



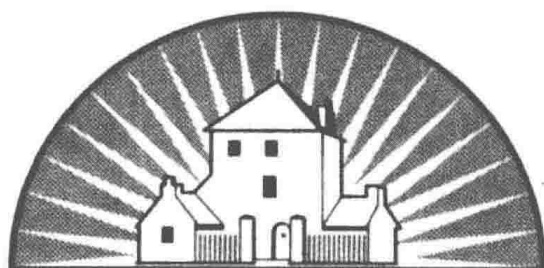
**兰登书屋**  
**韦氏大学英语词典**  
**RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S**  
**COLLEGE DICTIONARY**

**NEW EDITION**

**WITH MORE NEW WORDS  
AND DEFINITIONS**

商务印书馆  
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KDICTIONARIES



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## 兰登书屋韦氏大学英语词典

### Random House Webster's College Dictionary

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# Preface

## An Unrivaled Resource for the Future

Random House Webster's puts the newest words and meanings into your hands—terms you will not find in any other comparable dictionary. Already the established leader in bringing you Newer Words Faster, *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* continues to change and grow with the language after we enter the new millennium.

A significant area of change and growth in English has been the increasing awareness of the offensiveness of terms that refer insultingly to ethnic origin, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation. In 1991, *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* was the first to provide a complete section giving guidance on *Avoiding Sexist Language*. In 1997 this was expanded in content and renamed *Avoiding Insensitive and Offensive Language*. Now, in addition to this invaluable resource, the definitions for offensive terms have been completely rewritten, the labeling of them has been made stronger, and the usage notes that accompany them have been completely revised—

including hundreds of new notes.

The wealth of useful features first provided in this dictionary have been retained. Following this Preface you will find a *Sample Page* giving an at-a-glance guide to the features of this dictionary and an extensive, detailed guide to *Using This Dictionary*. Immediately before the A-Z section, the *Pronunciation Key*, the guide to the pronunciation symbols used throughout the dictionary, appears in a succinct chart for quick, easy reference.

Every effort continues to be expended by the staff of Random House Reference & Information Publishing and K Dictionaries to make every update of this dictionary an improved, more informative version of its predecessors. We launch this new edition of *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* in the hope that it will serve its users as the most reliable, up-to-date guide to information about our vibrant, ever-evolving language, much as the first edition of this dictionary served its users in the 20th century.

# 出版前言

本词典首次出版于1947年，此后每年都坚持修订更新，以其收词全面、释义精准、与时俱进的特点成为北美国家首选的英语工具书，可谓美国辞书界的里程碑之作。它名称中的“大学”并不是指大学生，而是指大学水平，即它适用于具有大学水平的所有读者。1997年，商务印书馆出版该词典的中文版，受到中国英语学习者的追捧。2005年，兰登书屋紧跟时代潮流，在出版了最新纸质版后，决定此后只维护、更新数字版本。10年后的今天，蒙KD公司授权，中国读者有幸重新见到这部真实记录了近几十年英语语言发展变化的词典。

作为一部大型学习型英语词典，本词典主要有以下特点：

**收词全面：**共收录单词、短语、习语等23万余条，涉及政治、经济、科技、文化、教育、法律、环保、医药、天文等诸多领域，涵盖近年来各领域出现的比较稳定的新词新义，可满足广大英语学习者的需求。

**释义精准：**力求用精准而浅显易懂的英文解释词条，保证其准确性和可读性。释义排列遵循常用释义在前，不太常用的或者历史、技术等释义在后的原则，方便读者查阅。对于国家和地名词条，本词典特别给出其地理位置、首都、首府、外国名称等详细信息。

**例证典型：**与有些原版词典不设例句的做法不同，对于有需要的词条，本词典给出了典型例证，突出单词在语境中的实际用法，帮助读者更加准确地理解和使用该单词，也更加适合非英语国家的读者使用。

**功能齐全：**专设“用法说明”“同义词辨析”“发音说明”“词源说明”等栏目，旨在提供更多信息，全方位展示单词用法，供读者参考。

**细节突出：**本词典力求从细微处提升读者的使用体验，如：在词性后列出单词的不规则屈折变化形式；在释义前面给出相应的语法信息，说明单词的固定搭配或特殊用法；在词头部分给出单词的其他相似拼写，等等。

综合以上特点，我们认为，这是一部特别适合非英语国家读者使用的英语词典。它的内容编排、体例设定和版式设计处处体现了内容的实用性、体例的清晰性和使用的便利性，相信读者在使用过程中会更加深刻地体会到这一点。

大型工具书的出版工作异常烦琐，虽然我们在编辑过程中投入了大量人力和精力，力求做到尽善尽美，但是限于时间和能力，词典中难免存在疏漏和错误，敬请广大读者批评指正。

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外语辞书编辑部

# Sample Page

vocabulary entry	<p><b>abacus</b> ['æbəkəs, ə'bækəs] <i>n</i>, <i>pl</i> <b>abacuses</b>, <b>abaci</b> ['æbə'saɪ, -kaɪ, ə'bækai] 1. a device for making arithmetical calculations, consisting of a frame set with rods on which balls or beads are moved. 2. a slab forming the top of the capital of a column. [1350–1400; ME &lt; L: board, counting board, re-formed &lt; Gk <i>ábax</i>]</p> <p><b>abandon</b><sup>1</sup> [ə'bændən] <i>vt</i> 1. to leave completely and finally; forsake utterly; desert: <i>to abandon a child; to abandon a sinking ship</i>. 2. to give up; discontinue; withdraw from: <i>to abandon a project; to abandon hope</i>. 3. to give up the control of: <i>to abandon a city to an enemy army</i>. 4. to yield (oneself) without restraint or moderation, as to emotions or natural impulses: <i>to abandon oneself to grief</i>. 5. to relinquish (insured property) in case of partial loss, so that the insured can claim a total loss. 6. <i>Obs.</i> to banish. [1325–75; ME <i>abando(u)nen</i> &lt; MF <i>abandoner</i> for OF (<i>mettre</i>) <i>a abandon</i> (put) under (someone's) jurisdiction = <i>a at</i>, to (&lt; L <i>ad</i>; see AD-) + <i>bandon</i> &lt; Gmc <i>*band</i>; see BOND<sup>1</sup>] —<b>aban'doner</b>, <i>n</i> —<b>aban'donment</b>, <i>n</i></p> <p><b>abandon</b><sup>2</sup> [ə'bændən] <i>n</i> a complete surrender to natural impulses without restraint or moderation; freedom from constraint: <i>to dance with reckless abandon</i>. [1815–25; &lt; F]</p> <p><b>abecedarian</b> [ˌeɪbɪsi'deəriən] <i>n</i> 1. a person learning the letters of the alphabet. 2. a beginner in any field. — <i>adj</i> 3. of or pertaining to the alphabet. 4. arranged in alphabetical order. 5. rudimentary; elementary. [1595–1605; &lt; ML <i>abecedāriānus</i> = LL <i>abecedāri(us)</i> (<i>a</i> + <i>be</i> + <i>ce</i> + <i>d(e)</i>) + L <i>-ānus</i> -AN<sup>1</sup>]</p> <p><b>abjure</b> [æb'dʒʊər, -'dʒɜr] <i>vt</i> -jured, -juring. 1. to repudiate or retract, esp. with formal solemnity; <i>recant</i>. 2. to renounce or give up under oath; forswear: <i>to abjure allegiance to a country</i>. 3. to refrain from; avoid. [1400–50; &lt; L <i>abjūrāre</i> to deny on oath = <i>ab-</i> AB- + <i>jūrāre</i> to swear; see JURY<sup>1</sup>] —<b>abjur'ato'ry</b>, <i>adj</i> —<b>abjur'er</b>, <i>n</i></p> <p><b>ablator</b> [æ'bleɪtər] <i>n</i> See under ABLATION (def. 3).</p> <p><b>abridgment</b> or <b>abridgement</b> [ə'brɪdʒmənt] <i>n</i> 1. a shortened or condensed form of a book, speech, etc., that still retains the basic contents. 2. the act or process of abridging. 3. the state of being abridged. 4. reduction or curtailment: <i>abridgment of civil rights</i>. [1400–50; late ME &lt; MF]</p> <p><b>acanthus</b> [ə'kæntəs] <i>n</i>, <i>pl</i> -thuses, -thi [-θaɪ] 1. any of several plants of the genus <i>Acanthus</i>, of the Mediterranean region, having spiny or toothed leaves and showy white or purplish flowers. 2. an architectural ornament, as on a Corinthian capital, resembling the leaves of this plant. [1610–20; &lt; NL, L &lt; Gk <i>ákanthos</i> bear's-foot] —<b>acan'thine</b> [-θɪn, -θaɪn] <i>adj</i></p> <p><b>achy</b> ['eɪki] <i>adj</i> <b>achier</b>, <b>achiest</b>. having or suffering from aches: <i>an achy back</i>. [1870–75] —<b>ach'iness</b>, <i>n</i></p> <p><b>act</b> [ækt] <i>n</i> 1. anything done, being done, or to be done; deed: <i>an act of mercy</i>. 2. the process of doing: <i>caught in the act</i>. 3. a formal decision, law, or the like, by a legislature, ruler, court, or other authority; decree or edict; statute: <i>an act of Congress</i>. 4. an instrument or document stating something done or transacted. 5. one of the main divisions of a play or opera. 6. <b>a</b>. a short performance by one or more entertainers, usu. part of a variety show, circus, etc. <b>b</b>. the routine or style by which an entertainer or group of entertainers is known: <i>a magic act</i>. <b>c</b>. the personnel of such a group. 7. a display of insincere behavior assumed for effect; pretense. — <i>vi</i> 8. to do something; carry out an action; exert energy or force. 9. to reach or issue a decision on some matter. 10. to operate or function in a particular way: <i>to act as manager</i>. 11. to produce an effect: <i>The medicine failed to act</i>. 12. to behave or conduct oneself in a particular fashion. 13. to pretend; feign. 14. to perform as an actor. 15. to be capable of being performed: <i>His plays don't act well</i>. — <i>vt</i> 16. to represent (a fictitious or historical character) with one's person: <i>to act Macbeth</i>. 17. to feign; counterfeit: <i>to act outraged virtue</i>. 18. to behave as: <i>to act the fool</i>. 19. to behave in a manner appropriate to: <i>to act one's age</i>. 20. <i>Obs.</i> to actuate. 21. <b>act for</b>, to represent, esp. legally. 22. <b>act on or upon</b>, <b>a</b>. to act in accordance with; follow. <b>b</b>. to have an effect on; affect. 23. <b>act out</b>, <b>a</b>. to illustrate by pantomime or other gestures. <b>b</b>. to express (repressed emotions) inappropriately and without conscious understanding. 24. <b>act up</b>, <b>a</b>. to fail to function properly; malfunction. <b>b</b>. to behave willfully. <b>c</b>. (of a recurring ailment) to become painful or troublesome again. — <b>idiom</b>. 1. <b>clean up one's act</b>, <i>Informal</i>. to begin adhering to more acceptable rules of behavior. 2. <b>get or have one's act together</b>, <i>Informal</i>. to behave or function responsibly and efficiently. [1350–1400; ME (&lt; MF) &lt; L <i>ācta</i>,</p>
homograph number (for words with the same spelling but different origins)	
pronunciation	
parts of speech	
verb inflected forms	
numbered definitions	
cross reference to a hidden entry	
variant spelling	
noun plurals, with variant plural pronounced	
taxonomic name	
adjective inflected forms	
lettered subdefinitions	
example sentences or phrases	
label of time	
phrasal verbs	
idioms	



<b>adagio</b>	
pl. of <i>āctum</i> , n. use of neut. ptp. of <i>agere</i> to drive (cattle), do, perform]	guide words
<b>adagio</b> [əˈdɑdʒoʊ, -ʒi, ʊ] <i>adv, adj, n, pl -gios.</i> — <i>adv</i> 1. <i>Music.</i> in a leisurely manner; slowly. — <i>adj</i> 2. <i>Music.</i> slow. — <i>n</i> 3. an adagio movement or piece of music. 4. a technically demanding ballet movement danced by a man and woman or by a mixed trio. [1740–50; < It, for <i>ad agio</i> at ease; <i>agio</i> < OPr <i>ais</i> or OF <i>aise</i> (see EASE)]	etymology
<b>-al<sup>2</sup></b> , a suffix forming nouns from verbs, usu. verbs of French or Latin origin: <i>denial</i> ; <i>refusal</i> . [< L <i>-āle</i> (sing.), <i>-ālia</i> (pl.), nominalized neut. of <i>-ālis</i> -AL <sup>1</sup> ; often r. ME <i>-aille</i> < OF < L <i>-ālia</i> ]	subject label
<b>AL</b> , 1. Alabama. 2. Anglo-Latin.	suffix
<b>alameda</b> [ˌæləˈmeɪdə] <i>n, pl -das.</i> Chiefly Southwestern U.S. a public walk shaded with trees. [1790–1800; < Sp, der. of <i>álam(o)</i> poplar]	abbreviation
<b>Alameda</b> [ˌæləˈmɪdə, -ˈmeɪ-] <i>n</i> a city in W California.	label of place
<b>Åland Is'lands</b> [ˈɑlənd, ˈɔlənd] <i>n, pl</i> a group of Finnish islands in the Baltic Sea, between Sweden and Finland. 572 sq. mi. (1480 sq. km). Finnish, <i>Ahvenanmaa</i> .	variant pronunciation
<b>All' Fools' Day</b> , <i>n</i> APRIL FOOLS' DAY. [1705–15]	geographical entry (location, area, foreign name)
<b>alright</b> [əˈlaɪt] <i>adv, adj</i> ALL RIGHT. <b>usage</b> The form ALRIGHT as a one-word spelling of the phrase ALL RIGHT in all of its senses probably arose by analogy with such words as <i>already</i> and <i>altogether</i> . Although ALRIGHT is a common spelling in written dialogue and in other types of informal writing, it is often considered incorrect, and ALL RIGHT is used in more formal, edited writing.	cross reference to another entry
<b>ambassador</b> [æmˈbæsədɹɪs] <i>n</i> 1. a woman who is an ambassador. 2. the wife of an ambassador. [1585–95] <b>usage</b> See -ESS.	usage note
<b>ammo'num chlo'ride</b> , <i>n</i> a white, crystalline, water-soluble powder, NH <sub>4</sub> Cl, used chiefly in the manufacture of dry cells and as an expectorant. Also called sal ammoniac. [1865–70]	cross reference to usage note
<b>apocrypha</b> [əˈpɒkrəfə] <i>n</i> (used with a sing. or pl. v.) 1. ( <i>cap.</i> ) a group of books not found in Jewish or Protestant versions of the Old Testament but included in the Septuagint and in Roman Catholic editions of the Bible. 2. various religious writings of uncertain origin. 3. writings or statements of doubtful authenticity. Compare CANON <sup>1</sup> (defs. 5, 6, 8). [1350–1400; ME < LL < Gk, neut. pl. of <i>apókryphos</i> hidden, unknown, spurious]	chemical formula
<b>appli'ance garage</b> , <i>n</i> a kitchen compartment or cabinet designed for housing frequently used small electric appliances. [1985–90]	variant form
<b>Argonaut</b> [ˈɑrgəˌnɒt, -nɒt] <i>n</i> 1. a member of the band of men who sailed to Colchis with Jason in the ship <i>Argo</i> in search of the Golden Fleece. 2. ( <i>sometimes l.c.</i> ) a person in quest of something dangerous but rewarding; adventurer. [< L <i>Argōnauta</i> < Gk <i>Argonautēs</i> crewman of the ship ARGO; see NAUTICAL]	capitalization style
<b>atheist</b> [ˈeɪθɪst] <i>n</i> a person who denies or disbelieves the existence of a supreme being. [1565–75; < Gk <i>áthe(os)</i> godless ( <i>a-</i> A- <sup>6+</sup> - <i>theos</i> , adj. der. of <i>theós</i> god) + -IST] — <i>a'theis'tic</i> , <i>a'theis'tical</i> , <i>adj</i> — <i>a'theis'tically</i> , <i>adv</i> — <b>syn</b> ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, INFIDEL refer to persons lacking religious belief or a particular religious faith. An ATHEIST denies the existence of a deity or of divine beings. An AGNOSTIC believes it is impossible to know whether there is a God without sufficient evidence. An INFIDEL is an unbeliever, esp. one who does not accept Christianity or Islam; the word is usu. pejorative.	grammatical information
<b>athlete</b> [ˈæθlɪt] <i>n</i> a person trained or gifted in exercises or contests involving physical agility, coordination, stamina, or strength. [1520–30; < L <i>āthlēta</i> < Gk <i>āthlētēs</i> , der. of <i>āthleîn</i> to contend for a prize < <i>āthlos</i> contest] — <b>pron</b> ATHLETE, ATHLETIC, and ATHLETICS are normally pronounced [ˈæθlɪt] [æθˈlɛtɪk] and [æθˈlɛtɪks]. The pronunciations [ˈæθəˌlɪt] [ˈæθəˌlɛtɪk] and [ˈæθəˌlɛtɪks] with an unstressed vowel inserted between the first and second syllables, are usu. considered nonstandard.	cross reference to another entry for comparison
	stressed multiple-word entry
	dates for first written occurrence
	lowercase style
	etymological cross reference to dictionary entry
	run-on derived entries
	synonym study
	pronunciation note

# Using This Dictionary

The English language, like any language that is spoken and written every day, is in a constant state of flux. New words are coined and old words take on new meanings. Some words fade out of common usage. The *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, provides a wealth of information about the present state of the language and gives easy access to words that have been in use for centuries as well as those that have become current only within the past few years.

## The Basics

For every term defined in the dictionary, the reader can typically find:

**fajitas** [fəˈhitəz, fə-] *n* (used with a sing. or pl. v.) a Tex-Mex dish of thin strips of marinated and grilled meat, served with tortillas, salsa, etc. [1975–80; < AmerSp, pl. of *fajita* lit., little sash, dim. of Sp *faja* belt, strip, band (orig. dial. or < Catalan < L *fascia* FASCIA)]

### Spelling

- the spelling, including common alternate forms

**blini** ['blini, 'blini] *n*, *pl* blini, blinis. a small yeast-raised pancake, usu. made with buckwheat flour and often served with caviar and sour cream. [< Russ *bliny*, pl. of *blin*; ORuss *blinŭ*]

### Pronunciation

- the pronunciation used in conversational speech, including common alternate pronunciations

**child's' play**, *n* something very easily done. [1350–1400]

### Part of speech

- the part of speech

**booty** ['buti] *n*, *pl* -ties. 1. spoil taken from an enemy in war; plunder; pillage. 2. something that is seized by violence and robbery. 3. any prize or gain. [1425–75; late ME *botye*, var. of *buty* < MLG *bute* booty (orig. a sharing of the spoils); *oo* of BOOT<sup>2</sup>]

### Most common meanings first

- the meaning(s) of the term, with the most common senses listed first
- the less common, historical, or technical senses of the term

**blunder** ['blʌndər] *n* 1. a gross, stupid, or careless mistake. — *vi* 2. to move or act clumsily, stupidly, or seemingly without guidance: *We blundered into the wrong room.* 3. to make a mistake, esp. through carelessness, stupidity, or confusion. — *vt* 4. to bungle; botch. 5. to utter thoughtlessly; blurt out. [1350–1400; ME *blunderen*, *blondren* < ON *blunda* shut one's eyes, nap; cf. Norw dial. *blundra*] — *blun'derer*, *n* — *blun'deringly*, *adv* — *syn* See MISTAKE.

### Word history (etymology)

- the date when the term first appeared in English and its source or relatives in other languages

### Words created from main entry

- other related words that are created from the main word

## Finding the Words You Are Looking For

To help you find the words you are looking for, all the main entries in the dictionary, including abbreviations and biographical and geographical



terms, appear in a single alphabetical list.

Terms are entered in strict letter-by-letter alphabetical order, regardless of whether they are single words, multiple-word phrases, or abbreviations. Names with *Mc* are found under *Mc*, not *Mac*; and names with *St.* are listed under *St.*, not *Saint*. If the first word in an entry is a number, the term is treated as if the number were spelled out.

Words that are spelled identically (homographs) but that differ in historical derivation are given separate main entries and marked with small superscript numbers, as are proper names that have distinctly different types of definitions.

## Variant Forms of the Entry Words

Since the vocabulary of English is rich in alternative forms of words and in alternative terms for the same sense, common variant forms are shown at many entries.

When a variant, usually preceded by “or” or “also,” is shown near the main entry, you may infer that the alternative form occurs in English with almost equal frequency although the more common spelling is given first. If the variant is a different spelling of what is essentially the same word as the main entry, and is pronounced the same way, it is preceded by “or.” If the variant is different enough in form to have a different pronunciation, it is preceded by “also.”

Noun variants substantially different in form from the main-entry term, as *riboflavin* versus *vitamin B<sub>2</sub>*, are preceded by “Also called.”

Variant forms that are less common than the main-entry word are shown later in the entry, preceded by “Often” or “Sometimes.”

All variants are placed to show whether they apply to all definitions of an entry or to only specific meanings.

## Names with *St.* listed under *St.*, rather than under *Saint*

## Number entries listed as if spelled out

## Homographs

## Equal variants

## Different words for the same thing

## Less common variants

## Variant applies to the adjective senses, but not to the noun sense

**St. Moritz** [*ˈsē mouˈrɪts*, *mə-*, *mə-*; *ˈmɔːrɪts*, *ˈmour-*] *n* a resort town in SE Switzerland. 6037 ft. (1840 m) above sea level. German, Sankt Moritz.

**stoa** [*ˈstouə*] *n*, *pl* *stoas*, *stoai* [*ˈstouai*] a portico, usu. detached and of considerable length, used as a promenade or meeting place in ancient Greece. [1595–1605; < Gk *stoá*]

**stoat** [*stout*] *n* the European ermine, *Mustela erminea*, esp. in its brown summer coat. [1425–75; late ME *stote*, of obscure orig.]

**four-hand'ed** or **four-hand'**, *adj* 1. involving four hands or players, as a game at cards. 2. written for four hands, as a piece of music for the piano. [1765–75]

**4-H Club** [*ˈfɔːrtɪf*, *ˈfour-*] *n* an organization sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture chiefly to instruct young people in modern farming methods. [so called from the aim of the organization to improve head, heart, hands, and health] —4-H, *adj* —4-H'er, *n*

**Four Horse'men of the Apoc'alyptse**, *n*, *pl* four horsemen symbolizing pestilence, war, famine, and death. Rev. 6:2–8.

**Paris**<sup>1</sup> [*ˈpærɪs*; *Fr. paˈri*] *n* the capital of France, in the N part, on the Seine.

**Paris**<sup>2</sup> [*ˈpærɪs*] *n* a Trojan prince, son of Priam and Hecuba, whose abduction of Helen led to the Trojan War.

**ameba** or **amoeba** [*əˈmɪbə*] *n*, *pl* -bas, -bae. 1. any of numerous one-celled aquatic or parasitic protozoa of the order Amoebida, having a jellylike mass of cytoplasm that forms temporary pseudopodia, by which the organism moves and engulfs food particles. 2. a protozoan of the genus *Amoeba*, inhabiting bottom vegetation of freshwater ponds and streams; used widely in laboratory studies. [1875–80; < NL *amoeba* < Gk *amoibē* change, alteration, *n*. der. of *ameibein* to exchange] —ame'bic, *adj* —ame'boid, *adj*

**exploratory** [*ɪkˈsplɒrəˌtɔːri*, -'sploʊrəˌtɔːri] also **explor'ative**, *adj* pertaining to or concerned with exploration: *exploratory surgery*. [1425–75; late ME < L] —explor'atively, *adv*

**riboflavin** [*ˌraɪboʊˈfleɪvɪn*, *ˌraɪboʊˈfleɪ-*, -bæ-] *n* a vitamin B complex factor essential for growth, occurring as a yellow crystalline compound, C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>20</sub>N<sub>4</sub>O<sub>6</sub>, abundant in milk, meat, eggs, and leafy vegetables and produced synthetically. Also called *vitamin-B<sub>2</sub>*. [< G (1935); see RIBO-, FLAVIN]

**symbolic** [*sɪmˈbɒlɪk*] *adj* 1. serving as a symbol of something (often fol. by *of*). 2. of, pertaining to, or expressed by a symbol. 3. characterized by or involving the use of symbols: *a highly symbolic poem*. Often, symbol'ical. [1650–60; < LL *symbolicus* < Gk *symbolikós*. See SYMBOL, -IC] —symbol'ically, *adv*

**endocrine** [*ˈendəkrɪn*, -ˌkrɪn, -ˌkrɪn] *adj* Also, **endocrinal** [*ˈendəˈkrɪnəl*, -ˌkrɪnəl] 1. secreting internally into the blood or lymph. 2. of or pertaining to an endocrine gland or its secretion. — *n* 3. ENDOCRINE GLAND. Compare EXOCRINE. [1910–15; ENDO- + -crine < Gk *krinein* to separate]

x Using This Dictionary

**odor** ['oʊdə] *n* 1. the property of a substance that activates the sense of smell: *a beautiful flower with an unpleasant odor*. 2. a sensation perceived by the sense of smell; scent. 3. a quality or property characteristic or suggestive of something: *an odor of suspicion*. 4. repute: *in bad odor with one's creditors*. 5. *Archaic*. something that has a pleasant scent. Also, *esp. Brit.*, odour. [1250–1300; ME < OF < L] —o'dorful, *adj* —o'dorless, *adj*

Variant applies to the entire entry

**blamable** or blameable ['bleiməbəl] *adj* deserving blame; censurable. [1350–1400]—blam'ably, *adv*

**prus'sic ac'id** ['prʌsɪk] *n* HYDROCYANIC ACID.

A variant as a main entry

In many cases, a variant form is listed as a main entry at its own alphabetical place and cross-referred to the more common form. Such cross references direct you to the entry with the definition and are normally shown in small capital letters. Not all variant forms have their own separate main entries, however. If you cannot find the term you are looking for, look nearby on the page to see whether it is shown as a variant at another main entry; for example, you will find *orangey* not as a main entry after *orangewood* but at *orangy*.

**Argo** ['ɑrgoʊ] *n gen.* Argus ['ɑrgəs] for def. 1. 1. a very large southern constellation, now divided into four, lying south of Canis Major. 2. (*italics*) the ship in which Jason sailed in quest of the Golden Fleece.

Italicized sense

When an italicized form applies only to a particular definition, the main entry remains in roman and the definition itself is labeled "(italics)."

**pantheon** ['pænθiən, -ən *or, esp. Brit.*, pæn'θiən] *n* 1. a public building containing tombs or memorials of the illustrious dead of a nation. 2. the realm of the heroes or idols of any group, movement, etc.: *a place in the pantheon of American literature*. 3. a temple dedicated to all the gods. 4. the gods of a particular mythology considered collectively. 5. (*cap.*) a domed circular temple in Rome, completed A.D. 120–124 by Hadrian, used as a church since A.D. 609. [1375–1425; late ME *panteon* < L *Panthēon* < Gk *Pántheion*, *n.* use of neut. of *pántheios* of all gods] —pan'theon'ic, *adj*

Capitalized sense

If a word is spelled with a capital letter when used in a specific sense, this is noted at the beginning of the definition with the label (*cap.*). Similarly, when a word that is usually capitalized would not be capitalized for a specific sense, this is indicated by the label (*l.c.*) (lower case).

**Puritan** ['pyʊərɪtɪn] *n* 1. a member of a group of Protestants that arose in the 16th century within the Church of England, demanding the simplification of doctrine and worship and greater strictness in religious discipline. 2. (*l.c.*) a person who is strict in moral or religious matters. —*adj* 3. of or pertaining to the Puritans. 4. (*l.c.*) puritanical. [1540–50; < LL *pūrit(ās)* PURITY]

Lower-case sense

**off'** (or Off') **Broad'way**, *n* professional drama produced in New York City in small theaters usu. outside the Broadway area. [1950–55, *Amer.*] —off'-Broad'way, *adj, adv*

Variant applies to part of entry term

Parentheses enclose a variation that applies to a limited portion of the entry; thus *off (or Off) Broadway* indicates that the first word may be spelled either with or without a capital letter.

**chew** [tʃu] *vt* 1. to crush or grind with the teeth; masticate. 2. to tear or mangle, as if by chewing (often *fol. by up*): *The sorting machine chewed up the letters*. 3. to make by or as if by chewing: *The puppy chewed a hole in the rug*. 4. to meditate on; consider at length (often *fol. by over*): *to chew a problem over*. —*vi* 5. to perform the act of masticating. 6. *Informal*. to chew tobacco, *esp. habitually*. 7. *chew out*, *Slang*. to scold harshly. —*n* 8. an act or instance of chewing. 9. something chewed or intended for chewing. —*idiom*. 1. *chew the fat or rag*, *Informal*. to converse in a relaxed

Idioms

Finding Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

Idioms are fixed expressions whose meanings are not predictable from the usual senses of their component words. In this dictionary, idioms appear in boldface type, listed in alphabetical order in a single block of labeled definitions following all other definitions in the entry. Optional words in idioms are shown in parentheses, as in *out at (the) elbows*.

A phrasal verb combines a verb and one or more adverbs or prepositions, like *up*, *over*, or *out*. Such a verb construction (for example, *take over*, *put up with*, or *eat out*) forms a single vocabulary unit with a meaning that is often not predictable from the sum of its parts. Phrasal verbs are shown in boldface type and placed together as the final group of verb definitions in an entry.

When an entry word is typically followed by a particular word for a given meaning, that information is often shown in parentheses at the end of the definition. Often, an italicized example will illustrate the typical grammatical context in which a word is used.

## Meanings Within the Entries

The various definitions within an entry indicate how the word is used now and how it was used in the past. In searching for a particular sense of a word, keep in mind that within each part-of-speech group, the most common meanings generally come before those that are encountered less frequently. Specialized senses follow those that are part of the general vocabulary. Archaic or obsolete senses are listed last. This order may be modified slightly when it is desirable to group related meanings together.

Numbered definitions are sometimes divided into lettered subdefinitions so that related meanings can be grouped together.

## Phrasal verbs

## Entry word often followed by a specified word

## Specialized meanings follow common ones

## Archaic or obsolete meanings listed last

## Subdefinitions

or aimless manner. 2. **chew the scenery**, to overact. [bef. 1000; OE *cēowan*, c. MLG *keuwen*, OHG *kiuwan*]—*chew'er, n*

**eat** [it] *v* **ate** [eit; *esp. Brit. et*] **eaten** ['itn], *eating*.—*vt* 1. to take into the mouth and swallow for nourishment; chew and swallow (food). 2. to consume gradually; wear away; corrode. 3. to use up, *esp. wastefully* (often fol. by *away*, *into*, or *up*): *Unexpected expenses ate up their savings*. 4. to make (a hole, passage, etc.), as by gnawing or corrosion. 5. to ravage or devastate. 6. to absorb or pay for: *The builder had to eat the cost of the repairs*. 7. to cause anxiety or irritation in; worry; bother: *What's eating you now?*—*vi* 8. to consume food; have a meal. 9. to make a way, as by gnawing or corrosion: *Acid ate through the linoleum*. 10. **eat in**, to eat or dine at home. 11. **eat out**, to have a meal at a restaurant rather than at home. 12. **eat up**, *a.* to consume wholly. *b.* to show enthusiasm for; take pleasure in. *c.* to believe without question. —*n* 13. *eats*, *Informal*. food. [bef. 900; ME; OE *etan*]—*eat'er, n*

**refrain'** [rɪ'freɪn] *vi* 1. to keep oneself from doing or saying something (often fol. by *from*). —*vt* 2. *Archaic*. to curb. [1300–50; ME *refreinen* < OF *refrener* < L *refrēnāre* to rein in, restrain = *re-* RE- + *frēnāre*, *v.* der. of *frēnum* bridle]—*refrain'ment, n*

**proposition** [ˌprɒpə'zɪʃən] *n* 1. the act of proposing. 2. a plan or scheme proposed. 3. an offer of terms for a transaction, as in business. 4. a thing, matter, or person considered as something to be dealt with or encountered: *a tough proposition*. 5. anything stated for discussion or illustration. 6. *Logic*. a statement in which something is affirmed or denied, so that it can therefore be significantly characterized as either true or false. 7. *Math.* a formal statement of either a truth to be demonstrated or an operation to be performed; a theorem or a problem. 8. a proposal of usu. illicit sexual relations. —*vi* 9. to propose sexual relations to. 10. to propose a plan, deal, etc., to. —*prop'osi'tional, adj*

**nice** [naɪs] *adj* *nicer, nicest*. 1. pleasing; agreeable; delightful: *a nice visit*. 2. amiable; pleasant; kind: *to be nice to strangers*. 3. requiring or displaying great skill, tact, or precision: *a nice handling of a crisis*. 4. indicating very small differences; minutely accurate, as instruments or measurements. 5. minute, fine, or subtle: *a nice distinction*. 6. having or showing delicate perception: *a nice sense of color*. 7. refined in manners, language, etc. 8. virtuous; respectable; decorous. 9. suitable or proper: *a nice wedding*. 10. carefully neat in dress, habits, etc. 11. having fastidious or fussy tastes. 12. *Obs.* coy, shy, or reluctant. 13. *Obs.* wanton. —*idiom.* *nice and*, (used as an intensifier to indicate sufficiency, pleasure, comfort, or the like): *It's nice and warm in here*. [1250–1300; ME: foolish, stupid < OF: silly, simple < L *nescius* ignorant, incapable = *ne-* negative prefix + *scius*, *adj.* der. of *scīre* to know; cf. *SCIENCE*]—*nice'ly, adv*—*nice'ness, n*

**potential** [pə'tenʃəl] *adj* 1. possible, as opposed to actual: *the potential uses of nuclear energy*. 2. capable of being or becoming: *a potential danger*. 3. (esp. of a verb phrase, verb form, or mood) expressing possibility, as by using the auxiliaries *can* or *may*. 4. *Archaic*. *POTENT'*. —*n* 5. possibility; potentiality: *an investment that has little growth potential*. 6. a latent excellence or ability that may or may not be developed. 7. *Physics*. *a.* a scalar quantity equal to the work done in moving a body from a standard reference point to a given point in a field of force. *b.* a scalar quantity equal, at a given point in an electric field, to the work done in moving a unit charge to an infinite distance from the field's origin. [1350–1400; ME *potencial* (< OF) < LL *potentiālis*. See *POTENCY*, *-AL'*]—*poten'tially, adv*

**ver'tical mobil'ity**, *n* movement from one social level to a higher one (upward mobility) or a lower one (downward mobility).

Hidden entries

Sometimes, related words are defined within the entry and displayed as separate terms within parentheses in boldface type (hidden entries).

Grammar: Parts of Speech and Inflections

Parts of Speech

The italicized, abbreviated label, like *n* or *adj*, that precedes a definition or group of definitions shows what class of words—or part of speech—the entry word belongs to when it is used in those senses.

For verb definitions, the label *vt* is used for transitive verbs (verbs that take an object) and the label *vi* is used for intransitive verbs (verbs that do not take an object). Occasionally, a combined *vt, vi* label will be used when the definition covers both transitive and intransitive uses.

**ski** [ski] *n, pl* skis, ski, *v* — *n* 1. one of a pair of long, slender runners made of wood, plastic, or metal used in gliding over snow. 2. WATER SKI. — *vi* 3. to travel on skis, as for sport. — *vt* 4. to use skis on; travel on skis over. [1745–55; < Norw; ON *skīth*, c. OE *scīd* strip of wood, OHG *scīt*] —ski'able, *adj*

Transitive and intransitive definitions separate

**cablecast** ['keɪbəl kæst, -kast] *n, v* -cast or casted, casting. — *n* 1. a television broadcast via cable television. — *vt, vi* 2. to broadcast via cable television. [1965–70; CABLE + (BROAD)CAST]

Transitive and intransitive definitions combined

**unite**<sup>1</sup> [yu'nart] *v* -united, uniting. — *vt* 1. to join, combine, or incorporate so as to form a single whole or unit. 2. to cause to adhere. 3. to cause to be in a state of mutual sympathy, or to have a common opinion or attitude. 4. to have or exhibit in combination, as qualities. — *vi* 5. to become or form a single whole. 6. to be or act in agreement; have a common goal, attitude, etc. 7. to be joined by or as if by adhesion. [1400–50; late ME < L *ūnītus*, ptp. of *ūnīre* to join together, unite, der. of *ūnus*] —unit'er, *n* —syn See JOIN.

General v label

A general *v* label is used:

- in summaries of inflected forms, when transitivity is indicated at a following numbered definition
- for undefined listed entries that are both transitive and intransitive
- at the main entry for a verb inflection
- at the beginning of a group of idioms or phrasal verb definitions when these are the only verb definitions

Inflections

Inflections are forms such as plurals of nouns, past-tense forms of verbs, and the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives.

NOUNS

Plurals are given for:

- (1) nouns ending in a -y that changes to -ies when the plural is formed
- (2) nouns ending in -ey
- (3) nouns with plurals that are not native English formations
- (4) nouns with a plural identical to the singular
- (5) nouns that change their internal spellings to form the plural
- (6) phrases or compounds where there is a question as to which element is pluralized
- (7) nouns ending in -a, -e (but not

**sally** ['sæli] *n, pl* -lies, *v* — *n* 1. a sortie of troops from a besieged place against an enemy. 2. a sudden rushing forth. 3. an excursion or side trip. 4. an outburst of passion, flight of fancy, etc. 5. a witty remark; quip. — *vi* 6. to make a sally, as a body of troops from a besieged place. 7. to set out, as on an excursion; venture (often fol. by *forth*).

Noun ending -y

**alumna** [ə'lamnə] *n, pl* -nae, a woman who is a graduate or former student of a specific school, college, or university. [1880–85, Amer.; < L: foster daughter, pupil; fem. of ALUMNUS] **usage** See ALUMNUS.

Latin plural form

**sheep** [ʃip] *n, pl* sheep. 1. any of several ruminant mammals, esp. of the genus *Ovis*, closely related to goats, esp. the domesticated *O. aries*. 2. leather made from the skin of these animals. 3. a meek, unimaginative, or easily led person...

Noun with identical singular and plural

**louse** [n laʊs; v also laʊz] *n, pl* lice, for defs. 1–3, louses for def. 4, *v* — *n* 1. any of various small, flat, wingless

Noun changes internal spelling

"silent *e*"), *-i*, *-o*, or *-u*, or in *-ful* or *-us*

- (8) nouns ending in elements that might be expected to form their plurals irregularly
- (9) nouns whose plurals change the pronunciation of a consonant

All plurals are shown whenever a term can have more than one form of the plural.

If a noun that might appear to be plural in form (such as *gymnastics*) can be used with a singular or plural verb, this is indicated in parentheses preceding the definition.

## PRONOUNS

The entire paradigm of inflections is shown at nominative pronouns.

## VERBS

Inflected forms are shown for verbs, in this order:

- past tense
- past participle (where this differs from the past tense)
- present participle

## ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Inflections are given for all adjectives and adverbs that form the comparative and superlative by adding *-er* and *-est*.

## Derived Entries

When the meaning of a term can be derived from the sum of its parts, the dictionary may show the term without defining it—either by running it on at the end of the entry to which it is related or by including it in a separate list of words, all of which begin with the same prefix. Prefixes and suffixes used in forming derived entries are also listed as main entries, where their meanings are explained.

Derived run-on entries are placed at the end of the entry. Entries sharing the same meaning are listed within the set in order of frequency, with the most common form first.

Lists of undefined entries are shown using some common prefixes. In these lists, the words are formed by adding a prefix to the base word. The words can be understood by adding one of the meanings of the prefix to the meaning of the base word. These lists start at the bottom of the dictionary page where the prefix is entered and extend to the following pages.

## Pronunciation of consonant changes

## Noun used with singular or plural verb depending on sense

## Inflections for nominative pronoun

## Inflections for irregular verb

## Inflections for adjective

## Undefined (derived) entries

## Run-ons in a set share a meaning

insects of the order Anoplura, with sucking mouthparts, that are parasitic on humans and other mammals...

**house** [*n*, *adj* haus; *v* hauz] *n*, *pl* houses ['hauzɪz], *v* housed, housing, *adj* — *n* 1. a building in which people live; residence. 2. a household. 3. (*often cap.*) a family, including ancestors and descendants: *the House of Hapsburg*. 4. a building, enclosure, or other construction for any of various purposes (*usu.* used in combination): *a clubhouse*; *a doghouse*. 5. a theater, concert hall, or auditorium. 6. the audience of a theater or the like...

**gymnastics** [dʒɪm'næstɪks] *n* 1. (*used with a pl v*) physical exercises that develop and demonstrate strength, balance, and agility, esp. such exercises performed mostly on special equipment. 2. (*used with a sing v*) the practice, art, or competitive sport of such exercises. 3. (*used with a pl v*) a. mental or creative feats of skill: *verbal gymnastics*. b. agile or strenuous physical maneuvers, as in moving oneself along a difficult course. [1645–55]

**she** [ʃi] *pron*, *sing. nom.* she, *poss.* her or hers, *obj.* her. — *pron* 1. the female person or animal being discussed or last mentioned; that female. 2. the woman: *She who listens learns*. 3. anything considered, as by personification, to be feminine: *spring, with all the memories she conjures up*. — *n* 4. a female person or animal. 5. an object or device considered as female or feminine...

**sow**<sup>1</sup> [soʊ] *v* sowed, sown or sowed, sowing. — *vt* 1. to scatter (seed) over land, earth, etc., for growth; plant. 2. to scatter seed over (land, earth, etc.) for the purpose of growth. 3. to implant, introduce, or promulgate; disseminate: *to sow distrust or dissension*. 4. to strew or sprinkle with anything. — *vi* 5. to sow seed, as for the production of a crop...

**surlly** ['sɜrli] *adj* -lier, -liest. 1. sullenly rude or bad-tempered. 2. unfriendly or hostile; menacingly irritable: *a surlly old lion*. 3. dark or dismal: *a surlly sky*. 4. *Obs.* lordly; arrogant. [1560–70; sp. var. of *obs.* *sirly* lordly = *SIR* + *-LY*] — *sur*'lily, *adv* — *sur*'liness, *n*

**cavalier** [kævə'liə, 'kævə'liə] *n*, *adj* — *n* 1. a horseman, esp. a mounted soldier; knight. 2. one having the spirit or bearing of a knight; a courtly gentleman; gallant. 3. the male escort or dancing partner of a woman. 4. (*cap.*) an adherent of Charles I of England in his dispute with Parliament. — *adj* 5. haughty, disdainful, or supercilious. 6. casual; lighthearted. 7. (*cap.*) of or pertaining to Cavaliers or Cavalier poets. [1590–1600; < MF: horseman, knight < It *cavaliere* < OPr < LL *caballārius*, der. of *caball(us)* horse] — *cav*'alier'ism, *cav*'alier'ness, *n* — *cav*'alier'ly, *adv*

**astrology** [ə'strɒlədʒi] *n* 1. the study that assumes and attempts to interpret the influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs. 2. *Obs.* astronomy. [1325–75; ME < L *astrologia* < Gk. See *ASTRO*-, *-LOGY*] — *astro*'log'er, *n* — *astro*'logical [æ'strɒ'lɒdʒɪkəl], *as*'trolog'ic, *astro*'logous [-gəs] *adj* — *as*'trolog'ically, *adv*

**anti-**, a prefix meaning "against, opposed to, prejudicial to" (*anti-abortion*; *anti-Semitic*; *antislavery*), "preventing, counteracting, or mitigating" (*anticoagulant*; *antifreeze*), "destroying or disabling" (*antiaircraft*; *antipersonnel*), "identical to in form or function, but lacking, opposite, or contrary in essential respects" (*antichlimax*; *antihero*; *antiparticle*), "an antagonist or rival of" (*Antichrist*; *antipope*), "situated opposite" (*Anti-Lebanon*). Also, *before a vowel*, *anti-*. [ME < L < Gk, prefixal use of *anti*; akin to *AND*]



an`timil`itarism, *n*  
an`timil`itar'y, *adj*  
an`timis`cegena'tion, *n*, *adj*  
an`timod`ern, *adj*, *n*  
an`timod`ernism, *n*  
an`timon`archist, *n*, *adj*

List words  
formed with  
prefix *anti-*

**rational** ['ræʃənl, 'ræʃnl] *adj* 1. based on or agreeable to reason: *a rational decision*. 2. exercising reason: *a rational negotiator*. 3. sane; lucid: *The patient seems rational*. 4. *Math. a.* capable of being expressed exactly by a ratio of two integers. *b.* (of a function) capable of being expressed exactly by a ratio of two polynomials. — *n* 5. RATIONAL NUMBER. [1350–1400; ME *racional* < L *ratio*nālis=*ratio*n- (s. of *ratio*) REASON+-ālis -AL'] —*ra'tionally*, *adv*

Mathematical  
definition

**allegro** [ə'leɪgroʊ, ə'leɪgroʊ] *adj*, *adv*, *n*, *pl* -gros. *Music.* — *adj*, *adv* 1. brisk or rapid in tempo. — *n* 2. an **allegro movement**. [1625–35; < It < L *alacer* brisk. Cf. ALACRITY]

Musical term

**buttery**<sup>2</sup> ['batəri, 'batri] *n*, *pl* -teries. 1. *Chiefly New Eng.* a storeroom for provisions, wines, and liquors; pantry or larder. 2. *Brit.* a room in a college or university where students may buy food and drink. [1350–1400; ME *boterie* < AF, prob. der. of *bote* BUTT<sup>4</sup>]

U.S. Regional  
label

British label

**agin** [ə'ɡɪn] *prep Dial.* against; opposed to. [1815–25]

General dialect  
label

**cleanly** [adj 'klɛnli; adv 'klin-] *adj* -lier, -liest, *adv* — *adj* 1. personally neat. 2. habitually kept clean. 3. *Obs.* cleansing; making clean. — *adv* 4. in a clean manner. [bef. 900]—*cleanliness* ['klɛnlinɪs] *n*

Obsolete  
sense

**clepe** [klɪp] *vt* cleped or clept (also ycleped or yclept), cleping. *Archaic.* to call; name. [bef. 900; ME; OE *cleopian*, var. of *clipian*; akin to MLG *kleperen* to rattle]

Archaic term

**grippe** [ɡrɪp] *n Older Use.* INFLUENZA. [1770–80; < F *gripper* to seize < Gmc; akin to GRIP, GRIPE] — *grip'py*, *adj* -pier, -piest.

Older usages

**flivver** ['flɪvər] *n Older Slang.* an automobile, esp. one that is small, inexpensive, and old. [1905–10, *Amer.*; orig. uncert.]

**no'-no'**, *n*, *pl* -nos, -no's. *Informal.* anything that is forbidden or not advisable, as because of being improper or unsafe. [1940–45]

Informal word

**nohow** ['nou haʊ] *adv Nonstandard.* in no case; in no way. [1765–75]

Nonstandard  
term

**hash' house'**, *n Slang.* a cheap restaurant or diner. [1865–70]

Slang terms

**humongous** [hyu'mʌŋɡəs, -'mʌŋ-; often yu-] also humungous, *adj Slang.* extraordinarily large. [1965–70, *Amer.*; expressive coinage, perh. reflecting HUGE and MONSTROUS, with stress pattern of TREMENDOUS]

Descriptive Labels

An italicized label preceding a definition or a group of definitions indicates that the word's use is limited in some way.

Subject Labels

Entries or definitions restricted in use to a particular field are given an appropriate label.

Labels of Place

Entries or definitions limited in use to a particular geographical location are given a regional label. A few terms too widespread to warrant specific geographical restriction or with a somewhat rural flavor are labeled "*Dial.*"

Labels of Time

To distinguish among terms in contemporary use and terms of historical interest, the following labels are used:

*Obs.* (Obsolete) Not in widespread use since about 1750, but often encountered in literature written before then.

*Archaic.* Current roughly up to 1900, but now employed only as a conscious archaism.

*Older Use.* Commonly used in the early part of the 20th century.

Labels of Style or Status

For entries not part of the standard vocabulary, these labels are given to aid in making useful judgments about the setting in which a term is appropriate, the kind of speaker who might use it, the kind of communication intended, and the likely effect on the listener or reader.

*Informal.* Not likely to occur in formal prepared speech or carefully edited writing except when used intentionally to convey a casual tone.

*Nonstandard.* Not conforming to the speech or grammar of educated people and often regarded as a marker of low social status.

*Slang.* Often metaphorical. Much slang is ephemeral, becoming dated in a relatively short time, but some slang terms find their way into the standard language. Slang terms are used in formal speech and writing only for special effect.



**Vulgar.** Considered inappropriate in many circumstances because of association with a taboo subject.

**Disparaging.** Used with disparaging intent, as to belittle a particular racial, religious, or social group.

**Offensive.** Likely to be perceived as offensive whether or not any offense was intended.

**Facetious.** Used consciously for humorous or playful effect.

**Baby Talk.** Thought to be used by small children and therefore used by adults in imitation of a child, as in speaking to babies or pets.

**Literary.** Used in contemporary speech or writing to create a poetic, evocative effect.

**Eye Dialect.** Used for deliberate misspellings in literature intended to convey a character's lack of education or habitual use of dialectal pronunciations, but in fact representing perfectly standard pronunciations.

**Pron. Spelling.** Terms with this label, which stands for Pronunciation Spelling, differ from those labeled "Eye Dialect" in that they are intended to convey not lack of education, but merely continuous rapid speech, and are often encountered in fiction.

## Etymologies

Etymologies (word histories) appear in square brackets after the definitions.

When words that could plausibly be derived within English are in fact loanwords, a skeleton etymology is given that, to save space, usually omits the actual forms in question. Hence, a full etymology is given for *elect*, but *election*, *elective*, and *elector* have the skeleton etymologies [ME < AF < L], [< ML], and [late ME < LL].

## Symbols and Abbreviations

The following symbols and abbreviations occur with particular frequency in the etymologies.

< This symbol, meaning "from," is placed before a language label (for example, < OF ... < L ... < Gk) in order to indicate from what language and in what form a word has entered English and to trace the line of descent from one pre-English source to another.

« This symbol is used to show descent from one language to another but with

**Vulgar word** — **carpper** [krap'er], *n* *Slang* (vulgar). a toilet or bathroom. [1930-35]

**Disparaging term** — **comsymp** ['kɒm,sɪmp] *n* (sometimes *cap.*) *Disparaging.* a person who sympathizes with communists. [1960-65; *com*(munist) *symp*(athizer)]

**Offensive term** — **girlie** ['gɜːli] *Slang.* — *adj* 1. featuring nude or scantily clad young women: *a girlie show; girlie magazines.* — *n* 2. *Offensive.* a girl or woman (often used as a term of address). [1855-60]

**Facetious usage** — **couth** [kuθ] *Facetious.* — *adj* 1. showing or having good manners or sophistication; smooth. — *n* 2. good manners; refinement: *to be lacking in couth.* [1895-1900; back formation from UNCOUTH]

**Baby talk** — **doo-doo** ['duːduː] *n* *Baby Talk.* feces; excrement.

**Literary usages** — **e'en** [ɪn] *adv* *Chiefly Literary.* even. [1250-1300; ME]

**drear** [driə] *adj* *Chiefly Literary.* dreary. [1620-30]

**Eye dialect** — **luv** [lʌv] *n* *Eye Dialect.* love.

**Pronunciation spellings** — **gonna** ['ɡɒnə; unstressed ɡənə] *Pron. Spelling.* going to (where *to* introduces an infinitive): *I'm gonna leave now.*

**gimme** ['ɡɪmi] *n, pl* -mes, -mies. 1. *Pron. Spelling.* give me. — *n* 2. the gimmes or gimmies, *Slang.* avarice; greed. [1880-85]

**Skeleton etymologies** — **elect** [1250-1300; ME < L *ēlēctus*, ptp. of *ēligere* to select, pick out = *ē-* E- + *-ligere*, comb. form of *legere* to gather]

**election** [1225-75; ME < AF < L]

**elective** [1520-30; < ML]

**elector** [1425-75; late ME < LL]

**Use of the symbol <** — **diadem** [1250-1300; ME *diademe* (< AF) < L *diadēma* < Gk *diādēma* fillet, band]

**Earlier forms of a word in the same language** — **madder**<sup>1</sup> [bef. 1000; ME *mad(d)er*, OE *mæd(e)re*]

**Use of the symbol «** — **crimson** [1375-1425; < ML *cremesīnus* « Ar *qirmizī* (*qirmiz* KERMES+*-ī* suffix of appurtenance) + L *-īnus* -INE<sup>1</sup>]

**fag<sup>1</sup>**

[1425–75; late ME *fagge* broken thread in cloth, loose end, drooping end > to droop, tire > to make weary > drudgery, drudge; (def. 6) a shortening of FAG END]

Use of the symbol >

**avarice**

[1250–1300; ME < OF < L *avāritia*=*avār(us)* greedy +*-itia* -ICE]

Use of the symbol =

**boron**

[1805–15; BOR(AX<sup>1</sup>) + (CARB)ON]

Use of the symbol +

**iniquity**

[1300–50; ME < L *inīquitās* unevenness, unfairness =*inīqu(us)* uneven (*in-* IN-<sup>3</sup>+*-īquus*, comb. form of *aequus* even, EQUAL) +*-itās* -ITY]

Use of the abbreviation *der. of*

**bleed**

[bef. 1000; ME *bleden*, OE *blēdan*, der. of *blōd* BLOOD]

**bacon**

[1300–50; ME *bacoun* < AF; OF *bacon* < Gmc *\*bakōn-* (OHG *bacho* back, ham, bacon), der. of *\*baka-* BACK<sup>1</sup>; cf. MD *bake* bacon]

Use of the symbol\*

**beauty**

[1225–75; ME *be(a)ute*, *bealte* < OF *beaute*, early OF *beltet* < VL *\*bellitātem*, acc. of *\*bellitās*= L *bell(us)* fine +*-itās* -ITY]

**transceiver**

[1935–40; TRANS (MITTER) + (RE) CEIVER]

Lost or replaced elements

**orbicular**

[1375–1425; late ME < LL *orbiculāris* circular = L *orbicul(us)* small disk (*orbi(s)* ORB+*-culus* -CLE<sup>1</sup>) +*-āris* -AR<sup>1</sup>]

Ellipsis

**columbine**

[1275–1325; ME < ML *columbīna* (*herbā*) dovelike (plant)]

Collapsed spellings

**psalm**

[bef. 900; ME *s(e)alm(e)*, OE *ps(e)alm* < LL *psalmus* < Gk *psalmós* song sung to the harp, der. of *psállēin* to pluck, play (the harp)]

**facility**

[1375–1425; late ME (< MF) < L *facilitās*; see FACILE]

Intermediary language

**atonement**

[1505–15; from phrase *at one* in harmony + -MENT]

Unlabeled forms

**base<sup>1</sup>**

[1275–1325; ME (n.) < MF < L *basis* BASIS; cf. PRISONER'S BASE]

Language labels used alone

an intermediate stage omitted. It may be read as “goes back to.”

> This symbol, meaning “whence,” is used to indicate that the word or sense following it is descended from the word or sense preceding it.

= This symbol, meaning “equivalent to,” precedes the analysis of a word. It is used to show that a word is made up of the words or morphemes that follow it.

+ This symbol is used between morphemes, the constituents of a compound or a blend, etc., in order to indicate that these are the immediate constituents of the word being analyzed.

*der. of* This abbreviation indicates that the form preceding it—for example, a particular part of speech—is a derivative of the form that follows.

\* This symbol, meaning “unattested,” signifies a hypothetical earlier form of a word, reconstructed by comparison of data from a later language or group of related languages.

**Parentheses**

Parentheses are used

- (1) to set off any element that is lost or replaced when constituents are joined;
- (2) to set off entire words (and their translations) that are lost in ellipsis;
- (3) to collapse, for the sake of brevity, two or more variant spellings or forms. Hence, in the etymology at the right, *s(e)alm(e)* indicates that *salm*, *salme*, *sealm*, and *sealme* are all attested spellings of the Middle English word for “psalm”;
- (4) to highlight an intermediary language that may or may not have played a role in the transmission of a form to English;
- (5) to enclose the analysis of a preceding word that is itself part of a larger analysis (as with Latin *orbiculus* in the etymology of *orbicular* above right).

**Language Labels**

Language labels, as given in the Abbreviation Key, precede the italicized etymons. An unlabeled form is to be understood as English.

A language label is shown alone, without an accompanying italicized form, when there is no significant difference in form or meaning between

the word in the given language and the preceding word in the etymology, or main entry word. In some cases an italicized word is not shown after a language label when the word is identical to one immediately following.

A language label is followed by a colon and a translation when there is a difference in meaning but none in form between a word in a given language and the preceding word.

Americanisms, terms first recorded in the U.S. or colonial America, are indicated by the label *Amer.* after the date.

### *Special Types of Etymologies*

Acronyms, when not accounted for in the definition, are shown in italics with parentheses enclosing all parts but those composing the entry word.

### *Dating the Entries*

The date appearing inside the square etymology brackets refers to the time when the entry word or phrase, or an older form of it, was first recorded in English. Caution should be used in interpreting any entry's date.

Because the meanings of words change, the date given may not reflect a current sense of the word or may not reflect exactly any meaning that appears in the body of the entry. For example, the etymology for *county* indicates that the word appeared in English in the 13th century, at which time it meant "the domain of a count." Our modern sense, "the largest local administrative division of a state," evolved from the earlier meaning.

In the case of compounds and derivatives, which are often reinvented with different senses, the date refers only to a sense actually in the entry. Though most words cannot be dated precisely, many coinages can be. Thus the date for a coined word will often appear as a single year, rather than as a date spread.

#### Language labels followed by colon

##### **incentive**

[1400–50; late ME < LL *incentivus* provocative, *L*: **setting the tune**, der. of *incentus*, ptp. of *incinere* to play (an instrument, tunes) = *in-* IN-<sup>2</sup>+*canere* to sing]

#### Americanism

##### **craps**

[1835–45, *Amer.*; ...]

#### Acronyms

##### **RAM**

[1955–60; *r(andom)-a(ccess) m(emory)*]

##### **scuba**

[1950–55; *s(elf)-c(ontained) u(nderwater) b(reathing) a(pparatus)*]

#### Dates expressed in various ways

##### **gold**

[bef. 900; ME, OE; c. OHG *gold*, ON *goll*]

##### **higgledy-piggledy**

[1590–1600; rhyming compound of uncert. orig.]

##### **direc'tor's chair**

[1950–55]

#### Coinages

##### **quark**

[coined in 1963 by U.S. physicist Murray Gell-Mann (b. 1929), who associated it with a word in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*]

##### **reggae**

[< Jamaican E, resp. of *reggay* (introduced in the song "Do the Reggay" (1968) by Frederick "Toots" Hibbert, who appar. coined the word)]