
**THE
POCKET
OXFORD
DICTIONARY**

New Edition

**THE
POCKET OXFORD
DICTIONARY
OF CURRENT ENGLISH**

First edited by
F. G. and H. W. Fowler

**SEVENTH EDITION
EDITED BY R. E. ALLEN**

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Preface to the Seventh Edition

THIS edition results from the most thorough and far-reaching revision yet of the smallest of the dictionaries originally conceived by the Fowler brothers. In its six previous editions the *Pocket* has changed little in overall concept and method, representing the utmost in the compression of a great deal of information in a small space by means of the rigorous application of space-saving devices and conventions. Now however considerations of clarity and ease of use have led to this completely redesigned seventh edition.

Readers familiar with earlier editions will find many changes of concept and presentation, all of these implemented in the interests of making the information more quickly retrievable without compromising the generally formal approach to presentation that distinguishes this work from others of the same size. The swung dash of earlier editions has been entirely dispensed with. The listing of vocabulary has been completely restructured with a main entry assigned to every defined item that is spelt as one word while genuinely compound items and phrases are still listed with their root words, where they surely belong. Greater clarity and ease of reference are thereby achieved without allowing the structure and intricate relationships of the vocabulary to disintegrate in a plethora of main entries in the manner of some modern small dictionaries.

Much thought has been given to the ordering of senses, with the result that these are now regularly arranged in order of comparative familiarity with the most important and current senses first and those that are evidently less so arranged in descending order thereafter. As a further aid to use, all compounds and phrases are assembled at the end of each entry leaving the main senses of the headwords clearer and less congested. Much of the more detailed constructional information hitherto attending explanations of words such as *draw* and *get* and *rub* (and on a smaller scale those such as *pretend* and *resolve*) has been reduced and simplified in the belief that a dictionary such as the *Pocket* is used chiefly to establish the sense of a word found in or known from a particular context rather than to construct contexts from notional bases (for 'decoding' rather than 'coding' in the language of modern lexicography).

Of great importance is the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA: see the introductory *Guide* at 2.1), newly adopted in this edition in the interests of greater precision and consistency

and to enable the guidance on pronunciation to be more valid internationally. At the same time the freeing of every headword from special marks and signs further enhances the clarity of presentation which underlies all the changes introduced in this edition.

In response to frequent requests from those who are concerned about standards of English that guidance be given on matters of disputed and controversial usage, the special markings introduced in the seventh edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (D for disputed uses and R for racially offensive uses) are also adopted here in the smaller work. A fuller explanation of these markings will be found in the *Guide* at 6.4.

The choice of vocabulary has been thoroughly reconsidered with many items no longer current in general English omitted in favour of the many new items clamouring for attention almost from day to day. Particular attention has been paid to the language of computers and the information sciences and in general to those technical terms such as *acid rain* and *fibre optics* that are ever more forcefully thrust upon us in everyday life.

Lexicography is a corporate effort and I must express my thanks to colleagues in the Oxford English Dictionary Department for their help and advice. In particular, the Chief Editor, Dr R. W. Burchfield CBE, has given valuable support and encouragement at all stages. My two assistants, Miss D. J. Thompson and Mr A. Hodgson, have contributed greatly to whatever success this new edition may achieve, and any credit due must be shared with them. I must also mention Mrs A. G. Dickinson, who joined me at a later stage. Outside the department Mr A. J. Spooner and Mr M. W. Grose between them read all the text and suggested many important additions and improvements. Mr D. J. Edmonds gave much advice on technical matters arising from the proofs and read many of them; others who contributed to this task were Mrs D. S. Eagle, Mrs E. J. Pusey, and Dr W. R. Trumble. Mrs Pusey also assisted with the preparation of entries in the early stages. To all these I am most grateful.

Finally I owe a great deal as always to the work of previous editors of the dictionary. I must mention in particular Dr J. B. Sykes, my predecessor and editor of the sixth edition.

R. E. A.

December 1983

From the Preface to the First Edition

THIS book is nominally an abridgement of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, but has in fact cost its compilers more labour, partly because the larger book was found not to be easily squeezable, and partly owing to changes in method unconnected with mere reduction of quantity. The one merit, however, that they feel entitled to claim for the *COD* has been preserved to the best of their power in the abridgement—that is, they have kept to the principle that a dictionary is a book of diction, concerned primarily with words or phrases as such, and not, except so far as is needed to ensure their right treatment in speech, with the things those words and phrases stand for. This principle, while it absolves the dictionary-maker from cumbering his pages with cyclopaedic information, demands on the other hand that he should devote much more space than that so saved to the task of making clear the idiomatic usage of words. The bad dictionary, on a word that has half a dozen distinct meanings, parades by way of definition half a dozen synonyms, each of them probably possessed of several senses besides the one desired, and fails to add the qualifications and illustrations that would show the presumably ignorant reader how far each synonym is coextensive with his word, and what is the context to which one or the other is the more appropriate. To avoid this vice has been the chief aim of the *COD* and of this abridgement alike; but the smaller the scale of the book, the more difficult becomes the task.

1917

F. G. F.
H. W. F.

Guide to the Use of the Dictionary

1. Headword

1.1 The headword is printed in bold type, or in bold italic type if the word is not naturalized in English and is usually found in italics in printed matter.

1.2 Variant spellings are given before the definition (e.g. **cabby** *n.* (also **cabbie**)); in all such cases the form given as the headword is the preferred form. When the variant form is alphabetically remote from the main form it is given at its proper place in the dictionary (e.g. **caiman** var. of **CAYMAN**).

1.3 Words that are different but spelt the same way (homographs) are distinguished by superior figures (e.g. **bat**¹ and **bat**²).

1.4 Words that are normally spelt with a capital initial are given in this form as the headword; when they are in some senses spelt with a small initial and in others with a capital initial this is indicated by repetition of the full word in appropriate form within the entry (as at **carboniferous**).

1.5 Variant American spellings are indicated by the designation **US** (e.g. **caecum** ... **US cecum**).

1.6 Verbal forms which can end in either *-ize* or *-ise* (e.g. **centralize**) are given in the *-ize* form but it should be noted that the *-ise* form is also permissible. The same applies to derivative words in *-ization* and *-izer* and so on.

2. Pronunciation

2.1 Guidance on pronunciation follows the system of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Only the pronunciation standard in southern England is given.

2.1.1 Consonants:

b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, and *z* have their usual English values. Other symbols are used as follows:

g (game)	ŋ (long)	ʃ (ship)
tʃ (chair)	θ (thin)	ʒ (measure)
dʒ (jet)	ð (there)	j (yes)
x (Scots etc.: loch)		

2.1.2 Vowels:

short vowels	long vowels	diphthongs
æ (bat)	ɑ: (dark)	eɪ (say)
e (bet)	i: (seem)	aɪ (buy)
ə (another)	ɔ: (born)	ɔɪ (toy)
ɪ (sit)	ɜ: (term)	əʊ (so)
ɒ (top)	u: (moon)	aʊ (now)
ʌ (but)		ɪə (peer)
ʊ (put)		eə (fair)
		ʊə (poor)

(ə) signifies the indeterminate sound as in *garden*, *carnal*, and *rhythm*.

The following signify sounds not natural in English:

- æ̃ (bain-marie, timbre)
- ɑ̃ (contretemps)
- ɔ̃ (bon voyage)

2.1.3 Main stress is indicated by ' preceding the relevant syllable; no attempt is made to indicate secondary stress.

2.2 Pronunciation of words of one syllable is not given when it conforms with the following basic pattern:

2.2.1 Single-letter vowels a = /æ/, e = /e/, i = /ɪ/, o = /ɒ/, u = /ʌ/; when lengthened by a succeeding single consonant followed by e, a = /eɪ/, e = /i:/, i = /aɪ/, o = /əʊ/, u = /ju:/ (as in *mat* and *mate*; *met* and *mete*, *sit* and *site*, *tot* and *tote*, *tun* and *tune*).

2.2.2 Other vowels as in *gain*, *fair*, *far*, *dare*, *saw*, *say*, *bean*, *fear*, *seen*, *seer*, *herd*, *here*, *few*, *thief*, *bier*, *bird*, *tire*, *boat*, *board*, *hoe*, *join*, *moon*, *poor*, *born*, *loud*, *sour*, *now*, *toy*, *due*, *burn*, *pure*.

2.2.3 Consonants as in *arc*, *cob*, *cry* (but soft *c* before *e*, *i*, *y* as in *ice* and *city*); *church*; *black*, *lodge*, *game*, *bag* (but soft *g* before *e*, *i*, *y* as in *age* and *gin*); *jet*; *sing*; *blank*; *photo*; *queen*; *shot*; *bitch*; *thin*; *box*; *yet*. Other consonants have their usual English values.

2.2.4 Initial double consonants as in *knot*; *rhyme*, *which*; *wring*.

2.3 Pronunciation of two-syllable words ending in *-er* preceded by a consonant is also not given when the first syllable is stressed and follows the above pattern (as in *porter*, *matter*, *poker*).

2.4 Pronunciation of compound words of easily recognized elements (e.g. *bathroom*, *jellyfish*) is not given when the stress is on the first element.

2.5 Pronunciation of regularly formed derivatives is not given

when it can be easily deduced from the headword or from a preceding main word (e.g. **casually** from **casual** and **catty** from **cat**), unless there is a change of stress or some other notable feature (as with **certification**).

The following suffixes and terminations especially should be noted:

- able /əb(ə)l/
- age /-ɪdʒ/
- al (preceded by consonant) /-(ə)l/
- dom /-dəm/
- ed (after *d* or *t*) /-ɪd/; (after other voiceless consonant) /-t/; (elsewhere) /-d/
- ess /-ɪs/
- est /-ɪst/
- ful /-fʊl/
- fy /-faɪ/
- ible /-ɪb(ə)l/
- ism /-ɪz(ə)m/
- ive /-ɪv/
- less /-lɪs/
- ment /-mənt/
- ness /-nɪs/
- ous /-əs/
- sion /-ʃ(ə)n or -ʒ(ə)n/
- some /-səm/
- tion /-ʃ(ə)n/
- y (preceded by consonant, but cf. -fy) /-ɪ/

3. Part-of-speech label

3.1 This is given for all main entries and derivatives except those consisting of two or more unhyphenated words.

3.2 It is not given for compound items listed at the end of entries except where these exist as more than one part of speech.

3.3 Different parts of speech of a single word are listed separately preceded by a bold number (e.g. **turn** 1 *n.* . . . 2 *v.t.*).

3.4 Verbs that are both transitive and intransitive are given the simple designation *v.*; those that are only transitive or only intransitive are labelled *v.t.* and *v.i.* respectively. The designation *absol.* denotes use with an implied object (as at **abdicate**).

4. Inflexion

4.1 *Plurals of Nouns*: nouns that form their plural regularly by adding *-s* (or *-es* when they end in *-s*, *-x*, *-z*, *-sh*, or soft *-ch*), or by changing *-y* (preceded by a consonant or *qu*) to *-ies*, receive no comment. Plural forms of those ending in *-o* (preceded by any letter other than another *o*) are always given. Other irregular forms are also given, except when the word is a compound of obvious formation (e.g. **footman**, **schoolchild**).

4.2 *Forms of Verbs*:

4.2.1 The following regular forms receive no comment:

- (i) third person singular present forms adding *-s* to the stem (or *-es* to stems ending in *-s*, *-x*, *-z*, *-sh*, or soft *-ch* and stems in *-o* preceded by any letter other than another *o*), or changing *-y* (preceded by a consonant or *qu*) to *-ies* (e.g. *cries*, *defies*).
- (ii) past tenses and past participles adding *-ed* to the stem, changing final *-y* (preceded by a consonant or *qu*) to *-ied* (e.g. *cried*, *defied*).
- (iii) present participles adding *-ing* to the stem, dropping a final silent *e* (e.g. *changing*, *dancing*).

4.2.2 A doubled consonant in verbal inflexions (e.g. *rubbed*, *rubbing*, *sinned*, *sinning*) is shown in the form (**-bb-**, **-nn-**, etc.). Where practice differs in American usage this is noted (as at **cavil**).

4.3 *Comparative and Superlative of Adjectives and Adverbs*:

The following regular forms receive no comment:

- 4.3.1 Words of one syllable adding *-er* and *-est*, those ending in silent *e* dropping the *e* (e.g. *braver*, *bravest*) and those ending in a final consonant (except *h*, *w*, or *x*) preceded by a single-letter vowel doubling the consonant (e.g. *hotter*, *hottest*).
- 4.3.2 Words of one or two syllables ending in *-y* (preceded by a consonant or *qu*) changing *-y* to *-ier* and *-iest* (e.g. *drier*, *driest*, *happier*, *happiest*).

4.4 *Adjectives in -able formed from Transitive Verbs*:

- 4.4.1 Verbs generally drop silent final *-e* except after *c* and *g* (e.g. *movable* but *changeable*).
- 4.4.2 Words of more than one syllable ending in *-y* (preceded by a consonant or *qu*) change *y* to *i* (e.g. *enviable*, *undeniable*).
- 4.4.3 A final consonant is doubled as in normal inflexion (*conferable*, *regrettable*): cf. 4.2.2 above.

5. Definition

5.1 Definitions are listed in order of comparative familiarity and importance, with the most current and important senses first.

5.2 They are separated by a semicolon, or by a comma when the two senses are more closely related.

5.3 A word or words in italics forming part of the definition indicates that it is normally used with the headword in the sense concerned (as with *of* and *that* at **certain**). Words such as *one*, *person*, and *do* are simply representative of a type: thus *oneself* implies *myself*, *yourself*, etc., and *do* implies any verb of action.

5.4 Round brackets enclose letters or words that are optional (as at **crash** *v.* where '(cause to) proceed with a crash' can mean either 'proceed with a crash' or 'cause to proceed with a crash'), and indicate typical objects of transitive verbs (such as '*milk*' and '*skin*' in two senses of **cream** *v.*).

6. Subject and Usage labels

6.1 These are used to clarify the particular context in which a word or phrase is normally used.

6.2 Words and phrases more common in informal spoken English than in formal written English are labelled *colloq.* (colloquial) or *sl.* (slang) as appropriate.

6.3 Some subject labels are used to indicate the particular relevance of a term or subject with which it is associated (e.g. *Mus.*, *Law*, *Physics*). They are not used when this is sufficiently clear from the definition itself.

6.4 Two categories of deprecated usage are indicated by special markings: **D** (= disputed) indicates a use that, although widely found, is still the subject of much adverse comment by informed users; **R** (= racially offensive) indicates a use that is regarded as offensive by members of a particular ethnic or religious group.

7. Phrases

Phrases are listed (together with compounds) in alphabetical order after the treatment of the main word, this being the earliest important word in the phrase except when a later word is more clearly the key word. The words *a*, *the*, *one*, and *person* do not count for purposes of alphabetical order.

8. Compounds

8.1 Compound terms forming one word (e.g. **bathroom**, **jellyfish**) are listed as main entries; those consisting of two or more words (e.g. **chain reaction**) or joined by a hyphen (e.g. **chain-gang**) are given under the first element or occasionally as main entries.

8.2 When a hyphenated compound in bold type is divided at the end of a line the hyphen is repeated at the beginning of the next line to show that it is a permanent feature of the spelling and not just an end-of-line hyphen.

9. Derivatives

9.1 Words formed by adding a suffix to another word are in many cases listed in alphabetical order at the end of the entry for the main word (e.g. **chalkiness** and **chalky** at **chalk**). In this position they are not defined since they can be understood from the sense of the main word and that given at the suffix concerned; when further definition is called for they are given main entries in their own right (e.g. **changeable**).

9.2 For reasons of space words formed by certain suffixes are not included at all except when some special feature of spelling or pronunciation or meaning is involved. These suffixes are **-ABLE**, **-ER¹** (in sense '... that does'), **-ER²** and **-EST** (see also 4.3), **-ISH**, **-LESS**, **-LIKE**, **-LY²**, and **-NESS**.

10. Etymology

10.1 This is given in square brackets [] at the end of the entry. In the space available it can only give the direct line of derivation in outline; the immediate source-language is always given first. Forms in other languages are not given if they are exactly or nearly the same as the English form.

10.2 **OE** is used for words that are known to have been used in Old English (before AD 1150).

10.3 **AF** (Anglo-French) denotes the variety of French current in England in the Middle Ages after the Norman Conquest.

10.4 **L** (Latin) denotes classical and Late Latin up to about AD 600; **med.L** (medieval Latin) that of the period about 600–1500; **AL** (Anglo-Latin) denotes Latin as used in medieval England.

10.5 Where the origin of a word cannot be reliably ascertained, the form [orig. uncert.] or [orig. unkn.] is used.

10.6 Names of the rarer languages that have contributed to English (such as Balti at **polo**, and Cree at **wapiti**) are given in full without explanation; they may be found explained in larger dictionaries or in encyclopaedias.

10.7 An etymology is not given when it is identical in essentials with that of the preceding entry, when the word is an abbreviation, or when the derivation is clear from the definition (as at **burgundy**).

11. Prefixes and Suffixes

11.1 A large selection of these is given in the main body of the text; prefixes are given in the form **ex-**, **re-**, etc., and suffixes in the form **-ion**, **-ness**, etc. These entries should be consulted to explain the many derivatives given at the end of entries (see 9.1).

11.2 Prefixes and suffixes are not normally given a pronunciation since this can change considerably when they form part of a word.

12. Cross-Reference

12.1 Cross-reference to main entries is indicated by small capitals (e.g. **calk** *US* var. of **CAULK**; **change one's tune** see **TUNE**).

12.2 Cross-reference in italics to a defined phrase or compound refers to the entry for the first word unless another is specified.

12.3 A homograph (see 1.3) is indicated by a superior figure (e.g. **calves** *pl.* of **CALF**¹, **CALF**²).

13. Proprietary Status

This dictionary includes some words which are, or are asserted to be, proprietary names or trade marks. Their inclusion does not imply that they have acquired for legal purposes a non-proprietary or general significance, nor is any other judgement implied concerning their legal status. In cases where the editor has some evidence that a word is used as a proprietary name or trade mark this is indicated by the letter **P**, but no judgement concerning the legal status of such words is made or implied thereby.

Abbreviations used in the Dictionary

SOME abbreviations occur only in etymologies. Others may appear in *italics*. Abbreviations in general use appear in the dictionary itself.

a.	adjective	Carib.	Caribbean
abbr.	abbreviation	cc.	centuries
abl.	ablative (case)	Celt.	Celtic
Abor.	Aboriginal	Chem.	Chemistry
absol.	absolute, used absolutely (see 3.4)	Chin.	Chinese
acc.	accusative (case)	cogn.	cognate
act.	active	collect.	collective
adv.	adverb	colloq.	colloquial
Aeron.	Aeronautics	comb.	combination, combining
AF	Anglo-French (see 10.3)	compar.	comparative
Afr.	African	conj.	conjunction
Afrik.	Afrikaans	contr.	contraction
AL	Anglo-Latin (see 10.4)	Corn.	Cornish
alt.	alteration, altered	corresp.	corresponding
Amer.	American	corrupt.	corruption
Amh.	Amharic		
Anat.	Anatomy	D	disputed (see 6.4)
anc.	ancient	Da.	Danish
app.	apparently	dat.	dative (case)
approx.	approximately	dem.	demonstrative
Arab.	Arabic	deriv.	derivative
Aram.	Aramaic	derog.	derogatory
Archaeol.	Archaeology	dial.	dialect
Archit.	Architecture	diff.	different
assim.	assimilated	dimin.	diminutive
assoc.	associated	Du.	Dutch
Assyr.	Assyrian		
Astrol.	Astrology	eccl.	ecclesiastical
Astron.	Astronomy	Econ.	Economics
attrib.	attributive, used attributively	Egypt.	Egyptian
Austral.	Australian	Electr.	Electricity
aux.	auxiliary	ellipt.	elliptically
		emphat.	emphatic
Bibl.	Biblical	Eng.	English
Biol.	Biology	Engl.	England
Bot.	Botany	erron.	erroneous(ly)
Brit.	British	esp.	especially
		etym.	etymology
		euphem.	euphemism
Canad.	Canadian	Eur.	Europe, European
		exc.	except

excl.	exclamation	Jav.	Javanese
		joc.	jocular
F	French		
f.	from	L	Latin (see 10.4)
fam.	familiar	lang.	language
fem.	feminine	LG	Low German
fig.	figurative	lit.	literal
Finn.	Finnish		
Flem.	Flemish	Math.	Mathematics
fol.	following (entry)	Mech.	Mechanics
form.	formation	med.	medieval
frequent.	frequentative	Mex.	Mexican
Fris.	Frisian	Mil.	Military
fut.	future (tense)	mod.	modern
		Mus.	Music
G	German	Myth.	Mythology
Gael.	Gaelic		
gen.	genitive (case)	n.	noun
Geog.	Geography	Naut.	Nautical
Geol.	Geology	neg.	negative
Geom.	Geometry	Norw.	Norwegian
Gk	Greek	num.	numeral
Gmc	Germanic		
Gram.	Grammar	O	Old
		obj.	objective (case)
Heb.	Hebrew	obs.	obsolete
Hind.	Hindustani	occas.	occasionally
hist.	with historical reference	OE	Old English (see 10.2)
		ON	Old Norse
i.	intransitive	opp.	as opposed to
Icel.	Icelandic	orig.	origin, originally
imit.	imitative		
imper.	imperative	P	Proprietary name (see 13)
impers.	impersonal	parenth.	parenthetically
incl.	including	Parl.	Parliament(ary)
Ind.	Indian	partic.	(esp. present) participle
ind.	indirect		
indic.	indicative	pass.	passive
infin.	infinitive	perf.	perfect (tense)
infl.	influenced	perh.	perhaps
int.	interjection	Pers.	Persian
interrog.	interrogative	pers.	person, personal
intr.	intransitive	Peruv.	Peruvian
Ir.	Irish	Philol.	Philology
iron.	ironical	Philos.	Philosophy
It.	Italian	Photog.	Photography
		phr.	phrase
Jap.	Japanese	Physiol.	Physiology

xx ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE DICTIONARY

pl.	plural	Slav.	Slavonic
Pol.	Polish	Sp.	Spanish
pop.	popular(ly)	sp.	spelling
Port.	Portuguese	subj.	subject, subjunctive
poss.	possessive (case)	subord.	subordinate
p.p.	past participle	superl.	superlative
pr.	pronounced	Sw.	Swedish
prec.	preceding (entry)	syll.	syllable
predic.	predicative, used predicatively	symp.	symbol
prep.	preposition	t.	transitive
pres.	present (tense)	Teut.	Teutonic
prob.	probably	Theol.	Theology
pron.	pronoun	thr.	through
pronunc.	pronunciation	trans.	transitive
Prov.	Provençal	transf.	by transference
pseud.	pseudonym	transl.	translation
Psych.	Psychology	Turk.	Turkish
R	racially offensive (see 6.4)	ult.	ultimately
redupl.	reduplication	uncert.	uncertain
ref.	reference	unkn.	unknown
refl.	reflexive	US	American, in American use
rel.	related	usu.	usually
repr.	representing	v.	verb
rhet.	rhetorical	var.	variant(s)
Rmc	Romanic	voc.	vocative
Rom.	Roman	W	Welsh
Russ.	Russian	wd(s)	word(s)
Sc.	Scottish	Zool.	Zoology
Scand.	Scandinavian	1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person of verb
sing.	singular		
Sinh.	Sinhalese		
Skr.	Sanskrit		
sl.	slang		

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