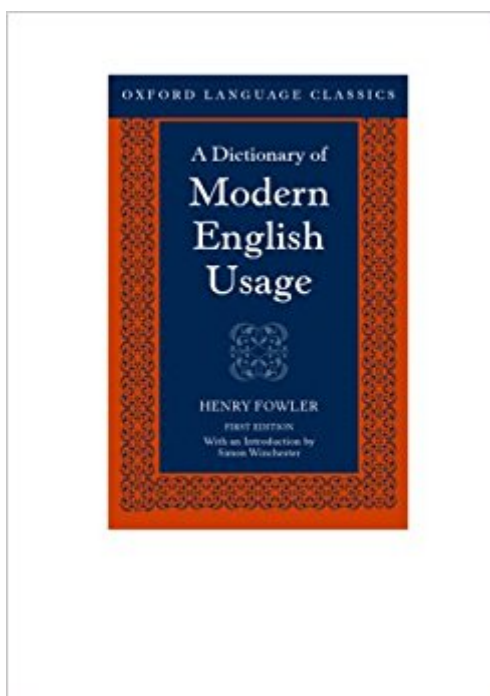


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A Dictionary Of Modern English Usage (Oxford Language Classics Series)



Synopsis

Over 75 years old, this classic text has become the standard work on the correct but natural use of English and has ensured that Fowler is a household name. Written in Fowler's inimitable style, it gives clear guidance on usage, word formation, inflexion, spelling, pronunciation, punctuation, and typography. Rewritten, updated, and expanded to take into account the vast linguistic changes of the past three-quarters of a century, here are thousands of alphabetically-arranged entries, offering advice and background information on all aspects of the English language, from grammar to spelling to literary style. Witty and practical, and renowned for its authority, Fowler's Modern English Usage remains an invaluable guide to the English language. The first place to turn for sensible advice on the thorny issues of grammar, meaning, and pronunciation, "Fowler" is one of those rare reference books that can also be read simply for pleasure. This new edition includes an introduction by Simon Winchester, which gives the book a modern perspective and confirms its importance in literature.

Book Information

Series: Oxford Language Classics Series

Paperback: 768 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 2 Revised edition (April 3, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0198605064

ISBN-13: 978-0198605065

Product Dimensions: 7.7 x 1.6 x 5.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 44 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,251,537 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > Reference > Dictionaries & Thesauruses > Synonyms & Antonyms #934 in Books > Reference > Dictionaries & Thesauruses > English #1234 in Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Reference

Customer Reviews

Review from previous edition 'Essentially for those who are not trying to consciously split infinitives. This book fulfils the same process as an old-fashioned educated aunt, at least in so far as ('the safest way of dealing with "in so far" is to keep clear of it') the English language is concerned.' Frank Muir Good Book Guide`Let me beg readers as well as writers to keep the revised Fowler at their elbows. It brims with useful information.' Raymond Mortimer, Sunday Times

Henry Watson Fowler (1858-1933) was a translator, lexicographer, and grammarian. With his brother Frank (1870-1918) he compiled the first edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary (published 1911) and the Pocket Oxford Dictionary (published in 1924, after Franks' death). Frank helped to plan Modern English Usage with his brother but he died before it was published and it was executed by Henry alone. The name Fowler has become synonymous with reliable and accurate reference on all aspects of written English.

I purchased "A Dictionary of Modern English Usage" by H.W. Fowler because of the acclaim it is given by other books on English style and usage. Fowler's first edition was published in 1926 followed by the second edition (with revisions by Sir Ernest Gowers) in 1965. Oxford University Press published a paperback in 1983 with reprints in 1984 and 1985. I have the second edition 1985. The print is small, almost like a footnote. I understand that dictionaries are like that. Publisher is trying to make them affordable, I suppose. But with such a small font, I am not sure either the compactness or bargain cost is worth it. That's about the book layout of this particular edition. Now for Fowler. I do not consider myself a scholar of English usage. I see myself as an everyday writer with below average intelligence. I was not sure what I was getting into when I bought Fowler. I should have been content with the wonderful books I do have on word usage that make occasional reference to Fowler. Yes, Fowler was first written in 1926. But I need help with using English as it is used today. Many helpful English usage books that are available. I appreciate them all for what they offer. The best of them use current examples of correct English usage. (Current meaning within the last 20 years. Not 1926.) I'll leave Fowler to the scholars of English. Give me the writer of English usage who writes for the everyday writer (who tells me whether it should be "everyday writer" or "every day writer").

The second edition is the best edition of this must have reference books on English Usage. Later and earlier editions are either anachronistic or fraught with problems. The second edition is perfect.

This is one of the older versions of Fowler's "Modern English Usage," and you have to be a devotee to enjoy it, which I do. I had one of these in the early 1980s when I was a technical editor in Amsterdam for Elsevier Science Publishers. Technical editors take a special interest in these types of things.

Truly a classic, to read around in, to enjoy with or without purpose. In fact I purchased two of these: one for a friend, one to have for myself, after all these years (although I have had the paper version for a decade). One came from PA, one from CA. Both honestly described, in great shape, well-wrapped, promptly sent and both booksellers will enjoy my patronage in future I am sure. It was hard to decide which to give to my friend, which to keep.

Fowler is a treat. He is a worthy forerunner to James Kilpatrick and has a similar sense of humour. Whether you agree with his take on usage or not, it is a delight to read. A must have for anyone who loves the magic of words and the often delightful, sometimes sublime, and occasionally absurd customs that govern their usage.

The idiomatic use of the English language needs a referee, and some referees are simply better than others. The "anything goes" motto of our times gives us uneven, illiterate, and occasionally brutal prose. This book helps block this inevitable slide into the lack of clarity and coherence. This second edition (cf., Third Edition) of "Modern English Usage" may strike some readers as arcane and archaic, because it is so restrictive in its prescriptions. Given the laxity of many of our writers, the use of a strict disciplinarian in philology is a welcome resource.

Invaluable

Obsolete on many points, and available in newer, revised editions. Still has some good advice on general writing, but this is mainly of historical interest.

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