Brief Guide to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*

Click on the symbols to see a phonetic pronunciation, or click the blue “play” arrow to hear it said aloud.

The letters and numbers give you an idea of when the various forms of the word were in use; e.g.:

- **OE** = Old English
- **ME 16** = Middle English between 1600-1699

Rest the mouse over the linked words in the etymology to see the brief definition of the root words. Clicking on the linked word will take you to the full entry for the root word.

You can trace the history of the word through quotations showing its use; for example, the first known use of the word garlic was c1000 (the “c” = circa, which means “approximately”).

Want to know what the symbols and abbreviations mean? Click on Help. In the “Welcome” section click on Other Resources to see their Key to symbols and other conventions... and Abbreviations... lists.

Don’t forget...

...to scroll down to see if your word has other definitions.
Clicking on **Thesaurus** will give you suggested synonyms. The *OED*’s Historical Thesaurus offers another way to explore words by grouping them into categories and by time period. Click on the category headings or **Go to Historical Thesaurus** link for another perspective on your word.

The *OED* offers a suggested citation for this dictionary entry; use the drop down menu to choose MLA style.

This trio of links allows you to explore the *OED* publication history of the word.

Click on one of these terms (or scroll down) to see your main entry used in compound words/phrases/etc.

If you were browsing the *OED* as a print book, these are the entries you would see before and after *garlic*; you can click on another entry to change words.

You can print, save or email the definition to yourself for later use.

You can search for a new word without going back to the home screen.

You can search for a new word without going back to the home screen.

You can print, save or email the definition to yourself for later use.