

# A Dictionary of New English



A  
DICTIONARY  
OF  
NEW ENGLISH

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Longman

Longman Group Limited  
London

Associated companies, branches and  
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First published 1973

Reprinted 1974

ISBN 0 582 55504 3

Printed in the United States of America

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## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### *Contents of the Dictionary*

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> by permission of The Clarendon Press, Oxford.

We cannot hope to include every new term on the circumference of our language, but we hope we have included the majority of new terms that are approaching the center of the language. As one well-known lexicographer has said, "A new word is a word that has not yet been recorded in the dictionaries."

The newness of the new English recorded here applies primarily to content, for the meanings of old words in new applications, such as *cage* and *cameo*, or idiomatic phrases, such as *can of worms* and *carry the can*, and the figurative and transferred meanings of names, such as *Camelot* and *Carey Street*, are things that need noting as features of the growth of the language. Old elements combine: in compounds (*carborne*, *card-carrying*, *cardioactive*), in chemical nomenclature (*carborane*), in acronyms (*Capcom*), in blends (*carbecue*), and in many technical phrases (*calligraphic display*, *Capri pants*, *caravan park*, and *carbon date*). Forms and elements entirely new in English appear principally in words quoted or borrowed from other languages (*cachaça*, *café filtre*, and *caporegime*).

### *General Principles of Selection*

Any record of a living language is at best a haphazard affair. It must be only a sampling, but if it is a broad sampling it is a mirror of current cultural modes and fancies, of technical achievements and social growth or squalor, and in the end a crucial test of the financial resources of the compiler.

Within those limitations, we made an examination of the quotations in our file and evaluated the collection of only the past ten years, from 1963 to 1972.

Before 1963 we had been sending quotations to an English dictionary of record, and the Merriam Unabridged has reflected the record of English up to the early 1960's also. So by checking the largest and most reliable standard English dictionaries to ascertain that none of the entries in the selection had appeared in them before, we were able to substantiate the judgment that these words and meanings were "new."

These quotations were examined for their lexicality, frequency, topical interest, and similar properties. Items that did not meet the tests of interest and importance, and those which appeared in the files showing substantial currency before 1963 have been reluctantly excluded, though a number of terms are still considered "new" by many (*autobahn*, *Black Muslim*, and *cryogenics*). Such terms are to be found in the Merriam Unabridged and the more important of them are usually in the latest editions of the college dictionaries.

On the other hand, words that have suddenly emerged from obscurity—of the scientific laboratory or other restricted and narrow usage—are included in spite of their existence before 1963. Generally they are technical terms of the sciences which have come to influence our technologically based modern society. And no check was made of technical dictionaries, as one of our objects was to record technical terms as they come into the common vocabulary; we wish primarily to be a companion to standard English dictionaries and to bring them up to date.

The editors were compelled by limitations of space to omit various types of words that may reasonably be called "new" but that nevertheless could not be regarded as lexical or "dictionary material" in the strict sense of the word: these included proper names of undeniable currency such as *Al-Fatah* and *Bangladesh*, and acronyms and abbreviations of well-known organizations, political parties, and the like, such as *DOT* (for Department of Transportation) and *SANE* (National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy). Yet there is no rule without exceptions, and

in a few instances the editors felt that certain terms of an admittedly "encyclopedic" nature should still be included in the dictionary because of their extraordinary importance or currency; an entry such as *SALT* falls in this category.

### *Prefixes, Suffixes, and Combining Forms*

Following the style of standard dictionaries, the main entries in this book appear in boldface type and are listed in alphabetical order, whether the entry is written as one word, as a hyphenated compound or derivative, or as a non-hyphenated compound or derivative.

Derivatives and compounds are given separate entry whenever they cannot be satisfactorily explained by a combination of the prefix, suffix, or combining form with the root word. Any effort to evaluate the productivity of word elements must be somewhat frustrating but we feel that some attempt must be made. New affixes (as *acousto-*) and new meanings of affixes and combining forms (as **anti** or **a-**) are recorded under the affix or combining form. Unusually active affixes and combining forms are hard to measure. Some are so active and productive (*re-*, *un-*, *-er*, etc.) as to make even a representative sampling beyond our resources. Such affixes and combining forms as **astro-**, **bio-**, **cosmo-**, **immuno-**, **-ian**, **-in**, **-manship**, and **-ville** are entered and examples of their use and productivity are given. The user should look first under the affix or combining form. If the word is not given there, it may have a specialized meaning of the affix or be unusually frequent or there may be some interesting information about the word containing the affix that warrants separate entry. Thus, **anticodon** is difficult to explain as a combination of *anti-* + *codon*. We therefore give it separate entry:

**anticodon**, *n.* a group of three chemical bases that form a unit in transfer RNA and serve to bind a specific amino acid to a corresponding group (called a codon) in messenger RNA.

Most terms involving the suffix *-nik* are given under **-nik**: **cinenik**, **citynik**, **computernik**, **no-goodnik**, etc.:

**-nik**, a slang suffix used to form nouns. *Sputnik*, whose successful launch in 1957 heralded the birth of the Space Age, was the model for *beatnik*, which became widely current in the late 1950's. *Beatnik* inspired the coinage of a number of nouns ending with the Russian personal suffix *-nik*, meaning "one who does or is connected with something." Most of the new *-nik* words closely followed the meaning of *beatnik* in denoting a person who rejects standard social values and becomes a devotee of some fad or idea or takes part in some mode of life. This class of words included *folknik* (folk-song devotee), *peacenik*, *protestnik*, *jazznik*, *filmnik* or *cinenik* (movie fan), and *Vietnik* (one who opposes U.S. involvement in Vietnam). Many words in *-nik* are in some degree derogatory, inviting disparagement or ridicule.

**cinenik**: Senter chose the 1965 Commonwealth Film Festival in Wales for the movie's ["Winter Kept Us Warm"] world premiere

and it enchanted the cine-niks there. *John Bernard, Maclean's*, Nov. 19, 1966, p 23

**citynik**: A kibbutz is a collective settlement, where all are equal, each giving according to his abilities and receiving according to his needs. . . . The day starts at dawn—in mid-summer this means four o'clock. It is surprising how quickly a reasonably healthy city-nik adjusts to the hours and graft. *Denis Herbstein, "Working Holiday: Kibbutzim," The Sunday Times (London), Jan. 4, 1970, p 67*

**computernik**: Despite the alarms of the computerniks and the current promulgation of the notion (from over the Canadian border) that bound volumes are doomed to obsolescence, the book would appear to be here to stay. *William Tarz, Review of "Rare Books and Royal Collectors" by M. L. Ettinghausen and "A Primer of Book Collecting" by J. T. Winterich and D. A. Randall, Saturday Review, Oct. 22, 1966, p 59*

**filmnik**: Another favorite is urbane, eccentric Woody Allen, who is currently flipping the filmniks by writing a Japanese movie in which the dubbed-in sound track is totally different from what is occurring on-screen. *Time, March 4, 1966, p 27*

**goodwillnik**: This editor didn't once ask me if I knew anything about music or had any right to write about it. Or, for that matter, whether I could write about anything. He wanted a goodwillnik, and whatever my feelings about this man's regulations, I think it was most admirable of him to spell them out. *Robert Evett, "Music: The Critics and the Public," The Atlantic, Sept. 1970, p 117*

**jobnik**: For any serviceman, the proudest insignia is the unit crest with a red background designating a battle unit. The "jobnik"—a soldier with a desk job—is looked down on. *Time, June 22, 1970, p 30*

**no-goodnik**: Lew Archer's job is to find a 17-year-old girl who has run off with a 19-year-old nogoodnik. *Anthony Boucher, The New York Times, March 3, 1968, p 37*

**protestnik**: . . . Tom Lehrer [a satiric singer] plinks away at targets ranging from air pollution to nuclear proliferation. Among his bull's eyes: those guitar-plunking protestniks (*The Folk Song Army*) whose St. Joan is Baez as they "strum their frustrations away." *"Records," Time, Nov. 12, 1965, p 4*

See also the main entries PEACENIK, VIETNIK.

Some, however, as **peacenik**, on the ground of frequency alone deserve separate entry:

**peacenik**, *n.* *U.S. Slang.* a person who engages in peace demonstrations; an active opponent of war. Compare VIETNIK.

What is the real offense of a long-haired peacenik who holds his fingers in a V as the hardhats come marching by? *Peter Schrag, "America's Other Radicals," Harper's, Aug. 1970, p 45*

When Barbara Howar was asked on the CBS special how somebody with her peacenik views could keep going out with Kissinger, she said, in a reply cut from the show, "Politics make strange bedfellows." *Joseph Kraft, Harper's, Jan. 1971, p 61*

[see -NIK]

A derivative new word can be found either under the affix or combining form or as a separate entry. The safe rule to follow is to look first under the affix or combining form; there important main entries are often listed.



## Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Shortened or Clipped Words

These three types of entries are related in that they are replacements of longer words or phrases. But whereas abbreviations are not spoken or treated as words but pronounced letter by letter, acronyms and clipped words are spoken and treated as regular words. The three types are illustrated by the following entries:

**ASP**, abbreviation of **AMERICAN SELLING PRICE**.

**ASP** (æsp), *n.* acronym for *Anglo-Saxon Protestant*. Compare **WASP**.

**del-i** ('del i:), *n.* *U.S.* short for *delicatessen*.

**div-i** ('div i:), *n.* *British.* short for *dividend*.

*Symbols*, which are neither shortenings nor replacements of longer words but letters chosen arbitrarily or by some system to represent or designate something, are also indicated where they occur. For example:

**BZ**, a symbol for an incapacitating gas whose effects include disorientation, drowsiness, and hallucination. Compare **CS**, **GB**, **VX**.

## Variants

Because of the great variation found in the spelling of new words, the editors tried, wherever possible, to give only one spelling to each entry, usually the one they considered most frequent or most likely to occur. In cases where usage seems to be evenly divided between two spellings, both are given as the entry words. We do not, however, list as head words all forms that occur in the various quotations. Thus, the form *Art Déco*, given in the first quotation under **art deco** or **Art Deco**, is not included as a head word. Since we have not attempted to do more than provide a finding word as the main entry, forms given in the quotations may be at variance with those in the head word.

## Pronunciation

The pronunciation of a hard or unfamiliar word is given immediately after the entry word; well-known words are not pronounced in this dictionary.

The pronunciation key (given in full on p. 27, 28) is composed of symbols with values within the range of their use in a broad transcription of the International Phonetic Association. The sole exception is the letter *y*, which we use to represent what in English is spelled with *y* in *yes* and *you* and *yarn* (for IPA *y*, a non-English vowel sound, we use *Y*).

In indicating the pronunciation of *vowels and diphthongs* we have chosen, at points of difference, to represent “American” rather than “British” speech. Thus although the key contains (ɔ) to represent an “aw”-type of “British” pronunciation of the *o* in *hot*, we use the (ɑ) which represents an “ah”-type vowel that is preponderant in America.