

Help with using *OED Online*

These pages contain all the information you will need to use *OED Online*, including a description of the contents of *OED Online* and how they are being updated and details of how to search and browse the Dictionary.

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1. What does *OED Online* contain?

1.1. The contents of the online Dictionary


The online *Oxford English Dictionary* is a work in progress. Hundreds of new entries are added every year.

The *OED* is currently being revised, with the aim of producing a completely updated third edition. Draft material from the revision programme is published online, alongside unrevised entries from the 20-volume Second Edition, first published in 1989, and its 3-volume Additions Series, published in 1993 (volumes 1 and 2) and 1997 (volume 3). Many of the entries in the Additions volumes consist of sections which are additions to an entry previously published in the Second Edition; such sections are appended to the end of the appropriate Second Edition entry. Complete entries published for the first time in the Additions volumes are presented as free-standing entries, along with entries from the Second Edition.

More revised entries are added to the online Dictionary every quarter, replacing older versions from the Second Edition and Additions Series.

Occasionally, new material is presented for an entry that has not yet been fully revised. This can be in the form of a new meaning of an existing word, a new compound or phrase involving an existing word, and so on. In such cases, the new material appears appended to the foot of the entry, introduced by the sentence 'Draft additions'. Each separate item in the partial entry is marked with the symbol ▶.

The complete text of the Second Edition is also available to search separately. The search form can be reached via a link on the Advanced search page.

In the main Dictionary, fully revised entries feature a button  that displays the Second Edition version for comparison in a pop-up window.

2. The workplace

2.1. What's happening in the main window?

The main window is where you view entries, browse the entry list, and look up words.

A web browser that supports frames is currently required to view *OED Online*. The frames used on the site are as follows:

Find Word frame

At the top of the window, this frame contains the Find Word search box.

Header frame

When an entry is displayed, this frame contains the headword and part of speech of the entry, as well as links back to the results list, to the previous and next entries in the results list, to the previous and next matches in the entry, and to an earlier or later version of the entry. (Not all links may be available, depending on the entry and on the number of results retrieved by the search.)

When a results list is displayed, this frame contains options for switching between Second Edition and New Edition results, and changing the number of results displayed per page.

Main frame

This frame contains the body of an entry. It is also used for lists of search results and for the Advanced search form.

Side frame

At the left-hand side of the window, this frame is used for the simple Full Text search form, for alphabetical and chronological lists of entries adjacent to the entry currently displayed in the Main frame, and for a map of the current entry, linking to each numbered sense.


Tools frame

At the bottom of the window, this frame contains tool buttons used to alter the contents of the Side frame, to display the Advanced search form, to display a print preview of an entry or results list, to mail a free link to an entry, to bring up the Help text, and to sign out of OED Online.

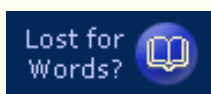
2.2. What do the buttons mean?

Find Word frame



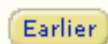
Type the word you want to find into the input box and press the Return key or click  Find Word

This performs a search for the word in the Dictionary's list of headwords and subordinate entries.

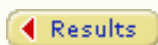


Get an *OED* entry chosen at random.

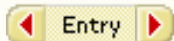
Header frame: entry display



View Second Edition version of an entry.



Return to results list.

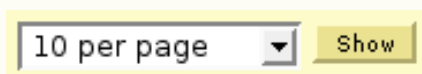



Go to previous/next entry in the results list.



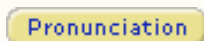
Go to next/previous match within an entry (after a Full Text search).

Header frame: results list display



Select a number from the list box and click  Show to redisplay the results list with the selected number visible on each page.

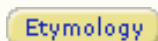
Main frame: entry display



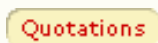
Toggle pronunciation information on and off.



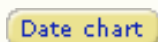
Toggle information on variant spellings on and off.



Toggle the etymology of the entry on and off.



Toggle the quotations on and off.



Toggle the date chart (which shows the dates of quotations in the entry) on and off.

Additions

Switch any Additions material which updates an entry on and off.

Main frame: results list display

Entry name

List results alphabetically by entry name.

Entry date

List results chronologically by entry date.

Quotation date

List results chronologically by quotation date.

Next ▶

Go to the next page of results

◀ Previous

Go to the previous page of results

More beginning at

Type a number in the input box and click the **More beginning at** button. The page of results beginning at the specified number is displayed.

Tools frame

List by entry

Lists entries in the entry list alphabetically. This is the default setting.

List by date

Lists entries in the entry list by date, i.e. in the order of date of first use.

Entry map

Displays a map of the current entry.

Simple search

Opens the Full Text search function.

Advanced search

Opens the Advanced search page.

Print

Click here to print an entry or results list.

Mail

Click here to mail an entry to a friend or colleague.

Help

Click here for help.

Sign out

Click here to exit the Dictionary.

3. Searching

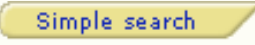
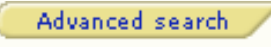
3.1. How do I find a word?

There are two ways to look up a word in the dictionary:

Find Word search

A quick search which finds main dictionary entries, such as **alphabet**, **break**, **xylophone**. It also finds subordinate entries such as the phrase **in alphabet**, or compounds such as **alphabet book**. The search form is located at the top-right of the browser window.

Full Text search

A full search of the entire Dictionary text. It finds your term wherever it occurs in the Dictionary. This could be in the form of an entry name, part of another word's definition, in a quotation, etc. A Full Text search also allows you to confine your search to a particular area of text (e.g. definition or quotation text) and to search for words that occur near one another (e.g. **Dickens** before **Drood**). The search form is displayed by clicking the  button. A Full Text search form with more advanced features is displayed by clicking the  button.

3.1.1. Find Word search

What is a Find Word search?



The Find Word box


A quick search which finds main dictionary entries, such as **alphabet**, **break**, **xylophone**. It also finds subordinate entries such as the phrase **in alphabet**, or compounds such as **alphabet book**.

How can I run a Find Word search?

1. Type the word you want to find into the Find Word box, located at the top right-hand side of the browser window.

In Find Word searches, it is not necessary to type punctuation or worry about capital letters or hyphens. See also Special characters, hyphens, and case.



2. Click .
3. A list of results is displayed, or, if there is a single result, the entry is displayed automatically. When there is a single result, the latest version of the entry is shown.
4. Click on any of the entry names to move there.

If you do not find the word you are looking for, try a Full Text search, as your word may be covered by variant spellings or be found in a quotation.


3.1.2. Full text search

What is a Full Text search?

A full search of the entire dictionary text. It finds your term wherever it occurs in the dictionary. This could be in the form of an entry name, part of another word's definition, in a quotation, etc. A Full Text search also allows you to search for words that occur near one another, such as **bread** before **butter**.

How can I run a Full Text search?

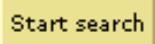
Here's how to run the simplest search:

1. Switch to Full Text search mode by clicking the  button at the base of the screen.
2. The Full Text search panel is displayed on the left of the main window. It contains an input box for a search term, a list box for selecting a search area, a button for submitting the search, and a button for expanding the form to show the proximity search options.

 A screenshot of a search interface. At the top, the word 'Search' is written in bold. Below it, there is a text input field with the word 'bread' entered, preceded by the label 'for'. Underneath that is a dropdown menu with 'full text' selected, preceded by the label 'in'. Below the dropdown is a blue link that says '[More options]'. At the bottom right of the panel is a yellow button with the text 'Start search'.

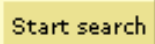
3. Type the word or phrase you want to find into the **SEARCH FOR...** box.
4. Choose your search area (which part of the dictionary entries you want to search): full text (i.e. the

entire text of the entries), definitions, etymologies, or quotations.

5. Click the  button.
6. The results are displayed in the results list.
7. To go to the top of any entry, click its name (in the left-hand column). To go to the first match in any entry, click the matching term (in the right-hand column).

You can build on this basic procedure to search for phrases, look for more than one term near one another, and/or include wildcards in your search.

Example

To search for the term **unmarried** in the definition text of entries only, type **unmarried** into the **SEARCH FOR...** box. From the search area list box (showing **full text**) choose **definitions**. Click  A list of results is displayed. Click on any of the entry names to open one of them.

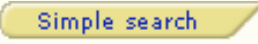
3.1.3. Choosing your search area

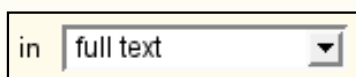
What is a search area?

This is the type of dictionary text you choose to search in a Full Text search. You choose your search area from the list box which shows **full text** as default in the Full Text search panel.

When you look at a typical entry you will see that it is divided into different sections. In addition to the main definition text for each of the senses of the entry, there is often information on spellings, etymology, and quotations. By default, a Full Text search searches the entire text of the entries, but you can confine your search area to definitions, etymologies, or quotations, if you prefer.

How can I choose a search area?

1. Make sure the Full Text search panel is displayed (click  to open it).
2. Choose your search area from the list box.



Search area list box

More about the search areas

Full text is the entire text of all the entries in the dictionary. It includes the entry names as well as spellings, definitions, etymologies, and quotations. A search on the full text of the dictionary is the broadest possible search.

First cited date is the date of the earliest quotations recorded in the Dictionary entries. Searching for a year as a first cited date will retrieve all the words whose first recorded use in English was in that year.

Dates can be typed as a single date (e.g. **1340**), or in the form of a closed range (e.g. **1340-1345**), an open range (e.g. **1340-**), or the end of a range (e.g. **-1340**). Wildcards cannot be used in date searches. For further details on date searching, see Searching for quotations by date.

First cited author is the author of the earliest recorded evidence for a word in the Dictionary. Searching for an author as the first cited author will retrieve all the words whose first recorded use in English was by that person.

First cited work is the (abbreviated) title of the work containing the earliest recorded evidence for a word in the Dictionary. Searching for a work as the first cited work will retrieve all the words whose first recorded use in English was in that work.

Lemmas are the terms defined in the Dictionary. A search in this area (which is only available on the Advanced search page) is equivalent to a Find Word search, but with the additional options offered by Advanced searching.

Definitions is the text which contains all the defined senses or meanings of the entry. There is a definition for every sense of the entry. For example, the definition of the entry **marble n.**, sense **1.a** is:

1. a. Limestone that has been recrystallized by metamorphism and is capable of taking a polish; *esp.* one that is pure white or has a mottled surface, such as is often used in sculpture and architecture. Also more generally: any stone that will take a polish and can be used for decorative purposes in building or sculpture.

Etymologies is the text which contains information on the origin of the word.

Language names enables a single search to retrieve all the different forms in which a language name occurs in the Dictionary's etymologies.

For example, Sanskrit is referred to in full and also in the abbreviated forms **Sk.**, **Skr.**, and **Skt.** The variation reflects the long publication history of the original *OED*. The collation of language names lists all forms in which language names appear in the *OED*'s etymologies, whether abbreviated or in full, but a search for any of these forms in the search area **language names** retrieves occurrences of all of the forms.

Quotations are the examples from print and manuscript sources which illustrate each sense of an entry. (Quotations are shown by default but you have the option to hide them.) There are usually quotations for every sense of the headword.

You can choose to search the entire quotations or confine your search to quotation text (**quotation text**), authors (**quotation author**), works (**quotation work**), or dates (**quotation date**). Choose the appropriate option from the list. Examples of content are:

- **quotation text** Alas poore Yorick
- **quotation author** J. H. Newman
- **quotation work** Tom Sawyer
- **quotation date** 1653

Pronunciations (only available on the Advanced search page): see Searching pronunciations.

Subjects (only available on the Advanced search page) enables a single search to retrieve all the different forms in which a subject name occurs in the Dictionary's definitions.

For example, anthropology is referred to in full and also in the abbreviated forms **Anthrop.** and **Anthropol.** The variation reflects the long publication history of the original OED, but a search for any of these forms in the search area **subjects** retrieves occurrences of all of the forms.

Note that case-sensitive searching and exact character searching do not work with subject searches.

3.1.4. Proximity searching

What is proximity searching?

Proximity searching helps you to search for one term near another (e.g. **sun** before **moon**) in a Full Text search. This is useful for finding words which may appear near each other in a number of different phrases (e.g. **sun and moon**; **sun, moon, and stars**; **attraction of the sun on the moon**; etc.).

How do I run a proximity search?

1. Make sure the Full Text search panel is displayed (click [Simple search](#) to open it).
2. Type the first word you want to find into the **SEARCH FOR...** box.
3. Choose your search area from the list box showing **full text** (the default). Note that the selected search area applies to both search terms.
4. Click the [\[More options\]](#) button to reveal the proximity search options.

These are: a second input box, a list box for selecting the level of proximity, and radio buttons for choosing the relative position of the two search terms.

Search

for

in

before

after

before or after

[\[Fewer options\]](#)

5. Type your second term into the bottom input box.
6. Choose from the list box the maximum number of words you want your terms to be separated by (default **1 word**).

The number of terms is inclusive of the second word, i.e. **1 word** means adjacent words, **2 words** means your terms are separated by one word, etc.

7. Choose whether you want to search for your first term before or after your second term, or both, and click the appropriate radio button.
8. Click the button.
9. The results are displayed in the results list.
10. Click on any of the entry titles to move there.

More about proximity search options

Proximity of terms

You can look for your terms within 1, 2, 5, and 10 words of another in the same section.

Alternatively, you can look for them anywhere within the same section. A section is an individual definition, etymology, or quotation. In the **full text** search area, entry names and spellings sections are covered in addition to all these others.

Before, after, before or after

Which of these options you choose depends on the likely order of the words you want to find. The option **before or after** finds your search terms in any order (i.e. near one another). The option **before** is the default.

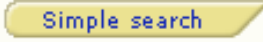
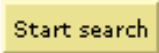
When you have completed your proximity search, you can return to the standard Full Text search panel (with one input box only) by clicking the [\[Fewer options\]](#) button.

A proximity search in which both search terms are identical will not give accurate results.

3.1.5. Searching for phrases

Though it is possible to search for a phrase such as **face the music** in both a Find Word and a Full Text search, for best results we recommend using a Full Text search. This is because in order to perform a successful Find Word search you need to get the form in which the phrase appears as a dictionary entry exactly right (e.g. to find **face the music**, you would need to type **to face the music**, not just **face the music**, to get a result). A Full Text search, covering the quoted examples as well as the defined terms, will often work without being so precise.

To search for a phrase in a Full Text search

1. Make sure the Full Text search panel is displayed (click  to open it).
2. Type the full phrase into the top input box (e.g. **face the music**).
3. Choose your search area in the usual way.
4. Start the search by clicking .

3.1.6. Special characters, hyphens, and case

Special characters

If you want to use a Find Word or Full Text search to look for a word with an accented letter (e.g. **café**) simply type a plain letter in place of the accented one (e.g. **cafe**).

The most common special characters (e.g. the Old English thorn and Middle English yogh) are treated as equivalent to the nearest plain alphabet characters (e.g. **th** or **y**). If in doubt, use a wildcard in place of the special character.

Pronunciations are shown in the standard characters of the International Phonetic Alphabet. These are searchable via a special **pronunciations** search area available on the Advanced search page. The Key to the pronunciation explains the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet, and describes how to search for them.

Other special characters, such as Greek, can be searched on the Advanced search page by entering the names

of the characters.

Some special characters which appear very infrequently are not displayed, but are represented by hollow diamond symbols. Move the mouse over the symbol to display the character code.

Hyphens

A Find Word search ignores hyphens and does not distinguish hyphens and spaces. This means that typing **database** will find **database**, **data-base**, or **data base**.

In a Full Text search, however, typing **data-base** will find both **data-base** and **data base**, but to find **database** you have to type it in exactly, i.e. as one word.

Case

In a Find Word or Full Text search you can use upper or lower case letters to type your search term. For example, **dickens** will find **Dickens** and **dickens**.

An option to do case-sensitive searches is available on the Advanced search page.

3.1.7. Wildcards

What is a wildcard?

A wildcard is a character which stands for any letter. You can include wildcards in a Find Word or Full Text search to make your search more flexible.

There are two wildcards available in the *OED*:

- The question mark **?** represents the occurrence of any one single character
- The asterisk ***** represents the occurrence of any number of characters (or no character at all)

A search with a wildcard retrieves all results which contain matching terms. For example

- **c?t** finds **cat**, **cot**, **cut**
- **c*t** finds **cat**, **caught**, **commencement**, **conflict**, **consent**, **cot**, **cut**, etc.

How can wildcards help me in a search?

Wildcards are useful if you do not know how to spell a word, if you are not sure in what form the term you

want appears in the dictionary, or if you want to find several terms beginning with the same root.

- The search term ***sychok?n?s?s** finds **psychokinesis**
- The term **colo*r** matches **color** and **colour**
- The term **chorograph*** finds **chorographer**, **chorographic**, **chorographical**, **chorographically**

Character classes

As well as being able to match any single character (with **?**), and any string of characters (with *****), it is possible to match any of a specified set of characters or strings, using the expressions described below.

A set of characters enclosed in square brackets (**[]**) represents a single character which can be any one of the bracketed characters. For example

- **s[pt]eak** will find **speak** and **steak**.

A hyphen can be used to abbreviate a range of characters in a square-bracketed expression. For example, **[l-p]** means the same as **[lmnop]**

- **s[l-p]eak** will find **sleak**, **smeak**, **sneak**, and **speak** (but not **steak**).

A caret (^) can be used at the start of a square-bracketed expression, to indicate that the character represented by the expression is not to be any of those included in the brackets.

- **s[^p]eak** will find **sneak**, **steak**, etc., but not **speak**.

A set of strings (separated by commas) enclosed in braces (**{ }**) represents a string which can be any one of the bracketed strings. For example

- **walk{s,ed,ing}** will find **walks**, **walked**, and **walking**.

There can be no spaces in a set enclosed in square brackets or braces.

3.1.8. Searching for abbreviated words

The *OED* uses many abbreviations in its definitions, etymologies, and citations, the most common of which are listed here.

It is not always necessary to know how a word is abbreviated in order to search for it within the full text of the Dictionary. Listed below are some tips on searching for abbreviations used in work titles, language names, and subject labels.

Work titles

Works cited in the *OED* usually have their titles presented in abbreviated form. The standard abbreviations are listed here.

There are also other ways of finding out how a particular work title is abbreviated:

1. Do a proximity search or a Boolean search using two or more key words.

For example, to find quotations from Dickens' *Bleak House*, try a proximity search for **dickens** near **bleak** in the **quotations** search area. The results list shows that the title is usually abbreviated to *Bleak Ho.*, but appears in full in revised and new entries, where bibliographic standardization has taken place.

2. Use wildcards.

For example, to find quotations from Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, try a search for **pickw*** in the **quotation work** search area. The results list shows that the title is usually abbreviated to just *Pickw.*

Language names

In the *OED*'s Second Edition, language names in etymologies were usually abbreviated.

For example, Sanskrit is referred to in full and also in the abbreviated forms **Sk.**, **Skr.**, and **Skt.** The variation reflects the long publication history of the original *OED*.

The collation of language names lists all forms in which language names appear in the *OED*'s etymologies, whether abbreviated or in full.

However, the best way of finding references to a language name is to use the **language names** search area, which enables a single search for any one of the forms to retrieve all the different forms.

Subject labels

The *OED* usually abbreviates subject labels used to indicate the context in which a word is used. (The standard abbreviations are listed here.)

For example, anthropology is referred to in full and also in the abbreviated forms **Anthrop.** and **Anthropol.** The variation reflects the long publication history of the original *OED*.

The best way of finding references to a subject is to use the **subjects** search area, which enables a single search for any one of the forms to retrieve all the different forms. This search area is only available on the Advanced search page.

3.2. How do I use the results list?

What is the results list?

The list of results produced after a Find Word search (when more than one result is produced) or a Full Text search. From the results list you can access all the entries your search has found.

What do you want to do next?

3.2.1. Find Word search results list

If there is more than one result to a Find Word search, these are listed in the results list.

How are the results laid out?

Each result is numbered and listed on a single line. On the left is the matching term (e.g. **bleachery**). If the match is a subordinate entry, the main entry under which it appears is given on the right (e.g. **bleacher**). The matching terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Above the list is a summary of what you are looking at (e.g. Results 11-20 of 26).

How can I move to an entry?

You can either:

- Click on the underlined match to open the entry at the matching term; or
- If the match is a subordinate entry, click on the name of the main entry in which it appears to move to the top of the main entry

How can I see more of the list?

1. By default the first ten results are shown. If there are more results, the message

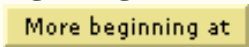
More beginning at

11

is displayed at the bottom of the screen, with an input box

containing by default the number of the result following the last one displayed on the current page.

2. To see the next ten results in the list, click the **More beginning at** button or the **Next** button.
3. To see the previous ten results in the list, click the **Previous** button.

4. To see any other ten results in the list (e.g. 32 to 41), change the **beginning at** number to the number you want by overtyping (e.g. change **11** to **32**) and then click the  button.
5. You can return to the first ten results at any time by changing the **beginning at** number to **1**.

3.2.2. Full text search results list

The results of a Full Text search are listed in the results list.

How are the results laid out?

Each result is numbered and listed on a single line. On the left is the name of the entry (e.g. **camaca**), and on the right is a snapshot of the part of the entry where the first match occurs, with the match underlined. The date of the earliest quotation in the entry appears to the left of the entry name, or, if a quotation search has been done, the date of the quotation found is displayed to the right of the snapshot. There is a separate line in the list for each separate section (definition, quotations, etymology) in any entry which contains a match. The results are listed by default in alphabetical order of the entries in which they occur.

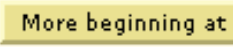
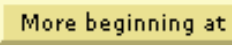


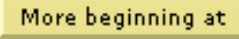
Above the Full Text panel is a summary of what you are looking at (e.g. Results 50-59 of 149).

How can I move to an entry?

You can either:

- Click on the underlined entry name to go to the top of the entry; or
- Click on the underlined match to open the entry directly at the match point

How can I see more of the list?

1. By default the first ten results are shown. If there are more results, the message  is displayed at the bottom of the screen, with an input box containing by default the number of the result following the last one displayed on the current page.
2. To see the next ten results in the list, click the  button or the  button.
3. To see the previous ten results in the list, click the  button.
4. To see any other ten results in the list (e.g. 32 to 41), change the **beginning at** number in the input box to the number you want by overtyping (e.g. change **11** to **32**) and then click the  button.

5. You can return to the first ten results at any time by changing the **beginning at** number to **1**.

3.2.3. Viewing a result

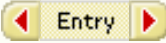
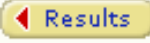
Find Word search results

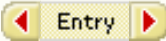
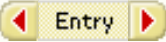
You can either:

- Click on the underlined match to open the entry at the matching term; or
- If the match is a subordinate entry, click on the name of the main entry in which it appears to move to the top of the entry

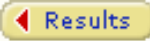
Once you have selected an entry for viewing from the results list, it is displayed in the entry window.

How do I view the next and previous entries in the results list?

There may be more than one entry matching your search term. If this is the case, you can view the next and previous entries by clicking the  button, located beneath the  button.

- To view the next entry in the results list, click the right-pointing arrow in the  button
- To view the previous entry in the results list, click the left-pointing arrow in the  button

How do I return to the results list?

Click the  button.

Full Text search results

You can either:


- Click on the underlined entry name to go to the top of the entry; or
- Click on the underlined match to open the entry directly at the match point



Once you have selected an entry for viewing from the results list, it is displayed in the entry window.

The terms which matched your search are highlighted in **red**:




1. a. Limestone that has been recrystallized by metamorphism and is capable of taking a polish; *esp.* one that is pure white or has a mottled surface, such as is often used in **sculpture** and architecture. Also more generally: any stone that will take a polish and can be used for decorative purposes in building or **sculpture**.





How do I view the next and previous matches in the entry?

There may be more than one match for your search term in the entry. If this is the case, you can view them using the  button on the left-hand side of the screen. There are no more matches to view when the button is greyed out.


- To view the next match in the entry, click the  button
- To view the previous match, click 

How do I view the next and previous entries in the results list?


There may be more than one entry matching your search term. If this is the case, you can view the next and previous entries by clicking the  Entry  button, located beneath the  Results button.

- To view the next entry in the results list, click the right-pointing arrow in the  Entry  button
- To view the previous entry in the results list, click the left-pointing arrow in the  Entry  button

How can I see which parts of the entry contain a match?

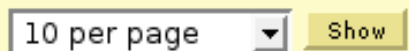

Click the  button to display the map of the entry. Every part of the entry which contains a match is marked with a red arrow.

How do I return to the results list?

Click the  Results button.

3.2.4. Changing the number of results on screen

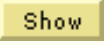
By default, results are broken up into pages of ten results lines each. The list box near the top right-hand corner of the list gives you information on how many results are being displayed.

 10 per page  Show

Number of results on each page of the results list

How can I change the number?


You can show up to 1000 results on screen at a time.

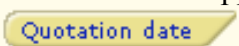
1. Click on the list box (containing 10 per page by default) and choose one of the other options: 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000.
2. Click .
3. Your chosen number of results is shown. You may need to use the scroll bar to scroll through them.

3.2.5. Changing the order in which results are listed

Results of Full Text searches are automatically listed by entry name, with a date showing to the left of it. This is the entry date. When a search has been restricted to quotations or parts of quotations, the date appears to the right of the result line, and is the date of the matched quotation.

Use the tabs above the list to change the order of results:

- Click  to list the results by entry date in chronological order of dates of first usage

If your results are the results of a Full Text search on **quotations** (or a subsection of this field, such as **quotation author**), the 'Entry Date' tab becomes inactive and appears greyed out. Instead, the 'Quotation Date' tab becomes active. Click  to list the results in chronological order of the dates of the quotations.

Entries without dates (such as undated cross-references) are placed at the end of the list.

- To switch back to ordering by entry name, click the  tab.

3.3. Advanced searching

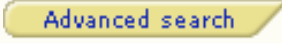
The Advanced search form offers a Full Text search of the entire Dictionary text with added options and greater flexibility:

- Combining searches using Boolean operators
- Case-sensitive searching
- Exact character searching
- Restricting a search to entries matched in the previous search, or to entries with a particular part of speech
- Searching pronunciations

- Searching the Second Edition


How can I run an Advanced search?

Here's how to run the basic type of search:

1. Switch to Advanced search mode by clicking the  button at the base of the screen.
2. The Advanced search panel is displayed in the main window.
3. Choose from the tabs whether you want to retrieve entries or quotations. The currently selected tab is red.



Choosing **Entries** means that the results will consist of entries containing the specified term or terms. Choosing **Quotations** means that the results will consist of quotations containing the specified term or terms.

4. Type the word or phrase you want to find into the first box.
5. Choose your search area.
6. Click the  button.
7. The results are displayed in the results list.

The results list has the same format as the normal Full Text search results list.

8. To go to the top of any entry, click its name (in the left-hand column). To go to the first match in any entry, click the matching term (in the right-hand column).

You can build on this basic procedure to search for phrases, look for more than one term near another, and/or include wildcards in your search.

3.3.1. Combining searches using Boolean operators

The Advanced search page contains three input boxes for search terms. Between the input boxes are two list boxes from which Boolean logical operations can be selected to combine search terms. There are three primary operators: **AND**, **OR**, and **AND NOT**. In addition, the operators **NEAR** and **NOT NEAR** are available.

AND	Using this operator between search terms retrieves entries or quotations containing both terms.
OR	Using this operator between search terms retrieves entries or quotations containing either of the terms.
AND NOT	Using this operator between search terms retrieves entries or quotations containing the first term but not the second.
NEAR	Using this operator between search terms retrieves entries or quotations containing the first term within a certain number of words of the second, or containing both terms anywhere in the same section of an entry. See below for details of options relating to this operator.
NOT NEAR	Using this operator between search terms retrieves entries or quotations in which the first term occurs, and in which the second term does not occur within a certain number of words of the first. See below for details of options relating to this operator.

These operators give you the ability to retrieve entries or quotations containing two or more terms in different search areas. For an example, see combining terms in different search areas.

NEAR/NOT NEAR searching

A panel to the right of the Advanced search form allows you to set the proximity required for a **NEAR** or **NOT NEAR** search. This works in the same way as proximity searching from the Full Text search panel, with a list box to select the level of proximity and radio buttons to choose whether the first search term should appear **before**, **after**, or **before or after** the second.

Options for NEAR/NOT NEAR:

1 word ▾

before

after

before or after

When the option **Entries** is selected from the tab at the top of the Advanced search form, **NEAR** and **NOT NEAR** only operate within a single search area, e.g. **definitions**. When one of these operators is used between two search terms, the same search area must be selected for both terms.

When the option **Quotations** is selected, any available combination of search areas can be used.

The operation **NEAR** (or **NOT NEAR**) is always performed first in a search, overriding the selected order of operations.

Matching terms in the same section of an entry

To match two or more search terms in the same quotation, the **Quotations** tab should be selected. For example, the following search retrieves quotations from *The Times* published in the 1960s:

Search for **Entries** **Quotations** containing

times in quotation work

AND (Operation A)

1960-1969 in quotation date

To match two or more search terms in the same definition or etymology, the operation **NEAR** should be used, with the proximity set to **section**. For example, the following search retrieves entries containing the words **bird** and **australia** in the same definition section.

Search for **Entries** **Quotations** containing

bird in definitions

NEAR (Operation A)

australia in definitions

Case-sensitive searching

Exact character searching

Options for NEAR/NOT NEAR:

1 word

before

after

before or after

If the **AND** operation had been used instead, entries (e.g. **ant-eater**) would have been matched in which the words **bird** and **australia** appeared in different definition sections.

Multiple search terms

When more than one Boolean operator is used, the search engine by default performs the operations in the order in which they are written. For example:

Search for **Entries** **Quotations** containing

bird* in definitions

OR (Operation A)

mammal* in definitions

AND (Operation B)

australia in definitions

This search retrieves entries in which **bird** or **mammal** occurs in the definition, and in which **australia** occurs. In other words, the search is bracketed as **(bird OR mammal) AND australia**, which states that the operation ‘OR’ is to be performed first.

You can override this default ordering by selecting the order you want from the panel to the right of the Advanced search form.

The two Boolean operators in the search form are labelled **Operation A** and **Operation B**. The order of operations panel contains a list box with the default ordering, **A before B**, selected.

Order of operations: A then B

In the example above, choosing to perform operation B before operation A will bracket the search as **bird OR (mammal AND australia)**, and the search will match entries in which **bird** occurs, or in which both **mammal** and **australia** occur.

3.3.2. Case-sensitive searching

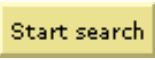
A standard Find Word or Full Text search is case-insensitive. For example, the search term **dickens** will find **Dickens** and **dickens**.

The Advanced search page allows you to perform case-sensitive searches, using the panel to the right of the search form.

1. Open the Advanced search page by clicking the **Advanced search** button at the base of the screen.
2. Enter your search terms (e.g. **Dickens**) in the boxes in the usual way.

3. Select your search areas from the list boxes in the usual way.
4. In the panel to the right of the search form, check the box labelled 'Case-sensitive searching'.

 Case-sensitive searching


5. Click the  button.
6. The results are displayed in the results list. The search term **Dickens** will find only **Dickens**, and not **dickens**

Although author names are displayed in small capitals, they are treated as lower case (apart from the initial letter), so a case-sensitive search for **GREENE** will not match the author name **GREENE**. Instead, the search term **Greene** should be entered.

3.3.3. Exact character searching

A standard Find Word or Full Text search treats accented letters as their equivalent plain letter. For example, typing **cafe** will find both **cafe** and **café**.

The Advanced search page allows you to find the exact form of a word, whether it incorporates a special character or not, using the panel to the right of the search form.

1. Open the Advanced search page by clicking the  button at the base of the screen.
2. Enter your search terms in the boxes in the usual way, except that if the word you are looking for contains an accented letter or other special character, enter its name instead of its plain letter equivalent, e.g. type **caf#eacu#** to find **café**.

Names of special characters are always contained between hashes (#). To find the name of a special character, consult one of the following lists:

- Accented roman characters
- Old and Middle English characters
- Greek characters
- Other special characters

3. Select your search areas from the list boxes in the usual way.
4. In the panel to the right of the search form, check the box labelled 'Exact character searching'.

 Exact character searching

5. Click the **Start search** button.

6. The results are displayed in the results list.

Note that exact character searching will also allow *exclusion* of accented characters. For example, typing **cafe** with ‘exact character searching’ selected will find only **cafe** and not **café**.

Exact character searching will not, however, allow hyphens to be searched. For example, typing **north west** with ‘exact character searching’ selected will find both **north west** and **north-west**.

3.3.3.1. Accented roman characters

The following table shows how to work out the names of accented roman characters in order to search for words containing them. In each case, the name begins with the plain roman character (which may be capitalized) and is followed by the name of the accent.

Accent	Name of character	Example	Occurs on
acute	*acu	caf#eacu# = café	A, a, c, E, e, g, I, i, n, O, o, r, S, s, t, U, u, y, z
apostrophe above	*apos	ya#wapos#elmani = ya ^w elmani	w
bar through letter (horizontal or diagonal)	*bar	sm#obar#rbr#obar#d = smørbrød	b, d, h, i, L, l, o, p
breve	*breve	bl#abreve#c = blăc	A, a, C, c, e, G, g, I, i, n, O, o, r, S, s, u, y, z
breve below	*brbl	#Hbrbl#atti = $\underset{H}{a}$ tti	H, h
cedilla	*ced	gar#cced#on = garçon	a, C, c, d, i, n, S, s, t, z
circle above	*ang	#Aang#ngstrom = Ångstrom	A, a, u
circle below	*circbl	p#ncircbl#t = p _z t	l, m, n, r
circumflex	*circ	ma#icirc#tre = maître	A, a, E, e, I, i, O, o, s, U, u, w, y

dot above	*dotab	Vish#ndotab#u = Vishṛu	a, c, d, e, g, h, I, m, n, o, p, r, S, s, t, u, y, z
dot below	*dotbl	Dravi#ddotbl#a = Draviḍa	c, D, d, E, e, H, h, K, k, l, m, n, o, R, r, S, s, T, t, x, z
circumflex (rounded)	*frown	T#afrown#ng = Tāṅg	A, a, o, u
circumflex (rounded) below	*frbl	q#ufrbl# = qṛ	e, i, u
grave	*grave	voil#agrave# = voilà	A, a, e, I, i, o, s, u
hacek	*hacek	#Chacek#ech = Čech	a, C, c, e, g, i, n, o, q, r, S, s, u, w, Z, z
hook	*hook	greb#ahook# = grebḥ	a, c, E, e, O, o, S, s, u
hosszu	*hosszu	peng#ohosszu# = pengő	a, c, E, e, O, o, S, s, u
macron	*mac	J#omac#ruri = Jōruri	A, a, E, e, g, I, i, n, O, o, S, u, y
tilde	*tilde	se#ntilde#ora = señora	a, c, g, N, n, o, r, u, w
tilde below	*tildebl	#dtildebl#aama = ḍaama	d
umlaut/diaeresis	*uml	na#iuml#f = naïf	A, a, e, i, O, o, U, u, y
umlaut below	*umlbl	t#ocirc###umlbl#a = tōḷa	l, s
underline	*undl	laba#kundl# = labak̲	B, b, d, e, G, g, h, j, K, k, m, n, o, p, r, S, s, T, t, Y, z

Letters may have more than one accent, in which case the name consists of the plain letter followed by each accent in turn, usually reading from the lowest placed to the highest, e.g. #amacacu# is the name of the character ā .

3.3.3.2. Old and Middle English characters

The following table lists the names used to search for Old and Middle English characters.

Character	Name	Appearance
Insular g (upper-case)	Asg	ḡ
Insular g (lower-case)	asg	ḡ
edh (upper-case)	Edh	Ð
edh (lower-case)	edh	ð
thorn (upper-case)	Th	Þ
thorn (lower-case)	th	þ
wynn (upper-case)	Wyn	ƿ
wynn (lower-case)	wyn	ƿ
yogh (upper-case)	Ygh	ȝ
yogh (lower-case)	ygh	ȝ


Note that some of these ligatures may also be accented, in which case the name of the character should be extended by the name of the accent(s), as in searching for accented roman characters. For example, þ with a bar through it (ᚢ) is called #thbar#.

3.3.4. Restricting searches

A standard search looks in every Dictionary entry for the required search term, but the Advanced search page allows you to restrict the set of entries searched, using the panel to the right of the search form.

Restricting to the results of a previous search

Suppose you want to refine the results of an earlier search. For example, a Find Word search for **march** matches seven entries, but if you are only interested in the word which means ‘border’ or ‘frontier’, you can refine this search by using the ‘Restrict search’ feature.

1. Open the Advanced search page by clicking the  button at the base of the screen.
2. Choose from the tabs to retrieve entries, rather than quotations. (This is the default option.)

Search for Entries Quotations containing

3. Enter your search terms (e.g. **border**) in the boxes in the usual way.
4. Select your search areas (e.g. **definitions**) from the list boxes in the usual way.

5. In the panel to the right of the search form, check the box labelled 'Restrict search to results of:'.
6. Select either the **previous search** or **search number** radio button, to restrict to the results of an earlier search (e.g. the Find Word search **march**).
 - If the **search number** radio button is selected, enter the number of the desired search in the text box.

Restrict search to results of

previous search

search number

The last ten searches are listed at the foot of the Advanced search page (you may have to scroll down to see them).

7. Click the Start search button.

In the example, the search performed is for the word **border** in definitions, but only in the entries for **march**.

A search for quotations, rather than entries, can only be restricted to the results of a previous search for quotations. A search for entries cannot be restricted to the results of a previous search for quotations.

8. The results are displayed in the results list. Two entries are matched: a noun and a related verb.

Restricting to entries with a particular part of speech

Before starting an Advanced search, if you check one or more of the boxes in the 'Part of speech filter', the search will be performed on only those entries with the selected part(s) of speech.

Part of speech filter

<input type="checkbox"/> noun	<input type="checkbox"/> preposition
<input type="checkbox"/> pronoun	<input type="checkbox"/> interjection
<input type="checkbox"/> adjective	<input type="checkbox"/> prefix
<input type="checkbox"/> article	<input type="checkbox"/> suffix
<input type="checkbox"/> verb	<input type="checkbox"/> combining form
<input type="checkbox"/> adverb	<input type="checkbox"/> participle
<input type="checkbox"/> conjunction	<input type="checkbox"/> phrase


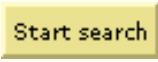
In the previous example, if you were only interested in nouns, you could check the box labelled ‘noun’ from the list before starting the search. There would be a single result: the entry **march** *n.*³, whose first meaning is ‘the border or frontier of a country’.

Many nouns in the *OED* have no explicit part of speech in the entry, but searching on nouns will still match these entries, along with other entries without parts of speech, such as variant entries.

3.3.5. Searching pronunciations

The search area **pronunciations** allows you to search the International Phonetic Alphabet symbols used to represent the pronunciations of words. Each symbol has a keyboard equivalent which is entered into the search box.

The Key to the pronunciation describes the symbols and lists their keyboard equivalents.

1. Open the Advanced search page by clicking the  button at the base of the screen.
2. Enter the keyboard equivalent of the pronunciation you wish to search for.
3. Choose **pronunciations** as the search area from the list box.
4. Click the  button.
5. The results are displayed in the results list.

3.3.6. Searching the Second Edition

The *OED*'s Second Edition (1989) is also available as a separately searchable text.

The text ‘search the Second Edition’ on the left-hand side of the Advanced search form links to a similar form, with the same search options. Entries and results lists displayed after a search on this form are from the Second Edition.

The operation of entries and results lists is exactly the same as in the main Dictionary, but entry lists for browsing, and the entry map, are unavailable in the Second Edition.

There are links back to the main Dictionary (the New Edition) at the left-hand side of entries, results lists, and the search form in the Second Edition.

4. Viewing Dictionary entries

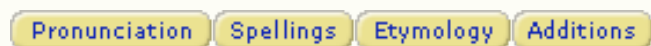
4.1. How can I see all the parts of an entry?

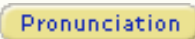
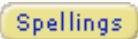


When you first open the dictionary you are taken to the entry of the word of the day.


You can start to read the entry as soon as it is opened. You also have some further choices about how the entry is displayed.

4.1.1. Pronunciation, spellings, etymology, Additions

At the top of many dictionary entries there are one or more of the following buttons.



- Click on the  button to reveal information about how the word is pronounced
- Click on the  button to show historical and alternative spellings
- Click on the  button to show information about the linguistic origins of a word
- Click on the  button to show supplementary information from the Additions of 1993 and/or 1997

When pronunciation, spellings, etymology, or Additions text are switched on (displayed) the appropriate button appears in red:  .

Click a button a second time to hide the information again.

An example

marble, *n.* and *a.* DRAFT REVISION Dec. 2003 [Earlier](#)

[Pronunciation](#) [Spellings](#) [Etymology](#) [Quotations](#) [Date chart](#)

Brit. /'mɑ:bl/, *U.S.* /'mɑrbəl/

A. *n.* I. Senses relating to the stone.

1. a. Limestone that has been recrystallized by metamorphism and is capable of taking a polish; *esp.* one that is pure white or has a mottled surface, such as is often used in sculpture and architecture. Also more generally: any stone that will take a polish and can be used for decorative purposes in building or sculpture.

The entry **marble** *n.* with pronunciation displayed

4.1.2. Displaying quotations

What is quotation text?

Most dictionary entries have sections of quotation text which give dated examples from manuscript or print sources of how the word is used in context. Quotation text is displayed in [blue](#).

How can I change the display of quotations?

Quotations are displayed by default. If you prefer, you can choose to

- hide quotation text; and/or
- display date charts which summarize the chronological spread of quotations in the entry

How do I hide quotations?

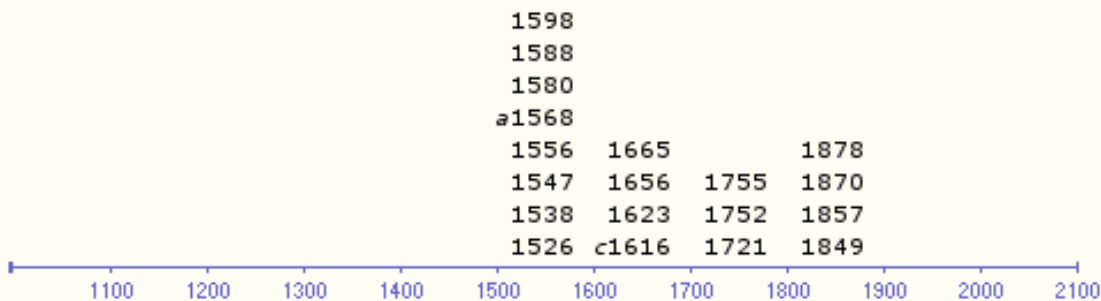
Click the [Quotations](#) button. To display them again, click the button a second time.

How do I display the date charts?

Click [Date chart](#). To hide them again, click the button a second time.

An example date chart

In this example, from definition **1.a** of the entry **dictionary** *n.*, the chart shows that quotations in this sense are dated from 1526 to 1878.



4.1.3. Viewing the map of an entry

Dictionary entries which have more than one sense are divided into numbered definitions.

To see the structure of an entry, click the [Entry map](#) button.

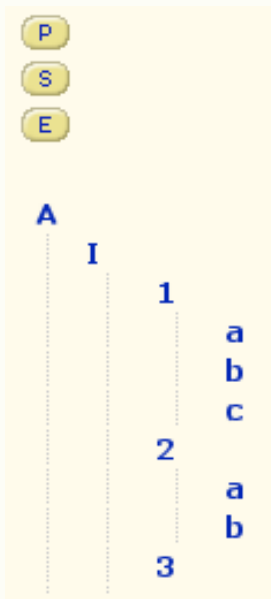
The map shows how many senses the entry has, and also represents the pronunciation, spellings, and etymology buttons. If there are Additions to a Second Edition entry, these will also be indicated in the map.

How can I use the map?

Use the map to move around the entry quickly. Click on any sense number or on the pronunciation, spellings, or etymology buttons to move to the matching part of the entry. This is a good way of moving through long entries, or of moving from the end of an entry to the beginning.

Also, if a previously displayed entry gave a cross-reference to a particular sense or senses of the current entry, the map gives the means to move directly to the relevant part of the entry.

An example map



Map of the entry **marble** *n.*

4.1.4. Returning to the top of an entry

There are several ways to get back to the top of an entry:

- Using the map. Click the map button and click on the first sense number in the entry to move there
- Using the [^top](#) button at the bottom of the entry. Click on it to move back up to the top
- Use the scroll bar to scroll back to the top



4.2. How can I make the most of the entry list?

What is the entry list?

The entry list is a list of all the main entries in the dictionary, which is shown on the left-hand side of the screen. The entry you are currently looking at is highlighted in the list. There are separate lists for Second Edition and New Edition entries, and the list displayed will always correspond to the set from which the currently displayed entry is taken.

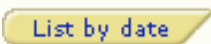
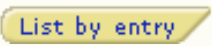
Browsing the list

Scroll through the list using the scroll bar. To open any of the entries in the list, click on it. This is a quick way of browsing entries either side of the one you are looking at.

The list shows only 50 lines at a time. To view the next or previous 50 lines, click the  or  buttons which appear when you scroll to the bottom or the top of the list.

Reordering the list

By default, the list is ordered alphabetically, from A to Z. You can also list the entries chronologically by the date of the earliest quotation they contain:

1. Click the  button.
2. The button turns red and the entries are listed in order of date.
3. To switch back to listing alphabetically by entry, click the  button.

4.3. How do I follow cross-references?

What is a cross-reference?

A cross-reference is a link from one dictionary entry to another for purposes of comparison or explanation. Cross-reference links are displayed in [blue small capitals](#).

Following cross-references

Click on the cross-reference to follow the hyperlink.

If there are several possible links for a cross-reference, you are given a results list from which you can select the desired match. Cross-references from New Edition entries link to other New edition entries if they are available online, or to Second Edition entries when these are the latest available.

Example

Open the entry **crooked**. Move to sense 5 (either by scrolling through the text or by using the map) and click on the cross-reference to [avocet](#).

4.4. Viewing Second Edition, Additions, and New Edition entries

When you open an entry, a label in the top right-hand corner of the screen identifies its provenance (e.g. SECOND EDITION 1989).

The *OED Online* contains entries from the Second Edition and its Additions volumes, and draft entries from the New (Third) Edition currently in progress. Every entry is labelled according to the text from which it has come.

SECOND EDITION 1989	The entry is from the Second Edition of 1989
ADDITIONS SERIES 1993	The entry is a free-standing entry from the Additions of 1993
ADDITIONS SERIES 1997	The entry is a free-standing entry from the Additions of 1997
DRAFT REVISION Mar. 2000	The entry is a revised entry published online in March 2000, replacing a Second Edition entry in the Dictionary.
DRAFT ENTRY June 2000	The entry is a draft new entry published online in June 2000

Revised and new entries may from time to time be emended. In such cases, the most recent version of an entry will be the version displayed online. Substantive editorial changes will result in a new text date, while non-substantive adjustments will not. Should an earlier, archived version of an entry be required for reference purposes, this can be supplied on request.

How do I view Additions to Second Edition entries?

If a Second Edition entry contains supplementary additional material (from the Additions of 1993 or 1997, or newly added material), the **Additions** button is displayed at the top of the entry.

The Additions are displayed at the end of the entry, where the text is identified as ‘Additions Series 1993’, ‘Additions Series 1997’, ‘Draft Additions Mar. 2000’, etc.

Like the quotations, the Additions are visible by default. Use the **Additions** button to toggle them off and on.


How do I view the Second Edition version of a revised entry?

A button **Earlier** appears to the right of the headword of a revised entry. Clicking the button displays a pop-up window containing the Second Edition version of the entry.

5. Outputting text

5.1. Printing an entry

You can print an entry or the current page of results:


1. Make sure the entry or the page of results you want is displayed.
2. Click the  button.
3. The entry or page of results is displayed in a printable form.
4. Click the Print button on your browser.

If you are printing an entry, the entire entry is printed. If you are printing the results list, only the current page of results is printed out.

5.2. Mailing an entry

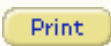
You can email a link to any entry to a friend or colleague, whether they subscribe to *OED Online* or not. The link will allow free access to the entry for three days.

To mail an entry:

1. Open the entry you want to link to.
2. Click the  button.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions given for sending your link.

5.3. Saving an entry to a file

You can save an entry to a file on your computer subject to the terms in the legal notice:

1. Make sure the entry you want is displayed.
2. Click the  button. This opens a new browser window containing the printable version of the entry. (In normal display, the headword is in a different frame from the rest of the entry, making it difficult to save the whole entry to a single file.)

3. Open the browser's **File** menu and select **Save As...**
4. Follow the instructions in the pop-up box that appears.

6. Understanding the *OED*

6.1. Key to the pronunciation

The pronunciation system used in revised material differs in some respects from that used in the Second Edition. In addition, the revised material includes not only British but also U.S. pronunciations.

For these reasons, two separate pronunciation keys are given here, one for Second Edition entries and one for entries in the New Edition.

For further details, see the pronunciation section of the Preface to the Third Edition.

6.1.1. Key for Second Edition entries

The pronunciations given are those in use in the educated speech of southern England (The so-called ‘Received Standard’), and the keywords given are to be understood as pronounced in such speech.

I. Consonants

b, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, t, v, z have their usual English values

Symbol	Example	Keyboard equivalent
g	as in <i>go</i> /gəʊ/	g
h	... <i>ho!</i> /həʊ/	h
r	... <i>run</i> /rʌn/, <i>terrier</i> /ˈtɛrɪə(r)/	r
(r)	... <i>her</i> /hɜː(r)/	(r)
s	... <i>see</i> /siː/, <i>success</i> /səkˈsɛs/	s
w	... <i>wear</i> /weə(r)/	w
hw	... <i>when</i> /hwɛn/	hw
j	... <i>yes</i> /jɛs/	j
θ	... <i>thin</i> /θɪn/, <i>bath</i> /bɑːθ/	T
ð	... <i>then</i> /ðɛn/, <i>bathe</i> /beɪð/	D
ʃ	... <i>shop</i> /ʃɒp/, <i>dish</i> /dɪʃ/	S
tʃ	... <i>chop</i> /tʃɒp/, <i>ditch</i> /dɪtʃ/	tS

ʒ	...	vision /vɪʒən/, déjeuner /deʒœne/	Z
dʒ	...	judge /dʒʌdʒ/	dZ
ŋ	...	singing /sɪŋŋ/, think /θɪŋk/	N
ŋg	...	finger /fɪŋgə(r)/	Ng

FOREIGN AND NON-SOUTHERN

ʎ	as in	Italian tomatillo /toma'tiʎo/	F
ɲ	...	French Bolognese /bolo'ɲeze/	J
x	...	German <i>ach</i> /ax/, Scots <i>loch</i> /lɔx/, Spanish frijoles /fri'xoles/	x
ç	...	German <i>ich</i> /ɪç/, Scots <i>nicht</i> /nɪçt/	C
ʒ	...	North German <i>sagen</i> /za:ʒən/	G
c	...	Afrikaans <i>baardmannetjie</i> /ba:ɪrtmanəci/	c
ɥ	...	French <i>cuisine</i> /kɥizin/	H

Symbols in parentheses are used to denote elements that may be omitted either by individual speakers or in particular phonetic contexts: e.g. *bottle* /'bɒt(ə)l/, *Mercian* /'mɜ:ʃ(ɪ)ən/, *suit* /s(j)uɪt/, *impromptu* /ɪm'prɒm(p)tju:/, *father* /'fɑ:ðə(r)/.

II. Vowels and Diphthongs

SHORT

ɪ	as in	<i>pit</i> /pɪt/, <i>-ness</i> /nɪs/	I
ɛ	...	<i>pet</i> /pɛt/, French <i>sept</i> /sɛt/	E
æ	...	<i>pat</i> /pæt/	{
ʌ	...	<i>putt</i> /pʌt/	V
ɒ	...	<i>pot</i> /pɒt/	Q
ʊ	...	<i>put</i> /pʊt/	U
ə	...	<i>another</i> /ə'nʌðə(r)/	@
(ə)	...	<i>beaten</i> /bi:t(ə)n/	(@)
i	...	French <i>si</i> /si/	i
e	...	French <i>bébé</i> /bebe/	e

a	...	French <i>mari</i> /mari/	a
ɑ	...	French <i>bâtiment</i> /bɑtimɑ̃/	A
ɔ	...	French <i>homme</i> /ɔ̃m/	O
o	...	French <i>eau</i> /o/	o
ø	...	French <i>peu</i> /pø/	2
œ	...	French <i>boeuf</i> /bœf/, <i>coeur</i> /kœr/	9
u	...	French <i>douce</i> /dus/	u
Y	...	German <i>Müller</i> /ˈmylɐr/	Y
y	...	French <i>du</i> /dy/	y

LONG

iː	as in	<i>bean</i> /biːn/	i:
ɑː	...	<i>barn</i> /bɑːn/	A:
ɔː	...	<i>born</i> /bɔːn/	O:
uː	...	<i>boon</i> /buːn/	u:
ɜː	...	<i>burn</i> /bɜːn/	3:
eː	...	German <i>Schnee</i> /ʃneː/	e:
ɛː	...	German <i>Fähre</i> /ˈfɛːrə/	E:
aː	...	German <i>Tag</i> /taːk/	a:
oː	...	German <i>Sohn</i> /zoːn/	o:
øː	...	German <i>Goethe</i> /ˈgøːtə/	2:
yː	...	German <i>grün</i> /gryːn/	y:

NASAL

ɛ̃, æ̃	as in	French <i>fin</i> /fɛ̃, fæ̃/	E~, {~
ɑ̃	...	French <i>franc</i> /frɑ̃/	A~
ɔ̃	...	French <i>bon</i> /bɔ̃/	O~
œ̃	...	French <i>un</i> /œ̃/	9~

DIPHTHONGS, etc.

eɪ	as in	bay /beɪ/	eɪ
aɪ	...	buy /baɪ/	aɪ
ɔɪ	...	boy /bɔɪ/	ɔɪ
əʊ	...	no /nəʊ/	@U
aʊ	...	now /naʊ/	aU
ɪə	...	peer /pɪə(r)/	I@
ɛə	...	pair /pɛə(r)/	E@
ʊə	...	tour /tʊə(r)/	U@
ɔə	...	boar /bɔə(r)/	O@
aɪə	...	fiery /'faɪəɪ/	aI@
aʊə	...	sour /saʊə(r)/	aU@

The incidence of main stress is shown by a superior stress mark (ˈ) preceding the stressed syllable, and a secondary stress by an inferior stress mark (ˌ), e.g. *accentuation* /æk,sɛntjuˈeɪʃən/.

When searching pronunciations, the superior stress mark (ˈ) has a double quotation mark (") as its keyboard equivalent, and the inferior stress mark (ˌ) has the percentage symbol (%) as its keyboard equivalent.

6.1.2. Key for New Edition entries

The pronunciations given are those in use among educated urban speakers of standard English in Britain and the United States. While avoiding strongly regionally or socially marked forms, they are intended to include the most common variants for each word. The keywords given are to be understood as pronounced in such speech.

A. British English

I. Consonants

Symbol	Example	Keyboard equivalent
b	as in <i>big</i> /bɪg/	b
d	... <i>dig</i> /dɪg/	d
dʒ	... <i>judge</i> /dʒʌdʒ/	dZ
ð	... <i>then</i> /ðɛn/, <i>bathe</i> /beɪð/	D

f	...	<i>fig</i> /fɪg/	f
g	...	<i>go</i> /gəʊ/	g
h	...	<i>how</i> /haʊ/	h
j	...	<i>yes</i> /jɛs/	j
k	...	<i>keep</i> /ki:p/, <i>card</i> /kɑ:d/	k
l	...	<i>leap</i> /li:p/	l
m	...	<i>mine</i> /maɪn/	m
n	...	<i>nine</i> /naɪn/	n
ŋ	...	<i>singing</i> /ˈsɪŋɪŋ/, <i>think</i> /θɪŋk/	N
ŋg	...	<i>finger</i> /ˈfɪŋgə/	Ng
p	...	<i>pine</i> /paɪn/	p
r	...	<i>run</i> /rʌn/, <i>hurry</i> /ˈhʌri/	r
s	...	<i>see</i> /si:/, <i>cease</i> /si:s/	s
ʃ	...	<i>shop</i> /ʃɒp/, <i>dish</i> /dɪʃ/	S
t	...	<i>tan</i> /tʌn/	t
tʃ	...	<i>chop</i> /tʃɒp/, <i>ditch</i> /dɪtʃ/	tS
θ	...	<i>thin</i> /θɪn/, <i>path</i> /pɑ:θ/	T
v	...	<i>van</i> /vʌn/	v
w	...	<i>wear</i> /weɪ/, <i>where</i> /weɪ/	w
z	...	<i>zoo</i> /zu:/	z
ʒ	...	<i>vision</i> /ˈvɪʒən/, <i>regime</i> /reɪʒi:m/	Z
x	...	(Scots) <i>loch</i> /lɒx/	x
ɹ	...	(Welsh) <i>penillion</i> /peˈnɪlɪən/, <i>Llandaff</i> /ˈlɪˌandaf/	L

In addition, the consonants *l*, *m*, and *n* can take on the function of a vowel in some unstressed syllables. It should generally be clear when this interpretation is intended, but in cases of potential ambiguity, the consonant symbol appears with a diacritic, as **l̥**, **m̥**, **n̥**, as e.g. *maddle* /ˈmadl̥/, *macromodelling* /ˌmakrəʊˈmɒdɪŋ̥/; *macroseism* /ˌmakrəʊˈsɑɪz̥m/, *ransoming* /ˈrʌnsɪm̥ɪŋ/; *madden* /ˈmadn̥/, *maddening* /ˈmadn̥ɪŋ/.

When searching pronunciations, the symbols **l̥**, **m̥**, and **n̥** have as their keyboard equivalents **l=**, **m=**, and **n=** respectively.

II. Vowels and Diphthongs

a	as in	trap /trap/, and some pronunciations of bath /baθ/	a
aʊ	...	mouth /maʊθ/	aU
ɑː	...	start /stɑːt/, palm /pɑːm/, and some pronunciations of bath /bɑːθ/	A:
eɪ	...	face /feɪs/	eI
ɛ	...	dress /drɛs/	E
ɛɪ	...	square /skwɛɪ/	E:
ə	...	another /ə'nʌðə/	@
ɜː	...	nurse /nɜːs/	@:
əʊ	...	goat /gəʊt/	@U
i	...	happy /'hapi/	i
iː	...	fleece /fliːs/	i:
ɪ	...	kit /kɪt/, rabbit /'ræbɪt/	I
ɪə	...	near /nɪə/	I@
ɔː	...	force /fɔːs/, north /nɔːθ/, thought /θɔːt/	O:
ɔɪ	...	choice /tʃɔɪs/	OI
ɒ	...	lot /lɒt/, cloth /klɒθ/	Q
uː	...	goose /guːs/	u:
ʊ	...	foot /fʊt/	U
ʊə	...	cure /kjʊə/, jury /dʒʊəri/	U@
ʌ	...	strut /strʌt/	V
aɪ	...	price /praɪs/	VI
ɑ̃	...	fin de siècle /fɑ̃ də'sjɛklə/	a~
ɔ̃	...	bon mot /bɔ̃'mɔ̃/, rapprochement /rə'prɔ̃ʃmɑ̃/	Q~

I represents free variation between /ɪ/ and /e/ **U** represents free variation between /ʊ/ and /ə/

When searching pronunciations, the symbols **I** and **U** have as their keyboard equivalents **1** and **}** respectively.

Stress

The symbol ' at the beginning of a syllable indicates that that syllable is pronounced with primary stress, as in the first syllable of *cerebrate* /sɛrɪbreɪt/.

The symbol , at the beginning of a syllable indicates that that syllable is pronounced with secondary stress, as in the first syllable of *cerebration* /,sɛrɪbreɪʃn/.

The symbol ˈ at the beginning of a syllable indicates that that syllable may be pronounced with either primary or secondary stress, as in the first syllable of *cerebrospinal* /ˈsɛrɪbrəʊspɑɪnəl/.

When searching pronunciations, the superior stress mark (ˈ) has a double quotation mark (") as its keyboard equivalent, and the inferior stress mark (ˌ) has the percentage symbol (%) as its keyboard equivalent.

B. U.S. English

I. Consonants

The consonants of U.S. English are essentially the same as those used in British English, but they have a different distribution. In particular:

After a vowel, U.S. English can have /r/ regardless of the sound which follows, whereas British English retains the /r/ only when it is followed by a vowel.

- Compare U.S. *mar* /mɑr/, *marring* /ˈmɑrɪŋ/ with British *mar* /mɑː/, *marring* /ˈmɑːrɪŋ/

Between vowels (except at the start of a stressed syllable) U.S. English has /d/ where British English has /t/.

- Compare U.S. *butter* /ˈbʌdər/, and *waiting* /ˈweɪdɪŋ/ (as against *wait* /weɪt/) with British *butter* /ˈbʌtə/, *waiting* /ˈweɪtɪŋ/, *wait* /weɪt/

U.S. speakers are more likely than British speakers to distinguish between *wear* (with /w/) and *where* (with either /w/ or /hw/).

II. Vowels and Diphthongs

aɪ	as in	price /praɪs/	aɪ
aʊ	...	mouth /maʊθ/	aʊ
ɑ	...	lot /lɑt/, palm /pɑm/, start /stɑrt/, and some pronunciations of cloth /clɑθ/, thought /θɑt/	ɑ

æ	...	trap /træp/, bath /bæθ/	{
eɪ	...	face /feɪs/	eɪ
ɛ	...	dress /drɛs/, square /skwɛ(ə)r/, marry /ˈmɛri/	E
ə	...	strut /strʌt/, nurse /nɜrs/, another /əˈnʌðər/, rabbit /ˈræbət/	@
i	...	fleece /flis/, happy /ˈhæpi/	i
ɪ	...	kit /kɪt/, near /ˈni(ə)r/	I
oʊ	...	goat /goʊt/	oU
ɔ	...	force /fɔ(ə)rs/, north /nɔrθ/, and some pronunciations of cloth /clɔθ/, thought /θɔt/	O
ɔɪ	...	choice /tʃɔɪs/	Oɪ
u	...	goose /gus/	u
ʊ	...	foot /fʊt/, cure /kjʊ(ə)r/	U
ɑ̃	...	rapprochement /ˈræprɔ̃ʃˈmɑ̃/, fin de siècle /fɛ̃ dəsˈjɛkl/	A~
ɔ̃	...	bon mot /bɔ̃ˈmoʊ/	O~

ɪ represents free variation between /ɪ/ and /eɪ/ **ʊ** represents free variation between /ʊ/ and /ə/

When searching pronunciations, the symbols **ɪ** and **ʊ** have as their keyboard equivalents **1** and **}** respectively.

Where /**ɪ**/, /**ɛ**/, /**ɔ**/, or /**ʊ**/ is followed by /r/, an intervening /ə/ is often inserted, e.g. *near* /ˈni(ə)r/, *square* /skwɛ(ə)r/, *force* /fɔ(ə)rs/, *cure* /kjʊ(ə)r/.

Stress

The symbol **ˈ** at the beginning of a syllable indicates that that syllable is pronounced with primary stress, as in the first syllable of *celebrate* /ˈsɛrəbreɪt/.

The symbol **ˌ** at the beginning of a syllable indicates that that syllable is pronounced with secondary stress, as in the first syllable of *celebration* /ˌsɛrəˈbreɪʃən/.

The symbol **ˑ** at the beginning of a syllable indicates that that syllable may be pronounced with either primary or secondary stress, as in the first syllable of *cerebrospinal* /ˑsɛrəbroʊˈspainəl/.

When searching pronunciations, the superior stress mark (**ˈ**) has a double quotation mark (**"**) as its keyboard equivalent, and the inferior stress mark (**ˌ**) has the percentage symbol (**%**) as its keyboard equivalent.

6.2. Key to symbols and other conventions

Before a word or sense

† = obsolete

|| = not naturalized, alien (not used in New Edition entries)

¶ = catachrestic and erroneous uses (not used in New Edition entries)

After a label ‘*Obs.*’ or ‘*rare*’

—⁰ indicates a word or sense for which no contextual examples from printed sources were available to the editors

—¹ indicates a word or sense for which only one contextual example from a printed source was available to the editors

In a listing of variant spellings

Second Edition entries:

1 = before 1100

2 = 12th century (1100-1200)

3 = 13th century (1200-1300), etc.

5-7 = 15th to 17th century, etc.

9- = 19th century to present, etc.

20 = 20th century

New Edition entries:

eOE = early Old English

OE = Old English

lOE = late Old English

eME = early Middle English

ME = Middle English

lME = late Middle English

- 14 = 1400-99
15 = 1500-99, etc.
16-18 = 1600-1899, etc.
18- = 1800-present, etc.
-17 = before 1700 (labelling Older Scottish forms)

In an etymology

- * indicates a word or form not actually found, but of which the existence is inferred
:— = normal development of (not used in New Edition entries)
< = from (in New Edition entries)
> = developed into or borrowed as (in New Edition entries)

Before a date

- a* = *ante*
c = *circa*
? indicates an uncertain date

In a quotation

- .. (within cited text) indicates an omitted part of a quotation
[] surrounds an editorial insertion
~ indicates a hyphen introduced in the printing of the First Edition of the *OED*, which may not have been present in the cited text

Around an entire entry

- [] indicates a 'spurious' entry

7. Technicalities

7.1. How do I quit?

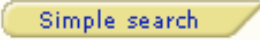
To exit the dictionary, click .

7.2. Frequently asked questions

What new entries have been added recently?

Each quarter, many new entries and senses are added to *OED Online*. The Help text contains a list of the latest additions, as well as details of all previous quarterly updates.

What is the difference between the two types of search?

The Find Word search box, located at the top right-hand corner of the screen, is used to look up the headwords and subordinate entries defined or illustrated in the Dictionary. The Full Text search box, displayed at the left-hand side of the screen by clicking the  button, is used to find a word anywhere in the entire text of the Dictionary.

Why do some characters in the text look odd?

The text of the *Oxford English Dictionary* contains a large number of special characters which are not displayable using HTML. These have been displayed using gif images created in the default typeface and size of the most commonly used browsers (Internet Explorer version 4.0 and above, and Netscape Navigator version 4.x). These gifs cannot change when the font settings on a browser are altered.

Netscape 6 and Opera users: the special characters are best viewed if the text is scaled to 110% of the default size.

- In Netscape 6, go to **View/Text size/Other** and type 110 in the box that appears
- In Opera, go to **Preferences/Document window** and select 110% from the drop-down default scaling menu

Can I search the Greek text or the phonetic characters in the Dictionary?

Greek characters can be searched using exact character searching, available on the Advanced search page.

Phonetic characters can be searched using their keyboard equivalents in a special search area, also available on the Advanced search page.

Why can't I find the entry for ORGANISE?

Many words can be spelled in more than one way, with preferences varying across the English-speaking world. For example, there are many verbs that can end in either *-ize* or *-ise*. The *OED*'s

policy on such verbs is to use the *-ize* spelling as the headword form. This also applies to words ending in *-ized/-ised*, *-izing/-ising*, and *-ization/-isation*. *OED Online* contains an entry for ORGANIZE, in which some of the quotations illustrate the *-ise* spelling. If in doubt, you could always use a wildcard in the search (e.g. ORGANI?E). Another way of finding variant spellings is to try a Full Text search.

What does the symbol † mean?

It means that the word or meaning that follows is obsolete.

Why do I get so many results when I do a Find Word search for the word TREE?

Many common words occur as parts of compounds and phrases. For example, the word TREE occurs in the compound JOSHUA TREE. In many Dictionary entries, such compounds are often compressed to avoid repetition of the headword of the entry, resulting in a Find Word match on the second component, such as TREE.

Why does a cross-reference link sometimes take me to a results list?

Although cross-references sometimes give explicit references to parts of speech, sense numbers, etc., the link only looks for the word which appears in the cross-reference in small capitals. More than one entry may match this word-form, so the link returns a set of results.

Why can't I find the author or work title I'm interested in?

For reasons of space in the original printed edition, some authors' names and most work titles appear in an abbreviated form. Lists of abbreviations are available for author names and work titles.

Why can't I find quotations from Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* by using a proximity search on DICKENS and CITIES?

There are a number of possible reasons for a proximity search like this failing:

- The number of words between the two search terms could be too few. For example, a setting of **5 words or fewer** is necessary to find DICKENS near CITIES
- The wrong search area could have been chosen. The search area applies to both of the search terms in a proximity search, so to find DICKENS near CITIES, the region **quotations** should be selected, rather than **quotation author** or **quotation work**.
- One or both of the search terms may occur in an abbreviated form. Lists of abbreviations are available for author names, and work titles.

Why does a citation for the author 'B. Wells' take me to the wrong entry in the bibliography?

Author names in the *OED* are usually cited by initials and surname, and different authors occasionally share the same cited form. The links for such authors point to the same place in the bibliography, i.e. the first entry matching the particular combination of initials and surname.

The correct author can often be found by scrolling down the bibliography file, but sometimes the author is not present in the bibliography.

Why does the 'Lost for Words' button keep reloading the same entry when clicked repeatedly?

Your browser may be displaying an entry from its cache rather than returning to the server for a fresh entry. If you access the internet via a proxy server, it could be the proxy server that is cacheing the entry.

To display a new entry selected at random, go to the 'Lost for Words' URL <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/lfw> and force the browser to reload the URL from the server, e.g. by pressing Ctrl+F5 on a PC.

What are the browser and hardware requirements for *OED Online*?

OED Online should work with almost every browser that supports frames, on almost every computer. We specifically support versions 3 and above of Netscape Navigator and versions 4 and above of Internet Explorer.

Is there a version of *OED Online* that does not require frames?

No, but this feature may be added in the future.

Can I improve my speed of access to *OED Online*?

If you are using an old version of your browser, you should be able to improve the speed of access by upgrading it to the current version.

Why can't I view the quick reference guide PDF?

To view the file you need the Adobe Acrobat Reader, available from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

If you have the Adobe Acrobat Reader and still cannot view the PDF, we suggest downloading the file to your hard disk and viewing the local copy. To do this, right-click on the link to the PDF file. From the pop-up menu that appears, select *Save Target As . . .* (in Internet Explorer) or *Save Link As . . .* (in Netscape and Opera), and follow the instructions that appear.

For technical support information for the Acrobat Reader, see Adobe's web site.

Why does a search sometimes result in a blank page?

Netscape 4.7 'times out' when a search takes too long, and displays a blank page with a 'Document contains no data' message. This can happen for complex Boolean searches displaying 1000 results at a time, for example.

If this happens, try setting the number of results displayed per page to a lower number.

7.3. Error messages

Invalid date search

A search in the **first cited date** or **quotation date** search areas may not contain wildcards or alphabet characters. Dates can be typed as a single date (e.g. **1340**), or in the form of a closed range (e.g. **1340-1345**), an open range (e.g. **1340-**), or the end of a range (e.g. **-1340**). A closed range of dates must have both years in full, e.g. **1340-1345** and not **1340-45**.

Invalid language name search

A search in the **language names** search area may not contain wildcards.

Invalid subject search

A search in the **subjects** search area may not contain wildcards.