

The Editorial Principles Underlying the *PASSPORT* Dictionary

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PASSPORT English Learner's Dictionary seeks to satisfy the needs of "intermediate" learners of English as a foreign language - those numerous people, young and adult, students and professionals, the "man and woman in the street" - who require a working knowledge of the language for the purposes of everyday communication in speech and reading.

The vocabulary of approximately 11,500 English headwords consists of the most frequent words in the language likely to be encountered by these populations, and covers the important topic areas of different professions, including computers and information technology, leisure requirements, culture, public affairs, popular and serious journalism, travel, sport, school and university studies, and more.

The structure of the dictionary consists of the headword and, in most cases, a number of example sentences and phrases. The headwords are translated into the first language of the learner; where a word is polysemantic, each separate meaning is entered as a sub-entry and translated. The separation of these different meanings (sub-entries) and the

carefully chosen examples provide the essential context for understanding the headword, in accordance with the linguistic principle of *context-sensitivity*, i.e. the meaning lies in part in the context and may well vary according to the context.

In this way learners will not fall into the semantic trap of "the-same-word-different-meanings" polysemes existing in everyday language (apart from technical terms) and in addition will meet the word in its syntactic context, enabling the learner to see its grammatical uses in terms of word order, accompanying function words, tense, aspect and voice features for verbs (and in many cases the negative and interrogative forms). For reasons of space, not every word has this maximum contextualisation, but every effort has been made to locate and deal with potential semantic and syntactic problems in this way.

In order to be as user-friendly as possible and to prevent unnecessary searches in the dictionary for unfamiliar words in these examples, the language of the contextualizing sentences and phrases has been kept as simple and short as possible, with the verbal forms limited to the present, past and future tenses (positive, negative and interrogative), some modals (e.g. 'can', 'must') and occasionally the passive voice. Forms of the perfect aspect have been avoided, unless there is no alternative (e.g. with 'yet', 'since' and 'for').

The *PASSPORT* dictionary is genuinely international in scope and orientation. English is a language of world communication, and its major

varieties (British and American) are used everywhere. Accordingly, both American and British English are covered: different words (e.g. tap/faucet), different spellings (e.g. color/colour), different usage (e.g. subway), etc. Cross-references between American and British English are always provided, so that the user of this dictionary will not be confused.

PASSPORT is primarily a 'decoding' English learner's dictionary, enabling the user to understand English by means of the translation into the native language and by the example sentences and phrases. However, a *reverse dictionary* is also provided, in order to enable the learner to proceed from the first language into the foreign language ('encoding'): the reverse dictionary refers the learner to the English headwords by means of the *key* of the items which have been translated into the first language.

Every effort has been made to have this dictionary as up-to-date and relevant as possible, with headwords and examples in the Standard English of the 1990s, and dealing with topic areas, such as computers, with which beginner-to-intermediate learners will undoubtedly be familiar.

I am sure that this bilingualised dictionary - which contains sample sentences and phrases to contextualize and clarify the meaning, along with specific notes on usage, spelling, grammar and references to potential native-tongue interference - will answer the needs of the vast numbers of learners at this level of English as the Language of World Communication.