

# WHAT'S the WORD?

Which is better:  
a monolingual or a  
bilingual dictionary?

The answer depends  
on your *level of language  
ability* or your purposes.

- *Beginning* language learners may want a *bilingual* (Spanish-English, Farsi-English, Chinese-English, etc.) reference for speed or convenience.

That's because in *monolingual* dictionaries, *definitions* of simple entries often contain words that are less common or more difficult than the the vocabulary items themselves. At least at first, it may be easier to learn from translations. *Translators* may also benefit.

- *Intermediate* language learners and native speakers usually refer to *monolingual* (English-English) sources. With these, they avoid misunderstanding info that gets "lost in translation."

## PART 3: Using Dictionaries to Learn Vocabulary

### U sing Dictionaries to Learn Vocabulary— *Meanings & Examples*

The most common, most efficient way to learn to understand and use new vocabulary is from *context*—the sentences in which we hear or read the new words or phrases. In other words, it's *not* usually a good idea to look up items in a print or online dictionary *while* reading—because distracting interruptions may make us *miss the point* of the relevant material.

On the other hand, as we become familiar with new or difficult items, dictionaries can help us *acquire* vocabulary. If we use references well, we'll be able to understand words and phrases more precisely—i.e., in more than a general sense. We'll also be able to use the items correctly and appropriately in our *own* speaking and writing.

How can a good print or online dictionary help us acquire new or difficult vocabulary? In the *Introduction to What's the Word? Using New Vocabulary in the Real World*, it was useful in learning how to pronounce new words aloud. In PART 1 of UNIT ONE, we used it to find out or to check *parts of speech*. And in this PART 3, we'll make use of dictionaries for *definitions* (meanings or explanations of words or phrases). We'll also look at *examples* of how to use vocabulary items in context.

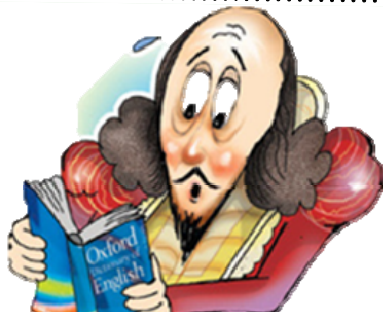
- Sample vocabulary item in this dictionary excerpt = the word approach
- Sample context: “To make good use of a dictionary, be sure to use the most efficient approach.”

The word in context is a *noun*, so let’s look at the *noun* entry, which is *Entry*<sup>2</sup>.

ap·proach<sup>1</sup> /ə'prəʊtʃ/ *v* 1 [I;T] to come near or nearer (to): We approached the camp. The time for us to leave is approaching. 2 [T about] to speak to, esp. about something for the first time: Did he approach you about lending him some money? 3 [T] to begin to consider: He approached the difficulty with great thought. **approach<sup>2</sup>**, 1 [U] the act of APPROACHING: The approach of winter brings cold weather. 2 [C] a means or way of entering: All approaches to the town were blocked. 3 [C] a manner or method of doing something: a new approach to teaching English 4 [C] speaking to someone for the first time: I'm not very good at making approaches to strangers. ap·proach·a·ble /ə'prəʊtʃəbəl/ *adj* 1 able to be reached 2 easy to speak to; friendly: You'll find the director a very approachable person. *opposite unapproachable*

The third definition seems to fit the context best: “Be sure to use the most efficient manner or method of” looking up vocabulary items.

The example “a new approach to teaching English” is similar to the original context, too.



Would Shakespeare be surprised at the updated entries in his dictionary?

# Recognizing Definitions and Examples

A good dictionary can be a valuable tool for acquiring vocabulary, but only if we use it effectively. Here are some steps to follow to make good use of a reference when we’re looking up an item found in a context:

1. **FIRST, FIND THE CORRECT ENTRY** for the vocabulary. If the item is a *noun* or a *noun phrase*, make sure you look at the *noun* entry; if it’s a *verb*, the *verb* entry; and so on. If the given word meanings are very different from one another, they may appear as *separate* entries—even for the same part of speech. Be sure to choose the appropriate *group* of definitions + examples.
2. **SECOND, FIND THE APPROPRIATE NUMBERED DEFINITION** for the item. Remember—the *definition* (the explanation or meaning) of the item does *not* include the word or phrase itself. But the main words of each definition are the *same part of the speech* as the item. To check that you’ve found the correct definition, try using it (shortened) form to replace the item itself. Does the context still make sense?
3. **FINALLY, LOOK AT THE EXAMPLES** for the word or phrase that correspond to the definition you’ve chosen. Are they similar in meaning to the sentence in which you found the item? Can you create similar or comparable phrases or sentences of your own with the item?

**Instructions:** On the next page are more entries from the *Longman Dictionary of American English*. To fill out the chart that follows, refer to these entries. For comparison, you can also find the answers in your own dictionary.

- In the left column are some vocabulary items—underlined and in bold type—in context from PART 3 of this worktext.
- In the second column, write the part of speech of each item as it is used in the context. (*n.* = *noun*; *v.* = *verb*; *adj.* = *adjective*; *adv.* = *adverb*.)

Continued on next page . . . .

**Instructions** (continued from previous page):

- In the third column, copy the dictionary definition that fits the use of that word or phrase in the context. If there are unnecessary words in the explanation, leave them out. Remember: the definition cannot include the word or phrase itself, but the main words should be in the same part of speech.
- In the last column, copy a phrase or sentence example of the item that corresponds to the meaning you chose. If there's no example, you may make up your own.

**ap-pro-pri-ate**<sup>1</sup> /ə'prɒ'pri:ət/ *adj* [for, to] correct or suitable: *His bright clothes were not appropriate for a funeral.* –opposite **inappropriate** –**appropriately** *adv* –**appropriateness** *n* [U]

**ap-pro-pri-ate**<sup>2</sup> /ə'prɒ'pri:ət/ *v* -ated, -ating [T for] 1 *fml* to set aside for some purpose: *The government appropriated a large sum of money for building hospitals.* 2 *euph* to take for oneself; steal: *The mayor was found to have appropriated government money.* –**appropriation** /ə,prɒ'pri'eɪʃən/ *n* [C;U]

**bi-ling-u-al** /baɪ'liŋgwəl/ *adj* 1 of, containing, or expressed in two languages: *a bilingual French-English dictionary* 2 able to speak two languages equally well

**con-tain** /kən'teɪn/ *v* [T] 1 to hold; have within itself: *This bottle contains two glasses of beer.* | *Beer contains alcohol.* 2 to hold back; keep under control: *Try to contain your anger/yourself!*

**cop-y**<sup>1</sup> /'kɒpi/ *n* -ies 1 a thing made to be exactly like another: *I asked my secretary to make me four copies of the letter.* 2 a single example of a magazine, book, newspaper, etc.: *Did you get your copy of "The News" today?*

**copy**<sup>2</sup> *v* -ied, -ying 1 [T] to make a copy of (something) 2 [T] to follow (someone or something) as a standard or pattern: *Jean always copies the way I dress.* 3 [I;T from, off] to cheat by writing exactly the same thing as (someone else): *He never does his homework himself; he just copies his brother's.*

**cop-y-cat** /'kɒpi,kæt/ *n infml derog* a person who without thought copies someone's manners, behavior, dress, etc.

**ef-fi-cient** /ɪ'fɪʃənt/ *adj* working well, quickly, and without waste: *She is a quick, efficient worker.* | *This new machine is more efficient than the old one.* –Compare: *an efficient secretary* (=who does his/her job well) *an effective medicine* (=which produces the desired result: –opposite **inefficient** –**efficiently** *adv* –**efficiency** /ɪ'fɪʃənsi/ *n* [U]: *attempts to improve efficiency*

**en-try** /'entri/ *n* -tries 1 [C into] the act of coming or going in; **ENTRANCE**<sup>1</sup> (2): *Spain's entry into the war* 2 [U] the right to enter: *The sign on the door says "No Entry."* 3 [C] *esp. AmE* a door, gate, or passage by which one enters 4 [C;U] the act or result of writing something down on a list: *The next entry in this dictionary is the word "entwine."* 5 [C] a person or thing, entered in a race or competition: *This painting is Mrs. Smith's entry in the competition.* –see **ENTRANCE**<sup>1</sup> (**USAGE**)

**fa-mil-lar** /fə'mɪlɪər/ *adj* 1 [to] generally known, seen, or experienced; common: *a familiar sight* 2 [F with] having a thorough knowledge (of): *Are you familiar with the rules of football?* –opposite **unfamiliar** 3 *derog* too friendly for the occasion: *The man's familiar behavior angered the woman.*

**fa-mil-lar-i-ty** /fə,mɪl'yærəti/, -mɪli'yær-/ *n* [U] 1 [with] thorough knowledge (of): *His familiarity with many foreign languages surprised us all.* 2 freedom of behavior usu. only expected in the most friendly relations: *They behaved towards each other with great familiarity.*

**fa-mil-lar-ize** *sbdy. with sthg.* ||also -ise *BrE* /fə'mɪlɪəraɪz/ *v* *prep* -ized, -izing [T] to make (oneself or someone else) informed about: *I spent the first few weeks familiarizing myself with the new job.*

**fa-mil-lar-ly** /fə'mɪlɪərli/ *adv* in an informal, easy, or friendly manner

**us-age** /'yuːsɪdʒ, -zɪdʒ/ *n* 1 [U] the way of using something; the type or degree of use 2 [C;U] the generally accepted way of using a language: *modern English usage*

**use**<sup>1</sup> /yuːs/ *n* 1 [U] the act of using or state of being used: *Do you approve of the use of guns by the police?* 2 [U] the ability or right to use something: *He was wounded in the war and lost the use of both legs.* | *to be given the use of the library* 3 [C;U] the purpose or reason for using something: *a new machine for the kitchen with several different uses* 4 [U] the usefulness or advantage given by something: *Is this book of any use?* | *What's the use of worrying?* 5 in use being used

## Dictionary Chart: Meaning & Examples

Vocabulary Item in Context	Part of Speech	Definition (Explanation of the Item in Context)	Another Example of How to Use the Item in Context
1. Be sure to find the <u>appropriate</u> meaning and example of the word in context.	adj.	<i>correct or suitable (for the context or intent)</i>	His bright clothes were not <u>appropriate</u> for a funeral.
2. A <u>bilingual</u> dictionary gives translations of words and phrases.		<i>containing or expressed in two languages</i>	
3. Definitions may <u>contain</u> words that are more difficult than the entries themselves.	v.		<i>Beer <u>contains</u> alcohol.</i>
4. It's O.K. to <u>copy</u> definitions word for word from a dictionary.			
5. Do you have a good <u>copy</u> of the dictionary entries to work from?			
6. The most <u>efficient</u> way to learn new vocabulary is from context.			
7. A dictionary <u>entry</u> is like a paragraph.			
8. Before we use it, it's a good idea to become <u>familiar</u> with the special features of a dictionary.			
9. There are <u>usage</u> notes in some dictionaries. They explain how grammar rules apply to the item.			
10. I can't look up these words in the dictionary because it's <u>in use</u> right now.	phrase (expression)		

**Instructions:** Here are some reading selections from PART 3 of *What's the Point? Book Two: Learning to Learn from Real Reading*, the reading skills *Worktext* that correlates to *What's the Word?* For more practice in using dictionaries to acquire new or difficult vocabulary, follow these steps:

1. FIRST, READ EACH SELECTION FOR MEANING. Make sure you get the point.
2. THEN CIRCLE THE NEW OR DIFFICULT VOCABULARY ITEMS. You might also circle the words and phrases that you'd like to use optimally in your own speaking and writing. In your own mind, try to figure out their meaning from context.

These instructions continue on page 54.

Communication in Relationships

## The Communication Process

What is the definition of the word "communication?" Communication is *supposed to be* the exchange of information or thoughts between people. In the process, a speaker or writer sends a message to a listener or reader. Usually, the *sender* of the message intends to get an idea across. Of course, the *receiver* has to hear or read the words. But the recipient also has to *understand* the *meaning*, the *intent*, and sometimes the *feeling* of the giver's message.

In *oral* communication, there's another step in a successful conversation. The person that *receives* the words has to *acknowledge or show* that he/she gets the point. Acknowledgment can be a nod or a smile, a "thank you" or an "okay." In a complex exchange, the listener should probably say something like, "Let me see if I understand correctly. What you mean is . . . ."

How do people feel if they never or rarely get adequate *acknowledgment*? Some simply "shut up"—they *stop* telling their thoughts and opinions. Others become *more* talkative. They don't think anyone is listening, so they talk on and on and on . . . just in case an idea or a thought gets through now and then.



How (well) are this speaker and this listener communicating?

## Making New Friends

How do some people begin new friendships so easily? The secret may lie in their *conversational style*. They may know a lot and have a lot of interests, but knowledge is *not* the secret of their success. Other people feel comfortable and self-confident around these people, so they seek out their company.

How can you make sure that people feel good when you are with them? One way is to use their names often. Another is to ask them for advice or information. Or ask their opinions on current issues. And when they're telling you something, keep them talking.



# Culture and Conversation

Conversational styles differ in diverse cultures or even in various groups within a country. For example, if you ask questions in *some* cultures, you seem interested and open to friendship. In *others*, however, your conversation partners might answer, "Why do you want to know?" or "None of your business." You'll come across as "nosy."

In some societies, if you say your opinion openly, people find you interesting. If you make direct requests, you appear honest. In other groups, however, your directness may seem impolite. In these cultures, people usually avoid disagreement and get upset about arguments. "Direct" people may find a "polite" communication style confusing and uncomfortable because they don't know what is going on.

Some environments are more *formal* than others in conversational style. If you try joking, teasing, or just "kidding around," your conversation partners may be offended. And you might feel foolish or embarrassed.

Who has the responsibility for successful communication? In some places, it's the job of the *speaker* to *clearly communicate* a point. In others, the *listener* is responsible for *getting* the message, so participants express themselves less directly. In still other groups, *both* speakers *and* listener have equal responsibility.

Finally, *how much* should you talk? Some groups believe that people should speak only when they have something important to say. In other cultures, however, long and excited conversations are popular and enjoyable social activities. In still others, "conventional" is the key.

## Communication in Relationships



↑ Considering (or disregarding) cultural stereotypes, how might one converse with the above characters?

## Words and Expressions

Here are two meanings of the word *expression*—"a phrase with a special meaning" and "a facial look that shows a feeling." Sometimes, we communicate more with an expression than with an expression. In other words, "expressions speak louder than words."

Are you confused? Then you may have pulled your eyebrows together and wrinkled your forehead. You have *a confused expression* on your face. In other ways, people communicate surprise, fear, tension, happiness, love, and many other feelings through their facial expressions.

Facial expressions have similar meanings in many countries and cultures. However, most people aren't *aware* of the expressions on their faces. They can't "read" other people's faces very well, either. That's because it may seem impolite to watch another person's face, and it may feel uncomfortable. But words don't express emotions as well as expressions. If you want to communicate feelings, use your facial muscles in addition to your voice. And watch for messages in other people's faces.



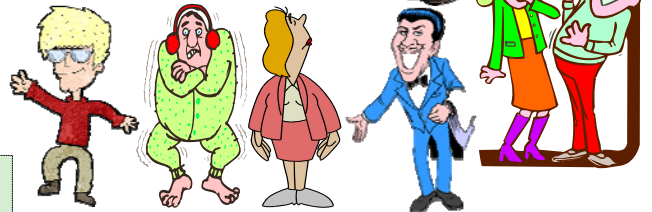
↑ some (exaggerated?) facial expressions

# The Meaning of Gestures

When we're reading, we have to understand meaning from the pictures, the words, and our own background knowledge and thinking. But when we're in a face-to-face conversation or are watching a speaker, there are *more clues* to meaning. We can understand some messages from people's *gestures*—not only their *facial expressions* but also the *movements* of their shoulders and arms, hands, and other body parts. These correspond with their body *postures*.

Some gestures are worldwide. People from almost all cultures understand the meaning of these body signals. Some examples are shivering when we're cold or fanning ourselves when we're hot. Some other widely understood gestures are raising one arm in greeting or to get attention and reaching out to welcome someone. In many cultures, people shake hands or put their hand on someone's shoulder to be friendly. On the other hand, they also show anger through arm and hand gestures.

Having trouble communicating with someone with just words? Try the "body language" of gestures to get your point across. And watch what your "conversation partner" does.



some examples of body postures & gestures ➔

## Why We Don't Listen

Communication in Relationships

Most people say they want happy, satisfying personal relationships, yet many relationships are unhappy and problematic. Psychologists tell us that *effective communication* is the key to successful relationships, and *good listening* is the key to effective communication. Why, then, are we such poor listeners?

On a typical day, we spend about half our time trying to listen to *somebody*—a family member, a co-worker or supervisor, a teacher, a friend—and then to the many, many speakers in the media and on our phones. We hear so many words that we "tune out" a lot of them. Background noise doesn't help us concentrate, either. The sounds of machines, traffic, loud music, and so on makes it difficult to understand and to think.

Second, we can *hear* about four times faster than most people can *speak*. So in the "space" between speakers' words and sentences, our minds wander to other things—what we have to do, how we're feeling, what we're going to say next, and so on.

In addition, many people are "selective listeners." They hear only what they *want* to hear—only the information or thoughts that seem interesting or feel comfortable to *them* at the time. Others are "defensive listeners." They feel personally attacked by other people's comments and opinions. Then they defend themselves instead of talking about the subject of the conversation. Still others think that they have "heard it all before." These "bored listeners" tune out their conversation partners' thoughts and feelings until they think they're hearing something new or exciting.

**Instructions** (continued from page 51):

3. In the left column of the following vocabulary chart, list the vocabulary items you circled in the reading selections on the previous three pages.
4. Write the part of speech of each item in the second column. (Or write phrase or expression.) Be sure to write the part of speech of (the main word) of each item as it appears in the context of the readings.
5. Now look up each item in your dictionary. In the third column, copy the dictionary definition that corresponds to the use of the item in context. If some of the words are unnecessary, leave them out. Remember—the explanation should not include the item itself, but the main words should be in the same part of speech.
6. In the last column, copy a dictionary example that corresponds to the definition you chose. As long as you keep the same meaning, you can change the example, of course. Or you can make up a phrase or sentence of your own that includes the vocabulary item in a similar context.

*Dictionary Chart: Meaning and Examples*

Vocabulary Item in Context	Part of Speech	Definition (Explanation of the Item in Context)	Another Example of How to Use the Item in Context
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			



## Dictionary Chart: Meaning and Examples (Continued)

Vocabulary Item in Context	Part of Speech	Definition (Explanation of the Item in Context)	Another Example of How to Use the Item in Context
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

### Learning Beyond the Book

Can you use your dictionary effectively and efficiently to acquire the new vocabulary items that you read in context? To find out, follow these instructions:

1. In a vocabulary-learning notebook or on paper, make a chart like the one above. It can contain as many boxes as you need, of course, and you can add boxes as you add more vocabulary items.
2. Whenever you read or hear English, list all the new, difficult, or important vocabulary items you meet. Try to copy the items in context—the phrases or sentences in which they appear. In your mind, make a guess about the general meaning of each word or phrase.
3. List each item in the left column of your vocabulary chart. In the second column, write the part of speech of the item as you saw or heard it.
4. Look up the word or phrase in the dictionary. Write the appropriate definition in the third column and a corresponding example for its use in the last column.
5. Begin to use the item in your own speaking and writing. If necessary, ask a native speaker of English if you are using it correctly.