

WEBSTER'S  
New  
Collegiate  
Dictionary

*A Merriam-Webster®*



# New Collegiate Dictionary

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# Preface

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is a completely new volume in the Merriam-Webster series of dictionaries. It is a general dictionary edited for use in school or college, in the office, and in the home—in short, wherever information about English words is likely to be sought. The average user should rarely have occasion to look for information about the vocabulary of present-day English that is not available within these pages.

The first Merriam-Webster Collegiate appeared in 1898 and quickly won the esteem of student and general reader. A second edition was published in 1910, and subsequent editions came out in 1916, 1931, 1936, 1949, and 1963. This eighth in the series incorporates the best of the time-tested features of its predecessors and introduces new features designed to add to its usefulness. Its more than 1500 pages make it the most comprehensive Merriam-Webster Collegiate ever published.

The heart of Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is the more than 1300 pages given over to the A-Z vocabulary. The information there set down derives not only from the 10,000,000 citations which were available to the editors of Webster's Third New International Dictionary and the 1963 Collegiate but also from the considerably more than 1,000,000 citations collected since the publication of these books. Thus each entry is based on a constantly updated file of actual English usage.

Those entries known to be trademarks or service marks are so labeled and are treated in accordance with a formula approved by the United States Trademark Association. No entry in this dictionary, however, should be regarded as affecting the validity of any trademark or service mark.

A noteworthy feature of the vocabulary section is the nearly 900 pictorial illustrations, many of which

were drawn especially for this book. These illustrations were selected not simply for their decorative function but particularly for their value in clarifying definitions.

The front matter—those pages preceding the A-Z vocabulary—contains two important sections. The Explanatory Notes should be read by every user of the dictionary since a thorough understanding of the information contained in them will contribute markedly to the value of this book. And all users of the dictionary are urged to read the lucid essay on the English language which was written for this Collegiate by Professor W. Nelson Francis of Brown University.

The back matter—those pages following the A-Z vocabulary—contains several sections that dictionary users have long found helpful. These include more than five hundred Foreign Words and Phrases that occur frequently in English texts but that have not become part of the English vocabulary; several thousand proper names that are entered under the separate headings Biographical Names and Geographical Names; and a list of the Colleges and Universities of the United States and Canada. There is also a Handbook of Style in which various stylistic conventions (as of punctuation and capitalization) are concisely summarized.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary has been edited by the trained staff of the G. & C. Merriam Co. It is the result of a collaborative effort, and it would be invidious to single out particular editors for special mention. At the same time, it would be ungracious to observe the anonymity which is often the lot of the present-day lexicographer, and so a list of those who contributed substantially to the completion of this book is printed below.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is the product of a company that has been publishing dictionaries for more than 125 years. It is offered to the user with the conviction that it will serve him well.

Henry Bosley Woolf  
Editor in Chief

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	<p><b>pachy-der-ma-tous</b> \pak-i-'dar-mat-əs\ <i>adj</i> [deriv. of Gk <i>pachys</i> + <i>dermat-</i>, <i>derma</i> 'skin'] 1: of or relating to the pachyderms 2 a: THICK, THICKENED b: CALLOUS, INSENSITIVE — <b>pachy-der-ma-tous-ly</b> <i>adv</i></p> <p><b>pam-per</b> \pam-pər\ <i>vt</i> <b>pam-pered</b>; <b>pam-per-ing</b> \-p(ə-)rɪŋ\ [ME <i>pamperen</i>, prob. of D origin; akin to Flem <i>pamperen</i> to pamper] 1 <i>archaic</i>: to wear with rich food: GLUT 2 a: to treat with extreme or excessive care and attention &lt;~ed their guests&gt; b: GRATIFY, HUMOR &lt;~ed him to ~ his wanderlust&gt; — <i>New Yorker</i> &gt; <i>syn</i> see <b>INDULGE</b> <b>ent</b> <b>chasten</b> — <b>pam-per-er</b> \-pər-ər\ <i>n</i></p> <p><b>papa-ya</b> \pə-'pi-ə\ <i>n</i> [Sp. or AmerInd origin; akin to Otomac <i>papai</i>]: a tropical American tree (<i>Carica papaya</i>) of the family Caricaceae, the papaya family) with large oblong yellow edible fruit; also: its fruit</p> <p><b>pa-per</b> \pə-'p(ə-)rɪŋ\ <i>vt</i> 1 <i>archaic</i>: to put down or describe in writing 2: to fold or enclose in paper 3: to cover or line with paper; <i>esp</i>: to apply wallpaper to 4: to fill by giving out free passes &lt;~ the theater for opening night&gt; 5: to cover (an area) with advertising bills, circulars, or posters ~ <i>vi</i>: to hang wallpaper — <b>pa-per-er</b> \-pər-ər\ <i>n</i></p> <p><b>paper tiger</b> <i>n</i>: one that is outwardly powerful or dangerous but inwardly weak or ineffectual &lt;~ necessary to show that the ... military presence was not a paper tiger&gt; — <i>Kaye Whiteman</i></p> <p><b>Paphian</b> <i>n</i> 1: a native or inhabitant of Paphos 2 <i>often not cap</i>: PROSTITUTE</p> <p><b>pap-i-la</b> \pap-i-'lō-mə\ <i>n</i> <i>pl</i> -mas or -mə-tə \-mə-tə\ 1: a benign tumor (as a wart) due to overgrowth of epithelial tissue on papillae of vascular connective tissue (as of the skin) 2: an epithelial tumor caused by a virus — <b>pap-il-lō-ma-tous</b> \-'lō-mət-əs\ <i>adj</i></p> <p><b>par-a-lyze</b> <i>Brit var of PARALYZE</i></p> <p><b>pa-ram-e-ter-ize</b> \pə-'ram-ət-ə-'rɪz\ or <b>pa-ram-e-trize</b> \-'ram-ət-ə-'rɪz\ <i>vt</i> <b>ter-ized</b> or <b>-trized</b>; <b>ter-iz-ing</b> or <b>-triz-ing</b> to express in terms of parameters — <b>pa-ram-e-ter-iza-tion</b> \-'ram-ət-ə-'rɪ-zə-'shən, -ə-'trɪ-zə-'\ or <b>pa-ram-e-tri-za-tion</b> \-'rɪ-zə-'zā-'\ <i>n</i></p> <p><b>pa-rang</b> \pə-'rɒŋ\ <i>n</i> [Malay]: a short sword, cleaver, or machete common in Malaysia and Indonesia</p> <p><b>parasympathetic nervous system</b> <i>n</i>: the part of the autonomic nervous system that contains chiefly cholinergic fibers, that tends to induce secretion, to increase the tone and contractility of smooth muscle, and to cause the dilatation of blood vessels, and that consists of a cranial and a sacral part — compare <b>SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM</b></p> <p><b>ped-dler</b> or <b>ped-lar</b> \pɛd-'lɜr\ <i>n</i>: one who peddles; as a: one who offers merchandise (as fresh produce) for sale along the street or from door to door b: one who deals in or promotes something intangible (as a personal asset or an idea) &lt;influence ~&gt;</p> <p><b>'pe-des-tri-an</b> \pə-'des-tri-ən\ <i>adj</i> <i>L. pedester</i>, <i>pedester</i>, lit., going on foot, fr. <i>pedes</i> one going on foot, fr. <i>ped-</i>, <i>per</i> foot — more at <b>FOOT</b> 1: COMMONPLACE, UNIMAGINATIVE 2 a: going or performed on foot b: of, relating to, or designed for walking &lt;a ~ mall&gt;</p> <p><b>peg-leg</b> <i>n</i> 'peg': an artificial leg; <i>esp</i>: one fitted at the knee</p> <p><b>pen-i-tent</b> \-tənt\ <i>adj</i> [ME, fr. MF, fr. L <i>paenitens</i>, <i>paenitens</i>, fr. pp. of <i>paenitere</i> to be sorry; akin to L <i>paene</i> almost — more at <b>PATIENT</b>]: feeling or expressing humble or regretful pain or sorrow for sins or offenses: REPENTANT — <b>pen-i-tent-ly</b> <i>adv</i></p> <p><b>penitent</b> <i>n</i> 1: a person who repents of sin 2: a person under church censure but admitted to penance <i>esp</i>. under the direction of a confessor</p> <p><b>per-cent-age</b> \pər-'sent-ij\ <i>n</i> 1: a part of a whole expressed in hundredths 2 a: a share of winnings or profits b: ADVANTAGE <i>PROFIT</i> &lt;no ~ in going around looking like an old sack of laundry&gt; — <i>Wallace Steamer</i> &gt; 3: an indeterminate part &lt; PROPORTION 4 a: PROBABILITY b: favorable odds</p> <p><b>per-jure</b> \pər-'jʊr\ <i>vt</i> <b>per-jured</b>; <b>per-jur-ing</b> \-pər-j(ə-)rɪŋ\ [MF <i>perjurer</i>, fr. L <i>perjurare</i>, fr. <i>per-</i> to destruction, to the bad + <i>jurare</i> to swear — more at <b>PER-JURY</b>] 1 <i>obs</i>: to cause to commit perjury 2: to make a perjurer of (oneself)</p> <p><b>pie</b> <i>pl</i> of <b>PI</b> or of <b>PIE</b></p> <p><b>pile</b> <i>vt</i> <b>piled</b>; <b>pi-ling</b> <i>vt</i> 1: to lay or place in a pile: STACK 2: to heap in abundance: LOAD &lt;piled potatoes on his plate&gt; ~ <i>vi</i> 1: to form a pile: ACCUMULATE 2: to move or press forward in or as if in a mass: CROWD &lt;piled into a car&gt;</p> <p><b>pile driver</b> <i>n</i> 1: a machine for driving down piles with a pile hammer or a steam or air hammer 2: an operator of a pile driver</p> <p><b>pi-ligrim</b> \pɪ-'lɪɡ-rəm\ <i>n</i> [ME, fr. OF <i>peligrin</i>, fr. LL <i>peregrinus</i>, alter. of <i>peregrinus</i> foreigner, fr. <i>peregrinus</i> foreign, fr. <i>peregr</i> being abroad, fr. <i>per</i> through + <i>agr-</i>, <i>ager</i> land — more at <b>FOR-ACRE</b>] 1: one who journeys in foreign lands: WAYFARER 2: one who travels to a shrine or holy place as a devotee 3 <i>cap</i>: one of the English colonists settling at Plymouth in 1620</p> <p><b>pinch-beck</b> \tʃɪnʃ-'bek\ <i>n</i> [Christopher <i>Pinchbeck</i> †1732 E watchmaker] 1: an alloy of copper and zinc used <i>esp</i>. to imitate gold in jewelry 2: something counterfeit or spurious — <b>pinch-beck</b> <i>adj</i></p>

# Explanatory Chart

pin-cush-ion \ˈpɪn-ˌkʊʃ-ən\ <i>n</i> a small cushion in which pins may be stuck ready for use	minor stress PAGE 11a
<sup>2</sup> pine <i>n</i> , <i>often attrib</i> [ME, fr. OE <i>pin</i> , fr. L <i>pinus</i> ; akin to Gk <i>pitys</i> pine, L <i>pinus</i> fat — more at FAT] 1: any of a genus ( <i>Pinus</i> of the family Pinaceae, the pine family) of coniferous evergreen trees which have slender elongated needles and some of which are valuable timber trees or ornamentals 2: the straight-grained white or yellow usu. durable and resinous wood of a pine varying from extreme softness in the white pine to hardness in the longleaf pine 3: any of various Australian coniferous trees (as of the genera <i>Callitris</i> , <i>Araucaria</i> , or <i>Cupressus</i> ) 4: PINEAPPLE — piny or pin-ey \ˈpi-nē\ <i>adj</i>	often attrib PAGE 14a
post-card \ˈpɒs(t)-kɑrd\ <i>n</i> 1: a card on which a message may be written for mailing without an envelope and to which the sender must affix a stamp 2: POSTAL CARD	pronunciation PAGES 11a, 12a
post-free \ˈpɒs(t)-frɪ\ <i>adj</i> , <i>chiefly Brit</i> POSTPAID	regional label PAGE 16a
post-mas-ter \-ˈmɑs-tər\ <i>n</i> 1: one who has charge of a post office 2: one who has charge of a station for the accommodation of travelers or who supplies post-horses — <b>post-mas-ter-ship</b> \-ˈʃɪp\ <i>n</i>	run-on entry (undefined) PAGE 11a
<sup>2</sup> private <i>n</i> 1 <i>archaic</i> : one not in public office 2 <i>obs</i> : PRIVACY 3 <i>a</i> : a person of low rank in various organizations (as a police or fire department) <i>b</i> : an enlisted man of the lowest rank in the marine corps or of one of the two lowest ranks in the army — <b>in private</b> : not openly or in public	run-on entry (defined) PAGE 11a
pro-gram-mer \ˈprɒ-ˈɡrɑm-ər\ <i>n</i> one that programs: as <i>a</i> : one that prepares and tests programs for mechanisms <i>b</i> : a person or device that programs a mechanism <i>c</i> : one that prepares educational programs	secondary variant PAGE 11a
pro-jec-tor \ˈprɒ-ˈdʒɛk-tər\ <i>n</i> 1: one that plans a project; <b>specif</b> : PROMOTER 2: one that projects: as <i>a</i> : a device for projecting a beam of light <i>b</i> : an optical instrument for projecting an image upon a surface <i>c</i> : a machine for projecting motion pictures on a screen 3: an imagined line from an object to a surface along which projection takes place	sense divider PAGE 17a
pro-jet \ˈprɒ-ˈdʒɛ, ˈprɒ-ˈdʒɛ\ <i>n</i> , <i>pl</i> <i>projets</i> \-ˈdʒɛ(z), -ˈdʒɛ(z)\ [F, fr. MF <i>pourjet</i> ] 1: <b>rank esp</b> : a draft of a proposed measure or treaty 2: a projected or proposed design	sense letter PAGE 17a
pro-mote \ˈprɒ-ˈmoʊt\ <i>v</i> <b>pro-mot-ed</b> ; <b>pro-mot-ing</b> [ <i>fr. promovere</i> , pp. of <i>promovere</i> , lit., to move forward, fr. <i>pro-</i> forward + <i>movere</i> to move] 1 <i>a</i> : to advance in station, rank, or honor: <b>RAISE</b> <i>b</i> : to change (a pawn) into a piece in chess by moving to the eighth rank <i>c</i> : to advance (a student) from one grade to the next higher grade 2 <i>a</i> : to contribute to the growth or prosperity of: <b>FURTHER</b> <~ international understanding> <i>b</i> : to help bring (as an enterprise) into being: <b>LAUNCH</b> <i>c</i> : to present (merchandise) for public acceptance through advertising and publicity 3 <b>slang</b> : to get possession of by doubtful means or by ingenuity <i>syn</i> see <b>ADVANCE</b> <i>ant</i> impede	sense numeral PAGE 17a
proph-et \ˈprɒf-ət\ <i>n</i> [ME <i>prophete</i> , fr. OF, fr. L <i>propheta</i> , fr. Gk <i>prophētēs</i> , fr. <i>pro</i> for + <i>phanai</i> to speak — more at FOR, BAN] 1: one who utters divinely inspired revelations; <b>specif</b> , <i>often cap</i> : the writer of one of the prophetic books of the Old Testament 2: one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight; <i>esp</i> : an inspired poet 3: one who foretells future events: <b>PREDICTOR</b> <a weather ~> 4: an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group <he is first the student and then the ~ of power — Alfred Kazin> 5 [Christian Science] <i>a</i> : a spiritual seer <i>b</i> : disappearance of material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth — <b>proph-et-ess</b> \-ət-əs\ <i>n</i>	small capitals PAGE 18a
pro-rate \ˈ(p)rɒ-ˈrɑt\ <i>v</i> <b>pro-rat-ed</b> ; <b>pro-rat-ing</b> [ <i>pro-rata</i> ] <i>v</i> : to divide, distribute, or assess proportionately — <i>w</i> : to make a pro rata distribution	stylistic label PAGE 16a
pro-spec-tive \ˈprɒ-ˈspek-tɪv also ˈprɒ-, prɒ-, prɒ-ˈ\ <i>adj</i> 1: likely to come about: <b>EXPECTED</b> <the ~ benefits of this law> 2: likely to be or become <a ~ mother> — <b>pro-spec-tive-ly</b> <i>adv</i>	subject label PAGE 16a
pun-gent \ˈjʌnt\ <i>adj</i> [L <i>pungent</i> , <i>pungens</i> , prp. of <i>pungere</i> to prick, sting; akin to L <i>pugnis</i> fist, <i>pugnare</i> to fight, Gk <i>pugna</i> fist] 1: having a stiff and sharp point <~ leaves> 2: sharply painful; <i>also</i> : <b>POIGNANT</b> — <i>a</i> : marked by a sharp incisive quality: <b>CAUSTIC</b> <a ~ denunciation> <i>b</i> : being to the point: highly expressive <~ prose> 4: causing a sharp or irritating sensation; <i>esp</i> : <b>ACRID</b> — <b>pun-gent-ly</b> <i>adv</i>	swung dash (boldface) PAGE 12a
<i>syn</i> PUNGENT, PIQUANT, POIGNANT, RACY <i>shared meaning element</i> : sharp and stimulating to the mind or senses <i>ant</i> bland	swung dash (lightface) PAGE 16a
pur-blind \ˈpʊr-blɪnd\ <i>adj</i> [ME <i>pur blind</i> , fr. <i>pur</i> purely, wholly, fr. <i>pur</i> pure] 1 <i>adj</i> : wholly blind — <i>b</i> : partly blind 2: lacking in vision, insight, or understanding: <b>OBTUSE</b> — <b>pur-blind-ly</b> \-ˈblɪn(d)-lē\ <i>adv</i> — <b>pur-blind-ness</b> \-ˈblɪn(d)-nəs\ <i>n</i>	synonymous cross-reference PAGES 18a, 19a
pur-dah \ˈpʊrd-ə\ <i>n</i> [Hindi <i>parda</i> , lit., screen, veil]: seclusion of women from public observation among Muslims and some Hindus <i>esp</i> . in India	synonym list PAGE 19a
Py-ra-mi-don \ˈpɪ-ˈrɑm-ə-dən\ <i>trademark</i> — <b>used for aminopyrine</b>	temporal label PAGES 15a, 16a
pyre \ˈpɪrɪ\ <i>n</i> [L <i>pyra</i> , fr. Gk, fr. <i>pyr</i> fire — more at FIRE]: a combustible heap for burning a dead body as a funeral rite; <i>broadly</i> : a pile of material to be burned <a ~ of dead leaves>	uppercase PAGE 14a
	usage note PAGES 16a, 17a
	verbal illustration PAGE 16a

# Explanatory Notes

## Entries

A boldface letter or a combination of such letters set flush with the left-hand margin of each column of type is a main entry. The main entry may consist of letters set solid, of letters joined by a hyphen, or of letters separated by one or more spaces:

teach ... *vb*  
teach-in ... *n*  
teaching fellow *n*

The material in lightface type that follows each main entry on the same line and on succeeding indented lines explains and justifies its inclusion in the dictionary.

The main entries follow one another in alphabetical order letter by letter: *book of account* follows *book-mobile*. Those containing an Arabic numeral are alphabetized as if the numeral were spelled out: *3-D* comes between *three-color* and *three-decker*. Those derived from proper names beginning with abbreviated forms of *Mac-* are alphabetized as if spelled *mac-*: *McCoy* comes after *macaroon* and before *mace*. Those that often begin with the abbreviation *St.* in common usage have the abbreviation spelled out: *Saint Martin's summer*.

A pair of guide words is printed at the top of each page. These indicate that the entries falling alphabetically between the words at the top of the outer column of each page are found on that page.

The guide words are the alphabetically first and usually the alphabetically last entries on the page:

**aposelene • appellation**

Occasionally the last printed entry is not the alphabetically last entry. On page 124, for example, *bold-faced* is the last printed entry, but *boldness*, run on at *bold*, is the alphabetically last entry and is therefore the second guide word. The alphabetically last entry is not used, however, if it follows alphabetically the first guide word on the succeeding page. Thus on page 113 *bitterness* is not a guide word because it follows alphabetically the fourth homograph *bitter* which is the first guide word on page 114. Any boldface word—a main entry with definition, a variant, an inflected form, a defined or undefined run-on, or an entry in a list of self-explanatory words—may be used as a guide word.

When one main entry has exactly the same written form as another, the two are distinguished by superscript numerals preceding each word:

<sup>1</sup>man ... *n*                      <sup>1</sup>quail ... *n*  
<sup>2</sup>man *vt*                        <sup>2</sup>quail *vb*

Sometimes such homographs are related: the two entries *man* are derived from the same root. Sometimes there is no relationship: the two entries *quail* are unrelated

beyond the accident of spelling. The order of homographs is usually historical: the one first used in English is entered first.

Words precede word elements made up of the same letters; solid compounds precede hyphenated compounds; hyphenated compounds precede open compounds; and lowercase entries precede those with an initial capital:

mini ... *n*  
mini- *comb form*  
work-up ... *n*  
work-up ... *n*  
work up ... *vt*  
ti-ta-nia ... *n*  
Ti-ta-nia ... *n*

The centered periods within entry words indicate division points at which a hyphen may be put at the end of a line of print or writing. Thus the noun *re-frig-er-a-tor* may be ended on one line with:

re-  
refrig-  
refriger-  
refrigera-

and continued on the next with:

-frigerator  
-erator  
-ator  
-tor

Centered periods are not shown after a single initial letter or before a single terminal letter because printers seldom cut off a single letter:

splomb ... *n*  
hoery ... *adj*  
idea ... *n*

Nor are they shown at the second and succeeding homographs of a word:

<sup>1</sup>mas-ter ... *n*  
<sup>2</sup>master ... *vt*  
<sup>3</sup>master *adj*

There are acceptable alternative end-of-line divisions just as there are acceptable variant spellings and pronunciations. It is, for example, all but impossible to produce a convincing argument that either of the divisions *aus-ter-i-ty*, *au-ster-i-ty* is better than the other. But space cannot be taken for entries like *aus-ter-i-ty* or *au-ster-i-ty*, and *au-s-ter-i-ty* would likely be confusing to many. No more than one division is, therefore, shown for any entry in this dictionary.

Many words have two or more common pronunciation variants, and the same end-of-line division is not always appropriate for each of them. The division *pi-an-ist*, for example, best fits the variant \pē-'an-əst\ whereas the division *pi-a-nist* best fits the variant \pē-ə-nəst\. In instances like this, the division falling farthest to the left is used, regardless of the order of the pronunciations:

*pi-a-nist* \pē-'an-əst, 'pē-ə-nəst\

When a main entry is followed by the word *or* and another spelling, the two spellings are equal variants. Both are standard, and either one may be used according to personal inclination:

*the-ater or the-atre*

If two variants joined by *or* are out of alphabetical order, they remain equal variants. The one printed first is, however, slightly more common than the second:

*coun-sel-or or coun-sel-lor*

When another spelling is joined to the main entry by the word *also*, the spelling after *also* is a secondary variant and occurs less frequently than the first:

*lov-able also love-able*

Secondary variants belong to standard usage and may be used according to personal inclination. If there are two secondary variants, the second is joined to the first by *or*. Once the word *also* is used to signal a secondary variant, all following variants are joined by *or*:

*'Shake-spear-ean or Shake-spear-ian also*

*Shak-sper-ean or Shak-sper-ian*

Variants whose spelling places them alphabetically more than a column away from the main entry are entered at their own alphabetical places and usually not at the main entry:

*Cha-nu-kah* ... *var of* HANUKKAH

*rime, rimer, rimester* *var of* RHYME, RHYMER, RHYMESTER

Variants having a usage label appear only at their own alphabetical places:

*fla-vour* *chiefly Brit var of* FLAVOR

*agin* ... *dial var of* AGAINST

To show all the stylings that are found for English compounds would require space that can be better used for other information. So this dictionary limits itself to a single styling for a compound:

*week-end*

*red-eye*

*high school*

When a compound is widely used and one styling predominates, that styling is shown. When a compound is uncommon or when the evidence indicates that two or three stylings are approximately equal in frequency, the styling shown is based on the analogy of parallel compounds.

A main entry may be followed by one or more derivatives or by a homograph with a different functional label. These are run-on entries. Each is introduced by a lightface dash and each has a functional label. They are not defined, however, since their meanings are readily derivable from the meaning of the root word:

*²question* *vr* ... — *ques-tion-er* *n*

*¹fun-ny* ... *adj* ... — *fun-ni-ly* ... *adv* — *fun-ni-ness* ... *n*

*mu-tant* ... *adj* ... — *mutant* *n*

A main entry may be followed by one or more phrases containing the entry word or an inflected form of it.

## Explanatory Notes

These are also run-on entries. Each is introduced by a lightface dash but there is no functional label. They are, however, defined since their meanings are more than the sum of the meanings of their elements:

*¹call* ... *vb* ... — *call one's bluff* : ...

*²mend* *n* ... — *on the mend* : ...

Defined phrases of this sort are run on at the entry constituting the first major element in the phrase. When there are variants, however, the run-on appears at the entry constituting the first major invariable element in the phrase:

*¹clock* ... *n* ... — *kill the clock or run out the clock* : ...

*¹seed* ... *n* ... — *go to seed or run to seed* : ...

Attention is called to the definition of *vocabulary entry* on page 1310. The term *dictionary entry* includes all vocabulary entries as well as all boldface entries in the separate sections of the back matter headed "Foreign Words and Phrases," "Biographical Names," "Geographical Names," and "Colleges and Universities."

## Pronunciation

The matter between a pair of reversed virgules \ \ following the entry word indicates the pronunciation. The symbols used are explained in the chart printed inside the front and back covers of this dictionary and on page 32a. For a detailed discussion of these symbols and related matters, the serious student is referred to "A Guide to Pronunciation" in Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

A hyphen is used in the pronunciation to show syllabic division. These hyphens sometimes coincide with the centered periods in the entry word that indicate end-of-line division; sometimes they do not:

*dis-cov-er* \dis-'kəv-ər\

*¹met-ric* \¹me-'trik\

A high-set mark ' indicates major (primary) stress or accent; a low-set mark , indicates minor (secondary) stress or accent:

*rough-neck* \raf-'nek\

The stress mark stands at the beginning of the syllable that receives the stress.

The presence of variant pronunciations indicates that not all educated speakers pronounce words the same way. A second-place variant is not to be regarded as less acceptable than the pronunciation that is given first. It may, in fact, be used by as many educated speakers as the first variant, but the requirements of the printed page are such that one must precede the other:

*apri-cot* \ap-rə-'kät, 'ä-prə-\

*for-eign* \fər-'ən, 'fär-\

A variant that is appreciably less common than the preceding variant is preceded by the word *also*:

*col-league* \käl-'æg *also* -ig\

Sometimes a regional label precedes a variant:

*¹great* \g'reät, *South also* 'gre(ə)t\

Symbols enclosed by parentheses represent elements that are present in the pronunciation of some speakers but are absent from the pronunciation of other speakers, elements that are present in some but absent from other utterances of the same speaker, or elements whose presence or absence is uncertain:



hap-pen ... *vi* ... hap-pen-ing \ˈhæp-(ə-)nɪŋ\  
 sat-is-fac-to-ry \sæt-əs-ˈfak-t(ə-)rē\  
 re-sponse \ri-ˈspān(t)s\

Thus, the parentheses at *happening* mean that there are some who pronounce the \ə\ between \p\ and \n\ and others who do not pronounce it.

When a main entry has less than a full pronunciation, the missing part is to be supplied from a pronunciation in a preceding entry or within the same pair of reversed virgules:

cham-pi-on-ship \-ship\  
 Ma-dei-ra \mə-ˈdɪr-ə, -ˈder-\

The pronunciation of the first three syllables of *championship* is found at the main entry *champion*:

<sup>1</sup>cham-pi-on \ˈcham-pē-ən\

The hyphens before and after \ˈder\ in the pronunciation of *Madeira* indicate that both the first and the last parts of the pronunciation are to be taken from the immediately preceding pronunciation.

In general, no pronunciation is indicated for open compounds consisting of two or more English words that have own-place entry:

kangaroo court *n*

Only the first entry in a sequence of numbered homographs is given a pronunciation if their pronunciations are the same:

<sup>1</sup>re-ward \ri-ˈwɔ(ə)rd\  
<sup>2</sup>reward

Pronunciations are shown for obsolete words only if they occur in Shakespeare:

clois-tress \ˈklɔi-strəs\ *n, obs*

The pronunciation of unpronounced derivatives and compounds run on at a main entry is a combination of the pronunciation at the main entry and the pronunciation of the suffix or final element as given at its alphabetical place in the vocabulary:

— oval-ness *n*  
 — over one's head

Thus, the pronunciation of *ovalness* is the sum of the pronunciations given at *oval* and *-ness*; that of *over one's head*, the sum of the pronunciation of the three elements that make up the phrase.

Partial pronunciations are usually shown when two or more variants have a part in common. When a variation of stress is involved, a partial pronunciation may be terminated at the stress mark which stands at the beginning of a syllable not shown:

di-verse \dī-ˈvɜrs, də-, ˈdī-  
 an-cho-vy \ˈan-ˌchō-vē, an-ˈ-

In some cases the pronunciation of a word or compound shows no major (primary) stress. One such class of words includes those that occur in main entries only as elements of an open compound. The stress shown for these words is the usual stress in the compound and may be less than major (primary):

clum-ber spaniel \ˌkləm-bər-\

In other contexts the word may have major (primary) stress, as in "Is that spaniel a clumber?"

## Functional Labels

An italic label indicating a part of speech or some other functional classification follows the pronunciation or, if no pronunciation is given, the main entry. The eight traditional parts of speech are indicated as follows:

de-cep-tive ... <i>adj</i>	war-den ... <i>n</i>
hap-pi-ly ... <i>adv</i>	of ... <i>prep</i>
be-cause ... <i>conj</i>	they ... <i>pron</i>
hey ... <i>interj</i>	re-lax ... <i>vb</i>

If a verb is both transitive and intransitive, the labels *vt* and *vi* introduce the subdivisions:

pen-e-trate ... *vb* ... *vt* ... ~ *vi*

A boldface swung dash ~ is used to stand for the main entry (as *penetrate*) and separate the subdivisions of the verb. If there is no subdivision, *vt* or *vi* takes the place of *vb*:

in-fect ... *vt*  
<sup>2</sup>vacation *vi*

Labeling a verb as transitive, however, does not preclude occasional intransitive use (as in absolute constructions).

Other italicized labels used to indicate functional classifications that are not traditional parts of speech are:

alt ... <i>abbr</i>	-ness ... <i>n suffix</i>
tele- or tel- <i>comb form</i>	-ize ... <i>vb suffix</i>
-onym ... <i>n comb form</i>	Fe <i>symbol</i>
-gen-ic ... <i>adj comb form</i>	Fris-bee ... <i>trademark</i>
<sup>1</sup> pro- <i>prefix</i>	must ... <i>verbal auxiliary</i>
Air Express <i>service mark</i>	gid-dap ... <i>vb imper</i>
<sup>1</sup> -ic ... <i>adj suffix</i>	me-seems ... <i>vb impersonal</i>
<sup>2</sup> -ly <i>adv suffix</i>	

Two functional labels are sometimes combined:

zilch ... *adj or n*  
<sup>1</sup>le-ga-to ... *adv or adj*

## Inflected Forms

### NOUNS

The plurals of nouns are shown in this dictionary when suffixation brings about a change of final -y to -i-, when the noun ends in a consonant plus -o or in -ey, when the noun ends in -oo, when the noun has an irregular plural or a zero plural or a foreign plural, when the noun is a compound that pluralizes any element but the last, when the noun has variant plurals, and when it is believed that the dictionary user might have reasonable doubts about the spelling of the plural or when the plural is spelled in a way contrary to expectations:

<sup>2</sup>fly *n, pl flies*  
 to-ma-to ... *n, pl -toes*  
 val-ley ... *n, pl valleys*  
<sup>2</sup>boo *n, pl boos*  
<sup>1</sup>mouse ... *n, pl mice*  
 sheep ... *n, pl sheep*  
 alu-m-nus ... *n, pl -ni*

**moth-er-in-law** ... *n, pl mothers-in-law*

**<sup>1</sup>seed** ... *n, pl seed or seeds*

**<sup>1</sup>pi** ... *n, pl pis*

**<sup>3</sup>dry** *n, pl dries*

Cutback inflected forms are used when the noun has three or more syllables:

**an-i-mos-i-ty** ... *n, pl -ties*

The plurals of nouns are usually not shown when the base word is unchanged by suffixation, when the noun is a compound whose second element is readily recognizable as a regular free form entered at its own place, or when the noun is unlikely to occur in the plural:

**<sup>1</sup>cat** ... *n*

**<sup>1</sup>church** ... *n*

**gad-fly** ... *n*

**al-che-my** ... *n*

Nouns that are plural in form and that regularly occur in plural construction are labeled *n pl*:

**en-vi-rons** ... *n pl*

Nouns that are plural in form but that are not always construed as plurals are appropriately labeled:

**ge-net-ics** ... *n pl but sing in constr*

**forty winks** *n pl but sing or pl in constr*

A noun that is singular in construction takes a singular verb when it is used as a subject; a noun that is plural in construction takes a plural verb when it is used as a subject.

## VERBS

The principal parts of verbs are shown in this dictionary when suffixation brings about a doubling of a final consonant or an elision of a final *-e* or a change of final *-y* to *-i-*, when final *-c* changes to *-ck* in suffixation, when the verb ends in *-ey*, when the inflection is irregular, when there are variant inflected forms, and when it is believed that the dictionary user might have reasonable doubts about the spelling of an inflected form or when the inflected form is spelled in a way contrary to expectations:

**<sup>3</sup>brag** *vb* **bragged**; **brag-ging**

**<sup>1</sup>blame** ... *vt* **blamed**; **blam-ing**

**<sup>1</sup>spy** ... *vb* **spied**; **spy-ing**

**<sup>2</sup>pic-nic** ... *vi* **pic-nicked**; **pic-nick-ing**

**<sup>2</sup>volley** *vb* **vol-leyed**; **vol-ley-ing**

**<sup>3</sup>ring** *vb* **rang** ...; **rung** ...; **ring-ing**

**<sup>4</sup>bias** *vt* **bi-ased** or **bi-ased**; **bi-as-ing** or **bi-as-ing**

**<sup>2</sup>visa** *vt* **vi-saed** ...; **vi-sa-ing**

**<sup>2</sup>chagrin** *vt* **cha-grined** ...; **cha-grin-ing**

The principal parts of a regularly inflected verb are shown when it is desirable to indicate the pronunciation of one of the inflected forms:

**<sup>3</sup>spell** *vb* **spelled** \ˈspeld, ˈspelt\; **spell-ing**

**<sup>2</sup>but-ton** ... *vb* **but-toned**; **but-ton-ing** \ˈbʊt-nɪŋ, -ˈnɪŋ\

Cutback inflected forms are often used when the verb has three or more syllables, when it is a disyllable that ends in *-l* and has variant spellings, and when it is a compound whose second element is readily recognized as an irregular verb:

**de-i-fy** ... *vt* **-fied**; **-fy-ing**

**<sup>2</sup>carol** *vb* **-oled** or **-olled**; **-ol-ing** or **-ol-ling**

**with-draw** *vb* **-drew** ...; **-drawn** ...; **-draw-ing**

## Explanatory Notes

The principal parts of verbs are usually not shown when the base word is unchanged by suffixation or when the verb is a compound whose second element is readily recognizable as a regular free form entered at its own place:

**<sup>4</sup>halt** ... *vi*

**dis-eat-is-fy** ... *vb*

## ADJECTIVES & ADVERBS

The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs are shown in this dictionary when suffixation brings about a doubling of a final consonant or an elision of a final *-e* or a change of final *-y* to *-i-*, when the word ends in *-ey*, when the inflection is irregular, and when there are variant inflected forms:

**<sup>1</sup>red** ... *adj* **red-der**; **red-dest**

**<sup>1</sup>bare** ... *adj* **bar-er**; **bar-est**

**<sup>1</sup>heavy** ... *adj* **heavi-er**; **-est**

**<sup>1</sup>ear-ly** ... *adv* **ear-li-er**; **-est**

**hom-ey** *also homy* ... *adj* **hom-i-er**; **-est**

**<sup>1</sup>good** ... *adj* **bet-ter** ...; **best**

**<sup>2</sup>ill** ... *adv* **worse**; **worst**

**<sup>1</sup>shy** ... *adj* **shi-er** or **shy-er** ...; **shi-est** or **shy-est**

Adjectives and adverbs of two or more syllables are usually cut back:

**come-ly** ... *adj* **come-li-er**; **-est**

**<sup>2</sup>easy** *adv* **eas-i-er**; **-est**

The comparative and superlative forms of regularly inflected adjectives and adverbs are shown when it is desirable to indicate the pronunciation of the inflected forms:

**<sup>1</sup>long** \ˈlɒŋ\ *adj* **lon-ger** \ˈlɒŋ-ger\; **lon-gest** \ˈlɒŋ-ɡest\

The inclusion of inflected forms in *-er* and *-est* in adjective and adverb entries means nothing more about the use of *more* and *most* with these adjectives and adverbs than that their comparative and superlative degrees may be expressed in either way: *lazier* or *more lazy*; *laziest* or *most lazy*.

At a few adjective entries only the superlative form is shown:

**mere** ... *adj* **mer-est**

The absence of the comparative form indicates that there is no evidence of its use.

The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs are not shown when the base word is unchanged by suffixation or when the word is a compound whose second element is readily recognizable as a regular free form entered at its own place:

**<sup>1</sup>full** ... *adj*

**un-lucky** ... *adj*

The comparative and superlative forms of adverbs are not shown when they are identical with the inflected forms of a preceding adjective homograph:

**<sup>1</sup>hot** ... *adj* **hot-ter**; **hot-test**

**<sup>2</sup>hot** *adv*

Inflected forms are not shown at undefined run-ons or at some entries bearing a limiting label:

**Jac-o-bin** ... *n* ... — **jac-o-bin-ize** ... *vt*

**<sup>2</sup>lampoon** *vt* ... — **lam-poon-ery** ... *n*

**<sup>1</sup>net** ... *n* ... — **net-ty** ... *adj*

**<sup>2</sup>cote** ... *vt* ... *obs* : to pass by

**crouse** ... *adj* ... *chiefly Scot* : BRISK, LIVELY

## Capitalization

Most entries in this dictionary begin with a lowercase letter. A few of these have an italicized label *often cap*, which indicates that the word is as likely to be capitalized as not, that it is as acceptable with an uppercase initial as it is with one in lowercase. Some entries begin with an uppercase letter, which indicates that the word is usually capitalized. The absence of an initial capital or of an *often cap* label indicates that the word is not ordinarily capitalized:

**mas-sive** ... *adj*

**an-gli-cize** ... *vt* ... *often cap*

**Swiss** ... *n*

The capitalization of entries that are open or hyphenated compounds is similarly indicated by the form of the entry or by an italicized label:

**ice cream** ... *n*

**<sup>1</sup>french fry** *vt*, *often cap 1st F*

**neo-im-pres-sion-ism** ... *n*, *often cap N&I*

**non-Com-mu-nist** ... *adj*

**Irish setter** ... *n*

**Memorial Day** ... *n*

A word that is capitalized in some senses and lowercase in others shows variations from the form of the main entry by the use of italicized labels at the appropriate senses:

**Gyp-sy** ... *n* ... **3** *not cap*

**Sal-va-tion-ist** ... *n* ... **2** *often not cap*

**<sup>1</sup>mass** ... *n* ... **1** *cap*

**es-tab-lish-ment** ... *n* ... **2** ... **b** *often cap*

## Attributive Nouns

The italicized label *often attrib* placed after the functional label *n* indicates that the noun is often used as an adjective equivalent in attributive position before another noun:

**ap-ple** ... *n*, *often attrib*

**<sup>1</sup>dog** ... *n*, *often attrib*

Examples of the attributive use of these nouns are *apple pie* and *dog license*.

While any noun may occasionally be used attributively, the label *often attrib* is limited to those having broad attributive use. This label is not used when an adjective homograph (as *iron* or *paper*) is entered. And it is not used at open compounds (as *X ray*) that may be used attributively with an inserted hyphen (as in *X-ray therapy*).

## Etymology

The matter in boldface square brackets preceding the definition is the etymology. Meanings given in roman type within these brackets are not definitions of the entry, but are meanings of the Middle English, Old English, or non-English words within the brackets.

The etymology traces a vocabulary entry as far back as possible in English (as to Old English), tells from

what language and in what form it came into English, and (except in the case of such words outside the general vocabulary of English as *dacha* and *talipot*) traces the pre-English source as far back as possible. These etyma are printed in italics.

The etymology usually gives the Middle English and the Old English forms of words in the following style:

**<sup>1</sup>reed** ... *n* [ME *rede*, fr. OE *hrēod* ...]

**<sup>1</sup>hate** ... *n* [ME, fr. OE *hete* ...]

An etymology in which a word is traced back to Middle English but not to Old English indicates that the word is found in Middle English but not in those texts that have survived from the Old English period:

**<sup>1</sup>clog** ... *n* [ME *clogge* short thick piece of wood]

**<sup>1</sup>rub** ... *vb* [ME *rubben*; akin to Icel *rubba* to scrape]

An etymology in which a word is traced back directly to Old English with no intervening mention of Middle English indicates that the word has not survived continuously from Old English times to the present. Rather, it died out after the Old English period and has been revived in modern times:

**Geat** ... *n* [OE *Gēat*]

**thegn** ... *n* [OE ...]

The etymology gives the language from which words borrowed into English have come. It also gives the form or a transliteration of the word in that language if the form differs from that in English:

**<sup>1</sup>fes-ti-val** ... *adj* [ME, fr. MF, fr. L *festivus* festive]

**linn** ... *n* [ScGael *linne* pool]

**<sup>1</sup>school** ... *n* [ME *scole*, fr. OE *scōl*, fr. L *schola* ...]

**smor-gas-bord** ... *n* [Sw *smörgåsbord* ...]

In a few cases the expression "deriv. of" replaces the more usual "fr." This expression indicates that one or more intermediate steps have been omitted in tracing the derivation of the form preceding the expression from the form following it:

**gal-ley** ... *n* [... OF *galie*, deriv. of MGk *galea*]

An etymology is not usually given for a word created in English by the combination of existing constituents or by functional shift. This indicates that the identity of the constituents is expected to be self-evident to the user:

**like-ness** ... *n* **1**: the quality or state of being like

**tone-deaf** ... *adj*: relatively insensitive to differences in musical pitch

**tooth-paste** ... *n*: a paste for cleaning the teeth

**profit system** ... *n*: FREE ENTERPRISE

**<sup>2</sup>wheel** ... *vi* **1**: to turn on or as if on an axis ...

In the case of a family of words obviously related to a common English word but differing from it by containing various easily recognizable suffixes, an etymology is usually given only at the base word, even though some of the derivatives may have been formed in a language other than English:

**<sup>1</sup>im-mor-tal** ... *adj* [ME, fr. L *immortalis* ...] **1**: exempt from death

**im-mor-tal-i-ty** ... *n*: the quality or state of being immortal

The word *immortality* was actually borrowed into Middle English (via Middle French) from Latin *immortalitas*.

Much of the technical vocabulary of the sciences and

other specialized studies consists of words or word elements that are current in two or more languages, with only such slight modifications as are necessary to adapt them to the structure of the individual language in each case. Many words and word elements of this kind have become sufficiently a part of the general vocabulary of English as to require entry in an abridged dictionary. Because of the vast extent of the relevant published material in many languages and in many scientific and other specialized fields, it is impracticable to ascertain the language of origin of every such term. Yet it would not be accurate to formulate a statement about the origin of any such term in a way that could be interpreted as implying that it was coined in English. Accordingly, whenever a term that is entered in this dictionary belongs recognizably to this class of internationally current terms and whenever no positive evidence is at hand to show that it was coined in English, the etymology recognizes its international status and the possibility that it originated elsewhere than in English by use of the label ISV (for International Scientific Vocabulary):

mega-watt ... *n* [ISV]

phy-lo-ge-net-ic ... *adj* [ISV, fr. NL *phylogenesis* ...]

<sup>1</sup>-ol ... *n* suffix [ISV, fr. *alcohol*]

An etymology beginning with the name of a language (including ME or OE) and not giving the foreign (or Middle English or Old English) form indicates that this form is the same as that of the entry word:

<sup>1</sup>tan-go ... *n* ... [AmerSp]

<sup>1</sup>po-grom ... *n* [Yiddish, fr. Russ ...]

<sup>1</sup>gang ... *n* [ME, fr. OE ...]

An etymology beginning with the name of a language (including ME or OE) and not giving the foreign (or Middle English or Old English) meaning indicates that this meaning is the same as that expressed in the first definition in the entry:

vig-or-ous ... *adj* [ME, fr. MF, fr. OF, fr. *vigor*] 1: possessing vigor

When an entry word is derived from an earlier Modern English word that is not entered in this dictionary, the meaning of such a word is given in parentheses:

<sup>3</sup>press *vb* [alter. of obs. *press* (to enlist by giving pay in advance)]

Small superscript figures following words or syllables in an etymology refer to the tone of the word or syllable which they follow. They are, accordingly, used only with forms cited from tone languages:

chow mein ... *n* [Chin (Pek) *ch'ao'* mien<sup>1</sup>, fr. *ch'ao'* to fry + mien<sup>1</sup> dough]

<sup>1</sup>voe-doo ... *n* ... [LaF *voudou*, of African origin; akin to Ewe *vo'du'* tutelary deity, demon]

When the source of a word appearing as a main entry is unknown, the expression "origin unknown" is usually used. Only in rare and exceptional circumstances (as with some ethnic names) does the absence of an etymology mean that it has not been possible to furnish any informative etymology. More often, it means that no etymology is believed to be necessary. This is the case, for instance, with most of the entries identified as variants and with many derivatives.

When a word has been traced back to the earliest language in which it is attested, and if this is an Indo-European language, selected cognates in other Indo-European languages, (especially Old High German, Latin, and Greek) are usually given:

<sup>1</sup>one ... *adj* [ME *on*, fr. OE *an*; akin to OHG *ain*, one, L *unus* (OL *oinas*), Skt *ain*]

## Explanatory Notes

equine ... *adj* [L *equinus*, fr. *equus* horse; akin to OE *eoh* horse, Gk *hippos*]

Sometimes, however, to avoid space-consuming repetition, the expression "more at" directs the user to another entry where the cognates are given:

<sup>2</sup>thought *n* [ME, fr. OE *thāht*; akin to OE *thencan* to think — more at THINK]

Besides the use of "akin to" to denote an ordinary cognate relationship, some etymologies make special use of "akin to" as part of a longer formula "of—origin; akin to—." This formula indicates that a word was borrowed from some language belonging to a group of languages whose name is inserted in the blank before the word *origin*, that it is impossible to say that the word in question is a borrowing of a particular attested word in a particular language of the source group, and that the form cited in the blank after the expression *akin to* is a cognate of the word in question as attested within the source group:

<sup>1</sup>ca-noe ... *n* [F, fr. NL *canoe*, fr. Sp, fr. Arawakan, of Cariban origin; akin to Galibi *canoua*]

<sup>2</sup>cant *n* [ME, prob. fr. MD or ONF; MD, edge, corner, fr. ONF, fr. L *canthus*, *cantus* iron tire; perh. of Celt origin; akin to W *cant* rim; akin to Gk *kanthos* corner of the eye]

This last example shows the two contrasting uses of "akin to." The word cited immediately after "of Celt origin; akin to" is a Celtic cognate of the presumed Celtic source word from which the Latin word was borrowed. The word cited after the second "akin to" is a further cognate from another Indo-European language.

When the origin of a word is traced to the name of a person or place not further identified, additional information may be found in the Biographical Names or Geographical Names section in the back matter:

new-ton ... *n* [Sir Isaac Newton]

cal-i-co ... *n* ... [Calicut, India]

## Usage

Three types of status labels are used in this dictionary — temporal, regional, and stylistic — to signal that a word or a sense of a word is not part of the standard vocabulary of English.

The temporal label *obs* for "obsolete" means that there is no evidence of use since 1755:

egal ... *adj* ... *obs*

har-di-ment ... *n* ... 2 *obs*

The label *obs* is a comment on the word being defined. When a thing, as distinguished from the word used to designate it, is obsolete, appropriate orientation is usually given in the definition:

<sup>1</sup>cat-a-pult ... *n* ... 1: an ancient military device for hurling missiles

<sup>2</sup>ruff *n* ... 1: a wheel-shaped stiff collar worn by men and women of the late 16th and early 17th centuries

The temporal label *archaic* means that a word or sense once in common use is found today only sporadically or in special contexts:

eft-soons ... *adv* ... *archaic*

<sup>2</sup>tender ... *n* ... 2 *archaic*



A word or sense limited in use to a specific region of the U.S. has a label that corresponds loosely to one of the areas defined in Hans Kurath's *Word Geography of the Eastern United States*. The adverb *chiefly* precedes a label when the word has some currency outside the specified region, and a double label is used to indicate considerable currency in each of two specific regions:

**ban-nock** ... *n* ... **2** *NewEng*  
**ban-quette** ... *n* ... **1** ... **b** *South*  
**cal-cu-late** ... *vt* ... **3** *chiefly North*  
**can-ti-na** ... *n* ... **1** *Southwest*  
**em-bar-ca-de-ro** ... *n* ... *West*  
**goo-ber** ... *n* ... *South & Midland*  
**jolt-wag-on** ... *n* ... *Midland*  
**pot-latch** ... *n* ... **2** *Northwest*

Words current in all regions of the U.S. have no label.

A word or sense limited in use to one of the other countries of the English-speaking world has an appropriate regional label:

**bairn** ... *n* ... *chiefly Scot*  
**be-gor-ra** ... *interj* ... *Irish*  
**bil-la-bong** ... *n* ... **1** *Austral*  
**com-man-do** ... *n* ... **1** *So Afr*  
**corn flour** *n* ... *Brit*  
**foot-ball** ... *n* **1** ... **e** *Canad*  
**gang** *vi* ... *Scot*  
**gar-ron** ... *n* ... *Scot & Irish*

The label *dial* for "dialect" indicates that the pattern of use of a word or sense is too complex for summary labeling: it usually includes several regional varieties of American English or of American and British English:

**crit-ter** ... *n* ... *dial*

The label *dial Brit* indicates currency in several dialects of the British Commonwealth; *dial Eng* indicates currency in one or more provincial dialects of England:

**hair** ... *n* ... **1** *dial Brit*  
**few-trils** ... *n* ... *dial Eng*

The stylistic label *slang* is used with words or senses that are especially appropriate in contexts of extreme informality, that usually have a currency not limited to a particular region or area of interest, and that are composed typically of shortened forms or extravagant or facetious figures of speech:

**clip joint** *n* **1** *slang* : a place of public entertainment (as a nightclub) that makes a practice of defrauding patrons (as by overcharging)

**horn-swog-gle** ... *vt* ... *slang* : BAMBOOZLE. HOAX

**prof** ... *n* ... *slang* : PROFESSOR

There is no satisfactory objective test for slang, especially with reference to a word out of context. No word, in fact, is invariably slang, and many standard words can be given slang applications.

The stylistic label *nonstand* for "nonstandard" is used for a few words or senses that are disapproved by many but that have some currency in reputable contexts:

**ir-re-gard-less** ... *adv* ... *nonstand*  
**lay** ... *vi* ... **2** *nonstand*

The stylistic label *substand* for "substandard" is used for those words or senses that conform to a widespread pattern of usage that differs in choice of word or form from that of the prestige group of the community:

**ain't** ... **2** *substand*

**learn** ... *vt* ... **2** *a substand*

A subject label or guide phrase is sometimes used to indicate the specific application of a word or sense:

**ape-ri-od-ic** ... *adj* ... **3** *cryptology*

**hemi-he-dral** ... *adj* ... *of a crystal*

**lose** ... *vi* ... **3** *of a timepiece*

In general, however, subject orientation is given in the definition:

**Gun-ther** ... *n* ... : a Burgundian king and husband of Brunhild in Germanic legend

**blitz** ... *n* ... **2** **b** : a rush of the passer by the defensive linebackers in football

Definitions are sometimes followed by verbal illustrations that show a typical use of the word in context. These illustrations are enclosed in angle brackets, and the word being illustrated is usually replaced by a lightface swung dash. The swung dash stands for the boldface entry word, and it may be followed by an italicized suffix:

**large-print** ... *adj* ... <~ books>

**low** *adj* ... **11** ... <had a ~ opinion of him>

**mess** ... *vi* ... **4** **c** ... <~ ing in other people's affairs>

**proud** ... *adj* ... **2** **b** ... <the ~est moment in her life>

The swung dash is not used when the form of the boldface entry word is changed in suffixation, and it is not used for open compounds:

**dare** ... *vt* ... **1** **a** ... <dared him to jump>

**upper hand** *n* ... <was determined not to let his opponent get the ~>

Illustrative quotations are also used to show words in typical contexts:

**with-in** ... *adv* **2** ... <search ~ for a creative impulse — Kingman Brewster, Jr.>

Omissions in quotations are indicated by suspension points:

**jog** ... *vi* ... **1** : ... <his ... holster ~ against his hip — Thomas Williams>

Definitions are sometimes followed by usage notes that give supplementary information about such matters as idiom, syntax, semantic relationship, and status. A usage note is introduced by a lightface dash:

**stead** ... *n* ... **2** : ... — used chiefly in the phrase *to stand one in good stead*

**zero** *vt* ... **2** **a** : ... — usu. used with *in*

**ad-e-noid** ... *n* ... : ... — usu. used in pl.

**guide** ... *n* ... **3** : ... — used esp. in commands

**pi-a-nis-si-mo** ... *adv or adj* ... : ... — used as a direction in music

**dick** ... *n* ... **2** : ... — usu. considered vulgar

**po-lack** ... *n* ... **2** : ... — usu. used disparagingly

Two or more usage notes are separated by a semicolon:

**cat** ... *vi* ... — often used with *around*; often considered vulgar

Sometimes a usage note is used in place of a definition. Some function words (as conjunctions and prepositions) have little or no semantic content; most interjections express feelings but are otherwise untranslatable into meaning; and some other words (as oaths and honorific titles) are more amenable to comment than to definition:

<sup>1</sup>*if* ... *conj* ... 3 — used as a function word to introduce an exclamation expressing a wish

<sup>1</sup>*for* ... *prep* ... 9 — used as a function word to indicate duration of time or extent of space

<sup>2</sup>*ouch* *interj* ... — used esp. to express sudden pain

<sup>3</sup>*gad* *interj* ... — used as a mild oath

<sup>1</sup>*lord* ... *n* ... 4 — used as a British title

## Sense Division

A boldface colon is used in this dictionary to introduce a definition:

**debutante** ... *n* ... : a young woman making her formal entrance into society

It is also used to separate two or more definitions of a single sense:

<sup>2</sup>*imitation* *adj*: resembling something else that is usu. genuine and of better quality: not real

Boldface Arabic numerals separate the senses of a word that has more than one sense:

<sup>2</sup>*quiz* *vt* ... 1: to make fun of: mock 2: to look at inquisitively 3: to question closely

Boldface lowercase letters separate the subsenses of a word:

<sup>1</sup>**pack** ... *n* ... 2 **a**: the contents of a bundle **b**: a large amount or number: HEAP **c**: a full set of playing cards

Lightface numerals in parentheses indicate a further division of subsenses:

<sup>3</sup>**re-treat** ... *n* ... 1 **a** (1): an act or process of withdrawing ... (2): the process of receding ... **b** (1): the usu. forced withdrawal of troops ... (2): a signal for retreating ...

A lightface colon following a definition and immediately preceding two or more subsenses indicates that the subsenses are subsumed by the preceding definition:

**huge** ... *adj* ... : very large or extensive: as **a**: of great size or area **b**: great in scale or degree ... **c**: great in scope or character

<sup>1</sup>**pe-cu-liar** ... *adj* ... 3: different from the usual or normal: **a**: SPECIAL, PARTICULAR **b**: CURIOUS **c**: ECCENTRIC, QUEER

The word *as* may or may not follow the lightface colon. Its presence (as at *huge*) indicates that the following subsenses are typical or significant examples. Its absence (as at *peculiar*) indicates that the subsenses which follow are exhaustive.

The system of separating the various senses of a word by numerals and letters is a lexical convenience. It reflects something of their semantic relationship, but it does not evaluate senses or set up a hierarchy of importance among them.

Sometimes a particular semantic relationship between senses is suggested by the use of one of four italic sense dividers: *esp*, *specif*, *also*, or *broadly*.

The sense divider *esp* (for *especially*) is used to introduce the most common meaning subsumed in the more general preceding definition:

**chick** ... *n* 1 **a**: CHICKEN: *esp*: one newly hatched

The sense divider *specif* (for *specifically*) is used to introduce a common but highly restricted meaning subsumed in the more general preceding definition:

<sup>2</sup>**pitcher** *n*: one that pitches; *specif*: the player that pitches in a game of baseball

The sense divider *also* is used to introduce a meaning that is closely related to but may be considered less important than the preceding sense:

**Moselle** ... *n* ... a white table wine made in the valley of the Moselle; *also*: a similar wine made elsewhere

The sense divider *broadly* is used to introduce an extended or wider meaning of the preceding definition:

**bull's-eye** ... *n* ... 3 **b**: a shot that hits the bull's-eye; *broadly*: something that precisely attains a desired end

The order of senses is historical: the sense known to have been first used in English is entered first. This is not to be taken to mean, however, that each sense of a multisense word developed from the immediately preceding sense. It is altogether possible that sense 1 of a word has given rise to sense 2 and sense 2 to sense 3, but frequently sense 2 and sense 3 may have arisen independently of one another from sense 1.

Information coming between the entry word and the first definition of a multisense word applies to all senses and subsenses. Information applicable only to some senses or subsenses is given between the appropriate boldface numeral or letter and the symbolic colon:

**ole-in** ... *n* ... 2 *also* **ole-ine** \-ən, -ēn\

**cru-ci-fix-ion** ... *n* ... 1 **a** ... **b** *cap*

<sup>1</sup>**tile** ... *n* ... 1 *pl* **tiles** or **tile** **a**: ...

<sup>2</sup>**palm** *n* ... 3 [*L. palmus*, fr. *palma*]

When an italicized label or guide phrase follows a boldface numeral, the label or phrase applies only to that specific numbered sense and its subsenses. It does not apply to any other boldface numbered senses:

**ro-ta** ... *n* ... 1 *chiefly Brit*: ... 2 *cap* ...

**ro-man-ti-cism** ... *n* 1: ... 2 *often cap* **a** (1): ... (2): ... **b**: ...

At *rota*, the *chiefly Brit* label applies to sense 1 but not to sense 2. The *cap* label applies to sense 2 but not to sense 1.

At *romanticism*, the *often cap* label applies to all the subsenses of sense 2 but not to sense 1.

When an italicized label or guide phrase follows a boldface letter, the label or phrase applies only to that specific lettered sense and its subsenses. It does not apply to any other boldface lettered senses:

<sup>1</sup>**hearse** ... *n* ... 2 **a** *archaic*: ... **b** *obs*

The *archaic* label applies to sense 2**a** but not to sense 2**b**. The *obs* label applies to sense 2**b** but not to sense 2**a**.

When an italicized label or guide phrase follows a parenthesized numeral, the label or phrase applies only to that specific numbered sense:

<sup>1</sup>**mat-ter** ... *n* ... 1 ... **h** (1) *obs*: REASON, CAUSE

The *obs* label applies to sense 1**h** (1) and to no other subsenses of the word.

## Names of Plants & Animals

An entry that defines the name of a plant or animal (as peach or lion) is a taxonomic entry. Such entries employ in part a formal codified vocabulary of New Latin names—*taxa*—that has been developed and used by biologists in accordance with international codes of botanical and of zoological nomenclature for the purpose of identifying and indicating the relationships of plants and animals. Names of *taxa* higher than the genus (as class, order, and family) are capitalized plural nouns which are often used with singular verbs and which are not abbreviated in normal use.

The genus is the fundamental taxon. It names a group of closely related kinds of plants (as *Prunus*, which includes the wild and cultivated cherries, apricots, peaches, and almonds) or animals (as *Felis*, which includes domestic and wild cats, lions, tigers, and cougars). It is a capitalized singular noun.

Each organism has one—and only one—correct name under these codes. The name for a species—the binomial or species name—consists of a singular capitalized genus name combined with an uncapitalized specific epithet. For a variety or subspecies—a trinomial, variety name, or subspecies name—the name adds a similar varietal or subspecific epithet. Thus the cultivated cabbage (*Brassica oleracea capitata*), the cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea botrytis*), and the brussels sprout (*Brassica oleracea gemmifera*) belong to the same species (*Brassica oleracea*) of cole.

*Taxa* in this dictionary are enclosed in parentheses and usually come immediately after the primary orienting noun. Genus names as well as binomials and trinomials are italicized, but names of *taxa* above the genus are not italicized:

**ba-sid-io-my-cete** ... *n* ... : any of a large class (Basidiomycetes) of higher fungi having septate hyphae, bearing spores on a basidium, and including rusts, smuts, mushrooms, and puffballs

**rob-in** ... *n* ... **1 a**: a small European thrush (*Erithacus rubecola*) resembling a warbler and having a brownish olive back and yellowish red throat and breast **b**: any of various Old World songbirds that are related to or resemble the European robin **2**: a large No. American thrush (*Turdus migratorius*) with olivaceous gray upperparts, blackish head and tail, black and whitish streaked throat, and chiefly dull reddish breast and underparts

*Taxa* are used in this dictionary to provide precise technical identifications through which defined terms may be pursued in technical writing. Because of their specialized nature, however, *taxa* do not have separate entries.

Taxonomic entries are usually oriented indirectly to higher *taxa* by other vernaculars (as by *alga* at *seaweed* or *thrush* at *robin*) or by technical adjectives (as by *composite* at *daisy*, *leguminous* at *pea*, or *teleost* at *perch*). Among the higher plants, except the composites and legumes and a few obscure tropical groups, such orientation is by a vernacular family name that is linked at the corresponding taxonomic entry to its technical equivalent:

**bee-ch** ... *n* ... : any of a genus (*Fagus* of the family Fagaceae, the beech family) of hardwood trees with smooth gray bark and small edible nuts; *also*: its wood

**oak** ... *n* ... **1 a**: a tree or shrub (genera *Quercus* or *Lithocarpus*) of the beech family that produces a rounded one-seeded thin-shelled nut surrounded at the base by an indurated cup

A genus name may be abbreviated to its initial letter when it is used more than once in senses not separated by a boldface number:

**nas-tur-tium** ... *n* ... : any of a genus (*Tropaeolum* of the family Tropaeolaceae, the nasturtium family) of herbs with showy spurred flowers and pungent seeds; *esp*: either of two widely cultivated ornamentals (*T. majus* and *T. minus*)

## Cross-Reference

Four different kinds of cross-references are used in this dictionary: directional, synonymous, cognate, and inflectional. In each instance the cross-reference is readily recognized by the lightface small capitals in which it is printed.

A cross-reference following a lightface dash and beginning with *see* or *compare* is a directional cross-reference. It directs the dictionary user to look elsewhere for further information. A *compare* cross-reference is regularly appended to a definition; a *see* cross-reference may stand alone:

**plea** ... *n* ... **2** ... **a** ... — *compare* DEMURRER

**scrup-ple** ... *n* ... **1** — *see* WEIGHT table

A cross-reference immediately following a boldface colon is a synonymous cross-reference. It may stand alone as the only definitional matter for an entry or for a sense or subsense of an entry; it may follow an analytical definition; it may be one of two synonymous cross-references separated by a comma:

**mul-ti-syl-lab-ic** ... *adj*: POLYSYLLABIC

**drain-age** ... *n* ... **2**: a device for draining: DRAIN

**drip-py** ... *adj* ... **1**: RAINY, DRIZZLY

A synonymous cross-reference indicates that a definition at the entry cross-referred to can be substituted as a definition for the entry or the sense or subsense in which the cross-reference appears.

A cross-reference following an italic *var of* is a cognate cross-reference:

**fiord** *var of* FIORD

Sometimes a cognate cross-reference has a limiting label preceding *var of* as a specific indication that the variant is not standard English:

**mair** ... *chiefly Scot var of* MORE

**quare** ... *dial var of* QUEER

**sher-ris** ... *archaic var of* SHERRY

A cross-reference following an italic label that identifies an entry as an inflected form of a noun, of an adjective or adverb, or of a verb is an inflectional cross-reference. Inflectional cross-references appear only when the inflected form falls at least a column away from the entry cross-referred to:

**mice** *pl of* MOUSE

**sang** *past of* SING

## Synonyms & Antonyms

Synonymous words believed to be of interest to the dictionary user are listed in groups following the entry of one of the words in the group. (See, for example, *talkative* on page 1189.) They are signaled by an indented boldface italic *syn*. They are followed by a brief statement of their common denotation which is called the "shared meaning element" and by a list of antonyms which is identified by a prefixed boldface italic *ant* and is specific to the first member of the group.

Synonymous words believed to present special problems to the dictionary user are similarly listed and are, further, clearly discriminated and illustrated in an accompanying paragraph. (See, for example, *gaudy* on page 475.)

When a word is included in a synonym list, the main entry of that word is followed by a run-on *syn* see—which refers to the entry where the synonym list may be found. Where appropriate, the run-on is followed by *ant* and any antonyms specific to the word. (See, for example, *facetious* on page 410.)

## Combining Forms, Prefixes & Suffixes

An entry that begins or ends with a hyphen is a word element that forms part of an English compound:

*self-* *comb form*

*-ology* ... *n comb form* ... <phraseology>

*-lyze* ... *vb comb form* ... <electrolyze>

*pre-* *prefix* ... <prehistoric>

*-er* ... *adj suffix or adv suffix* ... <hotter> <drier>

*-ism* ... *n suffix* ... <barbarianism>

*-fy* ... *vb suffix* ... <citify>

Combining forms, prefixes, and suffixes are entered in this dictionary for three reasons: to make easier the writing of etymologies of words in which these word elements occur over and over again; to make understandable the meaning of many undefined run-ons which for reasons of space would be omitted if they had to be given etymologies and definitions; and to

## Explanatory Notes

make recognizable the meaningful elements of new words that are not well enough established in the language to warrant dictionary entry.

## Lists of Undefined Words

Lists of undefined words occur after the entries of the prefixes *non-*, *re-*, and *un-*. These words are not defined because they are self-explanatory: their meanings are simply the sum of a meaning of the prefix combined with a meaning of the root word.

## Abbreviations & Symbols

Abbreviations and symbols for chemical elements are included as main entries in the vocabulary:

*acct* *abbr*

*Au* *symbol*

Abbreviations have been normalized to one form. In practice, however, there is considerable variation in the use of periods and in capitalization (as *mph*, *m.p.h.*, *Mph*, and *MPH*), and stylings other than those given in this dictionary are often acceptable.

Abbreviations regularly used in this dictionary are listed separately on page 31a.

Symbols that are not capable of being alphabetized are included in a separate section of the back matter headed "Signs and Symbols."



# The English Language and Its History

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English is undoubtedly the most important of the world's languages at the present time. In number of speakers it ranks second,<sup>1</sup> with approximately 275 million native speakers, compared with 610 million native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Spanish comes next, with 210 million, followed by Russian with 140 million and Hindi-Urdu and Arabic with 130 million each. Importance is not measured only by numbers, however. The uses to which a language is put and the extent of its international exposure are at least as important as the sheer bulk of native speakers. The worldwide use of English in diplomacy, commerce, and science is evidence of its importance in this regard, and serves to explain why many millions around the world find it desirable and sometimes necessary to learn it as a second language.

It is not the intrinsic superiority of English over other languages that has made it the premier world language. If it is richer in vocabulary, more flexible in grammar, and more expressive than other languages (and some would question at least the last two of these claims), these qualities are the results, not the causes, of its importance in the world. Simply stated, what makes a language important is the importance of the people who use it and the uses to which they put it. Since the eighteenth century, speakers of English—at first from the British Isles and later from America and the dominions—have played a dominant role in colonial expansion, industrial and technological development, and world politics. The position of English in the world is the direct result of the history of those who speak it.

What is modern English, this great world language, like? Before we can answer that question at all meaningfully, we must deal with the broader questions: What is a language like? and What qualities, if any, are shared by all languages, regardless of their relative prominence or obscurity? These are questions which are central to the study called linguistics. They cannot be completely answered by linguistics in its present state; probably they will never be completely answered. But linguistics has progressed sufficiently so that partial answers, dealing with the larger aspects of the questions, can be tentatively suggested. Like the answers put forward by most sciences, these are subject to revision in the future as new insights and new techniques are brought to bear and new minds take up the old problems from new angles. All we can say is that this is what we know, or think we know, now.

In the first place, language is a uniquely human possession, at least in that little corner of the universe that we know about. All races, tribes, and families of men have language; no animals do. Some people might question the second of these statements,

since we know that animals communicate with one another by sounds. But when we identify the particular qualities of genuine language, we discover that animal communication systems are different in several fundamental ways. Why this is so, when we share so much of our anatomy, physiology, and psychology with the animals, especially the apes and monkeys, science cannot yet clearly explain. It seems to be largely due to the structure of our brains, though other physical differences, especially in the anatomy of the throat and mouth, may have something to do with it. Much research is going on now in the attempt to answer this question. Meanwhile it is certainly a deeply ingrained part of our human nature to consider language as belonging to man alone. There is something a bit eerie about those animals, mostly birds, which can be taught to mimic the sounds of language. All the stories, whether fables, fairy tales, or fantasies, that endow animals with speech also give them other human qualities as well, so that they cease to be animals and become humans in disguise. On the other hand, we find it hard to imagine a human society lacking language. None has ever been found. If there still are tribes unknown to us living in isolation in Amazonian jungles, we are confident that they have language.

It is paradoxical that in spite of this universality of language among humans it still must be learned afresh by each individual person. There is considerable debate among linguists and psychologists as to how much of our linguistic ability we inherit and how much we have to learn from others. A conservative position would be that we inherit a remarkable aptitude for learning language, or at least one language, together with a very strong motivation to learn it early in life. Some linguists go much farther, as far as to maintain that we inherit not only an aptitude and a desire to learn, but actually a good part of the underlying system that is much the same in all languages. In any case, three conditions meet together to allow us to learn a language rapidly and successfully while we are still very young children: aptitude, strong motivation, and exposure to older people actually using language as they go about their lives. All normal children seem to have the first two of these; the third supplies the input which decides what particular language, or sometimes languages, we learn. It is thus a factor of our heredity that we are able and eager to learn a language, and an accident of our environment that the language we learn is English or French or some other of the three thousand or so living languages. The normal circumstance is to learn the language surrounding us in early childhood and to speak it the rest of our lives; it is our NATIVE SPEECH OR MOTHER TONGUE. Occasionally the environment is such that the child learns two mother tongues at the same time and is thus a native bilingual. Even more rarely, the child

<sup>1</sup> According to figures compiled by the Center for Applied Linguistics, Arlington, Va., in 1976.