



# Word Origins And How We Know Them: Etymology for Everyone

*Anatoly Liberman*

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## Word Origins And How We Know Them: Etymology for Everyone Anatoly Liberman

Written in a funny, charming, and conversational style, *Word Origins* is the first book to offer a thorough investigation of the history and the science of etymology, making this little-known field accessible to everyone interested in the history of words.

Anatoly Liberman, an internationally acclaimed etymologist, takes the reader by the hand and explains the many ways that English words can be made, and the many ways in which etymologists try to unearth the origins of words. Every chapter is packed with dozens of examples of proven word histories, used to illustrate the correct ways to trace the origins of words as well as some of the egregiously bad ways to trace them. He not only tells the known origins of hundreds of words, but also shows how their origins were determined. And along the way, the reader is treated to a wealth of fascinating word facts. Did they once have bells in a belfry? No, the original meaning of belfry was siege tower. Are the words isle and island, raven and ravenous, or pan and pantry related etymologically? No, though they look strikingly similar, these words came to English via different routes.

Partly a history, partly a how-to, and completely entertaining, *Word Origins* invites readers behind the scenes to watch an etymologist at work.

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