# Contents

*List of figures* viii
*Acknowledgements* ix
*Abbreviations and conventions* x

1 Introduction 1

2 A brief history of the English lexicon 6
2.1 Introduction 6
2.2 Old English (OE: 700–1150) 7
2.3 Middle English (ME: 1150–1500) 10
2.4 Early Modern English (EModE: 1500–1750) 13
2.5 Late Modern English (LModE: 1750 to present day) 18
2.6 Conclusion: The present day 22
Exercises 22
Further reading 23

3 Categories of meaning 25
3.1 Introduction 25
3.2 Traditional approaches to Semantics 26
3.3 Categories and prototypes 37
3.4 Domains and frames 42
3.5 Conclusion 46
Exercises 46
Further reading 47

4 Tracing the development of individual words 49
4.1 Introduction 49
4.2 Introducing the *OED* 50
4.3 What the *OED* tells us 53
4.4 Some other historical dictionaries 64
4.5 Historical corpora 66
Exercises 68
Further reading 68

5 How and why words change meaning 70
5.1 Introduction 70
5.2 The significance of meaning change 70
5.3 Studying semantic change 72
5.4 The process of semantic change 74
5.5 Categories of meaning change 75
5.6 Grammaticalisation 82
5.7 Why do words change meaning? 83
5.8 Conclusion 89
Exercises 90
Further reading 90

6 Larger categories 92
6.1 Introduction 92
6.2 A brief history of thesauruses 93
6.3 The structure of thesauruses 95
6.4 Using *HTOED* 101
6.5 Conclusion 109
Exercises 110
Further reading 112

7 English colour terms: A case study 113
*C. P. Biggam*
7.1 Introduction 113
7.2 How to describe colour 113
7.3 What are basic colour terms? 116
7.4 The evolution of basic colour categories 117
7.5 The development of colour terms in English 122
7.6 The changing nature of a basic category: BLUE 128
7.7 Summary 129
7.8 Conclusion 129
Exercises 130
Further reading 130

8 Language and culture 132
8.1 Introduction 132
8.2 Linguistics and anthropology 134
8.3 Pronouns of address 135
8.4 Kinship 137
8.5 Time 143
8.6 Conclusion 147
Exercises 148
Further reading 149

9 Metaphor and metonymy 150
9.1 Introduction 150
9.2 Metaphor in language and thought 150
9.3 Another kind of mapping: Metonymy 155
9.4 Metaphor and motivation 159
9.5 Metonymy and motivation 164
9.6 Conclusion 166
Exercises 168
Further reading 169

10 The big picture and a look ahead 170
10.1 Introduction 170
10.2 The big picture 170
10.3 *Green* as an example 171
10.4 Looking ahead 173

*Glossary of key terms* 177
*References* 191
*Index* 200