

# Kernerman DICTIONARY News

## A Dictionary for a New Age

by Lionel Kernerman



The past decade has seen considerable changes in our lifestyles. One of these is the communications explosion, including the exposure to English outside of school, brought about through the media, jet travel and computers.

As a result, the distinction between EFL (English as a Foreign Language, learnt almost only in the classroom) and ESL (English as a Second Language, learnt at school and absorbed also through the environment) is rapidly becoming blurred. People worldwide are exposed more and more, and at a younger age, to the sound of spoken English and to the appearance of English texts in everyday life. This has created the need for a dictionary for lower-level learners of EIL, English as the International Language.

These developments motivated us to create *PASSPORT*, an English database dedicated as the core for learner's dictionaries for people studying or using English at the beginning-to-intermediate levels. This article deals primarily with the level that *PASSPORT* is geared to, and tries to determine the need for such a dictionary.

Ironically, the first learner's dictionary ever to appear had less than 10,000 entries. It was Michael West's *New Method English Dictionary*, first published in 1935 by Longman. But when Hornby's *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* appeared in the '40s, it was vastly preferred over West's smaller dictionary. And even though Longman, Oxford, Chambers and others published *Elementary*, *Junior* or *First* learner's dictionaries, none of these became widely used, as none significantly caught the fancy of English teachers, the attention of English learners, or the interest of English curriculum writers. Teachers and students appeared to be satisfied with the intermediate- and advanced-level dictionaries - whether monolingual, bilingual or bilingualised - and few seemed bothered by the absence of an appropriate dictionary for these levels.

When pupils heard and read English mainly in the classroom, the best dictionary at the elementary and middle-school levels was the teacher. But now, that so much exposure takes place out-of-class, mainly at home, a teacher-substitute is required. Extra-classroom support via TV, video, computer,

printed material, and other self-study aids, is already widespread. What is needed is a dictionary to supplement the classroom teacher, at home as well as at school.

*PASSPORT English Learner's Dictionary* attempts to fulfil this need. It has been made as user-friendly as possible, so that it can be used independently, without teacher assistance or guidance. Its user-friendliness means having a handy and visually appealing format, enabling quick and simple finding of entries, containing a minimal number of abbreviations, facilitating comprehension of text, and providing mother-tongue equivalents.

It is convenient in size, with large, clear and uncrowded print, so that both the words and the lines are generously-spaced. There are innovative charts that enable the user to find out at a glance precisely on which double page a headword is located, in addition to the running heads, and to an alphabet key at the outer edge of each page.

There are no definitions of the headwords. In the case of upper-level learners, the translation *supplements* the explanation, guaranteeing and reinforcing

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This issue is devoted to the new **PASSPORT** English Learner's Dictionary.

comprehension, and guarding against misunderstanding. But at this lower-level, the translation *replaces* the explanation, which now becomes superfluous. Thus, accurate comprehension is achieved by means of the translations, and is enhanced by the examples of usage and by the notes.

*PASSPORT* contains hundreds of helpful notes on use, with tips about spelling, grammar, synonyms and antonyms, British and American differences, etc. It also presents a wealth of supplementary material, featuring a grammar section, in addition to the grammatical information that is richly dispersed throughout the entries. There are exercises to develop dictionary-using skills. There are appendices on time, numbers, measures, irregular verbs, geographical names, etc. There are also illustrations on almost every double page, and fully-illustrated pages by topic.

The first two editions to appear are for speakers of Hebrew and Arabic, each including its own L1-English dictionary section, to help users find out the English equivalent. Both versions exclude phonetic transcriptions, as our ten-year experience with Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking pupils shows that they are no worse off without phonetics. Since native speakers of non-Latin languages are already required to master one foreign alphabet when learning English, having to learn also a phonetic sign system is an additional burden. All the more so for learners at this lower level. Other publishers may decide whether or not to include phonetics in their own localized version, and which sort of phonetic system to use.

Each language edition demands a certain degree of localization to render it fully compatible with the specific requirements of that particular language, culture, or education system. This implies, in certain cases, the presentation of some notes in L1 instead of

English, and in other cases, introducing special notes relevant to that particular language or society. It should be noted that *PASSPORT* is probably the first English learner's dictionary created specifically to serve as a basis for adding other languages.

All the same, the question arises: If there is really such a need for a learner's dictionary at the middle-school level, why can't the larger dictionaries serve this purpose? Why should pupils be required to purchase two dictionaries - one for the pre-high-school and another for the high-school level? Why should they not buy the high-school dictionary when in a lower grade, and use it right through their remaining school years?

It must be remembered that the upper-level learner's dictionaries usually employ a defining vocabulary of as many as 3,500 "basic" words in dealing with their 20,000-50,000 headword list. Many of these words may be unfamiliar to pupils at a lower level. However, *PASSPORT* uses a basic word list that is hardly half that size. Moreover, the grammar and syntax used in the upper-level dictionaries is much too complicated for pre-secondary school pupils. They will not yet have learnt a great many of the grammatical forms, especially verb tenses.

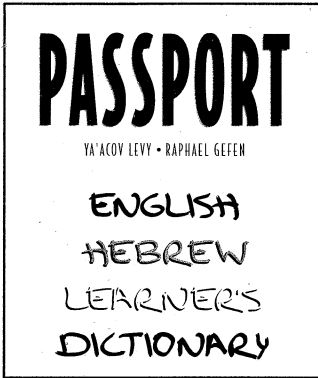
*PASSPORT* contains all the words likely to be required in the 3rd to 7th years of English studies. At the same time, it does not contain most words that learners do not need at this stage. The beauty of using such a dictionary is that its users do not have to wade through a lot of unnecessary text in order to find what they want, thus saving time and avoiding confusion and frustration. The results of its use are more readily rewarding. Not only are unnecessary headwords, difficult vocabulary and unfamiliar grammar and syntax avoided, but the examples of use utilise specially written,

didactically appropriate, phrases and sentences that are easy to grasp and retain.

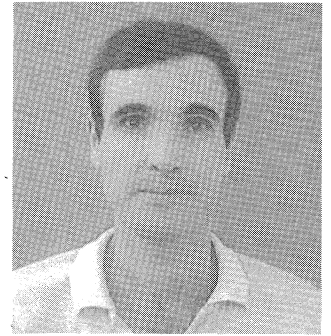
Subjecting lower-level learners to sentences that contain unfamiliar words, expressions, tenses and syntactic forms, is likely to discourage young learners from using the dictionary. A negative initial encounter with an unfriendly foreign language dictionary can deter students from using dictionaries at a later stage, even when they do have the necessary basis.

Actually, it was the assigning of high-school dictionaries by teachers to learners who are near-beginners, that triggered off our awareness of the need for a dictionary that is specifically designed to be used by pupils in primary and junior-high schools. We saw that rather than derive benefit from it, pupils confronted with a dictionary that is beyond their level, are discouraged from using a dictionary later on, because an image is created of it being difficult or complicated to use, incomprehensible and intimidating. Thus, by prescribing a higher-level dictionary than their pupils' actual ability, teachers with good intentions are liable to defeat their own purpose.

In conclusion, out-of-school exposure to English is a matter that has to be reckoned with. A major contribution to this out-of-school situation, where the teacher is not at hand to assist with the meanings of unfamiliar words, is having one's own dictionary suited to one's own level. Besides which, acquiring the dictionary-using habit, which leads to the development of dictionary-using skills, should start before the secondary school stage, and as close to the beginning of the foreign language learning process as possible. Having a dictionary tuned to one's own level promotes learner independence, and frees the teacher from a lot of unnecessary word-explaining.



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Ya'acov Levy

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His shirt clung to his wet body.

**clinic** *n.* מרפאה (פרטית או בבית-חולים)

**clip**<sup>1</sup> *n.* מהדק; תפס; "קליפס"  
 a paper clip ◊ a hair clip



**clip**<sup>2</sup> *v.* (clips, clipping, clipped)

1 להדק (יחד)  
 to clip papers together (with a paper clip)

2 לגזור; לקצץ; לגזור  
 She clipped her nails. ◊ to clip pictures from newspapers

**cloak** *n.* גלימה

**cloakroom** *n.* מלתחה  
 Leave your coat in the cloakroom.  
 ◊ **locker-room** מלתחה בבריכה וכד' נקראת

**clock** *n.* שעון  
 The clock is fast/slow. ◊ I set the alarm clock for 6 o'clock.

**watch** = שעות יד ◊

(a)round the clock

מסביב לשעון; 24 שעות ביממה  
 They are working around the clock to finish the project on time.

**clockwise** *adj., adv.* בכיוון מחוגי השעון  
 Move your finger clockwise.  
 ◊ opposite: **anticlockwise** or (Amer.) **counterclockwise**

**close**<sup>1</sup> *adj.*

1 קרוב  
 My house is close to the beach. ◊ The two offices are close together.

2 קרוב  
 a close friend

3 קרוב  
 There were close to 200 people at the party.

4 צמוד (תחרות וכד')

The contest was very close. He almost lost.

5 מדויק; קפדני; טוב  
 Pay close attention to what he says. ◊ Keep a close watch on them.

**close**<sup>2</sup> *adv.* קרוב; בסמוך  
 I live close to the hospital. ◊ Don't get too close to the monkeys! ◊ Bring it closer.

**close by** קרוב; סמוך לכאן  
 We live close by.

**get / come closer** להתקרב  
 She got / came closer to the house.

**close**<sup>3</sup> *v.* (closes, closing, closed)  
 לסגור; להיסגר  
 Close your eyes for a moment. ◊ The door closed automatically. ◊ The banks close at 1 pm today.

המלה **shut** יכולה להחליף את **close**, אבל כאשר משתמשים בצורת ה-ing מעדיפים להשתמש ב-close:

Quick! The doors are closing.

**close down** לסגור; להיסגר (עסק)  
 The business closed down because of financial difficulties.

**closed** *adj.*

1 סגור  
 The banks are closed today. ◊ The door is closed. ◊ with closed eyes

2 סגור  
 The list is closed.

3 סגור  
 The matter is closed.

**closely** *adv.* (= carefully)

בתשומת לב; בקפידה  
 He examined the picture closely. ◊ I watched them closely.

**closet** *n.* ארון (בייחוד לבגדים או מצעים)  
 a clothes/linen closet  
 ◊ באנגלית בריטית מקובלת יותר המלה **cupboard**

**cloth** *n.*

1 בד; אריג  
 cotton cloth ◊ several metres of cloth

2 מטלית  
 to wipe the table with a cloth  
 ◊ צורת הרבים בפירוש 2 היא **cloths**, ויש להבדיל אותה מ-**clothes** (בגדים).

3 מפת שולחן  
 a tablecloth

**clothe** *v.* (clothes, clothing, clothed)

להלביש  
 She clothed the baby all in white.  
 ◊ הפועל **dress** שימושי יותר.

**clothes** *n. pl.* בגדים  
 He took off his clothes and put on his pyjamas. ◊ What clothes was she wearing? ◊ Wait until I change my clothes.  
 ◊ **בגד** (פריט לבוש) =

**an article (or item) of clothing** בגד (לבוש שלם) = **outfit**