

Dictionary Skills

Name

Class

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In order to print out the phonetic spellings correctly, phonetic symbols will need to be installed as a font on your computer. IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) can be downloaded from www.chass.utoronto.ca/~rogers/fonts.html.



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The **headword** is the word placed at the beginning of a dictionary entry, usually printed in a different colour.

The **phonetic spelling** is a way of writing out the word using special characters which represent the sounds of speech, so it is a way of helping us to know what the headword sounds like. This is known as the pronunciation.

The **type of word** can also be called the **word class** or the **part of speech**, such as noun, verb, adjective; this helps us to understand the role played by the word in the sentence.

noun	nm, nf
pronoun	pron
adjective	adj
verb	v
adverb	adv
preposition	prep
conjunction	conj

The **translation** tells us the meaning of the word in the other language.

Sometimes more than one translation is given. It is important to look at the **context** to select the most appropriate translation. For instance, we decide which translation would make the most sense within the text we are looking at.

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Some dictionary entries contain further information or explanation about the headword. In order to save space, the headword is not written out in full each time. Instead, it is replaced by a **swung dash** ~.

For example, when looking for the word *s'installer*, the headword is *installer*. Within this entry we will find **s'~** which stands for *s'installer*.

When we find the headword in the dictionary, we can practise our skills by writing down the phonetic spelling, the type of word and the translation. For example:

Headword	Phonetic spelling	Type of word	Translation
merle	[mɛrl]	nm	blackbird

Headword	Phonetic spelling	Type of word	Translation
s'installer	[sɛ̃stale]	v	settle
pays	[pei]	nm	country
tiède	[tjɛd]	a	mild
aiguille	[egɥije]	nf	needle
coudre	[kudr]	v	sew
cuire		v	
chasser		v	
pêcher		v	

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