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In the May 1977 Word Ways, Kickshaws guest editor Philip Cohen made a plea for more articles based on dictionaries other than Webster's Pocket, Collegiate and Unabridged. This article is a response to his plea, based on my extensive collection of English-language dictionaries.

In particular, I own both Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary and Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary, two which Philip complained get little mention in Word Ways. I can understand Chambers getting little mention in Word Ways. It is a very popular British dictionary (about equivalent to Webster's Collegiate) used widely for crossword puzzles, word games, and Scrabble. It is more up-to-date, cheaper, and less bulky than The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (which has about the same number of words), and it is far more extensive than the rather limited, lightweight Concise Oxford. Besides being up-to-date, it contains a large number of Scots words, obsolete and dialect words, and spellings from the works of Milton and Spenser. On the other hand, I cannot understand the relative lack of attention which Funk & Wagnalls receives in Word Ways. After all, this is an American dictionary, and this name is almost as synonymous with dictionaries as that of Webster.

Among laymen, there is a misconception that dictionaries are all of a muchness — one dictionary contains mostly the same words as another of similar size. Either a word is "in the dictionary" (that is, in every dictionary), or it isn't to be found anywhere. Of course, this isn't really true, and over the past decade the variety of words discussed in Word Ways and the dictionaries from which they have been taken should have amply demonstrated this. All dictionaries are different; every dictionary contains words that other dictionaries don't; and every dictionary omits words which other dictionaries include. Different editions, different printings, and different supplemental sections make the whole matter even more complicated.

I thought it might be an interesting exercise to select a number of dictionaries and locate at least one word in each of them which isn't in any of the others. Which dictionaries should I choose? I did not want to include specialist dictionaries — dictionaries of slang, of technical terms, of dialect, and so on. Instead, I decided to restrict myself to dictionaries of "standard English" published within the last one hundred years. But with the many earlier editions of Funk & Wag-

SIXTEEN DICTIONARIES
nalls, Webster's and Chambers, even this was too daunting a task; so I eventually settled upon sixteen reasonably recent dictionaries.

Locating one word which is unique to each of sixteen dictionaries wasn't as easy a task as it may sound. Selecting a likely word from a particular dictionary and then checking it against the other fifteen usually revealed the fact that the word did appear in at least one of the others -- often the thirteenth, fourteenth or fifteenth! So, another likely word had to be selected and the whole process repeated. To determine that a word was unique to a dictionary required sixteen "dictionary accesses", and the whole job took 500 or more, counting all the false starts I made.

Some of these false starts may interest the reader. I thought GALLERYGOER was unique to Webster's New Collegiate (8th edition) until I found GALLERY-GOER in The Oxford English Dictionary -- but not as a main entry. I thought EASTRALIA was unique to Webster's First Edition until I found it tucked away in the Century Dictionary Supplement. KGOTLA, in the H-N section of the Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, looked like it might be unique, but it also turned up in Chambers. I expected COMPLEXIFICATION in Webster's Second Edition to be unique, but I also found it in the A-G section of the Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary.

Perhaps this information will be useful in determining the completeness of other dictionaries. The number of single-dictionary words that can be found in a given dictionary could be a significant piece of information by which to assess that dictionary.

1. The Century Dictionary (1897)
   bamlite a variety of fibrolite, a subsilicate of aluminum, from Bamle, Norway

2. The Century Dictionary Supplement (1909)
   pisang-ayer the traveler's-tree of the East Indies

   gju a kind of violin used in the Shetland Isles

   ronggeng popular dancing and singing in Malaysia

5. Dictionary of New English (1973)
   astrobug an insect sent into space as part of a biosatellite experiment

   zij the Persian astronomical tables, revised and corrected by Omar Khayyam

7. The Oxford English Dictionary
8. Supplement
9. A-G section
10. H-N section
11. Random
12. Webster's
13. Chambers
14. Webster's Taeniodora
15. 6000 Words
16. Webster's buqsha
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Dictionary</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Oxford English Dictionary (1933)</td>
<td>steeplet</td>
<td>a small steeple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Supplement to The Oxford English Dictionary (1933)</td>
<td>witchologist</td>
<td>one who studies witches or witchcraft</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A-G section of the Supplement to the Oxford English Dict. (1972)</td>
<td>deproletarianizable</td>
<td>able to be freed of proletarian character or qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>H-N section of the Supplement to the Oxford English Dict. (1976)</td>
<td>jazzophile</td>
<td>a devotee of jazz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Random House Dictionary (1966)</td>
<td>fiqh</td>
<td>jurisprudence based on theology, in Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Webster's New International Dictionary (1st edition, 1909)</td>
<td>fabrikona</td>
<td>a variety of canvas wall hanging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Webster's New International Dictionary (2nd edition, 1934)</td>
<td>Taeniodontidae</td>
<td>a family of Lower Eocene edentates (certain prehistoric mammals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961)</td>
<td>rta</td>
<td>the cosmic-moral principle of order that in Vedic tradition establishes regularity and righteousness in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6000 Words (1976)</td>
<td>aioli</td>
<td>a sauce made of crushed garlic, egg yolks, olive oil, and lemon juice, and usually served with fish, cold meat, or vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (8th edition, 1973)</td>
<td>buqsha</td>
<td>a monetary unit of the Yemen, 40 buqshas to the rial</td>
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