



The Chambers Dictionary

Chambers (Editor)

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This dictionary offers coverage of English vocabulary, ranging from rare words to the latest slang and technical terms. It contains a wealth of appendices with information from chemical elements to first names, and the plays of Shakespeare to the Greek and Hebrew alphabets. This edition contains definitions of more than 500 new words.

The Chambers Dictionary Details

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Peter says

The Only One for Day to Day Use: I've used Chambers for more than forty years and love it with a passion. I still pick it up and read it from time to time, once a week at least. If you think these two points qualify me to be sectioned, all I can say is you can't have had the use and pleasure out of it that I have. It has answered so many what-does-that-mean questions, and helped with so many crossword queries, and brought up so many obscure words for scrabble..... Try it.

I think Oxford has more or less abandoned the territory to Chambers - I mean, of one-volume, comprehensive, practical, day to day dictionaries. (The Concise seems to me to have gone downmarket, so to speak). But, of course, if what you're after is the definitive etymology, the history of the use of the word, the widest range of meanings over its history, then I think you're bound to go to the Shorter Oxford or the OED itself. But then, that's work

Waldo Varjak says

Every edition of a dictionary tends to lose a few words as it gains many more. Some of the words that are lost have gone out of the language completely while others have been sacrificed to make space for modern words, like twerk. If there were ever a need for a dictionary it would be for these older ones like the New Edition 1983 Chambers 20th Century Dictionary; such dictionaries The Internet has no use for and where the feeling is mutual I am sure. These pre-twerking dictionaries that might describe a word like selfie as a cute way to express an egotistical personality.

Return to that innocent time in history when sexting was a misspelling of a word only a sailor took serious; and when misspellings were not socially acceptable on cell phones at schools across the world. Return to a world when reading or browsing through the dictionary was the literate equivalent of surfing. And when you return, you will discover the etymology and true meanings of words that have morphed from language to language like naughty elven changlings in an interspecies romance.

This is one such romance tale and it is a darn good one. Let its pages thrill you in response to your eager caress, and titillate you with Chambers' renowned definitions that border on the heretical, like the definition for éclair, while still being part of the Scrabble™ high society. Let The Internet keep its definitions of twerking; you can have this naughty little secret exhibit itself on your lap and you can enjoy it even in public; especially in public.

Warwick says

Probably the best single-volume dictionary around. Its mission to include more unusual words makes it a great browse as well.

It loses marks for me for its irritating home pronunciation system; and it's decidedly patchy on archaic or obsolete words and definitions. For a little more money I'd go for the 2-volume Shorter OED, which gives you IPA, much more detailed etymologies, supporting citations, and better coverage of obsolete words. As a single volume, though, this'll probably give you the most bang for your buck.

Lynne King says

I came across a poll today stating underrated books and this book was included. I was dumbfounded when I saw this. How can you possibly exist without a dictionary, in fact several dictionaries.

This for me, as I'm English (UK), has to be the best and most informative. I have other dictionaries, of course, but I happen to prefer this one. My last copy got rather battered and so I replaced it last year. I like to feel my battered copy though and mostly return to that.

Yet again, how can this possibly be an underrated book? Bizarre...

Just_me says

It's huge but has more words than I will ever need and I use it all the time

Suzy Espersen says

This has to be the Bible for anyone working with or in any other way involved with the English language!

Manny says

I'm not hopeless at languages, but one of my friends (let's call him G) totally puts me to shame. He speaks at least five fluently and can get by in several more. He's also got a remarkably good memory. Again, my memory isn't bad, but he leaves me standing.

Here's an anecdote to show how good he is. We were sitting around at a friend's place sometime in the 80s. I'm not sure how we got on to the subject of spelling, but G told us that he didn't need to check spellings. He just knew how words were spelled, that's all there was to it.

So, naturally, we were sceptical, and we thought we'd test his ability. We got out a copy of Chambers and looked around for a word that would be as obscure and hard to spell as possible. After a few minutes, we were sure we'd found the perfect candidate. We then had the following conversation:

- It's pronounced "prett".

- Ah. It must be a loan word?

- Yes.
- Hm. And it must have a silent letter?
- Yes.
- Right. Let me see ... (pause) ... M?
- Uh, yes.
- M-P-R-E-T.

He was right. It means "an Albanian monarch". I'd like to think he cheated somehow - the alternative is just too depressing to consider.

Angela Brooks says

My favourite lexicon. Not a fan of the OED, Chambers is less 'everywhere', quietly erudite, the older dictionary. I've marked it 'read' because there isn't a 'constantly reading'. :)

Martin says

In the event of my being marooned on a desert island and allowed only one book it would have to be a good dictionary... preferably this one.

Petabyte says

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chambers...>]

Tattered Cover Book Store says

Chambers is my new favorite dictionary. If you, too, are the sort of person to have favorite dictionaries, you will quickly see why.

- Chris C.
