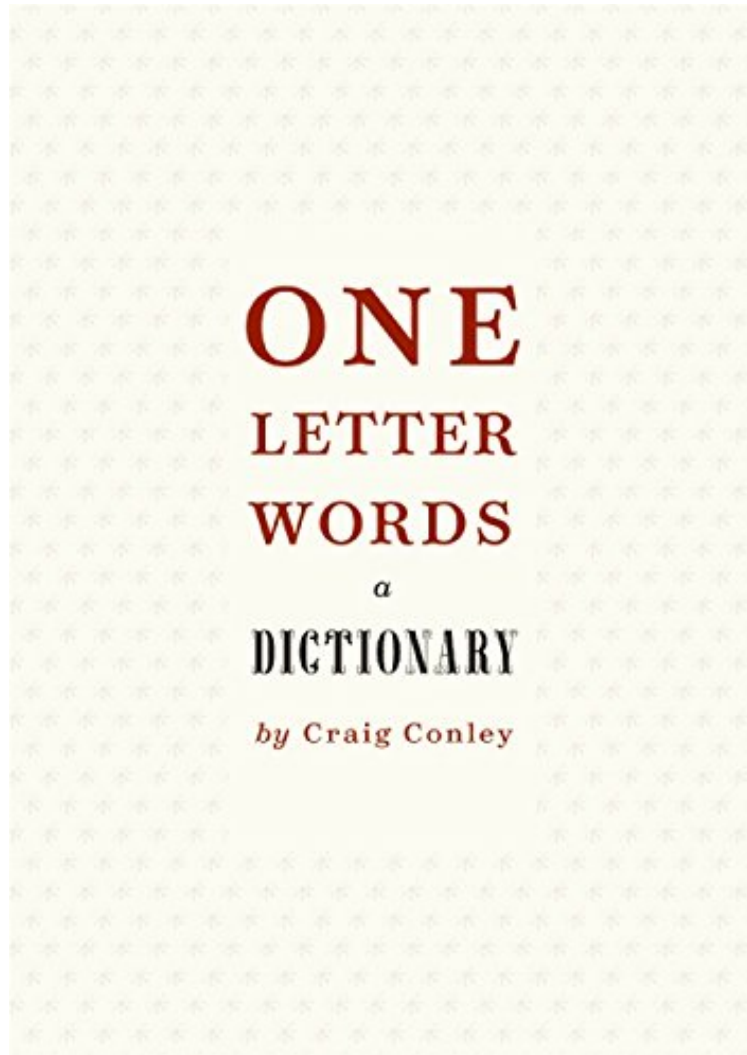


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## One-Letter Words, a Dictionary

*Craig Conley*

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**Craig Conley : One-Letter Words, a Dictionary** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One-Letter Words, a Dictionary:

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Merriam-Webster, move over! Until now, no English dictionary ever found the fun or the fascination in revealing the meanings of letters. *One-Letter Words, a Dictionary* illuminates the more than 1,000 surprising definitions associated with each letter in the English alphabet. For instance, Conley uncovers seventy-six distinct uses of the letter X, the most versatile, most printed letter in the English language. Using facts, figures, quotations, and etymologies, the author provides a complete and enjoyable understanding of the one-letter word. Conley teaches us that each letter's many different meanings span multiple subjects, including science. B denotes a blood type and also is a symbol for boron on the periodic table of elements and history in the Middle Ages, B was branded on a blasphemer's forehead. With the letter A, he reminds us that A is not only a bra size, but also a musical note. *One-Letter Words, a Dictionary* is a rich, thought-provoking, and curious compendium of the myriad definitions attributed to each letter of the English alphabet. This book is the essential desk companion, gift, or reference volume for a vast array of readers: wordsmiths, puzzle lovers, teachers, students, librarians, and armchair linguists will all find *One-Letter Words, a Dictionary* a must-have.

From Publishers Weekly Anyone who thinks the letter "a" alone can mean only one thing is sorely mistaken; Conley, a linguist, editor and textbook coauthor, enumerates at least fifty ways it has been used, including as a representation of "waking consciousness" and as the classification for the lightest weight of sandpaper. Conley, who has compiled several other quirky dictionaries, became a sort of cult hero when he put an early edition of this one online, where it garnered a huge following among people surfing the web for the odd and amusing. For each letter, Conley gives dozens of meanings, which he often supports with citations from literature, science and pop culture. The definitions are arranged in groups like "shapes and sizes," military and "people, places, things," some of which are common to most letters and others that pertain to only one, like "exertions of power," which has two entries under "d." Conley's own explanations are brief; the bulk of the book is taken up by quotations where he found a particular usage, and these come from sources as diverse as Joyce's *Ulysses*, Winnie-the-Pooh and the American Medical Association. Many of the instances Conley refers to are arcane or technical, and he does a cursory job of explaining the project and justifying his methods, so some entries will leave readers baffled. (Consider "v-bob": "a strong frame shaped like an isosceles triangle, turning on a pivot at its axis, and used as a bell crank to change the direction of a main pump rod.") Even so, anyone fascinated by language (and especially fans of word games like Scrabble) will be thrilled with this unique resource. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Craig Conley is an established teacher and author with a long history of writing for schools and public libraries. He is currently a consulting editor for McGraw-Hill and Globe Fearon publishers. For nine years he was an instructor of composition, literature, and study skills at universities and community colleges in Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida. His articles have appeared in magazines such as *Verbatim*, *Mothering*, *Mnemosyne Journal*, *American Cage-Bird*, and *Home Education*. Conley holds a B.S. in mass communications and an M.A. in English from Middle Tennessee State University.