

**A Dictionary
of New English**

A
DICTIONARY
OF
NEW ENGLISH

Clarence L. Barnhart

Sol Steinmetz

Robert K. Barnhart



Longman

Longman Group Limited
London

Associated companies, branches and
representatives throughout the world.

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PREFACE

This dictionary is a lexical index of the new words of the past decade, a record of the most recent terms required and created by our scientific investigations, our technical and cultural activities, and our social and personal lives. Each entry has one or more quotations of a length sufficient to help convey the meaning and flavor of the term; and pronunciations, etymologies, and usage notes are added in many cases to assist the understanding of a word and its use.

By "New English" we mean those terms and meanings which have come into the common or working vocabulary of the English-speaking world during the period from 1963 to 1972. We chose 1963 as the beginning date since this date marks the termination of the record of new English, except for sporadic examples, in most general dictionaries now available to the general public. The new words and phrases were collected from the reading of over half a billion running words from United States, British, and Canadian sources—newspapers, magazines, and books published from 1963 to 1972. The 5,000 or so new entries and meanings have been selected from over one million quotations in our files. The names of the readers for quotations are given on p. 11; without the work of the readers it would have been impossible to produce this dictionary. Two senior readers, Barbara M. Collins and Andrea B. Olsen, have been especially diligent and expert over a long period of years; we are especially grateful to them for helping us obtain a balanced sampling of words from the vast number of writers and speakers of English.

We have introduced a new type of illustrative reference in this book. Even the best of dictionaries, those that are not satisfied with contriving illustrative sentences and phrases but seek to show usage with authentic material, have long been content to give "citations" showing that a certain word or meaning exists. We have extended our "citations" so that they become "quotations" with enough of the surrounding context to show the way in which the word or meaning is used. It is the environment, as it were, of the word or meaning, that provides an explanation of a word rather than a mere definition. Moreover, by giving a greater amount of context we make this book more useful to the social scientist, the linguist, and the student of literature, and more readable to the average user.

In order that the reader may know the source of a quotation without consulting a bibliography we provide each quotation with a full bibliographical reference.

The editors have benefited greatly from the advice of an international advisory committee of distinguished linguistic scholars, librarians, and teachers. For indication of pronunciation the Committee recommended use of the symbols of a broad transcription of the International Phonetic Association (IPA); we have therefore adapted an IPA pronunciation system under their supervision. Such an international system should facilitate the use of this dictionary throughout the world. Special efforts were made to include words and meanings from both sides of the Atlantic. Two members of the Committee assisted in the labeling of

British and American meanings—Brian Foster and I. Willis Russell. In addition, one of our consulting editors, Anthony Wharton, checked all labels of Britishisms. We hope that we have been reasonably accurate in distinguishing British, American, and Canadian English for the international market. The labeling of regions of use is based on the evidence of current use in our files and is not always evidence of the place of origin of a term. Another member of the Committee, Reason A. Goodwin, has checked each pronunciation and etymology and the grammatical facts given about each entry. The plan of the entire book was submitted to the Committee and all features of it have been considered by them.

We could not have produced this book without the aid of the editorial staff. This is not an individual effort but the work of the same staff that produced the Thorndike-Barnhart dictionaries and the *World Book Dictionary* (to accompany the *World Book Encyclopedia*). We have used here the same professional techniques as for the books we produce for the textbook and general market.

All three editors have read critically every line of this dictionary. In spite of our joint efforts, we may have slipped from time to time—sometimes from lack of complete evidence. We will welcome any corrections or comments on any item; and of course we welcome the submission of new terms for inclusion in future editions. If you should write to us, please give the date, the publication, the title, and the page reference of the quotation or quotations you extract to support your comment. We will welcome information from you and acknowledge it.

In a way this book goes back to Sir William Craigie. Years ago Sir William taught the senior editor, who was then a graduate student at the University of Chicago, the art of collecting citations. Sir William was teaching a course in lexicography, which involved collecting citations for *A Dictionary of American English*. The same methods that Sir William applied to historical dictionaries, have been applied here to show how the vocabulary of English, as used in America and Britain, is currently evolving. We hope that *The Barnhart Dictionary of New English* will be especially useful to all non-native speakers of English reading English newspapers, magazines, and books and encountering neologisms. For native speakers, we hope that it will be a supplement to standard dictionaries and an aid to people interested in or dealing with words: style editors, English scholars, writers, and word enthusiasts.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Contents of the Dictionary

This is a dictionary of new terms and meanings which have become a part of the English common or working vocabulary between 1963 and 1972. It is an informal and necessarily incomplete record of the most important terms of the last ten years. Many new terms have not been included: highly technical or scientific terms used largely in professional work, dialect and slang expressions of limited currency, and nonce or figurative terms created for ephemeral use. Such terms of limited usefulness have not yet become a part of the common vocabulary.

“Common vocabulary” is aptly defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in the section labeled “General Explanations”:

So the English Vocabulary contains a nucleus or central mass of many thousand words whose ‘Anglicity’ is unquestioned; some of them only literary, some of them only colloquial, the great majority at once literary and colloquial,—they are the *Common Words* of the language. But they are linked on every side with other words which are less and less entitled to this appellation, and which pertain ever more and more distinctly to the domain of local dialect, of the slang and cant of ‘sets’ and classes, of the peculiar technicalities of trades and processes, of the scientific terminology common to all civilized nations, of the actual languages of other lands and peoples. And there is absolutely no defining line in any direction: the circle of the English language has a well-defined centre but no discernible circumference. Yet practical utility has some bounds, and a Dictionary has definite limits: the lexicographer must, like the naturalist, ‘draw the line somewhere’, in each diverging direction. He must include all the ‘Common Words’ of literature and conversation, and such of the scientific, technical, slang, dialectal, and foreign words as are passing into common use, and approach the position or standing of ‘common words’, well knowing that the line which he draws will not satisfy all his critics. For to every man the domain of ‘common words’ widens out in the direction of his own reading, research, business, provincial or foreign residence, and contracts in the direction with which he has no practical connexion: no one man’s English is *all* English. The lexicographer must be satisfied to exhibit the greater part of the vocabulary of *each* one, which will be immensely more than the whole vocabulary of any one.

In addition to, and behind, the common vocabulary, in all its diverging lines, lies an infinite number of *Proper* or merely denotative names, outside the province of lexicography, yet touching in thousands of points, at which the names, and still more the adjectives and verbs formed upon them, acquire more or less of connotative value. Here also limits more or less arbitrary must be assumed.¹

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