

LET'S LOOK IT UP!

"I DON'T know exactly what it means, so let's look it up in the dictionary." That sentence is spoken hundreds of thousands of times each day.

We all know what a dictionary is and that a man by the name of Webster had something to do with it. Noah Webster it was who first had the idea of "An American Dictionary of English Language." Wasn't Noah Webster a brother of Daniel Webster, the great statesman?

Let's look it up!

Having done so, we find it isn't true. For Noah Webster was born in 1758, twenty-four years before the great statesman and orator first saw the light of day. They were not related.

How is the dictionary compiled? Who compiles it? What establishes a word as a part of the English language?

The publishers of Webster's New International Dictionary devoted eight years to the making of an edition. Outside of their own staff of specialists, two hundred and seven other authorities were

called in to give of their experience and knowledge in specialized lines of work. If it was a chemical term, then several world-famous chemists were consulted before the word was finally defined. If it had something to do with sports, mining, lumbering, or quarrying, some recognized expert in those lines had first to pass on the definition before it became final.

Usage adds a word to the dictionary. A new industry comes into being which calls for new words. We begin to use these words in our daily conversations and, presto, they must be included in the newest editions of the dictionary!

Dictionaries are not hurriedly compiled; they are built literally word by word. Noah Webster's first modest dictionary contained the definitions of 38,000 words. That was in 1806.

The latest edition contains 600,000 entries, has 12,000 terms illustrated, has 35,000 geographical entries, 13,000 biographical, contains 3,350 pages and cost over a million and a quarter dollars to compile!

Dictionaries today must be engineered so as to stand up under the thumbing of millions of thumbs. The binding is strengthened by special tape and unusually stout covers. A special glue is used, and the binding thread is tested for tensile strength.

Some rainy day, sometime when you have an hour to spare, pick up an unabridged dictionary. Open it at random. Go slowly down the

columns. Before you are well under way, you will find some word or phrase which will fascinate you. Read what it has to say, and then look up some of the cross indexes.

Learn a new word, an unfamiliar pronunciation, each day, and you will help educate yourself, add interest to your personality.—*Richard L. Hobart, condensed from Young People's Weekly.*

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RUSSIAN READING

ONLY country where an edition running into millions is not just a publisher's dream is Soviet Russia. Since the Communist Revolution of 1917, states *The Natal Witness*, more than 7,000,000,000 copies of books have been made and sold while newspaper circulation has rocketed to 8,000,000,000 copies a year.

Widely read authors in Russia include Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens, Byron, Balzac, Pushkin and the disciples of Communism. Dicken's novels have an unusual attraction with the Russian proletariat. Since 1917 nearly 2,000,000 copies have been circulated in the Union. Shakespeare goes down far better than in Britain, 30,000,000 entire volumes have passed through the presses in the post-Revolutionary era.

Most popular of all are the Communist classics. In the last 20 years 355,000,000 copies of the various works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have been published in Russia. Stalin alone enjoyed a net sale of 40,000,000 copies in the year of 1937 alone. Unlike Adolf Hitler he does not receive royalties. Soviet knowalls even estimate that one out of every three of Russia's 135,000,000 people buys a Stalin work each year.—*From News Review.*