



Reading Homework (5)

Johnson's Dictionary

For the century before Johnson's Dictionary was published in 1775, there had been concern about the state of the English language. There was no standard way of speaking or writing and no agreement as to the best way of bringing some order to the chaos of English spelling. Dr Johnson provided the solution.

There had, of course, been dictionaries in the past, the first of these being a little book of some 120 pages, compiled by a certain Robert Cawdray, published in 1604 under the title *A Table Alphabeticall of hard usually English words*. Like the various dictionaries that came after it during the seventeenth century, Cawdray's tended to concentrate on 'scholarly' words; one function of the dictionary was to enable its student to convey an impression of fine learning.

Beyond the practical need to make order out of chaos, the rise of dictionaries is associated with the rise of the English middle class, who were anxious to define and circumscribe the various worlds to conquer - lexical as well as social and commercial. It is highly appropriate that Dr Samuel Johnson, the very model of an eighteenth-century literary man, as famous in his own time as in ours, should have published his Dictionary at the very beginning of the heyday of the middle class.

Johnson was a poet and critic who raised common sense to the heights of genius. His approach to the problems that had worried writers throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was intensely practical. Up until his time, the task of producing a dictionary on such a large scale had seemed impossible without the establishment of an academy to make decisions about right and wrong usage. Johnson decided he did not need an academy to settle arguments about language; he would write a dictionary himself; and he would do it single-handed. Johnson signed the contract for the Dictionary with the bookseller Robert Dodsley at a breakfast held at the Golden Anchor Inn near Holborn Bar on 18 June 1764. He was to be paid £1,575 in instalments, and



Reading Homework (5)

from this, he took money to rent 17 Gough Square, in which he set up his 'dictionary workshop'.

James Boswell, his biographer described the garret where Johnson worked as 'fitted up like a counting house' with a long desk running down the middle at which the copying clerks would work standing up. Johnson himself was stationed on a rickety chair at an 'old crazy deal table' surrounded by a chaos of borrowed books. He was also helped by six assistants, two of whom died whilst the Dictionary was still in preparation.

The work was immense; filing about eighty large notebooks (and without a library to hand), Johnson wrote the definitions of over 40,000 words, and illustrated their many meanings with some 114,000 quotations drawn from English writing on every subject, from the Elizabethans to his own time. He did not expel to achieve complete originality. Working to a deadline, he had to draw on the best of all previous dictionaries, and to make his work one of heroic synthesis. In fact, it was very much more. Unlike his predecessors, Johnson treated English very practically, as a living language, with many different shades of meaning. He adopted his definitions on the principle of English common law - according to precedent. After its publication, his Dictionary was not seriously rivalled for over a century.

After many vicissitudes, the Dictionary was finally published on 15 April 1775. It was instantly recognised as a landmark throughout Europe. 'This very noble work,' wrote the leading Italian lexicographer, will be a perpetual monument of Fame to the Author, an Honour to his own Country in particular, and a general Benefit to the Republic of Letters throughout Europe. The fact that Johnson had taken on the Academies of Europe and matched them (everyone knew that forty French academics had taken forty years to produce the first French national dictionary) was cause for much English celebration.

Johnson had worked for nine years, 'with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or



Reading Homework (5)

under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow'. For all its faults and eccentricities his two-volume work is a masterpiece and a landmark, in his own words, 'setting the orthography, displaying the analogy, regulating the structures, and ascertaining the significations of English words'. It is the cornerstone of Standard English, an achievement which, in James Boswell's words, 'conferred stability on the language of his country'.

The Dictionary, together with his other writing, made Johnson famous and so well esteemed that his friends were able to prevail upon King George III to offer him a pension. From then on, he was to become the Johnson of folklore.

Questions 1-3

Choose **THREE** letters from A-H.

Write your answers in boxes 1-3 on your answer sheet.

NB. Your answers may be given in any order.

Which **THREE** of the following statements are true of Johnson's Dictionary?

- A. It avoided all scholarly words.
- B. It was the only English dictionary in general use for 200 years.
- C. It was famous because of a large number of people involved.
- D. It focused mainly on language from contemporary texts.
- E. There was a time limit for its completion.
- F. It ignored work done by previous dictionary writers.
- G. It took into account subtleties of meaning.
- H. Its definitions were famous for their originality.

Questions 4-7

Complete the summary.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 4-7 on your answer sheet.



Reading Homework (5)

In 1764 Dr Johnson accepted the contract to produce a dictionary. Having rented a garret, he took on a number of 4 , who stood at a long central desk. Johnson did not have a 5 available to him, but eventually produced definitions of in excess of 40,000 words written down in 80 large notebooks. On publication, the Dictionary was immediately hailed in many European countries as a landmark. According to his biographer, James Boswell, Johnson's principal achievement was to bring 6 to the English language. As a reward for his hard work, he was granted a 7 by the king.

Questions 8-13

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 71?

In boxes 8-13 on your answer sheet, write:

- TRUE if the statement agrees with the information
- FALSE if the statement contradicts the information
- NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

8. The growing importance of the middle classes led to an increased demand for dictionaries.
9. Johnson has become more well known since his death.
10. Johnson had been planning to write a dictionary for several years.
11. Johnson set up an academy to help with the writing of his Dictionary.
12. Johnson only received payment for his Dictionary on its completion.
13. Not all of the assistants survived to see the publication of the Dictionary.

Reading Homework (5)

Let's Go Bats

A. Bats have a problem: how to find their way around in the dark they hunt at flight, and cannot use light to help them find prey and avoid obstacles. You might say that this is a problem of their own making one that they could avoid simply by changing their habits and hunting by day. But the daytime economy is already heavily exploited by other creatures such as birds. Given that there is a living to be made at night, and given that alternative daytime trades are thoroughly occupied, natural selection has favored bats that make a go of the night-hunting trade. It is probable that the nocturnal trades go way back in the ancestry of all mammals. In the time when the dinosaurs dominated the daytime economy, our mammalian ancestors probably only managed to survive at all because they found ways of scraping a living at night. Only after the my stenos mass extinction of the dinosaurs about 65 million years ago were our ancestors able to emerge into the daylight in any substantial numbers.

B. Bats have an engineering problem: how to find their way and find their prey in the absence of light Bats are not the only creatures to face this difficulty today. Obviously, the night-flying insects that they prey on must find their way about somehow. Deep-sea fish and whales have little or no light by day or by night. Fish and dolphins that live in extremely muddy water cannot see because, although there is light, it is obstructed and scattered by the dirt in the water Plenty" of other modern animals make their living in conditions where seeing is difficult or impossible.

C. Given the questions of how to manoeuvre in the dark, what solutions might an engineer consider? The first one that might occur to him is to manufacture light, to use a lantern or a searchlight Fireflies and some fish (usually with the help of bacteria) have the power to - manufacture their own light but the process seems to consume a large amount of energy. Fireflies use their light for attracting mates. This doesn't require a prohibitive amount of energy: a male's tiny pinprick of light can be seen by a female from some distance on a dark night since her eyes are exposed directly to the light source itself. However, using light to find one's own way around requires vastly more energy, since the

Reading Homework (5)

eyes have to detect the tiny fraction of the light that bounces off each part of the scene. The light source must, therefore, be immensely brighter if it is to be used as a headlight to illuminate the path, than if it is to be used as a signal to others. In any event, whether or not the reason is the energy expense, it seems to be the case that with the possible exception of some weird deep-sea fish, no animal apart from man uses manufactured light to find its way about

D. What else might the engineer think off Well, blind humans sometimes seem to have an uncanny sense of obstacles in their path, it has been given the name 'facial vision', because blind people have reported that it feels a bit like the sense of touch, on the face. One report tells of a totally blind boy who could and his tricycle at good speed round the block near his home, using facial vision. Experiments showed that, in fact, facial vision is nothing to do with touch or the front of the face, although the sensation may be referred to the front of the face, like the referred pain in a phantom limb The sensation of facial vision, it turns out really goes in through the ears. Blind people, without even being aware of the fact are actually using echoes of their own footsteps and of other sounds, to sense the presence of obstacles. Before this was discovered, engineers had already built instruments to exploit the principle, for example, to measure the depth of the sea under a ship. After this technique had been invented, it was only a matter of time before weapons designers adapted it for the detection of submarines. Both sides in the Second World War relied heavily on these devices, under such code names as Asdic (British) and Sonar (American), as well as Radar (American) or RDF (British), which uses radio echoes rather than sound echoes.

E. The Sonar and Radar pioneers Didn't know it then, but all the world now knows that bats, or rather natural selection working on bats, had perfected the system tens of millions of years earlier, and their radar" achieves feats of detection and navigation that would strike an engineer dumb with admiration It is technically incorrect to talk about bat'radar1, since they do not use radio waves. It is sonar. But the underlying mathematical the ones of radar and sonar



Reading Homework (5)

are very similar, and much of our scientific understanding of the details of what bats are doing has' come from applying radar theory to them. The American zoologist Donald Griffin, who was largely responsible for the discovery of sonar in bats, coined the term 'echolocation' to cover both sonar and radar, whether used' by animals or by human instruments.

Questions 1-5

The Reading Passage has five paragraphs, A-E.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter. A-E, in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1. examples of wildlife other than bats which do not rely on vision to navigate by
2. how early mammals avoided dying out
3. why bats hunt in the dark
4. how a particular discovery has helped our understanding of bats
5. early military uses of echolocation

Questions 6-9

Complete the summary below.

Choose ONE WORD ONLY from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 6-9 on your answer sheet.

Facial Vision

Blind people report that so-called 'facial vision' is comparable to the sensation of touch on the face. In fact, the sensation is more similar to the way in which pain from a 6..... arm or leg might be felt. The ability actually comes from perceiving 7..... through the ears. However, even before this was understood, the principle had been applied in the design of instruments which calculated the 8 of the seabed. This was followed by a wartime application in devices for finding 9..... .



Reading Homework (5)

Question 10-13

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 10-13 on your answer sheet.

10. Long before the invention of radar, had resulted in a sophisticated radar-like system in bats.
11. Radar is an inaccurate term when referring to bats because are not used in their navigation system.
12. Radar and sonar are based on similar
13. The word 'echolocation' was first used by someone working as a