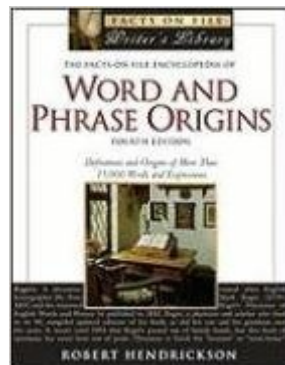


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The Facts On File Encyclopedia Of Word And Phrase Origins, 4th Edition (Facts On File Writer's Library)



Synopsis

More than 15,000 entries over 2,000 of which are new to this edition provide information and anecdotes on the origin and development of a wide range of words and phrases, including: Fellini named the hyperactive photographer in *La Dolce Vita* Signor Paparazzo, after the Italian slang for mosquito, which led to the popularity of the term, paparazzi. Argentina takes its name from the Latin *argentum* meaning silver. Legend says that llamas grazing on Mount Posi in 1545 uprooted some shrubbery, beneath which was a vein of silver ore. Conjuror's assistants in the 17th century would eat toads so the magicians could demonstrate their miraculous healing powers. The assistants came to be known as "toad eaters," which became our modern insult, "toady."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up
• This volume features more than 15,000 quirky words and expressions (2500 of them added since the 2004 edition) from the English/American vernacular. The text, arranged alphabetically, covers a broad range of slang terms, acronyms, coined phrases, literary references, and other dialectical gems. Written in an often-humorous tone, the brief entries consist of etymology and examples of usage culled from sources such as Shakespearean plays, films, or famous declarations. Terms range from classical nicknames (Heraclitus's "The Weeping Philosopher") to pop-culture references (the Seinfeld-ism "man hands"). Foreign expressions such as the British-born "do the needful" and the timely Iraqi "I throw a shoe at you!" are explained.

Cross-references are provided, and the index includes listings of phrases and the subjects who uttered them. As the preface states, "No word or phrase has been eliminated because it might offend someone's sensibilities." Hendrickson admits that some origins presented are mere theories. Moreover, the lack of a pronunciation guide and the volume's anecdotal approach undermine its academic value. Still, the author provides an entertaining, informative look at the diversity of influences on the English language. Readers will find plenty to pique their interest in this strong secondary source. --Christina Connolly, Clark University, Worcester, MA Copyright © 1987 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a collection of stories, speculative though entertaining, behind 7500 English words and phrases, from A & P through babushka, Calvinism, Davy Crockett, eggs Benedict, fifty-four forty or fight, German measles, and many more to ZZZ. The stories are fascinating, but the book is marred by many misspellings, particularly in the quotations from German. Still, it will appeal to word buffs and hence should be of interest to public libraries. Scholars will probably continue to rely on the OED and other standard reference works. Catherine von Schon, SUNY at Stony Brook Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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