



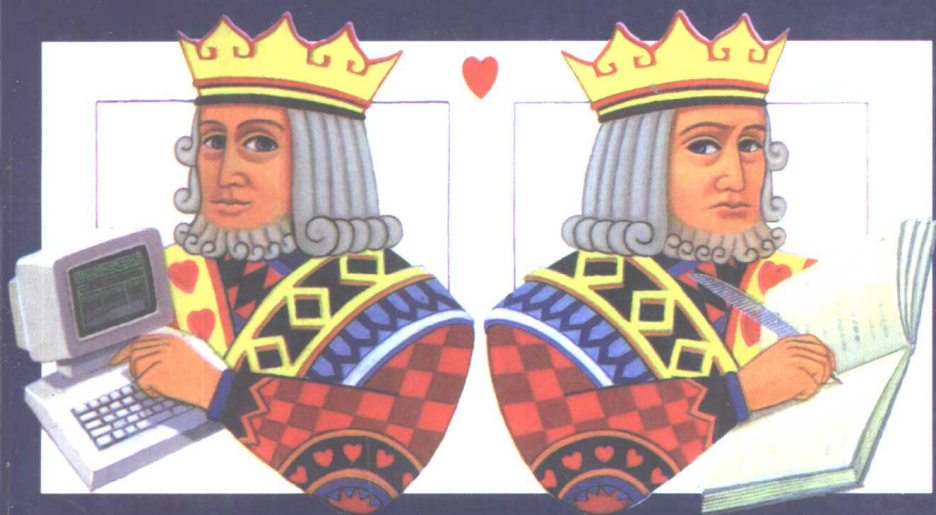
牛津英语百科分类词典系列

# Oxford

DICTIONARY OF

# THE KING'S ENGLISH

# 牛津标准英语词典



上海外语教育出版社  
SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

Whi  
外教社

Oxford Dictionary of

# **The King's English**

---

H. W. FOWLER

*and*

F. G. FOWLER

Oxford    New York

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

牛津标准英语词典: 英文 / (英) 法勒 (Fowler, H. W. ),  
(英) 法勒 (Fowler, F. G. ) 编. —上海: 上海外语教育出版  
社, 2000

(牛津英语百科分类词典系列)

书名原文: Oxford King's English

ISBN 7-81080-008-6

I. 牛… II. ①法…②法… III. 英语-词典 IV. H316

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2000) 第74398号

图字: 09-1999-311号

出版发行: **上海外语教育出版社**

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 65422031 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 孙 静

---

印 刷: 上海古籍印刷厂  
经 销: 新华书店上海发行所  
开 本: 850×1092 1/32 印张 12.25 字数 346 千字  
版 次: 2000年12月第1版 2000年12月第1次印刷  
印 数: 5 000 册

---

书 号: ISBN 7-81080-008-6 / H · 008

定 价: 16.00 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题, 可向本社调换

*Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP  
Oxford New York*

*Oxford is a trade mark of Oxford University Press*

*First published 1906*

*Second Edition 1907*

*Third Edition 1931*

*First issued as an Oxford University Press paperback 1973*

*Reissued in new covers 1996*

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press. Within the UK, exceptions are allowed in respect of any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms of the licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside these terms and in other countries should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.*

*This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser*

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available  
ISBN 0-19-881330-9*

*Published by permission of the Oxford University Press*

*Licensed for sale in the People's Republic of China only,  
not for sale elsewhere.*

*本词典(重印本)由牛津大学出版社授权出版,*

*仅供在中华人民共和国境内销售。*

## 出版说明

随着改革开放的不断深入以及国际交流的日趋广泛,外语学习已经不仅仅局限于语言技能的培养。通过英语获取专业知识、提高专业水平、跟踪学科的最新发展已经成为时代的要求。因此,目前国内急需一批用英语编纂的专业词典。

牛津英语百科分类词典系列是由牛津大学出版社组织编纂的一套工具书。该系列涉及语言学、文学、文化、艺术、社会学、数学、物理学、化学、生物学、医学、食品与营养、计算机等社会科学和自然科学门类近百种,均由造诣很深、经验丰富的专家撰写。作为第一批,我们从中精选了 52 本,以满足国内读者的需要。词典用浅显的英语,精确地解释了常用的专业词汇,充分体现了牛津大学出版社在出版工具书方面严谨的传统。

该系列词典可作为大专院校各专业的学生以及专业技术人员学习专业知识、提高专业英语能力的参考书。

本社编辑部



## PREFACE

THE compilers of this book would be wanting in courtesy if they did not expressly say what might otherwise be safely left to the reader's discernment: the frequent appearance in it of any author's or newspaper's name does not mean that that author or newspaper offends more often than others against rules of grammar or style; it merely shows that they have been among the necessarily limited number chosen to collect instances from.

The plan of the book was dictated by the following considerations. It is notorious that English writers seldom look into a grammar or composition book; the reading of grammars is repellent because, being bound to be exhaustive on a greater or less scale, they must give much space to the obvious or the unnecessary; and composition books are often useless because they enforce their warnings only by fabricated blunders against which every tiro feels himself quite safe. The principle adopted here has therefore been (1) to pass by all rules, of whatever absolute importance, that are shown by observation to be seldom or never broken; and (2) to illustrate by living examples, with the name of a reputable authority attached to each, all blunders that observation shows to be common. The reader, however, who is led to suspect that the only method followed has been the rejection of method will find, it is hoped, a practical security against inconvenience in the very full Index.

Further, since the positive literary virtues are not to be taught by brief quotation, nor otherwise attained than by improving the gifts of nature with wide or careful reading, whereas something may really be done for the negative virtues by mere exhibition of what should be avoided, the examples collected have had to be examples of the bad and not of the good. To this it must be added that a considerable proportion of the newspaper extracts are, as is sometimes apparent, not from the editorial, but from the correspondence columns; the names attached are merely an assurance that the passages have actually appeared in print, and not been now invented to point a moral.

The especial thanks of the compilers are offered to Dr Bradley, joint editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, who has been good enough to inspect the proof-sheets, and whose many valuable suggestions have led to the removal of some too unqualified statements,

some confused exposition, and some positive mistakes. It is due to him, however, to say that his warnings have now and then been disregarded, when it seemed that brevity or some other advantage could be secured without great risk of misunderstanding.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* itself has been of much service. On all questions of vocabulary, even if so slightly handled as in the first chapter of this book, that great work is now indispensable.

H. W. F. F. G. F.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this edition new examples have been added or substituted here and there.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

AT the end of a quarter century, during which the sales of our book have maintained a yearly average of nearly two thousand copies, I am bound, in presenting a third edition, to thank the public for so unexpected a continuance of favour. To authors so didactic as ourselves, however, a greater joy than that of surviving a quarter century would be any evidence of having proved persuasive. But such evidence is extremely difficult to find, or to rely upon when found. It has sometimes seemed to us, and to me since my brother's death, that some of the conspicuous solecisms once familiar no longer met our eyes daily in the newspapers. Could it be that we had contributed to their rarity? or was the rarity imaginary, and was the truth merely that we had ceased to be on the watch? I do not know; but a glimmer of hope has made the present revision, with occasional notes and changes, an agreeable task.

H. W. F.

*September, 1930.*



# CONTENTS

## PART I

### CHAPTER I. VOCABULARY, pp. 11-68

General Principles . . . . .	11
Familiar and far-fetched words . . . . .	14
Concrete and abstract expression . . . . .	15
Circumlocution . . . . .	15
Short and long words . . . . .	16
Saxon and Romance words . . . . .	16
Requirements of different styles . . . . .	17
Malaprops . . . . .	18
Neologisms . . . . .	28
Americanisms . . . . .	33
Foreign words . . . . .	36
Formation . . . . .	46
Slang . . . . .	57
<i>Individual</i> . . . . .	62
<i>Mutual</i> . . . . .	65
<i>Unique</i> . . . . .	67
<i>Aggravate</i> . . . . .	68

### CHAPTER II. SYNTAX, pp. 69-179

Case . . . . .	69
Number . . . . .	73
Comparatives and superlatives . . . . .	78
Relatives . . . . .	83
Defining and non-defining relative clauses . . . . .	83
<i>That</i> and <i>who</i> or <i>which</i> . . . . .	88
<i>And who, and which</i> . . . . .	93
Case of the relative . . . . .	101
Miscellaneous uses of the relative . . . . .	104
<i>It . . . that</i> . . . . .	112

Participle and gerund . . . . .	116
Participles . . . . .	119
The gerund . . . . .	124
Distinguishing the gerund . . . . .	124
Omission of the gerund subject . . . . .	133
Choice between gerund and infinitive . . . . .	138
Shall and will . . . . .	142
The pure system . . . . .	144
The coloured-future system . . . . .	146
The plain-future system . . . . .	147
Second-person questions . . . . .	149
Examples of principal sentences . . . . .	149
Substantival clauses . . . . .	154
Conditional clauses . . . . .	158
Indefinite clauses . . . . .	160
Examples of subordinate clauses . . . . .	161
Perfect infinitive . . . . .	163
Conditionals . . . . .	165
<i>Doubt that</i> . . . . .	167
Prepositions . . . . .	170

### CHAPTER III. AIRS AND GRACES, pp. 180-227

Certain types of humour . . . . .	180
Elegant variation . . . . .	184
Inversion . . . . .	189
Exclamatory . . . . .	190
Balance . . . . .	191
In syntactic clauses . . . . .	196
Negative, and false-emphasis . . . . .	199
Miscellaneous . . . . .	201
Archaism . . . . .	203
Occasional . . . . .	203
Sustained . . . . .	207
Metaphor . . . . .	209
Repetition . . . . .	218

Miscellaneous . . . . .	222
Trite phrases . . . . .	222
Irony . . . . .	224
Superlatives without <i>the</i> . . . . .	225
Cheap originality . . . . .	226
CHAPTER IV. PUNCTUATION, pp. 228-299	
General difficulties . . . . .	228
General principles . . . . .	233
The spot plague . . . . .	235
Over-stopping . . . . .	240
Under-stopping . . . . .	243
Grammar and punctuation . . . . .	244
Substantival clauses . . . . .	244
Subject, &c., and verb . . . . .	247
Adjectival clauses . . . . .	251
Adverbial clauses . . . . .	252
Parenthesis . . . . .	255
Misplaced commas . . . . .	257
Enumeration . . . . .	258
Comma between independent sentences . . . . .	263
Semicolon with subordinate members . . . . .	265
Exclamations and statements . . . . .	266
Exclamations and questions . . . . .	268
Internal question and exclamation marks . . . . .	270
Unaccountable commas . . . . .	271
The colon . . . . .	271
Miscellaneous . . . . .	272
Dashes . . . . .	274
General abuse . . . . .	274
Legitimate uses . . . . .	275
Debatable questions . . . . .	278
Common misuses . . . . .	282
Hyphens . . . . .	284
Quotation marks . . . . .	289
Excessive use . . . . .	289

Quotation marks (*continued*)

Order with stops . . . . .	291
Single and double . . . . .	296
Misplaced . . . . .	297
Half quotation . . . . .	298

## PART II. pp. 300 to the end

## EUPHONY, §§ I-10

1. Jingles . . . . .	300
2. Alliteration . . . . .	301
3. Repeated prepositions . . . . .	302
4. Sequence of relatives . . . . .	302
5. Sequence of <i>that</i> , &c. . . . .	303
6. Metrical prose . . . . .	304
7. Sentence accent . . . . .	305
8. Causal <i>as</i> clauses . . . . .	307
9. Wens and hypertrophied members . . . . .	309
10. Careless repetition . . . . .	313

## QUOTATION, ETC., §§ 11-19

11. Common misquotations . . . . .	314
12. Uncommon misquotations of well-known passages . . . . .	314
13. Misquotation of less familiar passages . . . . .	315
14. Misapplied and misunderstood quotations and phrases . . . . .	315
14 <i>a</i> . <i>Parvum in multo</i> . . . . .	316
15. Allusion . . . . .	317
16. Incorrect allusion . . . . .	317
17. Dovetailed and adapted quotations and phrases . . . . .	318
18. Trite quotations . . . . .	320
19. Latin abbreviations, &c. . . . .	321

## GRAMMAR, §§ 20-37

20. Unequal yokefellows and defective double harness . . . . .	322
21. Common parts . . . . .	324
22. The wrong turning . . . . .	326
23. Ellipse in subordinate clauses . . . . .	327
24. Some illegitimate infinitives . . . . .	328

25. 'Split' infinitives . . . . .	329
26. Compound passives . . . . .	330
27. Confusion with negatives . . . . .	332
28. Omission of <i>as</i> . . . . .	334
29. Other liberties taken with <i>as</i> . . . . .	335
30. Brachylogy . . . . .	336
31. Between two stools . . . . .	337
32. The impersonal <i>one</i> . . . . .	338
33. <i>Between . . . or</i> . . . . .	339
34. <i>A</i> placed between the adjective and its noun . . . . .	340
35. <i>Do</i> as substitute verb . . . . .	340
36. Fresh starts . . . . .	341
37. Vulgarisms and colloquialisms . . . . .	341

## MEANING, §§ 38-48

38. Tautology . . . . .	342
39. Redundancies . . . . .	343
40. <i>As to whether</i> . . . . .	344
41. Superfluous <i>but</i> and <i>though</i> . . . . .	345
42. <i>If and when</i> . . . . .	345
43. Maltreated idioms . . . . .	346
44. Truisms and contradictions in terms . . . . .	349
45. Double emphasis . . . . .	351
46. 'Split' auxiliaries . . . . .	352
47. Overloading . . . . .	354
48. Demonstrative, noun, and participle or adjective . . . . .	355

## AMBIGUITY, §§ 49-52

49. False scent . . . . .	356
50. Misplacement of words . . . . .	356
51. Ambiguous position . . . . .	357
52. Ambiguous enumeration . . . . .	359

## STYLE, § 53 to the end

53. Antics . . . . .	359
54. Journalese . . . . .	362
55. <i>Somewhat, &amp;c.</i> . . . . .	363

56. Clumsy patching . . . . .	366
57. Omission of the conjunction <i>that</i> . . . . .	367
58. Meaningless <i>while</i> . . . . .	368
59. Commercialisms . . . . .	369
60. Pet Phrases . . . . .	370
61. <i>Also</i> as conjunction; and <i>&amp;c.</i> . . . .	371
62. Anacoluthon . . . . .	371

## CHAPTER I VOCABULARY

### GENERAL

ANY one who wishes to become a good writer should endeavour, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid.

This general principle may be translated into practical rules in the domain of vocabulary as follows:—

Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched.

Prefer the concrete word to the abstract.

Prefer the single word to the circumlocution.

Prefer the short word to the long.

Prefer the Saxon word to the Romance.<sup>1</sup>

These rules are given roughly in order of merit; the last is also the least. It is true that it is often given alone, as a sort of compendium of all the others. In some sense it is that: the writer whose percentage of Saxon words is high will generally be found to have fewer words that are out of the way, long, or abstract, and fewer periphrases, than another; and conversely. But if, instead of his Saxon percentage's being the natural and undesigned consequence of his brevity (and the rest), those other qualities have been attained by his consciously restricting himself to Saxon, his pains will have been worse than wasted; the taint of preciosity will be over all he has written. Observing that *translate* is derived from Latin, and learning that the Elizabethans had another word for it, he will pull us up by *englishing*

<sup>1</sup> The Romance languages are those whose grammatical structure, as well as part at least of their vocabulary, is directly descended from Latin—as Italian, French, Spanish. Under Romance words we include all that English has borrowed from Latin either directly or through the Romance languages. And words borrowed from Greek in general use, ranging from *alms* to *metempsychosis*, may for the purposes of this chapter be considered as Romance. The vast number of purely scientific Greek words, as *oxygen*, *meningitis*, are on a different footing, since they are usually the only words for what they denote.

his quotations; he will puzzle the general reader by introducing his book with a *foreword*. Such freaks should be left to the Germans, who have by this time succeeded in expelling as aliens a great many words that were good enough for Goethe. And they, indeed, are very likely right, because their language is a thoroughbred one; ours is not, and can now never be, anything but a hybrid; *foreword* is (or may be) Saxon; we can find out in the dictionary whether it is or not; but *preface* is English, dictionary or no dictionary; and we want to write English, not Saxon. Add to this that, even if the Saxon criterion were a safe one, more knowledge than most of us have is needed to apply it. Few who were not deep in philology would be prepared to state that no word in the following list (extracted from the preface to the *Oxford Dictionary*) is English:—*battle, beast, beauty, beef, bill, blue, bonnet, border, boss, bound, bowl, brace, brave, bribe, bruise, brush, butt, button*. Dr Murray observes that these 'are now no less "native", and no less important constituents of our vocabulary, than the Teutonic words'.

There are, moreover, innumerable pairs of synonyms about which the Saxon principle gives us no help. The first to hand are *ere* and *before* (both Saxon), *save* and *except* (both Romance), *anent* and *about* (both Saxon again). Here, if the 'Saxon' rule has nothing to say, the 'familiar' rule leaves no doubt. The intelligent reader whom our writer has to consider will possibly not know the linguistic facts; indeed he more likely than not takes *save* for a Saxon word. But he does know the reflections that the words, if he happens to be reading leisurely enough for reflection, excite in him. As he comes to *save*, he wonders, Why not *except*? At sight of *ere* he is irresistibly reminded of that sad spectacle, a mechanic wearing his Sunday clothes on a weekday. And *anent*, to continue the simile, is nothing less than a masquerade costume. The *Oxford Dictionary* says drily of the last word: 'Common in Scotch law phraseology, and affected by many English writers'; it might have gone further, and said 'affected' in any English writer'; such things are antiquarian rubbish, Wardour-Street English. Why not (as our imagined



intelligent reader asked)—why not *before*, *except*, and *about*? Bread is the staff of life, and words like these, which are common and are not vulgar, which are good enough for the highest and not too good for the lowest, are the staple of literature. The first thing a writer must learn is, that he is not to reject them unless he can show good cause. *Before* and *except*, it must be clearly understood, have such a prescriptive right that to use other words instead is not merely not to choose these, it is to reject them. It may be done in poetry, and in the sort of prose that is half poetry: to do it elsewhere is to insult *before*, to injure *ere* (which is a delicate flower that will lose its quality if much handled), and to make one's sentence both pretentious and frigid.

It is now perhaps clear that the Saxon oracle is not infallible; it will sometimes be dumb, and sometimes lie. Nevertheless, it is not without its uses as a test. The words to be chosen are those that the probable reader is sure to understand without waste of time and thought; a good proportion of them will in fact be Saxon, but mainly because it happens that most abstract words—which are by our second rule to be avoided—are Romance. The truth is that all five rules would be often found to give the same answer about the same word or set of words. Scores of illustrations might be produced; let one suffice: *In the contemplated eventuality* (a phrase no worse than what any one can pick for himself out of his paper's leading article for the day) is at once the far-fetched, the abstract, the periphrastic, the long, and the Romance, for *if so*. It does not very greatly matter by which of the five roads the natural is reached instead of the monstrosity, so long as it *is* reached. The five are indicated because (1) they differ in directness, and (2) in any given case only one of them may be possible.

We will now proceed to a few examples of how not to write, roughly classified under the five headings, though, after what has been said, it will cause no surprise that most of them might be placed differently. Some sort of correction is suggested for each, but the reader will indulgently remember that to correct a bad sentence satisfactorily is not always possible; it should never