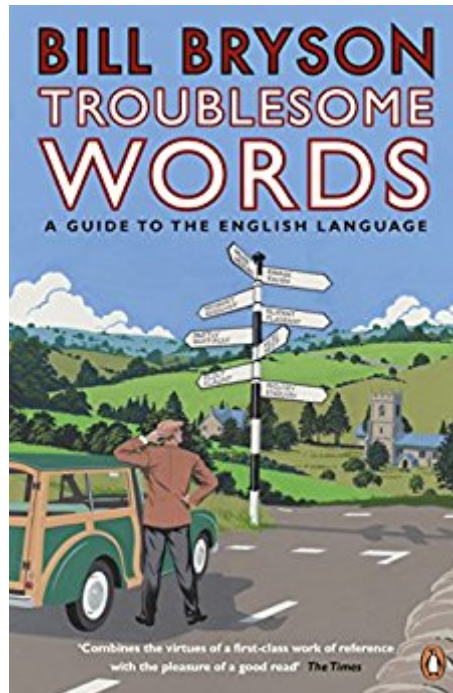




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Troublesome Words



Synopsis

Troublesome Words is playful and riddlesome guide to the English language from the bestselling author of Notes from a Small Island and A Short History of Nearly Everything, Bill Bryson. What is the difference between mean and median, blatant and flagrant, flout and flaunt? Is it whodunnit or whodunit? Do you know? Are you sure? With Troublesome Words, journalist and bestselling travel-writer Bill Bryson gives us a clear, concise and entertaining guide to the problems of English usage and spelling that has been an indispensable companion to those who work with the written word for over twenty years. So if you want to discover whether you should care about split infinitives, are cursed with an uncontrollable outbreak of commas or were wondering if that newsreader was right to say 'an historic day', this superb book is the place to find out.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On the same day, I ordered two used copies from 2 different sellers. They both arrived as promised...and in near "Bookstore" condition. BONUS...one of them was signed by Mr. Bryson. I had just become acquainted with Bill Bryson months before when I was given his audiobook of "At

Home"...which I have in my car and listen to when on the road. I listen to it in short segments as he offers so much information...my mind goes in to overload. I then ordered his "In the Woods" in audio which was delightful and a fairly "quick listen!" He has a huge store of information and a delightful way of sharing it. Even the Dictionary of Troublesome Words will make you smile. I love grammar so I love this book, "albeit" it did not have two of my favorite words included..."ergo" I should only give it 4 stars...but I acquiesced and give it a 5!! I have enjoyed all of his works to this point and hope to add more to my library. If you like words...this is a fun read!

This was a gift. I'm a writer/editor and already have many of Bill Bryson's books.

Fun to read, this is a great primer on the often subtle distinctions between words such as "gantlet" and "gauntlet." Set up dictionary-style, each word is presented concisely and authoritatively. If you want to hone your writing skills or just like to browse the endlessly fascinating words that make up the English language, you need this.

Bill takes all the trouble and makes it fun!

It is only after a lot of pages that you realize that yes, you really have been reading a dictionary. Amazing facts and comforting confirmations that you had understood a word. And slightly disconcerting discoveries that you had previously totally not understood the true meaning, or for that matter had any idea what the word or phrase had meant. Probable a must have for anyone who has to write stuff, which must be most of us at work these days. Maybe should be a legal requirement for scrabble players.

I'm one of those people who does things like read reference books from front to back, because I often don't know what I don't know. There were lots of grammatical points I did not remember and I would not have thought to look up. I'm not even sure where I would look them up, if I had a question. Now, having read through this book, which true to all of Bryson's work, is funny, I know some of what I don't know, you know? I won't remember all situations from the book, of course, but the book has planted a seed so I probably will remember to check in the future. I've realized I write using an embarrassing number of redundant phrases. Besides, I won an argument with my coworker that a person is nauseated, not nauseous. Thanks Bill; it was worth \$5.

Bill Bryson's dictionary is a wonderful frolic through the foibles of the English language. The misused, the misunderstood and even the mis-spelled are treated with great humour and insight. Many people will choose to randomly browse through "Bryson's Dictionary of Troublesome Words". I chose the option of reading it cover to cover. Either way, the book cannot fail to both entertain and inform. Unlike French, English is a work in progress with no bureaucracy trying to stifle change. An institution in the style of the French Academy is unthinkable for English. Indeed, herein lies the strength of English and the basis of its ability to continually re-invent itself and evolve through time. French, by way of comparison, looks increasingly like the fly stuck in amber. Bryson is a highly observant wordsmith and his book should be read by all those who cherish English and its marvelous journey.

I'm a sucker for reference books, and I've also started writing more. This small dictionary helps me sort out the words that always give me fits: current vs. currently, sensual vs. sensuous ... like that. Love this! P.S., the author has also written a couple of books about the English language, as well as the best-seller, *A Walk in the Woods*.

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