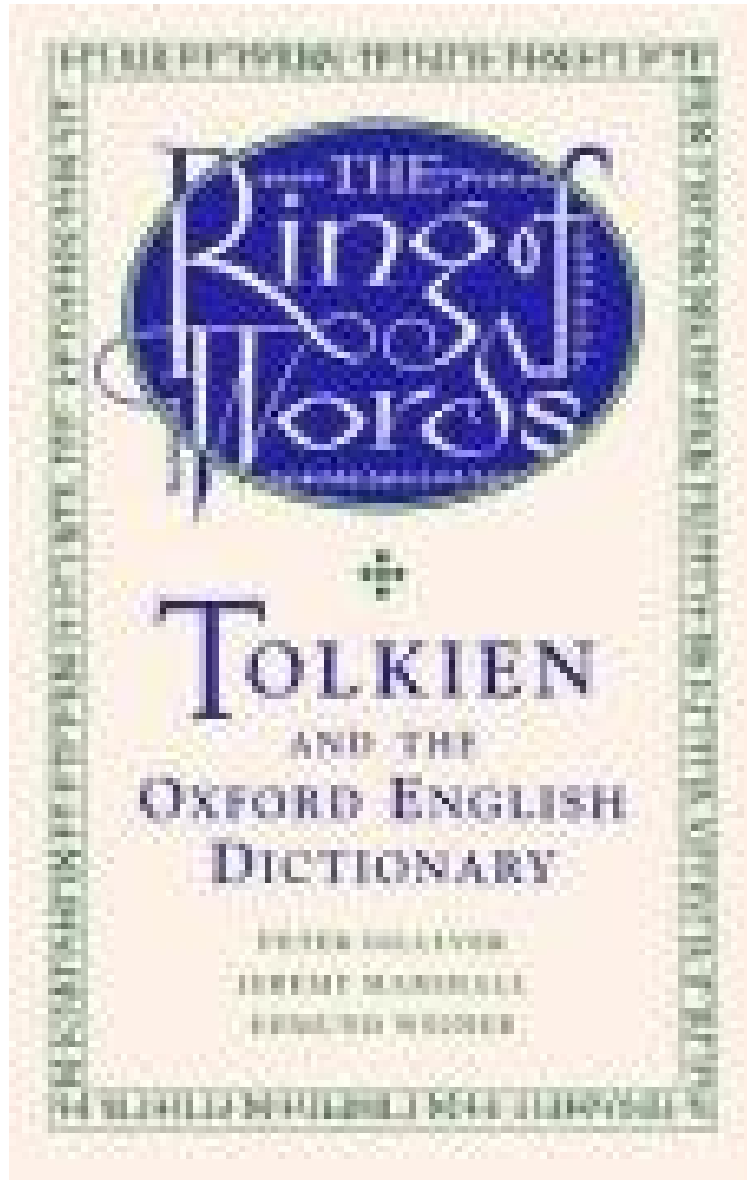


(Download ebook) The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary

## The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary

*Peter Gilliver, Jeremy Marshall, Edmund Weiner*  
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**Peter Gilliver, Jeremy Marshall, Edmund Weiner : The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Tolkien and His Word Journey - Insightful and Fascinating!By PM IFIVEI've just started to plow through this detailed history of Tolkien's involvement with the development of the first

edition of the OED. I did not know what to expect and should not have been surprised to see the level of detail in presenting Tolkien as a lexicographer and wordwright, as well as, exploring numerous examples of Tolkien's contributions through word studies and his ever-focused interest in philology. *The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary*, is a welcomed glimpse into Tolkien's participation and influence in the rigorous process of establishing the one and only dictionary of dictionaries, the OED. I would also add that this is not an easy read in that you really have to enjoy the extremely concentrated focus, peculiarities, and origins of words. It is intended for those who savor the detailed personality and skill it takes to establish a standard definition for a given word from the past or one that is created out of the wonderfully complex mind of Tolkien himself. It is one thing to flesh out the meaning of a single word and totally another thing to see Tolkien take his experience working on the OED as the springboard for creating several complete languages of the peoples and creatures of middle-earth. I look forward to mining through the little details and nuances presented in this book and hope that it will enable me (and you) to see the larger world of words with greater appreciation for Tolkien's imprint on the OED and society as well.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating information for those who love word origins

By SingleEyePhotos This book is in two parts. The first describes Tolkien's work on the Oxford English Dictionary and how he was able to make good use of his special philological skills. Brief explanations of words that he worked on, as well as technical details of how word origins are traced are given in this section. The second section, about 2/3 of the whole, is made up of entries for various real and "coined" words that Tolkien used in his works. A brief explanation of what the word means, and a quote from his works are given. That is followed by a discussion of the elements from which Tolkien formed the word, and possible variants of that word. "Real" words, mostly taken from Old or Middle English or Old Norse/Icelandic are given historical treatment. "Coined" words, that Tolkien made up out of the roots of "real" words are analyzed to show the components, and how the meaning of each component was used to make a whole word with a meaning that was greater than the sum of its parts.

Note that the first part is written in normal chapter format, whereas the second part is more like an encyclopedia or dictionary, with the words as headers, followed by a paragraph or two of explanation.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Tolkien's Words

By cprkwy8 As a Tolkien fan of 45 years, I found this book highly informative and most enjoyable to read. I was never interested in philology because I thought the subject was too dry. In the hands of these dedicated OED writers, it is anything but. I now have at least a sense of how Tolkien's love of words and their history led him to write the books that I love.

Tolkien's first job, on returning home from World War I, was as an assistant on the staff of the OED. He later said that he had "learned more in those two years than in any other equal part of his life." *The Ring of Words* reveals how his professional work on the Oxford English Dictionary influenced Tolkien's creative use of language in his fictional world. Here three senior editors of the OED offer an intriguing exploration of Tolkien's career as a lexicographer and illuminate his creativity as a word user and word creator. The centerpiece of the book is a wonderful collection of "word studies" which will delight the heart of Ring fans and word lovers everywhere. The editors look at the origin of such Tolkienesque words as "hobbit," "mithril," "Smeagol," "Ent," "halfling," and "worm" (meaning "dragon"). Readers discover that a word such as "mathom" (anything a hobbit had no immediate use for, but was unwilling to throw away) was actually common in Old English, but that "Mithril," on the other hand, is a complete invention (and the first "Elven" word to have an entry in the OED). And fans of Harry Potter will be surprised to find that "Dumbledore" (the name of Hogwart's headmaster) was a word used by Tolkien and many others (it is a dialect word meaning "bumblebee"). Few novelists have found so much of their creative inspiration in the shapes and histories of words. Presenting archival material not found anywhere else, *The Ring of Words* offers a fresh and unexplored angle on the literary achievements of one of the world's most famous and best-loved writers.

"The connection between his time spent mired in the drudgery of lexicography, his deeply felt and lifelong passion for philology, and the consequent meticulous craftsmanship of his writing, is all impeccably demonstrated in this fascinating assessment of Tolkien's life as one of England's most distinguished wordwrights. Anyone enthralled by the story of the English language will be captivated by this account of an unforgettable man's half-forgotten first achievements."--Simon Winchester, author of *The Professor and the Madman* and *The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary*

"Tolkien the scholar of language and Tolkien the author of fantasy fiction were inseparable: the authors explore this subject further than has been done before. But it is their extensive notes on the etymology and meaning of individual words used by Tolkien which readers will welcome most. *The Ring of Words* is an excellent addition to the shelf of best books about Tolkien, warmly recommended."--Wayne G. Hammond, author of *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Biography* and co-author of *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion*

About the Author Peter Gilliver is an Associate Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary and is also working on a history of the OED. Jeremy Marshall is an Associate Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary and co-author of *Questions of English*. Edmund Weiner is Deputy Chief Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary. He has written several books on English grammar and usage and teaches an annual course in the history of English.