

# Finding your way round the Dictionary

## Activity 1

Lots of words in English have more than one meaning. In your dictionary, each new sense starts with a new number. If the first sense does not fit the meaning you are looking for, you need to try the second, or the third - and so on. In the Longman WordWise Dictionary, the most common meaning is always shown first.

**string** /strɪŋ/ noun

**GRAMMAR**  
a string of things

- 1 a thin rope that you use for tying things: He tied some string round the package.
- 2 the strings on a guitar or other musical instrument are the long thin pieces of wire that are stretched across it.
- 3 a number of similar things that happen one after the other: There's been a **string of** complaints about you.

Look up these words in the Longman WordWise Dictionary. How many senses do each one have? The first one has been done for you.

- |          |                                     |         |                          |         |                          |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| term     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | message | <input type="checkbox"/> | bad     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| thick    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | failure | <input type="checkbox"/> | believe | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| fork     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | central | <input type="checkbox"/> | strong  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| suddenly | <input type="checkbox"/>            | floor   | <input type="checkbox"/> | paper   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Now read these sentences. Look at the words in bold, and decide which sense of the word is being used in the sentence. Write the number of that sense in the box beside the sentence.

- We live on the first floor.
- Joe's out at the moment - do you want to leave a message?
- After the supermarket, take the right fork in the road.
- Always read the terms of the contract before you sign it.
- "How do you like your coffee?" "Strong and black, please."
- If you're going out, could you buy me a paper from the store?
- The fog was so thick we could hardly see anything at all.
- Too much fat is bad for you.

## Activity 2

Some words have more than one entry in the Longman WordWise Dictionary - that means they are shown more than once in the dictionary. For example, snow can be used as a verb or as a noun, so there is one entry for each. When you see a small raised number after a word in the Longman WordWise Dictionary, this tells you there is more than one entry in the dictionary for that word.

<p><b>SNOW</b> /snoʊ ɪ snoʊ/ noun (no plural)</p> <p>soft white pieces of frozen water that fall like rain when the weather is very cold: The fields were <b>covered with snow</b>.   Several roads were blocked by <b>deep snow</b>.</p>	<p><b>SNOW</b> verb</p> <p>when it snows, snow falls from the sky: Children love it when <b>it snows</b>.   Mum, look - <b>it's snowing!</b></p> <p><b>PHRASE</b> be snowed in, get snowed in to be unable to leave a place because so much snow has fallen: Maybe we'll <b>get snowed in</b> and not be able to go to school.</p>
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Look up the words in this table in your Longman WordWise Dictionary. Some have more than one entry, so make sure you check for all the different entries. Put a tick (✓) for the parts of speech that have entries for the words shown. The first one has been done for you.

word	noun	verb	adjective	adverb
ring	✓	✓		
regular				
back				
pretty				
present				
home				
deep				
common				
fold				
human				
long				
single				
kind				

Finding your way round the Dictionary **TEACHER'S NOTES**

Aim: To familiarise students with basic dictionary conventions and ensure they can navigate their way around a monolingual dictionary confidently.

Level: Lower intermediate - Intermediate

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Photocopiable worksheets and the Longman WordWise Dictionary

**Activity 1**

At lower intermediate level, students often fall into the trap of not looking beyond the first sense when looking up a word in a dictionary. This activity is designed to accustom them to checking all the senses before choosing the definition they want. If your students are already familiar with doing this, the activity could be adapted as a race, with students divided into different teams.

*Answers*

*term 4; thick 6; fork 3; suddenly 1; message 2; failure 4; central 2; floor 2; bad 7; believe 3; strong 6; paper 5*

**Activity 2**

This activity is to accustom students to the existence of different entries for different parts of speech (word classes). Get students to mark each other's answers, checking against the dictionary.

*Answers*

<i>word</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>adjective</i>	<i>adverb</i>
ring	✓	✓		
regular	✓		✓	
back	✓	✓	✓	✓
pretty			✓	✓
present	✓	✓	✓	
home	✓			✓
deep			✓	✓
common	✓		✓	
fold	✓	✓		
human	✓		✓	
long			✓	✓
single	✓	✓	✓	
kind	✓		✓	