

**binary** /say *buy-nuh-ree/* *adjective*

1. If something is **binary**, it is made up of two parts or things: *a binary star*. 2. If a system is **binary**, it uses the numbers 0 and 1: *binary code*.

**bind** /rhymes with *find/* *verb* (**binds**, **binding**, **bound**, **has bound**)

1. If you **bind** things together, you tie them up with something such as string or rope so that they are held tightly together: *Bind those papers together before you move them*. 2. If you **bind** something, you tie it up firmly: *to bind up a sore arm*. 3. If you **bind** substances together, you mix them so that they will stick together in a mass: *You need an egg to bind the ingredients*. 4. If you **bind** a book, you fasten its pages together and put a cover around them: *This old book is falling apart – we'll have to get it bound again*.

☐ **binder**, *noun*: *Put all those loose papers in that cardboard binder*.

**bindi-eye** *noun* a small plant with tiny, sharp thorns, sometimes found in grass.

**NOTE** You can call this plant a **bindy** or **bindi** for short. The plant also has other names in some parts of Australia, such as **joey** and **jo-jo**.

**WORD HISTORY** from Aboriginal languages of New South Wales called Kamilaroi and Yuwaalarray

**binge** *noun* *Informal* a period of too much eating, drinking or spending money.

**bingo** *noun* a gambling game in which you cross numbers, called in any order, off a card, the winner having all the numbers called.

**binoculars** /say *buh-nok-yuh-luhz/* *plural noun* magnifying glasses for both eyes, used for making distant objects seem nearer.

☒ **SPELLING TIP** Remember that the first part of **binoculars** is spelt *bi*. This is a prefix meaning 'two'. The next part of the word comes from the Latin *oculus* meaning 'eye'.

**bio-** *prefix* a word part meaning 'life' or 'living things', as in *biology*.

**WORD HISTORY** this prefix comes from Greek

**biodegradable** *adjective* A **biodegradable** chemical or substance is one that can be broken down by the sun or bacteria into products which are not harmful to the environment: *biodegradable soap powder*.

**biodiversity** *noun* the number and variety of different plant and animal life forms that live in an area: *There is far greater biodiversity in a tropical rainforest than in a desert*.

**biofuel** *noun* a fuel made from recently living material such as vegetable oil, plants with a high sugar content, and waste from food crops: *Bio-fuel can be used to run cars and to make power for factories*

**COMPARE** this with **fossil fuel**.

**biography** *noun* (*plural* **biographies**) the story of a person's life, written by someone else.

☐ **biographer**, *noun* –**biographical**, *adjective*

**COMPARE** this with **autobiography**.

**biology** *noun* the science or study of all living things.

☐ **biological**, *adjective* –**biologist**, *noun*

**bionic** /say *buy-on-ik/* *adjective* A **bionic** person has had parts of their body replaced by electronic equipment so as to give them supernatural strength: *The film was about a bionic man*.

**biopsy** *noun* (*plural* **biopsies**) the removal of a small section of someone's body to check if it is diseased.

**birch** *noun* (*plural* **birches**) a tree of cold countries, with slender branches and smooth bark.

**bird** *noun* a two-legged creature which lays eggs and has wings and feathers.

**birth** *noun*

1. the act of being born. 2. any beginning: *the birth of television; the birth of an idea*.

☒ **SPELLING TIP** Don't confuse the spelling of **birth** with **berth** which sounds the same. A **berth** is a place to sleep on a boat or train or a place where a ship can tie up.

**birthday** *noun*

1. the day on which someone is born. 2. the annual celebration of the day of someone's birth: *It is my brother's seventh birthday tomorrow*.

**biscuit** /say *bis-kuht/* *noun* a small, thin cake which has been baked until it is crisp.

**WORD HISTORY** from Latin words meaning 'cooked twice'

☒ **SPELLING TIP** Don't forget the *ui* spelling for the 'uh' sound.

**bisect** *verb* To **bisect** something is to cut or divide it into two parts or two equal parts: *Use a pair of compasses to bisect the line*.

☐ **bisection**, *noun*

**COMPARE** this with **dissect**.

**bisexual** *noun*

1. an animal, human or plant which has both male and female sex organs. 2. someone who is sexually attracted to both males and females.

**bishop** *noun*

1. a Christian priest of high rank, in charge of a whole area. 2. a chess piece which can only move diagonally.

**bison** /say *buy-suhn/* *noun* (*plural* **bison**) a large American animal with high shoulders and shaggy hair.

**bistro** *noun* (*plural* **bistros**) a small, casual restaurant or wine bar.

**bit**<sup>1</sup> *noun*

1. a metal bar placed in a horse's mouth and attached to the reins, used to help control it.



**zany** /say *zay-nee*/ *adjective* (**zanier**, **zaniest**)  
funny in a silly or crazy way: *The cartoon was full of zany situations that made me laugh.*

**zeal** *noun* eagerness or enthusiasm: *We had heaps of zeal at the beginning of the year – until about March.*

☐ **zealous** /say *zel-uhs*/, *adjective*: *My mum is a zealous campaigner for animal rights.*

**zebra** *noun* a wild, horse-like African animal covered with black and white stripes.

**Zen** *noun* a Buddhist sect that is popular in Japan, which believes that you should meditate if you want to understand the universe.

**WORD HISTORY** from a Sanskrit word meaning 'religious meditation'

**zero** *noun* (plural **zeros** or **zeroes**)

1. the figure or symbol '0': *Put a zero on the list next to the classes where nobody is coming.*
2. nothing: *The effectiveness of my gumboots was zero because I had big holes in the bottom of them.*

**zest** *noun* eager enjoyment: *We attacked the party table with zest; My grandfather says that his zest for life increases the older he gets.*

☐ **zestful**, *adjective*

**zigzag** *noun*

1. a line with sharp turns first to one side and then to the other.  
–verb (**zigzags**, **zigzagging**, **zigzagged**, **has zigzagged**)
2. To **zigzag** is to lie or move in a zigzag line: *The track zigzagged through the thick bush.*

**zinc** *noun* a bluish-white metallic element.

**zip** *noun*

1. a fastener consisting of two rows of metal or plastic teeth and a sliding piece which joins or separates them.

–verb (**zips**, **zipping**, **zipped**, **has zipped**)

2. *Informal* If you **zip** somewhere, you move there quickly: *Mum asked me to zip down to the shop for some milk.*
3. To **zip** computer data is to put it into a form that uses less storage.

–phrase 4. **zip up**, to fasten with a zip: *Make sure you zip up your jacket – it's cold outside.*

**OTHER WORDS** (for definition 1) are **zipper** and **zip-fastener**.

**zip file** *noun* a computer file that is compressed into a smaller size so that it is easier to store or to send over the internet.

**zipper** *noun* See **zip**.

**zither** *noun* a musical instrument made of strings that you pluck, stretched over a box.

**zodiac** /say *zoh-dee-ak*/ *noun* a part of the sky forming an imaginary belt through which the sun, moon and planets appear to travel, and which contains twelve constellations which are named and used in astrology.

**zombie** *noun*

1. in the beliefs of some West Indian religions, a dead body brought back to life by supernatural means.
2. *Informal* someone who looks like a zombie and whose brain seems not to be functioning.

**WORD HISTORY** from a West African word meaning 'good-luck charm'

**zone** *noun*

1. an area marked off and used for a special purpose: *an industrial zone.*

–verb 2. To **zone** an area of land is to set it aside for a particular purpose: *Another two hundred hectares have been zoned for parks.*

☐ **zoning**, *noun*

**zoo** *noun* a large area of land with enclosed areas or cages where live animals are kept for public viewing.

**zoology** /say *zoh-ol-uh-jee*/ *noun* the science or study of animal life.

☒ **SPELLING TIP** You can remember the spelling of the first part of this word by thinking of a zoo. Here *zoo-* is a prefix meaning 'having to do with animals'. The other part of the word is the suffix *-logy*, meaning 'the study of'.

**zoom** *verb* To **zoom** is to 1. move quickly: *He zoomed by on his motorbike.* 2. go up suddenly: *The rocket let off a 'whoosh' as it zoomed towards space.*

☐ **zoom**, *noun*

**zucchini** /say *zuh-kee-nee* or *zooh-kee-nee*/ *noun* (plural **zucchini**s) a small, green vegetable marrow, usually picked when very young.

☒ **SPELLING TIP** *Silent letter alert:* don't forget the silent *h* following the double (not single) *c*. Also remember the *ini* ending. **Zucchini** has this spelling because it comes from Italian. Rap it out as *zuc + chi + ni*.