**ER 3.2 *What the OED gives***

What kinds of information does the *OED* give? Here is some of what you will find if you look up the word *dictionary* in the online *OED*:

* Both British and American pronunciations are given in audio clips, with phonetic transcriptions. It is noted that British speakers sometimes do not pronounce the ‘a’ in the final syllable, saying /dɪkʃənri/.
* Information is also given (eighteen lines of text, in fact) about the word’s etymology, going back to the Latin *dictionarius* meaning a ‘word book.’
* Related word forms in various languages (like Portuguese, Italian and German) are shown.
* For the use of the word as a noun, four main meanings are recognised, with various subcategories. There is the normal meaning of a ‘book which explains or translates . . . the words of a language or languages . . .’. A subcategory here is the usage referring to an encyclopaedia or some other reference book. The second meaning is ‘the collection of words used or understood by a particular person’ – as when you say a word is ‘not in someone’s dictionary’. The third use, a figurative one, is to refer to a person having as much knowledge of a topic as a dictionary; sometimes we refer to a person as ‘a walking dictionary’. The fourth use is in the idiom ‘to have swallowed a dictionary’, to describe someone who has a very large vocabulary, usually including many obscure words.
* Then there are several pages of compounds using the word *dictionary*, like *dictionary writer* and *dictionary catalogue.*
* For all meanings, subcategories, and compounds, illustrative quotations are given, with details about where these come from. Thus under the first meaning category there are no fewer than 31 quotations, from 1480 till 2006. By clicking on any quotation source, you can find a list of other quotations in the *Dictionary* from the same source.

The *OED* has many other general resources. In Chapter 3’s Figure 3.1 you saw the Timeline, showing in graph form the number of first citations in fifty-year blocks, from the year 1000 up to the present day. There is also a ‘Historical Thesaurus’ giving synonyms for given words at various points in history. For the *OED* as a whole, a list of the top 1000 sources is also given. Incidentally, the most used source in the *Dictionary* is *The Times* newspaper (42840 quotations), with Shakespeare coming second with 32952 quotations.

If you have access to the online *OED*, and would like to explore its resources a little more, take a look at ER3.3 (*Getting to know the OED*).