

Dictionary skills: Part 5

Level 3

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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: Expressions with prepositions

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 *to the point*).

Exercise 2: Verb + noun collocations

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

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, page 11).

Exercise 4: Word stress

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. Make sure they know how word stress is represented in the dictionary – with

a short vertical line above and before the stressed syllable, e.g. *'examine*.

Exercise 5: Idioms

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 in all the examples the colour adjectives are underlined as this is where the definitions will be found. 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 – again they will find the answers under the colour adjectives.

Exercise 6: Phrasal verbs

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), where the first meaning given is generally the most widely used and the last meaning the least used.

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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. The public's perception _____ him is slowly changing.
2. You have to collect your tickets _____ person.
3. This problem needs to be looked at _____ a historical perspective.
4. We need to plan _____ the future now that we're getting married.
5. Paul came back looking very pleased _____ himself.
6. We haven't got all day so please get _____ the point.
7. Looking at it _____ a scientific point of view, the discovery is extremely important.
8. You must be more polite _____ the customers.

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 or by looking up the nouns.

hair	hand	homework	hole
heart	heat	house	head

1. Can you give me a _____ with these boxes?
2. Ron nodded his _____ but said nothing.
3. It would break her _____ to have to go away.
4. If you can't stand the _____, get out of the kitchen.
5. Childcare can make a huge _____ in parents' budgets.
6. Maria likes to let her _____ down at weekends.
7. You could tell from the interviewer's questions that he hadn't really done his _____.
8. You need to put your own _____ in order before telling other people what to do.

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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. **stagnant**
 - a) *not natural, like the performance of a bad actor*
 - b) *not growing or developing*
2. **startling**
 - a) *surprising or very unusual*
 - b) *including a lot of famous people*
3. **stealthy**
 - a) *quiet and secret so that no-one sees or hears you*
 - b) *very cheap; below the expected price*
4. **strait-laced**
 - a) *tall and thin*
 - b) *strict and old-fashioned*
5. **streetwise**
 - a) *able to find your way easily around towns or cities*
 - b) *able to deal with difficult situations that you often find in cities*
6. **sulky**
 - a) *very soft, smooth or shiny*
 - b) *feeling angry and unhappy and not wanting to talk to anyone*
7. **superfluous**
 - a) *not needed or wanted*
 - b) *involving only the surface or outside part of something*
8. **surlly**
 - a) *dirty and unpleasant*
 - b) *unfriendly and rude*

4 Word stress

Use the dictionary to find how many syllables these words have and which syllable is stressed.

	no. of syllables	stressed syllable
<i>e.g. examine</i>	3	<i>second</i>
1. unforgettable		
2. superfluous		
3. decorative		
4. inflammable		
5. distinguished		
6. embarrassment		
7. inducement		
8. overindulgence		

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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. not to see the wood for the trees
 2. see how the land lies
 3. make a mountain out of a molehill
 4. over the hill
 5. bury your head in the sand
 6. be all at sea
 7. the grass is greener on the other side
 8. water under the bridge
- a. *no longer young and therefore unable to do the things you did in the past*
 - b. *be confused and not certain what to do*
 - c. *life always seems better somewhere else*
 - d. *something that's in the past and should no longer be regretted*
 - e. *to find out about a situation before deciding what to do*
 - f. *to focus on the details and not see the whole problem as a result*
 - g. *pretend a problem doesn't exist*
 - h. *treat a minor problem as if it were a very serious problem*

6 Phrasal verbs: set up

A First match the examples with the definitions.

1. Have your secretary set up a meeting for Thursday.
 2. Their negligence started off a chain reaction that resulted in extensive damage
 3. Will you be able to set up my PC?
 4. Rebels have set up an independent state within the country.
 5. She claims she is innocent and someone set her up.
 6. Police have set up a mobile incident unit outside the shop.
- a. [T] *to build a structure or put it in a particular place*
 - b. [T] *to arrange a situation so that someone is blamed for doing something, especially something illegal*
 - c. [I/T] *to make a piece of equipment ready for use*
 - d. [T] *to organize or plan something such as an event or system*
 - e. [I/T] *to start something such as a business, organization or institution*
 - f. [T] *to make something start to happen*

B Now decide which of the above definitions of *set up* is the most common and which is the least common. Rank them in order from 1 to 6 and write the letters of the definitions in the gaps. 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 geographical features.

1. in the land of the living
2. a drop in the ocean
3. to move mountains

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KEY

1 Expressions with prepositions

1. of
2. in
3. from
4. for
5. with
6. to
7. from
8. to

2 Verb + noun collocations

1. hand
2. head
3. heart
4. heat
5. hole
6. hair
7. homework
8. house

3 Adjectives and definitions

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

4 Word stress

1. five; third
2. three; second
3. three (four); first
4. four; second
5. three; second
6. four; second
7. three; second
8. five; fourth

5 Idioms

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

6 Phrasal verbs: *set up*

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

7 Homework task

1. *awake*
2. *a very small amount that will not have much effect*
3. *to do something so difficult that it seems impossible*