

What it means

One of the main functions of a dictionary is to give the meanings of words. In most entries this information is provided by the part called the **definition**.

For example:

<p>lifeboat <i>noun</i> (lifeboats) a boat for rescuing people at sea</p>

A definition has to be exact. It must give the full meaning of the headword.

- 1 Using a separate sheet, write a short definition of your own for each of the words below. Then look in the dictionary and compare its definition with yours.

mainland obstacle conquer fish seven grey

Revise and rewrite your definition if you think it needs improvement.

- 2 Many words have more than one meaning. When this is so, the definitions are numbered, as they are in this entry:

judge *noun*

1 a person appointed to hear cases in a lawcourt and decide what should be done.

2 a person deciding who has won a contest or competition.

3 someone who is good at forming opinions or making decisions about things.

Look up the following words and count the number of separate definitions each one has.

harsh abyss follow otherwise
explode outlook

Discussion

Look up these five words:

do go to in have

In what way are their meanings different from most other English words?

How does the dictionary explain their meanings?