 'hɑ:r-/ *adj.* **1** (especially spoken) very bad or unpleasant; used to describe sth that you do not like: *horrible weather/children/shoes* ◊ *The coffee tasted horrible.* ◊ *I've got a horrible feeling she lied to us.* **2** making you feel very shocked and frightened: *a horrible crime/nightmare* **3** (especially spoken) (of people or their behaviour) unfriendly, unpleasant or unkind: *a horrible man* ◊ *My sister was being horrible to me all day.* ◊ *What a horrible thing to say!* ► **horribly** /-əblɪ/ *adv.*: *It was horribly painful.* ◊ *The experiment went horribly wrong.*

horrid /'hɔ:rid; AmE 'hɔ:r; 'hɑ:r-/ *adj.* (old-fashioned or informal, especially BrE) very unpleasant or unkind **[SYN HORRIBLE]**: *a horrid child* ◊ *a horrid smell* ◊ *Don't be so horrid to your brother.*

horrific /'hɔ:rɪfɪk/ *adj.* **1** extremely bad and shocking or frightening **[SYN HORRIFYING]**: *a horrific murder/accident/attack* ◊ *Her injuries were horrific.* **2** (informal) very bad or unpleasant **[SYN HORRENDOUS]**: *We had a horrific trip.* **HELP** Some people use *an* instead of *a* before this word and then usually do not pronounce the 'h'. This now sounds old-fashioned. ► **horrifically** /-kli/ *adv.*

horrify /'hɔ:rɪfaɪ; AmE 'hɔ:r; 'hɑ:r-/ *verb* (hor-ri-fies, hor-ri-fy-ing, hor-ri-fied, hor-ri-fied) to make sb feel extremely shocked, disgusted or frightened **[SYN APPAL]**: *The whole country was horrified by the killings.* ◊ **[VNtoinf]** *It horrified her to think that he had killed someone.* [also **VNthat**] ► **horri-fied** *adj.*: *He was horrified when he discovered the conditions in which they lived.* ◊ *She gazed at him in horrified disbelief.*

horri-fy-ing /'hɔ:rɪfaɪŋ; AmE 'hɔ:r; 'hɑ:r-/ *adj.* making you feel extremely shocked, disgusted or frightened: *a horri-fy-ing sight/experience/story* ◊ *It's horri-fy-ing to see such poverty.* ► **hor-ri-fy-ing-ly** *adv.*

horror /'hɔ:rə(r); AmE 'hɔ:r; 'hɑ:r-/ *noun* **1** [U] a feeling of great shock, fear or disgust: *People watched in horror as the small plane crashed to the ground.* ◊ *With a look of horror, he asked if the doctor thought he had cancer.* ◊ *The thought of being left alone filled her with horror.* ◊ *To her horror, the man produced a gun.* ◊ *She recoiled in horror at the sight of an enormous spider.* ◊ *To his horror, he*

could feel himself starting to cry (= it upset him very much). ◊ *Her eyes were wide with horror.* **2** [sing.] ~ **of sth/doing sth** a great fear or hatred of sth: *a horror of deep water* ◊ *Most people have a horror of speaking in public.* **3** [U] **the ~ of sth** the very unpleasant nature of sth, especially when it is shocking or frightening: *The full horror of the accident was beginning to become clear.* ◊ *In his dreams he relives the horror of the attack.* **4** [C, usually pl.] a very unpleasant or frightening experience: *the horrors of war* ◊ *You wouldn't believe the horrors they have suffered due to famine and disease.* **5** [U] a type of book, film/movie, etc. that is designed to frighten people: *In this section you'll find horror and science fiction.* ◊ *a horror film/movie*—see also **HORROR STORY** **6** [C] (BrE, informal) a child who behaves badly: *Her son is a little horror.* **IDM** **horror of horrors** (BrE, humorous or ironic) used to emphasize how bad a situation is: *I stood up to speak and—horror of horrors—realized I had left my notes behind.*—more at **SHOCK** *n.*

horror story *noun* **1** a story about strange and frightening things that is designed to entertain people **2** (informal) a report that describes an experience of a situation as very unpleasant: *horror stories about visits to the dentist*

horror-struck (also **'horror-stricken**) *adj.* suddenly feeling very shocked, frightened or disgusted

hors d'oeuvre /ɔ: 'dɔ:v; AmE ɔ:r 'dɔ:rv/ *noun* [C,U] (*pl. hors d'oeuvres* /ɔ: 'dɔ:v; AmE ɔ:r 'dɔ:rv/) (from French) a small amount of food, usually cold, served before the main part of a meal—compare **STARTER**

horse /hɔ:s; AmE hɔ:rs/ *noun, verb*

noun **1** a large animal with four legs, a **MANE** (= long thick hair on its neck) and a tail. Horses are used for riding on, pulling carriages, etc: *He mounted his horse and rode off.* ◊ *a horse and cart*—see also **COLT**, **FILLY**, **FOAL**, **GELDING**, **MARE**, **STALLION** **2** = VAULTING HORSE—see also **CLOTHES HORSE**, **HOBBY HORSE**, **ROCKING HORSE**, **SEA HORSE**, **STALKING HORSE**, **TROJAN HORSE**, **WHITE HORSES** **IDM** (straight) **from the horse's 'mouth** (informal) (of information) given by sb who is directly involved and therefore likely to be accurate **hold your horses** (informal) used to tell sb that they should wait a moment and not be so excited that they take action without thinking about it first **horses for courses** (BrE) the act of matching people with suitable jobs or tasks **a one, two, three, etc.** **horse 'race** a competition or an election in which there are only one, two, etc. teams or candidates with a chance of winning—more at **BACK U.**, **BARN** *n.*, **CART** *n.*, **CHANGE U.**, **DARK** *adj.*, **DRIVE U.**, **EAT**, **FLOG**, **GIFT** *n.*, **HIGH** *adj.*, **STABLE** *n.*, **WILD** *adj.*

verb **[PHRV]** **horse a/bout/a/round** (informal) to play in a way that is noisy and not very careful so that you could hurt sb or damage sth

horse-back /'hɔ:sbæk; AmE 'hɔ:rs-/ *noun, adj.*

noun **IDM** **on 'horseback** sitting on a horse; using horses: *a soldier on horseback*

adj. [only before noun] sitting on a horse: *a horseback tour* ► **horse-back** *adv.*: *to ride horseback*

horseback riding *noun* [U] (AmE) = RIDING

horse-box /'hɔ:sbɒks; AmE 'hɔ:rsbɒks/ *noun* (BrE) a vehicle for transporting horses in, sometimes pulled behind another vehicle—see also **HORSE TRAILER**

horse 'chestnut *noun* **1** a large tall tree with spreading branches, white or pink flowers and nuts that grow inside prickly cases—see also **CHESTNUT** **2** the smooth brown nut of the horse chestnut tree—compare **CONKER**

horse-drawn *adj.* [only before noun] (of a vehicle) pulled by a horse or horses

horse-flesh /'hɔ:sfleʃ; AmE 'hɔ:rs-/ *noun* [U] horses, especially when being bought or sold

horse-hair /'hɔ:ʃheə(r); AmE 'hɔ:rsheə/ *noun* [U] hair from the mane or tail of a horse, used, in the past, for filling **MATRESSES**, **chairs**, etc.

horse-man /'hɔ:smən; AmE 'hɔ:rs-/ *noun* (*pl. -men* /-mən/) a rider on a horse; a person who can ride horses: *a good horseman*—see also **HORSEWOMAN**

The tilde (~) is used so that a word does not have to be repeated

example sentence

countable / uncountable noun

Idiom (a phrase with a particular meaning)

Phrasal verb (to fall off, to ring up)

BrE British English

AmE American English

some adjectives are only used before a noun.

irregular plural form

headword

an entry

some words have more than one meaning

additional information

part of speech

phonetic transcription

synonym

a dot in the word tells you where the word can be divided

Exercise

1. In this extract, what part of speech is “horrible”?
2. What parts of speech can “horseback” be?
3. Are the British and American pronunciations of “horse” the same? If not, how do they differ?
4. What does the expression “Hold your horses” mean?
5. Is “horror” a countable or uncountable noun? Where in the dictionary entry does it tell you this?
6. Which meaning of the word “horny” is being used in this example?
“He lived to a good old age, a home loving, unpretending farmer, cultivating his acres with his own horny hands.”
7. What do the words “colt”, “filly”, “foal” refer to?
8. How common is the adjective “horrible” in spoken English?
9. Is the word “horsebox” rather used in British or American English?
10. What does “a hornet’s nest” mean?
11. What does the phrase “to horse about” mean and is it used in a formal situation?
12. Where does the phrase “hors d’oeuvre” originally come from?
13. What is old-fashioned about the word “horrendous”?
14. Give the synonym of “horrify”.
15. What is special about the word “horrid”?

Exercise - Key

1. In this extract, what part of speech is “horrible”?
adjective
2. What parts of speech can “horseback” be?
noun, adjective
3. Are the British and American pronunciations of “horse” the same?
If not, how do they differ?
No, in British English the ‘r’ is not pronounced
4. What does the expression “Hold your horses” mean?
to wait and not to take action without thinking
5. Is “horror” a countable or uncountable noun? Where in the dictionary entry does it tell you this?
It is usually an uncountable noun but it can be countable (see 6)
6. Which meaning of the word “horny” is being used in this example?
hard and rough hands
7. What do the words “colt”, “filly”, “foal” refer to?
Horse (colt = a young male horse; filly = a young female horse; foal = a very young horse)
8. How common is the adjective “horrible” in spoken English?
It is often used in spoken language
9. Is the word “horsebox” rather used in British or American English?
British English (The American expression is “horse trailer”)
10. What does “a hornet’s nest” mean?
A difficult situation in which a lot of people get very angry
11. What does the phrase “to horse about” mean and is it used in a formal situation?
to mess about; informal
12. Where does the phrase “hors d’oeuvre” originally come from?
from French
13. What is old-fashioned about the word “horrendous”?
It sounds old-fashioned not to pronounce the ‘h’
14. Give the synonym of “horrify”.
to appal
15. What is special about the word “horrid”?
It is old-fashioned or informal and mostly used in British English