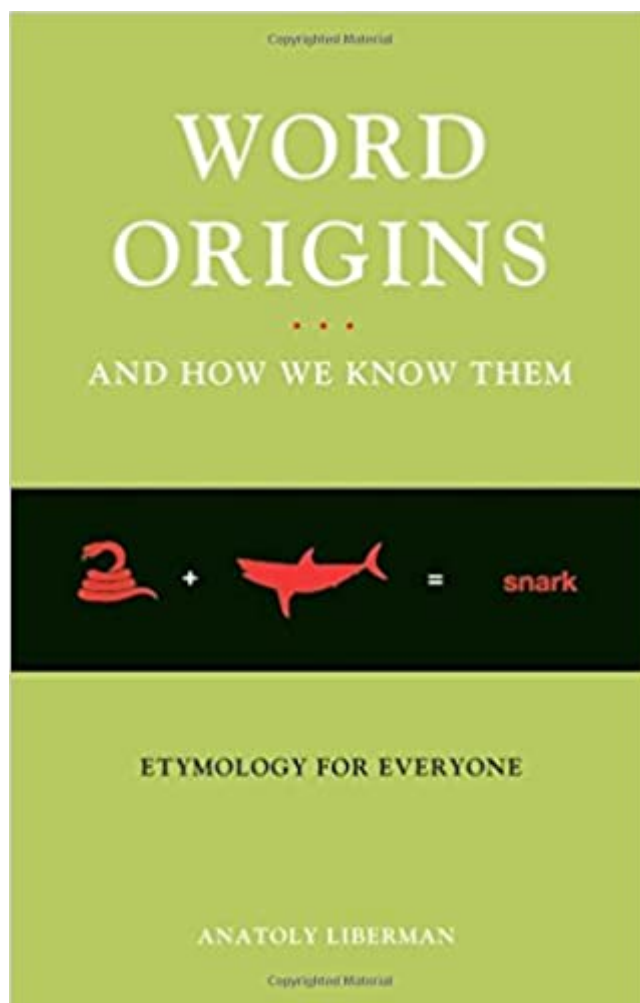


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Word Origins And How We Know Them: Etymology For Everyone



Synopsis

Written in a funny, charming, and conversational style, *Word Origins* is the first book to offer a thorough investigation of the history and the science of etymology, making this little-known field accessible to everyone interested in the history of words. Anatoly Liberman, an internationally acclaimed etymologist, takes the reader by the hand and explains the many ways that English words can be made, and the many ways in which etymologists try to unearth the origins of words. Every chapter is packed with dozens of examples of proven word histories, used to illustrate the correct ways to trace the origins of words as well as some of the egregiously bad ways to trace them. He not only tells the known origins of hundreds of words, but also shows how their origins were determined. And along the way, the reader is treated to a wealth of fascinating word facts. Did they once have bells in a belfry? No, the original meaning of belfry was siege tower. Are the words isle and island, raven and ravenous, or pan and pantry related etymologically? No, though they look strikingly similar, these words came to English via different routes. Partly a history, partly a how-to, and completely entertaining, *Word Origins* invites readers behind the scenes to watch an etymologist at work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Prof. Liberman's excellent book would make a fine Christmas present for anyone interested in the history of the English language. * Irish Times, *

Anatoly Liberman is Professor of the Humanities at the University of Minnesota. For the past seventeen years, he has been working on a new etymological dictionary of English.

A definite must read for those that long and thirst for knowledge!!!!!!!

Not quite as extensive as I would have preferred but still good.

I've always had an interest in this subject. I had not studied Greek or Latin in school, but should have. The book was informative to me, a layman, and helped in my understanding of English words and how they changed over the centuries. I am familiar with Spanish and French derivatives and the book informed me of the many words that are of German and even Viking ancestry. I also learned how long the science of etymology has been pursued and all the difficulties and ambiguities that come along in the process. The biggest problem I had was the author's use of esoteric Old English or German letters in the spelling of words that are or possibly are etymons for "modern" English words. I did indeed learn that etymology is a vast subject indeed and I find myself analyzing words that I come across now with more understanding of where they originated.

Recommended by the A Way With Words hosts, but it is meant for advanced students, not people with simply an interest in etymology. I gave up on it about 1/4 of the way through.

no problems with the seller or the product

I heard about it in an interview on the radio and was all excited. You don't get a good overview, the print does not help. It would have helped the subject matter to have it better presented. Although this generally interests me, I found it not very readable.

I bought this for my stepson. He's really enjoying it very much. He's using it for school. Thank you very much.

The book contains some good information, but the playful chapter headings led me to expect that the book would be written in a humorous style. It wasn't. Also, although the cover says "Etymology for Everyone", this is not a book for rank beginners. Some chapters are more accessible than others. Fortunately, I took a couple of classes in historical linguistics when I was in college, so some

of the concepts and lingo were familiar to me. If you just have a general interest in the origins of some of our more common words, and are looking for a quick reference, this is not the book I would recommend.

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