

The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary #Oxford University Press, 2004 #2004 #9780192805768 #Simon Winchester

The following is an abridged version of the preface to the new edition of Simon Winchester's highly-acclaimed *The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary*. Lexicography is among the slowest of callings, and those who labor in the great dictionary headquarters around the world "those harmless drudges" as Samuel Johnson mischievously called them nearly three centuries ago "can be much likened to snails." Fifteen years ago, when my book, *The Meaning of Everything*, a history of the making of the OED, was published the English language was a little less substantial than it is today. The Oxford English Dictionary was the first modern English dictionary ever made and it set a new standard for what dictionaries would be from then on. To this date, it is considered "the ultimate authority on the usage and meaning of English words and phrases, unparalleled in its accuracy and comprehensiveness".

Curious Facts According to book "The Meaning Of Everything - The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary", also by Simon Winchester, to Murray the hardest word was "œset". "Black" was also a difficult one, taking one assistant three months to work out. The very last word in the 1928 edition was *zyxt*: a Kentish word, past participle of the verb to see. The legendary Oxford English Dictionary today contains over 600,000 words and a staggering 2,500,000 illustrative quotations. A glorious, bursting treasure-house, the OED serves as a guardian of the literary jewels of the past, a testament to the richness of the English language today, and a guarantor of future understanding of the language.

A history of the oxford english dictionary. Professor Charlotte Brewer. I'm here today to talk to you about the Oxford English Dictionary, perhaps the most famous dictionary in the English-speaking world. But 1928 was not the end of the story. It is a living dictionary, and work on it has never really stopped since those early days in the 1860s. So let's look now at what has happened since 1928 *The Meaning of Everything* book. Read 506 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. From the best-selling author of *The Professor and the Madman*. He then turns his unmatched talent for story-telling to the making of this most venerable of dictionaries. In this fast-paced narrative, the reader will discover lively portraits of such key figures as the brilliant but tubercular first editor Herbert Coleridge (grandson of the poet), the colorful, boisterous Frederick Furnivall (who left the project in a shambles), and James Augustus Henry Murray, who spent a half-century bringing the project to fruition. *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, in 1928 - doesn't seem excessive. The story behind the Big Dic, as it was sometimes called by those who knew it well, is in many ways a typically Victorian one, of unrivalled ambition coupled with unflinching confidence in a vast scheme, largely carried out by a team of gifted amateurs. Parts of *The Meaning of Everything* are a slightly more detailed retelling of the earlier book. Winchester manages to kick life into what is at times unpromising material, though he occasionally resorts to caricature (a bad case of this is his buffoonish portrayal of Benjamin Jowett). Independent Culture Newsletter.