

Especially

for

kids

and their

families

# The Mini Page®

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BETTY DEBNAM – Founding Editor and Editor at Large

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dic•tio•nary \ˈdik-shə-,ner-ē\ *n.*

## Happy Birthday, Noah Webster!

When you see a word you don't know, you probably use a **dictionary** (DIK-shuh-nair-ee) to find out what it means. The dictionary you use may be a newer version of the one first written by Noah Webster. He started his dictionary in 1801 and finished in 1828. It gave the meanings of more than 70,000 words.

This week, The Mini Page honors Webster's 250th birthday by learning about his life and the things he did that still affect us today.

### Early life

Noah Webster was born on Oct. 16, 1758. His family lived in West Hartford, Conn. Noah had two brothers and two sisters.

Noah's father was a farmer and weaver. ("Webster" comes from Old English and means "female weaver.") His mother, Mercy, was a homemaker.

When Noah was a child, many kids went to school until they were 10 or 11 years old. After that, they stayed home to work on the farm. But when Noah was 14, he began studying with a minister. After two years, he went to Yale College. After he graduated, he wanted to study to be a lawyer, but he didn't have enough money.

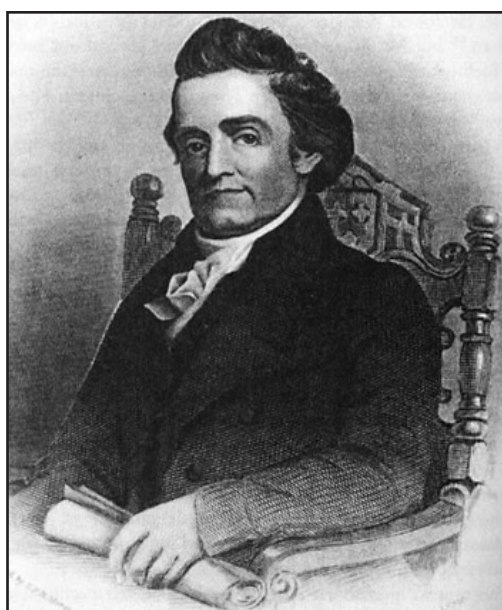


photo courtesy Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society

**Noah Webster (1758-1843) was patriotic, or loyal to the United States. He believed that American subjects and styles should be included in books. He thought this would make America more independent, or free, from England.**

### Working for change

Noah thought American children should have American textbooks.

In 1783, he finished "A Grammatical Institute of the English Language." It included "The Blue-backed Speller." A **speller** is a textbook that helps kids learn to read, spell and pronounce words. A lesson from it is shown below.

TABLE XXV. Lesson I.

People often sound ow at the end of words like er, thus, follow they call foller, pillow, piller. This corruption is called, in London, the cockney pronunciation. In the following lesson, children should be taught that w is silent and o retains its proper sound.

barrow	follow	shallow
bellow	hollow	sorrow
billow	mellow	tallow
elbow	morrow	willow
fallow	narrow	widow
farrow	pillow	yellow
furrow	shadow	wallow

### A different career path

Instead of studying law, Noah became a teacher.

Teachers in the late 1700s had many challenges: They taught all grades together, in one room. One teacher might have children from ages 6 to 16. The books were not well-written, and they were published in England. Schools had bad lighting and not enough heat in the winter.

Noah wrote essays about improving the poor conditions for teachers and students.



photo courtesy Monroe Historical Society, Monroe, Conn.

**Noah Webster would have taught in a one-room schoolhouse similar to this. Younger kids sat in front, with older kids in back rows. Light came from windows and candles.**

# A Mini Guide to the Dictionary

You can learn about a word's history and the different ways it's used in a dictionary. But it helps to know what all the symbols mean.



Become a word detective. Use the dictionary to find out more about words you're interested in.

For this example, we'll use the noun **newspaper**. (A noun describes a person, place or thing.)

**news•pa•per** \ 'n(y)üz- ,pā-pər, n(y)üs\ *n* (1670) **1: a paper that is printed and distributed usu. daily or weekly and that contains news, articles of opinion, features and advertising 2: an organization that publishes a newspaper 3: the paper making up a newspaper**

## Definition

This entry has three **definitions**, or meanings, for **newspaper**. The abbreviation **usu.** means **usually**.

## Pronunciation

You can learn how to **pronounce**, or say, a word by looking it up in the dictionary.

Pronunciation (proh-nun-see-AY-shun) guides are shown between two slashes, like this: \ \

\ 'n(y)üz- ,pā-pər, n(y)üs\

- The first symbol, a **high-set stress mark** ( ' ) means that the first syllable gets more importance when we say it.

- **Low-set stress marks** ( , ) mean that those syllables get less stress than those marked with high-set stress marks.

- The letter in parentheses ( **y** ) means that some people pronounce the Y and others don't. Either way is OK.

- The U with two dots over it ( **ü** ) means it is pronounced like the U in **rule**.

- An A with a line over it ( **ā** ) means it's a long A, pronounced like the A in **ate**.

- An upside-down E ( **ə** ) is called a **schwa**. It is pronounced like UH, as the A is in the word **about**.

**Most dictionaries have guides in the front that help you understand these and other symbols.**

## History of words

The history of words is called **etymology** (eh-tuh-MOL-uh-gee). Knowing the language that one of our words comes from helps us understand other words from that language as well as English.

In the dictionary, etymology:

- traces a word as far back as possible in English (for example, to Old English);

- tells from what language and in what form the word came into English;

- traces the pre-English source as far back as possible.

In our example, **newspaper** is an

English word that was first used in 1670, about 340 years ago.

If you look up the word **signal**, you'll see that it is traced back through English and French to the Latin word



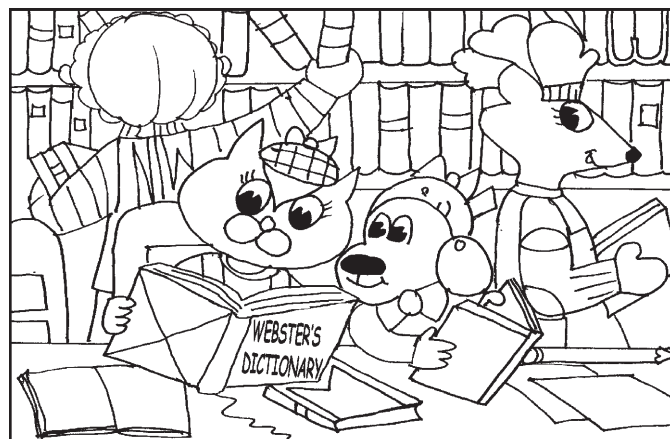
**signum**. That word was used about 700 years ago.

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## Mini Spy ...



Mini Spy and Basset Brown are looking up new words in the library's dictionary. See if you can find:



- man in the moon
- word MINI
- acorn
- pumpkin
- mitten
- olive
- sock
- pencil
- letter M
- kite
- heart
- number 3

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## Noah Webster

**TRY 'N FIND**

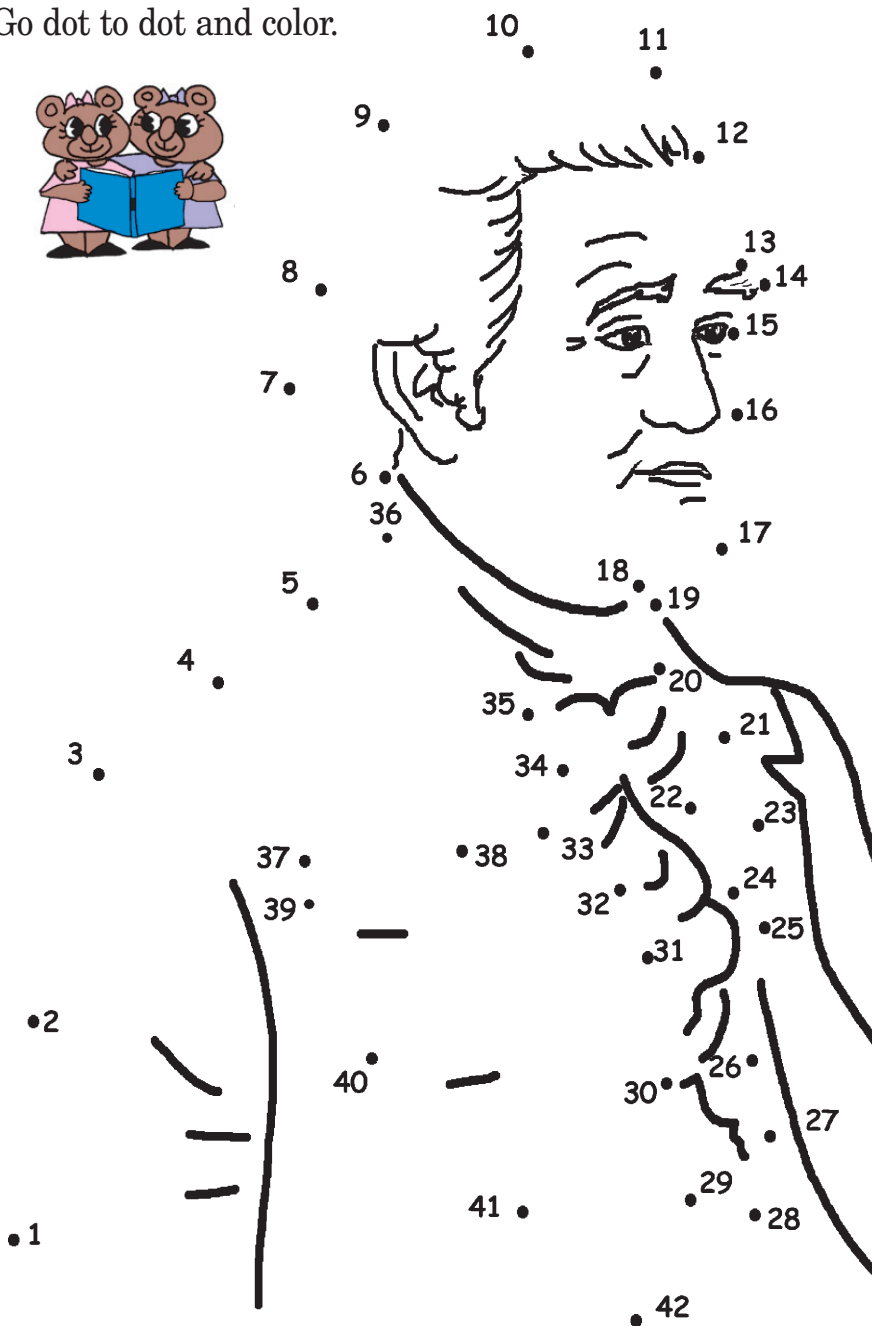
Words that remind us of Noah Webster are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: **DICTIONARY, BIRTHDAY, WORDS, NOAH, WEBSTER, CONNECTICUT, SCHOOL, YALE, LAW, TEACHER, ESSAY, AMERICAN, TEXT, SPELLER, BOOK, PRONOUNCE, HISTORY, SYMBOL, COPYRIGHT, LANGUAGE, MERRIAM.**

**IT'S FUN TO LOOK UP NEW WORDS!**



C O N N E C T I C U T X E T W  
W O R D S Y A S S E T A V A B  
E K P R O N O U N C E M L S I  
B X J Y R O T S I H A E O P R  
S M A I R R E M Q G C R B E T  
T H Z B Y I B O O K H I M L H  
E A E G A U G N A L E C Y L D  
R O L W L O O H C S R A S E A  
K N H V E D I C T I O N A R Y

Go dot to dot and color.



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## Rookie Cookie's Recipe Soy Glazed Burgers

### You'll need:

- 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 pounds ground beef
- hamburger buns

### What to do:

1. In a bowl, stir together soy sauce, honey and spices.
2. Combine 1/3 cup soy sauce mixture with ground beef. Reserve remaining mixture.
3. Form into 6 or 8 hamburger patties, depending on desired size.
4. Brush patties with remaining soy sauce mixture on both sides as you grill.
5. Grill on medium-high heat until meat is no longer pink.
6. Serve on hamburger buns with desired condiments. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

*\*You will need an adult's help with this recipe.*



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## Meet Cole and Dylan Sprouse



photo © 2007 Disney Channel

Dylan (left) and Cole Sprouse

Cole and Dylan Sprouse are twin brothers who star in the new Disney Channel series "The Suite Life on Deck." The brothers also star in the Disney series "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody." Cole plays Cody and Dylan plays Zack in the show.

Cole and Dylan, 16, were born in Arezzo, Italy. They grew up in Southern California. They got their first role in a toilet paper commercial when they were 6 months old.

When they were 1 to 6 years old, the brothers alternated in playing one character, Patrick, in the TV series "Grace Under Fire." They have appeared in several movies and TV shows.

Both boys love animals, video games, motocross, snowboarding, surfing and basketball. Cole also loves math. Dylan loves science.

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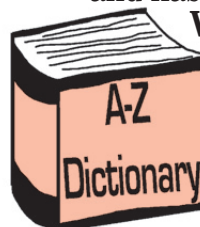
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## MIGHTY FUNNY'S Mini Jokes

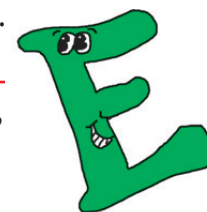
All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

**Will:** What word starts with an E, ends with an E, and has one letter?

**Walter:** Envelope!



**Winton:** Where can you always find happiness?  
**Wendy:** In the dictionary!

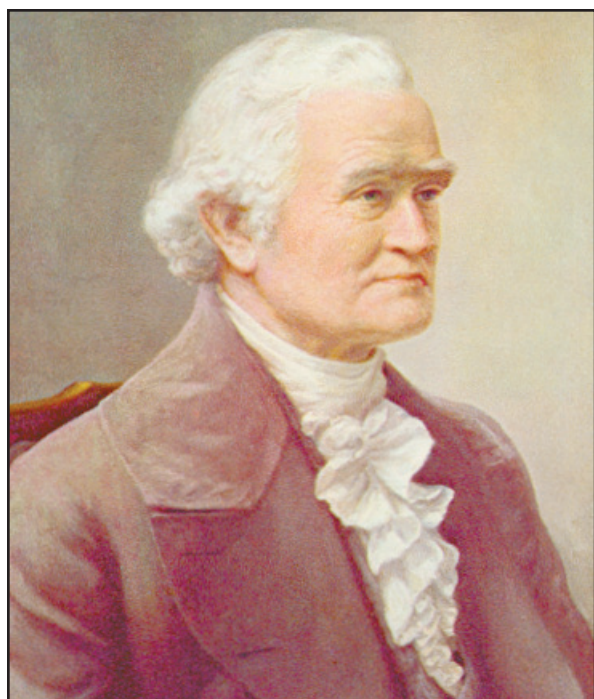


**Wesley:** Why is a dictionary considered so dangerous?

**Willem:** Because it has "dynamite" in it!



# Noah Webster's Dictionary



photos courtesy Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society

Noah Webster married Rebecca Greenleaf in 1789. They had eight children.

## Copyright

While he was writing the "Speller" and his dictionary, Noah Webster began to work for **copyright laws**.\* He thought America should have laws to protect the works of its authors.

\*Copyright is protection against someone copying someone else's work.

Noah tried to convince the U.S. government to make copyright laws. In 1790, the first **federal**, or national, copyright law was passed. It protected an original piece of work from being copied for 14 years after it was created.



The copyright symbol

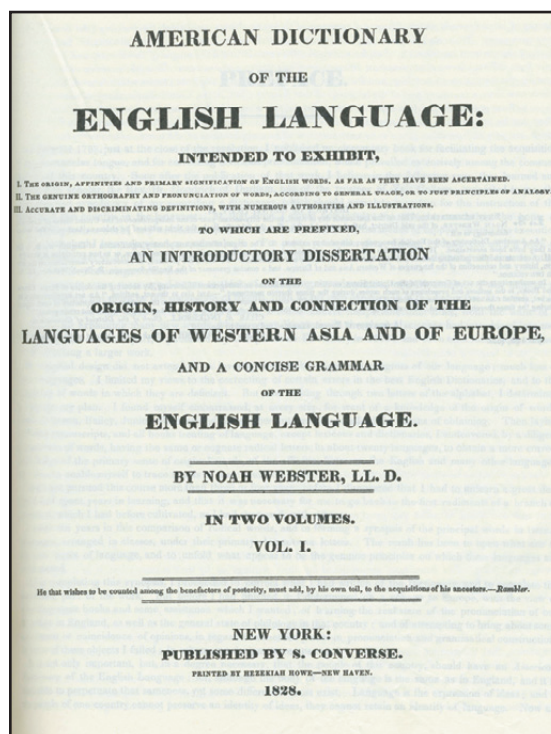
Look through your newspaper, including this Mini Page, for copyright symbols. Circle the ones you find.

The Mini Page thanks Jennifer DiCola Matos, director of education, Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society, West Hartford, Conn., for help with this issue.

## New country, new words

While he was working on the Speller, Noah Webster realized that people in the United States were using different words to describe their new government and laws. He decided to write an American dictionary.

In 1806, he published a shortened version of the dictionary. It had 40,600 words.



Twenty-two years later, the final version was published. "An American Dictionary of the English Language" had about 70,000 words. Webster included spelling, pronunciation, and information about the history of each word.

## What took so long?

Noah Webster had to do a lot of research to write his dictionary. Most of the words we use today come from other languages, such as Latin or French. Noah learned 26 languages so that he could figure out the **origins**, or beginnings, of our words.

Next week, The Mini Page is all about spiders.

Site to see:  
[www.noahwebsterhouse.org/childcentral.html](http://www.noahwebsterhouse.org/childcentral.html)

## American spellings

For his American dictionary, Noah changed the spelling of many English words. He wanted to make the spelling simpler.

*These are some examples of spellings he changed. Can you think of other words that are still spelled differently in England or Canada than they are in the United States?*

The old British way | Noah's American way

Kee	Key
Dawter	Daughter
Centre	Center
Flavair	Flavor
Programme	Program
Aluminium	Aluminum
Gaol	Jail
Mould	Mold
Travelled	Traveled
Honour	Honor
Humour	Humor
Masque	Mask
Publick	Public
Defence	Defense
Colour	Color
Musick	Music

## Merriam-Webster

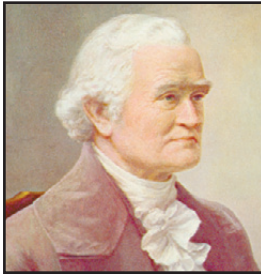
After Noah Webster died in 1843, a publishing company called G. & C. Merriam Co. bought all the unsold copies of the 1841 edition of Webster's dictionary. They also bought from his family the rights to update and sell new versions of the dictionary.

Today, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary has more than 225,000 definitions — more than three times as many as Webster's original book.

## The Mini Page Staff

Betty Debnam - Founding Editor and Editor at Large    Lisa Tarry - Managing Editor    Lucy Lien - Associate Editor    Wendy Daley - Artist

## Read all about Noah Webster



photos courtesy Noah Webster House &  
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by Betty Debnam

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(Note to Editor: Above is camera-ready, one column-by-3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch ad promoting Issue 41.)

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41-5 (08)

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## The Mini Page<sup>®</sup> Standards Spotlight: Happy Birthday, Noah Webster!

Mini Page activities meet many state and national educational standards. Each week we identify standards that relate to The Mini Page's content and offer activities that will help your students reach them.

**This week's standards:**

- Students understand that history relates to events and people of other times and places by identifying examples of interesting Americans. (Social Studies: History)
- Students explore factors that contribute to one's personal identity, such as interests, capabilities and perceptions. (Social Studies: Individual Development)


**Activities:**

1. Use words to show family members and friends that you like them. Fold a piece of paper in half to make a card for each person. Inside, paste newspaper words that describe the person. Give your cards to the people they describe.
2. The sports section is a great place to look for exciting words; writers have to say "won" or "lost" in almost every story. Look at the headlines in the sports section of your newspaper. Circle every word that means "won" in red and every word that means "lost" in blue. See if you can add other words that mean "won."
3. Find at least three long words in the newspaper that look interesting. Look up the meanings in the dictionary.
4. Find five words in the newspaper that did not exist in Noah Webster's time. List the words on a piece of paper. Write a sentence telling why Webster did not have the words in his dictionary.
5. The editorial and opinion pages of the newspaper are places to find clever uses of language. In opinion columns, people use words to emphasize their position on an issue. Read an opinion column or letter to the editor. List the words that reflect the writer's opinion. Now rewrite the letter or parts of the column to reflect the opposite point of view.

(standards by Dr. Sherrye D. Garrett, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi)


(Note to Editor: Above is the Standards for Issue 41.)

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## Gus Goodsport's<sup>TM</sup> Report

### Supersport: DeMarcus Ware



**Height: 6-4      Birthdate: 7-31-82**  
**Weight: 257      Hometown: Auburn, Ala.**

National Football League teams facing the Dallas Cowboys know to beware of DeMarcus Ware. The aggressive linebacker has a reputation for racking up quarterbacks and wrecking offenses.

Ware led the Cowboys in sacks with 14 last year and was selected to the Pro Bowl for the second season in a row.

Before rising to NFL stardom, Ware was a standout at Troy State, where he earned a degree in business information systems. The Cowboys picked him 11th overall in the NFL draft four years ago, and he has lived up to their expectations.

Away from football, Ware spends time with his wife, Taniqua, and their young daughter. He also has been active in community and charity projects such as United Way, Make-A-Wish and the Cowboys' youth football camps.

But on fall Sunday afternoons, Ware is a rough, tough Cowboy.

(Note to Editor: Above is copy block for Page 3, Issue 41, to be used in place of ad if desired.)

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