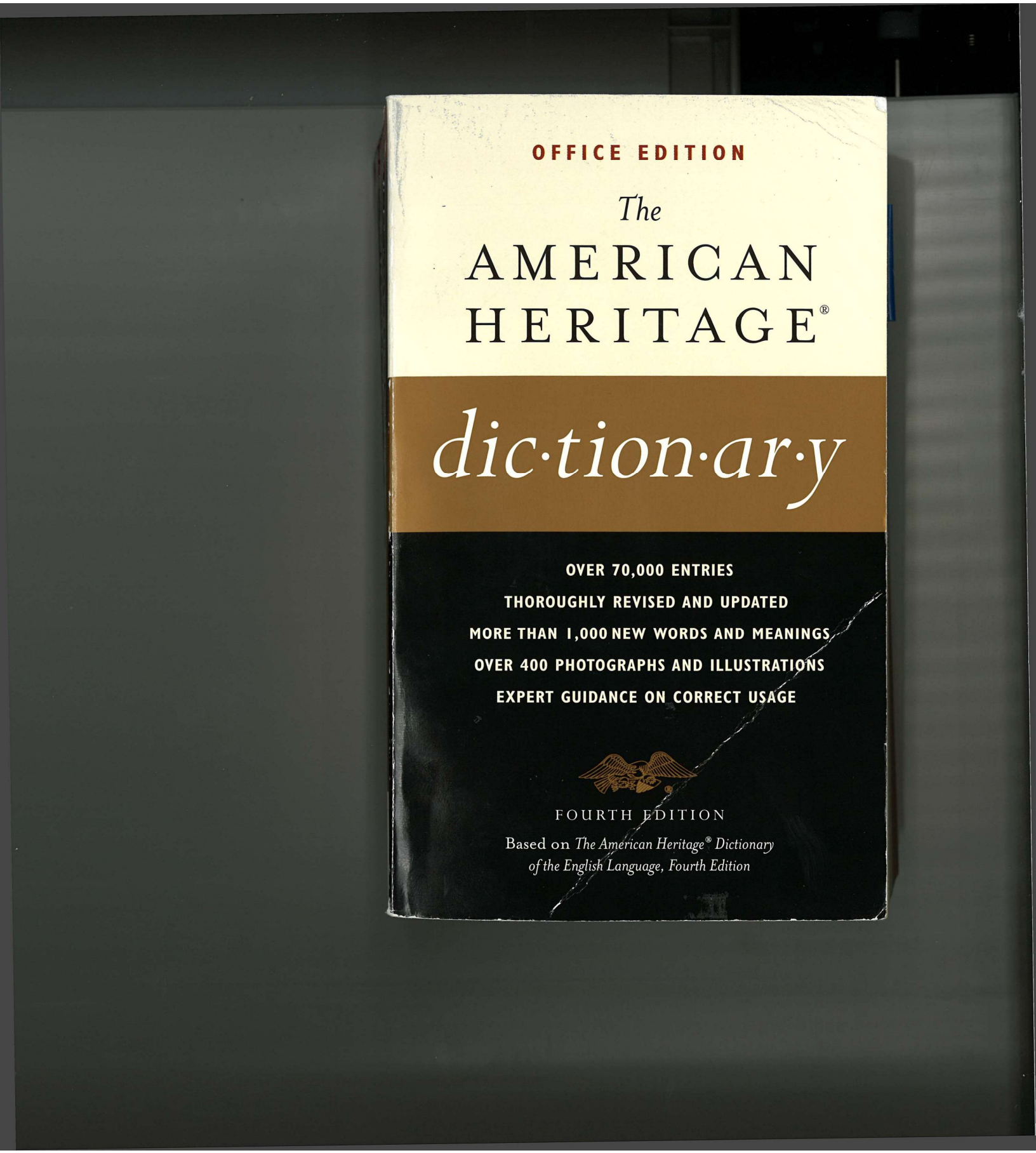
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Editorial and

Guide to the

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Calendar

Currency

Elements

Measuremer

fire tower ►*n.* A tower in which a lookout for fires is posted.
fire•trap (fīr′trăp′) ►*n.* A building that can catch fire easily or is difficult to escape from in the event of fire.
fire•wall (fīr′wôl) ►*n.* **1.** A fireproof wall used as a barrier to prevent the spread of fire. **2.** *Comp. Sci.* A security scheme that prevents unauthorized users from accessing a network.
fire•wa•ter (fīr′wô′tər, -wŏt′ər) ►*n. Slang* Strong liquor, esp. whiskey. [Translation of Ojibwa *ishkodewaaboo*, whiskey.]
fire•wood (fīr′wŏod′) ►*n.* Wood used as fuel.
fire•works (fīr′wûrks′) ►*pl.n.* **1.** Explosives and combustibles set off to generate colored lights, smoke, and noise for amusement. **2a.** A spectacular display, as of musical virtuosity. **b.** A fiery verbal attack.
fir•ing line (fīr′ĭng) ►*n.* **1.** The line of positions from which fire is directed at a target. **2.** The forefront of an activity; vanguard.
firing pin ►*n.* The part of the bolt of a firearm that strikes the primer and detonates the charge of a projectile.
firm[1] (fûrm) ►*adj.* **-er, -est 1.** Resistant to externally applied pressure. **2.** Marked by the tone and resiliency of healthy tissue: *firm muscles.* **3.** Securely fixed in place. **4.** Indicating determination or resolution. **5.** Constant; steadfast. **6.** Fixed and definite: *a firm offer.* **7.** Strong and sure: *a firm grasp.* ►*v.* To make or become firm. ►*adv.* **-er, -est.** Resolutely: *stand firm.* [< Lat. *firmus*.] —**firm′ly** *adv.* —**firm′ness** *n.*
firm[2] (fûrm) ►*n.* A commercial partnership of two or more persons, esp. when unincorporated. [< Med.Lat. *firmāre*, ratify by signature, ult. < Lat. *firmus*, firm.]
fir•ma•ment (fûr′mə-mənt) ►*n.* The vault or expanse of the heavens; the sky. [< Lat. *firmāmentum*, support.]
firm•ware (fûrm′wâr′) ►*n. Comp. Sci.* Instructions that are stored in ROM.
first (fûrst) ►*n.* **1.** The ordinal number matching the number 1 in a series. **2.** The one coming, occurring, or ranking first. **3.** The beginning; outset: *from the first.* **4.** The lowest forward gear in a motor vehicle. **5.** The winning position in a contest. ►*adj.* **1.** Coming before all others in order or location. **2.** Prior to all others in time; earliest. **3.** Ranking above all others; foremost. ►*adv.* **1.** Before or above all others in time, order, rank, or importance. **2.** For the first time. **3.** Rather; preferably: *would die first.* **4.** To begin with: *First we need to make sure of our facts.* [< OE *fyrst*.]
first aid ►*n.* Emergency treatment administered to an injured or sick person before professional medical care is available. —**first′-aid′** *adj.*
first base ►*n. Baseball* The first base to be reached by a runner. —**first baseman** *n.*
first-born (fûrst′bôrn′) ►*adj.* First in order of birth. —**first′born′** *n.*
first class ►*n.* **1.** The first, highest, or best group in a system of classification. **2.** The most expensive class of accommodations. **3.** A class of mail sealed against inspection. —**first′-class′** *adj. & adv.*
first cousin ►*n.* See **cousin** 1.
first-de•gree burn (fûrst′dĭ-grē′) ►*n.* A mild burn that produces redness of the skin but no blistering.
first-gen•er•a•tion (fûrst′jĕn′ə-rā′shən) ►*adj.* **1.** Of or relating to an immigrant to another country. **2.** Of or relating to one whose parents are immigrants.
first•hand (fûrst′hănd′) ►*adj.* Received from the original source. —**first′hand′** *adv.*
first-in, first-out (fûrst′ĭn′ fûrst′out′) ►*n.* A method of inventory accounting in which the oldest remaining items are assumed to have been the first sold.
first lieutenant ►*n.* A rank, as in the US Army, above second lieutenant and below captain.
first•ly (fûrst′lē) ►*adv.* To begin with.
first mate ►*n.* An officer on a merchant ship ranking immediately below the captain.
first person ►*n.* The form of a verb or pronoun designating the speaker of the sentence in which it appears.
first-rate (fûrst′rāt′) ►*adj.* Foremost in quality, rank, or importance. ►*adv. Informal* Very well; excellently.
first sergeant ►*n.* **1.** A rank in the US Army and Marine Corps below sergeant major. **2.** Any of three senior noncommissioned ranks in the US Air Force.
first strike ►*n.* The initial use of strategic nuclear weapons against a nuclear-armed adversary. —**first′-strike′** *adj.*
first-string (fûrst′strĭng′) ►*adj.* Of or being a regular member of a team rather than a substitute. —**first′-string′er** *n.*
firth (fûrth) ►*n. Scots* A long narrow inlet of the sea. [< ON *fjördhr*.]
fis•cal (fĭs′kəl) ►*adj.* **1.** Of or relating to government expenditures, revenues, and debt. **2.** Of finance or finances. [< Lat. *fiscus*, treasury.] —**fis′cal•ly** *adv.*
fiscal year ►*n.* A 12-month period for which an organization plans the use of its funds.
fish (fĭsh) ►*n., pl.* **fish** or **fish•es 1.** Any of numerous cold-blooded aquatic vertebrates having fins, gills, and a streamlined body. **2.** The edible flesh of a fish. ►*v.* **1.** To catch or try to catch fish. **2.** To grope: *fished in both pockets for a coin.* **3.** To seek something indirectly: *fish for compliments.* [< OE *fisc*.] —**fish′er** *n.* —**fish′ing** *n.*
fish•bowl (fĭsh′bōl′) ►*n.* **1.** A transparent bowl in which live fish are kept. **2.** *Informal* A place or situation lacking in privacy.
fish•er•man (fĭsh′ər-mən) ►*n.* **1.** One who fishes as an occupation or for sport. **2.** A commercial fishing vessel.
fish•er•y (fĭsh′ə-rē) ►*n., pl.* **-ies 1.** The industry devoted to the catching, processing, or selling of fish. **2.** A fishing ground. **3.** A hatchery for fish.
fish•eye (fĭsh′ī′) ►*adj.* Of or being a camera lens that covers an angle of about 180°.
fish hawk ►*n.* See **osprey.**
fish•hook (fĭsh′hŏok′) ►*n.* A barbed metal hook for catching fish.
fishing rod ►*n.* A rod used with a line for catching fish.
fish ladder ►*n.* A steplike series of pools by which fish can pass around a dam.
fish•meal (fĭsh′mēl′) ►*n.* Ground dried fish used as animal feed and fertilizer.
fish•net (fĭsh′nĕt′) ►*n.* **1.** Netting used to catch fish. **2.** A large-mesh fabric.
fish story ►*n. Informal* A boastful and implau-

sible or hig
fish•wife (
fish. **2.** A
abusive.
fish•y (fĭsh
bling or su
ing doubt
—**fish′i•n**
fis•sile (fĭs′
Phys. Fissi
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(fĭ-sĭl′ĭ-tē)
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which an
generating
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pendently
split.] —**fis**
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fist (fĭst) ►
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fist•ful (fĭst
fist•i•cuffs
fis•tu•la (fĭ
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hollow orga
fit[1] (fĭt) ►*v.*
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ship. **5.** To
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circumstanc
per. **3.** Phy
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tight fit. [M
—**fit′ter** *n.*
fit[2] (fĭt) ►*n.*
sion, esp. or
den appearan
or sneezing.
ousy. **3.** A s
[ME, hardsh
fit•ful (fĭt′f
—**fit′ful•ly**
fit•ness (fĭt′
cally fit, esp
per nutrition
fit•ting (fĭt′
►*n.* **1.** The a
small detach
ting•ly *adv.*
Fitz•ger•ald
Amer. singer
Fitzgerald,
1940. Amer.
FitzGerald,
and translato
five (fīv) ►*n.*
+ 1. **2.** The 5
—**five** *adj.*
five-and-ten
selling a wid

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