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Jolly Dictionary

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Lexicography by Michael Janes

Illustrated by Lib Stepher



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Introduction

The *Jolly Dictionary* aims to teach young children how to use a dictionary, as well as being useful in its own right.

When children have been taught to read using a phonic method, such as *Jolly Phonics*, they are generally capable of reading words that they may not be familiar with and whose meanings they may not know. Being able to use a dictionary enables children to find out the meanings of those words and pronounce them correctly. It makes them truly independent readers and writers.

In order for this to happen, children must be familiar with using a dictionary and be able to look up the words they require without difficulty.

Children need to feel that a dictionary is fun and useful to them, not just something that grown-ups use.

To encourage this, the *Jolly Dictionary* begins with a number of illustrated pages where words are arranged by topic or theme. These Picture Pages provide an easy reference point for young children, showing them how to spell useful words such as days of the week, numbers and the names of animals.

Young children should also begin to learn simple dictionary skills by playing games such as finding a particular letter. With two or more children, this can be turned into a race. Once they are able to read and write with reasonable fluency, the children can move on to looking up words in the main body of the text. Some games and practice for this are in the *Jolly Grammar Handbooks 1 and 2*.

In particular, children need to feel confident about finding their way around a dictionary. A dictionary can be divided into four sections, made up of words beginning with the letters a-e, f-m, n-s and t-z. Each of these sections contains about a quarter of the words in the dictionary. In the *Jolly Dictionary* each of these sections has a different colour - red, yellow, green and blue. So if children know which quarter a letter is in, they can look up a word more quickly. For example, if they are looking up the word 'potato', the words beginning with 'p' are in the third quarter and the dictionary should be opened at the green section. They can then use the alphabet across the top of the page to help them find the words beginning with 'p'.

Each entry in this dictionary includes a guide to how the word is pronounced. It uses the joined digraphs familiar from *Jolly Phonics* and a few new symbols for clarity. The pronunciation guide also uses bolder type to show where to put the stress in a word. There is more information on how to use the pronunciation guide on pages 8 to 11.

Each entry also indicates which parts of speech the word may be, depending on how it is used in a sentence. The names of the different parts of speech are colour coded, so for example, 'noun' is black, 'verb' is red and 'adjective' is blue. This element of the dictionary becomes more interesting to the children as they learn more about parts of speech and how our language works.