

# INTRODUCTION

We hoped that the structure of the dictionary has been designed to be transparent, simple and clear, and the well-balanced typography facilitates access to the dictionary's vast stock of local items. We did not find it necessary to give any kind of 'guide to the use of the dictionary'. Below we simply highlight the essential features of the dictionary with the aid of examples, and draw attention to those areas where the greatest number of changes has been made.

## Vocabulary

This dictionary – like its predecessor – focuses firmly on contemporary English as spoken and written today. More than 120,000 headwords are provided, along with more than 150,000 illustrative phrases, fixed expressions etc. Since the publisher's policy was to avoid increasing the size of the dictionary, we had to get rid of much *deadwood*, i.e. rare or obsolete and marginal words in order to make room for new words or terms and new meanings of existing words. This replacement process meant that editors and compilers had to exercise the greatest effort and care, so as not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Space thus opened up for a proper representation of the vocabulary of important and topical subject fields such as computing, economics, business, the environment, biology, physics, medicine, education, politics, telecommunications, motor vehicles, sports, tourism, aviation.

What, then, is *modern* and *new* in terms of the standard language most often turns out to be part of some specialist field, such as *tailback* (motor vehicles and transport), *teach-in* (education), *terminal* (aviation and computing), *mobile phone* (telecommunications), *greenhouse effect* (meteorology), *air bag* (motor vehicles) etc.

## Arrangement of headwords

A major structural change has taken place in the dictionary regarding the treatment of compounds. The term *compound* is taken here to mean not only lexical items written as one word or hyphenated (e.g. *birthplace*, *cardphone*, *card-playing*, *space-age*) but also those written as two or more separate words (e.g. *air bag*, *air traffic control*, *caravan site*). All of the above will normally be found as headwords in their alphabetical place in the word list.

Other set word combinations (e.g. *coat of arms*, *open university*, *Queen's evidence*) which function as single units may also appear as headwords, but adjectival or attributive constructions are normally found under the first element of such a unit, e.g. *nuclear engine* under *nuclear*, *absolute majority* under *absolute*, *public relations* under *public*.

Lexicography recognizes no hard and fast rules for the treatment of multi-word units. Even the best-known English dictionaries differ on whether to enter such units as headwords or include them under, for example, the first element.

## Encyclopaedic entries

Proper names such as first or given names (Christian names) (e.g. *George*, *Robert*, *Della*, *Elizabeth* etc.), other personal names (e.g. *Jesus Christ*, *Pilate*) or derivatives (*Elizabethan*, *Galilean*) or names of famous institutions or buildings (e.g. *Big Ben*, *the Met*), ancient or archaeological monuments and ruins (e.g. *Stonehenge*) are all part of the language. Their formal features such as spelling, pronunciation, their derivatives, and their Hungarian translations or equivalents should certainly be shown in the dictionary.

Similarly, geographical names, which in the past have often been appended to dictionaries, are included in the main list. Many such entries required updating: for example, *Czechoslovakia* is now partly the *Czech Republic*, partly *Slovakia*, the *German Democratic Republic* (GDR) merged into the *Federal Republic of Germany*, *Myanmar* is the new name of *Burma*, *Rhodesia* became *Zimbabwe* etc.

Encyclopaedic information, naturally, goes out of date faster than linguistic information. The same is true for abbreviations and acronyms, which are especially prolific elements of language, yet most ephemeral.

At least half of the 2,000 abbreviations included in the former editions have been replaced by new ones. And although there are no set rules for the way abbreviations are written, we have followed the current practice which does not use full stops within abbreviation such as BBC, PhD, EU etc., or with abbreviations when the last letter of the abbreviation is the final letter of the word, e.g. Dr, Mr, Mrs, etc. However, when the abbreviation does not end with the final letter of the word, e.g. Co., Esq., Afr., fig., etc., full stops are used. Acronyms, e.g. NATO, UNO, are treated as words and so there are no full stops after the letters.

## Layout of entries

Raised numbers mark homographs, i.e. words that have the same spelling but are derived from different sources, such as **ball**<sup>1</sup>, **ball**<sup>2</sup>, **saw**<sup>1</sup>, **saw**<sup>2</sup> etc.

Parts of speech (or word classes) are clearly divided by means of bold roman numerals with the particular abbreviation attached, e.g. **down** **I.** *mn* ... **II.** *hsz* ... **III.** *előlj* ... **IV.** *fn* ... **V.** *i* ... (where *mn* stands for adjective, *hsz* for adverb, *előlj* for preposition, *fn* for noun and *i* for verb).

Within a given part-of-speech block, the material is divided into meanings, with bold Arabic numerals used as section marks (**1.**, **2.**, **3.**, etc.). Lower-case letters [**a**), **b**), **c**), etc.] are used to differentiate shades of meaning.

E.g. **mark**<sup>1</sup> **1.** *fn* nyom, felt ... **2.** **a)** jel ... **b)** fontosság ... **3.** **a)** jel(zés), jegy, védjegy ... **b)** kézjegy, kézjel ... **c)** korrektúrajel **d)** ár(folyam)jegyzés **4.** *okt* jegy, osztályzat ... stb.

Within a part-of-speech block marked *i* (i.e. verb), transitive and intransitive verbs are divided by **A.** and **B.**, respectively. E.g. **gain** **II.** **A.** *tsi* ... **B.** *tni* ...

Phrasal verbs, i.e. verbs with particles or prepositions (**get over**, **make up** etc.) will immediately follow the verb section of the main entry, forming a sub-entry (or a cluster of sub-entries). When a phrasal verb has more than one meaning it is further divided by the use of bold Arabic numerals.

For cross-references the dictionary uses the symbol → which means invariably *the same as* or *see also*. American variants in spelling have been given systematically throughout the dictionary by means of cross-references. For example **honor** *US* → **honour**, **favor** *US* → **favour** etc.

## Meanings

This edition takes note of thousands of cases of semantic change, i.e. changes of meaning that have accumulated over the past decades. In many cases, new meanings were added to the existing ones: for instance, the meaning of *aisle* 'part of a church', was extended to mean 'a passage between cabinets and shelves in a supermarket'. *Album* acquired a new meaning 'a long-playing gramophone record'. A *trainer* means a kind of sports shoe, not only persons who train other people. *Disc* (or *disk*) now is used to store music or information. And many computing terms are typical examples of this linguistic extension: *file*, *mouse*, *character*, *chip*, *bus* and the like.

## Labelling

"Labelling" in lexicography means qualifying words by means of 'labels', mostly in the form of abbreviations. The three main categories of labels are regional (or geographical), subject field and style (or register) labels.

Numerous changes have been recorded and discrepancies noted in current dictionaries marking the geographical spread of words. Items labelled "*US*" in some dictionaries, for example, lost their labels in more recent dictionaries for the simple reason that the particular word or phrase is no longer confined to American English. For example "hitch a ride" was generally labelled "*US*" as it was in previous editions of this dictionary. But in newer dictionaries the label "*US*" disappeared, the expression having become the common property of English throughout the world.

Even more changes were made in applying style labels such as *coll/infml* (= colloquial or informal), *slang*, *vulgar*, *derog* (= derogatory). Such labels are used to mark all words and phrases which are not 'neutral' in style level or that are no longer current in the language (*obs* = obsolete or old-fash). English or American dictionaries vary greatly in the use of style (or register) labels causing constant headaches for the non-native lexicographer.

For example, one of the meanings of *card* – 'an amusing or unusual person' – is labelled *tréf* (jocular) in the previous edition of this dictionary, *coll* in Concise Oxford or Collins English Dictionary, *dated infml* in Oxford Advanced Learner's, and *old-fash* in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. We could pinpoint scores of cases of discrepancy between dictionaries.