

“ABC” – Introduction to the Dictionary

Reading/Discussion:

Do you know what a dictionary is? Do you have one in your classroom? If you do, what do you use it for? A dictionary is a very important book. It doesn't tell us a story and it doesn't usually have many pictures in it, but it is full of words and their meanings. For example, what would you do if your friends said you were deft? Would you be angry at them for calling you names? Or would you thank them? It depends on what deft means, doesn't it? How would you find out? Well, you could look it up in the dictionary!

The problem is, the dictionary has so many words, it will take you ages to find deft. Not really. The clever thing about the dictionary is that it is in alphabetical order, so if you know your alphabet you can look up words quite easily. Let's look at the alphabet again:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The first thing to do is to divide the alphabet into three parts: the beginning: A - G, the middle: H - Q and the end: R - Z. Which part do you think we will find deft in? Right! We need to look at the first letter of the word: D, so we know it will be one of the words starting with D. We will look near the beginning of the dictionary. But there are still a lot of D's. Will deft be at the beginning of the D's, or in the middle, or at the end? To find out, we'll look at the second letter of the word: E. Where does E fit in the alphabet? Near the beginning. Now we know that deft will be near the beginning of the D's – that makes it a lot easier to find. Here it is:

deft [deft] –adjective, -er, -est. dexterous; nimble; skillful; clever

Your friends weren't calling you names! Did you notice that the dictionary told us some other things about deft as well? One of the things we know now is that it is an adjective or a describing word. Isn't the dictionary a useful book!

Name _____

Date _____

“ABC” – Introduction to the Dictionary Questions

A: Knowing our ABC's

Look at the first letter of each word and sort them into the beginning (A-G), middle (H-Q) or end (R-Z) of the alphabet. See if you can get them in the same order as they would be in the dictionary.

yacht; apple; grass; igloo; bear; umbrella; cake; nail; dog; moon; egg; toy; hair; ring; fish; kite; zebra; lion; pear; snail; wall.

A-G	H-Q	R-Z
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.

B: Dictionary

Let's sort some more words. This time they all begin with the same letter, so to put them into the right order you will have to look at the second letter. Can you do that? Here are the words, write them into the dictionary in the correct order. The first one has been done for you:

shell; soap; sand; small; school; sun; seat; sweet; sit; spot; skill; sleep; stop; snail.

Name _____

Date _____

“ABC” – Introduction to the Dictionary Questions (Cont’d)

Sa - Sl

sand

Sm - Sw

Name _____

Date _____

“ABC” – Introduction to the Dictionary Answers

Activity A

A-G	H-Q	R-Z
1. apple 2. bear 3. cake 4. dog 5. egg 6. fish 7. grass	1. hair 2. igloo 3. kite 4. lion 5. moon 6. nail 7. pear	1. ring 2. snail 3. toy 4. umbrella 5. wall 6. yacht 7. zebra

Activity B

