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The World-Famous Thorndike Barnhart

# Handy Dictionary

\*\*\*\*\* New Revised Edition \*\*\*\*\*

With 36,000 word entries—and special tables such as weights and measures, signs and symbols, forms of address, special guides to punctuation, capitalization, and the use of numbers, as well as concise notes on style and grammar. \*\*\*\*\*



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The  
THORNDIKE BARNHART  
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DICTIONARY

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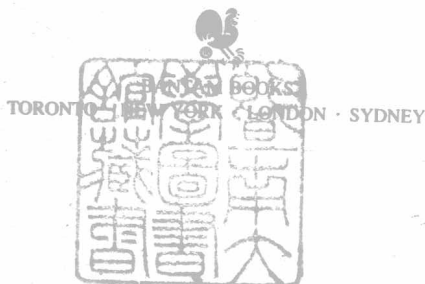
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Editor of *The Thorndike Barnhart  
Comprehensive Desk Dictionary,*  
*The American College Dictionary,*  
the Thorndike Barnhart Dictionary Series,  
and *The Dictionary of U. S. Army Terms*

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NEW REVISED EDITION

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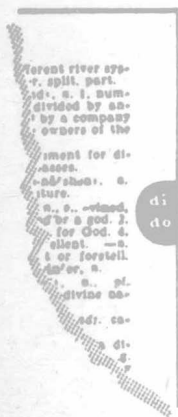
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*a word  
on the  
lexicographers*

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## PREFACE

This dictionary has been designed to provide, better than any other book of its size, the essential facts about the 36,000 most frequently used words of the English language. It will be useful to the writer who seeks a quick reminder of a correct spelling, to the speaker who wishes to verify the acceptability of a pronunciation, or to the beginner in the use of dictionaries who wants a small but trustworthy aid to the most effective use of English.

The importance of these 36,000 words has not been determined arbitrarily by a single editor or group of editors. It has been assessed carefully and systematically on a basis of counts of over 30,000,000 words in every major field of study. Scientific research has proven that the list thus selected makes up more than 90 per cent of the vocabulary used in current newspapers, magazines, and books. These are the words which every person must know how to use with skill.

Even more difficult than the problem of selecting the essential words (or entries) is the matter of choosing the meanings (or definitions) of these words which must be included within a dictionary of this size. When space is limited, it becomes enormously important that it should be devoted only to those meanings which will be most useful to the greatest number of people. To solve this problem we have turned, primarily, to *A Semantic Count of English Words*, by Professors Lorge and Thorndike. This count has enabled us to include in this book the meanings which are most frequently used by everyone in writing and speaking.

Another feature that adds to the usefulness of this dictionary is that all the facts about any entered word have been so arranged that the reader may get at them quickly and easily:

(1) All entries—ordinary words, biographical names, geographical names, abbreviations, and foreign words and phrases—are in the main alphabetical list. There is only one place to look for information. The user does not have to stop to ask himself whether *à la carte* will be in the dictionary proper or in a supplement of foreign words and phrases, whether *Aaron* is in the section labeled *Biographical Names* or in the main list, or whether *UNESCO* is a word (and hence in the main list) or an abbreviation (and therefore in a special list in the back of the dictionary).

(2) Common meanings are put first, and these are the meanings most likely to be needed. In the Lorge-Thorndike Semantic Count, over one third of the 431 occurrences of *address* are for the noun meaning "a speech, esp. a formal one." The next most frequent meaning (11 per cent of the occurrences) is "speak to." We have been guided by the Lorge-Thorndike Semantic Count in establishing the commonest meaning of a word and putting it first.



The Thorndike-Barnhart Handy Pocket Dictionary uses the five basic techniques of definition (or word-explanation) characteristic of the more advanced Thorndike-Barnhart dictionaries:

(1) *All entries are explained, so far as possible, in simpler terms than the word being defined.* In defining a common word as important as above, comparatively "hard" words like *exceeding* (instead of "more than") and *aforementioned* (instead of "earlier, in a book or article") are not used in this dictionary. The purpose of a definition should be to answer the reader's questions, not to send him searching for additional information elsewhere in the book.

(2) *Complex constructions are avoided.* In this dictionary, simple terms are put together in the simplest possible way to produce a meaningful definition. For example, *actinic* is defined as "producing chemical changes by radiation." A definition "pertaining to those chemical changes brought about by radiation, or to that property of radiation whereby such changes are produced" carries no essential meaning lacking in the five-word definition above, and it is far more difficult to understand.

(3) *Illustrative phrases and sentences are freely used.* This dictionary is the only pocket-sized dictionary to make such liberal use of illustrative phrases to force the meanings of its definitions home to its readers.

(4) *Great care is used to put ideas in their order of importance.* A *bank*, for example, is defined in this dictionary as "an institution for keeping, lending, exchanging, and issuing money." Consider this definition for a moment and it will be clear that the order of words here corresponds to the order in which most of us ordinarily conceive of the functions of a bank: first, as the place where we keep our surplus funds; second, as an institution from which we may occasionally obtain a loan; third, as a business concern that will exchange foreign currency for money which may be spent in this country; and fourth, as an institution which may issue money (but this applies to very few banks, and most of us rarely think of it). This principle of using logical order to make each definition as useful as possible has been applied throughout this book.

(5) *All specific information essential to the reader's understanding of each defined word is given.* Conciseness and precision must be the watchwords of the maker of a good pocket-sized dictionary, but as aids to, rather than at the expense of, a full understanding of a word's meaning. For example, the word *arson* is defined as "the crime of intentionally setting fire to a building." Four essential facts are involved here: first, that arson is a crime; second, that it must be intentional; third, that it involves the use of fire; and fourth, that it must take place in connection with some kind of building. No one of these facts may properly be omitted, especially the fact that arson is a crime. In this book, a careful check has been made of each definition to be sure that an essential fact is never omitted about any word, regardless of the simplicity of the definition or the limited amount of space which could be devoted to it.

Among the most troublesome words to spell are the plurals of nouns, past tenses and participles of verbs and the comparatives and superlatives of adjectives and adverbs. In some dictionaries the rules of spelling these forms are listed for the reader to refer to in the preface

or appendix. But this dictionary gives all the irregular forms where they are easy for the reader to find, at the beginning of the definitions.

Many writers frequently find themselves overusing favorite words. For readers of this sort, and for others interested in developing a more varied vocabulary, we give more than 1000 synonym lists, keyed to the proper definitions, from which they may choose an alternative or more fitting word.

In addition to these, there are scores of notes describing cases of varying or conflicting usage so that the user of the dictionary can decide which usage he prefers. These notes are abstracted from Professor Porter G. Perrin's *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, which is well known in the colleges and universities of this country.

This dictionary employs a pronunciation key that is easy to learn and to remember. The symbols in the key are listed and explained on page xxvi. Aside from the very familiar short and long vowels (short in hat, let, it, hot, cup; long in *āge*, *ēqual*, *īce*, *ōpen*, *ūse*) there are only eight symbols to learn. One of these symbols is ə, called *schwa*, which is used to denote the neutral sound of a vowel in an unaccented syllable. It is the sound of *a* in about, *e* in taken, *i* in pencil, *o* in lemon, and *u* in circus. The use of only one symbol for this somewhat variable sound is the approved practice of modern phonetics and has proved a valuable aid to speakers, teachers, and beginners in the use of English.

The making of a reliable dictionary—a record of present-day usage—is today necessarily a joint effort of many scholars and editors working together. In framing the policies of this book we have had advice and help from the twenty-seven scholars on the Editorial Advisory Committee. The special editors have had charge of major portions of this book—pronunciation, Americanisms, new words, and usage notes—and have by their combined efforts produced a convenient and authoritative guide to modern standard American usage.

The user of this book will have nothing to unlearn when he picks up a more advanced dictionary. The principles upon which it has been constructed are the same as those upon which the entire Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary Series is based. A careful study of the explanatory notes on pages xi-xvi will enable the reader to understand and use any advanced dictionary. With this book he has a ready and authoritative guide to the spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of the most frequently used English words.

Clarence L. Barnhart

# HOW TO USE THIS DICTIONARY

**1. The order in which information is given about a word (see *bad*<sup>1</sup>, below) is as follows:** (1) the word spelled in boldface type, (2) its pronunciation, (3) part of speech, (4) any irregular inflected forms (plural, past tense, etc.), (5) definitions of its meanings arranged under the appropriate parts of speech, (6) derivatives consisting of main entries, or their roots, plus the common suffixes, (7) synonyms keyed to the definitions, and (8) usage notes telling you about preferred forms of usage, awkward forms, good written style, and similar matters.

***bad*<sup>1</sup> (bād), *adj.*, worse, worst, *n.*, *adv.* —*adj.* 1. not as it ought to be; not good. 2. evil; wicked. 3. disagreeable; painful. 4. harmful. 5. sick; injured. 6. unfavorable. 7. worthless: a *bad check*. 8. incorrect; faulty. 9. not valid. 10. rotten; spoiled: a *bad egg*. 11. *Am.* hostile; dangerous. —*n.* bad condition, quality, etc. —*adv.* badly. —*bad'ness*, *n.* —*Syn. adj.* 1. inferior, poor. 2. sinful. 4. injurious. 8. defective, imperfect. 11. vicious. ➤ *Bad* is usually the adjective, though *badly* is used in the predicate (either: I feel *bad* or I feel *badly*); *badly* is usually the adverb, but *bad* is colloquially used: he draws *badly* (colloq. *bad*).**

## How to Find a Word

**2. One Alphabetical List.** You merely need to know the order of the letters of the alphabet to find a word in this dictionary. All main entries are in one long alphabetical list so that you have only one place to look to find a word. Note columns 1-2, page 1: words in the common vocabulary, a (the article), abandon, abandoned, abase, etc.; technical terms (abast); proper names (Aaron, Abel); and abbreviations (a., A.B.), are in one list.

**3. Homographs** (words spelled exactly alike but of different origin) have a small number raised a little above the line after each entry to remind you to look at the other entries spelled in the same way if you do not find the information you are seeking under the first one.

***mail*<sup>1</sup> (māl), *n.* 1. letters, papers, parcels, etc., sent by post. 2. system by which they are sent, managed by the Post Office Department. —*v.* send by mail: *mail a letter*.**

***mail*<sup>2</sup>, *n.* armor made of metal rings, or small loops of chain, linked together. —*v.* cover with armor or as if with armor. The *mailed fist* means armed force.**

When looking up cross references as from *bore*<sup>3</sup> to *bear*<sup>1</sup> be sure to look under the right homograph.

***bore*<sup>3</sup>, *v.* pt. of *bear*<sup>1</sup>. . . .  
***bear*<sup>1</sup> (bār), *v.*, *bore* or (*Archaic*) *bare*, *borne* or *born*, *bearing*. 1. carry: *bear a burden*. . . .  
***bear*<sup>2</sup>, *n.* 1. a large, clumsy animal. . . .******

**4. Main and Subordinate Entries.** In this dictionary, main entries always appear on the left-hand margin in large boldface type. On page 1, the first four main entries in column 2 are **abduct**, **Abel**, **aberration**, **abet**. Subordinate entries on page 1 are idioms (taken **aback** under **aback**), derivatives or run-ons (abdication under **abdicate**), inflected forms (**-cat-ed**, **-cat-ing** under **abdicate**). Subordinate entries are put in a smaller-sized bold-face type.

**5. Derivatives** (words formed from root words + suffixes) as **Main Entries** or **Subordinate Entries**. Note that derivative entries are sometimes entered as main entries and sometimes as subordinate entries. Derivatives formed with **-ly**, **-ness**, **-er**, **-able**, **-less**, **-like**, and less frequently **-tion**, **-ity**, and **-al**, are often printed in smaller boldface type at the very end of the definition of the word from which they are derived, because the meaning and the pronunciation can easily be obtained by combining the root with the suffix. Entries of this kind are called **run-on entries**. Sometimes, however, a derivative is very frequently used, has specialized meanings, or is hard to recognize as a derivative; in such cases the derivative is listed as a main entry (contrast **abnormality**, a main entry, with **abnormally**, a run-on entry).

**6. Idioms** are phrases or expressions, such as *meet halfway*, that cannot be fully understood from the ordinary meanings of the words which combine to form them. Look for an idiom under its most important word. Thus, *cast a ballot* is placed under the verb definitions of *cast*, with *might* and *main* under the noun definitions of *main*.

**cast** (kast), *v.*, *cast*, *cast-ing*, *n.* — *v.* 1. throw; throw off; let fall. 2. direct; turn: *he cast me a look*. 3. let harden in a mold. 4. arrange (actors and parts in a play). 5. cast a ballot, vote. 6. cast about, *a.* search; look. *b.* make plans. 7. cast down, *a.* lower. *b.* make sad. 8. cast up, *a.* raise. *b.* add up. — *n.* 1. act of throwing. 2. thing made by casting. 3. actors in a play. 4. form; look; appearance. 5. kind; sort. 6. a slight tinge.

**main** (mān), *adj.* 1. most important; largest: *the main street of a town*. 2. *by main strength*, by using full strength. — *n.* 1. a large pipe for water, gas, etc. 2. *Poetic.* the open sea. 3. in the main, for the most part. 4. with might and main, with all one's strength.

**7. Guide Words** are words printed at the top of each column in heavy black letters. The one at the top of the left column is the same as the first entry word on the page; the one at the top of the right column is the same as the last entry word on the page. All the main entries that fall alphabetically between the guide words can be found on that page. By using the guide words to see whether or not an entry is on a particular page you can save much time in locating desired entries.

## How to Use This Dictionary for Spelling

**8.** Words of one syllable are printed solid (each); words of more than one syllable are separated into syllables by centered dots (ab-di-cate, ea-ger, re-ly). Syllabication of the printed or written word is determined partly by speech (but note that the syllables in the pronunciation sometimes, as in *double*, differ from those in the entry word), partly by the component parts (root + affixes) of which the word has been formed, and partly by the conventions of printers and writers. When more than one pronunciation is given for a word, the syllabication shown is ordinarily that of the first pronunciation.

**reb-el** (n., *adj.* reb'el; *v.* ri-bel'), *n.*, *adj.*, *v.* . . .

The dot in the entry word represents the point at which a word may normally be broken at the end of a written or printed line. In printed matter and formal writing, however, it is not considered good practice to break a word so that a single letter stands alone on

one line (<sup>a-</sup>bet or sleep-<sup>y</sup>). Short

words, such as *able*, should stand unbroken on one line or the other; long ones should be broken as near the middle as possible (*Idiomatically*); hyphenated compounds (*double-cross*) are best broken only at the hyphen.

**9. Variant Spellings.** Often there are two or more ways of spelling the same word in English; both ways are current and in good use and it is merely a question of your preference or the preference (if you know it) of the person to or for whom you are writing. We record all of the common variant spellings. When two or more variants are close enough to be seen in the same eye-span they are entered together, and we put first the one that is simpler or is more common in American usage. If the variant spellings must be entered in different parts of the dictionary, we give them at the end of the preferred entry. Under the variant, we refer the user of the dictionary to the preferred form.

**ma-ha-ra-ja**, **ma-ha-ra-jah** (mä'hə-rä'jä), *n.* . . .

**en-close** (en-kloz'), *v.*, *-closed*, *-clos-ing*. 1. surround. 2. put a wall or fence around. 3. put in an envelope along with a letter, etc. Also, *in-close*. **in-close** (in-kloz'), *v.*, *-closed*, *-clos-ing*. enclose.

**10. Inflected Forms** (the plurals of nouns, the forms of the verb, and the comparatives and superlatives of adjectives) are sometimes difficult to spell. All inflected forms in which there is any change in the root are given immediately after the pronunciation, so that the person seeking to determine their spelling or syllabication may find them quickly and easily. Notice the syllabication of inflected forms in the examples given.

**ba-by** (bä'bī), *n.*, *pl.* *-bies*, *adj.*, *v.* *-bied*, *-by-ing*. . . .  
**need'y**, *adj.*, *need-i-er*, *need-i-est*. . . .

## How to Use the Pronunciations

### 11. The Standard for the Selection of Pronunciations.

The system of indicating pronunciation used in this dictionary is intended to present as clearly as possible pronunciations customarily heard from educated speakers of English in the United States. But pronunciation is constantly changing. Some pronunciations that once were common are now rarely used. New pronunciations, as (ad-ver'tis-mənt), for *advertisement*, gradually come into wide use and often force older pronunciations into obscurity. This dictionary has included variant pronunciations, sometimes not recorded elsewhere, which its editors have reason to believe are now part of the language. Examples of changed or changing pronunciations that are recorded are:

**dol-drams** (dol'drəmz; dōl'-)  
**hom-i-cide** (hom'ə-sid; hō'mə-)  
**pre-mo-ni-tion** (prē'mə-nish'ən;  
 prem'-ə-)

It is not possible to present in a dictionary all pronunciations that may be heard from cultivated speakers, but we have tried in each case to give the best-established American pronunciation.

## The Pronunciation Key

**12. Function of Letters of the Alphabet.** The letters of the alphabet are directions to produce sounds: the letters used in *bet* direct us to utter a different set of sounds than are called for by the letters in *sad*. Since English spelling habits are very conservative and have not kept pace with the changes in pronunciation, the directions are often ambiguous: the *ea* in *steak* directs us to say *ā* and the *ea* in *meat* to say *ē*; the *ei* in *receive* directs us to say *ē* but the *ei* in *vein* to say *ā*. The 26 letters of the alphabet occur in over 200 different spelling combinations directing us to say some 40 English sounds.

**13. Basis of the Pronunciation Key.** The inconsistencies and conservatism of English spelling make necessary a system of giving clear directions to say the proper sounds. This can be done by assigning one sound only to a letter (as in *bat*), combination of letters (ch as in *much*), or a letter modified by a diacritic (*ā* as in *bate*) to distinguish it from other sounds indicated by the same letter (*ā* as in *care*, *ā* as in *far*). There are in the key 43 symbols to represent the speech sounds of English.

**14. Diacritical Marks.** The first step in learning to read the pronunciations is to learn the key. There are only 13 special symbols for English sounds; five of these are the so-called long vowels, *ā*, *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū*; these symbols are well known and common to most dictionary systems and will cause little trouble. The "short" vowels, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*, left unmarked since they are approximately 40 per cent of all vowel sounds, occur chiefly in closed syllables (those with a consonant following a vowel, as in *hat*, *bet*, *sit*, *hot*, *cut*). There is no more reason to mark these common vowel symbols than there is to mark *d* or *n* or *b* with a diacritic.

**15.** The special symbols that must be learned are *ā* as in *far*, *ē* as in *care*, *ē* as in *term*, *ō* as in *or*, *th* as in *then* (contrast with *th* in *thin*), *ū* as in *put*, *ū* as in *rule*, and *ə* as in *about* (*ə*-bout'). These symbols are put in an abbreviated key at the bottom of every other page so that you may refer to them quickly and learn them easily.

## How to Find the Pronunciations

**16.** The pronunciation is entered in parentheses after the main entry.

**a-ban-don** (ə-ban'dən) . . . .

**17.** Homographs having the same pronunciation are pronounced in the first entry only.

**mail**<sup>1</sup> (māl), *n.* . . . .  
**mail**<sup>2</sup>, *n.* . . . .

**18.** Entry words that are made up of the preceding word plus any of the common suffixes, as *-ing*, *-ment*, *-ly*, *-ness*, *-tion*, etc., are not pronounced. The stress marks for such words are given in the boldface.

**re-late** (ri-lāt') . . . .  
**re-la'tion**, *n.* . . . .

**19.** If there are two (or more) main entries, pronounced the same, the pronunciation follows the second (or last) variant spelling or form.

**ba-zar**, **ba-zar** (bə-zār') . . . .

**20.** If a variant form is pronounced differently from the main entry, the proper pronunciation follows directly after each word. In most cases, it is necessary to give only the differing part of the variant pronunciation.  
**co-deine** (kō'dēn), **co-de-in** (kō'-di-in) . . . .

**21.** If the words that make up a phrase are entered separately and pronunciations are given there, no pronunciation is entered for the phrase.

**air force.** . . .

**22.** Difficult inflected forms are pronounced in the entry, unless they are separately entered.

**for-mu-la** (fôr'myâ-lâ), *n.*, *pl.* -las, -lâe (-lê) . . .  
**calf**<sup>1</sup> (kaf), *n.*, *pl.* calves . . .  
**calves** (kavz), *n.* *pl.* of calf<sup>1</sup> . . .

**23.** Run-ons are pronounced when they involve a change in pronunciation from the main entry that is not clear from the syllabication and stress alone.

**Ge-om-e-try** (jî-om'ê-trî), *n.* branch of mathematics that measures and compares lines, angles, surfaces, and solids. —**ge-o-met-ric** (jê'ê-met'rik), *adj.*

**24.** Some words are differently pronounced depending on their grammatical function in a particular context. These pronunciations have been labeled in accordance with the parts of speech shown in the entry.

**com-pound** (*adj.* kom'pound, kom-pound'; *n.* kom'pound; *v.* kom-pound'). . . .

**25.** Accent is indicated in the pronunciations by the symbol ' for the heavier or primary accent, and ' for the lighter or secondary accent, placed after the syllable which is to be accented.

**back-ground** (bak'ground'). . . .

Some words may be correctly accented in more than one way. Two (or more) pronunciations are given for such words.

**ab-do-men** (ab'də-mən; ab-dō'-mən). . . .

## How to Locate a Meaning

**26. Order of Definitions.** The meanings of words are arranged according to the frequency of their use. Meanings that are used most frequently are put first and those that are less frequent, such as technical meanings, come last.

If the meaning to be looked up is a common one the reader should scan the first few definitions of the entry. In note, *n.*, the most common meanings are 1-4, and the less frequent musical and business meanings are given later. This arrangement of definitions according to frequency enables the reader to find various meanings quickly and easily.

**note** (nôt), *n.*, *v.*, not-ed, not-ing.  
 —*n.* 1. words written down to remind one of something: *take notes of a lecture.* 2. notice; heed: *take note of.* 3. comment; remark. 4. a very short letter. 5. a single sound of definite pitch made by a musical instrument or voice. 6. *Music.* a written sign to show the pitch and length of a sound. 7. song; melody; tune. 8. distinction, importance, or consequence: *a man of note.* 9. a written promise to pay a certain sum of money at a certain time. . . .

**27. Ways in Which Meanings Are Given.** Meanings of words are given in one of the following three ways or some combination of them: descriptive statements (*abrasive*), synonyms (*ablution*), explanatory examples (*all*). Hard words or technical terms with only one or two meanings can be explained by using the first two methods; words with many meanings or closely related meanings require explanatory examples to clarify the meanings.

**a-bra'sive** (-siv), *n.* substance used for grinding or polishing, as sandpaper.

**ab-lu-tion** (ab-lû'shen), *n.* cleansing.

**all** (ôl), *adj.* 1. the whole of: *all Europe.* 2. every one of: *all men.* 3. the greatest possible: *with all speed.* —*pron.* 1. everyone: *all of us are going.* 2. everything: *all that glitters is not gold.* . . .

**28. Function of Explanatory Sentences.** Many relation words (prepositions, adverbs, linking verbs) cannot be understood readily by merely giving a definition. Consider the importance of the explanatory examples in distinguishing definitions 1 and 3 of *of*: "belonging to" and "that has as a quality." These very frequent words with a complex network of meanings are difficult to use idiomatically, and great care is taken in this dictionary to make their various meanings clear.

**of** (ov), *prep.* 1. belonging to: *the children of a family.* 2. made from: *a house of bricks.* 3. that has as a quality: *a look of pity.*

**29. Fitting the Definition into the Context.** The best test of the adequacy of a definition is to fit the definition into a context in place of the hard word. If the definition makes the context clear to the reader, the dictionary has done its work well. Find the appropriate definition for the italicized word in the sentences containing the word *encore* at the end of this paragraph by running down the list of definitions for *encore* given below. Notice how the clear numbering of the definitions helps you to find the different senses quickly. "The singer tried hard to get an *encore*." "Three *encores* are enough for any performer to give."

**en-core** (äng'kôr), *interj.*, *n.*, *v.*, *-cored*, *-cor-ing*. —*interj.* again. —*n.* 1. demand for the repetition of a song, etc. 2. repetition of a song, etc. —*v.* make such a demand for.

**30. Definitions with Restrictive Labels.** Not all words or meanings are used by every speaker or writer of English on every occasion. The great body of English is common to all users of the language but some meanings are used chiefly by members of certain trades and professions (subject labels), others are common only in certain geographical areas (*Dial.*, *Am.*, *Brit.*), still others are used only on certain occasions—in speaking and in informal, but not in formal, writing (*Collog.*)—and others are the half-remembered common words of former generations (*Archaic*, *Poetic*) which are chiefly found in literary use or in old books. The chief labels are:

**a. Collog.** = *Colloquial*, which merely means that the word or meaning is more common in speech than in writing. Colloquial English is good English as used in conversation and in those kinds of writing which resemble conversation, and is appropriate for all but the most formal occasions.

**tan-trum** (tan'trəm), *n.* *Collog.* fit of bad temper or ill humor.

**b. Slang** arises from a desire for novelty or for vivid emphasis or for unconventionality. Many slang words have short lives, but some prove more useful and become a part of the general colloquial and familiar vocabulary. Until they do, slang words and meanings should be avoided on formal occasions.

**swank** (swangk), *Slang*. —*n.* style; smartness. —*adj.* Also, *swank'y*, stylish; smart.

**c. Law, Elect., Bot., Physics, Chem.,** and similar labels are subject labels and indicate that the word or meaning is used chiefly by the members of a particular profession or trade.

**sul-fide** (sul'fid), *n.* *Chem.* any compound of sulfur with another element or radical. . . .

**d. Trademark** indicates that a word or meaning is a proprietary name owned by a particular company and valued by it as identifying its product. Sometimes a trademark by common use and wide application to related products becomes a part of the common vocabulary; aspirin was formerly a trademark. Great care has been taken to label trademarks but failure to include the label does not mean that the word is not a trademark.

**ko-dak** (kô'dak), *n.*, *v.*, *-daked*, *-dak-ing*. *Am.* —*n.* 1. a small camera with rolls of film on which photographs are taken. 2. *Kodak, Trade-mark*, a small camera made by the Eastman Kodak Company. —*v.* take photographs with a kodak.

**e. Dial.** = *Dialect*. A word or meaning used only in a certain geographical area or by a certain group.

**buss** (bus), *v.*, *n.* *Archaic* or *Dial.* kiss.

**f. Poetic**. A word or meaning found only in poetry or in prose that has some qualities of poetry.

**e'er** (âr), *adv.* *Poetic*. ever.

**g. Archaic**. A word or meaning rare except in books written in, or in the style of, an earlier period.

**chev-a-lier** (shev'e-lir'), *n.* *Archaic*. knight.

**h. Am.** = *Americanism*. A word or meaning originating in the United States, although its use may have spread throughout the English-speaking world.

**boost** (büst), *Am.* —*n.* a push or shove. —*v.* lift or push from below or behind. —*boost'er*, *n.* *Am.*

**i. U.S.** A word used more commonly in the United States than in other parts of the English-speaking world, but which originated elsewhere than in the United States.

**day bed, day'bed'**, *n.* *Esp. U.S.* bed used as a couch by day.

**j. Brit.** = *Britishism*. A word or meaning more common in Great Britain and the British Empire than in the rest of the English-speaking world.

**cur-ate** (kyûr'it), *n.* *Esp. Brit.* clergyman who is an assistant to a pastor, rector, or vicar.

**k.** Common non-English words from other languages used only or chiefly for special purposes, or by people familiar with other languages, are labeled with the name of the language before the definition.

**de no-vo** (dē nō'vō), *Latin.* anew.

## Synonyms

**31. Synonyms** are given for words which a speaker or writer may over-use, and for which a substitute word is therefore often desirable. These lists are keyed to specific definition numbers and parts of speech, since synonyms exist only for specific meanings of particular words. In *able*, *below*, *capable* may be used in place of *able* in the sense of "having power to do" but not strictly in the sense of "talented." For the second meaning of *able*, which is "talented, clever,"

either of the two synonyms may be substituted: *an expert lawyer, a skillful lawyer*. By using care to choose synonyms that fit in the right contexts you will learn to use words more precisely and more effectively.

**a-ble** (ā'bəl), *adj.*, *a-bler*, *a-blest*. 1. having power or means to do: *able to work*. 2. talented; clever: *an able lawyer*. —**Syn.** 1. capable. 2. expert, skillful.

## Usage Notes

**32. Usage notes** are given at the end of certain entries, and are preceded by a heavy black arrow. These discussions are concerned with such points as good idiomatic usage, sub-standard or awkward usage, and problems of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. They are designed to help you make the best possible choice of two or more ways of expression.

**con-tin-u-al** (kən-tin'yū-əl), *adj.* 1. never stopping. . . . ➤ *continual*, *continuous*. *Continual* means "frequently or closely repeated": *continual practice is necessary to become a champion*. *Continuous* means "without interruption": *the continuous flow of the brook formed a ravine*.



# HANDY GUIDE TO WRITING ENGLISH

All of us face nearly every day of our lives from early school onward various problems of communication with those around us by means of written words. Whether we are writing a business letter or a note to one of our friends, a composition for school, or a full length novel, there are certain basic rules which we all wish to follow in order to make our written message as clear as possible to its readers. This means that we want to use capital letters where capital letters are called for, and that we want to punctuate in such a way as to make our message most effective. If we are writing a letter we want it to begin and end in a fashion which will be acceptable to the person to whom it is addressed, which simply means that sometimes we wish to indicate by some particular form of greeting the degree of our respect for the person to whom we are writing. You will find short discussions of these various matters in the next 7 pages. The helpful points contained in these pages will give you real assistance toward the goal of written material which will express exactly what you wish to say in a fashion which is most likely to be acceptable to the greatest possible number of people.

## Guide to Capitalization

**Certain uses of capital letters,** as at the beginning of sentences or for proper names, are conventions followed by everyone; certain others show divided usage or are matters of taste. In general, formal English tends to use more capitals than informal English. The principal uses of capitals in current writing are:

**Sentence Capitals.** The first word of a sentence is capitalized. In quotations, the first word of a quoted sentence or part of sentence is capitalized, but when the quotation is broken, the second quoted part of a sentence is not capitalized unless it is a complete sentence:

"The first time I came this way," he said, "almost none of the roads were paved."  
"That was your last chance," she said. "Don't ever ask again."

**Proper Names.** Proper names and abbreviations of proper names are capitalized; names of people, places, races (*Indian, Negro, Caucasian*), languages (*French, Latin*), days of the week, months, companies, ships, institutions, fraternities, religious bodies, historical events (*the Revolutionary War*), documents (*the Constitution*), *Army, Navy*, and so on, are not capitalized unless they refer to the organized forces of a particular nation: *United States Army, the French Navy*.

**Lines of Poetry.** The first letter of a line of poetry is capitalized unless it was originally written without a capital.

**Titles of Articles, Books, etc.** The usual convention in English is to capitalize the first word, all nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs as well as prepositions that stand last or contain more than four (sometimes five) letters: *With Malice Toward Some; The Book of a Naturalist; You Can't Take It with You*.

**The Pronoun I Is Capitalized** (not from any sort of egotism, but simply because a small *i* is likely to be lost or to become attached to other words).

**Names of Relatives, Individuals.** In letters and familiar writing, names for members of one's family are often capitalized as a mark of courtesy (*Father, my Brother Wren*) but not in general writing. *President* referring to the President of the United States is always capitalized, and ordinarily titles of people in high office when referring to an individual (*the Senator*). Other titles may be capitalized when referring to a particular person: *The Colonel was there*.

**References to Deity.** *God, Jesus*, nouns such as *Saviour*, and pronouns referring directly to a sacred figure are capitalized—though practice is divided on the pronouns.