



linguistic tapestry, packed with abstruse information, wonderfully readable' -- Spectator 'If the history of language is a sort of labyrinth, David Crystal is an excellent guide' -- The Age, Australia 'Delicious revelations ... Crystal does an excellent job, not just of tracing the etymology of a word, but of relating it to social history, painting a picture of our times through words' --Independent on SundayPresentation de l'diteurFeaturing Latinate and Celtic words, weasel words and nonce-words, ancient words ('loaf') to cutting edge ('twittersphere') and spanning the indispensable words that shape our tongue ('and', 'what') to the more fanciful ('fopdoodle'), Crystal takes us along the winding byways of language via the rude, the obscure and the downright surprising.In this unique new history of the world's most ubiquitous language, linguistics expert David Crystal draws on words that best illustrate the huge variety of sources, influences and events that have helped to shape our vernacular since the first definitively English word was written down in the fifth century ('roe', in case you are wondering).