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# COLLINS DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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## Publisher's Foreword

This completely new and original English dictionary is one of the most important books ever published by Collins. It contains some 3 000 000 words and 162 000 references—more than any other single volume dictionary of British English in general use. *Collins English Dictionary* is, in fact, the first major English-language dictionary on a scale substantially greater than any dictionary in the "concise" category to be originated in Britain since the publication of the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* in 1933.

Its origins date back 10 years to when Collins asked Laurence Urdang, formerly Managing Editor of the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* and many other major reference works, to take on the task of creating the dictionary. He assembled in Aylesbury, England, a strong team of more than 20 full-time lexicographers, led by Patrick Hanks, Thomas Hill Long, and Alan Isaacs, all of whom had many years of experience in reference-book compiling.

We thought it was essential that the dictionary should cover all the spoken and written English that is likely to be required by any but the most highly specialized users, with enough space for clear and helpful definitions. We have also included many biographical and geographical entries and an exceptionally wide range of scientific and technical terms, in order to provide a truly comprehensive and useful dictionary. Great care was taken to

represent as fully as possible many varieties of national and regional usage, so as to ensure that the scope of this English dictionary would be fully international. Clearly, all this would have been impossible in a book of "concise" length, but we found that this new, convenient-sized volume would accommodate the necessary text of approximately 3 000 000 words.

For the first time in a major dictionary of this kind, computer technology has been used from the inception of the work. This has made it possible to survey every field of human activity subject by subject, defining technical as well as everyday vocabulary in an exceptionally short time. Specialist and general defining editors, pronunciation editors, etymologists, and other contributors were all enabled to work in parallel and then their contributions were sorted into their proper places by computer.

Some 200 people have taken part in this complex operation. It remains only for me to thank them all for making this book such a significant development in British-originated dictionaries of the English language.

JAN COLLINS

Glasgow

February 1979

## Editorial Preface

In a decade that has seen more lexicographical activity worldwide than the preceding century the first question arising from the publication of a new dictionary is, Why another dictionary? The immediate response is that we must keep pace with the language, which is in a state of ever-changing flux.

But, in fact, there are two reasons that go deeper than that. The first is the development, especially since the Second World War, of English as the most important language in the world. Today, English is the *lingua franca* not only of science, technology, commerce, and diplomacy, but of culture as well. The English-speaking peoples are voracious consumers of film, drama, literature, television—of every possible manifestation of the printed and spoken word.

The other reason is that, for the first time since the structuralist theories of language were set forth and codified in the first half of the twentieth century, linguists have begun to turn their attention to meaning, to semantics, and, more recently, to semiotics.

Both of these influences are reflected in *Collins English Dictionary*. The first can be seen in the careful attention paid to the selection of headwords

from America, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean, South Africa, and other parts of the world where English is spoken as a native language, as well as to the enormous number of words borrowed from foreign languages in the past 40 years. The second influence is reflected in the arrangement of the definitions and other information. Both of these are fully described in the Guide to the Use of the Dictionary and the other articles that follow it.

In the thousands of days that have gone into the preparation of the *Dictionary*, no one showed greater enthusiasm and support for the project than Jan Collins, Chairman of Collins. For his close editorial involvement, we are also most grateful to William McLeod, Publishing Manager of Collins's Reference Book Department. With their aid, every effort has been made to ensure that *Collins English Dictionary* will provide its users with the best and most up-to-date guide to the English language throughout the world.

LAURENCE URDANG

Aylesbury, Bucks

February 1979



different semantic areas clearly numbered: see 7.2 \*

**jug** (dʒʌg) *n.* 1. a vessel for holding or pouring liquids, usually having a handle and a spout or lip. U.S. equivalent: **pitcher**. 2. **Austral.** such a vessel used as a kettle: an **electric jug**. 3. [U.S.] a large vessel with a narrow mouth. 4. Also called: **jug-ful**. the amount of liquid held by a jug. 5. [Brit.] **informal**. a glass of alcoholic drink, esp. beer. 6. a slang word for jail. ~ *vb.* [**Jugs**, **jug-ging**, **jugged**]. 7. to stew or boil (meat, esp. hare) in an earthenware container. 8. (tr.) **Slang**. to put in jail. [C16: probably from *Jug*, nickname from girl's name *Joan*]

varieties of English labelled

inflected forms: see 3

inflected forms: see 3

**ju-gal** ('dʒu:ɡəl) *adj.* 1. of or relating to the zygomatic bone. ~ *n.* 2. Also called: **jugal bone**. other names for **zygomatic bone**. [C16: from Latin *jugālis* of a yoke, from *jugum* a yoke]

**ju-gate** ('dʒu:ɡeɪt, -ɡɪt) *adj.* (esp. of compound leaves) having parts arranged in pairs. [C19: from New Latin *jugātus* (unattested), from Latin *jugum* a yoke]

up-to-date word list

foreign words: see 2.6

**Ju-gend-stil** German. ('ju:ɡənt,ʃti:l) *n.* another name for **art nouveau**. [from *Jugend* literally: youth, name of illustrated periodical that first appeared in 1896, + *Stil* STYLE]

acronyms: see 7.8

**JUGFET** ('dʒʌɡfet) *n.* acronym for **junction-gate field-effect transistor**, a type of field-effect transistor in which the semiconductor gate region or regions form one or more p-n junctions with the conduction channel. Compare **IGFET**.

thorough scientific and technical coverage

**jugged hare** *n.* a stew of hare cooked in an earthenware pot or casserole.

field labels: see 6.5

**jug-ger-naut** ('dʒʌɡə,nɔ:t) *n.* 1. any terrible force, esp. one that destroys or that demands complete self-sacrifice. 2. **Brit.** a very large lorry for transporting goods by road, esp. one that travels throughout Europe.

useful encyclopedic information

**Jug-ger-naut** ('dʒʌɡə,nɔ:t) *n.* [**Hinduism**]. 1. a crude idol of Krishna worshipped at Puri and throughout Orissa and Bengal. At an annual festival the idol is wheeled through the town on a gigantic chariot and devotees are supposed to have formerly thrown themselves under the wheels in the hope of going straight to paradise. 2. a form of Krishna miraculously raised by Brahma from the state of a crude idol to that of a living god. [C17: from Hindi *Jagannath*, from Sanskrit *Jagannātha* lord of the world (that is, Vishnu, chief of the Hindu gods), from *jagat* world + *nātha* lord]

helpful usage labels: see 6.3

**jug-gins** ('dʒʌɡɪnz) *n.* **Brit.** [**informal**]. a silly fellow. [C19: special use of the surname *Juggins*]

parts of speech: see 4

**jug-gle** ('dʒʌɡl) *vb.* 1. to throw and catch (several objects) continuously so that most are in the air all the time, as an entertainment. 2. to arrange or manipulate (facts, figures, etc.) so as to give a false or misleading picture. 3. (tr.) to keep (several activities) in progress, esp. with difficulty. ~ *n.* 4. an act of juggling. [C14: from Old French *jogler* to perform as a jester, from Latin *joculārī* to jest, from *jocus* a jest] — **'jug-gler-y** *n.*

**jug-gler** ('dʒʌɡlə) *n.* 1. a person who juggles, esp. a professional entertainer. 2. a person who fraudulently manipulates facts or figures.

pronunciations in IPA: see 2

**ju-glan-da-ceous** (,dʒu:ɡlæn'deɪʃəs) *adj.* of, relating to, or belonging to the **Juglandaceae**, a family of trees that includes walnut and hickory. [C19: via New Latin from Latin *juglans* walnut, from *ju-*, shortened from *Jovi-* of Jupiter + *glans* acorn]

senses in order of current usage: see 7.3

**Ju-go-sla-vi-a** (ju:ɡəʊ'slɑ:vɪə) *n.* a variant spelling of **Yugoslavia**. — **'Ju-go-slav** or **'Ju-go-sla-vi-an** *adj.*, *n.*

**jug-u-lar** ('dʒʌɡjʊlə) *adj.* 1. of, relating to, or situated near the throat or neck. 2. of, having, or denoting pelvic fins situated in front of the pectoral fins: a **jugular fish**. ~ *n.* 3. short for **jugular vein**. [C16: from Late Latin *jugularis*, from Latin *jugulum* throat]

**jug-u-lar vein** *n.* any of three large veins of the neck that return blood to the heart from the head and face.

derived forms: see 12

**jug-u-late** ('dʒʌɡju,lert) *vb.* (tr.) **Rare**. to check (a disease) by extreme measures or remedies. [C17 (in the obsolete sense: kill by cutting the throat of): from Latin *jugulāre*, from *jugulum* throat from *jugum* yoke] — **'jug-u-la-tion** *n.*

**ju-gum** ('dʒu:ɡəm) *n.* 1. a small process at the base of each forewing in certain insects by which the forewings are united to the hindwings during flight. 2. **Botany**. a pair of opposite leaflets. [C19: from Latin, literally: YOKE]

**Ju-gur-tha** (dʒu:'gɜ:θə) *n.* died 104 B.C., king of Numidia (?112–104), who waged war against the Romans (the **Jugurthine War**, 112–105) and was defeated and executed.

lettered senses: see 7.2

**juice** (dʒu:s) *n.* 1. any liquid that occurs naturally in or is secreted by plant or animal tissue: *the juice of an orange*; *digestive juices*. 2. **Informal**. a. fuel for an engine, esp. petrol. b. electricity. c. alcoholic drink. 3. a. vigour or vitality. b. essence or fundamental nature. [C13: from Old French *jus*, from Latin] — **'juice-less** *adj.*

**juice ex-trac-tor** *n.* a kitchen appliance, usually operated by electricity, for extracting juice from fruits and vegetables. U.S. equivalent: **juicer**.

phrasal verbs entered as headwords: see 5.6.6

**juice up** *vb.* (tr., adv.) 1. **U.S. slang**. to make lively: *to juice up a party*. 2. (often passive) to cause to be drunk: *he got juiced up on Scotch last night*.

examples of typical use: see 7.1.5

**juic-y** ('dʒu:sɪ) *adj.* **juic-i-er**, **juic-i-est**. 1. full of juice. 2. provocatively interesting; spicy: *juicy gossip*. 3. **Slang**. voluptuous or seductive: *she's a juicy bit*. 4. **Chiefly U.S.** profitable: *a juicy contract*. — **'juic-i-ly** *adv.* — **'juic-i-ness** *n.*

**Juiz de Fo-ra** (Portuguese 'ʒwiz di 'fɔ:rə) *n.* a city in SE Brazil, in Minas Gerais state on the Rio de Janeiro–Belo Horizonte railway: **textiles**. **Pop.**: 218 832 (1970).

variant spellings: see 1.6

**ju-jit-su**, **ju-jut-su**, or **ju-jut-su** (dʒu:'dʒɪtsu:) *n.* the traditional Japanese system of unarmed self-defence perfected by

readable informative etymologies: see 11

informative geographical entries: see 7.5

cross-references: see 8

homograph numbers: see 1.3.2

single alphabetical list

usage notes: see 14

compounds given headword status: see 10.2

cross-references: see 8

cal system, device, or circuit. 2. the quality or condition of such a network. ~adj. 3. used in wiring.

**wir-ra** ('wɪrə) *interj.* [*Irish*] an exclamation of sorrow or deep concern. [C19: shortened from Irish Gaelic *a Muire! O Mary!* invocation to the Virgin Mary]

**Wir-ral** ('wɪrəl) *n. the.* a peninsula in NW England between the estuaries of the Rivers Mersey and Dee.

**wir-y** ('waɪərɪ) *adj.* **wir-i-er**, **wir-i-est**. 1. (of people or animals) slender but strong in constitution. 2. made of or resembling wire, esp. in stiffness: *wiry hair*. 3. (of a sound) produced by or as if by a vibrating wire. —**wir-i-ly** *adv.* —**wir-i-ness** *n.*

**wis** (wɪs) *vb.* *Archaic.* to know or suppose (something). [C17: a form derived from *[wɪs]*, mistakenly interpreted as *I wis I know*, as if from Old English *witan* to know]

**Wis.** *abbrev. for* Wisconsin.

**Wis-con-sin** (wɪs'kɒnsɪn) *n.* 1. a state of the N central U.S., on Lake Superior and Lake Michigan: consists of an undulating plain, with uplands in the north and west; over 168 m (550 ft.) below sea level along the shore of Lake Michigan. Capital: Madison. Pop.: 4 417 933 (1970). Area: 141 061 sq. km (54 464 sq. miles). [Abbrevs.: **Wis.** or (with zip code) **WI**] 2. a river in central and SW Wisconsin, flowing south and west to the Mississippi. Length: 692 km (430 miles). —**Wis-con-sin-ite** *n.*

**Wisd.** *abbrev. for* Wisdom of Solomon.

**wis-dom** ('wɪzdəm) *n.* 1. the ability or result of an ability to think and act utilizing knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. 2. accumulated knowledge, erudition, or enlightenment. 3. *Archaic.* a wise saying or wise sayings or teachings. 4. *Obsolete.* soundness of mind. ~Related *adj.*: **sagacious**. [+Old-English *wīsdōm*; see **WISE**, -**DOM**]

**Wis-dom of Je-sus, Son of Si-rach** ('sairæk) *n. the.* another name for **Ecclesiasticus**.

**Wis-dom of Sol-o-mon** *n.* a book of the Apocrypha, probably written about 50 B.C., addressed primarily to Jews who were under the influence of Hellenistic learning.

**wis-dom tooth** *n.* 1. any of the four molar teeth, one at the back of each side of the jaw, that are the last of the **permanent teeth** to erupt. Technical name: **third molar**. 2. **cut one's wisdom teeth** to arrive at the age of discretion.

**wise** ('waɪz) *adj.* 1. possessing, showing, or prompted by wisdom or discernment. 2. prudent; sensible. 3. shrewd; crafty: a *wise plan*. 4. well-informed; erudite. 5. aware, informed, or knowing (esp. in the phrase *none the wiser*). 6. *Slang.* [(post-positive; often foll. by *to*)] in the know, esp. possessing inside information (about). 7. [*Archaic*] or *Brit. dialect.* possessing powers of magic. 8. *Slang, chiefly U.S.* cocksure or insolent. 9. **be or get wise.** (often foll. by *to*) *Informal.* to be or become aware or informed (of something) or to face up (to facts). 10. **put wise.** (often foll. by *to*) *Slang.* to inform or warn (of). ~*vb.* 11. See **wise up**. [Old English *wīs*; related to Old Norse *viss*, Gothic *weis*, German *weise*] —**wise-ly** *adv.* —**wise-ness** *n.*

**wise**<sup>2</sup> (waɪz) *n.* *Archaic.* way, manner, fashion, or respect (esp. in the phrases *any wise*, *in no wise*). [Old English *wise* manner; related to Old Saxon *wīsa*, German *Weise*, Old Norse *vīsa* verse, Latin *visus* face]

**wise**<sup>3</sup> (waɪz) *vb.* (tr.) *Northern Brit. dialect.* to direct or lead. [Old English *wīsan*; related to Old Norse *vīsa*, Old Saxon *wīson*, German *weisen*, Old Frisian *wīsia* to turn around]

**-wise** *adv.* *combining form.* 1. Also: **-ways.** indicating direction or manner: *clockwise*; *likewise*. 2. with reference to: *profit-wise*; *businesswise*. [Old English *-wisan*; see **WISE**<sup>2</sup>]

**Usage.** The addition of *-wise* to a noun as a replacement for a lengthier phrase (such as *as far as... is concerned*) is considered unacceptable by most careful speakers and writers: *talentwise, he's a little weak* (he's a little weak as regards talent); *the company is thriving profitwise* (as far as profits are concerned, the company is thriving).

**wise-a-cre** ('waɪz,eɪkə) *n.* 1. a person who wishes to seem wise. 2. a wise person: often used facetiously or contemptuously. [C16: from Middle Dutch *wijsseggher* soothsayer; related to Old High German *wīssaga*, German *Weissager*. See **WISE**<sup>1</sup>, **SAY**]

**wise-crack** ('waɪz,kɹæk) *Informal.* ~*n.* 1. a flippant jibe or sardonic remark. ~*vb.* 2. to make a wisecrack. —**wise-crack-er** *n.*

**wise guy** *n.* *Slang.* a person who is given to making conceited, sardonic, or insolent comments.

**Wise-man** ('waɪz,mæn) *n.* **Nich-o-las Pat-rick Ste-phen.** 1802–65, British cardinal; first Roman Catholic archbishop of Westminster (1850–65).

**wi-sent** ('wi:zənt) *n.* another name for **European bison**. See **bison** (sense 2). [German, from Old High German *wisunt* **BISON**]

**wise up** *vb.* (adv.) *Slang, chiefly U.S.* (often foll. by *to*) to become or cause to become aware or informed (of).

**wish** (wɪʃ) *vb.* 1. [(when tr., takes a clause as object or an infinitive; when intr., often foll. by *for*)] to want or desire (something, often that which cannot be or is not the case): *I wish I lived in Italy*; *to wish for peace*. 2. (tr.) to feel or express a desire or hope concerning the future or fortune of: *I wish you well*. 3. (tr.) to desire or prefer to be as specified. 4. (tr.) to greet as specified; bid: *he wished us good afternoon*. 5. (tr.) *Formal.* to order politely: *I wish you to come at three o'clock*. ~*n.* 6. the act of wishing; the expression of some desire or mental inclination: *to make a wish*. 7. something desired or wished for: *he got his wish*. 8. (usually pl.) expressed hopes or desire, esp. for someone's welfare, health, etc. 9. (often pl.) *Formal.* a polite order or request. [Old English *wyscan*; related

national labels: see 6.6

cross-references in etymologies: see 11.4

abbreviations: see 7.7

related adjectives: see 8.6

syllabification: see 1.2

thorough coverage of idioms: see 10

syntactical information

temporal labels: see 6.2

full coverage of affixes and combining forms: see 7.9

spoken English covered

concise biographical entries: see 7.6

collocational information: see 5.9



# Pronunciation Key

The symbols used in the pronunciation transcriptions are those of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The following consonant symbols have their usual English values: *b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, z*. The remaining symbols and their interpretations are listed in the tables below.

## English Sounds

ɑ:	as in <i>father</i> ('fɑ:ðə), <i>alms</i> (ɑ:mz), <i>clerk</i> (kɜ:k), <i>heart</i> (hɑ:t), <i>sergeant</i> ('sɜ:dʒənt)
æ	as in <i>act</i> (ækt), <i>Caedmon</i> ('kædmən), <i>plait</i> (plæt)
aɪ	as in <i>dive</i> (daɪv), <i>aisle</i> (aɪl), <i>guy</i> (gaɪ), <i>might</i> (maɪt), <i>rye</i> (raɪ)
aɪə	as in <i>fire</i> (faɪə), <i>buyer</i> (baɪə), <i>liar</i> (laɪə), <i>tyre</i> (taɪə)
aʊ	as in <i>out</i> (aʊt), <i>bough</i> (baʊ), <i>crowd</i> (kraʊd), <i>slouch</i> (slaʊtʃ)
aʊə	as in <i>flour</i> (flaʊə), <i>cower</i> (kaʊə), <i>flower</i> (flaʊə), <i>sour</i> (saʊə)
ɛ	as in <i>bet</i> (bɛt), <i>ate</i> (ɛt), <i>bury</i> ('bɛrɪ), <i>heifer</i> ('heɪə), <i>said</i> (seɪd), <i>says</i> (seɪz)
eɪ	as in <i>paid</i> (peɪd), <i>day</i> (deɪ), <i>deign</i> (deɪn), <i>gauge</i> (geɪdʒ), <i>grey</i> (greɪ), <i>neigh</i> (neɪ)
ɛə	as in <i>bear</i> (beə), <i>dare</i> (deə), <i>prayer</i> (preə), <i>stairs</i> (steəz), <i>where</i> (weə)
g	as in <i>get</i> (gɛt), <i>give</i> (gɪv), <i>ghoul</i> (gu:l), <i>guard</i> (gɑ:d), <i>examine</i> (ɪg'zæmɪn)
ɪ	as in <i>pretty</i> ('prɪtɪ), <i>build</i> (bɪld), <i>busy</i> ('bɪzɪ), <i>nymph</i> (nɪmf), <i>pocket</i> ('pɒkɪt), <i>sieve</i> (sɪv), <i>women</i> ('wɪmɪn)
i:	as in <i>see</i> (si:), <i>aesthete</i> ('i:sθi:t), <i>evil</i> ('i:v'l), <i>magazine</i> (ˌmæɡə'zi:n), <i>receive</i> (rɪ'si:v), <i>siege</i> (si:dʒ)
ɪə	as in <i>fear</i> (fɪə), <i>beer</i> (bɪə), <i>mere</i> (mɪə), <i>tier</i> (tɪə)
j	as in <i>yes</i> (jes), <i>onion</i> ('ʌnjən), <i>vignette</i> (vɪ'njɛt)
ɒ	as in <i>pot</i> (pɒt), <i>botch</i> (bɒtʃ), <i>sorry</i> ('sɒrɪ)
əʊ	as in <i>note</i> (nəʊt), <i>beau</i> (bəʊ), <i>dough</i> (dəʊ), <i>hoe</i> (həʊ), <i>slow</i> (sləʊ), <i>yeoman</i> ('jəʊmən)
ɔ:	as in <i>thaw</i> (θɔ:), <i>broad</i> (brɔ:d), <i>drawer</i> (dɹɔ:ə), <i>fault</i> (fɔ:lt), <i>halt</i> (hɔ:lt), <i>organ</i> ('ɔ:gən)
ɔɪ	as in <i>void</i> (vɔɪd), <i>boy</i> (bɔɪ), <i>destroy</i> (dɪ'strɔɪ)
ʊ	as in <i>pull</i> (pʊl), <i>good</i> (gʊd), <i>should</i> (ʃʊd), <i>woman</i> ('wʊmən)
u:	as in <i>zoo</i> (zu:), <i>do</i> (du:), <i>queue</i> (kju:), <i>shoe</i> (ʃu:), <i>spew</i> (spju:), <i>true</i> (tru:), <i>you</i> (ju:)
ʊə	as in <i>poor</i> (pʊə), <i>skewer</i> ('skjuə), <i>sure</i> (ʃʊə)
ə	as in <i>potter</i> ('pɒtə), <i>alone</i> (ə'ləʊn), <i>furious</i> ('fjʊəriəs), <i>nation</i> ('neɪʃən), <i>the</i> (ðə)
ɜ:	as in <i>fern</i> (fɜ:n), <i>burn</i> (bɜ:n), <i>fir</i> (fɜ:), <i>learn</i> (lɜ:n), <i>term</i> (tɜ:m), <i>worm</i> (wɜ:m)
ʌ	as in <i>cut</i> (kʌt), <i>flood</i> (flʌd), <i>rough</i> (rʌf), <i>son</i> (sʌn)
ʃ	as in <i>ship</i> (ʃɪp), <i>election</i> (ɪ'lekʃən), <i>machine</i> (mə'ʃi:n), <i>mission</i> ('mɪʃən), <i>pressure</i> ('preʃə), <i>schedule</i> ('ʃɛdju:l), <i>sugar</i> ('ʃʊɡə)
ʒ	as in <i>treasure</i> ('treʒə), <i>azure</i> ('æʒə), <i>closure</i> ('klɔʒə), <i>evasion</i> (ɪ'veɪʒən)
tʃ	as in <i>chew</i> (tʃu:), <i>nature</i> ('neɪtʃə)
dʒ	as in <i>jaw</i> (dʒɔ:), <i>adjective</i> ('ædʒɪktɪv), <i>lodge</i> (lɒdʒ), <i>soldier</i> ('səʊldʒə), <i>usage</i> ('ju:sɪdʒ)
θ	as in <i>thin</i> (θɪn), <i>strength</i> (streŋθ), <i>three</i> (θri:)
ð	as in <i>these</i> (ði:z), <i>bathe</i> (beɪð), <i>lather</i> ('lɑ:ðə)

ŋ	as in <i>sing</i> (sɪŋ), <i>finger</i> ('fɪŋɡə), <i>sling</i> (slɪŋ)
ɹ	indicates that the following consonant ( <i>l</i> or <i>n</i> ) is syllabic, as in <i>bundle</i> ('bʌndl̩) and <i>button</i> ('bʌt̩n).

## Foreign Sounds

The symbols above are also used to represent foreign sounds where these are similar to English sounds. However, certain common foreign sounds require symbols with markedly different values, as follows:

a	a in French <i>ami</i> •German <i>Mann</i> , Italian <i>pasta</i> : a sound between English (æ) and (ɑ:), similar to the vowel in Northern English <i>cat</i> or London <i>cut</i> .
e	é in French <i>été</i> , eh in German <i>sehr</i> , e in Italian <i>che</i> : a sound similar to the first part of the English diphthong (eɪ) in <i>day</i> or to the Scottish vowel in <i>day</i> .
ɔ	o in Italian <i>no</i> , French <i>bonne</i> , German <i>Sonne</i> : a vowel resembling English (ɒ), but with a higher tongue position and more rounding of the lips.
o	o in French <i>rose</i> , German <i>so</i> , Italian <i>voce</i> : a sound between English (ɔ:) and (u:) with closely rounded lips, similar to the Scottish vowel in <i>so</i> .
y	u in French <i>tu</i> , ü in German <i>über</i> or <i>fünf</i> : a sound made with a tongue position similar to that of English (i:) but with closely rounded lips.
ø	eu in French <i>deux</i> , ö in German <i>schön</i> : a sound made with the tongue position of (e) but with closely rounded lips.
œ	œu in French <i>œuf</i> , ö in German <i>zwölf</i> : a sound made with a tongue position similar to that of English (e) but with open rounded lips.
~	above a vowel indicates nasalization, as in French <i>un</i> (œ̃), <i>bon</i> (bɔ̃), <i>vin</i> (vɛ̃), <i>blanc</i> (blɑ̃).
x	ch in Scottish <i>loch</i> , German <i>Buch</i> , j in Spanish <i>Juan</i> .
ç	ch in German <i>ich</i> : a (j) sound as in <i>yes</i> , said without voice; similar to the first sound in <i>huge</i> .
β	b in Spanish <i>Habana</i> : a voiced fricative sound similar to (v), but made by the two lips.
ʎ	ll in Spanish <i>llamar</i> , gl in Italian <i>consiglio</i> : similar to the (lj) sequence in <i>million</i> , but with the tongue tip lowered and the sounds said simultaneously.
ɥ	u in French <i>lui</i> : a short (y).
ʝ	gn in French <i>vigne</i> , Italian <i>gnocchi</i> , ñ in Spanish <i>España</i> : similar to the (nj) sequence in <i>onion</i> , but with the tongue tip lowered and the two sounds said simultaneously.
ɣ	g in Spanish <i>luego</i> : a weak (g) made with voiced friction.

## Length

The symbol : denotes length and is shown together with certain vowel symbols when the vowels are typically long.

## Stress

Three grades of stress are shown in the transcriptions by the presence or absence of marks placed immediately before the affected syllable. Primary or strong stress is shown by ' , while secondary or weak stress is shown by ˌ . Unstressed syllables are not marked. In *photographic* (ˌfəʊtə'græfɪk), for example, the first syllable carries secondary stress and the third primary stress, while the second and fourth are unstressed.

# The Pronunciation of British English

by A. C. Gimson

## The Origins

English has been spoken in Britain for some fourteen centuries. During this time, it has undergone such fundamental changes (affecting grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) that the speech of an inhabitant of the London region of the 7th century would be totally unintelligible to the modern Londoner. The earliest form of English, brought by Germanic invaders from the 5th century onwards, is known as *Old English* and extends up to about the 11th century. This general term itself embraces a number of separate dialects deriving from the different geographical origins of the invaders. It was the West-Saxon form of the South and the Southwest of the country that ultimately became regarded as a standard language, and it is in this form that most of the extant texts are written. From about the 7th century, Old English began to be written with the Latin alphabet, probably introduced into England by Irish missionaries. The Latin alphabet was, however, inadequate to express the more complex phonological system of the dialects of Old English. New letters, such as "æ," were added to indicate a value between that of Italian e and a; digraphs, such as 'th,' had to be used for consonant sounds that were unknown in Italian. Although there was a good deal of agreement about the orthography to be applied to the Old English sound system, there are in the texts of the period considerable variations in spelling forms as between one dialect and another and also between scribes. In fact, English has had a standardized form of spelling for not much more than two hundred years, the present apparent inconsistencies in our orthography reflecting the historical development of the language.

It can be said that the next major influence on our language—that of the French dominance from the 11th century onwards—affected spelling more than pronunciation (although it added enormously to our stock of words). During this period of *Middle English* (roughly 1100–1450), English remained the language of the people, but French was used by the aristocracy as well as in administrative and legal proceedings. It was not until the end of this era that English became re-established as the language used by all sections of society. By then, various French spelling forms had been taken over, e.g. *u* was replaced by *ou* in a word like *house* because of the different value attributed to *u* in French borrowings; and the *ch* sound of a word like *chin* (originally spelt with *c*) took on the French spelling of words such as *chamber*. By the time of Chaucer, the language began to look more like modern English and would be to a large extent intelligible to the modern ear.

In the following period, *Early Modern English* (1450–1600), the pronunciation of the language became increasingly similar to that of today. A modern Londoner would have little difficulty in understanding the speech used in the plays performed at Shakespeare's *Globe*, although it would make a somewhat rustic impression on his ear. Nevertheless, he would notice that there was still considerable variation in the spelling forms used, to some extent in printed works (where the styles depended upon the conventions adopted by individual printers) but more particularly in the handwritten letters of individuals (who continued to spell largely according to their own phonetic principles and thus provided us with a good deal of information about contemporary pronunciation). It is not

until the end of the 18th century that English began to sound more completely like the language we speak today. What is more, with the appearance of the great dictionaries of that century, the orthography was standardized into a form almost identical with our present one. However, even in the last two centuries, there have been notable pronunciation changes, which demonstrate that the sound system of the language is constantly undergoing evolution. The ambiguities of spelling that reflect fourteen centuries of linguistic history remain to puzzle the native user and to frustrate the foreign learner.

## The Present Situation

With so many influences at work on the language for so long, it is hardly surprising that the pronunciation of English in Britain today presents an extremely complex picture. It is possible to discern three main causes for variation, relating to the speaker's regional origin, his place in society, and his generation.

Elements of regional differences of pronunciation are evident today, to such an extent that a Cockney and a Glaswegian may still have serious difficulties of communication in speech. Englishmen are still readily able to identify the part of the country from which a person comes simply by listening to his speech, despite the fears of those who predict that dialect forms will soon disappear completely. Indeed, these regional forms of speech are often related to gross statements of regional prejudice—the Southerner who regards the speech of the Northerner as over-blunt, and the Northerner who characterizes the speaker with a Southern accent as affected. Dialect differences of pronunciation are therefore still important both for reasons of intelligibility and also in social terms. It is worth remarking too that, of all the various accents of British English, that of the London region has developed most rapidly, the speech of the other regions remaining closer to the historical origins of the language.

But the pronunciation of English in Britain has also a more purely social significance. As has been stated, at one time the upper classes would speak French whereas the rest of the people spoke English. In more recent centuries, when English was in universal use, there emerged different types of pronunciation in any region relating to the speaker's position in society, e.g. the popular speech forms of the working man, full of the historical characteristics of the region, as opposed to the pronunciation used by the professional and upper classes, which was modified towards a general standard. It can be said that the notion of a socially prestigious standard of pronunciation arose explicitly in the 16th century, when grammarians began to recommend that the only acceptable form of pronunciation was that used in London and at the Court, i.e. the speech of educated people in the Southeast of England. Such a notion of standard pronunciation, based on social criteria, became increasingly accepted during the next three centuries, so that in the middle of the 19th century the philologist Alexander J. Ellis was able to characterize it as "received pronunciation"—a term which is used to this day (often in an abbreviated form as RP). A century ago, persons of the ruling classes would pronounce English in the same way wherever they lived in Britain. This form of pronunciation had the advantage, therefore, of being widely intelligible. Moreover, it was important for the ambitious, who might wish to move upwards in society, to



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change their pronunciation. This was the sociolinguistic climate in which Bernard Shaw wrote his *Pygmalion*, a play which had a greater social significance at the time of its first production than it can possibly have now. In the first half of this century, this standard was adopted as a model by more and more of the population, despite vigorous opposition from a number of interests, notably the Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, and his Society for Pure English, who advocated a standard based on a more Northern type. It was on the grounds of wide intelligibility that, in the 1930s, the BBC decided to adopt "received pronunciation" as the form to be used by announcers. Indeed, the British public became so accustomed to this style of speech that they were suspicious of any attempt by the BBC to introduce news readers with a regional pronunciation. Moreover, the broadcasting media exposed more and more of the population to the Southern-based standard, with the result that a greater number of people began to use it, at least in a modified form.

Within the last twenty-five years, however, a considerable change of attitude seems to have taken place. The social divisions in the country have become noticeably less rigid, and the movement between classes has become easier. In particular, the young tend to reject the former "received" pronunciation as the voice of outmoded authority, preferring new speech-styles related to their own culture, such as the popular speech of London and Liverpool, as well as non-British accents such as those of America and Australia. It is too early to say whether this reaction by the young will have lasting consequences for the line of development of the traditional standard. But it is already clear that it is no longer possible to define the standard form as simply the variety of speech used by a particular section of society, since in a diluted form its use is more widespread than was the case even fifty years ago. It is no longer thought of as the "best" pronunciation, but as one which has advantages on account of its wide intelligibility; it is for this reason that it remains the form taught to foreign learners, although it is not the simplest system for them to acquire. It continues to have as its basis the speech of the London region, but, being no longer socially determined, must rely for definition on phonetic and phonological criteria. In the remarks on the sound system given below, 20 vowels and 24 consonants are listed. In addition, certain characteristics of usage identify the accent, e.g. different vowels are used in *cat* and *calm*; the vowels of *cot* and *caught* are distinguished; the vowel of *book* is the same as that in *good* rather than that in *food*; an *r* is not pronounced in words like *farm*, despite the spelling, nor is the final *g* sounded in *sing*, etc. Other characteristics are of a more phonetic kind, i.e. are concerned with the quality of the sounds, e.g. the vowels of *day* and *go* are clearly diphthongal, though the more open onset typical of Cockney is excluded; the two *l* sounds of *little* have different qualities, the first being "clear" and the second "dark," thus excluding some Scottish accents where both are "dark" and some Irish accents where both tend to be "clear," etc.

Nevertheless, even when a theoretical basis for the standard has been decided upon, account has to be taken of changes in pronunciation, especially in respect of vowels, reflected in the speech of different generations. Thus, older speakers (and those with conservative attitudes to life) use the vowel of *saw* in words like *off*, *cloth* and *cross*, rather than that of *hot*, which is of almost universal currency amongst the younger generation. Consonantal change is typified by the treatment of words beginning with *wh-*, such as *where*, *which* as opposed to *wear*, *witch*.

The distinction between such pairs began to be lost, on a large scale, in the London region as early as the 18th century. Today, it may be regarded as an optional extra to the system (often advocated by elocutionists) but almost totally abandoned by the young. The pronunciation shown in this dictionary represents the form used by the middle generations, avoiding the archaisms of the old and the possibly ephemeral eccentricities of the young.

It will be clear from what has been said that there remains a great diversity in the pronunciation of English in

Britain, reflecting differences of region, social class, and generation. It is possible that modern facility of communication, in all its senses, is levelling out some of the extreme forms of pronunciation which even a century ago led to lack of intelligibility. But complete standardization is unlikely to be achieved. However far we proceed along the road to a standard pronunciation, there will always remain slight differences as between one individual and another, and between the various speech styles which an individual will use in different situations.

### The Sound System

The infinite number of sounds produced in speaking a language can be reduced for linguistic purposes to a finite set of distinctive terms known as *phonemes*. Thus, the meaningful oppositions illustrated by the English series *seat*, *sit*, *set*, *sat*, etc., demonstrate the operation of vowel phonemes; similarly, *pin*, *tin*, *kin*, *bin*, *fin*, etc., exemplify the distinctive use of consonant phonemes. The realization of a phoneme may differ considerably according to its situation, e.g. the /p/ of *pin* is different from the /p/ of *nip*; the sound of /l/ in *leaf* differs from that in *feel*. But these differences of phonetic quality, of which the speaker is usually unaware, do not distinguish meaning. A phoneme may therefore be regarded as the smallest linguistic unit that can bring about a change of meaning. It should be noted, however, that English tolerates a certain degree of variability in the incidence of phonemes in particular words, even within the standard pronunciation, e.g. the short or long vowel in *room*. This dictionary recommends the form that has the most extensive current usage and is most widely understood. It is not a form which is intrinsically "better" than any other nor can it be thought of as synonymous with "educated": many highly educated people speak in a way that is easily identifiable as regional, e.g. with a type of Scottish, Northern, Southwestern, or even Cockney English.

#### (a) Vowels

The standard Southern English form of pronunciation operates with 20 basic vowel phonemes:

5 long vowels: /i:/ *feed*, /u:/ *food*, /ɑ:/ *calm*, /ɔ:/ *saw*, /ɜ:/ *bird* (where : indicates length)

7 short vowels: /ɪ/ *bit*, /ɛ/ *bet*, /æ/ *bat*, /ʌ/ *bud*, /ʊ/ *hot*, /ʊ/ *foot*; and the unstressed vowel /ə/ as in the first syllable of *above*

8 diphthongs: /eɪ/ *late*, /aɪ/ *five*, /ɔɪ/ *boy*, /əʊ/ *home*, /aʊ/ *house*, /ɪə/ *dear*, /eə/ *fair*, /ʊə/ *poor*

Notes:

(i) The length of so-called long vowels and diphthongs varies considerably. Thus, the /i:/ sound of *seat* is very much shorter than those in *seed* and *sea*; the diphthong in *plate* is shorter than those in *played* or *play*. In such cases, the duration of the vowel is a prime cue in distinguishing between a pair like *seat* and *seed*—more important than the final consonants. The actual length of long vowels and diphthongs is conditioned by the type of syllable closure involved: when a "voiceless" consonant (e.g. /s/ or /t/) closes the syllable, the long vowel or diphthong is much shorter than when it is followed by "voiced" consonant (e.g. /z/ or /d/) or when it is in an open syllable (e.g. in *see*). The result is that, in fact, the shortened "long" /i:/ of *seat* may be no longer than the short /ɪ/ of *sit*.

(ii) The vowels /i:, ɪ, u:, ʊ/ are traditionally paired as long and short. However, the difference of quality between /i:/ and /ɪ/ and between /u:/ and /ʊ/ is more important than that of length. In an opposition such as *bead*—*bid*, both length and quality operate as distinctive features; but, as was noted above, *seat* and *sit* exhibit an opposition which relies entirely upon a quality difference. In this dictionary, the notations /i:/-/ɪ/ and /u:/-/ʊ/ indicate the quality distinction by means of different symbols.

(iii) /ɪ/ frequently occurs in unstressed syllables, e.g. in

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*pocket, waited, savage*, etc. However, there is a tendency for the traditional /ɪ/ to be replaced by /ə/ in many cases, e.g. in words like *hopeless, goodness, secret*, etc. This use of /ə/, characteristic of regional forms of English, is extended by some even to cases like *boxers* v. *boxes*, where a meaningful opposition is lost. In this dictionary, the use of /ɪ/ in such cases, typical of the middle generations of English speakers, is retained.

(iv) Considerable variation between the use of /ju:/ and /u:/ is found in words like *lurid, revolution, suit*, and the prefix *super-*. The /j/-less form, which is increasingly common in such cases, is the first form given in this dictionary.

(v) Similarly, it is possible to use /æ/ or /ɑ:/ in the prefix *trans-* (e.g. *translation*) or the suffix *-graph* (e.g. *telegraph*). The most common forms, shown in the dictionary, are /æ/ for the prefix and /ɑ:/ for the suffix.

(vi) The old-fashioned /ɔ:/ in words like *off, cloth, cross*, is abandoned in favour of /ɒ/.

(vii) Since the distinction between *pour* and *paw* is now rarely made, /ɔ:/ is shown in both.

(viii) The sequences /aɪ, aʊ/ as in *tyre, tower* have, for at least a century, been reduced to /aɪ/ or /a:/, so that for many speakers the opposition is lost. Since this merger is by no means completely established in the language, the full forms /aɪ, aʊ/ are retained.

(ix) Certain monosyllables, having a grammatical function, e.g. *and, was, for*, have different pronunciations according to whether or not they carry stress, e.g. stressed /ænd, wɒz, fɔ:/, unstressed /ən(d), wəz, fə/. The citation (stressed) form is given first in the dictionary, although in normal discourse the weaker form has a much higher frequency of occurrence.

### (b) Consonants

There are 24 consonant phonemes:

/p/ *pin*, /t/ *tin*, /k/ *kin*  
/b/ *bay*, /d/ *day*, /g/ *gay*  
/tʃ/ *choke*, /dʒ/ *joke*  
/m/ *some*, /n/ *sun*, /ŋ/ *sung*  
/r/ *red*, /l/ *led*  
/f/ *fine*, /v/ *vine*, /θ/ *thing*, /ð/ *this*  
/s/ *seal*, /z/ *zeal*, /ʃ/ *shoe*, /ʒ/ *measure*, /h/ *hat*  
/w/ *wet*, /j/ *yet*

Notes:

(i) Some consonant phonemes have a restricted distribution, e.g. /ŋ/ occurs only in syllable-final positions; /ʒ/ occurs typically only in medial positions. In the case of words borrowed comparatively recently from French, such as *prestige, beige, camouflage*, both /ʒ/ and /dʒ/ are possible, the more common form being given in the dictionary.

(ii) Words ending in *r*, e.g. *father, far*, have no /r/ in the pronunciation when a consonant or a pause follows. However, it is normal for a "linking" /r/ to be pronounced when a vowel follows, e.g. in *father and mother, far off*. (This usage is extended by many speakers to cases where no *r* exists in the spelling, e.g. *the idea/r/ of it*.)

(iii) Variant pronunciations occur in words like *issue*

(/sj/ or /ʃ/), *actual* (/tj/ or /tʃ/). The commonest form is given.

(iv) /l/ and /n/, in particular, are frequently sounded as syllabic, without an accompanying vowel. Such cases are shown with raised <sup>2</sup>, e.g. *mutton* /ˈmʌt<sup>2</sup>n/.

### (c) Stress

What is here referred to as "stress," for the sake of brevity, is in English a complex of several factors, including stress (i.e. intensity for the speaker and loudness for the listener), pitch, quality (some sounds being more prominent to the listener than others), and length. The effect of this combination of factors is to render a syllable more or less prominent amongst its neighbours. The situation of the stressed syllable has always been an important feature of English pronunciation both in the word and in connected speech. Indeed, there are some pairs of words that are distinguished entirely or mainly by the placing of the stress-accent, e.g. *insult* (vb.) v. *insult* (n.), *object* (vb.) v. *object* (n.). In short words, there is usually only one stress-accent, e.g. *over* and *above*. This is shown by placing ' before the stressed syllable, e.g. /'əʊvə/ and /ə'bu:v/. However, in addition to this type of primary (tonic) stress, there may occur secondary stresses, e.g. *consideration*, where the secondary stress on *-sid-* is shown by ˌ before the syllable, e.g. /kənˌsɪdə'reɪʃən/.

The stress patterns given in the dictionary will always be those of the isolate, predicative forms, although in the case of double stressed words and compounds there may be a shift of primary and secondary stressing when the word or compound is used attributively, e.g. *afternoon* (predicative) /ˌɑ:--'/; but attributive in *afternoon tea* /ˌɑ:--'/.

Finally, as was the case with vowels and, to a lesser extent, with consonants, word stress patterns are liable to change in time; e.g. *character* was once stressed on the second syllable, whereas now the first syllable carries the stress-accent. Today, some instability of stressing may be observed in certain words, e.g. *controversy* ('kɒntrəˌvɜ:sɪ, kən'trɒvɜ:sɪ). There are also stressing variants that are characteristic of regional forms of English, e.g. Scottish English *realize* with /-'/ rather than the Southern /'--'/.

As with the sounds, the most common Southern form is given.

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# The Development of English as a World Language

## The Making of English

by David Brazil

Over the last five hundred years, the English language, formerly the language of a mere five or six million people living within the confines of the British Isles, has expanded to become the everyday speech of over three hundred million. Among the results of this expansion is the present status of English as the mother tongue of most of the inhabitants of the vast ethnically diverse society of the United States of America and as the most important second language of some fifty millions in Southern Asia and in a number of new nations of Africa. The expansion has, however, for all practical purposes been a feature of the most recent of the three major phases of development into which linguistic scholarship customarily divides the recorded history of the language. Although our principal concern here is with that geographical extension that has led to the label "English" being applied to many simultaneously existing varieties round the world, we can achieve a proper perspective only if we consider briefly the historical dimension of its variation.

"New English" or "Modern English," which has been so pre-eminently an article for export, is distinguished from the earlier variety, "Middle English," and the latter in turn from the still earlier "Old English." The three periods are separated by two watersheds, one associated historically with the Norman Conquest of the English, and the other with those complex developments to which historians apply the terms Renaissance and Reformation. After the Norman Conquest and again during the Renaissance there occurred marked accelerations in the process of change that all living language is subject to. The response of the language to historical pressures resulted on each occasion in the emergence of a form significantly different from that which preceded it, so that Old English must now be learned by the native speaker of English as a foreign language, and Middle English, the language of Chaucer and Langland, is today fully intelligible only to the specialist scholar.

Old English was the language of the heathen invaders who began to appear along the Eastern coast of Britain in the third century A.D., and who, after the withdrawal of the Roman legions, settled all but the West and North, where a Celtic language continued to be used. As Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, they spoke different dialects of a common Germanic tongue, and their geographical disposition in the new land, the Jutes in the Southeast, the Saxons in Wessex, and the two major divisions of the Angles in the Midlands and the North, set up at the outset many of the regional differences that still persist in the popular speech of the British Isles.

The earliest written records date from after the Christian conversion of the English instigated by Pope Gregory in 597. By then, the warlike habits of the English had, for the most part, given way to agricultural pursuits, and one can create a pleasant, if somewhat romanticized, picture of the agrarian life from a stock of words that are often spoken of approvingly as "short," "simple," and Anglo-Saxon—e.g. *man* and *child*; *eat*, *drink*, and *sleep*; *love* and *hate*; *land*, *harvest*, and *crops*.

Old English had a facility, comparable with that of modern German, for meeting the need for new vocabulary

by compounding existing words: *daisy* is picturesquely derived from "day's eye" and *nostril* from "nose hole." But the conversion to Christianity created needs that were not supplied from indigenous resources, and the Latin of the new clerics provided the first large-scale acquisition of foreign loans we know of. Apart from words of obvious ecclesiastical significance, like *priest*, *monk*, *hymn*, *altar*, and *candle*, others like *master* and *grammar*, *plaster* and *fever*, reflect the Church's commitment to learning and medical care.

The arrival of the Vikings, who, until King Alfred's victory in 878, threatened to subjugate the newly Christianized English, resulted in further augmentation of the vocabulary. But the language they spoke, which had a strong influence upon the speech of the Danelaw, the area lying to the northeast of a line drawn from Chester to London, was closely related to English. The results of its admixture were more subtle and elusive. Pairs of words, differentiated by a single sound, like *skirt* and *shirt*, *whole* and *hale*, have survived. Instead of a technical vocabulary associated with a new field of interest or endeavour, we have Old Norse borrowings that are every bit as commonplace as native Old English words: *husband*, *ugly*, *call*, *want*, and, most surprisingly, the pronouns *they*, *them*, and *their* to go alongside Old English *he*, *him*, and *her*.

When William, Duke of Normandy, defeated the English king at Hastings in 1066, he inaugurated a period of rule by French-speaking kings and of pervasive domination by a nobility whose interests were predominantly in things French. Until King John lost the last of the major continental possessions in 1205, Norman-French was the language of the Court, of business, and of lay culture, while Latin remained the ecclesiastical language. English was virtually reduced to the role of a patois. When its use was revived in educated circles in the thirteenth century, it had undergone radical change, some of which can be directly related to the long break in the literary tradition.

The elaborate inflection system that had been a feature of Old English, manifested, for instance, in the six different forms of the noun *stan* (stone), may well have been undergoing simplification in the spoken language before the Norman Conquest. Absence of the conservative influence of the written form would undoubtedly accelerate the process: although some vestiges of inflectional endings survive until after Chaucer's time, Middle English is essentially without this refinement. Another change was largely due to the fact that the French-trained scribes, who now replaced those of the Old English tradition, introduced new orthographical conventions and in so doing were responsible for much of the inconsistency for which modern English spelling is notorious. (Cf. Professor Gimson's comments, *The Pronunciation of British English*, p. xix.) New characters—*k*, *g*, *q*, *v*, *w*, and *z*—were brought into use. The two pronunciations of Old English "c" could now be differentiated, as in the modern spelling of *king* (from *cyning*) and *choose* (from *ceosan*). But the retention of "c" in words like *cat*, and its use to represent /s/ in *nice* have left us with confusing results: *king*, *can*, *cent*, *sent*. The characteristic Old English letters *ð* and *þ* were gradually replaced by *th*, and the loss of *ȝ* resulted in the sound it represented (a sound that was itself subsequently lost) being spelt as *gh* in words like *night*, *daughter*, and *laugh*. Finally, because of the similarity of a number of characters such as *u*, *v*, *n*, *m*, and *w* in the



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Carolingian script used by the scribes, *u* was replaced by *o* in many words like *come*, *son*, and *wonder*.

But by far the most noticeable feature of English, as it came to be re-established after the period of the supremacy of French, was the very large number of French words that had been absorbed into the common stock. Many of these have been sorted by scholars into sets that correspond with activities in which the indigenous English speakers are thought to have played little active part. They include much of the modern vocabulary of government and law, of ecclesiastical and military matters, of art, learning, and medicine, and words that reflect a preoccupation with fashion, polite social life, and refined feeding habits. A measure of the degree of assimilation of the new French words is the extent to which they occurred in derivatives, taking English endings as in *gently* and *gentleness*, and forming compounds with English nouns as in *gentleman*. Generally, however, the accession of loan words was accompanied by a marked decline in the facility of the language for creating new, self-explanatory compounds, a practice that was not revived extensively until the nineteenth century, when scientific and technological advances generated new needs.

A characteristic of Middle English was its very considerable regional variation. Contemporary writers testify that the speech of one area was frequently unintelligible to inhabitants of another. Amid the dialectal confusion, it is possible to distinguish five major areas: the North extending as far as the Humber, the East and West Midlands, together extending from the Humber to the Thames, the South, and Kent. The end of the fourteenth century saw the rise of Standard English, a result largely of the commercial supremacy of the East Midlands. In particular, the growing importance of London as a political, judicial, social, and intellectual centre led to the elevation of one particular variety of the East Midland dialect, namely London English, to a position of prestige that it has enjoyed ever since. It was this dialect that would be used overwhelmingly when the invention of printing opened up unprecedented possibilities for the dissemination of the written word.

The printing press was one of the factors that, around 1500, resulted in the second great change in English. The need and the possibility of what we can properly think of as mass circulation placed a high premium on the use of the vernacular. As in other parts of Europe, the latter made incursions into territories in which Latin had formerly held sway: law, medicine, and religion in particular. And one aspect of the revival of interest in classical antiquity was the very considerable translating activity that gave Shakespeare, for instance, with his "little Latin and less Greek," access to much of the classical heritage. Engagement with Latin and Greek had effects upon English—upon both vocabulary and grammar. The effects on vocabulary were more immediately noticeable and led to a further large accession of new words, often learned and polysyllabic, which, when carried to excess, earned contemporary castigation as "ink-horn" terms. In this way, the classical experience may be said to have been a potent instrument of change. Its effect upon grammar, though less immediate, was, by contrast, conservative.

The increasing use of English in more scholarly contexts after 1500 resulted in misgivings about its ability to survive. Compared with the fixity and predictability of Ciceronian Latin—by now a well and truly "dead" language—it seemed all too subject to change. The desire to "fix" English, so that matter expressed in it would have the same chances of survival as that expressed in the ancient languages, led to attempts by grammarians to legislate for the user; the basis of their legislation was, understandably, the well-known syntax of Latin. A similar concern for durability and respectability underlay the new preoccupation with orthography. Early spelling reformers, especially printers, sought to replace the largely idiosyncratic practices that had sufficed in the pre-printing era with a common system that seemed to them to be more consistently related to the sound system. They were not helped in this enterprise—an enterprise that, incidentally,

has continued to exercise the minds of language teachers ever since—by the fact that some of the sounds were themselves currently undergoing major changes. A complex process that led to an altered distribution of all the long vowels of English, known to philologists as the Great Vowel Shift, began in the latter part of the Middle English period but was not completed until after Shakespeare's time. For his audiences *Rome* and *room*, *raisin* and *reason* had similar pronunciations.

In bringing this sketch of the development of English to the beginning of the Modern English period, we have already reached the stage where its internal history and its external history react upon each other. The astonishing—and, as some thought, excessive—openness of English to new vocabulary resulted in the adoption of words not only from every major European language, but also from the more exotic languages of remoter lands to which it was now being carried. In the following paragraphs we note something of the effect of local languages and conditions upon the speech of English-speaking settlers not only in vocabulary, but in grammar and pronunciation also. An important aspect of the more recent development of British English has been its absorption of features from the new regional varieties to which geographical dispersion gave rise. Since no account of language development, however brief, can legitimately omit reference to attitudes, we must recognize that this last tendency has by no means always been welcomed by purists. And if a desire to protect the home-grown product from the effects of outside interference is questionable, the wish to prescribe standards for the much greater number of people who speak English outside the British Isles is even more so.

In the various forms that Standard English now takes there are, in fact, only very slight differences in grammar, and the variations in pronunciation—the numerous local accents—represent no insuperable barrier to intelligibility, however forcibly they may impress themselves upon the listener. As for vocabulary, there is a central core of ordinary, most frequently used words shared by all types of the standard language; and there is also a shared lexicon of highly specialized and technical terms. Between these two lies a considerable body of moderately common words and idioms, and it is here that the major national and local distinctions are to be found: Americanisms, Australianisms, Scotticisms, and so on, all having their own peculiarities of usage.

The differences and distinctions obtaining in the use of English around the world seem hardly likely to wither away. Present conditions seem rather to indicate a gradual increase, and common sense suggests willing acceptance of them as natural and interesting aspects of the language and of the individualities of the people who use it.

## English Around the World

by A. J. Aitken, S. R. R. Allsopp, R. K. Bansal, D. Brazil, R. J. Gregg, L. W. Lanham, T. H. Long, Harold Orton, J. M. Sinclair, John Spencer, Loreto Todd, and G. A. Wilkes

## The Regional Dialects of England

The question of the existence of a standard pronunciation of English has been the occasion for controversy nowhere more than in the context of discussions of the local and social varieties of the language that coexist within England. Before World War II many believed that a standard form did exist but that it was a class dialect rather than a regional one, flourishing in the public schools, the older universities, the law courts, the higher ranks of the armed forces and the civil service, the BBC, and of course the Royal Court. Having a well-recognized sound system, it was also characterized by the use of a pleasing voice quality, a rhythmical unhurried speech tempo, and a good articulation that was not staccato or