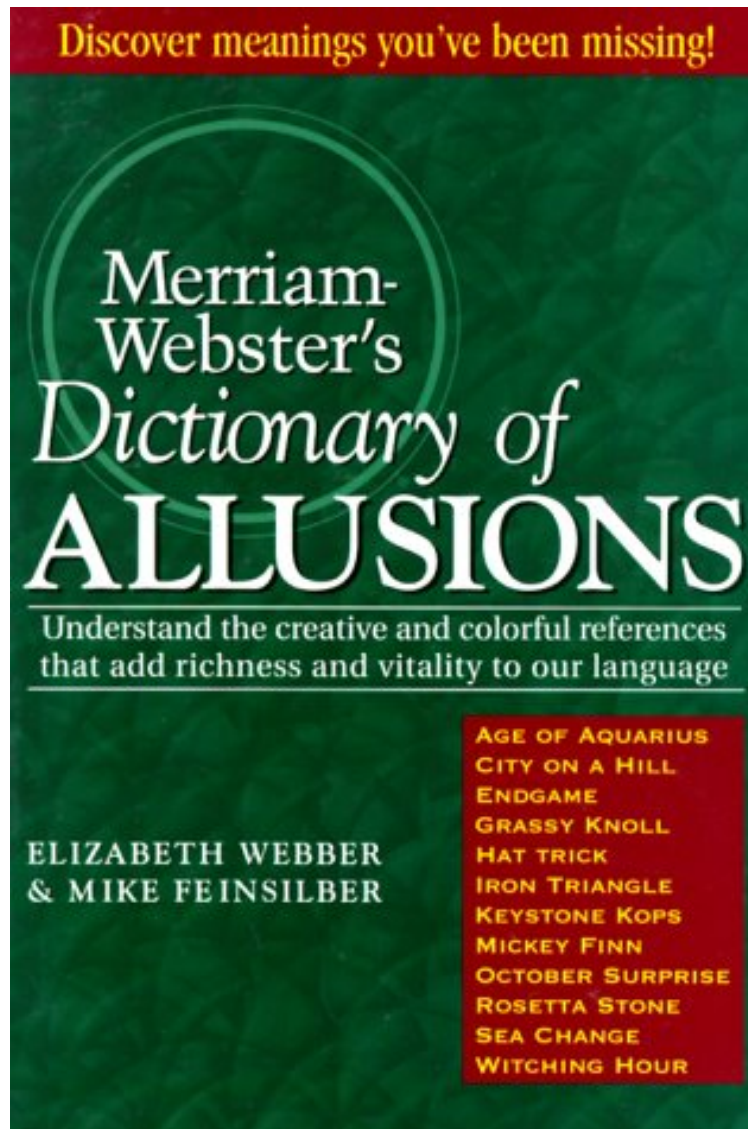


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## Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Allusions

*Elizabeth Webber, Mike Feinsilber*  
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A guide to references commonly used in speech and writing. Explains more than 900 allusions. Entries include examples from today's leading media. A must for serious readers, language lovers, and ESL students.

.com New Yorker founding editor Harold Ross, according to this book's preface, is said to have asked writer James Thurber once, with bewilderment, "Is Moby Dick the man or the whale?" Well, even Homer nods (Horace). But, Harold! Thou shouldst be living at this hour (Wordsworth). Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Allusions is a Big Rock Candy Mountain (American folk song) for anyone who feels amid the alien corn (Keats) when it comes to understanding allusions everyone else seems to grok (Heinlein). Thanks to the blood, sweat, and tears (Churchill) of authors Elizabeth Webber and Mike Feinsilber--compiling this allusional Rosetta stone must have taken a Herculean, nay Brobdingnagian (Swift) effort--we can come in from the cold (popularized by le Carr) of the dark night of the soul (St. John of the Cross) and dine out on (Gordon Liddy and others) these allusions for years to come. --Jane Steinberg From Booklist What are the meanings and origins of the phrases bad day at Black Rock, feeding frenzy, let a hundred flowers bloom, and trouble in River City? Using allusions in everyday conversation and writing is standard practice today. This small reference tool, compiled by a freelance writer and a journalist, will help users discover hidden or new meanings, increase knowledge beyond simple definitions, master the correct usage from experts, and learn today's new allusions. More than 900 entries are listed alphabetically. Each includes a short definition and a longer history of the word or phrase; some also include pronunciation. Length varies from five to six sentences to a page or more (e.g., beam me up, Scotty; Elysian Fields; McCarthyism; reign of terror), and all include one or more examples of the term in use, complete with date, author (when available), and print or media sources. For example, the entry for Second Coming includes "in Maclean's, January 15, 1988, on Apple Computer cofounder Steven Jobs: Clearly it is too soon to rule out a second coming for Steven Jobs." Almost all of the usage examples are from the late 1980s and 1990s. A number of these phrases will be found in other sources, including Dictionary of Historical Allusions and Eponyms [RBB N 1 98] and The Facts On File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins [RBB D 1 97]. The first has 550 words and phrases taken from historical, not literary examples; the second covers 15,000 words and phrases. Both are indexed. The readable Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Allusions supplements these and other similar dictionaries and is a worthwhile investment for reference collections, especially considering the price. Readers, language lovers, ESL students, and English majors will want personal copies. About the Author Mike Feinsilber is a contributor for the following Merriam-Webster Inc Title: Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Allusions Elizabeth Webber is a contributor for Merriam-Webster Inc titles including: 'Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Allusions'