**ER 3.3 *Getting to know the* OED**

You can use this activity to familiarise yourself with the workings of the online *OED*, (and you need to have access to this to do the activity). What you find out in terms of factual information will not necessarily be that interesting; it’s the process of search for the information that counts. The answers are underneath:

(a) Pronunciation. Look up the word *nomenclature* (n). British and American pronunciations are given at the top of the entry. There is a difference in where the two put the main stress on the word. What is it?

(b) Etymology. Look up the word *buxom* (adj). Notice the first meaning given (1a). Look at the Etymology section. A connection with PDE (using the suffix *-some*) is suggested. What is it? To explore this more, look at the *buxom* entry as a whole and plot how the meaning changed from the original (1a), to today’s meaning (4). Can you explain how one meaning is linked to the other?

(c) Quotations. Look up the word *border* (n). Where is the 1611 quotation from? How many other quotations from the same source are there in the *OED*.

(d) Before consulting the *OED*, think about the word *anchor* (n). List the different meanings you can think of for the word. Then look it up (*anchor, n1*). Are there any meanings you had not thought of?

(e) Timelines. Go onto the ‘Timelines’ page (by clicking on the red button in the middle of the ‘Home’ page). Click on the 1300 – 1350 bar, and find one word with a first quotation in that period that you did not know before. Look up its meaning. Then do the same for 1450 to 1500.

(f) Sources. Go onto the ‘Sources’ page (by clicking on the red button in the middle of the ‘Home’ page). What is the fourteenth most used source? And the twenty-fifth? Find examples of each source.

(g) Historical Thesaurus. Go onto the ‘Historical Thesaurus’ page (by clicking on the red button right-centre in the ‘Home’ page). Use the search button to look up the word *car* (be sure to use ‘Search’ on the left, not ‘Quick Search’ on the right). Focus on the eighth entry and click on the word *car* in red. This gives you some nineteenth-century synonyms. What are the first four?

**Answers**

(a) British: *no****men****clature,* American***no****meclature.*

(b) Flexible = *bow+some*. The chain of meanings goes *flexible – amiable – jolly – ‘plump and comely’.*

(c) The quotation is from the *King James Bible* Exod. xix. 12. There are 4527 other quotations from this source.

(f) 14th is William Caxton; 25th is *The Washington Post*.

(g) *Buggy, motor carriage, autocar, jam-jar.*