

TABLE 1: BURCHFIELD'S USAGE COMMENTS IN *OED1* SUPPLEMENT VOLS 1-4 (1972-86) AND THEIR TREATMENT IN *OED2* (1989) AND (WHERE APPLICABLE) *OED3* (2000-)

I WORD	II How marked in Supp	III Usage comment or note	IV Evidence supplied by quotation to substantiate editorial comment	V <i>OED2</i> treatment (and <i>OED3</i> treatment where applicable—i.e. over revised alphabet range <i>M-orature</i> )
1. <b>agenda</b>	No marking; part of definition	'Treated as a singular (a use now increasingly found but avoided by careful writers)'	None	Burchfield's comment removed
2. <b>data (used in pl. form with sing. construction.)</b>	Marked ¶	No comment	None of the 9 quotations indicate basis for judgement that usage is erroneous; one (1965) states 'Incidentally, by general usage <i>data</i> is now accepted as a singular collective noun'. (Cf quotations under 1b, in some of which <i>data</i> is also treated as sg. noun but without comment by Burchfield)	¶ retained (i.e. no change from Burchfield)
3. <b>disinterested</b>	No marking; part of definition hence unattributed	'(Often regarded as a loose use.)'	None	Burchfield's unattributed note retained
4. <b>hopefully</b>	No marking; part of definition hence unattributed.	'(Avoided by many writers.)'	None	Burchfield's unattributed note retained
5. <b>infer</b> v <sup>4</sup>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	'This use is widely considered to be incorrect, esp. with a person as the subject.'	None	Burchfield's unattributed note retained

6. <b>jet-boat</b>	Instead of quotation authority	‘(known to editor)’	NA	Burchfield’s note removed (earlier quotation found)
7. <b>layperson</b>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	‘One of numerous manufactured words formed to avoid alleged sexual discrimination in terminology.’	Some	Burchfield’s unattributed note retained
8. <b>media<sup>2</sup>, n.pl.</b>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	‘Also erron. as sing. in same sense.’	Support from only one of the 17 quotations: 1966, Kingsley Amis, ‘The treatment of <i>media</i> as a singular noun..is spreading into the upper cultural strata’	Burchfield’s unattributed note retained ( <i>OED3</i> omits this note and completely rewrites the entry, including a new usage note.)
9. <b>miniscule</b>	Label incorporated in definition	‘erron. var. MINUSCULE’	No evidence: the quoted sources are all ‘respectable’ (e.g. <i>N.Y. Times</i> , <i>Economist</i> )	Burchfield’s unattributed label retained ( <i>OED3</i> omits label and completely rewrites the entry, adding a usage note.)
10. <b>nite n<sup>2</sup></b>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	‘A widespread vulgarism’. (NB that Burchfield’s definition of this word, ‘An arbitrary respelling of <i>night</i> ’, also implies an adverse judgement on the usage)	One of 11 quotations clearly supports Burchfield’s note: 1934, B. J. THOMPSON in <i>Catholic World</i> : ‘ <i>Nite</i> connotes speakeasies, gin, cheapness and vulgarity.’	Burchfield’s unattributed note retained ( <i>OED3</i> omits this note and completely rewrites the entry, including a new usage note.)

<b>11. opinionnaire</b>	Additional note in smaller font	'A word of doubtful usefulness.—Ed.'	No evidence	Burchfield's note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i> ( <i>OED3</i> omits Burchfield's note, redefines the word, and adds earlier and later quotations)
<b>12. permanentize</b>	Additional note in smaller font	'A word of little value and rarely found in serious writing.—Ed.'	Some evidence	Burchfield's note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<sup>13.</sup> <b>person n 2<sup>f</sup></b>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	'In practice usually employed to avoid alleged sexual discrimination and widely regarded as having amusing connotations.'	Good evidence	Burchfield's unattributed note retained
<b>14. pikelet</b>	Additional note in smaller font	'Known personally to me in N.Z. in the 1920s.—Ed.'	N/A: earliest quotation dated 1943	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<b>15. plusage</b>	Additional note in smaller font	'A word of restricted currency.—Ed.'	The 5 quotations probably support Burchfield's note	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<b>16. possess v 3b. spec. To have sexual intercourse with (a woman).</b>	Additional note in smaller font	'This sense, suggested in private correspondence in 1969 by Professor W. Empson, may not have been intended by the writers themselves in some of the examples that follow.—Ed.'	Quotations support Empson, but probably not Burchfield	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>

<b>17. post (prep.) used with English words/phrases</b>	Additional note in smaller font	‘Usu. found in contexts where <i>after</i> would be equally appropriate and more agreeable—Ed.’	No evidence	Burchfield’s note retained, along with attribution to <i>Ed.</i>
<b>18. pre (prep.) = BEFORE</b>	Additional note in smaller font	‘Usu. found in contexts where <i>before</i> would be equally appropriate and more agreeable—Ed.’	No evidence	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<b>19. prestigious</b>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	‘In this sense many prefer to use PRESTIGEFUL <i>a.</i> or some other adjective.’	None of the 10 quotations (1913-1975) explain Burchfield’s implied criticism	Burchfield’s unattributed note retained
<b>20. prioritise</b>	Additional note in smaller font.	‘A word that at present sits uneasily in the language—Ed.’	Quotations indicate usage is questionable.	Burchfield’s comment removed
<b>21. pristine = ‘brand new, newly-made’</b>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	‘These transferred uses of the word, though now increasingly common, are regarded with disfavour by many educated speakers’	No evidence	Unattributed comment retained

22. <b>protagonist</b> <sup>1</sup>	Additional note in smaller font. No attribution.	‘Fowler’s classification of the plural as an absurd use ( <i>Dict. Modern English Usage</i> p. 471; maintained in Sir E. Gowers’ second edition, p. 489) may be challenged on the grounds that derivation from Greek <i>πρωτος</i> <i>first</i> , does not preclude a plural form, and limitation to the singular is strictly relevant only in the context of ancient Greek drama.’	Good evidence	Unattributed comment retained
23. <b>protagonist</b> <sup>3</sup> = ‘A proponent, advocate, or supporter (of a cause, idea, etc.).’	Marked ¶; definition explains ‘[Through confusion of sense 2 with PRO- <sup>1</sup> 5a.]’ Additional note in smaller font; no attribution.	‘In this use the notion of “a leading personage” is not implied. In some contexts there is ambiguity between this sense and sense 2.’	2 quotations out of total of 8 support condemnation	Unattributed comment retained
24. <b>redundantize</b>	Additional note in smaller font.	‘Fortunately <i>rare</i> —Ed.’	The single quotation bears out <i>rare</i> . (Why not ‘nonce-wd’?) Presumably Burchfield intends a pun on <i>fortunately</i> .	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<sup>25.</sup> <b>refute</b> <sup>5</sup>	Marked ¶; comment is part of definition, hence unattributed.	‘¶ Sometimes used erroneously to mean “deny, repudiate”’	One (1964) out of total of four quotations (1964-1980) indicates basis for condemnation	Both paragraph mark and unattributed comment retained.
26. <b>regretfully</b> (= <i>regrettably</i> ) <i>adv.</i>	Part of definition, hence unattributed.	‘A regrettable use, prob. after HOPEFULLY <i>adv.</i> 2.’	No evidence.	Note retained; attribution to <i>R.W.B.</i> supplied

<p><b>27. sanction, v<sup>4</sup></b>  <b>(To impose sanctions upon (a person), to penalize.)</b></p>	<p>Additional note in smaller font</p>	<p>‘A use of doubtful acceptability at present—Ed.’</p>	<p>2 quotes: 2<sup>nd</sup> supports Burchfield</p>	<p>Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i></p>
<p><b>28. scenario</b></p>	<p>Additional note in smaller font</p>	<p>‘The over-use of this word in various loose senses has attracted frequent hostile comment—Ed.’</p>	<p>16 quotes. None unambiguously supports B’s objection and most seem to use word in positive sense.</p>	<p>Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i></p>
<p><b>29. spastic, noun, b: ‘In weakened use, esp. contemptuously: one who is uncoordinated or incompetent; a fool’</b></p>	<p>Additional note in smaller font; no attribution.</p>	<p>‘Although current for some fifteen years or more, it is generally condemned as a tasteless expression, and is not common in print.’</p>	<p>N/A (Just one quotation, from dictionary of slang)</p>	<p>Note kept; attribution to <i>R.W.B.</i> supplied</p>

<b>30. spokesperson</b>	Additional note in smaller font; no attribution. (Note that definition is biased; cf. <i>layperson</i> )	Definition reads: “A manufactured substitute for ‘spokeswoman’ or ‘spokesman’”; comment reads: ‘One of numerous words formed to avoid alleged sexual discrimination in terminology’.	Good evidence	Both definition & unattributed comment retained
<b>31. supportative</b> (= ‘supportive’).	Labelled <i>rare</i> . Additional note in smaller font.	‘An unnecessary formation, since the shorter <i>supportive</i> is completely established.—Ed.’	3 quotes, 1972-1981. <sup>1</sup> The plentiful contemporary quotations for <i>supportive</i> bear Burchfield out; on the other hand there are many ‘unnecessary formations’ in language that nevertheless become established usage.	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<b>32. syllabication</b> (= <i>syllabification</i> )	Additional note in smaller font.	‘Tending to give way to <i>syllabification</i> —Ed.’	Two quotes (1933, 1971), vs. 4 quotes (1972-1980) for <i>syllabification</i> .	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>
<b>33. titivate, 2</b>	Marked ¶; comment incorporated in definition hence unattributed	Definition reads: ‘Used by confusion for TITILLATE v.1.’	3 quotes (1915, 1933, 1956); 3 further quotations of derivatives of verb.	Burchfield’s paragraph mark and definition retained unchanged.
<b>34. zibib</b>	Additional note in smaller font.	‘Pronounced (z <sup>ɪ</sup> b <sup>ɪ</sup> b) by N.Z. servicemen in Egypt in the 1939-45 war.—Ed.’	N/A	Note retained but attribution changed from <i>Ed.</i> to <i>R.W.B.</i>

<sup>1</sup> The three quotations (1972, 1976 and 1981) are all from reputable sources—*Nature*, *The Times*, and *Spectator* (though the last citation is opaque: ‘1981 *Spectator* 7 Feb. 19/2 Then follow the supportative words, the substructuring of Belonging.’)

I have found three other editorial comments by Burchfield, labelled 'Ed.' in the Supplement and kept in *OED*<sup>2</sup> with the attribution *R.W.B.* (s.vv. *fibre*, *S*<sup>15</sup>, and *tribology*), all referring to explanations or elucidations of etymology or meaning as recorded in correspondence with Burchfield in his role as editor of *OED*. They do not express Burchfield's personal views or judgements and are unexceptionable.