

Dictionary skills: Part 2

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



Exercise 1: Parts of speech

1. 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 *flat* have different dictionary entries for each word class.

Exercise 2: Irregular past tenses

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

Exercise 3: Compounds

3. 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

4. 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

5. When learners have finished this exercise, you could highlight some of the main patterns used in noun formation exemplified here, e.g. *-ation, -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. land _____
2. laugh _____
3. left _____
4. light _____
5. listen _____
6. look _____
7. love _____
8. lucky _____

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. fly	
2. forgive	
3. freeze	
4. grow	
5. hide	
6. hit	
7. hold	
8. kneel	

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*)

1. **body** _____ – the movements or positions of your body that show other people what you are thinking or feeling
2. **bottle** _____ – a small tool used for removing the cap from a bottle
3. **building** _____ – a place where something is being built
4. **call** _____ – a place where a large number of people are employed to deal with customers by telephone
5. **conference** _____ – a telephone call in which three or more people use special equipment that allows each of them to hear and speak to the others
6. **crash** _____ – a hard round hat that you wear to protect your head while riding a motorcycle
7. **data** _____ – legal control over who can see or use information kept by computers
8. **departure** _____ – a large room in an airport where you sit and wait before going on a plane

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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).

colour	hat	holiday	actors
body	tree	paper	infectious

- branch *part of* _____
- break *time for rest/* _____
- bright *with strong* _____
- bug _____ *illness*
- cap *soft* _____
- card *thick, stiff* _____
- cast *all the* _____ *in a film/play*
- cell *small part of* _____

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. admit	
2. correct	
3. approve	
4. believe	
5. establish	
6. conclude	
7. develop	
8. satisfy	

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KEY

1 Parts of speech

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

2 Irregular past tenses

1. flew
2. forgave
3. froze
4. grew
5. hid
6. hit
7. held
8. knelt

3 Compounds

1. language
2. opener
3. site
4. centre
5. call
6. helmet
7. protection
8. lounge

4 Main meanings

1. tree
2. holiday
3. colour
4. infectious
5. hat
6. paper
7. actors
8. body

5 Word building: Nouns

1. admission
2. correction
3. approval
4. belief
5. establishment
6. conclusion
7. development
8. satisfaction