

## Finding the correct entry in the MED

Some words in the dictionary have more than one entry. That is because the same word can belong to different word classes. For example, the word *limit* can be either a verb or a noun, so there are two entries: **limit<sup>1</sup>**, which is a verb, and **limit<sup>2</sup>**, which is a noun. Notice the small numbers <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>: they tell you that there is more than one entry for the word.

**limit<sup>1</sup>** /'lɪmɪt/ verb [T] ★★★  
1 to prevent a number, amount, or effect from

**limit<sup>2</sup>** /'lɪmɪt/ noun [C] ★★★  
1 the greatest amount or level of something that is possible: +to *Obviously there is a limit to the amount we*

### Activity 1

This activity focuses on words which have the same spelling, but different word classes. Look up the word *limp* in the dictionary and answer the questions.

- How many entries are there for the word *limp*? \_\_\_\_\_
- In which word classes is the word *limp* used?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How many meanings are explained for the adjective *limp*? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the noun *limp* used in the plural? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where do you find the adverb *limply*?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In which meaning of which entry for *limp* do you find the following examples:
  - Rachel walks with a slight limp. \_\_\_\_\_
  - He was limping slightly and he looked tired. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a limp effort \_\_\_\_\_
  - The yacht is limping towards the island. \_\_\_\_\_
  - limp and lifeless hair \_\_\_\_\_

Some words in English have the same spelling but two different meanings and pronunciations. These words are called *homographs*. The dictionary shows these in separate entries and the small numbers are used for these headwords too. The word *lead* for instance has three different entries:

**lead<sup>1</sup>** /li:d/ (past tense and past participle **led** /led/) verb ★★★

**lead<sup>2</sup>** /li:d/ noun ★★★

**lead<sup>3</sup>** /led/ noun ★  
1 [U] a soft heavy grey metal used especially in the past

### Activity 2

This activity focuses on words which have the same spelling, but different meanings and sometimes different pronunciations. Circle the pairs of words that are pronounced differently in the sentences. Then write the pronunciation of each word. Check in your dictionary.

- lead / lead**
  - Lead is a type of metal. \_\_\_\_\_
  - He was already in the lead after the first lap. \_\_\_\_\_
- mine / mine**
  - People still mine for gold in this area. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Is this your copy or mine? \_\_\_\_\_
- read / read**
  - I must read his new book – everyone tells me it's excellent. \_\_\_\_\_
  - I only read ten books last year. \_\_\_\_\_
- wind / wind**
  - The southerly wind brought moist air from the sea. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't forget to wind the clock up before you go to bed. \_\_\_\_\_
- bear / bear**
  - I can't bear the thought of moving again. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A polar bear can run as fast as 40 kilometres per hour. \_\_\_\_\_