

Annotated list of online resources for teaching and learning lexis:

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1. Online Dictionaries

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary ★★★★★

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) is the free, slightly reduced online version of the printed Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. The website provides a monolingual dictionary, a Thesaurus, and etymological information. Because all explanations are given in English, this online dictionary is especially suited for advanced English learners and teachers. The website provides simply structured and not overfilled dictionary entries, which are divided into subcategories. The online dictionary's search function corrects misspellings, but is not always able to find the correct word. It remembers words which have been entered before, so the user can look up words entered previously more quickly.

The dictionary offers a large number of good sample applications as well as collocations and the phonetic transcription. In addition, the British and American English pronunciations are given. Another advantage of the Oxford Advanced Dictionary is its integrated word lists. There users can find keywords, an Academic Word List (good for students), pictures which illustrate the vocabulary searched and usage notes (e.g. a pronunciation guide). This is a variety not many online dictionaries provide.

In summary, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary seems to be a most suitable dictionary for students at university level as well as for teachers and native speakers. It provides almost everything a good dictionary has to include.

Link: oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com/

Encarta MSN Dictionary ★★★★★

The MSN Encarta Online Dictionary is more than just a dictionary: it provides an English - English dictionary, translations between English and four other languages as well as an English thesaurus.

The layout of the website is simple and easy to follow. It might be somewhat irritating to switch between the different translation possibilities (e.g. the dictionary does not recognize the entered language if not appointed before). The search function is easy to use but does not correct misspelling.

In addition to the clear and straightforward translation of the word, users are also offered the pronunciation (in the dictionary, not the translation mode) and phonetic

transcriptions of the vocabulary as well as with a small number of examples and collocations. The website even offers a pronunciation key to support the learning of phonetics. It is no problem to switch between the different modes once an English word has been entered; the English dictionary and the English encyclopedia both provide explanations.

From a teacher's or pupil's perspective this website includes all the necessary features to be a good dictionary. Its use is for free, uncomplicated and can be used by learners of all degrees.

Link: <http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/dictionaryhome.aspx>

Leo Dictionary



The welcome page of the Leo-dictionary is well structured and clearly arranged. The user can choose between different language dictionaries and has the possibility to enter either a German or an English word to translate. The website offers an enlarged search function which provides correction in case words are misspelled.

The user is offered a large number of possible translations, which is not always a positive aspect because of the many possibilities to choose from. Nevertheless, the website is useful because it provides sample applications, subcategories (e.g. parts of speech and collocations), phonetics and pronunciation (British English, American English, German).

From a teacher's or pupil's perspective, this website includes all the necessary features to be a good dictionary. Using it is both free, and uncomplicated, which makes the Leo- Dictionary one of the most favored online dictionaries of English learners of all levels.

Link: <http://www.leo.org/>

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English



The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) website is a free online version of the CD-ROM of the dictionary. The dictionary is a monolingual dictionary for the English language, and therefore, especially suitable for advanced English learners and teachers. Users are provided with a clear, well structured website which is easy to use and follow, although it is overfilled with advertisements. The website's search function corrects misspellings and offers a satisfactory amount of solutions (even before entering the entire word). Furthermore, the search function provides subcategories before giving the dictionary entry; so users can decide which subcategory they want to look at.

The dictionary entry itself offers a good number of examples, sample applications and collocations. Grammatical clues are given as well as an abridgment of the given translation possibilities at the top of the page. The website also provides many links to related topics and topic dictionaries (e.g. for biology), which is an advantage for usage.

Unfortunately, the user does not find any pronunciation or phonetic transcriptions. To have these features, one has to buy the CD-ROM of the Longman Dictionary. In summary, the Longman Online Dictionary can be compared to the Oxford Online Dictionary and is very useful for students of English and native speakers with regard to the explanation of vocabulary.

Link: <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

Oxford Dictionary



The Oxford Online Dictionary is a monolingual dictionary for learners of English. Users are presented with a clearly and simply structured website which is easy to use. The dictionary's search function corrects misspellings and offers a satisfactory amount of solutions, even though it is not possible to look up phrases. Several explanations and definitions of the head word are given, divided into subcategories. The dictionary also offers phonetic transcription, sample applications and collocations, which are very useful to understand the meaning and use of the word. Unfortunately, there is no use of pictures and multimedia, which is a disadvantage especially for pronunciation. As the Cambridge Online Dictionary, the free Oxford Dictionary is more suitable for students of English, teachers and native speakers, but not for beginners.

Link: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/>

Beolingus Dictionary



The dictionary Beolingus, provided by the University of Chemnitz, is comparable to the Leo-dictionary. Users are confronted with a clearly and simply structured website which is easy to use and very helpful, especially for beginners.

The dictionary offers a large amount of vocabulary in either German or English. The dictionary's search function corrects misspelling and offers a satisfactory number of solutions. Furthermore, there is a feature which helps users find specialized dictionaries (e.g. for linguistics). Learners can take advantage of this function because they can look up whole categories of vocabulary (e.g. family, countries).

Several possible translations are provided; unfortunately, they are not divided into subcategories. The dictionary also offers phonetic transcriptions, sample applications and collocations, all of which are very useful in understanding the meaning and use of the word. Nevertheless, the possible translations given do not overwhelm the learner, instead s/he is provided with a sufficient amount of examples of when/how to use the word. It is also possible to listen to the pronunciation of a word, either in German or in American English.

If one decides to open a free account on the website, one can even practice learning the word he or she looked up through a number of exercises. From a teacher's or pupil's perspective, this website includes all the necessary features to be a good dictionary. Its use is for free, uncomplicated and can be used by learners of all degrees.

Link: <http://dict.tu-chemnitz.de/>

Cambridge Dictionary



The Cambridge Online Dictionary is a monolingual dictionary for the English language. Users are provided with a simple search function which guides them to subcategories of the desired word. The user now has to decide which subcategory to choose (e.g. dog as an

animal or as a person). It is not possible to enter more than one word if one wants to find suitable answers; misspelling is corrected but with an unsatisfactory amount of solutions.

The layout of the website is pretty simple and easy to follow, however, it might be a little bit difficult to find the right word. Once the word that was searched for has been found, the user is provided with an English explanation. Furthermore, one is offered the pronunciation (American and British English) and the phonetic transcription of the word as well as a small amount of sample applications. There is also a link to the “visual thesaurus”, a commercial website that displays word relations in the form of a mind map.

In summary, the free Cambridge Online Dictionary is probably not useful for learners who are beginners, but helpful to those who have been learning English for a longer time as well as to teachers and native speakers.

Link: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

MacMillan Dictionary



The MacMillan Dictionary is a monolingual dictionary for the English language. Users are provided with a clearly and simply structured website which is easy to use.

The dictionary’s search function corrects misspelling and offers a satisfactory amount of solutions (even before entering the whole word).

Several explanations and definitions of the word are given, followed by specialized examples. Even the vocabulary of the explanations can be looked up immediately by clicking on the respective word. Useful features of the dictionary are a thesaurus and an encyclopedia, which are linked to the entry. It also offers phonetic transcription, sample applications and collocations which are very useful in understanding the meaning of the vocabulary. One can listen to the pronunciation of the word and the part of speech is given. Nevertheless, the free MacMillan Dictionary is more suitable for English students, teachers and native speakers, but not for those who have just started learning the language.

Link: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

Linguec Dictionary



The Linguec Dictionary’s website first catches the user’s eye with a lot of advertisement on the welcome page. Nevertheless, the dictionary offers German ↔ English translation as well as a German ↔ French translation. The layout of the website in general is pretty simple and easy to follow.

Users are provided with a simple search function, which is not always able to find the word in case of misspelling. So misspelling is corrected, but with an unsatisfactory amount of solutions. However, it is possible to enter more than one word to be translated.

In addition to the clear and straightforward translations of the word, one is also offered the pronunciation (American and British English) and phonetic transcription, but only a small amount of examples (which is a disadvantage) and a large number of collocations.

Unfortunately, there are no subcategories, and if they want to look up the part of speech of a word, users have to use an external link.

However, the dictionary’s use is free, uncomplicated, and suitable for learners of all levels.

Link: <http://www.linguatec.net/onlineservices/linguadict>

dict.cc



Dict.cc is an online-dictionary for all types of English learners. Users are confronted with a neatly arranged and simply structured website which is easy to use. The website offers a large vocabulary in either English or German. Furthermore, translations from English or German in any other language (e.g. Spanish, French, Russian) are possible. The enlarged search function enables the user to enter either a German or an English word and also corrects misspellings, but with an unsatisfactory amount of solutions. Furthermore, it is not possible to enter a phrase or a sentence, the user then is confronted only with single words, but not with a combination of those entered.

Divided into subcategories (which are good orientation points), the searched vocabulary is given as a translation as well as within example sentences and sample applications. The website also offers synonyms, grammatical clues and collocations as well as a long list of links where other explanations for the words can be found. Unfortunately, the users are confronted with too many examples and translations, which makes it hard for the user to choose one suitable translation. Furthermore, phonetic transcription is missing, which is a disadvantage especially for students of English.

Nevertheless, the user has the possibility to listen to the pronunciation of a word in all languages provided. The website also offers a free vocabulary trainer, which is available after registration. In summary, this website seems to be more useful for those who are beginners at learning English and need a good online-dictionary.

Link: <http://www.dict.cc/>

2. Useful lexis links for learners

Spotlight



Spotlight online offers many opportunities to explore new vocabulary. The website contains a large variety of current topics and learner levels to choose from. You get the chance to encounter vocabulary in context, not only by reading through the articles provided, but also by using the audio/video material which comes with them. After that you can check out the exercises section and test your knowledge; all answers come with detailed explanations. As the website contains many interesting topics which include authentic audio or video material as well as exercises, it can be useful for the classroom as well-selected sections might be a good way of catching your students' interest when teaching lexis.

Suitable for: intermediates- advanced

Link: <http://www.spotlight-online.de/language/vocabulary>

Minnesota Public Radio



Among other things, this weekly podcast provides you with detailed explanations of lexical phenomena. Tricky vocabulary items are explained and put into context. The items are often integrated in stories, so on top of learning about vocabulary (and grammar), you will have an enjoyable listening exercise. If you have witnessed any interesting lexical phenomena yourself, you can send it in and it might be included on one of the next episodes.

Suitable for: intermediates – advanced

Link: http://minnesota.publicradio.org/radio/podcasts/grammar_grater/

Oxford Dictionaries



The Oxford Dictionaries' website offers three different levels of exercises to choose from. All levels include different lexical topics, for example homophones ('easy games'), plurals ('slightly harder games') or anagrams ('fiendishly difficult games'). Some of the quizzes, however, can be very challenging, even if 'easy games' are chosen, so they are rather suitable for more advanced learners.

Suitable for: intermediate to advanced

Link: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/page/557>

British Council



The British Council's website offers many opportunities to refresh your vocabulary. Just choose your favourite topic from a range of interesting sections and test your knowledge by playing games. The exercises include memory games or cloze activities. If you should, however, discover that some games are slightly too hard for you, hit the solutions button and memorise the answers for next time.

Unfortunately, the website is not very suitable for classroom use. As there is a variety of topics, however, it might be useful to refer to some of the games as additional material whenever it fits the thematic context.

Suitable for: beginners

Link: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-and-words>

Language Guide



This website offers good possibilities of extending young learners' vocabulary. The different sections include pictures, and choosing a picture, the audio function is activated, which provides you with a spoken and written version of the vocabulary item.

Teachers who have a smartboard in their classroom may make use of this website to introduce lexical fields like the weather or the body.

Suitable for: beginners

Link: <http://www.languageguide.org/englisch/>

Learn English



Even though the layout might seem a bit confusing at first sight, it is well worth having a look at this website. learnenglish.de covers many different aspects of lexis such as idioms and sayings, or irregular verbs, which are provided for each topic. The page also includes exercises. Unfortunately, you have to spend a lot of time looking for them, as they are not explicitly marked. The most useful thing about this website, however, is its visual explanations. Many words (often compound nouns) are explained by using pictures which makes remembering them much easier.

Suitable for: beginners-intermediates

Link: <http://www.learnenglish.de/vocabpage.htm>

3. Useful lexis links for teachers

BBC/British Council: Try – Vocabulary Activities ★★★★★

This section of the *Teaching English* website by the BBC and the British Council contains classroom activities and sometimes detailed lesson plans, which have been developed by teachers all over the world. Anyone can contribute; however, the entries have been evaluated by other users, so that even beginners can anticipate possible problems for classroom use – which are scarcely an issue. Most activities require little preparation, and additional material can usually be downloaded right away or is easy to get hold of. All things considered, the website is very useful for teachers who want to liven up their lessons with activities that are easy to implement and enjoyable for the students.

Different levels of competence

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/activities/vocabulary-activities>

Wordle ★★★★★

Wordle is a convenient tool if you want to highlight the keywords of a text for your students or let them explore the text in this manner by themselves – given there is a PC they can use in the classroom. It generates “word clouds” which “give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes.”(website’s description).

Applicable for all levels of competence

<http://www.wordle.net/>



BBC for teachers – Grammar and Vocabulary

The BBC Learning English Website is a good platform for learners to study individually. This section of the page contains worksheets and lesson plans for teachers to make use of the websites’ different features in the classroom. Sometimes this requires that the teacher downloads audio-material beforehand, which can result in some additional preparation time, depending on the technical facilities in one’s classroom. Nevertheless, the website offers lesson plans for a wide range of topics in an authentic context, which can certainly contribute to keeping one’s student’s English up to date.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/teach/grammar/index.shtml>

About.com: Lesson Plans for English Vocabulary Building for ESL / EFL Classes ★★★★★

The lesson plans presented on this webpage have one thing in common: All of them focus on increasing and improving vocabulary. They were created by so called guides, who work in the field of ESL and EFL and contribute to the website as freelancers. You will find that some

of the plans are more applicable for a German school context than others, however, it is still worthwhile to leaf through them.

Most lesson plans are for intermediate levels or above

[http://esl.about.com/od/vocabularylessonplan1/Lesson Plans for English Vocabulary Building for ESL EFL Classes.htm](http://esl.about.com/od/vocabularylessonplan1/Lesson_Plans_for_English_Vocabulary_Building_for_ESL_EFL_Classes.htm)

BBC/British Council: Think – Articles on teaching vocabulary



This is another section of the BBC/British Council's *Teaching English* webpage which contains articles on various topics related to teaching vocabulary. Like the lesson plans described before, these articles are contributions made by teachers and ELT professionals from all over the world. Subject matter ranges from very general topics to quite detailed descriptions of classroom techniques. Most of the articles follow a practical approach, so although their intention is to make you think (as the title suggests), it is relatively easy to make the connection to classroom reality. Furthermore, they might give you a fresh view on methods and concepts that had not really seemed that interesting before.

Applicable for all levels of competence

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/vocabulary/recent>

Teaching Vocabulary: Two Dozen Tips & Techniques



As the title suggests, this document by J.Pettigrew, Boston University, provides a number of techniques that can be used for teaching, revising and testing vocabulary. Furthermore, it lists some useful tips on working with words while reading and teaching students how to guess words from context.

Applicable for all levels of competence

[http://people.bu.edu/jpettigr/Artiles and Presentations/Teaching+Vocabulary.pdf](http://people.bu.edu/jpettigr/Artiles_and_Presentations/Teaching+Vocabulary.pdf)