

Passages Websters Timeline History 1899 1991

The Rise of Colloquialisms and Informal Language. dd70fe12e6

The journey from a predominantly prescriptive approach focused on a limited literary canon to a descriptive approach embracing linguistic diversity and reflecting the reality of language use represents a significant shift in lexicographical practice. This evolution highlights the dynamic nature of language and its adaptation to social contexts, emphasizing the importance of ongoing research and adaptation in the creation of dictionaries that accurately and comprehensively represent the language they aim to describe. The evolution of passages in Webster's dictionaries from 1899 to 1991 mirrors broader societal and linguistic changes. dd70fe12e6

A2: The shift reflects a change in understanding language itself. A prescriptive approach focuses on enforcing rules, while a descriptive approach aims to accurately document how language is actually used, acknowledging its dynamism and variation. dd70fe12e6

Q8: Are there any criticisms of the changes in the approach to passages in Webster's dictionaries. dd70fe12e6

Dictionaries from this period, such as the second edition of Webster's New International Dictionary (1934), while still upholding standards of formal English, started incorporating more examples of informal language and colloquial expressions. This shift is evident in the inclusion of passages taken from contemporary novels, short stories, and even journalistic writings. This reflected a growing acceptance of linguistic diversity and a recognition that a dictionary should accurately represent the way language is actually used, not just how it *should* be used. dd70fe12e6

A5: Growing awareness of linguistic diversity led to the inclusion of passages representing different dialects, ethnicities, and social classes, enriching the dictionary's scope and reflecting a more inclusive understanding of language. dd70fe12e6

These passages acted as models of correct English, offering clear examples of grammatical structures and vocabulary use. This focus reflects a prevailing belief in the importance of linguistic purity and the preservation of traditional forms. The *etymology* of words also held prominence, with extensive passages detailing word origins and historical development. Passages in editions from this era, such as the 1913 Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, often emphasized literary examples from established authors, reflecting a reverence for classical and canonical literature. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw Webster's dictionaries characterized by a formal, even prescriptive, approach to language. The selection

of passages aimed to illustrate proper usage and reinforce established norms of grammar and style. dd70fe12e6

The Impact of Technological Advancements

The focus shifted decisively toward representing the actual usage of language across various social contexts and registers. By the 1970s and 1980s, Webster's dictionaries embraced a fully descriptive approach. This shift reflected a greater understanding of language as a constantly evolving entity. Passages in these later editions often came from a broader range of sources, reflecting the diversity of American English and showcasing regional variations. The emphasis on *lexical changes* became crucial, with dictionaries meticulously documenting the evolution of vocabulary and the emergence of new words and expressions. dd70fe12e6

Q3: How did technological advancements influence the inclusion of passages in Webster's dictionaries. dd70fe12e6

The dictionary's role expanded beyond simply defining words to also acknowledging and representing the multifaceted nature of American English. This period saw the increased inclusion of passages reflecting linguistic diversity across different ethnic and cultural groups. The increased awareness of sociolinguistic factors—such as dialectal variations and social class—shaped the selection and inclusion of passages. dd70fe12e6

Q7: What are the implications of these changes for contemporary lexicography. dd70fe12e6

Reflecting Linguistic Diversity. dd70fe12e6

Analyzing the sources of these passages further illuminates evolving social and cultural trends. A6: Comparing passages across different editions of Webster's dictionaries reveals shifts in vocabulary, grammar, and style, providing insights into the evolution of American English throughout the 20th century. dd70fe12e6

Q6: How can one analyze the changes in passages to understand the evolution of American English. dd70fe12e6

Q1: How did the selection criteria for passages change over time. dd70fe12e6

Over time, the criteria broadened to include contemporary literature, colloquialisms, and examples from diverse sources, reflecting a shift from a prescriptive to a descriptive approach. A1: Initially, passages were primarily chosen from established literary works to illustrate proper usage. dd70fe12e6

This analysis will touch upon key aspects such as *dictionary usage*, *lexical changes*, and the impact of *sociolinguistic shifts*. This article will explore the significant shifts in the treatment of passages – including illustrative quotations, example sentences, and etymological citations – within Webster's dictionaries between 1899 and 1991. We'll delve into the editorial choices, the reflection of societal changes, and the impact these changes had on how dictionaries were used and perceived. The evolution of Webster's dictionaries, particularly the inclusion and alteration of passages within their pages, provides a fascinating glimpse into the changing social, cultural, and linguistic landscapes of the 20th century. dd70fe12e6

A3: Technological advancements like computerized typesetting enabled the inclusion of a larger volume of passages, allowing for more comprehensive coverage of linguistic variations and a more nuanced portrayal of language use. dd70fe12e6

The Influence of Literary Canon. dd70fe12e6

Passages in Webster's Dictionaries: A Timeline from 1899 to 1991

Conclusion

The period between 1899 and 1991 also witnessed significant technological advancements impacting the creation and dissemination of dictionaries. This allowed for more comprehensive inclusion of passages and a more detailed analysis of linguistic patterns, ultimately enriching the user's experience and contributing to a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the language. The transition from manual typesetting to computerized typesetting significantly altered the editorial process and the sheer volume of data that could be incorporated. dd70fe12e6

A8: Some might criticize the move toward inclusivity as potentially leading to a dilution of standards or a lack of clear guidance on preferred usage. However, the descriptive approach prioritizes accurate representation over prescriptive judgment, aiming to capture the richness and diversity of the language. dd70fe12e6

FAQ

Mid-Century Changes: Embracing Modernity (1940s-1960s)

The Early 20th Century: A Formal Approach (1899-1930s)

Late 20th Century: A Descriptive Approach (1970s-1991)

A7: The evolution of passages in Webster's dictionaries serves as a valuable case study for contemporary lexicographers, emphasizing the importance of descriptive methodologies, acknowledging linguistic diversity, and employing technological advancements to create comprehensive and accurate language resources. dd70fe12e6

The post-war era brought with it an increased focus on colloquialisms and everyday language. While literary examples still held a place, dictionaries began incorporating passages reflecting the evolving vernacular, reflecting the changes in *dictionary usage* within a more diverse and dynamic society. The mid-20th century witnessed a gradual shift in the approach to passages within Webster's dictionaries. This change signaled a move away from purely prescriptive models towards a more descriptive approach, acknowledging the dynamism of language and its adaptation to social contexts. dd70fe12e6

A4: While some might have initially viewed the inclusion of colloquialisms as a lowering of standards, it ultimately strengthened the dictionary's authority by making it a more accurate and useful reflection of actual language use. dd70fe12e6

Q5: How did the changing societal attitudes towards language diversity impact the selection of passages. dd70fe12e6

This approach, while contributing to the dictionary's scholarly reputation, also arguably limited its representation of diverse voices and evolving linguistic patterns. Shakespeare, Milton, and other established authors frequently provided illustrative quotations, reinforcing their cultural authority and shaping the dictionary's perception of "correct" language. The selection of passages was heavily influenced by the literary canon of the time. dd70fe12e6

Q4: Did the inclusion of more colloquialisms and informal language change the perceived authority of Webster's dictionaries. dd70fe12e6

Q2: What is the significance of the shift from prescriptive to descriptive lexicography. dd70fe12e6

Q3: How did the approach to lexicography change during this time. dd70fe12e6

1961 – 1991: The Age of Development and Specialization. dd70fe12e6

Q1: What significant technological advances impacted Webster's dictionaries during this period. dd70fe12e6

The late 19th and 20th centuries witnessed a period of unprecedented linguistic development. Webster's, as a major player in the field, had to adapt to these changes, reflecting them within its pages. New words emerged at an accelerated rate, driven by technological advancements, social upheavals, and global interconnectivity. dd70fe12e6

A4: This period established a foundation for the modern Webster's dictionary, demonstrating its ongoing ability to adapt to the ever-evolving landscape of the English language and its usage. dd70fe12e6

World War II and its aftermath brought about a flood of new terminology relating to military affairs, science, and technology. This period highlights the dictionary's role as a dynamic record of societal progression. The mid-20th century presented numerous difficulties to lexicographers. Beyond the obvious wartime lexicon, the post-war boom led to the addition of words reflecting the ascension of consumerism, suburban living, and the burgeoning Civil Rights movement. dd70fe12e6

This article delves into the fascinating history of Webster's passages, specifically focusing on the period between 1899 and 1991 – a time of immense societal metamorphosis that profoundly impacted the dictionary's composition. Webster's dictionaries have long been pillars in the world of lexicography, offering not just definitions but a window into the evolving landscape of the English language. We'll explore key milestones, underscoring the difficulties and successes that shaped these iconic reference works. dd70fe12e6

1899 – 1934: The Era of Refinement. dd70fe12e6

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):. dd70fe12e6

Practical Benefits and Implementation Strategies:. dd70fe12e6

Charting the Development of Webster's Passages: A Timeline from 1899 to 1991

Q2: How did societal changes influence the content of Webster's dictionaries. dd70fe12e6

The dictionaries became more than simple lists of words; they became valuable tools for understanding the cultural and historical context within which language operates. These decades witnessed a continuous effort to reflect the evolving nature of the English language, adapting to both technological and social changes. The period from 1899 to 1991 marks a significant section in the ongoing story of Webster's dictionaries. dd70fe12e6

Studying this historical timeline offers invaluable insights into linguistic change, offering a deeper understanding of how language reflects and shapes societal progressions. Researchers, educators, and writers can utilize this knowledge to enhance their understanding of word usage and the delicate aspects of meaning over time. dd70fe12e6

This era witnessed a significant enlargement in the scope and depth of Webster's dictionaries. We see the beginnings of specialized dictionaries, catering to specific fields and user requirements. The coming of the computer age brought about new demands for accurate definitions and the addition of technical jargon. Furthermore, the increasing focus on regional dialects and variations in English led to a more subtle approach to lexicography, aiming to capture the variety of the language. dd70fe12e6

A1: The invention and extensive adoption of the typewriter, followed by the computer, significantly impacted the editorial processes, allowing for greater efficiency and accuracy in compiling and editing entries. dd70fe12e6

Q4: What is the lasting legacy of this period on Webster's dictionaries. dd70fe12e6

1934 - 1961: Navigating the Uncertain Waters of War and Change. dd70fe12e6

A3: The approach moved from a primarily descriptive model to a more analytical and nuanced one, accounting for regional variations and evolving usage patterns. dd70fe12e6

This period also saw the continued perfection of the dictionary's editorial processes, leading to more harmonious standards of entry creation. The emphasis was on accuracy and providing thorough definitions. Think of this phase as the foundation upon which future editions would be built. The turn of the 20th century found Webster's dictionaries already established, but far from immutable. This era focused on sharpening existing entries

and incorporating new vocabulary related to emerging technologies like automobiles and electricity. dd70fe12e6

A2: Major social events like World War II and the Civil Rights Movement directly impacted the inclusion of new vocabulary, reflecting the current social and political discourse. dd70fe12e6

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