

Dictionary Skills

Functional Skills English Entry 3 - Handout

Why dictionary skills matter

- A dictionary helps you understand unfamiliar words in a reading text.
- In the Pearson Entry 3 Reading assessment, dictionaries are allowed.
- In the Writing assessment, dictionaries are not allowed, so spelling and word knowledge still need regular practice.

Key parts of a dictionary entry

Part	What it means	Example
Headword	The word you look up	support
Word type	The job of the word	verb / noun / adjective
Meaning	What the word means	to help someone or something
Example sentence	Shows the word in use	My tutor supports me with my English.

5-step strategy

- 1. Read the whole sentence first.
- 2. Find the word using alphabetical order or the search box.
- 3. Check the word type: noun, verb, adjective or adverb.
- 4. Read all the meanings, not only the first one.
- 5. Choose the meaning that makes sense in the sentence.

Useful examples

Word	Possible meanings	Sentence and best meaning
change	make different / money returned / coins	Please bring the correct change for the bus fare. = coins or money
regular	normal / repeated / usual	The bus service is regular. = repeated often
measure	to find the size / a size / an action	Measure the window before buying curtains. = find the size

Good learner phrases

- I think this meaning fits because...
- The clue words are...
- The word type is..., so the meaning is...
- I checked the sentence again and it makes sense.