

# THEO WORD BOOK

BASED ON  
THE AMERICAN  
HERITAGE  
DICTIONARY

40,000

words spelled  
and divided • A  
quick-reference  
guide to the  
most frequently  
used and troub-  
lesome words  
• Many special  
features

**BASED ON  
THE AMERICAN  
HERITAGE  
DICTIONARY**

# **THE WORD BOOK**

compiled  
by

Kaethe Ellis



**Houghton Mifflin** • Boston



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## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

*The Word Book* presents, clearly, succinctly, and in alphabetical order, basic information about the most commonly used words in the English language: how to spell a word, how to divide a word into syllables, and which syllables are stressed when a word is pronounced. Its list of more than 40,000 words is based on *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, a recognized authority on the definition and use of words.

Obsolete, rare, and archaic forms have not been included in *The Word Book*. Many colloquial words and technical and scientific terms, particularly those in common use, have been entered. Proper names and nouns have been omitted unless they appear as part of another, frequently used compound.

Normally, one-syllable words have not been entered, unless they present spelling difficulties, may be confused with another word, have irregular inflected forms, or do not appear elsewhere in the book as part of a compound form.

Many new words may be formed with the addition of a suffix like *-ly* or *-ment*. As a general rule, such forms have been omitted from *The Word Book* unless a change in syllabication, pronunciation stress, or definition occurs.

*The Word Book* also has special features that will save you time and effort: a guide to the formation of plurals, an explanation of the Seven Basic Rules of Spelling, a Sound Map that will aid you in finding words that you know how to pronounce but are not sure how to spell. In addition, there is other useful information: an alphabetical list of the most commonly used abbreviations, an explanation of proofreading symbols, a table of weights and measures, and a guide to the often-confusing metric system.

Though *The Word Book* is simple to use, the following guide will help you make the maximum utilization of its special benefits and features.

## DIVISION OF WORDS

*The Word Book* clearly shows how a word may be divided into syllables. Such divisions are indicated by a centered dot, by an accent mark, or by a hyphen:

ce·ment'

e·vap'o·ra'tion

top'sy-tur'vy

**Note:** Whenever a hyphen is indicated in an entry word, that hyphen is part of the word, and must be retained when the word is used.

At the end of a line of type, a word may be broken wherever a syllable division is indicated. However, it is good English practice to observe these exceptions:

**a.** A syllable consisting of a single letter should not be separated from the rest of the word, as in:

a·bide'

stealth'y

(Many typesetters also consider it bad practice to separate initial or final syllables of two letters, such as the prefix *un-* or the suffix *-er*. If possible, it is better to avoid such divisions.)

**b.** A hyphenated word should be divided only at the hyphen.

## A MATTER OF STRESS

*The Word Book* indicates whenever a syllable is stressed in pronunciation. Two different stress marks are used. The first, a boldface stress, indicates the syllable that receives the primary stress in the word:

cen'ter

le'gal

Normally, only one syllable in a word receives primary stress. However, certain compound words may have more than one primary stress. *The Word Book* will aid you in such cases.

The second mark, a lighter stress, indicates syllables that are not as strong as the one marked with a primary stress, but are still stronger than unmarked syllables:

def'i·ni'tion

re·gen'er·a'tion

At times, syllable stress depends on how a word is used; for example:

rec'ord (noun)

pre·fix' (verb)

re·cord' (verb)

pre'fix' (noun)

*The Word Book* indicates when such a shift in stress occurs; it also indicates whenever a plural form has an added stress or a shift in stress:

for'mu·la *pl.*

-las *or* -lae'

## INFLECTED FORMS

In *The Word Book* all irregular inflected forms have been included at the main entry for that word. These irregular inflected forms include noun plurals; the past tense, past participle, and present participle of verbs; and comparative and superlative forms of adjectives whenever the syllabic division of such a word changes. Such irregular forms—except, of course, in the case of one-syllable entries or forms—have been “clipped,” or shortened, to save space:

ac'ti·vate', -vat'ed,

-vat'ing

brave, brav'er,

brav'est

bring, brought,

bring'ing

ce'cum *pl.* -ca

fly, flew, flown,

fly'ing

po'di·um *pl.* -di·a

*or* -di·ums

swim, swam,

swum, swim'ming

wake, woke,

waked *or* woke

*or* wok'en,

wak'ing



In the above examples, you will notice that verbs may have two or three added inflected forms. If only two forms are given, the first is both the past tense and the past participle (e.g., *brought*); if three forms are given, the first is the past tense, the second the past participle (e.g., *swam*—past tense; *swum*—past participle). If there are alternate forms for inflected forms, these are also shown (e.g., the alternate plurals *-dia* or *-diums* for *podium*; the alternate past participles *waked* or *woke* or *woken* for *wake*).

**Note:** Words chosen for inclusion in *The Word Book* show the most complicated forms of that particular word. Consequently words such as *package* appear as a verb:

pack'age, -aged, -ag·ing

However, *package* is also a noun, and may be used as a modifier, or adjective. In such cases, *The Word Book* includes only the part of speech that has irregular inflected forms, unless the stress pattern or word division changes.

## WORDS LIKELY TO BE CONFUSED OR MISUSED

In *The Word Book*, glosses, or short identifying definitions, are given for all pairs or sets of words that are likely to be confused. If the words are separated alphabetically, cross-references to the other words are included.

Such words fall into three categories:

**a.** Homophones, or words that are pronounced precisely the same, but are spelled differently:

yew (*tree*)

◆ ewe, you

Yule (*Christmas*)

◆ you'll

(**Note:** many such sets of homophones are given even though one of the words, like *you'll*, does not have a separate entry.)

**b.** Words that are likely to be confused because they are closely related in spelling or pronunciation:

ac·cept (*to receive*)

◆ *except*

a·dopt' (*to choose*)

◆ *adapt, adept*

**c.** Troublesome words whose meanings are likely to be misused:

bi·week'ly (*once*

*in two weeks*)

◆ *semiweekly*

sem'i·week'ly

(*twice a week*)

◆ *biweekly*

Should such words fall in regular alphabetical order, only the gloss is shown:

co'co (*palm tree*)

co'coa (*beverage*)

toil (*labor*)

toile (*fabric*)

These glosses will help you quickly identify and locate the work you want. For further information on the usage of words, a dictionary should be consulted.

## VARIANTS

*The Word Book* includes variant spellings of words whenever these different spellings are in common use in English. Such variant spellings appear only at the main entry for that word. If the variants are used almost equally, they appear as follows:

clay'ey *or* clay'ish

For most words, however, one form is preferred over the other:

out'size' *also*

out'sized'

o'ver·all' *also*

o'ver-all'

As noted above in the section on inflected forms, all variant verb forms and plurals are also indicated.

## PREFIXES

Many words that have prefixes like *self-* and *un-* have been included in *The Word Book*, but it is impossible to include all such words. However, most prefixes follow regular rules when they are combined with other words. The following is a brief guide to the most commonly used prefixes.

*Prefix      Compounds are usually formed:*

anti-	Without a hyphen, unless the prefix is followed by a capital letter.
non-	
pre-	
pro-	
semi-	
un-	

out-	Without a hyphen.
over-	

re-	Without a hyphen, unless a distinction must be made between a word in which the prefix means "again" or "anew" and a word that has a special meaning: <i>re-creation</i> and <i>recreation</i> .
-----	---

self-	With a hyphen.
-------	----------------



## A

aard'vark'  
 a·back'  
 ab'a·cus *pl.* -cus·es  
     *or* -ci'  
 a·baft'  
 ab'a·lo'ne  
 a·ban'don  
 a·ban'doned  
 a·base', a·based',  
     a·bas'ing  
 a·bash'  
 a·bate', a·bat'ed,  
     a·bat'ing  
 ab'at·toir'  
 ab'bé  
 ab'bess  
 ab'bey *pl.* -beys  
 ab'bot  
 ab·bre'vi·ate',  
     -at'ed, -at'ing  
 ab·bre'vi·a'tion  
 ab·bre'vi·a'tor  
 ab'di·cate', -cat'ed,  
     -cat'ing  
 ab'di·ca'tion  
 ab'di·ca'tor  
 ab'do·men  
 ab·dom'i·nal  
 ab·duct'  
 ab·duc'tion  
 ab·duc'tor  
 a·beam'  
 a'be·ce·dar'i·an

a·bed'  
 Ab'er·deen' An'gus  
 ab·er'rant  
 ab'er·ra'tion  
 a·bet', a·bet'ted,  
     a·bet'ting  
 a·bet'tor *also*  
     a·bet'ter  
 a·bey'ance  
 ab·hor', -horred',  
     -hor'ring  
 ab·hor'rence  
 ab·hor'rent  
 a·bide', a·bode' *or*  
     a·bid'ed, a·bid'ing  
 a·bil'i·ty  
 ab'ject'  
 ab'jec'tion  
 ab·jure' (*to re-*  
     *nounce*), -jured',  
     -jur'ing  
     ◆ *adjure*  
 ab·la'tion  
 ab'la·tive  
 a·blaze'  
 a'ble  
 a'ble-bod'ied  
 a·bloom'  
 ab·lu'tion  
 Ab·na'ki *pl.* -ki *or*  
     -kis  
 ab'ne·gate', -gat'-  
     ed, -gat'ing  
 ab'ne·ga'tion  
 ab·nor'mal  
 ab'nor·mal'i·ty

a·board'  
 a·bode'  
 a·bol'ish  
 ab'o·li'tion  
 ab'o·li'tion·ar'y  
 ab'o·li'tion·ism'  
 ab'o·li'tion·ist  
 A'-bomb'  
 a·bom'i·na·ble  
 a·bom'i·nate',  
     -nat'ed, -nat'ing  
 a·bom'i·na'tion  
 a·bom'i·na'tor  
 ab'o·rig'i·nal  
 ab'o·rig'i·ne'  
 a·bort'  
 a·bor'tion  
 a·bor'tion·ist  
 a·bor'tive  
 a·bor'tus *pl.* -tus·es  
 a·bound'  
 a·bout'  
 a·bout'-face'  
 a·bove'  
 a·bove'board'  
 ab'ra·ca·dab'ra  
 a·brade', a·brad'ed,  
     a·brad'ing  
 ab·ra'sion  
 ab·ra'sive  
 a·breast'  
 a·bridge',  
     a·bridged',  
     a·bridg'ing  
 a·bridg'er  
 a·bridg'ment

a·broad'  
 ab'ro·gate', -gat'-  
     ed, -gat'ing  
 ab'ro·ga'tion  
 a·brupt'  
 ab'scess'  
 ab·scise', -scised',  
     -scis'ing  
 ab·scis'sa pl. -sas or  
     -sae'  
 ab·scis'sion  
 ab·scond'  
 ab'sence  
 ab'sent  
 ab'sen·tee'  
 ab'sen·tee'ism'  
 ab'sent-mind'ed  
 ab'sinthe  
 ab'so·lute'  
 ab'so·lute'ly  
 ab'so·lu'tion  
 ab'so·lut'ism'  
 ab'so·lut'ist  
 ab'so·lu·tis'tic  
 ab·solv'a·ble  
 ab·solve', -solved',  
     -solv'ing  
 ab·solv'er  
 ab·sorb' (to take in)  
     ◆ *adsorb*  
 ab·sorbed'  
 ab·sorb'en·cy  
 ab·sorb'ent  
 ab·sorp'tion  
 ab·sorp'tive  
 ab·stain'

ab·ste'mi·ous  
 ab·sten'tion  
 ab'sti·nence  
 ab'sti·nent  
 ab·stract' *adj.*  
 ab'stract' *n.*  
 ab·stract' (to re-  
     move)  
 ab'stract' (to sum-  
     marize)  
 ab·stract'ed  
 ab·strac'tion  
 ab·strac'tion·ism'  
 ab·struse'  
 ab·surd'  
 ab·surd'i·ty  
 a·bun'dance *also*  
     a·bun'dan·cy  
 a·bun'dant  
 a·buse', a·bused',  
     a·bus'ing  
 a·bus'er  
 a·bu'sive  
 a·but', a·but'ted,  
     a·but'ting  
 a·but'ment  
 a·but'ter  
 a·bysm'  
 a·bys'mal (*un-  
     fathomable, ex-  
     treme*)  
     ◆ *abyssal*  
 a·byss'  
 a·byss'al (*abysmal,  
     of oceanic depths*)  
     ◆ *abysmal*

Ab'ys·sin'i·an  
 a·ca'cia  
 ac'a·de'mi·a  
 ac'a·dem'ic  
 ac'a·de·mi'cian  
 ac'a·dem'i·cism'  
     *also* a·cad'e·mism'  
 a·cad'e·my  
 A·ca'di·an  
 a·can'thus pl. -thus·  
     es or -thi'  
 a' cap·pel'la  
 ac·cede' (to agree),  
     -ced'ed, -ced'ing  
     ◆ *exceed*  
 ac·ced'ence  
 ac·ced'er  
 ac·cel'er·an'do  
 ac·cel'er·ate',  
     -at'ed, -at'ing  
 ac·cel'er·a'tion  
 ac·cel'er·a'tive  
 ac·cel'er·a'tor  
 ac·cel'er·om'e·ter  
 ac'cent'  
 ac·cen'tu·al  
 ac·cen'tu·ate',  
     -at'ed, -at'ing  
 ac·cen'tu·a'tion  
 ac·cept' (to receive)  
     ◆ *except*  
 ac·cept'a·bil'i·ty  
 ac·cept'a·ble  
 ac·cep'tance  
 ac'cep·ta'tion  
 ac·cept'ed

ac'cess' (*entrance*)◆ *excess*

ac·ces'si·bil'i·ty

ac·ces'si·ble

ac·ces'sion

ac·ces·so'ri·al

ac·ces'so·ry

ac'ci·dence

ac'ci·dent

ac'ci·den'tal

ac'ci·dent-prone'

ac·claim'

ac'cla·ma'tion

(*praise*)◆ *acclimation*

ac·cli'mate,

-mat·ed, -mat·ing

ac'cli·ma'tion

(*adaptation*)◆ *acclamation*

ac·cli'ma·ti·za'tion

ac·cli'ma·tize',

-tized', -tiz'ing

ac·cliv'i·ty

ac'co·lade'

ac·com'mo·date',

-dat'ed, -dat'ing

ac·com'mo·dat'ing

ac·com'mo·da'tion

ac·com'mo·da'tive

ac·com'pa·ni·ment

ac·com'pa·nist

ac·com'pa·ny,

-nied, -ny·ing

ac·com'plice

ac·com'plish

ac·com'plished

ac·com'plish·ment

ac·cord'

ac·cord'ance

ac·cord'ing·ly

ac·cor'di·on

ac·cor'di·on·ist

ac·cost'

ac·count'

ac·count'a·bil'i·ty

ac·count'a·ble

ac·count'ant

ac·count'ing

ac·cou'ter

ac·cou'ter·ment

ac·cred'it

ac·cred'i·ta'tion

ac·cre'tion

ac·cru'al

ac·crue', -crued',

-cru'ing

ac·cul'tur·a'tion

ac·cu'mu·late',

-lat'ed, -lat'ing

ac·cu'mu·la'tion

ac·cu'mu·la'tive

ac·cu'mu·la'tor

ac'cu·ra·cy

ac'cu·rate

ac·curs'ed *also*

ac·curs't'

ac'cu·sa'tion

ac·cu'sa·tive

ac·cuse', -cused',

-cus'ing

ac·cused'

ac·cus'er

ac·cus'tom

ac·cus'tomed

ace

a·cerb'

ac'er·bate', -bat'ed,

-bat'ing

a·cer'bi·ty

ac'e·tate'

a·ce'tic (*of acetic**acid*)◆ *ascetic*

a·cet'i·fy', -fied',

-fy'ing

ac'e·tone'

ac'e·tyl·cho'line'

a·cet'y·lene'

a·ce'tyl·sal'i·cyl'ic

*acid*

ache, ached, ach'ing

a·chieve',

a·chieved',

a·chiev'ing

a·chieve'ment

a·chiev'er

A·chil'les

A·chil'les' heel

ach'ro·mat'ic

ac'id

a·cid'ic

a·cid'i·fi·ca'tion

a·cid'i·fy', -fied',

-fy'ing

a·cid'i·ty

ac'i·do'sis

a·cid'u·lous