

ON LOAN

Chapter I

Backstage (adv): in the part of the theatre where the actors and artists get ready and wait to perform

E.g. After the show, we were allowed to go backstage to meet the cast.

Shelf (n): a flat board, made of wood, metal, glass, etc. fixed to the wall or forming part of a cupboard/closet, bookcase, etc. for things to be placed on

E.g. I helped him put some shelves in his bedroom.

Confusion (n): a state of uncertainty about what is happening, what you should do, what sth means, etc.

E.g. There is some confusion about what the correct procedure should be.

Costume (n): the clothes worn by actors in a play or film/movie, worn by sb to make them look like sth else

E.g. The actors were still in costume and make-up.

Rustling (n): the sound of light, dry things, moving together

E.g. The soft rustling of leaves

Fierce (adj): (esp of actions and emotions) showing strong feelings or a lot of activities, often in a way that is violent

E.g. fierce loyalty/ hatred

Belt sth out (v): to sing a song or play music loudly

E.g. Nobody can belt out a tune like she can.

Chorus (n): part of a song that is sung after each verse = refrain

E.g. Everyone joined in the chorus.

2. a piece of music, usually part of a larger work, that is written for a choir (= a group of singer)

Kimono (n): a traditional Japanese piece of clothing like a long loose dress with wide sleeves, worn on formal occasions; a dressing gown or robe in this style

Wig (n): a piece of artificial hair that is worn on the head, for example to hide the

fact that a person is bald, to cover sb's own hair, or by a judge and some other lawyers in some courts of law

Thrust (v): (sth at sb) to make a sudden strong forward movement at sb with a weapon, etc

E.g. He thrust at me with a knife./

Pin (n): a short thin piece of stiff wire with a sharp point at one end and an item of decoration at the other; worn as jewellery

E.g. a diamond pin

Sash (n): a long strip of fabric worn around the waist or over one shoulder, esp as part of uniform

Almond (n): the flat pale sweet nut of the almond tree used in cooking and to make almond tree

E.g. Almond eyes (=eyes shaped like almonds)

Bustle (v): to move around in a busy way or to hurry sb in a particular direction

E.g. The nurse bustled us out of the room.

Maid (n): (old use) a young woman who is not married

2. a female servant in a house or hotel

Sick (adj): physically or mentally ill

E.g. Peter has been off sick (= away from work because he is ill) for two weeks.

Trip (v): to catch your foot on sth and fall or almost fall

E.g. She tripped and fell.

Scenery (n): the painted background that is used to represent natural features or buildings on a theatre stage

Rustle (v): if sth dry and light rustles or you rustle it, it makes a sound like paper, leaves, etc. moving or rubbing together

Mutter (v): to speak or say sth in a quiet voice that is difficult to hear, esp because you are annoyed about sth.

E.g. She just sat there muttering to herself.

Precarious (adj): (of a situation) not safe or certain; dangerous

E.g. He earned a precarious living as an artist.

2. likely to fall or cause sb to fall

E.g. The economy is precariously close to recession.

Cue (n): a few words or an action in a play that is a signal for another actor to do sth

E.g. She stood in the wings and waited for her cue to go on.

Expectant (adj): hoping for sth, esp sth good and exciting

E.g. children with expectant faces waiting for the fireworks to begin.

Beefy (adj): (of a person or their body) big or fat

E.g. beefy men/arms/thighs

Sandy (adj): (of hair) having a light colour, between yellow and red

Shrewd (adj): clever at understanding and making judgments about a situation= astute

E.g. a shrewd businessman

Assessor (n): a person who calculates the value or cost of sth or the amount of money to be paid

E.g. an insurance or tax assessor

Brief (adj): lasting only a short time

E.g. a brief meeting/conversation/visit

Rove (v): (written) to travel from one place often to another with no particular purpose

E.g. A quarter of a million refugees roved around the country.

Footlights (n): a row of lights along the front of the stage in a theatre

Pert (adj): (esp of a girl or young woman) showing a lack of respect, esp in a cheerful and amusing way

E.g. pert reply

Glee (n): a feeling of happiness, usually because sth good has happened to you, or sth bad has happened to sb else

E.g. He rubbed his hands in glee as he thought of all the money he would make.

Discourage (v): (sb from doing sth) to try to prevent sth or to prevent sb from doing sth, esp by making it difficult to do or by showing that you do not approve of it

E.g. a campaign to discourage smoking among teenagers

Scatter (n): a small amount or number of things spread over an area

Spontaneous (adj): not planned but done because you suddenly want to do it

E.g. a spontaneous offer of help

Applause (n): the noise made by a group of people clapping their hands and sometimes shouting to show their approval or enjoyment

E.g. Give her a big round of applause!

Unwary (adj): not aware of the possible dangers or problems of a situation and therefore likely to be harmed in some way

Seminary (n): a college where priests, ministers or rabbis are trained

Squash (v): to press sth so that it becomes soft, damaged or flat, or changes shape

E.g. The tomatoes at the bottom of the bag had been squashed.

Blur (n): something that you can't remember clearly

E.g. The events of that day were just a blur.

Lagoon (n): a lake of salt water that is separated from the sea by a reef or an area of rock or sand

2. a small area of fresh water near a lake or river

Plough sth up : to break up the surface of the ground by walking or driving across it again and again

E.g. The paths get all ploughed up by motorbikes.

Plough on (with sth): to continue doing sth that is difficult or boring

E.g. No one was listening to her, but she ploughed on with regardless.

Scrub (n): small bushes and trees

E.g. The bird disappeared into the scrub.

Scrape (v): to remove sth from a surface by moving sth sharp and hard like a knife across it

E.g. She scraped the mud off her boots.

Thud (n): a sound like the one which is made when a heavy object hits sth else

E.g. His head hit the floor with a dull thud.

2. to fall or hit sth with a low dull sound

E.g. His arrow thudded into the target.

Footstep (n): the sound or mark made each time your foot touches the ground when you are walking or running

E.g. the sound of footsteps on the stairs/ footsteps in the snow

Blind (n): a covering for a window, esp one made of a roll of fabric that is fixed at the top of the window and can be pulled up and down

Hush (v): a period of silence, esp following a lot of noise, or when people are expecting sth to happen

E.g. There was a deathly hush in the theatre./ A hush descended over the waiting crowd./Can we have a bit of hush? (=please be quiet)

Surge (n): a sudden increase of a strong feeling

E.g. She felt a sudden surge of anger.

Square (v): if you square yourself, or square your shoulders, you make your back and shoulders straight to show you are ready or determined to do sth

E.g. Bruno squared himself to face the waiting journalists.

Stumble (v): to hit your foot against sth while you are walking or running and almost fall

E.g. The child stumbled and fell./ I stumbled over a rock.

Frown (v): to make a serious, angry or worried expression by bringing your

eyebrows closer together so that lines appear on your forehead

E.g. What are you frowning at me for?

Back out (of sth): to decide that you are no longer going to take part in sth that has been agreed

E.g. He lost confidence and backed out of the deal at the last minute.

Plunge in : to jump into sth, esp with force

2. to start doing sth in an enthusiastic way, esp without thinking carefully about what you are doing

E.g. He's always plunging in at the deep end (=becoming involved in difficult situations without being well enough prepared)

Cheers *exclamation* : a word that people say to each other as they lift up their glasses to drink

Quieten (v): to become calmer or less noisy; to make sb/sth calmer or less noisy

Turn up : arrive

E.g. We arranged to meet at 7.30, but she never turned up.

Get into your stride (BrE)/ Hit your stride (AmE): to begin to do sth with confidence and at a good speed after a slow, uncertain start

E.g. After a nervous start, he finally got into his stride in the second set.

Buzz (n): the sound of people talking, esp in an excited way

E.g. The buzz of conversation suddenly stopped when she came into room.

Straggle (v): to grow, spread, or move in an untidy way in different directions

E.g. Her hair was straggling over her eyes.

Streamer (n): a long narrow piece of coloured paper, used to decorate a place for a party or other celebration

Pendant (n): a piece of jewellery that you wear around your neck on a chain

Locket (n): a piece of jewellery in the form of a small case that you wear on a chain around your neck and in which you can put a picture, piece of hair, etc

Mug (n): a tall cup for drinking from, usually with straight sides and a handle, used

without a saucer

E.g. a coffee mug/ a beer mug (=a large glass with a handle)

Lamely (adv): in a way that does not sound very confident, or that does not persuade other people

E.g. 'I must have made a mistake,' she said lamely.

Puzzled (adj): unable to understand sth or the reason for sth

E.g. She had a puzzle look on her face.

Treetop (n): the branches at the top of a tree

E.g. birds nesting in the treetops

Sheen (n): a soft smooth shiny quality

E.g. hair with a healthy sheen

Persist (v): to continue to do sth in spite of difficulties, in a way that can seem unreasonable

E.g. Why do you persist in blaming yourself for what happened?

Patchwork (n): a type of needlework in which small pieces of fabric of different colours or designs are sewn together

E.g. a patchwork quilt

Absently (adj): in a way that shows you are not looking at or thinking about what is happening around you

E.g. He nodded absently, his attention absorbed by the screen.

Battered (adj): old, used a lot, and not in very good condition

E.g. a battered old car

Oriental (adj): connected with or typical of the eastern part of the world, esp China and Japan, and the people who live there

E.g. oriental languages

Brocade (n): a thick heavy fabric with a raised pattern woven esp from gold or silver silk thread

Setting (n): a set of surroundings; the place at which sth happens

E.g. a rural/an ideal/a beautiful/an idyllic setting

At length : 1. For a long time and in detail

E.g. We have already discussed this matter at great length

2. (literary) after a long time

E.g. 'I'm still not sure,' he said at length.

Lurk (v): to wait somewhere secretly, esp because you are going to do sth bad or illegal

E.g. Why are you lurking around outside my house?

Weed (n): any wild plant without flowers that grows in water and forms a green floating mass

Chapter II

Plane tree (n): a tree with spreading branches and broad leaves, that is often found in towns in northern countries

Hurtle (v): to move or make sb/sth move very fast in a particular direction

E.g. A runaway car came hurtling towards us.

Overall(s) (n): a loose piece of clothing like a shirt and trousers/pants in one piece, made of heavy fabric and usually worn over other clothing by workers doing dirty work

E.g. The mechanic was wearing a pair of blue overalls.

Hum (v): to sing a tune with your lips closed

E.g. She was humming softly to herself.

Tortoiseshell (n): 1. The hard shell of a turtle, esp the type with orange and brown marks, used for making combs and small ornaments

2. a cat with black, brown, orange, and white fur

Tomcat (n): a male cat

Sling (v): to throw sth somewhere in a careless way

E.g. Don't just sling your clothes on the floor.

Crisscross (v): to make a pattern on something with many straight lines that cross each other

Postmark (n): an official mark placed over the stamp on a letter, etc. that shows when and where it was posted and makes it impossible to use the stamp again

E.g. an anonymous letter postmarked in Chicago

Spidery (adj): long and thin, like the legs of a spider

Penfriend (n): a person that you make friends with by writing letters, often sb you have never met

Flat (adj): (voice) not showing much emotion; not changing much in tone

E.g. Her voice was flat and expressionless.

Sensible (adj): (of people and their behavior) able to make good judgements based on reason and experience rather than emotion; practical

Comforting (adj): making you feel calmer and less worried or unhappy

E.g. It's comforting to know that you'll be there.

Troubled (adj): worried and anxious

E.g. She looked into his troubled face.

Brandy (n): a strong alcoholic drink made from wine. There are several types of brandy

E.g. The finest brandies are made in Cognac.

Out of the blue : unexpectedly; without warning

E.g. His resignation came right out of the blue.

Sort (n): a particular type of person

E.g. My brother would never cheat on his wife; he is not that sort.

Feelingly (adv): with strong emotion = emotionally

E.g. He spoke feelingly about his dead father.

Significant (adj): having a particular meaning/ meaningful

E.g. It is significant that he changed his will only days before his death.

Accusing (adj): showing that you think sb has done sth wrong

E.g. She gave him an accusing look.

Magistrate (v): someone who decides if people are guilty of less serious crimes in a court of law

Musty (adj): having a wet unpleasant smell

E.g. musty old books

Brittle (adj): (of sound) hard and sharp in an unpleasant way

E.g. a brittle laugh

Newsagent (n): a person who owns or works in a shop selling newspapers and magazines, and often sweets/candy and cigarettes

Pad (n): a book of paper sheets, used for writing, drawing, etc.

Biro (n): a type of pen

Muffle (v): to make a sound less loud or clear

E.g. Thick curtain muffled the traffic noises.

Take down: to remove sth from the place where it was

At gunpoint: when sb threatens people with a gun, or when sb is threatened with a gun

Blindfold (v): to cover someone's eyes with a piece of cloth so that they can't see

E.g. The hostages were blindfolded and led to the cellar.

Bunker (n): a strongly built shelter, usually under the ground, built for protection against bombs

Swoop (v): to suddenly and quickly move through the air, esp to attack sth

Mechanical (adj): saying or doing sth without thinking, because you have said or done it the same way many times before

Handout (n): food, money, clothes that are given to a person who is poor

Chapter III

Tense (adj): (of a person) nervous or worried, and unable to relax

E.g. She sounded tense and angry.

Loiter (v): to stand or wait somewhere esp without obvious reason = hang around

E.g. Teenagers were loitering in the street outside.

Proprietor (n): the owner of a shop, hotel, newspaper, etc.

Hollow (adj): (of sounds) making a low sound like that made by an empty object when it is hit

Airmail (n): the system of sending letters, etc. by air

Sandpit (n): an enclosed area for children to play in

Reclaim (v): to get sth back or to ask to have it back after it has been lost, taken away, etc.

E.g. You'll have to go to the police station to reclaim your wallet.

2. to make land that is naturally too wet or too dry suitable to be built on, farmed, etc.

E.g. The site for the airport will be reclaimed from the swamp.

Be all ears : to be waiting with interest to hear sb has to say

E.g. 'Do you know what he said?' 'Go on- I'm all ears.'

Conclusive (adj): proving sth, and allowing no doubt or uncertainty

E.g. conclusive evidence/proof/results

Abrupt (adj): sudden and unexpected

E.g. an abrupt change in the attitudes of the voters

2. not polite or friendly, because you don't want to waste time

Contingent (n): a group of soldiers that are part of a larger force

E.g. the French contingent in the UN peacekeeping force

Disgust (n): a strong feeling of dislike or disapproval for sb/sth that you feel is

unacceptable, or for sth that looks, smells, etc. unpleasant

E.g. She expressed her disgust at the programme by writing a letter to complain.

Break (v): (of voice) if sb's voice breaks, it changes its tone because of emotion

E.g. Her voice broke as she told us the dreadful news.

Reverberate (v): (of a sound) to be repeated several times as it bounces off different surfaces = echo

E.g. Her voice reverberated around the hall.

Poised (adj): in a position that is completely still but is ready to move at any moment

E.g. He stopped writing and looked at me, pen poised.

Dogged (adj): showing determination, not giving up easily

Deter (v): to make sb decide not to do sth or continue doing sth, esp by making them understand the difficulties and unpleasant results of their actions

E.g. The high price of the service could deter people from seeking advice.

Blurt out : to say sth suddenly and without thinking

E.g. Peter blurted out the news before we could stop him.

Chapter IV

Abstracted (adj): (formal) thinking deeply about sth and not paying attention to what is around you

Dispel (v): to make sth, esp a feeling or belief, go away or disappear

E.g. His speech dispelled any fears about his health.

Dubious (adj) doubtful

Hazy (adj): not clear because of haze

E.g. The mountains were hazy in the distance.

Overwhelming (adj): very great or very strong; so powerful that you cannot resist it

or decide how to react

E.g. The evidence against him was overwhelming.

Lattice (latticework) (n): a structure that is made of strips of wood or metal that cross over each other with spaces shaped like a diamond between them, used as a fence or a support for climbing plants; any structure or pattern like this

Creak (v): to make the sound that a door sometimes makes when you open it or that a wooden floor sometimes makes when you step on it

Bump (v): to move across a rough surface

E.g. The car bumped its way slowly down the drive.

Halt (n): an act of stopping the movement or progress of sb/sth

E.g. Work came to a halt when the machine broke down.

Gloomy (adj): dark, esp in a way that seems sad

E.g. They were led through the gloomy church by an old priest.

Grudging (adj): given or done unwillingly = reluctant

E.g. He could help feeling a grudging admiration for the old lady.

Loom (v): to appear as a large, unclear, threatening shape

Hydrofoil (n): a boat which rises above the surface of the water when it is traveling fast

Resolute (adj): determined not to change what you are doing because you are sure that you are right

Evasive (adj) trying to avoid answering questions directly

Incoherent (adj): confused and not clear

Concede (v): to admit that something is true, although you do not want to

E.g. She reluctantly conceded that I was right.

Trail away : if someone's voice trails away or trails off, it becomes quieter until it can't be heard

Opaque (adj): not transparent

Jumble (n): an untidy group of things

Saunter (v): to walk in a slow and confident way

E.g. He sauntered up to her and grinned.

Chapter V

Frenzy (n): a state of great activity and strong emotion that is often violent or frightening and not under control

Usher (v): to take someone into or out of a room or building

E.g. His secretary ushered us into the office.

Withdrawn (adj): quiet and not wanting to talk to people

Captive (n): sb who is kept as a prisoner, esp in a war

Crater (n): a large hole in the ground, esp caused by an explosion

Caption (n): a few words written above or below a picture that explain what it is about

Stiffen (v): to suddenly stop moving, esp because you are frightened or worried

Courtesy (n): polite behavior

Barge (v): to move in an awkward way, pushing people out of the way or crashing into them

E.g. They barged their way through the crowd.

Crass (adj): very stupid and showing no sympathy or understanding

Hostility (n) unfriendly and angry feelings or behavior

Erect (v): to put sth in position and make it stand upright

Gaze (v): to look steadily at sb/sth for a long time, either because you are very interested or surprised, or because you are thinking of sth else

Subdued (adj): not as bright or loud as usual

Count for : to be important and have important effect

Chapter VI

Clatter (v): if hard objects clatter, they make a loud unpleasant noise when they hit against each other

Overcast (adj): dark and cloudy

Flicker (v): to appear for a moment

E.g. A look of anger flickered across Andrea's face.

Recoil (v): to move your body quickly away from sb/sth because you find them or it frightening or unpleasant

E.g. She recoiled from his touch.

2. to react to an idea or a situation with strong dislike or fear

E.g. She recoiled from the idea of betraying her own brother.

Unpretentious (adj): not trying to seem more important, serious, clever than you really are

Chapter VII

Sober (adj): a sober person is sensible, quiet, and thinks a lot

Neon (n): a gas used in tubes in electric lights and signs

Ledge (n): a narrow flat surface like a shelf that sticks out from the side of a building or of a mountain

Stump (v): to walk with very firm heavy steps

Beckon (v): to give sb a signal using your finger or hand, esp to tell them to move nearer or to follow you

E.g. He beckoned to the waiter to bring the bill.

Perch (v): to sit or make sb sit on sth, esp on the edge of it

E.g. We perched on a couple of high stools at the bar.

Upturned (adj): pointing or facing upwards/ turned upside down

Wheelbarrow (n): a small cart with one wheel in the front and two long handles for

pushing, which you use outdoors to carry things, for example in a garden