
Longman Elementary Dictionary and Thesaurus

Review by Paul Morley

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In this resource book, *Longman Elementary Dictionary and Thesaurus – With color photographs and illustrations*, the target audience is elementary-age children, grades 3-5. This includes both the native English-speaking child still developing his/her own language and the second language learner.

The layout and format of the book is divided into three sections: the dictionary, thesaurus, and references. The first two sections contain a beautiful compilation of colored pictures that go along with certain words with easily understood definitions and examples. Each word in the dictionary is bolded in blue to give any child an easy time finding the word needed. The thesaurus section has bolded pink words using the same format for ease and accessibility. Using these colors is very pleasing to the eye helping any young learner navigate through its pages.

Additional attractive features are the sporadically located color coded inserts that aid in expanding knowledge of words, such as antonyms and synonyms, word origins, word choice, word families, word building, and grammar. This is found in the dictionary section only, where as the thesaurus has some antonyms and fewer colored pictures than the dictionary section.

The end of the book includes a reference section which features charts and diagrams of the solar system, the water cycle, the 50 states of the U.S., key events in American history, U.S. presidents, weights and measures, periodic table of elements, affixes and root words, academic word list, and irregular verbs. This is a nice section to supplement different curricula, with the exception of the periodic table that would benefit middle and high school students better. Also in this section, there is a picture dictionary that is categorized according to theme with simple context words found in a student's environment geared toward beginning learners.

With all the exciting additions that have been added to this children's dictionary, there are some areas of concern that have arisen when using this resource. As a 3rd grade teacher with several second language learners in my class, the use of higher academic language with some of the word help inserts were confusing and

had to be taught before they became beneficial. For example, the Word Families help box confused many students because of the term ‘word families’. Within the grammar world, these are words with different endings to change its part of speech (ex. discuss/discussion); this is the meaning that is used in this dictionary. However, within the elementary world, ‘word families’ is a term used when teaching young readers words with the same endings but different beginnings (-op, mop/top/pop). As such, using this dictionary did serve a springboard for classroom discussions about metalanguage terms.

Overall, the look and format of the book is very appealing to young learners with its vibrant colors and ease of use. However, the level of vocabulary and grammar used in certain aid inserts is higher than 3rd grade level making those features more difficult for optimal use in low elementary classes.

About the Reviewer

After several years of teaching third grade elementary in Utah County, Paul Morley now teaches fifth grade in the Spanish-English Dual Immersion program at Dixie Sun Elementary School in St. George, Utah. In addition to his teaching license, he has received an associate’s degree in Spanish, bachelor’s degree in TESOL, and a graduate certificate in the same. His interest areas include Elementary Language Learning for both native and non-native speakers and Drama.