



# Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage

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Why *literally* shouldn't be taken literally.

Why Americans think *home in on* something is a mistake and Brits think *hone in* is.

Is it *OK* to spell *OK* *okay*?

What's wrong with *hence why*?

Was Alanis Morissette ever *ironic*?

*Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage* is the world-famous guide to English usage, loved and used by writers, editors, and anyone who values correct English since it first appeared in 1926. *Fowler's* gives comprehensive and practical advice on complex points of grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and word choice.

Now enlarged and completely revised to reflect English usage in the 21st century, it provides a crystal-clear, authoritative picture of the English we use, while illuminating scores of usage questions old and new.

International in scope, it gives in-depth coverage of both British and American English usage issues, with reference also to the English of Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, and South Africa. The thousands of authentic examples in the book vividly demonstrate how modern writers tackle debated usage issues. They come on the one hand from established literary figures such as Chinua Achebe, Peter Ackroyd, Raymond Carver, Iris Murdoch, Harold Pinter, and Vikram Seth. On the other, they are drawn from a vast range of newspapers, journals, books, broadcast material, websites, and other digital sources from across the globe, and include references to topical personalities such as Stephen Fry, Prince Harry, Jeremy Paxman, and Wayne Rooney.

Based on the evidence and research of the Oxford Dictionaries Programme, this is the most comprehensive and authoritative guide to usage available.

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#### Review

Review from previous edition: "Full of lucid advice"

--Daily Express

"[Fowler's Modern English Usage] offers impeccable advice."

--The Times 15/12/2007

"Compared with the liberalism of other grammars, Burchfield's enlightened pedantry is a sheer joy to read and consult."

--The Independent

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--The Huffington Post

"Some care about getting English right; others don't. For those who do, there is a higher authority, a sacred book, that offers guidance through our grammatical vale of tears. Its full title is *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*"

--The New York Times

#### About the Author

**Jeremy Butterfield** is an author, language expert, writer, and lexicographer. For many years he worked in senior editorial positions in Collins Dictionaries. He is the author of the popular book on the English

language, *Damp Squid: The English Language Laid Bare* (2009), as well as the *Oxford A-Z of English Usage* (2013).

**Robert Burchfield** (1923-2004) was born in Wangannui, New Zealand. He edited the third and the revised third edition of *Fowler's Modern English Usage*. His distinguished lexicographical career included a number of key publications: *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966, with C. T. Onions and G. W. S. Friedrichsen) and *The English Language* (1985).

**Henry Watson Fowler** (1858-1933) worked as a teacher and freelance writer before going to Guernsey to form a remarkably successful writing partnership with his brother Francis. Most notably, the Fowler brothers wrote *The King's English*, and compiled the first edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1911). Henry Fowler finished the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* in 1924, and *Modern English Usage*, which made him a household name, in 1926.

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