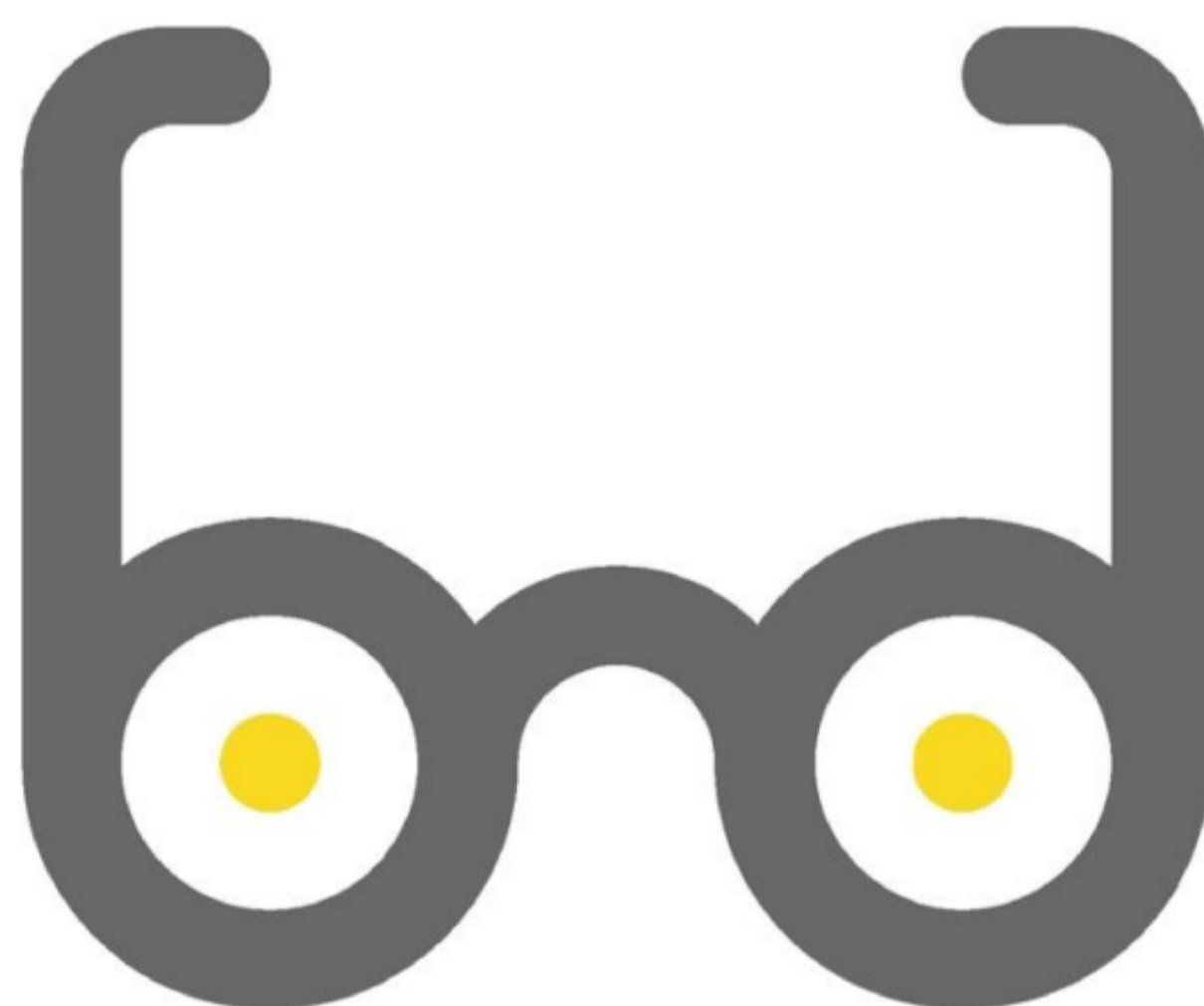


/ Word Nerd



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Introduction

English is full of beauty and surprises. If you're a lover of the weird and wonderful, from fascinating etymology to the ten most overused and useless English phrases, it's time to get your nerd on.

Get the inside dope on a wealth of curiosities hiding in plain sight within the English language. You'll discover the correct name for the dot over the letter 'i'; the English word for *Schadenfreude*; the collective noun for a group of seagulls; the Bechdel test; the opposite of serendipity; lots of words and phrases invented by Shakespeare; the anatomical name for your big toe and the only word in the English language that contains five consecutive vowels.

Despite its pellucid antiprolixity, this book isn't averse to a peppering of persiflage. It garners a smorgasbord of amuse-bouches vis-à-vis the English language, which is always cromulent but rarely misses an opportunity to metagrobolize!

**A logolept
is another
term for a
word nerd.**

Achluophobia is the fear of darkness.

Epeolatry: (n)
the worship
of words



What's the difference between a bibliophile and a bibliophagist?

Acrophobia is the fear of heights.

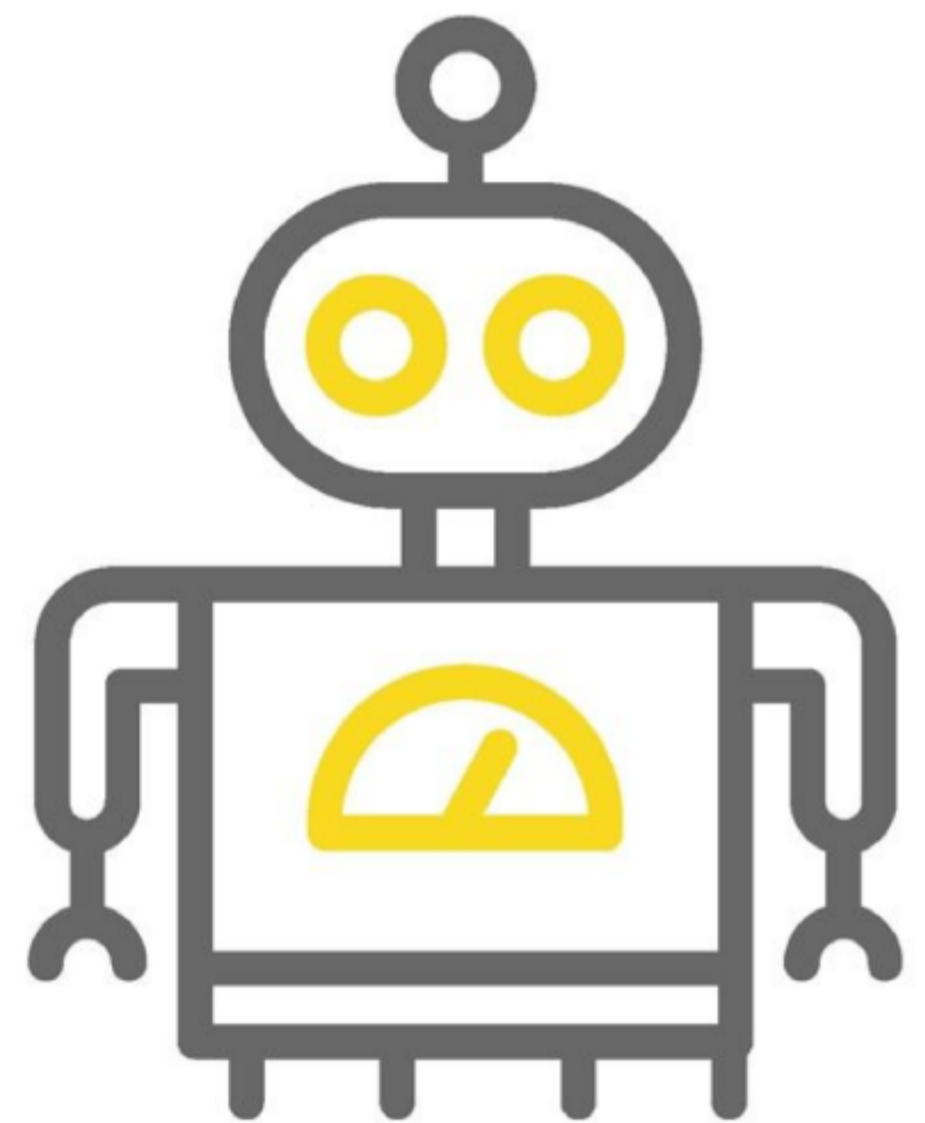
A **bibliophile** loves the look, the smell and the aesthetic of books, and may have hundreds of them displayed proudly at home – including several first editions – and may even boast excitedly about loving books. The **bibliophagist** is the real deal because he or she is simply a voracious reader. **Which one are you?**

An army of bloodhounds

Invented by science fiction:

Robot

First used in Karel Čapek's 1920 Czech play R.U.R. ('Rossum's Universal Robots') to refer to factory-made artificial humans.



The origin of the meaning of the word 'chaperone' as someone who accompanies or supervises another is a metaphor, because a chaperon was a hood formerly worn by nobles.

Alektorophobia is the fear of chickens.



There's a word for that:

Screenager A young person who spends a lot of time watching television or using digital technology, such as a computer or smartphone.

Philothaumaturge
Someone who loves magic.

Rasceta The creases in the skin on the inside of your wrists.

Sophrosyne An ancient Greek concept of excellence of character and soundness of mind, characterized by self-control, moderation, temperance; the antonym of hubris.

Interesting eponyms

Sideburns

were originally called 'burnsides', named after Union Army General and United States Senator Ambrose Burnside (1824–81), who was noted for his unusual facial hair.

Spelunking is the hobby of cave exploration, from spêlunx, the ancient Greek word for cave or cavern.

The earliest written example lexicographers have of the adjective '**bitchy**' is from a 1908 letter written by Virginia Woolf.

The word '**sport**', comes from the Old French desporter, meaning 'to take pleasure'. Words such as 'athlete', 'pentathlon' and 'triathlon' come from the ancient Greek verb athlein, to compete for a prize.

Anatidaephobia is the fear of ducks.

A band of gorillas

The longest English word that can be spelled without repeating any letters is **uncopyrightable**.

Bumblebees were nicknamed 'foggy-toddlers' in the Scots dialect of the eighteenth century.

Ough: We pronounce the combination 'o-u-g-h' in nine different ways. This sentence contains them all: 'A rough-coated, dough-faced, thoughtful ploughman strode through the streets of Scarborough; after falling into a slough, he coughed and hiccoughed.'