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 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.



How to look up a word on dictionary.com

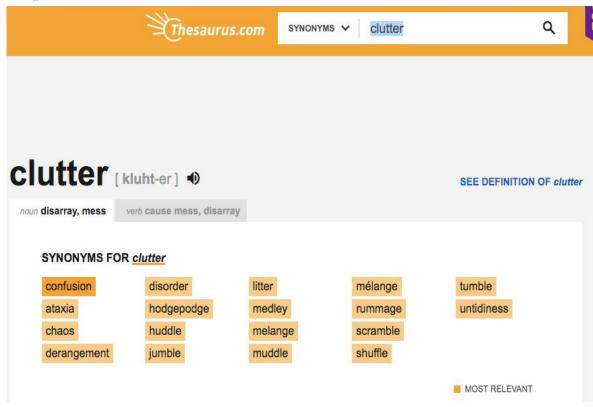
Examples from the Web allow students to see how the words are used in current, real-world contexts

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? IMCKAY COPPINS IAPRIL 15, 2011 IDAILY 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



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? Type or Paste (%+V or Ctrl+V) your text here

Using Thesaurus.com writing tool

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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!

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 eople will Synonyms for happy consider is the n. The term adjective: in high spirits; satisfied "artificial intelli iputers) that cheerful contented overiov ecstatic mimic "cognitiv h as "learning and problem s any fields, such elated delight ioyous pleased as health care k wearable adjective: lucky equipment will h care. They will successful fortunate accidental be able to mor apt weeks and

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auspicious

Today, I am going to talk about life in the future from 3 perspectives, including the

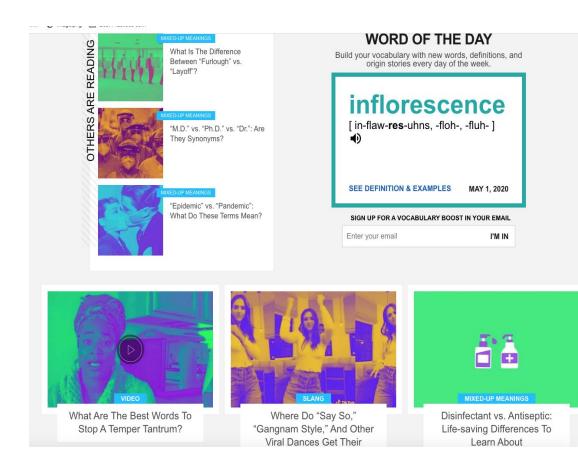
CHECK GRAMMAR

ssed 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/



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.youglish.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 <u>info@english-now.com</u> with subject line - Resources for Our Team.

Check the Resources for Our Team web page weekly for updates.