

Methodenblatt Nr. 2

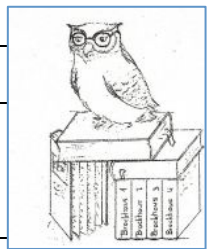
Kompetenzbereich:

Recherchieren, planen und strukturieren

verantwortliches Fach:

Englisch (und alle anderen Fremdsprachen)

Jahrgang: 8

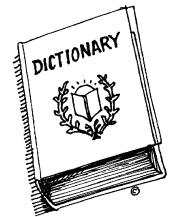


Thema: Arbeit mit einem zweisprachigen Wörterbuch

I. Reasons for using a dictionary

A dictionary is a very important tool for anyone who is learning a new language. A good bilingual dictionary serves the 11 following purposes:

1. looking up the *meaning* of an English word you see or hear
2. finding the *English translation* of a German word
3. checking the *spelling* of a word
4. checking the *plural* of a noun or *past tense* of a verb
5. finding out other *grammatical information* about a word
6. finding the *synonym* [= a word with the same meaning] of a word
7. looking up the *collocations*
[= words that are often combined with the word you want to use]
8. checking the *part of speech* [dt. Wortart] of a word
9. finding out how to *pronounce* a word
10. finding out about the *register* of a word
(e.g. check whether it is formal / informal to use it)
11. finding examples of *the use of a word in natural language*



II. Finding words quickly

This is a skill that you need to practise. Ask someone to write down 5 words and see how long it takes you to find them. Use the guide words at the top of each dictionary page; and keep practising until you can find any word within 10 seconds. You should also practise finding words in your own language in your bilingual dictionary. If you use an electronic dictionary, take some time at home to learn how it works and, again, practise finding words quickly.

III. Finding the right meaning of an English word

Very often when you look up a new English word, you find that it has more than one meaning. If you are not sure which one is correct, here's what you can do:

First, check through all the meanings and find the one that makes most sense in the *context* where you found the word. (Very often, many of the different meanings are similar and this should be enough to give you a good idea what the word means.)

Second, if you really want to make sure, think what the word is in your own language and look it up in a bilingual dictionary. If one of the English translations is the original word you looked up, then you can be satisfied that you have found the right meaning.

IV. Finding the right English translation of a German word

When you look up a German/English word in a bilingual dictionary, you will probably find that there is more than one English/German translation. Often the word depends on another word or context (= *collocators*) that you would like to connect it with. Have a look at these examples:

bind [baɪnd] <bound, bound> ① binden (to, on an) ② verbinden *Wunde* ③ *beim Kochen* binden *Soße* ④ (*übertragen*) binden, verpflichten; **bind oneself to something** sich zu etwas verpflichten ⑤ *Zement*: fest, hart werden
pflücken pick *Obst, Blumen*; pluck *Federn*

creak [kri:k] *Holz*: knarren; *Tür*: quietschen
Stillstand ① (*Halt*) standstill ② **zum Stillstand kommen** *Verkehr, Wirtschaft*: come to a standstill; *Blutung, Herz, Maschine, Motor*: come to a stop ③ **zum Stillstand bringen** bring to a stop *Verkehr, Wirtschaft*; **die Produktion zum Stillstand bringen** bring production to a standstill ④ (*Unterbrechung*) interruption [ɪntə'rapʃn]

break-down ['breɪkdaʊn] ① Versagen, Ausfall, [Betriebs]Störung; *von Auto*: Panne ② (*übertragen*) Versagen, Scheitern ③ *von Nerven*: Zusammenbruch
Ablehnung refusal; *von Angebot, Stelle*: rejection; **auf Ablehnung stoßen** meet with disapproval

If you are not sure which to use, you could try a *back translation*. This means that you look up the English translations one by one in a monolingual dictionary. If a word has a definition that matches the word in your language, you are safe to use it.

V. Knowing when to use the dictionary

If you look up every new word you see or hear, you will spend your whole day with the dictionary in your hand. That's no good! You have to be clever and choose the right words to check and the right time to do it. Try to follow the advice below and you will become a much more efficient language learner:

→ When you find a new word while reading, finish the sentence (better: the paragraph). If you haven't guessed the meaning and it still seems important, then you can look it up. To avoid interrupting your reading for too long, you should find its meaning in your own language using a bilingual dictionary.

→ When you hear a new word in class (or the teacher has written it on the board), wait and continue listening. What the teacher says next may help you to understand the word. If you look in your dictionary, you will not hear what comes next, and this will make understanding the lesson more and more difficult. If you think the word is very important, you could copy it from the board or write how you think it is spelled. Then later you could ask the teacher or another student what it means.