# Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage

Edited by
Jeremy Butterfield

FOWLER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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# Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage

FIRST EDITION
H. W. Fowler

FOURTH EDITION
*Edited by*
Jeremy Butterfield

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Printed in Italy by
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To my beloved parents,
who gave me my first copy of *Fowler* when I was
at the Royal Grammar School, Guildford.

## Conflicting views

Ours is a Copious Language, and Trying to Strangers.

MR PODSNAP IN DICKENS'S *OUR MUTUAL FRIEND*, 1865

Grammar is like walking. You have to think about it when you start but if you have to go on thinking about it you fall over. It should come as second nature.

ALICE THOMAS ELLIS IN *THE SPECTATOR*, 1989

Arguments over grammar and style are often as fierce as those over Windows versus Mac, and as fruitless as Coke versus Pepsi and boxers versus briefs.

PROFESSOR JACK LYNCH, *THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A USER'S GUIDE*, 2007

Time changes all things; there is no reason why language should escape this universal law. (Le temps change toute chose; il n'y a aucune raison pour que la langue échappe à cette loi universelle.)

FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE, *COURSE IN GENERAL LINGUISTICS*, 1959 (1916)

## Dislikes

First (for I detest your ridiculous and most pedantic neologism of 'firstly').

THOMAS DE QUINCEY, 1847

Comments on *hopefully* by members of a usage panel, as reported in 1985:

I have fought this for some years, will fight it till I die. It is barbaric, illiterate, offensive, damnable, and inexcusable.

I don't like chalk squeaking on blackboards either.

'Hopefully' is useful or it would not be used so universally.

'Grounded' meaning a withdrawal of privileges is a word I dislike. It's off the television (*Roseanne* notably) but now in common use. (I just heard it on *Emmerdale Farm*, where they probably think it's dialect.) I would almost prefer 'gated', deriving from Forties public school stories in *Hotspur* and *Wizard*. Other current dislikes: 'Brits'; 'for starters'; 'sorted'; and (when used intransitively) 'hurting'.

ALAN BENNETT IN *LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS*, 4 JAN. 1996

# A revision for the twenty-first century

This new, fourth edition of *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage* has been thoroughly revised and updated to reflect how English speakers the world over use the language now, in the early twenty-first century. It offers detailed, reasoned guidance on thousands of points of grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax, style, appropriate word choice, and pronunciation. It presents the facts of disputed or controversial usages and illuminates them with up-to-date examples, thereby enabling readers to make informed choices for themselves about their own usage.

In order to make the book relevant to modern users, my editing has consisted of three major tasks. To take editorial decisions, I have drawn on my observation and knowledge of contemporary usage issues derived from my experience as a teacher, translator, author, and former Editor-in-Chief of dictionaries.

First, the addition of over 250 new entries. These entries discuss words and phrases that have been coined or that have become more widespread since the previous edition. Many of them reflect the staggering changes in the way we communicate: *blog, to google, hashtag, homepage, online, phablet, selfie, social media.* Many, in contrast, are not new but raise usage or style issues not previously covered: *achingly* (pretentious? clichéd?), *ad nauseam* (misspelt as *-eum*), *to address* (overused?), *brainstorming* (not, contrary to urban myth, politically incorrect), *challenging* (meaning exactly what?), *epicentre* (misused?), *the problem is, is,* to name just a few.

Some of the new entries also reflect changed attitudes towards (or 'around' as many now say) language dealing with race, gender, disability, sexuality, and so forth: *ageism, conjoined twins, the language of disability, Indigenous Australians.*

Secondly, I examined each entry to see whether the points raised were still valid. In many cases, naturally, they were. That was particularly true of more straightforward matters such as spelling and alternative plural forms—although even here some surprises emerged, such as changing conventions for plurals of Latin-derived words ending in *-um*, which can cause so much head-scratching.

But in less cut-and-dried areas, many of the conventions that applied at the time of the previous edition, nearly twenty years ago, have changed, and I have updated entries accordingly, e.g. *between you and I, hopefully,* or the much debated use of *they, their,* etc. after singular noun phrases and pronouns such as *every student, everybody, everyone.*

Thirdly, I have modernized, where appropriate, the style and tone of voice of entries. Sometimes this involved rephrasing dated or literary wording, or language that is 'lexicographerspeak'; sometimes it meant removing a tone which was socially or linguistically outdated. Most visibly for the reader, because *Fowler* is a book that has always elucidated points of usage by well-chosen examples, I have carefully selected and added hundreds of examples of words being used in their modern contexts. To do this, I have drawn on a great variety of contemporary British, US, and international sources, ranging from the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Daily Telegraph,* to *Socialist Worker* and *Private Eye,* from *The Times of India* and the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* to *Scotland on Sunday* and *CNN* news.

These examples are all drawn from the unparalleled resource that is the *Oxford English Corpus.*

## The Oxford English Corpus

The use I have made of the *Oxford English Corpus* marks a watershed in the life of this book. Since many readers will be unfamiliar with the term 'corpus', it is worth explaining what this possibly funereal-sounding Latin word means in modern lexicography and linguistics. A corpus can be defined as 'a collection of written or spoken texts in machine-readable form, assembled for the purpose of linguistic research'. But such a definition is abstract, and raises questions such as 'How does a corpus work?', 'What are the practical benefits', and 'What does it contain?' To answer the first, the corpus allows users to analyse *all* the examples of a given word contained in it. For instance, the noun *challenge* appears in nearly a quarter of a million different sentences. These sentences can be read on screen, and are exhaustively analysed using linguistic software.

For this book, the practical benefits of using a corpus included establishing how often competing forms of a word are used, e.g. *geographic(al)*, or *website* versus *web site*. Corpus analysis also shows whether a word is more frequent in one variety of English than another: British English favours *educationalist* whereas *educationist* is widely used in Indian English. Lexically, it makes it possible to tease out differences between similar words through the word associations revealed by the data (e.g. *optimal/optimum*, *repertoire/repertory*). The corpus also brings to light previously unsuspected uses, malapropisms such as to be *clambering* to do something instead of *clamouring*, or misspellings such as to take a *peak* at something instead of *peek*.

As regards contents, the *Oxford English Corpus* contains over 2.5 billion words, consisting of twenty-first century texts from the year 2000 onwards, and is continuously updated. It is based mainly on texts collected from pages on the World Wide Web supplemented by printed texts to make it truly comprehensive. All types of English are included, from literary novels and specialist journals to everyday newspapers and magazines, and from Hansard to the language of blogs, emails, and social media.

And, the *Oxford English Corpus* reflects the international reach of English, comprising as it does not merely texts from the UK and the United States, but also Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean, Canada, India, South Africa, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong.

## The Web

This preface was written shortly after the twenty-fifth anniversary of the World Wide Web, and the Web has enormously benefited the editing in several ways.

It has allowed remote online access to the *Oxford English Corpus*, the benefits of which have already been summarized. In my reviewing of entries, the information I gleaned from online searches proved invaluable in establishing contemporary relevance. In particular, online discussion groups, blogs, and forums for and by copy editors, copywriters, learners, and word buffs provided fresh perspectives on issues that continue to cause puzzlement or controversy.

Lastly, the World Wide Web provides unparalleled access to a panoply of scholarly resources that previous editors would find mind-boggling: from the complete works of any classic author you care to name, to online dictionaries of all kinds, to long-forgotten books which may hold the key to a word's historical development. In particular, it has been a joy to be able to consult the *Oxford English Dictionary* online throughout this revision.

## Making the fullest use of this book

It sounds almost crass to point this out, but the main use of a dictionary—which is what this is, albeit a dictionary of usage—is as an alphabetically ordered look-up resource. If you have a query about the difference between *imply* and INFER, you go straight to the

relevant entry; similarly for the spelling of SIZEABLE, SIZABLE; if you have doubts about whether 'the man whom they claimed is a member of a dissident faction' passes grammatical muster, you go to WHO AND WHOM; if you find yourself swithering between 'If it *was* up to me' and 'If it *were* up to me', the entry on the SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD may be instructive.

But if you use the book only as a look-up of last resort, a sort of linguistic emergency service, you will unwittingly deprive yourself of at least half its pleasure and usefulness. The book covers, as it has since Henry Fowler created it, issues to do with every feature of English, including etymology (*forlorn hope*), very similar words (*flagrant* versus *blatant*), changing meanings (*nonplussed*), changes in the acceptability of words (*shag*), pronunciation (*chorizo, macho*), and bugbears, such as *-ize* verbs, *split infinitives*, and avoiding the passive, which, like Broadway hit musicals, just run and run.

And it also includes unexpected information. For example, Fowler included numerous technical terms from grammar, rhetoric, and poetry, many of which have been retained. They can provide an insight into mechanisms of language that we use without thinking and without naming, e.g. *hendiadys, litotes, personification*. There are several lengthy articles that explain a rule or feature governing innumerable different words (RECESSIVE ACCENT, DOUBLING OF CONSONANTS WITH SUFFIXES). A comprehensive web of cross-references guides you from one entry to others on the same topic, or related topics. There is also more than occasional humour, Fowlerian (*mot juste*) or other (*misprints*).

## Previous editors' examples

Previous editors did not pluck their conclusions out of thin air: they too had their own evidence, of disparate kinds. For Henry Fowler, it consisted partly of the files he had access to as an Oxford University Press lexicographer. But he was clearly also an avid collector of journalistic examples, often of ill-advised usage, hundreds of which he used to illustrate his discussions in the original edition. Those that illustrate a point still relevant for today's speakers of English have been kept.

For his 1965 revision, much of Sir Ernest Gowers' evidence came from a rather different source: the morass of official documents he had to wade through in his distinguished civil service career. To his eagle eye for cant and jargon we owe, for example, the entry on *officialese*, which has been retained and updated.

In preparing the third edition, in the pioneering days of computerized language analysis, Robert Burchfield created a personal database of quotations, drawn from language of the 1980s and 1990s. To his industry this current edition owes the many hundreds of examples drawn from literary authors of all stripes, such as Chinua Achebe, Peter Ackroyd, Peter Carey, J. M. Coetzee, Kingsley Amis, Raymond Carver, Iris Murdoch, and Vikram Seth.

## Prescriptive or descriptive?

It is usually only literary giants—Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, etc.—whose names stand for their entire work. Henry Fowler is one of that select non-literary band who have achieved such status (Baedeker, Bradshaw, Debrett's, Hansard, Wainwright). Apart from being a metonym—people refer to 'Fowler', meaning the book—he has become a common noun: one can talk of 'the latest Fowler', 'a Fowler for today', and even 'a Fowler of Politics'. The publication of Henry Fowler's original 1926 edition as an *Oxford World's Classic* highlights its legendary status as the most famous book about English usage ever written.

All this suggests Fowler's almost superhuman status as an arbiter of 'correct' English. And because of that people have taken it for granted that he laid down cast-iron rules to be adhered to absolutely. That belief is far from the truth. He was, paradoxically, both

descriptive and prescriptive. On the one hand, his analysis of authentic English usage is often both penetratingly accurate and commonsensical (he considered the ban on prepositions at the end of a sentence 'a superstition'). On the other hand, his training as a classical scholar and his career as a schoolmaster meant that he had an ingrained attachment to prescriptive rules.

This tension between a descriptive and a prescriptive approach is something that any compiler of a modern usage dictionary inevitably feels. My method has been to assess critically the statements made by the previous troika of authors/editors, and present their views tempered by contemporary evidence so that readers can make their own judgements. However, like many commentators on usage, to an extent I want to have my cake and eat it, to square the circle of descriptivism and prescriptivism. As a lexicographer and editor I favour the former; as a language-user I have my own preferences, tastes, habits, and bugbears, as all previous editors had. *Fowler* would not be *Fowler* without them.

# Acknowledgements

It gives me great pleasure to thank the team at Oxford University Press who have been instrumental in the creation of this revised edition. In the first place, thanks go to my Commissioning Editor, Rebecca Lane, who saw the merits of my plan for the book, which then led to the Delegates appointing me as the editor. Throughout the process of revising the text, I have been able to count on unstinting support and encouragement from my dedicated editor, Joanna Harris.

This revised edition of *Fowler* draws widely on the evidence of contemporary usage obtained from the Oxford English Corpus (which I explain in detail in the Preface). That corpus is maintained by Dr Pete Whitelock, whom I should like to thank for his always prompt and helpful replies to my queries. Angus Stevenson of the dictionaries department suggested several interesting usages to investigate. I am also indebted to Dr Donald Watt, who painstakingly reviewed all my edits and made innumerable valuable suggestions, stylistic and factual. Bernadette Mohan has meticulously proofread the text in its entirety to ensure that its contents are presented error-free and in a consistent style. Thanks are also due to Clare Jones, Bethan Lee, and Cornelia Haase for their crucial role in turning electronic files into an elegantly produced book, while its marketing and PR have been deftly and efficiently handled by Phil Henderson and Nicola Burton.

Finally, outside the Press, I should like to thank colleagues and friends too numerous to mention with whom, over the years, I have discussed knotty points of English usage; and in particular my partner, who has always been my sternest critic.

# Dedication, 1926

*To the memory of my brother*

FRANCIS GEORGE FOWLER, M.A. CANTAB.

*who shared with me the planning of this book,*
*but did not live to share the writing.*

I think of it as it should have been, with its prolixities docked, its dullnesses enlivened, its fads eliminated, its truths multiplied. He had a nimbler wit, a better sense of proportion, and a more open mind, than his twelve-year-older partner; and it is a matter of regret that we had not, at a certain point, arranged our undertakings otherwise than we did.

In 1911 we started work simultaneously on the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* and this book; living close together, we could, and did, compare notes; but each was to get one book into shape by writing its first quarter or half; and so much only had been done before the war. The one in which, as the less mechanical, his ideas and contributions would have had much the greater value had been assigned, by ill chance, to me. In 1918 he died, aged 47, of tuberculosis contracted during service with the B.E.F. in 1915–16.

The present book accordingly contains none of his actual writing; but, having been designed in consultation with him, it is the last fruit of a partnership that began in 1903 with our translation of Lucian.

H. W. F.

# Key to the Pronunciation

The pronunciation system is that of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and, except where otherwise specified, is based on the pronunciation, widely called 'Received Pronunciation' or RP, of educated people in southern England. The necessary adjustments have been made when standard American English pronunciations are given.

The symbols used, with typical examples, are as follows:

## Consonants

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

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| g | (**g**et) | ŋ | (ri**ng**) | ʒ | (deci**s**ion) |
| ʧ | (**ch**ip) | θ | (**th**in) | j | (**y**es) |
| ʤ | (**j**ar) | ð | (**th**is) | | |
| x | (lo**ch**) | ʃ | (**sh**e) | | |

## Vowels

| *Short vowels* | | *Long vowels* | | *Diphthongs* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | (c**a**t) | ɑː | (**ar**m) | eɪ | (d**ay**) |
| ɛ | (b**e**d) | ɛː | (h**air**) | ʌɪ | (m**y**) |
| ə | (**a**go) | iː | (s**ee**) | ɔɪ | (b**oy**) |
| ɪ | (s**i**t) | ɔː | (s**aw**) | əʊ | (n**o**) |
| ɒ | (h**o**t) | əː | (h**er**) | aʊ | (h**ow**) |
| ʌ | (r**u**n) | uː | (t**oo**) | ɪə | (n**ear**) |
| ʊ | (p**u**t) | | | ʊə | (p**oor**) |
| i | (happ**y**) | | | | |

(ə) before /l/, /m/, or /n/ indicates that the syllable may be realised with a syllabic **l**, **m**, or **n**, rather than with a vowel or consonant, e.g. /ʌmˈbɪlɪk(ə)l/ rather than /ʌmˈbɪlɪkəl/ The main or primary stress of a word is shown by a superior ˈ placed immediately before the relevant syllable. When a word also has a secondary stress this is indicated by an inferior ˌ placed immediately before the relevant syllable.

The mark ˜ (called a tilde) indicates a nasalized sound, as in the following sounds that are not natural in English:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| æ̃ | (t**im**bre) | ɑ̃ | (él**an**) | ɔ̃ | (garç**on**) |

# Abbreviations and Symbols

| | |
|---|---|
| † | obsolete |
| → | becomes |
| * | unacceptable construction, spelling, etc. |
| * | precedes a reconstructed etymological formation |
| ? | precedes a questionable or contentious use |
| ~ | varies freely with; by comparison with |
| ∧ | indicates the omission of a word |

SMALL CAPITALS refer the reader to the article so indicated, for further information.

| | |
|---|---|
| *a, ante* | before, not later than |
| abbrev. | abbreviation, abbreviated as |
| acc. | accusative |
| adj. | adjective |
| adv. | adverb |
| advt | advertisement |
| AmE | American English |
| arch. | archaic |
| Aust. | Australian |
| aux. | auxiliary |
| AV | Authorized Version (of the Bible) |
| BEV | Black English Vernacular (US) |
| BrE | British English |
| *c.* | *circa* |
| c. | century, centuries |
| Canad. | Canadian |
| cf. | compare |
| colloq. | colloquial |
| conj. | conjunction |
| const. | construed (with) |
| d. | died |
| dat. | dative |
| det. | determiner |
| dial. | dialect, -al |
| EU | European Union |
| e.g. | *exempli gratia*, 'for example' |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| Eng. | English |
| esp. | especially |
| et al. | *et alii*, 'and others' |
| exc. | except |
| f. | from |
| fem. | feminine |
| fig. | figuratively |
| Fr. | French |
| Ger. | German |
| gen. | genitive |
| Gk | Greek |
| ibid. | *ibidem*, 'in the same book or passage' |
| idem | 'the same' |
| i.e. | *id est*, 'that is' |
| IE | Indo-European |
| Ir. | Irish |
| It. | Italian |
| L, Lat. | Latin |
| lit. | literally |
| math. | mathematical |
| MDu. | Middle Dutch |
| ME | Middle English |
| MLG | Middle Low German |
| mod. | modern |
| modE | modern English |
| modF | modern French |
| mus. | music |
| n., n.pl. | noun, plural noun |
| NAmer. | North American |
| naut. | nautical |
| NIr. | Northern Irish |
| nom. | nominative |
| obs. | obsolete |
| obsolesc. | obsolescent |
| occas. | occasional(ly) |
| OE | Old English |
| OF | Old French |
| OProvençal | Old Provençal |
| orig. | originally |
| pa.t. | past tense |

| | |
|---|---|
| pa.pple | past participle |
| perh. | perhaps |
| pers. | person |
| Pg. | Portuguese |
| pl. | plural |
| poet. | poetic |
| ppl | participial |
| pple | participle |
| prep. | preposition, prepositional |
| pres. | present |
| prob. | probably |
| RP | Received Pronunciation (in BrE) |
| SAfr. | South African |
| Sc. | Scottish |
| *sc.* | *scilicet*, 'understand' or 'supply' |
| sing. | singular |
| Sp. | Spanish |
| SPE | Society for Pure English |
| spec. | specifically |
| s.v. | *sub voce*, 'under the word' |
| t. | tense |
| theol. | theological |
| tr. | translation (of) |
| trans. | transitive |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| ult. | ultimately |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| usu. | usually |
| v., vs. | verb, verbs |
| vol. | volume |
| WGmc | West Germanic |

# Bibliographical Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| Alford | Henry Alford, *The Queen's English*, 1864 |
| *Amer. N. & Q.* | *American Notes & Queries* |
| *Amer. Speech* | *American Speech* |
| *Ann.* | *Annual* |
| Baldick | C. Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 1990 |
| *BMJ* | *British Medical Journal* |
| *Bodl. Libr. Rec.* | *Bodleian Library Record* |
| *Bull. Amer. Acad. Arts & Sci.* | *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* |
| Burchfield | R. Burchfield, *The Spoken Word: a BBC Guide*, 1981 |
| *CGEL* | *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, ed. R. Quirk et al., 1985 |
| *Chr. Sci. Monitor* | *Christian Science Monitor* |
| *Chron.* | *Chronicle* |
| *COCA* | M. Davies, *The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 450 million words, 1990-present*, 2008–. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/. |
| *COD* | *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 8th edn, 1990; 9th edn, 1995 |
| *COHA* | M. Davies, *The Corpus of Historical American English: 400 million words, 1810–2009*, 2010–. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/. |
| *Conc. Scots Dict.* | *Concise Scots Dictionary* |
| Crystal | D. Crystal, *A First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 1980 |
| *DARE* | *Dictionary of American Regional English*, ed. F. G. Cassidy et al., 2 vols. (A–H), 1985, 1991 |
| *Dict.* | *Dictionary* (*of*) |
| *Dict. Eng. Usage* | *Dictionary of English Usage* |
| *Eccles. Hist.* | *Ecclesiastical History* |
| *Encycl.* | *Encyclop(a)edia* |
| *European Sociol. Rev.* | *European Sociological Review* |
| Fowler | H. W. and F. G. Fowler, *The King's English*, 1906 |
| Garner | Bryan A. Garner, *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage*, 1987 |
| *Gaz.* | *Gazette* |
| Gimson | A. C. Gimson, *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, 3rd edn, 1980 |
| Hartmann and Stork | R. R. K. Hartmann and F. C. Stork, *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, 1973 |
| *Hart's Rules* | *New Hart's Rules: The Handbook of Style for Writers and Editors*, 2005 |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Internat.* | *International* |
| Jespersen | Otto Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles*, i–vii, 1909–49 |
| Jones | Daniel Jones, *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1917 |
| *Jrnl* | *Journal* (*of*) |
| *Jrnl RSA* | *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* |
| *London Rev. Bks* | *London Review of Books* |
| Lyons | J. Lyons, *Semantics*, 2 vols., 1977 |
| *Mag.* | *Magazine* |
| *MEU* | *Modern English Usage*, 1926 |
| Mitchell | Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*, 2 vols., 1985 |
| *MWCDEU* | *Merriam-Webster Concise Dictionary of English Usage*, 2002 |
| *N&Q* | *Notes & Queries* |
| *NEB* | *New English Bible* |
| *New SOED* | *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols., 1993 |
| *NODWE* | *New Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors*, 2005 |
| *NY Rev. Bks* | *New York Review of Books* |
| *NYT* | *New York Times* |
| *OCELang.* | *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, ed. Tom McArthur, 1992 |
| *OCELit.* | *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble, 5th edn, 1985 |
| *ODCIE* | *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, ed. A. P. Cowie et al., 2 vols, 1975, 1983 |
| *ODEE* | *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1966 |
| *ODNB* | *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* |
| *ODO* | *Oxford Dictionary Online* |
| *OEC* | *Oxford English Corpus* |
| *OED* | *The Oxford English Dictionary*, issued in parts 1884–1928; as 12 vols., 1933 |
| *OED* 2 | *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, 20 vols., 1989 |
| *OEDS* | *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, 4 vols., 1972–86 |
| *OGEU* | *The Oxford Guide to English Usage*, 2nd edn, 1993 |
| *OMEU* | *The Oxford Miniguide to English Usage*, 1983 |
| *Oxf. Dict. Eng. Gramm.* | *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*, 1994 |
| *Parl. Aff.* | *Parliamentary Affairs* |
| *POD* | *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary* |
| Poutsma | Hendrik Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English*, 5 vols., 1926–9 |
| *Publ. Amer. Dial. Soc.* | *Publications of the American Dialect Society* |
| *Q* | *Quarterly* |
| Quirk | R. Quirk et al., *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, 1972 |
| *Reg.* | *Register* |
| *Rep.* | *Report* |
| *Rev.* | *Review* (*of*) |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sci. Amer.* | *Scientific American* |
| Smith | Egerton Smith, *The Principles of English Metre*, 1923 |
| *Tel.* | *Telegraph* |
| *TES* | *The Times Educational Supplement* |
| *THES* | *The Times Higher Educational Supplement* |
| *TLS* | *The Times Literary Supplement* |
| *Trans. Philol. Soc.* | *Transactions of the Philological Society* |
| Tulloch | S. Tulloch, *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words*, 1991 |
| Visser | F. Th. Visser, *An Historical Syntax of the English Language*, parts i–iii, 4 vols., 1963–73 |
| Wales | Katie Wales, *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, 1989 |
| Walker | John Walker, *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language*, 1791; 4th edn 1806 |
| *WDEU* | *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, 1989 |
| Webster's Third | *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, 1961 |
| Wells | J. C. Wells, *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, 1990 |

For convenience, the dates assigned to the works of Shakespeare are those given in the Bibliography of the *OED*. The texts of the individual works are cited from the original-spelling edition of Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, OUP, 1986.

All examples from the Bible are cited from the Authorized Version of 1611 (quoted from the 'exact reprint' with an introduction by Alfred W. Pollard, OUP, 1985).