

Vocabulary Strategy

SPECIALIZED DICTIONARIES

Specialized dictionaries provide information on words related to particular subjects. In addition to language references, such as bilingual dictionaries, libraries may have dictionaries on subjects as diverse as business, food, and medicine. To illustrate the difference between a general and a specialized dictionary, study the two entries below.

GENERAL DICTIONARY (ONLINE)

adobe, (ə'dō-bē) **n.** **1.** a brick or building material of sun-dried earth and straw. **2.** a structure made of adobe bricks. **3.** a heavy clay used in making adobe bricks; broadly : alluvial or playa clay in desert or arid regions. — *ado·be·like* \-līk\ **adj.**

DICTIONARY OF ARCHITECTURE (ONLINE)

Adobe is a term widely used in the southwestern United States and Spanish speaking countries. Although the word is often used to describe an architectural style, adobe is actually a building material.

Adobe “bricks” are usually made with tightly compacted earth, clay, and straw. However, construction methods and the composition of the adobe will vary according to climate and local customs.

Sometimes an asphalt emulsion is added to help waterproof the adobe bricks. A mixture of Portland cement and lime may also be added, but these materials will add to the cost. In parts of Latin America, fermented cactus juice is used for waterproofing.

Directions: Using the examples above as needed, respond to the questions.

- 1.** Which dictionary provides more than one definition of *adobe*?

- 2.** Which dictionary provides links, or cross-references, to related information?

- 3.** If you were reading a story and were confused by the term *adobe*, which dictionary would be more useful? Why?

- 4.** Which dictionary provides a pronunciation guide?

- 5.** Which dictionary provides more than one part of speech for the word *adobe*?
