

8. USING A DICTIONARY

For most students (even those who speak English very well), using a **learner's dictionary** (written for students who speak English as a second language) is much more helpful than using an **ordinary dictionary**.

You can see the difference by **comparing two definitions** of the word *humble*:

- From an **ordinary dictionary**: *free from pride or vanity; modest; meek; unassuming*
- From a **learner's dictionary**: *tending to consider yourself as having no special importance that makes you better than others; not proud*
 - *He's a humble man and he's not comfortable talking about his own achievements.*

Look at the different parts of a definition from a learner's dictionary:

brief definitions if the word has more than one meaning	<p>humble NOT PROUD / 'hʌm.bəl / <i>adj.</i> tending to consider yourself as having no special importance that makes you better than others; not proud. <i>He's a humble man and he's not comfortable talking about his own achievements.</i></p>	how the word is pronounced
	<p>humbly / 'hʌm.bli / <i>adv.</i> <i>I humbly ask your pardon.</i></p>	the word's part of speech (adjective)
	<p>humble LOW IN RANK <i>adj.</i> Low in rank or position; poor. <i>She rose from humble origins to become one of the best political writers in the world.</i></p> <p>humbly <i>adv.</i> <i>They live simply (= humbly)</i></p>	
complete definition of the word	<p>humble MAKE SOMEONE LESS IMPORTANT <i>v.</i> to make <i>sb</i> understand that they are not as important or special as they thought they were.</p> <p><i>The world champion was humbled (= unexpectedly defeated) by an unknown outsider in last night's race.</i></p>	<i>sb*</i> = somebody <i>sth*</i> = something
word in a sentence		

* Note: Look at the beginning of a dictionary for a list of abbreviations.

Excerpted and adapted from: *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* and *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary Online* (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>).

- To use an **online learner's dictionary**, go to: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org>
Choose the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.
- If you would like to **buy a learner's dictionary**, here are some choices:
Cambridge Dictionary of American English, Longman Dictionary of American English, Oxford Dictionary of American English.