

Preparing Your OED Entry

This handout a work in progress. It is not your final copy, so feel free to take many notes, make changes, and add new information here.

Headword Show the most common spelling of your word first. List up to two alternative spellings afterward if you have seen them.

Part of speech Indicate whether the word is a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or other part of speech. Be sure to note if your word is or can be used as more than one part of speech.

Label This refers to the context in which one could expect to see or hear this word used. It could be a regional or cultural origin, a field or special subject from which it derives, or the status or level of language to which it belongs.

Etymology Here you explain how the word became part of the English language. Is it borrowed from another field? Is it a combination or a new form of an already existing word or words? Do your best to infer how the word came into use.

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Definition Show the meaning(s) of the word. You may not use the word in the definition. You should try to be explanatory in this section. Do not give examples to define your word. If you listed multiple parts of speech above, you should explain the different functions of the word here.

Quotation Section Offer a selection of authentic examples of the use of the word that illustrate your definition. If your word can be used in multiple ways (or if it has changed), try to show a quote for each. For each quotation, include the date of publication; the author; the title of the work; and the text of the quotation.