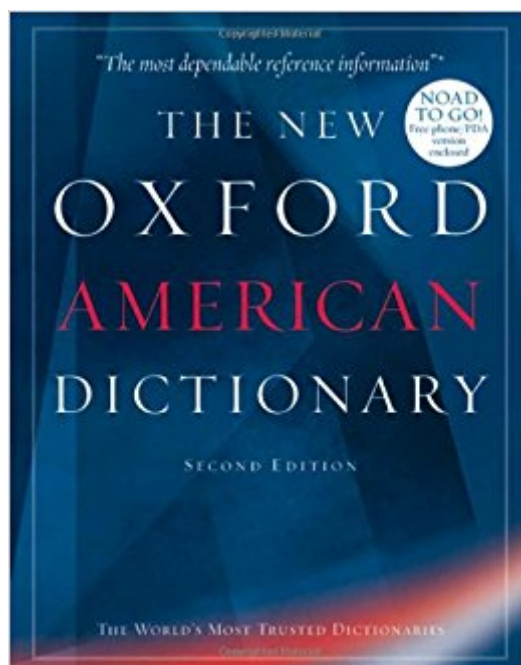


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The New Oxford American Dictionary



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

The New Oxford American Dictionary (NOAD) is the best 1-volume English dictionary available. I will compare this dictionary to the American Heritage Dictionary (2006) as these two dictionaries are the best 1-volume English dictionaries available. In my opinion, the NOAD is clearly a better dictionary for reasons listed below. Generally, the NOAD's entries are longer and more detailed, hence the reader gets more information. The American Heritage definitions are almost too concise (usually too concise for my preference) although many people may prefer the shorter definitions. Each dictionary will have a number of lesser known words (and even some more common words) the other dictionary will not have (especially scientific words, geographical locations, and newer words), so one dictionary is not superior as far as having a significant amount of more entries. It appears to me the NOAD has more entries, but even if it doesn't, it is still a better dictionary. Some comparisons of American Heritage Dictionary (2006) to the NOAD (New Oxford American Dictionary) (2004)-The NOAD is 1,959 pages A to Z, while The American Heritage 2,006 pages long A to Z. The American Heritage does not list anywhere that I can see how many entries it has. The NOAD says it has over 250,000 entries. The font of the American Heritage is smaller but it is just as easy to read as the NOAD's font. The NOAD uses 3 columns per page, the American Heritage uses 2.-The American Heritage has some newer words not found in NOAD, such as Red state, Blue state, Sudoku, Texas hold'em, but don't get the idea though this makes it better than the NOAD. Here are some words

(some relatively recent) the NOAD has that the American Heritage does not have: macarona (the dance), tamagotchi (the Japanese toy), October Surprise, Hamas (the militant Palestinian group), heat-seeking, (as a missile) tarte Tatin, solid south, spaceship earth.-Although the NOAD lacks color, it has many effective illustrations, and it even devotes full pages to maps. The American Heritage is visually more appealing with its 4.000 color pictures complete with a nice design layout.-A big advantage of the American Heritage is that it details some interesting etymological histories of about 400 common words. For instance the American Heritage dictionary gives a 13-line history on the word Kangaroo, explaining that it is not from an Aborigine meaning "I do not know," and then proceeds to explain the true history of the word. The American Heritage also has usage notes on over 750 synonyms, 100 notes on regionalisms, 500 notes on usage issues, and 50 notes on the social dimensions of some words.-Although the NOAD does not give these selected, interesting word histories, overall the NOAD etymology is done much better than the American Heritage's etymology. The NOAD's etymological explanations are consistently more detailed, and will frequently add a time frame when the word came into use, e.g. early 17th century (although it will not give specific years), something the American Heritage does not. The NOAD will give folk etymology of some words, and like the American Heritage will give notes on proper usage and help the reader/writer use the right word with synonyms.-One huge advantage the NOAD has over the American Heritage is that it adds many , many more common word phrase origins associated with a word, including proverbs, clichés, etc. For instance the word "pie" n. the NOAD will list the phrases "as easy as pie" "as sweet as pie" "a slice of the pie" and "pie in the sky" (and giving definitions of each phrase) while the American Heritage just lists and defines "pie in the sky." The NOAD will also give the origin of a few phrases such as "flash in the pan" (from the failure of gunpowder to ignite properly to fire a gun). The American Heritage does none of this with its phrases, but note that the American Heritage Dictionary publishes a separate book on word phrase origins, which is probably the reason it places little emphasis on them in its main dictionary.-The NOAD is superior in the biographical entries to the American Heritage. Each dictionary will have some people the other will not, but when they are similar, the NOAD almost always gives more information in a biographical entry. The NOAD is also superior in geographical entries. food entries, and political terms. The NOAD is also better at including entries one would normally find in an encyclopedia, for instance Tamil Tigers, Hammond Organ, Abbey Road are in the NOAD, but not in the American Heritage.-The NOAD is slightly better in giving information about nations of the world. The American Heritage's entries on nations is short and very basic, while the NOAD's, though not much longer, it will nevertheless give a better history of a country than the American Heritage will.I love dictionaries,

but in comparing these two dictionaries, the NOAD to me has its pulse on the English language more than the American Heritage, and so NOAD would be my first choice. The American Heritage Dictionary however is still very good. If you love words, you should get them both to enjoy the variety each provides.

This is a review of the second edition of the dictionary. Naturally, it has been revised substantially by adding or updating entries and usage notes. This is well described by the publisher and other reviews. A key new feature called "The Right Word" are valuable synonym study boxes discussing subtle differences in meaning, e.g., "definite" vs. "definitive". The typography has been completely overhauled. The change is definitely for the better, although this may sound surprising given the richness and complexity in the first edition. Word functions, usage levels, examples, etc., are again set in distinct fonts, yet they harmonize here much better than before. I especially like the new italic face frequently seen in the numerous and illuminating examples. Phrases are explicitly set off from the main entry yet at equal weight. Etymologies and derivatives follow tightly at the very end but are still clearly recognizable. The appendix has also received some attention and is now much more appropriate for a dictionary. The various "Hall of Fame" lists from the first edition have rightly been dropped in favor of informative and relevant language aids covering grammar, style, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. This part also includes several interesting lists of commonly mis-spelled words, clichés to avoid, and redundant expressions. This is the best desk dictionary of contemporary American English.

I knew I would like this new edition, but I didn't know how much! The Oxford American Dictionary is the best new dictionary of American English out there. It seems counterintuitive that OXFORD would make a great AMERICAN dictionary, but they really have more coverage than the other dictionaries I have (and I have a lot of dictionaries!). The new edition has so much more material, including a really great new essay on etymology and new synonym studies. I personally like the new page layout much better. The old one was very "dance-y" and distracting -- too much going on. This one is much simpler and flows better. I had no trouble finding the phrases (they begin with a dark triangle and the word PHRASES in bold type, so they're hard to miss!). The etymologies start with an open triangle, but they always come near the end of the entry so I don't see how they're difficult to find, either. The font they use for the pronunciations is easier to read, as well, and they now have the key on every right-hand page. And this new edition has a CD inside the book that lets you load the ENTIRE DICTIONARY on your smartphone or Blackberry or Treo! If using a dictionary makes

you cranky, you owe it to yourself to get this one and never feel cranky about looking something up again. It is the most usable, best-laid-out, most comprehensive dictionary I've seen yet.

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