
Concise Oxford English Dictionary

ELEVENTH EDITION

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Preface

to the Eleventh Edition

The eleventh edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* has been fully revised, updated, and redesigned, as is appropriate for the first *Concise* of the 21st century. In producing this edition we have been able to draw on the language research and analysis carried out for the groundbreaking *Oxford Dictionary of English* (second edition), which was published in 2003. As with the very first edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, which made use of the ‘materials’ and ‘methods’ by which the editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary* had ‘revolutionized lexicography’, so the eleventh edition makes use of the innovative principles and methodology devised for its larger cousin.

The first edition of the *Concise* was edited by the brothers Henry Watson and Frank George Fowler. Proposed in 1906, it was published in June 1911, whereupon it was praised as ‘a marvel of condensation, accomplished by skilful hands’ and ‘a miracle of condensed scholarship’. Revolutionary in its concentration on current English and in its copious use of illustrative examples ‘as a necessary supplement to definition’, the dictionary was an immediate success. Its compilation was indeed an Olympian achievement: the brothers were able to draw on the the *Oxford English Dictionary*, then still incomplete, for only the A–R part of the alphabet.

It is interesting today to look back at that first edition of the *Concise* and compare it with the new edition. The cover, bedecked with art nouveau swirls, proclaims ‘The Concise Oxford Dictionary, adapted by H. W. and F. G. Fowler from The Oxford Dictionary’. The book contains 1,064 pages, whereas the new edition has 1,681 larger pages.

The words covered, and the way they are described, have of course changed along with the language and the world. *CODI* had no entry for **computer**, **radio**, **television**, or **cinema**, although it did have **cockyolly bird** (‘nursery phr. for a bird’) and **impaludism** (‘morbid state ... found in dwellers in marshes’). It defined **beverage** as ‘drinking-liquor’, **cancan** as ‘indecent dance’, and **neon** as ‘lately discovered atmospheric gas’. **Gay** meant ‘full of or disposed to or indicating mirth; light-hearted, sportive’, while **Lesbian** was simply ‘of Lesbos’. Even spelling is different: **horsebox**, **horse chestnut**, and **horsefly** were all hyphenated, and **rime** and **shew** were given as variant spellings of **rhyme** and **show**.

The Fowler brothers, like all lexicographers until quite recently, had to rely largely on examples of usage that were derived from their own reading or sent in by others. Modern dictionaries are written and revised with the help

of searchable databases containing millions of words of English. For the eleventh edition we have made use of larger amounts of evidence than ever before: we were able to call upon the hundreds of millions of words of the Oxford English Corpus, which includes the citations database of the Oxford Reading Programme. This evidence informs everything we are able to say about the language and the words within it, whether in giving information about spelling, in ensuring accurate and precise definitions, or in establishing currency or level of formality. This latest edition of the *Concise* offers a description of the language that is as accurate, up to date, and objective as possible, using resources that the editors of the first edition could only dream of.

We have made particular efforts to ensure that the eleventh edition covers all those words, phrases, and meanings that form the central vocabulary of English in the modern world. Special attention has been given to scientific and technical vocabulary: we have consulted experts in fast-moving fields such as genetics, pharmacology, and computing. Rare, archaic, and literary language is represented as fully as ever before, and the latest *Concise* continues to celebrate all the richness and history of English.

The dictionary definitions retain the hallmark of conciseness, although this is balanced by an emphasis on clarity and accessibility, using ordinary modern English to explain technical and complex terms, with no abbreviations. With a nod to that first edition, we have added a thousand more illustrative examples to the text.

Features new to this edition include a greatly increased number of boxed usage notes, offering help with tricky and controversial questions of English. There are also around a hundred special Word Histories, which trace the stories of some of the language's most interesting words.

Appendices include useful tables of factual information, a discussion of English used in electronic communication, an explanation of the different levels of English, and a guide to good English.

We are grateful to many people for their help in the preparation of this edition. We are particularly indebted to Michael Proffitt, Graeme Diamond, and the continuing work of the New Words team of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for their help in identifying and drafting new words as they come into the language.

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Introduction

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* is designed to be as straightforward and self-explanatory as possible, and the use of special dictionary symbols and conventions has been kept to a minimum. Those that are used are explained below. In addition, the following notes are designed to enable the reader to understand more fully the principles involved in and the thinking behind the making of this dictionary.

ENTRY STRUCTURE: CORE SENSE AND SUBSENSSES

Within each part of speech the first definition given is the core sense. This represents the typical, central, or 'core' meaning of the word in modern standard English. The core meaning is not necessarily the oldest meaning, nor is it always the most frequent meaning, because figurative and extended senses are sometimes the most frequent. It is the meaning accepted by native speakers as the one which is most established as literal and central.

Each word has at least one core sense, which acts as a gateway to other, related subsenses. The relationship between core sense and subsense is indicated in the dictionary entry by the placing of the subsenses immediately after the core sense, introduced by a solid arrow symbol. Many entries have more than one core sense. Each new core sense is introduced by a bold sense number, and each may have its own related subsense or subsenses.

capital' ■ **n.** **1** the most important city or town of a country or region, usually its seat of government and administrative centre. ► a place particularly associated with a specified activity: *the fashion capital of the world*. **2** wealth owned by a person or organization or invested, lent, or borrowed. ► the excess of a company's assets over its liabilities. **3** a capital letter. ■ **adj.** **1** (Of an offence or charge) liable to the death penalty. **2** (of a letter of the alphabet) large in size and of the form used to begin sentences and names. **3** informal, dated excellent.

- PHRASES **make capital out of** use to one's own advantage. **with a capital** — used for emphasis: *she was ugly with a capital U*.
- DERIVATIVES **capitally** *adv.*
- ORIGIN ME (as *adj.* in the sense 'relating to the head or top'): via OFr. from L. *capitalis*, from *caput* 'head'.

cap ■ **n.** **1** a soft, flat hat without a brim and usually with a peak. ► a soft, close-fitting head covering worn for a particular purpose: *a shower cap*. ► an academic mortar board. **2** a protective lid or cover for a bottle, pen, etc. ► Dentistry an artificial protective covering for a tooth. **3** an upper limit imposed on spending or borrowing. **4** Brit. a cap awarded to members of a sports team, especially a national team. **5** (also **Dutch cap**) Brit. informal a contraceptive diaphragm. **6** the broad upper part of the fruiting body of a mushroom or toadstool. **7** short for **PERCUSSION CAP**. ■ **v.** (**caps, capping, capped**) **1** put or form a lid or cover on. ► put a cap on (a tooth). **2** provide a fitting climax or conclusion to. ► follow or reply to (a story or remark) with a better one. **3** place a limit on (prices, expenditure, etc.). **4** (**be capped**) Brit. be chosen as a member of a sports team, especially a national one. **5** Scottish & NZ confer a university degree on.

- PHRASES **cap in hand** (N. Amer. **hat in hand**) humbly asking for a favour. **cap of liberty** a conical cap given to Roman slaves when they were freed, later used as a republican symbol. **cap of maintenance** Brit. a cap or hat worn or carried as a symbol of official dignity. **set one's cap at** (Or US **for**) dated (of a woman) try to attract (a particular man) as a suitor. **to cap it all** as the final unfortunate incident in a long series.
- DERIVATIVES **capful** *n.* (pl. **capfuls**). **capper** *n.*
- ORIGIN OE *cappe* 'hood', from late L. *cappa*, perh. from L. *caput* 'head'.

The organization of core senses and subsenses is designed to show direct, logical relationships between the uses of a word. The aim is to help the user, not only to navigate the entries more easily and to find the relevant sense more readily, but also to build up an understanding in general of the way in which different meanings of a word relate to each other.

LABELS

Unless otherwise stated, the words and senses recorded in this dictionary are all part of standard English. Some words, however, are appropriate only to certain situations or are found only in certain contexts, and where this is the case a label (or combination of labels) is used.

Register labels

Register labels refer to the particular level of use in the language—indicating whether a term is formal or informal, historical or archaic, and so on:

formal: normally used only in writing, in contexts such as official documents.

informal: normally used only in spoken contexts or informal written contexts.

dated: no longer used by the majority of English speakers, but still encountered, especially among the older generation.

archaic: old-fashioned language, not in ordinary use today, though sometimes used to give a deliberately old-fashioned effect and also encountered in the literature of the past.

historical: still used today, but only in reference to some practice or artefact that is no longer part of the modern world, e.g. **banneret** or **umbo**.

literary: found only or mainly in literature written in a consciously 'literary' style, or in poetry.

technical: normally used only in technical and specialist language, though not necessarily restricted to any specific subject field.

rare: not in normal use.

humorous: used with the intention of sounding funny or playful.

euphemistic: used in place of a more direct or vulgar term.

dialect: not used in the standard language, but still widely used in certain local regions of the English-speaking world.

offensive: likely to cause offence, especially racial offence, whether the speaker intends it or not.

derogatory: intended to convey a low opinion or cause personal offence.

vulgar slang: very informal language, especially that relating to sexual activity or other bodily functions, which is widely regarded as taboo and may cause offence.

Geographical labels

The main regional standards for the language of English are British, US and Canadian, Australian and New Zealand, South African, Indian, and West Indian. The vast majority of words and senses listed in the dictionary are common to all the major regional standard varieties of English, but where important local differences exist these are recorded.

The geographical label 'Brit.' implies that the use is found typically in standard British English but is not found in standard American English, though it may be found in other varieties such as Australian or South African English. The label 'US', on the other hand, implies that the use is typically US and is not standard in British English, though it may be found elsewhere.

Subject labels

Subject labels are used to indicate that a word or sense is associated with a particular subject field or specialist activity, such as Medicine, Aeronautics, or Baseball.

GRAMMAR

The dictionary is based on a rigorous analysis of the grammar and syntactical structures of the language. This information is used to structure and organize the dictionary entry but, for the most part, it remains implicit in the text itself. Grammar is made explicit where it causes difficulty or is the source of controversy, or is likely to be of particular interest to the user.

1. Strong or obligatory syntactical patterns are presented directly, in bold text preceding the definition, e.g.

close ... 3 ... (close in) (of days) get successively shorter with the approach of the winter solstice.

sound ... 3 ... (sound off) express one's opinions loudly or forcefully.

bristle ... 3 ... (bristle with) be covered with or abundant in.

Where the structure is a verb structure including a direct object, this is also indicated in bold text (notice that the direct object is included unbracketed in the definition text in these cases):

drink ... 2 ... (drink something in) watch or listen eagerly to something.

pad ... 2 ... (pad something out) lengthen a speech or piece of writing with unnecessary material.

egg ... (egg someone on) urge or encourage someone to do something foolish or risky.

A similar presentation is used to show an obligatory plural form:

work ... 5 (works) ... a place where industrial or manufacturing processes are carried out.

2. Where a verbal noun ending in *-ing* or a verbal adjective ending in *-ed* or *-ing* is an important or the most important component of the verb use, this is indicated:

accommodate ... 2 ... [as adj. **accommodating**] fitting in helpfully with another's wishes or demands.

abash ... [usu. as adj. **abashed**] cause to feel embarrassed, disconcerted, or ashamed.

3. A small number of other explicit grammar labels are used:

[**treated as sing. or pl.**]: used to indicate nouns which may be used with either a singular or a plural verb without any change in meaning, normally collective nouns, e.g.

staff n. 1 [treated as sing. or pl.] the employees of a particular organization.

[**treated as sing.**]: used to indicate nouns which have a plural form but are normally used with a singular verb (many of which are words ending in *-ics* which relate to sports or subjects of study), e.g.

genetics pl. n. 1 [treated as sing.] the study of heredity and the variation of inherited characteristics.

acrobatics pl. n. [usu. treated as sing.] spectacular gymnastic feats.

mumps pl. n. [treated as sing.] a viral disease mainly affecting children, causing swelling of the parotid salivary glands of the face.

[**as modifier**]: used to indicate noun senses in which the noun is normally placed in front of another noun in order to modify its meaning, e.g.

scattergun ... [as modifier] covering a broad range in a random and unsystematic way: *the scattergun approach*.

bayonet... 2 [as modifier] denoting a type of fitting for a light bulb or other appliance which is pushed into a socket and then twisted into place.

[**postpos.**]: used to indicate an adjective which is used postpositively, i.e. which comes immediately after the noun which it modifies (often an adjective which has been adopted from a language where postpositive use is standard), e.g.

par excellence ... [postpos.] better or more than all others of the same kind: *Nash is the Regency architect par excellence*.

elect ... 2 [postpos.] elected to a position but not yet in office: *the President Elect*.

[**with neg.**]: used to indicate words and senses which are typically used in negative constructions, e.g.

clever ... 2 [with neg.] Brit. informal healthy or well: *I didn't feel too clever*.

fathom ... 1 [usu. with neg.] understand (something) after much thought.

SPELLING AND INFLECTION

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* gives advice and information on spelling, in particular for those cases which are irregular or which otherwise cause difficulty for native speakers. The main categories are summarized below.

Variant spellings

The main form of each word given is the standard British spelling or form. Standard variants, e.g. standard US spellings, are indicated at the top of the entry and cross-referred if the alphabetical position is more than four entries distant from the main entry.

anaemia (US **anemia**)

anemia US spelling of **ANAEMIA**.

ageism (also **agism**)

agism variant spelling of **AGEISM**.

-ize and -ise spellings

Where verbs can be spelled with either an **-ize** or **-ise** ending the two spellings are given as parallel forms:

agonize or **agonise**

Either spelling may be used. The form **-ize** has been in use in English since the 16th century; although it is widely used in American English, it is not an Americanism. The alternative spelling **-ise** is used particularly in British English.

Other variants, such as archaic, old-fashioned, or informal spellings, are cross-referred to the main entry, but are not themselves listed at the parent entry.

Esquimau archaic spelling of **ESKIMO**.

Hyphenation

Although standard spelling in English is fixed, the use of hyphenation is not. In standard English a few general rules are followed, and these are outlined below.

Noun compounds: there are no hard and fast rules to determine the use of one-word, two-word, or hyphenated forms (except when used to show grammatical function: see below): whether, for example, to write **airstream**, **air-stream**, or **air stream**. All three forms are found in use in standard texts. However, the evidence of modern English indicates a tendency towards avoiding hyphenation in general, showing a preference for **airstream** rather than **air-stream** and for **air raid** rather than **air-raid**. There is an additional tendency for the form to be one word in US English and two words in British English, e.g. **coffee pot** tends to be the more common form in British English, while **coffeepot** tends to be more common in US English.

To save space and avoid confusion, only one of the three possible forms—the standard British one—is entered in the dictionary. This does not, however, imply that other forms are incorrect or not used.

Grammatical function: hyphens are also used to serve certain grammatical functions. When a noun compound made up of two separate words (e.g. **credit card**) is placed before another noun and used to modify it, the general rule is that the noun compound becomes hyphenated, e.g. *I used my credit card* but *credit-card debt*. This sort of regular alternation will be seen in example sentences but is not otherwise explicitly mentioned in the dictionary entries.

A similar alternation is found in compound adjectives such as **well known**. When used predicatively, i.e. after the verb, such adjectives are generally unhyphenated, but when used attributively, i.e. before the noun, they are generally hyphenated: *he is not well known* but *a well-known painter*.

A general rule governing verb compounds means that, where a noun compound is two words (e.g. **beta test**), any verb derived from it is normally hyphenated (**to beta-test**). This alternation is shown explicitly in the dictionary text for relevant entries.

Inflection

English has comparatively few inflections compared to other European languages, and those that exist are remarkably regular. An *-s* is added to most nouns to make a plural; *-ed* is added to most verbs to make a past tense or past participle, and *-ing* is added to make a present participle.

Where difficulties arise, for example because the inflection is not regular, or because the spelling change even in a regular inflection is not straightforward, full guidance is given. The main areas outlined are covered below.

Verbs: the following forms are regarded as regular and are therefore not shown in the dictionary, unless other inflections for that verb are being shown:

- third person singular present forms adding *-s* to the stem (or *-es* to stems ending in *-s*, *-x*, *-z*, *-sh*, or soft *-ch*), e.g. **find** → **finds** or **change** → **changes**.
- past tenses and past participles dropping a final silent *e* and adding *-ed* to the stem, e.g. **change** → **changed** or **dance** → **danced**.
- present participles dropping a final silent *e* and adding *-ing* to the stem, e.g. **change** → **changing** or **dance** → **dancing**.

Other forms are given in the dictionary, notably for:

- verbs which inflect by doubling a consonant, e.g. **bat** → **batting**, **batted**
- verbs ending in *-y* which inflect by changing *-y* to *-i*, e.g. **try** → **tries**, **tried**
- verbs in which past tense and past participle do not follow the regular *-ed* pattern, e.g. **feel** → past and past part. **felt**; **awake** → past **awoke**; past part. **awoken**
- present participles which add *-ing* but retain a final *e* (in order to make clear that the pronunciation of *g* remains soft), e.g. **singe** → **singeing**

Nouns: plurals formed by adding *-s* (or *-es* when they end in *-s*, *-x*, *-z*, *-sh*, or soft *-ch*) are regarded as regular and are not shown.

Other plural forms are given in the dictionary, notably for:

- nouns ending in *-i* or *-o*, e.g. **agouti** → **agoutis**, **albino** → **albinos**

- nouns ending in *-a*, *-um*, or *-us* which are or appear to be Latinate forms, e.g. **areola** → **areolae**, **spectrum** → **spectra**, **alveolus** → **alveoli**
- nouns ending in *-y*, e.g. **fly** → **flies**
- nouns with more than one plural form, e.g. **storey** → **storeys** or **stories**
- nouns with plurals showing a change in the stem, e.g. **foot** → **feet**
- nouns with plurals unchanged from the singular form, e.g. **sheep** → **sheep**

Adjectives: the following forms for comparative and superlative are regarded as regular and are not shown in the dictionary:

- words of one syllable adding *-er* and *-est*, e.g. **great** → **greater**, **greatest**
- words of one syllable ending in silent *e*, which drop the *-e* and add *-er* and *-est*, e.g. **brave** → **braver**, **bravest**
- words which form the comparative and superlative by adding ‘more’ and ‘most’

Other forms are given in the dictionary, notably for:

- adjectives which form the comparative and superlative by doubling a final consonant, e.g. **hot** → **hotter**, **hottest**
- two-syllable adjectives which form the comparative and superlative with *-er* and *-est* (typically adjectives ending in *-y* and their negative forms), e.g. **happy** → **happier**, **happiest**; **unhappy** → **unhappier**, **unhappiest**

PRONUNCIATIONS

Pronunciations are not given for ordinary, everyday words such as **bake**, **baby**, **beach**, **bewilder**, **boastful**, or **budget**, since it is assumed that native speakers of English do not, as a rule, have problems with the pronunciation of such words.

In the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, the principle followed is that pronunciations are given only where they are likely to cause problems for the native speaker of English, in particular for foreign words, scientific and other technical terms, rare words, words with unusual stress patterns, and words in which the standard pronunciation is disputed. For example, full pronunciations are given for the following words: **baba ganoush**, **baccalaureate**, **beatific**, **bijouterie**, **bucolic**, and **buddleia**.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is used in representing the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England (sometimes called Received Pronunciation or RP). It is recognized that, although the English of southern England is the pronunciation given, many variations are heard in standard speech in other parts of the English-speaking world.

The symbols used for English words, with their values, are given below.

Consonants

The following have their usual English values: *b*, *d*, *f*, *h*, *k*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *p*, *r*, *s*, *t*, *v*, *w*, and *z*. Other symbols are used as follows:

g	get	x	loch	ð	this	j	yes
tʃ	chip	ŋ	ring	ʃ	she		
dʒ	jar	θ	thin	ʒ	decision		

Vowels

SHORT VOWELS	LONG VOWELS (: indicates length)	DIPHTHONGS	TRIPHTHONGS
æ cat	ɑ: arm	Δɪ my	Δɪə fire
ɛ bed	ɛ: hair	aʊ how	aʊə sour
ə ago	ə: her	eɪ day	
ɪ sit	i: see	əʊ no	
ɪ cosy	ɔ: saw	ɪə near	
ɒ hot	u: too	ɔɪ boy	
ʌ run		ʊə poor	
ʊ put			

- (ə) before /l/, /m/, or /n/ indicates that the syllable may be realized with a syllabic **l**, **m**, or **n**, rather than with a vowel and a consonant, e.g. /'bʌt(ə)n/ rather than /'bʌtən/.
- (r) indicates an **r** that is sometimes sounded when a vowel follows, as in **drawer**, **cha-chaing**.

Stress

The mark ' before a syllable indicates that it is stressed. Secondary stress is shown by the mark , before a syllable.

Foreign pronunciations

Foreign words and phrases, whether naturalized or not, are always given an anglicized pronunciation. The anglicized pronunciation represents the normal pronunciation used by native speakers of standard English when using the word in an English context. However, it is difficult to show the typical pronunciation of some commonly used French words by means of standard English vowel symbols, and for that reason the following nasalized vowels have been used:

- ã au gratin
- õ bouffant
- ã chanson
- õ frisson

Abbreviations used in the dictionary

Abbreviations in general use, such as ‘etc.’, ‘i.e.’, and ‘p.m.’, are listed and explained as entries in the dictionary itself.

abbrev.	abbreviation	fem.	feminine
Aborig.	Aboriginal	Fr.	French
adj.	adjective	freq.	frequently
adv.	adverb	Ger.	German
Afr.	African	Gk	Greek
Afrik.	Afrikaans	Gmc	Germanic
alt.	alteration, altered	Heb.	Hebrew
Amer.	American	imper.	imperative
appar.	apparently	Ind.	Indian
Arab.	Arabic	Indo-Eur.	Indo-European
assoc.	associated, association	infin.	infinitive
aux.	auxiliary	interrog.	interrogative
b.	born	Ir.	Irish
back-form.	back-formation	Ital.	Italian
C (as in C18, C19, etc.)	century	L.	Latin
Canad.	Canadian	Latin Amer. Sp.	Latin American Spanish
cent.	century	lit.	literally
cf.	compare with	masc.	masculine
Chin.	Chinese	MDu.	Middle Dutch
colloq.	colloquial	ME	Middle English
comb. form	combining form	med.	medieval
compar.	comparative	Mex. Sp.	Mexican Spanish
conj.	conjunction	Mid. High Ger.	Middle High German
contr.	contraction	Mid. Low Ger.	Middle Low German
corresp.	corresponding	mod.	modern
Dan.	Danish	n.	noun
det.	determiner	N.	North
dial.	dialect	naut.	nautical
dimin.	diminutive	neg.	negative
Du.	Dutch	neut.	neuter
E.	East	north. Engl.	northern English
eccles.	ecclesiastical	Norw.	Norwegian
Engl.	English	obs.	obsolete
exclam.	exclamation		

ABBREVIATIONS

OE	Old English	pron.	pronoun
OFr.	Old French	pronunc.	pronunciation
ON	Old Norse	ref.	reference
Old North. Fr.	Old Northern French	rel.	related
orig.	originally	Russ.	Russian
part.	participle	S.	South
perh.	perhaps	Sc.	Scottish
Pers.	Persian	Scand.	Scandinavian
phr.	phrase	sing.	singular
phrs	phrases	sl.	slang
pl.	plural	Sp.	Spanish
pop.	popular	Swed.	Swedish
Port.	Portuguese	ymb.	symbol
possess.	possessive	Turk.	Turkish
postpos.	postpositive	ult.	ultimately
predet.	predeterminer	usu.	usually
prep.	preposition	v.	verb
pres.	present	var.	variant
prob.	probably	vars	variants
		W.	West

Note on trademarks and proprietary status

This dictionary includes some words which have, or are asserted to have, proprietary status as trademarks or otherwise. Their inclusion does not imply that they have acquired for legal purposes a non-proprietary or general significance, nor any other judgement concerning their legal status. In cases where the editorial staff have some evidence that a word has proprietary status this is indicated in the entry for that word by the label *trademark*, but no judgement concerning the legal status of such words is made or implied thereby.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary is the most popular dictionary of its kind and is noted for its clear, concise definitions as well as its comprehensive and authoritative coverage of the vocabulary of the English-speaking world. Available in both British & American voice versions, this dictionary consists of over 50,000 audio pronunciations of both common and rare words, including words with controversial pronunciation or with variant pronunciations. The Most Popular Dictionary Worldwide: Over 240,000 words, phrases, and definitions, covering technical and scientific vocabulary as well. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary is one of the most popular choices in Oxford's renowned dictionary line. Now in print through its various editions for a century it has been selected by decades of users for its up-to-date and authoritative coverage of the English language. This centenary edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary presents the most accurate picture of English today. It contains over 240,000 words, phrases, and definitions, providing superb coverage of contemporary English, including rare, historical, and archaic terms, scientific and technical vocabulary, and En... Oxford English Dictionary | The definitive record of the English language. HOME. ABOUT. What's new: More than 650 new words, senses, and subentries have been added to the Oxford English Dictionary in our latest update, including fake news, Manhattanhenge, and Jedi mind trick. Find out more >. Upcoming webinar: join us on 10 October as Megan Bushnell presents her investigation into how a corpus-based approach, using OED data, is used to examine the context and etymology in Gavin Douglas' Eneados.