

## Features



1857

At the suggestion of Frederick J. Furnivall, the Philological Society of London establishes 'a Committee to collect unregistered words in English'. The public is asked to contribute.



1876

Cambridge University Press is asked to publish the dictionary, but rejects it.



1879

OUP agrees to publish, and James Murray, president of the Philological Society, is appointed editor. The project is known as the *New English Dictionary* (NED).



1884

The first part, covering A–Ant, is published.



1919

J. R. R. Tolkien joins the NED working on words beginning with W, requiring expertise in Old and Middle English.



1928

On 19 April, the last fascicle of the NED is published, marking the birth of the dictionary as we know it.



2013

John Simpson OBE retires and is succeeded by Michael Proffitt.



2018

The OED now defines more than 632,000 lexical items, with almost 855,000 separate senses, illustrated by more than 3.6 million quotations from 1,000 years of English. [M](#)

# 90

## years of the Oxford English Dictionary



1933

A reprint is issued as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).



2000

OED Online is launched.



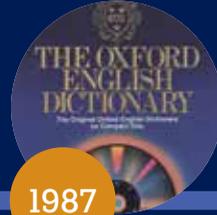
1993

John Simpson is appointed Chief Editor, and starts on the first wholesale revision of the dictionary—the third edition, or OED3.



1989

The second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED2) appears, defining more than half a million words and illustrated by more than 2.4 million quotations.



1987

The OED appears in electronic form.



1984

Work begins on a *New Oxford English Dictionary*, with Edmund Weiner as editor.



1957

Robert Burchfield is appointed editor of a new Supplement which is published in four volumes between 1972 and 1986.

Find an interactive version of the timeline in [Mosaic](#) online