

BLIS semester II
(paper – 5)
Reference Sources & Services
Topic – **Dictionary**
e-content

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Dictionary

The word `dictionary is derived from the medieval Latin word `dictionarium - a collection of words. It originates from the term `diction' meaning `a mode of expression'. A dictionary generally deals with the collection of general words either of a language or of special terms of a particular subject. It usually defines terms and gives their alternate meaning, usage, etc. The words are arranged in some definite order, usually alphabetical.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF DICTIONARIES

Though dictionaries are defined as reference books consisting of words and phrases, they cover almost every field of interest. We have a wide range and variety of dictionaries. They are divided into different categories according to their nature and scope of contents. Usually, librarians categorise them into the following four groups as it facilitates them in the organisation of the reference collection.

- General Language Dictionaries
- Special Dictionaries
- Dictionaries Useful for Translations
- Subject Dictionaries

➤ General Language Dictionaries

They are called general dictionaries as they deal with the common words of a language. They are most popular and readily used dictionaries. These may be classified into three groups according to the purpose, size, volume and user's age.

a) According to purpose

i) Prescriptive

ii) Descriptive

b) According to size

i) Unabridged

ii) Semi-abridged or Desk

iii) Abridged or Pocket

c) According to user's age

i) Children

ii) Junior

iii) Adult

➤ Special Dictionaries

The dictionaries, which are compiled for a special purpose or aspects of a language, are called special dictionaries. Most of these aspects of words, which are separately dealt with in special dictionaries; are also covered in general dictionaries. Hence, they are sometimes known as supplementary word books. They deal with the special aspects of the words much more comprehensively than the general

dictionaries. There are numerous forms and varieties of specialised dictionaries. Here, they are divided into three groups according to their content and scope.

- Dictionaries covering specific linguistic aspects of the words - Dictionary of Punctuation, Pronunciation Synonyms and Antonyms
- Dictionaries Covering a Special Type or Class of Words - Dictionary of Slang Words , New Words etc.
- Dictionaries Dealing with Literary Aspects and Catering; to Special Group of Persons - Dictionary of Proverbs, Phrases, Idioms etc.

➤ Dictionaries Useful for Translations

"Dictionaries giving meaning of words from one language into another language/languages are known as bilingual or multilingual dictionaries. We are all familiar with English-Hindi, English - Tamil or English-Urdu dictionaries.

a) Bilingual Dictionaries

Bilingual dictionaries, giving meaning in one or two other languages.

B) Multilingual Dictionaries

Multilingual dictionaries giving equivalent words in three or more languages.

➤ Subject Dictionaries

Dictionaries dealing with the terms of a particular subject are known as subject dictionaries. The rapid development in all the fields of knowledge, has necessitated in the compilation of subject

dictionaries devoted to the specific subject fields, occupations and professions. This is especially true for the fast advancing subjects of science and technology. General dictionaries cover most of the terms of the subjects in humanities. As specialisation increases, so do the scientific dictionaries. They differ from general language dictionaries in two ways:

- They include specialised technical terms of a particular discipline not usually found in general dictionaries.
- They give detailed descriptions of words. They not only define the terms but explain and comment on them.