

The Free Dictionary Blog

Categories: [English Grammar and Spelling](#), [Literature and History](#), [Site Announcements](#), [Trending Topics](#), [Wordymology](#)

Introducing...



NEW at The Free Dictionary: Wordle Word Finder!

Next time you're facing a hurdle with Wordle, we can help!

The origins of tea and coffee names.

Ready for some black dragon tea?



Dinosaurs galore!

One of these guys can't be trusted. Whose name means "deceptive"?



Hold on to your hats

Just who was Fedora? And can you fit 10 gallons into a 10-gallon hat?

Top Words of 2020

Learn more about the words you heard all year long!



A baker's dozen of dessert words.

Snail noodles for everyone!



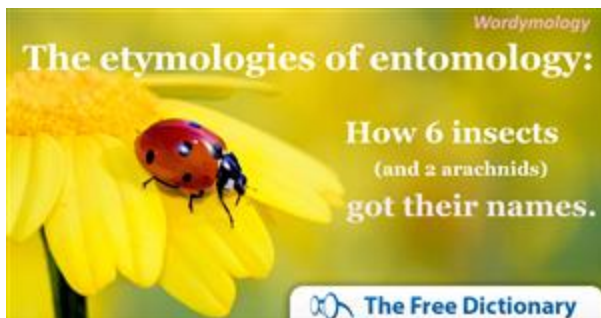
Idiom Contest Deadline

The deadline for the idiom contest is almost here!



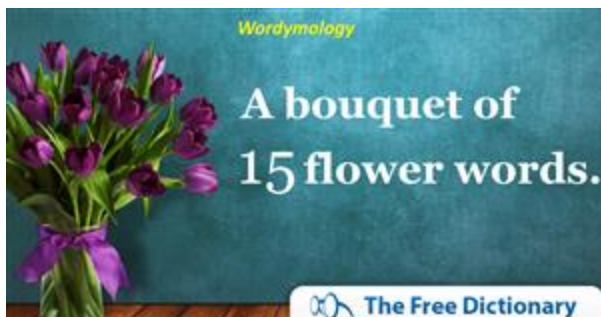
The Etymologies of Entomology.

They include rooster roaches and hairy cats.



A bouquet of 15 flower words.

Teeth, turbans, and taxonomists—the surprising seeds of some of your favorite flowers' names.



Know nonsense. And 6 of its best synonyms.

There are many excellent synonyms for nonsense. Here are the six with the most absurdly interesting etymologies.

Wordymology

Know Nonsense

And 6 of its best synonyms.



 The Free Dictionary

Here's how every month got its name

Why are the months' names what they are? What do they mean? And why do so many of them not make sense?

Wordymology

Here's how every month got its name.



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10 words to learn in 2020

Some new words for the new decade!

10 words
to learn in 2020.

 The Free Dictionary

The Etymology of Dance

You might know the steps, but do you know where these classic dances got their names?

Wordymology

The
Etymology
of
Dance



 The Free Dictionary

How gossip got its name

The scuttlebutt on snooping, schmoozing, and eavesdropping.

Wordymology

Gossip.

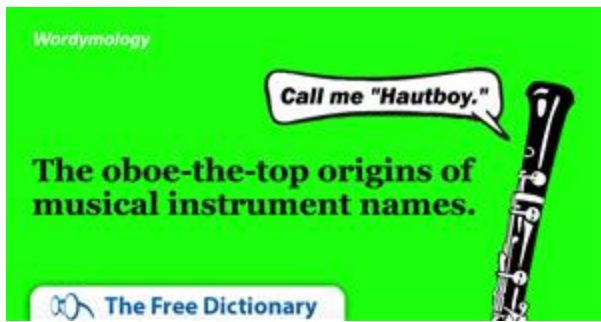
The scuttlebutt on snooping, schmoozing, and eavesdropping.



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The oboe-the-top origins of musical instrument names

12 note-able etymologies hiding behind the music.



Secrets of the Sauce: 8 condiment names explained

You may have a lot of passionate preferences about which condiments you use—and don't use. But do you know the ingredients of their etymologies?



The loco delicioso origins of Mexican food names

Donkeys, daisies, and explosives. Let's dig in to some crazy delicious etymologies.



Down in History: 11 names remembered for all the wrong reasons

Here's how 11 eponymous personages had their names become forever associated with things negative.



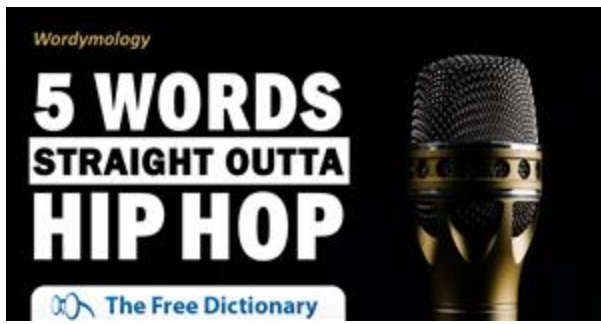
Femalexicon: 9 women immortalized in the English language

Meet nine women whose names and creations live on in our words.



5 words straight outta hip hop

Rap slang has entered the popular lexicon. How many of these words do you use?



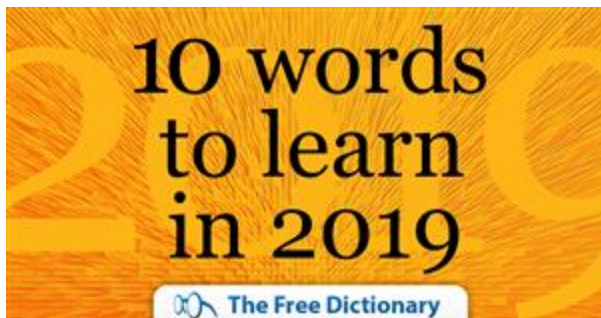
The naked truth about exercise words

Trying to keep your New Year's resolution to get in shape? Hit the etymogym with these fitness-related etymologies. (It counts as a gym day.)



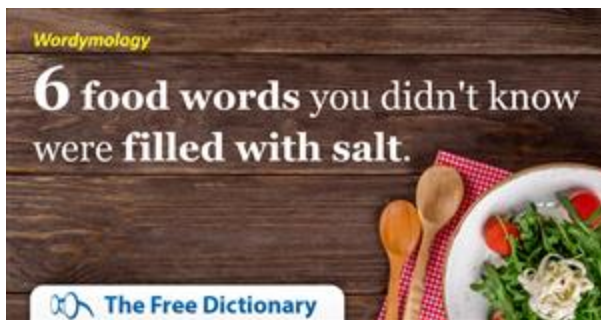
10 words to learn in 2019

"Learning new words at The Free Dictionary is the best resolution you can make." - Ben Franklin, probably



6 food words you didn't know were filled with salt

Watching your salt intake? You may want to avoid these salt-heavy etymologies.



The strange coinages of money words

Did Juno? The word "money" comes from a goddess.



Unwrap some Halloween word candy

Treat yourself to the tricky etymologies of these essential Halloween words.



How every day of the week got its name

A throwback to when it was called Thor's Day.



Pants are named after a clown named after a saint

And other undressed word histories.



The far-out etymologies of celestial bodies

Axe-wielders, wanderers, and long-haired stars. When it comes to their names, the cast of characters in the nighttime sky is much stranger than you might think.



The weird word origins of your favorite colors

Goblins, magic spells, and crushed-up bugs. You won't believe how some colors got their names.



Why is it called soccer?

Even if you call it "football," you might be surprised where the name "soccer" came from.



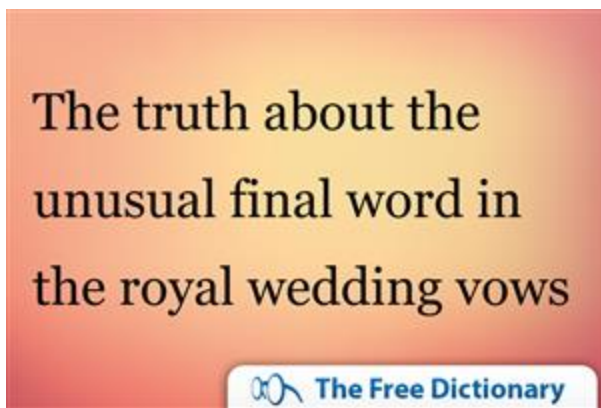
How 9 different fruits came to be named after the apple

F for creativity, fruit namers.



The truth about the unusual final word in the royal wedding vows

You've probably never heard it before, but you might be able to guess what it means.



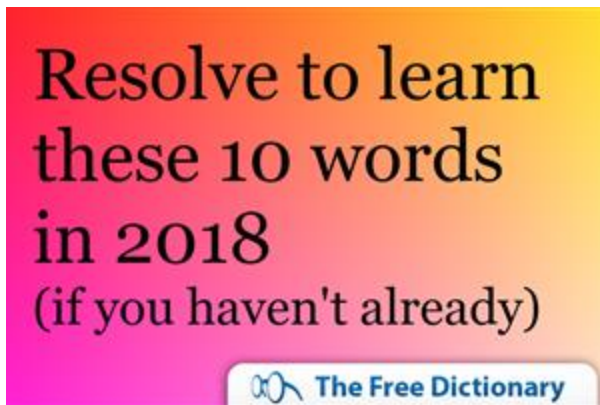
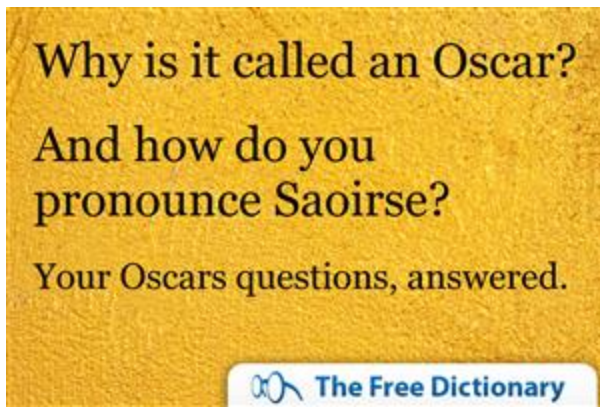
Book-Man: The new game from The Free Dictionary

Enter the word maze with Book-Man. How many words can you find?



Why is it called an Oscar? And how do you pronounce Saoirse?

The Free Dictionary answers your Oscars questions.



[Resolve to learn these 10 words in 2018 \(if you haven't already\)](#)

Here are the top 10 most bookmarked words at The Free Dictionary. How many of them can you define?



[The Free Dictionary Names Its 2017 Article of the Year](#)

The winner was chosen from the list of 2017's top searches.



[By popular demand: You can now sort your bookmarks into lists](#)

It just got a whole lot easier to manage your bookmarks.

[Flashcards have arrived at The Free Dictionary](#)

Study for your next big test, boost your vocabulary, learn words in a new language, and more!



"Impanel" just became the #1 search on The Free Dictionary

What is impaneling, and what is a grand jury?



Searches for "maverick" are trending

"Maverick" has been one of the most-searched words at TheFreeDictionary.com on July 28, 2017.



Searches for "jamboree" are up 400%

"Jamboree" has been one of the most-searched words at TheFreeDictionary.com on July 25, 2017.

Master these 10 most common writing tasks and you're set for life

Expert tips and templates for tackling life's toughest writing assignments: essays, cover letters, thank-you notes, and more.



Refine your writing with this list of transition words

Master the art of the seamless transition with this list of transition words and phrases for essays, plus examples of each type of transition.



Similes, Metaphors, Analogies, Allegories, and Alligators: Learn the Difference

Our helpful guide to similes, metaphors, and more will help you tell the difference between them with simple explanations and famous examples.



41 adorable baby animal names (with pics!)

Baby animal names are sometimes just as cute as the baby animals themselves. Here's a list of 41 of the most adorable.



A clowder of cats: 30 fancy names for animal groups



Do you know which animals groups are called an unkindness, an ambush, or an ostentation?



A full list of prepositions (no singing required)

Looking for a list of prepositions? Look no further.



A list of adjectives with which you can describe anything

A list of adjectives, including types of adjectives and examples.



A list of verbs with which you can do (or be) anything

A list of verbs, including explanations of how different types of verbs function in a sentence.

A very long list of adverbs, not all of which end in -ly

A list of adverbs, plus definitions and examples of how to use different types of adverbs in a sentence.



Is "irregardless" a word? (Supposably, it is.)

Irregardless. Supposably. Espresso. Are they words?



The famous last words of 12 enigmatic icons

The famous last words of the dying and the last dying words of the famous. It's a good thing someone was around to write them down.



What does your name mean? It might be more obvious than you think

Want to know what your name means? Start your search here.



What rhymes with orange? And 8 other burning language questions



What rhymes with orange? What is the plural of moose? What is the longest word in the world? All of your questions about words, answered by The Free Dictionary.



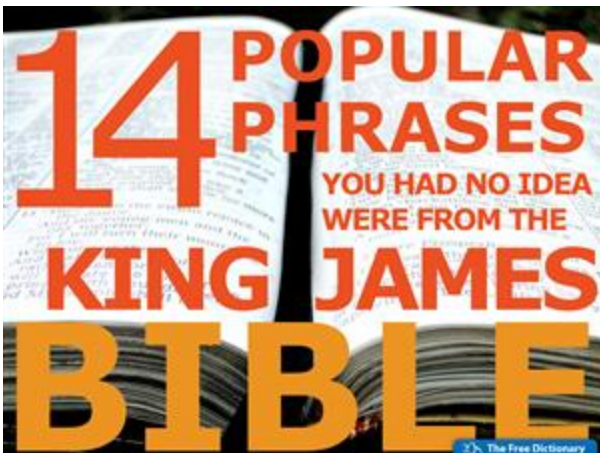
12 synonyms for beautiful used perfectly by famous authors

Looking for another word for beautiful? Feast your eyes on these 12 classic authors' descriptions for beauty.



13 awesome synonyms for awesome used by awesome authors

Awesome. Really awesome. Super awesome. Are you running out of synonyms for awesome?

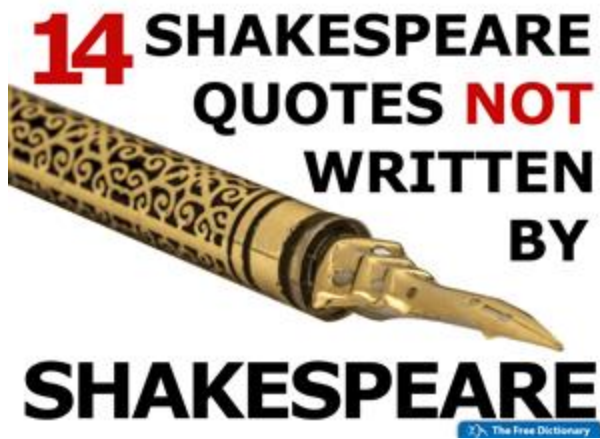


14 popular phrases you had no idea were from the King James Bible

Who knew so many popular phrases originated in the Bible? Here's 14 you probably use all the time.

14 Shakespeare quotes NOT written by Shakespeare

Shakespeare wrote a lot of great lines. Just not these.



4 things the Death Star isn't (by definition)

Let's not jump to any conclusions, Obi-Wan. Let's consult the dictionary first.



59 times you quoted Shakespeare without knowing it

You use these words and phrases all the time. Did you know Shakespeare coined them?

Deflategate and 14 other scandals ending in -gate (including Gategate!)



Why do scandals always end in -gate?

Googol, Yahoo,
and **28**
other **words**
invented
from scratch

The Free Dictionary

Googol, Yahoo, and 28 other words invented from scratch

Neologisms coined into existence can be found throughout literature, science, and industry, and they include some of the words you use every day.



I before E: 21 spelling rules (and their crazy exceptions!)

Believe it or not, English actually has spelling rules. And exceptions...



See how letters came from words (not the other way around)

A visual guide to how we arrived at the modern alphabet.

The 7 Major Differences between British and American Spelling

Do you know the 7 ways in which Brits and Americans spell things differently?



The 8 reasons your misspelling the 40 most misspelled words

A list of some of the most common misspellings, grouped into the reasons why they're most often misspelled.



The 9 worst public spelling blunders in modern history

Bad spellers can't get any R-S-P-E-C-T.



The Strange Things Americans and Brits Say Differently

The queue for the loo, or the line for the bathroom? Depends where you live.



We ranked the top 27 letters of the alphabet (U won't believe what's #21!)

Finally, the definitive ranking of every letter in the alphabet.



5 CANDIDATES for a GENDER- NEUTRAL SINGULAR PRONOUN

The Free Dictionary

[Ze Said/E Said: 5 Candidates for a Gender-Neutral Singular Pronoun](#)

Can we decide on a pronoun to be vague in gender but specific in number?



[Homophones, Homonyms, and Homographs: How to tell the difference](#)

These three grammar terms are confusing and easily mixed up. Learn how to tell them apart with easy explanations and examples.

[Quotation marks and punctuation: Inside or Outside?](#)

'By the way', the Queen said to Uncle Sam, 'What does it mean when you say, "O say can you see?"'



The top 3 things ruining your sentences

The sentence is one of the most basic building blocks of writing. Don't mess it up.



5 supposed grammar rules to boldly ignore

If you've ever felt overwhelmed by all of the grammar rules in the English language, good news—some are no longer necessary!



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