

APPENDIX

E

Reading the Dictionary

Experts believe that most English-speaking adults use between 25,000 and 50,000 words. That seems like a large number, yet the English language has over a million words. Effective readers use a dictionary to understand new or difficult words.

Most dictionaries provide the following information:

- Guide words (the words at the top of each page)
- Spelling (how the word and its different forms are spelled)
- Pronunciation (how to say the word)
- Part of speech (the function of the word)
- Definition (the meaning of the word)
- Synonyms (words that have similar meanings)
- Etymology (the history of the word)

All dictionaries have guide words at the top of each page. However, dictionaries differ from each other in the way they give other information about words. Some dictionaries give more information about the origin of the word; other dictionaries give long lists of synonyms. Each dictionary will explain how to use its resources in the first few pages.

How to Read a Dictionary Entry

The following entry from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition, will be used as an example for the discussions about the kinds of information a dictionary provides.

her·bi·cide \('h)ər-bə-,sīd\ *n* [L *herba* + ISV = *cide*] (1899) : an agent used to destroy or inhibit plant growth — **her·bi·cid·al** \,('h)ər-bə-'sī-dəl\ *adj* — **her·bi·cid·al·ly** \-dəl-ē\ *adv*

Spelling and Syllables

The spelling of the main word is given first in **bold** type. The word is also divided into syllables. The word *herbicide* has three syllables: *her-bi-cide*. Spellings of words based on this word are given at the end of the entry. This listing is especially helpful when letters are dropped or added to create a new word. The word *herbicide* changes form and spelling to become *herbicial*, which has four syllables, *her-bi-cid-al*, and *herbicially*, which has five syllables, *her-bi-cid-al-ly*.

EXAMPLES Use a dictionary to break the following words into syllables. In the spaces provided, rewrite each word, placing a dot (·) between the syllables.

1. intermit _____
2. pedagogy _____

EXPLANATIONS

1. *Intermit* has three syllables: *in-ter-mit*.
2. *Pedagogy* has four syllables: *ped-a-go-gy*.

PRACTICE 1

Use a dictionary to break the following words into syllables. In the spaces provided, rewrite each word, placing a dot (·) between the syllables.

1. scavenger _____
2. tundra _____

Pronunciation symbols indicate the sounds of consonants and vowels. Dictionaries provide pronunciation keys so that you will understand the symbols used in the pronunciation guide to a word. Below is a sample pronunciation key.

Pronunciation Key

\ə\ **ab**ut \ə\ kitten, **F** table \ər\ **fur**ther \a\ **ash** \ā\ **ace** \ä\ **mop**, **mar**
 \aù\ **out** \ch\ **chin** \e\ **bet** \ē\ **easy** \g\ **go** \i\ **hit** \î\ **ice** \j\ **job**
 \ŋ\ **sing** \ō\ **go** \ó\ **law** \òì\ **boy** \th\ **thin** \th\ **the** \ü\ **loot** \ù\ **foot**
 \y\ **yet** \zh\ **vision** \á, k, ⁿ, œ, œ, ue, ūe, ^y\

Note that each letter and symbol is followed by a sample word. The sample word tells you how that letter and symbol sounds. For example, the long *a*

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sounds like *a* in *ace*. And the short *i* has the sound of the *i* in *bit*. The symbol that looks like an upside down *e* (ə) is called a *schwa*. The schwa has a sound like *uh*, as in *about*.

Different dictionaries use different symbols in their pronunciation keys, so be sure to check the key of the dictionary you are using.

EXAMPLES Use the pronunciation key reprinted in this book to answer questions about the following words. Write the letters of your answers in the given spaces.

_____ 1. con · sign (kən-'sīn)

The *i* in *consign* sounds like the *i* in

- a. sit
- b. sigh

_____ 2. de · vi · ate ('dē-vē-āt)

The *a* in *deviate* sounds like the *a* in

- a. mat
- b. day

EXPLANATIONS

1. The *i* in *consign* sounds like the *i* in *sigh*
2. The *a* in *deviate* sounds like the *a* in *day*.

PRACTICE 2

Using your dictionary, find and write in the pronunciation symbols and accent marks for each of the following words.

1. oyster _____
2. papyrus _____

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech indicate how a word functions in a sentence. Dictionary entries tell you what part of speech a word is—noun, verb, adjective, and so on. The part of speech is abbreviated and printed in italics. Your dictionary provides a full list of abbreviations. The following are the most common abbreviations for the parts of speech:

Parts of Speech

<i>adj</i>	adjective	<i>n</i>	noun
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>conj</i>	conjunction	<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>interj</i>	Interjection	<i>v, vi, vt</i>	verb

Read again the sample dictionary entry for *herbicide*.

her·bi·cide \ (h)ər-bə-,sīd\ *n* [L *herba* + ISV =*cide*] (1899) : an agent used to destroy or inhibit plant growth — **her·bi·cid·al** \,(h)ər-bə-'sī-dəl\ *adj* — **her·bi·cid·al·ly** \-dəl-ē\ *adv*

As the entry shows, the word *herbicide* is a noun. Two other forms of the word are identified as an adjective (*herbicidal*) and an adverb (*herbicidally*).

EXAMPLES Use your dictionary to identify the parts of speech for each of the following words. A word may be used as more than one part of speech.

1. complement _____
2. before _____
3. fly _____

EXPLANATIONS

1. *Complement* can be used as a *noun* or a *verb*.
2. *Before* can be used as an *adjective*, an *adverb*, a *conjunction*, or a *preposition*.
3. *Fly* can be used as an *adjective*, a *noun*, or a *verb*.

PRACTICE 3

Use your dictionary to identify the parts of speech for each of the following words. A word may be used as more than one part of speech.

1. graph _____
2. angle _____
3. degree _____

Definitions

Most words have more than one meaning. When there is more than one definition, each meaning is numbered. Many times the dictionary will also provide examples of sentences in which the word is used.

EXAMPLE Three definitions are given for the word *degree*. In the spaces provided, write the number of the definition that best fits its meaning in each sentence.

1. A step or stage in a process
2. A unit of measurement for angles and curves
3. A title conferred on students by a college, university, or professional school upon completion of a program of study

_____ A. Joanne changed her physical fitness activities by *degrees*; she began with short 5-minute walks and built up to 30-minute walks every day of the week.

_____ B. John received his associate of arts *degree* from a community college and his bachelor of arts degree from a four-year university.

_____ C. If two triangles are similar, their corresponding angles have the same number of degrees.

EXPLANATION

- A. The correct answer is “a step or stage in a process” (1).
- B. The correct answer is “a title conferred on students by a college, university, or professional school upon completion of a program of study” (3).
- C. The correct answer is “a unit of measurement for angles and curves” (2).

PRACTICE 4

Here are two words, their definitions, and sentences using the words based on their various definitions. In the spaces provided, write the number of the definition that best fits each sentence. Note that one definition is not used.

A. **factor**: 1 something that brings about a result, ingredient 2 one who acts or transacts the business of another 3 a number that will divide into another number exactly

_____ 1. The manufacturer submits the order, along with the terms and conditions, to the *factor* for approval.

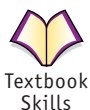
_____ 2. The *factors* of 10 are 1, 2, and 5.

_____ 3. The doctor discovered that pollen was a *factor* in Justine’s sinus condition.

Textbook Definitions

You do not always need to use the dictionary to find the meaning of a word. In fact, many textbooks contain words or word groups that you cannot find in a dictionary. The content word is usually typed in **bold** or *italic* print. The definition follows, and many times an example is given. Context clues are helpful.

EXAMPLE Read the following passage from a psychology textbook. Then answer the questions that follow it.



Disconfirmation is a communication pattern in which you ignore a person's presence as well as that person's communications. You say, in effect, that the person and what she or he has to say aren't worth serious attention. Disconfirming responses often lead to loss of self-esteem. Note that disconfirmation is not the same as rejection. In **rejection**, you disagree with the person; you indicate your unwillingness to accept something the other person says or does. In disconfirming someone, however, you deny that person's significance; you claim that what this person says or does simply does not count.

—De Vito, *The Interpersonal Communication Book*, 10th ed., p. 171.

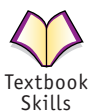
1. A communication pattern in which you ignore a person's presence as well as that person's communications is _____.
2. An unwillingness to accept something the other person says or does is _____.

EXPLANATION The author knows that these words, or the specific uses of these words, may be new for many students, so the words are set in **bold** print and definitions are given.

1. disconfirmation
2. rejection

PRACTICE 5

Read each of the following textbook passages. Then write the definition for each of the words in **bold** print.



1. To say that $x + 4 <$ (is less than) 10 and $x <$ (is less than) 6 are **equivalent** is to say that they have the same solution set. For example, the number 3 is a solution to $x + 4 <$ 10. It is also a solution for $x <$ 6. The number -2 is a solution

of $x < 6$. It is also a solution of $x + 4 < 10$. Any solution of one is a solution of the other; they are equivalent.

—Bittinger & Beecher, *Introductory and Intermediate Algebra*, 2nd ed., p. 143.

equivalent _____

2. To borrow the useful terms of the English novelist E. M. Forster, characters may seem flat or round. A **flat** character has only one outstanding trait or feature: for example, the stock character of the mad scientist, with his lust for absolute power and his crazily gleaming eyes.

—Adapted from Kennedy & Gioia, *Literature*, 8th ed., p. 78.

flat _____

3. **Codependence** refers to a self-defeating relationship pattern in which a person is “addicted to the addict.”

—Donatelle, *Access to Health*, 7th ed., p. 321.

Codependence _____

Glossary

Because each subject area has its own special vocabulary, many textbooks provide a special section called a glossary. A **glossary** is a list of words and their meanings. Sometimes the glossary is placed in the side margins on a textbook page; sometimes the glossary is a separate section in the back of the book. The words in a glossary are placed in alphabetical order. They give the word, the spelling, and the meaning of the word or words only as they are used in that subject area or textbook.

EXAMPLE Read the following sample glossary from an English composition handbook. In the spaces provided, write **T** if the statement is true or **F** if the statement is false.

Glossary of Fallacies

- Ad hominem attack** Attack on a person’s character to win an argument or point. The term means “against the man” or “against the person.”
- Bandwagon appeal** An attempt to cause a person to assume a view or take action due to peer pressure.
- False cause** An error in thinking that assumes one event causes another.
- Hasty generalization** Drawing a conclusion about a population based on a sample that is not large enough.

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- _____ 1. Jeremy made a **hasty generalization** when he gave credit to making a perfect score on his math test to the rabbit's foot he carried for good luck.
- _____ 2. Elected public officials often face **ad hominem** attacks about their private lives during election campaigns.
- _____ 3. Bill's decision to smoke cigarettes because his friends all smoke is an example that a **bandwagon appeal** may actually work.
- _____ 4. The word **fallacies** suggests errors.

EXPLANATION

1. False; Jeremy committed a *false cause* error.
2. True
3. True
4. True

REVIEW Test 1**Vocabulary-Building Skills**

Textbook Skills

- A. Look over the following entry from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Then mark the numbered items T (true) or F (false), based on the entry.

My·o·pia \mī-'ō-pē-ə\ n [NL, fr. Gk *myōpia*, fr. *myōp-*, *myōps*] (ca. 1752)
1 : a condition in which the visual images come to a focus in front of the retina of the eye resulting esp. in defective vision of distant objects
2 : a lack of foresight or discernment: a narrow view of something – **my·o·pic** \-'ō-pik, -'ä-\ *adj* – **my·o·pi·cal·ly** \-pi-k(ə)lē\ *adv*

- _____ 1. The entry gives three forms of the word *myopia*.
- _____ 2. *Myopia* can be a way of thinking about a topic.
- _____ 3. *Myopia* has three syllables.
- _____ 4. The *y* in *myopia* sounds like the *y* in *yard*.
- _____ 5. *Myopic* is a noun.

- B. Look over the following list of words from the glossary of the college textbook *Access to Health*. Based on the definition of each word and the context of each sentence, label each statement **T** if it is true or **F** if it is false.



Textbook
Skills

Glossary

Stress Mental and physical responses to change.

Stressor A physical, social, or psychological event or condition that requires adjustment.

Adjustment The attempt to cope with a given situation.

Strain The wear-and-tear sustained by the body and mind in adjusting to or resisting a stressor.

- _____ 6. **Stress** is usually the result of an internal state of emotional tension that occurs in response to the various demands of living.
- _____ 7. An angry parent is an example of a **stressor**.
- _____ 8. **Adjustments** are used as a last resort in response to stress.
- _____ 9. **Strain** is always a physical problem.
- _____ 10. Binge eating may be an unhealthy **adjustment** to the **stress** caused by low self-esteem.

REVIEW Test 2

Vocabulary-Building Skills

- A. Look over the following entry from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Then mark each item **T** (true) or **F** (false), based on the entry.

¹**myr·i·ad** \ˈmir-ē-əd\ n [Gk *myriad-*, *myrias*, fr. *myrioi* countless, ten thousand] (1555) **1** : ten thousand **2** : a great number <a ~ of ideas >

²**myriad** *adj* (1791) **1** : INNUMERABLE <those ~ problems > **2** : having innumerable aspects or elements <the ~ activity of the new land—Meridel Le Sueur >

- _____ 1. The noun *myriad* comes from a Greek word meaning “ten thousand.”
- _____ 2. The word *myriad* can be used as a noun or as an adjective.

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- _____ 3. The word *myriad* has four syllables.
- _____ 4. The *i* in *myriad* sounds like the *i* in *sigh*.

- B. Look over the following list of words from the glossary of an ecology textbook. Based on the definition of each word and the context of each sentence, label each statement **T** if it is true or **F** if it is false.

Glossary

Alluvial A water-carved canyon
Arroyo Related to material deposited by running water
Playa A natural, low water basin
Topography The physical structure of the landscape

- _____ 5. The **topography** of a desert is made up of lush vegetation.
- _____ 6. **Playas** can receive water that rushes down a hill.
- _____ 7. After a violent storm, soil that has been shaped into **alluvial** fans stretch across the desert.

- C. Look over the following list of words from the glossary of an English handbook. Based on the definition of each word and the context of each sentence, label each statement **T** if it is true or **F** if it is false.



Textbook
Skills

Glossary of Usage and Terms

Annotation A brief note you write about a text while reading it by making marks such as underlining, circling, and highlighting. Notes can be words, phrases, questions, or statements.

Paraphrase A restatement in your own words of the author's ideas and structure. A paraphrase closely follows the original source, pulls in many details, and may be as long as the original text.

Summary A condensed version of a text in which you explain the author's meaning fairly and accurately in your own words. A summary focuses on the author's main idea and is shorter than the original text.

- _____ 8. **Annotations** are written directly on the pages of a textbook.
- _____ 9. A **summary** is longer than a **paraphrase**.
- _____ 10. **Paraphrasing** is an effective reading and writing skill when the order of the author's ideas is important for emphasis.

EFFECTIVE READER Scorecard

Vocabulary-Building Skills

Test	Number Correct	Points	Score
Review Test 1	_____	× =	_____
Review Test 2	_____	× =	_____