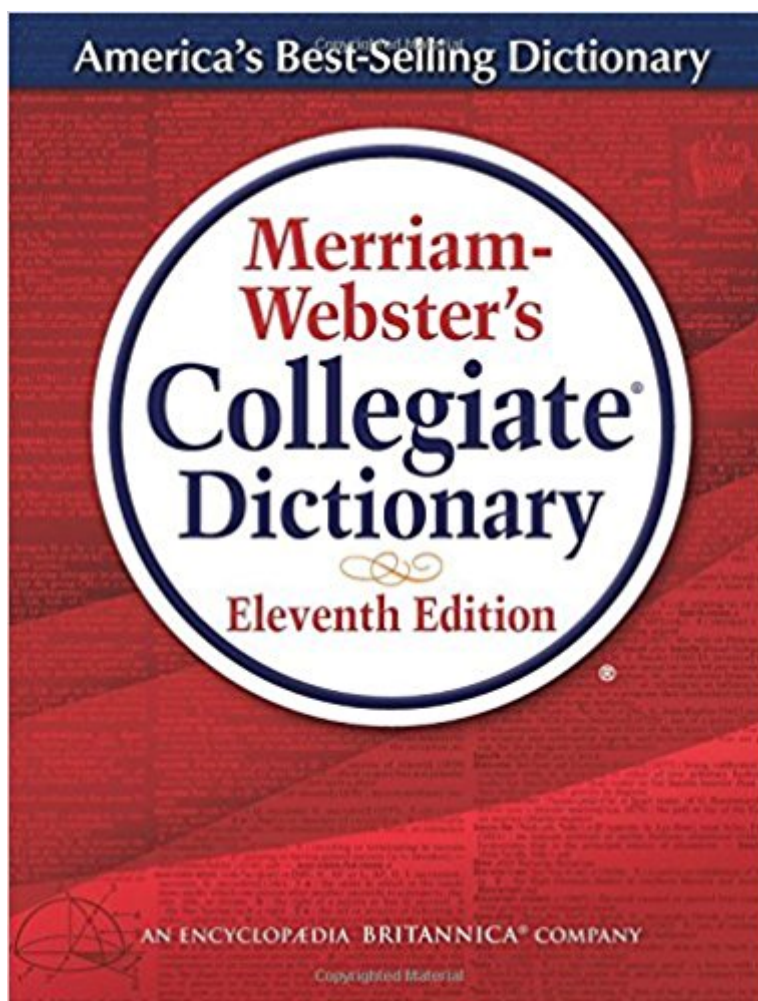


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Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary



Synopsis

Features more than 225,000 definitions and over 42,000 usage examples. Includes newly added words and meanings across a variety of fields, including technology, entertainment, health, science and society. Special sections include: A Handbook of Style, Foreign Words & Phrases, Biographical Names and Geographical Names. Includes an electronic version of the dictionary and a free one-year online subscription.

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The Merriam brothers desired a continuity of editorship that would link Noah Webster's efforts with their own editions, so they selected Chauncey A. Goodrich, Webster's son-in-law and literary heir, who had been trained in lexicography by Webster himself, to be their editor in chief. Webster's son William also served as an editor of that first Merriam-Webster dictionary, which was published on September 24, 1847. Although Webster's work was honored, his big dictionaries had never sold well. The 1828 edition was priced at a whopping \$20; in 13 years its 2,500 copies had not sold out. Similarly, the 1841 edition, only slightly more affordable at \$15, moved slowly. Assuming that a lower price would increase sales, the Merriams introduced the 1847 edition at \$6, and although

Webster's heirs initially questioned this move, extraordinary sales that brought them \$250,000 in royalties over the ensuing 25 years convinced them that the Merriams' decision had been abundantly sound. The first Merriam-Webster dictionary was greeted with wide acclaim. President James K. Polk, General Zachary Taylor (hero of the Mexican War and later president himself), 31 U.S. senators, and other prominent people hailed it unreservedly. In 1850 its acceptance as a resource for students began when Massachusetts ordered a copy for every school and New York placed a similar order for 10,000 copies to be used in schools throughout the state. Eventually school use would spread throughout the country. In becoming America's most trusted authority on the English language, Merriam-Webster dictionaries had taken on a role of public responsibility demanded of few other publishing companies.Â

For my needs, this Collegiate is a much better dictionary than the more simplified others, such as the dictionaries bundled with Kindle. Its definitions are more extensive and nuanced, especially useful when reading older material where the meanings of words (and the words themselves) have changed over time. Many times I have found the more nuanced meanings of better authors in their selection of words. It is simple to make this the default dictionary in Kindle instead of the bundled one. At its heart, it is a standalone full copy of the Collegiate Dictionary, and can also be fully accessed as a separate book within Kindle. This makes browsing enjoyable, not just of its listings (including such pictures as dictionaries have) but also its supplemental materials. When using it as a writer (I know the word, but not its spelling, nor if I completely understand the word I seek to use) and not as a reader, I would have been more pleased if those who had added electronic usability had also made it more intuitive to those of us with poorer ability to spell by more simply allowing the browsing for a word as is done with a paper dictionary. Yes, the pages are there exactly as they are in the paper version, but, for me, the electronics are not as good as the physical movement of the pages or groups of pages. It might be that adding a line which could be dragged at the top to change the pages displayed would further improve this.

This dictionary reminds me of the one my mom had when I was a kid. The lingo and terms seem present with our generation. This dictionary is good to keep in my library for references.

this one is comprehensive and direct with enough etymological and historical perspective to be useful and helpful most of the time. If it fails, on occasion, I go to another dictionary or the venerable OED. UPDATE: 9/30/13 - I recently purchased a Kindle Fire HD7 and tried to set MW as

the default. No can do. Not only that, I downloaded it to my device and it functions only as a book but not as a dictionary. If I try to look up a word, the book gets indexed, and then each and every occurrence of the word I'd like to have defined is listed, but not as a dictionary entry format. So I looked up "fall" and got pages and pages of locations where the word fall is used in the dictionary, whether as an explanatory description, an example, or, yes, a dictionary entry. But the dictionary definition is buried in and among the other uses of the word. Makes me wonder of the thesaurus would act the same? Works great on my Kindle Keyboard where I have set it up as my default and can still use the Oxfords as backup dictionaries.

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