5 Using your dictionary



Good dictionaries can tell you a lot more about a word than just its meaning, including (among other things):

- · Synonyms and their differences, e.g. mislay and lose
- Antonyms (opposites), e.g. friend = enemy/foe
- Collocations (how words go together), e.g. auburn combines only with hair (or connected words, e.g. curls)
- Pronunciation: this will mean learning some symbols which are different from the letters
 of the English alphabet.

θ	th in thick	ð	th in then	t∫	ch in church
ſ	sh in she	d ₃	j in jam	3	s in pleasure
ŋ	ng in ring	æ	a in bad	D	o in top
30	o in form	υ	u in put	Э	a in about
٨	u in up	3:	i in bird		

Most other symbols look just like ordinary letters of the English alphabet and their pronunciation is not so hard to guess. But check the table given in the index.

- Word stress: often shown by a mark before the syllable to be stressed or by underlining, e.g. ad'vent fa/, /wes tan/. Make sure you know how your dictionary marks stress.
- Usage: how a word is used and any special grammatical pattern that goes with it,
 e.g. suggest + clause (not an infinitive) I suggest you ring her right away.
- Whether a word is used for people and/or things. For example, look at this entry for malignant:

ma-lig-nant/ma/hgnant/adf 1 (of people or their actions) feeting or showing great desire to harm others; malevolent: a malignant slander, attack, thrus, 2 (a) (of a turnour) growing uncontrollably, and likely to prove fatal: The growth is not malignant (b) (of diseases) harmful to life.

Is ma-lig-nancy /-nonsi/n 1 [U] state of being malignant, 2 [C] malignant ramour, ma-lig-nantly adv.

Word-class (usually abbreviations n: noun, adj: adjective, etc.), whether a noun is
countable or uncountable, and whether a verb is normally transitive (needs an object) or
intransitive (doesn't need an object).



Don't forget that most words have more than one meaning. In this example, only the second meaning corresponds to the way hairy is used in this sentence:

It was a really hairy journey on the mountain road.

hairy /hggrl/, hairier, hairiest, I Someone or Auquain something that is hairy is covered with hair, as ... a plump child with hairy legs....a big, hairy man. The hincipon of a manimally hairy coat is to insulate the body.

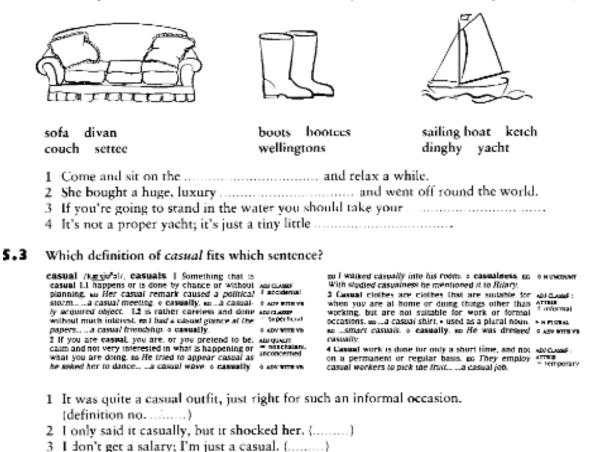
2 if you describe a situation as hairy, you mean that Auquain it is exciting, worrying, and rather frightening, a "agreement in the minutes and it got a little hairy when we drawe him to the station with less than two minutes.

Exercises

5.1 With a bilingual dictionary, try a double search: look up a word in your language; the dictionary may give several possibilities in English. Look up each of those possibilities in the English section of the dictionary to see how they translate back into your language. This may help you to separate synonyms.

If you own a dictionary, make a little mark in the margin each time you look a word up. If a word gets three or more marks, it is worth an extra effort to learn it. What other learning techniques are there for dictionaries?

5.2 Small, bilingual dictionaries often just give three or four translations for a word you look up, without any explanation. Here are some pictures with translations you might find in such a dictionary. Which ones fit in the sentences? You may need to use a monolingual dictionary.



5.5 In the dictionary entry for hairy opposite how many synonyms can you see for the different meanings?

4 /'libəti/.

6 /braða/

5 /rəˈvɪʒən/

4 It was just a casual encounter, but it changed my life. (.......)

.......

......

2 /'pacsport/.

3 /'leηθ/

....

Unit 5

- 5.2 1 All the words are possible. Some people feel that sofa and couch are a bit 'lower class', and that settee is the so-called 'refined, middle-class' word. Divan could also be used, but its normal British English meaning is a kind of bed with a very thick base. It can also, less commonly, mean a kind of sofa with no back or arms.
 - 2 Luxury most typically collocates with yacht, though ketch (a double-masted sailing ship) would also be possible. A dinghy is a very small, open boat, hardly suitable for going around the world. Sailing boat sounds just too general here, since it covers all types of boats with sails.

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- 3 Wellingtons is the most likely word, since they are rubber boots designed to keep the water out. Boots are any kind of high-sided footwear. Bootees suggests a kind of ankle-length shoe, fairly lightweight, usually with fur inside for cold weather, often referring to what babies wear.
- 4 Dinghy would be a good word here (see 2 above), though sailing boat would also fit, as it's quite general.
- **5.3** 1 3 2 1.1 3 4 4 1.1
- 5.4 1 education 2 passport 3 length 4 liberty 5 revision 6 brother