



Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (Reference Books)

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An edition of "Roget's Thesaurus", fully revised and updated for the millennium.

Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (Reference Books) Details

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From Reader Review Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (Reference Books) for online ebook

Christopher Hawkes says

Sometimes I feel bad for the reference sections in bookshops and libraries. They're like the dull grandfathers that children avoid at Christmas. Sales are steady but unenthusiastic and no one rushes home to read them. And there they fare even worse. Their dust jackets tear, their spines break and are repaired with masking tape. They weigh down objects being glued and are flicked through indelicately during games of Scrabble. Like usurped kings, they collect dust and dander on the bottom shelves and are cursed at each house move for the weight of their learning. 'Roget's Thesaurus' often sits amongst them.

It isn't fair. If you haven't looked at it in a while – or never at all – it really is worth (re)visiting. As an intellectual feat alone it is staggering. Unlike other types of thesaurus (which are simply lists of synonyms) Roget's relies on a complex organisational system by which the English language is divided into six classes, starting with 'Abstract relations' and ending with 'Emotion, religion and morality'. These are further divided into 39 sections ('Existence' to 'Religion') and almost a thousand headings. Some of these are unwieldy ('food', for example, runs to over five pages), but no task this ambitious could be achieved without flaws. The more clear-minded amongst us are therefore able to find what they want simply by searching the relevant section. If using the book thus is too difficult (I can never manage it), there is an index of about the same length as the text itself. By this the reader can look up a word of like-meaning and then choose the numbered heading of its closest alternative. For the more nuanced words, the further device of cross-referencing via italicisation allows you to hone your intended meaning to a sharp point. This process can be as exasperating as it sounds (looking for the answer to 9 Down may take all night) but few come away from a proper reading without a better command of the language.

Like many great and singular works however much of its existence is owed to the demons of its author. A born depressive, Peter Mark Roget took to obsessive list-making young, and had itemised subjects such as 'beasts', 'parts of the body' and 'things in the garden' before he'd turned nine. By which time he had already experienced more than his share of tragedy. His father died young and both his mother and sister suffered from serious mental illness. These events were followed later in life by the loss of his wife and the suicide of his uncle in his presence. Published at the age of 73, his thesaurus was the culmination of a lifetime of coping.

Some of this biography is evident in the work itself. His horror of disorder and squalor swelled the entry of 'uncleanness' in early editions to an unwieldy length. Moral judgements are also implicit (it is no mistake that 'religion' appears as the final section). But what of it? Objectivity is both the aim of every reference work and the impossibility. At least Roget puts his own name upon it. The English language is vast and often a maze of frustration. Roget daily leads many of us through the labyrinth by hand. Who cares if he's a bit neurotic?

Neil says

It's hard to find a word to describe just how useful this book can be.

Scribble Orca says

Whenever I'm short of something to read, which is often, I end up back inside Roget's Thesaurus.

Jill says

The older the Roget's the better, the words in my great-grandfather's 1920 copy would stimulate anyone to write with more glee and precision.

One can explore the 1911 Roget's online here:

<http://machaut.uchicago.edu/rogets>

Bev says

Dear Roget
How do I love you?
Let me count the ways:-))

Patricia Burroughs says

This is the original Roget's Thesaurus from the year 1852, reprinted in its original typeface and spellings in the year 1992 by Bloomsbury Books. What a find. Most words haven't changed much, but there are enough that are different to make this a fabulous resource for writers who want to know what words were in common usage in the 19th Century.

I was thrilled to get my hands on this copy and love it as the anchor of my collection (until I get one that was actually published in 1852!).

Sherry says

I will always feel sentimental towards this book - it's been with me since I was in Standard 9. And even though I rather use www.thesaurus.com these days, this book was there at the beginning, and I hope to be buried with it in my hand!

Anton Angelo says

The one book that always, always sits on my desk.

nanto says

Thesaurus ini dibeli dengan iming-iming saya akan bisa memahami sistem klasifikasi yang memudahkan pengelompokan kata. Berkesan sistem yang sangat "struktural" sekali. Dengan harapan itu saya pergi ke Gramedia MTA dan membelinya dengan gaji pertama dulu. Namun sampai nyana, sampai sekarang saya belum paham juga untuk memahami sistem itu. Thesaurus ini tetap saya baca layaknya thesaurus lain yang menautkan kata secara "induktif". Semoga saya bisa belajar dari yang sudah paham tentang sistem klasifikasi mBah Roget.

says

Becoming ever more important as my hair gets whiter - and thinner. A work from the compulsive who could only find relaxation in lists, here is the essential reference book for serious word users. Lots of editions/variants out there, but I would think it makes little difference which to choose - unless a technical thesaurus is required - in which instant this review would be of no help.

Michael says

I received this ancient tome in the mail from a relative. At first I couldn't imagine why they had sent me a book barely held together with electrical tape, something that would have been weeded from any library decades ago. Then I opened the cover and discovered that there was a plate glued to it, identifying it as a book from "ye library of" with my mother's maiden name printed below those words. I guess that makes it an heirloom, although one that isn't too likely to survive to another generation.

There is no date on it, but I would estimate it to be from the mid-40s to the early 50s. It claims to have been "revised and enlarged" by Samuel Romilly Roget, presumably a descendent of the original Roget, who was friends with the original Samuel Romilly. It includes a lengthy essay by Roget on the reasons for writing the Thesaurus and the challenges in grouping words by category. He is quite strong in defending the idea that all concepts have an opposite, and therefore can be grouped next to their negative. He is apparently convinced that the arrangement of concepts is logical enough that readers will only rarely need to use the index, but the index takes up nearly 50% of this edition. Some of the words or phrases listed here have become archaic, but not as many as one might expect, and there are a number of good "scrabble words" for people with tough letters to use.

Nowadays, as I understand it, college students with poor vocabularies will use the "Thesaurus" feature of Word to find synonyms for words they think they've over-used in their papers. The result is often bizarre and impossible to follow, famously including the phrase "sinister buttocks" substituted for "left behind." This is apparently called "Roeting." Poor Roget would be sad to see his legacy in such a state, just as he might be saddened by the electrical tape on this volume.

notgettingenough says

Sorry, I just don't get it, understand it, grasp it, make the connection, dig it, comprehend it.

The reason each word exists is that it is its own thing. By definition the thesaurus is telling you to do something wrong: to replace a word with something that isn't quite right.

I'm not going to say any more, but I DEMAND that you go here and watch/listen to The Thesaurus Song:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHDn7_...

It's brilliant, wonderful, fantastic, the best, fabulous....you get the idea.

Mark McKay says

Indispensible to a poet. Crossword solver. Anyone really.

Ian "Marvin" Graye says

Deux Semillon and a Serve of Monstrachet

Manny and I finally met on middle, if not neutral, ground, France, on my recent sojourn to Le Old World.

He shared with me the secrets of his delight in book-hunting in Paris.

Naturally, he endeavoured to distract me with children's literature, while he scoured the shelves, tables and barrows for erotic material that would yield at least one erection per euro or franc or whatever the universal currency of le porn softe oder concrete is nowadays. (I know, and they say the men of gay Paree are tight with their money or for yours.)

I love the categories that order the shelves of bookshops for our more convenient perusal, literature, popular fiction, children, young adult, paedophilia, reference, self-help, help yourself, science fiction, paranormal, young adult paranormal, paranormal reference, erotica, paranormal erotica, young adult paranormal erotica, oh my god, the choice you have available to you when you only have one hand with which to read.

Anyway, I was happily browsing the ~~young adult paranormal erotica~~ reference section, when Manny arrived with a book and a smirk on his face that I thought betrayed his greater familiarity with culture, whether French, yoghurt or otherwise.

"Here, you must buy this. I can't wait to see your review."

I was flattered by his attention.

It was a French copy of "Roget's Thesaurus".

Of course, I was familiar with the English version. I even collect different editions in English, but had never seen the work in a foreign language.

Imagine what you could learn about a culture by the way they assemble their Thesaurus.

I didn't even have time to turn to the contents page, when Manny said, "Come on, let's go and have une petite déjeuner."

I was grateful to have my Roget at this point, because it added some sophistication and dignity to the balance of my purchases.

Le femme a la biblio cash register even smiled knowingly and respectfully as she tallied le burden financais of my acquisitions.

To tell the truth, I had been une petite apprehensive when I weighed le heft of my Roget, but I vaguely remembered that le Frogs have less words in leur dictionnaire than the English.

Hence its relative heftlessness.

While Manny departed to le bar to acquire une bischen semillon et chevrelos goat's cheese a deux, I freed my Roget from its plain brown paper wrapping, and, yes dear lecteur, I was shocked, shocked, to discover its contents, even more so than le frog cop in "Casablanca".

In rétrospectivement, I suppose I should have seen it coming. Every second page betrayed pictures of a plump boyish garcon almost a la neud bearing little more or less than a t-shirt blanc sur le and/or la appellation "Roget".

And on every second page alternatif was, dare I reveal mon embarrasmente, an explicit hand-drawn and coloured picture of une reptile ancient et humungous described as "le Thesaurus".

Bon acquainted as I am with dinosaurs, this specimen was most cretaceous, possessed of arguably the most definite article I had ever observed, le stuff of legends a la bipedal carnivore lizarde und monsterotica a la Sainte Vierge Karen de la Noble Barnes.

So, mon ami, it is with great humilité et une grave accent that je must disclose that this work of literateur reveals few words, even less synonyms and precious little evidence of le structure de la langue et winding road Francais.

Yes, Manny had tricked moi in the most heartless et despicable fashion a la creme de la creme anglaise.

But I confide in you, my most hannibal lecteur, je suis already parcell ma vengeance.

Avoir peur, Manny, avoir not just un peu peur, avoir un very big peur.

Greg says

Update: Because I'm so used to the typical thesaurus, I've found this very difficult to use. It's a beautiful book, a magnificent reproduction, but for actual usage, I can't quite grasp the best method for its use.

Original:

I stumbled upon this beautiful mint-condition work in a used book store and at first I didn't know what I was holding. Why, this isn't the Roget's Thesaurus I've known most of my life! After flipping through the opening pages, I discovered it's a reprint of the original from 1852. For a dollar! In my forever, it will be the backbone of my desk. Easily the best one-hundred cents (no tax!!!) I've ever spent and I'm sure the owner of the store had no idea what was hiding out among his/her shelves. The returns on this investment have been, and will be, phenomenal. As a side note, during this same browse, I noticed Leni Riefenstahl's "Olympia", Parts One and Two! It was priced at an exorbitant 200 cents, but I had budgeted \$5.00 for this visit, so I left not only with two bucks in my pocket, but with two undeniably rich resources. (By the way, the film is epic, gorgeous, tastefully erotic and horrifying all at the same time: it's a must-see and a must-learn-about work.)
