

# Cool School Tools



## FIGURE IT OUT

Imagine that you are reading and you come across a word you don't know. What do you do? Here are a couple of ways to take on a new word and make it your friend.

1. Look again. Look at each letter carefully, and you may realize that it is a word you know – or know part of.
2. Read the sentence and see how the word is used to see whether you can guess what it means by the rest of the sentence. This is called using the context.
3. Check to see whether the word has a prefix, that is, whether it's a word part attached to the beginning of a word. "Un-" attached to the beginning of the word "happy," for example, makes the word "unhappy." If you take off the prefix you might be able to recognize the word.

4. Check to see whether the word has a suffix, that is, whether it's a word part attached to the end of a word. "-ness" attached to the word "happy," for example, makes "happiness" (the "y" is changed to an "i" when the suffix is added). If you take the suffix off, you might be able to recognize the word.

5. See whether you can detect the stem or root word. In the word "endearing," for example, if you took off the prefix "en-" and the suffix "-ing," you'd be left with the word "dear." Then you might be able to guess what the word "endearing" means (something that is "dear" or "lovable").

6. Finally, if you can't figure a word out on your own, remember, that's why you have a dictionary.

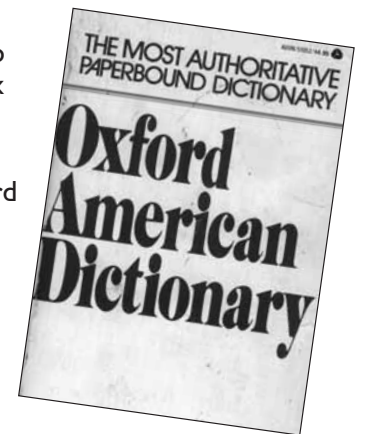
## Try To Remember

There are some easy ways to help yourself remember things you need to know.

### Memory Aids

Let's say you have to remember some facts for a test. One thing you can do is write down each fact and underline the first letter in each one. Then take the letters and form them into a real or silly word or sentence that you can remember. For example, let's say you need to remember the names and the order of the planets from the **Sun** – **M**ercury, **V**enus, **E**arth, **M**ars, **J**upiter, **S**aturn, **U**ranus, **N**eptune. You could use the sentence "**Monty's Very Enormous Mouse Just Sat Upon Nancy,**" using the first letter of the name of each planet.

Or, you could make up a song to a tune you know really well. Think about it, how do you often recall the letters of the alphabet song? Don't you sing it in your head? Well, tunes are a great way to recall facts. Say you use the tune to "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." You could write lyrics to help you remember the planet order, and the tune will be your guide. So the song might go something like this:



Twinkle twinkle **M**ercury,  
**V**enus and **E**arth come next you see.  
**M**ars and **J**upiter are up there, too.  
**S**aturn and **U**ranus also twinkle for you.  
**N**eptune's the last and mighty fine,

*Now you've got all the planets in line!*