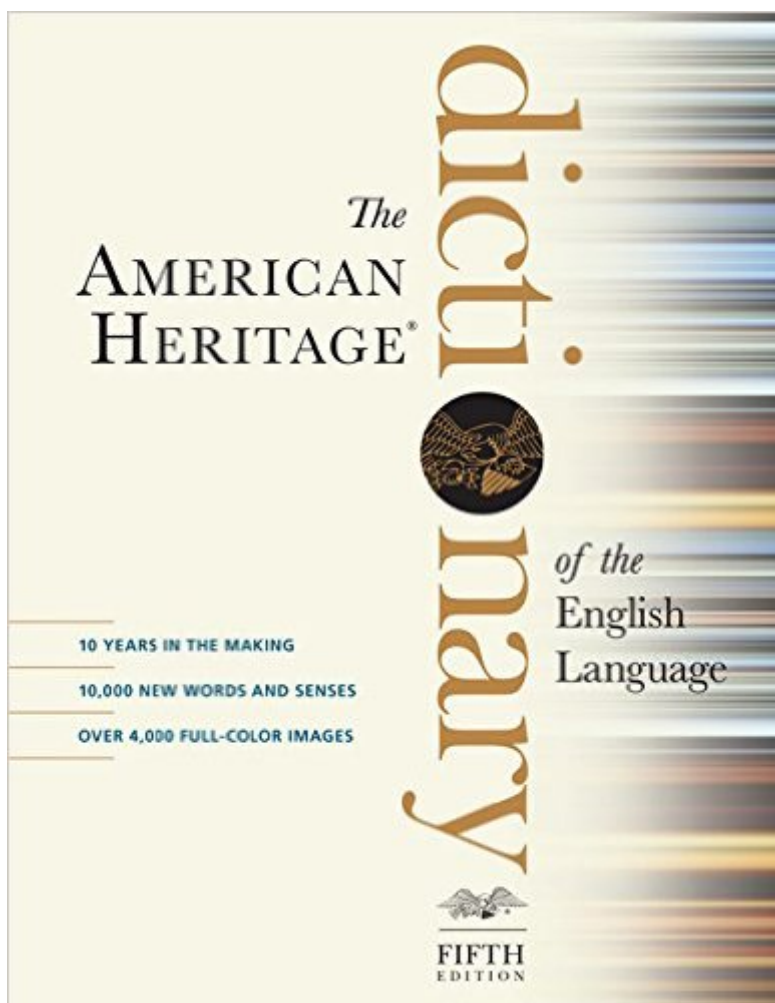


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# American Heritage Dictionary Of The English Language, Fifth Edition



## Synopsis

You are your words. Make the most of them! The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language is the premier resource for anyone who wants to know precisely what words mean, where they come from, and how to use them effectively. It is renowned for presenting accurate and comprehensible definitions, etymologies based on the latest research, and authoritative usage guidance from the celebrated American Heritage® Usage Panel. The fifth edition of the dictionary, published in 2011, included 10,000 new words and senses, as well as 4,000 new full-color images. This comprehensive update continues the tradition of exhaustive research and thorough review. Nearly 1,000 revisions to definitions and etymologies, 100 new words and senses, updated charts and tables, and new usage advice make this version the most current print dictionary of its size available today. The American Heritage® Dictionary combines clear, precise definitions with useful features that make it easier to choose your words and express yourself clearly. Your words really do define you. Make the most of them with the guidance of this respected work of reference.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I tutor elementary students in language arts and am a substitute teacher; the AHD Fifth edition was a replacement for my outdated AHD Third edition. I don't own electronic gadgets and, unlike another reviewer who wasn't happy thumbing through a seven pound tome (my scale registered the book at eight pounds, if that's important), I use my dictionary almost daily. The fifth edition includes color images; the guide words and entry words are printed in a nice blue. I would have liked a dust jacket, but the binding is sturdy and will withstand frequent use with minimal wear and tear (though the light

fabric may suffer from fingerprints). Have to admit I shook my head in bewilderment at some of the new entries, especially "ginormous" and "conversate." Learning/education is a lifelong process, and a dictionary is as essential to a home as plumbing and electricity! Instead of purchasing new software for that gaming device or a ginormous TV for the family room, consider purchasing the American Heritage Dictionary for a holiday family gift instead. It's affordable, will last a lifetime, and may even become a family heirloom!

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language has been my favorite dictionary for many years. I just bought the fifth edition (2084 pages), and still have the first (1550 pages) and fourth (2074 pages). In this review, I'll discuss two items -- the entries themselves, and the side notes for various words. For the entries, I looked at a short section near the word "dictionary." Compared to the fourth edition, the fifth edition dropped "didapper" (a type of grebe) and added "dicyclomine" (a medical drug); this reflects a greater emphasis on technical words. (This continues a trend that has been occurring since the first edition -- dropping "Dictograph" and "Didache" and adding "dictyosome" and "didanosine.") To me, the outstanding feature of the American Heritage Dictionary has been the side notes -- not just synonyms, but also usage notes, word histories, etc. Unfortunately, in this respect, the fifth edition is considerably weaker than the fourth. In the L section through "limbo", the fourth edition has 24 words with side notes (excluding synonyms), but the fifth edition has only 13. That is, about half of the old side notes are gone. The fifth edition no longer has a word history for "lemon", a usage note for "lifestyle", or a regional note for "lightning bug." There is also a small reduction in the number of words with synonyms. These side notes made the American Heritage Dictionary fun for browsing, and the fifth edition is much weaker in this regard than the fourth. It's still an excellent dictionary, but less interesting and enjoyable than the previous edition.

I looked at this dictionary at the library while trying to make a decision between two other dictionaries (Merriam-Webster Collegiate, 11th edition and Webster's New World College). This library did not have New World, but did have MW and the text looked very muddy to me, not inviting. My children and I also looked at some of the other dictionaries available like the Oxford Shorter English and this American Heritage. Both had clean, crisp text but the AH also had the main words in blue, the definitions in clear black and color pictures in the margins. I admit that I was drawn to the color pictures and found the blue printing really made the words stand out and invited perusing for enjoyment. The other dictionaries might have better selections and more extras (and I would most \*definitely\* prefer a CD/download that works on Windows instead of iOS or Android), but this is

the one where I would enjoy the experience.

First and foremost, let me state that my disappointment mostly has to do with the extras that I have come to expect out of this dictionary, not entries and definitions themselves.\* the two-page spread of "Entries with Notes" [pp. vi-vii inÂ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition : Print and CD-ROM EditionÂ listing headwords that had Regional Notes, Our Living Language Notes, Synonym Notes, Usage Notes, and Word History Notes have disappeared without a trace\* "Regional Patterns of American Speech" essay by Lee Pederson [pp. xvi-xxi in the 4th] is nowhere to be found\* While some headwords have notes appended to them that they hadn't in the past, a lot of notes from the 4th edition are simply missing. (such as with ERR)\* some notes haven't been updated even though the situation remains fluid (such as a usage note at FORTE (1) hasn't been updated and still lists Usage Panel survey data from 1996)\* Indo-European and Semitic roots appendixes appear (after perusing the dictionary for a couple of days) to be exactly the same. (For instance, the new entry THOBE isn't referenced in the Semitic Roots appendix at all)\* Font size has changed from slightly smaller (in essays and entries) to a lot smaller (in Indo-European and Semitic Roots appendixes). Problem is that while making the font smaller did shave off over 6 pages (from 35,5 to 29) from Indo-European Roots appendix, it only shaved off half-a-page from Semitic Roots appendix, thus not reducing the page number at all. Why couldn't the font size been left the same in Semitic Roots appendix? I doubt there would have been a significant anti-"Semitic" reaction to that. Also, getting rid of the half-title would have saved one sheet (two pages).As for entries and definitions, I have no complaints at all.If you don't happen to be in the habit of hoarding reference works and your primary interest lies with entries and definitions, then I would recommend buying this product despite my three-star rating.

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