

# “Meaning Indicators” in Spanish-English/English-Spanish Dictionaries

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## What do I mean by “meaning indicators”?

- “Access facilitating devices” (Lew, 2010)
- Used to direct users to the information they are looking for in long entries with many senses
- Currently also widely used in learner’s dictionaries
  - Several names currently in use: *Signposts* (Longman); *Guidewords* (Cambridge); *Short cuts* (Oxford)
  - Take the form of a navigational box or menu (Macmillan)

## What do I mean by “meaning indicators”?

- Present in both printed and digital formats
- Nichols (*Dictionaries* 2006:165):
  - “A signpost is simply a word or short phrase that summarizes the sense and comes after the sense number and before the definition. [...] The goal is for the signpost to stand out so the eye can skim the entry quickly.”

Part of the entry for **pass**<sub>[verb]</sub>*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th ed.* (1/2)**MOVE** 1 to move past or to the other side of somebody/something

2 to go or move in the direction mentioned

3 to make something move in the direction or into the position mentioned

**GIVE** 4 to give something to somebody by putting it into their hands or in a place where they can easily reach it**BALL** 5 (in ball games) to kick, hit or throw the ball to a player of your own side**AFTER DEATH** to be given to another person after first belonging to somebody else, especially after the first person has died**BECOME GREATER** 7 (of an amount) to become greater than a particular total**CHANGE** 8 to change from one state or condition to another**TIME** 9 when time passes, it goes by

10 to spend time, especially when you are bored or waiting for something

**END** 11 to come to an end; to be over

**TEST/EXAM** 12 to achieve the required standard in an exam, a test, etc.  
13 to test somebody and decide that they are good enough, according to an agreed standard

**LAW/PROPOSAL** 14 to accept a proposal, law, etc. by voting

**HAPPEN** 15 to be allowed  
16 to happen; to be said or done

**NOT KNOW** 17 [to say that you do not know the answer to a question, especially during a quiz

**NOT WANT** 18 to say that you do not want something that is offered to you

**SAY/STATE SOMETHING** 19 to say or state something, especially officially

**BELIEF/UNDERSTANDING** 20 to go beyond the limits of what you can believe, understand, etc.

**IN CARD GAMES** 21 to refuse to play a card or make a bid when it is your turn

**FROM THE BODY** 22 to send something out from the body as or with waste matter

## Observations on signposts in the OALD 7 entry for **pass**

- Some superordinates: e.g., *move*
- Some synonyms: e.g., *give*
- Some references to contextual information: e.g., *test/exam; in card games*
- The signpost *Law/proposal* refers to both a subject field and to an external element
- Of the 17 signposts, 8 do not belong to the same grammatical category as the word being defined

## Terminology used to refer to “meaning indicators” in bilingual dictionaries

- Sense discrimination (Iannucci)
- Meaning discrimination (Steiner)
  - “They should be in the source language when they precede the target-language equivalent and in the target language when they follow the target-language equivalent.” (Steiner, *Dictionaries* 1984: 172).
- *Collins Spanish Dictionary* “indicating material”
- *Oxford Spanish Dictionary* “sense indicators”

## Partial entry for **field**<sub>noun</sub> in the Simon & Schuster Spanish-English/English-Spanish Dictionary

1. **campo**, campiña, sembrado, campo cultivado.
2. campaña; **campo** (de hielo, nieve, etc.) extensión (del mar, del cielo).
3. (min., geol.) yacimiento(s) (de petróleo, carbón, etc.).
4. (fig.) **campo**, esfera (de alguna actividad), campo, ramo (de ciencia, erudición etc.).
5. (fig.) curso, ej., *the whole f. of history*, todo el curso de la historia.
6. franja (de bandera).
7. (fís.) **campo** (magnético o eléctrico)



## Partial entry for **field**<sub>noun</sub> in the Collins Spanish Dict.

1. a. **(agriculture)** **campo** *masculine*  
 (= meadow) **prado** *masculine*  
 b. **(geology)** **yacimiento** *masculine*
2. **(sport)** **campo** *masculine*, **terreno** *masculine* de juego, **cancha** *feminine* (Latin American)  
 (= participants) **participantes** *masculine plural*  
 (for post) **opositores** *masculine plural*, **candidatos** *masculine plural*
3. (= sphere of activity) **campo** *masculine*, **esfera** *feminine*
4. (= real environment) ⇒ a year's trial in the field **un año de prueba en el mercado** ⇒ to study sth in the field **estudiar algo sobre el terreno**
5. **(computing)** **campo** *masculine*
6. **(military)** **campo** *masculine* ⇒ field of battle **campo** *masculine* de batalla ⇒ to die in the field **morir en combate**
7. **(electricity and electronics, etc.)** **campo** *masculine* ⇒ field of vision **campo** *masculine* visual

## Partial entry for *field*<sub>noun</sub> in the Oxford Spanish Dictionary

- A.** *(Agriculture) (for crops) campo* (m); *(for grazing) campo* (m), **prado** (m), **potrero** (m) *(Latin America)*
- B.** *(Sport)*
- 1.** *(area of play) campo* (m), **cancha** (f) *(Latin America)*
- 2.** *(competitors) (+ sing o pl vb)* See examples
- C.** *(Military)* also See examples
- D.** *(of study, work) campo* (m); *(of activities) esfera* (f)
- E.** *(of practical operations) campo* (m)

## Partial entry for **field**<sub>noun</sub> in the Oxford Spanish Dictionary

2. (*competitors*) (+ sing o pl vb) See examples

**Brown was leading the field** = Brown iba a la cabeza de los participantes (or corredores etc), Brown llevaba la delantera

**the whole field set off after the fox** = toda la partida salió tras el zorro

**our products lead the field** = nuestros productos son los líderes del mercado

**there's a strong field of applicants for the job** = hay una buena selección de candidatos para el puesto

**to play the field** (colloquial) = tantear el terreno (colloquial)

## From the entry for *field*<sub>noun</sub> in the Oxford Spanish Dictionary

D.

*(of study, work)* campo (m); *(of activities)* esfera (f)

**she's an expert in her field** = es una experta en su campo

**my field is 20th century poetry** = mi especialidad es la poesía del siglo XX

**what field is he in?** = ¿cuál es su campo or especialidad?

**to be first in the field** (*Business*) = *ser\** el líder del mercado

## Information about *forge* / *forjar*

Collins Spanish Dictionary:

transitive verb

1. (*literal, figurative*) *fraguar, forjar*
2. (= *falsify*)

[+ *document, painting etc*] *falsificar*

⇒ **she forged his signature** falsificó su firma ⇒ **forged money** moneda *feminine falsa*

intransitive verb

⇒ **to forge ahead** avanzar a grandes pasos ⇒ **to forge ahead of sb** adelantarse a algn

## Information about *forge* / *forjar*

Collins Spanish Dictionary:

1. [+ **hierro**] **to forge, shape**
2. (= crear)
  1. (gen) to forge, shape
    1. [+ **sueños, ilusiones**] to build up
      - forjar **un plan** **to hammer out a plan**
      - tratamos de forjar un estado moderno **we are trying to build a modern state**

## Information about **forge** / **forjar**

Oxford Spanish Dictionary

A.

1. (*Metallurgy*) **forjar**
2. (*create*) [*bond/alliance*] **forjar**; [*plan*] **fraguar**\*

B.

(*counterfeit*) [*banknote/signature/painting*] **falsificar**\*

[the entry continues on with several examples with intransitive uses]

## Information about *forge* / *forjar*

### Oxford Spanish Dictionary

1. [**utensilio/pieza**] **to forge**
2. [**porvenir**] **to shape, forge**; [**plan**] **to make**; [**ilusiones/esperanzas**] **to build up**
3. [**nación/bases**] **to create**; [**amistad/alianza**]



## Corpus information about what you can “forjar” in Spanish (Sketch Engine, using Spanish web corpus)

1. alianza (*alliance*)
2. personalidad (*personality*)
3. identidad (*identity*)
4. lazo (*tie*)
5. leyenda (*legend*)
6. partido (*political party*)
7. amistad (*friendship*)
8. vínculo (*tie*)