
COLLINS

ENGLISH

DICTIONARY

Edited by Paul Baker
Designed by James Rossiter
Printed by House Books Ltd, Aylesbury, Bucks

Published by Collins in association with HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, London, UK

Copyright © 2003
All rights reserved
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Collins English Dictionary Online
Available on CD-ROM and online at www.collinsdictionary.com

Collins English Dictionary Online
Available on CD-ROM and online at www.collinsdictionary.com



HarperCollins Publishers

HarperCollins Publishers
PO Box, Glasgow G4 0NB

First Edition 1979
Second Edition 1986
Third Edition 1991
Third Edition Updated 1994
Fourth Edition 1998
Reprinted 1998 (twice)

© HarperCollins Publishers 1979, 1986, 1991, 1994, 1998

9 8 7 6 5 4 3

Standard Edition	ISBN 0 00 470453-3
Thumb-indexed Edition	ISBN 0 00 472168-3
Australian Standard Edition	ISBN 0 00 472219-1
Australian Thumb-indexed Edition	ISBN 0 00 472218-3

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

This edition prepared in conjunction with Market House Books Ltd, Aylesbury, England

Typographical design by Kerry Aylin
Wrapper design by Lynsey Roxburgh

Typeset by Market House Books Ltd, Aylesbury, England

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Caledonian International Book Manufacturing Ltd,
Glasgow

Collins English dictionary.

4th Australian ed.
ISBN 0 00 472218 3 (thumbed index).
ISBN 0 00 472219 1.

1. English language – Dictionaries. 2. English language –
Australia – Dictionaries. I. Wilkes, G. A. (Gerald Alfred),
1927–. II. Krebs, W. A. (William Alwyn). III. Ramson,
W. S. (William Stanley), 1933–.

423

Corpus Acknowledgments

We would like to thank those authors and publishers who kindly gave permission for copyright material to be used in the Bank of English. We would also like to thank Times Newspapers Ltd for providing valuable data.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher. This book is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Entered words that we have reason to believe constitute trademarks have been designated as such. However, neither the presence nor absence of such designation should be regarded as affecting the legal status of any trademark.

infinitive) with or by which: *the pen wherewith I am wont to write.* 2 something with which: *I have not wherewith to buy my bread.* ♦ *adv* 3 with what? ♦ *sentence connector* 4 with or after that; whereupon.

wherewithal *n* ('weəwɪð,ɔ:l). 1 the wherewithal, necessary funds, resources, or equipment (for something or to do something): *these people lack the wherewithal for a decent existence.* ♦ *pron* ('weəwɪð,ɔ:l). 2 a less common word for **wherewith** (senses 1, 2).

wherret ('weɪət) *Dialect.* ♦ *vb* 1 (*tr*) to strike (someone) a blow. ♦ *n* 2 a blow, esp. a slap on the face; stroke. [probably of imitative origin]

wherret ('weɪt) *vb* 1 to worry or cause to worry. 2 (*intr*) to complain or moan. [perhaps from *thwert*, obsolete variant of *thwart*; compare *worrrit*]

wherry ('weɪ) *n, pl -ries.* 1 any of certain kinds of half-decked commercial boats, such as barges, used in Britain. 2 a light rowing boat used in inland waters and harbours. [C15: origin unknown] ▶ 'wherryman *n*

whet (wet) *vb* whets, whetting, whetted. (*tr*) 1 to sharpen, as by grinding or friction. 2 to increase or enhance (the appetite, desire, etc.); stimulate. ♦ *n* 3 the act of whetting. 4 a person or thing that whets. [Old English *hwettan*; related to *hwæt* sharp, Old High German *hwezzen*, Old Norse *hvetja*, Gothic *hvatjan*] ▶ 'whetter *n*

whether ('weðə) *conj* 1 (*subordinating*) used to introduce an indirect question or a clause after *so* expressing or implying doubt or choice in order to indicate two or more alternatives, the second or last of which is introduced by *or* or *whether*: *he doesn't know whether she's in Britain or whether she's gone to France.* 2 (*subordinating*; often foll. by *or not*) used to introduce any indirect question: *he was not certain whether his friend was there or not.* 3 (*coordinating*) another word for **either** (sense 3): *any man, whether liberal or conservative, would agree with me.* 4 (*coordinating*) Archaic. used to introduce a direct question consisting of two alternatives, the second of which is introduced by *or* or *whether*: *whether does he live at home or abroad.* 5 **whether or no.** 5a used as a conjunction as a variant of **whether** (sense 1). 5b under any circumstances: *he will be here tomorrow, whether or no.* 6 **whether...or (whether).** if on the one hand...or even if on the other hand: *you'll eat that, whether you like it or not.* ♦ *determiner, pron* 7 Obsolete. which (of two): used in direct or indirect questions. [Old English *hwæther*, *hwether*; related to Old Frisian *hweder*, *hoder*, Old High German *hwedar*, Old Norse *hvatharr*, *hvarr*, Gothic *hwathar*]

whetstone ('wet,steɪn) *n* 1 a stone used for sharpening edged tools, knives, etc. 2 something that sharpens.

whew (hwju:) *interj* an exclamation or sharply exhaled breath expressing relief, surprise, delight, etc.

whew (weɪ) *n* the watery liquid that separates from the curd when the milk is clotted, as in making cheese. [Old English *hwæg*; related to Middle Low German *wei*, *heie*, Dutch *hul*] ▶ 'weyey, 'weyish, or 'weylike *adj*

whieface ('weɪ,feɪs) *n* 1 a pale bloodless face. 2 a person with such a face. ▶ 'wey, faced *adj*

whf *abbrev. for wharf.*

which (wɪt) *determiner* 1a used with a noun in requesting that its referent be further specified, identified, or distinguished from the other members of a class: *which house did you want to buy?* 1b (as *pronoun*): *which did you find?* 1c (used in indirect questions): *I wondered which apples were cheaper.* 2a whatever of a class; whichever: *bring which car you want.* 2b (as *pronoun*): *choose which of the cars suits you.* ♦ *pron* 3 used in relative clauses with inanimate antecedents: *the house, which is old, is in poor repair.* 4 as; and that; used in relative clauses with verb phrases or sentences as their antecedents: *he died of cancer, which is what I predicted.* 5 the **which.** Archaic. a longer form of **which**, often used as a sentence connector. [Old English *hwelc*, *hwilc*; related to Old High German *hwelth* (German *welch*), Old Norse *hveltr*, Gothic *hwileiks*, Latin *quis, quid*]

USAGE See at that.

whichever (wɪtʃ'evə) *determiner* 1a any (one, two, etc., out of several): *take whichever car you like.* 1b (as *pronoun*): *choose whichever appeals to you.* 2a no matter which (one or ones): *whichever card you pick you'll still be making a mistake.* 2b (as *pronoun*): *it won't make any difference, whichever comes first.*

whichsoever (wɪtʃ'səʊ'evə) *pron* an archaic or formal word for **whichever**.

whicker ('wɪkə) *vb* (*intr*) (of a horse) to whinny or neigh; nick. [C17: of imitative origin]

whidah ('wɪdə) *n* a variant spelling of **whydah**.

whiff (wɪf) *n* 1 a passing odour. 2 a brief gentle gust of air. 3 a single inhalation or exhalation from the mouth or nose. ♦ *vb* 4 to come, convey, or go in whiffs; puff or waft. 5 to take in or breathe out (tobacco smoke, air, etc.). 6 (*tr*) to sniff or smell. 7 (*intr*) *Brit. slang.* to have an unpleasant smell; stink. [C16: of imitative origin] ▶ 'whiffer *n*

whiff (wɪf) *n* Chiefly *Brit.* a narrow clinker-built skiff having outriggers, for one oarsman. [C19: special use of **WHIFF**]

whiffe ('wɪf) *vb* 1 (*intr*) to think or behave in an erratic or unpredictable way. 2 to blow or be blown fitfully or in gusts. 3 (*intr*) to whistle softly. [C16: frequentative of **WHIFF**]

whiffer ('wɪfə) *n* a person who whiffles.

whiffer ('wɪfə) *n* Archaic. an attendant who cleared the way for a procession. [C16: from *wife* battle-axe, from Old English *wifel*, of Germanic origin; the attendants originally carried weapons to clear the way]

whiffletree ('wɪf,lɪ:tɹi) *n* another name (esp. U.S.) for **swingletree**. [C19: variant of **WHIPPLETREE**]

whiffy ('wɪfɪ) *adj -fier, -fiest.* *Slang.* smelly.

Whig (wɪg) *n* 1 a member of the English political party or grouping that opposed the succession to the throne of James, Duke of York (1679–80), on the grounds that he was a Catholic. Standing for a limited monarchy, the Whigs represented the great aristocracy and the moneyed middle class for the next 80 years. In the

late 18th and early 19th centuries the Whigs represented the desires of industrialists and Dissenters for political and social reform. The Whigs provided the core of the Liberal Party. 2 (in the U.S.) a supporter of the War of American Independence. Compare **Tory**. 3 a member of the American political party that opposed the Democrats from about 1834 to 1855 and represented propertied and professional interests. 4 a conservative member of the Liberal Party in Great Britain. 5 a person who advocates and believes in an unrestricted laissez-faire economy. 6 *History.* a 17th-century Scottish Presbyterian, esp. one in rebellion against the Crown. ♦ *adj* 7 of, characteristic of, or relating to Whigs. [C17: probably shortened from *whiggamore*, one of a group of 17th-century Scottish rebels who joined in an attack on Edinburgh known as the *whiggamore raid*; probably from Scottish *whig* to drive (of obscure origin) + *more*, *mer*, *maire* horse, *MARE*] ▶ 'Whiggery or 'Whiggism *n* ▶ 'Whiggish *adj* ▶ 'Whiggishly *adv* ▶ 'Whiggishness *n*

whigmaleerie ('hwɪgmə'liəri) *n* *Scot.* 1 a trinket, whimsical ornament, or trifle. 2 a whim or caprice. [C18: of unknown origin]

while (waɪl) *conj* also **whilst** (waɪlst). 1 (*subordinating*) at the same time that: *please light the fire while I'm cooking.* 2 (*subordinating*) all the time that: *I stay inside while it's raining.* 3 (*subordinating*) in spite of the fact that: *while I agree about his brilliance I still think he's rude.* 4 (*coordinating*) whereas; and in contrast: *flats are expensive, while houses are cheap.* 5 (*subordinating*; used with a *gerund*) during the activity of: *while walking I often whistle.* ♦ *prep, conj* 6 *Scot. and northern English dialect.* another word for **until**: *you'll have to wait while Monday for these sheets; you'll never make any progress while you listen to me.* ♦ *n* 7 (usually used in adverbial phrases) a period or interval of time: *once in a long while.* 8 trouble or time (esp. in the phrase **worth one's while**): *it's hardly worth your while to begin work today.* 9 **the while.** at that time: *he was working the while.* ♦ See also **whiles**. [Old English *hwil*; related to Old High German *hwila* (German *Weile*), Gothic *hveila*, Latin *quies* peace, *tranquillus* TRANQUIL]

USAGE It was formerly considered incorrect to use *while* to mean in spite of the fact that or whereas, but these uses have now become acceptable.

while away *vb* (*tr, adv*) to pass (time) idly and usually pleasantly.

whiles (waɪlz; *Scot.* hwɔɪlz) *Archaic or dialect.* ♦ *adv* 1 at times; occasionally. ♦ *conj* 2 while; whilst.

whilk (hwɪlk) *pron* an archaic and dialect word for **which**.

whilom ('waɪləm) *Archaic.* ♦ *adv* 1 formerly; once. ♦ *adj* 2 (*prepositional*) one-time; former. [Old English *hwilum*, dative plural of *hwil* WHILE; related to Old High German *hwilom*, German *weiland* of old]

whilst (waɪlst) *conj* Chiefly *Brit.* another word for **while** (senses 1–5). [C13: from **WHILES** + *t* as in *amidst*]

whim (wɪm) *n* 1 a sudden, passing, and often fanciful idea; impulsive or irrational thought. 2 a horse-drawn winch formerly used in mining to lift ore or water. [C17: from **WHIM-WHAM**]

whimbrel ('wɪmbɹəl) *n* a small European curlew, *Numenius phaeopus*, with a striped head. [C16: from dialect *whimp* or from **WHIMPER**, alluding to its cry]

whimper ('wɪmpə) *vb* 1 (*intr*) to cry, sob, or whine softly or intermittently. 2 to complain or say (something) in a whining plaintive way. ♦ *n* 3 a soft plaintive whine. [C16: from dialect *whimp*, of imitative origin] ▶ 'whimperer *n* ▶ 'whimpering *n* ▶ 'whimperingly *adv*

whimsical ('wɪmzɪkəl) *adj* 1 spontaneously fanciful or playful. 2 given to whims; capricious. 3 quaint, unusual, or fantastic. ▶ **whimsicality** ('wɪmzɪkəlɪtɪ) *n* ▶ 'whimsically *adv* ▶ 'whimsicalness *n*

whimsy or **whimsey** ('wɪmzɪ) *n, pl -sies or -seys.* 1 a capricious idea or notion. 2 light or fanciful humour. 3 something quaint or unusual. ♦ *adj -sies, -siest.* 4 quaint, comical, or unusual, often in a tasteless way. [C17: from **WHIM**; compare **FLIMSY**]

whim-wham *n* *Archaic.* something fanciful; a trifle. [C16: of unknown origin; compare **FIMFLAM**]

whin¹ (wɪn) *n* another name for **gorse**. [C11: from Scandinavian; compare Old Danish *hvine* (grass), Norwegian *hvine*, Swedish *hven*]

whin² (wɪn) *n* short for **whinstone**. [C14 *quin*, of obscure origin]

whinchat ('wɪn,tʃæt) *n* an Old World songbird, *Saxicola rubetra*, having a mottled brown-and-white plumage with pale cream underparts: subfamily *Turdinae* (thrushes). [C17: from **WHIN**¹ + **CHAT**]

whine (waɪn) *n* 1 a long high-pitched plaintive cry or moan. 2 a continuous high-pitched sound. 3 a peevish complaint, esp. one repeated. ♦ *vb* 4 to make a whine or utter in a whine. [Old English *hwīnan*; related to Old Norse *hvīna*, Swedish *hvijsa* to scream] ▶ 'whiner *n* ▶ 'whining *adj* ▶ 'whiningly *adv* ▶ 'whiny *adj*

whinge (wɪndʒ) *Informal.* ♦ *vb* whinges, whingeing, whinged. (*intr*) 1 to cry in a fretful way. 2 to complain. ♦ *n* 3 a complaint. [from a Northern variant of Old English *hwīnstian* to whine; related to Old High German *wīnsan*, *wīnsan*, whence Middle High German *wīnsen*] ▶ 'whingeing *n, adj* ▶ 'whinger *n*

whinny ('wɪnnɪ) *vb -nies, -nying, -nied.* (*intr*) 1 (of a horse) to neigh softly or gently. 2 to make a sound resembling a neigh, such as a laugh. ♦ *n, pl -nies.* 3 a gentle or low-pitched neigh. [C16: of imitative origin]

whinstone ('wɪn,steɪn) *n* any dark hard fine-grained rock, such as basalt. [C16: from **WHIN**¹ + **STONE**]

whip (wɪp) *vb* whips, whipping, whipped. 1 to strike (a person or thing) with several strokes of a strap, rod, etc. 2 (*tr*) to punish by striking in this manner. 3 (*tr*; foll. by *out, away*, etc.) to pull, remove, etc., with sudden rapid motion: *to whip out a gun.* 4 (*intr*; foll. by *down, into, out of*, etc.) *Informal.* to come, go, etc., in a rapid sudden manner: *they whipped into the bar for a drink.* 5 to strike or be struck as if by whipping: *the tempest whipped the surface of the sea.* 6 (*tr*) to criticize virulently. 7 (*tr*) to bring, train, etc., forcefully into a desired condition (esp. in the phrases **whip into line** and **whip into shape**). 8 (*tr*) *Ir-*