

Research notes

- Born
- Childhood
- Novels

evidence

initial
ideas

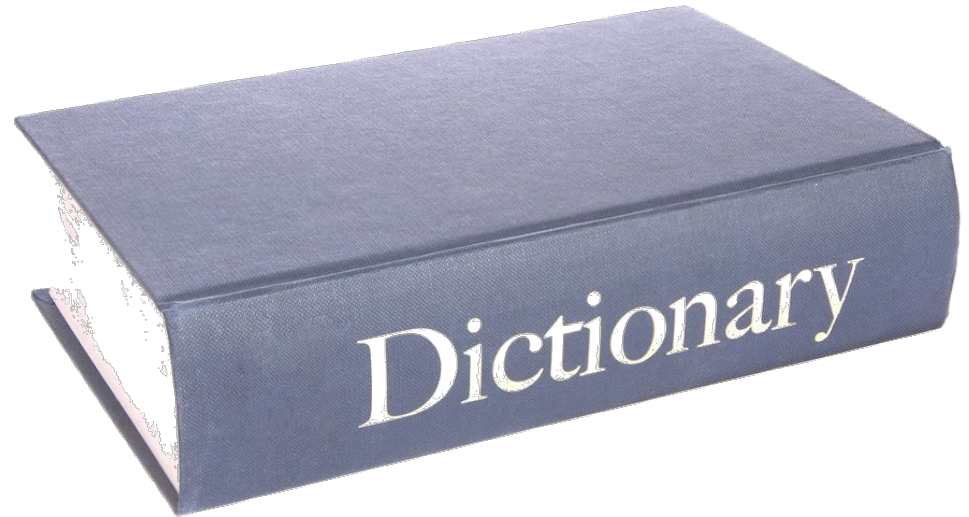
Using Dictionaries and Spellcheckers



What should you use a dictionary for?

We use dictionaries to:

- check how to spell words
- look up the meanings of words we don't know.



Using a dictionary can help you to widen your **vocabulary**, i.e. learn more words!

Why might it be useful to have a wide vocabulary?

- Your written and spoken English will improve because you will have more ways of saying what you want to say!
- Using a wide variety of words will make your writing more interesting to other readers.



The entries in a dictionary are organized into alphabetical order.
Try these activities to see how quickly you can sort words into alphabetical order.

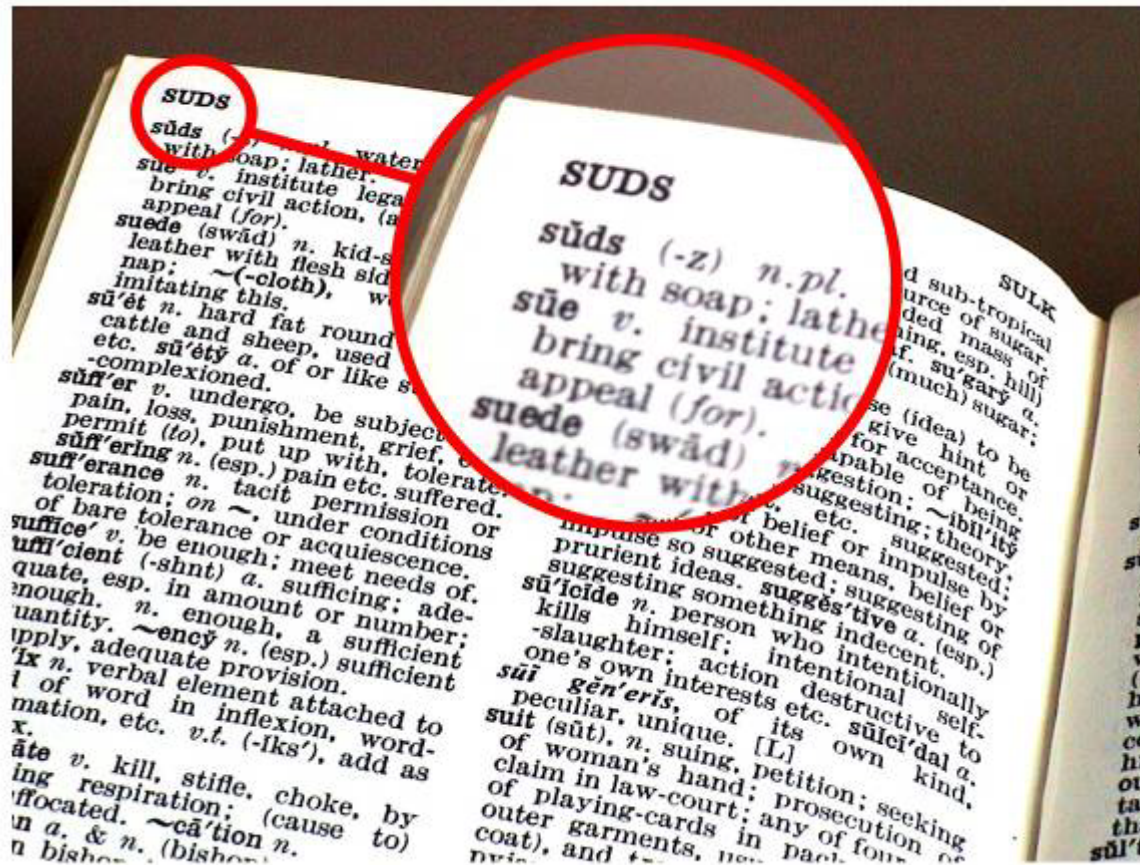
start



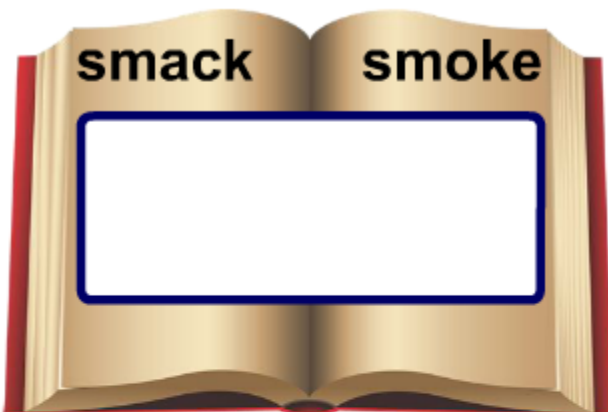
Using a dictionary: guide words

Dictionaries usually have **guide words** at the top of each page, indicating the first and last words on the page.

Why do you think guide words are helpful?

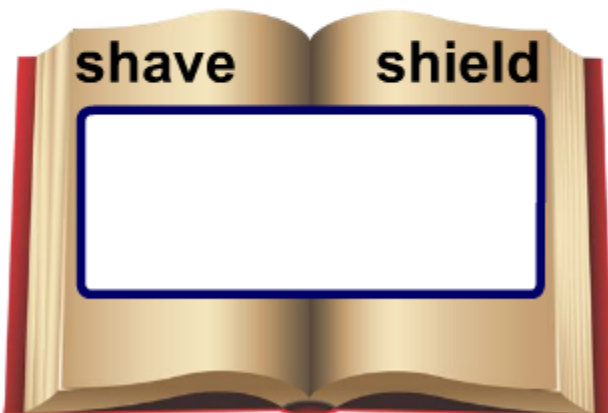
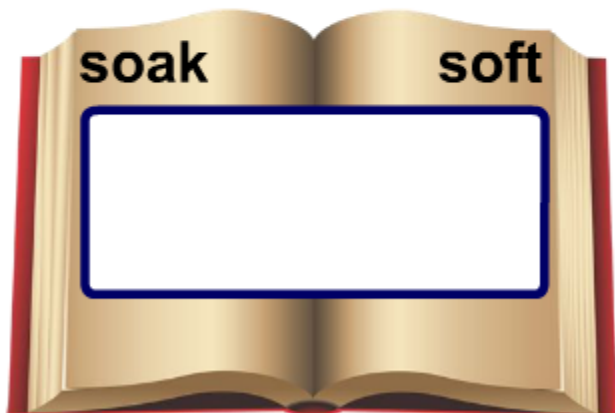


Can you drag each word onto the right page of the dictionary?



spout

shed



smart

soccer



solve

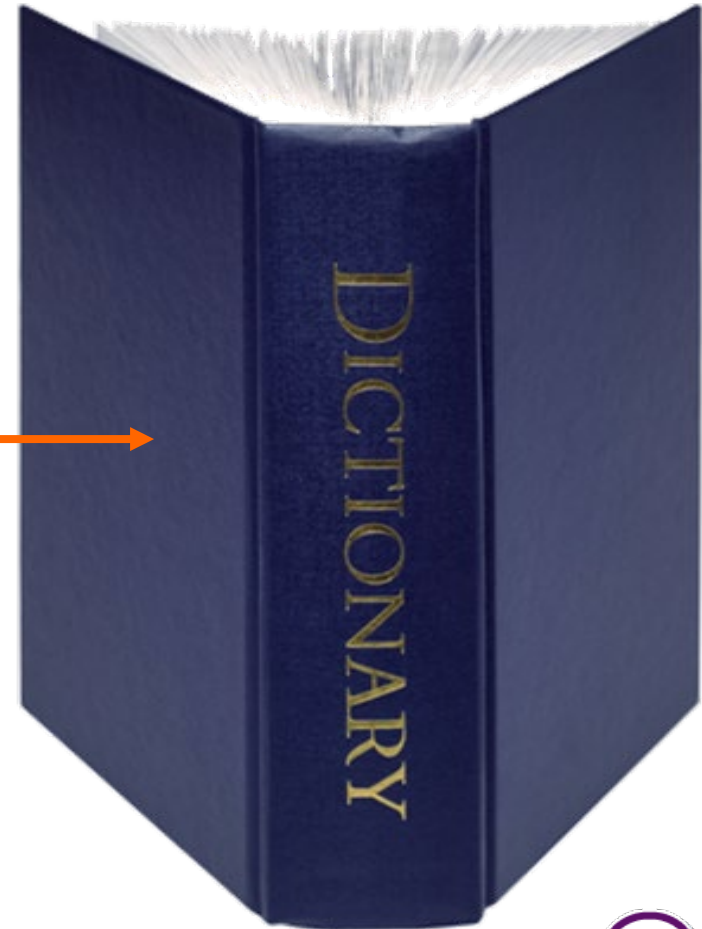


What will a dictionary tell you?

As well as telling you the spelling of word and its meaning or meanings, a dictionary can tell you many other things about a word!

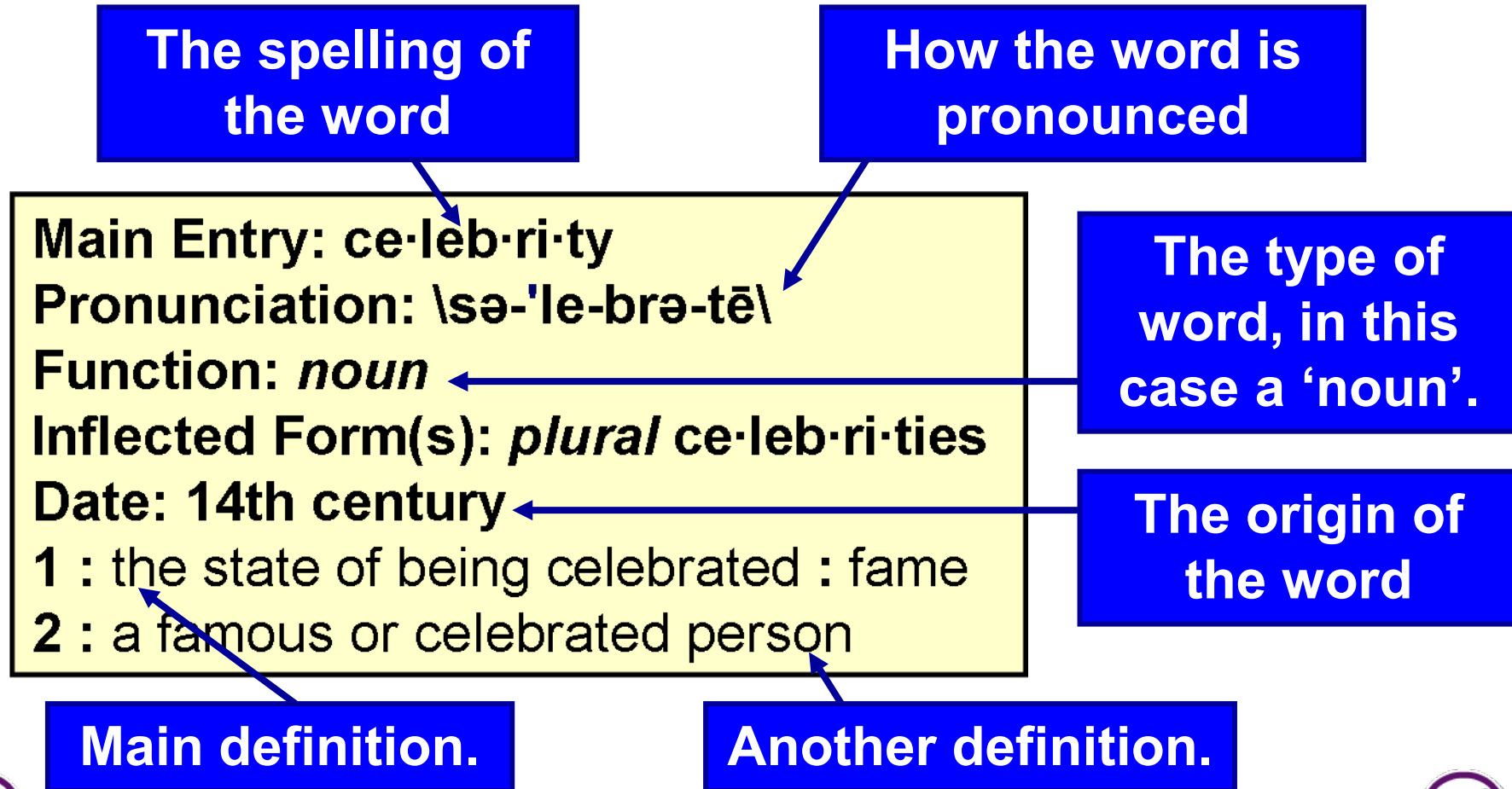
It can tell you:

- what type of word it is (i.e. a noun, verb, adjective etc.)
- the origin of the word
- how the word is pronounced
- how to pronounce the word.



What will a dictionary tell you?

Look at how the information is set out in this definition of the word '**celebrity**' from a dictionary.



Use a dictionary to see how much you can find out about the following words, then report back to the class.

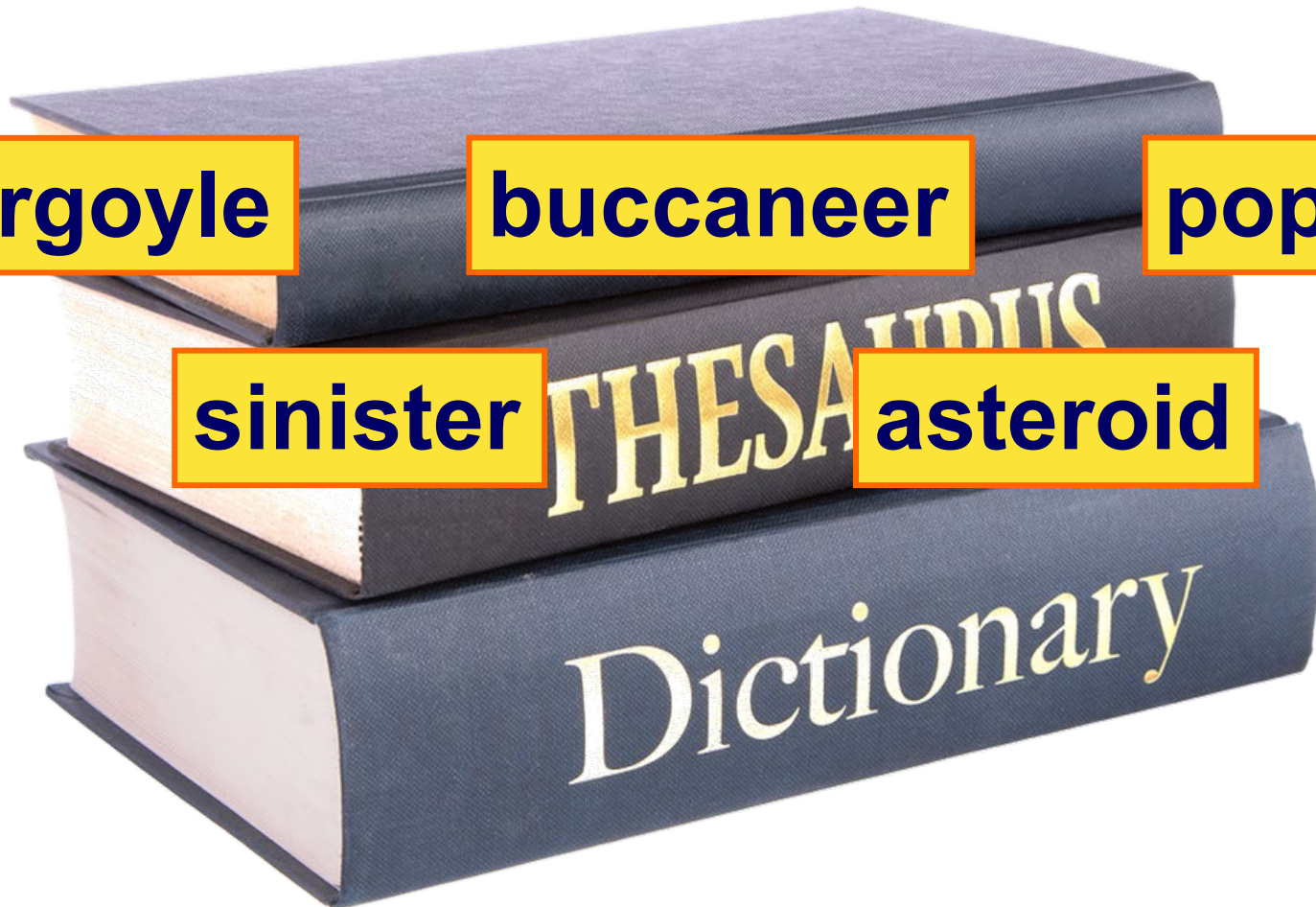
gargoyle

buccaneer

poppy

sinister

asteroid



From a dictionary you will find out that sometimes words perform more than one function.

For example, the word 'paint' can be a **noun** and it can also be a **verb**.

We will use this can of paint to paint the house.

noun

verb



Use your dictionary to find out the different functions of these words:

hammer

mirror

line

play

A dictionary can tell you the **origin** of a word, i.e. where it comes from.

Using a dictionary, find out which languages these words come from.

1. **bungalow** _____

2. **potato** _____

3. **carousel** _____

4. **volcano** _____

5. **chocolate** _____



Dictionary entry or not?



The English language is constantly evolving. Every year, as new words and phrases enter our vocabulary, dictionary writers have to decide exactly what to include. See if you can identify which of these words have been added to the online *Oxford English Dictionary* and which have not. Drag each word to the column of your choice. Press **start** to begin.

start

frenemy

solve



Which new words would *you* add to the dictionary?

Now it's time to have some fun with language.
We're going to play a vocabulary game!

Press **instructions** to learn what to do.



instructions

example

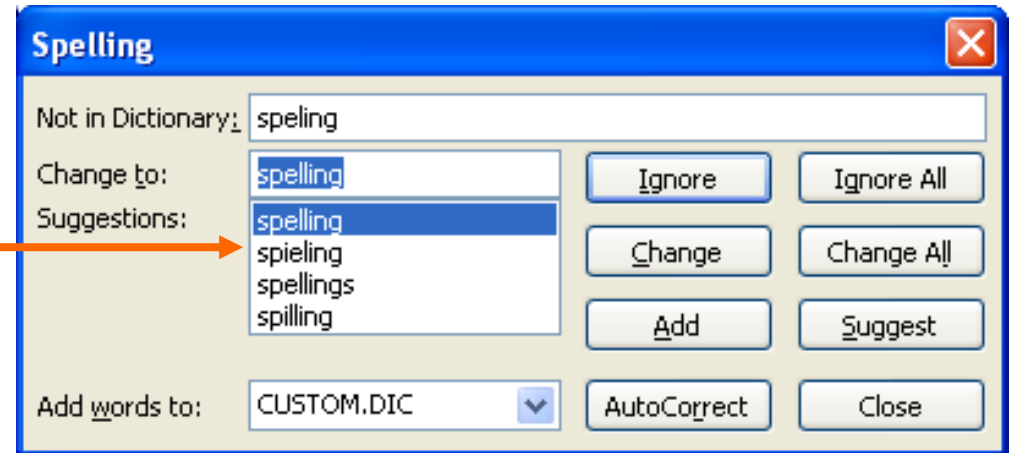
words

extension task



When you are doing work on the computer, you will probably use the spellchecker tool in your word processing program to check the correct spellings of words.

Spellcheckers usually give various alternatives and you can choose the correct word.



However, it is important to be careful when using a computer spellchecker. It may miss some of your errors – particularly **homophones** and incorrect use of apostrophes.

Spot the errors!

