

Dictionary skills: Part 1

Level 3

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Level: Upper-intermediate to advanced

Age: Teenagers / adults

Time needed: 45–60 minutes (approx)

Subject: Dictionary skills / vocabulary development

Summary: These worksheets are designed for use with the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* to give learners practice in using the dictionary to check meaning and for vocabulary development.



Exercise 4: British and American English

Exercise 1: Expressions with prepositions

1. Ask learners to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the possible answers. Listen to their suggested answers but do not correct any mistakes. Then ask them to check in the dictionary. Ensure that your learners know which word to look up in each case (for example, in the phrase *regardless of the weather*).

Exercise 2: Verb + noun collocations

2. Note that there are two ways in which the MED2 helps with collocations. Main frequent collocates are shown in **bold** within the entry (for example, *doubt: raise doubts*). Additional collocations are given in pink collocation boxes – with the heading *Words frequently used with _____*. For example, *space: Words frequently used with space. Verbs: create, fill, find, leave, make, take up*.

Exercise 3: Adjectives and definitions

3. Ask learners to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the possible answers. Listen to their suggested answers but do not correct any mistakes. Then ask them to check in the dictionary. Draw your learners' attention to the Metaphor boxes to be found in the MED2. Categories include *angry* and *happy* (for a full list see Language Awareness pages 8-9).

4. Ask learners to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the possible answers. Listen to their suggested answers but do not correct any mistakes. Then ask them to check in the dictionary.

Exercise 5: Idioms

5. Before you ask your learners to do this exercise, highlight which word is underlined in each idiom and ask them what type of word it is. Note that the verbs are not underlined as the idioms and their definitions will not be found under the entries for the verbs (for example, *keep an eye on* is defined under *eye* not *keep*). To give learners further practice in the tricky skill of identifying which word in an idiom to look up, ask them to have a quick look at Exercise 7 (homework) and tell you which three words they will have to look up (*hair, shoulder, foot*).

Exercise 6: Phrasal verbs

6. Ask learners to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the possible answers. Then ask them to check in the dictionary. Highlight the importance of the order of presentation of the meanings of phrasal verbs with several meanings (for example, *put on*, where no fewer than 15 different meanings are listed).

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1 Expressions with prepositions

Fill the gaps in these examples from the dictionary using prepositions. Then check your answers in the dictionary.

1. We consider all qualified job applicants, irrespective _____ sex or age.
2. We will continue the race regardless _____ the weather.
3. Flights from Stansted were cancelled owing _____ bad weather.
4. _____ the absence _____ any contrary agreement, the firm accepts full liability.
5. Contrary _____ expectations, the level of retail sales fell in January.
6. We were involved _____ the negotiations up until the last minute.
7. There is a close relationship _____ poverty and crime.
8. Far _____ seeming glad to see him, Rose looked almost angry.

2 Verb + noun collocations

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these nouns. Then check your answers in the dictionary by looking up the verbs and finding the nouns they collocate with.

responsibilities	results	infection	doubts
legislation	amount	impression	damage

1. _____ have been raised about the company's right to use this land.
2. The storm caused widespread _____.
3. I really wanted to create a good _____ at the start of the interview.
4. Other options will be considered if the talks fail to produce _____.
5. They intend to introduce _____ to prevent human cloning.
6. We have transferred all of our administrative _____ to our central office.
7. Regular cleaning may help prevent _____.
8. The new systems should significantly reduce the _____ of paper we use.

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3 Adjectives and Definitions

In each of these examples, one definition is correct and one is incorrect. Which do you think are the correct definitions? Check your answers in the dictionary.

1. **flabbergasted**
 - a) *extremely overweight*
 - b) *very surprised or shocked*
2. **grievous**
 - a) *extremely serious or severe*
 - b) *sad after someone has died*
3. **humdrum**
 - a) *tuneful and melodious*
 - b) *boring because nothing new or interesting ever happens*
4. **jaded**
 - a) *no longer enthusiastic or excited about things*
 - b) *deep green in colour*
5. **jubilant**
 - a) *extremely happy because something good has happened*
 - b) *celebrating a special occasion*
6. **livid**
 - a) *full of energy*
 - b) *extremely angry*
7. **mediocre**
 - a) *between small and large in size*
 - b) *average or below average in quality*
8. **minute***
 - a) *very small*
 - b) *with a lot of attention to detail*

* Note: check the pronunciation and stress of this word in the dictionary

4 British and American English

Use the dictionary to find the British or American equivalents of the words in the table and fill the gaps.

	British	American
1.	guide dog	
2.		lumber
3.	CV	
4.		hood (on a car)
5.	cooker	
6.		trunk (on a car)
7.	petrol	
8.		pacifier

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5 Idioms

Match these idioms with their meanings. Then check your answers by looking up the underlined words in the dictionary.

1. take your breath away
 2. a breath of fresh air
 3. keep an eye on
 4. keep your eye on sb
 5. play sth by ear
 6. sb's ears are burning
 7. sb's face fits
 8. save face
- a. used for saying that someone is the right type of person for something
 - b. to look after someone or something
 - c. to deal with a situation without having a plan, by reacting to things as they happen
 - d. to avoid being embarrassed or losing people's respect
 - e. to be watching someone carefully, especially because you think they are going to do something wrong
 - f. someone or something that is new, interesting, and exciting
 - g. to be extremely impressive or beautiful
 - h. used for saying that people are talking about someone

6 Phrasal Verbs: *take on*

A First match the examples with the definitions.

1. Don't take on so!
 2. Our website is taking on a new look. The war took on a new meaning for everyone involved.
 3. This evening Manchester United take on Barcelona.
 4. We're not taking on any new staff at the moment.
 5. My mother took it on herself to invite them.
 6. I can't take on any more work at the moment.
- a. [T] to fight or compete against someone
 - b. [I] (*informal, old-fashioned*) to become upset
 - c. [T] to accept some work or responsibility
 - d. [T] to develop a particular character or appearance
 - e. [T] to start to employ someone
 - f. [T] to decide to do something without asking permission from someone else

B Now decide which of the above uses of *take on* is the most common and which is the least common. Rank them in order from 1 to 6. Then check in the dictionary to see the order of priority given there.

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

7 Homework task

Use the dictionary to find the meanings of these idioms associated with parts of the body.

1. Keep your hair on.
2. To have a chip on one's shoulder.
3. To get cold feet.

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KEY

1 Expressions with prepositions

1. of
2. of
3. to
4. in/of
5. to
6. in
7. between
8. from

2 Verb + noun collocations

1. doubts
2. damage
3. impression
4. results
5. legislation
6. responsibilities
7. infection
8. amount

3 Adjectives and definitions

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. a
6. b
7. b
8. a

4 British and American English

1. seeing-eye dog
2. timber
3. résumé
4. bonnet
5. stove
6. boot
7. gas (gasolene)
8. (baby's) dummy

5 Idioms

1. g
2. f
3. b
4. e
5. c
6. h
7. a
8. d

6 Phrasal verbs: *take on*

- | A | B |
|------|------|
| 1. b | 1. e |
| 2. d | 2. d |
| 3. a | 3. c |
| 4. e | 4. a |
| 5. f | 5. f |
| 6. c | 6. b |

7 Idioms

1. Used for telling someone not to get angry or upset;
2. To be likely to become angry or offended very easily, especially about something that other people think should not upset you;
3. To suddenly feel nervous about something you have planned or agreed to do