ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Alphabetical order

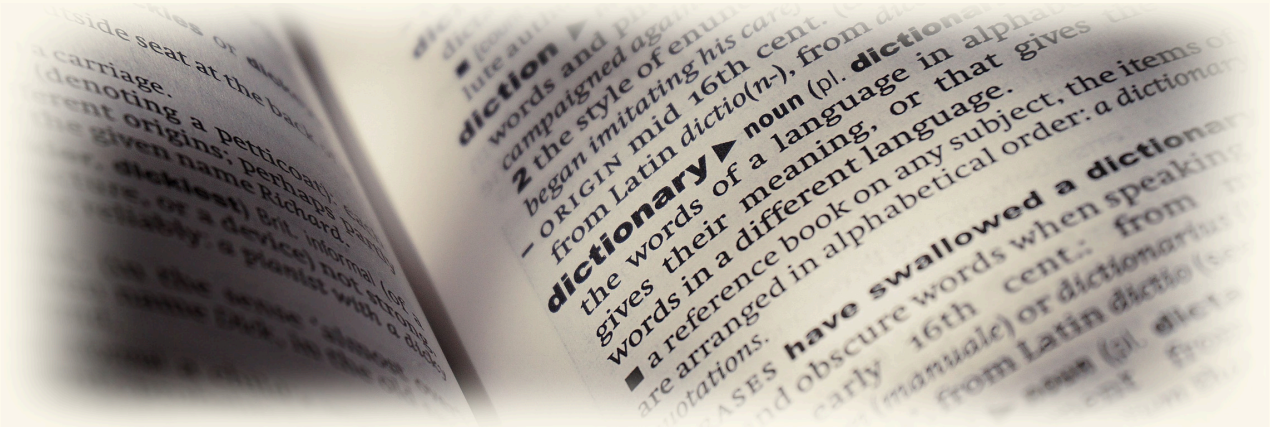
Difficulty level: Easy

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you find a name in a class list, a word in a dictionary, or a book on a library shelf without hunting through every single one. Alphabetical order lets you skip straight to the right section instead of starting at the beginning. It is a small skill, but it saves time every time you look something up.



Rule

Alphabetical order: put words in order by comparing their letters from left to right.

The word whose first differing letter comes earlier in the alphabet comes first, and if the first letters match, compare the second letters, then the third, and so on.

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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Put these words in alphabetical order: dog, apple, cat

SOLUTION

Look at the first letter of each word: d, a, c.

Put those letters in alphabet order: a, c, d.

So the order is: apple, cat, dog.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Put these words in alphabetical order: sun, moon, star

SOLUTION

Look at the first letter of each word: s, m, s.

Two words start with s, so compare their second letters: u in sun, t in star; t comes before u.

So the order is: moon, star, sun.

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Practice questions

1

List A:
doll
apple
ball
Put them in alphabetical order.

A ball, apple, doll

B apple, ball, doll

C doll, ball, apple

D apple, doll, ball

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List B:
pig
cow
dog
Which word comes first in alphabetical order?

A pig

B cow

C dog

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List C:
red
blue
green
Which word comes second in alphabetical order?

A red

B blue

C green

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List D:
three
one
two
Which word comes last in alphabetical order?

A one

B three

C two

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List E:
zebra
bear
lion
Which word comes first, and which comes last?

A bear first, zebra last

B zebra first, bear last

C lion first, zebra last

D bear first, lion last

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List F:
train
bus
car
How many words come before ‘train’ in alphabetical order?

A 0

B 1

C 2

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List G:
ruler
book
pen
Put them in alphabetical order, then write the word that comes in the middle.

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List H:
cookie
cake
candy
All three start with c, so use the second letter. Put them in alphabetical order.

A cookie, cake, candy

B cake, candy, cookie

C candy, cake, cookie

D cake, cookie, candy

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List I:
goat
fish
frog
Fish and frog both start with f. Which letter decides their order?

A The first letter

B The second letter

C The third letter

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List J:
jump
jam
jog
Put them in alphabetical order.

A jump, jog, jam

B jam, jump, jog

C jog, jam, jump

D jam, jog, jump

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ANSWER KEY

1. apple, ball, doll

2. cow

3. green

4. two

5. bear first, zebra last

6. 2

7. pen

8. cake, candy, cookie

9. The second letter

10. jam, jog, jump

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