



The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English)

By Tom Dalzell, Terry Victor

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The successor to *The Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* – Eric Partridge’s magnum opus – this all-new work retains the humour and energy of its forebear, and continues the Partridge tradition for a new millennium.

The culmination of years of research, this *Dictionary* features sources ranging from fanzines, through movie scripts, to classic twentieth-century literature.

Unique, exciting and, at times, hilariously shocking, key features include:

- new two-volume format, containing over 60,000 entries in 2,000 pages
- unprecedented coverage of World English, with equal prominence given to American and British English slang, and entries included from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, South Africa, Ireland, and the Caribbean
- new emphasis on post-World War II slang and unconventional English
- published sources for each entry, often including an early or significant example of the term’s use in print.

Edited by Tom Dalzell, an author, lawyer and leading expert on American slang, and Terry Victor, a slang-collector actor, broadcaster, writer and director, *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* is a monumental achievement, and anyone with a fascination or passion for language will delight in the wit and intelligence of this invaluable resource.



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Editorial Review

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Starred Review The king is dead. Long live the king! Since 1937 the standard dictionary of English slang has been Eric Partridge's *The Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. In edition after edition, Partridge enumerated slang words, provided quotations both to illustrate use and to date origins, cited other authorities, and applied usage labels. These included slang and cant, colloquialisms, solecisms, catchphrases, nicknames, and vulgarisms. The last, Partridge explained, are "words and phrases that, in no way slangy, are avoided in polite society." English has changed; society has changed; the time has come for a new *Partridge*.

Partridge recorded the slang of the UK as well as that of some Commonwealth countries. Conspicuously absent was the rich slang of the U.S., slang exported worldwide by GIs during World War II and broadcast globally through communications media that have, to use a current catchphrase, made the world flat. As the world changed, as English with an American accent became the lingua franca of the latter half of the twentieth century, Partridge (1894-1979) was less connected to the popular culture that breeds slang. As the culture changed--some would argue that it coarsened--the notion of vulgarisms has become anachronistic. Indeed, the U.S. vice president has been recorded publicly hurling one of the most vulgar yet most common slang words at a senator. In the flattened world, colloquialisms and slang terms have often become indistinguishable. Thus, the *New Partridge*.

In their backgrounds, the editors embody the spirit and informality of slang. Dalzell, a California labor lawyer who entered the bar not through the conventional path of a law degree but by "reading the law," has read widely in other areas and has become a nationally recognized expert on slang in English, especially in American English. Victor, a British actor and playwright, expresses his enthusiasm for slang's popularity, earthiness, and expressiveness in his rather peculiar endorsement for the *New Partridge*, saying, "If you never read a more exciting, more sexy, more rude, more filthy, more disgusting book in your life, it would have been one of the best books you ever read."

Both deeply connected through life experience with post-World War II culture, the editors have created a truly new *Partridge*. It encompasses the entire English-speaking world and focuses on slang and unconventional English used or created since 1945. Its catholicity includes "pidgin, Creolised English and borrowed foreign terms used by English-speakers in primarily English-language conversation." Gone are Partridge's labels separating the polite sheep from the vulgar goats. Dalzell and Victor celebrate the English language's fecundity by "embrac[ing] the language of the beats, hipsters, Teddy Boys, mods and rockers, hippies, pimps, druggoes, whores, punks, skinheads, ravers, surfers, Valley Girls, dudes, pill-popping truck drivers, hackers, rappers and more."

As in the original Partridge, entries list the term, identify its part of speech, explain its meaning, identify the country of origin, and cite sources or provide quotations showing how the term is used. The *New Partridge* draws on numerous specialized dictionaries, including Rick Ayers' *Berkeley High Slang Dictionary* (2004); Gregory Clark's *Words of the Vietnam War* (1990); Ralph de Sola's *Crime Dictionary* (1982); John A. Holm's *Dictionary of Bahamian English* (1982); and Ruth Todasco's *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Dirty Words* (1973). Other sources range widely: popular fiction, newspaper stories, Lennon and McCartney song lyrics, scholarly journal articles, magazines, transcripts of debate in Northern Ireland's parliament, and more--even Rush Limbaugh's radio program (source of the term *feminazi*) and Howard Stern's *Miss America* (1995). Despite including six double-columned pages for *fuck* and its many related coinages, none of these

entries cite Jesse Sheidlower's *The F Word* (1999), surely one of the very few, if not the only, dictionary devoted to a single slang word of singular popularity.

Dalzell and Victor note that Partridge's "etymologies at times strayed from the plausible to the fanciful," but their etymologies are at times absent. They clearly define terms such as *bimbo*, *daddy mac*, *lug* (as a noun meaning *ear*), and *potsy*. However, they leave a reader wondering where these terms came from and how each relates to the thing or condition it represents.

Like the old, the *New Partridge* is very much a product of English as it appears in print. Nearly all sources cited are ink-on-paper publications. It does include "several of the more prominent examples of Internet and text messaging shorthand that have become known outside the small circle of initial users" (e.g., GTG, LOL). Occasional or casual blog readers cannot, however, turn to the *New Partridge* to learn meanings of the blogosphere's slang terms.

Slang opens a window on society. This dictionary abounds with terms related to the human body, bodily functions, sexual acts, antagonism toward others, crime, drinking, drug abuse, gambling, and people on the margins of mainstream society or in a minority status. These topics, especially expressed using this dictionary's vocabulary, may not be the stuff of conversation in "polite society." They are, however, the stuff of human life in every culture and all social strata. The *New Partridge* does a service in recording these words and explaining them. Slang also demonstrates how vibrant, flexible, and accommodating the English language is and how creative and imaginative its millions of speakers are. This dictionary informs, but it also entertains.

The old *Partridge* is not really dead; it remains the best record of British slang antedating 1945, just as Robert L. Chapman's *Dictionary of American Slang* (1998), based on Harold Wentworth and Stuart Berg Flexner's 1960 dictionary, remains important for older American slang. Now, however, the preferred source for information about English slang of the past 60 years is the *New Partridge*. *James Rettig*
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Review

'A veritable Madame Tussaud's of the vulgar language. It is a really epoch-making, monumental piece of work, carried out with astonishing industry and learning.' – *New Statesman*

'Most slang dictionaries are no better than momgrams or a rub of the brush, put together by shmegegges looking to make some moola. [*The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*] is the wee babes. At more than 2,000 pages it's mondo and pretty authoritative, including entries not only from the United Kingdom and America but also from Australia, New Zealand, India and the Caribbean. Who's the daddy?!!' – *Guardian*

'One of the many benefits of owning the two-volume *New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, is that you can dip in just about anywhere and enjoy the exuberant, endless display of human inventiveness with language.' – *BOOKFORUM*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alberto Holbrook:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Guide is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They are really reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is actually reading a book. Why not the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, man feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you'll have this The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English).

Enrique Hayes:

The book with title The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English) contains a lot of information that you can understand it. You can get a lot of profit after read this book. This particular book exist new understanding the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world now. That is important to you to be aware of how the improvement of the world. This particular book will bring you inside new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book on the smart phone, so you can read that anywhere you want.

Bradley Cox:

Precisely why? Because this The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English) is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap that but latter it will shock you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such incredible way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of gains than the other book have such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking means. So , still want to delay having that book? If I had been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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