

## Dictionary Resources:

How find a great dictionary

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## How to pick the best dictionary for you

- Consider what you need it for
  - Some dictionaries are specialized (i.e. medical dictionaries, legal dictionaries, etc.)
- American English dictionaries are usually more helpful for American English speakers
  - American English is different than British English in both pronunciation and word usage
  - Some words have different meanings in American and British English (ex. Biscuit in British English is a cookie in American English)

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## Abridged v. Unabridged Dictionaries

- Unabridged: the FULL dictionary
  - It contains almost every word in the English language
  - They are HUGE
  - They are not always as current as abridged dictionaries (because it takes years to update them)
  - They contain even old or archaic words
  - They are very expensive

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### Abridged v. Unabridged Dictionaries

- Abridged: the shortened version of a dictionary
  - Abridged dictionaries are smaller
  - They have fewer words
  - The words they do have are more commonly used and up to date
  - They are usually cheaper
  - They are more practical
  - They tend to be easier to use

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### What to look for in a good dictionary in general

- Up to date
  - Words that are currently being used
- Easy definitions
  - Some dictionaries have easier definitions than others
- Identifies parts of speech
  - Some dictionaries tell you what part of speech a word is and gives a list of other forms of the word
- Identifies whether a word is formal/informal

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### What to look for in a good print dictionary

- Examples of a word's use
  - Some dictionaries use the words in a sentence or give other examples (i.e. pictures)
- Easy navigation
  - Some dictionaries make it very easy to look up words and other information
- Pronunciation guide\*
  - This makes pronouncing new words very easy

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## Pronunciation Guide\*

- Pronunciation guides may vary from dictionary to dictionary
  - The symbols may be different but the sounds are usually the same
  - American dictionaries show American pronunciations
  - Some dictionaries show both American and British pronunciations

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## The Pronunciation Guide (IPA)

Symbol	Key Word	Pronunciation	Symbol	Key Word	Pronunciation
/ɑ:/	hot	/hɑ:t/	/b/	boy	/bɔɪ/
/ə/	far	/fɑ:r/	/d/	day	/deɪ/
/æ/	cat	/kæt/	/dʒ/	just	/dʒʌst/
/aɪ/	fine	/faɪn/	/f/	face	/feɪs/
/aʊ/	house	/haʊs/	/g/	get	/gɛt/
/e/	bed	/bed/	/h/	hat	/hæt/
/eɪ/	name	/neɪm/	/k/	car	/kɑ:r/
/i:/	need	/ni:d/	/l/	light	/laɪt/
/ɪ/	sit	/sɪt/	/m/	my	/maɪ/
/oʊ/	go	/gəʊ/	/n/	nine	/naɪn/
/u/	book	/bʊk/	/p/	pen	/pen/
/u:/	boot	/bu:t/	/r/	right	/raɪt/
/ɒ/	dog	/dɒg/	/s/	see	/si:/
	four	/fɔ:r/	/t/	tea	/ti:/
/ɔɪ/	toy	/tɔɪ/	/tʃ/	cheap	/tʃi:p/
/ʌ/	cup	/kʌp/	/v/	vote	/voʊt/
/ʌ/	about	/ə-ˈbaʊt/	/w/	west	/west/
			/y/	yes	/jes/
			/z/	zoo	/zu:/
			/θ/	they	/ðeɪ/
			/θ/	think	/θɪŋk/
			/ʃ/	shoe	/ʃu:/
			/ʒ/	vision	/ˈvi:ʒən/
<b>Stress</b>					
ˈ	city	/ˈsɪ-ti/			
	dictionary	/ˈdɪk-ʃən-ri/			

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## The Pronunciation Guide (IPA)

### Consonants

p as in play /pleɪ/  
 b as in boy /bɔɪ/  
 t as in tree /tri:/  
 d as in dog /dɒg/  
 k as in cat /kæt/  
 ʒ as in get /ʒet/  
 ʃ as in thin /θɪn/  
 tʃ as in judge /dʒʌdʒ/  
 f as in fine /faɪn/  
 v as in vest /vest/  
 θ as in thin /θɪn/  
 ð as in then /ðen/  
 s as in sick /sɪk/  
 z as in zoo /zu:/  
 ʒ as in juice /dʒu:s/  
 ʒ as in vision /vɪʒən/  
 h as in how /haʊ/  
 m as in much /mʌtʃ/  
 n as in now /naʊ/  
 ŋ as in ring /rɪŋ/  
 l as in leg /leg/  
 r as in red /red/ or /red/  
 j as in yes /jes/  
 w as in wet /wet/

### Vowels and diphthongs

i as in tree /tri:/  
 ɪ as in insect /ɪnsekt/  
 e as in bed /bed/  
 ə as in cat /kæt/  
 ɔ as in car /kɑ:/ British, /kɑr/ American  
 o as in thought /θɔ:t/  
 ɔ as in now /nəʊ/  
 u as in us as in foot /fʊt/  
 u as in boot /bu:t/  
 ʌ as in up /ʌp/  
 ɔ as in far /fɑ:/ British, /fɑr/ American  
 ə as in ago /əˈɡəʊ/  
 eɪ as in play /pleɪ/  
 əʊ as in know /nəʊ/  
 aɪ as in sky /skaɪ/  
 aʊ as in how /haʊ/  
 oɪ as in boy /bɔɪ/  
 ɪə as in near /nɪə/ British, /nɪr/ American  
 eə as in where /weə/ British, /weər/ American  
 ɪə as in pure /pjʊə/ British, /pjʊr/ American

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### What to look for in a good online dictionary

- They usually have many similarities to print dictionaries
- They are usually just online versions of print dictionaries
  - <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> is a good example
- Most have an audio pronunciation of the word
- They may or may not be free

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### What to look for in a good online dictionary

- Easy to read definitions
- A thesaurus
- A site that is easy to navigate
- Grammar and/or spelling guides
- Lots of extra features\*
  - i.e. word of the day, encyclopedia, downloads etc.
  - These features are not always free

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### Where to find a good dictionary

- The best places:
  - Borders, Barnes & Noble, and Amazon
  - The book store on campus
  - Online\*
    - Not every online dictionary is a good dictionary

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## Recommendations

- The Longman's Dictionary of American English
  - It uses 50 words or less to define a given word
  - It is good for both English speakers and English learners
  - It has a writing and grammar guide
  - It has a built-in thesaurus
  - It has common American English words and pronunciations
  - It tells which part of speech a word is and whether it is formal, informal, or slang

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## Recommendations

- Webster's New Riverside Dictionary
  - It has a good variety of words
  - The definitions are not too difficult
  - Can be found as part of a package with a thesaurus
  - Has a useful pronunciation guide
  - Identifies the part of speech of each word

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