



# Elks Questions and Answers

For more information, visit the Dictionary Project at [www.dictionaryproject.org](http://www.dictionaryproject.org)

## Q: WHAT IS THE DICTIONARY PROJECT?

A: A community Service project with the goal of presenting a personal dictionary to each third grade student in the United States.

## Q: WHY SHOULD ELKS BE INVOLVED?

A: Because it is:

- a wonderful literacy project
- an opportunity to be involved in a hands-on project that does not require a lot of time.
- relatively inexpensive
- an opportunity to unite with other people in the community in a cooperative effort to distribute more dictionaries to more students and schools
- a program praised by school administrators, teachers, students, parents and news media.

## Q: HOW DO WE BEGIN?

**Step One:** Contact your local school principals or school superintendents and explain the project. Once permission is granted to proceed with the project, obtain the number of third grade students enrolled in each school you plan to cover.

By cooperating with other organizations in your area, you may be able to increase the number of schools who will benefit from the project. If one organization is giving the Student Dictionary to the third grade students, you can inquire about giving Spanish/English or French/English dictionaries to the students in addition to the Student Dictionary. It does not work well to present only the bi-lingual dictionaries to individual students as they still want the same one that the other students receive.

**Step Two:** Prepare to personalize the dictionaries while waiting for their arrival. Label designs can be downloaded from the Dictionary Project Web Site through the Get Involved link. Or you can design your own label. Once the dictionaries have arrived, arrange to have a "work party" to place the labels and an Elks Drug Awareness book mark in each of the books.

Let your members know of your participation in the Dictionary Project. Some of them may want to purchase dictionaries for a particular school in memory or honor of a family member. When this is done, the labels should reflect the involvement and contributions of all.

When ordering dictionaries, be sure to order enough to give one to each classroom teacher. On the presentation day, take extra dictionaries, including labels and book marks, for new students.

**Step Three:** Points to make during your brief visit:

- Introduce yourself. Ask the students to put their first and last name in the dictionary so that if they lose the book, it can be returned to them.
- Explain that you are visiting their school to give each student his/her own personal dictionary as a gift.
- Try to engage the students as much as possible because they want to contribute to the conversation.
- Ask why people use dictionaries; then emphasize that in the business world it is important to spell words correctly. A command of the English language makes you more effective in your work. A dictionary is a tool that everyone can use.
- Invite the students to look up an unfamiliar word in their dictionary and read the definition. Or ask the students to suggest words and then look up a few of the words. Talk about the meaning and discuss how some of the words have multiple meanings.
- Encourage the students to use the dictionary every day. They are not expected to spell every word correctly from memory, but they are expected to use a dictionary so that in all of their writing every word is spelled correctly.
- Have someone take photos of individual student reactions to the dictionaries and include these photos in your Lodge bulletin to enhance member pride and support.
- Don't wear out your welcome. The visit should last 10 - 15 minutes.

Before leaving, make sure school officials know that the Elks have a well established Drug Awareness Program and your Lodge can provide numerous materials at no cost to the school. Many schools will work with you in conducting your Red Ribbon Week. Many schools also use our pamphlets in their health classes.

You can also encourage the school officials to have their students participate in the Americanism Essay Contest program as well.