

THE
CHAMBERS
DICTIONARY



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Preface

This is the first edition of *The Chambers Dictionary* to be published in the twenty-first century, a significant fact considering that when the dictionary was first published, in 1901, it was entitled *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary*. The fact that the book has now outlived the century of its original title is a testament to its perennial appeal. One reason for this longevity is its distinctive approach: *Chambers* has not only secured the trust of its users with its comprehensive coverage of English, but has also delighted them by including more than its share of unusual words and throwing in a sprinkling of humorous and playful definitions. This combination has given *Chambers* a reputation for being “The Word Lover’s Dictionary”.

In the lexicographical landscape of the twenty-first century, *The Chambers Dictionary* stands out like a baroque mansion in a city of faceless concrete. While other single-volume dictionaries concentrate on describing the familiar language of our times, only *Chambers* provides the contemporary user with information on the unfamiliar: the words they may come across in our literary heritage; words from the past as well as the present; unusual words as well as commonly heard ones; words from the different dialects of English; fascinating words with the power to surprise and amuse.

We hope that users who are already familiar with the dictionary will find that this new edition retains its traditional appeal. We have pursued a policy of retaining all words listed in the previous edition (although we have taken the opportunity to remove some abbreviations that are no longer current). So the dictionary remains a treasure-house of strange and wonderful words. However, we have also taken steps to make the book accessible to the word lovers of the modern age by subjecting the entire dictionary to a thorough revision. Earlier editions assumed that readers would have more leisure to acquaint themselves with intricate patterns of arranging entries than may be the case today. We have attempted to make the dictionary’s structure more transparent by clarifying the way that entries are arranged. Earlier editions used in their definitions some words that are no longer widely understood. We have removed obsolete and opaque language from definitions. Earlier editions assumed that readers would have a familiarity with a canon of literature that is alien to many modern readers. We have clarified references to less familiar works and provided notes (as part of the supplement at the back of the book) on all of the authors mentioned in classification labels.

Yet while we are keen to preserve the treasures of the past, we have no wish to fossilize the English language. This new edition reflects the full richness of contemporary language, including around 10,000 new words and meanings. As ever, the new words and meanings in the dictionary provide a measure of the way that language is expanding to take account of new social and cultural trends: new arrivals such as *dotcom*, *webcam* and *silver surfer* indicate the influence that the computer continues to have on our language, while *ringtone*, *SIM card* and *WAP* are attributable to the ubiquitous mobile phone; new modes of entertainment have occasioned the inclusion of *docusoap* and *featurette*; the explosion of interest in food and drink from around the world has caused items such as *baba ghanouzh*, *panini* and *clafoutis* to become assimilated into English. These are just some of the more familiar words to have entered the dictionary in this edition. In the course of this updating, we have also – as readers of the new definitions for *mullet* and *boy band* (among others) may surmise – maintained the dictionary’s tradition of sprinkling the occasional light-hearted definition into the mix.

We hope that this major revision of the dictionary consolidates its existing strengths while bringing it up to date for a twenty-first-century readership.

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Finally, we would like to acknowledge our debt to all the lexicographers who have worked on the previous editions of this dictionary.

Foreword

by Melvyn Bragg

A good dictionary is the most democratic history of the human mind. All human life is there: the best, the worst and the rest. Actions are said to speak louder than words – but only if we give them a voice. How and when the first words crept up the larynx is a question to exercise linguists the world over, but now that they are here, it is words that distinguish us, disgust us, inspire us, and upset us. They can begin as one thing – like *chip*, which meant ‘to cut and chop into small pieces’ in the 1901 edition of Chambers – and metamorphose into fresh forms: *silicon chips*, to *chip* a golf ball or tennis ball or football, a *chip on the shoulder*. On it goes as if with a life of its own.

Perhaps it has. *Rose* must at one stage have been just a word, plucked from who knows where to describe the flower. Now it is the flower, the artificial has become real, and from the flower it takes off to evoke a girl called Rose, a small dawn, the colour of a wine and of a wood and of a cheek.

One of the greatest of all inventions, the alphabet, that meagre file of twenty-six letters, can transform itself into millions of different combinations and in great dictionaries these are rounded up every so often, replenished with new words. In Chambers the lists are garnished with the quirky (*not know a B from a bull’s foot* – ‘to be very ignorant’), the downright odd (*paneity* – ‘the state of being bread’) and of course, in its own best tradition, spiced with wit: (*éclair* – ‘a cake long in shape but short in duration’; *fish* – ‘to catch or try to catch or obtain fish or anything that may be likened to a fish – such as seals, sponges, corals, compliments, information or husbands’). It is not surprising that Chambers is the favourite dictionary of crossword puzzlers: in their stern expeditions into the unknown they need all the laughs they can get.

The use and misuse of language are topics that engage almost every English speaker I have ever met. ‘You say tomato? We say tomatoyto.’ ‘You call it a stream? It’s a beck up here.’ We love the fascinating and often comical history of different accents, the strength and retentive power of dialects, the tenacity of slang, the constant infusion of new words, the often unaccountable death of the old (*famble* for ‘hand’ surely merits a revival, and as for *neogamist* – ‘a person newly married’ – I fail to see how we manage without it).

The English language in its gloriously mongrelized, multi-layered, and now globalized, estate is an astonishing creation. The plasticity of its pronunciation, the obstinacy of some of its meanings, the way in which it can provide routes through the most fumble-brained line of thought make it, for me, more extraordinary than the Seven Wonders of the Old World and any Seven we would elect in the New. And everybody has a stake in it. Everybody who speaks it owns it.

But it was only when I set out to trace its history, from its roots to the present day, in *The Adventure of English*, that I realized just how mighty a thing it is and how very lucky English speakers are. Nowadays, with up to one and a half billion people having degrees of understanding of English, it is difficult to think of its world role as being anything but inevitable – like the arrival of *Homo sapiens* himself. But the more I went into the chronicle of the English language, the more of an adventure it seemed, with all the twists and turns of plot, the cliff-hangers, the apparent certain death, the miraculous recoveries and finally the astounding sum of it all. I began to think that the language itself had some inner focus of its own, taking the blows, patient through times of oppression, at times ruthless, always able to assimilate, to absorb, to slough off old skins or grow new ones.

The adventure began just over fifteen hundred years ago. After the Romans had withdrawn from Britain in 412AD, German tribes who had visited the island as mercenaries attached to the Roman legions took advantage of the departure of their former paymasters to come and settle in what they saw as a rich and ill-defended land. They brought their language with them. The Celtic, spoken by the natives, was very largely ignored and pushed to the extreme north and west, and such Latin as remained was picked at but meagrely. Over time, the invaders’ tongue bedded in and became the bedrock of our English. Still today, all over the world, the overwhelming majority of the one hundred most commonly used words are from what we call Old English – i.e. the language of the fifth century immigrants: *friend, father, mother, son, the, is, he, she* – these words are the foundation of the language. The Romans came back and, through the Church, infiltrated their Latin, circumspectly adopted, but that was as nothing compared with the invasion of the Danes, the Vikings, who almost conquered the entire island and would have done but for a last stand, made in true epic and heroic style by Alfred the Great. He not only saved England, but he also saved English. By insisting on its being taught in schools and used in law-making, he made it central to his Kingdom. And so by the eleventh century ‘English’, as it was called, with its epic poems and its laws and literature, was far and away the leading vernacular language in Europe.

Then the Normans came and Norman French ruled for almost three hundred years, making English the third tongue (Latin was the language of the powerful Church) in its own country. The amazing story here is that of a subjugated and oppressed language literally taking on its conqueror (in these years English absorbed over twelve thousand French words) and turning the oppressor’s tongue into its own. From *castles to government to beef* to every aspect of life, English worked out how to absorb what could have crushed and even eliminated it. Here the great talent for taking a punch, riding with it and then coming back with a counter-punch was fully revealed. It had begun when the Danes came and *hide* lived alongside *skin*, *ill* alongside *sick*. But this waterfall of French words

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enriched the language immeasurably. *Bit* and *morsel* were not quite the same, nor were *begin*, *start* and *commence*, but by keeping both or all three, even four sometimes, doors were opened to fine distinctions, to the possibility of greater and greater precision, to a language which would soon seek out poetry on which to hone its skills at describing the human condition.

By the time it was ready to seek out new lands across the sea and become the language of an empire, English had already learned how to plunder, loot, borrow and invent insatiably. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Pilgrim Fathers sailed for America with a language which already contained words from fifty different languages: yet still the roots held.

In my own foray into the adventure of English, I discovered a new hero of language in William Tyndale. He deserves to stand shoulder to shoulder with Shakespeare, who may well have heard Tyndale's words in his church at Stratford-on-Avon. Tyndale, an Oxford clerical scholar, was utterly determined that English-speaking people should have a Bible in their own language. His words have enriched the language and the literature ever since: *Let there be light; the powers that be; a man after my own heart; eat, drink and be merry*; and the great dignifiers of those in the faith: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*

We who speak English also use words derived from French, German, Latin, Greek, Danish, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, some Arabic, Malay, Welsh, Irish-Gaelic, Indian, Persian, Chinese, Caribbean, Australian, African... on it goes, this restless flow of English, begun in such a remote, such an unlikely spot, in such a small tribal tongue, now oceanic, circling the planet, breeding new Englishes, commanding new dictionaries.

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A short history of English

Introduction

English is now used as a first language by about 700 million speakers, and is a second language for many millions more. It appears in many guises, ranging from the “new” Englishes of Africa and Asia, eg Indian English, through the usages of North America to the oldest established varieties (the English of England, Hiberno-English and Scots in Lowland Scotland). English is now a world language, the most widespread in linguistic function and geographical extent that the world has ever seen.

The modern varieties of English have emerged over the last five or six centuries through contact with other languages and through dynamic interaction with each other. All, however, derive from one ultimate source: the Germanic language-variety which was brought to Britain from northern Germany by Anglo-Saxon invaders in the fifth century AD. The people who spoke this variety supplanted the Romano-British inhabitants, who gradually retreated to the northern and western parts of the island where, in North Wales and the Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland, they remain. The invaders’ language subsequently became a distinct language, English, which developed and spread within the British Isles up to the sixteenth century. English was subsequently taken beyond these islands with the imperial expansions of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

During these centuries the structure of the English language changed radically. Our evidence for these changes comes, of course, not from the direct analysis of speech – for sound-recordings of English only began to be made at the end of the nineteenth century – but from comparative study of other languages and through the painstaking analysis by scholars of the written records which have come down to us continuously from the seventh century onwards.

A Germanic language

All Germanic languages derive from a common ancestor known as Proto-Germanic. English is a member of the Western branch of the Germanic languages, which also includes German, Dutch, Afrikaans, and (its closest Germanic relative) Frisian, this last being a language-variety spoken in what is now part of the Netherlands. Other branches of Germanic which are traditionally identified include North Germanic (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Faroese, Icelandic) and East Germanic (now extinct, and recorded for the most part in the fourth-century Gothic Bible-translation of Bishop Ulfilas).

The Germanic languages are themselves part of a much larger language-family: the Indo-European group, which includes such diverse languages as Bengali and Brythonic, Russian and Romany, Sanskrit and Spanish. This group stems ultimately from Proto-Indo-European, which was probably originally spoken in what is now Southern Russia.

English shares a number of characteristics with its Germanic relations. Probably the best-known of these is the Germanic modification of inherited consonantal sounds known as Grimm’s Law, so-called after the philologist and folklorist J Grimm (1785–1863). Grimm showed that there was a regular set of consonantal differences between the Germanic languages and the others of the Indo-European family, which dated from the period of divergence of Proto-Germanic from the other Indo-European varieties. The effects of Grimm’s Law in Old English can be seen through comparing groups of cognates, ie words in different languages with a common ancestor (cf Latin *co-* + *gnātus* ‘born together’). Thus, for instance, *p* in other Indo-European languages corresponds to *f/v* in Germanic languages, eg *father* (German *Vater*, but Latin *pater*, French *père*, Italian *padre*, Sanskrit *pitar-*), *foot* (Dutch *voet*, but Latin *pes*, *ped-*, French *ped*, Sanskrit *padām* ‘footstep’), etc.

The discovery of such shared linguistic features has made it possible to reconstruct the relationships of the languages which derive from Proto-Indo-European. However, it is worth remembering that, just as children derive some of their linguistic behaviour from their parents but are also strongly influenced by their peer group, so language-varieties borrow usages from those language-varieties with which they come into contact and transmit these acquired characteristics to future generations. Indeed, without such contacts the processes of linguistic change would have been much slower in operation: such a pattern is observable in languages which have little contact with others (for instance Icelandic, which has been an isolated language for much of the last thousand years, has barely changed during this period). The history of English is not one of internal evolution, hermetically sealed from outside influence. Rather, its history is one of constant and dynamic interaction between inherited usage and the languages with which it came into contact.

It is traditional to distinguish between “external history”, ie the changing functions of varieties of the vernacular in relation to other languages and to broader developments in society, and “internal history”, ie the changing forms of the language. This distinction is adopted here.

External history

The earliest forms of English were very different from those in present-day use, and the modern configuration has taken many centuries to emerge. The history of English is traditionally divided into a sequence of epochs distinguished by certain language-external events and characterized by language-internal differences.

The following broad periods are generally recognized, although there is a good deal of scholarly debate about the precise boundaries between them.

Prehistoric Old English ('pre-Old English'): the period before written records, roughly 450–650/700AD. During this period English diverged from the other members of the Germanic group to become a distinct language.

Old English, often referred to as Anglo-Saxon after the Germanic tribes who used it: the period from the appearance of written records in English to the Norman Conquest of 1066. During this period, English was used nationally for the documentary purposes of Anglo-Saxon government. It also had a literary function: the epic poem *Beowulf* was copied in a manuscript dating from circa 1000, and the end of the period saw the emergence of a formidable native prose tradition with the composition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the religious homilies of Aelfric and Wulfstan. Most Old English which has come down to us is written in the West-Saxon dialect, since the national focus of power for much of the period lay in the south-western kingdom of Wessex. However, the Old English written record provides evidence for at least three other dialect-groupings: Old Mercian in the Midlands, Old Northumbrian in Northern England and in what later became Lowland Scotland to the south of the Clyde-Forth line, and Kentish in South-East England.

Towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, large numbers of North Germanic (Scandinavian) peoples settled in northern England. Their language, in part because it seems to have been to a degree mutually intelligible with local varieties of Old English, had a profound effect on the subsequent history of English beyond the area of primary Scandinavian settlement. However, Scandinavian left little mark on the written record until after the Norman Conquest of 1066.

Middle English: the period from the Norman Conquest to the arrival of printing in Britain in 1476. The Conquest saw the large-scale replacement of the old Anglo-Saxon aristocracy with a French-speaking and European-centred elite. Although English remained in widespread use in speech, it lost in national status; documentary functions were taken over by Latin, which was undergoing a revival in Western Europe, while many literary functions were taken over by varieties of French. The French-speaking elite seems to have shifted quite quickly to the regular use of English in speech, but French remained in prestigious use until at least the end of the fourteenth century. Written English, for much of the Middle Ages, was of solely local significance, primarily used for initial education and for the production of texts with a local readership; it was thus strongly marked by dialectal variation in writing. This situation changed towards the end of the period. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written for an aristocratic and metropolitan audience around 1390–1400, marks one stage in the emergence of the vernacular as having a national significance, as does the translation of the Bible into English associated with the proto-Protestant Wycliffite movement at the end of the fourteenth century.

Towards the end of the Middle English period, distinct varieties of the language emerged outside England: Older Scots in Lowland Scotland, and Hiberno-English in eastern Ireland.

Early Modern English: the period from 1476 to the early eighteenth century. Caxton's introduction of printing to England at the end of the fifteenth century coincided with the elaboration of English as a vernacular capable of being used for all linguistic functions. The role of English was given impetus by the Protestant Reformation, which placed a religious duty of literacy on all, and provided national texts for the purpose: the vernacular Bible and Prayer-Book. This national role coincided with the standardization of written English and with the emergence during the sixteenth century of a prestigious form of pronunciation. Evolving class-structures in society, notably the rise of a powerful London bourgeoisie, provided audiences for sophisticated vernacular texts, such as the dramas of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and the prestige of the vernacular was reinforced by the victories of the rising middle classes in the mid-seventeenth-century Civil Wars.

The foundation of the modern British state following the Act of Union between England, Wales and Scotland (1707) may be taken as an external marker of the end of the Early Modern period. Older Scots continued to be used up to this date, although it underwent severe competition from the forces of Anglicization, particularly in religious discourse. During this period, new varieties of English/Scots appeared in overseas settlements such as the Plantations in Ulster from the end of the sixteenth century, and in the British Colonies in North America.

Later Modern English: the period from the early eighteenth century to the present-day. Tendencies already prefigured in earlier centuries, such as the development of mass literacy and of urban varieties, came to fruition during this period. It is also the period when overt pride in English was most clearly signalled, notably with the arrival of large-scale codifications of the language such as Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* of 1755. Above all, the defining linguistic characteristic of this period is the spread of English beyond its place of origin, to the various parts of the Empire and later, with the cultural hegemony of the United States, to the new electronic media.

After 1707 Older Scots developed into Modern Scots, but became much more restricted in register, to non-prestigious speech and to specialized usages, eg in the verse of Robert Burns. Subsequent attempts to reinstate Scots as a national, ie Scottish, vernacular rather than as a collection of local varieties have met so far with mixed success. Other varieties within the English-language continuum have emerged as elaborated usages in their own right, eg Indian English, where a special variety with its own distinctive grammatical, lexical and accentual properties has emerged as a national prestigious usage.

Internal history

The developments in the social function of English described above all left their mark on the internal evolution of the language, at every level: in pronunciation and spelling, in grammar and in vocabulary.

Towards the end of the Old English period, **spelling** became standardized on the basis of West Saxon, for reasons already given; but during the Middle English period it became usual for dialectal variation to be manifested in spelling. There are therefore, for instance, no fewer than 500 ways of spelling the simple word 'through' in Middle English, ranging from fairly recognizable *thurgh*, *thorough* and *þorowe* to exotic-seeming *drow3*, *yhurght*, *trghug* and *trowffe*. As long as English was used simply on a local basis this practice was comparatively unproblematic, since the

phonic conventions of each locality could be accepted comparatively easily within that locality as an appropriate reflection of pronunciation. However, the inconvenience of not having a national system became much more apparent when English started to take on national functions once again. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the usage developed in London was starting to take on a national role, and London spelling of this period is in its essentials the basis of the present-day English pattern. During the sixteenth century, a parallel standardized Scottish system competed for a while with London spelling in Scotland, and a slightly modified form of the system appeared in the United States at the end of the eighteenth century (thus distinctions of the *coloured-colored* type) and has been subsequently sustained there and elsewhere.

The reconstruction of **pronunciation** during the Old and Middle English periods is based upon a mixture of evidence of greater or lesser value: the interpretation of spellings, the analysis of rhyming practice in verse, comparison with other languages and with later states of the language. The major development in the history of English is a phenomenon called the Great Vowel Shift, which affected the ‘long vowels’ of later Middle English. This sound-change, which probably arose in London as a result of complex processes of social interaction, may be dated to the period between 1400 and 1600 by the evidence of words coming into the language. Thus *doubt* and *guile*, French words which entered the language before 1400, were subjected to the diphthongization-processes of the Shift, while *soup* and *tureen*, later adoptions, were not so subjected.

The evidence for a standard form of pronunciation is uncertain until the sixteenth century. In 1589, George Puttenham, in *The Arte of English Poesie*, advises the accomplished poet to adopt the accentual usage of ‘the better brought vp sort’:

‘ye shall therfore take the vsuall speach of the Court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within lx. myles, and not much aboute.’

The history of standard pronunciation is a complex matter, and the evolution of present-day prestigious accents is a matter of quite complex interaction between varieties rather than a simple process of descent. However, broadly speaking, Puttenham’s description still holds for England at least, although other prestigious accents are found widely throughout the English-speaking world. Thus the accent-component of Scottish Standard English is prestigious in Scotland, and the variety known as General American is prestigious in the United States.

In **grammar**, the major change between Old and Present-Day English is the shift from synthesis to analysis in expressing grammatical relations. Whereas the relationships within and between phrases in Present-Day English are largely expressed by word-order, in Old English, these relationships are expressed to a much greater extent by special endings attached to words. These endings are called inflections.

The Old English inflectional system means that Old English word-order can be much more flexible than that of its descendant. Thus, in Present-Day English

1. *The lord binds the servant.*

and 2. *The servant binds the lord.*

mean very different things. The word-order indicates the relative functions of the phrases ‘the lord’ and ‘the servant’. This was not necessarily the case in Old English. Sentence 1. above can be translated into Old English as

3. *Se hlāford bint þone cnapan.*

However, it could also be translated as

4. *þone cnapan bint se hlāford.*

or 5. *Se hlāford þone cnapan bint.*

and so on. In sentences 3. – 5. above, the phrase *se hlāford*, because it is in the so-called nominative case, with a nominative form of the definite article (*se*) is always the subject of the clause in whatever position it appears. And, because it is in the so-called accusative case, with an accusative form of the definite article (*þone*) and an accusative inflection on the accompanying noun (*-an*), *þone cnapan* is always the direct object of the clause. The cases, not the word-order, here determine the relationship between the two phrases. There were conventions in Old English that placed the subject in initial position, but these conventions could easily be departed from for stylistic effect.

This system did not survive intact into the Middle English period; it appears that interaction with Scandinavian encouraged the loss of inflections, and the conventions of word-order, whereby subject/object positioning had become stylistically formalized, became more fixed to take over the task originally performed by inflections. The Present-Day English pattern resulted. However, it is wrong to describe Present-Day English as wholly uninflected: a few inflections remain in Present-Day English, even if we do not call them such (cf *Tom, Tom’s, pig, pig’s, pigs*, etc).

Perhaps most obviously, there have been changes in the **lexicon** between Old and Present-Day English, and these changes reflect the kinds of linguistic contacts which the language has undergone. Although much of the core vocabulary of English is derived from Old English – eg *hand, head, wife, child, stone, name, man, fish, ride, choose, bind, love*, etc – the lexicon in general has been greatly augmented by borrowings from other languages.

Scandinavian has affected some of the most basic features of the language, such as the pronoun system – *they, their* and *them* are all from Scandinavian – and the system of grammatical inflection, eg the *-s* endings on some parts of the verb-paradigm in *loves* etc. Further, some items of core vocabulary are Scandinavian in origin, eg *take, ill, egg, skin*. More subtly, cognate items in Scandinavian and English have developed distinct meanings, eg *skirt, shirt*, and many Scandinavian words are found only in some varieties, eg *kirk*.

French has had a massive effect on the range of lexical items available in the language. To exemplify from the noun alone: words such as *action, bucket, calendar, courtesy, damage, envy, face, grief, honour, joy, labour, marriage, noise, opinion, people, quality, rage, reason, sound, spirit, task, use, vision, waste*, all of which are common in Present-Day

usage, are all derived from French. Many French words are found in high-register contexts, and this means that their meanings in English diverge from those in French, eg *commence*, which has high-register connotations in English which are not shared by the French original *commencer*.

Of course, numerous other languages have had an effect on English, reflecting various cultural and imperial developments. Latin learning, sometimes mediated through French, has given English words such as *arbiter*, *pollen*, *junior*, *vertigo*, *folio*, etc. Contact with the world beyond Western Europe has given most of the European languages such words as *harem* (Arabic), *steppe* (Russian), *taboo* (Tongan), *chocolate* (Nahuatl), but it seems likely that imperial expansion in India gave English such items as *thug*, *pyjama*, *gymkhana*, *mulligatawny*.

The hospitality of English to foreign words has often been commented on; indeed, borrowing is the characteristic method whereby English expands its vocabulary, something which marks English off from its near-relatives such as German. Old English, like modern German, created new words through compounds, eg *sciprāp* ‘cable’ (lit. ‘ship-ropes’); cf German *Fernseher* ‘television’ (lit. ‘far-seer’). However, this is no longer a marked feature of Present-Day English. One reason for this change must be to do with the grammatical structure of the later forms of English: there is no need to fit borrowed items into a complex inflectional system. Another reason is probably to do with custom: the more English borrowed, the more borrowing became customary; the more borrowing became customary, the more English borrowed.

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Examples of Earlier English

The Lord’s Prayer in Old, Middle and Early Modern English, and in Older Scots

Old English (West Saxon, late ninth century)

Ʒū ūre fæder, þe eart on heofonum, sīe þīn nama gehālgod. Cume þīn rice. Sīe þīn wylla on eorþan swā swā on heofonum. Syle ūs tōdæg ūrne dæghwāmlican hlāf. And forgief ūs ūre gyltas swā swā wē forgiefað þm þe wið ūs āgyltaþ. And ne læd þū nā ūs on costnunge, ac ālies ūs fram yfele.

Middle English (Kentish, 1340)

Vader oure þet art ine heuenes, yhalzed by þin name. Cominde þi riche. Yworþe þi wil ase ine heuene and ine erþe. Bread oure echedayes yef ous today. And uorlet ous oure yeldinges ase and we uorleteþ oure yelderes. And ne ous led naȝt into uondinge, ac vri ous uram queade.

Middle English (Central Midlands, c. 1380)

Oure fadir, þat art in heuenys, halewid be þi name. Þi kyngdom come to. Be þi wile don ase in heuene and in erþe. Ȝiue to us þis day oure breed ouer oþer substaunse. And forȝiue to us oure dettes, as and we forȝiuen to oure dettouris. And leede us not into temptaciouns, but delyuere us from yuel.

Older Scots (c. 1520)

Our fader, that art in heuenis, hallewit be thi name. Thi kingdom cum to. Thi wil be done in erde as in heuen. Gefe to vs this day our breid ouer vthir substaunce. And forȝif to vs our dettis, as we forȝef to our dettouris. And leid vs nocht into temptacioun, bot deliuer vs fra euile.

Early Modern English (Book of Common Prayer, 1549)

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil.

Varieties of English

This dictionary is written with the British speaker of English in mind. However, English exists in many varieties in the world today. Some of the differences between the forms of English spoken and written in Britain and in the rest of the world are shown below.

American English

The characteristic American spellings of a number of individual words (eg *manoeuvre/maneuver*, *defence/defense*, *practise/practice*) are noted in the dictionary. Some spelling differences involving groups of similar words are as follows:

Brit	US	
-ogue	-og	American English simplifies words such as <i>catalogue</i> and <i>pedagogue</i> to <i>catalog</i> and <i>pedagog</i> .
-our	-or	American English has -or in words such as <i>color</i> and <i>humor</i> . <i>Glamour</i> and <i>saviour</i> , however, are generally written -our.
-re	-er	Eg <i>center</i> , <i>meter</i> , <i>theater</i> . But to show the hard sound of c or g: <i>acre</i> , <i>massacre</i> , <i>ogre</i> , etc; however, <i>meager</i> not <i>meagre</i> .
ll	l	In inflections and derivatives of words ending in <i>l</i> not immediately preceded by a single stressed vowel, American English does not double the <i>l</i> (cf page xxii): <i>canceled</i> , <i>counselor</i> , <i>disheveled</i> , <i>equaled</i> , <i>marvelous</i> , <i>traveler</i> , etc. (Note also <i>woolen</i> .)
pp	p	Similarly, <i>kidnap</i> , <i>worshipping</i> , etc.
tt	t	And also <i>carburetor</i> (but eg <i>formatting</i>).
l	ll	Eg <i>enroll</i> , <i>fulfill</i> , <i>instill</i> , <i>skillful</i> and <i>willful</i> .
ae, oe	e	The tendency to replace ae and oe by e in words derived from Latin and Greek is more strongly developed in the US than in Britain, eg <i>esophagus</i> , <i>hemoglobin</i> .
or e		
-ize	-ise	In verbs that may be spelt -ize or -ise, the use of -ize is now standard in American English. Note also <i>analyze</i> , <i>paralyze</i> , etc.

As a rule, hyphens are used less frequently in American English than in British English, although there is an increasing tendency to omit hyphens in Britain as well.

Generally speaking, American pronunciation differs from British English as follows:

Brit	US	
ä		In many words, eg <i>ask</i> , <i>dance</i> , <i>half</i> and <i>rather</i> , American English has a shorter, more front vowel than that of standard British English.
i		Where British English has /i/ in final position in words such as <i>happy</i> and <i>city</i> , American English has /ē/.
ö		An alternative pronunciation /ä/ is common in words such as <i>haunt</i> , <i>launch</i> , <i>saunter</i> , <i>taunt</i> and <i>vault</i> .

o		In American English, words such as <i>block</i> , <i>got</i> , <i>pond</i> , <i>probable</i> and <i>top</i> are pronounced with an /ä/ sound. In words in which the vowel is followed by <i>f</i> , <i>s</i> , <i>th</i> , <i>r</i> , <i>g</i> or <i>ng</i> , eg <i>coffee</i> , <i>dog</i> , <i>cross</i> , <i>forest</i> and <i>long</i> , a longer vowel similar to /ö/ is also common.
ū		After the sounds <i>t</i> , <i>d</i> , <i>n</i> , <i>l</i> and <i>s</i> , American English has /oo/ rather than /ū/, eg in <i>new</i> and <i>tune</i> .
ī		In most words ending in -ile, such as <i>agile</i> , <i>fertile</i> , <i>fragile</i> and <i>hostile</i> , American English pronounces the final syllable as /-il/ rather than /-īl/.
t		In words such as <i>latter</i> , <i>metal</i> and <i>writing</i> , the -tt/-t- is pronounced with the same sound as that of the -dd/-d- in <i>ladder</i> , <i>medal</i> and <i>riding</i> .
r		In most accents of American English <i>r</i> is pronounced at the end of a word and before a consonant.

There are a number of differences between the American pronunciation of vowels followed by *r* and the British pronunciation of the corresponding vowels:

Brit	US	
a		Some Americans tend to make a sound approaching /e/, so that, for example, <i>marry</i> approximates to <i>merry</i> .
ā		This is commonly pronounced as a diphthong before <i>r</i> , the first element of which is close to a lengthened /e/. The second element of the diphthong, /ə/, is sometimes not pronounced when the vowel occurs in initial or medial position; eg the usual pronunciation of <i>Maryland</i> is /mer'i-lænd/.
är		In words such as <i>clerk</i> and <i>Derby</i> , where British speech preserves an older pronunciation /är/, American speech has /ür/.
-er-		
-ə-ri		American English tends to give greater prominence than British English does to the suffixes -ary and -ory, and often also -ery; for example, <i>monetary</i> (Brit /-tə-ri/ or -tri/, US /-te-ri/), <i>confectionery</i> (Brit /-nə-ri/, US /-ne-ri/) and <i>obligatory</i> (Brit /-tə-ri/ or -tri/, US /-tö-ri/)

In addition to the above, many differences between American and British English pronunciation are noted in the entries for particular words and prefixes in the dictionary. See for example *anti-*, *schedule*, *simultaneous* and *tomato*.

Many differences between British and American usage with regard to vocabulary and meaning are noted in the dictionary, eg *bonnet/hood*, *coffin/casket*, *curtains/drapes*, *estate agent/realtor*, *motorway/expressway*, *pavement/sidewalk*, *sweets/candy* and *windscreen/windshield*.

Canadian English

In spelling, Canadian usage stands midway between American English and British English. The usage is, however, far from uniform and varies from province to province and even from person to person. Hence spellings such as *color*, *traveler* and *center*, and *colour*,

traveller and *centre*, are to be found alongside each other.

In pronunciation, Canadian English exhibits features found in both American and British English, although it more commonly follows American English: eg speakers of Canadian English pronounce *tomato* with an /ā/.

Brit Can

- r* Like American English, Canadian English pronounces *r* in word-final position and before a consonant.
- t* In the pronunciation of many Canadians, words such as *matter* and *madder* rhyme, as in American English.
- i* The sound heard in *squirrel*, etc approaches /ū/
- īl Of the words which end in /-īl/ in British English, most, eg *docile*, *textile*, *fragile*, end in /-īl/ as in British English, but some such as *missile* and *fertile* may end in /-il/ as in American English.
- ī, ow In Canadian English, the vowels in eg *loud* and *ride* do not rhyme with those of *lout* and *write*.

English in Australia and New Zealand

Although there are differences between the English of Australia and that of New Zealand, the two varieties are sufficiently similar to be treated together. Vocabulary that is peculiar to this region includes: names of local flora and fauna (*bowerbird*, *galah*, *wallaby*); words to do with local topography and everyday life, some imported in extended use into British English (*black stump*, *bush*, *outback*, *walkabout*); general words that do not exist in British English in the same meaning (*bather* = 'bathing costume', *king-hit* = 'knockout blow'); and many colourful colloquialisms and idioms (*beaut*, *bludge*, *crook*, *dinkum*, *she's apples*).

The spelling of Australian and New Zealand English traditionally follows that of British English but American spelling is now sometimes also found.

Features of pronunciation that can be noted are:

Brit Aust, NZ

- r* As in British English, *r* is not pronounced before a consonant or at the end of a word, except by speakers in the southern part of the South Island of New Zealand.
- i* Australian and New Zealand English have /ē/ in words such as *happy* and *very*, where British English has /i/. In closed unstressed syllables, where British English has /i/, Australian and New Zealand English have /ə/, as for example in *mistake*, *defeat*, *ticket*, etc.
- oor The pronunciation /ūə/ of words like *sure*, *pure*, etc has been almost entirely superseded by either /ō/ or /ooə/.
- ä In many words in which British English has /ā/, Australian and New Zealand English have /a/. In words ending in *-ance*, New Zealand English has /ä/ where Australian English has /a/ or /ā/. In Australian English *lather* is pronounced with /a/, but in New Zealand with /ä/.
- ō Before *l*, this is usually pronounced as /o/.

English in South Africa

In the 19th century, varieties of English were developed by the Dutch (influenced by Afrikaans), by the black population (influenced by local African languages) and by Indian immigrants who arrived in the country in the second half of the century. English has been an

official language of South Africa since 1910; Afrikaans replaced Dutch as an official language in 1925. During the apartheid era, Afrikaans was spoken by the white population and was regarded as the language of authority and government, whereas English, although a minority language, was spoken by many blacks, both as a language of political protest and as a means of attaining an international voice. At the end of the apartheid era, many African languages were also accepted as official languages.

The English of South Africa is therefore not a homogeneous variety, and the influences on it have been diverse. Many of the loan words from Afrikaans and African languages relate to local flora and fauna and other aspects of everyday life (some imported into British English): *aardvark* (an animal), *baas* (master), *backveld* (remote country), *dikkop* (a type of bird), *donga* (Zulu; gully), *fundi* (Nguni; an expert), *induna* (Zulu; a tribal leader), *jukskei* (an outdoor game), *koppie* (a low hill), *mossie* (a type of bird), *poort* (a mountain pass), *sjambok* (a whip), *snoek* (a fish) and *springbok* (an animal). A number of terms have permeated world consciousness for historical reasons, notably *apartheid*, *commando*, *trek* and *veld*. Words of English derivation include *pig-lily* (a kind of local lily) and *square-face* (gin), and words of mixed origin include *kingklip* (a fish). In other cases, words known in British English have special meanings in South African English, eg *bioscope* (a cinema), *camp* (a fenced-off area of pasture), *canteen* (a public house), *lay-by* (a down payment), *robot* (a traffic signal), *stamp* (pounded maize) and *township* (a black urban settlement).

Apart from relatively few and minor peculiarities of vocabulary, the standard English of South Africa is very similar to that of British English. South African pronunciation of English is characterized by a clipped accent with tight vowel sounds and more strongly articulated consonants /p/, /t/ and /k/. Other features are as follows:

Brit S Afr

- r* The S African English treatment of *r* word-finally and before consonants is the same as that of British English.
- i* S African English has /ē/ where British English has /i/ in *very*, *secretary*, etc. In other positions, /i/ is pronounced more centrally than in British English, with a vowel close to /ə/.
- a, e, ä, etc There is a tendency to raise these vowels to values approaching /e/, /i/, /o/ or /ö/, etc so giving /de'dē/ for *daddy*, /kit'l/ for *kettle*, and so on.
- ār This is normally pronounced as a long /e/ or /ā/ sound in words like *bear*, *fair*, etc.

English in the Indian Subcontinent

The use of English in the Indian Subcontinent dates from the first British contacts with the region in the 17th century; between then and independence in 1947 English developed into the language of government and education. Today, Hindi is the official language of India, and English has 'associate' status, although it has no such status beside Urdu in Pakistan and Bengali in Bangladesh.

English in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is normally learned as a second language, and is often greatly influenced by the speaker's first language. Thus no

homogeneous Indian English can be described here but only a number of features about which one may make some general remarks.

Two common features of Indian English are the use of retroflex *ʈ*, *ɖ*, etc for British English *t*, *d*, etc, and the substitution of *p*, *t*, *d* for *f*, *th*, *dh*. Speakers whose native language is Hindi or Urdu tend to insert an *i* before the initial consonant clusters in words such as *speech* and *school*, because these consonant groups do not occur in initial position in Hindi or Urdu.

Indian English pronounces word-final and pre-consonantal *r*.

Vowels in unstressed syllables are often pronounced in the way they would be in stressed syllables, where British English has /ə/ or /i/.

British contact with the peoples and languages of the Indian Subcontinent has resulted in a number of English loan words, including the familiar *bungalow* (from Hindi), *guru* (from Hindi), *jodhpurs* (from a place-name) and *pyjamas* (from Hindustani). Some English words and expressions are used in special ways: *demit* means 'to resign' (as in Scottish English) and *prepone*, meaning 'to bring forward to an earlier date', has a wider currency than it does in British English.

English in South-East Asia

The use of English in SE Asia dates from the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th, when the British East India Company established settlements at Penang and Singapore in the country then called Malaya; these two places, together with Malacca, had been formed into the Straits Settlements by 1867. In 1898, Britain bought from China a 99-year lease on the New Territories of Hong Kong, and other territories in the region became British protectorates.

Malaysia became independent in 1957, and the Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1963. Singapore achieved self-government in 1959 and (after a brief period of incorporation in the Federation) full independence in 1965. The principal languages of the area (in addition to English) are Chinese, Tamil and Malay, reflecting the ethnic mix of the populations. Hong Kong was returned to China on expiry of the lease in 1997.

The situation today is that British English is the dominant influence in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, while American English is more influential in the Philippines and other areas of the South Pacific, as a legacy of the American acquisition of these territories

after the Spanish-American War of 1898. In Singapore, English continued as the language of government, but education was based on a bilingual system of English and one of the three ethnic languages. In Malaysia, Malay (or, more accurately, Bahasa Malaysia) has been the official language since 1957, although more recently English has been actively promoted as a second language.

In the light of these historical facts, it is more realistic to speak of Singaporean English than of Malaysian English, although this is likely to change with time. Some linguists, however, prefer to regard the forms of English used in Singapore and in Malaysia as sub-varieties of a larger distinct variety, which they call Singaporean and Malaysian English (SME). In Singapore, since three-quarters of the population are ethnically Chinese, Mandarin and other Chinese languages are likely to exert a strong influence on the development of Singaporean English.

The vocabulary of English in SE Asia includes a few items that are also familiar in British English, such as *lychee* and *yin* and *yang*. Then there are words of English origin that are used mainly by Singaporean and Malaysian speakers as a part of their culture or lifestyle, such as *airflown* (denoting freshly imported food) and *red packet* (a red envelope containing money, given on ceremonial occasions), and more informal uses (sometimes disparagingly called *Singlish*) such as *to cut* ('to overtake') and *to zap* ('to photocopy'). Other words, such as *sarabat* (a strong-tasting drink made of ginger and sugar) and *silat* (the Malay equivalent of *kung fu*) are not English in origin, and represent concepts for which no other word exists. Finally and (in the context of SE Asian usage) more controversially, there are slang words of non-English origin, such as *chim* ('profound'), *malu* ('shameful') and others that are less easy to translate, such as *kiasu* (roughly, 'afraid to lose out').

Differences in pronunciation of English in SE Asia are largely affected by the influence of the other principal languages of the area, Chinese, Tamil and Malay. The principal features are (1) some consonants (notably /p/, /t/ and /k/) are not aspirated, (2) the last consonant of two at the end of a word (eg *lamp*, *first*) will often be silent, (3) there are considerable differences in vowel quality in words such as *bid*, *cot*, *stuff* and *pull* (in which the vowel tends to be longer) and in the articulation of diphthongs, as in *bait*, *boat* and *bare* (which tend to be shorter and closer to the first sound of the diphthong).

Using the dictionary

The following explanations are exemplified in the model of dictionary layout on page xx.

Order of entries

All entries are listed alphabetically, each entry having as a basic pattern the following elements:

- (1) Headword
- (2) Pronunciation
- (3) Part of speech label
- (4) Definition(s)
- (5) Etymology

Entries may also contain subheads – words that are derived from the headword by the addition of a suffix (*derivatives*) or another word (*compounds*) or idiomatic phrases that include the headword or one of its derivatives. This grouping of related words within an entry preserves and explains their etymological ‘family’ link, while at the same time ensuring that space is used as effectively as possible.

Where, however, such grouping is felt to be less helpful to the user we have separated the words into independent entries, as at **intention** and **shutter**, showing their relationships to **intend** and **shut** by means of the etymologies.

Structure

The main elements of an entry are explained in greater detail in the following paragraphs:

1. Headword

The word (in **bold** type) projecting at the head of an entry is referred to as the headword. Headwords are listed in alphabetical order.

Superscript numbers are added to headwords where necessary (see eg **cape**¹, **cape**²) to indicate homographs (words of identical spelling but of different meaning, origin, etc).

Included in the headword list, in alphabetical order, are **cross references**, words of which the full entry, or on which further information, is to be found elsewhere in the dictionary. Also included in the alphabetical headword sequence are **abbreviation** and **symbol** entries, which follow full-word entries of identical spelling.

2. Pronunciation

A respelling system has been used in this dictionary. It is a method that is intelligible to people who are not familiar with phonetic symbols, and one that allows for more than one interpretation – so that each user of the dictionary may choose a pronunciation in keeping with his or her speech.

A quick guide to some common vowel sounds is given on the line at the foot of right-hand pages of the dictionary. A detailed guide to the system is provided on pages xxviii and xxix.

Pronunciation guidance (inside oblique lines) follows the headword, and is given elsewhere in an entry where helpful. The main, current British pronunciations are given, and also significant US, etc

variants if appropriate, but the numerous possible regional variations cannot be covered individually in a dictionary of this size.

Guidance on stress patterns in words of more than one syllable is given by the use of the stress mark (ˈ), which *follows* the syllable that has the main accent, both in respelling and in subheads for which no full or partial respelling is required.

3. Part of speech label

Following the pronunciation at the head of an entry is a label to indicate the headword’s part of speech (eg *adj* for adjective, *n* for noun). A further part of speech label may follow a set of definitions, to show that the preceding bold word is also used with another grammatical function. Eg

gash¹ *vt* to cut deeply into. ♦ *n* a deep, open cut

Part of speech labels are given after all headwords, derivatives and compounds, except some foreign phrases. Phrases are not labelled.

4. Definition(s)

Definitions in the dictionary entries are ordered and grouped with a view to clarity, ease of comprehension and use. Normally the most common meanings are given first, unless an earlier, perhaps more specific, sense serves to clarify or explain its subsequent use.

Definitions are separated by semicolons.

In abbreviation and symbol entries, definitions are listed alphabetically.

5. Etymology

The etymology is given in square brackets at the end of the definition and before any subheads. If no etymology is shown, this indicates that the origin and history of the headword is unknown or uncertain or, in the case of certain chemicals and proprietary names, that the word has been arbitrarily coined. A bold word given as an etymology directs the reader to that word entry as the derivation; other etymologies may direct the reader directly to another etymology. A bold prefix given as an etymology indicates that the headword is formed from that prefix plus the remaining word-item; both elements may be found at their separate dictionary entries.

For abbreviations used in etymologies and elsewhere in the dictionary, see pages xxiv–xxvi.

6. Subheads

Subheads are bold-print items not listed as separate entries, but listed and explained within an entry. Subheads may fall into one of three categories:

(a) *Direct derivatives*

These are words which are formed by adding a suffix or ending either to the headword or to the root word. They are listed in alphabetical order. Their pronunciation basically follows that of the headword, with stress marks placed *after* the syllable with the main accent. Where necessary, fuller respelling guidance is given. If the meaning of a direct derivative is readily deducible, it may be undefined.

All words listed as subheads in entries for prefixes, suffixes and combining forms are treated as direct derivatives.

(b) *Compounds*

Compound words (ie those made up of two or more words, the first being the entry headword or one of its derivatives) follow any direct derivatives. They may be hyphenated, one-word or multi-word compounds. If the compound's meaning is evident from its two parts, it may be undefined. Those compounds which do not begin with the headword or derivative of the headword are listed under the third category, the phrases.

(c) *Phrases*

Following any direct derivatives and any compound words, all phrasal items relating to the headword are listed alphabetically. These may be phrases, phrasal verbs or idioms, or compounds which do not begin with the headword or any of its derivatives.

7. Alternative forms

Words spelt or formed in more than one way, but sharing the same meaning(s) and use, are shown in the dictionary linked by the word 'or'. Where a number of such alternatives are shown, strict alphabetical order may be waived in order to list the most commonly used form first.

At headwords, alternative forms that have different pronunciations are each followed immediately by their appropriate pronunciation(s). If the pronunciation follows both headword forms, it applies to both forms.

In hyphenated compound words, alternative forms may be shown only by the alternative element of the compound (eg **hunt'ing-box, -lodge or -seat**).

8. Hyphenation

To save possible confusion, hyphens are never used to split a headword or subhead over two lines. Thus any hyphens that do occur at the end of a line may be taken to be integral to the spelling of the words.

9. Inflections

Inflected forms of words are shown in parentheses after the part of speech label. Where no explanation of the inflected forms of a verb is given, the first word is the present participle and the second is a past tense and past participle of the verb. Plural forms and verb participles, etc are shown only if they are irregular in formation, or warrant special clarification. Comparative and superlative forms of adjectives are given (again by the same criteria).

10. Classification labels

A label relating to the classification (eg *offensive, dialect, chem, psychol*) of a word or meaning precedes the list of meanings where it applies to all of the meanings given.

Where a label applies to only one definition in a list, it immediately *follows* that definition.

A label which precedes the part of speech label at the head of an entry applies to *all* meanings of the word *and* to its derivatives and their meanings unless it is cancelled by a further classification label. This applies also where there is only one sense and one meaning of a word.

Classification labels are shown in italic print.

A bracketed language classification label (eg *Fr, Ger*) preceding the part of speech label at the head of an entry signifies that the word is still regarded as a foreign word, rather than as a naturalized English word. German nouns have been spelt with a capital letter, as they are in their country of origin.

11. Alternative pronunciations

Where a word may be pronounced in more than one way, alternative pronunciations are linked by the word 'or', or by a comma in a string of alternatives. The main, current British pronunciations of a word are given, and also significant and commonly-encountered US, Australian, etc variants as applicable.

Alternative pronunciations may be expressed as partial pronunciations, simply giving the syllable or syllables that may be pronounced differently, rather than respelling the word in full.

In all partial pronunciations, that part of a word not included in the respelling is to be assumed unchanged from the main pronunciation given earlier in the entry.

12. Prefix, suffix and combining forms

These entries are treated as ordinary word entries except in the respects specified below.

In the respelling given at a prefix or similar headword, no stress pattern is specified, as it varies according to the words formed with that element.

Entries for prefix, suffix and combining form items (as already noted) treat each subhead 'nested' within the entry, as a derivative of the headword.

Different senses covered by prefixes, suffixes and combining forms are separated by semicolons. Where these senses are used for reference in other parts of the dictionary, they have been numbered.

13. Panels

Words formed using the prefixes **anti-, non-, out-, over-, post-, pre-, re-, sub-, super-, un-, under-** and **up-** which do not require any explanation in the dictionary are listed in panels at the foot of relevant pages.

The parts of speech and stress patterns of these words are shown; their meanings can be easily derived by referring to the numbered senses at the relevant prefix entry, and if necessary to the word to which the prefix has been attached.

Model of dictionary layout

Basic entry pattern
consists of (1) headword;
(2) pronunciation; (3) part of
speech label; (4) definition(s);
(5) etymology

Alternative forms of the
headword are shown

New part of speech label
is introduced by the symbol
♦

Subheads relating to the
main entry words are
separated into three
categories:
■ Direct derivatives
□ Compounds
■ Phrases

Examples clarifying usage
of a word are shown in italics

Homographs, ie words
with the same spelling but
different origin, indicated by
superscript numbers

**Pronunciation of
subheads** shown by stress
mark (ˈ) after the syllable
with the main accent

boules /boʊl/ *n* a French form of bowls played on rough surfaces, pétanque. [Fr]

boulevard /boʊl(ə)vär(d)/ *n* a broad road, walk, or promenade bordered with trees; a broad main road; a strip of grass between pavement and road or the centre strip between two carriageways (chiefly *Can*). [Fr (orig applied to a road built on demolished town fortifications), from MDu *bollewerck*; see **bulwark**]

■ **boulevardier** /boʊl-vär-dyā/ *n* a frequenter of boulevards or promenades, chiefly of Paris; a man-about-town.

bouleversement /boʊ-vers-mā/ *n* an overturning; overthrow, ruin. [Fr]

bouille see **buhl**.

boult or **bolt** /bōlt/ *vt* to sift through coarse cloth; to examine by sifting. [OFr *bulter*, from *buleter*, appar from *bure*, from LL *burra* a coarse reddish-brown cloth, from Gr *pyrrhos* reddish]

■ **boult'er** or **bolt'er** *n* a sieve; a machine for separating bran from flour. **boult'ing** or **bolt'ing** *n*.

□ **boulting** or **bolting cloth** *n* a firm silk or nylon fabric with various mesh sizes used for boulting meal or flour, for embroidery, or for photographic enlargements. **boult'ing-hutch** or **bolt'ing-hutch** *n* a hutch or large box into which flour falls when it is bouted.

boun or **bowne** /boʊn or bown/ *vt* (used reflexively) and *vi* to prepare; to get ready; to dress; to set out. ♦ *adj* ready. [See **bound**²; revived by Sir Walter Scott]

bounce¹ /boʊns/ *vi* to jump or spring suddenly; to spring up or back like a ball; to burst (into or out of a room, etc); (of a cheque) to come back to the payee unredeemed because of lack of funds in the drawer's account; (of an e-mail message) to be returned to the sender without reaching the intended recipient; to boast, to exaggerate. ♦ *v* to cause to rebound; (of a bank) to return (a cheque) to the payee unredeemed; to turn out, eject, dismiss; to hustle, force; to reprimand, bring to book (*sl*); to beat (*obs*). ♦ *n* a thud; a leap or spring; springiness; resilience, vitality; boasting, a bold lie; dismissal (*US inf*). ♦ *adv* and *interj* expressing sudden or bouncing movement or (formerly) the noise of a gun. [Du *bonzen* to strike, from *bons* a blow]

■ **bounc'er** *n* a person or thing that bounces; a cheque that bounces (*inf*); a short-pitched fast delivery bowled so as to bounce and rise sharply off the ground [*cricket*]; a person employed to eject undesirable people from a club, dance hall, etc, or to prevent them from entering; something big; a bully; a liar. **boun'cily** *adv*. **boun'ciness** *n*. **bounc'ing** *adj* large and heavy; energetic; hearty. **bounc'y** *adj* prone to bouncing or full of bounce; lively, cocky; vigorous, resilient.

□ **bouncy castle** *n* an inflatable piece of play equipment consisting of a base and sides in the shape of a castle, for children to jump around in.

■ **bounce back** to recover quickly and easily.

bounce² /boʊns/ *n* the lesser spotted dogfish.

bound¹ /boʊnd/ *pat* and *pap* of **bind**. ♦ *adj* tied, fastened; (of books) provided with a binding; in linguistics, of a morpheme that cannot stand alone but only occurs as part of a word, eg the plural marker *-s*. ♦ *combining form* restricted to, or by, something specified, eg [*housebound*, *stormbound*].

□ **bound'-bailiff** *n* a sheriff's officer, so called from his bond given to the sheriff for the discharge of his duty.

■ **bound** to obliged to (a person, etc); certain to (do something) (*perh* partly from **bound**²). **bound up with** closely linked with.

bound² /boʊnd/ *adj* ready to start (for); on the way to (with *for*, or following an *adv*, eg *homeward bound*); also as *combining form*, eg in [*southbound*]; ready, prepared (*obs*). See also **bound**¹. [ON *būnn*, *pap* of *būa* to prepare; cf **boun**]

bound³ /boʊnd/ *n* a limit; (in *pl*) the limit of that which is reasonable or permitted; (in *pl*) a borderland, land generally within certain understood limits, the district. ♦ *vt* to set bounds to, to limit or restrain; to surround or form the boundary of. [OFr *bonne*, from LL *bodina*; cf Breton *bonn*, a boundary]

■ [**bound'ed**] *adj* restricted, cramped; surrounded. **bound'less** *adj* having no limit; vast. [**bound'lessness**] *n*.

□ **bound water** *n* [*bot*] water held by colloidal interaction and capillary forces.

■ **out of bounds** not to be visited, entered, etc; in such a prohibited place.

Pronunciation indicated
by respelling (see pages
xxviii-xxix)

Grammatical information
shown in brackets

Definitions separated by
semicolons, with
fundamental senses first,
followed by more specific
senses

Classification labels
shown after the definition
when they apply to that
sense only

**Etymological
information** shows origin
and history of words

Classification labels
shown before the definition
when they apply to all
senses

Spelling rules

The most important spelling rules are explained in this article; an understanding of these is assumed for all entries in the dictionary where no inflected form (plural, past tense, etc) is given. Inflected forms are given for words that have inflections with unpredictable spellings (eg *tangos* and *mangoes*), inflections with spellings that do not follow the general rules (*paid* and *laid* as opposed to *played*), or inflections that are regular but about which there is often uncertainty (eg *monkeys*, not 'monkies').

In general, derivatives (eg nouns and adverbs based on adjectives, such as *brightness* and *brightly* from *bright*, or adjectives formed from nouns, such as *noisy* from *noise*) are spelt out in full in the dictionary, but since the rules for the formation of such derivatives are much the same as for inflections, they are covered here also.

The rules given here are those that apply in British English. See also page xv for the rules of American spelling, where these differ from the British norm.

The basic rules of inflection and derivation:

- (i) Plural **nouns** are normally formed by adding *-s* to the singular form:

cat cats
dog dogs
horse horses

(NB There should be no apostrophe before the *s* in a plural noun; forms like *bag's* or *potato's* are commonly seen but are quite wrong. *Do's* is an exception, though *dos* is also correct.)

Verbs are generally inflected by adding *-s*, *-ing* and *-ed* to the base form:

follow follows following followed

If a word ends in *s*, *z*, *x*, *sh* or *ch*, *-es* is added rather than *-s*:

kiss kisses
box boxes
push pushes

However, if the *ch* is pronounced /k/ or /h/, *-s* alone is added:

stomachs lochs psychs

- (ii) Comparative and superlative **adjectives** (and some adverbs) are formed by the addition of *-er* and *-est* to the base form:

black blacker blackest

- (iii) **Derivatives** of nouns, verbs and adjectives are generally formed by the simple addition of a suffix to the stem:

sing singer
move movement
red redness
cruel cruelty

Adjectives which end in *ic* form adverbs in *-ally*:
economic economically

(The only common exception is *publicly*.)

Inflection of words ending in o:

- (i) Most **nouns** ending in *o* add *-s* to form the plural:

zoo zoos
radio radios
albino albinos

A small group of words add *-es*, eg *cargoes*, *echoes*, *goes*, *heroes*, *potatoes*. A number of words, such as *banjo*, *fiasco* and *halo*, may add either *-s* or *-es*. These are indicated in the dictionary.

- (ii) For the 3rd person singular of the present tense of the **verb**, the rule for adding *-s* or *-es* can be stated in terms of the noun rules:

if the noun takes only *-s*, or if there is no related noun, add *-s*:

two radios → she radios

if the noun takes *-es* in the plural, or may take either *-s* or *-es*, add *-es* to the verb:

two echoes → it echoes

(The main exception to this is *do*, plural *do's* or *dos*, 3rd person singular *does*.)

Words ending in y:

- (i) A **noun** ending in *y* preceded by a consonant generally has a plural in *-ies*:

fly flies
country countries

Proper nouns are an exception (eg *the four Marys*), as are words in which the final *y* belongs to the adverbial part of a compound (eg *lay-bys*, *stand-bys*).

If the final *y* is preceded by a vowel, it does not change to *ie* in the plural:

day days
donkey donkeys

(but see *money* for the exceptional plural *monies*)

- (ii) The rules for **verb** inflections are much the same as for nouns. If the *y* follows a consonant, it changes to *ie* before *-s*, but if it follows a vowel, it does not:

cry cries
deny denies

but

stay stays
enjoy enjoys
buy buys

Similarly, in the past tense:

cry cried
deny denied

but

stay stayed
enjoy enjoyed

(*Said*, *paid* and *laid* are exceptions.)

Spelling rules

- (iii) **Adjectives** ending in *y* preceded by a consonant generally change the *y* to *i* in the comparative and superlative:

happy happier happiest

The only exceptions are a few one-syllable words in which the final *y* is pronounced /ɪ/: see the dictionary entries for *dry*, *shy*, *sly*, etc. If the final *y* is preceded by a vowel, it generally does not change in the comparative and superlative:

grey greyer greyest
coy coyler coyest

However, a number of adjectives ending in *ey* (mostly ones based on nouns, eg *clayey* from *clay*) change the *ey* to *i*:

clayey clayier clayiest

- (iv) **Derivatives** follow similar rules as those for inflections, ie a *y* following a consonant changes to an *i* before a following suffix (except *-ing*), whereas one following a vowel does not:

happy happily happiness

merry merriment

deny denier

envy enviable

comply compliant

but

coy coyly coyness

employ employment

play player

enjoy enjoyable

buoy buoyant

Words which are exceptions to the inflectional rules tend to be exceptions also to the derivational rules, but the irregularities are not always predictable. See the dictionary entries for *dry*, *shy*, *sly*, etc. (Note also the spelling of *business*, to distinguish it from *business*.)

Words ending in e:

Before a suffix beginning with a vowel, the final *e* is generally dropped:

smile smiling smiled smiler

white whiter whitest whiten

pale palish

ice icy

use usable

escape escapism

Before a consonant, the *e* is retained:

move movement

use useful useless

There are, however, exceptions:

- (i) Verbs ending in *ee*, *oe* and *ye* do not drop the *e* before *-ing*:

hoe hoeing

dye dyeing

- (ii) Verbs ending in *ie* change the *ie* to *y* before *-ing*:

die dying

tie tying

- (iii) A few verbs retain the final *e* in order to show the correct pronunciation and to be distinguishable from similar words with no *e*:

sing singing

but

singe singeing

swing swinging

but

swingeing

(Note also the adjective *holey* = full of holes, as opposed to *holy*.)

- (iv) Before an *a* or an *o*, the *e* is retained after a soft *c* or *g*:

notice noticing but *noticeable*

advantage advantageous

- (v) Adverbs formed from adjectives ending in *le* preceded by a consonant simply replace the final *e* with *y*:

simple simply

single singly

- (vi) Words ending in *dge* may correctly retain or drop the final *e* in derivatives; thus *judgment* and *judgement*, *abridgment* and *abridgement* are equally correct.

- (vii) Common exceptions to all the above rules are *argument*, *awful*, *daily*, *duly*, *eerily*, *gaily*, *truly* and *wholly*.

Doubling of a final consonant:

If a word ends in a single consonant which is preceded by a single vowel written with a single letter and the stress of the word is on the final syllable of the word (or if there is only one syllable), the final consonant is doubled before a suffix beginning with a vowel:

drum drumming drummed drummer

omit omitting omitted

refer referring referred referral

red redder reddest redder

ton tonnage

but

dream dreaming dreamed dreamer

profit profiting profited

enter entering entered

refer reference (note the change in stress)

green greener greenest

A few words double the final consonant contrary to the above rule:

worship worshipping worshipped worshipper

(and also *format*, *handicap*, *hobnob*, *humbug*,

kidnap, *leapfrog* and *zigzag*)

A final *l* preceded by a single-letter vowel generally doubles regardless of the position of the stress, as in:

signal signalling signalled signaller

rebel rebelling rebellion rebellious

cancel cancelling cancellation

but not before the suffixes *-ize/-ise*, *-ism*, *-ist* and *-ity*, as in:

equal equality equalize

final finalist

though again there are exceptions, such as *medallist*, *tranquillity* and *crystallize*.

Note also *paralleling* and *paralleled* (where one would expect a double *ll* before the suffix) and *woolly* and *woollen* (where one would expect a single *l*).

A few words allow both single and double consonants: see the dictionary entries for eg *benefit*, *bias*, *bus*, *focus*, *gas*, *leaflet*, *plus* and *yes*.

Words ending in c:

When a suffix beginning with a vowel is added, and the consonant still has the hard /k/ sound, the *c* becomes *ck*:

picnic picnicking picnicked picnicker

Two exceptions are *arc* and *talc*:

arcing/arcking, arced/arcked

talcing/talcking, talced/talcked

The forms without *k* are the commoner. No *k* is added when the final *c* becomes a soft sound (/sh/ or /s/) in the derivative:

magic *magicking* *magicked*
but *magician*
electric *electricity*

-ie- or -ei-?

The rule 'i before e except after c' applies only to words in which the vowel has the long /ē/ sound:

believe *belief*
siege

pier
but
deceive *deceit*
ceiling

(Common exceptions are *seize*, *weir* and *weird*, scientific words such as *protein*, *caffeine* and *codeine*, and proper names such as *Keith*, *Neil*, *Sheila*, *Reid* and *Madeira*.)

If a word is pronounced with the sound /ā/, *ei* is always the correct spelling:

eight *heir* *neighbour* *reign* *weight*

Abbreviations used in the dictionary

The following abbreviations are used in the dictionary. They are shown here in italic type, but are also found in the dictionary in roman type.

Many of the abbreviations are used as labels, but other, unabbreviated, labels are also found in the dictionary, all of which should be self-explanatory. It should be noted that the label *Bible*, unless it is qualified, refers to the Authorized Version.

<i>abbrev</i>	abbreviation	<i>dimin</i>	diminutive
<i>account</i>	accounting	<i>dm</i>	decimetre(s)
<i>AD</i>	Anno Domini	<i>Du</i>	Dutch
<i>adj</i>	adjective		
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>E</i>	east, eastern
<i>Afr</i>	Africa(n)	<i>E Afr</i>	East Africa(n)
<i>Afrik</i>	Afrikaans	<i>E Anglia</i>	East Anglia(n)
<i>agric</i>	agriculture	<i>econ</i>	economics
<i>Am</i>	America(n)	<i>educ</i>	education
<i>am</i>	(<i>L ante meridiem</i>) before noon	<i>eg</i>	(<i>L exempli gratia</i>) for example
<i>Am Sp</i>	American Spanish	<i>Egypt</i>	Egyptian
<i>anat</i>	anatomy	<i>elec</i>	electricity, electrical
<i>Anglo-Chin</i>	Anglo-Chinese	<i>embryol</i>	embryology
<i>Anglo-Fr</i>	Anglo-French	<i>Eng</i>	England, English
<i>Anglo-Ind</i>	Anglo-Indian	<i>eng</i>	engineering
<i>Anglo-L</i>	Anglo-Latin	<i>esp</i>	especially
<i>anthrop</i>	anthropology	<i>etc</i>	(<i>L et cetera</i>) and so on, and the rest
<i>appar</i>	apparently	<i>ety</i>	etymology
<i>approx</i>	approximately	<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>Ar</i>	Arabic	<i>euphem</i>	euphemistic
<i>archaeol</i>	archaeology		
<i>archit</i>	architecture	<i>fem</i>	feminine
<i>astrol</i>	astrology	<i>ff</i>	following pages
<i>astron</i>	astronomy	<i>fig</i>	figurative(ly)
<i>atomic no</i>	atomic number	<i>Finn</i>	Finnish
<i>attrib</i>	attributive(ly)	<i>fl</i>	(<i>L floruit</i>) flourished
<i>Aust</i>	Australia(n)	<i>Flem</i>	Flemish
<i>Aust rules</i>	Australian rules football	<i>fortif</i>	fortification
		<i>Fr</i>	France, French
<i>bacteriol</i>	bacteriology	<i>Fris</i>	Frisian
<i>BC</i>	before Christ	<i>ft</i>	foot, feet
<i>biochem</i>	biochemistry		
<i>biol</i>	biology	<i>g</i>	gram(s)
<i>bot</i>	botany	<i>gen</i>	generally
<i>Brit</i>	Britain, British	<i>geog</i>	geography
		<i>geol</i>	geology
<i>c</i>	century	<i>geom</i>	geometry
<i>c.</i>	(<i>L circa</i>) about	<i>Ger</i>	Germany, German
<i>Can</i>	Canada, Canadian	<i>Gmc</i>	Germanic
<i>cap(s)</i>	capital(s)	<i>Gr</i>	Greek
<i>cf</i>	(<i>L confer</i>) compare	<i>gym</i>	gymnastics
<i>chem</i>	chemistry, chemical		
<i>Chin</i>	Chinese	<i>ha</i>	hectare(s)
<i>cinematog</i>	cinematography	<i>Heb</i>	Hebrew
<i>cm</i>	centimetre(s)	<i>HGer</i>	High German
<i>C of E</i>	Church of England	<i>hist</i>	history, historical
<i>compar</i>	comparative	<i>hortic</i>	horticulture
<i>comput</i>	computing	<i>Hung</i>	Hungarian
<i>conj</i>	conjunction		
<i>crystallog</i>	crystallography	<i>Icel</i>	Icelandic
<i>cu</i>	cubic	<i>ie</i>	(<i>L id est</i>) that is
<i>cwt</i>	hundredweight(s)	<i>imit</i>	imitative
		<i>immunol</i>	immunology
<i>Dan</i>	Danish	<i>impers</i>	impersonal
<i>derog</i>	derogatory	<i>in</i>	inch(es)

Abbreviations used in the dictionary

<i>incl</i>	including	<i>OFr</i>	Old French
<i>Ind</i>	India(n)	<i>OFris</i>	Old Friesian
<i>indic</i>	indicative	<i>OHGer</i>	Old High German
<i>inf</i>	informal	<i>Olr</i>	Old Irish
<i>infl</i>	influenced	<i>OLGer</i>	Old Low German
<i>intens</i>	intensive, intensifier	<i>ON</i>	Old Norse
<i>interj</i>	interjection	<i>ONFr</i>	Old Northern French
<i>interrog</i>	interrogative	<i>OPers</i>	Old Persian
<i>Ir</i>	Ireland, Irish	<i>ophthalmol</i>	ophthalmology
<i>irreg</i>	irregular(ly)	<i>opp</i>	opposite, opposed
<i>Ital</i>	Italy, Italian	<i>orig</i>	originally
<i>IVR</i>	International Vehicle Registration	<i>ornithol</i>	ornithology
		<i>OSax</i>	Old Saxon
<i>Jap</i>	Japanese	<i>OSlav</i>	Old Slavonic
<i>joc</i>	jocular(ly)	<i>OWelsh</i>	Old Welsh
		<i>oz</i>	ounce(s)
<i>kg</i>	kilogram(s)		
<i>km</i>	kilometre(s)	<i>Pak</i>	Pakistan(i)
		<i>palaeog</i>	palaeography
<i>L</i>	Latin	<i>palaeontol</i>	palaeontology
<i>lb</i>	pound(s) (weight)	<i>pa p</i>	past participle
<i>LGer</i>	Low German	<i>pa t</i>	past tense
<i>Lincs</i>	Lincolnshire	<i>pathol</i>	pathology
<i>lit</i>	literal(ly)	<i>perf</i>	perfect
<i>LL</i>	Low (or Late) Latin	<i>perh</i>	perhaps
		<i>Pers</i>	Persian
<i>m</i>	metre(s)	<i>pers</i>	personal, person
<i>masc</i>	masculine	<i>pfx</i>	prefix
<i>maths</i>	mathematics	<i>pharm</i>	pharmacy
<i>MDu</i>	Middle Dutch	<i>pharmacol</i>	pharmacology
<i>ME</i>	Middle English	<i>philos</i>	philosophy
<i>mech</i>	mechanics	<i>photog</i>	photography
<i>Med</i>	medieval	<i>phys</i>	physics
<i>med</i>	medicine, medical	<i>physiol</i>	physiology
<i>meteorol</i>	meteorology	<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>Mex</i>	Mexican	<i>pm</i>	(<i>L post meridiem</i>) after noon
<i>Mex Sp</i>	Mexican Spanish	<i>Pol</i>	Polish
<i>MFlem</i>	Middle Flemish	<i>Port</i>	Portuguese
<i>MFr</i>	Middle French	<i>poss</i>	possible, possibly
<i>MHGer</i>	Middle High German	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>milit</i>	military	<i>pres</i>	present
<i>MLGer</i>	Middle Low German	<i>prob</i>	probably
<i>mm</i>	millimetre(s)	<i>pr p</i>	present participle
<i>Mod</i>	modern	<i>pr t</i>	present tense
<i>Mod Du</i>	Modern Dutch	<i>pseudo-Fr</i>	pseudo-French
<i>Mod Fr</i>	Modern French	<i>pseudo-Ital</i>	pseudo-Italian
<i>Mod Gr</i>	Modern Greek	<i>pseudo-L</i>	pseudo-Latin
<i>Mod L</i>	Modern Latin (= New Latin)	<i>psychol</i>	psychology
<i>mph</i>	miles per hour		
<i>myth</i>	mythology	<i>qv, qqv</i>	(<i>L quod vide</i>) which see
<i>N</i>	north, northern	®	registered trademark
<i>n</i>	noun	<i>radiog</i>	radiography
<i>N Am</i>	North America(n)	<i>radiol</i>	radiology
<i>naut</i>	nautical	<i>RAF</i>	Royal Air Force
<i>NE</i>	north-east, north-eastern	<i>RC</i>	Roman Catholicism, Roman Catholic
<i>neg</i>	negative	<i>relig</i>	religion
<i>New L</i>	New Latin	<i>Russ</i>	Russian
<i>N Ireland</i>	Northern Ireland		
<i>N Irish</i>	Northern Irish	<i>S</i>	south, southern
<i>Norw</i>	Norwegian	<i>SAfr</i>	South Africa(n)
<i>n pl</i>	plural noun	<i>Sans</i>	Sanskrit
<i>n sing</i>	singular noun	<i>Scand</i>	Scandinavian
<i>NW</i>	north-west, north-western	<i>sci-fi</i>	science fiction
<i>NZ</i>	New Zealand	<i>Scot</i>	Scotland, Scottish
		<i>sculpt</i>	sculpture
<i>obs</i>	obsolete	<i>SE</i>	south-east, south-eastern
<i>ODu</i>	Old Dutch	<i>SEng</i>	southern England, southern English
<i>OE</i>	Old English	<i>Serb</i>	Serbian

Abbreviations used in the dictionary

<i>sfx</i>	suffix	<i>UK</i>	United Kingdom
<i>Shakesp</i>	Shakespeare	<i>ult</i>	ultimately
<i>sing</i>	singular	<i>US</i>	United States (of America)
<i>sl</i>	slang	<i>USSR</i>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<i>Slav</i>	Slavonic	<i>usu</i>	usually
<i>sociol</i>	sociology		
<i>Sp</i>	Spanish	<i>v</i>	verb
<i>Sp Am</i>	Spanish American	<i>vet</i>	veterinary medicine
<i>specif</i>	specifically	<i>vi</i>	intransitive verb
<i>sq</i>	square	<i>Viet</i>	Vietnamese
<i>St</i>	Saint	<i>vt</i>	transitive verb
<i>stats</i>	statistics		
<i>superl</i>	superlative	<i>W</i>	west, western
<i>surg</i>	surgery	<i>W Afr</i>	West Africa(n)
<i>SW</i>	south-west, south-western	<i>W Indies</i>	West Indies
<i>Swed</i>	Swedish	<i>WSax</i>	West Saxon
<i>technol</i>	technology		
<i>telecom</i>	telecommunications	<i>yd</i>	yard(s)
<i>theol</i>	theology	<i>Yorks</i>	Yorkshire
<i>transl</i>	translation, translating, translated		
<i>Turk</i>	Turkish		
<i>TV</i>	television	<i>zool</i>	zoology

Characters used in other languages

Some foreign words included in the etymologies in this dictionary include characters that are not used in English. A brief guide to the pronunciation of the non-English characters which appear most frequently is given below. The pronunciations given are necessarily approximate as it is not always possible to convey the exact phonetic values intended by means of respelling symbols or verbal explanations.

Vowels

Symbol	Sound
$\bar{a}, \bar{e}, \bar{i}, \bar{u}$	In Latin, Old English, etc, these are long vowels with the sounds (or approximately the sounds) represented by the respelling symbols <i>a</i> or \bar{a} , \bar{a} or <i>e</i> , \bar{e} , and <i>oo</i> respectively; in the pinyin transcription of Chinese, these are vowels with a first (level) tone.
\bar{o}	This represents a long <i>o</i> or \bar{o} sound or a monophthongal pronunciation of the respelling character \bar{o} ; in the pinyin transcription of Chinese, this is a vowel with a first (level) tone.
\bar{y}	A long \bar{u} sound.
$\bar{æ}$	A long vowel similar in sound to the RP pronunciation of respelling symbol <i>a</i> .
<i>a, e, etc,</i> $\check{a}, \check{e}, \text{etc}$	Short vowels corresponding to \bar{a}, \bar{e} , etc, with values, varying from language to language, similar to those of the corresponding long vowels or those of the short vowels of English.
$\check{a}, \check{e}, \text{etc}$	In the pinyin transcription of Chinese, these are vowels with a third (falling, then rising) tone; in Romanian, \check{a} has the sound <i>a</i> .
$\hat{a}, \hat{e}, \hat{i}, \hat{o}, \hat{u}$	In some languages, eg Middle High German, these symbols are used for long vowels with the values $\bar{a}, \bar{a}, \bar{e}, \bar{o}, oo$ respectively; in Romanian, \hat{a} and \hat{i} represent a sound midway between \bar{e} and <i>oo</i> .
$\acute{a}, \acute{e}, \text{etc}$	In the pinyin transcription of Chinese, these are vowels with a second (rising) tone.
$\grave{a}, \grave{e}, \text{etc}$	In the pinyin transcription of Chinese, these are vowels with a fourth (falling) tone.
\ddot{a}, \ddot{o}	These have the values of respelling symbols <i>e</i> / \bar{a} and <i>o</i> / \bar{a} respectively.
\tilde{i}, etc	The diacritic [˜] is used, as in the respelling, to show nasalization of vowels.

Consonants

Symbol	Sound
$\underset{\sim}{d}, \underset{\sim}{t}, \underset{\sim}{n}, \underset{\sim}{s}$	These are retroflex counterparts of <i>t, d</i> , etc.
$\underset{\sim}{r}$	In Sanskrit, a vowel rather than a consonant; in Hindi, etc, a consonant formed by the tongue moving from a retroflex position to strike against the alveolar ridge.
$\underset{\sim}{h}$	The normal <i>h</i> -sound of English.
$\underset{\sim}{m}$	This marks nasalization of the preceding vowel or the following consonant in Sanskrit.
$\underset{\sim}{ñ}$	A sound similar to <i>ny</i> , as in Spanish <i>cañon</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{ñ}$	The sound written <i>ng</i> in the respelling and in English orthography.
<i>c</i>	In Sanskrit, etc, a sound midway between <i>k</i> and <i>ch</i> ; in Turkish, the sound of <i>j</i> as in <i>judge</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{ç}$	In French, Arabic and Portuguese, this represents the sound <i>s</i> ; in Turkish, <i>ch</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{č}, \underset{\sim}{ć}$	In Serbo-Croat, $\underset{\sim}{č}$ represents the sound <i>ch</i> , and $\underset{\sim}{ć}$ represents <i>ty</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{ş}$	In Turkish, the sound <i>sh</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{ş}$	In Sanskrit, etc, a sound similar to <i>sh</i> .
<i>q</i>	In Arabic, a sound similar to <i>k</i> but pronounced slightly farther back in the mouth; in Chinese, a sound like <i>ch</i> ; in Gothic, <i>k_w</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{ğ}$	This marks a lengthening of the preceding vowel in Turkish.
<i>gg</i>	In Gothic, the sound <i>ng</i> .
$\underset{\sim}{’}$	In Russian words, this represents a ‘soft sign’, marking a <i>y</i> -like palatalization of the preceding consonant; in Chinese words, it is a mark of strong aspiration; in Arabic, Hebrew and Hawaiian, a glottal stop.
$\underset{\sim}{ء}$	In Arabic and Hebrew, a sound like <i>hh</i> but produced rather deeper in the throat.

Detailed chart of pronunciation

Vowels and diphthongs in accented syllables

Symbol		Examples	Pronunciation
<i>ā</i>	as in	name, aid, rein, tare, wear, hair, heir, fairy	<i>nām, ād, rān, tār, wār, hār, ār, fār'i</i>
<i>ä</i>	"	grass, path, palm, harm, heart	<i>grās, päth, pä'm, härm, härt</i>
<i>a</i>	"	sat, bad, have, marry	<i>sat, bad, hav, mar'i</i>
<i>ē</i>	"	lean, keel, dene, chief, seize, gear, sheer, here, bier, query	<i>lēn, kēl, dēn, chēf, sēz, gēr, shēr, hēr, bēr, kwēr'i</i>
<i>e</i>	"	red, thread, said, bury	<i>red, thred, sed, ber'i</i>
<i>ī</i>	"	side, shy, dye, height, hire, byre, fiery	<i>sīd, shī, dī, hīt, hīr, bīr, fīr'i</i>
<i>i</i>	"	pin, busy, hymn	<i>pin, biz'i, him</i>
<i>ō</i>	"	bone, road, foe, low, dough, more, soar, floor, port, Tory (For alternative pronunciation of port, more, etc, see <i>ö</i>)	<i>bōn, rōd, fō, lō, dō mōr, sōr, flōr, pōrt, tōr'i</i>
<i>ö</i>	"	haul, lawn, fall, bought, swarm, more, soar, floor, port, Tory (For alternative pronunciation of port, more, etc, see <i>ō</i>)	<i>hōl, lōn, fōl, bōt, swōrm, mōr, sōr, flōr, pōrt, tōr'i</i>
<i>o</i>	"	got, shot, shone	<i>got, shot, shon</i>
<i>oo</i>	"	fool, sou, boor, tour	<i>fool, soo, boor, toor</i>
<i>ū</i>	"	good, full, would	<i>gūd, fūl, wūd</i>
<i>ū</i>	"	tune, due, newt, view, endure, fury	<i>tūn, dū, nūt, vū, in-dūr', fū'ri</i>
<i>u</i>	"	bud, run, love	<i>bud, run, luv</i>
<i>û</i>	"	heard, bird, word, absurd	<i>hûrd, bûrd, wûrd, ab-sûrd'</i>
<i>ow</i>	"	mount, frown, sour	<i>mownt, frown, sowr</i>
<i>oi</i>	"	toy, buoy, soil	<i>toi, boi, soil</i>

Stress

In words of more than one syllable, the syllable with the main accent is shown by a stress mark ' following that syllable, both in the respellings (eg *äfter, bi-gin'*) and in entries in bold type (eg **af'ters, beginn'er**).

Note the difference in pronunciation, as shown by the position of the stress mark, between **bles'sed'** (*bles't*) and **bles's'ed** (*bles'id*), **refin'ed** (*re-fīnd'*) and **refin'edly** (*ri-fīn'id-li*).

Vowels in unaccented syllables

Neutral vowels in unaccented syllables are usually shown by ə (schwa)

eg *el'ə-mənt, in'fənt, ran'dəm, pre'shəs* (precious), *nā'chər* (nature).

In certain cases, they are more exactly represented by *i*

eg *ēvil, bi-höld', bles'id, man'ij, di-ment'*.

Vowels followed by r

In certain accents, for example in Scots, Irish, General American, **r** is pronounced wherever it occurs in the spelling and this is the form adopted in the dictionary.

In certain other accents, for example Received Pronunciation or what is sometimes called the BBC accent, it is pronounced only when it occurs before a vowel. Elsewhere the following rules apply:

<i>ār</i>	is pronounced as	<i>eə</i>	<i>ör</i>	is pronounced as	<i>ö</i> or <i>öə</i>
<i>är</i>	" " "	<i>ä</i>	<i>oor</i>	" " "	<i>üə</i>
<i>ēr</i>	" " "	<i>iə</i>	<i>ūr</i>	" " "	<i>üə</i>
<i>er</i>	" " "	<i>eə</i>	<i>ûr</i>	" " "	<i>û</i>
<i>īr</i>	" " "	<i>īə</i>	<i>owr</i>	" " "	<i>owə</i>

Consonants

Symbol		Examples	Pronunciation
<i>b</i>	as in	hob, rabbit	<i>hob, rab'it</i>
<i>ch</i>	"	church, much, match	<i>chúrch, much, mach</i>
<i>d</i>	"	ado, dew	<i>ə-doo', dū</i>
<i>dh</i>	"	then, father	<i>dhen, fū dhər</i>
<i>f</i>	"	faint, phase, rough	<i>fānt, fāz, ruf</i>
<i>g</i>	"	gold, guard, ghastly	<i>gōld, gārd, gāst'li</i>
<i>gz</i>	"	exact	<i>igz-akt'</i>
<i>h</i>	"	happy, home	<i>hap'i, hōm</i>
<i>hh</i>	"	loch, Taoiseach	<i>loh, tē shohh</i>
<i>hl</i>	"	(Welsh) pennill	<i>pen'ihl</i>
<i>(h)w</i>	"	whale, which	<i>(h)wāl, (h)wich</i>
<i>j</i>	"	jack, gentle, ledge, region	<i>jak, jen'tl, lej, rē'jən</i>
<i>k</i>	"	keep, cat, chorus	<i>kēp, kat, kōr'əs (kōr')</i>
<i>ks</i>	"	lax, vex	<i>laks, veks</i>
<i>kw</i>	"	quite, coiffeur	<i>kwīt, kwā-fær</i>
<i>l</i>	"	lamp, collar	<i>lamp, kol'ər</i>
<i>m</i>	"	meat, palm, stammer	<i>mēt, pām, stam'ər</i>
<i>n</i>	"	net, gnome, knee, dinner	<i>net, nōm, nē, din'ər</i>
<i>ng</i>	"	fling, longing	<i>fling, long'ing</i>
<i>ngg</i>	"	single, longer, languor	<i>sing'gl, long'gər, lang'gər</i>
<i>ngk</i>	"	monkey, precinct	<i>mungk'i, prē'singkt</i>
<i>p</i>	"	peat, apple	<i>pēt, ap'l</i>
<i>r</i>	"	rest, wreck, arrive	<i>rest, rek, ə-rīv'</i>
<i>s</i>	"	sad, city, circuit, scene, mass, psalm	<i>sad, sit'i, sūr'kit, sēn, mas, sām</i>
<i>sh</i>	"	shine, machine, sure, militia, acacia	<i>shīn, mə-shēn', shoor, mi-lish'ə, ə-kā'sh(y)ə</i>
<i>t</i>	"	tape, nettle, thyme	<i>tāp, net'l, tīm</i>
<i>th</i>	"	thin, three	<i>thin, thrē</i>
<i>v</i>	"	valid, river	<i>val'id, riv'ər</i>
<i>w</i>	"	was, one, twig	<i>woz, wun, twig</i>
<i>y</i>	"	young, bastion	<i>yung, bast'yən</i>
<i>z</i>	"	zoo, was, roads	<i>zoo, woz, rōdz</i>
<i>zh</i>	"	azure, measure, congé, lesion	<i>azh'ər (or ə zhūr), mezh'ər, kō-zhā, lē zhən</i>

Additional sounds in foreign and dialect words

Symbol		Examples	Pronunciation
<i>ø</i>	as in	<i>Fr</i> deux, feu, peu	<i>dø, fø, pø</i>
<i>æ</i>	"	<i>Fr</i> fleur, leur, cœur	<i>flær, lær, kær</i>
<i>ü</i>	"	(1) <i>Fr</i> sur, luminaire (2) <i>Ger</i> über, Führer (3) <i>Scots</i> bluid, buik	<i>sür, lü-mē-ner</i> <i>ü'bər, fū'rər</i> <i>blüd, бүk</i>

Nasalized vowels

<i>ã</i>	as in	<i>Fr</i> sang, temps, dent	<i>sã, tã, dã</i>
<i>ẽ</i>	"	<i>Fr</i> faim, vin, plein	<i>fẽ, vẽ, plẽ</i>
<i>õ</i>	"	<i>Fr</i> tomber, long, sonde	<i>tõ-ba, lõ, sõd</i>
<i>ẽ</i>	"	<i>Fr</i> lundi, humble, un	<i>lẽ-dẽ, ẽbl', õ</i>
<i>õ</i>	"	<i>Port</i> são	<i>sõoo</i>

An apostrophe is used in words such as *timbre* (*tẽbr'*), *maître* (*metr'*) and *humble* (*ẽbl'*) in the pronunciation of which a final *ə* (eg *tẽbrə*) is possible.

Vowels in bold entries

The long vowels **ā, ē, ī, ō, ū**, have the values *ā, ē, ī, ō, ū*; **ȳ** is to be pronounced *ī*.

