

What Do You Need to Know Before You Use a Printed Dictionary?

The first thing you need to do is to find out what type of dictionary you have and how it is set up. For example, many dictionaries put all the entries in the dictionary in alphabetical order. Others have separate sections for abbreviations, common geographical terms, and foreign words that are commonly used. These sections are usually in the back of the dictionary if the dictionary is arranged in this way. Dictionaries usually have an introduction to let you know where to find everything. Using your dictionary, answer the following questions:

Is your dictionary written for a particular age or grade level, such as elementary, high school, college, etc.?

Does your dictionary have an introduction explaining how to use it and where to find any special sections it includes?

Does your dictionary have special sections for things like abbreviations, foreign words that are commonly used, etc.? If so, where are they located in the dictionary?

How Do You Find Words In a Printed Dictionary?

On the top of the pages of a dictionary are words called **guide words** that help you “narrow” the area you need to look in to find the word you want. The guide words are the first and last words on the page. For example, if you were to look up the word “cranberry” in a dictionary, you would first go to the section with words that start with “C.” Then you would turn several pages at a time until you find words that are alphabetically close to the word “cranberry.”

For example, if the first page in the “C” section has “C” on the top left side of the page (the letter “c” is the first word on the page) and the word “cabbage” on the top right side of the opposite page (“cabbage” is the last word on the opposite page), you know you won’t find the word “cranberry” on those pages because c-r-a-n-b-e-r-r-y comes after c-a-b-b-a-g-e. If the next page has the word “cabbie” on the top left side of the page and the word “cableway” on the top right side of the opposite page, you know you will not find the word “cranberry” on those pages either. You will go on like this until you find a page that has guide words that the word “cranberry” would come between. Those are the pages you will look at more closely to zero in on the word “cranberry.” Using your dictionary, answer the following questions:

Look up the word “decision” in your dictionary. What are the guide words you found the word “decision” between?

Look up the word “fanfare” in your dictionary. What are the guide words you found the word “fanfare” between?

Look up the word “glance” in your dictionary. What are the guide words you found the word “glance” between?

Look up the word “hydrant” in your dictionary. What are the guide words you found the word “hydrant” between?

Amazing

What are the guide words you found the word "amazing" between?

What word was listed immediately before the word "amazing"?

What word was listed immediately after the word "amazing"?

What part of speech is the word "amazing"?

Copy the pronunciation of the word "amazing."

What does the word "amazing" mean? Copy the definition.

Copy a sentence that uses the word "amazing."

Are there any synonyms or antonyms listed for the word "amazing"? If so, copy one of each.

Copy the word "amazing" broken into syllables.

Are there any phrases using the word "amazing" that are mentioned in the dictionary? If so, copy one of the phrases and what it means.

Are there any prefixes or suffixes listed for the word "amazing"? If so, copy the word with the prefixes or suffixes that you find in the dictionary.