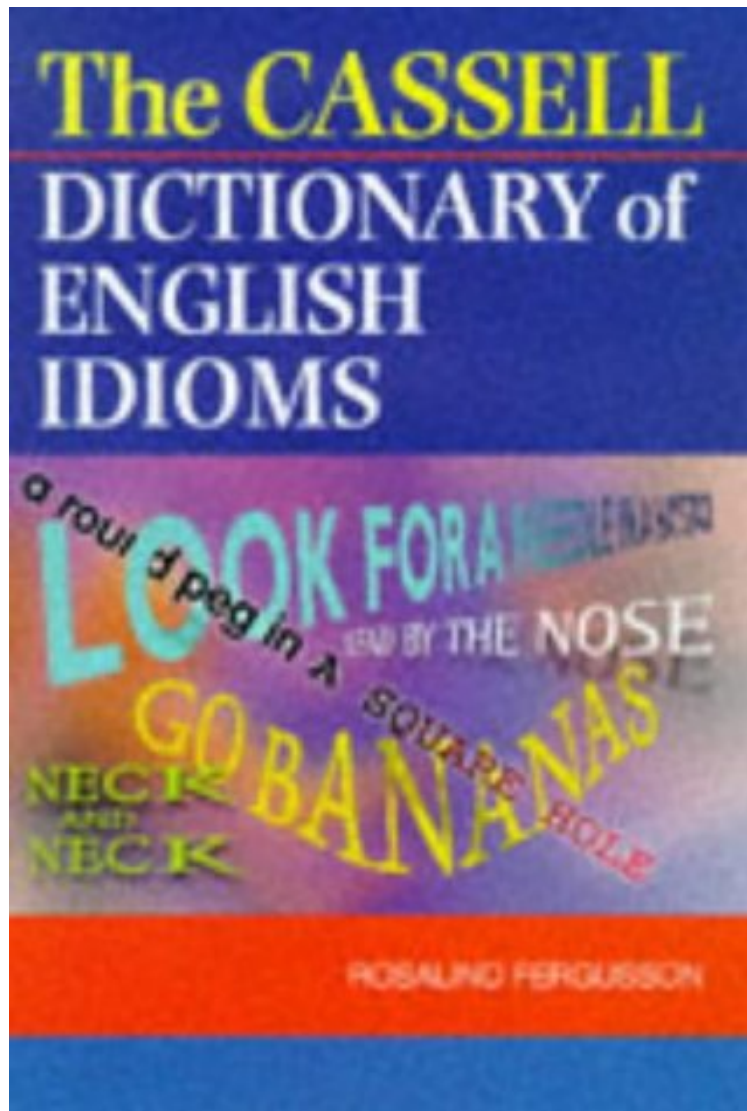


(Mobile book) The Cassell Dictionary of English Idioms

The Cassell Dictionary of English Idioms

From Cassell

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From Cassell : The Cassell Dictionary of English Idioms before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cassell Dictionary of English Idioms:

over 10,000 entries listed under keywords from A-Z comprehensive cross-reference system for easy searching clear definitions in plain English details of original usage and sources full and thorough guide to English idioms details of origins of strange expressions fascinating for native English speakers and new learners alike

From Booklist ed with Cassell Dictionary of World History. If Charles Dickens' literal-minded schoolmaster Mr. Gradgrind had imagination enough to appreciate the richness and vividness of many English idioms, he would have wanted a guide such as *The Cassell Dictionary of English Idioms* to explain them to his young charges. Just as Gradgrind reduced the power and beauty of horse to a catalog of facts: "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive . . ." and so on, Cassell explains the meanings of expressions such as *the fat is in the fire*, *to live on one's hump*, and *to rob Peter to pay Paul*. The clear explanations are succinct and direct. Where illustration enhances clarity, an idiom is used in a short sentence. Idiomatic expressions are arranged alphabetically by their "core" or key terms. Expressions for which the core term is ambiguous appear under every arguably core term with a see reference to the proper headword from the secondary terms. For example, *to pick up the pieces* appears under *piece*, but with a see reference to *pick*, the core term under which it is defined. Approximately 10,000 idioms have been selected from English as it is used today in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and the British Isles. Usage notes identify country of origin of expressions tied closely to one culture. Notes also label terms as colloquial or slang as appropriate. The variety and differences among the expressions identified in Cassell, the two-volume *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English* (1984), and *Longman Dictionary of English Idioms* (rev. ed., 1984) testify to the ongoing inventiveness of English speakers. Both of these older dictionaries provide many more illustrations of idioms in use. However, the strength of Cassell is the forthright way in which it presents the meanings of idioms. When the meaning rather than the origin or typology of an idiom is primary, Cassell outshines the rest of the field. Users familiar with American spellings must take care to look for words under their alternate British spellings (e.g., *colour* rather than *color*). A similar adherence to fundamentals characterizes *The Cassell Dictionary of Word Histories*. Its 20,000-plus A-Z entries succinctly define their terms, identify each one's part of speech, and provide the "WH," or word history. The word history specifies the time period when the word first appeared in written English, the language it derives from (or languages, in the case of hybrids), the original term(s) in the source language(s), and the meaning (in English) of the original term(s). Given the succinctness of the entries, there is little room for speculation about variant explanations of origin and even less room for delving into the folklore implicit in some English words. In addition to terms that have pedigrees rooted in other languages, this volume covers English's native mutations and combinations such as *cologarithm* (co + logarithm), *loads* (loads of), and the eponymous *sandwich*. Like its companion on idioms, *Word Histories* is a strong ready-reference source, well suited to providing the quick, pithy answer. However, those who revel in the riches of the English language, its intricacies, and the histories of its vocabulary will continue to enjoy the fuller narratives in *Webster's Word Histories* (Merriam-Webster, 1989), *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins* (Harper and Row, 2d ed, 1988), and *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* (H. W. Wilson, 1988). REVWR Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author Rosalind Fergusson is an experienced freelance writer and lexicographer. She is the author of numerous popular reference books, including the *Penguin Dictionary of Proverbs*.