

COLLEGE EDITION

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WEBSTER'S  
NEW WORLD  
DICTIONARY  
OF THE  
AMERICAN LANGUAGE

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## FOREWORD

As this edition of *Webster's New World Dictionary* is being prepared to go to press, the editors are systematically including in the plate proofs the death dates of recently deceased notables, new terms and senses resulting from the latest technological advancements, and such other changes and additions as last-minute developments make necessary.

This final gesture in the interest of up-to-dateness is a rather symbolic one, a logical extension of the lexicographic principles that have guided the editors in the preparation of this work. For just as historical events and scientific concepts refuse to remain fixed, unyielding entities, so too a living language will not permit itself to be immutably pinned down. The excellent dictionaries of Dr. Johnson and Nathaniel Bailey, remarkable though they were in their days, have little more pertinence for the present-day reader of the *New York Times* than the alchemical writings of Roger Bacon have for a nuclear physicist.

Not only could the earlier dictionaries have no knowledge of *dilatation*, *snorkel*, *betatron*, *cortisone*, *ACTH*, *cybernetics*, and *vibrophone*, but they would be of no help in uncovering the meanings of *extrapolate*, *parking meter*, *iron curtain*, *cold war*, *simulcast*, and *hot-foot*. Moreover, even those senses of words that have had continued currency from the time of Dr. Johnson to the present are in the earlier dictionaries defined in a language that falls strangely on 20th-century American ears.

The 100 scholars, specialists, and editorial workers who compiled this dictionary set out to create a new work that would be built in the light of contemporary linguistics, psychology, and the allied sciences. Recognizing that modern lexicography is a disciplined science, they were, nevertheless, determined to avoid the dogmatism that led Ambrose Bierce to define a *dictionary* as "a malevolent literary device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic." This dictionary was not to create the impression that it was authoritarian, laying down the law about usage; it was to play, rather, the role of a friendly guide, pointing out the safe, well-travelled roads.

*Webster's New World Dictionary* derives from the best traditions in British and American lexicography and is based especially on the broad foundations laid down for American dictionaries by Noah Webster. It is neither an abridgment nor a revision of some earlier work. It is a new dictionary in which every definition has been written afresh in the simplest language consistent with accuracy and fullness. The editors have tried to avoid wherever possible the "essence" type of definition, which merely states the class of things to which the thing being defined belongs and the differences that distinguish it from other members of this class. Instead, the reader is given the necessary additional connotative information, even if it means devoting a good deal of space to doing so (see, for example, the definitions of *Aryan*, *blood*, and *epic*).

In choosing the words to be entered and defined, the editors used as their criterion the frequency of occurrence in contemporary American usage and in readings generally required of college and university students, insofar as it could be determined. As a result, this dictionary contains over 142,000 vocabulary entries, more than any other comparable American desk dictionary. All entries are arranged in a single alphabetical list, so that there is no need to leaf through numerous supplements and prefatory lists, as well as the dictionary proper, to find entries such as *Isaiah*, *Charlemagne*, *Atlantic*, *John Bull*, *vis.*, *F.O.B.*, *O.H.G.*, *a priori*, and *coup de grâce*.

In addition to the customary literary, scientific, and technical wordstock, the *New World* contains with a fullness unknown in previous general desk dictionaries colloquialisms and slang, the informal and vulgar words that are so rich and characteristic a feature of American English. Thus, along with the well-established entries, such as *dead beat*, *double cross*, *flophouse*, *sob sister*, and *jerk*, there are included a large number of widely used terms that have been overlooked by other dictionaries, such as *fungo*, *cover girl*, *double take*, *big time*, *Hooper rating*, *hot rod*, *sixty-four dollar question*, and *whoops*. Particular care has been devoted to the phrasal units and compounds whose meaning cannot be inferred from the definitions of the individual components (for example, *act of God*, *black market*, *drive-in*, *hard up*) and to the important idiomatic phrases that are such a vital part of English (see, for example, the lists after *do*, *make*, and *run*). Many abbreviations have been entered as well as words and phrases in other languages that one is likely to encounter in an English context. While retaining all such obsolete, archaic, and Scottish and British dialectal terms and senses as appeared justified, the editors have placed special emphasis on providing full treatment of the hundreds of important new terms and new senses of older terms that have come into both scientific



## Foreword

and general use in recent years. Trade-marks which have become generic terms or have passed into wide general usage have also been entered, invariably with a careful indication of their proprietary nature.

This dictionary contains no run-on forms, that is, words entered after the definition of a related term, often syllabified and pronounced, but having no other useful purpose, except, perhaps, to increase the vocabulary count. Too often, the meaning of such a word is not self-evident. Full acquaintance with the word *career* does not in itself make possible an understanding of the very particular meaning of the derived *careerist*. Other conventional space-saving short-cuts have been sacrificed to increase usefulness to the reader. Alternative pronunciations, plurals whose spelling may present some difficulty, irregular comparatives, superlatives, principal parts of verbs, and so forth, have been entered in their full forms.

Following many of the key entries in the dictionary will be found a paragraph in smaller type in which words that are related to, or apparently synonymous with, the entry are carefully discriminated from one another as to precise meaning. Illustrative examples are supplied wherever these are helpful in showing the distinctions (see the synonymies following *happy* and *trite*).

The pronunciations here recorded are those of General American, the speech of the great majority of the inhabitants of the United States. As many variant pronunciations as space would permit have been included, but artificial, "platform" speech has been ignored. (For a more detailed discussion of pronunciation, see pp. x-xii.)

Dr. Whitehall and Dr. Umbach, who were in charge of the etymological research for this dictionary, have related the etymologies to the definitions in such a way that the "semantic flow" of the word—its evolution from earlier forms and its sense development—as well as its kinship to other words in English and related languages, is immediately made clear. The history of each word, except for certain names, obvious derivatives, and the like, has been traced back as far as present linguistic knowledge allows. For native English words Dr. Whitehall has regularly followed the thread of development back to the hypothetical base in Indo-European, the reconstructed language from which most of the languages of the Western world are believed to have descended. It is the editors' conviction that the detailed care accorded to the etymologies will have been justified if they succeed in helping students to achieve a deeper understanding of their language.

Data such as population and area figures are conservative and have been carefully checked with authoritative sources. Unofficial estimates of population figures have been avoided; only the latest official counts or estimates available were considered reliable. For values of foreign monetary units, the latest exchange figures are given, except where current fluctuation is such that these would be meaningless.

The illustrations, which were specially prepared for this dictionary by Joseph M. Guerry, were selected and designed for maximum usefulness to the reader. Tools and instruments are depicted in use, so that their function and relative size are made clear. Actual sizes of animals and plants have been given in preference to reduction ratios. Small outline maps appear throughout as an aid in locating many places of historical, literary, or current political importance. Modern typography and format have been selected to combine ease of reading with attractive appearance. For example, several different type faces have been used and the part-of-speech designations have been printed in slightly bolder type to make it easy for the reader to find what he is looking for. The design and production of this dictionary were the responsibility of Mr. Abe Lerner and Mr. Joseph Trautwein. For valuable cooperation in solving many problems of typography, thanks are due to Mr. Joseph Schwartz, of Westcott and Thomson, Inc.

One could not expect maximum efficiency from a new technological apparatus if he did not first read the operating instructions. Each user of this dictionary is, therefore, urged to read the *Guide to the Use of the Dictionary* on the following pages.

The Editors

# GUIDE TO THE USE OF THE DICTIONARY

## I. The entry words

### A. Arrangement of entries

All entries, including proper nouns, abbreviations, combining forms, and compounds of two or more words, have been entered in strict alphabetical order. All the elements in bold-face type are to be regarded as of equal value, with the following exceptions: in biographical entries, only the last, or family, name (that part preceding the comma) has been considered in alphabetization, but where there are two or more persons with the same family name, the first, or given, names have determined the order of entries.

**John of Gaunt** (gônt), Duke of Lancaster, 1340-1399; son of Edward III.

**John-son, Andrew** (jon's'n), 1808-1875; seventeenth president of the United States (1865-1869).

**Johnson, James Wel-don** (wel'd'n), 1871-1938; American writer and diplomat.

**Johnson, Samuel**, 1709-1784; English writer, critic, and lexicographer; known as *Dr. Johnson*.

**Johnson City**, a city in northeastern Tennessee: pop., 25,000.

If two or more variant spellings of a single word exist, each is entered in its proper place and the definition and variant spellings are given with the form most frequently used, the others being cross-referred to this.

**cas-si-mere** (kas'ə-mêr'), *n.* [*< Kashmir*; cf. CASHMERE (wool)], a thin, twilled woolen cloth, used for men's suits: also spelled *casimere*, *casimire*.

In some few cases, where usage is about evenly divided, full definitions are given with each form. Where the variant spellings are so nearly alike that they would normally appear in consecutive or nearly consecutive order, and where they are pronounced alike, the less frequent form or forms are entered directly after the main entry word, preceding the pronunciation.

**en-am-el-er, en-am-el-ler** (i-nam"l-êr), *n.* a person or thing that enamels.

Idiomatic phrases listed after a main entry have also been entered alphabetically within each group, all elements in bold-face type, again, being given equal weight. Such phrases have been entered wherever possible under the key word.

**few** (fū), *adj.* [ME. *fewe*, *few*; AS. *feawe*, *feawa*, *pl.*; akin to OFris. *jē*, Goth. *fewai*, *pl.*; IE. base \**pōu-*, etc., small, little, as also in L. *paucus*, little (cf. PAUCITY)], not many; of small number. *pron. & n.* not many; a small number.

**quite a few**, [Colloq.], a rather large number; a good many.

**the few**, the minority: contrasted with *the many*.

Biographical entries have been given with the most familiar form of the person's name, fuller forms, pseudonyms, maiden names, etc. being identified in parentheses following the pronunciation.

**Henry, O.**, (pseudonym of *William Sydney Porter*), 1862-1910; American short-story writer.

**Dick-ens, Charles** (dik'n'z, dik'in'z), (pseudonym *Boz*), 1812-1870; English novelist.

Prefixes and initial combining forms are indicated by a hyphen following the entry form.

**in-tra-** (in'trə), [L. *< intra*, within, inside *< \*intera*; akin to *interior*, *inter*], a combining form meaning *within*, *inside of*, as in *intramural*, *intravenous*.

Suffixes and terminal combining forms are indicated by a hyphen preceding the entry form.

**-ice** (is), [ME. *-ice*, *-ise*, *-is*; OFr. *-ice*; L. *-itius*, masc., *-itia*, fem., *-itium*, neut.], a suffix meaning *the condition*, *state*, or *quality of*, as in *justice*, *malice*.

Such affixes and combining forms have been pronounced only where it is feasible to pronounce the element in isolation.

### B. Syllabification

The syllabifications used in this dictionary, indicated by centered dots in the entry words, are those adopted by printers in the 18th century and in general use since then to indicate the points at which words may conveniently be divided at the end of a written or printed line.

**ox-i-diz-a-ble** (ok'sə-diz'ə-b'l), *adj.* that can be oxidized.

In adopting this traditional syllabification, the editors are fully aware of its inconsistencies, of its total failure to conform to any scientific principles. They are also aware that to upset the system by adopting one based on the etymological or descriptive, formative elements in words would be to instigate a major revolution in printing practice. (See p. xx, par. 2.4.)

### C. Derived forms

Every word entered in this dictionary has been fully defined. Nothing has been left to supposition or guesswork. Wherever a common derived form, such as an adverb from an adjective or a noun from a verb, shows the slightest deviation in spelling or pronunciation or offers the slightest doubt as to meaning, such a form generally has been entered, pronounced, and defined.

It is possible in English to form an almost infinite number of derived forms simply by adding certain prefixes or suffixes to the base word. In very many such cases it is possible to understand immediately the meanings of such derived words, if the meanings of the base word and of the affixes (the most common of which have been entered in this dictionary) are understood. For example, if the suffix *-able* is clearly understood to mean "that can be —ed" or "capable of being —ed," the meanings of such derived forms as *contradictable*, *recallable*, and *moldable* are immediately apparent. An analogous situation exists for words compounded with *-er*, *-less*, *-like*, *-ly*, *-ness*, etc. Space for less easily understood forms is therefore conserved by omitting many such words.

For some of the more common prefixes, such as *re-* and *non-*, sample lists of words compounded with such forms have been entered under the proper prefix or suffix merely to indicate the frequency with which such words occur in usage.

For adjectives ending in *-ic* having alternative forms in *-ical*, the derived adverbs (ending in *-ically*) have generally not been entered where such forms mean only "in (the specified) manner." Where the alternative form in *-ical* does not exist, the derived adverb has been entered.

The names of many sciences or studies ending in *-logy* (as, *psychology*, *histology*) form nouns of agent by replacing the *-y* with *-ist* (as, *psychologist*, *histologist*). In such cases, the derived form is not always entered but can easily be inferred.

### D. Foreign terms

Words and phrases borrowed from other languages and not regarded as completely naturalized English terms are indicated by a double dagger (‡) preceding the entry word. The language from which such a word is borrowed is indicated in its etymology and the foreign pronunciation is given first.

**†moi-ré** (mwā'rā'; Eng. mwā-rā', mō'rā'), *adj.* [Fr., pp. of *moirer*, to water *< moire*; see *MOIRE*], having a

# Guide to the Dictionary

## II. Pronunciation

### A. General introduction and key

With pronunciation, as with all other aspects of lexicography, it cannot be repeated too often that dictionaries are not the lawmakers—they are merely the law-recorders. A pronunciation is not "correct," or standard, because it is given in a dictionary; rather, it should be found in a dictionary because good usage has already made it standard. There is no single hypothetically "correct" standard for all speakers of American English (in the sense that Received Standard is the guide for British English), since the usage of the cultivated speakers in any region or locality constitutes a standard for that area. Hence, since the scope of a desk dictionary prohibits the inclusion of every possible acceptable variant, the editors of such a dictionary are justified in recording those pronunciations used by the greatest numbers of cultivated speakers. Thus, the pronunciations given in this dictionary are those observed among literate speakers of the Central variety of General American English (see p. xvii, par. 1.15). These are symbolized, however, in as broad a manner as is consistent with accuracy, so that speakers of other varieties of American English can readily read their own pronunciations into the symbols used here. In addition, the principal differentiating features of the language as spoken in the East and South are given in variant pronunciations, where these also occur as occasional forms in General American. Thus (häf) as well as (haf), (glö'ri) as well as (glör'i), and (tün) as well as (toon) are entered. As a result, the reader can be assured that although no single standard exists for the whole nation, the kind of pronunciation here indicated is acceptable anywhere in the United States.

One of the prime frustrations besetting the editors of a dictionary is the necessity for recording in isolation pronunciations that almost invariably occur in context. Thus, the word *and*, regarded as a unique phenomenon existing independently of the phrases and clauses of which it is always an element, could simply be recorded as (and). In actual practice such a pronunciation occurs only when the particle is deliberately emphasized in speaking (as, "The boys *and* the girls are invited."). In all other instances, the loss of stress results in a neutralization of the vowel to (ə) or even in a total loss of vowel to the following consonant, which becomes syllabic (see Key to Pronunciation, p. xi), and in extreme cases to an additional loss of the final *d*. Hence *ham* and *eggs* becomes (ham' and eggz'), or (ham' 'nd eggz') or even (ham' 'n eggz'). In addition to causing phonemic change, loss, and gain, the context in which a word is used often serves to alter its stress pattern. In this way *semifinal* (sem'i-fi'n'l) often becomes (sem'i-fi'n'l round'). Wherever practicable, such contextual variants have been indicated in one way or another. The general principle of the editors has been to record the speech of the unstudied, informal conversation of cultivated speakers. Such words as hardly ever occur in normal conversation necessarily have no colloquial pronunciation except where analogy would inevitably lead to one.

### Key to Pronunciation

An abbreviated form of this key appears at the bottom of every alternate page of the vocabulary.

Symbol	Key Words	IPA
a	fat, lap	[æ]
ā	ape, date	[e]
â	bare, care	[e → ε → æ]
ä	car, father	[a → a]
e	ten, let	[ε]
ē	even, meet	[i]
ê	here, dear	[i → i]
ēr	over, under	[or or ər]
i	is, hit	[i]
ī	bite, mile	[ai]
o	lot, top	[a]
ō	go, tone	[o]
ô	horn, fork	[o → ɒ]
ōō	tool, troop	[u]
oo	book, moor	[u]
oi	oil, boy	[oi]
ou	out, doubt	[au]
u	up, cut	[ʌ]
ū	use, cute	[ju → ru]
ūr	fur, turn	[ər or ɜr]
ə	a in ago e in agent i in sanity o in comply u in focus	[ə]

b	bed, dub	[b]
d	did, had	[d]
f	fall, off	[f]
g	get, dog	[g]
h	he, ahead	[h]
j	joy, jump	[dʒ]
k	kill, bake	[k]
l	let, ball	[l]
m	met, trim	[m]
n	not, ton	[n]
p	put, tap	[p]
r	red, dear	[r]
s	sell, pass	[s]
t	top, hat	[t]
v	vat, have	[v]
w	will, always	[w]
y	yet, yard	[j]
z	zebra, haze	[z]
ch	chin, arch	[tʃ]
ŋ	ring, drink	[ŋ]
sh	she, dash	[ʃ]
th	thin, truth	[θ]
th	then, father	[ð]
zh	azure, leisure	[ʒ]

[see explanatory note on p. xi]

### Foreign Sounds (see explanatory notes on p. xi)

ā	Fr. <i>bal</i>	[a]
ä	Fr. <i>cœur</i>	[œ]
ö	Fr. <i>feu</i>	[ø]
ô	Fr. <i>coq</i>	[ō → a → ɔ]
ü	Fr. <i>duc</i>	[y]
ñ	[see explanatory note on p. xi]	
ñ	G. <i>ich</i>	[ç]
kh	G. <i>doch</i>	[x]

This simplified Key to Pronunciation was evolved on the assumption that the reader is already familiar with the qualities of almost all the symbols as they occur in the key words. A few explanatory notes on the more complex of these symbols follow to give the fullest understanding of the pronunciations recorded. It should be recognized that certain concessions have of necessity been made to practicality and convenience; notably, a few symbols are deliberately intended to cover a relatively narrow range of vowel sounds to allow for regional and individual differences, and several symbols duplicate in essence others to allow a minimum distortion of the orthography in respelling.

- ä This symbol represents essentially the low back vowel of *far* (IPA [ɑ]) but may also represent the low central vowel occasionally heard in New England for *bath* (IPA [a]).
- â This symbol is used, always followed, and hence colored, by *r*, to represent the range of sounds (ā, e, a) heard variously in such words as *care* and *prayer*.
- ê Like (â), this symbol followed, and hence colored, by *r*, represents a range of sounds (i through ē) heard variously in such words as *here* and *dear*.
- i This symbol, representing essentially the vowel in *hit*, has also been used to indicate the neutralization of vowel in the unstressed syllables of such words as *garbage* (gär'bij), *goodness* (good'nis), and *preface* (pref'is). In some persons' pronunciation of such words, total neutralization is heard; hence, (gär'baj) (good'nəs), and (pref'əs) can be assumed as possible variants.
- o This symbol represents sounds that are essentially identical with those of (ä), but has been used where the original spelling has an o to avoid, as was mentioned above, too great distortion of the orthography.
- ô This symbol, representing essentially the vowel in *fork* (IPA [ɔ]), has also been used to represent the sound midway between (ä) and (ô) heard in an Eastern variant of *job* (IPA [ɒ]).
- ə This symbol, called the schwa, is borrowed from the International Phonetic Alphabet, and has been used to represent the reduced, weakened, and dulled vowel of neutral coloration heard in the unstressed syllables of *ago*, *agent*, *sanity*, *comply*, and *focus*. Although it must be recognized that the degree and quality of the dulling of such vowels will vary from word to word and from speaker to speaker, it must also be remembered that in



modern conversational English, *all* totally unstressed vowels are neutralized either to (ə) or to (i).

**ür and ěr** These two symbols represent respectively the stressed and unstressed r-colored vowels heard successively in the two syllables of *murder* (mür'děr) and indicated by IPA [ɜr or ɜ] and [ər or ər]. Where these symbols are given, Southern and Eastern speakers will, as a matter of course, pronounce them without the r-coloration, that is, by "dropping their r's," as represented by IPA [ɜ] and the schwa [ə].

**ŋ** This symbol, also borrowed from the International Phonetic Alphabet, represents the back-tongue nasal sound indicated in spelling by the -ng of *sing* and occurring also for n before the back consonants k and g, as in *drink* (drɪŋk) and *finger* (fɪŋ'gěr).

The apostrophe occurring before an l, m, or n indicates that this consonant has become a sonant, or syllabic consonant; that is, it has formed a syllable with no appreciable vowel sound, as in *apple* (ap'pl) or *season* (sě'zŋn). In some persons' speech such syllabic consonants are often replaced with syllables containing neutralized vowels, as (sě'zŋn); such variants, though not entered here, can, of course, be inferred.

The apostrophe has also been used after final l and r, in certain French words, to indicate that they are voiceless after an unvoiced consonant, as in *par exemple* (pär'eg'zän'pl'), *lettre* (let'r'). In such cases the final l and r often tend to be lost entirely in French speech.

In some Russian words where certain consonants are followed by the "soft sign" in the Cyrillic spelling, this has been indicated by (y'). The sound can be approximated by pronouncing an unvoiced (y) directly after the consonant involved.

## B. Foreign sounds

Although virtually no two sounds of different languages can be scientifically regarded as precisely identical, sufficient similarity exists, for all practical purposes, to permit the use of most of the preceding symbols in the recording of foreign pronunciation. The six additional symbols that follow fill adequately the gaps in the main phonetic key. Several of these symbols are, again, intended to convey varying sounds in differing languages, where the similarities are sufficient to permit the use of a single symbol.

**ä** This symbol, representing the *a* in French *bal* (bäl), can perhaps best be described as intermediate between (a) and (ä), corresponding closely to IPA [a].

**ě** This symbol represents the sound of *eu* in French *leur* (lěr) and can be approximated by rounding the lips for (ě) and trying to pronounce (e).

**ö** This symbol represents the sound of *eu* in French *feu* (fö) or *ö* (oe) in German *Goethe* (gö'tě) and can be approximated by rounding the lips for (ö) and trying to pronounce (ä).

**ô** This symbol represents a range of sounds varying from (ô) to (ö) and heard with such varying quality in French *coq* (kôk), German *doch* (dôkh), Russian *gospodin* (gôs pö-děn'), Italian *poco* (pö'kô), etc.

**ü** This symbol represents the sound of *ü* in French *duc* (dük) and German *grün* (grün) and can be approximated by rounding the lips for (ö) and trying to pronounce (ě).

**kh** This symbol represents the unvoiced velar or uvular fricative, as in German *doch* (dôkh) or Scottish *loch* (lokh) and can be approximated by arranging the speech organs as for (k) but allowing the breath to escape in a continuous stream, as in pronouncing (h).

**H** This symbol represents a sound similar to the preceding but formed forward in the mouth, as in German *ich* (ih), and frequently misheard by English speakers as (sh).

**n** This symbol indicates that the vowel sound immediately preceding it is nasalized; that is, the nasal passage is left open so that the breath passes through both the mouth and the nose in voicing the vowel [examples: Fr. *mon* (môn), *en passant* (än' pá'sän').]

## C. Stress

A primary, or strong, stress is indicated by a heavy stroke (ˑ) immediately following the syllable so stressed. A secondary, or weak, stress is indicated by a lighter stroke (˘) following the syllable so stressed.

**qual-i-ta-tive** (kwäl'ə-tä'tiv), *adj.* [L. *qualitativus*], having to do with quality or qualities: distinguished from *quantitative*.

In addition to such accents, some syllables in English receive what may be termed reduced secondary stresses. Such stresses are not indicated but may be inferred where an apparently unstressed syllable retains an unneutralized vowel.

Words of one syllable are regarded, in isolation, as receiving a primary stress, although this is not indicated. In contextual usage such words often receive a secondary stress or no stress at all.

Words of two or more syllables may be characterized by rising stress (i.e., by secondary stress on an early syllable and primary stress on a later one); by falling stress (i.e., by the reverse of this situation); or by level stress (i.e., by primary stress on two syllables). Where such words are characterized by all three of these patterns, space has often been conserved by indicating only the level stress.

## D. Variants

Where two or more pronunciations for a single word are given, the order in which they are entered does not necessarily mean that one is preferred to, or "better" than, the others. In most cases the order indicates that, in the opinion of the editors, the form given first is the most frequent in general use. Where usage is about evenly divided, since one form must be given first, the editors' preference generally prevails. Unless a variant is qualified, however, as by "now rarely" or "less commonly," it is understood that all pronunciations here entered represent standard uses.

In order to save space, where variants exist for two or more syllables of a word, a telescoped system has been used whereby two or more forms indicate four or more variants. Thus, for example, where *nucleolate* has (nöö-kle'ə-lit, nü-kle'ə-lät'), by substituting the variant syllables the following pronunciations may also be inferred: (. . . nü-kle'ə-lät', nü-kle'ə-lit).

Where specific parts of speech have variant pronunciations, these are indicated by italicized notes in the pronunciation proper.

**re-tic-u-late** (ri-tik'yoo-lit; also, and for *v.* always, ri-tik'yoo-lät'), *adj.* [L. *reticulatus* < *reticulum*; see RETICULE], like a net or network; netlike; specifically, in *botany*, having the veins arranged like the threads of a net: said of leaves. *v.t.* [RETICULATED (-id), RETICU-

In some few instances, where the entry was relatively short and it was felt that the pronunciation would not be overlooked, it was entered directly with the part of speech to which it had reference.

Every word used in this dictionary is pronounced in its main entry. Where it occurs in a phrase, the pronunciation is not repeated, unless it was felt that its contextual use created sufficient differences to warrant recording. Where the same family name exists for two or more biographical entries, the pronunciation and syllabification are given only with the first entry.

**Math-er, Cot-ton** (kot'n math'ěr), 1663-1728; American clergyman and writer.

**Mather, In-crease** (in'krěs), 1639-1723; father of Cotton; American clergyman and writer.

Complete pronunciations are given throughout for every main entry. Where truncated forms are given with irregular inflections, it is understood that the part of the form not pronounced is identical in quality and stress with the similar part of the main entry.

**fish-y** (fish'i), *adj.* [FISHIER (-i-ěr), FISHIEST (-i-ist)], 1. of or full of fish. 2. like a fish in odor, taste, etc.

Words borrowed from foreign languages but completely naturalized in English use are given Anglicized pronunciation. Where the foreign pronunciation is also still heard, it has been given in second place, properly labeled.

**hors d'oeu-vre** (ôr'düvr', ôr'duv'; Fr. ôr'dö'vr'), [pl. HORS D'OEUVRES (-dürvz', -duvz'; Fr. -dö'vr')], [Fr.,

The designation *sp. pronun.* (*spelling pronunciation*) indicates that the variant so labeled has resulted from an attempt to conform with the spelling, which may not be properly phonetic, and in this way deviates from the historical or established pronunciation (cf. *hist.*).

For words beginning with the combination *wh-*, where the pronunciation (hw) has been given, as in *why* (hwī), *while* (hwil), and *while* (hwit), alternative, unspirated pronunciations are heard today with increasing fre-



# Guide to the Dictionary

quency, as (wī), (wīl), and (wīt). Such variants have not been given with each word, but on those pages of the vocabulary containing words beginning with *wh-*, a note has been added to the bottom of the page indicating their occurrence. Compounds derived from such words and found elsewhere in the vocabulary should also be understood to have such variants.

## III. Inflected forms

Inflected forms regarded as irregular or offering difficulty in spelling or pronunciation are entered in brackets immediately following the part-of-speech labels.

**en·ti·ty** (en'tā-tī), *n.* [*pl.* ENTITIES (-tiz)], [Fr. *entité*; ML. *entitas* < L. *ens, entis*, ppr. of *esse*, to be], 1. being; ex-

Where variant inflected forms exist, all such forms are entered. If the inflected form is so altered in spelling (as by internal inflection) that it would appear at some distance from the main form in the alphabetized list, it is entered additionally in its proper place in the vocabulary.

**rode** (rōd), past tense and archaic past participle of *ride*.

Forms regarded as regular inflections, and hence not normally entered, include:

- Plurals formed by adding -s to the singular (or -es after *s, x, z, ch*, and *sh*), as *ships, brushes*.
- Present tenses formed by adding -s to the verb (or -es after *s, x, z, ch*, and *sh*), as *sorts, marches*.
- Past tenses and participles formed by simply adding -ed to the verb with no other change in the verb form, as *sorted, marched*.
- Present participles formed by simply adding -ing to the verb with no other change in the verb form, as *sorting, marching*.
- Comparatives and superlatives formed by simply adding -er and -est to the adjective or adverb with no other change in the positive form, as *taller, tallest*.

Where two inflected forms are given for a verb, the first is the form for the past tense and the past participle, and the second is the form for the present participle.

**make** (māk), *v.t.* [MADE (mād), MAKING], [ME. *maken*; AS. *macian*; akin to G. *machen*; IE. base \**maǵ-*, to

Where three forms are given, separated from one another by commas, the first represents the past tense, the second the past participle, and the third the present participle.

**blow** (blō), *v.i.* [BLEW (blōw), BLOWN (blōn), BLOWING], [ME. *blowen*; AS. *blowan*; akin to G. *blāhen*; IE. base

Where there are alternative, obsolete, or archaic forms, these are given and properly indicated.

**ride** (rīd), *v.i.* [RODE (rōd), or archaic RID (rīd), RIDDEN (rīd'ən) or archaic RID or RODE, RIDING], [ME. *riden*; AS. *ridan*; akin to G. *reiten*; IE. base \**reidh-*, to go,

In the interest of conserving space, where an irregularly inflected verb is simply compounded from another verb with the addition of a prefix, the inflected forms are not always repeated with the derived word, particularly if the base verb is used in the definition.

## IV. Etymology

Etymology has deliberately been made one of the strong features of this dictionary. During the years of preparation, the etymologies of all the entries were re-studied in light of recent publication, early dated quotations, and the chief new etymological dictionaries. The results of this survey, often original in character, are here presented with a fullness altogether unparalleled in any previous American dictionary. A striking innovation is the exhaustive treatment accorded to words of native origin, hitherto comparatively neglected in most English dictionaries. While it is undoubtedly easier to etymologize words borrowed into English from the Classical languages, the native word-stock deserves the attention accorded it here on the grounds that it comprises much of the everyday vocabulary of the English language. On semantic grounds alone, it is probably more important that the reader should understand the ultimate origins of such words as *arm* (of the body), *left* (hand, etc.), and *hen* than that he should recognize the constituents which make up such borrowed words as *attention* and *adventure*. The careful attention given the native vocabulary is paralleled in the painstaking care given to borrowings from Norse and Low German sources.

Wherever the semantic history of the entries can be illuminated by the procedure, etymologies are carried

back to the Indo-European base and correlated through this with other words, both native and of Classical or Romance origin, which are also ultimately derived from it. A typical example of this treatment is that of *light*:

**light** (lit), *n.* [ME. *liht*; AS. *leoht*; akin to G. *licht*; IE. base \**leug-*, to shine, bright, seen also in L. *lucere*, to shine, *lux, lumen*, light (cf. LUCID, LUMINOUS), *luna*, moon (cf. LUNAR), etc.], 1. a) that which makes it

The first section of this etymology provides typical Middle English and Anglo-Saxon forms representing the history of the word *within* English itself. Next comes a cognate form from another Germanic language (in this case, German) introduced by the words *akin to*. The final section of the etymology gives the reconstructed Indo-European base (its hypothetical character is indicated by \*), its generalized meaning or meanings, a selected group of Latin words also derived from this base, and cross references to borrowings or derivatives of these found in English. The intention behind this elaborate apparatus is not to present a mere list of historically related forms; it is to elucidate the semantic background of the entry, link it with other words of similar descent and meaning, and prepare the way for the more recent semantic history of the entry represented in the definitions. In short, the editors have thought of the etymologies as a vital part of definition and as a guide to the correct focusing of the definitions proper. Particularly in the longer and more complex words, they have aimed at an organization which flows smoothly from the etymology to the last sense recorded.

Because of the ample space devoted to etymology, the reader will not need to master a long list of abbreviations. He need merely understand the abbreviations for the various languages (see the list of abbreviations, p. xxxv) and remember that the symbol < means "derived from," that \* indicates a hypothetical, reconstructed base, that "prob." indicates strong scholarly opinion or editorial conviction in favor of what follows, and that "?" indicates uncertainty or unverifiable hypothesis. Where two hypotheses regarding the origins of a word are in conflict, both are usually briefly mentioned. Where the ultimate etymology is uncertain, the most promising direction of approach is given.

For words compounded in Modern English from a base word and an affix or affixes, the etymology contains only these elements. Detailed etymologies can be found with the main entries for such bases and affixes.

**fix-a-tive** (fik'sə-tiv), *adj.* [*fix* + *-ative*], that can or tends to make permanent, prevent fading, etc. *n.* a sub-

Where the definition makes the compounding elements of such a word perfectly obvious, no etymology is required.

## V. The definitions

### A. Arrangement and styling of senses

Semantic order from the etymology through the most recent sense of a word has been the guiding principle determining the order of senses within any given entry (cf. **common**). In this way, it has been possible to give a logical, progressive flow that permits the reader to see quickly and clearly the development of a word and the relationship of its senses to one another. In longer entries, where the treatment would not seriously disturb the semantic flow, technical senses have been entered, with suitable field labels properly alphabetized, at the end of the entry, to facilitate their being found quickly. For the same reason, archaic, obsolete, colloquial, slang, and dialectal senses are entered just before the technical senses, unless they are firmly anchored on one of the general meanings.

**foul** (foul), *adj.* [ME.; AS. *ful*; akin to G. *faul*, rotten, putrid, lazy; IE. base \**pā-*, \**pu-*, etc., to stink (? < exclamation of disgust), seen also in *pus, putrid*], 1. so offensive to the senses as to cause disgust; stinking; loathsome: as, a *foul* odor. 2. extremely dirty; dis-

treacherous; dishonest. 11. [Archaic], ugly. 12. [Colloq.], unpleasant, disagreeable, etc. 13. in *baseball*, relating to or having to do with foul balls or foul lines. 14. in *printing*, full of errors or changes: as, *foul* copy. *n.* anything foul; specifically, a) a collision

Obsolete senses that bridge the gap between the etymology and the definitions proper often occur first. Such senses are generally preceded by "originally" or "formerly" rather than by a formal usage label.

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Where a primary sense of a word can easily be subdivided into several closely related meanings, this has been done; such meanings are indicated by italicized letters after the pertinent numbered sense.

**ell** (el), *n.* 1. the letter L. 2. something shaped like an L; specifically, *a*) an extension or wing at right angles to the main structure. *b*) an L-shaped joint of piping or tubing.

Where a basic word has very many senses that can conveniently be arranged under a few major headings, such a division has been made (cf. **hand**, **go**). The sections, indicated by Roman numerals, are then further subdivided into numbered (and, where necessary, lettered) senses (cf. **go**).

Synonyms, in addition to being entered separately in discriminative synonymies (see p. xiv), are also incorporated in the definition treatment at those points where their relevance is most easily apparent. Antonyms are frequently indicated following definitions by *opposed to*... or *distinguished from*...

**grand opera**, opera, generally on a serious theme, in which the whole text is set to music: distinguished from *operetta*, *comic opera*.

If a word is capitalized in all its meanings, the entry word itself is printed with a capital letter.

**Eur-a-sian** (yoo-rā'zhən, yoo-rā'shən), *adj.* 1. of Eurasia. 2. of mixed European and Asiatic descent. *n.* 1. a person of mixed European and Asiatic descent. 2. a member of a people of both Europe and Asia.

If it is capitalized in most of its meanings, a lower-case letter in brackets occurs immediately after the numeral or part of speech of any sense not capitalized.

**Her-cu-les** (hūr'kyoo-lēz'), *n.* [L.; Gr. *Hēraklēēs* < *Hēra*, Hera + *kleos*, glory], 1. in Greek & Roman mythology, the son of Zeus and Alcmene, renowned for feats of strength, particularly the twelve labors imposed on him by Hera. 2. [h-], any very large, strong man. 3. a northern constellation: see **constellation**, chart.

Where it is capitalized in only one or two of the senses, the word is entered with a lower-case letter, and a capital letter in brackets occurs after the numeral or part of speech of each pertinent sense. In some instances these designations are qualified by the self-explanatory "often," "sometimes," or "usually."

**or-i-en-tal** (ōr'i-en't'l, ō'ri-en't'l), *adj.* [ME. *orientale*], 1. eastern. 2. [O-], of the Orient, its people, or their culture; Eastern. *n.* [usually O-], a native of the Orient or a member of a people native to that region. Opposed to *occidental*, *Occidental*. Abbreviated **Or**.

The designation *pl.* (or *often pl.*, *usually pl.*, etc.) before a definition means that the definition applies to the plural form of the entry word.

**gill** (gil), *n.* [ME. *gile*, *gille*; prob. < Anglo-N.; cf. ON. *gjölnar*, jaws, gills, older Dan. (*fiske*) *gæln*, Sw. *gål*; IE. base \**ghelunā*-, jaw, seen also in Gr. *chelynē*, lip, jaw], 1. the organ for breathing of most animals that live in water, as fish, lobsters, etc. 2. *often pl. a*) a red flap of flesh hanging below the beak of a fowl; wattle. *b*) the flesh under and about the chin and lower jaw of a person. 3. *pl.* the thin, leaflike, radiating plates on the undersurface of a mushroom.

The designation *used in pl.* (or *often in pl.*, *usually in pl.*, etc.) means that although the definition applies to the given singular form of the entry word, the word is used (or often used, usually used, etc.) in the plural.

**hand-cuff** (hand'kuī'), *n.* *usually in pl.* either of a pair of connected rings that can be locked about the wrists of a prisoner to keep him from using his hands, or to fasten him to a policeman.

The designations *sing.*, *in sing.*, etc. are similarly used. A colon after a definition generally means that the material that follows is not part of the definition proper but is additional information enlarging upon the factual content, examining the connotations, or indicating the usage of the term in the preceding sense.

**fig-ur-a-tive** (fig'yoor-ə-tiv), *adj.* [LL. *figurativus* < L.

another that may be thought of as analogous with it; metaphorical: to call a fierce fighting man a tiger is a figurative use of tiger: abbreviated **fig.** 4. containing or using figures of speech.

If instead of a colon there is a period followed by a capitalized word, the additional information applies to all the preceding senses (in that part of speech).

**hy-dro-** (hi'drō, hi'drə), [< Gr. *hydōr*, water], a combining form meaning: 1. water, as in *hydraulic*, *hydrometer*. 2. in chemistry, the presence of hydrogen, as in *hydrocyanic*. Also, before a vowel, **hydr-**.

Examples of the use of a term or sense have been liberally supplied, also set off from the definition proper by a colon and preceded, generally, by the word *as*.

**gar-nish** (gār'nish), *v.t.* [ME. *garnischen* < base of OFr. *garnir*, *guarnir*, *warnir*, to protect; prob. < MHG. *warnen*, to equip oneself, prepare, protect], 1. to decorate; adorn; embellish; trim. 2. to decorate (food) with something that adds color or flavor: *as*, a steak is often garnished with parsley. 3. in *law*, to bring

The part-of-speech labels are entered in bold-face italics after the pronunciation, if any. All the senses following such a label (until the next part of speech or the end of the entry) are for that part of speech. In some instances where it was feasible to combine several parts of speech (e.g., *n.* & *adj.* or *v.t.* & *v.i.*), this was done, so that the senses that follow apply to each part of speech.

**Erse** (ürs), *adj.* & *n.* [Scot. var. of *Irish*], 1. formerly, Scottish Gaelic. 2. in *linguistics*, Irish Gaelic.

In definitions of transitive verbs the specific or generalized objects of the verb, where given, are enclosed in parentheses since such objects are not strictly part of the definition.

**ex-hale** (eks-hāl', ig-zāl'), *v.i.* [EXHALED (-hāld', -zāld'), EXHALING], [Fr. *exhaler*; L. *exhalare*; *ex-*, out + *halare*, to breathe], 1. to breathe forth air; expire. 2. to be given off or rise into the air as vapor; evaporate. *v.t.* 1. to breathe forth (*air* or *smoke*). 2. to give off (*vapor*, *fumes*, etc.).

Where certain verbs are, in usage, invariably or usually followed by a specific preposition or prepositions, this has been indicated in either of the following two ways: the preposition has been worked into the definition, italicized and enclosed in parentheses, or a note has been added after the definition indicating that the preposition is so used.

**earth** (ürth), *n.* [ME. *erthe*; AS. *eorthe*; akin to G. *erde*; IE. base \**er-t*-, as also in Mlr. *ert*, ground], 1. the

etc. *v.t.* 1. to embed in or cover (*up*) with soil for protection, as seeds, plants, or roots. 2. to chafe (an

**gloat** (glōt), *v.i.* [prob. via dial. < AS. \**gloetan* or cognate ON. *glotta*, to grin scornfully; akin to G. *glozen*, Eng. dial. *glout*, to stare; IE. base \**ghlud-* < \**ghel-*, etc., to shine, as in *glass*, *glow*], to gaze or meditate with malicious pleasure, exultation, or avarice (*often with over*).

In general the aim of the editors has been, wherever possible, to define in such terms that the definition could conceivably replace in context the word being defined.

It is theoretically possible to use almost any word as whatever part of speech is required, although most such uses would be only for the nonce. Thus any transitive verb can be used absolutely as an intransitive verb, with the object understood (e.g., he *defined* the word; you must *define* carefully). Such absolute uses are entered only when they are relatively common. In the same way nouns used as adjectives (e.g., a *cloth* cover; a *family* affair) are indicated only for the most frequent uses.

## B. Usage labels

There is no universally accepted system of labeling the various levels of usage in English. It is generally understood that usage varies according to locality, degree of urbanization, level of education, occupation, etc., but any attempt to assign a specific label to every



sense of every term entered would be highly complicated by the overlapping of categories and by the fact that most of the basic vocabulary of the language (as *run, house, man, pretty*) occurs at all levels of usage.

The best current practice recognizes that usage labels must be descriptive rather than authoritarian or condemnatory. In this light, the following labels could adequately describe the three basic levels: *formal* (for technical, scientific, and academic writing and for certain restricted types of platform address), *informal* (for the usual writing and speaking of most educated people, as most novels and plays, newspaper and magazine articles, and ordinary conversation), and *vulgate* (for slang and certain restricted shoptalk). It cannot be repeated too often, however, that such classification has no direct connection with *good* (or *standard*) usage and *bad* (or *substandard*) usage. What is good usage in a literary essay may not be the best usage in ordering groceries; what is good usage in a letter to a friend may not be the best usage in a scientific dissertation. Some slang often falls properly into *informal usage*, and some magazine articles often lean heavily upon *formal usage*.

After much deliberation, the editors of this dictionary decided that the familiarity of the more conventional usage designations makes their use advisable if the meaning of these labels is clearly understood in advance. The labels, and what they are intended to indicate, are given below. If the label, which is placed in brackets (and often abbreviated), occurs directly after a part-of-speech label, it applies to all the senses of that part of speech; if it occurs after a numeral, it applies only to the sense so numbered.

**Colloquial:** The term or sense is generally characteristic of conversation and informal writing. It is not to be regarded as substandard or illiterate.

**Slang:** The term or sense is not generally regarded as standard usage but is used, even by the best speakers, in occasional, highly informal contexts. Slang terms are generally short-lived but may survive and become part of the colloquial or informal vocabulary.

**Obsolete:** The term or sense is no longer used but occurs in earlier writings.

**Archaic:** The term or sense is rarely used today except in certain restricted contexts, as in church ritual, but occurs in earlier writings.

**Poetic:** The term or sense is used only in poetry or, occasionally, in prose where a poetic quality is desired.

**Dialect:** The term or sense is used regularly only in certain geographical areas.

**British:** The term or sense is characteristic of British, rather than American, English. When preceded by

*especially*, it indicates an additional, though less frequent, American usage. Since this dictionary was prepared from the American point of view, terms and senses originating in or restricted to the United States are not so indicated. *British dialect* indicates that the term or sense is used regularly only in certain geographical areas of Great Britain, usually in northern England.

In addition to the above usage labels, supplementary information is often given after the definition, indicating whether the term or sense is generally regarded as obscene, vulgar, profane, or derogatory, used with ironic, familiar, or hyperbolic connotations, etc.

## VI. The Synonymies

Synonyms are words that have nearly identical or closely related meanings in one or more of their senses. They are sometimes, but by no means always, interchangeable with one another in these senses. More often, the subtle differences that distinguish them are of greater importance to precision in language than their apparent equivalence. In this dictionary, such synonyms, or related words, are discriminated in a short paragraph entered after that word which may generally be considered the basic or most comprehensive one of the group. Distinctions in the meanings of the words are briefly stated and typical examples of usage given wherever these will be helpful.

**SYN.**—**happy** generally suggests a feeling of great pleasure, contentment, etc. (a *happy* marriage); **glad** implies more strongly an exultant feeling of joy (your letter made her so *glad*), but both **glad** and **happy** are commonly used in merely polite formulas expressing gratification (I'm *glad*, or *happy*, that you could come); **cheerful** implies a steady display of bright spirits, optimism, etc. (he's always *cheerful* in the morning); **joyful** and **joyous** both imply great elation and rejoicing, the former generally because of a particular event, and the latter as a matter of usual temperament (the *joyful* throngs, a *joyous* family). See also **lucky**.—**ANT.** *sad*.

Each of the words discriminated in the example above is cross-referred to the entry for **happy**, where this synonymy appears. Thus, following the entry for **glad**, there is a note "**SYN.** see **happy**."

Whenever the basic word of a list is treated in another of its senses elsewhere, a cross reference is given to indicate this. Thus, "See also **lucky**" in the paragraph above means that the word **happy**, in its sense of "lucky" or "fortunate" is treated in the synonymy for **lucky**.

In many cases antonyms are given at the end of the synonymy and these, in turn, may receive discriminative treatment themselves. Thus, the antonym **sad** heads a synonymy that includes **melancholy**, **dejected**, **depressed**, and **doleful**, all antonymous to **happy**.

# THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

by Harold Whitehall

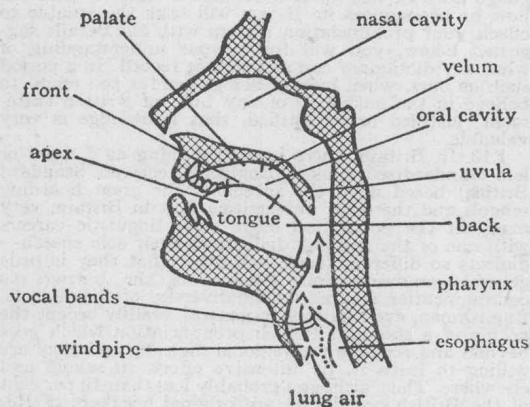
## I. MODERN AMERICAN ENGLISH

### A. Pronunciation

1.1 To most of us, the smallest practical unit of language is the *word*. All who can read, however, assume that words are built up from a limited number of distinctive "sounds" roughly corresponding to the letters of our alphabet. We are aware that they do not correspond exactly. When pressed for a description of these "sounds," we have to amplify such vague alphabetical indications as "the long *i* of *bite*" or "the short *a* of *bat*" with further details intended to convey impressions to the ear: "the soft *g* of *gin*," "the hard *s* of *sits*," etc. Because modern spelling reflects the pronunciation of the 15th rather than that of the 20th century, such descriptions are of limited usefulness. A more scientific procedure is to separate our "sounds" from their surroundings and to study the details of their formation as we prolong or slow down their articulation.

1.2 The mechanism by which speech sounds are produced is best thought of as an extremely flexible wind instrument comparable in some respects to the bassoon, in others to the bagpipe. It comprises a bellows (the LUNGS), an inner resonator (the PHARYNX, or UPPER THROAT) with a double reed (the VOCAL BANDS) at its base, and two outer resonators, one fixed (the NASAL CAVITY) and one modifiable (the ORAL CAVITY, or MOUTH). Speech sounds result when an outflowing stream of air is pumped through this instrument by the bellows action of the lungs and is impeded or modified in various ways as it passes through the resonators toward the outer air. It should be noted that the primary purpose of this apparatus is not the production of sound at all; its parts possess functions more closely connected with breathing and eating than with speaking. There are no vocal organs as such.

FIG. I



1.3 The double reed of the speech mechanism consists of two bands of membrane set in the top of the windpipe behind the thyroid cartilage (the Adam's apple of the male) and known as the VOCAL CORDS, or better, VOCAL BANDS. The modifiable outer resonator, the ORAL CAVITY, can be altered in shape, partially blocked, or completely blocked by action of the lips and tongue. Either of the two outer resonators can be shut off from the other by raising or lowering the UVULA, the muscular pendant attached to the back of the roof of the mouth.

1.4 As outflowing breath streams upward from the lungs through the windpipe, it can first encounter the double-reed apparatus of our mechanism—the vocal bands. In ordinary breathing, these are drawn back transversely toward the left- and right-hand sides of the top of the windpipe; the GLOTTIS, or space between them, is widely opened; and the breath can pass by them without being checked or impeded. Sounds formed with

the glottis thus opened are known as VOICELESS SOUNDS. If, however, the vocal bands are pulled close together and the glottis reduced to a mere slit, pressure of the upward-moving breath stream will induce a sinuous vibration of such sort that slight openings and closings of the edges of the vocal bands follow each other in rapid succession. This vibration is communicated to the moving breath stream itself and thence, in increasingly amplified form, to the moving column of air in the resonating chambers of the upper throat, mouth, and/or nasal cavity. The amplified vibration is heard as VOICE, a musical hum characteristic of VOICED SOUNDS. All English vowels and many English consonants are voiced; other consonants are voiceless: cf. voiced (*z*) in *zee* with voiceless (*s*) in *see*, voiced (*v*) in *vast* with voiceless (*f*) in *fast*, voiced (*b*) in *bit* with voiceless (*p*) in *pit*, etc. The distinction between voiced and voiceless, of primary importance in classifying sounds, reflects the first basic possibility of our vocal instrument. Another possibility is to narrow the glottis gradually toward the position for voice just before articulating certain other voiced sounds. This gradual narrowing is basic in producing the sound which we associate with the English letter *h*.

1.5 After the outflowing breath stream leaves the region of the glottis, it can next be diverted by the flexible, pendant lobe attached to the upper wall of the back of the mouth—the UVULA. If the uvula is so raised as to shut off the breath stream from the nasal cavity, the breath will escape through the mouth; if the uvula is lowered and the breath stream blocked in the mouth by action of the lips or tongue, it will escape through the nasal cavity and the nostrils. The raising or lowering of the uvula, therefore, gives us another phonetic possibility: when the breath escapes through and is further worked on in the mouth, we get ORAL SOUNDS; when the breath is blocked in the mouth and escapes through the nose, we get NASAL SOUNDS (cf. oral *b* in *bat* with nasal *m* in *mat*, oral *d* in *dash* with nasal *n* in *gnash*, etc.).

1.6 From the foregoing, it is clear that the vocal bands, uvula, and nasal cavity, whatever their importance in the over-all activity of speaking, do not account solely for most individual speech sounds. The one exception in English is the unusually simple sound *h*, produced, as described above, by a progressive narrowing of the glottis. Most of our sounds are not so much articulated as co-articulated—produced by several simultaneous muscular movements working in concert. In sound production, the opening or closing of the glottis and the raising or lowering of the uvula are of primary importance, but most of the audible distinctions between English sounds result from further modification of the outflowing breath stream caused by further muscular adjustments in the mouth. These movements, designed to produce various kinds of CAVITY FRICTION (i.e., the passage of the breath stream over the entire surface of cavities or chambers), LOCAL FRICTION, or MIXED FRICTION (cavity plus local friction) depend upon the action of the tongue and lips.

1.7 Within the mouth, the outflowing breath stream may be further modified in five principal ways. (1) It may be allowed to produce cavity friction in the resonance chambers molded by the positions of tongue, lips, and jaw. The resulting sounds, which add various mixtures of overtones to the basic voice hum according to the varying shapes assumed by the chambers, are commonly known as VOWELS. (2) The breath may be stopped completely along the center line of the tongue but allowed to escape along both sides: sounds thus formed, known as LATERALS, are exemplified by English (*l*), as in *let*. When the back of the tongue is also somewhat elevated as in the Middle Western (*l*) of *feel*, such sounds combine local friction with cavity friction. (3) The outflowing breath may be forced, with characteristic local frictional noises, through a narrow slit or groove formed between the teeth and lower lip or between the upper parts of the mouth and various parts of the tongue. Such sounds, which include English (*f*), (*v*), (*s*), (*z*), (*th*), (*lh*), (*sh*), (*zh*), are known as FRICATIVES (SPIRANTS). (4) The breath may be stopped for a moment by movements of the lower lip or some part of the tongue and then released with some



degree of local friction. Such sounds, as English (p), (b), (t), (d), (k), (g), are known as STOPS. (5) The breath may be lightly, rapidly, and intermittently stopped in such a manner that the tongue (or uvula), protruding elastically, executes either a single swift flip or a succession of flips under pressure of the breath stream. Sounds of this type, known as TRILLS and FLIPS, are known in American English only by the variety of (t) in Middle Western *water*, *butler*, etc. (6) Finally, the breath stream may be stopped in the mouth, so that pressure is built up behind the point of stoppage, and the main current of the outflowing air is allowed to escape, with cavity friction, through the nasal cavity. The sounds produced in this way (strictly, nasalized voiced stops) are known as NASALS: cf. (b) and (m), (d) and (n), (g) and (ŋ).

1.8 The capacities of the breath-stream mechanism so briefly described above are almost endless. We have seen how it resembles, in some points, the bassoon and bagpipe. We might add that few musical instruments of any kind can produce so many varied noises (SOUNDS) as this physiological instrument of ours. But after all, the primary purpose of speaking is communication, or, as Leonard Bloomfield phrases it, "to connect the speaker's stimulus with the hearer's response": if we used too many of these noises in speech the purpose of speaking would be defeated. In practice, every language has evolved its own particular system of sound-signals based not on all but on very few of the breath-stream mechanism's phonetic possibilities. Although the total number of these signals seldom exceeds forty in any language, it should be remembered that any particular signal may actually comprise several sounds closely related in articulation, and that one or more of these closely related sounds may serve as distinctive signals in other languages—that is, may be used to differentiate words and forms. Thus, the English sound signal (l) includes the purely consonantal (l) of *lit* and the vowel-like, mixed-friction (l) of *feel*; in Polish, these two variants of our English signal (l) occur as two distinct sound signals used to differentiate words from each other. Similarly, the Spanish sound signal (ð) comprises two variants which resemble the distinctive English signals (ð) and (ð) heard in *boat* and *bought*. We may readily realize that a distinctive signal of one language may not occur in another (cf. the vowel (i) of French *lune*, the consonant (kh) of German *Nacht*), that distinctive signals in one language or dialect may be merely variant forms of a single signal in another, and that the whole system of signals in one language or dialect may differ basically from the system of another. In examining any language or dialect, therefore, the first constructive step is to discover its distinctive sound signals—its PHONEMES, as we shall henceforth call them—and the system which they compose (PHONEMIC SYSTEM).

1.9 On pages xviii and xix is given one possible chart of the phonemes of North Central American English, both in symbols used by this dictionary and in those of the International Phonetic Association (IPA). Each phoneme is embodied within a short illustrative word. Whenever dialects, languages, or historical states of languages are to be contrasted or compared, the IPA symbols, which apply to the bundles of articulation features forming a speech sound irrespective of the spelling, are much to be preferred. In the chart, a new sound is conceived to have been made every time an articulator is moved either to constrict or to release the breath stream; but the phonemes (ch), (j), as the IPA symbols [tʃ], [dʒ] clearly show, actually involve two articulation movements. Similarly, the complex vowel phonemes known as DIPHTHONGS (not shown in the chart) involve a vowel articulation followed immediately by a glide of the articulator to an ending position which is that of another vowel: thus English (i) can be thought of as (ä + i), IPA [aj]; English (ou) as (ä + oo), IPA [au]; English (oi) as (ö or ö + i), IPA [oi] or [oi].

1.10 The chart is actually a graph of physiological sound-production, to be read horizontally from right to left for the action of articulating organs from glottis to lips and vertically, bottom to top, for the types of articulation from least to greatest total constriction (STRICTURE) of the breath stream. To describe the chief characteristics (PHONETIC FEATURES) of any phoneme, one needs only to read from right to left along the appropriate line and reproduce the column and line labels. Following this procedure, we find that the phoneme (s) is a voiceless, oral, tongue apex (apical) groove fricative; that (m) is a voiced, nasal, lip phoneme; and that (öö) is a voiced, oral, tongue-back, rounded, high-vowel phoneme. Similar descriptions for all the other phonemes can easily be made.

1.11 Implicit in the discussion of phonemes (see 1.9 above) is the notion that each one tends to appear in variant forms (ALLOPHONES) according to the environment in which it occurs. Phonemes are, after all, seldom encountered as individual utterances; they are realized as segments of a larger continuum of sound in words and word groups. It is natural enough, therefore,

that they should be influenced by whatever is in close contact with them, whether it be other phonemes, pauses in the speech flow, or conditions of stress and the like. Whatever it be, all phonemes show some degree of positional variation caused by the environments in which they occur, just as signals formed by a semaphore show slight variations of form according to the context of signals in which they occur. It is true that most of the variations are almost imperceptible except to a trained phonetician. The differences, for instance, between the (t) of *top*, which is aspirated (i.e., followed by a puff of breath) and the (t) of *stop*, which is not, become noticeable only when we listen with the utmost care. Yet these slight differences are important because they sometimes indicate boundaries between words and because what we call SOUND-CHANGE, whereby one phoneme may eventually become merged with, or change to, another, often starts from the weakest (i.e., least characteristic) positional variant of a phoneme. It is no accident that the distinction between *that's tough* and *that stuff* depends chiefly upon the aspirated initial (t) in the former, or that the weakly articulated flip (t) of *letter*, *water*, *patter*, *butler*, etc. has now become, in some parts of the Middle West, an allophone of the phoneme (d). If we wish to possess more than a cursory knowledge of our own speech, we need to know something about the allophones of our phonemes as well as about the phonemes themselves.

1.12 Every American belongs to one speech minority or another. The fact that we do not possess any single, accepted American standard pronunciation means, among other things, that different speakers use different allophones and even different phonemes in pronouncing the same words. Not that these differences seriously impede communication between us. The United States is actually one of the few large countries in the world where one may travel from border to border without changing language or running the risk of being seriously misunderstood. A *calf* is still a *calf* whether pronounced (kaf), IPA [kæf] or (käf), IPA [kaf or kaf]. Even so, it is well to recognize that every reader of this dictionary has, in one sense or other, his own dialect, and that the pronunciation symbols of the dictionary, deliberately conceived with the widest possible applications, will mean different things to different readers. Even speakers from the central area of the country, who might be expected to feel particularly at home with the pronunciations entered here, will find divergencies of detail between what they actually say and what we indicate they might say. Such matters are not adequate grounds for social shame, linguistic fear, or self-condemnation. The dictionary is not intended as an instrument of torture or an arbiter of "correctness" but as a *generalized record of observed fact*. The truth is that nobody knows how he pronounces his own language until he has made a deliberate effort to find out how he pronounces it. If you will take the trouble to check your pronunciation system with the details suggested below, you will foster your understanding of what any dictionary can and cannot record. In a period such as ours, when human beings are far too ready to believe in the authority of any kind of written statement, justified or unjustified, that knowledge is very valuable.

1.13 In Britain, there is such a thing as a more or less standardized spoken English (Received Standard British) based upon the speech of the great boarding schools and the older universities. But in Britain, very many of the population begin their linguistic careers with one of the regional dialects as their sole speech—dialects so different from each other that they impede general communication. Because of the barriers to communication created by the diversity of the dialects, Englishmen, even Britons in general, readily accept the notion of a standard British pronunciation which goes beyond and replaces the regional dialects; and they are willing to learn it, by intensive effort, in school and elsewhere. Thus, although probably less than 10 per cent of the British population are original speakers of Received Standard British, it is universally accepted as desirable by educational authorities, by radio performers, and by the mass of the population. A dictionary of British English, therefore, can automatically adopt Received Standard British for its pronunciations.

1.14 In this country, the situation is otherwise. As previously mentioned, ours is probably the only nation on earth in which one can travel three thousand miles without encountering serious difficulties of oral communication. Regional differences in speech undoubtedly exist here: the speech of Maine is not like that of Georgia, nor is the speech of Texas like that of Minnesota. Yet, unless we deliberately exaggerate them for social or other reasons, our regional speech differences offer no great barrier to the free exchange of opinions and ideas. They consist more of flavor than of substance. Precisely for that reason, all the pressures ever exerted for the official adoption of a Received Standard American English comparable in scope with Received Standard British have proved unavailing. The practical

# The English Language

necessity simply does not exist. In the affairs of American life, one may speak a Southern, Middle Atlantic, Chicago-Great Lakes, or Eastern New England English without any real disadvantage. The important thing is that we should speak, in a forceful, clear, and literate fashion, the variety of English of our upbringing.

1.15 The pronunciation recorded in this dictionary is largely that of General American, especially as used by literate speakers in the central part of the country. It represents a type of American English used, with relatively minor variations, in the whole of the Central, the Middle Western, the Northwestern Middle Western, the Western New England, and the Middle Atlantic States. It is the native speech of most of the editors of the dictionary. Since, however, many users of this book will speak other regional varieties of American English than the one we employ, and will undoubtedly read their own pronunciation patterns into the highly generalized symbols used by this dictionary, we shall give here a brief sketch of the principal types of American English as spoken on a literate level.

a) *Eastern New England (Coastal Northeastern)*. In its most characteristic form, this type is confined to speakers native to the New England States east of the Connecticut River. In origins, it seems to be an American development of the middle-class speech of East Anglia, London, and the Home Counties in the 17th and 18th centuries. Since Received Standard British has much the same origin, it shares many features with the speech of Eastern New England. Especially notable are the following characteristics:

(1) Loss of final (r) and of (r) before consonants ("r-coloring") in such words as *far, farm, heard, sir, firm, force, course, beard, chair*, etc.

(2) Use of (r) as a link between contiguous vowels and between vowels and consonants in loose contact: *cloth* (klɒrθ), *law-and-order* (lɔr ənd ɔdə), etc.

(3) Use of either a low central vowel or a low back unrounded vowel (ä), IPA [a] or [ɑ], before the voiceless fricatives (f, s, θ) and before (n) followed by a voiceless fricative or stop: *after* (äftə), *glass* (gläs), *path* (päth), *dance* (däns), *plant* (plänt), etc. This same sound is usually heard also in such words as *half* and *calf*.

(4) Use of a low back rounded vowel, IPA [ɒ], in *hot, rock, college, cot, rod*, etc., as well as in such words as *caught, salt, saw*.

(5) Use of (ä), or (o), as the first vowel of *horror, sorry, orange*, etc.

b) *Coastal and General Southern*. This type of American speech, often called, in its eastern Virginia and South Carolina forms, *Plantation Southern*, seems to be based on the upper-class London and Home Counties speech of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Its chief characteristics are the following:

(1) Loss of final (r) and of (r) before consonants in such words as *far, farm, sir, heard, form, force, course, beard, chair*, etc. In *sir, heard*, etc., the vowel is usually a tense mid-central phoneme, IPA [ɜ], often made into the diphthong [ɜɪ] before a consonant. In *far, farm*, the vowel is usually a lengthened, low back rounded phoneme, IPA [ɒ].

(2) Loss or distinct weakening of the final vowel in the diphthongs of *dine, while, oil, toil*.

(3) Use of the general Southern diphthong (aoo), IPA [əʊ], in such words as *out, cow, house*. In Eastern Virginia, a circumflex diphthong (əöö), IPA [əʊ], occurs before voiceless consonants, while a falling diphthong (aoö), IPA [əʊ], normally appears before voiced consonants.

(4) Centralization or fronting of (öö), (oo) in such words as *moon, spoon*, and *book, good*, (IPA [mün], [spün], [bük], [güd]).

(5) Consistent occurrence of the semivowel (y) before (öö)—rendered (i) in this dictionary—in such words as *due* (dü), *tune* (tün), *news* (nüz).

(6) The breaking of the vowels (i, e, a, o, oo) into diphthongs, especially at points of pitch change: thus, *bid, bed, bad, rod* are normally (biəd, bead, baəd, rɔəd).

c) *Southern Mountain (Highland Southern, South Midland)*. This speech type appears to be a Southern Appalachian blend of General Southern with Pennsylvania speech. Today, however, it is heard over the central lower Mississippi valley (sometimes in local competition with General Southern), and in East Texas, Arkansas and parts of Oklahoma, Eastern Kansas, Missouri, Southern Illinois, Southern and Central Indiana, Southern Ohio, and Southern Pennsylvania. Its range is furthest north in Central Indiana. Southern Mountain speech shares characteristics 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in *b* above with General Southern, but retains *r* (more accurately, an "r-coloring" of the vowel) in such words as *far, farm, heard, sir, form, force, chair*, etc. Other features, some shared with other dialects, but specially significant for the contrast with the speech of the Central Middle Western States, are as follows:

(1) Raising and diphthongization of (e) before *g*, as in *egg* (äig), *leg* (läig), *keg* (käig). This usually accompanies a related lengthening of (i), and a distinct diphthongization of (a), before *g*.

(2) The front vowel (e) often appears as (i) before nasals, especially in such words as *ten, tennis, penny, pen*, etc. Among cultivated speakers in the northern part of the Southern Mountain area, this is now regarded as substandard.

(3) The front vowel (i) is usually lowered and diphthongized to (äi) or (ei) before (ŋ), as in *thing, think, ink*, etc.

(4) The *s* of *greasy, absorb*, is usually (z).

(5) The vowel of *dish, fish*, and the final vowel of *city, charity*, etc. occurs as (ē) in many parts of the area.

(6) The word *wash* is often pronounced (wörsh) or (wärsh).

(7) The vowel (ō) often appears as a diphthong with a fronted first element parallel with the fronting in *spoon, good*, etc. Example: *boat* (bəöt). Because of the migration of workers from the South in World War II, Southern Mountain speech is now heard sporadically in such Northern industrial cities as Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland.

d) *General American (North Midland, North Central, Western)*. Since this is the type of pronunciation recorded in this dictionary, it deserves fairly detailed attention here. Its general phonemic system, or rather, one of its systems, has been illustrated in section 1.9 above. The following details are significant:

(1) Final (r) and (r) before consonants ("r-coloring") are everywhere retained in such words as *far, farm, heard, sir, firm, force, course, beard, and chair*.

(2) The vowel (o), IPA [ɑ] or [a], in *hot, rock, college, cot, rod*, etc., contrasts with the vowel (ō), IPA [ɔ] of such words as *caught, salt, all, law*. (But cf. *Western Pennsylvania* below.)

(3) The vowel in such words as *horror, sorry, orange* is usually (ō), IPA [ɔ], in contrast to the (o), IPA [ɑ], of the Coastal East and General Southern. (But cf. *Middle Atlantic* below.)

(4) The diphthongs (ou), (i), (oi) occur as [au] or [au], [ai] or [ai], and [oi] or [oi].

(5) After the apical consonants (t), (d), (n) the vowel (öö) is not normally preceded by the semivowel (y) as in the Southern dialects.

(6) The vowels (i, e, a, o, oo) completely lack the diphthongization heard in the Southern dialects.

(7) The phonemes (ä) and (ō) are less obviously diphthongized than in other regional varieties of American speech.

(8) The vowels in the classes of words represented by *Mary, marry, merry* have generally coalesced under the same sound, usually (e), IPA [e].

(9) The back vowels (öö), (oo), and (ō) are not centralized or fronted. (But cf. *Middle Atlantic* below.)

(10) The vowel in *after, pass, path, dance*, etc. is (a), IPA [æ], not (ä), IPA [a, ɪ], as in Eastern New England speech.

(11) The vowel (e) is not raised and diphthongized before *g* as it is in Southern Mountain speech.

(12) The *s* in *greasy, absorb* is usually (s), rather than (z) as in the South and in Eastern New England.

In its widest geographical sense, General American includes several subtypes. As research progresses, we are likely to discover more of them and to discard the use of the term General American itself. (1) The *Middle Atlantic* type is chiefly characterized by the fronting of (öö) and (ō) and by its low back unrounded vowel (o). IPA [ɑ], in *horror, sorry, orange*. (2) The *Western Pennsylvania* type often possesses the low back unrounded vowel, IPA [ɑ], both in *hot, rock, college, rod*, etc. and in *caught, salt, law*, etc. This is obviously a mixed dialect, reproduced further west in some of the Ohio River towns and in the Southwest. (3) The *West Central* type, spoken in Chicago and on the southern shores of the Western Great Lakes area, has (ä), both in *hot, rock, college, rod*, etc. and in *father, balm, alms*.

1.16 This brief survey of the four principal varieties of American speech does some injustice to the varied and subtle regional modifications of the American language. Several of the large cities, notably New York City, have developed or are in the process of developing their own characteristic speech patterns, while the Southern Piedmont possesses a variety of speech quite distinct from either General Southern or Southern Mountain, although it incorporates features found in both. Our present knowledge of the allophonic, and sometimes of the phonemic, variations present in American speech is the measure of our comparative ignorance rather than of our knowledge of the subject.

## Syllables

2.1 Thus far, we have been chiefly concerned with phonemes as isolated sound-signal units. It is time to put them into the contexts of actual speech and to study them in combination with the various contextual factors (PROSODIC FEATURES) which influence them.

2.2 When we study a succession of phonemes in an utterance, the first thing that strikes us is a marked variation of prominence (SONORITY) between them. For instance, in the word *limitation* (limətāshən),



FIG. II  
THE DISTINCTIVE SOUND-SIGNAL UNITS (PRIMARY PHONEMES) OF NORTH CENTRAL AMERICAN ENGLISH  
A. In the pronunciation symbols of this dictionary

TYPE OF ARTICULATION	ARTICULATOR					CO-ARTICULATION			
	LIP	TONGUE APEX	TONGUE FRONT	TONGUE CENTER	TONGUE BACK	UVULA—In position for:	GLOTTIS—In position for:	RELATIVE INCREASE OF OVER-ALL STRICTURE	
STOP	(p)in (b)in	(t)in (d)in			(k)in (g)ive	oral oral	voiceless voiced	Local Friction	
FRICATIVE Breath release through:									
1. Slit	(f)in (v)im	(th)in (th)en (s)in (z)inc	(sh)in a(z)ure (zh)			oral oral oral oral	(h)im—voiceless voiced voiceless voiced		
2. Groove									
AFRICATE (= stop & neighboring fricative)			(ch)est [= t + sh] (j)est [= d + zh]			oral oral	voiceless voiced		
LATERAL		(l)imb				oral	voiced		
NASAL	(m)an	(n)an			sa(ng) (ŋ)	nasal	voiced		
SEMIVOWEL (= vowel-like sound used as consonant)			(y)ield	(r)eeled	(w)ield	oral	voiced		
VOWEL Relative tongue position:	co-articulation								
1. High	(ōō) rounded (oo) rounded	b(ee)t (ē) b(i)t (ī)			b(oo)t (ōō) b(oo)k oo	oral (all vowels)	voiced (all vowels)		
2. Mid	(ō) rounded (ō) rounded	b(ai)t (ā) b(e)t (ē)		{b(u)tt (u)} {sof(a) (ə)}	b(oa)t (ō) b(ou)ght (ō)				
3. Low		b(a)t (a)	f(a)ther (ä)		b(o)x (o)				
								Cavity Friction	

FIG. II

THE DISTINCTIVE SOUND-SIGNAL UNITS (PRIMARY PHONEMES) OF NORTH CENTRAL AMERICAN ENGLISH  
B. In the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

TYPE OF ARTICULATION	ARTICULATOR						CO-ARTICULATION		
	LIP	TONGUE APEX	TONGUE FRONT	TONGUE CENTER	TONGUE BACK	UVULA—In position for:	GLOTTIS—In position for:	RELATIVE INCREASE IN SONORITY	
STOP	pin bin	tin din			kin giv	oral oral	voiceless voiced		
FRICATIVE Breath release through:									
1. Slit									
2. Groove	fin vin	ɸin ðin sin zɪŋk	ʃin [ʃ] æʒər [ʒ]			oral oral oral oral	(h) in—voiceless voiced voiceless voiced		
AFRICATE (= stop & neighboring fricative)			ʧest [tʃ] jest [dʒ]			oral oral	voiceless voiced		
LATERAL		lm				oral	voiced		
NASAL	mæn	næn			sæŋ	nasal	voiced		
SEMIVOWEL (= vowel-like sound used as consonant)			ʃild	rild	wild	oral	voiced		
VOWEL Relative tongue position:	co-articulation					oral (all vowels)	voiced (all vowels)		
1. High	(u) rounded (ʊ) rounded		bit bit						
2. Mid	(o) rounded (ɔ) rounded		bet bet	{bat sofe}	but buk				
3. Low			bæt	fæðər	baks				

RELATIVE INCREASE OF OVER-ALL STRUCTURE



[limə'teʃən], phonemes 2, 4, 6, 8, are obviously more prominent in their relative sonority than the others; in *oscillator* (osə'lātər), [ʊsə'lətər], this same prominence occurs in phonemes 1, 3, 5, 7. On further analysis, we find that all of these prominent phonemes, (i), (ə), (ā), (o), etc. are cavity friction sounds (i.e., vowels) bordered either by less prominent phonemes possessing mixed or local friction, or by silence. In essence, then, any speech flow consists of a series of peaks and troughs of prominence with sonorous cavity-friction phonemes at the peaks and less sonorous phonemes or silence (pause) at the troughs. A glance at Fig. 11 makes it clear that this variation in the sonority of phonemes depends upon the relative degree of stricture. In the chart, sonority decreases from the bottom of the diagram, where the breath stream is represented as least constricted, to the top, where it is most constricted. If we use the symbol 1 to characterize the most sonorous (cavity-friction) sounds, 2 to indicate the less sonorous (mixed-friction) sounds, and 3 to symbolize the least sonorous (local-friction) sounds, then the peaks and troughs of sonority in our examples may be easily diagrammed:

212131 312      13121312  
(limə'tāʃən), (osə'lātər).

Now reference to the syllabification in this dictionary will immediately show that the words *limitation*, *oscillator*, i.e., *lim'i-ta'tion*, *os-cil-la-tor*, possess just as many 1's as they possess syllables. In other terms, the most obvious thing about syllables is that they are *peaks of prominence bordered by troughs of less prominence*. The phonemes at the peaks are called SONANTS; those at the troughs are called CONSONANTS.

2.3 This explanation, however, does not completely account for syllables. As can be easily seen if we prolong (ā), [a], and at the same time hit the chest repeatedly with a fist, the pumping action of the lungs (CHEST PULSE) is a vital factor in syllable formation. Further, since the less sonorous phonemes constrict the breath stream, hence slow down expiration, and thus retard lung action, that action is relatively slow at the troughs, and relatively fast at the peaks, of sonority. Like everything else in speech, the syllable is relatively complex in its mechanical formation.

2.4 No one is likely to have much trouble in counting the number of syllables in a word. To decide where one syllable ends and another begins, however, is a matter of such difficulty that linguistic science is still unable to provide a simple formula for syllable division in English. Neither the system of division used in this dictionary nor any other yet devised really squares with the observable facts of the English language. *The separation of syllables in this and similar books is merely a graphic convenience*, intended to help printers to be consistent. Its virtues are esthetic, not linguistic. Perhaps the only scientific method of practical syllabification would depend upon the etymological and formative elements present in words. Meanwhile, we continue to use, and, unfortunately, to have represented to us as factual, a system which is neither logical in itself nor based in any degree on the ascertained characteristics of our language.

2.5 In our consideration of syllables, it is well to remember that the details of their formation may vary considerably in different languages. In English, the phonemes at the peaks of sonority are all, according to one conventional interpretation, cavity friction sounds (VOWELS). Phonetically, however, the pronunciation of such words as *battle*, *bottle*, *border*, and *batten* as

313 2 313 2 312 32 313 2  
(bat'l, bot'l, bōr'dēr, bat'n)

shows the possibility of employing such mixed-friction phonemes as (l), (r), (n) as sonants. We find them thus employed in several languages. Similarly, the vowel in *bird*, *sir*, *stir*, *curd*, etc., symbolized in this dictionary by (īr), IPA [ər] or [ɜ] may be regarded with equal justification as an "r-vowel" to be symbolized as in Czech by simple r:

323 32 332 323  
(brd), (sr), (str), (krd).

The unusual English exclamation *psst!* acquaints us with the possibility, actually used in some languages, of employing the more sonorous fricatives as peaks of sonority in syllables.

2.6 Similar differences between various languages are also apparent at the troughs of sonority. Among languages other than English, some begin syllables only with sonants, some end them only with sonants, some begin or end them only with single consonants, and some permit only a single consonant between syllables. English syllables can commence and end with sonants, with single consonants, and with clusters of as many as three consonants (we shall disregard inflectional endings) before and after the peak of the syllable: cf. *strict*, *quartz*. Any possible combination of these may occur between syllables.

2.7 The exceptionally flexible structure of the English syllable is not difficult to understand once we realize that the essential nucleus, the sonant, stands at a peak of sonority, which may be attained or departed from

either swiftly or gradually. The presence of consonant clusters implies gradual ascent or descent in relative sonority, i.e., it has somewhat the same effect as that of initial (h) on the voicing of a following vowel.

2.8 It must not be thought that any consonant may adjoin any other consonant in the above scheme. The permissible clusters of consonants are in part conditioned by historical but chiefly by physiological factors. These include the following: (1) whether two phonemes which might adjoin in the same cluster have the same articulator; (2) whether they have the same type of articulation; (3) whether they are both voiced or voiceless; (4) whether they have the same or varying conditions of stricture; (5) whether, especially in phonemes of the same articulation type, one is slightly more prominent than the other. Thus *r*, an apical consonant, is never preceded by *s*, also apical; stops do not combine initially with stops, etc. In initial clusters, and in some dialects in final clusters, English appears to insist upon a certain degree of differentiation between contiguous consonants.

## Stress and Related Phenomena

3.1 Our consideration of the syllable has shown that in any series of phonemes within an utterance, certain phonemes are more prominent than others. Those prominent phonemes, we have seen, are the chief determinants of what we call syllables. When we come to consider a series of syllables in an utterance, we likewise find that certain syllables are more prominent than others. In *limitation*, *oscillator*, for instance, the syllables *-tā-* and *os-* obviously carry more relative prominence than any others in these two words, and, if we listen closely to our own pronunciation, we shall find that *lim-* and *-lāt-*, although less prominent than *-tā-* and *os-*, are still more prominent than the other syllables surrounding them. In conventional dictionary terms, we should say that the prominent syllables are *stressed*, i.e., pronounced with more vigor or intensity of articulation, than the remaining *unstressed* syllables. In short, we should regard stress, the relative loudness or intensity of syllables conditioned by the relative energy of articulation, as the factor producing differences of prominence between successive syllables. This dictionary distinguishes between *primary*, or *strong*, stress, here marked by superscript (') after the syllable to which it applies, and *secondary*, or *light*, stress, marked by superscript (˘) after the syllable to which it applies, *reduced secondary* stress, to be inferred when an apparently unstressed syllable has any other vowel than (ə), and *unstress*, or *zero* stress, which is left unmarked. Thus *lim'i-ta'tion* (lim'ə-tā'ʃən), *os'il-la'tor* (os'ə-lā'tər), etc. The reader should be warned that the individual perception of stress varies greatly. Most users of this dictionary will have little difficulty in distinguishing between the four stress levels mentioned above, but some may find it difficult to discriminate between reduced secondary stress and zero stress, or even between secondary and primary stress. The laboratory phonetician can perceive additional stress levels by means of his instruments.

3.2 In English, the placing of stress is phonemic, i.e., significant for the expression of meaning. All our words except monosyllabic words have a definite stress pattern or, more occasionally, patterns, which play an important role in our recognition of them. Notice that the hearing recognition of *insight* as compared with *incite* depends upon the primary stress of its first syllable (in'sīt') as compared with the stress on the second syllable of the latter (in-sīt'). Among most speakers, such words as *inlay*, *impact*, *address*, *import*, *imprint*, *increase*, *contrast*, *contract*, *insult*, *insert*, *contest*, *protest*, *convert*, *converse*, *convict*, *protect*, *conflict*, *rebel*, *transfer* are stressed on the first syllable when used as nouns, on the second when used as verbs. This alternation of stress pattern, however, is not uniformly applied in the English-speaking world, and the number of words affected by it varies somewhat from region to region. In New England, for instance, a *selectman* is often called a (sē'lek-man'); in many parts of the country you *po-lice* the town but call in the *po'lice*. Because stress patterns in English are meaningful, it is often necessary to memorize these patterns for relatively unfamiliar words. Our native words of Anglo-Saxon and Germanic origin present little difficulty since the stress almost invariably falls upon the most important formative element in them (the BASE): *man*, *man'ly*, *man'li-ness*, *un-man'*, *un-man'ly*, etc. But in the other part of our vocabulary, comprising words chiefly of Latin, French, or Greek origin, many words show a change in stress pattern, when formative elements (suffixes) are added to them: *ha'bil*, *ha-bil'u'al*, *e'qual*, *e-equal'i-ty*, etc. The realistic method of looking at this phenomenon is to think of such words as existing in two forms: (1) a word-form. (2) a combining form (stem-form). Thus, we might contrast the word-forms *ha'bil*, *e'qual*, *pho'to-graph*, etc. with the combining forms *ha-bil'-*, *eq-u-al'-*, *pho-log'raph-*, used in forming derivatives. Since, in many words, the fixed stress patterns of the native English tradition come into conflict with the shifting patterns of the Greco-Latin