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Even in the age of advancing technology, reference sources are still usually in book form. Many of these reference sources are often used while others are consulted rarely. These seldom used books are necessary, however, in finding the answers to difficult and unusual questions.

Some reference information is stored on audiocassettes or videocassettes while some may be contained in computer programs or on microfilm or microfiche.

For most elementary school study, books, either hard-

bound or paperback, remain the primary source of reference information.

The books described in this study are those that are most familiar and easily available.

Paperback copies of a dictionary, thesaurus, atlas or map book, and almanac may be suggested as a beginning home library for students.

Stress the availability of these reference materials at the school or public libraries.

What Is a Reference Tool?

A *reference tool* is any source of information to which people go for answers to questions. *Reference books* are the most widely used reference tools. The information in a reference book is organized systematically, so that data can be found easily and quickly.

People use reference books at certain times to find definite answers.

A. Read each situation listed below. After each, write the name of a common reference tool found in most homes which would be most helpful in finding the information needed.

1. You want to know when Skateland opens. _____
2. You caught some fish and want to fry them. _____
3. You want to buy a puppy. _____
4. Your family is going to Bass Lake but doesn't know how to get there. _____

There are other kinds of reference books at your library or in your classroom. These books are always available for you to find facts quickly because they never leave the library or school building. Other kinds of books are available for borrowing, but reference books may not be checked out. They remain on the shelves to be consulted or used at a library table.

There are many kinds of reference books but these are the most commonly used :

encyclopedia dictionary thesaurus atlas almanac and fact book
biographical dictionary quotation and poetry index geographical dictionary

B. Use the list of the most commonly used reference books to answer these questions.

1. Which of these books are in your classroom? _____

2. Which of these books are in your school library? _____

C. In order to find the answers to questions quickly, it is important to know the kind of information each reference source contains. Write the name of the reference source listed above before its description.

1. _____ a book of maps and charts
2. _____ a book that gives the spelling, pronunciation, and definition of words
3. _____ a book of synonyms and antonyms
4. _____ book published each year that gives current information on many subjects
5. _____ a book that gives information about cities, countries, and bodies of water
6. _____ a set of books that gives general information on many topics
7. _____ a book, arranged alphabetically, that gives information about famous people

What's in a Dictionary?

A *dictionary* is a reference book containing an alphabetical list of words and information about each word. The information given about a word includes its correct spelling, pronunciation, meaning, origin, and correct usage.

Dictionaries come in many sizes and in many languages. The information given here will help you learn about American dictionaries. An *unabridged dictionary* is one that contains all of the words in the English language. An unabridged dictionary has in it over 500,000 words. Unabridged dictionaries are very thick and heavy. An *abridged dictionary* contains only the most common English words. One dictionary for children contains 20,000 words, while a commonly used dictionary for adults has 160,000 entries.

A. Use an unabridged dictionary to answer the following questions.

1. Where is this unabridged dictionary located? _____
2. What is the title of this dictionary? _____
3. When was it published? _____
4. How many pages does it have? _____

B. Use your dictionary to answer the following questions.

1. Is your dictionary abridged or unabridged? _____
2. What is the title of your dictionary? _____
3. When was it published? _____
4. How many pages does it have? _____

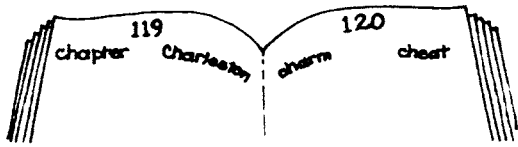
Dictionaries contain sections of additional helpful information. Sometimes these sections are located in the front of the book and sometimes they can be found at the back of the dictionary.

C. Here is a list of additional information that might be included in a dictionary. Look for each in an unabridged dictionary and in your dictionary. Place a check mark under *Abridged* and/or *Unabridged* to tell if you found it. Then write Front or Back to show where in the dictionary it was located.

Information	Abridged	Unabridged	Location
1. a metric conversion table _____			
2. presidents of the U.S. _____			
3. names of colleges and universities _____			
4. tables of weights and measures _____			
5. list of biographical names _____			
6. signs and symbols _____			
7. chronology of American events _____			
8. common English given names _____			

Using Your Dictionary

The words in a dictionary are arranged in alphabetical order. *Guide words* at the top of each page tell you the first and last word on the page.



In order to use the guide words and find words quickly, you will need to know the alphabet and understand alphabetical order.

A. Write these words in alphabetical order.

1. carbon _____
calendar _____
canary _____
camel _____
cape _____
2. present _____
predict _____
preach _____
pretend _____
preface _____

B. Look at the guide words shown above.

1. Write the page number on which you would find the word charge. _____
2. On which page would you find chase? _____
3. Where would you find champion? _____

C. Use your dictionary to answer the following.

1. What are the guide words at the top of the page that contains the word rattan? _____

2. What guide words appear on the page with laugh? _____
3. Circle the word that is spelled correctly.
 - a. hieena hyeena hyena
 - b. flashlite flashlight fleshlight
 - c. cheata cheeta cheetah

4. Write the pronunciation spelling for each of these words. Include all the marks.
 - a. rebus _____
 - b. corps _____
 - c. waver _____
 - d. oxymoron _____
 - e. recess _____
5. Write sing. if the word is singular. Write pl. if the word is plural.
 - a. geese _____
 - b. oxen _____
 - c. dilettante _____
 - d. mice _____
 - e. women _____
6. Circle the words that should be capitalized.
 - a. army b. easter c. french
 - d. autumn e. pekingese f. science
7. What part of speech is each of these words?
 - a. sharp _____
 - b. goldfish _____
 - c. itemize _____
 - d. slowly _____
8. Write the meaning of each abbreviation.
 - a. etc. _____
 - b. A.D. _____
 - c. prep. _____
 - d. lb. _____
 - e. Wed. _____

Etymology is the history of a word that shows where it came from and how it has changed.

D. Answer the following questions after looking up the etymology of the most important word in the question.

1. Who first shouted "Eureka"? _____
2. The word dinosaur came from two words meaning "terrible" and "lizard." What was that language? _____