

DICTIONARY TERMS

Most dictionaries contain much more than a list of words and their definitions. The following terms are keys to the valuable information a good student needs to know and use in this important resource.

- Contextual Illustrations* – Phrases or sentences use the entry in appropriate contexts.
- Definitions* – More than one definition may be listed in numbered sequences to explain the exact meanings of the entry word. If the definition has two or more meanings which are closely related, they are designated a., b., etc.
- Entry Words* – These are the words listed in alphabetical order in boldface type with their definitions. More than one entry may appear for a word if the word has more than one etymology.
- Etymology* – The derivation or history of a word appears in brackets.
- Guide Words* – Two words at the top of each dictionary page indicate the first and last words on that page.
- Inflected Forms* – This term refers to irregular plurals of nouns (child – n. pl., children), the tense of verbs (ran, running, runs), and the comparative/superlative degrees of adjectives and adverbs (good, better, best).
- Parts of Speech* – Labels (v., adj., n., ad., etc.) reveal the part of speech of each series of definitions.
- Pictorial Illustrations* – Pictures in the margin that relate to the entry word.
- Pronunciation* – Since each letter in the English language alphabet has more than one sound, symbols or diacritical marks appear in parentheses to indicate the sounds of each word. At the bottom of the page, the pronunciation key with its key words gives an example of each sound.
- Restrictive Labels* – Certain labels restrict the definition to a particular field or usage. Field Labels identify the special area or subject to which a definition applies, as Music, Sports, Law. Usage Labels restrict a definition to a certain level of language (slang, informal, obscene) or geographic region (Southwestern U.S., Austral., Scot.).
- Run-on Entries* – Derived forms which are not defined appear in boldface type at the end of the definition.
- Syllabification* – Entry words are divided into syllables to indicate where they may be broken at the end of a line.