

**1. A man of words**

Lexicographer Noah Webster, compiler of the first and most significant American Dictionary of English, was born on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1758. He was proud of his American heritage and sought to reflect the linguistic and cultural differences that separated the English of the United States with that of Britain. This week’s worksheet provides a biography in a text that contains an extra word on each line.

**Level**

Intermediate and upwards

**How to use the lesson**

1. Ask your students if they own an English-English dictionary. Does it contain examples of both British English and American English? Do they know of any differences between the spelling of American English words and British English words? If not, tell them you will ask the same question after they have read the worksheet.
2. Give one copy of the worksheet to each student in the class and ask students to work in pairs. Ask them to read the text quickly and find the answers to question 1. Students should compare their answers with their partner.
3. Check answers in open class.
4. Ask students to read the text again. This time they should find the extra word, where necessary. Once again, ask students to compare answers with their partner. Check answers in open class.

**Answers**

*Possible answers for question 1:*

- He was 70 when he finished writing his dictionary.
- He was born in 1758.
- He learned 26 languages when writing the dictionary.
- Samuel Johnson wrote his own dictionary in 1775.
- He was born on October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- His dictionary contained 70,000 references.
- He died at the age of 85.

*Question 2:*

- |          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. ✓     | 7. then  | 13. ✓     |
| 2. has   | 8. about | 14. more  |
| 3. the   | 9. ✓     | 15. ✓     |
| 4. ✓     | 10. of   | 16. ✓     |
| 5. Great | 11. been | 17. than  |
| 6. to    | 12. like | 18. years |

## 2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.m-w.com/netdict.htm>

This is the direct descendant of Webster's original dictionary

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

Compare it with one of the latest dictionaries on the market

[http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah\\_Webster](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_Webster)

Start here and follow the links all over this fascinating site

<http://noahwebsterhouse.org/index.html>

Take a look at Noah Webster's house and learn more about the man

<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/spquiz.pl>

Try your own spelling with Merriam-Webster's Spelling Bee