

# 6) Using a dictionary

A learner's dictionary includes a wide range of information that will help you to expand your vocabulary and use words more effectively when you speak and write. Look at these entries from the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

The key (1) tells you that **reflect** is in the Oxford 3000 and is an important word.

**reflect** 1 B1 ① /ri'flekt/ verb 1 ② [T, usually passive] to show the image of sb/sth on the surface of sth such as a mirror, water or glass: **be reflected** (in sth) His face was reflected in the mirror. ◊ She could see herself reflected in his eyes. 2 ③ [T, I] to throw back light, heat, sound, ... work. 4 ④ [I, T] to think carefully and deeply about sth: Before I decide, I need time to reflect. ◊ **on/upon sth** She was left to reflect on the implications of her decision. ...

The words before the definition give a general idea of the different meanings of **reflect**.

**absorb** 1 B2 /əb'zɔ:b; NAmE -'zɔ:rb/ verb  
- LIQUID/GAS 1 ② [I] to take in a liquid, gas or other sub-  
...  
- INFORMATION 4 ④ [I] - sth to take sth into the mind and learn or understand it ⑤ **take in**: It's a lot of information to absorb all at once. ...

The phrases in bold show common phrasal structures and/or collocations: they will help you to use **favour** naturally in typical contexts.

**Propose** is a *formal* word and more common in written English.

**propose** 1 B2 ① /prə'pauz/ verb  
- SUGGEST PLAN 1 ② [T] (*formal*) to suggest a plan, an idea, etc. for people to think about and decide on: - sth The ...  
- that... She proposed that the book be banned. ◊ (*BrE also*) She proposed that the book should be banned. ◊ **it is proposed that...** It was proposed that the president be elected for a period of two years. ◊ **- doing sth** He proposed changing the name of the company. ◊ **it is proposed to do sth** It was proposed to pay the money from public funds.

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

**IDM** no 'comment' (said in reply to a question, usually from a journalist) I have nothing to say about that: 'Will you resign, sir?' 'No comment!'

**PHRV** count a'gainst sb | count sth a'gainst sb to be considered or to consider sth to be a disadvantage in sb: For that job her lack of experience may count against her. count 'down (to sth) to think about a future event with ...

The numbers tell you that **reflect** has different meanings.

Prepositions that follow **reflect** are shown in bold.

**count** 1 A2 /kaʊnt/ verb, noun

■ verb

- SAY NUMBERS 1 ② [I] to say numbers in the correct order: Billy can't count yet. ◊ **- (up) to sth** She can count up to 10 in Italian. ◊ **- from sth (to / up to sth)** to count from 1 to 10
- FIND TOTAL 2 ③ [T, I] to calculate the total number of
- INCLUDE 3 ④ [T, I] - sb/sth to include sb/sth when you calculate a total: We have invited 50 people, not counting the children.

Dictionaries often provide synonyms (**take sth in** is a synonym for one meaning of **absorb**) and opposites: these help you to expand your vocabulary.

**favour** 1 B1 ① (US *favor*) /'feɪvə(r)/ noun, verb

■ noun

- HELP 1 ② [C] a thing that you do to help sb: Could you do me a favour and pick up Sam from school today? ◊ I'll ask Steve to take it. He owes me a favour. ◊ Thanks for helping me out. I'll return the favour (= help you because you have helped me) some time. ◊ **as a - (to sb)** I'm going as a favour to Ann, not because I want to. ◊ **Do yourself a favour** (= help yourself) and wear a helmet on the bike. ◊ EXPRESS YOURSELF at PERMISSION

It is followed by a noun, a *that* clause, or an -ing form, so you cannot say: **He proposed us to go**.

The grammar of each word is labelled, e.g. whether a noun is countable [C], uncountable [U], plural, or usually plural (as here), etc.

**circumstance** 1 B2 ① /'sɜ:kəmstæns, -stɔ:nz,

-stæns; NAmE 'sɜ:rkəmstæns, -stɔ:nz/ noun 1 ② [C, usually pl.] the conditions and facts that are connected with and affect a situation, an event or an action: Police said there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the boy's death. ◊ **under... circumstances** Under normal circumstances, your white blood cells are able to fight infections. ◊ **in... circumstances** The company reserves the right to cancel this agreement in certain circumstances. ◊ **In exceptional circumstances**, detainees could be denied access to a lawyer. ...

**1 Complete the sentences with the correct verb, and use the numbers opposite to say which meaning is being used.**

- 1 There were about twelve on the bus, not ..... the teachers.
- 2 I think she'll have to go away and ..... on what we've said to her.
- 3 There's no liquid at the bottom because the sponge has ..... all the juice.
- 4 From the list, I have ..... fifteen who still haven't replied to the invitation.
- 5 There was too much information to ..... in one session; it was impossible.
- 6 In this game, one person closes their eyes and ..... up to 50, while the others hide.
- 7 He was standing behind me, but I could see his face ..... in the water.

**2 Complete the sentences with a word from the opposite page.**

- 1 Sam, could you ..... me a favour? ~ Sure. What is it?
- 2 How many people were there? ~ Lots, but I didn't actually ..... them.
- 3 There was so much information, I couldn't ..... it all in.
- 4 I only went to the party as a ..... to Anne.
- 5 Prime Minister, do you have anything to say? ~ No .....
- 6 You can change the date in certain .....
- 7 Could I ask a ..... ? ~ Yes, of course. What do you want?
- 8 I'm sure Bob will do it. He ..... me a favour.

**3 Cross out the grammar mistake in each sentence and write the corrections at the end.**

- 1 We could see our faces reflected on the water.
- 2 She proposed to leave the children behind.
- 3 You can take dogs into shops in certain circumstance.
- 4 There were ten people there, no counting the two of us.
- 5 I'll need to reflect in what he said.
- 6 He proposed us to take the car.

**4 Use the  to complete these sentences. You will find the answers in the full dictionary entries for the words shown on the opposite page.**

- 1 I ..... myself lucky to have a job that I really enjoy.
- 2 I'm ..... favour ..... equal pay.
- 3 Under the ..... , I would prefer not to say anything.
- 4 The whole incident ..... badly on everyone involved.
- 5 You can email us or leave a ..... on our website.
- 6 When you buy someone a present, it's the thought that .....

**5 Look up these words in the  . What special information is given for each one? Write an example sentence for each.**

inform .....  
observe .....  
finding .....  
immune .....

**6  ABOUT YOUR DICTIONARY** Look in the  at the full entry for a very common word such as **face**, **head** or **take**. Note down five or six new collocations, phrases, or phrasal verbs that include the target word.

