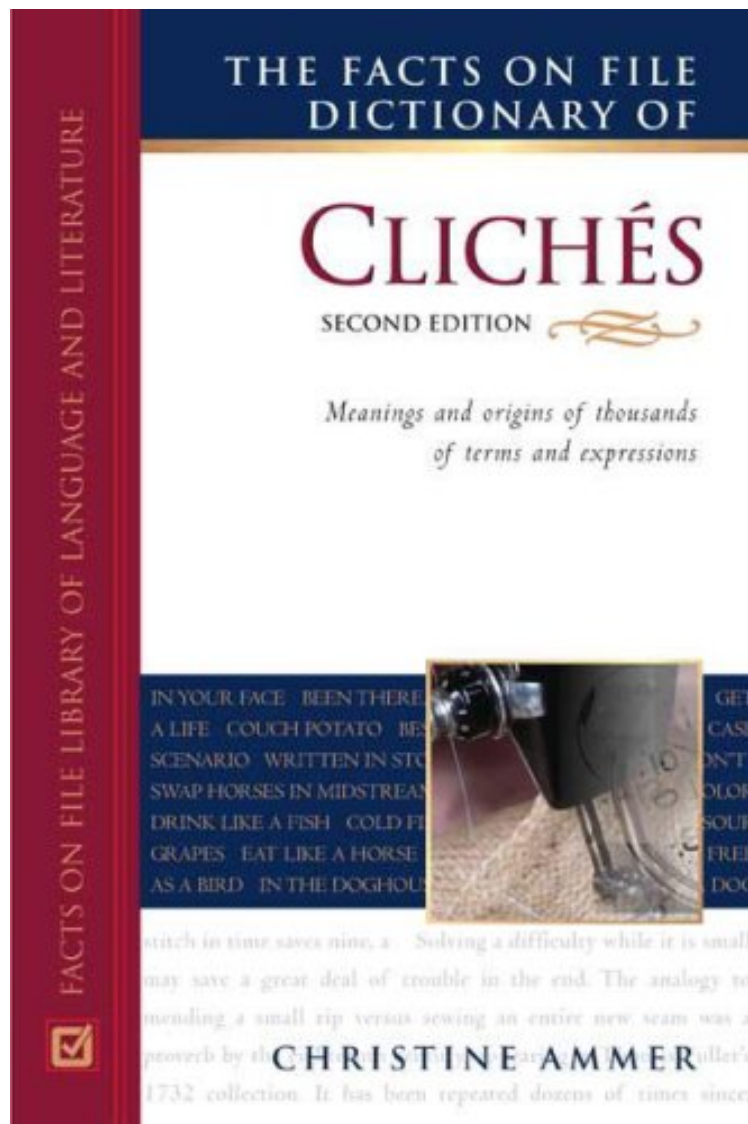


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The Facts on File Dictionary of Cliches: Meanings and Origins of Thousands of Terms and Expressions (Facts on File Library of Language and Literature)

Christine Ammer

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Christine Ammer : The Facts on File Dictionary of Cliches: Meanings and Origins of Thousands of Terms and Expressions (Facts on File Library of Language and Literature) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Facts on File Dictionary of Cliches: Meanings and Origins of

Thousands of Terms and Expressions (Facts on File Library of Language and Literature):

62 of 62 people found the following review helpful. stuffed to the gills with cock and bull stories
By A. Ryan
After an art instructor of mine expressed a passing interest in the original meanings of expressions, I decided to search the to find him an appropriate Teacher Appreciation Day gift book. I could not believe the numerous results that popped up not only from my initial query, but from trails like "customers who bought this item also bought..." and "explore other similar items...". Jeez, who knew - and why didn't I know - that all these wonderful references existed! I picked out five of the most highly rated ones and set about vetting them for the best. The winner: the Facts on File Dictionary of Cliches. With almost 4,000 entries, this certainly qualifies as the most extensive book of cliché listings that I've come across so far. There are a plethora of old favorites that may have their origins in the Bible, poetry, literature, or historical developments that have long since sunk into obscurity; and there are 500 newer, i.e. late 20th Century updates like "no-brainer" and "bad hair day". Each entry describes the meanings, origins and early uses (when known), development and present-day usage. The author also provides sample quotes just like "real" dictionaries do. For my purposes, I was also searching for a cliché reference book that was both entertaining *and* brief in descriptions and explanations (my teacher is a bit dyslexic). FOFDOC was also the best compromise between those two somewhat conflicting qualities. I could have gone with Myron Korach's Common Phrases and Where They Come From, but some of the stories were a bit long-winded (clichés are infectious, no?) and besides, it wasn't nearly as extensive at only about 500 listings. On the other hand (oooooh, there I go again!), James Rogers' Dictionary of Cliches was the closest contender in terms of quality, but still fell short (I realize now that I just can't help myself) in quantity at only @ 2,000. I found myself referring to the FOFDOC often in the last few weeks while I waited for Teacher Appreciation Day. I am thinking of getting a copy for myself now, and by extension for my children when they'll be old enough to need a writer's reference. Now, what to do with the other four?
-Andrea, aka Merribelle
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fun and interesting book! Makes a great gift!
By NB
Got this book as a gift and have sent more as gifts. Fun and interesting! Great for conversation breakers!
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good but not great...
By Dkid
This is a really nice book, but it didn't have the kind of background information I was anticipating. I've always enjoyed finding out the origins of English expressions. This is nice, but just didn't have as much explanation as other books I've read.

This updated and expanded edition of a popular title explains the meanings and origins of almost 4,000 clichés and common expressions. Each entry in "The Facts On File Dictionary of Cliches, Second Edition" includes the meaning of the cliché or expression, its origin and early uses, the historical development of the phrase, and its present-day usage. For this second edition, the author has added hundreds of new clichés, including many from the business world, such as "drum up," "fork over," and "go belly-up"; from the military, such as "the balloon goes up," "body count," and "mickey mouse"; and from popular novels, especially mysteries and thrillers. Other new clichés include "bells and whistles," "yada yada yada," and "whatever." "The Facts On File Dictionary of Cliches, Second Edition" is the largest, most comprehensive, and most entertaining reference of its kind. Fully indexed and cross-referenced, this essential resource will prove invaluable for students, writers, and general readers.

From Booklist
Christine Ammer acknowledges in the preface to this second edition of her dictionary of clichés that it may seem oxymoronic for her to speak of updating a dictionary of clichés by adding new clichés. But of course every cliché is new at some blurry point along a time line, just as others gradually fall out of favor. Thus, as a linguist whose concern is current usage, Ammer has not only added new ones (new in the sense of having recently become established as clichés) but she has culled and discarded many older clichés--such as "alas and alack" and "blot one's copybook"--that appeared in the first edition but that are rarely seen or heard nowadays. Taking the long view of the historian, Ammer regards a collection such as hers as giving form to "the particularity of an era's attitude." A pointed example is drawn from the testimony of a young soldier pressed by her comrades to participate in harassment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Her response, when agreeing to join in, was "OK. Whatever." This example, along with several others, appears in the entry for whatever, which Ammer says is "one of the most recent additions to clichedom," noting, too, that it is used very loosely. Her own definition--"in any case; anything goes; as you wish"--is certainly adequate, though it hardly accounts for the word being sometimes "irksome, and even incendiary, as well as nonchalant." In this connection, she adduces the actor Russell Crowe's assault on a hotel clerk who uttered the word with a greater measure of disrespect than Crowe thought appropriate. (It's an absolute delight to find such matters brought up in discussing meaning and usage.) The thoroughness of this entry is typical of the whole, and the same thoroughness may be found in the indexing, which permits both phrasal and keyword searches. Recommended for all libraries wanting to keep their collection of English-language resources current. Harold Cordry
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Recommended for public and academic collections," - Choice "While several resources on clichés are currently available, this one stands apart for the large number of citations.,, Recommended for academic and public libraries." - Library Journal
About the Author
Christine Ammer is an author of more than two

dozen reference books on subjects ranging from classical music to women's health. For the past 15 years she has concentrated on language. Her other books on words and phrases include *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*; *Cool Cats, Top Dogs, and Other Beastly Expressions*; *Fighting Words: From War, Rebellion, and Other Combative Capers*; and *The New A to Z of Women's Health*. She also writes a column on terms from military history for *Military History Quarterly*. She lives in Lexington, MA.