

Questions to guide your reading of *Frindle*, by Andrew Clements (1996).

Who decides what goes into the dictionary? Explain your answer.

What is the topic of Nick's report to the class?

Nick and some of his friends swear a promise to each other in 5th grade. About what? And why?

Why do so many children have to start staying after school?

What happens with the 5th grade class picture?

Why does the school principal visit Nick's house?

This book mentions the word "gwagala."

What does it mean? Who used it?

Are/were there any such words in your family?

Have such words caught on in the past and spread beyond a family?

What role does the linguistic concept of 'arbitrariness' play in this book?

At what point should a word be added to the dictionary?

How should it be decided? How many users, for example?

In his first television interview, Nick says that even though he invented the word frindle, "it's not his word anymore." What does he mean? Is he right? Why or why not?

Another character says that Nick does "own" the word frindle. Who?

In what sense is it true? In what sense isn't it true?

A character in the book gives another example of another English word which someone made up for no reason. What was it, and when?

Nick decides not to lead a boycott of the school cafeteria. Why?

This book mentions that 'ain't' actually is in the dictionary.

Should it be? Why or why not?

Mrs. Granger sends Nick a package when he is in college. Why? What is in the package?

Can words go 'out of date'? What would be an example?

Should words ever be removed from the dictionary, instead of added?

In what circumstances?

At the end of the book, Nick gives his old teacher something.

What is it and why?

What word would you invent, and why? Is there any word that English doesn't have, but needs?

Word inventions happen, but they are relatively rare. So, what about Nick's original question?

Where do dictionaries get the words from? Where do most of our words (not newly invented) come from? From where do we learn them as our language skills develop during our lifetimes?