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By Marc McCutcheon

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YA-- A dictionary of generic terms or "buzz words" of over 20 categories that include the environment, animals, the human body and mind, performing arts and broadcasting, sports, the law, medicine, finance, the military, language, food and drink, and electronics. The book is both fun and useful. The definitions are easy to understand, and YAs can use it to gain a feel for a particular subject or to define a specific word in its thematic use. Its only faults are that subject-area terminology is not all inclusive and specialized subjects need illustrations to clarify definitions. Still, it's an enjoyable and worthwhile reference book.

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Most dictionaries and thesauruses are not designed to assist users who know subjects or definitions and seek corresponding words or terms, but this work is different. Organized into more than 20 thematic categories including animals and insects, clothing, language, religions, sports, and weapons, each further subdivided it allows you to look up something when you know what it is but not what it is called. Thus, from this fascinating resource you can learn that a caption under a picture is a cutline, a rhyming adjective/noun combination is a stinky pinky, and the metal tag at the end of a shoelace (found under parts of a shoe in the 20th-century clothing part of the section on clothing) is an aglet. Astute readers may quibble with the wording of some definitions (ISBN is defined as a universal identification number printed on the back of a book to facilitate sales), but it is understandable that such brief entries cannot cover the complexities of some terms. New to this edition is a lengthy section with the pronunciations and definitions of more than 1000 erudite words and expressions. Collections interested in true thesauruses or reverse dictionaries may prefer The New American Roget's College Thesaurus in Dictionary Form (1985), Illustrated Reverse Dictionary (LJ 3/15/91), or Reverse English Dictionary (Mouton de Gruyter, 1999). Elizabeth Connor, Medical Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Charleston

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