

# Using a dictionary

## Activity 1

### Get to know your dictionary

**Learning objective:** to use the dictionary more efficiently by being familiar with the construction of headword entries, the information within the dictionary and the location of this information

#### Before you start

- Remind the children that any dictionary is not just a list of headwords and definitions, but that it also has valuable information at the beginning and in the topic pages at the end. Look together briefly at the introductory section.



#### Answers

- |                   |                 |                   |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| a) headword       | b) related word | c) comparative    |
| d) pronunciation  | e) plural       | f) definition     |
| g) superlative    | h) style label  | i) example of use |
| j) part of speech | k) etymology    |                   |



#### More to do

- Discuss the information given at the beginning and end of other reference books in the classroom or school library.

## Activity 2

### Hunt the headword

**Learning objective:** to use the dictionary more efficiently by understanding the term and concept of headword and through intensive practice in looking words up

#### Before you start

- Explain the term *headword*. If appropriate, talk about how to find a headword (looking at the first and second letters and so on). The children must use a dictionary to answer the questions.



#### Answers

- |   |              |                  |
|---|--------------|------------------|
| 1. a) amicable  | b) hostile   | c) meagre/measly |
| d) sardine  | e) taut      | f) whippet       |
| g) nocturnal  | h) revolting | i) swivel        |
| j) gory   | k) scornful  | l) faulty        |
| 2. a) racket  | b) pitch     | c) dictate       |
| 3. any appropriate definition for <i>corkscrew</i> , <i>Plasticine</i> <sup>®</sup> , <i>gabble</i> , <i>bicycle</i> , and <i>jealous</i> . |              |                  |



#### More to do

- Ask children to read out their definitions from question 3. Ask: *Was it harder than you expected? Which was the most difficult word to define? Why? Did you leave important details out?*
- Discuss useful *defining* words such as *substance*, *device* and *vehicle*.
- Ask children to write definitions of words at an appropriate level, which include the part of speech and the inflections (that is, the related plurals or other parts of speech which follow the headword). They should compare their definitions with those in a dictionary.

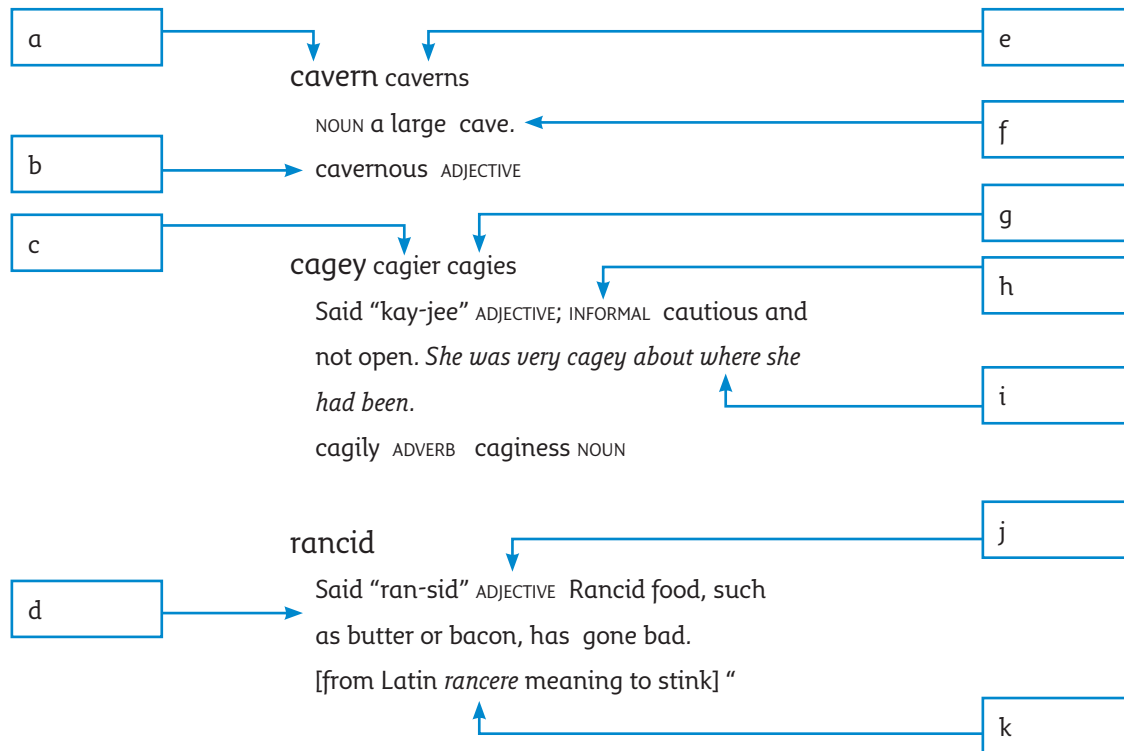
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 1**

**Get to know your dictionary**

1. Use the word bank below and your dictionary to fill in the boxes.

comparative	pronunciation	part of speech	etymology
definition	plural	example of use	style label
headword	related word	superlative	



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 2**

**Hunt the headword**

A **headword** is the word in large, bold print which begins each dictionary definition. Find the headwords which match these definitions.

- 1. a) am icable fairly friendly
- b) ho \_\_\_\_\_ aggressive
- c) me \_\_\_\_\_ very small or inadequate
- d) sa \_\_\_\_\_ a small edible sea fish
- e) ta \_\_\_\_\_ stretched very tight
- f) wh \_\_\_\_\_ a small, thin dog used for racing
- g) no \_\_\_\_\_ happening or active at night
- h) re \_\_\_\_\_ horrible and disgusting
- i) sw \_\_\_\_\_ to turn round on a central point
- j) go \_\_\_\_\_ with a lot of blood or bloodshed
- k) sc \_\_\_\_\_ showing contempt
- l) fa \_\_\_\_\_ not working properly



- 2. a) Which **R** word means a lot of noise, an illegal way of making money and a type of long bat used in tennis?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Which **P** word means an area of ground marked out for playing a game, how high or low a sound is and to throw with a lot of force? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Which **D** word means to say something aloud for someone else to write down, to tell someone what they must do and to cause or influence something? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Write your own definitions for the following words, then compare your definitions to those in the dictionary. Try not to use more words than the number shown in the brackets.
- a) corkscrew (10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Plasticine® (15) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c) gabble (10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - d) bicycle (10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - e) jealous (25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_