

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

USE A DICTIONARY

- I Do you know what the words “e-cigarette”, “voluntourism” and “fo’shizzle” mean? If you don’t, there is little point in looking them up in the dictionary you have been using for years because these words are recent additions to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).
- II The idea of compiling a comprehensive dictionary was suggested in 1857 by members of the Philological Society of London. However, it was too much work, and in 1879 the work was taken over by Oxford University. It was thought that it would only take ten years to complete, but the first volume was only finished in 1884. The tenth and final volume came out in 1928. The dictionary had taken much longer to complete than people thought it would because the English language is always changing.
- III Over the course of the 20th century, the OED continued to grow until it was published as a 20-volume work in 1989. Unlike libraries, most people could not afford or find the space on their bookshelves for the entire set, but technology came to the rescue a few years later when the whole of the OED was released as a CD-ROM in 1992. Today, the whole dictionary can be found online.
- IV A language is constantly developing, so a dictionary needs to reflect this. Technological developments are the reason for many of the new words. Thirty years ago, no one would have known what a “smartphone” or a “selfie” was, for instance. Furthermore, words can take on new meanings. In the past, a mouse meant a small animal. Today, most of us have one on our desk. An “e-cigarette” is the name that has been given to the electronic device that is used by smokers as a way of getting the effect of smoking without using real cigarettes. New words are often invented by combining two existing words, such as “voluntourism”, which is when tourists spend time doing voluntary work. And of course, there is slang, which is constantly changing. So for the record, “fo’shizzle” in hip-hop slang simply means “for sure”.

1 Choose the correct answer.

- 1 Why does the writer mention the word “fo’shizzle”?
 - a It is a word that nobody understands.
 - b It has always appeared in the dictionary.
 - c It is a new word in the dictionary.
- 2 Slang is mentioned in the article because it is
 - a a bad way of speaking English
 - b a reason for adding new words to the dictionary
 - c a new word in the dictionary

2 Decide if the following sentences are true (T) or false (F). Find evidence in the text to support your answers.

- 1 At first, people did not realise that the OED would take so long to complete.
.....
- 2 In 1989, libraries could not afford the new version of the OED.
.....

3 Complete the sentences.

- 1 In the 19th century, an English-language dictionary was needed because
.....
- 2 The development of the CD-ROM that contains the entire OED made it possible
.....

4 Answer the questions.

1 What are the three ways in which a person today can use the *Oxford English Dictionary*?

.....

2 Why does the writer mention a mouse in the final paragraph?

.....

5 Find words or expressions in the text that mean:

1 new (paragraph I)

2 complete (paragraph II)

3 during (paragraph III)

4 without a doubt (paragraph IV)