

Dictionaries




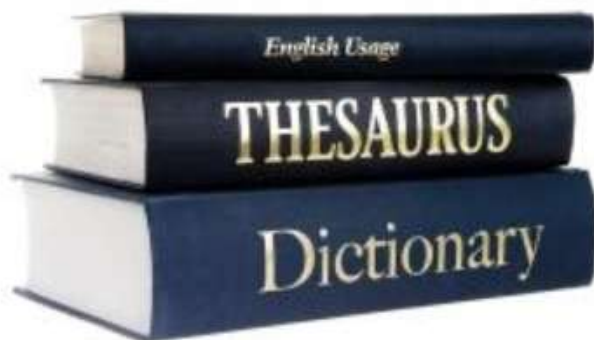


What is a dictionary?

wiseGEEK
clear answers for common questions

According to *Wisegeek*

 “A dictionary is a reference book that focuses on defining words and phrases, including multiple meanings. The most frequently used dictionary is a language dictionary that includes the majority of frequently used words in a language. Language dictionaries are made for different types of users: scholars, office workers, schools, and second language learners.”



A dictionary, a thesaurus, and a book on English usage.

What do we use dictionaries for?

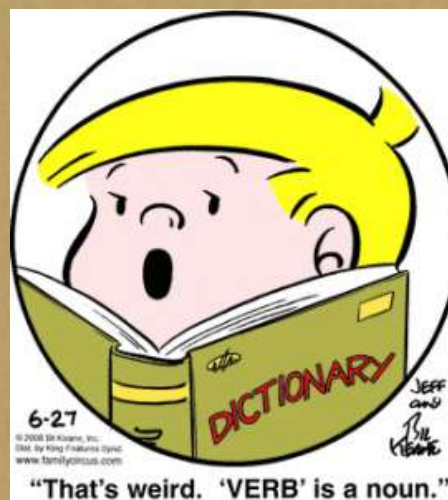


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"THE LAST THING HE SAID WAS 'I'M GOING TO GO LOOK UP THE WORD 'DICTIONARY' IN THE DICTIONARY', AND THEN THE UNIVERSE KIND OF COLLAPSED AROUND HIM."

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"That's weird. 'VERB' is a noun."




"WHY DID I BECOME AN ACCOUNTANT?", WELL IN TRUTH JUST THREW A DART AT THE FIRST PAGE IN THE DICTIONARY BUT BECOMING AN AARDVARK WAS TOO DIFFICULT

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What's a dictionary for?

 English professor at Wits school of literature and language studies, Victor Houliston, said: “The underlying question is: ‘what is a dictionary for?’ Is it to prescribe how words should be used, or is it merely a guide to the way words are actually used?”

- **FYI, The Oxford Dictionary and sms slang are now BFFs** by [Natalia Ribeiro](#) March 31, 2011

WITS

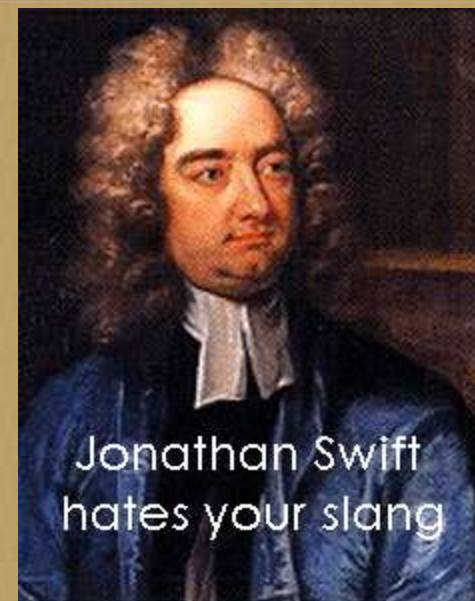
VUVUZELA

Produced by Wits Journalism



Goes back to Jonathan Swift

📖 In his “Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue”, Jonathan Swift called for the creation of an Academy similar to the Académie Française, to watch over the English language. The list of duties by the Academy include: to fix the grammar, throw out words not useful in the language, settle the good words there are, and “restore” words that have been “antiquicated”





LEARNING DICTIONARIES AND MEANINGS




A Book very useful and
known but not practis'd

The Second

Fixing the language?



An aim of historical dictionaries

 You might think that a word's definite meaning, or its proper spelling, can be found in the dictionary. But these pages are a reminder that dictionaries are complicated things, and that words often have several meanings, and may have had several spellings. The dictionaries show us that language is always changing and that dictionary-makers (lexicographers) are there to record the words of their time - even though some of them hope to set down rules and fix the language forever.

- [Dictionaries and Meanings](#)



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The Second

Dictionaries

7

Examples of Early Dictionaries 1

FIRST PART
OF THE ELEMENTA-
RIE VVHICH ENTREA-
TETH CHEFELIE OF THE
right writing of our English tung,
set furth by RICHARD
MVLCASTER.

1582 – Mulcaster's Elementarie

A
Table Alphabeticall, con-
tayning and teaching the true
writing and vnderstanding of hard
vsuall English words, borrowed from
the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine,
or French, &c.

With the Interpretation thereof by
plaine English words, gathered for the
benefit and help of all vnskilfull persons.

1604 – Cawdrey's Table
Alphabeticall

With the interpretation thereof by
*plaine English words, gathered for the benefit &
helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other
vnskilfull persons.*



LEARNING DICTIONARIES AND MEANING

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Dictionaries

8

Examples of Early Dictionaries 2



1656 – Blount's Glossographia




1673 – Head's Canting Academy



The first real lexicographer

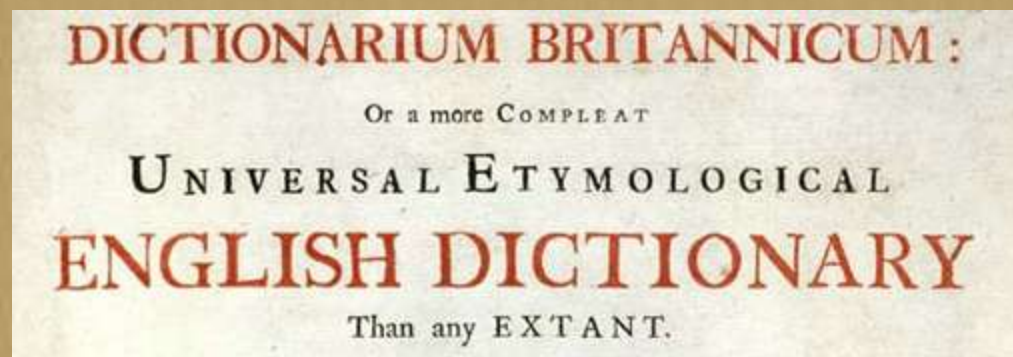


Nathanael Bailey

 Nathan Bailey was an English schoolmaster, philologist and lexicographer. His *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* of 1721 went through some thirty editions; his 1730 *Dictionarium Britannicum* was a massive folio dictionary that Samuel Johnson used as a basis for his own dictionary. Bailey included etymologies, rudimentary pronunciations, proverbs, and many woodcut illustrations. Esoteric Latinisms were excluded, but common words were defined. The *Britannicum* had about 48,000 entries, many more than any of its predecessors, and even more than Johnson, at about 42,000.



Nathan[ael] Bailey's main dictionary



1730 - Bailey's
[Dictionary Britannicum](#)

Sample entry
from [Universal Etymological English Dictionary](#) from
[Scanned Images, Engravings and Pictures From Old Books](#)

/ · [1736 Universal Etymological Dictionary](#) · g · Goat

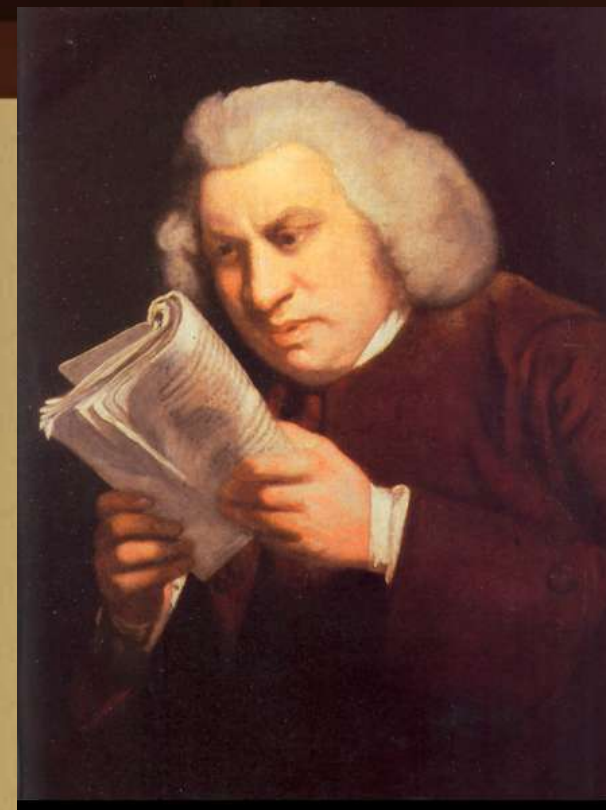
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Goat


GOAT [*gæte* (Saxon) *geyt* (Dutch) *gede* (Danish) *geet* (Su.) *geit* (Teutonic) *gait* (Gothic)] an animal well known.



Bailey's more famous successor

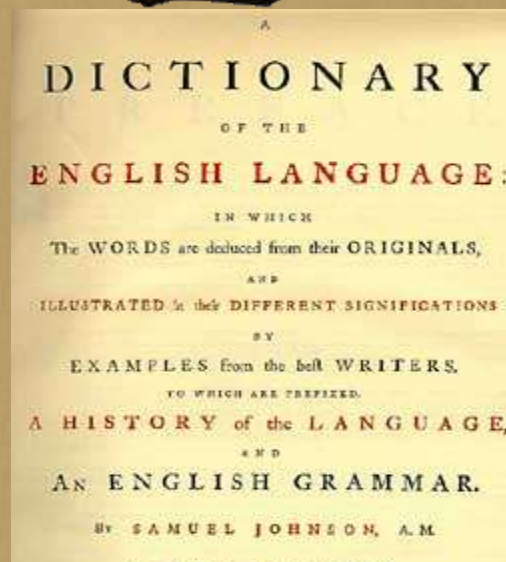


Samuel Johnson:

 “The chief intent of [the dictionary] is to preserve the purity, and ascertain the meaning of our English idiom . . . [However,] it is not enough that a dictionary delights the critick, unless, at the same time, it instructs the learner; as it is to little purpose that an engine amuses the philosopher by the subtilty of its mechanism, if it requires so much knowledge in its application as to be of no advantage to the common workman.”

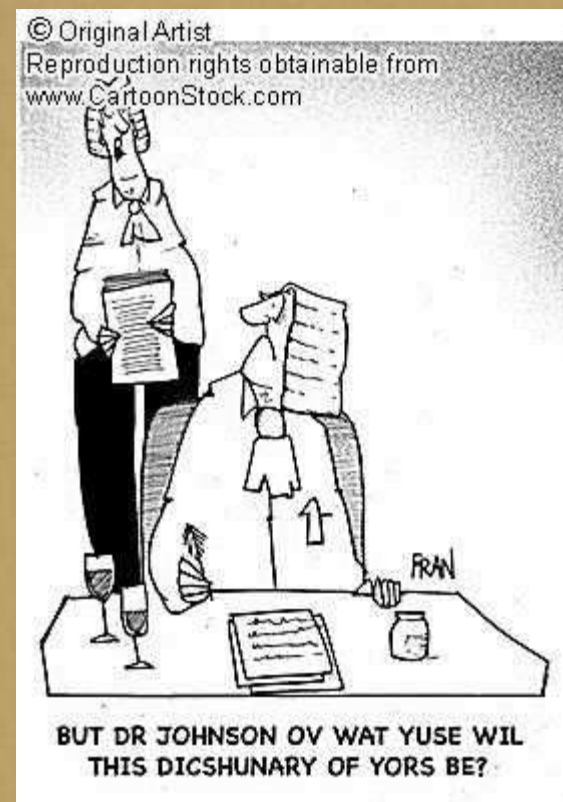
- The Plan of an English Dictionary (1747)

Johnson's Dictionary



Some of his definitions must have taxed the vocabularies of even the most literate of readers. “**network**: Any thing reticulated, or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.” To define a network as *reticulated* would cause indrawn breath among modern lexicographers, since it meant something “constructed or arranged like a net”, so his definition was circular; *decussate* meant to cross or intersect so as to form an X shape; nowadays it’s mainly a technical term in botany for leaves arranged in pairs each at right angles to the next pair above or below.

<http://www.worldwidewords.org/weirdwords/ww-vel2.htm>



WORLD WIDE WORDS


Michael Quinion writes on international English from a British viewpoint




The American Answer to Johnson



Noah Webster (1758-1843)

 Webster began writing his dictionary at the age of 43. It took him more than 27 years to write it. In this first “American” dictionary, Webster introduced distinctively American words such as “skunk” and “hickory” and “chowder.” In addition, he introduced American spellings such as “color” and “music,” derivations of the English spellings “colour” and “musick.”

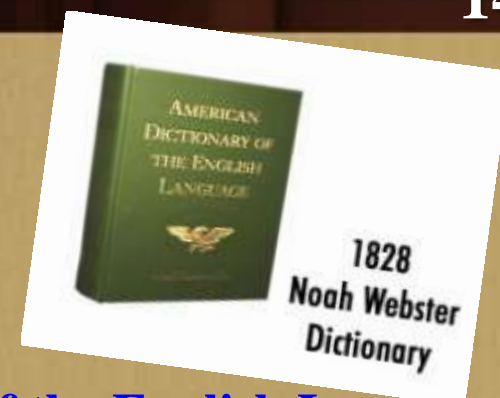
 But not all Webster spellings from that first dictionary stuck! For example, “tung” (tongue) and “wimmen” (women) aren’t used today -- even if they are more true to their pronunciation.

- [Happy Birthday, Noah Webster!](#)






Webster's dictionaries



 **1806 *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*, the first truly American dictionary.**

 **[A Sample Glossary from A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language](#)**

 **1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language***

 “... his magnum opus, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, for which he learned 26 languages, including Anglo-Saxon and Sanskrit, in order to research the origins of his own country's tongue. This book, published in 1828, embodied a new standard of lexicography; it was a dictionary with 70,000 entries that was felt by many to have surpassed Samuel Johnson's 1755 British masterpiece not only in scope but in authority as well.”

- **[Noah Webster and America's First Dictionary](#)**



Post-Webster: Dictionary Wars and the Merriam brothers

Webster vs. Worcester

- ☞ Worcester vs. Webster came to mean not only linguistic conservatives and moderates vs radicals and liberals, but, with some inevitable extremist distortion and oversimplification, Anglophiles vs. Americanizers, Boston-Cambridge-Harvard vs. New Haven-Yale, upperclass elegance vs. underbred Yankee uncouthness.[\[8\]](#)

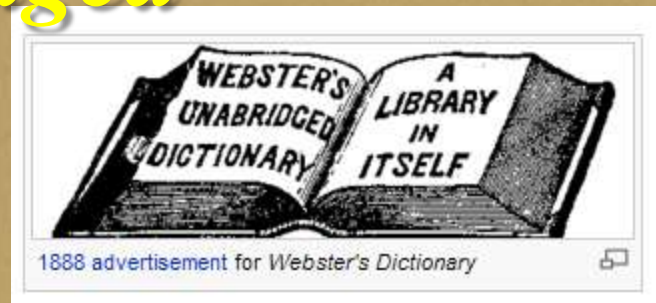
Merriam-Webster

- ☞ The Merriam brothers desired a continuity of editorship that would link Noah Webster's efforts with their own editions, so they selected Chauncey A. Goodrich, Webster's son-in-law and literary heir, who had been trained in lexicography by Webster himself, to be their editor in chief. Webster's son William also served as an editor of that first Merriam-Webster dictionary, which was published on September 24, 1847.

- [Merriam-Webster Continues Noah Webster's Legacy](#)




Unabridged—abridged



abridged (uh BRIJD)

1. Shortened; to decrease, condense, digest: “The book was abridged to a more readable length.”
2. Restrict, limit, curtail, diminish, deprive one of, take away: “No one should be allowed to abridge citizens of their legal rights.”

unabridged (un' uh BRIJD)

 Entire, in full, not shortened, complete: “There is an unabridged dictionary on the library table; as well as an unabridged book about etymologies.”


- [abridged, unabridged](#)



The Webster name



Are all Webster's dictionaries alike?

 No. After Noah Webster's death in 1843 and throughout the 19th century, Merriam-Webster produced the finest American dictionaries, building the reputation of the name “Webster’s” to a point where it became a byword for quality dictionaries. But in the late 1800s and early 1900s, legal difficulties concerning the copyright and trademark of the name Webster arose, and eventually many different publishers—some rather unscrupulous—began putting dictionaries on the market under the Webster’s name.

- [Merriam-Webster FAQ](#)

See also [Webster's Dictionary](#) on
everything,

Another famous dictionary



Oxford English Dictionary

The definitive record of the English language

How it began 1857: The Philological Society of London calls for a new English Dictionary

More work than they thought 1884: Five years into a proposed ten-year project, the editors reach *ant*
One step at a time 1884-1928: The Dictionary is published in fascicles

Keeping it current 1933-1986: Supplements to the *OED*

Making it modern 1980s: The Supplements are integrated with the *OED* to produce its Second Edition

Into the electronic age 1992: The first CD-ROM version of the *OED* is published

The future has begun The present: The *OED* is now being fully revised, with new material published in parts online





Sir James Augustus Henry Murray (1837–1915), by S. S. McClure



The OED and the Madman

Broadmoor's word-finder

 Opened in 1863, Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum, as it was then known, has been home to some of England's most notorious criminals. In 1872 it admitted one of its most famous patients ever: Dr William Chester Minor, an American surgeon.

 For around 20 years, Minor dedicated his life to collecting quotations for the first Oxford English Dictionary. His work led to a lasting friendship with one of the dictionary's editors, Dr James Murray

 [More...](#)

 [READ MORE...](#)


Further Reading: *'The Surgeon of Crowthorne: A Tale of Murder, Madness and the Love of Words'*, by Simon Winchester






Two Kinds of Dictionaries

Descriptive and Prescriptive Dictionaries

 *Descriptive dictionaries* describe the language. They include words that are commonly used even if they are nonstandard. They will often include nonstandard spellings.

 *Prescriptive dictionaries* tend to be more concerned about correct or standard English. They prescribe the proper usage and spelling of words. That school dictionary in which I found *ain't* was a descriptive dictionary.


- English Plus+ News, November 2000






What's a thesaurus?

What is a thesaurus?

 A thesaurus is a collection of synonyms (words which have basically the same meaning) and antonyms (words which have basically opposite meanings).

What are the two forms of a thesaurus?

 In dictionary form, words are in alphabetical order, so you look “very” up under V.

 In index form, words are classified by meaning, and you would have to look up “very” in the index at the back of the book. The index would guide you to the page or pages where “very” appears.

- [How to Use a Thesaurus](#)







Roget's?



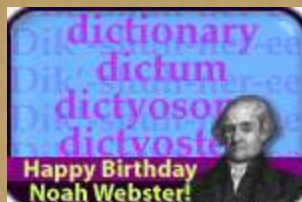
Roget's Thesaurus

 *Roget's Thesaurus* is a widely-used English thesaurus, created by Dr. Peter Mark Roget (1779–1869) in 1805 and was released to the public on 29 April, 1852. The original edition had 15,000 words, and each new edition has been larger. The Karpeles Manuscript Library houses the original manuscript in its collection.

 The name “Roget” is not trademarked. Use of the name “Roget” in the title of a thesaurus does not necessarily indicate any relationship to Dr. Roget or the original *Roget's Thesaurus*. It has come to be seen as a generic thesaurus name, like “Webster” for dictionaries.



Websites for dictionary skills



[All About Words:](#)

[Dictionary Activities!](#)

[Dictionary Crossword Puzzle](#)

[Dictionary Word Search](#)

[Answer Keys for Crossword & Word Search](#)



Dictionary Skills

Grade Level(s): 3-5, 6-8

By: Upsadaisy

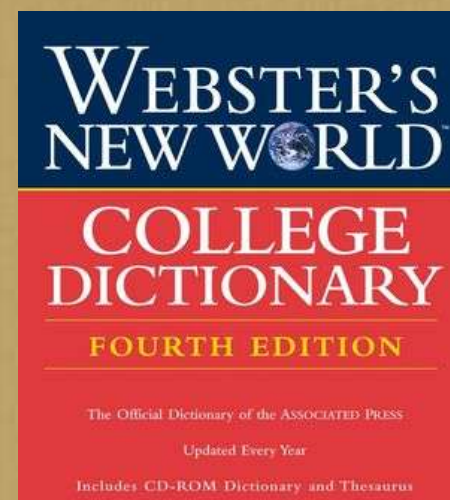
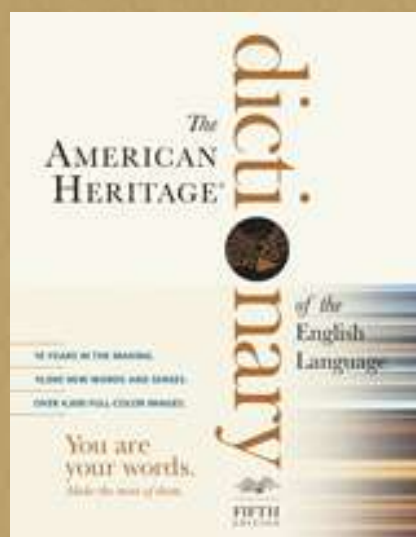
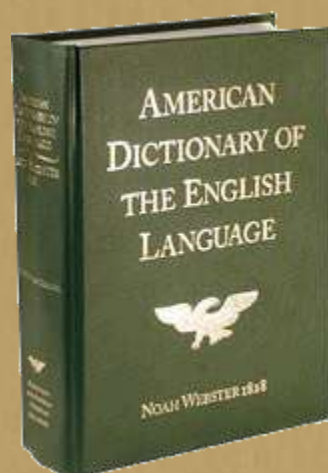
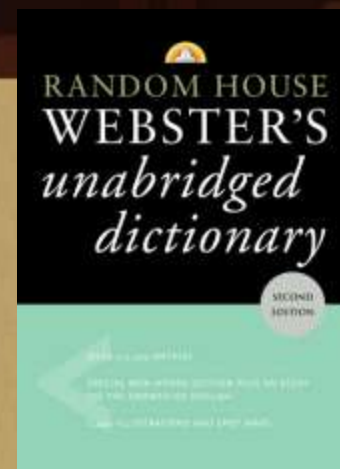
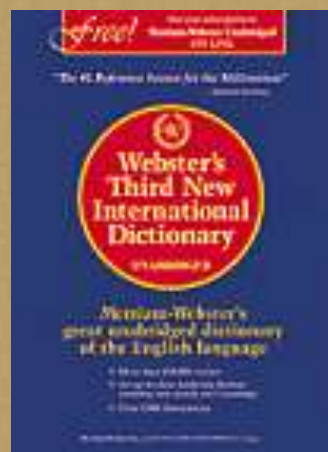
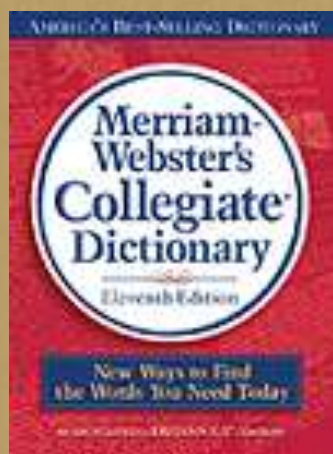
READING FUN

for Intermediate Students (Grades 4-6)

DICTIONARY SKILLS



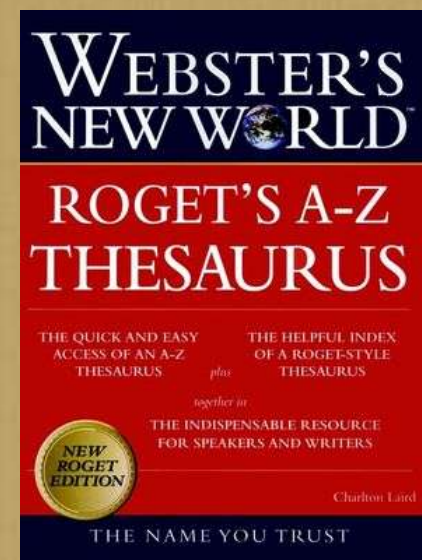
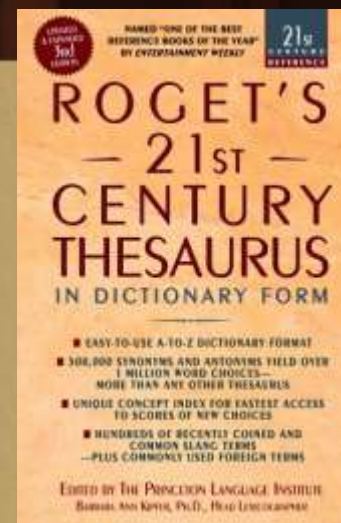
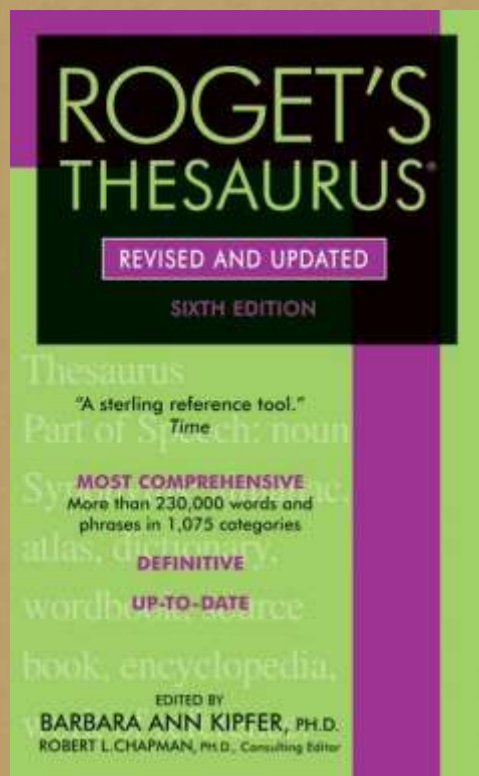
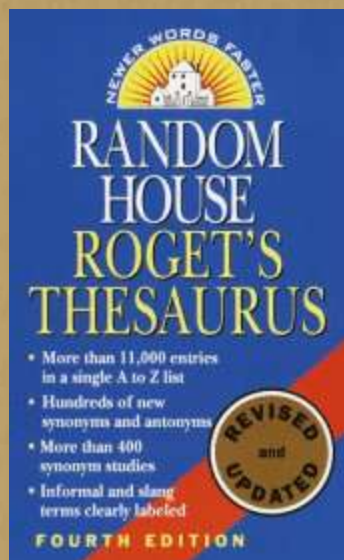
Print dictionaries



WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD™
We Define Your World®

WILEY

Print Thesauri





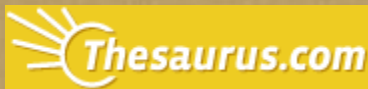
SOME ONLINE SITES

Reference
Desk



GREAT
WEBSITES
FOR KIDS

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ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY
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a division of the
American Library Association*



Oxford Dictionaries
The world's most trusted dictionaries



Cambridge Dictionaries Online
The most popular online dictionary and thesaurus for learners of English



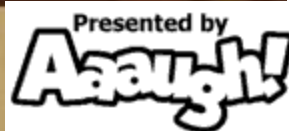
Webster's Online Dictionary
with Multilingual Thesaurus Translation



OneLook®
Dictionary Search



Words online



The
F O O L I S H
DICTIONARY
online edition

INTERNET ANAGRAM SERVER

STRANGE & UNUSUAL REFERENCES
SELECT A BOOK TO READ ONLINE



[The Rap Dictionary](#)

The Word Detective

Words and Language in a Humorous Vein
on the Web Since 1995



wordiQ.com

WordAssault

Visual Dictionary

by Paul McFedries

word spy

The Word Lover's
Guide to
New Words

McMansion is
trendy & large, light-colored
house, especially a new
house that has a close proximity
to the surrounding houses.

With a shrill cry of
alarm,
harmful
reducing the
emotions
and a relatively

summit-ho
model to
globalization
corporate
dependen
The word



Look it up!