

Contents

Preface vii

Part I **The universe of words** 1

1 Wordsmithery 3; **2** Wordhoards 9; **3** Wordgrowth 18;
4 Wordfields 25; **5** Wordworks 33

Part II **The origins of words** 41

6 Wordstarts 43; **7** Wordlore 50; **8** Wordloans 59;
9 Wordbuilding 64; **10** Wordnaming 72

Part III **The diversity of words** 81

11 Wordspells 83; **12** Wordsounds 90; **13** Wordendings 98;
14 Wordregions 105; **15** Wordgangs 113; **16** Wordworlds 119;
17 Wordrisks 127

Part IV **The evolution of words** 135

18 Wordbirths 137; **19** Worddeaths 142; **20** Wordchanges 149;
21 Wordfutures 156

Part V **The enjoyment of words** 165

22 Wordmelodies 167; **23** Wordplay 172; **24** Wordgames 177;
25 Wordmasters 183

Part VI **Becoming a word detective** 187

1 How to find out the history of a word 189
2 How to find out about the meaning of names 191
3 How to get involved with dictionaries 194

- 4** How to estimate the size of your vocabulary 196
- 5** How to keep a record of your child's words 198
- 6** How to decide whether sounds have meanings 201
- 7** How to get involved with dialects 203
- 8** How to find out more about words 205

Index of subjects 208

Index of people 212

Index of words 215