

3 Using an English dictionary

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

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.

win /wɪn/ verb (winning; pt, pp won /wɒn/) **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 £25 000 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.

mistake ¹ /mɪ'steɪk/ 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. <i>informal</i> , <i>formal</i>
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. /f/ is pronounced 'sh'.	slang	very informal words or phrases used in spoken language

1 Complete the words.

- d e f i n e
1 s _ _ m b _ _ l
2 st _ _ l _ _
3 sl _ _ _ _ _
4 em _ _ _ _ _ size

- 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.

