A dictionary tells you much more than the meaning of a word. You can discover its word class, if it changes, how to pronounce it, how to use it in a sentence, where it comes from, and even other words in the same family.

**Getting Started**

**Fill in the blanks.**

- Colour or bold headwords help you find words easily and different meanings are numbered. How many meanings of 'great' are there?
- Other words that come from the headword are listed too. What two words are derived from 'great'?

**Greek adjective**

to do with ancient or modern Greece or its people

**Greek noun**

1 the language of Greece, which has ancient and modern forms
2 a person from Greece

**Greek words in English**

The spelling of an English word often shows that it comes from ancient Greek. Many words which begin with ph- and pe- are Greek in origin (e.g. phobia, psychic), as are words beginning with ch- which have a k sound (e.g. chirodogy, chord, choreography, and chorus). The Greek origin of other words, like dragon and planet (from Greek words meaning respectively ‘serpent’ and ‘wanderer’) is less obvious. English uses many prefixes and suffixes of Greek origin. The prefixes bio-, eco-, mega-, and micro- are derived from the Greek words bios ‘life’, oikos ‘house’, megos ‘great’, and mikros ‘small’, and are still being used to form new words, like biodiversity, ecosystem, mega-city, and microwave. And the Greek words graphen ‘to write’, logia ‘study’, and pathèla ‘feeling’ have produced the suffixes -graphy, -logy, and -pathy, which feature in many English words, such as biography, calligraphy, astrology, mythology, sympathy, and telephony.

**Word histories**

Word histories explain how words changed over time. What is the origin of ‘pomegranate’?

**Synonyms build your vocabulary.** Choose a synonym for ‘great’.

**Citations, or sentences from books, show how writers use the word.** What is a unicorn?

**Language panels**

Give more information on key topics to help you understand more. Give an example of onomatopoeia.

**You can use your Oxford English Dictionary for Schools for these activities**

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