

Bryson's Dictionary for Writers and Editors

Bill Bryson

#### About the Book

What is the difference between cant and jargon, or assume and presume? What is a fandango? What's the new name for Calcutta? How do you spell supersede? Boutros Boutros-Ghali? Is it hippy or hippie?

These questions really matter to Bill Bryson, ever since his days as a rookie subeditor on *The Times* back in the 1970s; and they matter to anyone who cares about the English language. Originally published as *The Penguin Dictionary for Writers and Editors*, *Bryson's Dictionary for Writers and Editors* has now been completely revised and updated for the twenty-first century by Bill Bryson himself.

Here is a very personal selection of spellings and usages, covering such head-scratchers as capitalization, plurals, abbreviations and foreign names and phrases. Bryson also gives us the difference between British and American usages, and miscellaneous pieces of essential information you never knew you needed, like the names of all the Oxford colleges, or the new name for the Department of Trade and Industry – or the correct spelling of Brobdingnag.

An indispensable companion to all those who write, work with the written word, or just enjoy getting things right, it gives rulings that are both authoritative and commonsense, all in Bryson's own inimitably good-humoured way.

### Contents

Cover About the Book Title Page Preface

#### **DICTIONARY**

A

В

C

D

E

F

G

Η

Ι

J K

L

 $\mathbf{M}$ 

N

O

P

Q Ŕ

S T

U

V

W

 $\mathbf{X}$ 

Y Z

#### Appendix

Words ending in -able and -ible
Major airports
Temperature conversion table
Distance conversion table
Metric prefixes
Monarchs of England
Main units of currency
Numerals

About the Author Also by Bill Bryson Copyright

# Bryson's Dictionary for Writers and Editors

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#### **Preface**

This book is intended as a quick, concise guide to the problems of English spelling and usage most commonly encountered by writers and editors. How do you spell supersede and broccoli and accessible? Do I write archaeology or archeology? What's the difference between a cardinal number and an ordinal number? Is it Capital Reef National Park or Capitol Reef National Park? What did Belize use to be called? Doesn't Calcutta have a new name now? (It does – Kolkata.) What do we now call the Chinese river that I knew in my schooldays as the Hwang-Ho? In short, what are the answers to all those points of written usage that you kind of know or ought to know but can't quite remember?

It is a personal collection, built up over thirty years as a writer and editor in two countries, and so inevitably – inescapably – it reflects my own interests, experiences and blind spots. You may not need, as I do, to be reminded that it is Anjelica Huston but Whitney Houston, or have occasion at any point in your life to write the name of the district of Sydney known gloriously and unimprovably as Woolloomooloo. But I very much hope that what follows is broad enough and general enough to be frequently useful to nearly everyone.

To keep it simple, I have freely resorted to certain short cuts. Pronunciations have been simplified. I have scorned the International Phonetic Alphabet, with its dogged reliance on symbols such as  $\theta$ , i: and  $\sigma$  on the grounds that

hardly anyone readily comprehends them and instead have attempted to convert tricky pronunciations straightforward phonetic equivalents. Often these are intended as no more than rough guides - anyone who has ever heard the throat-clearing noise that is a Dutchman pronouncing "s-Gravenhage" (the formal name of The Hague) will realize what a feebly approximate thing my suggested version is - and I unhesitatingly apologize for any shortcomings in this respect. Where pronunciation guidance is given - for instance, for the Spanish poet Vicente Aleixandre - the stress mark (') appears after the stressed syllable: ah-lay-hahn '-dray.

I have also been forced on occasion to be arbitrary over spelling. Dictionaries are sometimes remarkably out of step with the rest of the world on certain matters of usage and orthography – in this respect I can cite no better example than the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s interesting but lonely insistence that Shakespeare should be spelled Shakspere – but there is usually a rough consensus, which I have sought to follow, though I try always to note alternatives when they are freely accepted.

I have tried also to keep cross-references to a minimum. In my view one of the more grating irritants of research is to hunt through several pages looking for 'Khayyám, Omar' only to be told: 'See Omar Khayyám'. So I have frequently put such information not only where it should be but also where a hurried reader might mistakenly look for it. The price for this is a certain repetition, for which I additionally apologize.

Some issues of style - whether you should write shopkeeper or shop-keeper, for instance - have been deliberately excluded. Such matters often are so overwhelmingly a question of preference, house style or fashion that my choices would be simply that: my choices. I would suggest that in such instances you should choose what seems most sensible, and strive to be consistent.

In the updating and typing of this new edition, I am hugely indebted to Meghan Bryson and Felicity Bryson Gould, respectively my daughter-in-law and daughter, for their unstinting and good-natured help. I am also much indebted to my editors Marianne Velmans and Deborah Adams for a thousand improvements to the text and countless errors caught. As always, my most special thanks to my dear wife, Cynthia, for her patience and support throughout.

# Dictionary

## A

**n** Errors involving the indefinite articles *a* and *an* are almost consequence of certainly more often a haste and carelessness than of ignorance. They are especially common when numbers are involved, as here: 'Cox will contribute 10 per cent of the equity needed to build a £80 million cable system' or 'He was assisted initially by two officers from the sheriff's department and a FBI agent.' When the first letter of an abbreviation is pronounced as a vowel, as in 'FBI', the preceding article should be an, not a.

hen, Germany in French, Aix-la-Chapelle

to, Alvar (1898-1976) Finnish architect and designer

hus city in Denmark. In Danish, Arhus

cus, pl. abacuses

ft towards the stern, or rear, of a ship

ttoir

**Nas, Mahmoud** (1935- ) President of Palestinian National Authority 2005-

ot's Salford, Warwickshire

C American Broadcasting Companies (note plural), though the full title is no longer spelled out. It is now part of the Walt Disney Company. The television network is ABC-TV.

omen, but abdominal

lulaziz International Airport, King, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia erdonian of or from Aberdeen

**rfan** coal-mining village in Mid-Glamorgan, scene of 1966 landslide in which 144 people died

**rgavenny**, Gwent pronounced *ab-er-guh-ven'-nee* for the town, but *ab-er-ghen'-nee* for the Marquess of Abergavenny

**rrant** departing from the normal standard; the noun is **aberration** 

**rystwyth**, Ceredigion

orrent

djan capital of Côte d'Ivoire

ncunabulis (Lat.) from the cradle

**>genesis** the concept that living matter can arise from non-living matter; spontaneous generation

**ure** solemnly renounce. <u>See also ADJURE</u>.

le In adding this suffix to a verb, the general rule is to drop a silent e (livable, lovable) except after a soft g (manageable) or sibilant c (peaceable). When a verb ends with a consonant and a y (justify, indemnify) change the y to i before adding -able (justifiable, indemnifiable). Verbs ending in -ate drop that syllable before adding -able (appreciable, demonstrable).

**e/-ible** There are no reliable rules for knowing when a word ends in *-able* and when in *-ible*; see the Appendix for a list of some of the more frequently confused spellings.

**prigine** (Lat.) from the beginning

acadabra

idgement/abridgment

ogate to abolish, do away with

**alom** in the Old Testament, third son of David

alom, Absalom! novel by William Faulkner (1936)

aroka Range, Rocky Mountains, North America cess

eil to descend a rockface by means of a rope; the North American term is rappel

inthe an aniseed-flavoured liqueur

quatulate (mock Lat.) to depart in haste

temious

ι **Dhabi** capital city of and state in the United Arab Emirates ι**ja** capital of Nigeria

simbel, Egypt site of temples built by Rameses II ss, abyssal, but abysmal **'ssinia** former name of Ethiopia

cia

**démie française** French literary society whose 40 members act as guardians of the French language; in English contexts, *Française* is usually capitalized

demy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences institution responsible for the Oscars

**ippella** singing without instrumental accompaniment **pulco**, Mexico officially, Acapulco de Juárez

**\S** Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (UK)

ademia della Crusca Italian literary academy

elerator

essible

essory

iaccatura grace note in music

**identally**, not -tly

olade

ommodate very often misspelled: note -cc-, -mm-

**ompanist**, not -iest

outrement (US accouterment)

**ra** capital of Ghana

rington, Lancashire

eson, Dean (1893-1971) American diplomat and politician, Secretary of State 1949-53

illes King of the Myrmidons, most famous of the Greek heroes of the Trojan War

illes heel, Achilles tendon

nashellach Station, Highland

**lulous, assiduous** *Acidulous* means tart or acid; *assiduous* means diligent.

nowledgement/acknowledgment

and, Sir Antony (1930- ) British diplomat

lvte, not -ite

**ncagua, Cerro** mountain in the Andes in Argentina, highest peak (at 22,835 feet/6,960 metres) in the western hemisphere

res Portuguese spelling of Azores

**ustics** As a science, the word is singular ('Acoustics was his line of work'). As a collection of properties, it is plural ('The acoustics in the auditorium were not good').

#### uiesce, acquiescence uit, acquittal, acquitted

e a unit of land measuring 43,560 square feet, 4,840 square yards; equivalent to 4,047 square metres, 0.405 hectare

**onym** is a word formed from the initial letter or letters of a group of words, as in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

**ostic** writing in which the first, and sometimes the last, letter of each line spells a word when read vertically; a type of word game based on the same principle

**aeon** in Greek mythology, a hunter who is turned into a stag by Artemis (the Roman Diana) after he spies her bathing

**vity** often a sign of prolixity, as here: 'The warnings followed a week of earthquake activity throughout the region.' Just make it 'a week of earthquakes'.

**te, chronic** These two are sometimes confused, which is a little odd as their meanings are sharply opposed. *Chronic* pertains to lingering conditions, ones that are not easily overcome. *Acute* refers to those that come to a sudden crisis and require immediate attention. People in the Third World may suffer from a chronic shortage of food. In a bad year, their plight may become acute.

anno domini (Lat.) 'the year of the Lord'. AD should be written before the year (AD 25) but after the century (4th century AD) and is usually set in small caps. See also ANNO DOMINI and BC.

**ge** Even the most careful users of English frequently, but unnecessarily, refer to an 'old adage'. An adage is by definition old.

gio slowly; slow movement; pl. adagios

**pter, adaptor** The first is one who adapts, e.g., a book for theatrical presentation; the second is the device for making

appliances work abroad and so on.

lams, Charles (1912-88) American cartoonist, long associated with the *New Yorker* 

lams, Jane (1860–1935) American social activist and reformer; Nobel Peace Prize 1931

lenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge

endum, pl. addenda

lis Ababa capital of Ethiopia

**uceable** capable of being proved

nauer, Konrad (1876–1967) West German Chancellor 1949–63

#### noid, adenoidal

**hoc** (Lat.) towards this, for a particular purpose

**Infinitum** (Lat.) without limit, to infinity

rondack Mountains, US

#### udicator

ure solemnly urge. See also ABJURE.

*lib.*, ad *libitum* (Lat.) 'at will'. Note full stop after *lib*. To adlib is to speak in public without preparing in advance.

**oc**., ad locum (Lat.) 'at the place'. Note full stop after loc.

**ninister** not administrate

niral's Cup series of yachting races held every two years
nissible, but admittable

**nit to** is nearly always wrong. You admit a misdeed, you do not admit to it.

**nauseam** (Lat.) not -um; to the point of nausea

, without further a cliché; best avoided

**enalin** is the preferred spelling, but **adrenaline** is accepted.

**ance planning** is common but always redundant. All planning must be done in advance.

**erse**, **averse** *Averse* means reluctant or disinclined (think of *aversion*). *Adverse* means hostile and antagonistic (think of *adversary*).

iser, but advisoryocaat a liqueur

.ea in Greek mythology, the island inhabited by Circe

rean Sea area of the Mediterranean between Greece, Turkey and Crete

**ina** town and island off the south-eastern coast of Greece **eid** epic poem by Virgil

**lian Islands** group of islands off north-eastern Sicily; also called Lipari Islands

lus Greek god of winds

n (US eon)

ate

Lingus Irish airline

olíneas Argentinas

oMéxico

osol

ospace

**ospatiale** French aviation company

**osphere** one of the lower levels of the atmosphere

chylus (c. 525-c. 450 BC) Greek playwright

**culapius** (Lat.)/**Asclepius** (Grk) Roman and Greek god of medicine

**thetic** is normally the preferred spelling, though **esthetic** is acceptable in the US.

rs and Issas, French Territory of former name of Djibouti *ire de coeur* (Fr.) love affair

ire d'honneur (Fr.) a duel

may affect As a verb, affect means to influence ('Smoking may affect your health') or to adopt a pose or manner ('He affected ignorance'). Effect as a verb means to accomplish ('The prisoners effected an escape'). As a noun, the word needed is almost always effect (as in 'personal effects' or 'the damaging effects of war'). Affect as a noun has a narrow psychological meaning to do with emotional states (by way of which it is related to affection).

**npinscher** breed of dog

ettuoso in music, play with feeling

davit

**nity** denotes a mutual relationship. Strictly, one should not speak of someone or something having an affinity for another, but rather with or between.

ettando in music, speeding up

**ight** Note -ff-.

#### ionado, pl. aficionados

**-CIO** American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

**nd** (Fr.) thoroughly

rtiori (Lat.) with even stronger reason, all the more so

**kaans, Afrikaners** The first is a language; the second a group of people.

**rerki, Issaias** (or **Isaias**) (1946-) President of Eritrea 1993argentum (Lat.) chemical symbol for silver

Aktiengesellschaft (Ger.) roughly equivalent to Inc.

**memnon** in Greek mythology, king of Argos and commander of the Greek army in the Trojan War; also the title of a play by Aeschylus, the first part of the *Oresteia* trilogy

ssiz, (Jean) Louis (Rodolphe) (1807-73) Swiss-born American naturalist

auche (Fr.) to the left

ing

#### nt provocateur, pl. agents provocateurs

**ravate**, strictly, means to make a bad situation worse. If you walk on a broken leg, you may aggravate the injury. People can never be aggravated, only circumstances.

**ression, aggressiveness** *Aggression* always denotes hostility. *Aggressiveness* can denote hostility or merely boldness.

#### rieve

ncourt, Battle of (1415)

raphobia fear of open spaces

R advanced gas-cooled reactor, a type of nuclear power station

a, India site of Taj Mahal

#### eeable

**Lascalientes** city and state in central Mexico

ı**ilera, Christina** (1980- ) American singer

ı**sta**, not *Aug*-; formally, Gruppo Agusta; Italian helicopter company

**nadinejad, Mahmoud** (1956- ) President of Iran 2005uis clos (Fr.) behind closed doors

Wilderness! comedy by Eugene O'Neill (1933)

**and abet** A tautological gift from the legal profession. The two words together tell us nothing that either doesn't say on its own. The only distinction is that *abet* is normally reserved for contexts involving criminal intent. Thus it would be careless to speak of a benefactor abetting the construction of a church or youth club.

#### e-de-camp, pl. aides-de-camp e-mémoire

**S** is not correctly described as a disease. It is a medical condition. The term is short for *acquired immune deficiency syndrome*.

uillette ornamental braid worn on the shoulder of a uniform
sbury, Marquess of, but the town in Buckinghamshire is
Aylesbury

**tree**, Merseyside site of the Grand National racecourse **porne** 

**Jus Industrie** European aircraft manufacturer, now called **Airbus SAS**; it is a subsidiary of EADS NV

**>dale** (cap.) a breed of terrier, named after the valley in Yorkshire

**France-KLM** Franco-Dutch airline formed from merger of two national carriers in 2004

**Line Pilots Association** for the group that looks after the interests of American commercial pilots. **BALPA** performs the same function in the UK.

- , George Biddell (1801-92) English astronomer
- **-en-Provence** (hyphens), France
- ·la-Chapelle (hyphens) French name for Aachen, Germany

·les-Bains (hyphens), France

ccio capital of Corsica and birthplace of Napoleon

postal abbr. of Alaska

postal abbr. of Alabama

The adjectival forms of proper nouns in French do not take capital letters after  $\grave{a}$  la:  $\grave{a}$  la française,  $\grave{a}$  la russe,  $\grave{a}$  la lyonnaise.

#### oaster

#### ddin

**mein, El** Egyptian village that gave its name to two battles of the Second World War

mogordo, New Mexico site of first atomic bomb explosion nbrooke, Alan Francis Brooke, Viscount (1883–1963) British field marshal

**a recherche du temps perdu** novel by Marcel Proust, published in English as *Remembrance of Things Past* 

**s! poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio,'** is the correct version of the quotation from *Hamlet* 

**ska Airlines**, not *Alaskan* 

**igenses, Albigensians** religious sect during 11th to 13th centuries, also known as Cathars

**right, Madeleine** (1937- ) Czech-born American diplomat and academic

**umen, albumin** *Albumen* is the white of an egg; *albumin* is a protein within the albumen.

uquerque, New Mexico

aeus (fl.c. 600 BC) Greek poet

atraz island, former prison, in San Francisco Bay

ibiades (c. 450-404 BC) Athenian statesman and general

**ock, Sir John William** (1892–1919) British aviator who with **Sir Arthur Whitten Brown** (1886–1948) was the first to fly non-stop across the Atlantic (1919)

ott, Louisa May (1833-88) American writer

ixandre, Vicente (1898–1984) Spanish poet, awarded Nobel Prize for Literature 1977; pronounced *ah-lay-hahn* ′- *dray*.

#### utian Islands, Alaska Ifa

**1-Romeo** for the Italian make of automobile

**Fatah** Palestinian political organization. Drop *Al*- when it is preceded by an article ('a Fatah spokesman', 'the Fatah organization').

**edsson, Daniel** (1972- ) Swedish ice hockey player **edsson, Helen** (1965- ) Swedish professional golfer **esco** (one word)

**1e** is plural; a single organism is an **alga**.

onquin Hotel, New York; Algonquin Indians orithm

**Muhammad** (1942- ) born Cassius Marcellus Clay; American heavyweight boxer, three times world champion italienne (Fr., no caps) 'in the Italian style'

ali, pl. alkalis, alkalies

**Chwarizmi, Muhammad ibn-Musa** (c. 780-850) Arab mathematician, often called the father of algebra

**habad** city in Uttar Pradesh, India

ge, allegedly, allegation

**Example 29 Corporation** and **Allegany** for the town, county, Indian reservation and state park in New York. The plural of the mountains is **Alleghenies**. In short, there is huge variation in the spelling from place to place, so double-check.

**enby, Edmund Henry Hynman, Viscount** (1861–1936) British general

ende, Salvador (1908-73) President of Chile 1970-3

God's Chillun Got Wings play by Eugene O'Neill (1924)

allowmass (one word) alternative name for All Saints' Day,

1 November

iallows. Kent

**intents and purposes** is a tautology; use just 'to all intents'.

Nippon Airways, not -lines

**phone** in Canadian usage, someone who does not speak French

t, allotted, allotting, allottable

r**ight**, not alright

Saints' Day 1 November

**Souls College**, University of Oxford

Souls' Day 2 November

**time** Many authorities object to this expression in constructions such as 'She was almost certainly the greatest female sailor of all time' (*Daily Telegraph*) on the grounds that *all time* extends to the future as well as the past and we cannot possibly know what lies ahead. A no less pertinent consideration is that such assessments, as in the example just cited, are bound to be hopelessly subjective and therefore have no place in any measured argument. (There is a similar problem with futurity in the use of 'ever'.)

the allusion was received with loud cheers' (cited by Fowler). The word is not, as many suppose, a more impressive synonym for *reference*. When you allude to something, you do not specifically mention it, but leave it to the reader to deduce the subject. Thus it would be correct to write, 'In an allusion to the President, he said: "Some people make better oil men than politicians." The word is closer in meaning to *implication* or *suggestion*.

**'son, June** (1917-2006) American film actress, real name Ella Geisman

**Ianāmah/Al Manama** capital of Bahrain

laty largest city in Kazakhstan. The capital is Astana.

ıodóvar, Pedro (1949- ) Spanish film-maker

wick, Northumberland pronounced ann '-ick

**es-de-Haute-Provence** département of France

**Qaeda** (from the Arabic  $al-q\bar{a}'ida$ ) is the most common spelling in English for the terrorist group, but there are

many variants, including commonly *Al Qaida, al-Qaeda* and *al-Qaida*.

**)ahirah/El Qahira** Arabic name for Cairo

**ght** is never correct; make it **all right**.

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, muscle-wasting disease. Also known as motor neurone disease. In the US it is called Lou Gehrig's disease, after the baseball player who suffered from it.

**atian** (cap.) common UK name for breed of dog officially called German Shepherd

r, alter The first is a table used in worship, the second means to change.

**reation** is a heated exchange of words. If blows are traded or shoving is involved, it is not properly an altercation.

**ing** parliament of Iceland

**tough**, **though** The two are interchangeable except as an adverb placed after the verb, where only *though* is correct, and in the expressions *as though* and *even though*, where idiom precludes *although*.

cumulus, altostratus (one word) for types of cloud minium (US aluminum)

**mnae, alumni** Alumni is the masculine plural for a collection of college graduates. In the context of an all-female institution, the correct word is *alumnae*. The singular forms are **alumna** (fem.) and **alumnus** (masc.).

**sum** border plant

heimer's disease, but in formal medical contexts the nonpossessive form **Alzheimer disease** is increasingly used instead

./AM, ante meridiem (Lat.) before midday

**alienborg Palace**, Copenhagen residence of the Danish royal family

anuensis one who takes dictation; pl. amanuenses

aretto liqueur; pl. amarettos

**arillo**, Texas

aryllis plant with trumpet-shaped flowers

**bassadors Theatre**, London (no apos.)

**bergris** substance used in the manufacture of perfumes **bidextrous**, not *-erous* 

pience

biguous, equivocal Both mean vague and open to more than one interpretation. But whereas an *ambiguous* statement may be vague by accident or by intent, an equivocal one is calculatedly unclear.

**enhotep** name of four kings in the 18th dynasty of ancient Egypt

erica's Cup yacht races

ericium (not cap.) chemical element

eriCorps voluntary service organization

erisourceBergen (one word) US pharmaceutical supply company

éthyste, Côte d', France

haric Semitic language; official tongue of Ethiopia

icus curiae (Lat.) 'friend of the court'; pl. amici curiae

d, among Among applies to things that can be separated and counted, amid to things that cannot. Rescuers might search among survivors, but amid wreckage.

**niocentesis** the withdrawing of amniotic fluid from a pregnant woman's uterus

peba, pl. amoebas/amoebae (US ameba, pl. amebas/amebae)

oitié (Fr.) in part, halfway

**bk** is generally the preferred spelling, but **amuck** is an accepted alternative.

ng, between A few authorities insist that among applies to more than two things and between to only two. But by this logic you would have to say that St Louis is among California, New York and Michigan, not between them. In so far as the two words can be distinguished, among should be applied to collective arrangements (trade talks among the members of the European Union) and between to

reciprocal arrangements (a treaty between the UK, the US and Canada).

**oral, immoral** *Amoral* describes matters in which questions of morality do not arise or are disregarded; *immoral* applies to things that are evil.

*pur-propre* (Fr.) self-respect

**père, André Marie** (1775-1836) French physicist; the unit of electricity named after him is the ampere (no cap., no accent)

ohetamine

phibian, amphibious

**phitryon** In Greek mythology, a Mycenaean king whose wife, Alcmene, gave birth to Hercules after Zeus tricked her into sleeping with him

phora, pl. amphorae (or amphoras)

**poule** is the preferred spelling; **ampule** is also accepted.

**trak** American passenger railway company. The company's formal designation is the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, but this is almost never used, even on first reference.

**undsen, Roald** (1872–1928) Norwegian explorer, first person to reach the South Pole (1911)

icreon (c. 563-c. 478 BC) Greek poet

**esthesia, anaesthetic** (US **anesthesia, anesthetic**) The doctor who administers anaesthetics is an **anaesthetist** in the UK, an **anesthesiologist** in the US.

**logous** comparable in some way

lyse (US analyze)

thema, pl. anathemas

ı**xagoras** (c. 500-428 BC) Greek philosopher

ximander (c. 611-c. 547 BC) Greek philosopher

ien régime (Fr.) the old order

illary

lalusia region of Spain. In Spanish, Andalucía

**lersen, Hans Christian** (1805–75) Danish writer of children's tales. Not *-son* 

lerson, Marian (1897-1993) celebrated contralto

lhra Pradesh Indian state

lorra is a principality; the capital is Andorra la Vella.

**lrejewski, Jerzy** (1909-83) Polish novelist

lretti, Mario (1940- ) American racing driver

**lrewes, Lancelot** (1555–1626) English scholar and prelate, one of the principal translators of the King James Bible

**lrews Air Force Base** (no apos.), Maryland

**rogenous, androgynous** The first applies to the production of male offspring; the second means having both male and female characteristics.

**lromache** in Greek mythology, the wife of Hector **lroscoggin** county, river and lake in Maine, US

urysm

insen, Christian B. (for Boehmer) (1916–95) American biochemist, awarded Nobel Prize for Chemistry 1972

ractuosity having many turns

**gelico, Fra** (1387-1455) Florentine painter, also known as Fra Giovanni da Fiesole

**jkor** complex of ruins in Cambodia. **Angkor Wat** is a single temple within the compound.

**leterre** French for England

ilicize (lower case)

**Jlo American PLC** South African mining conglomerate now based in London; Anglo American is spelled as two words, no hyphen

**ora, Angora** The first is a type of wool; the second is the former name of Ankara, Turkey.

#### jostura bitters

**strom/ångström** abbr. Å; unit used to measure wavelengths of light, and equal to one ten-billionth of a metre; named for Anders Ångström (1814–74), Swedish physicist

leuser-Busch US brewery

**ui** Chinese province, formerly spelled *Anhwei* 

akchak National Monument and Preserve, Alaska

**mus**, but **animosity** Both mean hostility, but *animosity* is stronger than *animus*.

**seed** a flavourful seed

**sette** a drink flavoured with aniseed

**cara** capital of Turkey

ıabessacook, Lake, Maine

**Lapolis** capital of Maryland

**tapurna** a cluster of mountains in the Himalayas, of which the highest peak is Annapurna I (26,545 feet/8,091 metres)

**Arbor**, Michigan home of the University of Michigan

ie Arundel County, Maryland

e of Cleves (1515-57) fourth wife of Henry VIII

**ex, annexe** In the UK, the first is the verb and the second the noun. In the US, both noun and verb are spelled *annex*.

**lieopsquotch Mountains**, Newfoundland, Canada lihilate

 ${f l-Margret}$  (1941- ) American actress, born Ann-Margret Olsson; note hyphen and irregular spelling Margret

o domini (Lat.) 'the year of the Lord'; see also AD

us mirabilis (Lat.) remarkable year

maly, anomalous

nymous, anonymity

wilh, Jean (1910-87) French playwright; pronounced an'oo-ee

rak

chluss (Ger.) a union; particularly applied to that of Germany and Austria in 1938

**ananarivo** capital of Madagascar

assawamock Neck, Massachusetts

**e bellum** (Lat.) 'before the war'; especially applied to the period before the American Civil War

**ecedence**, **antecedents** *Antecedence* means precedence; antecedents are ancestors or other things that have gone before.

ediluvian antiquated, primitive

**e meridiem** (Lat.) 'before midday', abbr. a.m./AM; not to be confused with **antemeridian** (one word), meaning of or taking part in the morning

ennae, antennas Either is correct as the plural of antenna, but generally antennae is preferred for living organisms ('a beetle's antennae') and antennas for man-made objects ('radio antennas made possible the discovery of quarks').

**icipate** To *anticipate* something is to look ahead to it and prepare for it, not to make a reasonable estimate. A tennis player who anticipates his opponent's next shot doesn't just guess where it is going to go, he is there to meet it.

#### i-Defamation League

**igone** in Greek mythology, the daughter of Oedipus; also the title of a play by Sophocles

igua and Barbuda Caribbean state; capital St John's ipasto (It.) appetizer, hors-d'oeuvre; pl. antipasti ipodean of Australia or New Zealand

**irrhinum** note -*rr*-; a flower, also known as snapdragon **ofagasta**, Chile

onioni, Michelangelo (1912–2007) Italian film director ony and Cleopatra, not Anthony play by Shakespeare (c. 1606)

**werpen** the Flemish name for Antwerp, Belgium; the French name is **Anvers** 

**ious** Since *anxious* comes from *anxiety*, it should contain some connotation of being worried or fearful and not merely eager or expectant.

A tricky word at times, as here: 'This paper isn't very good, but neither is any of the others.' A simple and useful principle is to make the verb always correspond to the complement. Thus: 'neither is any other' or 'neither are any of the others'.

**body, anyone, anything, anywhere** *Anything* and *anywhere* are always one word. The others are normally one word except when the emphasis is on the second element (e.g., 'He received three job offers, but any one

would have suited him'). Anybody and anyone are singular and should be followed by singular pronouns and verbs. A common fault – so common, in fact, that some no longer consider it a fault – is seen here: 'Anyone can relax so long as they don't care whether they or anyone else ever actually gets anything done.' The problem, clearly, is that a plural pronoun ('they') is being attached to a singular verb ('gets'). Such constructions may in fact be fully defensible, at least some of the time, though you should at least know why you are breaking a rule when you break it.

more, any time Both are always two words.

ZAC Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

**ZUS Pact** 1951 security treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States

**VB** area of outstanding natural beauty (UK)

utrance (Fr.), not à l'outrance; to the very last, to the death lachicola Florida river

ldoorn, Netherlands

nnines for the Italian mountain range. Note -nn- in middle. In Italian, Appennini

ritif, pl. aperitifs

elstrudel (Ger.) apple strudel

omb

calypse, apocalyptic

**gee** the highest or most distant point, usually in reference to orbiting bodies. Its opposite is **perigee**.

ollinaire, Guillaume (1880–1918) born Wilhelm Apollinaris de Kostrowitzky; French writer and critic

llo Greek god of light, son of Zeus

**plogie for Poetrie, An'** title of an essay by Sir Philip Sidney, also published as 'The Defence of Poesie' (1595)

**siopesis**, pl. **aposiopeses** the sudden breaking off of a thought or statement

**stasy**, pl. **apostasies** the abandoning of one's faith **statize** renounce a belief

**osteriori** (Lat.) 'from what is after'; in logic, moving from effect to cause, reasoning from experience

**thegm** a witty or pithy maxim; the g is silent

**theosis**, pl. **apotheoses** deification (generally used figuratively)

valachian Mountains, eastern US

**aloosa** breed of horse

**aratchik** party functionary, especially of the Communist Party

arel

arition

**ellant, appellate** The first is a person who appeals against a court ruling; the second describes a court at which appeals are heard.

endices, appendixes Either is correct.

le Mac

licator

**oggiatura** in music, an accented non-harmonized note that precedes a harmonized note

**comattox** town in Virginia where the Confederacy surrendered to the Union to end the American Civil War (9 April 1865)

**raise, apprise** *Appraise* means to assess or evaluate. *Apprise* means to inform. An insurance assessor appraises damage and apprises owners.

**reciate** has a slightly more specific meaning than writers sometimes give it. If you *appreciate* something, you value it ('I appreciate your concern') or you understand it sympathetically ('I appreciate your predicament'). But when there is no sense of sympathy or value (as in 'I appreciate what you are saying, but I don't agree with it') *understand* or *recognize* or the like would be better.

#### rehensible

**ès-midi** (Fr.) afternoon

ès-ski (Fr., hyphen) the period after a day's skiing

il Fool's Day (UK)/April Fools' Day (US)

rincipio (Lat.) from the beginning

**riori** (Lat.) from what is before; in logic, an argument proceeding from cause to effect

**opos** in French, à propos

ıleius, Lucius (fl. 2nd c. AD) Roman satirist

ı**lia** region of Italy known in Italian as Puglia

**ba, Gulf of** an arm of the Red Sea. Aqaba is also the name of a town in Jordan.

**a vitae** (Lat.) water of life; used to describe whiskies and other alcoholic spirits

**educt**, but **aquifer** The first is a bridge carrying water across a valley, the second a mass of rock capable of holding water.

**iline** like an eagle

**linas, St Thomas** (1225-74) Italian theologian, canonized 1323

uoi bon? (Fr.) what for? what's the point?

postal abbr. of Arkansas; not Arizona, which is AZ

**bic numerals** (no cap.)

**fat, Yasser** (1929–2004) born Mohammed Abdel-Raouf Arafat; leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization 1969–2004, awarded Nobel Peace Prize 1994

maic Semitic language

**n Island** and **Aran Islands** (Ireland) but **Isle of Arran** (Scotland) The sweater is spelled *Aran*.

**de Triomphe**, Paris officially, Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile -en-ciel (Fr.) rainbow; pl. arcs-en-ciel

haea type of unicellular organisms

**haeology** is normally preferred, but **archeology** is accepted (and is standard in the US).

haic, archaism

hetype

hilochus of Paros (c. 714-c. 676 BC) Greek poet

**himedes** (c. 287-212 BC) Greek mathematician and engineer

hipelago, pl. archipelagos

tic Circle, Arctic Ocean, but arctic fox (no cap.)

**ennes** wooded plateau in southern Belgium, north-eastern France and Luxembourg

**izzone, Edward Jeffrey Irving** (1900–79) British illustrator **zzo**, Italy

uable

us (Dan.)/Aarhus city in Denmark

stides (c. 530-c. 468 BC) Athenian statesman

stophanes (c. 448-c. 380 BC) Greek dramatist

iadillo, pl. armadillos

ıageddon

lament

lature

renia formerly part of Soviet Union, capital Yerevan
rour (US armor)

**ma** applies only to agreeable smells; there is no such thing as a bad aroma.

ostook River, Maine and New Brunswick

an, Isle of Scotland. See also Aran Island.

i**ère-pensée** (Fr.) ulterior motive, mental reservation

i**vederci** (It.) goodbye

**viste** disagreeably ambitious person

ol-Johnston British automobile of early 1900s

**ondissement** principal division of French *départements* and some larger cities

ows of the Chace, not Chase letters by John Ruskin (1881)

\*fact (US artifact) The word should be applied only to things fashioned by humans, not to animal bones, fossils or other naturally occurring objects.

**emis** Greek goddess of the moon, associated with hunting. The Roman equivalent is Diana.

eriosclerosis

hur Andersen, not -son accountancy firm choke

**ba** Caribbean island, a self-governing dependency of the Netherlands; capital Oranjestad