

Dictionary skills: Part 3

Level 1

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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 (MED 2)* to give learners practice in using the dictionary to check meaning and for vocabulary development.



Exercise 1: Parts of speech

If you do Exercise 1 as a class exercise, ask learners to work with a partner and try to complete the grid before checking in the dictionary. If they are unfamiliar with dictionary use, you may need to show them where the word class information can be found – immediately after the phonemic transcription of the word (e.g. *noun, adj, adv*). In the case of verbs, check they understand [I] and [T] shown after the word class information – I for *intransitive* and T for *transitive*. Make sure they realize that homographs such as *model* have different dictionary entries for each word class.

Exercise 2: Irregular past tenses

Make sure that learners know where this information can be found (immediately after the phonemic transcription).

Exercise 3: Compounds

The answers to these will not be found in the dictionary under the entries for the nouns themselves but in the associated compound words found immediately after each entry. For example, the entry for *business* gives definitions for different uses of the word as well as idioms containing the word *business*. Compounds beginning with *business* can be found after the entry for *business*, e.g. *business card, business class, business plan* and so on.

Exercise 4: Main meanings

Draw your learners' attention to the use of pink boxes in MED2 for words with five meanings or more. These give very brief definitions for each meaning in the order of priority in which they are presented in the dictionary. For example, meaning one of the nine meanings of *full* is *containing all that fits*, while the much less common meaning eight is *clothing: loose on body*.

Exercise 5: Word building

When learners have finished this exercise, you could highlight some of the main patterns used in noun formation exemplified here, e.g. *-ion, -ment*, and ask them for more examples of each.

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1 Parts of speech

What parts of speech are these words? Check in the dictionary and write *verb*, *noun*, *adjective* or *adverb* in the gaps after each word. Note that some of them have more than one function.

- | | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. mean | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. measure | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. mind | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. minute | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. mistake | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. model | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. move | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. murder | _____ | _____ | _____ |

2 Irregular past tenses

Complete the table by writing in the irregular past tenses of these verbs. Then check your answers in the dictionary.

	Irregular past form
1. lend	
2. lose	
3. mean	
4. pay	
5. ride	
6. ring	
7. rise	
8. shake	

3 Compounds

Find the nouns that go with these other nouns to match the definitions.

Example: bus _____ – a building where buses start and finish their journeys (*bus station*)

- distance** _____ – a system in which students work at home with the help of the Internet and television
- exchange** _____ – the value of the money of one country when you change it into the money of another country
- exit** _____ – an official document or mark in a passport that gives you permission to leave the country you are in
- expiry** _____ – the date when something can no longer be used or is no longer safe to eat
- fairy** _____ – a traditional children's story in which magic things happen
- fire** _____ – a metal staircase on the outside wall of a building that people use to get out of the building if there is a fire inside
- flight** _____ – someone whose job is to look after passengers on a plane
- fortune** _____ – someone who looks at your hand or a special set of cards in order to tell you what is going to happen to you in the future

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4 Main meanings

These words all have more than one meaning in English. Fill the gaps using the words in the list. Then look in the dictionary* and check your answers.

* You will find short definitions of the main meanings of words with five or more meanings in the pink-shaded box beneath the word, e.g. full (nine meanings).

true	post	station	fall
illegal	metal	surface	money

- chain *connected _____ rings*
- channel *television _____*
- charge *amount of _____ to pay*
- claim *say something is _____*
- collapse *_____ down suddenly*
- column *tall thick _____*
- commit *do something _____*
- counter *long flat _____*

5 Word building: Nouns

Complete the table by writing in the noun form of each of these verbs. Then use the dictionary to check your answers.

verb	noun
<i>e.g. correct</i>	<i>correction</i>
1. react	
2. move	
3. perform	
4. reduce	
5. fail	
6. know	
7. mean	
8. punish	

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KEY

1 Parts of speech

1. verb; adjective; noun
2. verb; noun
3. verb; noun
4. noun; adjective; verb
5. verb; noun
6. noun; verb; adjective
7. verb; noun
8. verb; noun

2 Irregular past tenses

1. lent
2. lost
3. meant
4. paid
5. rode
6. rang
7. rose
8. shook

3 Compounds

1. learning
2. rate
3. visa
4. date
5. tale
6. escape
7. attendant
8. teller

4 Main meanings

1. metal
2. station
3. money
4. true
5. fall
6. post
7. illegal
8. surface

5 Word building: Nouns

1. reaction
2. movement
3. performance
4. reduction
5. failure
6. knowledge
7. meaning
8. punishment