



# Words from the White House: Words and Phrases Coined or Popularized by America's Presidents

*Paul Dickson*

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The founding fathers (a term created by Warren G. Harding for his "front porch campaign" of 1920) felt that coining words and creating new uses for old ones was part of their role in creating a new American culture and language, distinct from the proscriptive King's English. Noah Webster called the creation of such Americanisms "acts of defiance," along with such radical ideas as universal literacy and public libraries. Ever since, American presidents have enriched our vocabulary with words, phrases, and concepts that we've put to general use.

Acclaimed lexicographer Paul Dickson has compiled the first collection of new words and lexical curiosities originating on Pennsylvania Avenue. Organized chronologically, each entry contains the definition, etymology, and a brief essay placing the word or phrase in its cultural context. From Washington (*tin can*) and Jefferson (who alone gets credit for some one hundred coinages, including *belittle* and the expression *holding the bag*), to Lincoln (*relocate*) and Teddy Roosevelt (*bully pulpit*), to Ike (*mulligan*) and Obama (*Snowmageddon*), they collectively provide an illuminating tour of more than two centuries of our history.

?Bloviate ... lunatic fringe ... iffy ... military industrial complex ... Anglophobia ... kitchen cabinet ... public relations ... ottoman ... pedicure ... point well taken ... personal shopper ... normalcy

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