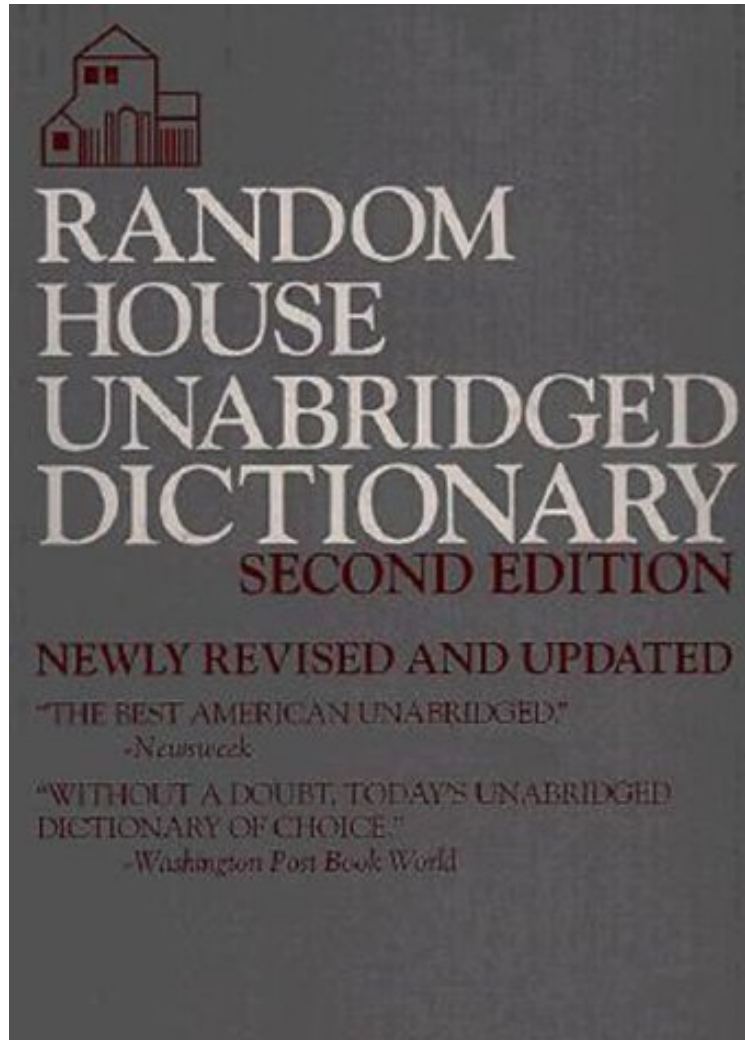


Random House Unabridged Dictionary

Random House

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ow newly revised and up to the minute--through the Random House Living Dictionary Project, an immense, online lexicographic database--this comprehensive dictionary includes more than 315,000 entries, 2,400 illustrations, 75,000 example sentences, a 32-page atlas, and 45 boxed charts and tables. Smyth-sewn binding.

From Booklist This revised and updated printing of The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, second edition unabridged (1987), has been released in conjunction with the first CD-ROM edition of the work. PRINT VERSION. The print dictionary continues its tradition of being very up-to-date, thanks in part to a computerized database that Random House has named its "Living Dictionary Project." According to the publisher, 1,000 new words and meanings have been added to the work since the 1987 printing, with another 1,500 revisions to entries and definitions. New entries include cyberpunk, intifada, in-your-face, karaoke, maquiladora, Norplant, virtual reality, wallyball, and wannabe. Additional definitions include not as indicating a previous statement is untrue, and Teflon meaning "imperviousness to blame or criticism." Biographical entries on Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton, V{ }aclav Havel, David Souter, and Clarence Thomas have been added. Maps within the work have been updated, as has the atlas in the supplementary material. The book has the same attractive format as the previous printing. CD-ROM VERSION. This marks the first time an unabridged American dictionary has been released in this format. Macintosh, DOS, and Windows versions are issued on the same CD-ROM. The Macintosh version requires System 6.0.3 or later, 1 MB of RAM, and at least 1 MB free on the hard drive. The DOS version requires at least a 286-based IBM compatible, 2 MB of RAM, and at least 1 MB free on the hard drive, with a mouse recommended. The Windows version has the same requirements as the DOS version, with Windows version 3.0 or higher. The Board examined the DOS and Windows versions. Either version can be invoked while the user is in word processing software by using a "hot key" combination, which brings up the entry for whatever word the cursor is on within the document. The Windows version also may be invoked by double-clicking an icon. The DOS version may be invoked from a DOS prompt, though instructions for doing so are given only in the "readme.txt" file on the CD-ROM. It is not possible to print directly from either version; printing can be done only from a word processor. The words entered in a search are not highlighted within a definition in any way, so the user must look carefully for their occurrence. The illustrations from the print dictionary do not appear in the CD-ROM version. The CD-ROM comes with no documentation except instructions on how to install the product, which is easy to do. The user must rely exclusively on onscreen help or various ".txt" files on the CD-ROM. DOS VERSION. The dictionary occupies approximately half of the screen. The user may select options on a menu bar at the top of the screen using the mouse or arrow keys. Using Dictionary, the user types in a word and presses ENTER. If the Browse option is invoked, a window opens that scrolls down a word list as each letter is typed in. While in Dictionary, a menu bar at the bottom of the screen offers further options with the use of various function keys, for example, to move to the previous or next word in the dictionary or to copy and paste to a word-processing document. The F2 key serves a hypertext function, allowing one to look up a word within a definition without retyping it. This latter feature is undocumented in the help screens. Entries appear as they do in the printed dictionary, although there is no variation in typeface on the screen. Italicized main entries, for example, appear in regular text with a small square in front of them. Search opens a window with three options: Definitions, Wildcard, and Anagram. The first option searches for a word within definitions; Boolean operators can be used. Search accepts a maximum of two logical operators--a fact made evident only in the "readme.txt" file. The Wildcard feature is useful for crossword puzzle-questions. Entering ??vera??, for example, retrieves beverage, coverage, coverall, and leverage. The Anagram feature is supposed to retrieve all combinations of a series of letters. The History menu displays a list of the words looked up during the session. Options allows several choices, including turning a "match exactly" feature on or off. When it is off, terms typed in the definitions window will be truncated. Typing in youth, for example, will retrieve all definitions that contain youth or youths. The Help menu, which is not context-sensitive, offers three choices: Features, which explains some search methods; Glossary, which defines terms such as homographs or phrasal verb; and Pronunciation, which supplies a list of pronunciation symbols used. WINDOWS VERSION. As is expected, this version has a more graphic interface, though with the same search functions as the DOS version. A menu bar at the top of the screen offers the choices of Lookup? (essentially the same as Dictionary in the DOS version), Edit (for copying and pasting to a word processor), Search, Options, and Help. In addition, a button panel to the right of the screen features the choices of Lookup, Browse, Wildcard, History, Definition Search, and Anagram. The entries themselves are much more eye-pleasing in this version, appearing much as they do in the printed work, with variant typefaces and font sizes. Although still not context-sensitive, the help screens in the Windows version offer many more examples. EVALUATION. Unfortunately, this CD-ROM dictionary is plagued by discrepancies in indexing of definitions, misspellings or inaccuracies in the Dictionary lookup feature, an almost useless Anagram search feature, and inconsistencies between the two versions. Nowhere is it explicitly stated which parts of an entry may be retrieved when doing a Definitions search. Etymologies appear to be not searchable, nor are the approximate dates when the word entered the English language. There are inconsistencies in retrieving words that appear as synonyms at the end of entries. A Definitions search on gainsay and impugn--both of which appear as synonyms for contradict--successfully retrieves contradict; a search for the word iconoclasm, however, does not retrieve heresy, for which it is a synonym.

Usage labels are likewise inconsistently retrieved. A Definitions search on the label vulgar retrieves enough entries to keep prurient searchers entertained for quite awhile. It does not, however, retrieve fuck, though that word is labeled vulgar. Derived words are not retrieved in a Definitions search. Thus, a user will not find panegyric, which is given as a derivation of panegyric. Plurals are likewise not retrieved, unless they are used within the definition itself. A simple word lookup in the Dictionary option in DOS or the Lookup option in Windows revealed inconsistencies. Some words appear twice--once with a period after them. Thus, there is green fee and green fee. on the browse list, each leading to slightly different entries. The word mother is consistently misspelled in the browse list: mothbr, mothbr earth, Mothbr Goose, and so on, although when one retrieves the entry, the main entry itself is properly spelled. Such mistakes affect all other search functions. Entering ?!a?ious in the Wildcard menu, for example, retrieves malarious and salacious, but not hilarious. The reason is that hilarious does not appear in the index. In the DOS version, there are five listings for hilar. Retrieving the first one leads to the entry hilum, the next three lead to identical entries for hilarious, the last to hilarity. In the Windows version, the same list appears, with all five leading to the same entry, hilum, revealing a disparity between the DOS and Windows versions of the database. A Definitions search for conspiracy in the DOS version retrieves 21 hits; a search in the Windows version for the same word retrieves 9 hits--two of which are not retrieved in the DOS version. The Anagram search is particularly bug-laden. A search on nails--specifically mentioned in Random House promotional material--retrieves nothing, since the plural nails is not a main entry. An Anagram search on nation retrieves option; one on under retrieves Taino and -tonia. Searching glean retrieves 10 relevant hits, including angel. Searching angel, however, retrieves only 5 hits, not including glean. The Boolean-search capability is a nice feature, though it is extremely slow. While useful for questions such as determining what a group of lions is called (entering "group AND lions" retrieves pride), there is no proximity operator, so irrelevant hits will be retrieved. Searching for "french AND cut" took 5 minutes and 15 seconds, despite the fact that a 486/5X-based computer with a double-speed CD-ROM drive was used. CONCLUSION. Until such inconsistencies are resolved, the Board cannot recommend the CD-ROM version of the Random House Unabridged Dictionary. Although the Wildcard and Definitions searches are certainly useful, the differences between the same searches in the Windows and DOS versions as well as the many errors spotted make one wonder what was not retrieved due to spelling and indexing inconsistencies. A product with this many features also needs better documentation. The revision of the print dictionary, however, is strongly recommended, particularly for those libraries that did not purchase the second edition. From the Inside Flapow newly revised and up to the minute--through the Random House Living Dictionary Project, an immense, online lexicographic database--this comprehensive dictionary includes more than 315,000 entries, 2,400 illustrations, 75,000 example sentences, a 32-page atlas, and 45 boxed charts and tables. Smyth-sewn binding.