

New Webster's Dictionary

of the English Language

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New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language



LAW
FOR THE
LAYMAN
A Concise Encyclopedia

Edited by
Hugo Sonnenschein
LL.B., LL.M., J.D.

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New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language

This single volume is a library of information!

The 1,158-page dictionary has more than 158,000 entries. It is uncomplicated but scholarly, versatile and comprehensive. Such great talents as Mario Pei, Mark Van Doren, Roy H Copperud, Paul Hume, Arna W. Bontemps, Maximilian Ellenbogen, and Blyden Jackson have collaborated with a staff of nearly 100 editors and twenty other consultants in an effort to make this dictionary a benchmark in creative reference volumes.

Charles Collingwood of CBS News has praised the dictionary in these words: "I very much applaud the clarity of the presentation and the simplicity and commonsense of the definitions...I think this work will fill an extremely valuable place between the rough and ready workbooks and the weighty volumes for more specialized purposes..."

In addition to this fine basic dictionary, 11 other dictionaries are included in this library of knowledge, ranging from new words that have entered the language, through foreign words and phrases, abbreviations, quotations, mythology, legal terms, environment, science, space English to Spanish.

(Continued on back flap)

New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language

(Continued from front flap)

The 18 encyclopedic supplements and 32 tables put a world of information at your fingertips. You'll find hints on composing effective letters, on correct filing, converting to metric measurement, even counting calories. Using the supplements you can calculate how much insurance your family needs and even repair a squeaky door. Tips on first aid, high blood pressure, credit, entertaining, and fitness are also included.

All of this, and much, much more comes in a quality binding you will be proud to have in your home or office.

PRINTED IN USA

PRONUNCIATION
SYMBOLS
USED
IN THIS
DICTIONARY

' primary accent " secondary accent

For definition of *schwa*, see opposite page.

a	fat, band
ā	fate, tame
â	fare, pair
ä	far, father
ą	fall, ought, orb
a	schwa sound, as in ago
b	bat, abide, bib
c	catch, because, idealistic
ch	chain
d	date, ladder, road
e	met, threat
ē	me, feat
è	her, fir, urn
e	schwa sound, as in happen
ēr	mere, rear
f	fine, muffin, leaf
g	gold, ingrate, log
h	hang, behold
hw	whig
i	pin, hymn
ī	pine, by
i	schwa sound, as in fossil
j	job, rigid, edge
k	king, lake, clock
l	like, whole, mail
m	make, pamper, palm
n	name, pencil, pan
ng	sing
o	not, squat, yacht
ō	note, boat
ö	move, groove
o	schwa sound, as in gallop
oi	oil
ou	pound, now
p	pea, paper, lamp
r	rust, narrow, latter

Continued on opposite page

Guide word, in a left-hand column, a guide to the first entry word on the page.

Entry word

Variant spelling of entry word

Syllabication, indicated by raised center dot

Pronunciation

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Part of speech

Etymology

Inflected form, comparative and superlative

Inflected form, irregular plurals

Inflected form, irregular of verb

Separation of definitions, by period or semicolon

Pronunciation key, a capsule guide

sabra

sa·bra, sā'bra, sā'brā, *n.* A native of Israel.

sac·cate, sak'it, sak'āt, *a. Biol.* furnished with or having the form of a sac or pouch.

sake, sāk, *n.* [O.E. *sacu*, contention, case or suit at law; Icel. *sök*, L.G. *sake*, G. *sache*, suit, affair, thing; akin to O.E. *sacan*, Icel. *saka*, to contend, accuse, etc.] Purpose; benefit; interest; account, used with *for*; as, *for his sake*, *for the sake of the community*.

sa·ke, sa·ki, sā'kē, *n.* An alcoholic beverage made in Japan from fermented rice, usu. served hot.

salt·pe·ter, Brit. **salt·pe·tre**, salt'pē'ter, *n.* [For M.E. *salpetre*, < O.Fr. *salpetre*, Fr. *salpêtre* < M.L. *salpetra*, for *sal petrae*, 'salt of rock' (because found as an incrustation on rocks).] Potassium nitrate, KNO₃. Sodium nitrate, NaNO₃, a crystalline compound used as a fertilizer; also *Chile saltpeter*.

sa·lu·ta·to·ri·an, sa·lō'ta·tōr'ē·an, sa·lō'ta·tār'ē·an, *n.* In some colleges and high schools in the U.S., the second highest-ranking student in the graduating class who delivers the salutatory oration at commencement.

sa·lu·ta·to·ry, sa·lō'ta·tōr'ē, sa·lō'ta·tār'ē, *a.* [*L. saluatorius*.] Pertaining to or of the nature of a salutation; as, a *salutatory oration*.—*n.* pl. **sa·lu·ta·to·ries**. An address of welcome usu. delivered at the beginning of commencement ceremonies.

salv·a·ble, sal'va·bl, *a.* That which may be salvaged or salvaged; savable.—**sal·va·bil·i·ty**, *n.*—**sal·va·bly**, *adv.*

sans·cu·lotte, sanz'kü·lot', Fr. sän·ky·lät', *n.* pl. **sans·cu·lottes**, Fr. sän·ky·lät'. [Fr., without breeches.] A revolutionary, orig. a derisive term used by aristocrats at the time of the French Revolution of 1789; later, a popular designation for a revolutionary; any radical or revolutionary.—**sans·cu·lot·tic**, sanz'kü·lot'ik, *a.*—**sans·cu·lot·tish**, *a.*—**sans·cu·lot·tism**, *n.*—**sans·cu·lot·tist**, *n.*

San·ta Ger·tru·dis, san'ta ger·trō'dis, *n.* A type of beef cattle in the western U.S., which is a Brahman-Shorthorn crossbreed, valued for its resistance to hot climates.

sa·pi·ent, sā'pē·ent, *a.* [*L. sapiens, sapientis*, wise, discreet, pp. of *sapio*, to taste, to know, to be wise; *sapid*, *insipid*, *savor*, *sage*, are of similar origin.] Wise; sage; knowing; discerning, often used ironically. Pertaining to affected wisdom.—**sa·pi·ent·ly**, *adv.*

sap·py, sap'ē, *a.*—**sappier**, **sappiest**. Abounding with sap; juicy; succulent; energetic; young. *Slang*, stupid; sentimental.

sar·coph·a·gus, sār·kof'a·gus, *n.* pl. **sar·coph·a·gi**, **sar·coph·a·gus·es**, sār·kof'a·ji'. [*Gr. sarkophagos*; it was orig. the name of a type of stone used for making coffins, and believed to have the property of consuming the dead bodies.] A stone tomb or coffin usu. ornamented and open to view, as a monument.

sate, sāt, *v.t.*—**sated**, **sating**. [Perh. < O.E. *saed*, *satisfied*, *satiated*, the form having been influenced by *satisfy*, *satiare*.] To satisfy completely, as the appetite or desire; to glut or satiate.

sat·is·fac·tion, sat'is·fak'shan, *n.* [O.Fr. Fr. *satisfaction*, < L. *satisfactio(n-)*.] The act of satisfying, or the state of being satisfied; fulfillment of desires, demands, or needs. Gratification or pleasure occasioned by some fact or circumstance; the cause of such gratification; payment, as for debt; discharge, as of obligations; reparation, as of a wrong or injury; the opportunity of repairing a supposed wrong, as by a duel; release from doubt or conviction; *eccles.* the performance by a penitent of the penal acts enjoined by ecclesiastical authority.—**sat·is·fac·tion·al**, *a.*

a- fat, fāte, fār, fāre, fāl; **e-** met, mē,

serviette

sav·ior, *Brit. sav·iour*, sāv'yēr, *n.* [O.Fr. *sauveour* (Fr. *sauveur*), < L.L. *salvator*, < *salvare*, E. *save*.] One who saves, rescues, or delivers; (*cap.*) a title of God and esp. of Christ, often preceded by 'the.'

sa·vor·y, *Brit. sa·vour·y*, sāv'vō-rē, *a.* — *savorier*, *savoriest*. Having a pleasant flavor and smell, pleasantly piquant to the taste; respectable. — *n. pl. sa·vor·ies*. *Brit.* a spicy dish eaten either before a meal to stimulate the appetite or afterward as a dessert. — *sa·vor·i·ly*, *adv.* — *sa·vor·i·ness*, *n.*

sa·vor·y, sāv'vō-rē, *n.* [M.E. *saveray*, ult. < L. *satureia*, savory.] *Bot.* any of the aromatic, menthaceous plants of the genus *Satureia*, esp. *S. hortensis*, an herb native in southern Europe and much cultivated as a seasoning. Also *sum·mer sa·vor·y*.

saw, sɑ, *n.* [O.E. *saga*, *sage*, a saw = Dan. *sav*, Icel. *sög*, D. *zaag*, O. *sage*; same root as L. *seco*, to cut.] A hand tool or powered cutting instrument consisting of a blade, band, or disk of thin metal with a dentated or toothed edge. — *v.t.* — *past sawed*, *pp. sawed* or *sawn*, *ppr. sawing*. To cut with a saw; to form by cutting with a saw; to move through, slash, or slice as if operating a saw; as, to *saw* the air. — *v.i.* To use a saw; to cut with a saw; to be cut with a saw, as wood. — *saw·er*, *n.* — *saw·like*, *a.*

scab, skab, *n.* [O.E. *scaeb*, < L. *scabies*, *scab*, *itch*, < *scabo*, to scratch. Hence *shabby*.] A sort of crust formed over a sore in healing; *veter. pathol.* scabies or mange in animals, esp. in sheep. A fungous or bacterial plant disease causing crustlike spots in the affected areas. *Slang.* a non-union workman, esp. one who works in the place of a striker; a union worker who does not participate in a strike; a scoundrel or villainous fellow. *Metal.* a roughness or scale on the surface of a piece of iron or steel. — *v.i.* — *scabbed*, *scabbing*. To form or to have scabs; to work as a scab.

scal·ly·wag, skal'ē-wag", *n.* Scalawag.

scal·y ant·eat·er, *n.* Pangolin.

sce·nog·ra·phy, sē-nog'ra-fē, *n.* Representation or drawing according to the rules of perspective; this art applied to stage scene painting. — **sce·no·graph·ic**, sē'no-graf'ik, sen'o-graf'ik, *a.* — **sce·no·graph·i·cal·ly**, *adv.*

Schmidt sys·tem, shmit' sis'tem, *n.* An optical system used for reflecting telescopes and cameras which utilizes a spherical mirror objective and a transparent corrector plate near the focus to reduce spherical aberration.

schwa, shwä, G. shvä, *n.* [G. < Heb.] *Phon.* the indeterminate vowel sound of most syllables that are not stressed in English, as the *a* in *scholar*, the *u* in *tetanus*, the *i* and *e* in *prominent*, and the *o* in *piston*; the phonic symbol denoting that sound (ə).

sea, sē, *n.* [O.E. *sæ*, sea or lake = D. *see*, *zee*, Dan. *sø*, Icel. *saer*, G. *see*, Goth. *saiws*.] The continuous mass of salt water which covers the greater portion of the earth; the ocean; a segment of this that is enclosed to some degree by land; as, the North Sea; a name given to some large landlocked lakes; as, the Caspian Sea; a large wave or surge, as: A sea put the deck awash. Large swells or series of waves, as: A heavy sea was running that night. Any large quantity; as, a sea of difficulties; a flood; the vocation of a sailor, as: The sea is a hard life. — *a.* — *at sea*, aboard ship on the ocean; bewildered or perplexed; as, to be all *at sea* about the matter. — *fol·low the sea*, to make a career of seafaring. — *go to sea*, to voyage on the sea, esp. as an occupation. — *put to sea*, to set out, as a ship, onto the ocean. — **sea·most**, *a.* Located closest to the sea.

ser·vi·ette, sēr'vē-et', *n.* [Fr.] *Brit.*, *Canadian*, a table napkin.

u·tub, cūbe, bull; **oi**-oil; **ou**-pound.

Guide word, in the right-hand column, a guide to the last entry word on the page

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PRONUNCIATION SYMBOLS USED IN THIS DICTIONARY

(Continued)

s	seat, last, mass
sh	shark, rush
t	tea, mate, pat
th	thin
TH	then
u	tub, rough
ū	tube, cube
u̇	bull, took
u	schwa sound, as in circus
v	victor, river, believe
w	wig
y	youth
z	zeal
zh	azure

FOREIGN

ä	Fr. ami
ch	G. ach
h	Sp. jacal — ha·käl'
N	Fr. bon
OE	Fr. feu, G. schön
R	Fr. rouge, G. rot, It. mare, Sp. pero
V	Sp. Habana — ä·vä'nä
Y	Fr. tu, G. über

SUFFIX SOUNDS

	ancy	ancē
	ble	bl
ceous, cious	shus	
	ent	ent
esque	esk	
	ous	us
sion, tion	shan	
	tor	tār, tur, tor, ter
ture	chēr, chur	

PRONUNCIATION
SYMBOLS
USED
IN THIS
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'primary accent " secondary accent

For definition of *schwa*, see opposite page.

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a	schwa sound, as in ago
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ch	chain
d	date, ladder, road
e	met, threat
ē	me, feat
è	her, fir, urn
e	schwa sound, as in happen
ēr	mere, rear
f	fine, muffin, leaf
g	gold, ingrate, log
h	hang, behold
hw	whig
i	pin, hymn
ī	pine, by
i	schwa sound, as in fossil
j	job, rigid, edge
k	king, lake, clock
l	like, whole, mail
m	make, pamper, palm
n	name, pencil, pan
ng	sing
o	not, squat, yacht
ō	note, boat
ö	move, groove
o	schwa sound, as in gallop
oi	oil
ou	pound, now
p	pea, paper, lamp
r	rust, narrow, latter

Continued on opposite page

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sa·ke, sa·ki, sā'kē, *n.* An alcoholic beverage made in Japan from fermented rice, usu. served hot.

salt·pe·ter, Brit. **salt·pe·tre**, salt'pē'ter, *n.* [For M.E. *salpêtre*, < O.Fr. *salpêtre*, Fr. *salpêtre* < M.L. *salpetra*, for *sal petra*, 'salt of rock' (because found as an incrustation on rocks).] Potassium nitrate, KNO₃. Sodium nitrate, NaNO₃, a crystalline compound used as a fertilizer; also *Chile saltpeter*.

sa·lu·ta·to·ri·an, sa·lō'ta·tōr'ē·an, sa·lō'ta·tār'ē·an, *n.* In some colleges and high schools in the U.S., the second highest-ranking student in the graduating class who delivers the salutatory oration at commencement.

sa·lu·ta·to·ry, sa·lō'ta·tōr'ē, sa·lō'ta·tār'ē, *a.* [L. *salutatorius*.] Pertaining to or of the nature of a salutation; as, a *salutatory oration*.—*n.* pl. **sa·lu·ta·to·ries**. An address of welcome usu. delivered at the beginning of commencement ceremonies.

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San·ta Ger·tru·dis, san'ta ger·trō'dis, *n.* A type of beef cattle in the western U.S., which is a Brahman-Shorthorn crossbreed, valued for its resistance to hot climates.

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sate, sāt, *v.t.*—**sated**, **sating**. [Perh. < O.E. *saed*, *satisfied*, *satiated*, the form having been influenced by *satisfy*, *satiate*.] To satisfy completely, as the appetite or desire; to glut or satiate.

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a- fat, fate, fär, färe, fall; e- met, mē,

serviette

Guide word, in the right-hand column, a guide to the last entry word on the page

sav·ior, *Brit. sav·iour*, sāv'yēr, *n.* [O.Fr. *sauteur* (Fr. *sauteur*), < L.L. *salvator*, < *salvare*, E. *save*.] One who saves, rescues, or delivers; (*cap.*) a title of God and esp. of Christ, often preceded by 'the.'

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scab, skab, *n.* [O.E. *scaeb*, < L. *scabies*, *scab*, *itch*, < *scabo*, to scratch. Hence *shabby*.] A sort of crust formed over a sore in healing; *veter. pathol.* scabies or mange in animals, esp. in sheep. A fungous or bacterial plant disease causing crustlike spots in the affected areas. *Slang*, a non-union workman, esp. one who works in the place of a striker; a union worker who does not participate in a strike; a scoundrel or villainous fellow. *Metal.* a roughness or scale on the surface of a piece of iron or steel.—*v.i.*—*scabbed*, *scabbing*. To form or to have scabs; to work as a scab.

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scal·y ant·eat·er, *n.* Pangolin.

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Schmidt sys·tem, shmit' sis'tem, *n.* An optical system used for reflecting telescopes and cameras which utilizes a spherical mirror objective and a transparent corrector plate near the focus to reduce spherical aberration.

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ser·vi·ette, sēr'vet'et', *n.* [Fr.] *Brit.*, *Canadian*, a table napkin.

u- tub, cūbe, bull; **oi-** oil; **ou-** pound.

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PRONUNCIATION SYMBOLS USED IN THIS DICTIONARY

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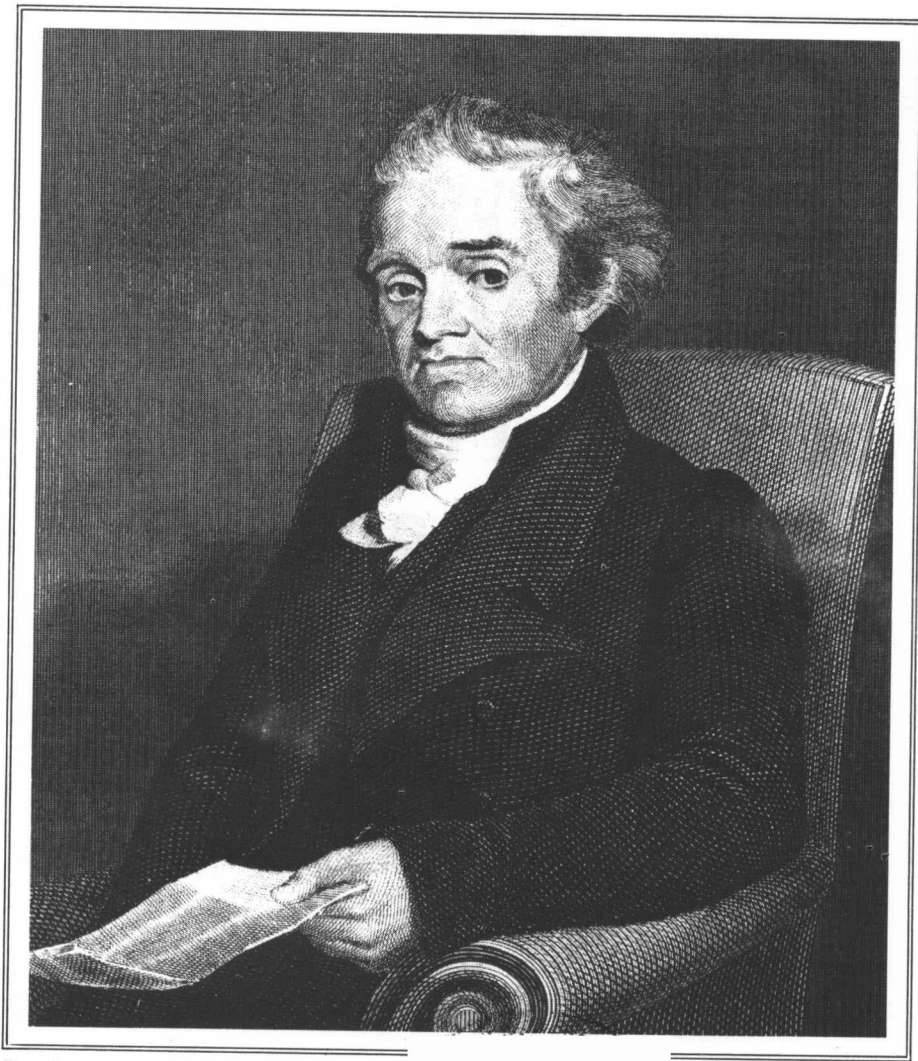
S	seat, last, mass
sh	shark, rush
t	tea, mate, pat
th	thin
TH	then
u	tub, rough
ū	tube, cube
u̇	bull, took
u	schwa sound, as in circus
v	victor, river, believe
w	wig
y	youth
z	zeal
zh	azure

FOREIGN

ä	Fr. ami
ch	G. ach
h	Sp. jacal — ha·käl'
N	Fr. bon
OE	Fr. feu, G. schön
R	Fr. rouge, G. rot, It. mare, Sp. pero
V	Sp. Habana — ä·vä'nä
Y	Fr. tu, G. über

SUFFIX SOUNDS

ancy	ancē
ble	bl
ceous, cious	shus
ent	ent
esque	esk
ous	us
sion, tion	shan
tor	tar, tur, tor, ter
ture	chēr, chur



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NOAH WEBSTER

Preface

When plans were formulated for the creation of this new dictionary, the publishers decided that its emphasis, unlike that of many other dictionaries of the English language, should be on the future. It was decided to look ahead, and thus we planned this dictionary for the twenty-first century, as well as for the present.

Our work, which is completely new in content, has been designed and styled in the most modern format possible. It is set in an attractive, easy-to-read type, and it is printed on glare-free, long-life paper.

It is the latest contribution in the great tradition of English-language lexicography, a tradition that includes the works of Nathan Bailey (1721, 1730), Samuel Johnson (1755), Noah Webster (1783, 1806, and 1828), Joseph Emerson Worcester (1830), and Charles Richardson (1836-37). Our dictionary carries on it the name *Webster* in recognition of and respect for the American lexicographer, Noah Webster, whose work in the standardization of American usage and pronunciation set the guides for those of us who follow.

Based on the principle that language is essentially speech (a *living, vibrant, constantly changing medium of expression*), and that, as the language changes, so must its guidelines, our dictionary strives to bring to its users the English language in its most modern, and most accurate, form. It makes readily available to the home, to the student at school, and to the office—for reference, for formal learning, and for self-instruction—all but the most technical and the most esoteric words from our ever-expanding storehouse of knowledge, and it has been written in a style that is easily read and understood by people at all levels of intellectual development. The definitions are clear and comprehensive; the scientific and technical vocabulary is extensive, accurate, and the most modern possible; and the selection has been guided by usefulness to the reader. Within these covers are collected all of the words in common use which are essential for the vocabulary of an educated man.

But, because our dictionary is a general dictionary, intended for the general reader and not for such technicians of the English language as philologists, semanticists, and etymologists, it is not “unabridged.” (An “unabridged” dictionary would contain within it all of the vocabulary thus far recorded in the long history of the English language.) Such an “unabridged” dictionary, prepared on the scale of our own general dictionary, would be unwieldy—it would not best serve the needs of the home, of the student, and of the office. Hence the one hundred thirty-five thousand entries here have been selected primarily because of their usefulness to the average dictionary user.

Our permanent editorial staff has labored for more than three years to prepare this essential tool of modern and effective communication, though the basic research for the project had been under way many years earlier. The work has been reviewed and tested by a distinguished panel of experts from a wide variety of disciplines. The panel includes not only scholars, but editors, authors, newspaper columnists, radio and television commentators, and reference librarians; it includes men and women from many walks of life who employ the English language daily in performance of their varied professional duties. These are the people who best understand and appreciate the richness and the variety of English. These are the members of our panel, and they, like us, believe we have done our job well.

In itself, this dictionary is a guide to spelling, to pronunciation, to grammar; in its etymological information it reveals to us past use and derivation, and its definitions of today’s use suggest the future uses of words.

The aids to the dictionary should be used by the reader to make each excursion into this work as fruitful as possible. We urge our readers to study with especial care the *Guide to the Use of This Dictionary* which follows, as well as the *Pronunciation Guide*. Our editorial staff always welcomes any comment you may have on their work.

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A Historical Sketch of the English Language

By Mario Pei

Of some three thousand existing languages, large and small, English is second only to Chinese in number of speakers. It has well over 300 million native speakers, plus probably as many more who handle it in pidgin fashion or as an acquired tongue. It enjoys the widest distribution of any language on earth, appearing in numerous countries on every continent as an official tongue, and unofficially in many more. Over half of the world's scientific publications, books, newspapers, and magazines are entirely or partly in English. In international congresses and gatherings, English is used more often than any other tongue. More than half of the world's radio and television programs are in English, and it is the language most commonly used in the world's airways and seaways.

Yet around the year A.D. 1100, when the first unofficial census of English speakers (William the Conqueror's *Domesday Book*) appeared, the rough estimate was that they numbered about 1.5 million. About 1500, English seems to have had some 5 million speakers, as against, roughly, 10 million for German, 12 million for French, 8 or 9 million for Spanish and Italian. By 1700, the number of English speakers had grown to 8 million (with 2 million already on American soil). By 1900, English had taken a substantial lead over other European languages, with some 123 million (of whom only about 33 million were now on English soil), as against 80 million for German, 52 million for French, 58 million for Spanish, 54 million for Italian, 85 million for Russian. Today, the more than 300 million speakers of English (200 million of them in the United States) hold a commanding lead over the 100 million speakers of German, the 75 million of French, the 160 million of Spanish, the 60 million of Italian, the 200 million of Russian. Only Chinese, with its tremendous mass of over 700 million speakers, outstrips English.

Two factors were at work in this historical process. One was the natural population growth common to all countries, though in different degrees. The other was overseas expansion to such areas as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, with the concomitant absorption of millions of speakers of other languages who migrated to those areas, and whose descendants grew up in an English-speaking atmosphere. The same factor, though to a lesser degree, was operative in the case of other great colonial languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Russian. The English language may therefore be said to have been the greatest beneficiary of British colonialism and American expansionism.

The English language had its official beginning as Anglo-Saxon, the tongue of the invaders from the European mainland North Sea coast who in the fifth century, under the mythical leadership of Hengist and Horsa, began to push back the Celtic-speaking, Romanized Britons into the mountain fastnesses of Wales and Cornwall. Racially and linguistically, the newcomers were a conglomerate of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, speaking Germanic dialects akin to Dutch, Frisian, and Low German. For what concerns language, they formed part

of a larger, West Germanic branch of the Germanic or Teutonic subgroup of Indo-European, the vast family of related languages whose other branches are Celtic, Latin-Romance, Balto-Slavic, Greek, Albanian, Armenian, and the Indo-Iranian tongues of northern India, Pakistan, and Iran. The Teutonic subgroup comprised an East Germanic branch, now extinct, whose major representative was Gothic; a North Germanic or Scandinavian branch, which survives today in Icelandic, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish; and a West Germanic branch, whose ancient members included Old High German, Old Saxon, Old Frisian, and Anglo-Saxon, and whose modern members are German, both High and Low, Dutch-Flemish, Afrikaans, Frisian, and English.

The mixture of Low German dialects spoken by the Anglo-Saxons differed from modern English to such a degree that it cannot be read or understood by present-day English speakers without a special course of study. Like all the older members of the Indo-European family, it had a rich system of cases for nouns and adjectives, special endings for separate verb forms, a sound structure which has undergone radical transformations, and a vocabulary which is scanty by modern standards, but adequate for the needs of the Anglo-Saxon civilization at that period.

While it is true that less than a fourth of the present-day English vocabulary consists of words and roots of Anglo-Saxon origin, these nevertheless constitute that segment of today's spoken language which is basic and which has the greatest frequency of occurrence—words that appear over and over again in the flow of spoken and even written language: common connectives and adverbs such as *and, if, but, who, that, which, when, where, here, there*; articles and prepositions such as *the, a, to, for, in, by, of, with, from*; adjectives such as *hot, cold, great, small, good, bad*; nouns such as *bread, water, sea, land, world, heaven, hell*; verbs such as *be, have, ask, answer, go, come*; pronouns such as *I, me, you, he, she, it*. In a running conversational text, it is not rare to find that as many as 90 percent of the words are of Anglo-Saxon origin.

The tongue of the Anglo-Saxons, unstandardized at first, had achieved a measure of unification by the time of King Alfred in the latter part of the ninth century. It had already begun to receive contributions from other than West Germanic sources. The antipathy between Britons and Saxons was such that very few Celtic words came into the Saxon language at this period (*crag, dun, combe*, among them; most borrowings from Celtic took place at a later period: *glen, heather, clan, bard, plaid, slogan* from Scots Gaelic; *colleen, whiskey, blarney* from Irish; *eisteddfod, flannel* from Welsh). But the missionaries who converted the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity also brought to them a fairly large number of Latin and Greek words, many of religious connotation, which were added to those which the Anglo-Saxons had picked up from their contacts with the Romans while they were still on the European mainland. In this fashion, the Old English of King Alfred's period already possessed such words as *kitchen* (Latin *coquina*),

kiln (Latin *culina*), *street* (Latin *strata*); *cheese* (Latin *caseus*), *shrive* (Latin *scribere*), *mint* (Latin *moneta*), *minster* (Latin *monasterium*), *kirk* or *church* (Greek *kyriake*). It even had such words as *persoc* (Latin *persica*), later displaced by the same Latin word in Norman-French development (*peach*).

The first major crisis in the history of the English language came with the Danish invasions at about A.D. 870. The Danes were members of the same Teutonic stock as the Anglo-Saxons, but of the Northern or Scandinavian branch. Their language, while close, was different. When King Alfred, tired of fighting and raids, offered them appeasement by granting them permission to settle in the northeastern areas of England, they accepted, and intermingled with the local Anglo-Saxons. The languages also intermingled, with the result that several West Germanic Anglo-Saxon words were replaced by North Germanic Scandinavian equivalents. Among the latter are the all-important pronouns *they*, *them*, replacing Anglo-Saxon *hie*, *hem* (the latter is said to survive in colloquial "I met 'em yesterday"); verbs such as *take*, *cut*, *get* (Anglo-Saxon used *niman*, *snidan*, *weorthan*—if these had come down into the modern language, they would probably have as their present-day forms *nim*, *snide*, *werth*—compare German *nehmen*, *schneiden*, *werden*, which were not subjected to Scandinavian influence); nouns such as *knife*, *leg*, *steak*, *sister*; and adjectives such as *ill*, *ugly*, *happy*, *low*. The verb form *are* is Scandinavian (compare Anglo-Saxon *sint*, *sindon*, German *sind*, but Swedish *är*). In many cases, both the Anglo-Saxon and the Danish word have come down to modern times (*no*—*nay*; *from*—*fro*; *shirt*—*skirt*; *ditch*—*dike*; *welkin*—*sky*). Many English place-name suffixes, such as *-by*, *-thorpe*, and *-dale*, are of Scandinavian origin. The Scandinavian contribution to the formation of English is large and important, but also generally unrecognized by the nonspecialist, because it has so thoroughly merged with kindred Anglo-Saxon.

The next, and last, invasion from abroad came with the Norman Conquest of 1066. Racially, the Normans were of the same breed as the Danes who had settled in northeastern England centuries before. Under very similar circumstances, these Northmen had settled at the somewhat unwilling invitation of the French kings in a province of northwestern France that was given their name, Normandy—"land of the Normans or Northmen." Just as the Danes had become thoroughly assimilated to the Anglo-Saxons, the Normans had taken over French customs and the French language. When their leader, William of Normandy, wrested control of England from Harold, last of the Saxon kings, the language his followers spoke was the Norman dialect of French.

Merging of the Old English of the Anglo-Saxons and the French of the Normans was by no means the easy process that had attended the merger of Anglo-Saxon and Danish. French, too, belonged to the great Indo-European family of languages, but it was of the Latin-Romance, not the Germanic group. For centuries the two languages remained apart: English was spoken by the Anglo-Saxon lower classes, and French by the Norman overlords and their retainers, the clergy, the scholars, and the royal court. At first the conquerors disdained the tongue of their subjects, and English, which had attained literary pretensions during the late Anglo-Saxon period, sank to an unbelievably low estate. Practically all writing was done in Latin or French. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there developed on English soil a flourishing literature in French, with such masterpieces as the *Lays of Marie de France* and, probably, the *Chanson de Roland*. But in the same period all that English can boast of is a few works of a religious nature, such as the continuation of the Peterborough Chronicle, the *Ormolum*, and the *Ancren Riwele* (Layamon's *Brut* is only an Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of an earlier French work by Wace).

Yet during this dark period when the English language seemed prostrate, it was not only changing and developing in the mouths of the people, but making inroads into the speech habits of the upper classes. In the course of nearly three centuries and many bitter wars fought against the French on the mainland, the upper classes were becoming convinced that their future lay in their new English possessions, not on the continent. By the middle of the thirteenth century they, too, were speaking English habitually. By the beginning of the fourteenth, the new state of linguistic affairs was fully recognized, and long before the end of that century it had become official.

But in the meantime several things had been happening to the English language. Bereft of official support and a true written standard, it had been transforming itself from Anglo-Saxon to Middle English, with the loss of many of the old flexional endings and widespread mergers among the rest (*blinda* and *blindan*, for example, merged into *blinde*, which forecasts the modern endless *blind*). Many changes were taking place in the sound pattern, though the most far-reaching of these, the Great Vowel Shift, was to come later. Most important, perhaps, was the tremendous infiltration of French words into the vocabulary, laying the foundation for the word stock of modern English, which is more than half Latin-Romance. A vast flood of words of extremely frequent occurrence, usually monosyllabic in form, and which most people take for granted as being "English" from the beginning of time, were assimilated from the French of the Normans. Consider a list that includes *please*, *wait*, *pay*, *large*, *air*, *noise*, *play*, *piece*, *nice*, *poor*, *real*, *cry*, *catch*, *chase*, *grief*, *pray*. Add a few two-syllable words such as *army*, *money*, *very*, where French *armée*, *monnaie*, *verai*, or *vrai* have replaced the original Anglo-Saxon *here*, that still appears in German *Heer*, the *gild* that corresponds to German *Geld*, the *sore* of "I am sore wroth" that coincides with German *sehr*. Think of the *beef*, *veal*, *pork* (French *boeuf*, *veau*, *porc*) whose Anglo-Saxon counterparts, now differentiated as to meaning, are *ox*, *calf*, *swine*. As in the case of Danish, the intrusion into the language of a French word did not invariably displace the old Saxon form; both lived on happily together, giving rise to a rich series of synonyms (*heal*—*cure*; *lord*—*sire*; *glass*—*mirror*; *bowman*—*archer*; *wedlock*—*marriage*; *spear*—*lance*; *sorrow*—*grief*; *might*—*power*; *doom*—*judgment*; *beseech* or *bid*—*pray*; in each couple the first word is Saxon, the second French). But in the case of *medicine*, *geometry*, *lieutenant*, *uncle*, the French word effectively displaced the Saxon-derived *leechcraft*, *earthcraft*, *steadholder*, *eme*.

As far back as 1340, when a Kentish writer titled his poem *The Ayenbite* (Again-bite) of *Inwyt* (In-wit) rather than *The Remorse of Conscience*, there have been attempts to "purify" the language of its foreign importations, and restrict it to its original Anglo-Saxon or, at the most, Germanic content. They have never been successful.

The complete and successful marriage of Germanic and Latin-Romance is shown by the late fourteenth-century output of Chaucer, who deftly blends both vocabulary elements into a literary tongue that is substantially modern English, and can be understood by the present-day reader with a minimum of study and explanations.

But the language was still to undergo many changes before achieving its modern state. Between the Chaucerian and the Elizabethan periods, English vowel sounds were radically transformed, though little of that phonetic transformation was reflected in the spelling. Old English vowels, both long and short, were for the most part "pure" vowel sounds, without the diphthongal glide that characterizes our so-called "long" vowels of today (in the alphabet pronunciation of today, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* are diphthongs, consisting of a basic sound preceded or

followed by an on- or off-glide, with the sole possible exception of *e*, which some American linguists insist is *iy*; the others are pronounced respectively as *ey*, *ay*, *ow*, *yu*). The transformation was achieved in several distinct stages over a period of centuries. Anglo-Saxon *stān*, for instance, moved on to *stōn*, with the *ō* pronounced as in German *Sohn*, then diphthongized into the two sounds that are heard in the modern General American and British standard pronunciation of *stone* (American *stoun*, British *stawn*). Anglo-Saxon *hūs*, first changing into *hows*, moves on to American *haws*, British *həws*. The final *-e* that had largely supplanted Anglo-Saxon endings tended to become more and more silent, even when retained in spelling. Fluctuations in plural forms were largely leveled out in favor of the now almost universal *-s* formation (but there are survivals of earlier plural-forming systems, such as *oxen*, *children*, *deer*, *feet*, *mice*; it is my own theory that this triumph of the *-s* plural, which is general in English, fairly widespread in Dutch, rare in German, practically nonexistent in Scandinavian, may in part have been due to French influence).

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries mark the beginning of a slowing down of phonetic and grammatical changes, but also the appearance of a mass of vocabulary accretions of a learned nature, which are overwhelmingly Latin and Greek. England could not escape (nor indeed did she make the slightest attempt to escape) the pervading influence of the European Renaissance and Humanism. This meant a new flowering of classical studies and widespread pilfering of classical lexicons to round out the great European languages. Often the pilfering took place on English soil, with the coining of "aureate" and "inkhorn" terms which as often as not dropped out of the language after a brief lifespan (*assation*, *ataraxy*, *clancular*, *dignotion*, *exolution* are cases in point). Just as often the long, classical-sounding words came into English from French and Italian—languages that were closer to the source. Most of these accretions are with us today, and form an important, not to say indispensable part of our literary, scientific, and even everyday vocabulary. Try getting along without such words, unchanged from the original Latin, at least in written appearance, as *alias*, *alibi*, *extra*, *deficit*, *bonus*, *exit*, *item*, *agenda*, *propaganda*; or such Greek scientific coinages as *protein*, *allergy*, *antibiotic*, *hormone*, *cosmetic*, *automatic*, *microphone*, *telegraph*, *stratosphere*.

Modern civilization is a matter of both adaptation and give-and-take. The latter process is common to all civilized languages. It is in vain that French purists like Etienne fulminate against the French tendency to borrow and adapt English words. The speakers of English have taken from French far more than they will ever be able to repay, for they are probably the greatest word borrowers in history. Once modern interchanges begin, there is no stopping them.

English borrowings from French include not only the thousands of words that came in with the Normans, and which had achieved full citizenship by the time of Chaucer (words such as *crown*, *state*, *court*, *tax*, *office*, *mayor*, *prince*, *count*, *peasant*, *treason*, *sermon*, *lesson*, *clerk*, *saint*, *faith*, *mercy*, *proof*, *fine*, *arrest*, *accuse*, *peace*, *battle*, *soldier*, *dress*, *robe*, *coat*, *fur*, *chair*, *closet*, *cellar*, *porch*, *amusement*, *art*, *beauty*, *color*, *pen*, *pain*, *joy*, *flower* and *flour*, *city*, *labor*, *river*, *cost*, *safe*, *seem*, *close*, *move*, *push*, *quit*, *easy*, *single*, *sudden*, *allow*, *carry*, *obey*, *remember*, *suppose*). They also include later acquisitions that may or may not retain some perceptible trace of their origin in their spelling or pronunciation (*sumptuous*, *brunette*, *ballet*, *champagne*, *dentist*, *patrol*, *syndicate*, *chauffeur*, *foyer*, *garage*). They even include ultramodern terms such as *discothèque* and *gogo* (French slang *à gogo* means "aplenty").

Next to French, the greatest foreign influence exerted upon English was from Italian. Here we have a wealth of musical and artistic terms (*opera*, *aria*, *piano*, *torso*, *vista*, *gala*, *cameo*, *cello*), some of which have strayed far beyond their original function

and meaning (*tempo*, *crescendo*, *staccato*, *stanza*, *inferno*, *studio*, *solo*). Many are disguised by reason of having used French as an intermediary, or because English speakers chose to adapt them to English sound schemes (*cash*, *deposit*, *costume*, *pilot*, *medal*, *lumber*, *escort*, *cartoon*, *laundry*, *manage*, *group*, *pants*, *concert*, *attack*, *vogue*, *compliment*, *burlesque*, *campaign*, even *flu* from *influenza*, *boloney* from Bologna, and *wig* from *periwig* from *perruque* from *parrucca*). While most of these acquisitions occurred in past centuries, some are fairly recent (*manifesto*, *zucchini*, *broccoli*, *spaghetti*, *ravioli*, *confetti*, *Punch* from *Punchinello* from *Pulcinella*, *pasta*, *marina*, *credenza*).

Spanish and Portuguese have contributed heavily to the Anglo-American vocabulary, especially in connection with contacts in the American Southwest. Here are words such as *cargo*, *mosquito*, *sherry* (from the city of Jerez in Spain), *pimento*, *tornado*, *rodeo*, *sombrero*, *stampede*, *bonanza*, *incommunicado*, *commando*, *cork*, *conga*. Many words from the Iberian Peninsula are disguised almost beyond recognition by adaptation to English sound patterns (*cockroach* from *cucaracha*, *hoosegow* from *juzgado*, *vamoose* from *vamos*, *alligator* from *el lagarto*, *lariat* from *la reata*, *pickaninny* from *pequemin*). More recent acquisitions include *aficionado* and *sangría*.

Dutch, closest of the other Germanic languages to English, has been a generous contributor, with such words as *boor*, *deck*, *drawl*, *boom*, *nap*, *gin*, *tub*, *scum*, *spool*, *stripe*, *freight*, *leak*, *pump*, *dock*, *snap*, *switch*, *toy*, *brandy*, *cookie*, *cole slaw*, *yacht*, to which may be added South African *trek* and *veld*. North Germanic Scandinavian, which helped out in the earliest formative period of English, continues with such offerings as *ffjord*, *floe*, *ski*, *slalom*, *geyser*. German, which had given us *swindler*, *halt*, *plunder*, *sauerkraut*, *stroll*, *kindergarten*, *poodle*, *yodel*, *poker*, along with loan translations such as *masterpiece*, *homesickness*, *sharpshooter*, *standpoint*, *chain-smoker*, *mailed fist*, *storm and stress*, *superman*, continues with words not yet naturalized, such as *Weltschmerz*, *Blitz*, *ersatz*, *Lebensraum*, *Luftwaffe*, *Panzer*, *Dirndl*.

The Slavic languages, notably Russian, contributed in the past words such as *czar*, *vodka*, *steppe*, *pogrom*, joined more recently by *bolshevik*, *kulak*, *sputnik*, and words that Russian had previously taken from the west, such as *commissar* and *intelligentsia*. From Serbo-Croatian comes *cravat*, from Czech *robot*, from Polish *polka* and *mazurka*.

Among Oriental contributors, first place goes to the two great Semitic languages, Arabic and Hebrew. The first offers such words as *alcohol*, *alkali*, *algebra*, *assassin*, *syrup*, *divan*, *sofa*, *mattress*, *magazine*, *safari*, along with many medieval Persian forms that came to the west by way of Arabic: *azure*, *candy*, *check*, *lemon*, *lilac*, *orange*, *spinach*, *scarlet*, *sugar*. Persian itself supplies *bazaar*, *caravan*, *crimson*, *jungle*, *khaki*, *shawl*, *tulip*, *turban*, *van*, *veranda*, while from India come *loot*, *pundit*, *guru*, *rajah*, *punch* (the drink), *coolie*, *bungalow*, *calico*, *cot*, *polo*, *thug*.

Hebrew, with its kindred Aramaic, gives us many old words, largely religious: *camel*, *ebony*, *sapphire*, *seraph*, *cherub*, *rabbi*, *abbot*. From the modern Ivrit of Israel we get *kibbutz* and *sabra*.

The Far East gives us Chinese *tea*, *tycoon*, *kowtow*, *tong*, *yen*; Japanese *kimono*, *samurai*, *kamikaze*, *kabuki*, *judo*, *ju jitsu* and *karate*. Australian native languages give us *kangaroo* and *boomerang*; Polynesian tongues *aloha*, *lei*, *luau*, *atoll*, *tattoo*, *bamboo*. From African languages are *gorilla*, *guinea*, *voodoo*, *hoodoo*, *zebra*, *jazz*, *okra*, *gumbo*, *jumbo*, while North American Indian tongues are responsible for *moccasin*, *wigwam*, *moose*, *raccoon*, *skunk*, *totem*, *tomahawk*, *porgy*, *terrapin*, with those of Mexico contributing *chocolate*, *tomato* and *coyote*, those of the West Indies *mahogany*, *barbecue*, *hurricane*, *cannibal*, *maize*, *potato*, *tobacco*, those of South America *quinine*, *llama*, *pampa*, *jaguar*, *tapioca*, and the recent *lagniappe*.

It is obvious that the vocabulary of English, though firmly rooted in a Germanic-Latin-Romance-Greek base, is among