Pocket

OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Ninth Edition

First edited by F.G. and H.W. Fowler

Edited by Catherine Soanes

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship and education by publishing worldwide.
Oxford is registered trademark of Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries.

Published in the United States by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© Copyright Oxford University Press 1969, 1978, 1984, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002
Database right Oxford University Press (makers)

All rights reserved.
No part of this material may be stored transmitted retransmitted lent or reproduced in any form or medium without the permission of Oxford University Press.

Editorial Team

Editor
Catherine Soanes

Assistant Editors
Jonathan Blaney
Judith Wood

Pronunciation Editors
Susan Wilkin

Keyboarders and Proofreaders
Jane Horwood
Richard Jones
Muriel Summersgill

About This Dictionary

The *Pocket Oxford English Dictionary* is part of the range of new generation dictionaries based on the *New Oxford Dictionary of English*. It aims to provide up-to-date and accessible information on the core vocabulary of current English in single pocket-sized volume. Its priorities are clear explanations of meaning and help with aspects of words which often cause difficulties, especially spelling, pronunciation, and usage. It will be particularly useful to secondary-school students, and in the UK is ideal for students working with GCSE and Standard Grade level examinations.

The text is directly informed by the evidence of how the language is actually used today, based on the analysis of hundred of millions of words of real English carried out for *NODE*. This information is presented in clear and concise way; definitions focus on the central meanings of words and are immediately accessible, avoiding the use of difficult and over-technical vocabulary. An open layout, with each new section of and entry (phrases, derivatives, usage notes, etymologies, wordbuilder features) on a new line, ensures that finding individual sections and entries is easy to do.

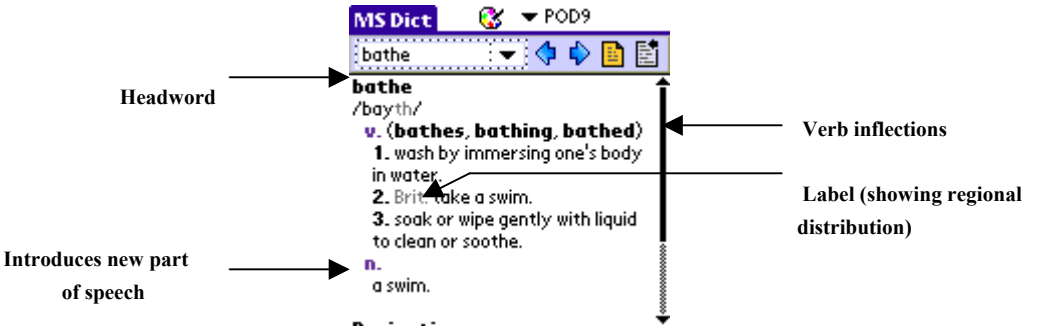
In addition to providing information on the standard core of English as an international language, the dictionary has a number of special features which form an integral part of the text. Firstly, there is information on related words in the form of special wordbuilder sections, enabling the user to expand their vocabulary. Secondly, there are boxed usage notes within the text giving clear guidance on points of grammar and usage. Thirdly, there are in-text lists and tables focusing on core study subjects, for example giving information on such subjects as chemical elements, countries, and nationalities of the world, and geological ages.

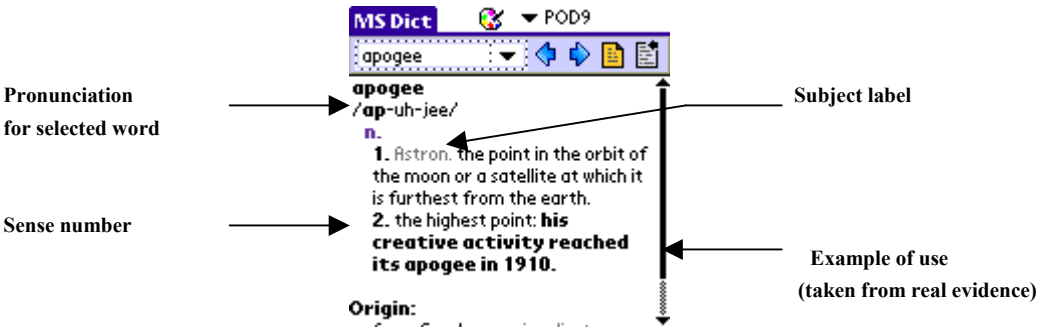
Pronunciations are given using a simple respelling system, newly devised for the dictionary, making them very easy to understand. Greater clarity has also been introduced into etymologies, which are written in a non-technical style to focus on root words, with language names written out in full.

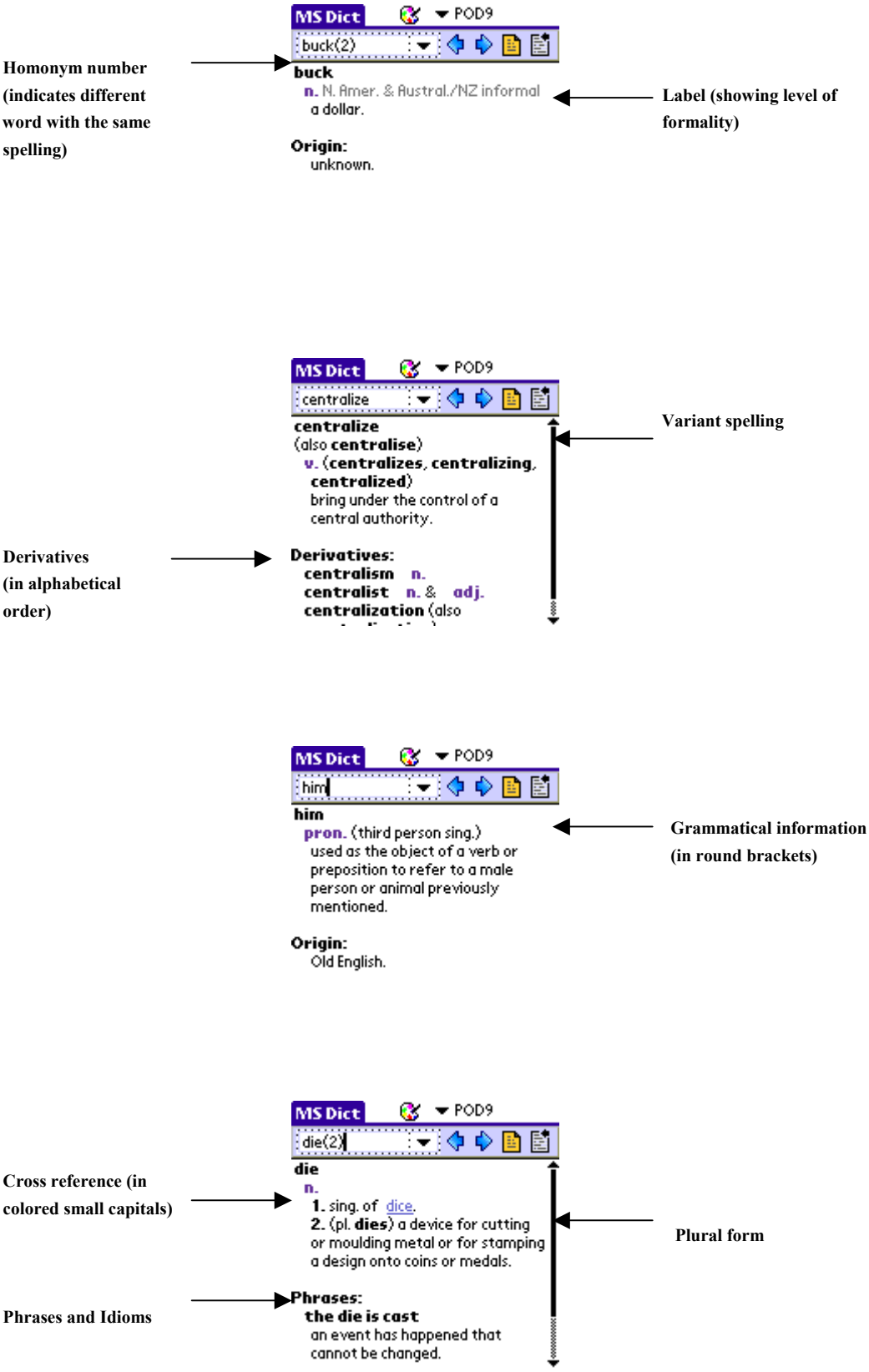
Guide to the Use of the Dictionary

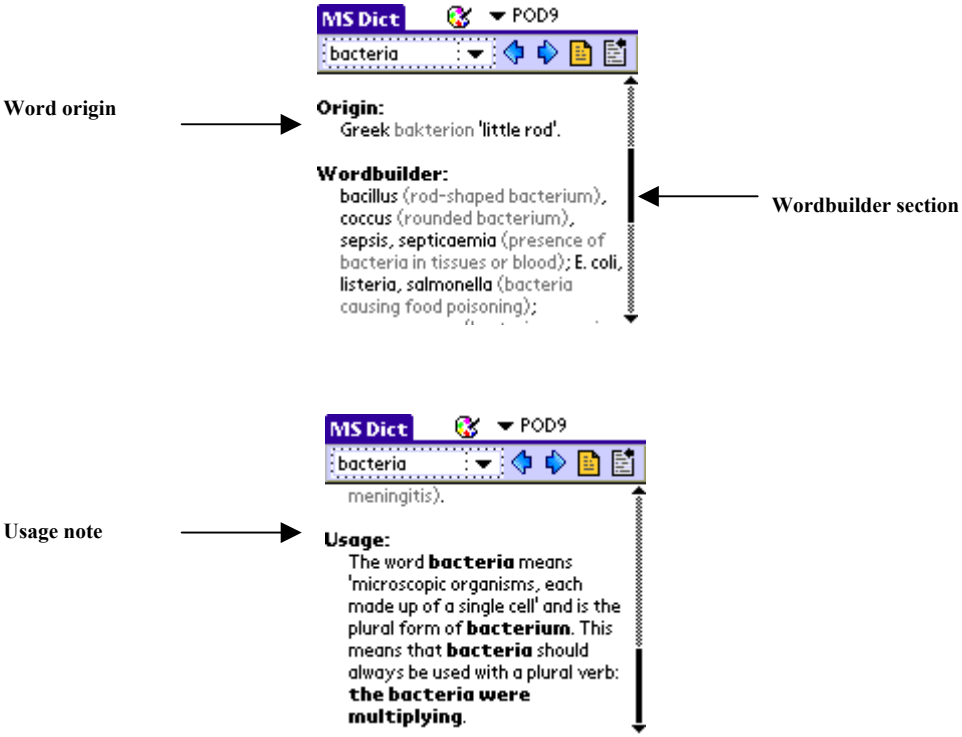
Structure of entries

The *Pocket Oxford English Dictionary* is designed to be straightforward as possible and the use of special dictionary symbols and conventions has been kept to a minimum. Those that are used are explained below.






MS Dict
POD9
buck(2)
buck
n. N. Amer. & Austral./NZ informal
a dollar.
Origin:
unknown.
Homonym number (indicates different word with the same spelling)
Label (showing level of formality)
centralize
(also centralise)
v. (centralizes, centralizing, centralized)
bring under the control of a central authority.
Derivatives:
centralism n.
centralist n. & adj.
centralization (also
Variant spelling
Derivatives (in alphabetical order)
him
him
pron. (third person sing.)
used as the object of a verb or preposition to refer to a male person or animal previously mentioned.
Origin:
Old English.
Grammatical information (in round brackets)
die(2)
die
n.
1. sing. of dice.
2. (pl. dies) a device for cutting or moulding metal or for stamping a design onto coins or medals.
Phrases:
the die is cast
an event has happened that cannot be changed.
Cross reference (in colored small capitals)
Phrases and Idioms
Plural form



Headwords

The headword is shown in bold type.

Variant spellings are given after the headword, e.g. **centralize** (also **centralize**), or before a particular sense if the variant only applies to that sense**;** in all such cases the form given as the headword is the preferred form.

Words that are different but spelled the same way (homographs) are given small numbers to distinguish them.

Variant American spellings are indicated by the label US, e.g. **colour (**US **color).**

Inflections

Plurals of nouns

Plurals formed by adding *–s* (or *–e*s when they end in *–s, -x, -z, -sh,* or soft *–ch*) are regular and are not shown.

Other plural forms are given in the dictionary, notably for:

- Nouns ending in *–i* or *–o*, e.g. **alibi** > **alibis**, **albino** > **albinos**
- Nouns ending in *–a, -um*, or *–us* which are or appear to be Latin forms, e.g. **spectrum** > **spectra**, **areola** > **aleolae**
- Nouns ending in *–y*, e.g**. fly** > **flies**

- Nouns with more than one plural form, e.g. **storey** > **storeys** or **stories**
- Nouns with plurals showing a change in stem, e.g. **foot** > **feet**
- Nouns with plurals that are the same as the singular form, e.g. **sheep** > **sheep**

Verbs

Verbs which change their form (inflect) by simply adding *–s, -ing*, and *–ed* to the infinitive (e.g. **abduct**) are regular and are not shown in the dictionary.

Other verb inflections are given in full in the dictionary, notably for:

- Verbs ending in *–e*, e.g. **change** > **changes**, **changing**, **changed**
- Verbs which inflect by doubling a consonant, e.g. **bat** > **bats**, **batting**, **batted**
- Verbs ending in *–y* which inflect by changing *–y* to *–i*, e.g. **try** > **tries**, **trying**, **tried**
- Verbs in which the past tense and/ or the past participle do not follow the regular *–ed* pattern, e.g. **feel** > **feels**, **feeling**, **felt**; **wake** > **wakes**, **waking**, **woke**; past part. **Woken**
- Verbs ending in *–er*, whether the final *–r* is doubled or not, e.g. **confer** > **confers**, **conferring**, **conferred**; **banter** > **banters**, **bantering**, **bantered**

Adjectives

The following forms comparative and superlative are regular and are not shown in the dictionary:

- Words of one syllable adding *–er* and *–est*, e.g. **great** > **greater**, **greatest**
- Words of one syllable ending in silent *–e*, which drop the *–e* and add *–er* and *–est*, e.g. **brave** > **braver**, **bravest**
- Words which form the comparative and superlative by adding ‘more’ and ‘most’

Other forms are given in the dictionary, notably for:

- Adjectives which form the comparative and superlative by doubling the final consonant, e.g. **hot** > **hotter**, **hottest**
- Two-syllable adjectives which form the comparative and superlative with *–er* and *–est*, e.g. **happy** > **happier**, **happiest**

Hyphenation

Although, standard spelling in English is fixed, the use of hyphens is not. A few general rules are followed, and these are outlined below.

Noun compounds: there are no set rules as to whether a compound (a word such as **airstream**) is written as one word, two words, or with a hyphen (unless the hyphen is used to show the word's grammatical functions: see below): **airstream**, **air stream**, and **air**-stream are all acceptable. However, in modern English, hyphens are being used less than before, and compounds tend to be written either as one word (airstream) or two words (air raid) rather than with a hyphen. There is a further difference between British and US English: compounds tend to be written as two words in British English and one word in US English.

To save space and avoid confusion, only one of the three possible forms-the standard British one- is given in the dictionary. This does not, however, mean that other forms are incorrect or not used.

Grammatical function: hyphens are also used to show a word's grammatical function. When a noun compound made up of two separate words (e.g. **credit card**) is placed before another noun, the rule is that the compound is written with hyphen, e.g. *I used my credit card* but *credit-card debt*. This may be seen in example sentences but is not otherwise mentioned in the dictionary entries.

A similar rule exists with compound adjectives such as **well known**. When used after the verb (predicatively) such adjectives are not written with hyphen, but when used before the noun (attributively) they should have a hyphen: *he is well known* but *a well-known painter*.

The rule with verb compounds is that, where a noun compound is two words (e.g. **hero worship**) any verb compound formed from it is normally hyphenated (**to hero-worship**). This form is shown in the dictionary entries.

Labels

Unless otherwise stated, the words and sentences in this dictionary are all part of standard English. Some words, however, are suitable only for certain situations or are found only in certain contexts, and where this is the case a label (or a combination of labels) is used.

Register labels

These refer to the particular level of use in the language- indicating where a term is informal or formal, historical or archaic, and so on.

Formal: normally used only in writing, such as in official documents

Informal: normally used only in speaking, or informal writing

Dated: no longer used by most English speakers, but still used by older people

Archaic: old-fashioned language, not in ordinary use today, though sometimes used to give an old-fashioned effect and also found in the literature of the past

Hist.: historical-only used today to refer to some practice or thing that is no longer part of modern life, e.g. **blunderbuss.**

Literary: found only or mainly in literature

Tech.: technical- normally used only in technical language, though not restricted to a particular subject field

Rare: not in normal use

Humorous: used to sound funny or playful

Euphem.: euphemistic- used instead of a more direct or vulgar term

Dialect: not part of the standard English language, but still widely used in certain local regions of the English-speaking world

Derog.: derogatory- intended to express a low opinion or cause offence

Offens.: offensive- likely to cause offence, especially racial offence, whether the speaker means to or not

Vulgar: very informal language, usually referring to sexual activity or other bodily functions, which is widely thought of as taboo and may cause offence

Geographical labels

English is spoken throughout the world, but the main regional types of English are British, US and Canadian, Australian and New Zealand, South African, Indian, and West Indian. The majority of words and senses listed in the dictionary are common to all the major regional varieties of English, but where important local difference exist these are shown.

The geographical label 'Brit.' Means that the use is found typically in the British English but is not found in the American English, though it may be found in other varieties such as Australian English. The label 'US', on the other hand, implies that the use is typically US and is not standard in British English, though it may be found elsewhere.

Subject labels

These are used to indicate that a word or sense is associated with a particular subject field or specialist activity, such as Music, Chemistry, or Soccer.

Definition

Definitions are separated by numbers and listed in order of comparative familiarity and importance, with the most current and important senses first.

Derivatives

Derivatives are words formed from another word with the addition of a suffix; for example, **adjustable** is a derivative of **adjust**, with the suffix –**able** added to it. Many derivatives can be understood from the sense of the main word and the particular suffix used; in such cases, the derivatives are listed at the end of the entry for the main word (e.g. **abdication** at **abdicate**). When a derivative has more than one meaning and further explanation is needed, then it is given and entry in its own right (e.g. agreeable).

Wordbuilder sections, lists, and tables

The Wordbuilder sections in the dictionary provide a selection of words related to the headword, generally including brief definitions, to encourage the user to expand their vocabulary. Fuller definitions of the words listed in these sections can be found at the main entries for those words. For instance, the Wordbuilder section at the entry for **animal** gives the related words *fauna, invertebrates, vegetables*, and *zoology*, and that at **brass lists a selection of brass** musical instruments, all of which have their own entries in the dictionary.

The dictionary also includes a number of lists and tables giving information on such subjects as geological ages and countries and nationalities. These lists are situated as near as possible in the text to a 'parent' entry. For instance, lists of countries and nationalities are given as near as possible to an entry relating to a continent, such as **American**, while the list of geological ages is given near to the entry for **geology**.

Pronunciation system used in the dictionary

The *Pocket Oxford English Dictionary* uses a respelling system for pronunciations in which special symbols are avoided. The dictionary's policy is to give a pronunciation for any word which might cause difficulty; it does not provide pronunciations for everyday words believed to be familiar to everyone, such as *table* or *large*. Foreign pronunciations are always given an English pronunciation, e.g. /kor-don **bler**/ (cordon bleu).

Hyphens have been used to divide pronunciations approximately into syllables. The main stress is shown in bold, e.g. /**ab**-duh-muhn/ (abdomen). Secondary stresses are not given.

An apostrophe has been used instead of the sound /uh/ in cases where this is too heavy, or where the sound is syllabic consonant (a consonant that is full syllable), as in /**ay**-zh'n/ (Asian) or /**ha**r-k'n/ (hearken).

A consonant is sometimes doubled to avoid confusion, for example, -ss- is given whenever –s- might be pronounced as –z-, as in /**cha**-liss/ (chalice).

'I' occurs in initial segments of words and stand-alone segments (e.g. /I-uh-**tol**-luh/ (ayatollah), /**kat**-I-uhn/ (cation)). All other instances of 'I' are represented with 'y'.

A rhyming pronunciation is given where the alternative respelling involves odd-looking word groups, as in aisle /*rhymes with* mile/.

List of Respelling Symbols

Vowels	Examples	Vowels	Examples	Vowels	Examples
a	as in **cat**	ew	as in **few**	oy	as in **boy**
ah	as in **calm**	i	as in **pin**	u	as in **cup**
air	as in **hair**	I	as in **eye**	uh	as in **along**
ar	as in **bar**	o	as in **top**	uu	as in **book**
aw	as in **law**	oh	as in **most**	y	as in **cry**
ay	as in **say**	oi	as in **join**	yoo	as in **unit**
e	as in **bed**	oo	as in **soon**	yoor	as in **Europe**
ee	as in **meet**	oor	as in **poor**	yr	as in **fire**
eer	as in **beer**	or	as in **corn**		
er	as in **her**	ow	as in **cow**		

Consonants	Examples	Consonants	Examples	Consonants	Examples
b	as in **bat**	l	as in **leg**	t	as in **top**
ch	as in **chin**	m	as in **man**	th	as in **thin**
d	as in **day**	n	as in **not**	*th*	as in **this**
f	as in **fat**	ng	as in **sing, finger**	v	as in **van**
g	as in **get**	nk	as in **thank**	w	as in **will**
h	as in **hat**	p	as in **pen**	y	as in **yes**
j	as in **jam**	r	as in **red**	z	as in **zebra**
k	as in **king**	s	as in **sit**	zh	as in **vision**
kh	as in **loch**	sh	as in **shop**		

Abbreviations used in the dictionary

abbrev.	abbreviation	Meteorol.	Meteorology
adj.	adjective	Mil.	Military
adv.	adveb	n.	noun
Anat.	Anatomy	N. Amer.	North America
Amer. Football	American Football	Naut.	Nautical
Archit.	Architecture	N. Engl.	Northern English
Astron.	Astronomy	NZ	New Zealand
Austral.	Australian	opp.	opposite of
Biochem.	Biochemistry	offens.	offens.
Boil.	Biology	part.	participle
Bot.	Botany	Philos.	Philosophy
Chem.	Chemistry	Phonet.	Phonetics
comb. form	combining form	Physiol.	Physiology
contr.	contraction	pl.	plural
derog.	derogatory	predet.	predeterminer
det.	determiner	prep.	preposition
Electron.	Electronics	pres.	present
Engl. Law	English Law	pronunc.	pronunciation
esp.	especially	Rom. Myth.	Roman Mythology
euphem.	euphemistic	S. Afr.	South African
exclam.	exclamation	Sc.	Scottish
fem.	feminine	sing.	singular
Geol.	Geology	Stat.	Statistics
Gk Myth.	Greek Mythology	symb.	symbol
hist.	historical	tech.	technical
Ind.	Indian	usu.	usually
Ir.	Irish	v.	verb
Math.	Mathematics	Var.	variant
Med.	Medicine	Zool.	Zoology