

2/4/24

How Much Do You Know About...

Estimated play time: Approximately 15 minutes

Number of players: Unlimited

Supplies needed: Tokens (for scorekeeping); Prizes (small) for winner(s)

Suitable for visually impaired players.

Overview:

In this game, we look at one subject in depth – it could be a person, place, event, or thing. This week, let's see how much you know about ... **THE DICTIONARY**.

Instructions:

1. This game can be played by individuals or teams.
2. Read the first question. Discussion is permitted among teammates. Prior to the start of the game, a method to signal when a team is ready to answer must be determined. Ringing bells and New Year's blowers are just two inexpensive noisemakers. Raised hands work, but the host must be vigilant to watch for whose hand went up first. The host always has the final say in any disputes.
3. After a team is recognized as the first to signal, they may give one answer. If the first answer is incorrect, the other teams may 'buzz' in and answer.
4. Keep score (10 points for each answer) after each question is answered correctly. Play until all questions have been asked and answered.

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INSTRUCTIONS: Just answer the questions to find out how much you know about today's subject ... **THE DICTIONARY.**

1. What four key types of information about a word do you get when you look it up in the dictionary?
2. One of the first known dictionaries was compiled during the first century BC by a Roman grammarian and teacher named Verrius Flaccus. In what language was his dictionary written?
3. In 1755 Samuel Johnson wrote *A Dictionary of the English Language*, which is considered the first modern dictionary because the words were arranged in this order.
4. Johnson's dictionary remained popular for more than 100 years; but during that time, the English language changed quite a bit. As a result, in 1857 the London Philological Society decided that it was time for a new, more comprehensive and reliable dictionary, and set out to put together what ultimately became this premier English dictionary.
5. When the creators of the *O.E.D.* began their work in 1857, they thought they'd finish in ten years. However, 27 years later, they had only gotten as far as this definition: *A small wingless insect that usually lives in a complex colony.* What letter were they on?
6. The first complete *O.E.D.* was published in 1928. It defined more than 400,000 words in 10 volumes. Can you guess how many volumes the second complete edition contained when it was published in 1989?
7. The longest entry in the *O.E.D.* gives 430 definitions for one word. Three of these definitions are: *To prepare a table; to put hair temporarily in rollers; and the passage of the sun below the horizon.* What is the word?
8. Who is credited with establishing "American" English by creating the first English dictionary with American spellings and pronunciations?

9. Webster compiled *An American Dictionary of the English Language* between 1807 and 1825. He included uniquely American words that didn't appear in British dictionaries, such as *squash* and this other familiar word, defined as: *An American mammal typically ejecting an intensely malodorous fluid when startled.*
10. Can you guess the last name of brothers George and Charles, who in 1843 secured the rights to Noah Webster's dictionary ... and added their name to the title?
11. The rule of thumb at the *O.E.D.* is that a new word cannot be included in the dictionary until it has appeared five times, in five different sources, over a period of five years. In 2010, 200 new words were added, including *staycation*. What does *staycation* mean?
12. Guess the decade in which these words were added to the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*: *aerospace*, *car wash*, *do-it-yourself*, and *meter maid*.
13. Guess the decade in which these words were added to the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*: *AIDS*, *boom box*, *caller ID*, *trophy wife*, and *voice mail*.
14. Some of the new entries to the *O.E.D.* in 2023 include the abbreviation *WOC*, which means *woman of color*; *petfluencer*, which is *a person who gains a large following on social media by posting entertaining images or videos of their cat, dog, or other pet*; and *woke*, which means ... what?
15. Complete this well-known quotation: "The dictionary is the only place where success comes before ..."
16. In 1805, Peter Mark Roget, a British physician and obsessive list maker, compiled a reference book that organized words by their meanings. Today this essential tool is used by millions to find synonyms (words with nearly the same meaning) and antonyms (words with opposite meanings).

Fun Fact: In 2001, the editors placed a fake word in the *New Oxford American Dictionary* as a trap for other lexicographers who might steal their material. The word was *esquivalience*, which they defined as *the willful avoidance of one's official responsibilities; the shirking of duties*. Sure enough, the trap worked. The popular online reference, *Dictionary.com*, ended up with egg on its face when it included *esquivalience* on its website.

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ANSWERS

1. Spelling, meaning, pronunciation, and etymology (the origin or history of the word)
2. Latin ... which is not quite as obvious an answer as it seems. The Greek language was embraced by many elite and educated Romans who regarded Greek culture and science as an example to be followed.
3. Alphabetical. Before Johnson, words were arranged by topic. For example, all of the names of animals were grouped together.
4. *The Oxford English Dictionary (O.E.D.)*
5. A. (The definition is for ant.) It took 71 years before the entire dictionary was completed.
6. Twenty volumes (with 615,100 words defined)
7. Set
8. Noah Webster. Webster thought English spelling rules were unnecessarily complicated, so he dropped the u in words such as *color* and changed the -re ending in words such as *centre* to -er. Webster also helped to establish the popular contests known as spelling bees.
9. Skunk
10. Merriam. Today *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* is one of the most popular English dictionaries in the world.
11. A vacation spent in one's home country rather than abroad; or, one spent at home and involving day trips to local attractions.
12. The 1950s
13. The 1980s
14. Woke (which was once a positive term meaning sensitive to minorities) has now become a disparaging term used by the political right to describe a liberal progressive orthodoxy that promotes inclusive policies or ideologies and embraces ethnic, racial, or sexual minorities.
15. Work
16. The Thesaurus