

zone (ஸ்டோன்) (n.) area with particular features,
மண்டலம்.

◆The earth is divided into **zones**.



zebra (ஸீய்ப்ரா) (n.) An animal like a horse with black and white stripes, வரிக்குதிரை.

◆When you want a word starting with 'z', **zebra** will be the first word that will come to your mind.

zen (ஸன்) (n.) a Japanese Buddhist sect, புத்த மதத்தில் ஒரு பிரிவு.

◆**Zen** is an anti-rational Buddhist sect developed in India.

zenith (ஸனித்) (n.) the highest or culminating point, மிக உயர்ந்த இடம்.

◆His mayorship was at the **zenith** of his political career.

zero (ஸெரென்) (n.) cypher, பூஜ்யம்.

◆Water freezes at **zero** degree centigrade.

zinc (ஸ்டிங்க்) (n.) a bluish white metal, துத்தநாகம்.

◆**Zinc** is used as a protective coating for iron.

Learn to love the dictionary

Not many students on our campuses seem to be tuned to the possibility of using dictionaries as a powerful learning tool. Here is an introduction to the world of dictionaries.

Words are tools for life and dictionaries make them work for us. We use dictionaries to expand our knowledge of words so that we can communicate effectively in both written and spoke language. A good vocabulary broadens our understanding of what we read or hear and increases our ability to speak and increases our ability to speak and write well. When we look up a word in a dictionary, we look up a word in dictionary, we should be interested in what the word means. We should also ask the question: “What can we do with it?”

HANDY RESOURCE

A good dictionary is a handy resource for researching different meanings, collections, examples of use and standard pronunciation. It is an extra teacher for students. it makes them more independent and enables them to study outside the classroom. If students know how to use the dictionaries afflictively, there are hundreds of hours of self guided study to be had with a good dictionaries. It is good news that familiarising with dictionaries has become part of our modern school curriculum. But there has not been any effort to endear our college and university students to the guardians of the English language.

The fall in reading habit among students is the main reason for their disenchantment with lexicons, says Nishi Wilson, head of English department at government college, Thriputhuar. She says studies the undergraduate level have changed in such a way as not to prompt the students to look up dictionaries on their own.

She cites the example of recent trimming of Shakespeare from B.A. English Literature syllabus. “But we do push them to refer dictionaries on their own,” says Ms. Wilson.

We found most students ignorant of the variants of dictionaries and their size and scope. For them, the idea of an English lexicon begins and ends with Oxford.

THE VARIOUS TYPES

Dictionaries vary in accordance with their content and treatment as well. There are monolingual, bilingual, multilingual, historical, biographical and geographical dictionaries, among others. There are dictionaries in almost every subject.

Some dictionaries list meanings in the historical order in which they appeared and some others in order of popularity and most common use.

Some dictionaries are encyclopedias; and some others are purely linguistic, concentrating on etymology, nuances of meaning, and quotations demonstrating usage.

Some dictionaries cover as many number of words as possible; and some only the most commonly used words. Dictionaries vary based on the vocabulary of the audience they are intimidating. Yet many adult dictionaries are that. Some dictionaries have definitions that requires a lot work to understand. Some lexicons are criticized for defining words with words that they do not define.

But the Learner’s dictionaries introduced in recent decades use very simple and limited words in their definitions.

For examples, the Longman Dictionary of contemporary English uses its defining vocabulary of just 2,000 common words to explain its 2,07,000 words and phrases.

The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners uses 2,500 ordinary words to define its 1,00,000 - old entries. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary also uses simple words to explain its words and phrases.

All of them are good for college students. The widespread use of bilingual (English-Malayalam) dictionaries is said to be a reason for the dwindling standard of English. Students should think in English as much as possible, says Basheer Kotta, an English teacher at Farook College, Feroke.

But there are teachers who advise that students can keep a bilingual dictionary on hand as a supportive tool, but a monolingual dictionary should be the main reference.

Mr. Basheer says a good dictionary like the Oxford Concise, the Chambers or the Collins can stimulate an interest in students for the English language.” Constants use of dictionary will be of immense help, he says adding that the habit should from school days.

For most of us, the word Oxford spells authority about language. The 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary (OED)- a colossal, epic work in 21,730 pages- is the accepted authority on the evolution of the English language over the last millennium. It is “the greatest continuing work of scholarship that this (20th) century has produced.”

It is the most complete dictionary of the English language, and perhaps the greatest dictionary in any language, OED defines 6,15,100 words using 2,436,600 quotations. Shakespeare alone is quoted 33,300 times in OED, and his play Hamlet is quoted in 1,600 places, making the Prince of Denmark the most quoted single work of an author.

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, unrivalled resource of two volumes for the study of the development and use of Modern English, is the next largest book from the Oxford stable. The Oxford Dictionary of English (formerly New Oxford Dictionary of English) is the biggest single-volume dictionary from Oxford. Despite the controversies it kicked up for its unorthodox choices, including being permissive on split infinitives, this recent dictionary has been highly rated.

Concise Oxford Dictionary, with its latest edition carrying 2,40,000 words and phrases, is yet another prestigious lexicon from Oxford. The name Webster's has become a synonym for American Dictionary.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, is an authority on the English language. So is Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary.

Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (formerly the Random House Unabridged Dictionary) with 3,15,000 commands high authority in the language. The name Webster's continues to be a powerful and lucrative marketing tool today. So many dictionaries of varied size and quality have been called Webster's that the name no longer has any specific brand meaning.

Random House dictionaries are now called Random House Webster's, and Microsoft's Encarta World English Dictionary is now Encarta Webster's Dictionary. Chambers Dictionary (10th edition) contains many more dialectal, archaic, unconventional and eccentric words than its rival.

Though not as user-friendly as Oxford Dictionary of English or Collins English Dictionary of English Dictionary, Chambers is prized by people with a passion for word games like scrabble and cross words. Like Samuel Johnson's ground breaking Dictionary of 1755, Chambers stands out for its wryly humorous definitions, such as "an ideal woman with none of the short-comings of married men's wives's for "bachelor's wife", and "someone free of responsibility but full of advice" for "back-seat driver"

The criticism against Chambers is that its definitions are less clearly; laid out than in the other dictionaries. Cambridge offers a dictionary for students, at all level.

For Beginners, Cambridge offers Essential English Dictionary; for intermediate level, it has Learner's Dictionary and for higher students. Cambridge suggests its Advanced learner's Dictionary.

The Collins English Dictionary (8th edition) boasts of clutter-free design and attractive typeface in colour. It offers a contemporaneous and historical literary blend that can satisfy most requirements from the common reader to the esoteric academic. In comparison with the Oxford, Chambers or Webster's, Collins is more aesthetically pleasing.

The latest edition of Collins Concise Dictionary includes links to thousands of Websites, and is the only Dictionary in concise format with encyclopaedic entries for people, places, regions and ideas. Collins Essential English dictionary is also popular among school students.

The Penguin English Dictionary is good and less expensive, but it contains fewer words than the others.

Collins also offers three dictionaries in its Cobuild series exclusively for learners of English: The Student's Dictionary, The Learner's Dictionary (Concise Edition), and the English Dictionary for Advanced Learners.

Cobuild is an acronym for Collins Birmingham University International Language Database—a corpus containing many British and American newspapers, books, television programmes, real-life conversations and so on.

WHAT ENDEAR COLLINS COBUILD TO OUR STUDENTS ARE ITS DEFINITIONS.

They are full sentences from everyday life, not phrases invented by editors. The definitions do not simply tell you what a word means; they tell you how to use it - in what phrases, in what grammar structures; and in what context.

Providing words we need at our fingertips, all publishers have small dictionaries in different names. Collins, for example, has Pocket Dictionary, Express English Dictionary, and Gem English Dictionary. Oxford has Mini Dictionary, Little Oxford Dictionary, and Pocket Dictionary.

Pocket dictionaries are ideal for students to carry in their bags or pockets.

“I do carry one to college, and keep a desk dictionary at home,” says, Marshida C.K., final-year M.A. English student at Farook College.

THE LEADING ONES

Some key dictionaries are listed below:

- The Oxford English Dictionary (20 volumes, 22,000 pages).
- Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (2 volumes, 3,793 pages).
- Oxford Dictionary of English (2,110 pages, 355,000 words).
- Concise Oxford English Dictionary (11th Edition, 240,000 words).
- Webster’s Third New Inter National Dictionary (450,000 entries).
- Random house webster’s unabridged Dictionary (315,000 entries).
- Webster’s New World Dictionary (160,000 entries).
- The World Book Dictionary (2 volumes, 225,000 entries).
- Encarta Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language (2nd Edition, 2,208 pages).
- The Penguin English Dictionary (2nd Edition).
- The Chambers Dictionary (10th Edition, 1,825 pages).
- Collins English Dictionary (8th Edition, 1888 pages), and
- Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners
- The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (7th Edition, 180,000 words).
- Langman Dictionary of Contemporary English (3rd Edition, 1722 pages).
- Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners of English (100,000 References).

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