

October 16th, 2022

Dear Mr. Noah Webster,

I have a riddle for you, sir. What is black, white, and red all over? My favorite book! It's your 1999 red-colored paperback Webster's American English Dictionary. You may think to yourself, "Of all the books out there, a dictionary is an odd choice for one's favorite book," but I assure you, sir, I am most sincere. Before receiving my hand-me-down copy, I felt helpless, always asking other people what words meant. But now, whenever there's a word I am not familiar with, I have the power to unlock the definition on my own. Aside from the Bible, of course, your Webster's American English Dictionary is my most-cherished book.

In fact, I wanted to make time today, on the anniversary of your birth, to write and express to you how much I appreciate you, your work, and how your book has enhanced my life. I know you've put huge effort into the making of your dictionary. To think, you learned 28 languages just to see why various people spell, pronounce, and use English words differently; I am so inspired. To elaborate how much your dictionary means to me, let me share with you that I am an avid writer. By examining definitions and learning new words, I improve my writing and communication. With these new words, I like to expand my vocabulary, use them in my story-writing, and quiz my grandma to see if she has learned that particular word yet. I also avoid certain words after discovering their meaning. To be honest, I have not finished reading your 405-page dictionary from cover to cover yet, but I am actively devouring the priceless words which it contains.

When writing a whimsical story, epically documenting my day, or dutifully doing my schoolwork, I have the privilege to search this dictionary for just the right word. At times, I may

consult its trusty sidekick, a thesaurus, but even then, I go back to your dictionary to cross-reference and make sure the word I'm considering actually fits in that context. Because of my devotion to my dictionary, I pay more attention to which words others use to craft their sentences, whether written or oral, to understand a person's worldview and motives. Words are containers of ideas and meaning, don't you think, and should be chosen with utmost care? Words are choice morsels, both precious and delicious, wouldn't you agree, sir?

My tattered paperback dictionary is wearing down from many years of use, so I now have my eye on your 1828 edition. It is at the top of my Christmas wish list. I have heard many good things about it: that it is the result of 26 years of your hard work, contains 70,000 words, and that when it was initially published, 12,000 of those words were never before included in a previous dictionary. In contrast, my current 1999 dictionary has only 40,000 words with their meanings. I believe the definitions you put in the 1828 edition—I've read a few—are even more vivid and accurate than in the newer revised versions which have been whittled down. Your 1828 dictionary is so good, in fact, that it is for sale at a shocking price of around \$60! Well, it's not in my budget yet, but I am entering a writing contest, and if I win, I will buy your in-depth lexicon. Until I get enough money, however, I will gladly stick with my treasured, handy dandy Webster's American English Dictionary. It's transformed my life.

Sincerely,

Azmerrah Teav

P.S. I can't believe that if you were still living today, you would be 264 years old. Happiest of birthdays, Mr. Webster!