The *Oxford English Dictionary*: past, present, and future

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The Oxford English Dictionary in its current online version.
This magical city of bridges, cathedrals, gold-tipped towers and church domes has been mirrored in the surface of the swan-filled Vltava River for more than ten centuries.

(Travel Prague: Illustrated City Guide)
dome, n.

Pronunciation: /dəʊm/
Forms: Also 16 dosme, 17 doom.
Etymology: In sense 1, apparently directly < Latin domus... (Show More)

1. A house, a home; a stately building, a mansion. Now only as a poetical or dignified appellation.

1553—1817

†2. A cathedral church; = DOM n.² Obs.

1691 A. GAVIN Observ. Journey to Naples 71 The Ceremony...Celebrated...at the Dome (so they call the Cathedral Churches in Italy).
1707 London Gaz. No. 4382/3, There was a Jew Christen’d last Sunday in the Dome of this City [Berlin].
1718 J. ADDISON Remarks Italy (ed. 2) 45 Pope Lucius, who lies buried in the Dome.
1753 J. HANWAY Hist. Acct. Brit. Trade Caspian Sea II. 1. iii. 15 There is also the dome, which is a cathedral church.
The ordinary Citizens Wives and Daughters wear a Kind of Toilet on their Heads, with a long Fringe which covers their Faces, and drives away the Flies like Horse-trappings. The Body
Changes in the meaning of the word *toilet*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1530s</td>
<td>a piece of cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660s</td>
<td>a piece of cloth covering a dressing table;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a dressing table;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>items found on a dressing table (hairbrushes, cosmetics etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680s</td>
<td>the action of taking care of one’s appearance, or getting dressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790 or 1800</td>
<td>a room for dressing/washing in (also <em>toilet room</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>a room for urination/defecation (1850s for <em>toilet room</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Start of entry in *OED Online* for *smiley face*, showing the earliest known example (1957)

**smiley face, n.**

Pronunciation: Brit. /ˈsmæli fiːz/, U.S. /ˈsmæli ,feɪz/

Etymology: < SMILEY adj. + FACE n.

orig. U.S.

1. A simple graphic representation of a smiling face; spec. a round, cartoon-style face, originally and chiefly black on yellow.

The black and yellow design was originally devised by Harvey Ball, U.S. commercial artist, in 1963, for the State Mutual Life Assurance Company (Worcester, Mass.), as the logo of a corporate friendship campaign. It is freq. used as a symbol of hope, peace, solidarity, etc., esp. in youth culture (associated esp. in the United States with the 1970s). It is also specifically associated (chiefly in the United Kingdom) with the Acid House movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

1957 *Sarasota* (Florida) *Herald-Tribune* 8 Sept. (Family Weekly mag.) 14/1  Tape a paper plate to a mop head for a face, arranging the string strands on each side for hair. Draw a big smiley face on the plate!

1971 *Beaver County* (Pa.) *Times* 15 Sept. (Advertising suppl.)  A happy face lamp with the new smiley face.

1989 *Chicago Tribune* (Nexis) 15 Feb. (Style section) 18  Inside the throbbing, strobe-lit Acid House clubs,...nothing symbolizes the endless ‘don’t worry be happy’ mentality more succinctly than Smiley Face... The non-stop grin...becomes explicitly linked to the use of the now-popular club drug Ecstasy.

1993 R. Hughes *Culture of Complaint* i. 50  A fixed white grin as inane as a 70s Smiley-face sticker.

2005 S. Booth *One Last Breath* xxxviii. 534  Someone had painted a smiley face on their wheelie bin.
OED: the past
The idea of a historical dictionary

- Each word should tell its own life-story
- The evidence for this life-story: quotations, showing how the word was actually used at different times
- Collecting this data: reading many thousands of texts, and writing out quotations by hand
- Use of volunteers (‘crowdsourcing’), first by the brothers Grimm in the 1830s
- Technique adopted by the Philological Society of London in the 1850s
PROPOSAL FOR THE PUBLICATION OF

A NEW

ENGLISH DICTIONARY

BY THE

PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY.
Quotation from *The Muse in Miniature* (1771) for the word *elemented*, supplied by Winthrop Sargent, Jr. (1825–1870) of Natchez, Mississippi

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Elemented: part.
Now making cataract descends
To calm the elementid fray
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(1771) "Muse in Miniature"
Herbert Coleridge (1830–1861), first editor of the Dictionary
Frederick James Furnivall (1825–1910), second editor of the Dictionary
Quotation for *odd-come-short*
contributed by Frederick Furnivall

Used in the *OED*:

1873  *R. Broughton*  *Nancy* I. 79  A dinner-party...a squire or two, a squiress or two, a curate or two—such *odd-come-shorts* as can be got together...at briefest notice.

**b.** An odd or eccentric person; a misfit.
James Augustus Henry Murray (1830–1915), Editor of the *OED* from 1879, with some of his assistants
James Murray’s Appeal to the English-Speaking and English-Reading Public (1879)

AN APPEAL
TO THE
ENGLISH-SPEAKING AND ENGLISH-READING PUBLIC
TO READ BOOKS AND MAKE EXTRACTS FOR
THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY’S
NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

In November 1857, a paper was read before the Philological Society by Archbishop Trench, then Dean of Westminster, on ‘Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries,’ which led to a resolution on the part of the Society to prepare a Supplement to the existing Dictionaries supplying these deficiencies. A very little work on this basis sufficed to show that to do anything effectual, not a mere Dictionary-Supplement, but a new Dictionary worthy of the English Language and of the present state of Philological Science, was the object to be aimed at. Accordingly, in January 1859, the Society issued their ‘Proposal for the publication of a New English Dictionary,’ in which the characteristics of the proposed work were explained, and appeals to the English and American public were made.
Quotation slip for *toggery*, supplied by Dwight Whitney Learned of Japan


"The horse's rode on was not an animal to take advantage of the weakness of his toggery."
William Chester Minor (1835–1920), madman and contributor to the *OED*
Quotation slip for the word *set*, contributed by W. C. Minor (and how it eventually appeared in the *OED*).

**[Quotation Slip Image]**

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James Murray in his ‘Scriptorium’, with two of his assistants, and his son Harold
The *New English Dictionary* as envisaged in the 1879 Agreement with OUP

- Four volumes
- 6,000 pages
- 10 years’ work
The first section, or ‘fascicle’, of the Dictionary: A to ant (published 1884)
Henry Bradley (1845–1923), Editor of the Dictionary (alongside Murray) from 1887
William Craigie (1867–1957), Editor from 1901, and Charles Onions (1873–1965), Editor from 1914
Creating a dictionary entry

- read through all the quotations for the word
- work out and define its different senses
- arrange the senses in chronological order, with each definition illustrated by a selection of quotations starting with the earliest known
- devise a structure of senses and subsenses which shows how these developed from each other
- write the pronunciation and etymology
One page of Dictionary proofs, with corrections
Murray and his assistants, in the Scriptorium

Onions, Bradley, and Craigie with their assistants, outside the Old Ashmolean

OED staff, 1915
Arthur Maling, assistant 1885–1928, and one of his slips for the word *organist*
J. R. R. Tolkien, *OED* assistant 1919–20, and two of his slips for the word *walrus*
COMMERCIAL BREAK.
Copies of *The Ring of Words*
are available from all good booksellers.
The completed first edition of *OED*, 1933

- 12 volumes, plus a 1-volume Supplement
- Over 16,000 pages
- Over 250,000 entries
- Approximately 2,000,000 quotations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publication Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>First edition of <em>Shorter Oxford English Dictionary</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Second edition of <em>SOED</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Third edition of <em>POD</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Third edition of <em>LOD</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Fourth edition of <em>POD</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Third edition of <em>SOED</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Fourth edition of <em>COD</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The revised *Supplement* to the *OED*: four volumes (expanded from one), published 1972–86

Robert Burchfield (1923–2004) with the four Supplement volumes
The second edition of the *OED* (*OED2*): first edition (*OED1*), plus four-volume Supplement, plus 5,000 additional new entries

John Simpson, Co-Editor

Edmund Weiner, Co-Editor
OED: the present
Creating OED3

- 70 in-house lexicographers, researchers, and systems engineers; hundreds of specialist advisers
- Continuing to add new entries to cover new words and meanings
- Complete revision of every existing entry: definitions, quotations, arrangement of senses, pronunciation, etymology
- Online publication: a new batch of revised and new entries is published at www.oed.com every 3 months
Sudoku, n.

A type of logic puzzle, the object of which is to fill a grid of nine squares by nine squares (subdivided into nine regions of three by three squares) with the numbers one to nine, in such a way that every number appears only once in each horizontal line, vertical line, and three-by-three subdivision. Also: any of various similar puzzles based on this, involving grids of different sizes, symbols rather than numbers, etc.

Some numbers (or symbols, etc.) are supplied at the start of the puzzle as a guide; the number and location of these dictates the difficulty of completing the puzzle.

2000 New Pilot Files (2 of 6) in braunschweig.newfiles (Usenet newsgroup) 24 Sept., Sudoku Number Place o.2—Freeware Sudoku Number Place is a number puzzle that is simple yet entertaining.

2004 Times (Nexis) 12 Nov. (Features section) 15 The new numerical brain-teaser highlighted in T2, the game of Su Doku, is not just a sign of the intellectual Times.

2005 Daily Tel. 23 June 26/1 While the rules of this logic puzzle may be simple there are numerous strategies to help you solve sudoku.

2006 Omaha (Nebraska) World-Herald (Nexis) 7 May 1 E He's just driving, the car's visor snapped down against the yellow-orange of the setting sun, his wife working a Sudoku puzzle.
Entry for *rodeo* in the first edition of *OED* (published 1909): earliest quotation is from 1834
Entry for *rodeo* in the second edition of *OED* (published 1989)

**rodeo** (rəˈduːə, ˈroʊdəʊ). orig. U.S. [Sp. *rodeo* a going round, a cattle-ring, etc., f. *rodear* to go round.]

1. A driving together of cattle in order to separate, count, inspect, or mark them; a round-up.

1834 Darwin Jnl. 16 Aug. in Voy. Beagle (1839) III. 311 Once every year there is a grand ‘rodeo’ when all the cattle are driven down, counted, and marked. 1851 Laws

*California* xci, Every owner of a stock farm shall be obliged to give yearly one general rodeo. 1891 B. Harte First Fam. Tasajara vii, Her native-bred animal fondly believed that he was participating in a *rodeo*.

2. A place or enclosure where cattle are brought together for any purpose.

1847 W. C. L. Martin The Ox 24/1 To collect the herd once a week, driving them from all quarters to a *ródeo*, or circuit, where an account is taken of their numbers. 1866 Athenaeum 24 Nov. 672/3 In fine weather they are left on the ‘rodeo’, a bare piece of ground near the house, to which they are driven to pass the night.

3. a. A public exhibition of skill, often in the form of a competition, in the riding of unbroken horses, the roping of calves, wrestling with steers, etc.

1914 B. M. Bower Flying U Ranch 16 They have them *rodeos* on a Sunday, mostly, and they invite everybody to it, like it was a picnic. 1925 Annual Rodeo Program (Tucson, Arizona) 3 We extend a cordial invitation to you to come to Tucson for our Annual Rodeo. 1938 D. Coolidge Arizona Cowboys ii. 27 The round-up had just begun. They call it *ródeo*, in Spanish, but the cactus cowboys pronounced it *rodeo*. The contest riders of today have given it another twist and call it *ró-deo*. 1940 Arizona (Arizona Work Projects Administration Writers’ Project) 72 That distinctively western entertainment, the *rodeo* was originally an exhibition of cowboy skill in the regular activities of cattle ranch and range. But today it is largely commercialized and many of its features are of the circus type, remote from the cowpuncher’s everyday life. 1950 Manch. Guardian Weekly 5 Oct. 6/2 Madison Square Garden is presently dedicated to Gene Autry and the annual *rodeo*. 1976 Columbus (Montana) News 27 May 1/4 One of those injured was a prime mover and instigator of this *rodeo*, Ed Miller, who is currently in St. Vincent’s with a broken leg.

b. transf. A similar exhibition of competitive skill in the riding of motor-cycles, fishing, etc.; also used more generally of other types of competition. Also fig. Cf. *RODEO*.

1927 My Oklahoma July 23/1 Oklahoma is going to have a state-wide baby *rodeo* next year. 1928 Daily Express 7 May 15/3 On Wednesday... a motor-cycle *rodeo* in the afternoon will be followed by a carnival procession through the town. 1940 Sun (Baltimore) 11 Sept. 1/7 Nazi bombers smashed at London with increasing violence early today their fourth consecutive dusk-to-dawn *rodeo* of destruction. 1949 Daily Progress (Charlottesville, Va.) 22 Aug. 9/1 Entries for the fishing *rodeo* for youngsters here must be in by Thursday.

4. attrib. and Comb., as *rodeo* circuit, clown, *cowboy*, ground, *parade*, queen, rider, *riding* (sb. and a.).

1961 M. S. Robertson Rodeo 101/1 The California Rodeo...is one of the Big Four, the *rodeos* whose pioneering and consistent greatness bridged the years from the inception of the ‘cowboy tournaments’ to the modern *rodeo* circuit. 1980 Country Life 13 Nov. 1819/1 He... started bronc riding in the *rodeos*. Demobbed, he returned to the *rodeo*
rodeo n.

1. [2] A place or enclosure where cattle are confined, esp. in a round-up. Now hist. and rare.
   1811

2. [1] Chiefly in the western United States: a driving together of cattle to be counted, registered, branded, etc.; a round-up. Now chiefly hist.
   1819

3. [3] a. [a] Chiefly in the western United States and western Canada: a public exhibition or competition demonstrating traditional cowboy skills, such as riding bulls or unbroken horses, roping calves, and wrestling steers. Found earliest in sources relating to Chile. In early use freq. denoting such an exhibition or competition as part of a round-up; see sense 2.
   1824

   b. fig. and in allusive use: an activity, place, or thing regarded as spirited, boisterous, disorganized, wild, etc.
   1917

   c. [b] orig. and chiefly N. Amer. An exhibition or competition demonstrating any skill; (more generally) any competition or show. not one’s first (time at the) rodeo and variants: one is not inexperienced or naive. Cf. ROADEO n.
   1927

4. [news2009] In snowboarding: a type of aerial manoeuvre combining a flip with a rotation.
   1996
rodeo, n.

Pronunciation: Brit. /ˈrɔʊdiəʊ/, /rəʊ(ʊ)ˈdeɪəʊ/, U.S. /ˈrəʊdɪ.ou/, /ˈrəʊdэi.ou/

Inflections: Plural rodeos, (rare) rodeoes.

Forms: 18 rodeo, 18– rodeo.

Etymology: < Spanish (originally American Spanish) rodeo place or enclosure where cattle are rounded up (1802), cattle round-up (although this sense is first attested later: 1843 or earlier), specific uses of rodeo act of going round (first half of the 13th cent.) < rodear to go round, to cause to go round (first half of the 13th cent.; < classical Latin rotäre (see ROTATE U.) + Spanish -ear, suffix forming verbs, especially frequentative verbs). In quot. 1819 at sense 2 via French †rodeo round-up (1819 in the passage translated; rare before 20th cent.; now rodeo, and usually in sense ‘public exhibition or competition demonstrating traditional cowboy skills’ (1923 in this sense, after English)). The stress of the Spanish word is on the penultimate syllable. In English, pronunciations closely resembling the Spanish pronunciation are frequent in areas of former Spanish settlement in the western United States, especially in California and the southwest. Alongside these, Dict. Amer. Regional Eng. (at cited word) records various naturalized pronunciations which show shift of stress to the first syllable (so especially in Midwestern and eastern states) and/or substitution of /i/ for Spanish /e/ or its naturalized equivalent /eɪ/ in the second syllable.

orig. U.S.

1. A place or enclosure where cattle are confined, esp. in a round-up. Now hist. and rare.

1811 Scots Mag. Nov. 817/1 All the herds, who are feeding at liberty, run and unite in an open place marked out, called the rodeo: they are kept there for some time.

1821 Monthly Mag. 31 Jan. 622/1 They pursue the same method with the horses, which they collect not in the rodeo, but in the farm-yard.

1866 Athenæum 24 Nov. 672/3 In fine weather they are left on the ‘rodeo’, a bare piece of ground near the house, to which they are driven to pass the night.

1893 A. CHAPMAN & W. J. BUCK Wild Spain v.62 The bull finds this man between him and his companions in the rodéo, to whom he would now fain return.

1917 W. H. KOEBEL Brit. Exploits S. Amer. xxiv. 497 When he mustered cattle, it was to a rodeo that he galloped.
Sense 1 of *rodeo* in *OED Online*, showing Historical Thesaurus links

Etymology: < Spanish (originally American Spanish) *rodeo* place or enclosure where cattle are confined, esp. in a round-up. Now *hist.* and rare.

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Thesaurus

- the external world
- the living world
- food and drink
- farming
- animal husbandry
- keeping of cattle
- [noun] enclosing cattle
- enclosure for cattle
  - rack-yard (1765)
  - lobby (1778)
  - wro (1808)
  - rodeo (1811)
  - lair (1865)
  - lairage (1883)
  - ox yard (1885)
Other ways of searching the *OED* database

- Search by date of first use
- Search by language of origin
- Search for words first used by a particular author
- Search by subject, or language register (colloquial, etc.)
- Search by any of these in combination
OED: the future

- Possibilities for linking to *OED* entries directly from words in electronic text as the reader encounters them
- New projects investigating particular varieties of English: e.g. a community-based dictionary database for Philippine English
- Completing *OED3*: likely to take another 20 years or so
Part of the *OED* offices today
Questions?