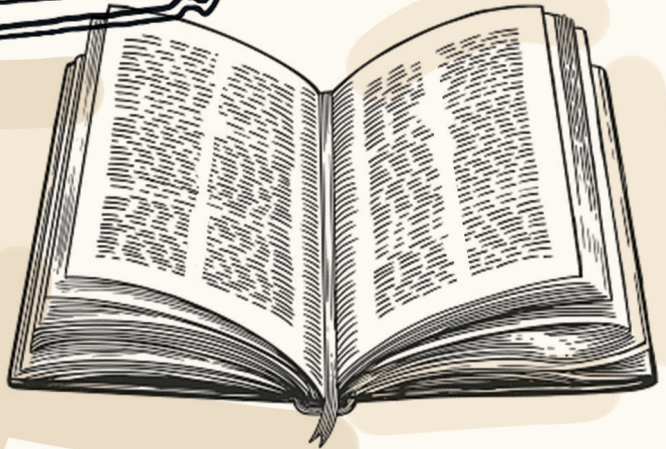


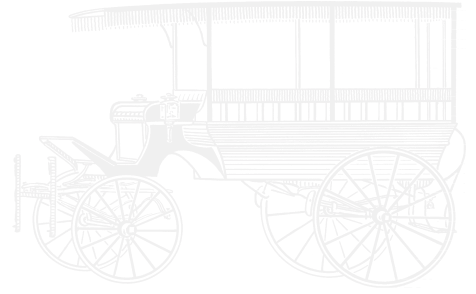


# Using Your Dictionary



How to get  
the most out  
of your print  
dictionary





# Using Your **Dictionary**

There is so much to discover with every turn of a dictionary's page. Whether you use one to check your spelling, understand a book or article you're reading, improve your writing, or simply broaden your vocabulary, dictionaries overflow with useful, interesting, and even entertaining information about words.

Here's what you need to know to get the most out of your Merriam-Webster dictionary.



## Entries

Entries in the dictionary are arranged in alphabetical order according to their **headwords**.

Headwords are the **boldface** words at the beginning of an entry.

**ser-en-dip-i-ty** \ser-ən-'dip-ət-ē\ *n* : the gift of accidentally finding valuable or agreeable things [from its possession by the heroes of the Persian fairy tale *The Three Princes of Serendip*]

When main entries are spelled exactly alike but have different functions in the sentence or have different origins, they are called **homographs**.

Each homograph is entered at its own place and has a small numeral at the beginning.

**<sup>1</sup>floun-der** \'flaʊn-dər\ *n, pl flounder or flounders* : FLATFISH; *esp* : any of various important marine food fishes [Middle English, of Scandinavian origin]

**<sup>2</sup>flounder** *vi floun-dered; floun-der-ing* \-dər-ɪŋ, -drɪŋ\ : to struggle or proceed clumsily <*flounder* in the deep snow> [probably alteration of *founder*]

## Spelling

Some words can be spelled in different ways. These additional spellings are called **variants** and they appear after the headword, following either *or* or *also*.

The word *or* is used when the variant is as common as the main entry word.

**lol·li·pop** *or* **lol·ly·pop** \ˈläl-ē-ˌpöp\ *n* : a lump of hard candy on the end of a stick [perhaps from English dialect *lolly* “tongue” + <sup>2</sup>*pop*]

The word *also* is used when the variant is less common than the entry word.

**espres·so** \e-ˈspres-ō\ *also* **ex·pres·so** *n* : coffee brewed by forcing steam or hot water through finely ground darkly roasted coffee beans [Italian *caffè espresso*, literally, “coffee made on the spot”]

**GUIDE WORDS**

at the top of the page show the alphabetical range of the entries on that page to help you find a word quickly.

**DEFINITIONS**

provide the meaning of each headword. Many words have more than one meaning so their entries have multiple definitions.

**SYNONYMS**

describe different shades of meaning and provide word choice. A word that is shown in small capital letters in a definition is a synonym of the word that is being defined.

**FUNCTIONAL LABELS**

are sometimes abbreviated and italicized, such as *n* for nouns, *vb* for verbs, and *adj* for adjectives.

ject to glacial action; *also* : to produce glacial effects in or on — **glaci-ation** \ˈglā-shē-ˈā-shən, -sē-ˈ n  
**glacier** \ˈglā-shərˈ n : a large body of ice moving slowly down a slope or valley or spreading outward on a land surface [French, from Middle French dialect, from *glace* “ice,” from Latin *glacies*]  
**glaci-ol-ogy** \ˈglā-shē-ˈāl-ə-jē, -sē-ˈ n : a branch of science dealing with snow or ice accumulation, glaciation, and glacial epochs — **glaci-ol-ogist** \-jəstˈ n  
<sup>1</sup>**glad** \ˈglɑd\ *adj* **glad-der**; **glad-dest** **1 a** : experiencing pleasure, joy, or delight : made happy **b** : made pleased, satisfied, or grateful <was *glad* of their help> **c** : very willing <*glad* to do it> **2 a** : marked by, expressive of, or caused by happiness <a *glad* shout> **b** : causing happiness and joy : PLEASANT <*glad* tidings> **3** : full of brightness and cheerfulness [Old English *glæd* “shining, glad”] — **glad-ly** *adv* — **glad-ness** *n*

<sup>2</sup>**glad** *n* : GLADIOLUS  
**glad-den** \ˈglɑd-n\ *vt* **glad-dened**; **glad-den-ing** \ˈglɑd-ning, -n-ing\ : to make glad  
**glade** \ˈglɑd\ *n* : a grassy open space in a forest [perhaps from *glad*]

**glad-i-a-tor** \ˈglɑd-ē-ˈāt-ər\ *n* **1** : a person engaged in a fight to the death for public entertainment in ancient Rome **2** : a person engaging in a fierce fight or controversy [Latin, from *gladius* “sword,” of Celtic origin] — **glad-i-a-to-ri-al** \ˈglɑd-ē-ə-ˈtōr-ē-əl, -ˈtōr-ə\ *adj*

**glad-i-o-la** \ˈglɑd-ē-ˈlɑ-lə\ *n* : GLADIOLUS [back-formation from *gladiolus*, taken as a plural]

**glad-i-o-lus** \ˈglɑd-ē-ˈlɔ-ləs\ *n*, *pl* **-o-li** \-lē, -lī, -lī\ or **-o-lus** *also* **-o-lus-es** **1** : any of a genus of chiefly African plants related to the irises with erect sword-shaped leaves and spikes of brilliantly colored flowers **2** : the large middle portion of the sternum [Latin, from *gladius* “sword”]

**glad-some** \ˈglɑd-səm\ *adj* : giving or showing joy : CHEERFUL — **glad-some-ly** *adv* — **glad-some-ness** *n*

**glad-stone** \ˈglɑd-ˈstɔn\ *n*, *often cap* : a traveling bag with flexible sides on a rigid frame that opens flat into two compartments [W. E. Gladstone, died 1898, British statesman]

**glam-or-ize** *also* **glam-our-ize** \ˈglɑm-ə-ˈrīz\ *vt* **1** : to make glamorous — **glam-or-i-za-tion** \ˈglɑm-ə-ro-ˈzā-shən\ *n* — **glam-or-iz-er** *n*

**glam-or-ous** *also* **glam-our-ous** \ˈglɑm-rəs, -ə-rəs\ *adj* : excitingly attractive : full of glamour — **glam-or-ous-ly** *adv* — **glam-or-ous-ness** *n*

**glam-our** *also* **glam-or** \ˈglɑm-ər\ *n* : a romantic, exciting, and often illusory attractiveness; *esp* : alluring or fascinating personal attraction [Scottish *glamour* “magic spell,” alteration of English *grammar*]

**Word History** In the Middle Ages the meaning of *grammar* was not restricted to the study of language but included learning in general. Since almost all learning was couched in language not spoken or understood by the unschooled populace, it was commonly believed that such subjects as magic and astrology were included in this broad sense of *grammar*. Scholars were often viewed with awe and more than a little suspicion by ordinary people. This connection between *grammar* and magic was evident in a number of languages, and in Scotland by the 18th century a form of *grammar*, altered to *glamer* or *glamour*, meant “a magic spell or enchantment.” As *glamour* passed into more extended English usage, it came to mean “an elusive, mysteriously exciting attractiveness.”

<sup>1</sup>**glance** \ˈglɑns\ *vi* **1** : to strike something and fly off at an angle <the bullet *glanced* off the wall> **2** : to flash or gleam with quick intermittent rays of light <the pond *glanced* in the sunlight> **3 a** : to take a quick or hasty look <*glanced* up from the book> **b** : to refer briefly to a subject [Middle English *glencen*, *glenchen*] **synonyms** see FLASH — **glanc-ing-ly** \-ing-lē\ *adv*



gladiolus

\ə\ <b>abut</b>	\aù\ <b>out</b>	\ì\ <b>típ</b>	\ò\ <b>saw</b>	\ù\ <b>foot</b>
\ər\ <b>further</b>	\ch\ <b>chin</b>	\ì\ <b>life</b>	\óì\ <b>coin</b>	\y\ <b>yet</b>
\a\ <b>mat</b>	\e\ <b>pet</b>	\j\ <b>job</b>	\th\ <b>thin</b>	\yü\ <b>few</b>
\ā\ <b>take</b>	\ē\ <b>easy</b>	\ng\ <b>sing</b>	\th\ <b>this</b>	\yü\ <b>cure</b>
\ä\ <b>cot, cart</b>	\g\ <b>go</b>	\ò\ <b>bone</b>	\ü\ <b>food</b>	\zh\ <b>vision</b>

## filterability • finger

the action of a filter **2** : to remove by means of a filter **3** : to pass through or as if through a filter

**fil-ter-able** *also* **fil-tra-ble** \ˈfɪl-tə-rə-bəl, -trə-bəl/ *adj* : capable of being separated by or of passing through a filter <filterable microorganisms> <a filterable liquid> — **fil-ter-abil-i-ty** \fɪl-tə-rə-ˈbɪl-ət-ē, -trə-ˈɪ/ *n*

**filterable virus** *n* : any of the infectious agents that remain infectious after passing through a filter with pores too fine for a bacterium to pass through

**filter bed** *n* : a bed of sand or gravel for filtering water or sewage

**filter feeder** *n* : an animal (as a clam or baleen whale) that obtains its food by filtering organic matter or minute organisms from a current of water that passes through some part of its body

**filter paper** *n* : porous paper used for filtering

**filter tip** *n* : a cigar or cigarette with a tip designed to filter the smoke before it enters the smoker's mouth

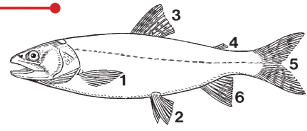
**filth** \ˈfɪlθ/ *n* **1** : foul or putrid matter; *esp* : disgusting dirt or refuse **2 a** : moral corruption **b** : something that tends to corrupt or disgust [Old English *fylth*, from *fūl* "foul"]

**filthy** \ˈfɪl-thē/ *adj* **filth-i-er**; **-est** **1** : covered with or containing filth : disgustingly dirty **2 a** : morally polluted : EVIL <filthy politics> **b** : OBSCENE **synonyms** see DIRTY — **filth-i-ly** \-thə-lē/ *adv* — **filth-i-ness** \-thē-nəs/ *n*

**fil-trate** \ˈfɪl-trāt/ *n* : fluid that has passed through a filter

**fil-tra-tion** \ˈfɪl-trā-shən/ *n* : the act or process of filtering

**fin** \ˈfɪn/ *n* **1** : a thin external process of an aquatic animal (as a fish or whale) used in propelling or guiding the body **2 a** : a fin-shaped part (as on an airplane, boat, or automobile) **b** : FLIPPER **2 c** : a projecting rib on a radiator or an engine cylinder [Old English *finn*] — **fin-like** \-lɪk/ *adj* — **finned** \ˈfɪnd/ *adj*



fin 1: 1 pectoral, 2 pelvic, 3, 4 dorsal, 5 caudal, 6 anal

## EXAMPLES

of how a word is used illustrate and clarify different meanings.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

clarify meanings and present additional information.

## INFLECTED FORMS

are shown in certain entries for nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

## USAGE NOTES

give information on how words are used and are set off from the definition by a dash ( — ).

## ETYMOLOGIES

explain the origin of an entry word by tracing it back to its earliest known forms and meanings.

**fin-like** \-lɪk/ *adj* — **finned** \ˈfɪnd/ *adj*

**fi-na-gle** \fə-ˈnā-gəl/ *vb* **fi-na-gled**; **fi-na-gling** \-ˈnā-gə-ling, -gling/ **1** : to obtain by indirect or involved means **2** : to obtain by trickery [perhaps from *fainaigue* "to renege"] — **fi-nag-ler** \-gə-lər, -glər/ *n*

**fi-nal** \ˈfɪn-l/ *adj* **1 a** : not to be altered or undone <reached a final decision> <all sales are final> **b** : of or relating to a concluding court action <final decree> **2** : coming at the end : being the last in a series or process <the final chapter> **3** : being or relating to an end or purpose <our final goal> [Medieval French, from Latin *finalis*, from *finis* "end, boundary"] **synonyms** see LAST — **fi-nal-ly** \ˈfɪn-l-ē, ˈfɪn-lē/ *adv*

**final** *n* : something final: as **a** : a deciding match, game, or trial — usually used in plural **b** : the last examination in a course — often used in plural

**fi-na-le** \fə-ˈnāl-ē, fɪ-ˈnāl-/ *n* : the close or termination of something; *esp* : the last section of an instrumental musical composition [Italian, from Latin *finalis* "final"]

**fi-nal-ist** \ˈfɪn-l-əst/ *n* : a contestant in the finals of a competition

**fi-nal-i-ty** \fɪ-ˈnāl-ət-ē, fə-/ *n*, *pl* **-ties** **1** : the character or condition of being final, settled, or complete **2** : something final

**fi-nal-ize** \ˈfɪn-l-īz/ *vt* : to put in final or finished form

**fi-nance** \fə-ˈnans, ˈfɪ-, fɪ-/ *n* **1 pl** : liquid resources (as money) available to a government, business, group, or individual **2** : the system that includes the circulation of money, the granting of credit, the making of investments, and the provision of banking facilities **3** : the obtaining of funds or capital : FINANCING [Middle English, "ending, payment," from Medieval French, from *finer* "to end, pay," from *fin* "end," from Latin *finis*]

**finance** *vt* **1** : to raise or provide funds or capital for <finance a new car> **2** : to sell to or supply on credit <finance farmers until harvest>

**finance charge** *n* : a charge for credit that is generally a percentage of the amount of credit given

**finance company** *n* : a company that specializes in making small loans usually to individuals

**fi-nan-cial** \fə-ˈnān-ʃəl, fɪ-/ *adj* : having to do with finance or with finances — **fi-nan-cial-ly** \-ˈnān-ʃəl-lē, -ʃəl-ē/ *adv*

**synonyms** FINANCIAL, MONETARY, PECUNIARY, FISCAL mean having to do with money. FINANCIAL implies money matters involving a large scale or some degree of complexity

**PRONUNCIATIONS**

use letters and special symbols to let you know how to say a word. Sometimes, a key at the bottom of the page explains the sounds that the symbols represent.

Hyphens in pronunciations indicate the word's syllables. A full list of pronunciation symbols is often found in the beginning of the dictionary.

**1** *to·ward* \tō-ərd, 'tō-ərd, 'tōrd, 'tōrdz\ *adj* **1** *also to·wards* \tō-ərdz, 'tō-ərdz, 'tōrdz, 'tōrdz\ **a** : coming soon : IMMINENT <could move fast enough if a meal was *toward*> **b** : happening at the moment : AFOOT **2 a** *obsolete* : quick to learn : APT **b** : PROPITIOUS 3 <a *toward* breeze> [Old English *tōweard* "facing, imminent," from *tō* "to" + *-weard* "-ward"]

**town house** *n* **1** : the city residence of one having a country-seat or a chief residence elsewhere **2** : a house connected to another by a common sidewall  
**town meeting** *n* : a meeting of inhabitants or taxpayers of a town to transact public business  
**towns-folk** \təʊnz-fōk\ *n pl* : TOWNSPEOPLE  
**town-ship** \təʊn-ʃɪp\ *n* **1 a** : TOWN **3 b** : a unit of local government in some northeastern and north central states **c** : a subdivision of the county especially in the southern U.S. **2** : a division of territory in surveys of U.S. public land containing 36 sections or 36 square miles (about 93.2 square kilometers)  
**towns-man** \təʊnz-mən\ *n* **1** : a native or resident of a town or city **2** : a fellow citizen of a town

\ə\ <b>abut</b>	\aʊ\ <b>out</b>	\i\ <b>tip</b>	\ɒ\ <b>saw</b>	\u\ <b>foot</b>
\ər\ <b>further</b>	\ch\ <b>chin</b>	\ɪ\ <b>life</b>	\ɔɪ\ <b>coin</b>	\y\ <b>yet</b>
\ə\ <b>mat</b>	\e\ <b>pet</b>	\j\ <b>job</b>	\θ\ <b>thin</b>	\yü\ <b>few</b>
\ā\ <b>take</b>	\e\ <b>easy</b>	\ng\ <b>sing</b>	\th\ <b>this</b>	\yü\ <b>cure</b>
\ä\ <b>cot, cart</b>	\g\ <b>go</b>	\ɒ\ <b>bone</b>	\ü\ <b>food</b>	\zh\ <b>vision</b>

**Questions?**

While the main features and parts of different dictionaries are similar, not all dictionaries are exactly alike. Most dictionaries include a section that explains how information is presented, so you can always check there if something doesn't make sense.



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