# 3 Using an English dictionary

How can a learner's dictionary help you? These examples are from the *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary*.

**win** /wɪn/ *verb* (winning; *pt, pp* won /wʌn/) **1** [I,T] to be the best, first or strongest in a race, game, competition, etc: *to win a game/match/championship* • *I never win at table tennis.* • *Which party do you think will win the next election?* **2** [T] to get money, a prize, etc. as a result of success in a competition, race, etc: *We won a trip to Australia.* • *Who won the gold medal?* • *He won the jackpot in the lottery.*

HELP Note that we **earn** (not **win**) money at our job: *I earn £25000 a year.*

IDM **you can't win** (*informal*) there is no way of being completely successful or of pleasing everyone: *Whatever you do you will upset somebody. You can't win.*

**win/lose the toss** ➲ toss

PHR V **win sb over/round (to sth)** to persuade sb to support or agree with you: *They're against the proposal at the moment, but I'm sure we can win them over.*

**Definitions** are in simple English. Different meanings of a word are given.

Examples are **provided** to show how the word is used.

The dictionary can help you to **avoid** making mistakes, and gives help with grammar.

**Idioms** and phrasal verbs are at the end of the **entry**.

Phonetic **symbols** help with pronunciation. You can find out which **syllable** is **stressed**.

**mistake**[1] /mɪˈsteɪk/ *noun* [C] something that you think or do that is wrong: *Try not to* ***make any mistakes*** *in your essays.* • *a* ***spelling mistake*** • *It was a big mistake to trust her.* • *I* ***made the mistake of*** *giving him my address.*

IDM **by mistake** as a result of being careless: *The terrorists shot the wrong man by mistake.*

OTHER WORDS FOR

**mistake**

**Error** is more formal than **mistake**: *a computing error.* When you **make a mistake** you **do** sth **wrong**: *I got the answer wrong.* • *You must have the wrong number* (= on the phone). **Fault** indicates who is responsible for sth bad: *The accident wasn't my fault. The other driver pulled out in front of me.* **Fault** is also used to describe a problem or weakness that sb/sth has: *a technical fault.*

Words that are often used together are given in bold.

It can teach you **related** words: this helps you **build** your vocabulary and choose the correct word for your needs.

It helps you with **style**: **for instance**, formal, informal, **slang**, etc.

**guy** /gaɪ/ *noun* **1** [C] (*informal*) a man or a boy: *He's a nice guy.* **2 guys** [pl] (*informal*) used when speaking to a group of people of either sex: *What do you guys want to eat tonight?*

SPOTLIGHT *stress* and *emphasize*

Both verbs mean to say a syllable, word or phrase with extra loudness. The related nouns are **stress (on sth)** and **emphasis (on sth)**.

- *Don't* ***emphasize*** *every word. The* ***stress*** *is* ***on*** *the first syllable.*

GLOSSARY

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **definition** | an exact statement of what a word or phrase means **define** *v* | **syllable** | a part of a word which contains a vowel sound. *Go* has one **syllable**, and *prefer* has two. |
| **provide** | give sth to sb or make sth available for sb | **related (to sth)** | connected to sth |
| **avoid doing sth** | If you **avoid** doing sth, you try not to do it. | **build** | make sth bigger; increase sth |
| **idiom** | a group of words with a special meaning | **style** | the way sth is written or spoken, e.g. *informal, formal* |
| **entry** | one item that is written in a dictionary, list, etc. There are three dictionary **entries** on this page. | **for instance** | SYN **for example** |
| **symbol** | a letter, number or sign that has a particular meaning, e.g. /ʃ/ is pronounced 'sh'. | **slang** | very informal words or phrases used in spoken language |



LIVEWORKSHEETS

## 1 Complete the words.

▶ d e f i n e

1 s___mb___l
2 st___l___
3 sl___ ___ ___
4 em___ ___asize
5 id___ ___ ___
6 s___ll___bl___
7 em___ ___asi___
8 f___r ___ ___st___ ___ce
9 d___f___n___t___ ___n

## 2 Is the meaning the same or different? Write *S* or *D*.

▶ Does he use a lot of slang? / Does he use a lot of idioms? D

1 It's possible to increase your vocabulary. / It's possible to build your vocabulary. .....
2 Is that symbol correct? / Is that definition correct? .....
3 It gives words that are connected. / It gives words that are related. .....
4 The city is fantastic: for example, the buildings, the parks, the people, etc. / The city is fantastic: for instance, the buildings, the parks, the people, etc. .....
5 Can you avoid mistakes? / Can you define mistakes? .....
6 Is that formal? / Is that slang? .....
7 They always stress that syllable. / They always emphasize that syllable. .....
8 It doesn't give all the answers. / It doesn't provide all the answers. .....

## 3 Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| symbols | avoid | related | entry ✓ | definitions | syllable | define |
| instance | stress | idiom | provide | build | entry | |

▶ In a dictionary, ***foreigner*** comes after the entry for ***foreign***.

1 Dictionaries have many uses: for ..... , to find out the meaning, check pronunciation, etc.
2 This dictionary has clear ..... which are easy to understand.
3 Some dictionaries can help you ..... your vocabulary if they ..... synonyms and opposites, or other ..... words.
4 A dictionary gives you grammar information so that you can ..... making mistakes.
5 You can check the pronunciation of any word in the dictionary by looking at the phonetic ..... and noticing which ..... is stressed.
6 ***Good luck!*** is given as an ..... in the dictionary, at the end of the ..... for ***luck***.
7 Dictionaries for foreign learners ..... words in simple English.
8 In the word ***emphasize***, the ..... is on the first syllable.

## 4 Look at the dictionary entries on page 16. Answer the questions.

▶ Which syllable is stressed in ***mistake***? The second syllable.

1 Which related words are given for ***mistake***? .....
2 How many definitions are there in the entry for ***win***? .....
3 What style is the idiom ***You can't win***? .....
4 Is ***guy*** a slang word? .....
5 Which phonetic symbols are given for ***guy***? .....
6 What's the second definition of ***guy***? .....

## 5 Are these sentences correct? Write *Yes* or *No*. Use the dictionary entries to correct any wrong answers.

1 a She turned left by a mistake. .....
b I haven't got the keys, but it's not my fault; Jo lost them. .....
2 a We're hoping to win a medal for skiing in the Olympics. .....
b My dad wins a lot of money in his job. .....
3 a There are a couple of guys at the door. Who are they? .....
b I like Amelie: she's a funny guy. .....

TEST YOURSELF

LIVEWORKSHEETS