
Vocabulary Development with Dictionary.com & Thesaurus.com

**Highlights from English Now! Professional Development Zoom session
April 30, 2020**

In what ways have you used dictionaries in your classes?

Standard dictionaries have always been used as part of our lessons and homework assignments for several purposes:

- To find a definition that students can understand in English, rather than an inaccurate translation of a word
- To look up how to pronounce words and identify stressed syllables
- To look up word forms, including irregular verbs
- To look up primary and alternate meanings to words
- To find example sentences that put words in meaningful contexts

BUT, using standard dictionaries is TIME-CONSUMING!

Benefits of online English to English dictionaries for students

- For students who have a good base of basic vocabulary, English to English dictionaries help students make connections between what they are learning and what they already know
- Use for the same purposes as a standard dictionary, but much more efficiently
- Students can immediately hear how the word is pronounced and listen to it over and over again
- Students can easily access [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) or other online dictionaries through a free app on their phones

How to look up a word on dictionary.com

- Go to dictionary.com and type a word into the search window
- I searched for the word “clutter”. If I click on the microphone, I will hear the word pronounced.
- There is a link to synonyms at the companion site, Thesaurus.com
- There are definitions for the different variations of the word and sample sentences.

The screenshot shows the Dictionary.com website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the Dictionary.com logo and a search bar containing the word "clutter". Below the header, there is a teal banner with a calendar icon. Underneath the banner, there are navigation tabs: "TOP DEFINITIONS", "QUIZZES", "RELATED CONTENT", "EXAMPLES", "EXPLORE DICTIONARY", and "BRITISH". The main content area displays the word "clutter" in large bold letters, followed by its IPA pronunciation "[kluht-er]" and a "SHOW IPA" link. Below this, there is a link to "SEE SYNONYMS FOR clutter ON THESAURUS.COM". The word is categorized as a "verb (used with object)" and a "verb (used without object)". Under the "verb (used with object)" category, there are two numbered definitions: 1. "to fill or litter with things in a disorderly manner: All kinds of papers cluttered the top of his desk." and 2. "British Dialect. to run in disorder; move with bustle and confusion." Under the "verb (used without object)" category, there is one numbered definition: 3. "British Dialect. to make a clutter." Below these, there is a "SEE MORE" link. The word is also categorized as a "noun" and has three numbered definitions: 5. "a disorderly heap or assemblage; litter: It's impossible to find anything in all this clutter.", 6. "a state or condition of confusion.", and 7. "confused noise; clutter."

How to look up a word on dictionary.com

Examples from the Web allow students to see how the words are used in current, real-world contexts

EXAMPLE SENTENCES FROM THE WEB FOR CLUTTER

- Magazines are the only thing in my apartment that qualify as *clutter*.
- I'M A DIGITAL HOARDER|LIZZIE CROCKER|DECEMBER 17, 2014|DAILY BEAST
- Using the above apps can cut out the *clutter*, get you the best deals right away, and streamline your travels.
- THE BEST TRAVEL APPS FOR ROAD WARRIORS|MATTHEW KEPNES|MAY 27, 2014|DAILY BEAST
- Picking real targets from false targets and *clutter* is still down to operators.
- TOMORROW'S STEALTHY SUBS COULD SINK AMERICA'S NAVY|BILL SWEETMAN|MAY 12, 2014|DAILY BEAST
- The real, true, unguarded details tend to cut through the *clutter*.
- JON HUNTSMAN: THE ONLY COOL REPUBLICAN?|MCKAY COPPINS|APRIL 15, 2011|DAILY BEAST

Dictionary.com companion site - Thesaurus.com

- Quickly view synonyms for a word
- Not all synonyms will be perfect matches, of course, but this can lead to great conversation about word meanings!
- Antonyms are also available

The screenshot shows the Thesaurus.com website interface. At the top, there is an orange header with the Thesaurus.com logo and a search bar containing the word 'clutter'. Below the header, the word 'clutter' is displayed in large black font, followed by its phonetic transcription '[kluht-er]' and a speaker icon. To the right of the word, there is a link that says 'SEE DEFINITION OF clutter'. Below the word, there are two tabs: 'noun disarray, mess' and 'verb cause mess, disarray'. Under the 'noun' tab, the section 'SYNONYMS FOR clutter' is shown. The synonyms are listed in a grid of orange boxes, arranged in five columns. The first column contains 'confusion', 'ataxia', 'chaos', and 'derangement'. The second column contains 'disorder', 'hodgepodge', 'huddle', and 'jumble'. The third column contains 'litter', 'medley', 'melange', and 'muddle'. The fourth column contains 'mélange', 'rummage', 'scramble', and 'shuffle'. The fifth column contains 'tumble' and 'untidiness'. At the bottom right of the page, there is a small orange square followed by the text 'MOST RELEVANT'.

Thesaurus.com

SYNONYMS | clutter

clutter [kluht-er]

[SEE DEFINITION OF clutter](#)

noun **disarray, mess** *verb* cause mess, disarray

SYNONYMS FOR clutter

confusion	disorder	litter	mélange	tumble
ataxia	hodgepodge	medley	rummage	untidiness
chaos	huddle	melange	scramble	
derangement	jumble	muddle	shuffle	

MOST RELEVANT

Using Thesaurus.com writing tool

You can cut and paste writing from any document (email, Google doc, Word file) to the thesaurus.com writing tool to suggestions for words with similar meanings or grammar corrections.

<https://www.thesaurus.com/writingtool>

Get grammar help. Become a better writer. Meet the Thesaurus.com Grammar and Word Swap Writing Tool

Paste your latest writing below and check for grammar suggestions. You can also hover over words you'd like to swap, and our handy synonym tool will offer other ways to say it. Are you ready to give it a try?

CHECK GRAMMAR

Type or Paste (⌘+V or Ctrl+V) your text here

Using Thesaurus.com writing tool

Here is an example of how the writing tool works. I cut and pasted a student's writing from a Google Doc into the writing tool space. Then, I put my cursor over the word "happy" to find synonyms.

Note: In this example, "happy" is probably the best choice. "Pleased" would also be okay, but "elated", "ecstatic", or "joyous" would be too much, and "contented" would sound strange!

CHECK GRAMMAR

Today, I am going to talk about life in the future from 3 perspectives, including the future of health, living conditions and food. This presentation is going to take 5 minutes and I am **happy** to take your questions after the talk. Future health What will life be like consider is the "artificial intelligence" mimic "cognitive" and problem solving as health care equipment will be able to monitor months and even out, offering m

Synonyms for **happy**

adjective: in high spirits; satisfied

cheerful contented overjoy ecstatic
elated joyous delight pleased

adjective: lucky

successful apt fortunate accidental
advantageous appropriate auspicious
befitty

people will n. The term (computers) that has "learning" in many fields, such as wearable health care. They will be weeks and stressed or stressed

Everything After Z

Dictionary.com also has a lot of great content in its Everything After Z section, including Word of the Day, videos about word meanings, and articles on slang and mixed-up meanings.

<https://www.dictionary.com/e/>

OTHERS ARE READING

MIXED-UP MEANINGS

What Is The Difference Between "Furlough" vs. "Layoff"?

MIXED-UP MEANINGS

"M.D." vs. "Ph.D." vs. "Dr.": Are They Synonyms?

MIXED-UP MEANINGS

"Epidemic" vs. "Pandemic": What Do These Terms Mean?

WORD OF THE DAY

Build your vocabulary with new words, definitions, and origin stories every day of the week.

inflorescence

[in-flaw-**res**-uhns, -floh-, -fluh-]

SEE DEFINITION & EXAMPLES MAY 1, 2020

SIGN UP FOR A VOCABULARY BOOST IN YOUR EMAIL

Enter your email I'M IN

VIDEO

What Are The Best Words To Stop A Temper Tantrum?

SLANG

Where Do "Say So," "Gangnam Style," And Other Viral Dances Get Their

MIXED-UP MEANINGS

Disinfectant vs. Antiseptic: Life-saving Differences To Learn About

Other web sites helpful for finding word meanings

Check out these great sites, recommended by our teachers:

Improve Your English Pronunciation Using YouTube (thank you, Kathy and Michelle!)

www.youghlish.com

This web site lets you find real examples of youtube videos with people using any word you choose. For example, I typed in “make a decision” and found a video of Hilary Clinton using that phrase, as well as many other examples. Results are not pre-screened, so you should choose carefully before showing examples in class. Adult students will enjoy exploring this resource on their own.

English Speeches with Big Subtitles (thank you, Amy!)

<https://www.englishspeecheschannel.com/>

The developer of this web site says, “English is my second language, and to help me on this long journey, I created English Speeches in 2017. The main idea is assisting the students in practicing their listening and reading while watching famous Speeches with BIG subtitles.” Find speeches of famous people with large, color-coded subtitles to make them easier to follow. For example, watch Steve Jobs give a moving graduation speech at Stanford in 2005.

Share more ideas

Thank you to all the teachers who contributed ideas for this presentation. If you have questions, please email Jennifer at jennifer.kagan@english-now.com

If you have a teaching resource that you would like to recommend, remember to send it to info@english-now.com with subject line - Resources for Our Team.

Check the [Resources for Our Team](#) web page weekly for updates.