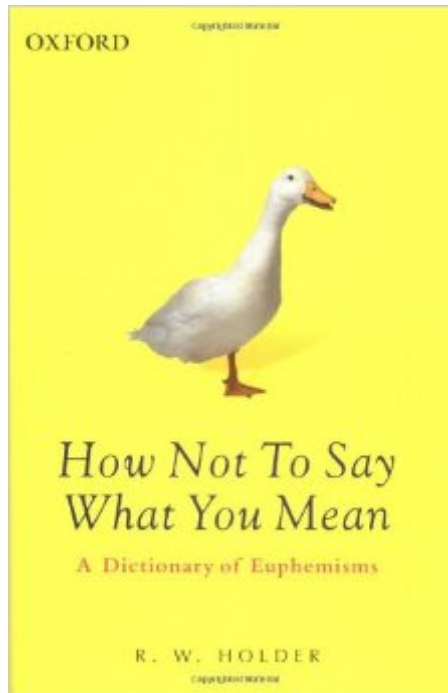


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# How Not To Say What You Mean: A Dictionary Of Euphemisms (Oxford Paperback Reference)



## Synopsis

We often use euphemisms when dealing with taboo or sensitive subjects. We speak of "full-figured" women. We "fudge" on our income tax. We get "cold feet" before our wedding. In *How Not to Say What You Mean*, R.W. Holder offers an engaging volume that celebrates this human tendency to use mild, vague, or roundabout expressions rather than those which are blunt, precise, and true. Arranged in alphabetical order, this dictionary contains thousands of entertaining and informative entries ranging from such circumlocutions as a "fruit salad" (mixture of illegal narcotics), "arm candy" (a good-looking female companion), a "barrel-house" (a brothel), "birthday suit" (nakedness), and a "blue hair" (an old woman). Completely updated, the dictionary provides definitions, examples, as well as historical explanations where appropriate. Fun, fascinating, lively, and at times shocking, this new edition of *How Not to Say What You Mean* is a browser's delight and will appeal to all language and word play lovers, and anyone looking for a good laugh.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

R.W. Hodder's dictionary is very helpful for those of us who want to say and write to be helpful without ambiguity, and who rail against the subversion of political correctness. *How Not To Say What You Mean* is the updated guide to probity, candor, earthiness, and straightforwardness. The dictionary provides definitions with example sentences as well as explanations where appropriate. Thematically indexed the entries are wide-ranging: work, sexuality, bankruptcy, clothing, education,

politics and aircraft, provide the real meaning for phrases well-known and obscure we come across daily in speech and writing such as liquidity crisis, coronary inefficiency, four-letter man, normalization, investigative journalism, governmental relations, ethically challenged and year of progress. It's a dictionary to browse, to be entertained by and take courage from. Highly recommended for all who have the courage to say and write what we mean.

This is a good reference book for readers and writers, and possibly courageous public speakers. A thematic index at the back of the book makes finding the right term easy. The entries provide concise, clear definitions, as well as quoted sources which add clarity as to the origin and usage of the word or phrase. These authorities are cross-referenced to an author/work bibliography in the front of the book, handy for those who wish to conduct further research. Many of the euphemisms deal with sexual topics, a possible commentary on either the repressive or playful nature of our social mores. Most of the words and phrases are modern, at least within the last fifty years, but some obsolete terms are included, often to show comparison to current usage. While not an exhaustive study of euphemisms, or a substitution for a good slang dictionary, this is a great reference book to have, to use, and to read -- just for the fun of it.

This is the fourth edition of a venerable and useful work that first appeared in 1987, according to the jacket notes. These jacket notes are easily readable, owing to the choice of a civilized type face and size. The same cannot be said for the bulk of this otherwise admirable volume itself. Most persons reading this review will know that the euphemism "small print" means, as the book says: "onerous conditions in a contract which are not given prominence." However, in this review, "small (or fine) print" means much of the main body of the text, which is in print that many will find hard to read without a magnifier. Despite my cavil about the tiny font used to print much of this book, it is a gem. Not only are the terms arranged in alphabetical order, dictionary-style, with examples of usage and micro-essays, they are also placed alphabetically into fourteen different thematic groupings, each preceded by a little essay on the subject. These page-and-a-half-sized essays are well-written and rewarding to those who can tease out the words from the miniscule printing. Thus one can immerse oneself into the world of evasive language in each of these fourteen rubrics: Addictions, Affairs of State, Bodily Functions, Childbirth, Crime and Punishment, etc. It is amusing and instructive to do so. I recommend this book to all word-fanciers whose vision, natural or enhanced, is up to it.

The contents may be offensive to some readers. So be it! Words and their usage are part of our

language. As an aside, I'd like to see someone take on the task of relating euphemisms to short titles of Congressional bills: Leave No Child Behind Act; Fair Tax Act; The USA Patriot Act; Help American Vote Act...

I wish I would've read ALL the reviews before purchasing. Unfortunately, I was so taken with the theme of the book I failed to see them (as it was recommended by !) Needless to say, even if I would've seen the reviews, it wouldn't prepare me for the volumes words dedicated to body parts, sex, etc. Definitely not for the coffee table...or the book case, for that matter.

In truth; Filth and Disgust. Flipping randomly through the book pages, and then taking time to read a whole page or two in order, you find nothing but sexually deviant definitions for even the most common of quaint Euphemisms one would expect to see. The book seems to be based, for the most part, on British and a few selected 'same type' American Euphemisms. In general, the book lovingly exalts numerous "sexual" euphemisms within its main "Thematic" subjects ranging from: "Abortion", "Animals", "Bawds and Pimps", "Brothels", "Cheating", "Cowardice", "Crime", "Death", "Defecation", "Extortion and Violence", "Farting", "Gambling", "Killing and Suicide", "Menstruation", "Mental Illness", "Illegitimacy and Parentage", "Masturbation", "Miscarriage", "Pornography", "Poverty and Parsimony", "Prostitution", "Race", "Sexual Variations", "Stealing", "Urination", "Venereal Disease", "Warfare" and, sadly, much more.... If you are the type of person that embraces/wants a Thought-Life that tends and leads to Poverty and Death of Body and Spirit- then this book is for you. Purchase it, and then Drink it in Deeply to expedite that inevitable destination that it will cast you down to. As for us- it was expedited it to the "garbage" pile where it belongs.

Overemphasis on sexual material. Would not have bought the book had I known this. Believe "missed the boat" in recommending it to the general public. I am very disappointed.

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