

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Locating Sources of Information

The next step in completing a research paper is locating appropriate sources of information. In this unit, you will learn about many types of resources and the information they contain.

Types of Dictionaries – Dictionaries are alphabetical lists of words with information about each. They can be **general** or **subject specific**. You have most likely used general dictionaries such as *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. Subject specific dictionaries concentrate on the vocabulary of a single topic area such as *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*. Dictionaries tell what words mean, give pronunciations, and spellings.

Dictionaries may be **unabridged**, meaning they are not shortened or **abridged**, meaning they have been shortened. The dictionaries you've used are likely abridged versions because they do not include every single possible word. Words that are not commonly used have been omitted.

**Etymological** dictionaries provide a history of the origin of words. In other words, they tell us where words came from. An example of an etymological dictionary is the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

*Are the following dictionaries general or subject specific?*

1. Cassell's Dictionary of Slang \_\_\_\_\_
2. Random House Unabridged Dictionary \_\_\_\_\_
3. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language \_\_\_\_\_
4. Black's Law Dictionary \_\_\_\_\_
5. McGraw Hill's Spanish Dictionary \_\_\_\_\_
6. 100 Words Almost Everyone Misuses and Confuses \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionaries contain some basic parts to help you learn about new words. At the top of each page are **guide words**. The **opening guide word**, listed first, tells the first word on the page and the **closing guide word**, listed second, tells the final word on the page. **Entry words** are the words defined on the page and are usually listed in bold writing. **Phonetic respellings** are used to help you pronounce each word. Many dictionaries also provide **parts of speech** by using abbreviations such as n (for noun), adj (for adjective), v (verb) or pron (pronoun) to tell you how the word is commonly used in language. **Definitions** teach you the meaning of words. Often, more than a single definition is listed but they are ordered by the most common usage. **Variants of the words** are provided which give you alternate endings such as running for run. The **etymology of words**, for those dictionaries that provide origins, show a brief history for words. **Correct usage in a sentence** provides an example of usage in a sentence. **Synonyms and antonyms** are sometime given and follow the abbreviations **syn** or **ant**. Some dictionaries provide **illustrations** such as a drawing or picture. In addition to the phonetic respellings, a **short pronunciation key** is often provided on the bottom of the right page.

**sob** (sob) v. sobbed, sob-bing. –intr.v. 1. To weep aloud with convulsive gasping; cry uncontrollable. 2. To put or bring by sobbing: sobbed herself to sleep. –n. The act or sound of sobbing. [ Middle English sobben, to catch breath, prop. of Low Germanic orig.] syn. cry.

7. Underline the opening guide word in green.
8. Circle the closing guide word with blue.
9. Place a red star above the entry word.
10. Underline parts of speech with purple.
11. Use a yellow highlighter to mark the definition.
12. Use a blue highlighter to mark the variant(s).
13. Place a pink star above the etymology of the word.
14. Place blue brackets around the correct usage of the word in a sentence.
15. Color the syn or ant orange.

Look in a dictionary for the phonetic respellings for the following words and write them on the lines:

16. interpretative \_\_\_\_\_
17. marjoram \_\_\_\_\_
18. seersucker \_\_\_\_\_
19. commedia dell'arte \_\_\_\_\_
20. shenanigan \_\_\_\_\_
21. nasturtium \_\_\_\_\_

22. Look for a dictionary that includes a short pronunciation key and write down the key provided at the bottom of the page containing the entry word namesake.

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23. Find a word in a dictionary with both a French and Latin origin and write it on the space below.

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24. Use a dictionary of slang to find an interesting word and write down the word with definition on the line below:

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25. Look for a word that includes an illustration and write down the word and a description of the illustration on the line below.

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26. Look for a subject dictionary not mentioned in this worksheet and write the title on the line below.

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Thesaurus: a reference source used to find synonyms for common words. Like dictionaries, thesauruses are organized alphabetically. Use a thesaurus to replace the italicized word in each of the following problems with a synonym. Write the replacement above the italicized word.

- 27. John's *disobedience* not only gets him in trouble, it keeps him from truly learning the process.
- 28. Graduation is to *celebrate* the conclusion of many years of hard work and the *mark* the beginning of a new chapter in life.
- 29. The brute has hired a new *servant*.
- 30. The *fabrication* of evidence led to her false imprisonment.

Be careful when using synonyms. Sometimes, the original meaning of a word is lost when replaced. Look at the following sentence pairs. How was the original meaning changed when a synonym was used?

- 31. My friendship with Sara brings endless *amusement*.  
My friendship with Sara brings endless *solace*.

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- 32. The blemish on Tom's nose was an embarrassment.  
The deformity on Tom's nose was an embarrassment.

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Create a sentence of your own and look up synonyms. Replace one of the words to create a new meaning.

33. (your sentence) \_\_\_\_\_

34. (new sentence) \_\_\_\_\_

Using the same sentence, find a synonym to use that retains your original meaning.

35. \_\_\_\_\_

Almanacs: contain brief details including facts, data, statistics, lists, charts, etc., over many different topics. These are great resources to find quick information. Use the almanacs provided by your instructor to answer the following questions.

36. What is the population of the United Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_

37. Name 2 chronological events that happened in January 2002. \_\_\_\_\_

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38. Name a senator who represented Alaska in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. \_\_\_\_\_
39. What was the average cost for a gallon of gas in 1980? \_\_\_\_\_ 1974? \_\_\_\_\_
40. What is the post office-authorized 2-letter abbreviation for the Marshall Islands? \_\_\_\_\_
41. What is the tallest building in the world? \_\_\_\_\_
42. Where was Julia Roberts born? \_\_\_\_\_
43. What is the genitive case for the constellation Pisces? \_\_\_\_\_

Annals, Timelines, and Chronologies: These sources all provide information by date such as the Timelines of American History, The Annals of America, and the People's Chronology. Sometimes, these resources cover a relatively short period of time such as a year or an entire history from the beginning of time until now.

44. Look in the Annals of America to find out who, according to Christopher Columbus, is allowed to have 20 wives. \_\_\_\_\_
45. In 1919, what were the seven "principles of a progressive education"? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
46. Look in Harper's Atlas of World History to find the year in which the decline and fall of Byzantium began. \_\_\_\_\_
47. Look in the Atlas of the Crusades to find when Philip II took the corsair base of Jerba (in North Africa). \_\_\_\_\_
48. Find, in the Book of Chronologies, who won the Nobel Peace prize in 1979. \_\_\_\_\_
49. Use the Book of Chronologies to find when the bow and arrow were invented. \_\_\_\_\_
50. In 1969, which U.S. senator waited 10 hours before reporting that he drove his car off a bridge and drowned his companion? \_\_\_\_\_
51. In what year was the bass clarinet developed? \_\_\_\_\_
52. Compare and contrast almanacs and annals. \_\_\_\_\_  
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