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The Merriam-Webster Dictionary

韦氏词典

[美] 梅里亚姆-韦伯斯特公司 编



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内 容 简 介

本书是美国最畅销的平装本词典,取材于《韦氏第三版新国际英语词典》。本书是1994年最新版,是以《韦氏大学词典》第10版为基础编纂而成的便携本。

本书共收词六万条,均为英语中最常用的词汇,涉及科学、技术、商业和医药方面。每个词条包括发音、拼写、词义、词源和同义词等注释。词条释义简明精确。书后附有常用的实用资料。本书以它的权威性和实用性成为广大英语工作者和学习者的必备工具书。

THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

Merriam-Webster 1994

韦 氏 词 典

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The Merriam-Webster Dictionary



MERRIAM-WEBSTER, INCORPORATED
Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Preface

This new edition of THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY is the fifth in a line of Merriam-Webster paperback dictionaries which began in 1947. It is based on and preserves the best aspects of preceding editions, but it also offers much that is new, drawing specifically on *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*, which was published after the appearance of the last paperback edition. Every entry and every section has been reexamined and revised in light of the most current information available. Every definition has been based on examples of actual use found in the Merriam-Webster citation file, which now includes more than 14,500,000 examples of English words used in context.

The 60,000 entries in *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* give coverage to the most frequently used words in the language. The heart of the dictionary is the A-Z vocabulary section, where readers will find information about meaning, spelling, pronunciation, etymology, and synonymy. This section is followed by several others that users have long found useful: a list of foreign words and phrases that often occur in English texts; a list of nations of the world; a list of places in the United States having 19,000 or more inhabitants; a similar list of places in Canada; and a section devoted to widely used signs and symbols. The A-Z vocabulary is preceded by a set of Explanatory Notes that should be read carefully by every user of the dictionary. An understanding of the information contained in these notes will make the dictionary both easier and more rewarding to use.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary has been created by a company that has been publishing dictionaries for 150 years. It has been edited by an experienced staff of lexicographers, who believe it will serve well those who want a concise and handy guide to the English language of today.

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Explanatory Notes

Entries

A boldface letter or a combination of such letters, including punctuation marks and diacritics where needed, that is set flush with the left-hand margin of each column of type is a main entry. The main entry may consist of letters set solid, of letters joined by a hyphen or a diagonal, or of letters separated by one or more spaces:

alone . . . *adj*
avant-garde . . . *n*
and/or . . . *conj*
assembly language . . . *n*

The material in lightface type that follows each main entry on the same line and on succeeding indented lines presents information about the main entry.

The main entries follow one another in alphabetical order letter by letter: *bill of health* follows *billion*; *Day of Atonement* follows *daylight saving time*. Those containing an Arabic numeral are alphabetized as if the numeral were spelled out: *4-H* comes between *fourfold* and *Four Hundred*; *3-D* comes between *three* and *three-dimensional*. Those that often begin with the abbreviation *St.* in common usage have the abbreviation spelled out: *Saint Valentine's Day*.

A pair of guide words is printed at the top of each page. These indicate that the entries falling alphabetically between the words at the top of the outer column of each page are found on that page.

The guide words are usually the alphabetically first and the alphabetically last entries on the page:

airfield • albatross

Occasionally the last printed entry is not the alphabetically last entry. On page 44, for example, *anglicize* is the last main entry, but *angling*, an inflected form at ³*angle*, is the alphabetically last entry and is therefore the second guide word. The alphabetically last entry is not used, however, if it follows alphabetically the first guide word on the succeeding page. Thus on page 58 *asking* is not a guide word because it follows alphabetically the entry *askew* which is the first guide word on page 59.

Any boldface word—a main entry with definition, a variant, an inflected form, a defined or undefined run-on, or a run-in entry—may be used as a guide word.

When one main entry has exactly the same written form as another, the two are distinguished by superscript numerals preceding each word:

¹*melt* . . . *vb*
²*melt* *n*

¹*pine* . . . *n*
²*pine* *vb*

Full words come before parts of words made up of the same letters; solid compounds come before hyphenated compounds; hyphenated compounds come before open compounds; and lowercase entries come before those with an initial capital:

² super . . . <i>adj</i>	run-down . . . <i>n</i>	dutch . . . <i>adv</i>
super- . . . <i>prefix</i>	run-down . . . <i>adj</i>	Dutch . . . <i>n</i>
	run down <i>vb</i>	

The centered dots within entry words indicate division points at which a hyphen may be put at the end of a line of print or writing. Thus the noun *cap-puc-cino* may be ended on one line and continued on the next in this manner:

<i>puccino</i>	<i>cap-</i>
<i>cino</i>	<i>cappuc-</i>
<i>no</i>	<i>cappucci-</i>

Centered dots are not shown after a single initial letter or before a single terminal letter because typesetters seldom cut off a single letter:

abyss . . . <i>n</i>
flighty . . . <i>adj</i>
idea . . . <i>n</i>

Nor are they usually shown at the second and succeeding homographs unless they differ among themselves:

¹ sig-nal . . . <i>n</i>	¹ min-ute . . . <i>n</i>
² signal <i>vb</i>	² mi-nute . . . <i>adj</i>
³ signal <i>adj</i>	

There are acceptable alternative end-of-line divisions just as there are acceptable variant spellings and pronunciations, but no more than one division is shown for any entry in this dictionary.

A double hyphen at the end of a line in this dictionary (as in the definition at **angiogram**) stands for a hyphen that is retained when the word is written as a unit on one line. This kind of fixed hyphen is always represented in boldface words in this dictionary with an en dash.

When a main entry is followed by the word *or* and another spelling, the two spellings are equal variants. Both are standard, and either one may be used according to personal inclination:

ocher *or* **ochre**

If two variants joined by *or* are out of alphabetical order, they remain equal variants. The one printed first is, however, slightly more common than the second:

¹plow *or* **plough**

When another spelling is joined to the main entry by the word *also*, the spelling after *also* is a secondary variant and occurs less frequently than the first:

absinthe *also* **absinth**

Secondary variants belong to standard usage and may be used according to personal inclination. Once the word *also* is used to signal a secondary variant, all following variants are joined by *or*:

²**wool-ly** *also* **wool-ie** *or* **wooly**

Variants whose spelling puts them alphabetically more than a column away from the main entry are entered at their own alphabetical places and usually not at the main entry:

li-chee *var of* LITCHI

Variants having a usage label appear only at their own alphabetical places:

me-tre . . . *chiefly Brit var of* METER

To show all the stylings that are found for English compounds would require space that can be better used for other information. So this dictionary limits itself to a single styling for a compound:

peace-mak-er

pell-mell

boom box

When a compound is widely used and one styling predominates, that styling is shown. When a compound is uncommon or when the evidence indicates that two or three stylings are approximately equal in frequency, the styling shown is based on the comparison of other similar compounds.

A main entry may be followed by one or more derivatives or by a homograph with a different functional label. These are run-on entries. Each is introduced by a boldface dash and each has a functional label. They are not defined, however, since their meanings are readily understood from the meaning of the root word:

fear-less . . . *adj* . . . — **fear-less-ly** *adv* — **fear-less-ness** *n*

hic-cup . . . *n* . . . — **hiccup** *vb*

A main entry may be followed by one or more phrases containing the entry word or an inflected form of it. These are also run-on entries. Each is introduced by a boldface dash but there is no functional label. They are, however, defined since their meanings are more than the sum of the meanings of their elements:

¹set . . . vb . . . — set sail : . . .

¹hand . . . n . . . — at hand : . . .

Defined phrases of this sort are run on at the entry defining the first major word in the phrase. When there are variants, however, the run-on appears at the entry defining the first major word which is invariable in the phrase:

¹seed . . . n . . . — go to seed or run to seed 1 : . . .

Boldface words that appear within parentheses (as **co-ca** at **co-caine** and **jet engine** and **jet propulsion** at **jet-propelled**) are run-in entries.

Attention is called to the definition of *vocabulary entry* on page 816. The term *dictionary entry* includes all vocabulary entries as well as all boldface entries in the section headed "Foreign Words and Phrases."

Pronunciation

The matter between a pair of reversed virgules \ \ following the entry word indicates the pronunciation. The symbols used are explained in the chart printed inside the back cover.

A hyphen is used in the pronunciation to show syllabic division. These hyphens sometimes coincide with the centered dots in the entry word that indicate end-of-line division:

ab-sen-tee \ 1 ab-sən-¹tē \

Sometimes they do not:

met-ric \¹me-trik \

A high-set mark ¹ indicates major (primary) stress or accent; a low-set mark 1 indicates minor (secondary) stress or accent:

heart-beat \¹hārt-1bēt \

The stress mark stands at the beginning of the syllable that receives the stress.

A syllable with neither a high-set mark nor a low-set mark is un-stressed:

¹struc-ture \¹strək-čər \

The presence of variant pronunciations indicates that not all educated speakers pronounce words the same way. A second-place variant is not to be regarded as less acceptable than the pronunciation that is given first. It may, in fact, be used by as many educated speak-

ers as the first variant, but the requirements of the printed page are such that one must precede the other:

apricot \¹a-prə-¹kāt, ²ä-\
 pro-vost \¹prö-¹vöst, ²prä-vöst\

Symbols enclosed by parentheses represent elements that are present in the pronunciation of some speakers but are absent from the pronunciation of other speakers, or elements that are present in some but absent from other utterances of the same speaker:

¹om-ni-bus \¹äm-ni-(¹)bəs\
 ad-di-tion-al \ə-¹di-sh(ə)-nəl\

Thus, the above parentheses indicate that some people say \¹äm-ni-¹bəs\ and others say \¹äm-ni-bəs\; some \ə-¹di-shə-nəl\, others \ə-¹di-shnəl\.

When a main entry has less than a full pronunciation, the missing part is to be supplied from a pronunciation in a preceding entry or within the same pair of reversed virgules:

cham-pi-on-ship \-¹ship\
 pa-la-ver \pə-¹la-vər, -¹lä-\

The pronunciation of the first three syllables of *championship* is found at the main entry *champion*. The hyphens before and after \¹lä\ in the pronunciation of *palaver* indicate that both the first and the last parts of the pronunciation are to be taken from the immediately preceding pronunciation.

In general, no pronunciation is indicated for open compounds consisting of two or more English words that have own-place entry:

witch doctor *n*

Only the first entry in a sequence of numbered homographs is given a pronunciation if their pronunciations are the same:

¹re-ward \ri-¹wórd\
²reward *n*

The absent but implied pronunciation of derivatives and compounds run on after a main entry is a combination of the pronunciation at the main entry and the pronunciation of the other element as given at its alphabetical place in the vocabulary:

— quick-ness *n*
 — hold forth

Thus, the pronunciation of *quickness* is the sum of the pronunciations given at *quick* and *-ness*; that of *hold forth*, the sum of the pronunciations of the two elements that make up the phrase.

Functional Labels

An *italic label indicating a part of speech or another functional classification follows the pronunciation or, if no pronunciation is given, the main entry. The eight traditional parts of speech are indicated as follows:*

<i>bold . . . adj</i>	<i>bo-le-ro . . . n</i>
<i>forth-with . . . adv</i>	² <i>un-der . . . prep</i>
¹ <i>but . . . conj</i>	¹ <i>it . . . pron</i>
<i>ge-sund-heit . . . interj</i>	<i>slap . . . vb</i>

Other italicized labels used to indicate functional classifications that are not traditional parts of speech include:

<i>ATM abbr</i>	² <i>-er . . . n suffix</i>
<i>self- comb form</i>	<i>-ize . . . vb suffix</i>
<i>un- . . . prefix</i>	<i>Fe symbol</i>
<i>-ial adj suffix</i>	<i>may . . . verbal auxiliary</i>
² <i>-ly adv suffix</i>	

Functional labels are sometimes combined:

afloat . . . adj or adv

Inflected Forms

Nouns

The plurals of nouns are shown in this dictionary when suffixation brings about a change of final *-y* to *-i-*, when the noun ends in a consonant plus *-o* or in *-ey*, when the noun ends in *-oo*, when the noun has an irregular plural or a zero plural or a foreign plural, when the noun is a compound that pluralizes any element but the last, when a final consonant is doubled, when the noun has variant plurals, and when it is believed that the dictionary user might have reasonable doubts about the spelling of the plural or when the plural is spelled in a way contrary to what is expected:

² <i>spy n, pl spies</i>	<i>mouse . . . n, pl mice</i>
<i>si-lo . . . n, pl silos</i>	<i>moose . . . n, pl moose</i>
<i>val-ley . . . n, pl valleys</i>	<i>cri-te-ri-on . . . n, pl -ria</i>
² <i>shampoo n, pl shampoos</i>	<i>son-in-law . . . n, pl sons-in-law</i>

¹quiz . . . *n*, *pl* quiz-zespi . . . *n*, *pl* pis¹fish . . . *n*, *pl* fish or fishes³dry *n*, *pl* drys

Cutback inflected forms are used when the noun has three or more syllables:

ame-ni-ty . . . *n*, *pl* -ties

The plurals of nouns are usually not shown when the base word is unchanged by suffixation, when the noun is a compound whose second element is readily recognizable as a regular free form entered at its own place, or when the noun is unlikely to occur in the plural:

night . . . *n*fore-foot . . . *n*mo-nog-a-my . . . *n*

Nouns that are plural in form and that regularly occur in plural construction are labeled *n pl*:

munch-ies . . . *n pl*

Nouns that are plural in form but that are not always construed as plurals are appropriately labeled:

lo-gis-tics . . . *n sing or pl*

Verbs

The principal parts of verbs are shown in this dictionary when suffixation brings about a doubling of a final consonant or an elision of a final *-e* or a change of final *-y* to *-i-*, when final *-c* changes to *-ck* in suffixation, when the verb ends in *-ey*, when the inflection is irregular, when there are variant inflected forms, and when it is believed that the dictionary user might have reasonable doubts about the spelling of an inflected form or when the inflected form is spelled in a way contrary to what is expected:

²snag *vb* snagged; snag-ging¹move . . . *vb* moved; mov-ing¹cry . . . *vb* cried; cry-ing¹frol-ic . . . *vb* frolicked; frolick-ingsur-vey . . . *vb* sur-veyed; sur-vey-ing¹drive . . . *vb* drove . . . ; driv-en . . . ; driv-ing²bus *vb* bused or bussed; bus-ing or bus-sing²visa *vb* visaed . . . ; vi-sa-ing²chagrin *vb* cha-grined . . . ; cha-grin-ing

The principal parts of a regularly inflected verb are shown when it is desirable to indicate the pronunciation of one of the inflected forms:

learn . . . *vb* learned \¹lɔ:nd, ²lɔ:nt\; learn-ing
¹al-ter \¹ól-tɔ:r\ *vb* al-tered; al-ter-ing \-t(ə)-rɪŋ\

Cutback inflected forms are usually used when the verb has three or more syllables, when it is a two-syllable word that ends in *-l* and has variant spellings, and when it is a compound whose second element is readily recognized as an irregular verb:

elim-i-nate . . . *vb* -nated; -nat-ing
²quarrel *vb* -reled or -relled; -rel-ing or -rel-ling
¹re-take . . . *vb* -took . . . ; -tak-en . . . ; -tak-ing

The principal parts of verbs are usually not shown when the base word is unchanged by suffixation or when the verb is a compound whose second element is readily recognizable as a regular free form entered at its own place:

¹jump . . . *vb*
 pre-judge . . . *vb*

Another inflected form of English verbs is the third person singular of the present tense, which is regularly formed by the addition of *-s* or *-es* to the base form of the verb. This inflected form is not shown except at a handful of entries (as *have* and *do*) for which it is in some way anomalous.

Adjectives & Adverbs

The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs are shown in this dictionary when suffixation brings about a doubling of a final consonant or an elision of a final *-e* or a change of final *-y* to *-i-*, when the word ends in *-ey*, when the inflection is irregular, and when there are variant inflected forms:

¹red . . . *adj* red-der; red-dest
¹tame . . . *adj* tam-er; tam-est
¹kind-ly . . . *adj* kind-li-er; -est
 hors-ey or horsy . . . *adj* hors-i-er; -est
¹good . . . *adj* bet-ter . . . ; best
¹far . . . *adv* far-ther . . . or fur-ther . . . ; far-thest or fur-thest

The superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs of two or more syllables are usually cut back:

²fancy *adj* fan-ci-er; -est
¹ear-ly . . . *adv* ear-li-er; -est

The comparative and superlative forms of regularly inflected adjectives and adverbs are shown when it is desirable to indicate the pronunciation of the inflected forms:

¹*young* \¹yəŋ\ *adj* *youn-ger* \¹yəŋ-gər\; *youn-gest* \¹yəŋ-gəst\

The inclusion of inflected forms in *-er* and *-est* at adjective and adverb entries means nothing more about the use of *more* and *most* with these adjectives and adverbs than that their comparative and superlative degrees may be expressed in either way: *lazier* or *more lazy*; *laziest* or *most lazy*.

At a few adjective entries only the superlative form is shown:

²*mere* *adj.* *superlative* *mer-est*

The absence of the comparative form indicates that there is no evidence of its use.

The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs are usually not shown when the base word is unchanged by suffixation, when the inflected forms of the word are identical with those of a preceding homograph, or when the word is a compound whose second element is readily recognizable as a regular free form entered at its own place:

¹*near* *adv*

³*good* *adv*

un-wor-thy . . . *adj*

Inflected forms are not shown at undefined run-ons.

Capitalization

Most entries in this dictionary begin with a lowercase letter. A few of these have an italicized label *often cap*, which indicates that the word is as likely to be capitalized as not and that it is as acceptable with an uppercase initial as it is with one in lowercase. Some entries begin with an uppercase letter, which indicates that the word is usually capitalized. The absence of an initial capital or of an *often cap* label indicates that the word is not ordinarily capitalized:

salmon . . . *n*

gar-gan-tuan . . . *adj.* *often cap*

Mo-hawk . . . *n*

The capitalization of entries that are open or hyphenated compounds is similarly indicated by the form of the entry or by an italicized label:

dry goods . . . *n pl*
 french fry *vb, often cap 1st F*
 un-American . . . *adj*
 Par-kin-son's disease . . . *n*
 lazy Sus-an . . . *n*
 Jack Frost *n*

A word that is capitalized in some senses and lowercase in others shows variations from the form of the main entry by the use of italicized labels at the appropriate senses:

Trin-ity . . . *n . . . 2 not cap*
 To-ry . . . *n . . . 3 often not cap*
 ti-tan . . . *n 1 cap*
 re-nais-sance . . . *n . . . 1 cap . . . 2 often cap*

Etymology

This dictionary gives the etymologies for a number of the vocabulary entries. These etymologies are in boldface square brackets preceding the definition. Meanings given in roman type within these brackets are not definitions of the entry, but are meanings of the Middle English, Old English, or non-English words within the brackets.

The etymology gives the language from which words borrowed into English have come. It also gives the form of the word in that language or a representation of the word in our alphabet if the form in that language differs from that in English:

philoden-dron . . . [NL. fr. Gk. neut. of *philodendros* loving trees . . .]
'savage . . . [ME *sauvage*, fr. MF. fr. ML *salvaticus*, alter. of L *silvaticus* of the woods, wild . . .]

An etymology beginning with the name of a language (including ME or OE) and not giving the foreign (or Middle English or Old English) form indicates that this form is the same as the form of the entry word:

le-gume . . . [F]
'jour-ney . . . [ME. fr. OF . . .]

An etymology beginning with the name of a language (including ME or OE) and not giving the foreign (or Middle English or Old English) meaning indicates that this meaning is the same as the meaning expressed in the first definition in the entry:

ug-ly . . . *adj* . . . [ME. fr. ON *uggligr* . . .] 1 : FRIGHTFUL, DIRE

Usage

Three types of status labels are used in this dictionary—temporal, regional, and stylistic—to signal that a word or a sense of a word is not part of the standard vocabulary of English.

The temporal label *obs* for “obsolete” means that there is no evidence of use since 1755:

³*post n 1 obs*

The label *obs* is a comment on the word being defined. When a thing, as distinguished from the word used to designate it, is obsolete, appropriate orientation is usually given in the definition:

cat-a-pult . . . *n 1*: an ancient military machine for hurling missiles

The temporal label *archaic* means that a word or sense once in common use is found today only sporadically or in special contexts:

¹*mete* . . . *vb* . . . *1 archaic*

¹*thou* . . . *pron, archaic*

A word or sense limited in use to a specific region of the U.S. has an appropriate label. The adverb *chiefly* precedes a label when the word has some currency outside the specified region, and a double label is used to indicate considerable currency in each of two specific regions:

²*wash n* . . . *5 West*

dogie . . . *n, chiefly West*

crul-ler . . . *n* . . . *2 Northern & Midland*

Words current in all regions of the U.S. have no label.

A word or sense limited in use to one of the other countries of the English-speaking world has an appropriate regional label:

chem-ist . . . *n* . . . *2 Brit*

loch . . . *n, Scot*

²*wireless n* . . . *2 chiefly Brit*

The label *dial* for “dialect” indicates that the pattern of use of a word or sense is too complex for summary labeling: it usually includes several regional varieties of American English or of American and British English:

¹*mind vb 1 chiefly dial*