

## Learning vocabulary: tips and techniques

### A Guessing meaning from context

When you meet an unknown word, first try to guess the meaning from the context – the surrounding words and the situation.

Read the text on the right and see how words have meaning in relation to other words.

- You know that a *PC* is a type of 'computer' and *digital music* relates to 'music on computers'.
- You can guess that *are digitizing* is a verb because it derives from 'digit', it is in the form of the present continuous, and it goes with the subject 'families' and the object 'home movies'.
- Words change their shape by adding prefixes and suffixes; for example, we add the prefix *inter-* to *net* and form *Internet*, and we add the suffix *-age* to *store* and form *storage*. (See Units 33 and 34.)

#### *The birth of a revolution*

Kids use PCs to do homework, access information via the Internet for research, communicate with pals, play video games and collect digital music. Parents, too, use the PC for communication and entertainment but also let it handle mundane tasks like balancing the checkbook, monitoring investments, preparing tax returns, and tracking the family's genealogy. With the advent of more powerful PCs with greater storage capacity, families are digitizing home movies and photos are stored on the home computer. *Miami Herald*



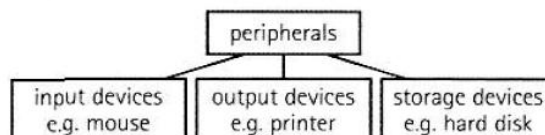
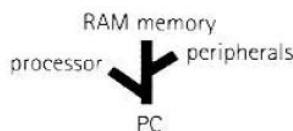
### B Organizing vocabulary

Read the text again. You can organize words in your notebook in different ways.

	How?	Examples
■ Meaning	definition lexical family synonyms translation	<i>The Internet is a global network of computers. digit (root), digital, digitally, digitize, digitizer, digitized</i> <i>handle = manage; advent = arrival</i> <i>storage = almacenamiento (Spanish)</i>
■ Word class	(n), (v), (adj), etc.	<i>communication (n); communicate (v)</i>
■ Word building	prefixes suffixes compounds	<i>Internet; research</i> <i>information; investment; powerful</i> <i>checkbook (cheque + book)</i>
■ Collocations	word partners, phrases	<i>access information; handle tasks</i>

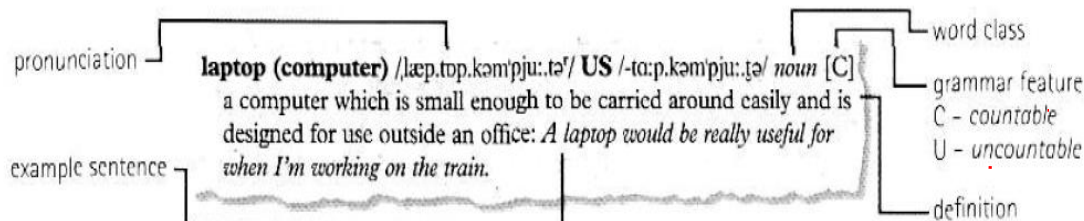
BrE: chequebook  
AmE: checkbook

Word trees and spidergrams can help you build up your own mental maps of vocabulary areas. You can make diagrams to classify things.



### C Using a dictionary

A monolingual dictionary gives you a lot of information about words. Look at this entry.



Use a bilingual dictionary if you find it easier. You may like to look at some Cambridge dictionaries at [www.dictionary.cambridge.org](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org). For ICT, you can also use an online computer dictionary.

(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

1 Look at the words in the box. Are they nouns, verbs or adjectives?

financial    Internet    electronic    print    design    microchips

2 Read A opposite. Complete this text with words from exercise 1. Use the context to help you.

### A digital era

Computers have changed the way we do everyday things, such as working, shopping and looking for information. We (1) ..... houses with the help of PCs; we buy books or make flight reservations on the (2) ..... ; we use gadgets that spring to life the instant they are switched on, for example the mobile phone, the music player, or the car ignition, all of which use (3) ..... . Many people now work at home, and they communicate with their office by computer and telephone. This is called 'teleworking'. With the appropriate hardware and software, a PC can do almost anything you ask. It's a magical typewriter that allows you to type and (4) ..... any sort of document. It's a calculating machine that makes (5) ..... calculations. It's a filing cabinet that manages large collections of data. It's a personal communicator that lets you interact with friends. It's a small lab that helps you edit photos and movies. And if you like (6) ..... entertainment, you can also use it to relax with games.

3 Match the words in exercise 1 with the following definitions.

- 1 tiny pieces of silicon containing complex electronic circuits
- 2 to make or draw plans for something
- 3 relating to money or how money is managed
- 4 involving the use of electric current in devices such as TV sets or computers
- 5 the large system of connected computers around the world
- 6 to produce text and pictures using a printer

4 Organize these words as in B opposite.

mobile phone    interact    communicator    teleworking  
calculating    calculations    typewriter

- |           |                |  |
|-----------|----------------|--|
| ■ Meaning | definition     | (1) ..... : working at home, while communicating with your office by computer or telephone |
|           | lexical family | calculate, calculator, (2) ..... (3) .....   |
|           | synonyms       | gadgets = small devices  |
|           | translation    | switch on = (4) .....  |
- |                 |           |                     |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------------|
| ■ Word building | prefixes  | (5) .....           |
|                 | suffixes  | (6) .....           |
|                 | compounds | (7) ..... (8) ..... |
- |                |               |                                     |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| ■ Collocations | word partners | print a document; make calculations |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|

5 Look at this dictionary entry. Put these labels in the correct place.

- |                 |                    |              |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1 pronunciation | 3 example sentence | 5 word class |
| 2 definition    | 4 grammar feature  |              |

a .....      b .....      c .....

**data** /'deɪ.tə/ US /-tə/ *group noun* [U]  
 information, especially facts or numbers, collected for examination and consideration and used to help decision-making, or information in an electronic form that can be stored and processed by a computer:  
*The data was/were collected by various researchers. Now the data is being transferred from magnetic tape to hard disk.*

d .....  
 e .....

(Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary)