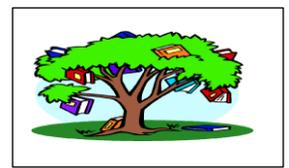


# Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



## Finding the Word: Diction

*Words are acquired through meaningful necessity.*

- ❖ Words help process life-- an arsenal of words can serve to make sense of what goes on.
- ❖ We remember words that make things happen. A word that is effective or meaningful is going to be remembered in order to achieve something or understand new challenges.

*English words are meaningful in context*

- ❖ A single English word can have several different meanings.
- ❖ One phenomenon can have several words to give different nuances.
  - A thesaurus can help work through this.
- ❖ A word's meaning is determined by its context (what surrounds it).
- ❖ If a word "works" in a context, it will be remembered to be used again in the same context.
  - Encountering a word in a variety of contexts can refine and/or alter its meaning.
- ❖ The words we have are "tools in the toolbox."

*English comes from several places*

- ❖ Day- to-day words from the Germanic-speaking Anglo-Saxons
- ❖ More elevated vocabulary from the French-speaking Normans
- ❖ Latin roots with prefixes and suffixes (we generally don't use roots by themselves)
- ❖ Greek roots and affixes (words fit together to give a scientific or philosophical term)
- ❖ Cognates from other languages

*Use context and etymology to help build vocabulary*

- ❖ Look up words as you read. Notice the context (how the word is used in its location).
  - The Oxford New Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus has usage examples & word studies.
- ❖ Just because the word is meaningful for you doesn't mean you have the right definition.
  - Keep interacting with English-- read, speak, listen, write.
  - Don't hesitate to change your personal definitions.
- ❖ Become familiar with some Latin and Greek. Memorize the few prefixes and suffixes.
- ❖ Most of us know Germanic words from extensive daily use.

*Play some games*

- ❖ Crossword puzzles
- ❖ Scrabble