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# Merriam-Webster's Collegiate<sup>®</sup> Dictionary

  
Eleventh Edition

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the Words You Need Today**

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA<sup>®</sup> COMPANY

# Merriam- Webster's Collegiate<sup>®</sup> Dictionary

ELEVENTH  
EDITION



Merriam-Webster, Incorporated  
Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.



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# Preface

When Webster's Collegiate Dictionary was first published, the year was 1898, and Americans were being exhorted to "remember the Maine." As the eleventh consecutive edition of this standard reference book appears, we have crossed the nearly inconceivable divide between the second and third millennia of the modern era, but since daily lives can scarcely be led in constant awareness of a span of time that vast, we now situate ourselves, for the most part, in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Over the time between these editions, the world has made its way through two global wars and many others of a more limited kind; wide-ranging social, political, and economic change (not to say, revolution); and successive waves of technological change that have transformed communication, transportation, information storage and retrieval, and great numbers of other human activities. At every turn these events and developments have had a major effect on the stock of words that English speakers use, and it has been the job of a good general dictionary to record these changes. The present book is the latest effort by the editorial team of Merriam-Webster to meet that responsibility.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, like all earlier editions is meant to serve the general public as its chief source of information about the words of our language. Its title may suggest a special appropriateness for the older student, but those who work in offices and those who read, think, and write at home will equally find it a trustworthy guide to the English of our day.

The ever-expanding vocabulary of our language exerts inexorable pressure on the contents of any dictionary. Words and senses are born at a far greater rate than that at which they die out. The 1664 pages of this Collegiate make it the most comprehensive ever published. And its treatment of words is as nearly exhaustive as the compass of an abridged work permits. As in all Merriam-Webster dictionaries, the information given is based on the collection of 15,700,000 citations maintained in the offices of this company. These citations show words used in a wide range of printed sources, and the collection is constantly being augmented through the efforts of the editorial staff. Thus, the user of the dictionary may be confident that entries in the Collegiate are based on current as well as older material. The citation files hold 5,700,000 more examples than were available to the editors of Webster's Third New International Dictionary, published in 1961, and 1,200,000 more than the editors of the Tenth Edition had at their disposal. The editors of this edition also had available to them a machine-readable corpus of over 76,000,000 words of text drawn from the wide and constantly changing range of publications that supply the paper slips in the citation files. It is now nearly four times the size of the corpus used by the editors of the Tenth Edition.

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

The best features of the vocabulary section in the last edition have been retained, reviewed, and improved for this one. Additional pictorial illustrations are present, and many of them were drawn especially for this book in order to supplement and clarify definitions. Synonym paragraphs and usage paragraphs are both here again, augmented in number. The dates of first use provided at most main entries have proved to be very popular with users of the Collegiate. For the Eleventh Edition, thousands of these dates have been pushed back in time, anywhere from a single year to several centuries from published materials

(both print and electronic) not available ten years ago, from the continuing investigations of our own editors, and from the contributions of hundreds of interested readers. Two important changes in the treatment of the vocabulary have been made for this edition, one to provide additional information and the other to make information easier to find. All standard variants are now shown at the relevant main entry so that the reader may see at a glance whether they are equal variants with the main entry or are distinctly less frequent. And entries for abbreviations as well as for the symbols for chemical elements are now quickly found in the vocabulary section and need not be sought in a separate section tucked away in the back matter, as in the previous edition.

The front matter of this book establishes a context for understanding what this dictionary is and how it came to be, as well as how it may be used most effectively. The Explanatory Notes address themselves to the latter topic. They answer the user's questions about the conventions, devices, and techniques by which the editors have been able to compress mountains of information about English words into so few pages. All users of the dictionary are urged to read this section through and then consult it for special information as they need to. The brief essay on our language as it is recorded in Merriam-Webster dictionaries, and this Collegiate in particular, is meant to satisfy an interest in lexicography often expressed in the correspondence which our editors receive. The Guide to Pronunciation serves both to show how the pronunciations in this book are arrived at and to explain the mechanics of the respelling system in which they are set down.

The back matter retains five sections from the last edition of the Collegiate. These are Foreign Words and Phrases that occur frequently in English texts but have not become part of the English vocabulary; thousands of proper names brought together under the separate headings Biographical Names and Geographical Names; a gathering of important Signs and Symbols that cannot readily be alphabetized; and a Handbook of Style in which various stylistic conventions (as of punctuation and capitalization) are summarized and exemplified. All the sections have been carefully updated for this edition.

Looking at a copy of that long-ago first Collegiate Dictionary, one is struck by how different it is, as a physical book and as a work of reference, from the present edition. The board covers are heavy, the margins of the page are wide, and the type is relatively large; at the same time it holds only about 1100 pages and less than half the number of vocabulary entries of this Eleventh Edition. At that time the Merriam-Webster citation file was no more than in its infancy. Yet the editors of that book created it with the same careful, serious attention that the present editors have brought to their work.

We believe that this work sustains and advances the tradition of excellence in lexicography that is the heritage of Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. The editorial staff who produced it include a number of people who have made contributions to three or four successive editions of the Collegiate Dictionary. That experience and that continuity form an important part of what the Eleventh Edition is, as do the energy and care of those who have joined the staff just within the last few years. Some of the latter group will very likely contribute in major ways to the twelfth, the thirteenth, perhaps even the fourteenth edition of the Collegiate. In the meantime, the entire staff, whose names are given on the facing page, offer their work to people everywhere who need information about the vocabulary of English, in the assurance that it will prove a reliable companion.

Frederick C. Mish  
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angle brackets PAGE 19a	pet • put-up	guide words PAGES 10a, 11a
binomial PAGE 22a	<sup>2</sup> <b>pet</b> <i>adj</i> (1584) 1: kept or treated as a pet 2: expressing fondness or endearment (3) ~ <b>name</b> (2) 3: FAVORITE (a ~ project)	<b>pharaoh</b> <i>n</i> (ca. 1925) : a small red ant. (Monomorium pharaonis) that is a common household pest
boldface colon PAGE 20a	<b>phar-ma-cy</b> <i>ˈfār-mā-sē</i> <i>n. pl. -cies</i> [LL <i>pharmacia</i> administration of drugs, fr. Gk <i>pharmakeia</i> , fr. <i>pharmakeuein</i> to administer drugs, fr. <i>pharmakon</i> magic charm, poison, drug] (1651) 1: the art, practice, or profession of preparing, preserving, compounding, and dispensing medical drugs 2 <b>a</b> : a place where medicines are compounded or dispensed 3: DRUGSTORE 3: PHARMACOPOEIA 2	<b>phase-contrast microscope</b> <i>n</i> (1947): a microscope that translates differences in phase of the light transmitted through or reflected by the object into differences of intensity in the image — <b>called also phase microscope</b>
called also PAGE 19a	<b>phil-is-tine</b> <i>ˈfī-lə-stēn; fə-ˈlīs-tən, -tən; ˈfī-lə-stən</i> <i>n</i> (14c) 1: a native or inhabitant of ancient Philistia 2 <b>often not cap</b> <b>a</b> : a person who is guided by materialism and is usu. disdainful of intellectual or artistic values <b>b</b> : one uninformed in a special area of knowledge — <b>philis-tine</b> <i>adj</i> , <b>often cap</b> — <b>phil-is-tin-ism</b> <i>ˈlā-stē-ni-zəm; -līs-tā-, -lā-stē-ni-ˈzəm</i> <i>n</i> , <b>often cap</b>	<b>pic-tur-escape</b> <i>ˈpɪk-ʃə-ˈresk</i> <i>adj</i> [F & It; <i>pittorresco</i> , fr. <i>pittoresco</i> , fr. <i>pittore</i> painter, fr. L <i>pictor</i> , fr. <i>pingere</i> ] (1703) 1 <b>a</b> : resembling a picture: suggesting a painted scene <b>b</b> : charming or quaint in appearance 2: evoking mental images: VIVID <b>syn</b> see GRAPHIC — <b>pic-tur-escape-ly</b> <i>adv</i> — <b>pic-tur-escape-ness</b> <i>n</i>
capitalization label PAGE 15a	<sup>3</sup> <b>pic-tur-escape</b> <i>ˈpɪk-ʃə-ˈresk</i> <i>adj</i> [F & It; <i>pittorresco</i> , fr. <i>pittoresco</i> , fr. <i>pittore</i> painter, fr. L <i>pictor</i> , fr. <i>pingere</i> ] (1703) 1 <b>a</b> : resembling a picture: suggesting a painted scene <b>b</b> : charming or quaint in appearance 2: evoking mental images: VIVID <b>syn</b> see GRAPHIC — <b>pic-tur-escape-ly</b> <i>adv</i> — <b>pic-tur-escape-ness</b> <i>n</i>	<sup>3</sup> <b>pill</b> <i>ˈpɪl</i> (1736) 1: to dose with pills 2: BLACKBALL ~ <i>vi</i> : to become rough with or mat into little balls (brushed woollens often ~)
centered dots PAGE 11a	<sup>1</sup> <b>pill</b> <i>ˈpɪl</i> (1736) 1: to dose with pills 2: BLACKBALL ~ <i>vi</i> : to become rough with or mat into little balls (brushed woollens often ~)	<sup>1</sup> <b>pill-lar</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər</i> <i>n</i> [ME <i>piller</i> , fr. AF, fr. ML <i>pillare</i> , fr. L <i>pila</i> ] (13c) 1 <b>a</b> : a firm upright support for a superstructure: POST <b>b</b> : a usu. ornamental column or shaft; <i>esp</i> : one standing alone for a monument 2 <b>a</b> : a supporting, integral, or upstanding member or part (a ~ of society) <b>b</b> : a fundamental precept (the five ~s of Islam) 3: a solid mass of coal, rock, or ore left standing to support a mine roof 4: a body part that resembles a column — <b>pill-lar-less</b> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
cognate cross-reference PAGE 23a	<b>pill-lar</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər</i> <i>n</i> [ME <i>piller</i> , fr. AF, fr. ML <i>pillare</i> , fr. L <i>pila</i> ] (13c) 1 <b>a</b> : a firm upright support for a superstructure: POST <b>b</b> : a usu. ornamental column or shaft; <i>esp</i> : one standing alone for a monument 2 <b>a</b> : a supporting, integral, or upstanding member or part (a ~ of society) <b>b</b> : a fundamental precept (the five ~s of Islam) 3: a solid mass of coal, rock, or ore left standing to support a mine roof 4: a body part that resembles a column — <b>pill-lar-less</b> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
cutback inflected forms PAGES 14a, 15a	<b>pill-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
date PAGES 17a, 18a	<b>pill-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
defined run-on entry PAGES 11a, 12a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
definition PAGES 20a, 21a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
directional cross-reference PAGE 23a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
equal variant PAGE 11a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
etymology PAGES 15a, 16a, 17a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
functional label PAGE 13a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
guide phrase PAGE 19a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
homographs PAGE 10a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
illustrative quotation PAGE 19a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
inflected forms PAGES 13a, 14a, 15a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
inflectional cross-reference PAGE 23a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
list of undefined words PAGE 24a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
lowercase PAGE 15a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
main entry PAGE 10a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>
often attrib PAGE 15a	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>	<b>pil-lar-less</b> <i>ˈpɪ-lər-ləs</i> <i>adj</i> — <b>from pillar to post</b>

# Explanatory Chart

**po-ten-tate** \pō-tē-tāt/ *n* (15c) : RULER, SOVEREIGN; broadly : one who wields great power or sway

**pot-herb** \pāt-ərb, -hərb/ (c. 1520) : a usu. leafy herb that is cooked for use as greens; also : one (as mint) used to season food

**pot-lik-ker** \pōt-lī-kər/ [Southern & Midland] *n* : a small earthenware pot

**pot-sherd** \pāt-šərd/ *n* [ME *pot-shard*, fr. *pot* + *shard* (14c) : a pottery fragment; usu. unearthed as an archaeological relic

**pouf** also **pouffe** \pūf/ *n* [fr. *pouff*, something inflated, of inflat. origin] (1817) 1 : PUFF 3b(3) 2 : a bouffant or fluffy part of a garment or accessory 3 : OTTOMAN — **poufed** or **pouffed** \pūft/ *adj*

**poult** \pōlt/ *n* [ME *polet*, *pulte* young fowl — more at PULLET] (15c) : a young fowl; esp. : a young turkey

**pow-dery** \pau-də-rē/ *adj* (15c) 1 : resembling or consisting of powder (< snow) 2 : easily reduced to powder : CRUMBLING 3 : covered with or as if with powder

**prexy** \prek-sē/ also **prex** \preks/ *n*, *pl* **prex-ies** also **prex-es** [prexy fr. *prex*, by shortening & alter. fr. *president*] (1828) *slang* : president — used chiefly of a college president

**proph-et** \prā-fət/ *n* [ME *prophete*, fr. AF, fr. L *propheta*, fr. Gk *prophētēs*, fr. *pro* for + *phanai* to speak — more at FOR, BAN] (12c) 1 : one who utters divinely inspired revelations; as a often *cap* : the writer of one of the prophetic books of the Bible b *cap* : one regarded by a group of followers as the final authoritative revealer of God's will (Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah) 2 : one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight; esp. : an inspired poet 3 : one who foretells future events : PREDICTOR 4 : an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group 5 [Christian Science] a : a spiritual seer b : disappearance of material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth — **proph-et-hood** \hūd/ *n*

**pro-posed** \prō-pōz/ *vb* **pro-posed**; **pro-posing** [ME, fr. AF *proposer*, *proposer*, fr. L *proponere* (perf. indic. *proposui*) — more at PROPOSE] (14c) 1 : to form or put forward a plan or intention (<man ~s, but God disposes) 2 *obs* : to engage in talk or discussion 3 : to make an offer of marriage 4 *vi* 1 a : to set before the mind (as for discussion, imitation, or action) (< a plan for settling the dispute) b : to set before someone and esp. oneself as an aim or intent (<proposed to spend the summer in Italy) 2 a : to set forth for acceptance or rejection (< terms for peace) b : a topic for debate c : to recommend to fill a place or vacancy : NOMINATE (< them for membership) c : to offer as a toast (< the happiness of the couple) — **pro-poser** *n*

**pro-spect** \prā-spekt/ *n* [ME, fr. L *prospectus* view, prospect, fr. *prospicere* to look forward, exercise foresight, fr. *pro-* forward + *specere* to look — more at PRO-, SPY] (15c) 1 : EXPOSURE 3b 2 a (1) : an extensive view (2) : a mental consideration : SURVEY b : a place that commands an extensive view : LOOKOUT c : something extended to the view : SCENE d *archaic* : a sketch or picture of a scene 3 *obs* : ASPECT 4 a : the act of looking forward : ANTICIPATION b : a mental picture of something to come : VISION c : something that is awaited or expected : POSSIBILITY d *pl* (1) : financial expectations (2) : CHANCES 5 : a place showing signs of containing a mineral deposit 6 a : a potential buyer or customer b : a likely candidate for a job or position — **in prospect** : possible or likely for the future

**syn** PROSPECT, OUTLOOK, ANTICIPATION, FORETASTE mean an advance realization of something to come. PROSPECT implies expectation of a particular event, condition, or development of definite interest or concern (<the prospect of a quiet weekend). OUTLOOK suggests a forecasting of the future (<a favorable outlook for the economy). ANTICIPATION implies a prospect or outlook that involves advance suffering or enjoyment of what is foreseen (<the anticipation of her arrival). FORETASTE implies an actual though brief or partial experience of something forthcoming (<the frost was a foretaste of winter).

**pro-strate** \prō-strāt/ *adj* [ME *prostrat*, fr. AF, fr. L *prostratus*, pp. of *prostrare*, fr. *pro-* before + *sternere* to spread out, throw down — more at STREW] (14c) 1 : stretched out with face on the ground in adoration or submission; also : lying flat 2 : completely overcome and lacking vitality, will, or power to rise (<was ~ from the heat) 3 : trailing on the ground : PROCUMBENT (< shrubs) **syn** see PRONE

**pro-ten-sive** \tēn(t)-siv/ *adj* [L *protensus*, pp. of *protendere*] (1671) 1 *archaic* : having continuance in time 2 *archaic* : having lengthwise extent or extensiveness — **pro-ten-sive-ly** *adv*

**Pro-tes-tant ethic** *n* (1926) : an ethic that stresses the virtue of hard work, thrift, and self-discipline

**prove** \pruv/ *vb* **proved**; **proved** or **prov-en** \prū-vən, Brit also \prō-v/; **prov-ing** \prū-vin/ [ME, fr. AF *prover*, *pruver*, fr. L *probare* to test, prove, fr. *probus* good, honest, fr. *pro-* for, in favor + *-bus* (akin to OE *bēon* to be) — more at PRO-, BE] *vi* (13c) 1 *archaic* : to learn or find out by experience 2 a : to test the truth, validity, or genuineness of (<the exception ~s the rule) (< a will at probate) b : to test the worth or quality of : *specif* : to compare against a standard — **some-times** used with **up** or **out** c : to check the correctness of (as an arithmetic result) 3 a : to establish the existence, truth, or validity of (as by evidence or logic) (< a theorem) (<the charges were never proved in court) b : to demonstrate as having a particular quality or worth (<the vaccine has been proven effective after years of tests) (<proved herself a great actress) 4 : to show (oneself) to be worthy or capable (<eager to ~ myself in the new job) ~ *vi* : to turn out esp. after trial or test (<the new drug proved effective) — **prov-able** \prū-və-bəl/ *adj* — **prov-able-ness** *n* — **prov-ably** \blē/ *adv* — **pro-ver** \prū-vər/ *n*

**usage** The past participle *proven*, orig. the past participle of *prove*, a Middle English variant of *prove* that survived in Scotland, has gradually worked its way into standard English over the past three and a half centuries. It seems to have first become established in legal use and to have come only slowly into literary use. Tennyson was one of its earliest frequent users, prob. for metrical reasons. It was disapproved by 19th century grammarians, one of whom included it in a list of "words that are not words." Surveys made some 50 or 60 years ago indicated that *proved* was about four times as frequent as *proven*. But our evidence from the last 30 or 35 years shows this no longer to be the case. As a past participle *proven* is now about as frequent as *proved* in all contexts. As an attributive adjective (<proved or proven gas reserves) *proven* is much more common than *proved*.

**provided** *conj* [ME, pp. of *providen* to provide] (11c) : on condition that : with the understanding : IF **usage** see PROVIDING

**put-up** \pūt-əp/ *adj* (1810) : arranged secretly beforehand (< a ~ job)

primary stress  
PAGE 12a

pronunciation  
PAGES 12a, 13a

regional label  
PAGE 18a

secondary stress  
PAGE 12a

secondary variant  
PAGE 11a

sense divider  
PAGE 20a

sense letter  
PAGE 20a

sense number  
PAGE 20a

stylistic label  
PAGES 18a, 19a

subject label  
PAGE 19a

swung dash (boldface)  
PAGE 13a

swung dash (lightface)  
PAGE 19a

synonymous cross-reference  
PAGE 23a

synonym paragraph  
PAGES 23a, 24a

syn see  
PAGES 23a, 24a

temporal label  
PAGE 18a

undefined run-on entry  
PAGES 11a, 12a

uppercase  
PAGE 15a

usage note  
PAGE 19a

usage paragraph  
PAGES 19a, 20a

usage see  
PAGE 20a

verbal illustration  
PAGE 19a

# Explanatory Notes

## Entries

### MAIN ENTRIES

A boldface letter or a combination of such letters, including punctuation marks and diacritics where needed, that is set flush with the left-hand margin of each column of type is a main entry or entry word. The main entry may consist of letters set solid, of letters joined by a hyphen or a slash, or of letters separated by one or more spaces:

**<sup>1</sup>alone** . . . *adj*  
**au-to-da-fé** . . . *n*  
**and/or** . . . *conj*  
**automatic pilot** *n*

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

Variation in the styling of compound words in English is frequent and widespread. It is often completely acceptable to choose freely among open, hyphenated, and closed alternatives (as *life style*, *life-style*, or *lifestyle*). However, to show all the stylings that are found for English compounds would require space that can be better used for other information. So this dictionary limits itself to a single styling for a compound:

**peace-mak-er**  
**pell-mell**  
**boom box**

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

### ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

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

**ca** *abbr* circa  
**Ca** *symbol* calcium

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

For a list of abbreviations regularly used in this dictionary, see the section Abbreviations in This Work elsewhere in the front matter. Many of these are also in general use, but as a rule an abbreviation is entered either in the vocabulary or in that list, not both.

### ORDER OF MAIN ENTRIES

The main entries follow one another in alphabetical order letter by letter without regard to intervening spaces or hyphens: *battle royal* follows *battlement* and *earth-shattering* follows *earthshaking*. Those containing an Arabic numeral are alphabetized as if the numeral were

spelled out: *3-D* comes between *three-color* and *three-decker*. Those that often begin with the abbreviation *St.* in common usage have the abbreviation spelled out: *Saint Anthony's fire*.

Full words come before parts of words made up of the same letters. Solid compounds come first and are followed by hyphenated compounds and then open compounds. Lowercase entries come before entries that begin with a capital letter:

**<sup>3</sup>semi** . . . *n*  
**semi-** . . . *prefix*  
**take-out** . . . *n*  
**take-out** . . . *adj*  
**take out** *vt*  
**tim-o-thy** . . . *n*  
**Tim-o-thy** . . . *n*

### HOMOGRAPHS

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

**<sup>1</sup>melt** . . . *vb*      **<sup>1</sup>pine** . . . *n*  
**<sup>2</sup>melt** *n*          **<sup>2</sup>pine** *vi*

Sometimes such homographs are related: the two entries *melt* are derived from the same root. Sometimes there is no relationship: the two entries *pine* are unrelated beyond the accident of spelling. The order of homographs is usually historical: the one first used in English is entered first. A homograph derived from an earlier homograph by functional shift, however, follows its parent immediately, with the result that occasionally one homograph appears ahead of another that is older in usage. For example, of the three entries *kennel* the second (a verb) is derived from the first (a noun). Even though the unrelated third entry *kennel* was used in English many years before the second, it follows the two related entries.

Abbreviations and symbols that are homographs of other entries are listed last:

**<sup>1</sup>bus** . . . *n*  
**<sup>2</sup>bus** *vb*  
**<sup>3</sup>bus** *abbr*

### GUIDE WORDS

A pair of guide words is printed at the top of each page. The entries that fall alphabetically between the guide words are found on that page.

It is important to remember that alphabetical order rather than position of an entry on the page determines the selection of guide words. The first guide word is the alphabetically first entry on the page. The second guide word is usually the alphabetically last entry on the page:

**glee • globular cluster**

The entry need not be a main entry. Another boldface word—a variant, an inflected form, or a defined or unde-



fined run-on—may be selected as a guide word. For this reason the last printed main entry on a page is not always the last entry alphabetically:

### IQ • ironness

On the page where these guide words are used, *ironmongery* is the last printed entry, but *ironness*, a derivative word run on at <sup>2</sup>*iron*, is the last entry alphabetically and so has been chosen as the second guide word.

All guide words must themselves be in alphabetical order from page to page throughout the dictionary; thus, the alphabetically last entry on a page is not used if it follows alphabetically the first guide word on the next page:

### joint • Jotun

On the page where these guide words are found, *Jotunn*, a variant at the entry *Jotun*, is the last entry alphabetically, but it is not used as the second guide word because it follows alphabetically the entry *Jotunheim*, which is the first guide word on the next page. To use *Jotunn* would violate the alphabetical order of guide words from page to page, and so the entry *Jotun* is the second guide word instead.

## END-OF-LINE DIVISION

The centered dots within entry words indicate division points at which a hyphen may be put at the end of a line of print or writing. Thus the noun *pos·si·bil·i·ty* may be ended on one line with:

pos-  
possi-  
possibil-  
possibili-

and continued on the next with:

sibility  
bility  
ity  
ty

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

aswirl . . . adj  
mouthy . . . adj  
idea . . . n

Nor are they shown at second and succeeding homographs unless these differ among themselves:

<sup>1</sup> re·form . . . vb	<sup>1</sup> min·ute . . . n
<sup>2</sup> reform n	<sup>2</sup> minute vt
<sup>3</sup> reform adj	<sup>3</sup> mi·nute . . . adj

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

Many words have two or more common pronunciation variants, and the same end-of-line division is not always appropriate for each of them. The division *fla·gel·lar*, for example, best fits the variant \fla-ˈje-lər\ whereas the division *flag·el·lar* best fits the variant \fla-jə-lər\. In instances

like this, the division falling farther to the left is used, regardless of the order of the pronunciations:

*fla·gel·lar* \fla-ˈje-lər, ˈfla-jə-lər\

For more information on centered dots within entry words see the paragraph on hyphens in the Guide to Pronunciation.

A double hyphen at the end of a line in this dictionary stands for a hyphen that belongs at that point in a hyphenated word and that is retained when the word is written as a unit on one line.

**lemon thyme** *n* (1629) : a thyme (*Thymus citriodorus*) having lemon-scented leaves used as a seasoning; *also* : its leaves

## VARIANTS

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

*ocher or ochre*

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

*pol·ly·wog or pol·li·wog*

When another spelling is joined to the main entry by the word *also*, the spelling after *also* occurs appreciably less often and thus is considered a secondary variant:

*can·cel·la·tion also can·cel·ation*

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

<sup>1</sup>*Shake·spear·ean or Shake·spear·ian also Shak·sper·ean or Shak·sper·ian*

The use of *or* to indicate equal variants and *also* to indicate secondary variants applies not only to main entries, but to all boldface entry words, including inflected forms and run-on entries.

Variants of main entries whose spelling places them alphabetically more than a column away from the main entry are entered at their own alphabetical places as well as at the main entry:

*gibe or jibe . . . vb*  
<sup>1</sup>*jibe* var of GIBE  
<sup>1</sup>*rhyme also rime . . . n*  
*rhyme·ster also rime·ster . . . n*  
<sup>3</sup>*rime, rimester* var of RHYME, RHYMESTER

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

*metre . . . chiefly Brit var of METER*  
*agin . . . dial var of AGAINST*

## RUN-ON ENTRIES

The defined senses of a main entry may be followed by one or more derivatives or by a homograph with a different functional label. These are run-on entries. Each is introduced by a lightface dash and each has a functional la-

## 12a Explanatory Notes

bel. They are not defined, however, since their meanings are readily derivable from the meaning of the root word:

**slay** ... *vb* ... — **slay-er** *n*

**spir-it-ed** ... *adj* ... — **spir-it-ed-ly** *adv* — **spir-it-ed-ness** *n*

**stac-ca-to** ... *adj* ... — **staccato** *adv* — **staccato** *n*

The defined senses of a main entry may be followed by one or more phrases containing the entry word or an inflected form of it. These are also run-on entries. Each is introduced by a lightface dash but there is no functional label. They are, however, defined since their meanings are more than the sum of the meanings of their elements:

**<sup>1</sup>hole** ... *n* ... — **in the hole** <sup>1</sup> : ...

**<sup>1</sup>live** ... *vb* ... — **live it up** : ...

Defined phrases of this sort are run on at the entry constituting the first major element in the phrase. The first major element is ordinarily a verb or a noun, but when these are absent another part of speech may serve instead:

**<sup>1</sup>but** ... *conj* ... — **but what** : ...

When there are variants, however, the run-on appears at the entry constituting the first major invariable element in the phrase:

**<sup>1</sup>clock** ... *n* ... — **kill the clock** *or* **run out the clock** : ...

**<sup>1</sup>hand** ... *n* ... — **on all hands** *or* **on every hand** : ...

A run-on entry is an independent entry with respect to function and status. Labels at the main entry do not apply unless they are repeated.

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

## Pronunciation

Pronunciation is indicated between a pair of reversed virgules \ \ following the entry word. The symbols used are listed in the chart printed inside the back cover of this dictionary and on the page facing the first page of the dictionary proper. An abbreviated list appears at the bottom of the second column on each right-hand page of the vocabulary. Explanations of the symbols are given in the Guide to Pronunciation.

### SYLLABLES

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

**ab-sen-tee** \ab-sən-ˈtē\

**<sup>1</sup>met-ric** \ˈme-trɪk\

### STRESS

A high-set mark \^ indicates primary (strongest) stress or accent; a low-set mark \\_ indicates secondary (medium) stress or accent:

**heart-beat** \ˈhārt-bēt\

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

Stress marks are an indication of the relative prominence of the syllables in a word. In running speech the primary stress can vary in English words for several contextual and semantic reasons. Because the variation is so great, this book shows the primary stress of a word in its pronunciation as a single word out of context.

## VARIANT PRONUNCIATIONS

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

**apri-cot** \ˈa-prə-kāt, ˈā-\

**for-eign** \ˈfôr-ən, ˈfār-\

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

**<sup>1</sup>al-loy** \ˈa-lɔɪ *also* ˈə-lɔɪ\

A variant preceded by *sometimes* is even less common, though it does occur in educated speech:

**in-vei-gle** \in-ˈvā-gəl *sometimes* -ˈvē-\

Sometimes a regional label precedes a variant:

**<sup>1</sup>great** \ˈgrāt, *Southern also* ˈgre(ə)t\

The label *dial* precedes a variant that is noteworthy or common in a dialect or dialects of American English, but that is not considered to be a standard pronunciation:

**ask** \ˈask, ˈāsk; *dial* ˈaks\

The symbol \÷\ is placed before a pronunciation variant that occurs in educated speech but that is considered by some to be unacceptable:

**nuc-le-ar** \ˈnū-klē-ər, ˈnyū-, ÷-kyə-lər\

This symbol refers only to the immediately following variant and not to subsequent variants separated from it by a comma or a semicolon.

## PARENTHESES IN PRONUNCIATIONS

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

**<sup>1</sup>twin-kle** \ˈtwɪŋ-kəl\ *vb* ... **twin-king** \-k(ə)lɪŋ\

**sat-is-fac-to-ry** \sə-təs-ˈfak-t(ə)rē\

**re-sponse** \rɪ-ˈspān(t)s\

Thus, the parentheses at *twinkling* mean that there are some who pronounce the \ə\ between \k\ and \l\ and others who do not pronounce it.

## PARTIAL AND ABSENT PRONUNCIATIONS

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

**cham-pi-on-ship** \-ˌʃɪp\

Ma-dei-ra \mə-'dir-ə, -'der-\

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

<sup>1</sup>cham-pi-on \ʃam-pē-ən\

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

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

di-verse \dī-'vərs, də-, 'dī-,\

an-cho-vy \ʼan-,chō-vē-, an-'\

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

witch doctor *n*

A pronunciation is shown, however, for any element of an open compound that does not have entry at its own alphabetical place:

di-phos-pho-gly-cer-ic acid \(\dī-'fās-fō-gli-,ser-ik-\

sieve of Er-a-tos-the-nes \-,er-ə-'tās-thə-,nēz\

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

<sup>1</sup>re-ward \ri-'wórd\<sup>2</sup>reward

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

clois-tress \\'klói-strəs\ *n* ... *obs*

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

— oval-ness *n*

— shot in the dark

Thus, the pronunciation of *ovalness* is the sum of the pronunciations of *oval* and *-ness*; that of *shot in the dark*, the sum of the pronunciation of the four elements that make up the phrase.

The notation *sic* is used at a few pronunciation respellings which are correct but are at variance with the spelling of the word.

Ki-ri-bati \\'kir-ə-,bas—sic\

## Functional Labels

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

<sup>1</sup>bold ... *adj*hand-i-ly ... *adv*<sup>1</sup>but ... *conj*oops ... *interj*

bo-le-ro ...

<sup>2</sup>under *prep*some-one ... *pron*<sup>1</sup>shrink ... *vb*

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

flat-ten ... *vb* ... *vt* ... ~ *vi*

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

<sup>2</sup>fleece *vt*ap-per-tain ... *vi*

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

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

geog *abbr*poly- *comb form*-logy *n comb form*-iferous *adj comb form*super- *prefix*Gram-my ... *service mark*<sup>1</sup>-ic *adj suffix*<sup>2</sup>-ward or -wards *adv suffix*-itis *n suffix*-ize *vb suffix*Ly-cra ... *trademark*-nd *symbol*<sup>1</sup>may ... *verbal auxiliary*gid-dy-ap ... *vb imper*me-thinks ... *vb impersonal*NC-17 ... *certification mark*

Two functional labels are sometimes combined:

zilch ... *adj or n*afloat ... *adj or adv*

Functional labels are not shown for main entries that are noun phrases having a preposition in the middle:

ball of fire (ca. 1900) : a person of unusual energy ...

Functional labels are also not shown for phrases that are defined run-on entries.

## Inflected Forms

In comparison with some other languages, English does not have many inflected forms. Of those which it has, several are inflected forms of words belonging to small, closed groups (as the personal pronouns or the demonstratives). These forms can readily be found at their own alphabetical places with a full entry (as *whom*, the objective case form of *who*) or with a cross-reference in small capital letters to another entry (as *those*, the plural form of *that*).

Most other inflected forms, however, are covered explicitly or by implication at the main entry for the base form. These are the plurals of nouns, the principal parts of verbs (the past tense, the past participle when it differs from the past tense, and the present participle), and the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs. In general, it may be said that when these inflected forms are created in a manner considered regular in English (as by adding *-s* or *-es* to nouns, *-ed* and *-ing* to verbs, and *-er* and *-est* to adjectives and adverbs) and when it seems that there is nothing about the formation likely to give the dictionary user doubts, the inflected form is not shown in order to save space for information more likely to be sought. Inflected forms are also not shown at undefined run-ons or at some entries bearing a limiting label:

gour-mand ... *n* ... — gour-man-dize ... *vi*<sup>1</sup>fem-i-nine ... *adj* ... — fem-i-nine-ness ... *n*

## 14a Explanatory Notes

<sup>2</sup>lake *n* ... — *laky* ... *adj*

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

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

On the other hand, if the inflected form is created in an irregular way or if the dictionary user is likely to have doubts about it (even though it is formed regularly), the inflected form is shown in boldface, either in full or cut back to a convenient and easily recognizable point. Full details about the kinds of entries at which inflected forms are shown and the kinds at which they are not shown are given in the three following sections.

## NOUNS

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

<sup>2</sup>spy *n*, *pl* spies

si-lo ... *n*, *pl* silos

<sup>2</sup>shampoo *n*, *pl* shampoos

gal-ley ... *n*, *pl* galleys

<sup>1</sup>mouse ... *n*, *pl* mice

moose ... *n*, *pl* moose

cri-te-ri-on ... *n*, *pl* -ria

son-in-law ... *n*, *pl* sons-in-law

<sup>1</sup>quiz ... *n*, *pl* quiz-zes

<sup>1</sup>fish ... *n*, *pl* fish or fish-es

cor-gi ... *n*, *pl* corgis

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

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

ame-ni-ty ... *n*, *pl* -ties

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

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

<sup>2</sup>crunch ... *n*

fore-foot ... *n*

mo-nog-a-my ... *n*

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

munch-ies ... *n pl*

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

ro-bot-ics ... *n pl* but *sing* in constr

two bits *n pl* but *sing* or *pl* in constr

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

construction takes a plural verb when it is used as a subject.

## VERBS

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

<sup>2</sup>snag *vt* snagged; snag-ging

<sup>1</sup>move ... *vb* moved; mov-ing

<sup>1</sup>cry ... *vb* cried; cry-ing

<sup>2</sup>frol-ic *vi* frol-icked; frol-ick-ing

<sup>1</sup>sur-vey ... *vb* sur-veyed; sur-vey-ing

<sup>1</sup>drive ... *vb* drove ...; driv-en ...; driv-ing

<sup>2</sup>bus *vb* bused also bussed; bus-ing also bus-sing

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

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

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

learn ... *vb* learned \lɜrnd, lɜrnt\; learn-ing

rip-en ... *vb* rip-ened; rip-en-ing \ri-pə-nɪŋ, 'ri-p-nɪŋ\

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

elim-i-nate ... *vb* -nat-ed; -nat-ing

<sup>3</sup>quarrel *vi* -reled or -relled; -rel-ing or -rel-ling

<sup>1</sup>re-take ... *vt* -took ...; -tak-en ...; -tak-ing

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

<sup>1</sup>jump ... *vb*

pre-judge ... *vt*

Another inflected form of English verbs is the third person singular of the present tense, which is regularly formed by the addition of *-s* or *-es* to the base form of the verb. This inflected form is not shown except at a handful of entries (as *have* and *do*) for which it is in some way anomalous.

## ADJECTIVES & ADVERBS

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

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

<sup>1</sup>tame ... *adj* tam-er; tam-est

<sup>1</sup>kind-ly ... *adj* kind-li-er; -est

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

dic-ey . . . *adj* dic-i-er; -est<sup>1</sup>good . . . *adj* bet-ter . . . ; best<sup>1</sup>bad . . . *adj* worse . . . ; worst<sup>1</sup>far . . . *adv* far-ther . . . or fur-ther . . . ; far-thest or fur-thest

The superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs of two or more syllables are usually cut back:

<sup>3</sup>fancy *adj* fan-ci-er; -est<sup>1</sup>early . . . *adv* ear-li-er; -est

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

<sup>1</sup>young . . . *adj* youn-ger \ˈyʊŋ-gər\; youn-gest \ˈyʊŋ-gɛst\

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

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

<sup>3</sup>mere *adj*, superlative mer-est

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

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

<sup>1</sup>near . . . *adv*un-wary . . . *adj*

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

<sup>1</sup>hot . . . *adj* hot-ter; hot-test<sup>2</sup>hot *adv*

## Capitalization

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

lunk-head . . . *n*gar-gan-tuan . . . *adj*, *often cap*Mo-hawk . . . *n*

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

obstacle course *n*neo-Ex-pres-sion-ism . . . *n*, *often cap N*off-off-Broadway *n*, *often cap both Os*un-Amer-i-can . . . *adj*Dutch oven *n*Old Glory *n*

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

re-nais-sance . . . *n* . . . 1 *cap* . . . 2 *often cap*Shet-land . . . *n* . . . 2 *often not cap*Trin-i-ty . . . *n* . . . 2 *not cap*

## Attributive Nouns

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

<sup>1</sup>bot-tle . . . *n*, *often attrib*busi-ness . . . *n*, *often attrib*

Examples of the attributive use of these nouns are *bottle opener* and *business ethics*.

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

## Etymology

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

The etymology traces a vocabulary entry as far back as possible in English (as to Old English), tells from what language and in what form it came into English, and (except in the case of such words outside the general vocabulary of English as *bascule* and *zloty*) traces the pre-English source as far back as possible if the source is an Indo-European language. These etyma are printed in italics.

## OLD, MIDDLE, AND MODERN ENGLISH

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

<sup>1</sup>nap . . . *vi* . . . [ME *nappen*, fr. OE *hnappian* . . .]<sup>1</sup>old . . . *adj* [ME, fr. OE *eald* . . .]

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

<sup>1</sup>slab . . . *n* [ME *slabbe*]<sup>1</sup>nag . . . *n* . . . [ME *nagge*; akin to D *negge* small horse]

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

ge-mot . . . *n* [OE *gemōt* . . .]thegn . . . *n* [OE . . .]

An etymology is not usually given for a word created in English by the combination of existing constituents or by



functional shift. This indicates that the identity of the constituents is expected to be self-evident to the user.

**book-shelf** . . . *n* . . . : an open shelf for holding books

<sup>1</sup>**fire-proof** . . . *adj* . . . : proof against or resistant to fire

**off-put-ting** . . . *adj* . . . : that puts one off : REPELLENT, DISCOURAGING

**penal code** *n* . . . : a code of laws concerning crimes and offenses and their punishment

<sup>3</sup>**stalk** *n* . . . 1 : the act of stalking

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

<sup>1</sup>**equal** . . . *adj* [ME, fr. L *aequalis*, fr. *aequus* level, equal] . . . 1 **a** (1) : of the same measure, quantity, amount, or number as another

**equal-i-ty** . . . *n* . . . 1 : the quality or state of being equal

**equal-ize** . . . *vt* . . . 1 : to make equal

While *equalize* was formed in Modern English, *equality* was actually borrowed into Middle English (via Anglo-French) from Latin *aequalitas*.

Incorporating material from major scholarly reference works completed in recent years, the etymologies of late Old and Middle English words borrowed from French now apply the label "Anglo-French" (abbreviated AF) to all medieval French words known to have been used in French documents written in Britain before about 1400. This treatment acknowledges that literate English speakers then were typically bilingual or trilingual readers and writers who cultivated distinctive varieties of Latin and French as well as of English, and that words moved easily from one to another of these three languages. The label "Anglo-French" should not be taken to mean that the etymon is attested exclusively in Anglo-French, for in the great majority of cases the word has a cognate form in the continental northern French of Picardy and Normandy or the French of Paris and its surroundings. Because Anglo-French is one dialect of medieval French, it falls within the domain of wider labels "Old French" and "Middle French," which cover all dialects of French in their respective time frames. A similar caution applies to derivative words:

<sup>1</sup>**jour-ne-y** . . . *n* . . . [ME, fr. AF *journee* day, day's journey, fr. *jur* day, fr. LL *diurnum* . . .]

This etymology does not mean that the derivation of *journee* from *jur* took place only in Anglo-French. Forms corresponding to Anglo-French *journee* exist in other dialects of Old and Middle French, as well as in Old Occitan, and the word survives in Modern French as *journée*, "day."

## LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

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

<sup>1</sup>**mar-ble** . . . *n* [ME, fr. AF *marbre*, fr. L *marmor*, fr. Gk *marmaros*]

**how-it-zer** . . . *n* [D *houwitzer*, ultim. fr. Czech *houfnice* ballista]

**souk** . . . *n* [Ar *sūq* market]

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

**tri-lo-bite** . . . *n* [ultim. fr. Gk *trilobos* three-lobed, fr. *tri-* + *lobos* lobe]

When a language name that is not itself an entry in the dictionary is used in an etymology, a short parenthetical definition will immediately follow the name:

**kook-a-bur-ra** . . . *n* [Wiradhuri (Australian aboriginal language of central New South Wales) *gugubarra*]

However, subfamily, language, or dialect names modified by qualifiers that simply add geographical orientation—as "Interior Salish," "MF (Picard dial.)," or "Southern Paiute"—will not be further defined as long as both the qualifier and the word being qualified are both entries in the dictionary.

Words cited from certain American Indian languages and from some other languages that are infrequently printed have been rendered with the phonetic symbols used by scholars of those languages. These symbols include the following: a raised dot to the right of a vowel letter to mark vowel length; a hook below a vowel letter to mark nasality; an apostrophe over a consonant letter to mark glottal release; a superscript *w* to the right of a consonant letter to mark labialization; the symbol *ç* to render *ʃ*; the symbol *î* to render a high central vowel; the Greek letters *β*, *δ*, and *γ* to render voiced labial, dental, and velar fricatives; the symbol *θ* to render *ʈh*; the symbol *x* to render *ʁ*; the symbol *ʔ* to render a glottal stop; and the symbol *λ* ("crossed lambda") for a voiceless lateral affricate. Examples of these symbols can be found at etymologies for the words *Athabaskan*, *babassu*, *coho*, *fist*, *Lhasa apso*, *potlatch*, and *sego lily*.

## ASSUMED OR RECONSTRUCTED FORMS

An asterisk placed before a word means that it is assumed to have existed or has been reconstructed by means of comparative evidence. In some cases, the assumption may be due to lack of evidence:

<sup>4</sup>**bore** *n* [ME *\*bore* wave, fr. ON *bāra*] (1601)

The word is unattested before Modern English, though the likelihood is strong that it was borrowed from Scandinavian much earlier. The case of the word *battlement* is somewhat different:

**bat-tle-ment** . . . *n* [ME *batelment*, fr. AF *\*bataillement*, fr. *batailler* to fortify with battlements — more at *BATTLE*]

It is highly probable that *bataillement* existed in Anglo-French, given that both the underlying verb *batailler* and the Middle English derivative *batelment* are attested.

The asterisk is invariably used before words labeled VL, which stands for "Vulgar Latin," the traditional name for the unrecorded spoken Latin of both the uneducated and educated, especially in the final centuries of the Roman Empire. Vulgar Latin forms can be reconstructed on the basis of their later outcome in the Romance languages and of their relationship with known Latin words:

<sup>1</sup>**can-vas** . . . *n* [ME *canevas*, fr. AF *canevas*, *chanevaz*, fr. VL *\*cannabaceus* hempen, fr. L *cannabis* hemp . . .]

## WORDS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

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

## ETYMOLOGIES OF TECHNICAL WORDS

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

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

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

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

## COMPRESSION OF INFORMATION

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

**ka-pok** . . . *n* [Malay]

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

<sup>1</sup>**dumb** . . . *adj* [ME, fr. OE . . .]

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

<sup>1</sup>**wea-ry** . . . *adj* . . . [ME *wery*, fr. OE *wērig* . . .] 1 : exhausted in strength . . .

When a word from a foreign language (or Middle English or Old English) is a key element in the etymologies of several related entries that are found close together, the meaning of the word is usually given at only one of the entries:

**ve-lo-ce** . . . *adv* or *adj* [It, fr. L *veloc-*, *velox*]

**ve-loc-i-pede** . . . *n* [F *vélocipède*, fr. L *veloc-*, *velox* + *ped-*, *pes* foot — more at FOOT]

**ve-loc-i-ty** . . . *n* . . . [MF *velocité*, fr. L *velocitat-*, *velocitas*, fr. *veloc-*, *velox* quick; prob. akin to L *vegere* to enliven — more at WAKE]

When an etymology includes the expression “by alter.” and the altered form is not cited, the form is the term given in small capital letters as the definition:

**ole** . . . *adj* [by alter.] . . . OLD

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

**far-ad** . . . *n* [Michael *Faraday*]

**jodh-pur** . . . *n* [*Jodhpur*, India]

## RELATED WORDS

When a word of Indo-European origin has been traced back to the earliest language in which it is attested, words descended from the same Indo-European base in other languages (especially Old High German, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit) are usually given:

**na-vel** . . . *n* [ME, fr. OE *nafela*; akin to OHG *nabalo* navel, L *umbilicus*, Gk *omphalos*]

<sup>1</sup>**wind** . . . *n* . . . [ME, fr. OE; akin to OHG *wint* wind, L *ventus*, Gk *aēnai* to blow, Skt *vātī* it blows]

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

**ho-ly** . . . *adj* . . . [ME, fr. OE *hālig*; akin to OE *hāl* whole — more at WHOLE]

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

**ba-nana** . . . *n* . . . [Sp or Pg; Sp, fr. Pg, of African origin; akin to Wolof *banaana* banana]

<sup>2</sup>**briar** *n* . . . [F *bruyère* heath, fr. MF *bruiere*, fr. VL \**brucaria*, fr. LL *brucus* heather, of Celt origin; akin to OIr *froech* heather; akin to Gk *ereikē* heather]

This last example shows the two contrasting uses of “akin to.” The word cited immediately after “of Celt origin; akin to” is an attested Celtic word descended from the same etymon as the unattested Celtic source of the Latin word. The word cited after the second “akin to” is evidence that the Celtic etymon has deeper relations within Indo-European.

## Dates

At most main entries a date will be found enclosed in parentheses immediately preceding the boldface colon and the number that introduces the first sense:

**ex-po-sé** also **ex-po-se** . . . *n* [F *exposé*, fr. pp. of *exposer*] (1803) 1 : a formal statement of facts 2 : an exposure of something discreditable

This is the date of the earliest recorded use in English, as far as it could be determined, of the sense which the date precedes. Several caveats are appropriate at this point. First, a few classes of main entries that are not complete words (as prefixes, suffixes, and combining forms) or are not generic words (as trademarks) are not given dates. Second, the date given applies only to the first sense of the word entered in this dictionary and not necessarily to the word's very earliest meaning in English. Many words, especially those with long histories, have obsolete, archaic, or uncommon senses that are not entered in this dictionary, and such senses have been excluded from consideration in determining the date:

**green-horn** . . . *n* [obs. *greenhorn* animal with green or young horns] (1682) 1 : an inexperienced or naive person

The 1682 date is for sense 1, not for the word as a whole. *Greenhorn* also has an obsolete sense, “animal with green

## 18a Explanatory Notes

or young horns," that was recorded as early as 1460, but since this sense is not entered, it is ignored for purposes of dating. Third, the printed date should not be taken to mark the very first time that the word—or even the sense—was used in English. Many words were certainly in spoken use for decades or even longer before they passed into the written language. The date is for the earliest written or printed use that the editors have been able to discover. This fact means further that any date is subject to change as evidence of still earlier use may emerge, and many dates given now can confidently be expected to yield to others in future printings and editions.

A date will appear in one of three different styles:

**nuclear family** *n* (1947) : a family group that consists only of father, mother, and children

**moon-light** . . . *n* (14c) : the light of the moon

**sheet** . . . *n* [ME *shete*, fr. OE *scēte*, *scīete*; . . .] (bef. 12c) **1 a** : a broad piece of cloth; *esp* : BEDSHEET

The style that names a year (as 1947) is the one used for the period from the sixteenth century to the present. The style that names only a century (as 14c) is the one used for the period from the twelfth century through the fifteenth century, a span that roughly approximates the period of Middle English. The style (bef. 12c) is used for the period before the twelfth century back to the earliest records of English, a span that approximates the period of Old English. Words first attested after 1500 can usually be dated to a single year because the precise dates of publication of modern printed texts are known. If a word must be dated from a modern text of uncertain chronology, it will be assigned the latest possible date of the text's publication prefixed by the abbreviation *ca.* (for *circa*). For words from the Old and Middle English periods the examples of use on which the dates depend very often occur in manuscripts which are themselves of uncertain date and which may record a text whose date of composition is highly conjectural. To date words from these periods by year would frequently give a quite misleading impression of the state of our knowledge, and so the broader formulas involving centuries are used instead.

Each date reflects a particular instance of the use of a word, most often within a continuous text. In cases where the earliest appearance of a word dated by year is not from continuous text but from a source (as a dictionary or glossary) that defines or explains the word instead of simply using it, the year is preceded by *ca.*:

**magnesium hydroxide** *n* (ca. 1909) : a slightly alkaline crystalline compound  $Mg(OH)_2$  . . .

In such instances, *ca.* indicates that while the source providing the date attests that the word was in use in the relevant sense at that time, it does not offer an example of the normal use of the word and thus gives no better than an approximate date for such use. For the example above no use has so far been found that is earlier than its appearance as an entry in Webster's New International Dictionary, published in 1909, so the date is given with the qualifying abbreviation.

## Usage

### USAGE LABELS

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

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

**per-du** . . . *n* . . . *obs*

**gov-ern-ment** . . . *n* . . . *2 obs*

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

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

**far-thin-gale** . . . *n* . . . : a support (as of hoops) worn esp. in the 16th century beneath a skirt to expand it at the hipline

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

**goody** . . . *n* . . . *archaic*

**lon-gi-tude** . . . *n* . . . **2 archaic**

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

**pung** . . . *n* . . . *NewEng*

**ban-quette** . . . *n* . . . **1 . . . b Southern**

**pas-tor** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly Southwest*

**do-gie** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly West*

**gal-lery** . . . *n* . . . **2 . . . b Southern & Midland**

**pot-latch** . . . *n* . . . **2 Northwest**

**smear-case** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly Midland*

**crul-ler** . . . *n* . . . **2 Northern & Midland**

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

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

**cut-ty sark** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly Scot*

**lar-ri-kin** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly Austral*

**in-da-ba** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly SoAfr*

**spal-peen** . . . *n* . . . *chiefly Irish*

**bon-net** . . . *n* . . . **2 a Brit**

**book off vi** . . . *chiefly Canad*

**din-kum** . . . *adj* . . . *Austral & NewZeal*

**gar-ron** . . . *n* . . . *Scot & Irish*

The label *Brit* indicates that a word or sense is current in the United Kingdom or in more than one nation of the Commonwealth (as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada).

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

**least-ways** . . . *adv* . . . *dial*

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

**bo-gle** . . . *n* . . . *dial Brit*

**hob** . . . *n* . . . **1 dial Eng**

The stylistic label *slang* is used with words or senses that are especially appropriate in contexts of extreme informality, that are usually not limited to a particular region or

area of interest, and that are composed typically of shortened or altered forms or extravagant or facetious figures of speech:

<sup>4</sup>**barb** *n* ... *slang* : BARBITURATE

<sup>2</sup>**skinny** *n* ... *slang* : inside information : DOPE

**bread-bas-ket** ... *n* ... <sup>1</sup> *slang* : STOMACH

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

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

**learn** ... *vb* ... <sup>2</sup> *a nonstand*

**ir-re-gard-less** ... *adv* ... *nonstand*

The stylistic labels *disparaging*, *offensive*, *obscene*, and *vulgar* are used for those words or senses that in common use are intended to hurt or shock or that are likely to give offense even when they are used without such an intent:

**grin-go** ... *n* ... *often disparaging*

**piss away** *vt* ... *sometimes vulgar*

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

<sup>2</sup>**break** *n* ... <sup>5</sup> ... <sup>d</sup> *mining*

**an-ti-mag-net-ic** ... *adj* ... *of a watch*

<sup>1</sup>**hu-mor** ... *n* ... <sup>2</sup> *a in medieval physiology*

In general, however, subject orientation lies in the definition:

**Di-do** ... *n* ... : a legendary queen of Carthage in Virgil's *Aeneid* who kills herself when Aeneas leaves her

**je-té** ... *n* ... : a springing jump in ballet made from one foot to the other in any direction

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF USAGE

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

<sup>1</sup>**key** ... *n* ... <sup>3</sup> *a* ... (the ~ to a riddle)

**com-mit** ... *vt* ... <sup>1</sup> ... *c* ... (~ it to memory)

<sup>2</sup>**plummet** *vi* ... <sup>2</sup> ... (prices ~ed)

**weak** ... *adj* ... <sup>4</sup> ... *b* ... (2) ... (history was my ~est subject)

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

<sup>1</sup>**true** ... *adj* ... <sup>8</sup> ... (in the *truest* sense)

**turn off** *vt* ... <sup>4</sup> ... (turn the water off)

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

**con-flict-ed** ... *adj* ... (this unhappy and ~ modern woman —John Updike)

Omissions in quotations are indicated by ellipses:

**alien-ation** ... *n* ... <sup>1</sup> ... (~ ... from the values of one's society and family —S. L. Halleck)

## USAGE NOTES

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

<sup>1</sup>**inch** ... *n* ... <sup>5</sup> : ... — usu. used in the phrase *give an inch*

<sup>2</sup>**drum** ... *vt* ... <sup>2</sup> : ... — usu. used with *out*

<sup>1</sup>**so** ... *adv* ... <sup>1</sup> *a* : ... — often used as a substitute for a preceding clause

<sup>1</sup>**sfor-zan-do** ... *adj* or *adv* : ... — used as a direction in music

**hajji** ... *n* : ... — often used as a title

Two or more usage notes are separated by a semicolon:

<sup>2</sup>**thine** *pron* : ... that which belongs to thee — used without a following noun as a pronoun equivalent in meaning to the adjective *thy*; used esp. in ecclesiastical or literary language and still surviving in the speech of Friends esp. among themselves

Sometimes a usage note calls attention to one or more terms with the same denotation as the main entry:

**water moccasin** *n* ... <sup>1</sup> : a venomous semiaquatic pit viper (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*) chiefly of the southeastern U.S. that is closely related to the copperhead — called also *cottonmouth*, *cottonmouth moccasin*

The called-also terms are shown in italic type. If such a term falls alphabetically more than a column away from the main entry, it is entered at its own place with the sole definition being a synonymous cross-reference to the entry where it appears in the usage note:

**cot-ton-mouth** ... *n* : WATER MOCCASIN

**cottonmouth moccasin** *n* : WATER MOCCASIN

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

<sup>1</sup>**of** ... *prep* ... <sup>1</sup> — used as a function word to indicate a point of reckoning

<sup>1</sup>**oyez** ... *vb* *imper* ... — used by a court or public crier to gain attention before a proclamation

<sup>1</sup>**or** ... *conj* ... <sup>1</sup> — used as a function word to indicate an alternative

**gosh** ... *interj* ... — used as a mild oath to express surprise

**sir** ... *n* ... <sup>2</sup> *a* — used as a usu. respectful form of address

## USAGE PARAGRAPHS

Brief usage paragraphs have been placed at a number of entries for terms that are considered to present problems of confused or disputed usage. A usage paragraph typically summarizes the historical background of the item and its associated body of opinion, compares these with available evidence of current usage, and often adds a few words of suitable advice for the dictionary user.

Each paragraph is signaled by an indented boldface italic *usage*. Where appropriate, discussion is keyed by sense number to the definition of the meaning in question. Most paragraphs incorporate appropriate verbal illustrations and illustrative quotations to clarify and exemplify the points being made:

**ag-gra-vate** ... *vt* ... <sup>1</sup> *obs a* : to make heavy : BURDEN **b** : INCREASE <sup>2</sup> : to make worse, more serious, or more severe : intensify unpleasantly (problems have been *aggravated* by neglect) <sup>3</sup> *a* : to rouse to displeasure or anger by usu. persistent and often petty goading **b** : to produce inflammation in *usage* Although *aggravate* has been in sense 3a since the 17th century, it has been the object of disapproval only since about 1870. It is used in expository prose (when his silly conceit ... about his not-very-good early work has begun to *aggravate* us —William Styron)