2 Finding the Right Meaning

When words have several different meanings, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English starts each new sense with a “signpost”, a word or short phrase which helps you quickly find the meaning you need.

You’ll find a complete new edition of the Longman Language Activator – the writing dictionary on the CD-ROM to help you expand your vocabulary.

A. Read the following text and look up the shaded words in the dictionary to find out the correct meaning. The first one, pace, has been done for you.

We need your support

The pace of life gets faster every day and the world around us becomes more and more fragile. Yet we don’t seem to be learning any lessons. Though many people support the principles behind Greenpeace, few turn their support into action.

Greenpeace is active in a whole number of ways. But we need your help, whether you can spend time planting trees in your local park, fighting to stop the expansion of the motorway network in your area, or protecting the seas around us.

The volume of work continues to grow and the issues become ever more urgent. Greenpeace needs to be present everywhere that the environment is being decimated and the natural resources of the world are over-exploited. We need to make our voice heard whenever and wherever governments break guidelines and ignore agreements. You too can play a role; you can make a difference, whether you have an afternoon to fill, need a break from your weekend routine, or even if you have just a few spare hours after work. Become a volunteer and help to give your world a chance.

B. Now look at the following definitions, which show other meanings of these words. Write the word that fits the definition best in the right-hand column. You won’t need to use every word that is highlighted in exercise A. The first answer has been done for you.

Which meaning?

1. Speed of events/changes
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12.

Pace

1. A single step when you are running or walking
2. How possible or likely it is that something will happen
3. If your voice does this, it becomes lower and starts to sound like a man’s voice
4. A short piece that is read from the Bible during a religious ceremony
5. A magazine or newspaper printed for a particular day, week, or month
6. A book that is part of a set
7. Something that you keep in addition to the one you usually use (e.g. a key)
8. To hold the weight of something, keep it in place, or prevent it from falling
9. Likely to explode at any time
Teacher’s Notes

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Time: 10–15 minutes

Aims:
- To encourage students to use the “signposts” in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English when looking for specific meanings.
- To extend their vocabulary.

1. Point out to students that if a common word has several meanings, each one is “signposted” in the dictionary.

2. Focus on the entry for pace (noun) in the dictionary extract. There are three different meanings. Ask the class to read the first sentence of the Greenpeace text and to think about which meaning of pace is being used.

3. For the other words highlighted in the Greenpeace text the class should decide, with the help of their dictionary, which “signpost” is relevant for this context. They should write their answers in the right-hand column.

4. Explain that in exercise B alternative definitions of the highlighted words in exercise A are given. Ask students to write the word that is being defined in the space on the right.

Answers:
A. 1. speed of events/changes; 2. experience; 3. agree and help; 4. involved; 5. prevent something; 6. amount of something; 7. subject/problem; 8. rules/laws; 9. spend time; 10. stop doing something; 11. time; 12. opportunity

B. 1. pace; 2. chance; 3. break; 4. lesson; 5. issue; 6. volume; 7. spare; 8. support; 9. active