

Using the dictionary

Understanding dictionary definitions

The definitions in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* are all written using a limited number of words, which makes them easy to understand. Here you can practise some of the key vocabulary that is used again and again in definitions.

A What is it?

Match up the items on the left with something from the list on the right. Say what you think the things are. Then read the definitions in the dictionary and see whether you were right.

	<i>It's a type of...</i>	<i>It's a kind of...</i>
American football	vegetable	
Chinese cabbage	disease	
French horn	cake	
German measles	sport	
Danish pastry	musical instrument	
Turkish delight	sweet	

B Nouns often used in definitions

Check that you know the meaning of the words in the box and then decide which fits best into the sentences below.

machine	quality	organization	instrument	act	substance	device
state	process	container	tool	feeling		

- 1 A vat is a large _____ for holding liquids.
- 2 A stapler is a small _____ for putting staples into paper.
- 3 A stethoscope is an _____ that a doctor uses to listen to sb's heart.
- 4 A chisel is a _____ used for shaping wood, stone or metal.
- 5 A blender is an electric _____ for mixing soft food or liquid.
- 6 Gel is a thick _____ like jelly.
- 7 Desalination is the _____ of removing salt from sea water.
- 8 Horror is a _____ of great shock, fear or disgust.
- 9 Wealth is the _____ of being rich.
- 10 Beauty is the _____ of giving pleasure to the senses or to the mind.
- 11 A union is an _____ of workers that exists to protect their interests.
- 12 An ambush is an _____ of making a surprise attack on someone.

C Adjectives often used in definitions

Check the meanings of the adjectives in the box, and then choose the ones that you think best describe the nouns below. You should choose at least two adjectives for each noun.

thin	thick	flat	pale	round	long	rough	smooth	hollow	pointed	small	sharp	shiny
------	-------	------	------	-------	------	-------	--------	--------	---------	-------	-------	-------

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 disk | _____ | _____ | 4 cream | _____ | _____ |
| 2 satin | _____ | _____ | 5 tube | _____ | _____ |
| 3 thorn | _____ | _____ | 6 tweed | _____ | _____ |