This second edition of Sidney I. Landau’s landmark work offers a comprehensive and completely up-to-date description of how dictionaries are researched and written, with particular attention to the ways in which computer technology has changed modern lexicography. A completely new chapter has been added and every chapter has been updated and reorganized to reflect the changes. Landau has an insider’s practical knowledge of making dictionaries and every feature of the dictionary is examined and explained, with frequent examples given from the latest dictionaries of the US and Britain. A history of English lexicography is also included. The book is both practically grounded and soundly based on current lexicographic scholarship. Written in a readable style, free of jargon and unnecessary technical language, it will appeal to readers who are simply interested in dictionaries – with no special knowledge of the field – as well as to professional lexicographers.

Sidney I. Landau is former Editorial Director of the North American Branch of Cambridge University Press and has been engaged in lexicography since 1961. He has contributed widely to professional journals in the field and is editor of the three-volume International Dictionary of Medicine and Biology (1986) and the Cambridge Dictionary of American English (2000).
DICTIONARIES

The Art and Craft of Lexicography

SECOND EDITION

SIDNEY I. LANDAU
For Sarah
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Illustrations


2 Title page of a facsimile edition of Robert Cawdrey’s 1604 dictionary, *A Table Alphabeticall*. From the Collection of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

3 Title page of Nathan Bailey’s *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721). From the Collection of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

4 Title page of Samuel Johnson’s *Plan of a Dictionary* (1747). From the Collection of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.


6 Citation for “over the top.”

7 Corpus printout for “conspicuous.”

8 Citation for “dot-coms.”

9 Citation for “dot-comer.”

10 Citation for “dot.”

11 Citation for “raves.”

12 Citation for “E-commerce.”

13 Citation for “skorts.”

14 Citation for “like.”

15 Part of the entry “bull” from the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, vol. I.

16 The entry “mincy” from the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, vol. III.

17 *DARE* base map showing state designations compared to standard map of the United States.

18 *DARE* distribution map for “gesundheit.”
Illustrations

19  *DARE* distribution map for “scat.”  
20  “surgeries” – American subcorpus.  
21  “colossal” – American subcorpus.  
22  Tag descriptions of “run.”  
23  Tag descriptions and search for “crazy” and “crazies” – American subcorpus.  
24  Tag descriptions of “escalate.”  
25  Lemmatized collocation search for “voice.”  
26  “husky” as a collocate of “voice.”  
27  “hear” as a lemmatized collocate of “voice.”  
28  “back burner” and “front burner” – American subcorpus.  
29  A proposed organization of corpus text types.  
30  Sentence search for “tactfully” – American subcorpus.  
31  Tag descriptions of “right” – American subcorpus.  
32  Thorndike’s block system of distribution of dictionary entries by initial letters. Courtesy of Robert K. Barnhart.  
33  Typical headings of a dictionary style manual (simplified version).  
34  Basic Editing Screen. Used with permission of Cambridge University Press.
Revision of one’s own work puts one in the uncomfortable position of judging oneself as an outsider, as indeed one is after a span of nearly twenty years. I understand that every nine years’ time, on average, every cell of a person’s body has been replaced, so I have undergone two complete transformations in this period and am working on a third. Perhaps the more significant changes are in one’s view of the world and of one’s own place within it. Both mentally and physically I am not the same person I was when I wrote this book in 1981–82. Although I could have had the text optically scanned, I elected to retype all of it, as this would compel me to review every word. I have not regretted the decision.

An honest appraisal of one’s book, as of one’s self, makes one realize how one’s views of what is important have in some cases changed. One’s capacity for indignation about some things especially, like one’s capacity to race upstairs two at a time, is mysteriously weakened without one knowing precisely when the change took effect. I have been surprised at the vigor of some of my criticisms over what now strike me as fairly trivial matters, and have not been reluctant to excise such comments entirely or modify them as the case seemed to warrant. On the other hand, I remain convinced that my willingness to express a personal point of view and a style of writing that permitted such expression have been instrumental in giving the first edition whatever success it has had in the select world of dictionary people and in the wider public interested in dictionaries. I was determined not to change the style or character of the book, and I have not.

Some critics of the first edition said the book had its virtues but was not methodical enough; it wasn’t organized systematically and failed to cover everything in a logical way. They were probably right. But if I were to dissect the dictionary structure in a completely calm and logical way, if I were to write a string of endless, numbered paragraphs, 3.1.5.6 followed by 3.1.5.7 followed by 3.1.5.8, and so on, one passive-voice
sentence dribbling away into the next, the system might be improved but
the book would be unreadable, and worse, unread. Writing is hard work,
and I have never been motivated to write a book that no one will read,
even if it wins critical acclaim. One has to have some passion to write a
book when one isn’t doing it to earn a living. Yet I have no constitutional
antagonism towards coherent organization and do not regard chaotic or
incongruent structure as essential for sustaining reader interest. I have
indeed found in the first edition organizational superfluities, odd repeti-
tions, and peculiar transitions, and I have tried to correct these by judi-
cious deletion, by moving passages from one chapter to another or
within a chapter, or by rewriting, but I have not disabled, I hope, the
essential appeal of the book. This I take to be the result of its having
been written by someone with a committed, first-hand experience of
editing a wide range of dictionaries over many years, one who is willing
to give his honest report of how it is done and what can go wrong and
who is not afraid to comment on what is good, what could be better, and
what is deplorable. When making a criticism, I have always tried to offer
a constructive proposal along with it. On balance my voice in this edition
is raised in contention less often. I have no points I want to score.
Whatever hurts or disappointments I had have long since been absorbed
into my system and, though still a presence that no doubt shape my views
of dictionaries (and of much else!), are no longer catalysts for acerbic
comment. Their effects are physiological, more profound and more
lasting perhaps, but less exigent.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge again, as in the first edition, the patient
help of my principal tutor at Funk & Wagnalls many years ago, Sam
Davis; the generosity and wisdom of that formidable scholar, Albert H.
Marckwardt; and the encouragement and kind attention given me by
Randolph Quirk – all offered at a time when I was virtually a mere
recruit in lexicography. I should also like to acknowledge with gratitude
Robert L. Chapman, who gave me my first dictionary job at Funk &
Wagnalls, helped me acquire the skills of a good lexicographer, and
aided my career in ways large and small. The omission of his name from
the first edition was an oversight that I regret.

A number of people offered constructive criticism of the first edition
and pointed out errors and omissions of one sort or another. On some
of these criticisms I have acted; on others I have not. But I thank all those
who took the trouble to write or e-mail me about ways to improve the
book. I want to thank particularly Edward Gates, Tom McArthur,
Preface to the second edition

Dušan Gabrovšek, and Włodzimierz Sobkowiak for their specific criticisms and corrections. A number of active lexicographers were willing to take time out from their busy schedules to reply to my queries about practical issues involved in dictionary making today or in the current marketplace. I am grateful to the following for their generous help: Frank Abate, Michael Agnes, Robert K. Barnhart, David Jost, Erin McKean, Wendalyn Nichols, and Joseph Pickett. For his advice on legal issues in the European Union, I am most grateful to Alan Hughes. I thank Patrick Hanks for his kindness in making available to me his unpublished lecture on Samuel Johnson and to Edward Gates for sending me a copy of an article he had written and which I could not otherwise obtain.

A number of my former colleagues at Cambridge University Press, expert in particular areas of corpus use, lexicography, or language research, agreed to look at portions of the manuscript for this edition and give me the benefit of their comments, or steered me to others who could provide needed advice. For such services I am pleased to express my thanks to Patrick Gillard, Andrew Harley, Paul Heacock, Alan Harvey, Christine Bartels, and Penny Carter. I also wish to thank Joan Houston Hall, Chief Editor of the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, for her gracious help in reviewing my coverage of DARE, correcting mistakes, and answering any and all questions I had about the dictionary. Any errors that remain on any of the subjects discussed in this book are entirely my responsibility.


Anyone reading this edition will see how central to the task of dictionary making the use of a corpus has become. In order to revise the book, it was therefore absolutely necessary to have access to a first-rate lexicographical corpus, and I am pleased to acknowledge using the Cambridge International Corpus and the Cambridge Corpus Tools (the unique software that enables one to make use of the Corpus), which were used with the permission of Cambridge University Press. The CIC is a computerized database of contemporary spoken and written
Preface to the second edition

English, which currently stands at over 300 million words. It includes British English, American English, and other varieties of English. Cambridge University Press has built up the CIC to provide evidence about language use that helps to produce better language teaching materials.
Abbreviations

(The full titles of dictionaries are usually given when first mentioned in any discussion, along with their abbreviations; abbreviations are used in the text immediately following to avoid repeating the full title.)

ACD  American College Dictionary
AHCD3 American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition
AHD  American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language
AHD4 American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition
CDAE Cambridge Dictionary of American English
CED Collins English Dictionary
CIDE Cambridge International Dictionary of English
Cobuild Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, Second Edition
Cobuild ELD Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary
DAE Dictionary of American English
DARE Dictionary of American Regional English
DMAU Dictionary of Modern American Usage
EWD Hamlyn Encyclopedic World Dictionary
EWED Encarta World English Dictionary
LAAD Longman Advanced American Dictionary
LDAE Longman Dictionary of American English
LDOCE Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
LDOCE3 Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Third Edition
MW10 Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition
NID2 Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition
NID3 Webster’s Third New International Dictionary
NODE New Oxford Dictionary of English
NTC NTC’s American English Learner’s Dictionary
OALD Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary
OALD6 Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, Sixth Edition
### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td><strong>OED</strong></td>
<td><em>Oxford English Dictionary</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OED2</strong></td>
<td><em>Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RHD2</strong></td>
<td><em>Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RHWCD</strong></td>
<td><em>Random House Webster’s College Dictionary</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WBD</strong></td>
<td><em>World Book Dictionary</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WDEU</strong></td>
<td><em>Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WNW</strong></td>
<td><em>Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, College Edition</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WNWCD</strong></td>
<td><em>Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition</em></td>
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