# Lesson Skill: Word reference materials

**Strand**    Reading — Vocabulary

**SOL**    3.4

4.4

5.4

## Materials
- Copies of word references such as a dictionary, glossary, and thesaurus
- Copies of Word Resource Lotus for each student group (attached)
- URLs for online word resources such as a student dictionary and thesaurus
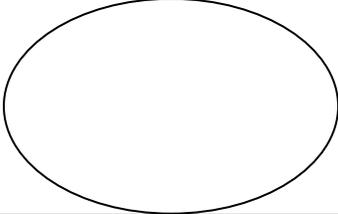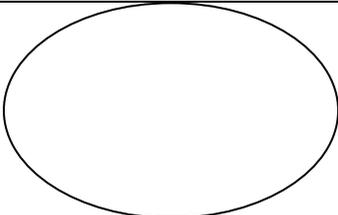- Available technology

## Lesson
1. As a review, have the class brainstorm reference materials (including but not limited to dictionary, thesaurus, index, glossary, atlas, almanac, encyclopedia, phone book). Record the list on the board or electronic display for student reference.

2. Circle the words "glossary," "thesaurus," and "dictionary" on the list. Give students 30 seconds to draw a conclusion about what the words have in common. At the end of 30 seconds, have students share their conclusion with a student sitting next to him/her. Explain to students these three reference sources all help readers and writers locate specific information about words. Therefore, dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses are called word reference resources.

3. Divide students into three groups, and assign each group a different word reference resource. Ask students to familiarize themselves with their resource so they can complete their Word Reference Lotus. When each group has completed its lotus, ask them to share the conclusions with the class, while the rest of the class takes notes on the reference lotus.

4. After each group has shared conclusions, reinforce the primary purpose or use of each word reference material. Reiterate that dictionaries are used to determine the meanings (or definitions) of unknown words. Dictionaries may also identify the part of speech of the word and may offer synonyms and antonyms for the word. Explain that thesauruses also offer lists of synonyms, or words with the same meaning as an original word. Thesauruses are often used by writers to replace overused words in their writing. Remind students that glossaries are similar to dictionaries in that they give the meaning of a particular word, but differ in that glossaries are not a separate book but instead a section in the back of a textbook or other nonfiction text.

5. Using available technology, demonstrate accessing an online student dictionary and online student thesaurus. Ask students to write down the URL on their Word Reference Lotus for future use at home and/or in the classroom.
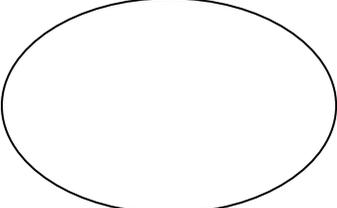
**Strategies for Differentiation**

- Give students a modified lotus diagram that is empty, except for the middle box which will have the reference resource written, i.e., dictionary, thesaurus, glossary. Guide students in completing the diagram.
- Groups can be differentiated with varied lotus diagrams.
- Give students tags with descriptions of the reference materials. Ask them to locate the reference material in the classroom. For example, one tag may read "word reference found in a book," and the student would locate a glossary.
- Give students scenarios of a reference material being used. Have students cite the resource and support their answer.
- Group students to complete the lesson based on readiness, interest, learning style, or level of comfort.
- Prepare a picture board of word reference materials for students who learn better visually.

# Word Reference Lotus

| Book or part of a book? | Definition of words? Yes or No | Synonyms of words? Yes, No, Sometimes |
|---|---|---|
| How do readers use this reference material? | | Part of speech of words? Yes, No |
| How do writers use this reference material? | Example of a *dictionary* entry: | Example of an online version of this reference: |

| Book or part of a book? | Definition of words? Yes or No | Synonyms of words? Yes, No, Sometimes |
|---|---|---|
| How do readers use this reference material? | | Part of speech of words? Yes, No |
| How do writers use this reference material? | Example of a *glossary* entry: | Example of an online version of this reference: |

| Book<br>or<br>part of a book? | Definition of words?<br><br>Yes or No | Synonyms of words?<br><br>Yes, No, Sometimes |
|---|---|---|
| How do readers use this reference material? | | Part of speech of words?<br><br>Yes, No |
| How do writers use this reference material? | Example of a *thesaurus* entry: | Example of an online version of this reference: |