The New Oxford American Dictionary

SECOND EDITION

FIRST EDITION

Elizabeth J. Jewell
Frank Abate

SECOND EDITION

Erin McKean

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2005

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further
Oxford University's objective of excellence
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York
Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in
Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

The first edition of the *New Oxford American Dictionary* was based on *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, published in the United Kingdom in 1998.

Copyright © 2005 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York, 10016
www.oup.com/us
www.askoxford.com

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission of Oxford University Press

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
The new Oxford American dictionary.-- 2nd ed.
p. cm.
ISBN-13 978-0-19-517077-1

1. English language--United States--Dictionaries. 2. Americanisms--Dictionaries.
PE1628.N429 2005
423'.1--dc22
2005000941

This book includes some words that are, or are asserted to be, proprietary names or trademarks. Their inclusion does not imply that they have acquired for legal purposes a nonproprietary or general significance, nor is any other judgment implied concerning their legal status. In cases where the editor has some evidence that a word is used as a proprietary name or trademark, this is indicated by the designation trademark, but no judgment concerning the legal status of such words is made or implied thereby.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

■ *historical* postpone the conscription of (someone): *he was no longer* ***deferred from*** *the draft.* ▷late Middle English (also in the sense 'put on one side'): from Old French *differer* 'defer or differ,' from Latin *differre*, from *dis-* 'apart' + *ferre* 'bring, carry.' Compare with DEFER[2] and DIFFER. **—de·fer·ment** *n.* **—de·fer·ra·ble** *adj.* **—de·fer·ral** /-ˈfərəl/ *n.*

de·fer[2] ▸*v.* (**-ferred, -fer·ring**) [*intrans.*] (**defer to**) submit humbly to (a person or a person's wishes or qualities): *he deferred to Tim's superior knowledge.* ▷late Middle English: from Old French *deferer*, from Latin *deferre* 'carry away, refer (a matter),' from *de-* 'away from' + *ferre* 'bring, carry.' Compare with DEFER[1]. **—de·fer·rer** *n.*

def·er·ence /ˈdefərəns/ ▸*n.* humble submission and respect: *he addressed her with the deference due to age.* See note at HONOR. ▷mid 17th cent.: from French *déférence*, from *déférer* 'refer' (see DEFER[2]).

▸*PHRASE* □ **in deference to** out of respect for; in consideration of.

def·er·ent[1] /ˈdefərənt/ ▸*adj.* another term for DEFERENTIAL. ▷early 19th cent.: from DEFER[2] and DEFERENCE.

def·er·ent[2] ▸*n.* (in the Ptolemaic system of astronomy) the large circular orbit followed by the center of the small epicycle in which a planet was thought to move. ▷late Middle English: from medieval Latin *deferent-* 'carrying away,' from the verb *deferre*.

def·er·en·tial /ˌdefəˈrenCHəl/ ▸*adj.* showing deference; respectful: *people were always* ***deferential to*** *him.* ▷early 19th cent.: from DEFERENCE, on the pattern of pairs such as *prudence, prudential.* **—def·er·en·tial·ly** *adv.*

de·ferred an·nu·i·ty ▸*n.* an annuity that commences only after a lapse of some specified time after the final purchase premium has been paid.

de·fer·ves·cence /ˌdēfərˈvesəns; ˌdefər-/ ▸*n. Medicine* the abatement of a fever as indicated by a decrease in bodily temperature. ▷early 18th cent.: from Latin *defervescent-* 'ceasing to boil,' from the verb *defervescere*. **—de·fer·vesce** /-ˈves/ *v.*

de·fi·ance /diˈfīəns/ ▸*n.* open resistance; bold disobedience: *the demonstration was held* ***in defiance of*** *official warnings.* ▷Middle English (denoting the renunciation of an allegiance or friendship): from Old French, from *defier* 'defy.'

de·fi·ant /diˈfīənt/ ▸*adj.* showing defiance: *she was in a defiant mood.* ▷late 16th cent.: from French *défiant* or directly from DEFIANCE. **—de·fi·ant·ly** *adv.*

de·fib·ril·la·tion /dēˌfibrəˈlāSHən/ ▸*n. Medicine* the stopping of fibrillation of the heart by administering a controlled electric shock in order to allow restoration of the normal rhythm. **—de·fib·ril·late** /dēˈfibrəˌlāt/ *v.*

de·fib·ril·la·tor /dēˈfibrəˌlātər/ ▸*n. Medicine* an apparatus used to control heart fibrillation by application of an electric current to the chest wall or heart.

de·fi·cien·cy /diˈfiSHənsē/ ▸*n.* (*pl.* **-cies**) a lack or shortage: *vitamin A deficiency in children.* ■ a failing or shortcoming: *they did not like having the deficiencies of their city pointed out to them.*

de·fi·cien·cy dis·ease ▸*n.* a disease caused by the lack of some essential or important element in the diet, usually a particular vitamin or mineral. See also IMMUNODEFICIENCY.

de·fi·cien·cy pay·ment ▸*n.* a payment made, typically by a government body, to cover a financial deficit incurred in the course of an activity such as farming or education.

de·fi·cient /diˈfiSHənt/ ▸*adj.* [*predic.*] not having enough of a specified quality or ingredient: *this diet is* ***deficient in*** *vitamin B.* ■ insufficient or inadequate: *they trashed the legislation as deficient.* ■ (also **mentally deficient**) *offensive* having a mental handicap. ▷late 16th cent. (originally in the theological phrase *deficient cause*, denoting a failure or deficiency that has a particular consequence): from Latin *deficient-* 'failing,' from the verb *deficere* (see DEFECT[1]).

def·i·cit /ˈdefəsit/ ▸*n.* the amount by which something, esp. a sum of money, is too small. ■ an excess of expenditure or liabilities over income or assets in a given period: *an annual operating deficit | the budget will remain* ***in deficit.*** ■ (in sports) the amount or score by which a team or individual is losing: *came back from a 3–0 deficit.* ■ *technical* a deficiency or failing, esp. in a neurological or psychological function: ***deficits in*** *speech comprehension.* ▷late 18th cent.: via French from Latin *deficit* 'it is lacking,' from the verb *deficere* (see DEFECT[1]).

def·i·cit fi·nanc·ing ▸*n.* government funding of spending by borrowing.

def·i·cit spend·ing ▸*n.* government spending, in excess of revenue, of funds raised by borrowing rather than from taxation.

def·i·lade /ˈdefəˌlād; ˌdefəˈlād/ *Military* ▸*n.* the protection of a position, vehicle, or troops against enemy observation or gunfire.

▸*v.* [*trans.*] protect (a position, vehicle, or troops) against enemy observation or gunfire: [as *adj.*] (**defiladed**) *a defiladed tank.* ▷early 19th cent.: from French *défiler* 'protect from the enemy' + -ADE[1].

de·file[1] /diˈfīl/ ▸*v.* [*trans.*] sully, mar, or spoil: *the land was defiled by a previous owner.* See note at POLLUTE. ■ desecrate or profane (something sacred): *the tomb had been defiled and looted.* ■ *archaic* violate the chastity of (a woman). ▷late Middle English: alteration of obsolete *defoul*, from Old French *defouler* 'trample down,' influenced by obsolete *befile* 'befoul, defile.' **—de·file·ment** *n.* **—de·fil·er** *n.*

de·file[2] /diˈfīl; ˈdēˌfīl/ ▸*n.* a steep-sided, narrow gorge or passage (originally one requiring troops to march in single file).

▸*v.* [*intrans.*] *archaic* (of troops) march in single file: *we emerged after defiling through the mountainsides.* ▷late 17th cent.: from French *défilé* (noun), *défiler* (verb), from *dé* 'away from' + *file* 'column, file.'

de·fine /diˈfīn/ ▸*v.* [*trans.*] **1** state or describe exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of: *the contract will seek to define the client's obligations.* ■ give the meaning of (a word or phrase), esp. in a dictionary. ■ make up or establish the character of: *for some, the football team defines their identity.* **2** mark out the boundary or limits of: [as *adj.*] (**defined**) *clearly defined boundaries.* ■ make clear the outline of; delineate: *she defined her eyes by applying eyeshadow.* ▷late Middle English (also in the sense 'bring to an end'): from Old French *definer*, from a variant of Latin *definire*, from *de-* (expressing completion) + *finire* 'finish' (from *finis* 'end'). **—de·fin·a·ble** *adj.* **—de·fin·er** *n.*

de·fin·i·en·dum /diˌfinēˈendəm/ ▸*n.* (*pl.* **-da** /-də/) a word, phrase, or symbol that is the subject of a definition, esp. in a dictionary entry, or that is introduced into a logical system by being defined. Contrasted with DEFINIENS. ▷late 19th cent.: from Latin, 'that which is to be defined,' from the verb *definire* (see DEFINE).

de·fin·i·ens /diˈfinēənz/ ▸*n.* (*pl.* **de·fin·i·en·ti·a** /diˌfinēˈenSH(ē)ə/) a word, phrase, or symbolic expression used to define something, esp. in a dictionary entry, or introducing a word or symbol into a logical system by providing a statement of its meaning. Contrasted with DEFINIENDUM. ▷late 19th cent.: from medieval Latin, 'defining,' present participle of *definire* (see DEFINE).

de·fin·ing mo·ment ▸*n.* an event that typifies or determines all subsequent related occurrences.

def·i·nite /ˈdefənit/ ▸*adj.* clearly stated or decided; not vague or doubtful: *we had no definite plans.* ■ clearly true or real; unambiguous: *no definite proof has emerged.* ■ [*predic.*] (of a person) certain or sure about something: *you're very definite about that!* ■ clear or undeniable (used for emphasis): *video is a definite asset in the classroom.* ■ having exact and discernible physical limits or form. ▷mid 16th cent.: from Latin *definitus* 'defined, set within limits,' past participle of *definire* (see DEFINE). **—def·i·nite·ness** *n.*

USAGE For an explanation of the difference between **definite** and **definitive**, see **usage** at DEFINITIVE.

def·i·nite ar·ti·cle ▸*n. Grammar* a determiner (*the* in English) that introduces a noun phrase and implies that the thing mentioned has already been mentioned, or is common knowledge, or is about to be defined (as in *the book on the table; the art of government; the famous poet and short story writer*). Compare with INDEFINITE ARTICLE.

def·i·nite de·scrip·tion ▸*n. chiefly Philosophy* a noun phrase introduced by the definite article or its equivalent, and purporting to denote a particular entity or phenomenon.

def·i·nite in·te·gral ▸*n. Mathematics* an integral expressed as the difference between the values of the integral at specified upper and lower limits of the independent variable.

def·i·nite·ly /ˈdefənitlē/ ▸*adv.* without doubt (used for emphasis): *I will definitely be at the airport to meet you.* | ■ in a definite manner; clearly: *we couldn't plan to go elsewhere until we had heard from you more definitely.*

def·i·ni·tion /ˌdefəˈniSHən/ ▸*n.* **1** a statement of the exact meaning of a word, esp. in a dictionary. ■ an exact statement or description of the nature, scope, or meaning of something: *our definition of what constitutes poetry.* ■ the action or process of defining something. **2** the degree of distinctness in outline of an object, image, or sound, esp. of an image on a photograph or on a screen. ■ the capacity of an instrument or device for making images distinct in outline: [in *combination*] *high-definition television.* ▷late Middle English: from Latin *definitio(n-)*, from the verb *definire* 'set bounds to' (see DEFINE). **—de·fi·ni·tion·al** /-SHənl/ *adj.* **—def·i·ni·tion·al·ly** /-SHənl-ē/ *adv.*

▸*PHRASE* □ **by definition** by its very nature; intrinsically: *underachievement, by definition, is not due to lack of talent.*

de·fin·i·tive /diˈfinitiv/ ▸*adj.* **1** (of a conclusion, agreement) done or reached decisively and with authority: *a definitive diagnosis.* ■ (of a book or other text) the most authoritative of its kind: *the definitive biography of Harry Truman.* **2** (of a postage stamp) for general use and typically of standard design, not special or commemorative.

▸*n.* a definitive postage stamp. ▷late Middle English: from Old French *definitif, -ive*, from Latin *definitivus*, from *definit-* 'set within limits,' from the verb *definire* (see DEFINE). **—de·fin·i·tive·ly** *adv.*

USAGE **Definitive** in the sense 'decisive, unconditional, final' is sometimes confused with **definite**. **Definite** means 'clearly defined, precise, having fixed limits,' but **definitive** goes further, meaning 'most complete, satisfying all criteria, most authoritative': *although some critics found a few definite weak spots in the author's interpretations, his book was nonetheless widely regarded as the* ***definitive*** *history of the war.* A **definite** decision is simply one that has been made clearly and is without doubt, whereas a **definitive** decision is one that is not only conclusive but also carries the stamp of authority or is a benchmark for the future, as in a Supreme Court ruling. It is a common error to use **definitive** as though it were a more elegant way of saying **definite.**

de·fin·i·tive host ▸*n. Biology* an organism that supports the adult or sexually reproductive form of a parasite. Compare with INTERMEDIATE HOST.

def·la·grate /ˈdefləˌgrāt/ ▸*v. dated Chemistry* burn away or cause (a substance) to burn away with a sudden flame and rapid, sharp combustion: [*trans.*] *the current will deflagrate some of the particles.* ▷early 19th cent.: from Latin *deflagrat-* 'burned up,' from the verb *deflagrare*, from *de-* 'away, thoroughly' + *flagrare* 'to burn.' **—def·la·gra·tor** /-tər/ *n.*

def·la·gra·tion /ˌdeflaˈgrāSHən/ ▸*n.* the action of burning a substance until it burns away rapidly. ■ *technical* combustion that propagates through a gas across the surface of an explosive at subsonic speeds, driven by the transfer of heat. Compare with DETONATION. ▷early 17th cent.: from Latin *deflagratio(n-)*, from the verb *deflagrare* (see DEFLAGRATE).

de·flate /diˈflāt/ ▸*v.* **1** [*trans.*] let air or gas out of a tire, balloon, or similar object): *he deflated one of the tires.* ■ [*intrans.*] be emptied of air or gas: *the balloon deflated.* **2** cause (someone) to suddenly lose confidence or feel less important: [as *adj.*] (**deflated**) *news left him feeling utterly deflated.* ■ reduce the level of (an emotion or feeling): *her anger was deflated.* **3** *Economics* bring about a general reduction in price levels in (an economy). ▷late 19th cent.: from DE- (expressing reversal) + *-flate* (as in *inflate*). **—de·fla·tor** /-tər/ *n.*

de·fla·tion /diˈflāSHən/ ▸*n.* **1** the action or process of deflating or being deflated: *deflation of the illusion that the 1960s were a perpetual party.* **2** *Economics* reduction of the general level of prices in an economy. **3** *Geology* the removal of particles of rock, sand, etc., by the wind. ▷late 19th cent. (in the sense 'release of air from something inflated'): from DEFLATE; sense 3 via German from Latin *deflat-* 'blown away,' from the verb *deflare*. **—de·fla·tion·ist** /-SHənist/ *n.* & *adj.*

de·fla·tion·ar·y /diˈflāSHəˌnerē/ ▸*adj.* of, characterized by, or tending to cause economic deflation.

de·flect /diˈflekt/ ▸*v.* [*trans.*] cause (something) to change direction by interposing something; turn aside from a straight course: *the bullet was deflected harmlessly into the ceiling | figurative he attempted to deflect attention away from his private life.* ■ [*intrans.*] (of an object) change direction after hitting something: *the ball* ***deflected off*** *his body.* ■ cause (someone) to deviate from an intended purpose: *she refused to be deflected* ***from*** *anything she had set her mind on.* ■ cause (something) to change orientation: *the compass needle was deflected* ***from*** *magnetic north by metal in the area*