1 Know Your Dictionary

It’s worth spending some time getting to know your Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English so that you can get the most from it.

Look at this extract and see if you can answer the following questions:

1. In this extract, what part of speech is block?
2. What is the American English for breeze-block?
3. What does the expression put your head on the block mean?
4. Are the British and American pronunciations of the word block the same? If not, how do they differ?
5. Is block countable or uncountable? Where in the dictionary entry does it tell you this?
6. Which meaning of the word block is being used in this example?
   “42nd Street is two blocks from here on the right.”
7. Where in the world does the word block mean “a large piece of land”?
8. What do the phrases office block, apartment block and block of flats all refer to?
9. How common is the noun block in spoken English?
10. What does block voting mean?
11. What does it mean if you get writer’s block?
12. If your car is going on the block, what is going to happen to it?
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Time: 20–30 minutes

Aims:
- To introduce students to key features of the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.

1. Divide the students into pairs. They should turn the worksheets over so they can’t read the questions.
2. Tell the students that the quiz will be timed and that they should tell you once they’ve finished. For each question they get wrong, 2 minutes will be added to their score.
3. Say that all the information they need is in the extract.
4. Time how long each pair takes to finish. Maximum time allowed is 10 minutes.
5. Redistribute the papers so that different groups mark each other’s work.

Answers:
1. Block is a noun here.
2. Cinder block.
3. To risk destroying other people’s opinion of you or losing your job by doing or saying something.
4. No; the American pronunciation uses the longer / aɪ / while British English uses / ɒ /.
5. Countable; the information is in the first line of the dictionary entry – [C].
7. Australia.
8. Large buildings.
9. It is in the 2000 most common spoken words.
10. An arrangement that is made for a whole group to vote together.
11. You cannot write anything.
12. Your car is going to be sold, especially at an auction.