

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ENGLISH DICTIONARIES

How did a single genre of text have the power to standardise the English language across time and region, rival the Bible in notions of authority, and challenge our understanding of objectivity, prescription, and description? Since the first monolingual dictionary appeared in 1604, the genre has sparked evolution, innovation, devotion, plagiarism, and controversy. This comprehensive volume presents an overview of essential issues pertaining to dictionary style and content and a fresh narrative of the development of English dictionaries throughout the centuries. Essays on the regional and global nature of English lexicography (dictionary-making) explore its power in standardising varieties of English and defining nations seeking independence from the British Empire: from Canada to the Caribbean. Leading scholars and lexicographers historically contextualise an array of dictionaries and pose urgent theoretical and methodological questions relating to their role as tools of standardisation, prestige, power, education, literacy, and national identity.

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*In memory of Madeline Kripke (1943-2020), dictionary
collector*

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and “‘There is Much, Very Much, in the Name of a Book,’ or, the Famous Title of *Hobson-Jobson* and How it Got That Way’, in Michael P. Adams, ed., *Cunning Passages, Contrived Corridors: Unexpected Essays in the History of Lexicography*, Polimetrica, Monza (Milan), Italy, 2010.

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BY SARAH OGILVIE

Chronology

- 1582 Publication of Richard Mulcaster's *Elementarie*, the first proposal for a monolingual English dictionary
- 1586 Publication of William Bullokar's *Pamphlet for Grammar*, the first grammar of English
- 1596 Edmund Coote, *The English Schoole-Maister*, includes a glossary of 1,368 English words (later appropriated by Cawdrey)
- 1600 Queen Elizabeth I grants a formal charter to London merchants trading to the East Indies
- 1604 Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabeticall*, the first stand-alone monolingual English dictionary
- 1616 John Bullokar, *English Expositor*
- 1623 Henry Cockeram, *English Dictionarie*
- 1653 John Wallis, *Grammatica linguae anglicanae*
- 1656 Thomas Blount, *Glossographia*
- 1658 Edward Phillips, *New World of English Words*
- 1660 Royal Society of London founded
- 1671 Stephen Skinner, *Etymologicon linguae anglicanae*, the first etymological dictionary of English
- 1674 John Ray, *Collection of Words Not Generally Used*, the first collection of English dialectal variants
- 1676 Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary*
- 1699 Abel Boyer, *Royal Dictionary*
 B. E., *New Dictionary of the Terms Ancient and Modern of the Canting Crew*, the first slang dictionary
- 1702 John Kersey ('J. K.'), *New English Dictionary*
- 1710 Copyright Act
- 1711 James Greenwood, *Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar*

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- 1715 Elisabeth Elstob publishes first grammar of Old English
- 1721 Nathaniel Bailey, *Universal Etymological English Dictionary*
- 1723 Publication of Thomas Dyche's *A Dictionary of All the Words Commonly Us'd in the English Tongue*, the first English dictionary to indicate pronunciation (stress)
- 1728 Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia, or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*
- 1735 Benjamin Defoe, *New English Dictionary*
- 1745 Ann Fisher, *New Grammar* (first grammar published by a woman)
- 1747 Samuel Johnson, *Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language*
- 1749 Benjamin Martin, *Lingua Britannica Reformata*
- 1755 Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*
- 1757 James Buchanan, *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio, or A New English Dictionary*
- 1762 Robert Lowth, *Short Introduction to English Grammar*
- 1764 William Johnston, *Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary*
- 1773 William Kenrick, *New Dictionary of the English Language*
- 1775 Thomas Spence, *Grand Repository of the English Language*
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- 1783 Noah Webster, *American Spelling Book* (the 'Blue-backed Speller')
- 1785 Francis Grose, *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*
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- 1791 John Walker, *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language*
- 1798 Samuel Johnson Jr., *A School Dictionary*
- 1806 Noah Webster's first dictionary, *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*
- 1808 John Jamieson, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*
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- 1819 James Hardy Vaux, *New and Comprehensive Vocabulary of the Flash Language*, Australia's first dictionary of convicts' slang
- 1828 Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*

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- 1859 John Camden Hotten, *Dictionary of Modern Slang, Cant, and Other Vulgar Words*
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- 1869 Alexander Ellis, *On Early English Pronunciation* which defines 'received pronunciation'
- 1872 Robert and William Chambers, *Chambers's English Dictionary*
- 1873 English Dialect Society founded
- 1884 First fascicle (*A-Ant*) of *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, ed. James A. H. Murray
- 1886 Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*
- 1889 First fascicle (*A-Appet*) of *Century Dictionary*, ed. William Dwight Whitney
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- 1891 James Maitland, *American Slang Dictionary*
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- 1896 Joseph Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*
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- 1898 Edward E. Morris, *Austral English: A Dictionary of Australasian Words, Phrases and Usages*, first historical dictionary of Australian English and New Zealand English combined

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- 1911 H. W. Fowler & F. G. Fowler, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*
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- 1924 Francis G. Fowler and Henry W. Fowler, *Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*
- 1928 Final volume of the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Oxford English Dictionary)* published
- 1933 C. T. Onions, H. W. Fowler, and J. Coulson, *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*
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- 1979 Patrick Hanks, *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*
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- 1982 John Holm and Alison Watt Shilling, *Dictionary of Bahamian English*
- 1985 First volume (A-C) of the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, ed. Fred G. Cassidy (and later Joan Houston Hall)
 First volume (A-G) of the *Historical Dictionary of American Slang (HDAS)*, ed. Jonathan Lighter
- 1986 First fascicle (D) of the *Dictionary of Old English*, eds. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, and Antonette diPaolo Healey
- 1987 John Sinclair, *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*
- 1988 W. S. Ramson, *Australian National Dictionary: A Dictionary of Australianisms on Historical Principles*
- 1989 John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition
- 1994 Elizabeth Orsman and Harry W. Orsman, *New Zealand Dictionary*
- 1995 Known as ‘The Year of the Dictionaries’ due to the launch of dictionary.com and the publication of *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (3rd ed.), *COBUILD* (2nd ed.), and *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (5th ed.)
- 1996 Richard Allsopp and Jeannette Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*

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- 1999 Anne H. Soukhanov, *Encarta World English Dictionary*
 urbandictionary.com launched
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