



National Dictionary Day is October 16

11 Facts about the Dictionary

How many did you REALLY know?

1. **What is a dictionary?** A dictionary is a reference book that lists words (in alphabetical order) in a language and provides their definition, origin, and pronunciation.
2. Early iterations of dictionaries contained only a few thousand words. Today's dictionaries can contain **upward of 470,000 words**.
3. **Noah Webster** wasn't the first American to produce a dictionary, nor was he the only one, yet his name has become synonymous with the modern American Dictionary.
4. **National Dictionary Day** is observed annually on October 16 in honor of Webster, the man considered the "Father of the American Dictionary." It also happens to be his birthday.
5. **In 1806**, Webster published the first truly American dictionary.
6. A person who compiles dictionaries is known as a **lexicographer**.
7. The **American Dictionary** changed the spelling of many words from traditional English to the American spelling that continues today.
8. As of January 1, 2016, the number of words in the English language is: **1,035,877.3**. However,

not all words appear in every dictionary (or any dictionary), but it doesn't mean they are not real words.

9. The **number of entries varies** by publisher, size, and type of dictionary.
10. **How does a new word get added to the dictionary?** The answer is by usage. Editors monitor which words people use most often and where/how they use them. These marked passages create citations, which can turn into entries.
11. Editors typically add around **1,000 new entries** to dictionaries (online and print) each year.

Information curated by:

