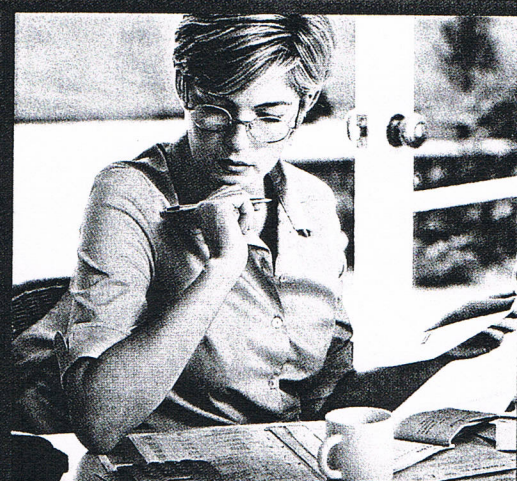


With index to
volume 10

October 2001

MODERN ENGLISH TEACHER

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Including...

Teacher education in the third millennium • Rosemary Wilson

Activities for first lessons • Steve Coffey

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BRINGING TEACHERS TOGETHER

MODERN ENGLISH TEACHER

EDITORIAL

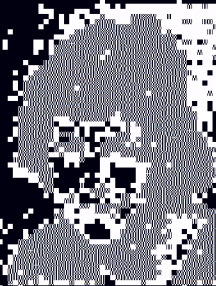
If you've already noticed the section Happy Birthday MET, I expect you're thinking 'MET – forty years old?'. And in a way you're right – which is why I was surprised when one of our regular contributors, Bob Jordan, got in touch recently and offered to write an article on the history of MET for its 40th birthday. But in that the magazine *Modern English*,

(a Council of Europe initiative), it seemed important to remind ourselves of the Council's work since the 1970s; Andy interviewed John Trim, who has been closely involved with the Council since that time.

But I don't want you to think we're only looking backwards in this issue of MET. Rosemary Wilson, in her Keynote article *To infinity and beyond*, takes us

back to the beginning. This year MET has been celebrating its fortieth birthday. In the early 1970s, it was a small, obscure publication, but it grew rapidly and became a major journal in the field of English language teaching. The magazine's content is broad and includes articles on grammar, lexis, phonology, and pronunciation. It also features book reviews and news items. The magazine is published quarterly and is available to teachers and researchers in the field of English language teaching. The magazine is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the field of English language teaching.

well into the future. This issue of MET is dedicated to the future of English language teaching. The articles in this issue explore the challenges and opportunities facing the field of English language teaching in the twenty-first century. The authors discuss the impact of technology, globalization, and the changing needs of learners. They also offer suggestions for how to address these challenges and opportunities. This issue is a must-read for anyone interested in the future of English language teaching.



Editorial Board
Editor: ...
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Editorial Board: ...
Editorial Board: ...
Editorial Board: ...
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Editorial Board: ...
Editorial Board: ...

CONTENTS

► **Keynote**

- 5 **To infinity and beyond**
Teacher education in the third millennium
Rosemary Wilson




► **About Language**

- 13 **The Future Continuous**
Some thoughts on time and circumstance
Jill Cosb
- 15 **The origins and development of English dictionaries 2**
The 19th century and modern times
Bob Jordan
- 20 **Good grief**
A selection of oxymorons
David Maule
- 21 **More word games**
Tom Swifities and beyond
Martin Eayrs
- 25 **Grammar fallacies of our age**
3 'The Present Perfect Continuous for events which continue into the present'
Martin Parrott

- 28 **McDonaldization or UnCola**
Food and drink and current usage
Peter Viney

- 29 **Explosive idioms**
David Maule


► **Classroom Ideas**

- 31 **Activities for first lessons** 
A new language; a new coursebook
Steve Coffey
- 35 **A beginners' lesson** 
How to make the coursebook more interesting
Lindsay Miller
- 40 **Using the raw materials** 
A Dogme approach to teaching language
Scott Thornbury & Luke Meddings

► **Current Issues**

- 44 **The Council of Europe**
What is it? And what does it do for us?
Andy Hopkins interviews John Trim


► **Culture Matters**

- 49 **Culture for the masses** 
Intercultural training
Derek Utley

► **Happy Birthday MET**

- 54 **The 40th anniversary of the real beginnings of MET**
Its concept, birth and development
Bob Jordan

► **Bits and PCs**

- 62 **Is your use of email user-friendly?**
Martin Eayrs
- 64 **Net-work** 
Tips for teaching with Web-based materials
Anne Stokes

► **People and Places**

- 67 **Ackroyd uncovers**
The writer behind the writers
Susan Fearn

► **Reviews**

- Survey review ▼
- 71 **Dictionary updates**
Bryan Robinson
A book I've used ▼
- 76 **A Special Interest in Computers**
Glenda Inverarity
Background books ▼
- 77 **The Language Teacher's Voice**
Wayne Trotman
- 78 **Teachers in Action**
Rosemary Wilson
- 79 **Teaching English Worldwide**
Roger Hunt
- 80 **Alive to Language**
Karl Bernhardt
- 82 **Innovation and Best Practice**
Friedrich Klein
- 84 **What's new?**
- 86 **Index to MET Volume 10**
- 88 **Directory**
- 95 **Writing for MET**
- 96 **Subscription form**



 indicates an article with classroom ideas

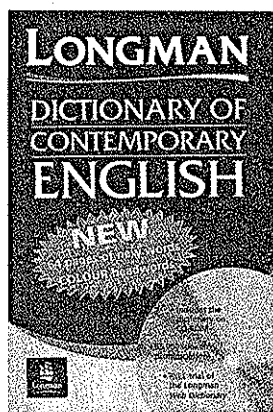
Survey review

Dictionary updates

A lot of new editions of dictionaries have appeared on the market recently. New editions aim to bring the entries up-to-date and provide users with new features. Most of the dictionaries under review here also have in common the fact that they are based on a language corpus of some sort, so the publishers are able to claim that they are 'more authentic' than their earlier editions. This exploitation of corpora is certainly to be welcomed, but in reality has it genuinely improved the quality of the dictionaries? Here are some first impressions.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (new edition)

Pearson Education 2000



On my bookshelves, I have a copy of the 1978 *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDoCE) paperback edition, which is probably the dictionary I have used most regularly over the years. When I first bought it, I did so because it was

easy to handle, both physically in terms of size and weight, and visually, in terms of the manner and style of presentation. Learners always ask which dictionary you recommend, and I find it hard to promote one in preference to another. While the contents and criteria on which dictionaries are constructed can and should be analysed objectively, when it comes down to actually *using* dictionaries it is very much a subjective matter. I often take learners to the library, and set up activities for them to use a range of dictionaries, so they become aware of their advantages and disadvantages: what may seem comfortable to me may be the height of inconvenience for you.

The new LDoCE has been constructed from two corpora, one of written and the other of spoken English, and it covers both American and British varieties. Words are defined in terms of their major meanings, and these are presented in order of the frequency with which they appear in the corpora. The spoken English input has been taken from authentic recordings of natural language use, rather than from TV or radio sources, and the information on frequency is actually included in the text for some items. In addition, words are presented with their typical collocations, which means that learners should be able to make more natural sentences. For example, in the entry for *road* I found that the phrase *on the road to success/recovery/peace* etc., is followed by the clear and simple definition:

Developing in a way that will result in success, etc.

and the example, which is taken from the corpus:

'It was this deal that set him on the road to his first million.'

Using the LDoCE with a passage from the opening page of Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby*,

Several girlish white cruisers bobbed in the harbour but a mile or so down current was a deserted pier.

I found it an excellent aid for upper intermediate learners, giving these simple and clear definitions:

cruis-er /'kru:zə]/-ər/n [C] 1 a large fast warship: a battle cruiser 2 a boat used for pleasure 3 AmE a police car

bob v

1 ► MOVE IN WATER ◀ [I] to move up and down when floating on the surface of water: bob up and down The boat was bobbing up and down on the waves.

As an exam writer, I often use a dictionary to help me when preparing vocabulary/definition tasks of the 'find a word or phrase that means the same as...' type. For a text that I used with advanced learners, I had items like 'downtrodden' and 'to sweat it out', among others. Here are the definitions given:

down-trod-den /'daʊn,troʊdn]/,-tra-/ adj downtrodden people, workers etc are treated badly and without respect by people who have power over them

sweat sth ↔ out phr v [T] 1 sweat it out a) to continue doing something until it is finished, even though it is difficult: You can't leave the course now. Just sweat it out until the summer. b) to do hard physical exercise: They were sweating it out in the gym. 2 to get rid of an illness by making yourself sweat a lot

Once again, these are more than adequate, and show how clear the defining vocabulary actually is.

The new LDoCE comes with a CD-ROM containing the entire contents of the dictionary. I installed this and found that it links up with my word processor, which seems a sensible feature. I find that I am ill at ease about using the CD-ROM dictionary, despite my reliance on the spell-checker and grammatical revision

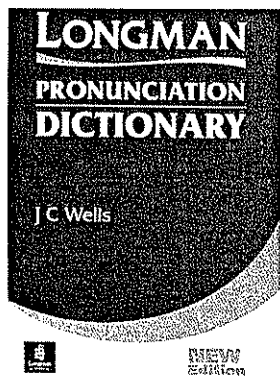
that the word processor offers, but I assume that I will grow to like it with time. Certainly, the word lists, and word family windows that it produces, will be of advantage to learners, and the pronunciation feature, which means that you can actually hear how to say new words, will be a great boon to them.

By comparison with my earlier edition though, the page layout of the new *LDoCE* seems more cramped because of the smaller top and bottom page margins that they are using. Moreover, the weight of the paper is quite a bit less than that of the 1978 edition, which explains how, with almost 300 more pages, the new edition can take up just about the same amount of space. The type face used in the definitions is extremely small, and the interlinear spacing makes reading a little uncomfortable. Headwords are presented in a heavy bold print, which contrasts strongly with the fine type style of the defining text. I suspect that prolonged use would be hard on the eyes, but then dictionaries are reference materials, not extensive reading, so that may be too fine a quibble.

Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (new edition)

J C Wells

Pearson Education 2000



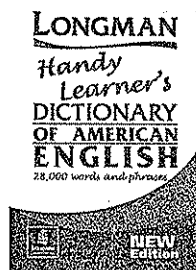
The *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* is based on an analysis of the spoken English corpus. The entries are presented in alphabetical order of their written forms, but alternatives of

both spelling and pronunciation are given. This makes it an extremely thorough resource. The scope of the entries is highly comprehensive, even including names of commercial products and trademarks. Just by opening the dictionary at random I encountered entries like *Cordoba*, *cordon*, *cordon bleu*, *cordon sanitaire*, *Corel*, and *Corfu* in the same column.

For each entry, the first pronunciation given, printed in blue, is the modernised form of British pronunciation, or Received Pronunciation (RP). This is followed by acceptable variants, such as Northern English forms, which are printed in black type. Unless there is a difference between the British English and American English, no other transcription is offered, but when differences do occur, these are shown second, separated by a ** symbol and also printed in blue type. American variants may be given of the entire word, or only of the part or parts of the word that differ. Pronunciations to be avoided are highlighted by a special warning sign. In the case of words that are non-English, the pronunciations in the language of origin are also given.

Longman Handy Learner's Dictionary of American English (new edition)

Pearson Education 2000

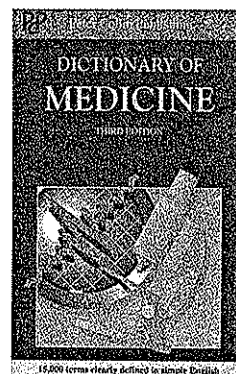


I have a particular dislike of pocket-size dictionaries because I feel they cannot really offer anything useful: in a few pages they tend to cram as many entries as possible, so the quality of definitions is greatly reduced.

Consequently, my first impression of the *Longman Handy Learner's Dictionary of American English* was bound to be prejudiced. However, it does include a number of entries that I did not expect to find in such a small publication: 'cocoon = *vt* protect from hardship'; 'pits = *infmtl* the worst possible example of something'; 'screwball = *n* SCREWY person'; which leads us to 'screwy = *adj infml* strange or slightly crazy'. I shall certainly use it when in doubt about American spelling, if nothing else. The entries are clearly labelled, and the use of a limited set of symbols to denote things like 'derogatory', 'euphemistic', 'slang' or 'taboo' forms, makes it more informative than you might expect. My American students, who find much British vocabulary quaint or obscure, were quite impressed by it, too.

Dictionary of Medicine (new edition)

Peter Collin Publishing 2000



The only dictionary in this review that does not appear to be based on a corpus is the Peter Collin Publishing *Dictionary of Medicine*. The introduction presents a number of specialists as the experts who have provided some of the information, but there is no obvious reference to any other source. This aside, I checked out the text against a number of terms that appeared in a research article I often use with students in their final year. The original text is in Spanish, and describes a study carried out in a university hospital. All of the essential

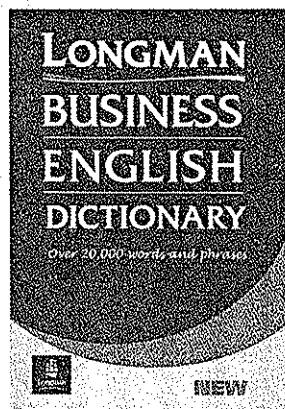
terms appear, and the explanations are simple and clear. For example, the source refers to the 'Mantoux test'; this appears with its phonetic transcription, along with a simple definition:

Mantoux test [mæn'tu: 'test] *noun* test for tuberculosis, where the patient is given an intracutaneous injection of tuberculin; compare PATCH TEST

The other terms included in this reference all appear in the dictionary, and are all equally clear. Quite a help for my students, especially in such a small volume.

Longman Business English Dictionary

Pearson Education 2000



The range of entries in the *Longman Business English Dictionary* is impressive. I took to looking for some of the more topical terms that have appeared in the Spanish news in recent months, and which have not been translated into Spanish. Terms such as 'stock options' are regularly heard in news broadcasts (pronounced "estock o'shon") and have become part and parcel of many parodies of top politicians and business people. First of all, I was disappointed to find that the entry itself instructed me to 'see under OPTION'.

However, there I found a complete list of no fewer than 15 collocations of *option*, and the definition:

stock option an option to buy shares at a particular price. The pay of a company's top managers often includes stock options in the company they work for: *a stock option plan for key employees that gives Mr O'Reilly options to buy four million shares of Heinz stock*

An authentic example gives the definition ample clarification, and it puts the phrase, and its intrusion into Spanish current affairs, right in context.

I was even more impressed when I looked for the term 'white knight', which is one of the more romantic combinations found in Business English, and which I doubted would be included:

white knight *n* [C] FINANCE someone who buys shares in a company to prevent another company taking it over completely: *Morgan has been looking for a white knight since insurance broker Willis Faber announced it was selling its 20% stake in the company.* —compare BLACK KNIGHT

As I said earlier, this is a more than adequate definition, in an accessible vocabulary, that makes this book a splendid up-to-date, and authentic resource for Business English learners.

Bryan Robinson

(Received March 2001)

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Survey review summary

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English	
Number of entries	28,000.
Sources	Longman Corpus Network; British National Corpus.
Defining vocabulary	About 2000 words.
Presentation	Paperback. 15.5 x 22 cm. 1668 pages. 22 pages of tables. One page of Grammar notes. CD-ROM containing the full dictionary, along with 55,000 spoken pronunciations, and a link to give a 30-day free trial of the Longman Web Dictionary.
Features	Frequency of use is the organizing principle behind order of presentation. Words are 'flagged' to indicate whether they are among the one, two, or three thousand most frequently spoken or written words in BrE or AmE. Collocations are shown, also in order of frequency. Alphabetical progression is indicated by letters in the outer margins. 24 pages of colour illustrations.

Longman Pronunciation Dictionary	
<i>Number of entries</i>	135,000 pronunciations.
<i>Scope</i>	British and American speakers.
<i>Presentation</i>	Paperback. 15.5 x 22 cm. 869 pages. Key to phonetic symbols for English on inside front cover. Typographical conventions, stress marks and other symbols on inside back cover; and both on a plasticated full-page-sized bookmark. Recommended pronunciations given in blue.
<i>Features</i>	200 graphs to show developments in pronunciation for both BrE and AmE over the years. Spelling-to-sound guides appear regularly. Highlighted sections inform on aspects of pronunciation and phonetics.

Longman Handy Learner's Dictionary of American English	
<i>Number of entries</i>	28,000.
<i>Defining vocabulary</i>	About 2000 words.
<i>Presentation</i>	Paperback. 11 x 15.5 cm. 522 pages. Pronunciation table and notes on American English sounds on inside front cover, short forms and labels used on inside back cover.
<i>Features</i>	Two pages of highlights to help you use the dictionary. A half page of grammar notes. Five-page table of irregular verbs.

Peter Collin Publishing Dictionary of Medicine	
<i>Number of entries</i>	15,000 words and phrases. 12,000 headwords.
<i>Defining vocabulary</i>	Limited vocabulary of 500 words 'over and above those words which actually appear in the dictionary as main words'.
<i>Scope</i>	British and American medical practice. Phonetic transcriptions based on the International Phonetic Alphabet. Includes terms from surgery, general practice, hospitals, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, and other specializations.
<i>Presentation</i>	Paperback. 13 x 20 cm. 500 pages. Also 20-page supplement and one page on phonetics. Comments inserted into the text within a simple box, using a different type face. These provide background information about the specific entries beyond the definitions given.
<i>Features</i>	Brief quotations from internationally recognized journals to show use in context. German and Spanish bilingual versions available.

Longman Business English Dictionary	
<i>Number of entries</i>	20,000 words and phrases; 12,000 headwords.
<i>Defining vocabulary</i>	Defining vocabulary of about 2000 words.
<i>Scope</i>	British and American English. Accounting; banking; economics; finance; computing; human resources; insurance; law; manufacturing; marketing; property; tax; statistics.
<i>Presentation</i>	Paperback. 15.5 x 22 cm. 533 pages. Pronunciation table on inside front cover, and 'Labels' and their corresponding definitions on the inside back cover.
<i>Features</i>	Alphabetical progression through the dictionary clearly indicated by large letters printed in the outside margins of the pages to enable easy searching. Four pages of notes and guidance to help you use the dictionary. Examples are taken from the Longman Network Corpus, the <i>Financial Times</i> and <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> , although they are not sourced directly to specific publications. Cross-references to fields and to related entries.