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DICTIONARY OF

SLANG

JOHN AYTO



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The Oxford Dictionary of **Slang**

JOHN AYTO

John Ayto is a professional lexicographer and author. His publications include *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang* (with John Simpson), *The Oxford Essential Guide to the English Language*, *The Longman Register of New Words*, *The Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins*, and *Twentieth Century Words* (published by OUP).

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Preface

Our longstanding love affair with the undignified bits of our language—the unguarded vocabulary of conversation, the quirky slang of in-groups, the colourful outbursts of lexis in extremis—has assured us a continuing tradition of collecting such words together in dictionaries. From the earliest exposés of underworld cant from writers such as John Awdelay and Thomas Harman in the sixteenth century, through Francis Grose's pioneering *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), J. S. Farmer and W. E. Henley's seven-volume *Slang and its Analogues* (1890–1904), and Eric Partridge's influential *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (1936), to Jonathan Lighter's *Historical Dictionary of American Slang* (1994–), the development of colloquial English vocabulary has been voluminously and enthusiastically documented.

However, almost all of this documentation has been—not surprisingly—in alphabetical format: extremely convenient for looking up individual words, but not so useful if you are interested in the language of a particular area of activity, or if you want to find a word for a concept. That's the traditional role of the thesaurus. Thesauruses group words thematically, not alphabetically—so words expressing, for instance, 'anger' or 'similarity' can all be found together. What better format for looking at the history of English vocabulary topic by topic? That's where the *Oxford Dictionary of Slang* comes in: taking in turn each area of life and each aspect of the world that generates significant amounts of slang, it plots its lexical development over time, recording the arrival of each new item on the scene and building up a picture of how our off-guard speech has changed down the years. (If you need to access the book alphabetically, there is a full index at the back.)

Each entry has a date after it. This represents the earliest written record we have of the appearance of that word, or that meaning of that word, in English. It's important to remember that it does not necessarily mean that the word came into the language in that year. Indeed, as far as slang is concerned, it's more often than not the case that new usages have a lengthy currency in the spoken language before they start to appear regularly in print. Before dates, the letter *a* stands for 'before' and the letter *c* stands for 'approximately'.

Most entries also detail the origin of the word, if it is known, and any noteworthy features of its usage; particularize its meaning, if this is more specific than is indicated by the grouping of words to which it belongs; and illustrate it with an example taken in most cases from the *Oxford English Dictionary* or its files.

The contents of the book are based on the *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang*, but the number of entries has been considerably expanded, to cover more extensively that uncertain borderland between slang and colloquial usage. One person's slang is another's colloquialism, but the wider scope of this dictionary should ensure that few genuine candidates for 'slang' status escape its net. At the same time, its range is circumscribed by its format: areas rich in slang are included, but those which can barely scrape together a handful of slang terms are not. Do not expect to find every single piece of English slang here.

The dictionary concerns itself largely with words that have been current during the past hundred years or so, but some words and usages that died out earlier than that are included if they are important in illustrating the development of a particular semantic field.

My grateful thanks are due to John Simpson, chief editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and to his staff on the *OED*, particularly Michael Proffitt, Sue Baines, Anthony Esposito, Jennie Miell, Hania Porucznik, Peter Sweasey, and Tania Young, for their invaluable help in scouring the files of the *OED* for information not reliably available elsewhere on the dating of English slang.

John Ayto
London, 1998

The Body and its Functions

1. The Body and its Parts

(See also under **Fatness** p. 12 and **Nakedness** p. 11)

Head

noddle (1509) Origin unknown ■ *Independent*.

There are not many opportunities for them now to use their noddle rather than do what the FA tells them to do. (1991)

block (1635) Especially in the phrase *knock someone's block off* strike someone powerfully on the head ■ H. G. Wells: Many suggestions were made, from "Knock his little block off", to "Give him more love". (1939)

nob (a1700) Probably a variant of *knob*; latterly (now dated) especially in the phrase *bob a nob*, a shilling a head, a shilling each

knob (1725) Dated ■ Richard Whiteing: They invariably ... "ketch it in the knob" in the form of a bilious headache. (1899)

napper (1785) British; origin unknown ■ G. M. Wilson: If anyone ever asked for an orangeade bottle on his napper, Fruity did. (1959)

pimple (1818) Dated ■ *Racing Song*: Sharp brains in my noble pimple. (a1887)

nut (1846) ■ *Swell's Night Guide*: She's getting groggy on her pins, and if you don't pipe rumbo, she'll go prat over nut (head over heels). (1846)

chump (1859) British; from earlier sense, lump of wood ■ Vladimir Nabokov: Think how unpleasant it is to have your chump lopped off. (1960)

twopenny, tuppenny (1859) Dated; from *twopenny loaf* = *loaf of bread*, rhyming slang for *head*; compare **loaf** (below) head ■ C. E. Montague: "Into it, Jemmy," I yelled. "Into the sewer and tuck in your tuppenny." (1928)

noggin (1866) Orig and mainly US; from earlier sense, small mug ■ P. G. Winslow: A rap on the back of the noggin that knocked her out. (1975)

filbert (1886) From earlier sense, hazel nut; compare **nut** (above) head

bonce (1889) British; from earlier sense, large playing-marble ■ Len Deighton: This threat ... is going to be forever hanging over your bonce like Damocles' chopper. (1962)

bean (1905) Orig US ■ R. D. Paine: If these Dutchmen get nasty, bang their blighted beans together. (1923)

beezer (1915) Perhaps from Spanish *cabeza* head

lemon (1923) ■ *Coast to Coast*: If you had any brains in that big lemon you'd wipe me. (1952)

hat-rack (1942) ■ L. Hairston: If you spent half as much time tryin' to put something inside that worthless hat-rack as you did having your brains fried. (1964)

Uncle Ned (1955) Rhyming slang ■ *Listener*: I have spent an hour fixing the big, loose curls on top of my Uncle Ned. (1964)

cruet (1966) Australian; origin uncertain; there may be some connection with **crumpet** (below) head, and compare Australian slang *crudget* head, recorded once, in 1941, of unknown origin ■ R. Beilby: "Where did he get it?" "Through the cruet." (1977)

Head as repository of sanity and source of common sense

(See also under **Sanity** pp. 301-6)

onion (1890) Especially in the phrase *off one's onion* mad, crazy ■ H. G. Wells: He came home one day saying Tono-Bungay till I thought he was clean off his onion. (1909)

crumpet (1891) British; especially in the phrase *balmy* or *barmy on (or in) the crumpet* mad, crazy ■ R. H. Morrieson: It's Madam Drac, gone right off her crumpet at last. (1963)

pannikin (1894) Mainly Australian; from earlier sense, metal drinking-vessel; in the phrase *off one's pannikin* mad, crazy ■ C. J. Dennis: Per'aps I'm off me pannikin wiv' sittin' in the sun. (1916)

noodle (1914) Compare earlier sense, fool ■ M. Trist: Take no notice. ... She's off her noodle. (1945)

loaf (1925) Probably from *loaf of bread*, rhyming slang for *head*; especially in the phrase *use one's loaf* ■ *Jewish Chronicle*: Use your loaf. Didn't Sir Jack Cohen of Tesco ... start the same way? (1973)

score (1942) Australian & New Zealand; from earlier sense, round bun ■ D'Arcy Niland: I can just see you running a house. I'd give you a week before you went off your score. (1957)

barnet (1969) British; from earlier sense, hair ■ George Sims: 'Use your barnet!' Domino said. (1969)

Hair

barnet (1931) British; short for *Barnet fair*, rhyming slang for 'hair', from the name of the London borough of *Barnet* ■ Frank Norman: They send you to a doss house, so that you can get lice in your barnet. (1962)

Hair colour

bluey (1918), blue (1932) Australian & New Zealand; a nickname for a red-haired person; origin unknown

Bald person

slaphead (1990) British

Face

phiz (1688) Archaic; shortened from *physiognomy*

mug (1708) Perhaps from the drinking mugs made with a grotesque imitation of the human face that were common in the 18th century
 ■ L. Cody: What! Miss a chance to get your ugly mug in the papers! (1986)

phizog (1811) Now dated or jocular; shortened from *physiognomy* ■ *Radio Times*: The phizog is definitely familiar. . . 'I get recognized wherever I go.' (1980)

dial (1842) British; from a supposed resemblance to the dial of a clock or watch; compare **clock** (p. 2) *face* ■ L. A. G. Strong: You should have seen the solemn dials on all the Gardas and officials. (1958)

mooley, moey, moee (1859) Dated; from Romany *moot* mouth, face ■ Peter Wildeblood: All nylons and high-heeled shoes and paint an inch thick on their moeys. (1955)

mush, moosh (1859) British; from earlier sense, soft matter, apparently with reference to the soft flesh of the face ■ T. Barling: A big grin all over his ugly mush. (1974)

chivvy, chivy, chivey (1889) British; short for *Chevy Chase*, rhyming slang for *face* ■ Angus Wilson: I can't keep this look of modest pride on my chivvy forever. (1958)

puss (1890) Mainly US; from Irish *pus* lip, mouth ■ Carson McCullers: When you looked at the picture I didn't like the look on your puss. (1961)

kisser (1892) From earlier sense, mouth ■ Damon Runyon: He is a tall skinny guy with a long, sad, mean-looking kisser, and a mournful voice. (1938)

map (1908) Dated ■ James Curtis: What d'you want to sit there staring at me for? I'm not a bloody oil-painting. You ought to know my map by now. (1936)

clock (1918) Compare **dial** p. 2 *face* ■ J. I. M. Stewart: His clock was still the affable Brigadier's, but you felt now that if you passed a sponge over it there'd be something quite different underneath. (1961)

pan (1923) Compare *dead-pan* ■ Eric Linklater: I never want to see that pan of yours again. (1931)

boat, boat-race (1958) British; rhyming slang ■ Robin Cook: We've seen the new boat of the proletariat, all gleaming eyes. (1962)

Eyes

lamps (1590) Dated; orig. poetical ■ F. D. Sharpe: He had his lamps on the copper. (1938)

peepers (a1700) From earlier sense, person who peeps ■ *Observer*: Or is it Liz Hurley? So hard to tell now the old Pennis peepers have started to fail spectacularly. (1997)

gogglers (1821) Dated; from *goggle* look with wide eyes + *-ers* ■ W. M. Thackeray: Her ladyship . . . turning her own grey gogglers up to heaven. (1840)

mince-pies (1857), minces (1937) Rhyming slang ■ Robin Cook: A general look of dislike in the minces, which tremble a bit in their sockets. (1962)

saucers (1864) Dated; from the comparison of wide eyes with saucers, first recorded in the 14th century

Having bulging eyes

bug-eyed (1922) Orig US; from the verb *bug* bulge ■ Raymond Chandler: An angular bug-eyed man with a sad sick face. (1943)

Ear

lug (1507), lughole (1895) *lug* from earlier sense, flap of a cap, etc., covering the ears; perhaps of Scandinavian origin ■ *Taffrail*: Give 'im a clip under the lug! (1916)

listener (1821) Dated, mainly boxing slang; from earlier sense, person who listens ■ Pierce Egan: Hooper planted another hit under Wood's listener. (1827)

tab (1866) Orig dialect ■ *New Statesman*: Dad was sitting by the fire, behind his paper with one tab lifted. (1959)

earhole (1923) ■ *John O'London's*: Before you know it you'll be out on your earhole. (1962)

Ear swollen by blows

cauliflower ear (1896) From the distorted ear's shape ■ George Melly: Bouncers with cauliflower ears circling the dance-floor in evening dress. (1965)

thick ear (1909) British; especially in the phrase *give* (someone) *a thick ear*, hit someone hard (on the ear) ■ *Taffrail*: I sed I'd give yer a thick ear if yer went on worryin' me. (1916)

tin ear (1923) ■ Young & Willmott: A man with skill as a boxer, and a 'tin ear' (cauliflower ear) to prove it, had . . . prestige. (1962)

Nose

smeller (a1700) Dated, mainly boxing slang; from earlier sense, one who smells ■ *Nation*: He would rather not have to draw his claret and close his peepers and mash his smeller and break his breadbasket. (1894)

snitch (a1700) From earlier sense, a blow on the nose; ultimate origin unknown ■ L. Marshall: I'm not curious. I never had a long nose. . . . Peter . . . had a very long snitch. He had to push it into things that shouldn't have bothered him. (1965)

beak (1715) Jocular; from earlier sense, bird's bill ■ E. C. Clayton: A large, fat, greasy woman, with a prominent beak. (1865)

nozzle (1771) Dated; from earlier sense, small spout or mouthpiece; ultimately a diminutive of **nose** ■ J. H. Speke: But Bombay, showing his nozzle rather flatter than usual, said 'No; I got this on account of your lies'. (1863)

conk (1812) Perhaps a figurative application of *conch* type of shell ■ **Tiresias**: We soon become familiar with the regulars: . . . the keen young one whose hat is too big; the lugubrious one with the *Cyrano de Bergerac* conk. (1984)

scent-box (1826), snuff-box (1829) Dated boxing slang ■ **Cuthbert Bede**: There's a crack on your snuff-box. (1853)

sniffer (1858) ■ **Robin Cook**: They'll . . . look down their sniffers at you. (1962)

boko, (US) boke (1859) Origin unknown ■ P. G. Wodehouse: For a moment he debated within himself the advisability of dotting the speaker one on the boko, but he decided against this. (1961)

snoot (1861) Dialectal variant of *snout* ■ D. M. Davin: At first I was all for poking the bloke in the snoot. (1956)

snorer (1891) Compare earlier sense, person who snores

razzo (1899) Dated; probably an alteration of *raspberry* ■ **James Curtis**: If the queer fellow tried to come any acid he would get hit right on the razzo. (1936)

beezr (1908) Perhaps from *beezr* head, but this sense is not recorded until slightly later ■ P. G. Wodehouse: It is virtually impossible to write a novel of suspense without getting a certain amount of ink on the beezr. (1960)

schnozzle, schnozzola (1930) US; used especially as a nickname for the entertainer Jimmy Durante (1893–1980); pseudo-Yiddish (see **schnozz** (p. 3) nose, but compare also dated **nozzle** (p. 3) nose) ■ **Tamarack Review**: What a way to louse up this new magenta outfit—streaming eyes, a shiny schnozzola! (1959) ■ **Listener**: Hebrew amens are breathed through Yiddish schnozzles. (1977)

shonk (1938) From earlier sense, Jew; from the stereotypical view of Jews having large noses

schnozz, schnoz (1942) US; apparently Yiddish; compare German *Schnauze* snout ■ **Roy Hayes**: 'You remember what our boy looks like?' 'Gray hair, widow's peak, big schnozz, red ski parka and no luggage.' (1973)

honker (1948) Dated; probably from the sound made by blowing the nose ■ **R. Park**: It's yer own fault for having such a God-forgotten honker [sc. a large nose]. (1948)

hooter (1958) Probably from the sound made by blowing the nose ■ **Times**: Derek Griffiths is a young coloured comedian with a face like crushed rubber . . . and a hooter to rival *Cyrano de Bergerac*. (1972)

Mouth

gob (1550) Mainly British; perhaps from Gaelic and Irish *gob* beak, mouth, or from *gab* talk

■ **Julia O'Faolain**: Would you be up to that? Just to try to get her to keep her gob shut? (1980)

hole (1607) I. & P. Opie: Habitual grumblers in London's East End receive the poetic injunction: 'Oo, shut yer moanin' 'ole.' (1959)

trap (1776) Especially in the phrase *shut one's trap*, keep silent; compare **potato trap** p. 3 mouth and obsolete slang *fly-trap* mouth (c1795)

■ **Maureen Duffy**: If Emily should open her great trap and spill the lot she could find herself deep in trouble. (1981)

potato trap (1785) Dated ■ **W. M. Thackeray**: And now Tom . . . delivered a rattling clinker upon the Benicia Boy's potato-trap. (1860)

clam, clam-shell (1825) US, dated

gash (1852) US, dated ■ **Harriet Beecher Stowe**: Ef Zeph Higgins would jest shet up his gash in town-meetin', that air school-house could be moved fast enough. (1878)

kissing-trap (1854) Dated

north and south (1858) British; rhyming slang ■ **Frank Norman**: Dust floating about in the air, which gets in your north and south. (1958)

mooley, moey, moee (1859) Dated; from *Romany mooli* mouth, face

mush, moosh (1859) British; probably from *mush* face ■ **Ian Jefferies**: He said if anybody opened his mush, he'd kill 'em. (1959)

kisser (1860) = that which kisses, from earlier sense, one who kisses; compare earlier **kissing-trap** (p. 3) mouth ■ **John Wainwright**: Open that sweet little, lying little, kisser of yours, and start saying something that makes sense. (1973)

rag-box (1890) Dated ■ **Rudyard Kipling**: Now all you recruits what's drafted to-day, You shut up your rag-box an' 'ark to my lay. (1890)

yap (1900) US; probably from earlier verb sense, chatter ■ **Howard Fast**: They know that if they open their yaps, we'll close them down. (1977)

smush (1930) US, dated; alteration of *mush* mouth ■ **Damon Runyon**: He grabs Miss Amelia Bodkin in his arms and kisses her kerplump on the smush. (1935)

gate (1936) Mainly British ■ **Bill Naughton**: Shut your big ugly gate at once. (1966)

cake-hole (1943) ■ I. & P. Opie: Shut your cake-hole. (1959)

Teeth

peg (1598), toothy-peg (1828), toospeg (1921) Used especially by or to children ■ **Agatha Christie**: He took his elephant's trotters and his hippopotamus's toothy pegs and all the sporting rifles and what nots. (1931)

ivories (1782) Dated ■ **Tit-Bits**: His friend who gets one of his 'ivories' extracted with . . . skill by the same dentist. (1898)

Hampstead Heath, Hampsteads (1887) British; rhyming slang; from the name of a

district in north London ■ **Robin Cook**: The rot had set in something horrible with her hamsteeds and scotches. (1962)

tats, tatts (1906) Australian; applied especially to false teeth; from earlier sense, dice; ultimate origin unknown ■ **R. Park**: He heard her calling after him, 'Hey, you forgot yer tats! Don't you want yer teeth?' (1949)

pearlies (1914), pearly whites (1935)
■ **Thomas Pynchon**: Secretaries . . . shiver with the winter cold . . . their typewriter keys chattering as their pearlies. (1973)

snappers (1924) Applied especially to false teeth
■ **Listener**: Do your snappers fit snugly? (1958)

choppers (1940) Orig US; applied especially to false teeth ■ **Sun**: A set of false choppers were once found in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, after a Royal Garden Party. (1965)

Men's facial hair

face-fungus (1907), fungus (1925) Jocular
■ **Listener**: Svengali . . . with his face-fungus and rolling eyes. (1959)

door-mat (1909) British, dated ■ **J. R. Ware**: *Door-mat*, the name given by the people to the heavy and unaccustomed beards which the Crimean heroes brought home from Russia in 1855–56. . . . By 1882 the term came to be applied to the moustache only. (1909)

five o'clock shadow (1937) Applied to a growth of stubble which becomes visible in the late afternoon on the face of a man who has shaved earlier in the day ■ **New Yorker**: Mr. Nixon, however, was given a deep five-o'clock shadow by the Rumanian artist. (1969)

bum fluff (1961) British; applied to the incipient growth of hair on the face of an adolescent boy
■ **New Musical Express**: You must be a pretty crap Satan if you can only appeal to bumfluff-faced adolescent, social inadequates out to shock their mums. (1995)

Beard

ziff (1917) Australian & New Zealand; origin unknown ■ **George Melly**: 'Better get rid of that ziff,' she said pointing to his embryonic beard. (1981)

Moustache

tash, tache (1893) Abbreviation ■ **Roger Simons**: 'E' ad a little tash, just under 'is nose. (1965)

mo (1894) Australian & New Zealand; abbreviation ■ **K. Garvey**: His mo he paused to wipe. (1981)

walrus moustache (1918) Applied to a large moustache which overhangs the lips; from its similarity to the whiskers of a walrus
■ **Theodora Fitzgibbon**: I remember Conan Doyle as a large man with sad thoughtful eyes and a walrus moustache. (1982)

soup-strainer (1932) Jocular; applied to a long moustache ■ **Ellis Lucia**: A soulfully humming male quartet in soup-strainers and sideburns. (1962)

cookie-duster (1934) US, jocular

stash (1940) US; abbreviation ■ **Time**: Sandy is a superannuated swinger, complete with stash, burns and a 17-year-old hippie on his arm. (1971)

taz (1951) Variant of *tash* moustache ■ **Maureen Duffy**: He was proud of his little toothbrush taz and elegant white raincoat. (1969)

mush (1967) Shortening and alteration of *moustache* ■ **Kenneth Giles**: He read one of those Service ads. . . . You know, a young bloke with a mush telling to troops to go plunging into the jungle. (1969)

Whiskers

sluggers, slugger whiskers (1898) Orig and mainly US; applied to ear-to-chin whiskers

Shave

ocean wave (1928) Dated; rhyming slang
■ **John O'London's**: I 'as my ocean wave an' when I've got my mince pies open I goes down the apples and pears. (1934)

Bearded person

beardie, beardy (1941) ■ **Spectator**: There were more than forty thousand of us—weirdies and beardies, colonels and conchies, Communists and Liberals. (1960)

Arm

wing (1823) ■ **Sun** (Baltimore): He came up with a bad arm during the season, and had been troubled before with it. If the big man's wing behaves this year he should be of considerable value. (1947)

Hand

paw (1605) Often jocular; from earlier sense, animal's foot ■ **Ernie Money**: He stuck out his paw, and said Good-bye. (1887)

mauler (1820) Often applied specifically to the fists; compare earlier sense, one who mauls; also obsolete slang *mauley hand*, probably from the verb *maul*, but perhaps connected with Shelta *malya*, said to be a transposition of Gaelic *lamh* hand ■ **John Rossiter**: You keep your big maulers off this. (1973)

flipper (1832), flapper (1833) Dated; compare contemporary sense, broad fin of a fish, etc.
■ **W. H. Smyth**: The boatswain's mate exulted in having 'taken a lord by the flipper'. (1867) ■ **Lessons of Middle Age**: Come, Frank, and extend the flapper of friendship. (1868)

mud-hook (1850) Dated

duke, dook (1859) Often applied specifically to the fists; probably short for *Duke of Yorks*, rhyming slang for *forks fingers* ■ **Jessica Mitford**: The funeral men are always ready with dukes up to go to the offensive. (1963)

mitt (1896) Orig US; from earlier sense, mitten
■ **Raymond Chandler**: 'Freeze the mitts on the bar.' The barman and I put our hands on the bar. (1940)

meat-hook (1919)

Left-handed person

molly-dook, molly-dooker, molly-duke

(1941) Australian; probably from obsolete slang *molly* effeminate man, from the female personal name *Molly*, a pet form of *Mary* + *dook*, variant of *duke* hand; compare earlier Australian *mauldly* left-handed, *molly-hander* left-hander ■ *Northern Daily Leader* (Tamworth): Five of the top seven batsmen doing battle for Australia are left-handers. Kepler Wessels, Wayne Phillips, etc. . . . are all molly dookers. (1983)

Fingers

forks (a1700) Dated; applied especially to the fingers as used for picking pockets; from earlier sense, prongs of a fork ■ Harrison Ainsworth: No dummy hunter had forks so fly. (1834)

pinky, pinkie (1808) Mainly North American & Scottish; applied specifically to the little finger; from Dutch *pinkje*, diminutive of *pink* little finger ■ W. H. Auden: O lift your pin-kie, and touch the win-ter sky. (1962)

Breasts

titties (1746), tits (1928) *tit*, variant of *teat*; *titty*, originally a dialectal and nursery diminutive of *teat*, now as a diminutive of *tit* ■ *Oz*: Mary Anne Shelley, with the best tits off-off-Broadway. (1969) ■ *Screw*: Man, those nice firm buttocks and titties filled that bikini to overflowing. (1972)

charlies (1873) Unexplained use of the male personal name *Charlie*, diminutive of *Charles* ■ Peter Wildeblood: Carrying her famous bosom before her like the tray of an usherette she was disconcerted to hear . . . a nasal cry of: 'Coo, look at them charlies!' (1957)

bazoos (1928) Orig US; jocular alteration of *bosoms* ■ Elmore Leonard: Another case of Bio-Energetic Breast Cream . . . for South Beach bazoos. (1983)

boobs (1929), boobies (1934) *boob*, probably shortened from *booby*; *booby*, probably alteration of dialectal *bubby* breast ■ *Guardian*: The characters were constantly referring to her large bosom (even descending to calling them 'big boobies'). (1968) ■ *Daily Mirror*: If people insist on talking about her boobs, she would rather they called them boobies, which is a way-out word. . . rather than breasts. (1968)

knockers (1941) Perhaps from the notion of pendulous breasts knocking together ■ M. J. Bosse: I'm jealous. She has those big knockers, and I'm afraid you like them. (1972)

jugs (1957) Orig US; perhaps from the notion of a jug as a receptacle for milk or other liquids ■ Tom Wolfe: She must allow him the precious currency he had earned, which is youth and beauty and juicy jugs and loamy loins. (1987)

bristols (1961) British; short for *Bristol Cities*, rhyming slang for *titties*; from the name of Bristol City Football Club ■ Robin Cook: These slag girls used to go trotting upstairs . . . arses wagging and bristols going. (1962)

norks (1962) Australian; origin uncertain; perhaps from the name of the *Norco* Co-operative Ltd., a butter manufacturer in New South Wales ■ *Australian* (Sydney): The minimum requirement is an 'Aw, whacko, cop the norks!' followed by at least a six decibel wolf whistle. (1984)

bazookas (1963) Applied especially to large breasts; from earlier sense, portable rocket launcher, but presumably suggested mainly by *bazooms*

melons (1972) Orig US; applied especially to large breasts ■ *Pussycat*: Her full and shapely melons swung and swayed . . . as she moved. (1972)

bazongas, bazoongas, bazonkas (1972) US; probably a jocular alteration of **bazookas**

dingleberries (1980) From the earlier US sense, a cranberry, *Vaccinium erythrocarpum*, of the south-eastern US. The origin of *dingle* is uncertain ■ *British Journal of Photography*: Daddy says knockers and jugs and bazooms and dingleberries. . . And then he laughs and goes 'wuff! wuff!' (1980)

Large-breasted

stacked, stacked up, well stacked (1942) Orig US; used as a term of male approval ■ D. Shannon: A cute little blond chick . . . really stacked. (1981)

Ribcage

slats (1898) Orig and mainly US ■ John Masefield: Billy bats Some stinging short-arms in my slats. (1911)

Abdomen

victualling office (1751) Dated, mainly boxing slang; from earlier sense, office concerned with providing naval food supplies ■ *Sporting Magazine*: Spring put in a heavy claim on his opponent's victualling office. (1820)

bread-basket (1753) From earlier sense, receptacle for bread; now often used with reference to the abdomen as the target for a punch or shot ■ John Bristed: Our landlady, who was standing . . . with her mouth wide open, and her hands locked together . . . resting on her prominent breadbasket. (1803)

bingy, bingee, bingie, bingey, binjy (1832) Australian; from Aboriginal (Dharuk) *bindi* ■ *Australasian Post*: Plenty tucker here! Just look at those binjies! (1963)

tummy (1869), tum (1864), tum-tum (1869) *tummy* representing a childish alteration of *stomach*; *tum* shortened from *tummy*; *tum-tum* reduplication of *tum* ■ James Joyce: Cissy poked him out . . . of fun in his wee fat tummy. (1921) ■ *Time*: To re-establish old wisdom and simple certitudes: hot chestnuts in the hand, calories in the tum. (1977)

Derby kelly, Darby kelly, Derby kel (1906), kelly (1970) British; rhyming slang for *belly* ■ Terence Rattigan: Just that ride home. Cor, I still feel it down in the old derby kel. (1942) ■ Alfred Draper: My old kelly was rumbling and I fancied a pie and chips. (1970)

Maconochie (1919) Dated British services' slang, jocular; from earlier sense, stewed meat

amidships (1937) Used to refer to the striking of a blow in the abdomen; from earlier sense, in the middle of a ship, implying the most crucial or vulnerable part ■ *Times*: Buss hit him painfully amidships and he had to leave the field. (1961)

puku (1941) New Zealand; Maori ■ **P. Grace**: Your puku's getting in the way. (1978)

beer belly (1942), beer gut (1976) Used to refer to an abdomen enlarged by drinking beer ■ *Rolling Stone*: Woods pauses to tuck his shirt between a beer belly and a silver belt buckle. (1969) ■ *Los Angeles Times*: Fregosi took to wearing the jacket . . . when he began to develop a beer gut while trying to play for the Mets. (1986)

Ned Kelly (1945) Australian; rhyming slang for *belly*; from the name of *Ned Kelly* (1857–80), Australian bushranger ■ **Barry Humphries**: If I don't get a drop of hard stuff up me old Ned Kelly there's a good chance I might chunder in the channel. (1970)

Navel

belly button (1877) ■ **J. B. Priestley**: If you'd ever gone to school with your belly-button knockin' against your backbone. (1946)

Waist

middle (971) ■ **George Borrow**: He has got it buckled round his middle, beneath his pantaloons. (1842)

Heart

ticker (1930) Orig US; from the resemblance of the beating of the heart to the steady ticking of a clock ■ **J. Cartwright**: Put something at the bottom about your heart. Say, 'The ticker seems to be a little dodgy at the moment'. (1980)

Intestines

guts (a1000) Orig a standard term, but now colloquial when applied to human beings

inside (1741), insides (1840) ■ **Charles Kingsley**: So now away home; my inside cries cupboard. (1855)

innards (1825) Dialect pronunciation of *inwards* intestines, from noun use of *inward* internal ■ **J. T. Farrell**: His innards made slight noises, as they diligently furthered the process of digesting a juicy beefsteak. (1932)

shitbags (1937) Dated

comic cuts, comics (1945) Australian; rhyming slang for *guts*; from *comic cuts*, originally the name of a children's paper, later applied to strip cartoons ■ **F. A. Reeder**: I got a bit crook in the comic cuts and had to run for the latrine about ten times a day. (1977)

kishke, kishka, kishkeh, kishker (1959) From earlier sense, sausage made with beef

intestine; from Yiddish ■ **Leo Rosten**: I laughed until my *kishkas* were sore. (1968)

Womb

oven (1962) Especially in expressions suggesting pregnancy, in allusion to *have a bun in the oven* be pregnant ■ **David Fletcher**: She's in the club, you know. Got one in the oven, eh? (1976)

Pubic hair

pubes First recorded in the late 16th century as a two-syllable word adopted from Latin *pubes* pubic hair; the slang usage, pronounced /pju:bz/, is a comparatively recent development ■ *International H & E Monthly*: If I did shave my pubes I would end up sporting lots of elastoplast in all the places where I had cut myself. (1990)

bush (c1650) ■ **Anthony Powell**: He insisted on taking a cutting from my bush—said he always did after having anyone for the first time. (1973)

thatch (1933) ■ **C. McKay**: Looking to the stand where the girls were, Tack, indicating Rita, said, 'And tha's a finer piece a beauty than thisere. Man! Man! Oh how I'd love to get under her thatch.' (1933)

Genitalia

thing (c1386) Euphemistic; applied especially to the penis ■ **J. P. Donleavy**: Men wagging their things at you from doorways. Disgusting. (1955)

privates (1602) Shortened from earlier *private parts*; first recorded as a pun on the sense 'intimate friends' in Shakespeare *Hamlet* 2 ii: In the middle of her favour . . . her privates, we ■ **Ed McBain**: The dancer . . . wiped the black man's glasses over what the Vice Squad would have called her 'privates'. (1979)

sex (1938) ■ **Herbert Gold**: His eyes turned to his pants, gaping open, and his sex sick as an overhanded rattler gaping through. (1956) ■ **Ted Allbeury**: The narrow white briefs that barely captured her sex. (1977)

Male genitals

jock (a1790) Origin unknown; perhaps from an old slang word *jockum*, *-am* penis ■ **Ian Cross**: Sprigs clattering on the floor, knees, jocks, backsides and shouting as everybody dressed. (1960)

family jewels (1916) Orig US; often applied specifically to the testicles; from the notion of a husband's genitals being precious, and vital to the fathering of a family ■ **Peter O'Donnell**: 'E might be in 'ospital. . . I'm not quite sure what spirits of salts does to the old family jewels. (1965)

crown jewels (1970) Often applied specifically to the testicles; from the notion of preciousness; compare **family jewels** p. 6 in same sense ■ **J. Mitchell**: This one's [sc a horse] a gelding. . . . He lost his crown jewels. (1986)

lunchbox (1992) British; mainly applied to the genitals visible through tight clothing ■ *Guardian*: 'What is Linford

Christie's lunchbox?' Mr Justice Popplewell . . . asked the Olympic gold medallist in bemusement. 'They are making a reference to my genitals, your honour,' replied the agitated athlete. (1998)

Penis

weapon (a1000) ■ H. & R. Greenwald: This sexual thrill still comes over me whenever I see a horse flashing his weapon. (1972)

yard (1379) Dated; from earlier sense, rod; compare Latin *virga* rod, penis ■ John Payne: Aboulhusn . . . abode naked, with his yard and his arse exposed. (1884)

cock (c1450) Probably from the notion of the cock as the male bird ■ *Landfall*: 'She had her hand on his cock.' 'There's no need to be crude.' (1969)

tool (1553) ■ Leonard Cohen: You uncovered his nakedness!—You peeked at his tool! (1966)

prick (1592) ■ Ed McBain: Jocko had . . . a very small pecker. . . . Blood on the bulging pectorals, tiny contradictory prick. (1976)

meat (1595) See also **beat the meat** under To masturbate at **Sex** (p. 79) ■ *Black Scholar*: She was in his arms . . . and grabbing his erect meat. (1971)

needle (1638) Dated ■ Erica Jong: 'Won't ye have a Nestlecock?' cries the second Tart, . . . a Needlewoman fer yer e'er-loving Needle?' (1980)

pego (1680) Origin unknown ■ H. R. F. Keating: There's some as likes . . . her dirty old fingers round their pego. (1974)

pudding (1719), pud (1939) From earlier sense, sausage; see also **pull one's pudding** under To masturbate at **Sex** (p. 79) ■ James Joyce: There's a lot of lecit pleasure coming bangslanging your way, Miss Pimpernelly satin. For your own good, you understand, for the man who lifts his pud to a woman is saving the way for kindness. (1939)

machine (1749) Dated ■ Philo cunnus: I then seized his stiff machine in my grasp. (c1863)

root (1846) ■ Kate Millet: It measures intelligence as 'masculinity of mind', condemns mediocre authors for 'dead-stick prose', praises good writers for setting 'virile example' and notes that since 'style is root' (penis), the best writing naturally requires 'huge loins'. (1970)

Johnson, Jim Johnson (1863) Arbitrary use of the surname *Johnson* ■ *Screw*: So I went to take my turn with the hopes of somehow getting my *Jim Johnson* wet. (1972)

John Thomas (1879), John, john (1934) Arbitrary use of a male name ■ *Times Literary Supplement*: The grotesquely coy accounts of sex, during which Tony tells us that his 'John Thomas' was 'up and raring to go'. (1972) ■ David Ballantyne: How often did the nurse find him with his old john lying limply? (1948)

dick (c1888) Pet form of the male forename *Richard*; compare earlier sense, riding whip ■ Philip Roth: You might have thought that . . . my dick would have been the last thing on my mind. (1969)

dingus (c1888) US; compare earlier sense, whatchamacallit

dong (a1900) Mainly US; origin uncertain; perhaps from *Dong*, name coined by Edward Lear (1877) for an imaginary creature with a luminous nose ■ Philip Roth: I was wholly incapable of keeping my hands off my dong. (1969)

pisser (1901) Now mainly in *pull someone's pisser* pull someone's leg; see under **To make fun of someone or something at Ridicule** (pp. 330–1).

old man (1902) ■ Brian Aldiss: She had been opening up her legs before the reprise. Those glorious mobile buttocks. . . . I felt my old man perking up again at the memory. (1971)

pecker (1902) Mainly US; perhaps from the earlier phrase *keep one's pecker up* remain brave or optimistic ■ N. Levine: Ground sunflower seeds. . . . This will make your pecker stand up to no end of punishment. (1958)

peter (1902) From the male forename ■ Joseph Wambaugh: If you look very closely you can see a gerbil's dick, but not a parakeet's peter. (1977)

rod (1902) Applied especially to the erect penis ■ Ezra Pound: His rod hath made god in my belly. (1934)

organ (1903) Euphemistic; often in the phrase *male organ* ■ M. Campbell: He had the largest organ that anyone had ever seen. It was a truncheon. (1967)

willy, willie (1905) British; from a pet form of the male forename *William* ■ P. Angadi: We used to hold each other's willies. . . . We didn't know about sex then. (1985)

micky (1922) From a pet form of the male forename *Michael* ■ James Joyce: I'll put on my best shift and drawers to let him have a good eyeful out of that to make his micky stand for him. (1922)

middle leg (1922) ■ Dylan Thomas: Men should be two tooled and a poet's middle leg is his pencil. (1935)

tube (1922) ■ James Joyce: I suppose the people gave him that nickname [sc. Mr de Kock] going about with his tube from one woman to another. (1922)

putz (1934) Mainly US; Yiddish, from Middle High German *putz* ornaments ■ Philip Roth: He simply cannot—*will* not—control the fires in his putz, the fevers in his brain. (1964)

whang, wang (1935), whanger, wanger (1939) Orig and mainly US; *whang* from earlier sense, thong ■ G. Hammond: Maybe you're not as ready with your whang as you were, or maybe you couldn't keep it up. (1981) ■ Milton Machlin: She didn't get the idea so fast, so he whipped the old whanger out of his union suit and laid it on the table in front of her. (1976)

pencil (1937) ■ Dick Francis: That Purple Emperor strain is as soft as an old man's pencil. (1967)

dingdong (1944) US jocular

sausage (1944) Australian; mainly in the jocular phrase *hide the sausage* have sexual intercourse ■ D. Williamson: Raylene's a hell of a nice girl but the word is she's not a great one for hiding the sausage. (1977)

plonker (1947) Not recorded in print before 1947, but reported in use around the time of World War I; origin unknown; compare dated Australian slang *plonker* explosive shell

■ **Loaded:** An appendage of some magnificence, news of his powerhouse plonker brought the groupies . . . ever-knocking at the Hendrix bedroom door. (1996)

todger, tadger (1951) Origin unknown

■ **Sunday Sport:** My todger stood to attention as she joked: 'I'm sure that it winked at me then!' (1994)

winkle (1951) From earlier sense, small mollusc; applied especially to a small boy's penis ■ **Ted Hughes:** O do not chop his winkle off His Mammy cried. (1970)

dork (1961) Mainly US; origin uncertain; perhaps a variant of *dirk* dagger, influenced by *dick* penis ■ **Spectator:** A man with one leg and a vermilion bladder, violet stomach and testicles and a scarlet dork is seen putting it into another amputee. (1984)

stalk (1961) Applied especially to the erect penis ■ **Alan White:** I had a stalk on me as long as my arm. A right handful, that one. (1976)

rig (1964) ■ **Martin Amis:** All weekend I cried, . . . thought of ways of committing suicide, . . . considered lopping off my rig with a razor-blade. (1973)

wee-wee (1964) From earlier sense, urination ■ **Screw:** [The] self-righteous defender of what he thought to be his threatened wee wee, could not contain his machismo. (1977)

ding (1967) US; compare **ding-a-ling** p. 8, **dingdong** p. 7, **dingus** p. 7

swipe (1967) US, Black English ■ **I. Slim:** Slim, pimping ain't no game of love, so prat 'em and keep your swipe outta 'em. (1967)

ding-a-ling (1968) ■ **R. H. Rimmer:** My damned ding-a-ling was pointing my bathrobe into a tent. (1975)

prong (1969) ■ **Martin Amis:** This old prong has been sutured and stitched together in a state-of-the-art cosmetics lab. (1984)

tonk (1970) Compare earlier, mainly Australian senses, fool, homosexual man ■ **John Carey:** Most of his boyhood was spent worrying about the size of his 'tonk' (as he disarmingly dubs it). (1980)

knob (1971) ■ **Melody Maker:** No pictures of pop stars' knobs this week due to a bit of 'Spycatcher' type censorship round these parts. (1987)

meat tool (1971) Compare **meat** p. 7 and **tool** p. 7 ■ **Bernard Malamud:** What do you do . . . with your meat tool? You got no girl, who do you fuck other than your hand? (1971)

shaft (1971) ■ **Brian Aldiss:** It was never enough merely to lower your trousers—they had to come off, . . . so that you could crouch there naked but for your shirt, frantically rubbing your shaft. (1971)

chopper (1973) ■ **Jonathon Green:** We all know who's got the big choppers, and there's no way you can have a big chopper and money and power. (1993)

dipstick (1973) From earlier sense, rod for measuring depth liquid, especially engine oil;

probably reinforced by *dip one's wick* (of a man) have sex ■ **Maladicta:** I overheard in a cinema once the cry 'Keep your lipstick off my dipstick'. (1980)

An erection of the penis

horn (1785) ■ **Guardian:** Dirty old goat. . . . He only bows his head to get his horn up. (1972)

cock-stand, stand (1866) ■ **Angus Wilson:** Marcus . . . found, as his eyes took in the young man's flirtatious glance, that he was beginning a cock-stand. (1967) ■ **Index Expurgatorius of Martial:** Mævius, who while sleeping only gets A piss-proud stand that melts away on waking. (1868)

hard-on, hard (1893) ■ **Screw:** Billy and I talked down our hardons and . . . went downstairs to load the truck. (1972)

ramrod (1902) ■ **Alan Sillitoe:** I'd undone my belt and zip on our way across, and fell onto her with my ramrod already out. (1979)

rise (1949) Usually in *get a rise* ■ **Martin Amis:** 'Have you fucked Sue? . . . What was it like? . . . 'It was okay, except I couldn't get a proper rise.' (1973)

stiff (1980)

Testicles

stones (1154) Originally in standard use, but now slang

balls (1325) From their approximately spherical shape ■ **D. H. Lawrence:** She . . . gathered his balls in her hand. (1928)

bollocks (1744), bollocks (1382) *bollock*, variant of *ballock*, from late Old English *bealluc* testicle; related to *ball* spherical object ■ **Landfall:** Fine specimen of a lad, my Monty. All bollocks and beef. (1968)

knackers (1866) From earlier sense, castanets, from *knack* make a sharp cracking noise ■ **Graham Greene:** I may regret him for a while tonight. His knackers were superb. (1969)

nuts (1915) ■ **Roger Busby:** Russell got a boot in the nuts. (1973)

cobblers (1936) British; short for *cobbler's* (or *cobblers'*) awls, rhyming slang for *balls* ■ **James Curtis:** Well, they got us by the cobblers. (1936)

goolies (1937) Apparently of Indian origin; compare Hindustani *gol'* bullet, ball, pill ■ **Guardian:** To get a performance out of them [*sc* actors] . . . it is sometimes necessary to kick them in the goolies. (1971)

pills (1937) From earlier sense, ball ■ **Adam Diment:** I . . . wished I had followed up my elbow in the throat with a hefty boot in his peasant pills. One in the balls is worth two in the teeth—a motto of unarmed combat instructors. (1968)

rocks (1948) See also **get one's rocks off** under To have sex (with) at **Sex** p. 76 ■ **John Braine:** I'd get a swift kick in the rocks. (1975)

dingdongs (1957) US, jocular; compare **dingdong** p. 7 penis

cojones (1966) From Spanish, plural of *cojón*
testicle ■ Truman Capote: The baseball field was mud up
to your *cojones*. (1966)

Female genitals

cunt (c1230) Middle English *cunte*, *count(e)*,
ultimately from Germanic **kuntōn* ■ Henry Miller:
O Tania, where now is that warm cunt of yours? (1934)

hole (1592) ■ Thomas D'Urfey: It has a Head much like a
Mole's, And yet it loves to creep in Holes: The Fairest She that
e'er took Life, For love of this, became a Wife. (1719)

meat (1611) ■ Germaine Greer: It would be unbearable,
but less so, if it were only the vagina that was belittled by
terms like *meat*. (1970)

slit (1648) ■ *Rolling Stone*: What am I going to call it?
Snatch, Twat? Pussy? Puss puss, nice kitty, nice little animal
that's so goddam patronizing it's almost as bad as saying 'slit'.
(1977)

twat, twot(t) (1656) Origin unknown ■ Patrick
White: This young thing with the swinging hair and partially
revealed twat. (1973)

muff (1699) From the supposed resemblance
between the pubic hair and a fur muff ■ Henry
Miller: The local bookie's got Polaroids of her flashing her
muff. (1973)

honey-pot (1709) ■ Germaine Greer: If a woman is
food, her sex organ is for consumption also, in the form of
honey-pot. (1970)

quim (1735) Of uncertain origin; perhaps related
to obsolete *queme* pleasant ■ H. R. F. Keating: Is it
worse to have it on me belly than to have it in me quim? (1974)

gash (c1866) From earlier sense, cut ■ *Viz*: 'Hey, I
think we're in here, San!' 'Aye! I'm juicin' up already. A couple
more o' these an' I'll be frothin' at the gash.' (1991)

fanny (1879) Mainly British; origin unknown
■ James Joyce: Two lads in scoutish breeches went through
her . . . before she had a hint of hair at her fanny to hide.
(1939)

pussy (1880), puss (1902) Probably from the
supposed resemblance between a cat's fur and
the pubic hair, but compare Old Norse *püss*
pocket, pouch, Low German *püse* vulva and Old
English *pusa* bag ■ Jimmy O'Connor: He killed about
five prostitutes, cut them to pieces and stuffed various objects
up their pussies. (1976)

minge (1903) Origin unknown ■ *New Direction*:
They've all . . . scented and talced their minges. (1974)

snatch (1904) Perhaps from earlier obsolete
sense, a brief fondle or act of sexual intercourse
■ Philip Roth: Know what I did when I was fifteen? Sent a
lock of my snatch-hair off in an envelope to Marlon Brando.
(1961)

box (1916) Mainly US; previously in use in the
17th century ■ R. Drewe: I've seen some great tits and
some of the bushiest boxes you could imagine. (1983)

jelly roll (1927) US, mainly Black English; from
earlier sense, cylindrical cake containing jelly or
jam ■ Bernard Malamud: Irene Lost Queen I miss To be
between Your Jelly Roll. (1971)

pocketbook (1942) US; from earlier sense,
purse or handbag; probably either from the
supposed resemblance between the labia and a
closed or folded purse, or from the notion of the
vagina as a receptacle (compare **box** p. 9) ■ *Maya*
Angelou: Momma had drilled into my head: 'Keep your legs
closed, and don't let nobody see your pocketbook.' (1969)

zatch (1950) Perhaps an alteration of *satchel* in
similar slang sense ■ Robert Dentry: Scotsmen playing
the bagpipes give me a pain in the prick. . . . Pathan tribesmen
playing them is enough to make the harlot of Jerusalem snatch
her zatch! (1971)

Clitoris

clit, clitty (c.1866) Abbreviation ■ *Gay Times*: Now
available. . . Set of 4 clit stimulators. (1990)

(little) man in the boat (1979)

Buttocks

arse (Old English), ass (1860) *arse*, Old English
ars; *ass* mainly US; originally in standard use,
but now slang ■ *Guardian*: Bush's rhetoric has
occasionally dropped to the level of schoolboy abuse: 'Saddam
is going to get his arse kicked.' (1991)

tail (1303) Now mainly US; now mainly in
figurative phrases, such as *work one's tail off*, or
applied to a woman's buttocks and genital area
regarded as an object of sexual desire ■ William
Faulkner: This is the first time you've had your tail out of that
kitchen since we got here except to chop a little wood. (1942)
■ *Transatlantic Review*: He had been after her tail for
months, but Judy, being an old-fashioned girl, declined his
advances. (1977)

bum (1387) Mainly British; origin unknown
■ *Looks*: Begin with a warm-up and concentrate on your bum
and thighs, and work on your boobs and tum as well when you
turn the poster over. (1989)

butt (c1450) From probable earlier sense, broader
end of something; originally in standard use,
but now slang, mainly US ■ John Bartlett: The word
is used in the West in such phrases as, 'I fell on my butt.' 'He
kick'd my butt'. (1860)

backside (c1500) From earlier sense, rear part
■ *Gentleman's Magazine*: He shall fall on his back-side.
(1827)

prat (1567) Orig criminals' slang; origin unknown
■ David Delman: I'm a *shmo* about tennis, so if I fall on my
prat a time or two you have to bear with me. (1972)

cheeks (a1600) Used especially with reference to
the two halves of the buttocks ■ Norman Mailer: A
car . . . is already a girl. . . . The tail-lights are cloacal, the rear
is split like the cheeks of a drum majorette. (1959)

moon (1756) Dated; from the shape of the
buttocks; used in the singular and the plural
with the same meaning ■ Samuel Beckett: Placing
her hands upon her moons, plump and plain. (1938)

rass (1790) Jamaican; by metathesis of *arse*
■ A. Salkey: You class-war rass hole, you! (1959)

rear (1796) Euphemistic ■ N. R. Nash: Just once is
enough, Baby. (*She slaps her on the rear*) Come on—get to
work. (1949)

behind (a1830) Euphemistic ■ George Bernard Shaw: You can say 'If I catch you doing that again I will ... smack your behind.' (1928)

duff (c1835) US; origin unknown

buns (1877) US; from the hemispherical shape of the buttocks ■ Elmore Leonard: She saw ... a white band below his hips, sexy, really nice buns. (1985)

jacksy, jacksie, jaxey, jaxie, jacksy-pardo, jacksy-pardy (1896) From the male personal name *Jack* + *-sy* ■ Alfred Draper: The amount of love in our house you could stick up a dog's jacksie and he wouldn't even yelp. (1970)

can (1914) Orig and mainly US ■ John McCormick: A toilet bowl in the corner with a scratched metal lid that freezes your can when you do sit on it. (1967)

tochus, tochas, tochess, tuchus, tuchas, tokus, tocus, etc. (1914) Mainly North American; from Yiddish *tokhes*, from Hebrew *taħaṣ* beneath ■ W. R. Burnett: I was ... getting my tokus pinched all over the place. (1952)

fanny (1919) Orig and mainly US; origin unknown ■ Nevil Shute: I'd never be able to think of John and Jo again if we just sat tight on our fannies and did nothing. (1960)

beam (1929) From earlier sense, width of a ship; used especially with reference to the width of the hips and buttocks ■ Mrs Hicks-Beach: A cast-off of Jim's. He's grown too broad in the beam for it. (1944)

keister, keester, keyster (1931) US; origin unknown; compare earlier senses, bag, strong-box ■ *New Yorker*: Just put your keyster in the chair and shut your mouth. (1985)

bim (1935) Alteration of *bum* ■ Cecil Day Lewis: He slid gracefully down it on his bim. (1948)

slats (1935) Orig and mainly US; usually in the phrase *a kick in the slats* ■ *Business Week*: Unless we get a new kick in the slats from inflation next year, I would look for continued relative restraint in settlements. (1975)

posterior (1936) Euphemistic or jocular; the plural *posteriors* was used for 'buttocks' between the 17th and the 19th centuries ■ *Sea Spray* (New Zealand): It is soft so that a crewman winding the spinnaker sheet winch down aft can rest his posterior on it. (1976)

quoit, coit (1941) Australian; from earlier sense, rope ring, in allusion to the anus ■ John Bailey: 'I think he needs a good kick up the coit,' says Cromwell. (1972)

Khyber Pass, Khyber (1943) British; rhyming slang for *arse*; from the name of the chief pass in the Hindu Kush mountains between Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan ■ *Crescenda*: If we sit on our Khybers, we will miss out on all the things that make our lives the richer. (1968)

chuff (1945) Origin unknown ■ *Observer*: It was two hours of unmitigated boredom, that could only have been enjoyed by people too lazy to get off their chuffs and book themselves on a real tour of stately homes. (1996)

zatch (1950) Perhaps an alteration of *satchel* in similar slang sense ■ E. B. White: You are just sticking

out your zatch, and many a tosspan and struffart will run you through. (1950)

bronze, bronza, bronzo (1959) Australian; from earlier sense, anus ■ Les Ryan: Go and sit on your bronze while we give scabs your jobs. (1975)

tush, tushie, tushy (1962) Mainly North American; alteration or diminutive of *tochus* buttocks ■ *Pix* (Australia): Pretty young girls who walk around ... with their tushes out there asking for it. (1970)

acre, acher (1965) Australian, euphemistic; from *acre* measure of area, from the notion of a large expanse of buttocks; the spelling *acher* perhaps inspired by the notion of a 'pain in the arse' ■ Frank Hardy: Wiping between his toes and falling on his acre. (1971)

heinie, hiney (1982) US; perhaps from *behind*, influenced by *heinie* German (soldier) ■ *New Yorker*: I could tell how tight that girl's shorts were. I could see her heinie clear across the square. (1985)

Anus

arsehole (1400), **asshole** (1935) *asshole*, mainly US ■ Ezra Pound: Faces smeared on their rumps. ... Addressing crowds through their arse-holes. (1930)

hole (1607) ■ Leonard Cohen: Don't give me this all diamond shit, shove it up your occult hole. (1966)

shithole (1937)

ring (1949) From its annular shape ■ R. Stow: I bet I would have booted him in the ring if he hadn't run. (1965)

ort (1952) Australian; also applied more broadly to the buttocks; origin unknown ■ J. Wynnum: Take it from me, there's more ways of killin' a cat than fillin' its ort with sand. (1962)

bronze, bronza, bronzo (1953) Australian; from its colour ■ D'Arcy Niland: I know the one with an ugly face like a handful of bronzas. Who's the other? (1957)

freckle (1967) Australian; from previous sense, brown mark on the skin ■ Barry Humphries: I too believed that the sun shone out of Gough's freckle. (1978)

The rectum

back passage (1960) Euphemistic ■ P. Falconer: As she sucked, so her fingers reached his back passage. Uninvited, she positioned two fingers at the entrance of his arsehole, and crudely thrust into him. (1993)

Legs

stumps (a1460) Jocular; from earlier sense, remaining part of an amputated limb; now mainly in *stir one's stumps* act quickly

pins (1530) From earlier sense, peg ■ *Daily Mirror*: You look a bit wobbly on your pins, pet. (1976)

timbers (1807) From earlier sense, wooden leg ■ John Clare: Boys, miss my pegs ... and hit my legs, My timbers well can stand your gentle taps. (1821)

props (1828) Dated ■ *Sportsman*: There are those ... who assert that with such 'props' he will never successfully negotiate the Epsom gradients. (1891)

pegs (1833) Jocular; often also applied to a wooden or other artificial leg ■ Thomas Hood: The army-surgeons made him limbs: Said he,—‘They’re only pegs’. (a1845)

underpinnings (1848) US ■ R. B. Parker: I learned Vic’s technique for developing ‘sinewy and shapely underpinnings’. (1974)

benders (1849) Orig US ■ H. W. Longfellow: Young ladies are not allowed to cross their benders in school. (1849)

Scotch peg (1857) Rhyming slang ■ Ward Muir: If he had occasion to allude to his leg he would probably have called it ‘Scotch peg’. (1917)

stems (1860) ■ *Vanity Fair*: Among some of Conway’s more famous expressions are: . . . ‘Stems’ and ‘Gamb’s’ (legs). (1927)

wheels (1927) US, orig criminals’ slang ■ Ed McBain: Bid blonde job, maybe five-nine, five-ten. Blue eyes. Tits out to here. Wheels like Betty Grable. (1985)

Shortness of legs

duck’s disease, ducks’ disease, duck-disease (1925) Jocular ■ B. Marshall: Plinio, the barman with duck’s disease, came running up. (1960)

Knees

benders (1925) Orig US ■ A. S. M. Hutchinson: They say family prayers there with the servants every night, all down on their benders. (1925)

2. Nakedness

Naked

in one’s birthday suit (1753) ■ *Guardian*: The sight of me in my bathing-suit might tip the balance in a world already veering towards collapse. Ditto, me in my birthday suit. (1992)

in the altogether (1894) From the notion of being ‘altogether’ or ‘completely’ naked ■ Nigel Balchin: *Should I get a kick out of just seeing a girl in the altogether?* (1947)

bollock-naked, ballock-naked (1922) British ■ *Viz*: Yes indeed! ‘BIG’ BEN is ‘STARK’ bollock naked! Porno action on page 19! (1990)

starkers (1923) British; from *stark (naked)* + *-ers* ■ *Guardian*: There was no stripping. . . . The girls were starkers all the time. (1963)

starko (1923) British; from *stark (naked)* + *-o* ■ J. Pudney: Leave him in his birthday suit. Miss bloody Garth can walk back to Midsomer starko and explain to the folks that she’s been a man all the time. (1961)

in the raw (1941) From earlier (mainly metaphorical) use of *the raw* to denote exposed flesh ■ Evelyn Waugh: Auberon surprised her in her bath and is thus one of the very few men who can claim to have seen his great-great-grandmother in the raw. (1944)

Feet

tootsy, tootsie, tootsy-wootsy, tootsie-wootsie, etc. (1854) Jocular; alteration of *foot* + diminutive suffix *-sy* ■ Mary Wesley: You can rest your tootsies while I listen to music. (1983)

mud-hooks (1850) Dated

plates of meat (1857), plates (1896), platters of meat (1923), platters (1945) *plates/platters of meat*, rhyming slang ■ Cecil Day Lewis: ‘Your clodhopping feet.’ ‘Plates of meat,’ murmured Dick Cozzens, who is an expert in slang. (1948) ■ P. Branch: He . . . took off his shoes. ‘Heaven!’ he sighed. ‘My plates have been quite, quite killing me.’ (1951)

beetle-crushers, beetle-squashers (1860) Jocular ■ Anthony Gilbert: He looked down . . . at his own enormous beetle-crushers in bright tan Oxfords. (1958)

dogs (1913) ■ John Steinbeck: We ain’t gonna walk no eight miles . . . tonight. My dogs is burned up. (1939)

Skin

hide (a1000) From earlier sense, animal’s skin; originally in standard use, but now jocular, especially in metaphorical expressions ■ Lord Lytton: The poor fellow meant only to save his own hide. (1873)

Breath

puff (1827) From earlier sense, short emission of air ■ W. C. Baldwin: Sustaining three more savage charges, the last . . . far from pleasant, as my horse had all the puff taken out of him. (1863)

in the nuddy (or nuddie) (1953) Jocular, orig Australian; from *nudd-*, jocular alteration of *nude* + *-y* ■ S. Weller: Quick—ring her back—she’s in the nuddy—give her a scare. (1976)

No clothing

not a stitch (1885) ■ Alan Bennett: And he will insist on not wearing a stitch. Zoe gets quite agitated. Normally, you see, they wear what I believe is called a posing pouch. (1972)

The bare skin

the buff (1654) Now mainly in the phrases *in the buff* naked and *to the buff* so as to be naked; from earlier sense, buffalo-skin (leather) ■ Vivian Jenkins: They went swimming, sunbathed, did their training stripped to the buff. (1956) ■ *Rolling Stone*: The girls call themselves the Groupies and claim they recorded their song in the buff. (1969)

To undress

peel (1785) Often followed by *off*; originally used in boxing slang, referring to contestants getting stripped ready to fight ■ *Variety*: The gals are peelin’ in 23 clubs through Los Angeles County. (1950)

To go naked

skinny-dip (1966) Orig US; applied to swimming naked; from the notion of swimming only in one's skin ■ Lisa Birnbach: Once every summer, teenagers are caught skinny-dipping after dark. (1980). Hence **skinny-dipper** (1971)

streak (1973) Orig US; applied to running naked in a public place as a stunt ■ *Daily Telegraph*: The girls ... had danced on the lawns in the nightdresses, 'streaked' to chapel and enjoyed midnight parties. (1979) Hence **streaker** (1973) ■ John Irving: A young

woman had reported that she was approached by an exhibitionist—at least, by a streaker. (1978)

Clothed

decent (1886) Used especially in asking whether someone is clothed before entering their room ■ Ruth Harvey: Sometimes, if she knew one of the actors or actresses, she would knock at a door and call 'Are you decent?' (That old theatrical phrase startled people who didn't belong to the theatre, but it simply meant 'Are you dressed?') (1949)

3. Physique

Fat

rolly-poly (1820) A fanciful formation based on the verb *roll* ■ Dinah Mulock: A little roly-poly woman, with a meek, round, fair-complexioned face. (1865)

tubby (1835) From earlier sense, tub-shaped ■ Rudyard Kipling: Fat Captains and tubby Majors. (1891)

pudgy (1836), podgy (1846) Used to suggest shortness or squatness as well as fatness; apparently popularized in the writings of William Thackeray; from *pudge*, *podge* fat person or thing + *-y* ■ William Thackeray: Their fingers is always so very fat and pudgy. (1837)

jelly-bellied (1899) From the noun *jelly-belly*

broad in the beam (1929) Euphemistic; applied to large hips or buttocks; *beam* from earlier sense, breadth of a ship ■ Mrs Hicks-Beach: A cast-off of Jim's. He's grown too broad in the beam for it. (1944)

Fat person

fatty (1797) Often used as a derisive nickname; from the adjective *fat* + *-y*; compare the earlier adjective *fatty* ■ *Petticoat*: Success stories connected with slimming are few and far between, so any fatties who might be reading this—take note of this tale! (1971)

Mother Bunch (1847) Applied to a fat or untidy old woman; from the name of a noted fat woman of Elizabethan times ■ *Guardian*: She no more looks like a Mother Bunch than sounds like one ... a fairly plump but elegant, well-dressed woman. (1964)

slob (1861) Used to associate fatness and moral delinquency; from the earlier (especially Irish) sense, mud, muddy land ■ S. Ellis: A big, fat, gutless slob. (1958)

jelly-belly (1896) ■ L. A. G. Strong: If I ever want a ginger-chinned jelly-belly's advice ... I'll ask for it. (1935)

slump (1906) Applied to a fat, slovenly person; from earlier sense, sudden decline ■ Jeffrey Ashford: D'you reckon we'd waste good bees and honey on a slump like you for nothing? (1960)

flop (1909) Applied to a soft or flabby person ■ Frank O'Connor: She was a great flop of a woman. (1936)

slug (1931) ■ I. & P. Opie: The unfortunate fat boy ... is known as ... slug. (1959)

fatso (1933) Often used as a derisive nickname; probably from the adjective *fat* or the designation *Fats* ■ Len Deighton: I began to envy Fatso his sausage sandwiches. (1962)

lard-ass (1946) Mainly North American, orig nautical; often applied specifically to a large-buttocked person, or to the buttocks themselves ■ R. A. Hill: All they do is eat and sit on their lard asses around the guns. (1959)

Fatness

middle-age spread, middle-aged spread (1931) Applied to paunchiness in a middle-aged person ■ *John o' London's*: Join the happy throng who have learnt to control the 'middle-age spread' by wearing the ... supporting belt. (1937)

puppy fat (1937) Applied to fatness in a young person, which supposedly soon disappears

flab (1958) ■ Kenneth Giles: She looks pretty good ... no flab round the thighs yet. (1966)

spare tyre (1961) Applied to a roll of fat around the midriff

Muscular; massive

beef to the heel(s) (1867) ■ James Joyce: Transparent stockings, stretched to breaking point. Not like ... the one in Grafton street. White. Wow! Beef to the heel. (1922)

hefty (1871) From earlier sense, weighty ■ E. F. Norton: The bucolic bumpkin with coarse features and slow brain fails no less than the hefty giant. (1925)

Thin

skinny (1605) From earlier sense, like or consisting of skin ■ *Saturday Review*: A chicken ... sometimes skinny and often ill-kept. (1879)

spindly (1827) From earlier sense, (of plants) growing weakly ■ Bayard Taylor: Therefore I've worn, like many a spindly youth, False calves these many years upon me. (1872)

weedy (1852) Used to denote unhealthy thinness and weakness; from earlier sense, like a weed

■ **Nation:** In order to fill the ranks large numbers of weedy men have been enlisted. (1892)

Thin person or animal

beanpole (1837) Applied to a tall thin person; see at **Size** (p. 395).

weed (1869) Applied to a thin and unhealthy delicate person ■ *Times:* A girl torn between a brainy weed and a moronic body-builder. (1970)

hat-rack (1935) Applied to a scraggy animal; from the resemblance of the protruding ribs and other bones to the pegs of a hat-rack ■ **Roy**

4. Sight, Vision

A look, a glance

squint (1673) ■ G. M. Fenn: Better get back to him as soon as you've had your squint round. (1894)

deck, dekh (1853) Orig Anglo-Indian, dated; from Hindustani *dekhā* sight, *dekhnā* see, look at ■ E. Milne: Crikey, have a deck at Ronald Colman! (1951)

look-see (1883) Pidgin-like formation from the noun or verb *look* + the verb *see* ■ Adam Diment: I took a long looksee through my . . . binoculars. (1968)

decko, dekho (1894) British, orig army slang; from Hindustani *dekho*, imperative of *dekhnā* to look ■ *Observer:* Once I'd grabbed hold of the script and taken a good dekho at it, my worst fears were confirmed. (1958)

double O (1913) US; applied to an intense look; from the resemblance to a pair of staring eyes ■ R. A. Heinlein: The cashier came over and leaned on my table, giving the seats on both sides of the booth a quick double-O. (1957)

squiz, squizz (1913) Australian & New Zealand; probably a blend of *squint* and *quiz* ■ K. Smith: Hey, youse blokes! Come over here and take a squiz at *this!* (1965)

gander (1914) Orig US; from the verb *gander* ■ *Scientific American:* Take a gander at the see-through door below. (1971)

geek (1919), gig (1924), gink (1945) Australian; from British dialect verb *geek* peep, look ■ Robert Close: Get a gink at that chin, mates! (1961)

Captain Cook (1932) Australian; rhyming slang for *look*; from the name of James Cook (1728–79), British navigator and explorer ■ D. O'Grady: Got a Captain Cook at your dossier—it's thicker than your frickin' head. (1974)

butcher's (1936) British; short for *butchers's hook*, rhyming slang for *look* ■ Kingsley Amis: Have a butcher's at the *News of the World*. (1960)

bo-peep (1941) Australian & New Zealand; extension of *peep*, after *bo-peep* nursery game ■ *Landfall:* Take a bo-peep at old Lionel. (1969)

Campbell: One trick is to deprive a hatrack of an old horse of water, and let him have a good lick of salt. (1957)

string-bean (1936) US; applied to a thin tall person; from earlier sense, type of narrow-podded bean ■ *New Yorker:* 'Did Germany need living space?' Hellmann asked, translating the stringbean's German word. (1977)

streak (1941) Orig Australian; applied to a thin tall person; from earlier sense, long narrow strip ■ *Listener:* That long streak of misery in a blue shirt. (1966)

Skinny Liz (1959) Applied to a thin girl or woman ■ N. Fitzgerald: She takes no interest in . . . eatin'. That's why she's such a Skinny Liz. (1961)

shufti, shufti (1943) British, orig army slang; from Arabic *šufti* have you seen?, from *šāf* see ■ Richard Adams: Let's 'ave a crafty shufti round with that in mind. (1980)

To see

lay eyes on (a1225), clap eyes on (1838) ■ Walter Besant: I never clapped eyes on you before to my knowledge. (1887)

To look (at)

twig (1764) Dated; origin unknown ■ Charles Dickens: 'They're a twiggin' of you, sir,' whispered Mr. Weller. (1837)

pipe (1846) Origin uncertain ■ H. J. Parker: During the daytime wandering about the area, 'pipe-ing', looking over a car, became a regular practice. (1974)

gander (1887) US; from the resemblance between a goose and an inquisitive person stretching out the neck to look

get an eyeful (1899) ■ Nigel Balchin: He thought to himself this is a bit of all right and started right in to get an eye-ful, see? (1947)

eyeball (1901) Orig US; from the noun *eyeball* ■ *Listener:* This movie is so richly risible that I advise all, in John Wayne's phrase, to go down to the Warner and eyeball it. (1968)

take a lunar (1906) Dated; from earlier sense, observe the moon ■ John Guthrie: Charles took a lunar. (1950)

get (1911) Used to denote looking at or noticing especially someone who is conceited or laughable; usually used in the imperative with a pronoun as object ■ *News Chronicle:* If he is conceited the girls mutter get *yew!* (1958)

lamp (1916) Orig US; compare **lamps** p. 2 eyes ■ Roger Busby: I'd like to know how the coppers got on to us. They couldn't have lamped us on the road. (1969)

screw (1917) Orig Australian ■ J. North: From the way he was screwin' her phiz. (1922)

clock (1929) Orig US; perhaps from the notion of observing someone in order to time their actions ■ *Sunday Express Magazine*: Our waiter . . . was so busy clocking him that he spilt a precious bottle of appleade over the table cloth. (1986)

get a load of (1929) Orig US ■ Dennis Bloodworth: Get a load of that chick over there. (1972)

goggle (1938) From earlier sense, look with wide eyes ■ *Listener*: The contemporary reader . . . has better things to do than goggle into the dim past. (1965)

squiz, squizz (1941) Australian & New Zealand; from the noun *squiz* look ■ C. B. Maxwell: He only wanted to squiz at the beach from the best vantage point of all. (1949)

shufti, shufti (1943) British, dated; from the noun *shufti*

To appraise visually

give someone or something the once-over (1915) Orig US; *once-over* from the notion of a single rapid all-encompassing glance ■ *New Yorker*: He gave his display of perfect strawberries the once-over. (1977)

give something the up-and-down (1923) From the notion of 'looking something up and down' ■ P. G. Wodehouse: 'Read this letter.' He gave it the up-and-down. (1923)

eye someone up (1982) ■ *Sun*: Modest John likes to play down his good looks and says he gets a bit embarrassed when girls eye him up. (1992)

To keep watch, be observant

stag (1796) Dated; probably from the noun *stag* informer ■ G. Bartram: Who set ye on to watch me? . . . And at last . . . he admitted that Master John had told him to keep an eye on me and Jenny—to 'stag' us if he saw us out together—and to get a witness to what went on between us. (1897)

keep one's eyes peeled (1853) or skinned (1833) Orig US; from the notion of having the eyelids open ■ Richard Tate: Keep your eyes peeled for a break in the mist. (1974)

keep tabs on, keep (a) tab on (1889) Orig US; from *tab* an account, a check ■ Dorothy Sayers: The one person . . . likely to have kept tabs on Mr Perkins . . . was old Gaffer Gander. (1932)

keep nit (1903) Australian; from earlier obsolete use as a warning that someone is coming; *nit* perhaps a variant of *nix* used to warn of someone's approach ■ B. Scott: They'd pick a couple of the mob to keep nit then they'd hoe into the corn. (1977)

stake out (1942) Orig US; used to denote placing somewhere under surveillance; probably from the notion of surrounding a place as if with stakes ■ Len Deighton: When . . . the French police staked out the courier routes, they found . . . 50,000 dollars of forged signed travellers' cheques. (1962). Hence **staked out** placed so as to maintain surveillance (1951) ■ Henry Kissinger: David Bruce . . . came to the Embassy

through the front door where the press was staked out. (1979)

keep yow (1942) Australian; origin unknown ■ Graham McInnes: Molly kept a look-out ('kept yow', as we used to say). (1965)

Observation

obbo, obo (1933) Abbreviation of *observation*; applied especially to police surveillance of a person, building, etc. ■ Busby & Holtham: Now I got a fix on the place I got to do some obo first. (1968)

stake-out (1942) Orig US; applied to a period of (especially police) surveillance; from the verb *stake out* ■ Raymond Chandler: Somebody stood behind that green curtain . . . as silently as only a cop on a stake-out knows how to stand. (1943)

obs (1943) Orig services' slang; abbreviation of *observation* ■ Olive Norton: Hurry up. I'm keeping obs. (1970)

To catch sight of, spot

twig (1796) Dated; from earlier sense, look at ■ FitzWilliam Pollok: I twigged the tigress creeping away in front of us. (1879)

To stare inquisitively or in astonishment

gawp (1682) Perhaps an alteration of *gape* ■ *European*: St Tropez is packed with these threadbare tourists who gawp at sights they have long only heard about—especially the topless bathers on the beaches. (1991)

gawk (1795) Orig US; perhaps from the noun *gawk* awkward person, but perhaps an iterative from the obsolete verb *gaw stare* (with suffix as in *tal-k, walk, lur-k*), from Old Norse *gā* heed. ■ C. D. Eby: Gawking in wonder at the falling bombs. (1965)

rubberneck (1896) Orig US; from the notion of someone with a flexible neck who looks this way and that ■ *Daily Telegraph*: Hortensia was rubbernecking like an American tourist, admiring the scenery, sniffing the breeze. (1969)

To hallucinate visually

see things (1922) ■ Douglas Rutherford: Was I seeing things or was that Sally driving your truck? (1977)

A person who looks

gongoozler (1904) Applied to a person who stares idly or protractedly at something, originally at activity on a canal; origin uncertain, but compare Lincolnshire dialect *gawn* stare vacantly or curiously, and *gooze(n)* stare aimlessly, gape ■ *New Yorker*: I stopped off in the Galeana sports park . . . to watch a game on one of the three huge outdoor screens that the city had supplied for gongoozlers like me. (1986)

Glasses

specs, specks (1807) Abbreviation of *spectacles* ■ Don DeLillo: Peter, her son, . . . reddish hair, wire-frame specs. (1982)

gig-lamps (1853) Dated; from earlier sense, lamp at the side of a gig

goggles (1871) From earlier sense, spectacles for protecting the eyes

cheaters (1908) US, orig gamblers' slang
 ■ Raymond Chandler: The eyes behind the rimless cheaters flashed. (1949)

bins (1981) British; first recorded in print in 1981, but other evidence (e.g. obsolete Cockney rhyming slang *Errol Flynn's spectacles*) suggests much earlier use; abbreviation of *binoculars*
 ■ John McVicar: Frank gives me the once-over and pushes the bins back tight on my eyes. If George saw my minces, he might pull the deal. (1992)

Sunglasses

shades (1958) Orig US ■ George Higgins: I looked at Emerson, hiding behind his shades and his imported-cigarette smoke. (1980)

A monocle

window-pane (1923) Dated ■ P. G. Wodehouse: Freddie no longer wore the monocle. . . . His father-in-law had happened to ask him one day would he please remove that damned window-pane from his eye. (1966)

5. Hearing

To listen, hear

get an earful (1917) ■ Frank Sargeson: I tried to get an earful when I heard somebody out on the landing-place. (1946)

earwig (1927) Often jocular; used to denote eavesdropping ■ *Guardian*: Anyway, apparently you sometimes get a Miss Millett 'earwiggling' in a dark corner, so she was paraded towards me for a formal introduction. (1992)

get a load of (1929) Orig US; often used ironically in commenting on what someone has said

earhole (1958) Used to denote listening, and often specifically eavesdropping ■ *Frank Norman*: You can always shtoom up if any screws are earholeing. (1958)

To have delusions of hearing

hear things (1991) First recorded in 1991, but certainly older than that; *hear voices* = 'imagine one hears voices' dates from the late 19th century ■ *Ticket*: Three and a bit minutes later it's wheedled its way into your mind, where it burrows away with sitars and voices so buried in the mix you wonder whether you're hearing things. (1994)

Listening attentively

all ears (1865) Earlier *all ear* ■ *Guardian*: We've been

Binoculars

binocs (1943) Abbreviation

bins (1971) Abbreviation

Wearing glasses

specky (1956) Derogatory, mainly Scottish; from *spec(s) + y* ■ R. Jenkins: The unbraw unlovable puke married to yon specky gasping smout of a barber. (1956)

A bespectacled person

four-eyes (1873) Jocular; often used as a term of address ■ *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane): Aha, foureyes! You're nicked! (1988)

Visually impaired

boss-eyed (1860) Applied to someone who is cross-eyed or has only one eye; origin unknown; compare slang *boss bungle* and *boss shot* unsuccessful attempt ■ I. & P. Opie: When somebody who is boss-eyed goes by you spit on the ground. (1959)

Visibility

vis (1943) Orig military slang; abbreviation

hearing a lot about the Government having to listen, and he's all ears. (1992)

Deaf

deaf as a post (c1845) Denoting extreme deafness

Mutt and Jeff (1960) Rhyming slang; from the names of two characters called *Mutt* and *Jeff* in a popular cartoon series by H. C. Fisher (1884-1954), American cartoonist ■ *Bowlers' World*: They don't hear the cry 'Feet!' sometimes on account of being a bit 'Mutt and Jeff'. (1992)

cloth-eared (1965) From *cloth ears* ■ George Melly: It was more difficult for a band on the road to know what was going on than for the most cloth-eared member of a provincial jazz club. (1965)

Impaired hearing

cloth ears (1912) Often used to criticize an inattentive listener

A deaf person

dummy (1874) Applied to a deaf-mute ■ Carson McCullers: But a dummy! . . . 'Are there any other deaf-mute people here?' he asked. (1940)

cloth ears (1965) From earlier sense, impaired hearing; mainly used as a derogatory form of address to an inattentive listener ■ *New Statesman*: I've told you once, cloth-ears. (1965)

6. Smell

A smell

funk (1623) Applied to a strong, usually unpleasant smell, and also to an oppressively thick atmosphere, especially one full of tobacco smoke; from the obsolete verb *funk* blow smoke on, probably from northern French dialect *funkier*, from Latin **fūmicāre*, *fūmigāre* smoke
 ■ **Martin Amis**: The darts contest took place, not in the Foaming Quart proper (with its stained glass and heavy drapes and crepuscular funk), but in an adjoining hall. (1989)

niff (1903) British; often applied specifically to an unpleasant smell; perhaps from the noun *sniff*
 ■ **Draconian**: The customary Oxford autumn niff, usually readily recognisable, redolent as it is of bonfires and long grass. (1975)

hum (1906) British; applied to an unpleasant smell; from the verb *hum* smell bad
 ■ **W. E. Collinson**: An awful pong or hum. (1927)

pong (1919) Applied to an unpleasant smell; origin unknown
 ■ **Gwen Moffat**: She's burning the feathers. . . . She only does it when the wind takes the smell away from us. . . . The pong's not bothering us. (1973)

To smell unpleasantly

pen and ink, pen (1892) Rhyming slang for *stink*
 ■ **G. F. Newman**: 'I don't mind, provided he takes a bath.' 'Yeah, he does pen a bit.' (1972)

whiff (1899) ■ **Rudyard Kipling**: Then she'll whiff. Golly, how she'll whiff! (1899)

hum (1902) British
 ■ **Daily Telegraph**: When the wind drops this stuff really hums. (1970)

7. Bodily Functions

To urinate or defecate

do it (1922) Euphemistic
 ■ **Herbert Gold**: It's so easy, boy, after you do it once. Before that it's hard. You sweat. You do it in your pants. (1956)

go (1926) Euphemistic
 ■ **Time**: I took off all my clothes but my drawers and-well-I had to go. (1935)

spend a penny (1945) British, euphemistic; often applied specifically to urination; from the necessity in former times of inserting a penny in a slot in the door to gain admission to a cubicle in a public lavatory
 ■ **People's Journal** (Inverness & Northern Counties ed.): Anyone on the Islands . . . after that time who wants to 'spend a penny' must make a 10-minute walk . . . to the public toilets. (1973)

An unintentional act of urinating or defecating

accident (1899) Euphemistic
 ■ **Nation**: Then a new child had, as Mabel calls it, 'an accident'. She may have been afraid of asking to go out. (1926)

niff (1927) British; from the noun *niff*
 ■ **Kenneth Giles**: It smelled. . . . 'Niffs, don't it?' said one of the youths. (1967)

pong (1927) From the noun *pong* bad smell
 ■ **Ruth Rendell**: The place . . . just pongs of dirty clothes. (1979)

stink (or smell) to high heaven (1963)
 ■ **F. Richards**: I probably smell to high heaven of insect repellent. (1963)

Smelly

loud (1641) Now mainly US
 ■ **G. B. Goode**: The natives . . . prefer to have the meat tainted rather than fresh, declaring that it is most tender and toothsome when decidedly 'loud'. (1887)

funky (1784) Now only US; from *funk* bad smell + -y
 ■ **James Baldwin**: They knew . . . why his hair was nappy, his armpits funky. (1962)

whiffy (1849) From *whiff* impression of an (unpleasant) smell + -y
 ■ **Rose Macaulay**: 'A bit whiffy,' Hero said, as they passed among the cottages that encircled the muddy . . . pool. (1934)

niffy (1903) British; from *niff* (bad) smell + -y
 ■ **Baron Corvo**: The niffy silted-up little Rio della Croxe. (1934)

pongy (1936) From *pong* bad smell + -y
 ■ **Graham McInnes**: Dad . . . kept turning up . . . with loot from the Prahran market: strings of saveloys and frankfurters, pongy cheeses, . . . and huge Portuguese sardines. (1965)

on the nose (1941) Australian
 ■ **Frank Huelin**: He removed his boots and the narrow strips of rag wrapped round his feet. 'By cripes! They're a bit on the nose,' said my mate, wrinkling his nose. (1973)

To have an urgent need to urinate or defecate

be caught (or taken) short (1890) ■ **Private Eye**: Taken badly short when on his way to work, and finding that both of the public lavatories in Putney were closed, Mr. Peter Herring entered a police station and asked if he could use their convenience. (1977)

Urination

number one (1902) A children's word or euphemism; contrasted with *number two* defecation
 ■ **Angus Wilson**: This little ginger [kitten] is going to do a number one if we're not careful. (1967)

pee (1902) From the verb *pee* urinate
 ■ **Daily Telegraph**: If people came in just to use the lavatory, he would ask them for their address 'in case I need a pee when I'm passing your house'. (1973)

pee-wee (1907) Mainly a children's word or euphemism; reduplicated form of *pee*; see also *wee*
 ■ **Simon Raven**: Don't forget the little dears do a pee-wee before they go to bed. (1962)

piss (1916) From earlier sense, urine ■ Philip Larkin: Groping back to bed after a piss. (1974)

wet (1925) From the verb *wet* urinate ■ Jon Cleary: The children want to wet. . . . Come on, love. Have your wet. (1975)

leak (1934) From the verb *leak* urinate ■ Graham Greene: All these hours of standing without taking a leak. (1969)

piddle (1937) From earlier sense, urine ■ E. Burgess: Take the poodle for its piddle. (1959)

Jimmy Riddle, jimmy (1937) Rhyming slang for *piddle* ■ Douglas Clark: Mrs. D. was in there having a jimmy. (1971)

wee-wee (1937), wee (1968) Imitative; a child's word or euphemism ■ Jack Scott: When he needed a wee-wee he did it in a corner of the hut. (1982) ■ Philip Purser: Hurry up, I want to do a wee. (1971)

slash (1950) British; perhaps from obsolete *slash* a drink, of uncertain origin ■ N. J. Crisp: He decided to risk a quick slash, which . . . he needed. (1977)

widdle (1954) Imitative; compare *piddle* and *wee* ■ Alan Coren: Love is . . . mekkin' sure yer betrothed 'as a pensionable position wi' luncheon vouchers an' gets out of 'is bath when he wants a widdle. (1977)

run-off (1961) ■ H. W. Sutherland: What with the cold and the beer she was bursting for a run off again. . . . The nearest ladies she knew was at Pier Head. (1967)

tinkle (1965) From the verb *tinkle* urinate ■ Ernest Braley: And went over and had a tinkle. (1974)

whizz, whiz (1971) From the verb *whizz* urinate ■ Douglas Clark: She could have left him alone . . . while she went for a whizz or changed her clothes. (1971)

To urinate

piss (1290) Ultimately (through French and Latin) from the sound; also in the phrase *piss oneself* wet oneself ■ J. Barnett: You've pissed yourself . . . you dirty bastard. (1978)

leak (1596) ■ Jack Kerouac: The prowler car came by and the cop got out to leak. (1957)

pluck a rose (1613) Dated, euphemistic; applied to a woman

pee (1788) Orig transitive, in the sense 'make wet by urinating'; the intransitive use emerged later (1880); from the sound of the first letter of *piss* ■ Mary McCarthy: 'My God', you yell . . . 'can't a man pee in his own house?' (1948)

pump ship (1788) Orig nautical ■ Douglas Rutherford: A couple of men had come in to pump ship at the stand-up urinals. (1973)

piddle (1796) Perhaps from *piss* + the verb *piddle* (compare *widdle*); probably not the same word as earlier *piddle* work or act in a trifling way ■ Richard Adams: I have no idea what portents he employs—possibly the bear piddles on the floor and he observes portents in the steaming what-not. (1974)

wet (1925) Also in the phrase *wet oneself* urinate involuntarily (1922) ■ Virginia Woolf: The marmoset is just about to wet on my shoulder. (1935) ■ *Times Literary Supplement*: She also sweats, weeps, vomits and wets herself. (1976)

whizz, whiz (1929) ■ R. B. Parker: I wondered if anyone had ever whizzed on Allan Pinkerton's shoe. (1976)

wee-wee (1930), wee (1934) Imitative; a children's word or euphemism ■ Danny Abse: I suddenly rushed into the sea . . . and wee-weed in the water for a joke. (1954) ■ *Daily Mail*: Our headmaster told us that any boy caught short should if absolutely necessary wee into an empty milk bottle. (1983)

tinkle (1960) Orig US ■ Ed McBain: I'm looking for the loo. . . . I really have to tinkle. (1976)

strain the potatoes (or spuds) (1965) Australian, jocular; used of males ■ P. Burgess: Keep Ted's chair for him. He's only gone out to strain the spuds. (1982)

syphon the python (1968) Jocular, orig Australian; used of males; from the common analogy between the penis and a snake ■ D. Ball: Brooks was struck with an overwhelming desire to piss. Syphon the python, he thought. (1978)

widdle (1968) From the noun *widdle* urination ■ W. Harris: He headed straight for me. . . . I damn near widdled. (1983)

Urine

piss (1386) From the verb *piss* urinate ■ Nicolas Freeling: The hallway smelt. . . . Piss, cabbage, stale sweat. (1979)

piddle (1901) From the verb *piddle* urinate ■ Maureen Duffy: I envied him his ability to tie his little soft winkle into a knot at the end and blow it out like a balloon with unshed piddle. (1962)

wet (1925) From the verb *wet* urinate ■ D. H. Lawrence: But see old Leo Tolstoi wetting on the flame. As if even his wet were absolute! (1925)

wee-wee (1948) From earlier sense, urination ■ A. N. Keith: Our barrack . . . smelled of kids, pots, and wee-wee. (1948)

pee (1961) From the verb *pee* urinate ■ P. Cave: Sarcasm runs off on them like pee on a plastic bedsheet. (1976)

The urinary system

waterworks (1902) British euphemistic ■ Wallace Hildick: I'd been plagued for a long time . . . by—well—let's call it waterworks trouble. (1977)

A bed-wetter

pissabed (1643) Literally 'piss in bed'; the word existed earlier as a name for the dandelion, so called after its diuretic properties ■ Roy Fuller: He beat me at the beginning of term for peeing my bed. . . . Now he thinks of me as a pissabed. (1959)

Defecation

number two (1902) A children's word or euphemism; contrasted with *number one* urination ■ **Mary McCarthy:** When I had done Number Two, you always washed them out yourself before sending them to the diaper service. (1971)

crap (1926) From the verb *crap* defecate ■ **Brendan Behan:** And then, God of war, did I want a crap. (1959)

shit, shite (1928) From the verb *shit* defecate ■ **Roseanne Barr:** Daddy will go over and he'll turn on the TV and then he'll go take a shit, like he always does. (1989)

dump (1942) From the verb *dump* defecate ■ **W. H. Auden:** To start the morning With a satisfactory Dump is a good omen All our adult days. (1966)

tom-tit (1943) Rhyming slang for *shit* ■ **Christopher Wood:** Perhaps 'e stopped for a tomtit. (1970)

biggies (1953) British; a children's word or euphemism; contrasting the physical and psychological weight of defecation with the lesser importance of urination ■ **Angus Wilson:** He's a bit erratic where he does his biggies, now he's a grown up parrot. (1967)

To defecate

shit, shite (c1308) Also used transitively to mean 'defecate in' (1877) and reflexively to mean 'make oneself dirty by defecating' (1914); from Old English *scitan*, recorded in the past participle *be-sciten*

do one's business (1645) Dated euphemistic

crap (1846) Probably from the noun *crap* excrement, although this is not recorded until later ■ **Alexander Baron:** They'd crapped on the floor, in the same rooms they'd slept in. (1953)

poop (1903) From earlier sense, fart ■ **Cape Times:** Five-year-old eyes grow round with wonder at the memory of the elephant 'pooping' on the carpet. (1974)

dump (1929) Orig and mainly US; probably from earlier sense, deposit rubbish

do (go, make, etc.) poo-poo(s) (1976) Mainly a children's term; compare **pooh-pooh** excrement ■ **Mother & Baby:** Show her the nappy and tell her that she can do her wee-wee and poo-poo (or whatever your family words are!) in the potty instead of the nappy now that she is a big girl. (1988)

poop, poo (1980) Euphemistic, orig a children's word; from the noun *pooh* excrement ■ **Clive James:** The citizens of Munich are . . . dog-crazy . . . but have somehow trained their pets not to poo. (1982)

Excrement

turd (c1000) Applied to a piece of excrement; from Old English *tord* ■ **Nadine Gordimer:** It was true that it was difficult to get the children to remember to bury the paper along with the turd. (1981)

dirt (a1300) Now euphemistic, but orig a standard term; now applied mainly to animal excrement; by metathesis from Middle English *drit*, probably from Old Norse *drit* excrement

shit, shite (a1585) From the verb *shit* defecate ■ **Erica Jong:** In general the toilets run swift here and the shit disappears long before you can leap up and turn around to admire it. (1973)

crap (1889) First recorded in 1889, but implied in the earlier adjective *crappy* (see below); compare earlier sense, *chaff*, refuse from fat-boiling; ultimately from Dutch *krappe* ■ **J. D. Salinger:** There didn't look like there was anything in the park except dog crap. (1951). Hence **crappy** made dirty by excrement (1846)

mess (1903) Euphemistic; applied mainly to animal excrement ■ **Woman's Own:** It's the dog. It made a mess on the carpet. (1960)

dingleberry (1938) Orig US; applied to a piece of dried faecal matter attached to the hair around the anus; from earlier US sense, a cranberry, *Vaccinium erythrocarpum*, of the south-eastern US; the origin of *dingle* is uncertain

road apples (1942) North American, euphemistic; applied to horse droppings ■ **J. H. Gray:** The best pucks were always those supplied by passing horses, 'road apples' we called them. (1970)

doo-doo (1948) Orig and mainly US, mainly a children's word or euphemism; reduplication of *do* excrement

poop (1948) From the verb *poop* defecate ■ **Telegraph (Brisbane):** A young woman claims a 'bird poop treatment' has cured her of a chronic dandruff. . . . She's been free of dandruff since a mynah bird relieved himself on her head during lunch one day. (1976). Hence **poopy** (1988) US; denoting being made dirty with excrement

poopy, poopie (1955) Mainly a children's word; from *poop* + -y

pooh, poo, pooh-pooh, poo-poo (1960) Mainly a children's word; from the exclamation *pooh* expressing disgust at an unpleasant smell ■ **Independent Magazine:** Mashed carrots today can resemble brightly coloured babies' poo (and when you contemplate some of the bottled vegetable purées people feed them with, it is little wonder). (1996)

doings (1967) British, euphemistic; from earlier more general application to something unspecified ■ **Paul Beale:** There's a lump of bird's doings on the windowsill. (1984)

do, doo (1972) Mainly a children's word or euphemistic; first recorded in 1972, but implied by the earlier *doo-doo*, and remembered in use c1920 (private letter to the editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*); from the verb *do* (compare *doings*) ■ **Time Out:** 'Eat crap!' barked the film director. And suddenly Divi was up to his dentures in doggy doo. (1985)

Diarrhoea

squitters (1664) From the obsolete verb *squitter* squirt, have diarrhoea, probably of imitative origin ■ **Lord Harewood:** We went incessantly to those over-public latrines. . . . My squitters were at their worst. (1981)

the squits (1841) British, euphemistic; from the obsolete dialectal verb *squit* squirt ■ **David Lodge:**

'Olive oil doesn't agree with me.' 'Gives you the squits, does it?' (1988)

the trots (1904) Euphemistic; from the notion of having to move hurriedly to the lavatory
 ■ Colleen McCullough: 'Go easy on the water at first,' he advised. 'Beer won't give you the trots.' (1977)

gippy tummy, guppy tummy (1943) Applied especially to diarrhoea suffered by visitors to hot countries; *gippy* from *gip(sy)* + *-y*, influenced by *Egyptian*
 ■ G. Egmont: Always take . . . whatever is your favourite antidote to gippy tummy when you go abroad. (1961)

Delhi belly (1944) Applied to diarrhoea suffered by visitors to India; *Delhi* from the name of the capital of India

the shits (1947) ■ *Zigzag*: 'I've had the shits,' he cried. 'You want to avoid the food.' (1977)

Aztec hop, Aztec revenge, Aztec two-step (1953) Applied to diarrhoea suffered by visitors to Mexico; *Aztec* from the name of a former native American people of Mexico; *two-step* from the name of a type of dance
 ■ Joseph Wambaugh: So long, Puerto Vallarta! With his luck he'd die of Aztec Revenge anyway, first time he had a Bibb lettuce salad. (1978)

Montezuma's revenge (1962) Applied to diarrhoea suffered by visitors to Mexico; from the name of *Montezuma II* (1466–1520), Aztec ruler at the time of the Spanish conquest of Mexico
 ■ *Times*: England's World Cup football squad suffered their first casualty in Mexico on Wednesday, when 20-year-old Brian Kidd was struck down by what is known as 'Montezuma's Revenge'—a stomach complaint. (1970)

the runs (1962) Euphemistic; from the notion of having to run to the lavatory
 ■ Bernard Malamud: Sam Clemence, a witness from Harlem U.S.A., despite a bad case of the runs . . . stands up for his friend Willie. (1971)

A lavatory

jakes (1538) Dated; origin uncertain; perhaps from the male forenames *Jacques* or *Jack*
 ■ James Joyce: He kicked open the crazy door of the jakes. (1922)

bog (a1789) British; short for *bog-house*, of uncertain origin
 ■ *New Left Review*: Toilet paper in the bogs. (1960)

shit-house (1795) ■ P. Cave: 'Nothing wrong with it—safe as a brick-built shithouse,' I assured her. (1976)

can (1900) US
 ■ J. D. Salinger: She kept saying . . . corny . . . things, like calling the can the 'little girls' room'. (1951)

place (1901) Euphemistic
 ■ James Joyce: They did right to put him up over a urinal. . . . Ought to be places for women. (1922)

rear (1903) Orig school and university slang; often used in the plural; perhaps from their position behind a building
 ■ Bruce Marshall: And now let's raid the rears and rout out any of the other new swine that are hiding there. (1946)

lav (1913) British; abbreviation of *lavatory*
 ■ June Thomson: Gilbert Leacock went out to the lav. . . . I heard the chain being pulled. (1973)

dyke, dike (1923) From earlier sense, ditch
 ■ Jon Cleary: I learned . . . to respect her privacy. And I don't mean just when she went to the dike. (1967)

crapper (1927) From *crap* defecate + *-er*
 ■ Chester Himes: Go to the crapper? What for? They weren't children, they didn't pee in bed. (1969)

lat (1927) Usually used in the plural; abbreviation of *latrine*
 ■ J. I. M. Stewart: Turk says that conscientious objectors have to clean out the lats in lunatic asylums. (1957)

john, johnny (1932) Mainly US; compare earlier *cuzjohn* lavatory (1735)
 ■ Colin McInnes: 'You poor old bastard,' I said to the Hoplite, as he sat there on my john. (1959)
 ■ D. Conover: Why, oh, why, do little boys (and big ones) rush to a johnny when nature provides opportunity everywhere? (1971)

dunny, dunnee (1933) Australian & New Zealand; orig applied specifically to an outdoor earth-closet; from British dialect *dunnekin* privy, of unknown origin
 ■ *Private Eye*: It seems a bit crock for old bazza to spend the night in the dunnee! (1970)

loo (1940) British; origin uncertain; perhaps from *Waterloo*
 ■ Peter Wildeblood: The loo's on the landing, if you want to spend a penny. (1957)

shouse, shoush, sh'touse (1941) Australian; syncopated form of *shit-house*
 ■ Thomas Keneally: I'd like some trees on it, pines and gums, so you don't have to see your neighbour's shouse first thing each morning. (1968)

recess (1950) Criminals' slang; applied to a prison lavatory; usually used in the plural
 ■ *Observer*: Locked in their cells *sc.* in Winson Green Prison, Birmingham at 5.30., with one opening later to go to the recesses (lavatories) and to have a hot drink. (1974)

W (1953) Abbreviation of W.C.
 ■ E. Malpass: A small garden of weeds, with a cinder path leading to a W. (1978)

House of Lords (1961) British, euphemistic or jocular
 ■ *Listener*: When you need the House of Lords, it's through there. (1967)

karzy, carsey, carsy, karsey, karzey (1961) British; alteration of Italian *casa* house
 ■ T. E. B. Clarke: You made a real thorough search? Everywhere? Outhouses, karzey, the lot? (1968)

lavvy (1961) British; from *lav* + *-y*
 ■ *Guardian*: A house where the lavvy is behind an arras. (1971)

toot (1965) Australian; probably from British dialect *tut* small seat or hassock
 ■ J. Rowe: Waldon added over his shoulder, 'Gobind's in the toot. He'll be right out.' (1978)

A lavatory pan or other receptacle

jerry (1859) Probably an abbreviation of *jeroboam* very large wine bottle, from the name of *Jeroboam* king of northern Israel, described in the Bible (1 Kings xi. 28) as a 'mighty man of valour'; compare W. Maginn: The naval officer . . . came into the Clarendon for a Jerry = jeroboam of punch. (1827)
 ■ George Orwell: A bed not yet made and a jerry under the bed. (1939)

po (1880) Applied to a chamber-pot; from French *pot (de chambre)*
 ■ *Punch*: I kneelin' by de bed . . . peein' in de smart Victorian po. (1974)

thunder-mug (1890) Applied to a chamber-pot

article (1922) British, euphemistic; applied to a chamber-pot ■ Joanna Cannan: How could he be so rude, she asked, when he said 'pot' instead of 'bedroom article'. (1958)

throne (1922) Often jocular ■ J. J. Rowlands: Our plumber . . . revealed that the water level in the 'throne' works just like the old glass water barometer. (1960)

honey-bucket (1931) North American; applied to a container for excrement ■ *Beaver* (Winnipeg, Manitoba): A woman taxi driver tells me most houses have honey-buckets, and galvanized bath tubs filled by hand. (1969)

thunder-box (1939) Applied to a portable commode, and hence to any lavatory ■ Evelyn Waugh: 'If you *must* know, it's my thunderbox.' . . . He . . . dragged out the treasure, a brass-bound, oak cube. . . . On the inside of the lid was a plaque bearing the embossed title *Connolly's Chemical Closet*. (1952)

potty (1942) Applied to a chamber-pot; from pot + -y ■ W. H. Auden: Lifted off the potty, Infants from their mothers Hear their first impartial Words of worldly praise. (1966)

shitter (1969) From *shit* + -er ■ *Black Scholar*: He lit a square and sat down on the shitter and tried to collect his thoughts. (1971)

pooperscooper, pooperscoop (1976) Applied to a small shovel carried to clear up (a dog's) excrement from the street, etc. ■ Joseph Wambaugh: Bring your poopers-scoopers, boys. The dogs are covering the red carpet in a sea of shit. (1977)

To vomit

spew (c897) Old English; orig a standard usage, but 'not now in polite use' (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

puke (1600) Probably imitative

whip the cat (1622), shoot the cat (1785) Dated

cat (1785) Probably from *shoot the cat*

throw up (1793) ■ A. E. Fisher: Ogy got drunk and threw up in the backyard. (1980)

turn up (1892) Used to denote making someone vomit or feel sick ■ Stella Gibbons: Turns you up, don't it, seein' 'ter-day's dinner come in 'anging round someone's neck? (1932)

sick up (1924) Used intransitively and transitively ■ Rudyard Kipling: I have ate grass and sicked up. (1930) ■ Charles Sweeney: On the way the reptile sicked up another hen, and half-way it regurgitated a third hen on the floor of my vehicle. (1966)

blow (1950) US; used transitively with usually a metaphorical object (e.g. *one's lunch*) denoting broadly 'vomiting'

chunder, chunda (1950) Australian; probably from rhyming slang *Chunder Loo* spew, after a cartoon character *Chunder Loo of Akin Foo* originally drawn by Norman Lindsay (1879-1969) and appearing in advertisements

for Cobra boot polish in the *Sydney Bulletin* between 1909 and 1920 ■ *Private Eye*: Many's the time we've chundered in the same bucket. (1970)

barf (1956) Orig and mainly US; not recorded until 1956, but implied in earlier rare US slang *barfer*, used as a term of abuse (1947); origin unknown; perhaps imitative ■ *Chicago Sun-Times*: If you are Princess Diana, you have to stay home and do needlepoint until all danger of barfing in public is past. (1982)

chuck (1957) Often followed by *up*; based on *throw up* ■ *Swag* (Sydney): The Pommy bird woke up and chucked all over the multi-coloured woollen blanket. (1968)

go for the big spit (1960) Australian ■ *Private Eye*: He goes for the big spit and accidentally entombs a nice old lady and her dog in tepid chuck. (1970)

upchuck (1960) US ■ Tobias Wells: Anyway, Natalie had to upchuck, it's that kind of bug. (1967)

ralph (1967) Orig and mainly US; often followed by *up*; apparently a use of the personal name, but perhaps imitative of the sound of vomiting ■ *Village Voice*: He ralphs up the downers and the quarts of beer. (1974)

Vomiting

technicolor yawn, technicolour yawn (1964) Australian ■ *Bulletin* (Sydney): The sick-making sequences will probably have less impact in this country because we've all been well initiated with Bazza McKenzie and his technicolor yawns. (1974)

chuck (1966) Australian; from the verb *chuck vomit* ■ *Kings Cross Whisper* (Sydney): He sat down in the gutter to have a bit of a chuck and flaked out. (1966)

chunder (1967) Australian; from the verb *chunder vomit*

Vomit

sick (1959) From the adjective *sick* nauseated ■ *Listener*: There's blood on the windscreen, sick on the trousers. (1977)

chunder (1960) Australian; from the verb *chunder vomit* ■ C. Kelen: Wiping the chunder from his mouth. (1980)

puke (1961) From the verb *puke vomit* ■ *New Society*: At the Black Raven, by Liverpool Street station, . . . there is a slight odour of puke and disinfectant. (1975)

barf (1974) US; first recorded in 1974, but implied in earlier metaphorical use referring to disgusting foodstuffs (1962); from the verb *barf vomit* ■ *New York Times*: Whereas the horror film was once spooky, now it is nauseating, measured by the barf, rather than the shiver. (1981)

chuck (1976) Australian; from the verb *chuck vomit* ■ McDonald & Harding: Were there chuck stains around the toilet? (1976)

A fart

raspberry tart (1892) Dated; rhyming slang

breezer (1973) Australian ■ Gerald Murname: Barry Launder has ordered every boy to write in his composition *at the picnic I let a breezer in my pants, or else be bashed to smithereens after school.* (1974)

To belch

gurk (1923) British; imitative ■ *New Statesman*: They grunted and gurbed with an unconcern that amazed me. (1966). Hence **gurk** a belch (1932)

burp (1929) Orig US; imitative ■ W. R. Burnett: He belched, 'It's an old Arab custom. . . . You no like food—no burp—host insulted.' (1953). Hence **burp** a belch (1932) ■ Vladimir Nabokov: A comfortable burp told me he had a flask of brandy concealed about his warmly coated person. (1962)

To spit

gob (1872) Now mainly British; from the noun *gob* slimy lump ■ Dylan Thomas: And they thank God, and gob at a gull for luck. (1953)

Nasal mucus

snot (c1425) Probably from Middle Dutch, Middle Low German *snotte*, Middle High German *snuoz* ■ Arthur Haley: Trying futilely to breathe through nostrils nearly plugged with snot, he gaped open his cracked lips and took a deep breath of sea air. (1976). Hence **snotty** running with or dirty with nasal mucus (1570) ■ I. M. Gaskin: A baby can seem snorty and snotty, but sometimes it sounds worse than it is. (1978)

bogy, bogey (1937) British; applied to a piece of dried nasal mucus; compare earlier sense, policeman ■ David Pinner: He . . . removed wax from ears, bogeys from nose, blackheads from chin. (1967)

Sexual secretions

come, cum (1923) Usually applied specifically to ejaculated semen; from the verb *come* have an

orgasm ■ *Miss London*: His attitude to sex is ambivalent. 'Each night I had to clean the come off the back seat of the cab,' he remarks in reasonable disgust. (1976)

love juice (1965) ■ *Pussycat*: I could feel his lovejuice so hot, trickling down into the start of my stomach. (1972)

scum (1967) Mainly US; applied specifically to semen

To ejaculate

shoot (1922) ■ H. C. Rae: I wanted him to shoot and get it over. (1972)

Menstruation

the curse (1930) Euphemistic; from the oppressive nature of menstruation ■ Graham Greene: I forgot the damn pill and I haven't had the curse for six weeks. (1969)

rag (1948) Euphemistic; applied to a sanitary towel; mainly used in various phrases denoting menstruation, such as *be on the rag*, *have the rag(s) on*, and *ride the rag* ■ *Maledicta*: There were several references to menstruous conditions or activities, found equally commonly in both male and female rest rooms ('Sue Ellen's on the rag' etc.). (1978)

jam-rag (a1966) Applied to a sanitary towel ■ *Viz*: The new Vispire Shadow jam rag is designed to suit your lifestyle, with a wrap-a-round gusset flap to keep the blood off your knicker elastic. (1992)

visitor (1980) Euphemistic; applied to a menstrual discharge; compare obsolete *visit* in the same sense ■ *New Yorker*: Girls used to say they had the curse. Or they had a visitor. (1984)

Dilatation and curettage

scrape (1968) ■ Margaret Drabble: She was having a D and C, a routine scrape. (1980)

8. Pregnancy & Childbirth

Pregnant

in the (or a, that) way (1742) Euphemistic ■ J. Rose: She suspected herself of being pregnant, 'in the way' as she called it. (1980)

gone (1747) Used to specify the length of pregnancy ■ Winifred Holtby: Brought her to the Home, four months gone, and won't be fifteen till next March. (1931)

in the family way (1796) Euphemistic ■ *Listener*: Wretched little dramas of scruffy girls in jeans being aborted after men with sideburns . . . had got them in the family way. (1967)

expecting (1890) Euphemistic ■ R. Longrigg: 'Make him do a Charleston.' 'Have a heart,' said Sue. 'I'm expecting.' (1957)

in pod (1890) ■ Melvin Bragg: Your working-class lad is still a bit worried if he gets his girl in pod. (1968)

in the (pudding) club (1890) Euphemistic ■ J. N. Smith: When the doctor told me I was in the club I

told him he was daft—that I'd never—well, you know. (1969) ■ Lionel Davidson: 'Was she in the pudding club?' . . . 'Probably. They aren't saying.' (1978)

in trouble (1891) Euphemistic ■ *Daily News*: She said she consented to come to London to be married to the prisoner as she believed she was in trouble. (1891)

up the pole (1922) Euphemistic; from earlier sense, in difficulty ■ Flann O'Brien: To say nothing of a lot of crooked Popes with their armies and their papal states, putting duchesses and nuns up the pole, and having all Italy littered with their bastards. (1961)

up the spout (1937) Euphemistic; from earlier sense, spoiled, ruined ■ S. Troy: Up the spout, isn't she? I thought Michel would have had more bloody savvy. (1970)

in the spud line (1937) Euphemistic ■ H. W. Sutherland: It couldn't have been himself that put Kathleen Ertall in the spud line. (1967)

preggy, preggie (1938) Euphemistic; from *preg(nant + y* ■ *Star* (Sheffield): Final fling for noisy Parkers shows Michael and preggie June back in England. (1976)

up the duff (1941) Mainly Australian; from *duff* (pudding made of) dough, from the same notion as inspired *pudding club* and *bun in the oven* ■ **Robert Dentry**: 'There was a strong suspicion that one of the women was preggers.' 'Eh?' 'Up the duff, sir.' (1971)

up the stick (1941) Euphemistic ■ **J. I. M. Stewart**: Do you know what it's like, Cyril, to be a decent and penniless young man who isn't sure he hasn't got his girl up the stick? (1976)

preggers (1942) British; from *preg(nant + -ers* (as in *bonkers, crackers*, etc.) ■ **Monica Dickens**: Let anyone mention in her hearing that they felt sick, and it would be all over the hospital that they were 'preggers'. (1942)

in pig (1945) From earlier standard use, applied to a sow ■ **Dorothy Halliday**: Since when had her mother paid the slightest attention to anything her darling daughter said or did, except to do her level best to keep her from marrying anything less than a duke, until she had to get herself in pig. (1976)

preggo (1951) Australian; also used as a noun, denoting a pregnant woman; from *preg(nant + the Australian suffix -o* ■ **Patrick White**: 'Can't resist the bananas.' 'Yeah. They say you go for them like one thing when you're preggo.' (1965)

preg (1955) Often euphemistic; abbreviation of *pregnant* ■ *London Magazine*: A bit of news which may just interest you, I am P-R-E-G and not by Roy. (1967)

up the creek (1961) Euphemistic; from earlier sense, in difficulty ■ **E. Lambert**: I know a girl who thinks her bloke may have put her up the creek. (1963)

To make pregnant

knock up (1813) US ■ **H. C. Rae**: He screwed her, knocked her up first go and . . . married her . . . before she could even contemplate abortion. (1971)

stork (1936) US; from the noun *stork*, with reference to the nursery fiction that babies are brought by the stork ■ **Rex Stout**: 'Didn't she stop because she was pregnant?' . . . 'Yes,' he said. 'She was storked.' (1968)

A conceived child in the womb

a pudding in the oven (1937) Compare in the (*pudding*) club p. 21 ■ **Joyce Porter**: 'None of us

ever suspected that she'd got a pudding in the oven.' 'She was going to have a baby?' asked Dover. (1965)

a bun in the oven (1951) ■ **Nicholas Monsarrat**: 'I bet you left a bun in the oven, both of you,' said Bennett thickly. . . . Lockhart explained . . . the reference to pregnancy. (1951)

Unplanned pregnancy

afterthought (1914) Applied to the youngest child in a family, especially one born considerably later than the other children; from the supposition that the birth of such a child was not envisaged when the older children were conceived ■ **Graham McInnes**: Terence was the youngest child. . . . ('I'm a little afterthought.') (1965)

accident (1932) ■ **Margaret Drabble**: I had two, and then Gabriel was an accident. (1967)

A miscarriage

miss (1897) Abbreviation ■ **Dell Shannon**: She had a miss, that time, lost the baby. (1971)

A premature birth or baby

preemie, premie, premy (1927) North American; (alteration, after American pronunciation, of *prem(ature + -ie* ■ *Time* (Canada edition): The preemie's sense of security is further heightened by the recorded sound of a pregnant mother's heartbeat piped into the artificial womb. (1975)

A Caesarian section

Caesar (1952) ■ *Guardian*: One Roman Catholic doctor . . . will awaken this convenient custodian of his conscience with the words: 'I'm doing a fourth Caesar.' (1964)

Midwifery; a midwifery case

midder (1909) From *mid(wifery + -er* ■ **M. Pollard**: Although he . . . did his medicine in Edinburgh, he came here to the Rotunda for his midder. (1965)

Contraception

Vatican roulette (1962) Jocular; applied to the rhythm method of birth control, as permitted by the Roman Catholic Church; by analogy from *Russian roulette*; from the method's unpredictable efficacy ■ **David Lodge**: That's another thing against the safe method there are so many things that can affect ovulation. . . . No wonder they called it Vatican Roulette. (1965). See also Contraceptives under **Sex** (p. 79)

9. Tiredness

Tired

fagged (1780) British; often followed by *out*; from the past participle of the obsolete verb *fag* tire, of unknown origin ■ **Edward Pennell-Elmhirst**: I have seldom seen so many fagged faces as on Saturday. (1883)

beat (1832) From past participle of the verb *beat*; usually in the phrase *dead beat* ■ **Pamela Frankau**: I was too beat and hazy to take anything in. (1954)

tuckered (c.1840) US; often followed by *out*; past participle of the verb *tucker* tire ■ **S. W. Baker**: The old bear got regularly tuckered-out. (1890)