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New Webster's dictionary of  
the English language

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ENCYCLOPEDIA ED. -  
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## Preface

When plans were formulated for the creation of this new dictionary, the publishers decided that its emphasis, unlike that of many other dictionaries of the English language, should be on the future. It was decided to look ahead, and thus we planned this dictionary for the twenty-first century, as well as for the present.

Our work, which is completely new in content, has been designed and styled in the most modern format possible. It is set in an attractive, easy-to-read type, and it is printed on glare-free, long-life paper.

It is the latest contribution in the great tradition of English-language lexicography, a tradition that includes the works of Nathan Bailey (1721, 1730), Samuel Johnson (1755), Noah Webster (1783, 1806, and 1828), Joseph Emerson Worcester (1830), and Charles Richardson (1836-37). Our dictionary carries on it the name *Webster* in recognition of and respect for the American lexicographer, Noah Webster, whose work in the standardization of American usage and pronunciation set the guides for those of us who follow.

Based on the principle that language is essentially speech (a *living*, vibrant, constantly changing medium of expression), and that, as the language changes, so must its guidelines, our dictionary strives to bring to its users the English language in its most modern, and most accurate, form. It makes readily available to the home, to the student at school, and to the office—for reference, for formal learning, and for self-instruction—all but the most technical and the most esoteric words from our ever-expanding storehouse of knowledge, and it has been written in a style that is easily read and understood by people at all levels of intellectual development. The definitions are clear and comprehensive; the scientific and technical vocabulary is extensive, accurate, and the most modern possible; and the selection has been guided by usefulness to the reader. Within these covers are collected all of the words in common use which are essential for the vocabulary of an educated man.

But, because our dictionary is a general dictionary, intended for the general reader and not for such technicians of the English language as philologists, semanticists, and etymologists, it is not “unabridged.” (An “unabridged” dictionary would contain within it all of the vocabulary thus far recorded in the long history of the English language.) Such an “unabridged” dictionary, prepared on the scale of our own general dictionary, would be unwieldy—it would not best serve the needs of the home, of the student, and of the office. Hence the one hundred thirty-five thousand entries here have been selected primarily because of their usefulness to the average dictionary user.

Our permanent editorial staff has labored for more than three years to prepare this essential tool of modern and effective communication, though the basic research for the project had been under way many years earlier. The work has been reviewed and tested by a distinguished panel of experts from a wide variety of disciplines. The panel includes not only scholars, but editors, authors, newspaper columnists, radio and television commentators, and reference librarians; it includes men and women from many walks of life who employ the English language daily in performance of their varied professional duties. These are the people who best understand and appreciate the richness and the variety of English. These are the members of our panel, and they, like us, believe we have done our job well.

In itself, this dictionary is a guide to spelling, to pronunciation, to grammar; in its etymological information it reveals to us past use and derivation, and its definitions of today’s use suggest the future uses of words.

The aids to the dictionary should be used by the reader to make each excursion into this work as fruitful as possible. We urge our readers to study with especial care the *Guide to the Use of This Dictionary* which follows, as well as the *Pronunciation Guide*. Our editorial staff always welcomes any comment you may have on their work.

THE PUBLISHERS

A substance used to impart a gloss; a gloss and smoothness of surface produced by friction; the process or act of polishing; elegance of manners; refinement of style.—**pol-ish off**, *slang*. To finish rapidly; dispose of completely.—**pol-ish up**, *colloq.* to improve.—**pol-ish-er**, *n.*

**Pol-ish**, pō'lish, *a.* Pertaining to Poland, a country in central Europe, its inhabitants, or its language.—*n.* The principal language of Poland, which is Slavic in origin.

**Po-lit-bu-ro**, pol'it-būr'ō, pō-lit'būr'ō, *n.* [Russ. *politbyuro*, political bureau.] The powerful, policy-forming executive body of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, prior to 1953.

**po-lite**, pō-lit', *a.* [L. *politus*, < *polio*, to polish.] Showing by speech and behavior a considerate regard for others; polished, cultured; as, *polite* society; refined, well-bred.—**po-lite-ly**, *adv.*—**po-lite-ness**, *n.*

**pol-i-tic**, pol'i-tik, *a.* [L. *politicus*, Gr. *politikos*, < *polis*, a city.] Prudent and sagacious; cunning; artful; sagacious in adapting means to an end; expedient; political; as, body *politico*.

**po-lit-i-cal**, pō-lit'i-kal, *a.* Having a fixed or regular system or administration of government; relating to civil government and its administration; concerned in state affairs or national measures; pertaining to a nation or state, or to nations or states, as distinguished from *civil* or *municipal*; treating of politics or government; as, *political* parties.—**po-lit-i-cal-ly**, *adv.*

**po-lit-i-cal a-sy-lum**, n. Sanctuary or protection extended by a country to citizens being sought by their native country for trial or punishment for political acts.

**po-lit-i-cal e-con-o-my**, *n.* The social science of the interrelations of economic processes and political and social organizations; a 19th century social science precedent to modern economics; economics.—**po-lit-i-cal e-con-o-mist**, *n.*

**po-lit-i-cal sci-ence**, *n.* That science which deals with the structure, organization, and principles of government.—**po-lit-i-cal sci-en-tist**, *n.*

**pol-i-ti-cian**, pol'i-tish'an, *n.* One versed in the science of government and the art of governing; one skilled in politics; one who occupies himself with politics as a profession; one involved in politics for personal gain, political appointment, or partisan objectives.

**po-lit-i-cize**, pō-lit'i-siz', *v.i.*—*politicized*, *politicizing*. To engage in or discuss politics.—*v.t.* To lend a political character to; to make political in nature.

**pol-i-tick**, pol'i-tik, *v.i.* To enter into or become involved in political activity.—**pol-i-tick-er**, *n.*

**po-lit-i-co**, pō-lit'i-kō', *n.* pl. **po-lit-i-cos**. [*< Sp., It.*] A politician.

**pol-i-tics**, pol'i-tiks, *n. pl., sing. or pl. in constr.* [Fr. *politique*, Gr. *politikē*.] The science of government; political science; the policies and aims of a government of a nation or state; the conduct and contests of political parties; political affairs; political connections or beliefs of a person; the plotting or scheming of those seeking personal power, glory, position, or the like.

**pol-i-ty**, pol'i-tē, *n. pl.* **pol-i-ties**. [Gr. *politēia*.] The form or manner of government of a nation, state, or other institution; administrative control; the state of being organized under a particular form of government, or the community so organized.

**pol-ka**, pōl'ka, pō'ka, *n.* [Cf. Pol. *Polka*, fem. of *Polak*, a Polack or Pole.] A lively round dance of Bohemian origin, with music in duple time; a piece of music for such a dance or in its rhythm.—*v.i.*

to form a pattern on a textile fabric; a pattern of or a fabric with such dots.

**poll**, pōl, *n.* [M.E. *polle* = M.D. and L.G. *polle*.] The head, esp. the part of it on which the hair grows; the nape of the neck; a person or individual in a number or list; an enumeration or a list of individuals, as for purposes of taxing or voting; the registering of votes, as at an election; the voting at an election; the number of votes cast, or the numerical results of the voting; as, a heavy *poll*; *usu. pl.* the place where votes are cast.—*v.t.* To cut off or cut short the hair of; crop; shear; to cut off the top, as of a tree; to pollard; to cut off or cut short the horns of; to enroll in a list or register, as for purposes of taxing; to take or register the votes of; to bring to the polls, as voters; to receive at the polls, as votes; to deposit or cast at the polls, as a vote.—*v.i.* To vote at the polls; give one's vote.—**poll-ee**, pō-lē', *n.*—**poll-er**, *n.*

**poll**, pōl, *n.* [Cf. Gr. *hoi polloi*, 'the many.'] At Cambridge University, England, a student who reads for or obtains a 'pass' degree, that is, a degree without honors.

**pol-lack**, pōl'ak, *n. pl.* **pol-lacks**, **pol-lack**. A food fish, found in the northern Atlantic, *Pollachius virens*, belonging to the cod family, although darker in color. Also **pol-lock**, *pl.* **pol-locks**, **pol-lock**.

**pol-lard**, pōl'erd, *n.* [*< poll*, the head, and affix *-ard*.] A tree with the top cut off to induce a dense new growth of foliage; any usu. horned animal, as a stag or sheep, in a hornless state; a coarse product of wheat, finer than bran.—*v.t.* To convert into a pollard.

**polled**, pōld, *a.* Without horns, as some breeds of cattle; having the horns removed.

**pol-len**, pōl'en, *n.* [L. *pollen* and *pollis*, fine flour or dust.] *Bot.* The male element in flowering plants made up of masses of fine, usu. yellow, powdery grains or microspores and produced in the anther of the stamen.—**pol-lin-ic**, pō-lin'ik, *a.*

**pol-len count**, *n.* The average number of pollen grains of specified plants, usu. ragweed, in a cubic yard of air, taken over a 24 hour period at a stated place, and which is obtained by using an exposure meter located on the roof of a high, unobstructed building.

**pol-lex**, pōl'leks, *n. pl.* **pol-li-ces**, pōl'i-sēz. [L.] The thumb in man; a corresponding digit of other animals.—**pol-li-cal**, *a.*

**pol-li-nate**, pōl'i-nāt', *v.t.*—*pollinated*, *pollinating*. *Bot.* to transfer pollen from the anther of a flower to the stigma of (the same or another flower), by wind, water, insect, or man.—**pol-li-na-tion**, pōl'i-nā-shan, *n.*—**pol-li-na-tor**, *n.*

**pol-li-nif-er-ous**, pōl'i-nif'er-us, *a.* Producing pollen.

**pol-lin-i-um**, pō-lin'ē-um, *n. pl.* **pol-lin-i-a**, pō-lin'ē-a. A coherent body of pollen particles, as found in milkweeds and orchids.

**pol-li-nize**, pōl'i-niz', *v.t.*—*pollinized*, *pollinizing*. *Bot.* to pollinate.—**pol-li-niz-er**, *n.*

**pol-li-no-sis**, pōl'i-nō'sis, *n.* *Pathol.* hay fever.

**pol-li-wog**, pōl'ē-wog', *n.* [Earlier *polliwig*, *polwigge*, M.E. *polwigge*, = E. *poll* and *wiggle*.] A tadpole. Also **pol-ly-wog**.

**poll-ster**, pōl'stēr, *n.* A poll taker.

**poll tax**, *n.* A tax levied on a person, usu. as a prerequisite for voting, and now declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

**pol-lu-tant**, pō-lōt'ant, *n.* Something that pollutes, esp. chemicals or refuse material released into the atmosphere or water.

**pol-lute**, pō-lōt', *v.t.*—*polluted*, *polluting*. [L. *pulluo*, *pollutum*, < prep. *pol*, *por*, used in comp. and *luō*, to wash.] To make foul or unclean; soil; taint; to corrupt or

desecrate, or make ceremonially impure.—**pol-lut-er**, *n.*—**pol-lu-tion**, *n.*

**Pol-lux**, pōl'uks, *n.* *Astron.* a star of the first magnitude in the Gemini constellation; *Gr. mythol.* the twin brother of Castor, son of Leda and Zeus.

**Pol-ly-an-na**, pōl'ē-an'a, *n.* A blindly or overly optimistic person who tends to discover something good in everything; a name originating in Eleanor Porter's novel, *Pollyanna*.

**po-lo**, pō'lō, *n.* [Native Tibetan name in northern India.] A game resembling hockey, played on horseback with long-handled mallets and a wooden ball; any game resembling this, as water polo.—**po-lo-ist**, *n.*

**po-lo coat**, *n.* A tailored overcoat for informal wear often of a camel's hair fabric.

**pol-o-naise**, pōl'o-nāz', pō'lō-nāz', *n.* [Fr.] *Mus.* a slow marchlike dance of Polish origin; music in three-four time, for or in the manner of this dance. An 18th century overdress for women, made with a fitted bodice and a draped cutaway skirt.

**po-lo-ni-um**, pō-lō-nē-um, *n.* *Chem.* a radioactive element discovered in pitchblende by M. and Mme. Curie. Sym. Po, at. no. 84, at. wt. 209. Also *radium F*. See Periodic Table of Elements.

**pol-ter-geist**, pōl'tēr-gist', *n.* [G.] A ghost or spirit which is said to manifest its presence by noises, knockings, and other disturbances.

**pol-troon**, pōl-trōn', *n.* [Fr. and Sp. *poltron*, < It. *poltrone*, < *poltro*, lazy, dastardly, < O.H.G. *polstar*, a pillow.] An arrant coward; a dastard; a wretch without spirit or courage.—*a.* Base; vile; contemptible.—**pol-troon-er-y**, pōl-trō'ne-rē, *n.* Cowardice.

**po-ly**, pōl'ē, *n. pl.* **poly-ys**. A leukocyte having a varied-lobed nucleus.

**pol-y-am-ide**, pōl'ē-am'id, pōl'ē-am'id, *n.* A polymeric compound in which the amide group links the monomer units together; sometimes used to make synthetic fibers, as nylon; synthetic analog to peptide or protein fibers.

**pol-y-an-drous**, pōl'ē-an'drus, *a.* [Gr. *polys*, many, *anēr*, *andros*, a male.] *Bot.* having many stamens, that is, any number above twenty, inserted in the receptacle. Pertaining to or practicing polyandry.

**pol-y-an-dry**, pōl'ē-an'drē, pōl'ē-an'drē, *n.* [Gr. *polys*, many, *anēr*, *andros*, a man.] The practice of having more than one husband at the same time; *bot. state* of being polyandrous.—**pol-y-an-dric**, *a.*

**pol-y-an-thus**, pōl'ē-an'thus, *n. pl.* **pol-y-an-thus-es**. [Gr. *polys*, many, *anthos*, a flower.] *Bot.* A garden variety of the primrose, *Primula polyantha*; a commonly cultivated narcissus, *Narcissus tazetta*, with many flowers in a cluster.

**pol-y-ba-sic**, pōl'ē-bā'sik, *a.* *Chem.* relating to acids with more than one replaceable hydrogen atom.—**pol-y-ba-sic-i-ty**, pōl'ē-bā-sis'i-tē, *n.*

**pol-y-ba-site**, pōl'ē-bā'sit, pō-līb'a-sit', *n.* [G. *polybasit*.] A blackish mineral with a metallic luster, Ag<sub>3</sub>SbS<sub>6</sub>, a valuable silver ore.

**pol-y-car-pel-lar-y**, pōl'ē-kār'pe-ler'ē, *a.* *Bot.* consisting of many carpels.

**pol-y-car-pic**, pōl'ē-kār'pik, *a.* *Bot.* Pertaining to a plant which produces a fruit with two or more distinct carpels; pertaining to a plant which fruits more than once in a season. Also **pol-y-car-pous**.—**pol-y-car-py**, *n.*

**pol-y-chaete**, pōl'i-kēt', *n.* [N.L. *Polychaeta*, *pl.*, < Gr. *polychaitēs*, having much hair.] *Zool.* any of the *Polychaeta*, a class of annelids having unsegmented rudimentary