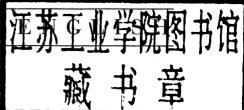# Webster's NewWorld Dictionary®

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Third College Edition

THIRD COLLEGE EDITION

Webster's New World Dictionary®

OF AMERICAN

VICTORIA NEUFELDT

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Editor in Chief Emeritus

MACMILLAN · USA

Dedicated
to David B. Guralnik
lexicographical mentor
and friend

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FOREWORD

The publication in 1988 of *Webster's New World Dictionary,* Third College Edition, was the triumphant result of more than four years of concentrated editorial effort and nearly as much time again in long-range planning. The new edition replaced the Second College Edition, which had served its readers well since 1970. It retained the many virtues of the parent volume while bolstering its coverage of the rapidly growing lexicon of contemporary English and introducing some innovative lexicographic features.

This printing represents the third and most extensive updating of the dictionary since its publication in 1988. It follows relatively minor corrections that were entered in the fourth printing of 1988 and the more substantial changes registered in the copyrighted ninth printing of 1991.

With every passing year, new words enter the English language, existing words take on new meanings, registers shift between the standard language and the colloquial, and pronunciations change. The editorial staff of Webster's New World conducts a continuous and wide-reaching program of language monitoring, collecting linguistic evidence in the form of citations of words and expressions used in print and speech. It is these citations, now numbering over one million, which serve as the foundation for the frequent, authoritative updates of the dictionary.

The results of these efforts to keep the dictionary current can be seen in the more than 200 new entries added for this printing, including *cyberpunk, designated driver, ECU, food court, fuzzy logic, Kwanzaa, multiculturalism, no-brainer, virtual reality, wuss,* and many others. Spanning the language from technical terminology to slang, these new entries help document the continuing evolution of American English and reflect the subtle interplay between language and culture. New meanings for such terms as *anecdotal, documentation,* and *electronics* also serve to chart significant linguistic change.

A great many of the changes entered in this updated printing stem from the decade's political upheaval in eastern Europe: the breakup of the Soviet Union's constituent republics into independent states; the division of Yugoslavia and of Czechoslovakia; and the unification of the two Germanys. The resulting new political nomenclature instantly rendered a vast number of geographical entries out-of-date. A comprehensive check of the dictionary's database ferreted out all pertinent entries, and appropriate editing has been done in every instance.

Not only recent events in Europe and Asia have necessitated changes. Data from the 1990 U.S. census were published in 1991, making it necessary to revise the population figures for city and state entries. Changes in biographical entries, scrupulously tracked between updatings, may go beyond the relatively simple addition of death dates from obituaries. Continuing research can often lead to confirmation of a disputed date or the correction of an error previously held to be fact by the majority of investigators. For example, recent biographical research has allowed us to give confirmed birth dates for Louis Armstrong, Chester A. Arthur, Jelly Roll Morton, and Antonio Vivaldi.

All terms, whether newly entered or retained from the first copyright printing of 1988, that are known to be trademarks or service marks are identified in appropriate fashion within the individual entries. All changes are entered in the lexicographic database designed and maintained for the Webster's New World editorial offices by Lexi-Comp, Inc., of Hudson, Ohio, under the direction of Thury O'Connor.

For all its many changes, this updated printing still preserves all the excellent characteristics of the original publication, particularly with respect to clarity of definition, for which *Webster's New World Dictionary* has become justly famous. In addition, the Third College Edition continues to provide more synonym studies and detailed etymologies than do competing dictionaries.

The reader will benefit greatly from reading the articles in the front matter, particularly the Guide to the Use of the Dictionary, which begins on page xi. The essay on the English language by John Algeo, Professor of English at the University of Georgia, will give useful insights into the nature of change and variation in English, topics so often puzzling to dictionary users. The discussion of etymology by the late William E. Umbach, former Dean of Graduate Studies, University of Redlands, will give the reader a deeper appreciation of the dictionary's etymologies, which have been highly praised over the years.

This updated printing provides the opportunity to welcome Professor James W. Hartman of the University of Kansas as the dictionary's consultant on the pronunciation of English. Professor Hartman is known for his work as Pronunciation Editor of the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE).* In addition, the dictionary and its maintenance and future development now benefit greatly from the knowledgeable support of Gerard Helferich, Vice President and Editor in Chief of Prentice Hall General Reference.

Editorial and administrative staff members are listed on page vi. Modern dictionaries represent massive collaborative efforts among editors at multiple levels over long periods of time. The staff page credits those responsible for the preparation of the Third College Edition of 1988 as well as those who subsequently contributed to the updatings of 1991 and 1994. Where appropriate, dates are given to indicate the period of contribution.

Michael Agnes
Executive Editor

THE NEW WORLD DICTIONARIES: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

by David B. Guralnik

All events have their antecedents. Nothing comes from nothing, and all present-day lexicographers of our language share an indebtedness, of one degree or another, to all those who preceded them, from Robert Cawdrey, whose *A Table Alphabeticall*, a slim vocabulary listing generally regarded as the first English dictionary, appeared in 1604, through the landmark works of Nathaniel Bailey (1721), Samuel Johnson (1755), and Noah Webster (1828) to James A. H. Murray and his successors, who compiled the monumental *Oxford English Dictionary*. But when *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* appeared on the scene in the Encyclopedic Edition of 1951, it marked the first publication in many years of a dictionary that was neither an abridgment nor a revision of some other work. The staff of relatively young language scholars assembled a decade earlier, in 1941, set about to break through the conservatism that then existed in lexicographical circles and to produce a dictionary that would be truly reflective of its times.

Although by then most lexicographers had long since abandoned the belief that they had the responsibility for arbitrarily deciding what was good usage and what was bad usage, many dictionary publishers still promulgated, and the public generally accepted, the notion that "the dictionary" has absolute authority. The editors of this new dictionary were determined, as they stated in the Foreword to the First College Edition (1953), that it "was not to create the impression that it was authoritarian, laying down the law; it was to play, rather, the role of a friendly guide, pointing out the safe, well-traveled roads." Among its innovations were to be the introduction of the relaxed pronunciations used in ordinary conversation by cultivated speakers of the prevailing variety of the language, then known as General American. For example, they would avoid suggesting, as other dictionaries of that time did, that the vowel sound of *glass* differed from the one of *cat* in that dialect. Also, etymologies were to be expanded to include Indo-European bases and an indication of cognate relationships both among words in the language and with words in other Indo-European languages. And what was of most importance, definitions would be written in the language of the mid-twentieth century and in a relaxed style that would once and for all scotch Ambrose Bierce's definition of *dictionary* as "a malevolent device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic." Wherever necessary, additional connotative information about the words being defined would be given, even though it meant devoting considerable space to doing so. Moreover, special attention was to be paid to colloquialisms and slang terms and to the phrasal units and compounds and idiomatic phrases, all rich and characteristic features of our American language, but largely neglected by dictionaries of that time.

One hundred editors and assistants were involved in the preparation of the College Edition. The planning for this new dictionary was carried out under the editorial direction of Josephine McCarter. From 1944 to 1948, Joseph H. Friend served as General Editor. He was succeeded by David B. Guralnik, who then continued as Editor in Chief of the entire line of Webster's New World Dictionaries until his retirement in 1986. The highly acclaimed etymologies were researched and prepared by Harold E. Whitehall and William E. Umbach. The latter has continued to serve as chief etymologist through this present Third College Edition.

In the very first review of *Webster's New World Dictionary*, under the heading "A New High Standard in Lexicography," it was greeted as marking "a great advance in American lexicography. It is the first medium-size dictionary to build into its ground plan and defining techniques recent advances in semantics, general linguistics, and the psychology of language, and to incorporate a truly scientific (i.e., quantitative) approach to the problems of pronunciation, usage, and etymology." The dictionary received immediate acceptance on college campuses and in a very short time became one of the leading dictionaries for use in the universities.

A program of regular maintenance was instituted following publication and at first annually, then later biennially, substantial updatings were brought out. After several years, however, it became apparent that such updatings, however extensive, could not keep pace with the vast changes occurring in the language. Rapid advances in the sciences and in technology brought with them countless new terms and new applications of established terms. The continuing evolution of the language was marked by changes in prevailing pronunciations and in the status of numerous terms. New information had been uncovered concerning many of the etymologies. And so work was begun on a total revision and resetting of the dictionary.

In 1970, the Second College Edition of *Webster's New World Dictionary* was published, again with innovations. The dictionary was the first of its kind to identify all Americanisms and the first to give the etymology of all American place names. Both of these aspects of the work were carried out under the supervision, and with the invaluable resources, of Mitford M. Mathews, the editor of the *Dictionary of Americanisms*, who joined the New World staff in 1955 as Special Consulting Editor and Editor, Americanisms. He continued to serve in that position until shortly before his death in 1985. By the mid-1970's, the Second College Edition had become the dictionary of first reference for most of the leading newspapers and news agencies in the United States and the one on which their style manuals had been based. It also became the first dictionary of its scope to be embossed in its entirety in Braille, by the American Printing House for the Blind.

The staff of Webster's New World Dictionaries has carried out its tasks over the period of nearly half a century under the aegis of several publishing houses, but the continuity, both of personnel and of place, has remained unbroken. In 1980, upon the acquisition of the dictionary line by Simon & Schuster, Inc., work was begun on the necessary Third College Edition. In addition to the changes that time had inevitably wrought in the lexis of the language, technology had created and refined new tools to aid the lexicographers in their labors. Although by then computers had been in use for a decade or longer in typesetting dictionaries, the state of the art had now reached the point where the lexicographer's dream, a complete self-contained database, could be constructed. With the invaluable aid of Thury L. O'Connor of Lexi-Comp, Inc., the editors proceeded to design such a database, which could serve as a permanent, though constantly growing and changing, information resource that would give the lexicographer immediate access to a vast body of data and would greatly facilitate the manipulation of that information and the ongoing analysis of our language. After centuries of performing our tasks of gathering, storing, and manipulating information in a never-changing manner, lexicographers have seen the science of lexicography, in one decade, take a giant step forward. The *art* of lexicography, however, that is to say, the writing of definitions and the evaluation of the elements in the lexis of the language, remains very much a human activity.

This Third College Edition of *Webster's New World Dictionary*, completed under the skillful editorship of Victoria Neufeldt, is, we believe, the successful synthesis of both the modern science and the traditional art of dictionary making. We trust it will continue to serve its users as faithfully as did its predecessors.

GUIDE TO THE USE OF THE DICTIONARY

I. THE MAIN ENTRY WORD

A. *Arrangement of Entries*

All main entries, including single words, hyphenated and un-hyphenated compounds, proper names, prefixes, suffixes, and abbreviations, are listed in strict alphabetical order and are set in large boldface type, extending slightly into the left margin.

black (blak) *adj.*...
Black (blak), **Hugo (La Fayette)**...
black alder...
black-and-blue (-ən blōō′) *adj.*...
black·ber|ry (blak′ber′ē, -bər ē) *n.*...
bldg...
-ble (bəl)...

Note that in the biographical entry only the last, or family, name (that part preceding the comma or the first sense number) has been considered in alphabetization. When two or more persons with the same family name are entered, they are dealt with in a single entry block, arranged in alphabetical order by first names. Biographical and geographical names that are identical in form are kept in separate entry blocks.

Jack·son (jak′sən) **1 Andrew** (called *Old Hickory*) 1767–1845; U.S. general: 7th president of the U.S. (1829–37) **2 Robert H(oughwout)** 1892–1954; U.S. jurist: associate justice, Supreme Court (1941–54) **3 Thomas Jonathan** (called *Stonewall Jackson*) 1824–63; Confederate general in the Civil War

Jack·son (jak′sən) [after A. JACKSON] **1** capital of Miss., in the SW part, on the Pearl River: pop. 203,000 (met. area 320,000) **2** city in W Tenn.: pop. 49,000 **3** city in S Mich.: pop. 40,000

The name prefixes "Mac" and "Mc" are listed in strict alphabetical order.

MacDowell, Edward Alexander
mace
MacLeish, Archibald
make
maser
McCormack, John
McKinley, William

Strict alphabetical order is also followed for "Saint" and "St." when they appear as a part of proper names other than the names of canonized persons.

Saint Bernard (dog)
Saint-Gaudens, Augustus
squint
St. Clair (river)
steel
St. Helena (island)

Canonized persons are alphabetized by their given names, which appear in boldface. The designation "Saint" follows in lightface type, either directly after a comma or, within a proper-name block, at the beginning of a numbered sense. Thus **Augustine**, the saint, will be found in the A's, but **St. Augustine**, the city in Florida, will be found in the S's.

B. *Variant Spellings & Forms*

When variant spellings of a word are some distance apart alphabetically, the definition for the word appears at the spelling known or judged to be the one most frequently used. Other spellings of the word are cross-referred to that spelling in small capitals, and unless such a cross-reference indicates that the variant is British, dialectical, slang, obsolete, or the like, each form given is as acceptable in standard American usage as the one carrying the definition, though usually not as commonly used.

gay·e|ty...*n.*...*alt. sp. of* GAIETY
kerb...*n. Brit. sp. of* CURB (n. 5, 6 & vt. 3)

If two variant spellings are alphabetically close to each other, they appear together as a joint boldface entry. In some such cases, usage is about evenly divided between them. In still others, the evidence of collected citations indicates a greater frequency of occurrence for the one given first. In no case is the first spelling considered "more correct" or the one necessarily to be preferred.

the|a·ter or **the|a·tre**...*n.*...

If one variant spelling, or several, are alphabetically close to the main-entry spelling and pronounced exactly like it but are somewhat or considerably less frequent in usage, such spellings are given at the end of the entry block in small boldface.

Par·chee|si...: also sp. **par·che′|si** or **par·chi′|si**

In some cases, the variants may involve diacritics, hyphens, or the like.

co·op|er·ate or **co-op|er|ate**...*vi.*...Also **co·öp′er·ate′**

When words having exactly the same meaning would fall alphabetically next to or close to each other, the less frequently used word is given in small boldface at the end of the definition for the predominant word.

laud|a·to|ry...*adj.*...Also **laud′|a·tive**
-lep|sy...**-lep′|si|a**

C. *Cross-references*

In all main entries that consist simply of a cross-reference to another entry of the same meaning, the entry cross-referred to is in small capitals.

gay·e|ty...*n.*...*alt. sp. of* GAIETY
go·losh or **go·loshe**...*n. Brit. sp. of* GALOSH
slap-bang...—*adj. colloq. var. of* SLAPDASH
me·grim...*n.*...*obs. var. of* MIGRAINE
yellow daisy ☆BLACK-EYED SUSAN
☆**ma·jor·ette**...*n. short for* DRUM MAJORETTE

D. *Homographs*

Main entries that are spelled alike but are different in meaning and origin, as **bat** (a club), **bat** (the animal), and **bat** (to wink), in addition to being entered in separate blocks are marked by superscript numbers immediately following the boldface spellings.

bat¹...*n.*...
bat²...*n.*...
bat³...*vt.*...

When these need to be referred to in etymologies, definitions, etc., the cross-reference is made to the numbered homograph.

Main entries that differ from others with the same spelling by having such markings as accents, hyphens, etc. or by being in italic type or capitalized are not considered homographs and are not marked with superscripts. Proper nouns, abbreviations, etc. with the same spelling are not marked with superscripts.

Jack·son...**1 Andrew**...
Jack·son...**1** capital of Miss.,...

E. *Americanisms*

Words and phrases having their origin in the United States, as well as those senses of previously existing words or phrases that first came into use in this country, are marked as Americanisms by an open star (☆). (See the essay by John Algeo, beginning on p. xvii.)

If the star precedes the entry word, the word itself entered the language as an Americanism.

☆**las|so**...*n.*...a long rope or leather thong with a sliding noose at one end, used to catch cattle or wild horses—*vt.*...to catch with a lasso—**las′so|er** *n.*

If the star precedes a particular part of speech, that part of speech entered the language as an Americanism.

squid...*n.*...—☆*vi.* **squid′ded, squid′ding 1** to take on an elongated squidlike shape due to strong air pressure: said of a parachute **2** to fish for squid or with squid as bait

If the star precedes a single definition or subsense of a definition, only that definition or subsense is an Americanism.

liv·er|y...*n.*... **4** *a*)...*b*)...☆*c*) LIVERY STABLE
load...*n.*... ☆**6** the amount of work carried by or assigned to a person, group, etc. /the course *load* of a student, the *caseload* of a social worker/

F. *Foreign Terms*

Foreign words and phrases encountered with some frequency in English speech and writing but not completely naturalized are set in boldface italic type. The user of the dictionary is thus signaled that such terms are generally printed in italics or underlined in writing.

au na·tu·rel...[Fr.]...

Commonly used abbreviations for non-English terms are not set in boldface italic type. Their etymologies show the language of origin and the full, unabbreviated form of the term.

i.e. [L. *id est*] that is (to say)
R.S.V.P. or **r.s.v.p.** [Fr. *répondez s'il vous plaît*] please reply

G. *Prefixes, Suffixes, & Combining Forms*

Prefixes and initial combining forms are indicated by a hyphen following the entry form.

hem|i-...*prefix meaning* half [*hemisphere*]

Suffixes and terminal combining forms are indicated by a hyphen preceding the entry form.

-la|try...*combining form* worship of or excessive devotion to [*bibliolatry, demonolatry*]

The very full coverage given these forms, which are also given pronunciations when pronunciation in isolation is feasible, makes it possible for the reader to understand and pronounce countless complex terms not entered in the dictionary but formed with affixes and words that are entered.

H. *Word Division*

At the end of a line of print or of other writing, it may be necessary, because no more space is available, to carry over part of a word to the beginning of the next line. This breaking of a word into two parts is called word division (or syllabification).

Though every word (other than a monosyllable) can be divided into the parts (syllables) that make it up, careful printers and writers avoid making certain divisions of words at the end of lines.

In this dictionary, the parts of boldface entry words are separated either by a heavy centered period [·] or by a hairline [|].

The heavy centered period indicates one or more places where a word can be acceptably divided at the end of a line:

des·sert
mes·sen·ger

The hairline indicates one or more places where, if possible, a word should not be divided at the end of a line:

hon|ey·bee
hon|ey·suck|le

If the first or last syllable of a word consists of only one letter, the word should never be divided at that place:

a|glow
cheer|y

The parts of a hyphenated term should, if possible, never be divided except at the hyphen itself:

la|bor-in|ten|sive
sin|gle-hand|ed|ness

If the last syllable of a word consists of only two letters, it is better not to divide the word at that place:

dress|er
dis·pos|al

In this dictionary, a final syllable consisting of only two letters is usually, but not always, marked with the hairline. The syllable is generally not marked with a hairline if the word in which the syllable occurs has more than two syllables and one or more of the preceding syllables are also marked with hairlines. This is especially true if the additional syllable or syllables marked with hairlines are close to the final syllable of the word. Not marking the final two-letter syllable with a hairline is intended to indicate that it is better to divide the word at the two-letter syllable than to divide the word at one of the other places marked by the hairline.

A stress mark not immediately followed by a hairline is equivalent to a centered period. A word can be acceptably divided at the place where the stress mark appears:

hap'pi|ly
re·as|sur'ance

A stress mark immediately followed by a hairline indicates a place where, if possible, a word should not be divided:

be'|a·tif'|i·cal|ly
cheer'|i·ness

Words shown with stress marks, as in the examples above, are chiefly derived words that appear at the end of a main entry.

Where plurals, comparative forms, or the like are shown immediately after a main entry, the plurals and the like are often truncated, with a hyphen preceding the truncations.

A hyphen used before such truncations and not immediately followed by a hairline is equivalent to a centered period. A word can acceptably be divided at the place indicated by the hyphen:

ar·is·toc·ra|cy ... n., pl. -|cies

A hyphen immediately followed by a hairline indicates a place where, if possible, a word should not be divided:

par·i|ty[1] ... n., pl. -|ties

In addition to the general principles that have been indicated, certain other principles—some based on conventional printing practices, others largely judgmental—determine whether or not a word can be acceptably divided at one or more places within the word. The entry words in this dictionary have been divided with centered periods and hairlines in accordance with all these principles.

II. PRONUNCIATION

A. Introduction

The pronunciations given in this dictionary are those widely used by good speakers of American English.

Many words of the language occur in everyday speech and in newscasts, talks or discussions on radio or television, and in spoken recordings. Good speakers do not always pronounce these words in the same way. Because the various pronunciations are widely used by good speakers, however, the pronunciations must be considered as acceptable pronunciations.

To decide which pronunciations are most commonly in use by good speakers, the editors of this dictionary have for many years maintained a file of written transcriptions of pronunciations that they have heard or that they themselves use. The file is supplemented by pronunciation queries made to individuals in the sciences and in other specialized fields, so as to determine the pronunciations of terms that do not occur in everyday speech. In addition, all available works on the pronunciation of English have been carefully studied and evaluated.

B. Key to Pronunciation

Symbol	Key Words	Symbol	Key Words
ə	*a neutral vowel sound, like a in ago, e in over, i in sanity, o in comply, u in focus*	n	no, end, pan
		ŋ	ring, anger, drink
a	at, carry, gas		
ā	ate, day, tape	ō	own, tone, go
ä	ah, car, father	ô	horn, all, law
b	bed, able, tab	oo	look, pull, good
		ōō	tool, crew, moo
ch	chin, archer, march	oi	oil, coin, toy
		ou	out, how, our
d	dip, idea, wad	p	put, open, tap
e	end, berry, ten	r	red, part, far
ē	eve, be, me		

Symbol	Key Words	Symbol	Key Words
f	fit, after, if	s	sell, cast, toss
		sh	she, cushion, wash
g	get, angle, tag	t	top, meter, sat
h	he, ahead, hotel	th	thin, nothing, truth
		th	the, father, scythe
i	is, hit, lid	u	up, bud, cut
ī	ice, bite, high	ʉ	urn, fur, cur
j	joy, agile, edge	v	vat, over, have
k	kid, oaken, take	w	will, away, wit
l	lid, elbow, sail	y	yet, onion, yard
m	met, amid, aim	z	zebra, lazy, haze
		zh	azure, leisure

Explanatory Notes

'   The apostrophe: For the pronunciation transcription of English words, the apostrophe is used immediately before the symbol (l) or the symbol (n) to indicate that the *l* sound or the *n* sound is, in a syllable so transcribed, a syllabic consonant.

A syllabic consonant is a consonant pronounced in such a way as to form a complete syllable, or the main part of a syllable, entirely or almost entirely by itself, with little or no perceptible sound of a vowel in that syllable.

Words in which a syllabic *l* occurs are words like *cattle*, *ladle*, and *turtle*.

Words in which a syllabic *n* occurs are words like *button*, *hidden*, and *satin*.

When, in words like those just specified, the *l* or the *n* is not pronounced as a syllabic consonant, a spelled consonantal sound immediately preceding the spelled *l* or *n* typically begins the syllable. The syllable then continues with a vowel sound (distinct or neutral) and ends with the ordinary nonsyllabic sound of the *l* or *n*. The word *satin*, for example, is pronounced by some as *sa-tin* (rather than as *sat'n*).

Indication of only a syllabic *l* or *n* in words like *ladle* and *satin* is not meant to exclude the acceptability of an alternate nonsyllabic *l* or *n* in the pronunciation of such words.

The consonant *m* is sometimes pronounced as a syllabic consonant (as in *chasm*), but the occurrence of a syllabic *m* in American English is much less common than the occurrence of a syllabic *l* or a syllabic *n*.

Indication of only a nonsyllabic *m* in words like *chasm* and *prism* is not meant to exclude the acceptability of an alternate syllabic *m* in the pronunciation of such words.

In words like *apple* and *cabin*, the consonants *l* and *n* are sometimes pronounced as syllabic consonants, as they also are in certain other kinds of consonant combinations. But unless the consonants *l* and *n* are frequently pronounced as syllabic consonants (as they regularly are when following a stressed syllable ending in a *d* sound or a *t* sound), they are not transcribed as syllabic consonants in this dictionary.

Indication of only a nonsyllabic *l* or *n* in words like *apple* and *cabin* and in words involving certain other kinds of consonant combinations is not meant to exclude the acceptability of an alternate syllabic *l* or *n* in the pronunciation of such words.

ə   The schwa: This symbol represents an indistinct, neutral vowel sound, without any stress, often used at the beginning, middle, or end of words. It is not clearly identifiable with any other vowel sound. It is the typical sound of the letter *a* in *ago*, of the letter *e* in *over*, of the letter *i* in *sanity*, etc.

Some speakers replace the neutral schwa sound with the distinct vowel sound of the spelled vowel. For example, some speakers pronounce the *i* of the word *sanity* with the distinct *i* that occurs in the word *hit*.

Indication of only a schwa for a vowel like the *i* in *sanity* is not meant to exclude the acceptability of an alternate distinct vowel in place of the schwa shown.

ä   This symbol represents the usual sound in American English of the letter *a* in words like *ah, car, father*.

In words like *car* and *far*, some speakers use a sound between the sound of the *a* in *ah* and the sound of the *a* in *at*. The symbol (a) is meant to include this variation in the pronunciation of such words.

In words like *grass* and *path*, the usual sound in American English of the letter *a* is the same as the sound of *a* in *at*. In British English the usual sound of the letter *a* in many such words is the same as the sound of *a* in *ah*. Some American speakers pronounce such words with an *a* sound that lies between the sound of the *a* in *at* and the sound of the *a* in *ah*. To indicate these variations, many basic words like *grass* and *path* (but not derived forms like *grassy* and *pathway*) are shown with two successive transcriptions, one transcription using the symbol (a), the second transcription using the symbol (ä).

In words like *alms* and *hot*, the usual sound in American English of the letters *a* and *o* is the same as the sound of *a* in *ah*. Many speakers, however, use a sound that approaches or is

the same as the sound of the *o* in *horn*. Most such words are shown with a single transcription using the symbol (ä), though sometimes a second transcription using the symbol (ô) is added. Use of a single transcription with the symbol (ä) for words like *alms* and *hot* is not meant to exclude the acceptability of an alternate vowel sound that approaches or is the same as the sound of the *o* in *horn*.

e   This symbol represents the sound of the letter *e* in words like *end*, *berry*, and *ten*.

In words like *care* and *vary*, the sound of the letter *a* often ranges from the sound of the letter *e* in *ten* to the sound of the letter *a* in *at*. Some speakers pronounce the *a* in such words like the *a* in *tape*. The symbol (e) is meant to include all such variations. If one or more of the variations occur especially frequently in certain words of this kind, transcription of such words with the symbol (e) may be followed by transcriptions using the symbols (a) or (ā).

ē   This symbol represents the sound of the letter *e* in words like *eve*, *be*, and *me*.

In words like *lucky* and *pretty*, the usual sound in American English of the letter *y* is identical with or close to the sound of the initial letter *e* in *eve*. In British English the usual sound of the letter *y* in such words is identical or close to the sound of the letter *i* in *is*, as it also is in the pronunciation of a considerable number of American speakers. The symbol (ē) is meant to include such variations.

i   This symbol represents the sound of the letter *i* in words like *is*, *hit*, and *lid*.

The first syllables of words like *deny* and *review* often have a neutral vowel sound (the schwa: see above), as do the final syllables of words like *courage* and *goodness*. The symbol (i) is meant to include this variation; sometimes transcriptions using the schwa symbol are used in place of or in addition to transcriptions using the (i) symbol.

In words like *dear* and *mere*, some speakers use a vowel sound identical with or close to the sound of the *e* in *me*. The symbol (i) is meant to include this variation.

ŋ   This symbol represents the sound (a single sound, not two) of the two spelled letters *ng* in words like *bang*, *long*, and *ring*. Likewise, this symbol represents the same sound of the single spelled letter *n* in words like *pink*, *rank*, and *sunk*, as it also does in words like *angry*, *finger*, and *tangle*.

ô   This symbol represents the vowel sound generally used in words like *horn*, *all*, and *law*.

In words like *auto* and *lawn*, some speakers use a sound identical with or close to the sound of the letter *a* in *ah*. The symbol (ô) is meant to include this variation; if the variation is especially frequent, transcriptions of such words with the symbol (ô) may be followed by transcriptions using the symbol (ä).

In words like *glory* and *more*, a considerable number of speakers use a sound identical with or close to the sound of the letter *o* in *go*. The symbol (ô) is meant to include this variation.

r   This symbol represents the sound of the letter *r* in *red*, *part*, and *far*.

Most speakers in the United States and Canada regularly pronounce the *r* in most words spelled with *r* (wherever an *r* occurs in the spelling of a word).

All speakers of all varieties of English pronounce any spelled *r* that occurs as the first letter of a word (as in *red*) or that occurs immediately after a pronounced consonant (as in *bring*).

In words like *part* and *far*, however, the spelled *r* is usually not pronounced by speakers of standard British English, and it is likewise not usually pronounced by most native speakers of the varieties of American English typically occurring in much of the southern and extreme eastern parts of the United States.

In this dictionary the symbol (r) is regularly used for each occurrence of an *r* sound in a word, in accordance with the way the word is usually pronounced by most speakers in the United States and Canada. It is to be understood that speakers who normally do not pronounce the *r* of words like *part* and *far* will disregard the symbol (r) used in the transcription of such words.

t   This symbol represents the sound of the letter *t* in *top*, *meter*, and *sat*.

When the sound of the letter *t* occurs between two vowel sounds (as in *meter* or *later*), most speakers of American English use a sound identical with or close to the sound of the letter *d*. In words in which this *d*-like sound is typical in American English, the (t) symbol is joined to the symbol for the vowel sound immediately preceding this special sound of the (t) symbol. It is to be understood that speakers who normally pronounce the *t* of words like *meter* and *later* in the same way that they pronounce the *t* of *top* will carry the *t* sound wholly or almost wholly over to the immediately following syllable.

Foreign Sounds

'   The apostrophe: For the pronunciation transcription of some foreign words, the apostrophe is used immediately after one or two consonant symbols in certain words to indicate that the consonant sound or pair of sounds so marked is pronounced with little or no vibration of the vocal cords. The resulting sound is therefore very much like a whisper. For example, the pronunciation of a French word like *fille* is shown like this: fē′y′. A French word like *lettre* is pronounced like this: le′tr′.

à   This symbol represents a sound between the sound of the *a* in

ah and the sound of the *a* in *at*, very much like the sound some speakers of English use in the pronunciation of words like *grass* and *path* (compare (ä): Explanatory Notes). The sound occurs typically in the sound of the *a* in a French word like *salle*.

ë   This symbol represents a sound equivalent to the sound made by rounding the lips (as though to say "oh") and then, keeping the lips rounded, pronouncing the *e* of *get*. The sound is very much like the sound of the *u* in *fur*. It occurs typically in the sound of the *eu* (a single sound) in a French word like *auteur*.

H   This symbol represents a sound equivalent to the sound of *sh* in *ship*, but made with the tip of the tongue pointing downward. The sound occurs typically in the sound of the *ch* in a German word like *ich*.

kh   This symbol represents a sound equivalent to the sound made by drawing the tongue back in the mouth (as though to pronounce the letter *k*) and then, keeping the tongue that way, heavily forcing the breath over the tongue and out of the mouth. The sound occurs typically in the sound of the *ch* in a German word like *machen* or in the sound of the *ch* in a Scottish word like *loch*.

n   This symbol (an italicized *n*) represents a sound made by letting the voice pass both through the nose and through the mouth in pronouncing the vowel symbol immediately preceding the *n* symbol; no sound of the letter *n* itself should be heard (except, in a French phrase like *bon appétit*, with the following vowel). The sound occurs typically in French and, to a lesser extent, in Portuguese.

ô   This symbol represents a sound equivalent to the sound made by loosely rounding the lips (as though to say "horn") and then, keeping the lips so rounded, pronouncing the *u* of *up*. The sound occurs typically in the sound of the *o* in a French word like *tonne* or in the sound of the *o* in a German word like *korrekt*. In an Italian word like *poco* or in a Spanish word like *torrero* the sound of each *o* is almost the same as the sound of *o* in *horn*.

ö   This symbol represents a sound equivalent to the sound made by rounding the lips (as though to say "oh") and then, keeping the lips rounded, pronouncing the *a* of *ate*. The sound occurs typically in the sound of the *eu* (a single sound) in a French word like *feu*.

r   This symbol (an italicized *r*) represents the sound of *r* as that letter is pronounced in various foreign languages. The *r* is typically pronounced by vibrating the tip of the tongue, as in an Italian word like *bravo*. In some languages (especially in French) the *r* is often produced far back in the mouth, typically with a vibration of the uvula. In some foreign languages the sound of the *r* may often be similar to the sound of an English *r*.

ü   This symbol represents a sound equivalent to the sound made by rounding the lips (as though to say "oh") and then, keeping the lips rounded, pronouncing the *e* of *me*. The sound occurs typically in the sound of the *u* in a French word like *tu* and, with a somewhat less tense resonance, in the sound of the *ü* in a German word like *gemütlich*.

C. *General Styling of Pronunciation*

Pronunciations are given inside parentheses, immediately after the boldface main word being pronounced.

A single space is used between syllables.

A primary (strong) stress is indicated by a heavy stroke [′] immediately following the syllable so stressed.

A secondary (less strong) stress is indicated by a lighter stroke [′] immediately following the syllable so stressed.

Many main words have closely related words that are self-explanatory and that appear at the end of the main entry. If such closely related words do not require separate pronunciations, they are shown only with stress marks.

D. *Truncation*

Variant pronunciations are often truncated, with only that syllable or those syllables pronounced in which change occurs.

A hyphen *after* a truncated variant shows that the variation occurs in the first part of the word:

ab·duct (ab dukt′, əb-)

A hyphen *before* a truncated variant shows that the variation occurs in the last part of the word:

as·sume (ə soom′, -syoom′)

A hyphen *before and after* a truncated variant shows that the variation occurs within the word:

am·pu·tate (am′pyoo tāt′, -pyə-)

Truncations of variant pronunciations shown for a word that has different parts of speech typically appear like this:

pre·cip·i·tate (*for v.,* prē sip′ə tāt′, pri-; *for adj. & n.,* -tit, *also,* -tāt′)

Truncated pronunciations may be given for two or more words occurring in succession:

ju·di·ca|ble (joo′di kə bəl)
ju·di·ca·tive (-kāt′iv, -kə tiv)
ju·di·ca·to|ry (-kə tôr′ē)
time·keep|er (tīm′kē′pər)
time-lapse (-laps′)

E. *Order of Pronunciations*

Two or more pronunciations are often given for the same word. One or more of the additional pronunciations may have a qualifying note (such as *also, often, occas., chiefly Brit,* or the like). If no such note is given, each pronunciation shown is equally accept-

able in American English, regardless of the order in which the pronunciations appear.

III. PART-OF-SPEECH LABELS

Part-of-speech labels are given for main entry words (excluding most proper nouns) that are solid or hyphenated forms, but not for prefixes, suffixes, and abbreviations. The following labels for the parts of speech into which words are classified in traditional English grammar are used in this dictionary. They appear in boldface italic type following the pronunciations.

n	noun	*prep.*	preposition
vt.	transitive verb	*conj.*	conjunction
vi.	intransitive verb	*pron.*	pronoun
adj.	adjective	*interj.*	interjection
adv.	adverb		

Among other labels also used are the following:

n.pl. plural noun
v.aux. auxiliary verb
definite article
n.fem. feminine noun
n.masc. masculine noun

When an entry word is used as more than one part of speech, long dashes introduce each different part of speech in the entry block and each part-of-speech label appears in boldface italic type.
round[1] ...*adj.* ...—*n.* ...—*vt.* ...—*vi.* ...—*adv.* ... —*prep.* ...
Two or more part-of-speech labels are given jointly for an entry when the definition or definitions, or the cross-reference, will suffice for both or all.
lip-read ...*vt., vi.* ...to recognize (a speaker's words) by lip reading ...
hal|lo or **hal·loa** ...*vi., vt., interj., n.* HALLOO
Part-of-speech labels are not used for names of persons and places, or for given names, figures in religion, mythology, literature, etc. However, usages have sometimes developed from these that can be classified as parts of speech and these are indicated.
A|don·is ...*Gr. Myth.* a handsome young man loved by Aphrodite: he is killed by a wild boar —*n.* any very handsome young man ...
It is theoretically possible to use almost any word as whatever part of speech is required, although most such uses would be only for the nonce. Thus any transitive verb can conceivably be used absolutely as an intransitive verb, with the object understood (e.g., he *defined* the word; you must *define* carefully). Such absolute uses are entered only when they are relatively common. In the same way nouns used as adjectives (e.g., a *cloth* cover; a *family* affair) are indicated only for the most frequent uses.

IV. INFLECTED FORMS

Regular inflected forms are normally not indicated. Those that are regarded as irregular or offering difficulty in spelling are entered in small boldface immediately following the part-of-speech labels. They are truncated where possible, to conserve space, and syllabified and pronounced where necessary.

A. Plurals of Nouns

Plurals formed regularly by adding *-s* to the singular (or *-es* after *s, x, z, ch,* and *sh*), as *bats, boxes,* are not shown.
Plurals are shown when formed irregularly, as for nouns with a *-y* ending that changes to *-ies,* and for those with an *-o* ending, those inflected by internal change, those having variant forms, those having different forms for different meanings, compound nouns, etc.
cit|y ...*n., pl.* **cit'ies** ...
bo·le|ro ...*n., pl.* **-ros** ...
tooth ...*n., pl.* **teeth** (tēth) ...
a|moe·ba ...*n., pl.* **-bas** or **-bae** (-bē) ...
die[2] ...*n., pl.* for 1 & 2, **dice** (dīs); for 3 & 4, **dies** (dīz)
son-in-law ...*n., pl.* **sons'-in-law'** ...
If an irregular plural is so different in spelling that it would appear at some distance from the singular form, it is entered additionally in its proper alphabetical place.
lice ...*n. pl. of* LOUSE

B. Principal Parts of Verbs

Verb forms regarded as regular and not normally indicated include:
a) present tenses formed by adding *-s* to the infinitive (or *-es* after *s, x, z, ch,* and *sh*), as *waits, searches;*
b) past tenses and past participles formed by simply adding *-ed* to the infinitive with no other changes in the verb form, as *waited, searched;*
c) present participles formed by simply adding *-ing* to the infinitive with no other change in the verb form, as *waiting, searching.*
Principal parts are given for irregular verbs including those in which the final *e* is dropped in forming the present participle, those which always or optionally repeat the final consonant in all principal parts, those in which *-y* changes to *-ie-* in the past tense and past participle, and those inflected by internal change.
Where two inflected forms are given for a verb, the first is the form for the past tense and the past participle, and the second is the form for the present participle.

make[1] ...*vt.* made, mak'ing ...
sip ...*vt., vi.* sipped, sip'ping ...
Where three forms are given, separated from one another by commas, the first represents the past tense, the second the past participle, and the third the present participle.
swim[1] ...*vi.* swam, swum, swim'ming ...
Where there are alternative forms for any of the principal parts, these are indicated as follows:
trav|el ...*vi.* -eled or -elled, -el·ing or -el·ling ...
drink ...*vt.* drank, drunk or now colloq. drank, drink' ing ...
If a principal part of a verb is so different in spelling that it would appear at some distance from the infinitive form, it is entered additionally in its proper alphabetical place.
said ...*pt. & pp. of* SAY ...

C. Comparatives & Superlatives of Adjectives & Adverbs

Comparatives and superlatives formed by simply adding *-er* or *-est* to the base, as *taller, tallest,* are not indicated. Those formed irregularly, as by adding *-r* and *-st* (*rare, rarer, rarest*), by changing final *-y* to *-i-* (*happy, happier, happiest*), or by some radical change in form (*good, better, best* or *well, better, best*), are indicated with the positive form.
The positive form is also noted at the comparative and superlative forms when these are entered and defined at some distance from it.
best ...*adj.* ...1 *superl. of* GOOD ...—*adv.* 1 *superl. of* WELL[2] ...
Archaic, obsolete, or dialectical inflected forms that are irregular in form and important enough to include in the dictionary are entered separately.
spake ...*archaic pt. of* SPEAK

V. THE ETYMOLOGY

Etymology has been made a strong feature of this dictionary because it is believed that insights into the current usage of a word can be gained from a full knowledge of the word's history and that a better understanding of language generally can be achieved from knowing how words are related to other words in English and to words in other Indo-European languages. Particular attention is paid to showing these relationships as fully as possible and to carrying the etymologies back where possible (either directly or through cross-reference) to the Indo-European base.
Etymologies appear in entry blocks inside open double brackets that make them clearly distinguishable in their position before the definitions proper. The symbols, as < for "derived from," and the abbreviations of language labels, etc. used in the etymologies are dealt with in full in the Abbreviations and Symbols list on the endpapers inside the back cover of this book.
The form and content of a typical etymology is demonstrated in the following entry for **life**.
life (līf) *n., pl.* **lives** ⟦ME < OE *lif,* akin to ON *lif,* life, Ger *leib,* body < IE base **leibh-,* to LIVE[1]⟧ 1 that property or quality of plants and animals that distinguishes them from ...
The first portion of this etymology, dealing with the history of the word within English itself, indicates that in Middle English the word is found in the same form and with the same meaning as in Modern English, and that this form derives from the Old English word *lif.* Cognate forms from other Germanic languages are next introduced by the words *akin to,* the first cognate, Old Norse *lif,* with the same meaning, "life," and the other, German *leib,* with an interestingly related meaning, "body." The word is then taken back to the reconstructed Indo-European base (its hypothetical character is indicated by *) and its meaning, "to live." Thus we have traveled back in the history of an entry word across language barriers to the very root of the word.
Some words are etymologized by means of cross-references (in small capitals) to their component elements, which are dealt with separately in the dictionary.
pro|to·ste|le ...*n.* ⟦PROTO- + STELE⟧ ...
si·lox·ane ...*n.* ⟦SIL(ICON) + OX(YGEN) + -ANE⟧ ...
splurge ...*n.* ⟦echoic blend of SPL(ASH) + (S)URGE⟧ ...
Note that in two of the etymologies above, the parentheses are used to set off parts dropped in telescoping the words that were used to form the entry word. It is always the whole word, however, that will be found in the dictionary.
No etymology is shown where one would be superfluous, as because the elements making up the word are immediately apparent to the user (e.g., **preconscious**) or because the definition that follows clearly explains the derivation (e.g., **bluebottle**).
Where no etymology can be ascertained and no reasonable conjecture can be made, that fact is indicated by the following: ⟦< ?⟧

VI. THE DEFINITIONS

A. Order of Senses

The senses have in general been arranged in historical order, from the etymology (usually the sense or senses of a word before modern English times or in the language or languages from which it came) through the original modern English senses (now often archaic or obsolete) to the most recent senses. Thus the most common present-day meaning of a word may appear near the end of an entry.
Semantic relationships between meanings is also taken into consideration and, in longer entries, will take precedence over a strictly historical ordering if the two do not coincide. It is also important to note that the exact historical development of the different meanings of a word is often obscure or even opaque, and that several

different meanings may have developed at the same time. In view of all these factors the order of the senses in any given entry is not always to be taken as a strictly chronological one.

B. *Numbering & Grouping of Senses*

Senses are numbered consecutively within any given part of speech in boldface numerals. Numeration is begun anew for each part of speech and for each idiomatic phrase.

aim...*vi., vt.*...**1**...**2**...**3**...**4**...—*n.* **1**...**2**...**3**...**4**...—**take aim 1**...**2**...

Where a primary sense of a word can easily be subdivided into several closely related meanings, this has been done; such meanings are indicated by italicized letters after the pertinent numbered or labeled sense. The words "especially" or "specifically" (abbreviated "esp." and "specif.") are often used after an introductory definition to introduce such a grouping of related senses.

hack[2]...*n.*...**1** *a)* a horse for hire *b)* a horse for all sorts of work *c)* a saddle horse *d)* an old, worn-out horse **2** a person hired to do routine, often dull, writing; literary drudge...

length...**8** *Phonet. a)* the duration of the pronunciation of a vowel [the *i* in *bride* has greater *length* than the *i* in *bright*] *b)* popularly, the quality of a vowel...

trick...*n.*...**4** a clever or difficult act intended to amuse; specif., *a)* an act of jugglery or sleight of hand; also, an illusion of the kind created by legerdemain *b)* an action, feat, or routine performed by an animal as a result of training...

Where a basic word has very many senses that can conveniently be arranged under a few major headings, such a division has been made (e.g., **go, time**). The sections, indicated by boldface Roman numerals, are then further subdivided into numbered senses.

C. *Capitalization*

If a main-entry word is capitalized in all its senses, the entry word itself is printed with a capital letter (e.g., **European**).

If a capitalized main-entry word has a sense or senses that are uncapitalized, these are marked with the corresponding small-boldface, lower-case letter followed by a short dash and enclosed in brackets.

Pu·ri·tan...*n.*...**1**...**2** [p-]...—*adj.* **1**...**2** [p-]...

Conversely, capitalized letters are shown where pertinent with lower-case entries. In some instances these designations are qualified by the self-explanatory "usually," "often," "also," or "occas." in italics.

north...*n.*...**1**...**2**...**3**...**4** [*often* N-]...—*adj.* **1**...**2**...**3** [N-]...

D. *Plural Forms*

In a singular noun entry, the designation "[*pl.*]" (or "[*often pl.*]," "[*usually pl.*]," etc.) before a definition indicates that it is (or *often, usually*, etc. is) the plural form of the entry word that has the meaning given in the definition.

lim·it...*n.*...**1**...**2** [*pl.*] bounds; boundary lines...

look...*vi.*...—*n.* **1**...**2**...**3** [Colloq.] *a)* [*usually pl.*] appearance; the way something seems to be... *b)* [*pl.*] personal appearance, esp. of a pleasing nature...

If such a plural sense is construed as singular, the designation "*with sing. v.*" is added inside the brackets.

bone...*n.*...**7** *a)* [*pl.*] flat sticks used as clappers in minstrel shows ☆*b)* [*pl. with sing. v.*] an end man in a minstrel show...

The note "*usually used in pl.*" at the end of a singular noun definition means that although the definition applies to the given singular form of the entry word, the word is usually used in the plural.

lead[2] (led) *n.*...**1**...**2** anything made of this metal; specif., *a)*...*b)* any of the strips of lead used to hold the individual panes in ornamental windows (*usually used in pl.*)...

If a plural noun entry is construed as singular, the designation "[*with sing. v.*]" is placed after the *n.pl.* label or, in some cases, with the numbered sense to which it applies.

☆**ger·i·at·rics**...*n.pl.*...[*with sing. v.*] the branch of medicine that deals with the diseases and problems of old age...

a·cous·tics...*n.pl.* **1**...**2** [*with sing. v.*]...

E. *Prepositions Accompanying Verbs*

Where certain verbs are, in usage, invariably or usually followed by a specific preposition or prepositions, this has been indicated in the following ways: the preposition has been worked into the definition, italicized and usually enclosed in parentheses, or a note has been added after the definition indicating that the preposition is so used.

strike...*vi.*...**10** to come suddenly or unexpectedly; fall, light, etc. (*on* or *upon*) [to *strike* on the right combination]...

strike...*vi.*...☆**17** *U.S. Navy* to be in training (*for* a specified...

fig[2]...*vt.*...to dress showily: with *out* or *up*...

hit...*vi.*...**3** to knock, bump, or strike: usually with *against*...

Such uses of verbs with specific prepositions should not be confused with verb sets consisting of a verb form with an adverb, which are entered as idiomatic phrases under the key verb (e.g., **make out, make over**, and **make up** at the entry **make**).

F. *Objects of Transitive Verbs*

In definitions of transitive verbs the specific or generalized objects of the verb, where given, are enclosed in parentheses since such objects are not part of the definition.

ob·serve...*vt.*...**1** to adhere to, follow, keep, or abide by (a law, custom, duty, rule, etc.) **2** to celebrate or keep (a holiday, etc.) according to custom **3** *a)* to notice or perceive (something) *b)* to pay special attention to...

In *3b* above, it will be noted no object is shown; the definition is

formulated so that it is apparent that the verb takes an object. In some such cases the transitive verb can be defined jointly with the intransitive verb.

chis·el...—*vi., vt.*...**1** to cut or shape with a chisel...

G. *Additional Information & Notes*

Additional information or any note or comment on the definition proper is preceded by a colon, if a note applies to the preceding sense. If the note applies only to a preceding subsense, then it is enclosed in parentheses.

at·mos·phere...*n.*...**1** the gaseous envelope (air) surrounding the earth to a height of *c.* 1,000 km (*c.* 621 mi.): it is *c.* 21% oxygen, 78% nitrogen, and 1% other gases, and rotates with the earth, because of gravity...

clas·si·cal...*adj.*...*c)* designating or of art music of the European tradition, including such forms as the symphony, the opera, chamber music, the sonata, etc. (distinguished from folk or popular music or jazz)...

mature...*adj.*...**4** due; payable: said of a note, bond, etc....

If the note or comment applies to the whole part of speech or to the entry word itself, it begins with a capital letter and no colon introduces it.

Where the explanatory material consists of a series of items, as in geographical and chemical definitions, the colon precedes the first item and the others are separated by semicolons (e.g., **hydrogen, Ohio**).

H. *Illustrative Examples of Entry Words in Context*

Examples of usage have been liberally supplied, enclosed in lightface slant brackets, with the word that is being illustrated set in italics. These brief illustrative examples are helpful in clarifying meaning, discriminating a large stock of senses for a basic word, showing level of usage or special connotation, and supplying added information.

com·mon...*adj.*...**1** belonging equally to, or shared by, two or more or by all [the *common* interests of a group] **2** belonging or relating to the community at large; public [*common* carriers] **3** widely existing; general; prevalent [*common* knowledge] **4** widely but unfavorably known [a *common* criminal] **5** *a)* met with or occurring frequently; familiar; usual [a *common* sight] *b)* basic; simple; rudimentary [*common* courtesy]...

I. *Internal Entry Words*

Entry words occasionally occur within definitions in small boldface type. In such cases, the meaning of the inserted entry word is made clear in the definition.

cap...*n.*...**5**...percussion cap for toy guns (**cap guns**)...

J. *Cross-references*

Entry words (or tables, illustrations, etc.) to which the reader is being cross-referred are given in small capitals.

ca·tab·o·lism...*n.*...: opposed to ANABOLISM...

ce·no·gen·e·sis...*n.*...: cf. PALINGENESIS...

fa...*n.*...: see SOLFEGGIO...

eu·sta·chi·an tube...: see EAR[1], illus.

natural law 1...**2**...: see LAW (sense 8*a*)...

perk[3]...[Colloq.] *short for* PERQUISITE...

in·ti...*n.*...: see MONEY, table

VII. USAGE LABELS & NOTES

It is generally understood that usage varies among groups of people according to locality, level of education, social environment, occupation, etc. More specifically, it must be remembered, usage varies for an individual in any given day depending upon the particular situation and the purpose his language must serve. The language that a scientist uses in preparing a report may be quite different from the language used in writing a letter to a friend. What is good usage in a literary essay may not be the best usage in the lyrics to a popular song or in casual conversation. None of the modes of using language in the cases cited is in an absolute sense more correct than any of the others. Each is right for its occasion and any attempt to interchange styles can result in inappropriate language.

Dictionaries can reasonably be expected to assign usage labels to those terms that the record shows are generally limited to informal or highly informal contexts. Such labels, if they are to be useful, must be conventional words that are clearly understood by the reader. The labels used in this dictionary are given below, with an explanation of each. If the label, which is placed in brackets (and in some cases abbreviated), occurs directly after a part-of-speech label or after a boldface entry term, it applies to all the senses given with that part of speech or that term; if it occurs after a numeral or letter, it applies only to the sense so numbered or lettered.

Colloquial: The term or sense is in widespread use and is generally characteristic of conversation and informal writing. It is not regarded as substandard or illiterate.

Slang: The term or sense is not generally regarded as conventional or standard usage but is used, even by the best speakers, in highly informal contexts or for special effect. A given slang vocabulary is often characteristic of the usage of a certain group (e.g. teenagers, musicians). Slang consists of both coined terms and new or extended meanings attached to established terms.

Usually slang terms either pass into disuse in time or come to have a standard status.

Obsolete: The term or sense is no longer used but occurs in earlier writings.

Archaic: The term or sense is rarely used today except in certain restricted contexts, as in church ritual, but occurs in earlier writings.

Old Poetic: The term or sense was never part of the everyday language, but was used chiefly in earlier poetry, or in prose where a poetic quality was desired.

Dialect: The term or sense is used regularly only in some geographical areas or in a certain designated area (*South, Southwest, West,* etc.) of the United States.

British: The term or sense is restricted to the British Isles as a whole. The label "Brit., etc." indicates the term or sense is found generally throughout the English-speaking world outside the U.S. The label "Brit., etc. (exc. Cdn.)" indicates the term or sense is in general use throughout the English-speaking world except North America.

Canadian (or *Irish, Australian,* etc.): The term or sense is characteristic specifically of Canadian (or Irish, Australian, etc.) English.

Historical: The term or sense refers to something that no longer exists (a kind of object, institution, etc.) and to which no term that is more current applies.

Old-fashioned: The term or sense is not yet considered archaic but has an old-fashioned quality, as one used by an older generation of people, that has been superseded by another or other words.

Rare: The term or sense has never been common. "Now Rare" suggests it was once common but, although not archaic, is now not often used.

Vulgar: The term or sense may be an old one, but it is today regarded by most people as highly inappropriate usage in all or almost all social contexts. Many, but not all, such terms are also slang.

In addition to the above usage labels, supplementary information is often given after the definition, indicating whether the term or sense is generally regarded as vulgar, substandard, or derogatory, used with ironic, familiar, or hyperbolic connotations, etc. Where there are some objections to common usages, that fact is also indicated (e.g., **who, whom**).

The dictionary also contains a number of more extensive usage notes that go into greater detail in giving information that pertains to the entry rather than to a particular sense. These notes are introduced by ***USAGE***—in boldface italic capitals at the left indented margin of an entry block. An example of such a usage note is the discrimination of the uses of *can* and *may* following the entry at **can**[1].

VIII. FIELD LABELS

Labels for specialized fields of knowledge and activity are used to help the user quickly identify a particular field of application when this is not readily apparent from the definition itself. A number of such senses within a single entry block are usually grouped together, arranged alphabetically by label.

form...**n.**...**17** *Gram.*...**18** *Linguis.*...**19** *Philos.*...

hit...**vt.**...☆**14** *Baseball*...☆**15** *Blackjack*...

IX. SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF PLANTS & ANIMALS

When the name of an animal or plant is entered in this dictionary, its scientific name is included parenthetically in the definition.

All animals and plants have been given Modern Latin or Latinized names by biologists in accordance with rules prescribed by international codes of zoological and botanical nomenclature and have been systematically classified into certain categories, or taxa, that discriminate the similarities and differences among organisms.

Taxonomists are continuously studying and comparing basic materials in order to classify organisms more precisely or to modify, when necessary, current classifications. The taxonomic designations used in this dictionary reflect the most reliable information available from such constant scrutiny, including many recent revisions.

The highly respected publication *Synopsis and Classification of Living Organisms,* edited by Sybil P. Parker, organizes a complete modern set of classifications in two volumes. This reference work, which utilized the contributions of many experts, provided the foundations for the taxonomic classifications used in this dictionary.

The basic taxa are phylum or division, class, order, family, genus, and species. When these or any additional taxonomic names appear in this dictionary, they are enclosed in parentheses and, in conformity with the international codes, have an initial capital with the regular exception of the names of species and taxa ranking below species.

The scientific name of every species of animal or plant is an italicized binomial that consists of the capitalized name of the genus followed by the uncapitalized specific name or epithet.

The user of this dictionary can usually trace the complete taxonomy of a plant or animal by referring to key words in a series of related definitions. For example, one can link a complete taxonomy for a plant, as the turnip, or for an animal, as the cheetah:

tur·nip...**n.**...**1** *a*) a biennial plant (*Brassica rapa*) of the crucifer family,...

cru·ci·fer...**adj.** designating a family (Brassicaceae, order Capparales) of dicotyledonous plants...

di·cot|y·le|don...**n.**...any plant belonging to a class (Magnoliopsida) of angiosperms...

an·gi|o·sperm...**n.** any of a division (Magnoliophyta) of flowering plants...

      *   *   *

chee·tah...**n.**...an extremely fast, doglike cat (*Acinonyx jubatus*)...

cat...**n.**...**1** any of a family (Felidae) of carnivores,...

car·ni·vore...**n.**...**1** any of an order (Carnivora) of fanged, flesh-eating mammals,...

mam·mal...**n.**...any of a large class (Mammalia) of warmblooded, usually hairy vertebrates...

ver·te·brate...**n.** any of a large subphylum (Vertebrata) of chordate animals...

chor·date...**n.**...any of a phylum (Chordata) of animals...

In those taxa where a trinomial is used, as for a subspecies, the third term is uncapitalized and italicized. If a trinomial is used for a cultivated variety, the abbreviation "var." in roman type appears between the specific name and the third term:

☆**Canada lynx** a North American lynx (*Lynx lynx canadensis*)...

cab·bage[1]...**n.**...**1** a common vegetable (*Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata*) of the crucifer family,...

If a particular genus is named in an entry more than once, it is usually abbreviated:

☆**pur|ple-fringed orchis**...orchids (*Habenaria psycodes* and *H. fimbriata*)...

X. IDIOMATIC PHRASES

Idiomatic phrases are run in on an entry block alphabetically after the definition or definitions of the main-entry word, each phrasal entry set in boldface with a dash preceding it. Such phrases have been entered wherever possible under the key word.

busi|ness...**n.**...**—business is business**...**—do business with** ...**—**☆**give (or get) the business** ...**—mean business**...

Alternative forms are indicated inside parentheses, as above in **give (or get) the business.** In the phrase (**at**) **full tilt** under the entry **tilt,** both the longer phrase, **at full tilt,** and the shorter, **full tilt,** are being recorded.

XI. RUN-IN DERIVED ENTRIES

It is possible in English to form an almost infinite number of derived forms simply by adding certain prefixes or suffixes to the base word. It has been the purpose of the editors to include as run-in entries in boldface type only those words one might reasonably expect to encounter in literature or ordinary usage, and then only when the meaning of such derived words can be immediately understood from the meanings of the base word and the affix. Thus, **greatness, liveliness,** and **newness** are run in at the end of the entries for **great, lively,** and **new,** the meanings of the derived forms being clearly understood from the base word and the suffix **-ness,** which is found as a separate entry in this dictionary and means "state, quality, or instance of being." Many words formed with common suffixes such as **-able, -er, -less, -like, -ly, -tion,** etc. are similarly treated as run-in entries with the base word from which they are derived. All such entries are syllabified and either accented to show stress in pronunciation or, where necessary, pronounced in full or in part. Each run-in derived form is preceded by a dash.

If two synonymous run-in derived forms share a part-of-speech label, the more frequently used form appears first and the part-of-speech label is given after the second form. Note the plural form following the first run-in:

prac·ti·cal...**adj.**...**—prac'ti·cal'i|ty** (-kal'ə tē), *pl.* **-|ties,** or **prac'ti·cal·ness** *n.*

When a derived word has a meaning or meanings different from those which can be deduced from the sum of its parts, it has been entered in a block of its own, pronounced, and fully defined (e.g., **producer**).

XII. THE SYNONYMY

The dictionary contains many short paragraphs in which synonyms are listed and discriminated. Each such synonymy is entered after that word in the group which may generally be considered the most basic or comprehensive. Although synonyms have similar or closely related meanings, they are not always interchangeable with one another. The subtle differences that distinguish them are of great importance to precision in language. These distinctions are briefly stated and typical examples of usage given where these will be helpful.

The abbreviation ***SYN.*** in boldface italic capitals at the left indented margin of an entry block introduces a synonymy for the main-entry word. Each of the words discriminated in the paragraph carries, at its own place of entry in the vocabulary, a cross-reference to that synonymy. Thus, following the entry for **guffaw,** there is a note "**—SYN.** LAUGH."

In many cases antonyms are given at the end of the synonymy.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
VARIATION, THE DICTIONARY,
AND THE USER
by John Algeo

The English language is full of variety—of alternative ways of expressing an idea. Books like *Webster's New World Dictionary* record that variety and offer advice about it to those who come to them for information and guidance. To take advantage of what the dictionary has to offer, a user must know something about the kinds of variation in language and about how to interpret the information the dictionary gives about that variation.

VARIATION IN LANGUAGE

Language is not a Platonic idea abiding in a realm of archetypal truths. Rather it is a system we infer from the sounds that come out of the mouths of speakers and the marks that come from the hands of writers. "The" language is an abstraction from many particular language events—conversations and complaints, homilies and harangues, explanations and exhortations—all the varied uses to which language is put all over the world.

Variation within a language is of two main kinds. From one kind, we identify those who use the language: we infer where they come from, what groups they belong to, when they learned the language, and what they are like as individuals—their age, sex, education, and personality; such variation is called *dialect*. From the other kind, we identify the uses to which language is put: the subjects it treats, the circumstances in which it is used, the medium of its expression (for example, speech versus writing), the social relationships among its users, and the purposes of its use; such variation is called *register*.

A Paradox: Diversity and Unity

Every human language is a diversity in unity. The diversity springs naturally from the way different human beings use the language. Each of us is unique—slightly different from every one of our fellows—and consequently we each use our language also in a slightly different way from anyone else. The unity comes from our use of language to communicate with one another. As long as we talk and write among ourselves, the language we use can vary only within understandable bounds; it has to be basically the same for all of us.

The paradox of diversity in unity is more apparent in English than in any other language spoken upon the face of the Earth. The more widely a language is used, the more potential it has for variation. English—in the number of persons who use it, the geographical spread of its use, and the variety of purposes for which it is used—is the most popular language in the world.

Three groups of people use English: (1) those who speak it as a mother tongue, the first language they learn and the main one they use; (2) those who live in a bilingual environment or for whom English is a second language in frequent use in addition to their mother tongue; and (3) those for whom English is a foreign language used for special purposes. Among those nations whose citizens speak English as their mother tongue, the United States is the most populous, followed by the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries such as Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and various Caribbean nations. Canada and South Africa have English as one of two native languages. Having English as an official or widely used second language are many African, Asian, and Oceanic countries: Cameroon, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, India, Israel, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In other nations such as China, Egypt, Japan, most European countries, and indeed throughout the world, English is a widely studied and used foreign language, even if it does not have domestic use among the citizens of those nations.

Perhaps as much as 15 percent of the world's population uses English in one of those three ways. Moreover, those users of English (the most widely distributed of human languages) are scattered all over the world. In addition, English is used more widely for more purposes than any other language: by speakers of many other languages when dealing with science, technology, business, travel, and literature. It is the language of international conferences, negotiations, business, and aviation, and is sometimes used in lands where it is not native for dealings with foreigners, whatever their native languages may be.

Because of that variety of persons, places, and purposes in its use, English is also among the most varied of languages. However, its worldwide popularity also depends upon the basic unity of the language—wherever, by whomever, and whyever used. And so English is also one language, despite all its varieties.

World Englishes: Language and Dialect

The varieties of English include most noticeably those forms of the language used as a mother tongue in independent nations around the globe. They are the most inclusive regional dialects of the language. In population, the chief national variety is American English or the "American language," an expression that does not imply the United States uses a different language from the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries, but only that the English of America has its own standards, as independent of those of its sister nations as the governments of those countries are from one another.

The difference between a language and a dialect is to some extent arbitrary. Linguists say that if two persons, using their mother tongues, can communicate with each other, they speak the same language, although differences in pronunciation, word use, or grammar are signs of different dialects of the language. Politically considered, however, national boundaries often make a difference in what is considered to be the same language or different ones. Swedish and Norwegian are treated as separate languages because they are used in independent nations, although they are mutually comprehensible for the most part. On the other hand, Chinese is considered one language because of political unity and a shared system of ideographic writing, although a native of Canton and a native of Beijing may find that they cannot talk together.

Political boundaries are not always decisive, however. The existence of a conventional written form for Catalan reinforces its claim to be regarded as a separate language from standard Spanish. Present-day English, like the Spanish of Spain and Latin America, on the other hand, is usually thought of as one language that exists in a number of distinct national varieties. English is a world language used by many nations in somewhat different ways. Each country has its own standards for the English language, and so those national varieties are dialects of "the" English language.

Historical Varieties

Our existing dialects are the result of a long history. In the fifth century, various Germanic tribes invaded the British Isles, bringing with them their varied but closely related speechways, which became the language of several independent kingdoms in what are now England and Scotland. That variety of language, called Old English or Anglo-Saxon, was, by the criterion of mutual comprehensibility, a different language from the one we use today. The opening lines of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf* are incomprehensible to a present-day reader:

Hwaet we Gar-Dena/in geardagum/theodcynginga /thrym gefrunon/hu tha aethelingas/ellen fremedon.

Listen! We have learnt of the glory of the kings of the Spear-Danes in days of yore, how the princes did deeds of valor.

Although we cannot understand that language without special study, it (or a variety very much like it) was the ancestor of the English we speak. It gradually changed over the centuries until by about 1100 we speak of it as a different historical variety, Middle English. That lasted until about 1500, when we begin calling it Modern English—recognizably the same as our English in sound and writing.

The early forms of English were subject to strong foreign influences, especially from successful invasions by Scandinavians and French-speaking Normans, but also from the cultural influence of Latin, the language of the medieval Church. Despite such influences, English survived and developed along its own lines

from the poetry of *Beowulf* into that of Chaucer and Shakespeare, becoming the national language of the kingdoms of England and Scotland, which were finally joined by the Act of Union in 1707. Thereafter, English had a single national standard during most of the eighteenth century.

With the American Revolution of 1776, however, two national varieties came into existence: American and British English. Political independence encourages the inhabitants of a nation to recognize their own local variants as the characteristics of their national standard rather than as provincial departures from the standard of the motherland. Other national varieties arose as other areas came to political independence: Liberian (1847), Canadian (1867), Australian (1910), South African (1910), Irish (1922), and after World War II and the dissolution of the British Empire a large number of others. Today, American and British are only the two largest and most influential of many national varieties of the language.

The American Variety

From its roots in the small English colonies of the New World, beginning with Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, American English has become the most used of the mother-tongue varieties of English. In some ways, in pronunciation and grammar particularly but also in vocabulary, American English is conservative, having preserved features lost from British. For example, *fall* has been used since the sixteenth century as a variant for 'autumn' and is still so used in the United States, although it has become uncommon in the United Kingdom.

American English is also innovative, especially in its words. Americanisms, as words and meanings originating in American English are called, have enriched every facet of the vocabulary, and many of them have spread to use in English worldwide. The reader can garner some impression of the frequency and range of Americanism by browsing through this dictionary, looking for items marked with a star (☆). In origin, these Americanisms are of several types.

Sometimes the settlers in the American colonies took old words and used them in new senses. *Corn* originally meant 'grain' in general, and in England, often 'wheat' in particular; Americans applied it to maize instead. *Creek* in England referred to an inlet or bay from the sea; in America it was used for a small stream. Americans, responding to their experiences in the New World, have also turned old expressions to new, metaphorical uses. So *up the creek*, not a desirable place to be, is an Americanism for 'in trouble' and *corny* is 'unsophisticated, sentimental'.

Americans invented new words out of old elements, as Thomas Jefferson did in coining *belittle*, a term that might just as well have originated in England. *Gerrymander*, on the other hand, arose out of a particular event in the political history of Massachusetts, and so is characteristically American. The most famous and successful of all American inventions is *OK*, a word that has pervaded not only all other varieties of English but many foreign languages as well. Despite efforts to relate *OK* to several other languages, including African ones, its history as chronicled by Allen Walker Read shows it to be a native invention. The term was coined in a Boston newspaper in 1839 as an abbreviation of the comic misspelling *oll korrect* and was subsequently popularized as the name of a political club supporting President Martin Van Buren, who was nicknamed *Old Kinderhook* from his birthplace.

Americans have also borrowed words from a variety of foreign languages. From African languages come *gumbo* and probably *jazz* and *juke(box)*. From Amerindian languages, *moccasin*, *skunk*, and *squash* (the food). From Spanish, *cockroach*, *ranch*, and *tornado*. From Dutch, *boss*, *cookie*, and *Santa Claus*. From German, *fresh* 'bold', *hamburger*, and *loafer*. From French, *cent*, *chowder*, and *prairie*. Food terms are especially likely to come from other languages. So we also have *chow mein* from Chinese, *nosh* from Yiddish, *pita* from Modern Hebrew or Greek, *pizza* from Italian, *smorgasbord* from Swedish, and *sukiyaki* from Japanese.

American Regional Dialects

American English itself is no monolith. True, the differences to be found on the breadth of the American continent are not as great as those in the much smaller area of the British Isles. Nevertheless, there are regional dialects within the United States. They are distinguished by pronunciation (Boston "pahk the cah" for *park the car* and Southern "nahs whaht rahs" for *nice white rice*), by word choice (Pennsylvania *gum band* for a rubber band and Louisiana *bayou* for a creek), and even by grammar (New

York "stand *on* line" for queuing up and Southern *y'all* for the second person plural).

The country east of the Mississippi includes two major dialects: Northern and Southern, separated approximately by the Mason-Dixon line between Pennsylvania and Maryland and by the Ohio River. Each of those dialects is subdivided, however, into two. Dialect boundaries do not follow state lines, so the latter can be used only very approximately to suggest the extent of dialect areas.

The Upper North thus includes New England, New York, Michigan, northern Illinois, and Wisconsin; the Lower North is much of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and southern Illinois. The Lower South comprises eastern Virginia and North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, northern Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi; the Upper South is Maryland, western Virginia and North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The Lower North and Upper South overlap in some features, so they are grouped together as a single area, the Midland, by dialectologists like Hans Kurath and Raven I. McDavid, Jr., but treated as parts of the North and South by others like Craig M. Carver.

West of the Mississippi, the features that define eastern dialects continue, but fan out and increasingly overlap one another the farther west one goes. Consequently, Western American English is a dialect to itself, in which the distinctive features of Northern predominate. It is easy to identify a New Englander or a Deep-Southerner, a Manhattanite or an Appalachian from the way they talk. It is much harder to identify a Californian, Oregonian, Nebraskan, or for that matter even a Michigander or Ohioan because their language is relatively uniform.

Social Dialects and Idiolects

In addition to regions, ethnic and other groups have their own dialects. Hispanic English—whether Chicano, Cubano, or Puertorriqueño—has some common features wherever it is found, in California, Texas, Florida, or New York City. Black English similarly has distinctive features, some shared with old-fashioned white Southern use and some characteristic of the black community wherever it is found—including Philadelphia, Detroit, or Chicago. The Chinese, Finns, Germans, Irish, Italians, Japanese, Jews, Poles, and many other such ethnic groups have their own ways of using English. Truck drivers, stock brokers, racetrack touts, and computer hackers have their distinctive ways of working, playing, and talking.

Men and women use English in somewhat different ways. Teenagers and their grandparents have different versions of the language. The less well and the better educated, the insular and the cosmopolitan, the uninvolved and the involved in community affairs—all label themselves by the language they use. And finally, each individual has a different idiolect—a variety of the language that is as personally distinctive as a fingerprint. All of these are dialects, options in language by which we identify who we are.

Several generations of scholars have investigated American regional and social dialects. A Linguistic Atlas of the United States was begun by Hans Kurath and has been carried on by Harold B. Allen, Raven I. McDavid, Jr., Virginia V. McDavid, Lee Pederson, William A. Kretzschmar, Jr., and others. The multivolume *Dictionary of American Regional English* was conceived and is under the editorial direction of Frederic G. Cassidy. Both those projects are under the sponsorship of the American Dialect Society. A number of other scholars have focused especially on the social aspects of dialect, chief among them William Labov.

Registers

Dialects are not the only sort of variation. Other language options allow us to adapt what we want to say or write to the circumstances in which we are communicating. We use different words in discussing politics, sports, theology, or computer science. We arrange our sentence variously in talking to babies, lovers, bosses, or panhandlers. Sentence structure differs between recipes, telegrams, stock-market reports, and thank-you notes. English is pronounced differently from a pulpit or over the counter of a fast-order restaurant. The medium of communication is also relevant: when listening on the telephone, we have to make frequent responses ("mhm," "I see," "oh," "yes") to let the person on the other end know we are still there and paying attention, whereas in face-to-face conversation we often use instead nods of the head, smiles, raised eyebrows, and other such nonlinguistic visual clues.

Differences in language choices that correlate with the subject of discussion, the audience, the genre, the occasion and purpose, or the medium of communication are called registers. They tell little about us as persons, but a good deal about how we respond to the circumstances of communication. Dialect depends on who we are; register depends on who we are communicating with, where,

how, why, and about what. Dialects are limitations on what we can say and write naturally; registers are functional options available to us.

Historical and Contemporary Variation

All the kinds of variation we find in English today also change with time. And it is historical change that has created the variation we see about us. These two sorts of language variation—the historical and the contemporary—are intimately connected. Indeed, they are the same thing looked at in different ways.

It is the nature of language to change. New discoveries, inventions, experiences—even new ways of looking at old things—require new words to talk about them. As we rub shoulders with speakers of other languages around the world, their languages rub off on us. As new generations are born and learn English, they speak a language not quite like that of their parents. And so as the years and generations pass, the language becomes different.

Although many factors combine to effect a change as great as that which converted Old English (exemplified above by the opening lines of *Beowulf*) into Modern English, they are of two main kinds. One sort of change is caused by pressures that exist inside the language system itself. The other sort is the result of changes in the society that uses the language.

The word *cupboard* was formed in the fourteenth century as *cuppeboard*, literally a "cup-board," a sideboard or buffet on which to stack cups. Pressures internal to English caused the "p" sound to be swallowed up by the following "b" and the vowel of the second part to lose stress and be reduced to the neutral vowel schwa: "cubberd" is easier to say. At the same time, changes in living styles moved the storage space for dishes, utensils, and other household items into closets and cabinets, and so *cupboard* changed its meaning. *Cupboard* changed its pronunciation because of internal linguistic pressures and its meaning because of external social changes.

Both kinds of change affect all aspects of the English language. The analogy of the past tense form *drove* for *drive* helped to create a new past tense *dove* for the verb *dive*. Such analogy is a kind of internal pressure. On the other hand, our contact with Russia has introduced such new words as *babushka*, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the multitude of forms we have invented using the suffix *-nik*. Loanwords reflect external, cultural change.

Change, due to both internal and external causes, is normal to all living languages. The only languages that do not change are languages that are not used. Change is not corruption; there is no danger of English dying because it is changing—on the contrary, change is a sign of vitality. On the other hand, change is not improvement. It is simply adaptation to internal and external pressures, however much we may like or dislike particular changes.

While a historical change is in progress but not yet complete, alternative ways of using the language are available to us. The effect of historical change is to create contemporary variation. Conversely, contemporary variation is historical change frozen at a moment in time. One task of a dictionary is to record the variation in the contemporary language, to relate it to historical change, and to explain to dictionary-users the options they have in choosing among the alternatives before them.

THE DICTIONARY

The cynic Ambrose Bierce defined the dictionary as "a malevolent literary device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic." Bierce was wrong. Dictionaries, on the contrary, are properly devices for tracing the past growth of the vocabulary, describing its present extent and options, and giving information from which we can assess its future possibilities. Dictionaries are records of the language's vitality and elasticity.

Dictionaries come in a variety of sizes and kinds, ranging from the seventeen-volume *Oxford English Dictionary*, which aims at a full lexicographic historical record of all the words of English, to slim pocket-sized booklets. For ordinary purposes, the most useful kind of dictionary is the "college" or "desk" dictionary, which aims at recording all the vocabulary of English about which most dictionary-users are likely to want information. It tries to answer simply and accurately questions about words. It is an all-purpose reference book about the English vocabulary.

Grammar and Lexicon

Languages are described in two ways. First, by general rules that state the regularities or structure of the language and are called its grammar (for example, "English verbs form their past tense by adding the ending *-ed*"). Second, by a list of irregularities that states idiosyncratic facts about the words of the language and is called its *lexicon* (for example, "*loose* and *unloose* both mean 'to set free'"). Grammars tell us about the patterns into which words

enter. Dictionaries tell us about the individual peculiarities of words. Inevitably, the two kinds of descriptions overlap: grammars list exceptions to their general rules ("the past tense of *drive*, however, is *drove*"), and dictionaries give some information about regular forms ("*-ed*: a suffix used to form the past tense of regular verbs"). However, the focus of grammars is on regular combinations of words, and that of dictionaries is on their individual peculiarities.

The dictionary is primarily a record of how the words of a language are used by those who speak and write it as a mother tongue. That record includes what words are used, how they are spelled and pronounced, how their written and spoken forms are divided into syllables, what part of speech they belong to, what irregularities they have in inflected forms, where they came from and how they developed, what they mean, how they are used, and what restrictions limit their use (see the "Guide to the Use of the Dictionary" for information about these parts of a dictionary entry).

Usage and Acceptability

Among the information in dictionaries are judgments made by speakers and writers of the language concerning what is proper or acceptable. Everyone who uses English likes or dislikes some of the options that are available to them. Thus, some persons object to the use of *them* to refer to an indefinite pronoun like *everyone*, as in the preceding sentence; others find it a normal and convenient use. Some persons regard *hopefully* in the sense 'it is to be hoped' as in "They are to leave early, hopefully by six" as ungainly; others think it fills a need. The variation in such opinions is part of the language that dictionaries try to record.

Dictionary users often come to the dictionary to be told what is correct or incorrect in the language. Within certain limitations, that expectation is reasonable. However, lexicographers do not make laws about what is right and wrong. Rather they observe how people who speak and write English use the language (use) and what those same people think about the options available to them (acceptability).

When most people use a word and accept it without comment, the lexicographer records that word without question. When most people do not use a word and reject it as impossible, the lexicographer simply omits it (or enters it with the label *archaic* or *obsolete* if it is an older word now used rarely or never). However, when a word is used by some people and not by others, or is accepted as right by some and rejected as wrong by others, the lexicographer records the word and notes the fact that its use is restricted in various ways or that opinion about its acceptability is divided.

Dictionaries do not tell their users how they *ought* to speak and write the English language, but only how they *can* do so and what other speakers and writers think about the options available to everyone. Grammars and dictionaries are sometimes described as "descriptive" or "prescriptive," as "permissive" or "purist." Such dichotomies, however, are false. It is not the business of a dictionary either to give permission or to uphold pure standards. Nor is it its business to prescribe what people should do or to describe uses without reference to the reactions that others may have to those uses.

Aims and Limitations of Lexicography

Dictionaries set forth the options available to users of the language and give as much information as they can about those options—including the responses they are likely to evoke. That is a very ambitious goal. In fact, it is a goal that cannot be achieved completely. English provides an untold wealth of options, reactions to those options are as diverse as the persons who use English, and both the options and reactions to them are constantly changing.

It has been said that all grammars leak—that is, fail to describe completely the regularities in the system of a language. Similarly, all dictionaries have holes. None can hope to present a full account of the English vocabulary because it is too large and too much in flux. The wonder is that dictionaries are able to tell as much as they do and to be as accurate as they are.

A college dictionary aims to give reasonably full information about all the words we are apt to encounter in newspapers, general magazines, and nontechnical books, but also important technical terms that a user might wish to look up. It aims at being as up-to-date as possible and at giving as accurate information as our ever-growing knowledge of the language and the world makes available. It aims at setting forth the main variations in the language and providing such information about them as is necessary for an intelligent choice among the options. New dictionaries have