



11. In the World of Dictionaries

We often come across words that are unfamiliar to us, when we read books, newspapers or magazines. We also hear new words and phrases when we watch TV programmes. How do we find the meanings of these words?

In the classroom, the teacher is always available to the students to tell the meaning of new and difficult words. But she cannot accompany every student all the time to explain the meaning of every new word. Besides, grown up people

also need help in this respect. A language has hundreds of thousands of words in it. It is impossible for one person to know all of them. But all these words can be explained in a 'dictionary'.

At some time or other, you must have been advised to look up a word in a dictionary by your teachers or parents. Let us now see what the word 'dictionary' means. Given below are some examples of how the word might be explained in different dictionaries.

dictionary : *noun* a book in which words are listed in alphabetical order from A to Z. You look up a word in a dictionary to find out what it means and how to spell it.

dictionary /'dɪk.ʃən.ri/ *plural* dictionaries [c] **1.** a book that gives a list of words in alphabetical order and explains their meanings in the same language, or another language. **2.** a book that explains words used in a subject.



dictionary (डिक्शनरी) **dictionaries** शब्दांचे अर्थ, उच्चार, वापर याबद्दल माहिती देणारे पुस्तक. शब्दकोश. कोश.

Thus we see that a dictionary shows us many things.

- Words in a dictionary are usually arranged in alphabetical order.
- A dictionary tells us what a word means.
- A dictionary shows us how a word is spelt.
- A dictionary tells us how a word is pronounced.
- A dictionary shows us the different forms of the same word. For example, rose-roses, go-going-went-gone, etc.
- A dictionary tells us with the help of examples, how a word is used.
- A dictionary lists many other words / phrases related to that word.
- A dictionary points out the different meanings of words which have the same spelling.
- A dictionary also tells us the grammatical class to which a word belongs. (You will learn about these classes of words when you are a little older.)

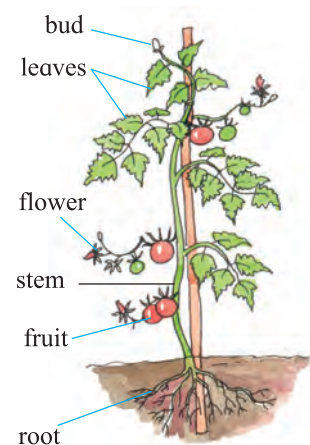
All dictionaries, however, are not the same. Depending on who is going to use the dictionary, the information in it is arranged and presented in different ways. Do you know that there are different types of dictionaries? Let us look at a few of them.

Children's dictionaries : Some dictionaries are designed specially for children. They include only a few thousand words but there are many pictures and diagrams in children's dictionaries. There may also be word-games, puzzles and jokes based on the meaning or use of words.

Pronouncing dictionaries : Some dictionaries provide only the pronunciation of words. It is shown with the help of special symbols.

Dictionaries of synonyms : Some dictionaries give lists of synonyms – words which have a similar meaning. They may also include antonyms or opposites.

Visual dictionaries : Some dictionaries contain only ‘visuals’ or pictures. They do not have to explain the meaning in words, as the visuals speak for themselves. The visuals may be in the form of photographs, diagrams or hand drawn pictures. They are all labelled. See the simple visual given alongside. In the same way, even complicated machines or systems are made simple in a visual dictionary.



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Encyclopedic dictionaries : Encyclopedias are books that give a lot of information on a great number of topics. Encyclopedic dictionaries, too, give a lot more information about most of the words they contain. These dictionaries are usually quite thick and contain many more words than the smaller, ordinary dictionaries.

Computers and the internet have brought with them **‘online’ dictionaries**. They are very easy to use. You just type the word you want to look up and instantly you are shown its meaning, use, etc. You can even listen to the proper pronunciation of a word. A printed dictionary cannot do this.

Then there are some dictionaries that show how a word was used hundreds of years ago, how its use or meaning or spelling changed over the years and how it is used today.



A dictionary is a must for a student. You can begin with simple, attractive dictionaries and then learn to use the more difficult ones later. So, the next time you come across a difficult word, don't fret. Just look it up in a dictionary.

You can make your own dictionary. Write the meaning and other information about the words you plan to include in your dictionary, on cards of the same size. Use a separate card for each word. Arrange the cards in alphabetical order. Your dictionary is ready ! Moreover, you can add new words to this dictionary whenever you like.