

The Dictionary

Alphabetical order

In a dictionary words are ordered alphabetically - from A to Z. You need to know the alphabet order to be able to search for words. If you get confused about the order of the letters in the alphabet, you can practise saying it in your head or finger spelling it. You can also write it down on paper so you can refer to it when you look up a word in the dictionary.

Knowing the first letter of a word is not enough. Once you have found the right section for a word that starts with a particular letter, you need to check for the second letter of the word to work out where the word is going to be. For example, the word **date** comes before the word **doubt** because the second letter in **date** (**a**) comes before the second letter in **doubt** (**o**) in the alphabet.

For long words, you may need to repeat this process for the third letter, the fourth letter and sometimes more. For example, to work out the order of the words **paste**, **particular** and **pavement**, you need to look at the third letter because all three words start with **pa**.

Here the order is:

particular
paste
pavement

Of the third letters in the words, **r** is first in the alphabet, then **s** and finally **v**.