

# Most Common

## Mistakes in English Errors in English

★ Common Mistakes in English  
(Bangla) by T.J. Fitikides

★ Common Errors in English  
Usage by Paul Brians

★ Common Translation Errors  
With Bangla

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# Common Mistakes in English

## (Bangla) by T.J. Fitikides

### Misused Forms ⇒ Wrong Preposition

Mistakes are often made by using the wrong preposition after certain words. The following list includes the words which most often give trouble.

(প্রায়ই ভুলগুলো সৃষ্টি হয় সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু word-এর পরে অযৌক্তিক preposition ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে। এরকম সমস্যা করে, এমন কিছু word নিচে তালিকাটিতে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হল)

1) *Absorbed* (=গভীরভাবে নিবিষ্ট বা নিমগ্ন) *in, at* বসবে না।

✗ *The man was absorbed at his work.*

✓ *The man was absorbed in his work.*

Note : *Absorbed* -এর পরে appropriate preposition 'in' বসে। *Absorbed* -এর পর 'at' বসে না।

2) *Accuse of* (অভিযুক্ত করা/দোষী করা), *for* নয়।

✗ *She accused the man for stealing.*

✓ *She accused the man of stealing.*

Note : *But charge, takes, with: as, The man was charged with murder.*

(লক্ষণীয় *charge, with* গ্রহণ করে, যেমন : *The man was charged with murder.*)

3) *Accustomed to* (অভ্যস্ত হওয়া), *with* বসবে না।

✗ *I'm accustomed with hot weather.*

✓ *I'm accustomed to hot weather.*

Note : Also used to, যেমনঃ *He is used to the heat.*

4) *Afraid of* (ভীত/শঙ্কিত), *from* বসবে না।

✗ *Laura is afraid from the dog.*

✓ *Laura is afraid of the dog.*

Note : *Afraid* হল- ভীত, এরপর সঠিক preposition-এর ব্যবহার হল- 'of, from' বসানো সঠিক নয়।

5) *Aim at* (তাক করা), *on* বা *against* বসবে না।

✗ *She aimed on the target.*

✓ *She aimed at the target.*

Note : *At, preposition*-টি সর্বদা গতিপথ নির্দেশ করতে ব্যবহৃত হয়ঃ যেমন- *throw at* (ঝাঁপিয়ে পড়া), *shout at* (কারো প্রতি চিৎকার করে বলা), *fire at* (লক্ষ্য করে গুলি বর্ষণ করা), *shoot at* (তাক করে গুলি ছোঁড়া)। তবে *Shoot (at* ব্যতীত) আঘাত করে হত্যা করা অর্থ নির্দেশ করে। যেমন- *He shoot a bird* (= সে আঘাত করলো এবং এটা মরলো)।

6) *Angry with* (রাগান্বিত/ক্রুদ্ধ/রুষ্ট), *against* নয়।

✗ *The teacher was angry against him.*

✓ *The teacher was angry with him.*

Note-1 : আমরা ব্যক্তির সাথে *with*, কিন্তু বস্তুর প্রতি (*at*)ক্রুদ্ধ/রুষ্ট (*angry*)হই, যেমনঃ *He was angry at The weather (with the weather* নয়)।

Note-2 : Also *annoyed with, vexed with, 'indignant with' a person, but at a thing.* (একইভাবে ব্যক্তির 'সাথে' বোঝাতে *Annoyed (ক্রুদ্ধ) with, vexed (বিরক্ত) with, indignant (ঘৃণা/ক্রোধ) with*। লক্ষণীয়, বস্তুর 'প্রতি' বোঝাতে উক্ত *word-* গুলোর পরে *with-*এর পরিবর্তে *at* বসে।

7) *Anxious (= troubled উদ্ভিন্ন/উৎকণ্ঠিত) about, for* নয়।

✗ *They're anxious for his health.*

✓ *They're anxious about his health.*

Note : *But anxious meaning wishing very much takes for, as: Parents are anxious for their children's success.* (তবে *Anxious* যখন তীব্রভাবে চাচ্ছে এমন বা প্রত্যাশী অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হয়, তখন *about-*এর পরিবর্তে *for* বসে। যেমনঃ *Parents are anxious for their children's success.*)

8) *Arrive (পৌঁছানো) at, to* নয়।

✗ *We arrived to the village at night.*

✓ *We arrived at the village at night.*

Note : Use *arrive in with countries and large cities, as : Mr Smith has arrived in London (arrive in দেশ এবং বড় শহর বোঝাতে ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ Mr. Smith arrived in London or New York, India etc.*

9) *Ashamed (লজ্জিত) of,from* নয়।

✗ *He's now ashamed from his conduct.*

✓ *He's now ashamed of his conduct.*

Note : *Shy* লাজুক/সাবধানী/দ্বিধান্বিত অর্থে *ashamed of* ব্যবহার করা যথার্থ নয়, সুতরাং *I am ashamed of my teacher-*এর পরিবর্তে আপনার বলা উচিত *I'm shy of my teacher.*

10) *Believe (আস্থা/বিশ্বাস থাকা) in, to* নয়।

✗ *We believe to God.*

✓ *We believe in God.*

Note : *To believe in means to have faith in To believe (without the in) means to regard something as true : I believe everythin he says. (To believe in* অর্থ হল আস্থা/বিশ্বাস থাকা, পক্ষান্তরে *To believe (in* ব্যতীত) অর্থ হল- সত্য হিসেবে বিবেচনা করা (বিশ্বাস করা) যেমনঃ *I believe everything he says)*

11) *Boast of or about* (অহংকার করা) , *for* নয়।

✗ *James boasted for his strength.*

✓ *James boasted of (or about) his strength.*

12) *Careful of, with or about* (যত্নবান/মনযোগী), *for* নয়।

✗ *Elke's very careful for her health.*

✓ *Elke's very careful of/about her health.*

Or : *You should be more careful with your money.*

Note : *Take care of* (ব্যবস্থা করা/ভার নেওয়া)। যেমনঃ *He takes care of his money.*

13) *Travel by train* ইত্যাদি, *with the train* ইত্যাদি নয়।

✗ *He travelled with the train yesterday.*

✓ *He travelled by train yesterday.*

Note : আমরা বলি, *by train, by tram, by boat, by aeroplane*, আবার *by land, by sea, by air, by bus, in a bus, on a bus; by motor car* বা *in a motor car, by taxi* বা *in a taxi; in a cab, in a carriage; on horse-back, on a donkey, on a bicycle; on foot.*

14) *Complain about* (অসন্তোষ,অন্যায়,দুর্ভোগ,যন্ত্রণা) *for* নয়।

✗ *Annette complained for the weather.*

✓ *Annette complained about the weather.*

Note : আমরা যখন অসুস্থতার কথা বলি তখন *complain of* ব্যবহার করি। আমরা বলিঃ *She complained of a sore throat.*

15) *Composed of* (স্থির/স্থিরীকৃত), *from* নয়।

✗ *Our class is composed from thirty students.*

✓ *Our class is composed of thirty students.*

16) *Confidence in* (আত্মবিশ্বাস/আস্থা), *to* নয়।

✗ *I have great confidence to you.*

✓ *I have great confidence in you.*

Note : *In confidence* এটিঃ যেমন- *Let me tell you something in confidence (as a secret=গোপনে)*।

17) *Conform to* (অনুরূপ/একমত হওয়া), *with* নয়।

✗ *We must conform with the rules.*

✓ *We must conform to the rules.*

Note : তবে, *comply* (রাজি হওয়া/সম্মত হওয়া/মত দেয়া)-এরপর *with* বসে। যেমনঃ *We'll comply with your request.*

18) *Congratulate on* (অভিনন্দন জানানো), *for* নয়।

✗ *I congratulate you for your success.*

✓ *I congratulate you on your success.*

19) *Consist of* (গঠিত হওয়া), *from* নয়।

✗ *A year consists from twelve months.*

✓ *A year consists of twelve months.*

Note : অধিক সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করতে হবে, *passive voice* এ *consist* ব্যবহারে।

20) *Covered with* (ছেয়ে যাওয়া, আচ্ছাদিত হওয়া), *by* নয়।

✗ *The mountains are covered by snow.*

✓ *The mountains are covered with/in snow.*

21) *Cure of* (আরোগ্য/চিকিৎসা/মুক্ত করা), *from* নয়।

✗ *The man was cured from his illness.*

✓ *The man was cured of his illness.*

Note : কিন্তু *cure* যখন Noun হিসেবে বসে সে ক্ষেত্রে *for* (জন্য) কে গ্রহণ করে। যেমনঃ *There is no cure for that disease*, অন্যদিকে *cure* এরপরে *preposition from* বসেনা।

22) *Depend on or upon* (নির্ভর/অবলম্বন করা, নির্ভরশীল/মুখাপেক্ষী হওয়া), *from* নয়।

✗ *It depends from her.*

✓ *It depends on (or upon) her.*

Note: *Rely* (নির্ভর/ভরসা করা)-এর পরেও *on* বা *upon* বসে। যেমনঃ *I can't rely on (or upon) him.*

23) *Deprive of* (বঞ্চিত/বিরহিত করা), *from* নয়।

✗ *Nelson Mandela was deprived from his freedom.*

✓ *Nelson Mandela was deprived of his freedom.*

24) *Die of an illness* (রোগ/অসুস্থতার জন্য মারা যাওয়া), *from an illness* নয়।

✗ *Many people have died from malaria.*

✓ *Many people have died of malaria.*

Note : কেউ যখন রোগ/অসুস্থতা, অনাহার/ক্ষুধা, পিপাসা, দুঃখ ইত্যাদি হতে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *die*-এর পরে *of* বসে। অত্যধিক খাটুনি (*overwork*) হতে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *from* বসে। সহিংসতা (*violence*), তরবারি (*sword*), মহামারী (*pestilence*) ইত্যাদি হতে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *by* বসে। যুদ্ধে, অভাবে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *in* বসে। দেশের জন্য আত্মদান বোঝাতে *for* বসে। কোন কারণে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *for*, অবহেলার কারণে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *through*, নাট্যমঞ্চে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *to* বসে এবং ঝুঁকির মধ্যে মারা যাওয়া বোঝাতে *at* বসে।

25) *Different from* (ভিন্নরকম/পৃথক), *than* নয়।

✗ *My book is different than yours.*

✓ *My book is different from yours.*

26) *Disappointed by, about* বা *at, from* নয়।

(a) *by/at/about*:

✗ *Phillipa was disappointed from the low mark she got in the test.*

✓ *Phillipa was disappointed by/about/at the low mark she got in the test.*

(b) *with/in*:

✗ *Jane was disappointed from her son.*

✓ *Jane was disappointed with/in her son.*

Note : আমরা ব্যক্তির পূর্বে *with* অথবা *in*, বস্তুর পূর্বে *at, about* অথবা *by* এবং *gerund* এর পূর্বে *at* ব্যবহার করি, যেমন: *Keith is very disappointed at not winning the prize. We use that (optional before a new clause): I was disappointed (that) I didn't get an invitation.*

27) *Divide into parts* (অংশে/ভাগে ভাগ করা), *in parts* নয়।

✗ *I divided the cake in four parts.*

✓ *I divided the cake into four parts.*

Note : তবে কোন বস্তুকে অর্ধেক (*in half*) বা দুইয়ে (*in two*) ভাগ করা যেতে পারে।  
যেমনঃ *Paul divided the apple in half (or in two).*

28) *No doubt (n)* (সংশয়/সন্দেহ) *of* বা *about, for* নয়।

✗ *I've no doubt for his ability.*

✓ *I've no doubt of (or about) his ability.*

Note : *Doubtful* (সন্দিগ্ন/সন্দেহপ্রবণ)-এর পরেও *of* বসে। যেমন: *I am doubtful of his ability to pass.*

29) *Dressed in* (পরিহিত), *with* নয়।

✗ *The woman was dressed with black.*

✓ *The woman was dressed in black.*

Note : *The woman was in black* এটিও সঠিক।

30) *Exception to* (বহির্ভূত), *of* নয়।

✗ *This is an exception of the rule.*

✓ *This is an exception to the rule.*

👉 Note: আমরা বলি, *with the exception of* (ব্যতীত), যেমন: *She liked all her subjects with the exception of physics.*

31) *Exchange for* (বদলি/বিনিময় করা), *by* নয়।

✗ *He exchanged his collection of matchboxes by some foreign stamps.*

✓ He exchanged his collection of matchboxes for some foreign stamps.

Note : In exchange (বদলে/বিনিময়ে)-এর পরেও for বসে, যেমনঃ He gave them his old car in exchange for a new one.

32) Fail in (ব্যর্থ/অকৃতকার্য হওয়া), from নয়।

✗ Steven failed from maths last year.

✓ Steven failed in maths last year.

33) Full of (পূর্ণ/ভরা/টাইটুসুর), with বা from নয়।

✗ The jar was full with (or from) oil.

✓ The jar was full of oil.

Note : তবে Fill-এর পরে with বসে, যেমনঃ Jane filled the glass with water।

34) Get rid of (নিষ্কৃতি/অব্যহতি পাওয়া), from নয়।

✗ I'll be glad to get rid from him.

✓ I'll be glad to get rid of him.

35) Glad (খুশি/আনন্দিত) of বা about, from বা with নয়।

✗ Francis was glad from (or with) receiving your letter.

✓ Francis was glad of (or about) receiving your letter.

Note : ফলাফল (result)-এ খুশি বোঝাতে glad at ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ He is glad at having received a good mark.

36) Good at (ভাল/দক্ষ/যোগ্য), in নয়।

✗ My sister's good in maths.

✓ My sister's good at maths.

Note 1 : Bad (খারাপ/মন্দ), clever (চালাক/দক্ষ), quick (প্রাণবন্ত/চটপটে), slow

(ধীর/মহুর) ইত্যাদির পরেও at বসে। তবে weak (দুর্বল)-এর পরে in বসে। যেমনঃ He's weak in grammar.

Note 2 : He's good in class অর্থ- ক্লাসে তার আচরণ ভাল।

37) Guard against (সতর্ক থাকা/সাবধান হওয়া), from নয়।

✗ You must guard from bad habits.

✓ You must guard against bad habits.

38) Guilty of (অপরাধী/দোষী), for নয়।

✗ He was found guilty for murder.

✓ He was found guilty of murder

39) Independent of (স্বাধীন/স্বাবলম্বী), from নয়।

✗ Clare's independent from her parents.

✓ Clare's independent of her parents.

📖 Note: আমরা বলি, dependent (নির্ভরশীল/অধীন) on, যেমন: A child is dependent on its parents.

📖 ই-বুক পড়ুন, 📖 কাগজের অপচয় রোধ করুন,

## এসো ইবুক পড়ি, সবুজ পৃথিবী গড়ি।

প্রয়োজনীয় সকল শিক্ষণীয় বাংলা বই নিয়ে আসুন আপনার হাতের মুঠোয়! পড়ালেখাকে আমি আপনাদের হাতের মুঠোয় এনে দিলাম, সংগ্রহের করার দায়িত্ব আপনাদের.....!!!

পড়ুন যে কোন স্থানে যে কোন সময়... ইবুক হতে পারে বোরিং, বেকার ও অবসর সময়ের অন্যতম সঙ্গী। এই জন্য

❏ কম্পিউটার- ❏ মোবাইল স্ক্রিন অটো-অ্যাডজাস্টেড ( অর্থাৎ পড়তে ডানে বামে মুভ করা লাগবে না) ইউনিকোড ঝকঝকে বাংলা টেক্সট ফরম্যাটে (স্ক্যান বিহীন) ৫০০+ (4.5 GB) শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই..এর ডিভিডি (DVD) করা হয়েছে যা কপি করে কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইল পড়তে পারবেন।

তাহাড়া এই ই-বুক গুলোতে বুকমার্ক মেনু 📖 ও হাইপার লিংক মেনু 📌 যুক্ত করা হয়েছে ফলে খুব সহজে যে কোন অধ্যায়ে এ ক্লিক করেই যেতে পারবেন স্ক্রল করা লাগবে না..

৫০০+ শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই বা ইবুকের থেকে নেওয়া কিছু বইয়ের ফোল্ডার ডাউনলোড লিংকঃ ব্রাউজারের এড্রেস বারে লিখুনঃ 📌 [bit.ly/tanbir](http://bit.ly/tanbir)

তারা জাস্ট একবার কয়েকটি বই ডাউনলোড করে মোবাইলে পড়ে দেখুন..!

এই বই গুলো পড়ে যদি ভালো লাগে এবং এই রকম আরো ইবুক পেতে এই আপডেট ৫০০ বাংলা ইবুকের ডিভিডি সংগ্রহ করুন, দাম মাত্র ৩০০ টাকা, যা যে কোন একটি সাধারণ বইয়ের দামের সমান ...

যারা আগে আমাদের থেকে ইবুকের ডিভিডি কুরিয়ার করে নিয়েছিলেন তারা চাইলে এই নতুন ডিভিডিও কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে পারেন।

কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে চাইলে অথবা ইবুক সম্পর্কে যে কোনো সাহায্যের জন্য নিঃসঙ্কোচে কল করুন **01738359555 (Tanbir Ahmad)**

এতোদিন যারা অনেক কষ্ট করে খুঁজে খুঁজে একটা একটা বই ডাউনলোড করেছেন তাদের কথা চিন্তা করে ও ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

আপনি চাইলে এই ই-বুক সমূহের প্রায় 50% বই (মোবাইল ভার্সন ও নতুন গুলো ব্যাতিত) আমাদের “প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই” নামক ইবুকের 📌 [ওয়েবসাইট \(ভিজিটর সংখ্যা ৭৫ লাখ\)](http://www.tanbir.com) ও 📌 [পেইজ \(ফ্যান সংখ্যা প্রায় ৮ লাখ\)](http://www.tanbir.com) থেকে একটা একটা করে খুঁজে এমবি খরচ করে ফ্রিতে ডাউনলোড করে নিতে পারেন ! এতে অবশ্যই আপনার অনেক সময় ও এমবি খরচ হবে ! আপনাদের সময় ও এমবি বাচাতে অর্থাৎ কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

এই ইবুকের ডিভিডি সার্ভিস চালু করেছি। আমাদের এ আয়োজন উদ্যোগ্য বইয়ের সাথে মানুষের সম্পর্কে অনিঃশেষ ও অবিচ্ছিন্ন করে রাখা।

40) *Indifferent to* (নিরুৎসুক/উদাসীন/উল্লাসিক/অমনোযোগী), *for* নয়।

✗ *They're indifferent for politics.*

✓ *They're indifferent to politics.*

41) *Insist on* (তাগিদ দেওয়া/সনির্বন্ধ বলা/জোর দেওয়া), *to* নয়।

✗ *He always insisted to his opinion.*

✓ *He always insisted on his opinion.*

📌 **Note:** লক্ষণীয় *persist* (জেদ করা/নাছোড়বান্দার মত অটল থাকা)-এর পরে *to* বসে।

যেমনঃ *He persisted in his silly ideas.*

42) *Interested in* (আগ্রহী/সাগ্রহ/কৌতূহলী/উৎসাহী), *for* নয়।

✗ *She's not interested for her work.*

✓ *She's not interested in her work.*

👉 **Note:** Take an interest (আগ্রহান্বিত হওয়া/আগ্রহ প্রকাশ করা)-এর পরে *in* বসে।

যেমনঃ *She takes a great interest in music.*

43) *Jealous of* (পরশ্রীকাতর/ঈর্ষানিত হওয়া), *from* নয়।

✗ *He's very jealous from his brother.*

✓ *He's very jealous of his brother.*

44) *Look at* (দেখা/তাকানো/দৃষ্টি ফেরানো), *to* নয়।

✗ *Look to this beautiful picture.*

✓ *Look at this beautiful picture.*

**Note :** সর্বদা *gaze* (স্থির দৃষ্টিতে তাকিয়ে থাকা), *stare* (স্থির দৃষ্টিতে তাকানো) ইত্যাদির পরেও *at* বসে। তবে *look after* (= *take care of* যত্ন নেওয়া/দেখা-শোনা করা); *look for* (= *try to find* - অনুসন্ধান করা) *look over* (= *examine* - পরিদর্শন/ পরীক্ষা করা); *look into* (= *examine closely* - গভীরভাবে পরীক্ষা করা/তদন্ত করা); *look upon* (= *consider* - বিশেষ দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে দেখা); *look down upon* (= *have a low opinion of* - উপেক্ষা করা/অন্যদের ছোট ভাবা), *look upto* (= *respect*- শ্রদ্ধা করা); *look out for* (= *expect* - আশা/সম্ভাবনা); *look forward to* (= *expect with pleasure*- আনন্দের সাথে প্রতীক্ষা/আশা করা); *look to* (= *rely on*- কোন ব্যাপারে সাবধান হওয়া) ইত্যাদির ব্যবহার রীতিসিদ্ধ।

45) *Leave for a place* (কোন স্থানের উদ্দেশ্যে যাত্রা করা), *to a place* নয়।

✗ *They're leaving to England soon.*

✓ *They're leaving for England soon.*

46) *Live on* (বঁচে থাকা), *from* নয়।

✗ *He lives from his brother's money.*

✓ *He lives on his brother's money.*

**Note :** *Feed on* (খেয়ে বঁচে থাকা)-এর পরেও *on* বসে। যেমনঃ *Some birds feed on insects.*

47) *Married to* (বিবাহিত), *with* নয়।

✗ *Angela was married with a rich man.*

✓ *Angela was married to a rich man.*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা *engaged* (বাগদান করা)-এর পরেও *to* বসে। যেমনঃ *Sally was engaged to Peter for a year before they got married.*

48) *Opposite to* (সম্মুখবর্তী/মুখোমুখি/উল্টো দিকে/বিপরীতে), *from* নয়।

✗ *Their house is opposite from ours.*

✓ *Their house is opposite to ours.*

👉 **Note:** *Opposite ours*-ও শুদ্ধ।

49) *Pass by a place* (কোন স্থানকে অতিক্রম করা/পেছনে ফেলা), *from a place* নয়।

✗ *Will you pass from the post-office?*

✓ *Will you pass by the post-office?*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা *pass the post-office* শুদ্ধ।

50) *Play for a team* (কোন দলে/দলের হয়ে খেলা), *with a team* নয়।

✗ *He plays regularly with that team.*

✓ *He plays regularly for that team.*

51) *Pleased with* (সন্তুষ্ট/খুশি/আনন্দিত), *from* নয়।

✗ *The teacher is pleased from me.*

✓ *The teacher is pleased with me.*

👉 **Note:** আমরা বলতে পারি *pleased at* বা *pleased with* যদি, পরে একটি *abstract noun* বা *clause* বসে, যেমন : *They were pleased at (or with) what he said;*  
*They were pleased at (or with) her results.*

52) *Popular with* (জনপ্রিয়/লোকপ্রিয়), *among* নয়।

✗ *John's popular among his friends.*

✓ *John's popular with his friends.*

53) *Prefer to* (শ্রেয় মনে করা/পছন্দ করা), *from* নয়।

✗ *I prefer a blue pen from a red one.*

✓ *I prefer a blue pen to a red one.*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা *preferable to* (অধিকমাত্রায় প্রিয়), যেমনঃ *This car is preferable to my old one.*

54) *Preside at* বা *over* (সভাপতিত্ব করা/প্রধান হওয়া), *in* নয়।

✗ *Who presided in the last meeting?*

✓ *Who presided at (or over) the last meeting?*

55) *Proud of* (গর্বিত/মর্যাদাবান হওয়া), *for* নয়।

✗ *He's very proud for his promotion.*

✓ *He's very proud of his promotion.*

👉 **Note:** আবার আমরা বলতে পারি *take (a) pride in*, যেমনঃ *A craftsman takes a pride in his work.*

56) *Rejoice at* বা *in* (আহ্লাদিত/উল্লসিত হওয়া), *for* নয়।

✗ *We rejoiced for her success.*

✓ *We rejoiced at (or in) her success.*

57) *Related to* (আত্মীয়তা সূত্রে সম্পর্কিত/জড়িত/সংশ্লিষ্ট হওয়া), *with* নয়।

✗ *Are you related with Simon in any way?*

✓ *Are you related to Simon in any way?*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদাই *relation* (সম্পর্ক) এরপরে *to* বসে, যেমনঃ *Is he any relation to you?*

58) *Repent of* (অনুশোচনা করা/হওয়া), *from* নয়।

✗ *He repented from his crime.*

✓ *He repented of his crime.*

👤 **Note:** লক্ষণীয় *repentance* (অনুশোচনা/অনুতাপ)-এর পরে *for* বসে। যেমনঃ *He feels repentance for his sin.*

59) *Satisfied with* (পরিভূক্ত/সন্তুষ্ট), *from* নয়।

✗ *Are you satisfied from your marks?*

✓ *Are you satisfied with your marks?*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদা *content* (খুশি হওয়া), *delighted* (আনন্দিত হওয়া), *unhappy*, *happy*, *displeased* (অসন্তুষ্ট হওয়া), *dissatisfied* (অসন্তুষ্ট হওয়া), *disgusted* (বিরক্ত হওয়া) এদের পরে *preposition with* বসে।

60) *Similar to* (সদৃশ/অনুরূপ/সমমনা), *with* নয়।

✗ *Your house is similar with mine.*

✓ *Your house is similar to mine.*

61) *Sit at a desk* (ডেস্কে বসা) ইত্যাদি, *on a desk* নয়।

✗ *The bank manager was sitting on his desk.*

✓ *The bank manager was sitting at his desk.*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদাই *sit at a table* (টেবিলে বসা) এক্ষেত্রে *at* হবে। কিন্তু *chair*, *bench*, *sofa* ইত্যাদির ক্ষেত্রে *on* হবে। যেমনঃ *on a chair/bench/sofa*; আবার *in an arm-chair*, *in a tree* বা *up a tree*, যেমনঃ *A bird sometimes perches (= sits) on a tree.*

62) *Spend on* (অতিবাহিত/ব্যয় করা), *for* নয়।

✗ *I spend a lot of time for my computer.*

✓ *I spend a lot of time on my computer.*

63) *Succeed in* (কৃতকার্য/সফল হওয়া), *at* নয়।

✗ *I hope he'll succeed at his work.*

✓ *I hope he'll succeed in his work.*

👤 **Note:** লক্ষণীয়, একজন ব্যক্তি সম্পত্তি, পদবী, কার্যালয় (অফিস) ইত্যাদির উত্তরাধিকারী (মালিক) *succeeds to* হয়। যেমনঃ *Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the throne in 1952.*

64) *Superior to* (শ্রেষ্ঠ/উপরস্থ), *from* বা *than* নয়।

✗ *This is superior from (or than) that.*

✓ *This is superior to that.*

👤 **Note:** *inferior* (নিকৃষ্ট/অধস্তন), *junior* (বয়ঃকনিষ্ঠ/অধস্তন), *senior* (বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠ/উপরস্থ), *subsequent*, *prior* (পূর্ববর্তী) ইত্যাদির পরেও *to* বসে।

65) *Sure of* (নিশ্চিত/নিঃসংশয় হওয়া), *for* নয়।

✗ *I'm quite sure for her honesty.*

✓ *I'm quite sure of her honesty.*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদা *certain* (নিশ্চিত)-এর পরেও *of* বসে। যেমনঃ *I am quite certain of it.*

66) *Surprised at or by* (হতবাক/বিস্মিত), *for* নয়।

✗ *Harold was surprised for the loud bang.*

✓ *Harold was surprised at/by the loud bang.*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদা *astonished* (বিস্মিত করা), *amazed* (বিস্মিত করা), *alarmed* (উদ্ভিন্ন), *puzzled* (কিংকর্তব্যবিমূঢ় করা), *shocked* (মর্মান্বিত) ইত্যাদির পরেও *at/by* বসে।

67) *Suspect of* (সন্দেহ করা), *for* নয়।

✗ *I suspect Kate for stealing the pen.*

✓ *I suspect Kate of stealing the pen.*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদা *suspicious* (সন্দেহপ্রবণ)-এর পরে *of* বসে। যেমনঃ *Dogs are suspicious of strangers.*

68) *Take by* (চেপে ধরা) *from* নয়।

✗ *Robert took his brother from the hand.*

✓ *Robert took his brother by the hand.*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদা *hold* (চেপে ধরা), *catch* (ধরা), *seize* (ধরা/পাকড়ানো), *snatch* (তাড়াতাড়ি ধরা), *grasp* (আঁকড়িয়ে ধরা) ইত্যাদির পরেও *by* বসে।

69) *Tie to* (বাঁধা), *on* নয়।

✗ *The girl tied the string on the kite.*

✓ *The girl tied the string to the kite.*

👤 **Note:** সর্বদাই *bind* (বাধা/বন্ধন করা/বাঁধানো)-এর পরেও *to* বসে। যেমনঃ *The prisoner was bound to the stake.*

70) *Tired of* (ত্যাগ/বিরক্ত হওয়া), *from* নয়।

✗ *The boys are tired from eating boiled eggs.*

✓ *The boys are tired of eating boiled eggs.*

**Note :** *Tired with* (ক্লান্ত/বিরক্ত, উদ্যোগহীন/অবসন্ন), যেমনঃ *I am tired with walking.*

*I want to rest. Tired of* এবং *tired with* উল্লেখ্য যে, *weary* (ক্লান্ত) *of* এবং *weary with* এরাও।

72) *Tremble with cold* (ঠাণ্ডায় কেঁপে ওঠা), *from cold* ইত্যাদি নয়।

✗ *The man was trembling from cold.*

✓ The man was trembling with cold.

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা *shake* (ঝাঁকা দেওয়া/বিচলিত করা/কাঁপা) এবং *shiver* (কাঁপা)-এর পরেও *with* বসে। যেমনঃ *The thief was shaking with fear.*

73) *Warn (a person) of danger* বিপদ সম্পর্কে (কোন ব্যক্তিকে) সতর্ক করে দেওয়া, *about danger* নয়।

✗ *They were warned about the danger.*

✓ *They were warned of the danger.*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদাই কোন ব্যক্তিকে দোষ/ত্রুটি সম্পর্কে সতর্ক করে দিতে, *warned against* ব্যবহার হয়। যেমনঃ *His teacher warned him against disobeying the regulations.*

74) *Write in ink* (কালিতে লেখা), *with ink* নয়।

✗ *I've written the letter with ink.*

✓ *I've written the letter in ink.*

👉 **Note:** আপনি *in* ব্যবহার করবেন যখন আপনি কাজ শেষ করে ফেরত আসবেন। *The drawing was done in charcoal. Dora writes her letters in green ink.* আপনি যখন কোন *instrument* নির্দেশ করবেন তখন ব্যবহার করবেন *with*। *The children are learning to write with a pen. Helen prefers to paint with a thin brush*

**(See Exercise s 73-76)**

Have another look at-

**PREPOSITIONS AFTER CERTAIN WORDS**

👉 **Note:** নিম্নোক্ত *word*-গুলোর পরে ব্যবহৃত *prepositions* গুলো মনোযোগ সহকারে

দেখুনঃ *Accuse of*

*Accustomed to*

*Afraid of*

*Aim at*

*Angry with, at*

*Arrive at, in*

*Ashamed of*

*Believe in*

*Benefit by*

*Boast of*

*Careful of*

*Complain of*

*Composed of*

*Conform to*

*Congratulate on*

*Consist of*

*Cure of*

*Depend on*

*Deprive of*

*Die of*

*Different from*

*Doubt of or about*

*Dressed in*

*Fail in*

*Full of*

*Good at*

*Guard against*

*Guilty of*

*Independent of*

*Indifferent to*

*Insist on*

*Interested in*

*Jealous of*

*Look at*

*Married to*

*Pleased with*

*Prefer to*

*Proud of*

*Related to*

*Repent of*

*Satisfied with*

*Similar to*

*Succeed in*

*Superior to*

*Sure of*

*Surprised at, by*

*Suspect of*

*Tired with, of*

*Translate into*

*Warn of, about*



## Misused Forms ⇒ Misuse of Infinitive

**Infinitive** ব্যবহার নয়, **gerund** যেখানে ব্যবহার হওয়া উচিতঃ

- Prepositions* বা *preposition phrases* -এরপরেঃ
- যে সকল *words* নিয়মিতভাবে *preposition* গ্রহণ করে তাদের পরেঃ
- সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু *verb*-এর পরেঃ
- সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু *Adjectives*-এর পরে *verb* আসলে *ing* যুক্ত হয়ঃ
- সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু *phrase* -এর পরেঃ

75) *Without* (ব্যতীত/ছাড়া, etc. + *-ing*.

✗ *Do your work without to speak.*

✓ *Do your work without speaking.*

76) *Instead of* (স্থলে/বদলে/পরিবর্তে), etc. + *-ing*.

✗ *He went away instead to wait.*

✓ *He went away instead of waiting.*

77) *Capable of* (সামর্থবান/ক্ষমতাবিশিষ্ট) + *-ing*.

✗ *They're quite capable to do that.*

✓ *They're quite capable of doing that.*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদাই *incapable* (অক্ষম/সামর্থহীন)-এর পরেও *of* বসে, তবে *able* বা *unable*-এর পরে *to+infinitive* বসে। যেমনঃ *He is unable to do anything.*

78) *Fond of* (পছন্দ করা/আসক্ত হওয়া) + *-ing*.

✗ *She's always fond to talk.*

✓ *She's always fond of talking.*

79) *Insist on* (সনির্বদ্ধ বলা/জেদ করা/জোরাজুরি করা) + *-ing*.

✗ *Simon insisted to go to London.*

✓ *Simon insisted on going to London.*

80) *Object to* (আপত্তি করা/প্রতিবাদ জানানো) + *-ing*.

✗ *I object to be treated like this.*

✓ *I object to being treated like this.*

81) *Prevent from* (নিবৃত্ত করা/বিরত থাকা)+ *-ing*.

✗ *The rain prevented me to go.*

✓ *The rain prevented me from going.*

82) *Succeed in* (কৃতকার্য/সফল হওয়া)+ *-ing*.

✗ *Paula succeeded to win the prize.*

✓ *Paula succeeded in winning the prize.*

83) *Think of* (বিবেচনা করা/ভাবা) + *-ing*.

✗ *I often think to go to England.*

✓ I often think of going to England.

84) Tired of (ত্যাগ-বিরক্ত/ক্লান্ত) + -ing.

✗ The customer got tired to wait.

✓ The customer got tired of waiting.

85) Used to (অভ্যস্ত হওয়া) + -ing.

✗ She's used to get up early.

✓ She's used to getting up early.

86) Avoid (এড়িয়ে চলা/পরিহার করা) + -ing.

✗ You can't avoid to make mistakes.

✓ You can't avoid making mistakes.

👉 **Note:** সর্বদাই *can't help* (= *can't avoid*)-এর পরেও *gerund* বসে। যেমনঃ *I can't help laughing.*

87) Enjoy (উপভোগ/আনন্দ লাভ করা)+ -ing.

✗ I enjoy to play football.

✓ I enjoy playing football.

👉 **Note:** *Like* (পছন্দ করা) *dislike* (অপছন্দ করা) এই *verb* দুটির পরে *infinitive* বা *gerund* বসতে পারে। যেমনঃ *He likes reading English books, or He likes to read English books.*

88) Excuse (ক্ষমা করা) + -ing.

✗ Please excuse me to be so late.

✓ Please excuse my being so late.

Or: Please excuse me for being so late.

89) Finish (শেষ/সম্পূর্ণ করা) + -ing.

✗ Have you finished to speak?

✓ Have you finished speaking?

👉 **Note:** *begin* (আরম্ভ/শুরু করা) *verb* টির পরে *to+infinitive* বা *gerund* উভয়টিই বসতে পারে। যেমনঃ *She began to speak, বা She began speaking.*

90) Go on (অবিরত/চলতে থাকা/চলিয়ে যাওয়া) + -ing.

✗ The music went on to play all day.

✓ The music went on playing all day.

👉 **Note:** সর্বদাই *keep on* (চলিয়ে যাওয়া)-এর পরেও *ing* যুক্ত হবে। যেমনঃ *She kept on playing the piano.*

91) *Mind* (আপত্তি করা/কিছু মনে করা) + *-ing*.

✗ *Would you mind to open the door?*

✓ *Would you mind opening the door?*

92) *Practise* (অনুশীলন/চর্চা করা) + *-ing*.

✗ *You must practise to speak English.*

✓ *You must practise speaking English.*

93) *Remember* (মনে করা/স্মরণ করা) + *-ing*.

✗ *I don't remember to have seen him.*

✓ *I don't remember seeing him.*

Or: *I don't remember having seen him.*

94) *Risk* (ঝুঁকি নেওয়া) + *-ing*.

✗ *We couldn't risk to leave him alone.*

✓ *We couldn't risk leaving him alone.*

95) *Stop* (খামিয়ে দেওয়া/ব্যাহত করা) + *-ing*.

✗ *The wind has almost stopped to blow.*

✓ *The wind has almost stopped blowing.*

👉 *Note: Give up* (পরিত্যাগ করা)-এর পরেও *gerund* বসে। যেমনঃ *He gave up smoking.*

96) *Busy* (ব্যস্ত হওয়া) + *-ing*.

✗ *He was busy to revise the exams.*

✓ *He was busy revising for the exams.*

97) *Worth* (বিশেষ মূল্য বিশিষ্ট) + *-ing*.

✗ *Is today's film worth to see?*

✓ *Is today's film worth seeing?*

98) *Have difficulty in* (অসুবিধা/সমস্যা থাকা) + *-ing*.

✗ *She has no difficulty to do it.*

✓ *She has no difficulty in doing it.*

99) *Have the pleasure of* (আনন্দিত হওয়া/থাকা) + *-ing*.

✗ *I had the pleasure to meet him.*

✓ *I had the pleasure of meeting him.*

👉 *Note: সর্বদাই take pleasure in* (আনন্দ পাওয়া)-এরপর *verb* আসলে *gerund* বসে।  
যেমনঃ *He takes great pleasure in helping the poor.*

*Have another look at...*

*Use of the gerund*

**Gerund ( infinitive নয়) ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত:**

1) *Prepositions*-এর পরেঃ

*Examples: He worked without stopping. She played instead of working.*

2) যেসব *words* নিয়মিতভাবে *preposition* গ্রহণ করে, যেমনঃ *fond of, insist on, tired of, succeed in.*

*Examples: I'm tired of doing the work again. He succeeded in catching the rat.*

3) সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু *verb*-এর পরে, যেমনঃ *avoid, enjoy, finish, stop, risk, excuse.*

*Examples: They enjoy playing football. The wind has stopped blowing.*

4) *Busy* এবং *worth, adjective* দ্বয়ের পরেঃ

*Examples: Lena was busy writing a book. This date is worth remembering.*

5) সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু *phrases*- এর পরে, যেমনঃ *it's no use, it's no good, I can't help, would you mind, look forward to.*

*Examples: I think it's no use trying again. I can't help feeling angry about it.*

সুনির্দিষ্ট কিছু *Verb*-এর পরে, *gerund* বা *infinitive* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। যেমনঃ *begin, like, dislike, hate, love, prefer.*

*Example: He began to talk* বা *He began talking.*

100) *It's no use* (মূল্য বা লাভ নেই) + *-ing.*

✗ *It's no use to cry like a baby.*

✓ *It's no use crying like a baby.*

102) *Look forward to* (আশা করা/প্রতিক্ষা করা)+ *-ing.*

✗ *I look forward to see him soon.*

✓ *I look forward to seeing him soon.*

103) *There is no harm in* (কোন দোষের নয়) + *-ing.*

✗ *There's no harm to visit her now.*

✓ *There's no harm in visiting her now.*

(See Exercise s 63 and 64)

# ই-বুক পড়ুন, কাগজের অপচয় রোধ করুন, এসো ইবুক পড়ি, সবুজ পৃথিবী গড়ি।

প্রয়োজনীয় সকল শিক্ষণীয় বাংলা বই নিয়ে আসুন আপনার হাতের মুঠোয়! পড়ালেখাকে আমি আপনাদের হাতের মুঠোয় এনে দিলাম , সংগ্রহের করার দায়িত্ব আপনাদের.....!!!

পড়ুন যে কোন স্থানে যে কোন সময়... ইবুক হতে পারে বোরিং , বেকার ও অবসর সময়ের অন্যতম সঙ্গী। এই জন্য

কম্পিউটার- মোবাইল স্ক্রিন অটো-অ্যাডজাস্টেড ( অর্থাৎ পড়তে ডানে বামে মুভ করা লাগবে না) ইউনিকোড ঝকঝকে বাংলা টেক্সট ফরম্যাটে (স্ক্যান বিহীন) ৫০০+ (4.5 GB) শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই..এর ডিভিডি (DVD) করা হয়েছে যা কপি করে কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইল পড়তে পারবেন।

তাহাড়া এই ই-বুক গুলোতে বুকমার্ক মেনু ও হাইপার লিংক মেনু যুক্ত করা হয়েছে ফলে খুব সহজে যে কোন অধ্যায়ে এ ক্লিক করেই যেতে পারবেন স্ক্রল করা লাগবে না..

৫০০+ শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই বা ইবুকের থেকে নেওয়া কিছু বইয়ের ফোল্ডার ডাউনলোড লিংকঃ ব্রাউজারের এড্রেস বারে লিখুনঃ [bit.ly/tanbir](http://bit.ly/tanbir)

তারা জাস্ট একবার কয়েকটি বই ডাউনলোড করে মোবাইলে পড়ে দেখুন..!

এই বই গুলো পড়ে যদি ভালো লাগে এবং এই রকম আরো ইবুক পেতে এই আপডেট ৫০০ বাংলা ইবুকের ডিভিডি সংগ্রহ করুন , দাম মাত্র ৩০০ টাকা, যা যে কোন একটি সাধারণ বইয়ের দামের সমান ...

যারা আগে আমাদের থেকে ইবুকের ডিভিডি কুরিয়ার করে নিয়েছিলেন তারা চাইলে এই নতুন ডিভিডিও কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে পারেন।

কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে চাইলে অথবা ইবুক সম্পর্কে যে কোনো সাহায্যের জন্য নিঃসঙ্কোচে কল করুন **01738359555 ( Tanbir Ahmad )**

এতোদিন যারা অনেক কষ্ট করে খুঁজে খুঁজে একটা একটা বই ডাউনলোড করেছেন তাদের কথা চিন্তা করে ও ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

আপনি চাইলে এই ই-বুক সমূহের প্রায় 50% বই (মোবাইল ভার্সন ও নতুন গুলো ব্যাতিত) আমাদের “প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই” নামক ইবুকের [ওয়েবসাইট](http://www.tanbir.com) (ভিজিটর সংখ্যা ৭৫ লাখ) ও [পেইজ](http://www.tanbir.com) (ফ্যান সংখ্যা প্রায় ৮ লাখ) থেকে একটা একটা করে খুঁজে এমবি খরচ করে ফ্রিতে ডাউনলোড করে নিতে পারেন ! এতে অবশ্যই আপনার অনেক সময় ও এমবি খরচ হবে ! আপনাদের সময় ও এমবি বাচাতে অর্থাৎ কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!এই ইবুকের ডিভিডি সার্ভিস চালু করেছি । আমাদের এ আয়োজন উদ্দেশ্য বইয়ের সাথে মানুষের সম্পর্ককে অনিঃশেষ ও অবিচ্ছিন্ন করে রাখা।

## Misused Forms ⇒ Wrong Tense

104) *Did*-এর পরে *to* ব্যতীত *infinitive*-এর পরিবর্তে *past tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ  
(Using the *past tense* after *did* instead of the *infinitive* without *to*).

a) To ask questions (প্রশ্ন করতে):

✗ *Did you went to school yesterday?*

✓ *Did you go to school yesterday?*

b) To make negatives (না বোধক করতে):

✗ *I did not went to school yesterday.*

✓ *I did not go to school yesterday.*

*Did*, auxiliary verb-টির পরে *to* ব্যতীত *present infinitive* অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে এবং *past tense* নির্দেশক কোন কিছু থাকবে না।

Note : *Did* দ্বারা শুরু প্রশ্নের উত্তরে সর্বদা *past tense* হয়। যেমনঃ *Did you see the picture?* -Yes . *I saw the picture* বা *Yes, I did.*

105) *Does* এর পরে *to* ব্যতীত *infinitive*-এর পরিবর্তে *third person singular* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

a) To ask questions (প্রশ্ন করতে):

✗ *Does the gardener waters the flowers?*

✓ *Does the gardener water the flowers?*

b) To make negatives (না বোধক করতে):

✗ *The man doesn't waters the flowers.*

✓ *The man doesn't water the flowers.*

Auxiliary verb (সাহায্যকারী ক্রিয়া) এরপরে *to* ব্যতীত *present infinitive* অবশ্যই *does* বসবে এবং *present tense* নির্দেশকের ক্ষেত্রে *third person (does)* হবে না।

👉 Note: *Does* দ্বারা শুরু প্রশ্নটির উত্তরে সর্বদা *present tense* এর *third person* হয়।

যেমনঃ *Does he like the cinema?* Yes, he likes the cinema, or Yes, he does.

(For Sections 104-105 see Exercises 33 and 34)

106) *Can*, *must* ইত্যাদির পরে *to* ব্যতীত *infinitive* এর পরিবর্তে *third person singular* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He can speaks English very well.*

✓ *He can speak English very well.*

*Can*, *must*, *may*, *shall* এবং *will*, এদের পরে *to* ব্যতীত *infinitive* অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে এবং বর্তমান নির্দেশক *third person* হবে না।

107) *Tense*-এর ব্যবহারজনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Rachel asked me what I am doing.*

✓ *Rachel asked me what I was doing.*

*Principal clause*-এর *verb* যখন *past tense* হয়, তখন *subordinate clauses*-টিতে *verb*-এর *past tense* ব্যবহৃত হয়।

📌 *Note*: এই নিয়ম কয়েকটি ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োগ হয় না। 1) *Quotations*-এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত *verb*-গুলোতে, 2) যেসকল ঘটনা সবসময় সত্য (চিরন্তন সত্য ঘটনা, সেগুলোতে, 3) তুলনা করতে।  
সুতরাং আমরা বলিঃ

a) *She said , 'I a m waiting for your answer ' '*

b) *He said that London is a great city*

c) *He liked you more than he likes me*

108) *Subordinate clause*-এ *shall, will/'ll*-এর পরিবর্তে *should/would'/'ll* ব্যবহৃত হয়।

✗ *He said (that) he will/'ll come tomorrow.*

✓ *He said (that) he would/'d come tomorrow.*

যখন প্রধান *Clause*-এর *verb*-টি *past tense*-এ হয়, তখন *shall* এবং *will/'ll* যথাক্রমে *should* এবং *would/'d*-এ পরিবর্তিত হয়।

109) *Subordinate clause*-এ *might*-এর পরিবর্তে *may* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Last Sunday Ailsa told me that she may come.*

✓ *Last Sunday Ailsa told me that she might come.*

যখন *Principal clauses*-এর *verb*-টি *past tense*-এ হয়, তখন *may, might*-এ পরিবর্তিত হয়।

📌 *Note*: *Conjunction, that*-এর পরে কখনও *comma (,)* বসে না।

110) *Subordinate clause*-এ *could*-এর পরিবর্তে *can* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Ben thought he can win the prize.*

✓ *Ben thought he could win the prize.*

যখন *Principial clauses*-টির *verb*-টি *past tense*-এ হয়, তখন *can- could*-এ পরিবর্তিত হয়।

(For Sections 107-110 see Exercises -22 and 23)

111) *Infinitive*-এর চিহ্ন *to*-এর পরে *past tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He tried to kicked the ball away.*

✓ *He tried to kick the ball away.*

*Infinitive* চিহ্ন *to*-এর পরে *simple past tense* নির্দেশক *mood* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

112) একটি *Auxiliary verb*-এর পরে *past participle*-এর পরিবর্তে *past tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I've forgot to bring my book.*

✓ *I've forgotten to bring my book.*

*Auxiliary verb have* এবং এর অন্যান্য রূপগুলোর সাথে *past participle (past tense নয়)* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

113) অতীত কর্তব্য/বাধ্যবাধকতা প্রকাশ করতে *must* বা *ought* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *You ought to come yesterday.*

✓ *You ought to have come yesterday.*

Or: *You should have come yesterday.*

*Past tense*-এ *must* এবং *ought* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। অতীত কর্তব্য (যা করা হয়নি) প্রকাশ করতে, আমরা *had to, was obliged to*-এর মতো অর্থ প্রকাশ করতে *perfect infinitive*-এর পর *ought, should* অথবা এ জাতীয় *word* ব্যবহার করতে পারি।

📌 *Note*: *Indirect speech*-এ *must* এবং *ought, past tenses* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। **যেমনঃ** *He said he must do it.*

114) *Past tense*-এর পরিবর্তে *present perfect* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I have seen a good film yesterday.*

✓ *I saw a good film yesterday.*

অতীতে উল্লিখিত সময়ের মধ্যে কোন কাজ সম্পন্ন হয়েছে এমনটি প্রকাশ করতে *past tense (present perfect নয়)* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

📌 *Note*: যখন আপনার বাক্যে অতীত সময় নির্দেশক কোন *word* বা *phrase* থাকে, **যেমনঃ** *yesterday, last night, last week, last year, then, ago* ইত্যাদি, তখন অবশ্যই সর্বদা *past tense* ব্যবহার করতে হবে।

115) *Present perfect*-এর পরিবর্তে *simple past tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I saw the Parthenon of Athens.*

✓ *I have seen the Parthenon of Athens.*

যদি আমরা অতীত কাজের বর্তমান ফলাফল সম্বন্ধে কথা বলি, তবে আমরা অবশ্যই *present perfect tense* ব্যবহার করব, যখন কেউ বলেঃ *I have seen the Parthenon* সে অতীতের 'দেখা' কাজটি সম্বন্ধে ভাবছে না, ভাবছে অতীত কাজটির বর্তমান ফলাফল সম্বন্ধে।

116) সাম্প্রতিক কাজের সাথে *present perfect*-এর পরিবর্তে *past tense* ব্যবহার জনিত

ভুলঃ

✗ *The clock struck.*

✓ *The clock has struck.*

যদি আমরা মাত্র শেষ হওয়া কোন কাজ সম্বন্ধে কথা বলি, তবে আমরা অবশ্যই *present perfect* ব্যবহার করব, *past tense*-এর পরিবর্তে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ, ঘড়ির কাটা আঘাত করার তৎক্ষণাৎ পরে আমাদের বলা উচিত হবেনা, *The clock has struck.*

117) *Present perfect*-এর পরিবর্তে *simple present* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'm at this school two years.*

✓ *I've been at this school two years.*

কোন কাজ অতীতে শুরু হয়েছিল এবং চলতে চলতে বর্তমানে প্রবেশ করেছে, এটি প্রকাশ করতে অবশ্যই *present perfect (simple present নয়)* ব্যবহৃত হবে। *I've been at this school two years* অর্থ হল- *I'm still here* (আমি এখনও এখানে আছি)।

118) সময় প্রকাশক '*since*' clause-এর উত্তরে, *present perfect tense*-এর পরিবর্তে *simple present* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Since he came, we're happy.*

✓ *Since he came, we've been happy.*

সময় প্রকাশক '*since*' clause-এর উত্তরে, verb-টি সাধারণত *present perfect tense*-এ হয়।

119) *Present continuous*-এর পরিবর্তে *simple present* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Look! Two boys fight.*

✓ *Look! Two boys are fighting.*

কথা বলার মুহূর্তে কোন কাজ চলছে, তা প্রকাশ করতে অবশ্যই *Present continuous (simple present নয়)* ব্যবহৃত হবে।

📌 **Note:** নিকট ভবিষ্যতের কোন কাজ প্রকাশ করতেও *present continuous* ব্যবহৃত হয়। বিশেষত গতি প্রকাশক verb-এর সাথে *come, go, leave* ইত্যাদির মত, যেমনঃ *He is leaving for England soon, Lorna is arriving tomorrow at six. Tom and I are eating out tonight.*

120) *Tense*-এর *continuous* রূপটির অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I'm understanding the lesson now.*

✓ *I understand the lesson now.*

**Note:** As a rule যে verb-গুলো কর্ম নির্দেশক চেয়ে অবস্থা নির্দেশ করে, সেই verb-গুলোর কোন continuous forms হয় না, যেমনঃ Understand, know, believe, like, love, belong, prefer, consist, mean, hear, see ইত্যাদি।

121) অভ্যাসগত কাজ (habitual action) প্রকাশ করতে simple present-এর পরিবর্তে present continuous ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Every morning I'm going for a walk.

✓ Every morning I go for a walk.

বর্তমানে অভ্যাসগত কাজ প্রকাশ করতে simple present (present continuous নয়) অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

**Note:** Always শব্দটির সাথে বা চলমান অবস্থা নির্দেশক verb-গুলোর সাথে present continuous অভ্যাসগত কাজ প্রকাশ করতে পারে। যেমনঃ

He is always talking in class; He is living in London.

122) বর্তমানে অভ্যাসগত কাজ প্রকাশ করতে use verb ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I use to get up at six every morning.

✓ I get up at six every morning.

Or: I'm accustomed to getting up at six, etc.

উল্লেখ্য, অতীতের অভ্যাসগত কর্ম বুঝাতে Past tense-এর 'to use' verb-টি ব্যবহৃত হয়। যা সুদূর অতীতের কোন কিছু বা ব্যক্তিকে নির্দেশ করে অথবা আজ যা করা হচ্ছে না, যেমনঃ I used to see him everyday. My father used to play football very well.

123) বর্তমান অভ্যাসগত কাজ প্রকাশ করতে Simple past tense-এর পরিবর্তে past continuous ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Last year I was walking to school everyday.

✓ Last year I walked to school everyday.

Use the simple past tense to express a habit in the past and not the past continuous.

**Note:** অতীতের কোন একটি ঘটনা ঘটাতে থাকার মুহূর্তে অন্য একটি ঘটনা ঘটেছিল। এই ঘটনাটি বর্ণনা করতে past continuous tense ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ I was walking to school when I met him.

124) Past perfect-এর পরিবর্তে past tense ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The train already left before I arrived.

✓ The train had already left before I arrived.

অতীতের দুটি কাজের মধ্যে যেটি অপেক্ষাকৃত আগে সম্পন্ন হয় সেটির জন্য *past perfect tense* ব্যবহৃত হবে এবং অপেক্ষাকৃত পরে সম্পন্ন হওয়া কাজটির জন্য *past tense* ব্যবহৃত হবে।

*Note* : একই বাক্যে *present tense* এবং *past perfect tense* কখনও ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়। সুতরাং এটা বলা ভুল হবে, যেমনঃ *My brother says that he had not gone to the cinema last night.*

125) *Simple past tense*-এর পরিবর্তে *past perfect* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'd finished the book yesterday.*

✓ *I finished the book yesterday.*

কোন বাক্যে *past perfect* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত হবেনা, যদি না অন্য একটি *verb*, *past tense*-এ থাকে।

(See Section 124.)

126) সময় প্রকাশক *clause*-এ *Present tense*-এর পরিবর্তে *future tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'll see you when I shall come back.*

✓ *I'll see you when I come back.*

যদি *Principal clause*-এর *verb*-টি *future tense*-এর হয়, তবে সময় প্রকাশক *clause*-টির *verb*-টি *present tense*-এ হবে।

127) *If clause*-এ *present tense*-এর পরিবর্তে *future tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *If he'll ask me, I will/'ll stay.*

✓ *If he asks me, I will/'ll stay.*

একটি সাধারণ ভবিষ্যত শর্তে, শর্ত বাক্যাংশ (বা *If-clause*)-টিতে *present tense* এবং শর্ত বাক্যাংশটির উত্তরে (*principal clause*-এ) *future tense* ব্যবহৃত হবে।

*Note* : তবে অনুরোধ প্রকাশ করতে, *if clause*-এ *future tense* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। যেমনঃ *I shall be very grateful if you will lend me some money, If you will/'ll give me some money I will/'ll buy you a drink.*

128) *As if* বা *as though*-এর পরে *past tense*-এর পরিবর্তে *present tense* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Janine talks as if she knows everything.*

✓ *Janine talks as if she knew everything.*

As if বা as though, phrase-টির পরে past tense ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত। He talks as if he knew everything, মানে হল, He talks as he would talk if he knew everything.

Note : Verb to be এর বেলায় as if-এর পরে were ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমন: He acts as if he were a rich man.

129) Wish-এর present নির্দেশকের পরিবর্তে wish-এর অতীত শর্ত সম্বন্ধীয় (would wish) ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I would wish to know more English.

✓ I wish (that) I knew more English.

বর্তমান অর্থ প্রকাশ করতে, wish-এর present tense ব্যবহৃত হয় এর পরের that clause-টি past tense-এ হয়।

130) একটি অসম্ভাব্য (impossible) শর্তের সাথে ভুল tense ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ If he would/'d ask me, I would/'d stay.

✓ If he asked me, I would/'d stay.

একটি অসম্ভাব্য শর্ত past tense দ্বারা প্রকাশিত হয় এবং উত্তরটি (শর্তাধীন) conditional বাক্য দ্বারা প্রকাশিত হয়। past tense-এর এই ব্যবহারটি কোন সময়কে নির্দেশ করে না, তবে সম্ভাব্যতার মাত্রাকে প্রকাশ করে।

131) অসম্ভাব্য (impossible) শর্তের সাথে ভুল tense ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ If he would/'d have asked me, I would/'d stay.

✓ If he had/'d asked me, I would/'d have stayed.

একটি অসম্ভাব্য (impossible) শর্ত past perfect tense দ্বারা এবং উত্তরটি অতীত শর্তাধীন (past conditional) বাক্য দ্বারা প্রকাশিত হয়। past perfect tense-এর এই ব্যবহারটি সময়কে নির্দেশ করে না, তবে একটি অসম্ভব ঘটনাকে নির্দেশ করে।

Have another look at...

Use of certain tenses

1) অভ্যাসগত কাজগুলোর জন্য simple present tense ব্যবহৃত হয়, পক্ষান্তরে বর্তমান সময়ে চলতে থাকা কাজগুলোর জন্য present continuous tense ব্যবহৃত হয়।

Examples: I read the newspaper every day.

I'm reading an English book (now).

2) নির্দিষ্ট সময় বা তারিখ উল্লিখিত হলে *simple past tense* ব্যবহৃত হয়, পক্ষান্তরে সময় বা তারিখ উল্লিখিত না হলে *present perfect tense* ব্যবহৃত হয়।

*Examples: I did my homework last night. I've done my homework (so I can watch TV - or whatever - now).*

3) অতীতের অভ্যাসগত কাজগুলো *simple past* অথবা *used to phrase* দ্বারা প্রকাশিত হয়।

*Example: I went (or I used to go) to the cinema every week last year.*

*Note :* অতীত অভ্যাসগত কাজ প্রকাশ করতে *past continuous (I was going)* ব্যবহৃত হয়না। তবে অতীতে চলমান কোন কাজের সময়ে অন্য একটি কাজ ঘটেছিল বোঝালে চলমান কাজটির জন্য *past continuous* ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ *I was going to the cinema when I met him.*

4) যদি কোন কাজ অতীতে শুরু হয়ে বর্তমানেও চলতে থাকে, এই ক্ষেত্রে কেবল *present perfect tense* ব্যবহার করা শুদ্ধ।

*Example: I've been in this class for two months.*

5) সময় বা শর্ত প্রকাশক *clause-এ future tense* নয়, *present tense* ব্যবহার করতে বেশ সতর্ক থাকতে হবে, যদি *principal clause-এর verb-টি future tense* হয়।

*Example: I will/'ll visit the Parthenon when I go (or if I go) to Athens.*

133) *Tenses-গুলোর তালিকা পাকিয়ে ফেলা বা হ-য-ব-র-ল অবস্থাঃ*

✗ *They asked him to be captain, but he refuses.*

✓ *They asked him to be captain, but he refused.*

যদি আপনি অতীত সময় নির্দেশক *verb* দ্বারা শুরু করেন, তবে সর্বক্ষেত্রে একই রূপ বজায় রাখুন। একটি রচনার শুরু থেকে শেষ অবধি *tense-গুলতে একই নিয়ম প্রয়োগ করুন।*

*(See Exercises 24-30)*

# ই-বুক পড়ুন, কাগজের অপচয় রোধ করুন, এসো ইবুক পড়ি, সবুজ পৃথিবী গড়ি।

প্রয়োজনীয় সকল শিক্ষণীয় বাংলা বই নিয়ে আসুন আপনার হাতের মুঠোয়! পড়ালেখাকে আমি আপনাদের হাতের মুঠোয় এনে দিলাম, সংগ্রহের করার দায়িত্ব আপনাদের.....!!!

পড়ুন যে কোন স্থানে যে কোন সময়... ইবুক হতে পারে বোরিং, বেকার ও অবসর সময়ের অন্যতম সঙ্গী। এই জন্য

কম্পিউটার- মোবাইল স্ক্রিন অটো-অ্যাডজাস্টেড ( অর্থাৎ পড়তে ডানে বামে মুভ করা লাগবে না) ইউনিকোড ঝকঝকে বাংলা টেক্সট ফরম্যাটে (স্ক্যান বিহীন) ৫০০+ (4.5 GB) শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই..এর ডিভিডি (DVD) করা হয়েছে যা কপি করে কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইল পড়তে পারবেন।

তাহাড়া এই ই-বুক গুলোতে বুকমার্ক মেনু ও হাইপার লিংক মেনু যুক্ত করা হয়েছে ফলে খুব সহজে যে কোন অধ্যায়ে এ ক্লিক করেই যেতে পারবেন স্ক্রল করা লাগবে না..

৫০০+ শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই বা ইবুকের থেকে নেওয়া কিছু বইয়ের ফোল্ডার ডাউনলোড লিংকঃ ব্রাউজারের এড্রেস বারে লিখুনঃ [bit.ly/tanbir](http://bit.ly/tanbir)

তারা জাস্ট একবার কয়েকটি বই ডাউনলোড করে মোবাইলে পড়ে দেখুন..!

এই বই গুলো পড়ে যদি ভালো লাগে এবং এই রকম আরো ইবুক পেতে এই আপডেট ৫০০ বাংলা ইবুকের ডিভিডি সংগ্রহ করুন, দাম মাত্র ৩০০ টাকা, যা যে কোন একটি সাধারণ বইয়ের দামের সমান ...

যারা আগে আমাদের থেকে ইবুকের ডিভিডি কুরিয়ার করে নিয়েছিলেন তারা চাইলে এই নতুন ডিভিডিও কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে পারেন।

কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে চাইলে অথবা ইবুক সম্পর্কে যে কোনো সাহায্যের জন্য নিঃসঙ্কোচে কল করুন **01738359555 ( Tanbir Ahmad )**

এতোদিন যারা অনেক কষ্ট করে খুঁজে খুঁজে একটা একটা বই ডাউনলোড করেছেন তাদের কথা চিন্তা করে ও ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

আপনি চাইলে এই ই-বুক সমূহের প্রায় 50% বই (মোবাইল ভার্সন ও নতুন গুলো ব্যাতিত) আমাদের “প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই” নামক ইবুকের [ওয়েবসাইট](http://www.tanbir.com) (ভিজিটর সংখ্যা ৭৫ লাখ) ও [পেইজ](http://www.tanbir.com) (ফ্যান সংখ্যা প্রায় ৮ লাখ) থেকে একটা একটা করে খুঁজে এমবি খরচ করে ফ্রিতে ডাউনলোড করে নিতে পারেন ! এতে অবশ্যই আপনার অনেক সময় ও এমবি খরচ হবে ! আপনাদের সময় ও এমবি বাচাতে অর্থাৎ কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

এই ইবুকের ডিভিডি সার্ভিস চালু করেছি। আমাদের এ আয়োজন উদ্যেশ্য বইয়ের সাথে মানুষের সম্পর্ককে অনিঃশেষ ও অবিচ্ছন্ন করে রাখা।

## Misused Forms ⇒ Miscellaneous Examples

### 134) Gender-এর বিভ্রান্তিঃ

✗ *The door is open, please shut her.*

✓ *The door is open, please shut it.*

ইংরেজীতে কেবল ব্যক্তি এবং প্রাণীর নামগুলোর *gender* (*masculine* বা *feminine*) রয়েছে। জড়বস্তুগুলো হল *neuter* (*gender*) এবং *pronoun* হিসেবে *singular number*-এ এরা *it* গ্রহণ করে।

*Note* : কিন্তু, জড়বস্তুগুলো যখন ব্যক্তিরূপে প্রকাশিত হয়, তখন এরা *masculine* বা *feminine pronoun*-গুলোকে গ্রহণ করে। যেমনঃ *Time has his work to do, England is proud of her navy.*

### 135) জড়বস্তুগুলোর জন্য *possessive form* ব্যবহার করেঃ

✗ *Her room's window is open.*

✓ *The window of her room is open.*

অপ্রাণীবাচক (*inanimate*) বস্তুর ক্ষেত্রে আমরা সাধারণত *of structure* ব্যবহার করি। *The door of the car. The leg of the table. The surface of the water.* আবার স্থান বা সংস্থার ক্ষেত্রে আমরা তো ব্যবহার করতে পারিঃ *London's streets = The streets of London. Italy's climate. = The climate of Italy. The school's main office = The main office of the school.*

👉 *Note*: তবে আমরা বলি, *a day's work, a night's rest, a week's holiday, a pound's worth* ইত্যাদি, যেমনঃ *Especially with similar measures of time.*

### 136) *To be verb*-এর পরে *objective case* ব্যবহার করেঃ

✗ *It was him.*

✓ *It was he.*

*To be verb*-এর পরে বসা *pronoun*-টি অবশ্যই *nominative case*-এ হবে, *objective case*-এ নয়। *Objective case* এখন কথোপকথনের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয়,

যেমনঃ *It's me. It was him/her/them etc.*

👉 *Note*: *It's me* এঈ প্রচলিত *expression*-টি সুস্পষ্টভাবে ভুল যা এখন পর্যন্ত এটি কথোপকথনে ব্যবহার হয়। *It is I* এটি লিখিত বক্তব্যে বা রচনায় শুদ্ধ রূপ হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয়ে থাকে।

### 137) *Than conjunction*-টির পরে *objective case* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *My sister is taller than me.*

✓ *My sister is taller than I (am).*

*Than* হল একটি *conjunction* এবং এর পরে কেবল *pronoun*-এর *nominative case* বসতে পারে। *pronoun*-টির পরের *verb*-টি সাধারণত উহ্য থাকে।

👉 *Note*: *Spoken English*-এ *objective case*-টি প্রায়ই ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *You're much taller than me.*

138) *Between*-এর পরে *nominative case* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *It's a secret between you and I.*

✓ *It's a secret between you and me.*

*Between* হল একটি *preposition* এবং সব *preposition*-ই নিজেদের পরে *objective case* গ্রহণ করে।

139) *Gerund*-এর পূর্বে *objective case* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Him laughing at her was what made her angry.*

✓ *His laughing at her was what made her angry.*

যখন কোন *word*-এর শেষে 'ing' suffix-টি থাকে, তখন এটি *gerund* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয়, এরপূর্বে কোন *noun* বা *pronoun* বসলে তা অবশ্যই *possessive case*-এ হবে।

140) *Double possessive/genitive*-এর সাথে *objective case* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *A friend of him told us the news.*

✓ *A friend of his told us the news.*

👉 **Note:** অধিকৃত বস্তুটির চেয়ে অধিকারী ব্যক্তির উপর আমরা যখন জোর প্রদান করতে চাই তখন প্রায়ই *double possessive* (*of+name+'s,his,mine* ইত্যাদি) ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ

*A friend of his* একে আরও সহজভাবে বলা যায় *one of his friends*.

141) 'Self' forms-গুলোর অশুদ্ধ ব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Michael and myself are here.*

✓ *Michael and I are here.*

ব্যবহৃত হবে *The simple personal pronouns I, you, he* ইত্যাদি। *If no emphasis is necessary.*

*Use the self pronouns in two ways: 1) (or emphasis is necessary).*

👉 **Note:** *Self* যুক্ত *pronoun* কে দু'ভাগে ভাগ করা যায় ১) জোর প্রদানের জন্য, যেমনঃ

*She herself was hurt* ২) আত্মবাচক হিসেবে, যেমনঃ *She hurt herself*.

142) *Himself* বা *themselves* এদের পরিবর্তে *hisself* বা *theirselves* ব্যবহারজনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *They fell down and hurt theirselves.*

✓ *They fell down and hurt themselves.*

👉 **Note:** *Relative pronoun* এর *third person* হয় *himself* অথবা, *themselves* কিন্তু *his self* এবং *their selves* হয় না।

143) একই ধ্বনি বা উচ্চারণ বিশিষ্ট *Noun/verb*-এর ভুল ব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Becky played, a good play of chess.*

✓ *Becky played a good game of chess.*

👉 **Note:** কিছু ক্রিয়া এবং বিশেষ্যের একই রকম এবং সাদৃশ্যমূলক অর্থ রয়েছে, যেমনঃ *The police fight a hard fight. Heather dreams long vivid dreams. If you lie the lie will catch you out!* অতএব আমরা কদাচিৎ একই শব্দ ব্যবহার করি, সাধারণত আমরা

তা এড়িয়ে চলি, যেমনঃ *She fought a long battle with them. If you lie you will be caught out. The company did an African dance.*

144) Which (relative pronoun-টিকে) ব্যক্তির জন্য ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I've a brother which is at school.*

✓ *I've a brother who is at school.*

👉 **Note:** Relative pronoun হিসেবে which কেবল প্রাণীকুলের (animals) বা বস্তুসমূহের (things) জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয়। ব্যক্তির জন্য ব্যবহার করার সঠিক pronoun-টি হল who (whose, whom).

145) Everything-এর পরে what বা which ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I heard everything which (or what) he said.*

✓ *I heard everything (that) he said.*

👉 **Note:** All, some, any, something, everything, anything, much, little এবং nothing এদের পরে which বা what relative pronoun ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। এই word-গুলোর পরে কেবল that, relative pronoun-টি ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে, তবে এটি সাধারণত উহ্য (omitted) থাকে।

146) Who এবং whom.

a) Who

✗ *I saw the woman whom you said lived next door.*

✓ *I saw the woman (who) you said lived next door.*

আমরা কদাচিৎ আধুনিক ইংরেজিতে whom ব্যবহার করি। আমরা এটা কখনও to, by, with, after, on ইত্যাদি সর্বনামের পর ব্যবহার করি। যেমনঃ *The girl to whom you were speaking is Nigerian.* আমরা বর্তমান বাক্যের order এড়িয়ে চলি। যেমনঃ *The girl you were speaking to is Nigerian.* আপনি who এর পরিবর্তে that ব্যবহার করতে পারেন। যেমনঃ *The girl that you were speaking to is Nigerian.*

(For Sections 144-146 see Exercise 18)

147) Superlative-এর পরে that-এর পরিবর্তে who, whom বা which ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *It's the best which I've seen.*

✓ *It's the best (that) I've seen.*

👉 **Note:** Superlative degree এর পরে relative pronoun that (who, whom অথবা which) ব্যবহার হওয়া উচিত। বাস্তবে কিন্তু এটি উহ্য (omitted) থাকে।

148) Same as বা same that-এর পরে ভুল relative ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Amelia bought the same bag that me.*

✓ *Amelia bought the same bag as me.*

Same এবং such এর পরে 'as relative'-টি ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

👉 **Note:** উল্লেখ্য *that* (*who* বা *which* নয়) মাঝে মাঝে *same* এর পরে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

যেমনঃ *He wore the same domes that he wore on Sunday.*

149) *Which?*-এর পরিবর্তে *Who?* বা *what?* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Who of the two boys is the taller?*

✓ *Which of the two boys is the taller?*

একটি নির্দিষ্ট সংখ্যার মধ্যে কোন একটি/কোনটি জিজ্ঞাসা করতে, *Which*, *interrogative pronoun*-টি ব্যক্তি এবং বস্তু উভয়ের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহার করা হয়।

👉 **Note:** *What* *interrogative pronoun*-টি পছন্দ ইঙ্গিত করে না। যেমনঃ *What's your telephone number?* এটি ব্যক্তির পেশা জানতেও ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ *Whats your father? - He's a lawyer.*

(Compare Section 144.)

150) *Who?* এবং *Whom?*

a) *Who?*

✗ *Whom do you think will be chosen?*

✓ *Who do you think will be chosen?*

b) *Whom?*

✗ *Who do you think I saw yesterday?*

✓ *Whom do you think I saw yesterday?*

a) *Sentence*-টিতে *who* হল *will be chosen*-এর *subject*, *do you think* ভাষার অলঙ্কার ছাড়া আর কিছুই নয়, b) *Sentence*-টিতে *whom* হল *I saw*-এর *object*, *do you think* ভাষার অলঙ্কার ছাড়া আর কিছুই নয়।

(For Sections 149 and 150 see Exercise 19)

151) *Another*-এর পরিবর্তে *one other* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Please give me one other book.*

✓ *Please give me another book.*

👉 **Note:** *An* এবং *other* হতে *Another* গঠিত হয়েছে, তবে *another* বা *on other* এর পরিবর্তে এদেরকে একটি *word another* হিসেবে লেখা হয়।

152) *Comparative*-এর পরিবর্তে *superlative* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *John is the tallest of the two boys.*

✓ *John is the taller of the two boys.*

👉 **Note:** যখন দু'জন ব্যক্তি বা দু'টি বস্তুর মধ্যে তুলনা করা হয়, তখন *comparative form* অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে।

153) *Than*-এর পরিবর্তে *comparative*-এর পরে *form* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Amy is taller from her brother.*

✓ *Amy is taller than her brother.*

👑 **Note:** Comparative degree এবং adjective (বা adverb)গুলো *than* দ্বারা হয় কিন্তু *from preposition* দ্বারা নয়।

154) Superlative-এর পরিবর্তে comparative ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Cairo is the larger city in Africa.*

✓ *Cairo is the largest city in Africa.*

👑 **Note:** যখন দুইয়ের অধিক ব্যক্তি অথবা বস্তুর মধ্যে তুলনা বুঝায় তখন superlative Degree বসে।

155) Most-এর পরিবর্তে the more ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The more people will agree with me.*

✓ *Most people will agree with me.*

👑 **Note:** অধিকাংশ (the majority) কে বুঝায় তখন অবশ্যই most কে ব্যবহৃত হয় কোন অবস্থায় the more নয়। যেমনঃ Use most (not the more) when you mean the majority of)

156) Better বা Worse-এর পরিবর্তে more good বা more bad ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *This one looks more good than that.*

✓ *This one looks better than that.*

👑 **Note:** Good এবং bad, adjectives দুটির তুলনার জন্য irregular forms রয়েছে।

যেমনঃ Good , better , best এবং bad , worse , worst .

(For Sections 151-156 see Exercises 7 and 8)

157) At home-এর পরিবর্তে home ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *In the afternoon I stay home.*

✓ *In the afternoon I stay at home.*

👑 **Note:** At home phrase-টি বাড়িতে (in the house) অর্থ নির্দেশ করতে ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত, তবে come বা go এদের মতো verb-গুলোর সাথে preposition-এর কোন প্রয়োজন নেয়। যেমনঃ He wants to go home.

158) One of বা among-এর পরিবর্তে from ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

Don't, ✓ *She is from the nicest girls I know.*

✓ *She is one of the nicest girls I know.*

👑 **Note:** One of বা among এই ভাব প্রকাশ করতে আপনার from ব্যবহার পরিহার করা উচিত।

159) Active (to) infinitive-এর পরিবর্তে passive (to) infinitive (to be+past part) ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *English isn't easy to be learned.*

✓ *English isn't easy to learn.*

📌 **Note:** Easy, difficult, hard, heavy, good ইত্যাদি adjective-গুলোর পরে সাধারণত active infinitive বসে।

160) Passive voice-এ intransitive verb ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ She was disappeared from the house.

✓ She disappeared from the house.

📌 **Note:** নিয়মস্বরূপ, appear, seem, become, consist ইত্যাদির মতো intransitive verb-গুলো passive voice-এ ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

161) Verb-এর একটি form (রূপ)-এর সাথে অন্য একটি form-এর মিশ্রণ জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ It's better to enjoy yourself when you're young rather than wasting time worrying about the future.

✓ It's better to enjoy yourself when you're young than to waste time worrying about the future.

📌 **Note:** Verb-এর একটি form-এর সাথে অন্য একটি যেন না মেশে, সে ব্যাপারে সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করা উচিত। যদি কোন তুলনামূলক বাক্যে প্রথম verb-টি infinitive-এ থাকে তবে দ্বিতীয়টিও অবশ্যই infinitive-এ হবে।

162) Mood-গুলোর ভুলক্রম জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ If you would/'d do me this favour, I will/'ll be very grateful to you.

✓ If you would/'d do me this favour, I would/'d be very grateful to you.

Or: If you will/'ll do me this favour, I will/'d be very grateful to you.

163) The unrelated participle (অসম্পর্কযুক্ত participle):

✗ Being in a hurry, the door was left open.

✓ Being in a hurry, he left the door open.

Participle phrase-এর সাথে সম্পর্কিত যুক্তিযুক্ত subject-টি গ্রহণ করতে অবশ্যই সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করতে হবে। Sentence-টিতে প্রদত্ত, being in haste-এর যুক্তিযুক্ত subject-টি হল অবশ্যই he, the door নয়।

164) Isn't it?, Question phrase-টির অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ He played well yesterday, isn't it?

✓ He played well yesterday, didn't he?

Isn't it?, Question phrase-টি কেবল তখন ব্যবহৃত হয়, যখন পূর্ববর্তী বিবৃতিটিতে is word-টি থাকে, যেমন: It is a hot day, isn't it?

📌 **Note:** এরূপ প্রশ্নে পূর্ববর্তী বিবৃতির অনুরূপ tense ও person অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে এবং সঠিক auxiliary verb-টিও অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে। অবশ্য যদি পূর্ববর্তী বিবৃতিটি negative form-এ হয়, তবে question phrase-টিতে not উহ্য থাকে। সুতরাং আমরা বলিঃ

1. They are on holiday, aren't they?

They aren't on holiday, are they?

2. You speak English, don't you?

3. You don't speak French, do you?

(See Exercise 36)

165) উদ্দেশ্য প্রকাশ করতে Gerund-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I come here for learning English.

✓ I come here to learn English.

👉 Note: উদ্দেশ্য সাধারণত infinitive দ্বারা প্রকাশিত হয়, gerund দ্বারা নয়।

166) Negative questions-গুলোর উত্তর Yes বা No:

Question: Didn't you see the game?

Answer: Yes, - that, is, I saw it.

No, - that is, I didn't see it.

👉 Note: Negative questions-গুলোর উত্তরে যদি হ্যাঁবোধক হয়, তবে Yes বলুন এবং নাবোধক হলে No বলুন। That is-প্রশ্নটির negative form-এর উত্তরের সাথে সম্পর্কবিহীন।

167) Double negative ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ She says she's not afraid of nobody.

✓ She says she's not afraid of anybody.

Or: She says she's afraid of nobody.

👉 Note: ইংরেজিতে দুটি negative, একটি affirmative বিবৃতির সমান, সুতরাং দুটি negative একই clause-এ ব্যবহার করা আপনার পরিহার করা উচিত; যখন not ব্যবহৃত হয়, তখন none, any-এ; nothing, anything-এ; nobody, anybody-এ; no one, anyone-এ; nowhere, anywhere-এ; neither... nor, either...or-এ পরিবর্তিত হয়।

(See Exercise 38)

168) Once বা twice-এর পরিবর্তে one time বা two times ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I was absent one time or two times.

✓ I was absent once or twice.

👉 Note: One time এবং two time-এর পরিবর্তে যথাক্রমে once এবং twice ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত। তবে এখন three times-এর পরিবর্তে thrice কদাচিৎ ব্যবহৃত হয়।

169) One day ইত্যাদির পরিবর্তে a day ইত্যাদি ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ A day they went sight-seeing in Florence.

✓ One day they went sight-seeing in Florence.

👉 Note: Day, night, morning, afternoon এবং evening-এর সাথে one (a বা an নয়) ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত, যখন one-এর একটি নিশ্চিত অর্থ নির্দেশ করে।

170) The next day ইত্যাদির পরিবর্তে the other day ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ David slept well and was better the other day.

✓ David slept well and was better the next day (or on the following day).

📖 **Note:** *The other day*-এর একটি idiomatic অর্থ রয়েছে-অল্প কদিন আগে, যেমনঃ *I met an old friend the other day.*

171) *Half past one* ইত্যাদির পরিবর্তে *one and a half* ইত্যাদি ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Lessons begin at eight and a half.*

✓ *Lessons begin at half past eight.*

📖 **Note:** কথা বলার সময় আমরা বলি, *half past one, half past two, half past three* ইত্যাদি।

172) *As usual*-এর পরিবর্তে *as usually* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *As usually, he left his pen at home.*

✓ *As usual, he left his pen at home.*

173) *In my opinion*-এর পরিবর্তে *according to my opinion* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *According to my opinion, she's right.*

✓ *In my opinion, she's right.*

📖 **Note:** *I think*-এর পরিবর্তে *as I think, phrase*-টির ব্যবহারও পরিহার করতে হবে এবং বলতে হবে, *He is lazy and I think he'll fail. (as I think-নয়)*।

174) *In the end*-এর পরিবর্তে *at the end* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *At the end they reached the city.*

✓ *In the end they reached the city.*

*In the end* চূড়ান্ত পর্যায়ে বা শেষে, অর্থ নির্দেশ করে, *at the end* খুব বেশি দূরের বিন্দু বা অংশে বা শেষ সীমানায়-অর্থ নির্দেশ করে। যেমনঃ *There's an index at the end of this book, There's a holiday at the end of this month.*

175) *In the rain*-এর পরিবর্তে *under the rain* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *They played football under the rain.*

✓ *They played football in the rain.*

📖 **Note:** *In the sun* এবং *in the shade* একইভাবে এরাও ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ *He was sitting in the sun (or in the shade).*

176) *The reason is that*-এর পরিবর্তে *the reason is because* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The reason is because I believe it.*

✓ *The reason is that I believe it.*

*Reason* word-টি কারণ নির্দেশ করে, সুতরাং *the reason is because* হল একটি মূল্যহীন পুনরাবৃত্তি, সঠিক *idiom*-টি হল *the reason is that...*

*Have another look at...*

*Negatives*

**Negative**-গুলো সাধারণত **Present+Past simple** দুভাবে প্রকাশিত হয়ঃ

*By putting not (n't) after the verb. Use this method*

1) Verb-এর পরে *not* বসিয়ে; এই পদ্ধতিটি কেবল একুশটি verb-এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়। এখানে verb-গুলোর একটি তালিকা দেয়া হলঃ

*Am, is, are, was, were; have, has, had; shall, should; will, would; can, could; may, might; must; need; dare; ought... to; used...to.*

*Examples: I'm not ready. You mustn't do that. He can't write well. He oughtn't to go.*

কথোপকথনে *Not* প্রায়ই *n't*-এ সংক্ষিপ্ত হয়। সুতরাং আমরা বলি *do not*-এর জন্য *don't*, *does not*-এর জন্য *doesn't*, *did not*-এর জন্য *didn't*, *had not*-এর জন্য *hadn't*, *would not*-এর জন্য *wouldn't* ইত্যাদি (তবে আমরা বলি *shall not*-এর জন্য *shan't*, *will not*-এর জন্য *won't*, *cannot*-এর জন্য *can't*)।

2) *Not* এবং *present infinitive (to* ব্যতীত)-এর সাথে *do, does, did* ব্যবহার করে। এই পদ্ধতিটি উপরোক্ত একুশটি verb ছাড়া অন্য সব verb-এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়। *Word*-এর ক্রমটি হলঃ

*SUBJECT + do (does, did) + not + INFINITIVE*

*Examples: I don't go there very often. He doesn't teach English. The didn't see the game.*

3) নেতিবাচক অর্থ প্রকাশক অন্যান্য word-গুলো দ্বারাও অস্বীকৃতি (*negative*) প্রকাশিত হয়। *Word*-গুলো হচ্ছে *no, nobody, no one, nothing, nowhere.*

*Example: They know nothing* বা *They do not (don't) know anything.*

177) *The country*-এর পরিবর্তে *a country* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I spend my holidays in a country.*

✓ *I spend my holidays in the country.*

*A country* হল একটি স্থান, যেমনঃ *France, India* বা *Egypt*। *The country* হল একটি দেশের একটি অংশ বা ভাগ, যা গঠিত হয়েছে মাঠ-ময়দান, বন-জঙ্গল এবং পর্বতমালা ইত্যাদির সমন্বয়ে।

178) *Whether*-এর পরিবর্তে *if* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I asked Paul if he was going.*

✓ *I asked Paul whether he was going.*

যখন কোন প্রশ্নের *answer* হবে *yes/no* তখন *whether* ব্যবহৃত হবে। আর যদি প্রশ্নটির *answer yes/no* না হয়ে অন্য কিছু হবে তখন *if* ব্যবহৃত হবে। যেমনঃ *I shall speak to him, if he comes.* এই *sentence*-টিতে যেহেতু *yes/no reply* হবে না সেহেতু *if* ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে।

179) *Two*-এর জন্য *either*-এর পরিবর্তে *any* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Any of these two books is good.*

✓ *Either of these two books is good.*

*Either* দুইয়ের মধ্যে 'এটি' অথবা 'ওটি' অর্থ নির্দেশ করে; *Any* তিন বা ততোধিকের মধ্যে 'একটি' অর্থ নির্দেশ করে। যেমনঃ *Any of these books will do.*

180) *I like*-এর পরিবর্তে *likes me* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The cinema likes me very much.*

✓ *I like the cinema very much.*

👉 *Note:* *The cinema appeals to me* এটি সঠিক এবং অর্থ নির্দেশ করে 'আমি সিনেমাটি খুব বেশি পছন্দ করি'।

181) *Neither... nor*-এর পরিবর্তে *neither... or* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Sara speaks neither English or French.*

✓ *Sara speaks neither English nor French.*

মনে রাখুন, *Neither*-এর পরে অবশ্যই *nor* বসবে, *or* নয়। তবে *either*-এর পরে *or* বসে।

যেমনঃ *He speaks either English or She drinks either orange juice or apple juice.*

182) *Neither*-এর পরিবর্তে *negative sentence*-এ *both* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Both of them didn't go to school today.*

✓ *Neither of them went to school today.*

মনে রাখতে হবে যে, *Negative sentence*-এ *both*, *neither*-এ পরিবর্তিত হয়।

184) *Or*-এর পরিবর্তে *negative sentence*-এ *and* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I don't like red and orange. I want the blue one.*

✓ *I don't like red or orange. I want the blue one.*

যদি কোন *Sentence*-এ একটি *negative word* ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে *and*-এর পরিবর্তে অবশ্যই *or* ব্যবহৃত হবে।

👉 *Note:* যদি *clause*-গুলোতে পৃথক *subject*-গুলো যুক্ত হয়, তবে *conjunction* 'and' ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ *He didn't write to me and I was worried.*

185) *Before* বা *when*-এর পরিবর্তে *till* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'd reached the school till the rain started.*

✓ *I'd reached the school before the rain started.*

সময় প্রকাশক *Clause*-এর কাজটির পূর্বে যদি *principal clause*-টির *verb*-এর কাজটি সম্পন্ন হয়, তবে সময় প্রকাশক *clause*-টি *till*-এর পরিবর্তে *before* বা *when* দ্বারা অনুসৃত হয়।

## Misused Forms ⇒ Un-English Expressions

Foreign idiomatic expressions (বিদেশি রাগ-রীতিসিদ্ধ অভিব্যক্তিগুলোর) খুব কাছাকাছি English-এ অনুবাদ করা হতে ভুল্লুলো ঘটে; নিম্নে এ ধরনের ভুলগুলোর উদাহরণ দেওয়া হলঃ (Mistakes often result from too close a translation into English of foreign idiomatic expressions. The following are examples of such mistakes)

186) *Take an exam, give an exam* নয়।

✗ *The pupil gave his exam.*

✓ *The pupil took his exam.*

👑 **Note:** শিক্ষকগণ পরীক্ষা অর্পন করে (*give*) বা আয়োজন করে (*set*); শিক্ষার্থীগণ পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করে (*take*) বা পরীক্ষা দেওয়া (*sits for*)।

187) *To be right or wrong, to have right or wrong* নয়।

✗ *You've right or You've wrong.*

✓ *You're right or You're wrong.*

188) *To be busy, to have work* নয়।

✗ *I have much work this morning.*

✓ *I'm very busy this morning.*

👑 **Note:** উল্লেখ্য, আমরা বলি, *I have a lot of work to do this morning.*

189) *It's cold, it has cold* নয়।

✗ *It has cold this winter.*

✓ *It's cold this winter.*

190) *Go for a walk, make a walk* নয়।

✗ *We made a walk along the river.*

✓ *We went for a walk along the river.*

👑 **Note:** আমরা আরো বলতে পারি, *we had a walk* অথবা, *we took a walk along the river*. সাইকেলের উপরে, ঘোড়ার পিঠে ইত্যাদিতে আরোহণ করি (*ride on*) তবে আমরা বাসে, ট্রেনে বা অন্যান্য সাধারণ পরিবহনে উঠি (*ride in*)।

191) *Go for a ride on a bicycle, go for a walk on a bicycle* নয়।

✗ *We went for a walk on our bicycles.*

✓ *We went for a ride on our bicycles.*

👑 **Note:** আমরা সাইকেলের উপরে, ঘোড়ার পিঠে ইত্যাদিতে আরোহণ করি (*ride on*) তবে আমরা বাসে, ট্রেনে বা অন্যান্য সাধারণ পরিবহনে উঠি (*ride in*)।

192) *Mount or get on a horse, ride a horse* নয়।

✗ *Peter rode his horse and went home.*

✓ *Peter got on his horse and rode home.*

👉 **Note:** To ride একটি চলমান কাজ নির্দেশ করে; To mount বা to get on একটি সাধারণ কাজ নির্দেশ করে।

193) Dismount বা get off a horse, come down from a horse নয়।

✗ They came down from their horses.

✓ They got off their horses.

👉 **Note:** আমরা মোটর গাড়ি, ঘোড়ার গাড়ি ইত্যাদি হতে নামি (alright from) বা ছেড়ে দেই, (get out of), কিন্তু ট্রেন, বাস, ট্রাক ইত্যাদিতে get on বা off করি।

194) Go on foot, go with the feet নয়।

✗ Shall we go there with the feet?

✓ Shall we go there on foot?

195) Take or have a shower, make a shower নয়।

✗ I make a shower every morning.

✓ I take a shower every morning.

Or: I have a shower every morning.

👉 **Note:** যখন আমরা সমুদ্র বা নদী সম্বন্ধে কথা বলি, তখন আমরা বলি, to bathe, to have a bathe, to go for a bathe, to go bathing, to go for a swim বা to go swimming.

196) Ask a question, make a question নয়।

✗ Naomi made me several questions.

✓ Naomi asked me several questions.

197) Take an hour, need an hour নয়।

✗ I'll need an hour to do that.

✓ it'll take me an hour to do that.

198) Give a discount, make a discount নয়।

✗ He made me a small discount.

✓ He gave me a small discount.

199) Take exercise, make exercise নয়।

✗ you ought to make more exercise.

✓ You ought to take more exercise.

200) Say one's prayers, make or do one's prayer নয়।

✗ I make my prayer before I go to bed.

✓ I say my prayers before I go to bed.

👉 **Note:** To say grace হল- খাণ্ডা শুরু করার পূর্বে আল্লাহর অনুগ্রহ চাওয়া।

201) Give or deliver a lecture, make a lecture নয়।

✗ He made an interesting lecture.

✓ He gave an interesting lecture.

Or: He delivered an interesting lecture.

👉 **Note:** লক্ষণীয় আমরা বলি, He made an interesting speech.

202) Pretend, make oneself that নয়।

✗ She makes herself that she knows.

✓ She pretends to know.

203) Have a dream, see a dream নয়।

✗ I saw a strange dream last night.

✓ I had a strange dream last night.

Or: I dreamt a strange dream last night.

204) Smoke a cigarette, drink a cigarette নয়।

✗ He drinks too many cigarettes

✓ He smokes too many cigarettes.

205) Make a mistake, do a mistake নয়।

✗ I did one mistake in dictation.

✓ I made one mistake in dictation.

206) Tell or speak the truth, say the truth নয়।

✗ Fiona always says the truth.

✓ Fiona always tells the truth.

Or: Fiona always speaks the truth.

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা to tell a lie এটিও হয় (to say a lie নয়), যেমনঃ He told me a lie.

207) See or watch a game, to follow a game নয়।

✗ Did you follow the game?

✓ Did you see (or watch) the game?

👉 **Note:** To follow the lesson বলাও পরিহার করতে হবে, যখন আপনি to attend the class অর্থটি নির্দেশ করবেন।

208) Turn (switch) the light on or off, open or shut the light নয়।

✗ Please open (or shut) the light.

✓ Please turn on (or off) the light.

Or: Please switch on (or off) the light.

👉 **Note:** আমরা বলি, একটি প্রদীপ (lamp), মোমবাতি (candle) বা আগুন (fire).

209) Give an example, bring an example নয়।

✗ Can you bring a better example?

✓ Can you give a better example?

210) Give a mark, put a mark নয়।

✗ The teacher put me a good mark.

✓ The teacher gave me a good mark.

👉 **Note:** To put a lesson, to put a goal, to put punishment এগুলো বলাও পরিহার করতে হবে এবং পরিবর্তে বলতে হবে- to give a lesson, to score a goal, to give punishment.

211) Set a watch by, put a watch with নয়।

✗ I put my watch with the radio news.

✓ I set my watch by the radio news.

212) A watch is slow or fast, goes behind or in front নয়।

✗ My watch goes two minutes behind.

✓ My watch is two minutes slow.

👉 **Note:** আমরা এও বলতে পারি, My watch loses or gains.

213) Show a film, play a film নয়।

✗ This film will be played shortly.

✓ This film will be shown shortly.

214) Have one's hair cut, cut one's hair নয়।

✗ I'm going to cut my hair.

✓ I'm going to have my hair cut.

👉 **Note:** I'll make a pair of shoes for a suit of clothes-এটি বলাও পরিহার করতে হবে এবং পরিবর্তে বলতে হবে, I'll have a pair of shoes (or a suit of clothes) made.

215) Learn by heart, learn from out নয়।

✗ We have a poem to learn from out.

✓ We have a poem to learn by heart.

216) Put on weight, put weight নয়।

✗ I've put at least three kilos.

✓ I've put on at least three kilos.

👉 **Note:** Put on weight এর বিপরীত হল to lose weight, যেমনঃ She has lost five kilos.

217) It works miracles, it makes miracles নয়।

✗ That medicine makes miracles.

✓ That medicine works miracles.

218) Getting on with, going with নয়।

✗ How is Susan going with her work?

✓ How is Susan getting on with her work?

219) *This morning, today morning* নয়।

✗ *I haven't seen him today morning.*

✓ *I haven't seen him this morning.*

👉 **Note:** Today morning, today afternoon, today evening, yesterday night, this night ইত্যাদি বলাও পরিহার করতে হবে এবং পরিবর্তে বলতে হবে, this morning, this afternoon, this evening, last night, tonight ইত্যাদি।

220) *Quietly, slowly, slowly* নয়।

✗ *The boy came in slowly, slowly.*

✓ *The boy came in quietly.*

222) *What do you call...? How do you call...?* নয়।

✗ *How do you call this in English?*

✓ *What do you call this in English?*

👉 **Note:** যদি প্রশ্নটি কোন বস্তু সম্বন্ধে না হয়ে কোন অভিব্যক্তি সম্বন্ধে হয়, তাহলে বলা উচিত *How do you say this in English?*

(See Exercise 62)



# ই-বুক পড়ুন, কাগজের অপচয় রোধ করুন, এসো ইবুক পড়ি, সবুজ পৃথিবী গড়ি।

প্রয়োজনীয় সকল শিক্ষণীয় বাংলা বই নিয়ে আসুন আপনার হাতের মুঠোয়! পড়ালেখাকে আমি আপনাদের হাতের মুঠোয় এনে দিলাম, সংগ্রহের করার দায়িত্ব আপনাদের.....!!!

পড়ুন যে কোন স্থানে যে কোন সময়... ইবুক হতে পারে বোরিং, বেকার ও অবসর সময়ের অন্যতম সঙ্গী। এই জন্য

কম্পিউটার- মোবাইল স্ক্রিন অটো-অ্যাডজাস্টেড ( অর্থাৎ পড়তে ডানে বামে মুভ করা লাগবে না) ইউনিকোড ঝকঝকে বাংলা টেক্সট ফরম্যাটে (স্ক্যান বিহীন) ৫০০+ (4.5 GB) শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই..এর ডিভিডি (DVD) করা হয়েছে যা কপি করে কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইল পড়তে পারবেন।

তাহাড়া এই ই-বুক গুলোতে বুকমার্ক মেনু ও হাইপার লিংক মেনু যুক্ত করা হয়েছে ফলে খুব সহজে যে কোন অধ্যায়ে এ ক্লিক করেই যেতে পারবেন স্ক্রল করা লাগবে না..

৫০০+ শিক্ষামূলক প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই বা ইবুকের থেকে নেওয়া কিছু বইয়ের ফোল্ডার ডাউনলোড লিংকঃ ব্রাউজারের এড্রেস বারে লিখুনঃ [bit.ly/tanbir](http://bit.ly/tanbir)

তারা জাস্ট একবার কয়েকটি বই ডাউনলোড করে মোবাইলে পড়ে দেখুন..!

এই বই গুলো পড়ে যদি ভালো লাগে এবং এই রকম আরো ইবুক পেতে এই আপডেট ৫০০ বাংলা ইবুকের ডিভিডি সংগ্রহ করুন, দাম মাত্র ৩০০ টাকা, যা যে কোন একটি সাধারণ বইয়ের দামের সমান ...

যারা আগে আমাদের থেকে ইবুকের ডিভিডি কুরিয়ার করে নিয়েছিলেন তারা চাইলে এই নতুন ডিভিডিও কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে পারেন।

কুরিয়ারের মাধ্যমে নিতে চাইলে অথবা ইবুক সম্পর্কে যে কোনো সাহায্যের জন্য নিঃসঙ্কোচে কল করুন **01738359555 (Tanbir Ahmad)**

এতোদিন যারা অনেক কষ্ট করে খুঁজে খুঁজে একটা একটা বই ডাউনলোড করেছেন তাদের কথা চিন্তা করে ও ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

আপনি চাইলে এই ই-বুক সমূহের প্রায় 50% বই (মোবাইল ভার্সন ও নতুন গুলো ব্যাতিত) আমাদের “প্রয়োজনীয় বাংলা বই” নামক ইবুকের [ওয়েবসাইট](http://www.tanbir.com) (ভিজিটর সংখ্যা ৭৫ লাখ) ও [পেইজ](http://www.tanbir.com) (ফ্যান সংখ্যা প্রায় ৮ লাখ) থেকে একটা একটা করে খুঁজে এমবি খরচ করে ফ্রিতে ডাউনলোড করে নিতে পারেন ! এতে অবশ্যই আপনার অনেক সময় ও এমবি খরচ হবে ! আপনাদের সময় ও এমবি বাচাতে অর্থাৎ কষ্ট লাগবের জন্য অর্থাৎ রেডিমেট সব প্রয়োজনীয় বই হাতের কাছে পেতে ... !!!

এই ইবুকের ডিভিডি সার্ভিস চালু করেছি। আমাদের এ আয়োজন উদ্যেশ্য বইয়ের সাথে মানুষের সম্পর্ককে অনিঃশেষ ও অবিচ্ছন্ন করে রাখা।

## Incorrect Omissions ⇒ Omissions of preposition

সুনির্দিষ্ট Word-গুলোর পরে *preposition*-কে উহ্য (*omission*) রাখার ফলে সৃষ্ট বিভ্রান্তিগুলোর কতিপয় উদাহরণ নিচে দেওয়া হলঃ

223) *Ask for a thing, ask a thing* নয়।

✗ *She came and asked my book.*

✓ *She came and asked for my book.*

224) *Dispose/get rid of a thing, dispose/get rid a thing* নয়।

✗ *He'll dispose/get rid all his property.*

✓ *He'll dispose/get rid of all his property.*

225) *Dream of a thing, dream a thing* নয়।

✗ *Young men dream glory and riches.*

✓ *Young men dream of glory and riches.*

226) *Explain to a person, explain a person* নয়।

✗ *She explained me the matter.*

✓ *She explained the matter to me.*

227) *Knock at the door, knock the door* নয়।

✗ *Who is knocking the door?*

✓ *Who is knocking at the door?*

228) *Listen to a person or thing, listen a person or thing* নয়।

✗ *They were listening the music.*

✓ *They were listening to the music.*

229) *Pay for a thing, pay a thing* নয়।

✗ *How much did you pay the book?*

✓ *How much did you pay for the book?*

👉 **Note:** একজন ব্যক্তি অন্য একজন ব্যক্তিকে টাকা প্রদান করতে (*to pay*) পারে। তিনি একটি বিল, হিসাব বা চাঁদা প্রদানও (*pay*) করতে পারে, তবে তিনি যা ক্রয় করেন তার জন্য তাকে মূল্য পরিশোধ করতে হয়। সেক্ষেত্রে *pay for* বসে।

230) *Point to or at a person or thing, point a person or thing* নয়।

✗ *He pointed the map on the wall.*

✓ *He pointed to the map on the wall.*

Or: *He pointed at the map on the wall.*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা *point out*, যেমনঃ *He pointed out the boy who did it*, *To point* (*preposition* ব্যতীত) অর্থ হল-দিক নির্দেশ করা। যেমনঃ *Don't point the gun this way.*

231) *Remind a person of something, remind a person something* নয়।

✗ *Please remind me that later.*

✓ *Please remind me of that later.*

232) *Reply to a person, reply a person* নয়।

✗ *She's not replied me yet.*

✓ *She's not replied to me yet.*

233) *Say to a person, say a person* নয়।

✗ *Kevin said me, Come tomorrow.*

✓ *Kevin said to me, 'Come tomorrow'.*

234) *Search for a lost thing, search a lost thing* নয়।

✗ *They're searching the ball.*

✓ *They're searching for the ball.*

🐾 **Note:** *In search of* (কোন কিছুর অনুসন্ধান/খোঁজে), **যেমনঃ** *The wolf goes in search of sheep. To search (for ব্যতীত)-অর্থ হল কারো পকেট বা বাড়ি তল্লাশি করা।*

**যেমনঃ** *The policeman searched the man and his house.*

235) *Share with a person, share a person* নয়।

✗ *My friend shared me his book.*

✓ *My friend shared his book with me.*

236) *Speak to a person, speak a person* নয়।

✗ *I'll speak him about that.*

✓ *I'll speak to him about that.*

🐾 **Note:** *I'll speak to him* অর্থ হল- আমি সকল প্রকার আলাপ করব (*I'll do all the speaking*); *I'll speak with him* অর্থ হল-তার সাথে আমার আলাপ/কথা আছে (*I'll have a conversation with him*).

237) *Supply a person with something, supply a person something* নয়।

✗ *Can you supply me all I need?*

✓ *Can you supply me with all I need?*

🐾 **Note:** *Provide a person with* (কোন ব্যক্তিকে কিছু সরবরাহ করা) এটিও ব্যবহার করা যায়। **যেমনঃ** *She provided her son with all he needed.*

*Have another look at...*

**Third person singular, simple present**

1) *He, she, it* অথবা যে কোন *singular noun*-এর বেলায় *present tense*-এর *verb*-এর শেষে *-s* বা *-es* যুক্ত হয়; *he works, it catches, the sun rises, she worries.*

2) *Verb*-এর *first person*-এর শেষে যখন *s,x,ch,sh* বা *o* থাকে, তখন এর *third person singular* করতে *verb*-এর সাথে *-es* যুক্ত হয়ঃ

*I watch/he watches*

*I finish/he finishes*

*I fix/he fixes*

*I go/he goes*

3) যখন *Verb*-এর *first person*-এর শেষে *consonant -y* থাকে, তখন এর শেষে 'y' i-এ পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং এর সাথে *es* যুক্ত হয়, অর্থাৎ *ies* যুক্ত হয়ঃ

*I carry/he carries*

*I study/he studies*

*I fly/he flies*

👉 **Note:** যদি *-y-* এর পূর্বে *vowel* থাকে, তবে আমরা কেবল *s* যোগ করে *verb*-টির *third person singular* গঠন করি। যেমনঃ *he plays, he enjoys, he obeys.*

4) কতিপয় *Verbs* আছে যেগুলোর *third person singular* অনিয়মিত (*irregular*):

*I am/he is*

*I have/he has*

*I do/he does*

*I say/he says*

5) *Third person singular*-এ *shall, will, can, may, must* এবং *ought* এই *verb*-গুলোর কোন পরিবর্তন ঘটে না।

*I shall/he shall*

*I will/he will*

*I can/he can*

*I may/he may*

*I must/he must*

**Remember:** *present tense*-এ *verb*-এর *third person singular number* গঠনে *-s, -es* বা *-ies* যুক্তকরণ, *noun*-এর *plural form* গঠনের মতোই।

238) *Think of a person or thing, think a person or thing* নয়।

✗ *Think a number and then double it.*

✓ *Think of a number and then double it.*

239) *Wait for a person or thing, wait a person or thing* নয়।

✗ *I'll wait you at the cinema.*

✓ *I'll wait for you at the cinema.*

👉 **Note:** *Await* কোন *preposition* গ্রহণ করে না। যেমনঃ *I'm awaiting your reply.*

240) *Wish for a thing, wish a thing* নয়।

✗ *He doesn't wish any reward.*

✓ *He doesn't wish for any reward.*

241) *Write to a person, write a person* নয়।

✗ *I'll write her tomorrow.*

✓ *I'll write to her tomorrow.*

👑 **Note:** যখন *write verb*-টির *direct* (বস্তুবাচক কর্ম)-টি প্রকাশিত হয়, তখন *preposition (to)*-টি উহ্য থাকে। যেমনঃ *I'll write him a letter.*

(See Exercises 84 and 85)



## Incorrect Omissions ⇒ Miscellaneous

### Examples

242) Third person singular number-এর *-s* বা *-es* উহ্য (omitted):

✗ *He speak English very well.*

✓ *He speaks English very well.*

যখন Subject-টি হয় *he, she, it* বা noun-এর *singular number*, তখন verb-এর *present tense* হতে *-s* বা *-es* যেন বাদ না পড়ে সেদিকে অবশ্যই সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করতে হবে।

(See Exercise 31)

243) *Doesn't*-এর পরিবর্তে *don't* ব্যবহার করেঃ

✗ *He don't care what he says.*

✓ *He doesn't care what he says.*

*Don't* (=do not); *I, we, you, they* এবং *Plural nouns*-এর word-গুলোর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়, পক্ষান্তরে *doesn't* (=does not); *he, she, it* এবং *3rd person singular number*-এর word-গুলোর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

(See Exercise 32)

244) Past tense-এর *-d* বা *-ed* উহ্য (omitted) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I receive a letter yesterday.*

✓ *I received a letter yesterday.*

*Regular verbs*-এর *past tense* হতে যেন *-d* বা *-ed* যাতে বাদ না যায় সে বিষয়ে সতর্ক থাকতে হবে, বলার সময় *past tense*-এর শেষের অংশটুকু পরিষ্কারভাবে উচ্চারিত হওয়া উচিত।

245) Plural form-এর *-s* বা *-es* বা *-ies* উহ্য (omitted) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I paid six pound for the book.*

✓ *I paid six pounds for the book.*

*Plural number*-এর *-s, -es* বা *-ies* যেন বাদ না যায়, সে দিকে অবশ্যই সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করতে হবে।

📌 **Note:** কতিপয় noun-এর রয়েছে *irregular plurals form*: *man, men; woman, women; child, children; ox, oxen; foot, feet; tooth, teeth; goose, geese; mouse, mice.*

246) Possessive-এর শেষাংশের উহ্যতা (omitted):

✗ *A hen's egg is different from a Pigeon.*

✓ *A hen's egg is different from a pigeon's.*

যদি কোন তুলনায় প্রথম Noun-টি *possessive case*-এ হয়, তবে অবশ্যই দ্বিতীয় noun-টিও *possessive case*-এ হবে। যেমনঃ *My mother's nose is bigger than my father's.*

247) *Singular countable noun*-এর পূর্বে *article*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

ভুলঃ

✗ *I've no money to buy car.*

✓ *I've no money to buy a car.*

সাধারণত, *Common noun*-এর *singular number*-এর পূর্বে *the* বা *a* বা *an* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

248) *To be*-এর পরে *a* বা *an*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'm not teacher, I'm student.*

✓ *I'm not a teacher, I'm a student.*

*To be*-এর *singular noun-complement* প্রকাশ করতে অবশ্যই এর পূর্বে *indefinite article* *a* বা *an* ব্যবহৃত হবে।

249) *Half 'word'* টির পরে *a* বা *an*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He drank half glass of milk.*

✓ *He drank half a glass of milk.*

📌 **Note:** *Half a glass (an hour, a day, a mile* ইত্যাদি) হল *half of a glass (of an hour, of a day, of a mile* ইত্যাদি)-এর সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপ।

250) *Hundred*-এর পূর্বে *a* বা *one*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Hundred years make a century.*

✓ *A hundred years make a century.*

Or: *One hundred years make a century.*

*Hundred* এবং *thousand*-এর পূর্বে *indefinite article: a* বা *numeral: one* অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে।

251) *Make a noise* হতে *a* বা *an*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I told them not to make noise.*

✓ *I told them not to make a noise.*

📌 **Note:** সর্বদাই *to make a mistake, to make a fortune, to make a will, to make an impression, to make an experiment, to make an attempt*-এগুলো সঠিক গঠন।

252) জাতীয়তাসমূহের নামের পূর্বে *the*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *English are fond of sports.*

✓ *The English are fond of sports.*

দলগত জনসাধারণের বর্ণনায়, জাতীয়তাসমূহের নামের পূর্বে অবশ্যই *Definite article: the* বসাতে হবে। যেমনঃ *The British, The French, The Dutch, The Swiss, The Chinese, The Sudanese* ইত্যাদি।

253) *Instruments* (বাদ্যযন্ত্রের) নামের পূর্বে *the*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) রাখা জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I play violin, but not piano.*

✓ *I play the violin, but not the piano.*

বাদ্যযন্ত্রের (*instruments*) নামের পূর্বে *definite article* ব্যবহৃত হবে।

254) *Cinema word*-টির পূর্বে *the*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *On Saturday I go to cinema.*

✓ *On Saturday I go to the cinema.*

*Cinema, theatre, concert* ইত্যাদি *word*-গুলোর পূর্বে *definite article the* আবশ্যিক হয়।

(For *Sextions 247-254 see Exercises 16 and 17*)

255) *Passive (voice)* থেকে *to be verb*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Charles Dickens born in 1812.*

✓ *Charles Dickens was born in 1812.*

আবশ্যিক *Verb*-টির *past participle* রূপটি *to be verb*-এর সাথে মিলিত হয়ে সর্বদা *passive voice* গঠিত হয় (*to be + past participle*)।

*Have another look at...*

*Indefinite article*

***Indefinite article* ব্যবহৃত হয়ঃ**

1) প্রতিটি *Singular common noun*-এর পূর্বে যদি না *the* বা এমন কোন *word*, যেমনঃ *this, that, my, his* বসে, যেমনঃ *I bought a new book* (*I bought new book* নয়).

2) *Hundred* এবং *thousand*-এই *word*-গুলোর পূর্বে, যেমনঃ *A hundred soldiers were in the camp.*

3) *To be verb*-এর পরে যখন একটি *singular common noun* বসে, তার পূর্বে, যেমনঃ *Mary's father is a lawyer.*

4) সুনির্দিষ্ট *Phrase*-গুলোতে, যেমনঃ *To make a noise, a mistake, a fortune, an impression; to have a headache, a pain, a cold, a cough.*

***Indefinite article* ব্যবহৃত হয় নাঃ**

1) *Singular nouns* যেগুলোর *plural* রূপ ব্যবহৃত হয় না, তাদের পূর্বে, যেমনঃ *advice, information, work, furniture, bread* ইত্যাদি।

*Example: He gave me good advice* (*a good advice* নয়).

2) *Kind of* বা *sort of phrase*-টির পরে, যেমনঃ *What kind of pen do you want?*  
*A, an or one*

অনেক ভাষায় *Numeral; one, indefinite article a* বা *an*-এর পরিবর্তে ব্যবহৃত হয়, কিন্তু *English*-এ এভাবে ব্যবহৃত হয় না, *One man went into one shop* এভাবে না হয়ে হওয়া উচিতঃ *A man went into a shop. One* কেবল সংখ্যার উপর জোর প্রদত্ত হলে ব্যবহৃত হবে, যেমনঃ *One swallow does not make a summer.*

256) প্রশ্ন হতে *Do auxilliary (verb)*-টির উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *You understand the problem?/He understands the problem?/She understood the problem?*

✓ *Do you understand the problem?/Does he understand the problem?/Did she understand the problem?*

প্রশ্ন জিজ্ঞেস করতে, *Simple present* এবং *simple past tense*-এ অন্যান্য *verb*-এর পূর্বে *do* (*does, did*) বসাতে হয়।

🌟 **Note:** *Can, may, must* এগুলোর মত *auxilliary verb*-এর পূর্বে 'do' *auxiliary verb*-টি ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়, যেমনঃ *Can you meet me tomorrow?*

(See Exercise 34)

257) *Principal verb* হিসেবে *do*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Do pupils their work carefully?*

✓ *Do pupils do their work carefully?*

*Sentence*-টির সঠিক রূপটিতে, প্রথম *do*-এর নিজস্ব কোন অর্থ নেই এবং কেবল প্রশ্নটি তৈরিতে সাহায্য করেছে; অন্যদিকে দ্বিতীয় *do* হল বাক্যটির *principal* (প্রধান) *verb* এবং এর অর্থ কাজ করা (*perform*)।

258) সময় নির্দেশক *Preposition*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I was born the third of December.*

✓ *I was born on the third of December.*

সাধারণত কোন কাজের সময় প্রদর্শন করতে *Preposition* ব্যতীত *noun* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়।

🌟 **Note:** উল্লেখ্য যে, *Last year, next year, some day, one day, this afternoon* ইত্যাদির সাথে *preposition* ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

259) *Infinitive*-এর পরে *preposition*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *They've no house to live.*

✓ *They've no house to live in.*

যদি *Infinitive*-টি একটি *intransitive verb* (*live* ইত্যাদির মত) হয়, তবে এর পরে অবশ্যই *preposition*-টি থাকবে। কিন্তু *preposition*-টির *object*-টি উহ্য থাকে।

260) *Introductory word* হিসেবে *there*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Once lived a great king.*

✓ *Once there/There once lived a great king.*

যে *Sentence*-এ, *subject*-এর পূর্বে *verb* বসে, সেখানে *subject*-কে পরিচয় করিয়ে দিতে *adverb, there* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

261) *To know verb*-টির পরে *how*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *She knows to play the piano.*

✓ *She knows how to play the piano.*

*To know, verb*-টির পরে, *infinitive*-টি সর্বদা *adverb how* দ্বারা পরিচিত হয়।

262) *Comparative*-এর পরে *other*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Homer was greater than all the Greek poets.*

✓ *Homer was greater than all the other Greek poets.*

যেহেতু *Homer* ছিলেন একজন গ্রীক কবি, তাই প্রথম বাক্যটি তাকে অপেক্ষাকৃত বড় করেছে, যা যুক্তিযুক্ত।

*Have another look at...*

Verb 'to be'

Present tense: *I am/'m, you are/'re, he (she, it) is/'s; we, you, they are/'re.*

Past tense: *It was, you were, he (she, it) was; we, you, they were.*

Future tense: *I, you, he (she, it) will/'ll be; we, you, they will/'ll be.*

Present perfect: *I, you, have/'ve been, he (she, it) has/'s been; we, you, they have/'ve been.*

Past perfect: *I, you, he (she, it) had/'d been; we, you, they had/'d been.*

Future perfect: *I, you, he (she, it) will/'ll have been; we, you, they will/'ll have been.*

**Uses of the verb to be as auxilliary**

**Use of the verb to be:**

1) *Contuinous tenses* গঠন করতে *present participle* এর সাথেঃ

To be + *present participle*

Example: *The sun was shining in the sky.*

2) *Passive form* গঠন করতে *past participle* এর সাথেঃ

To be + *past participle*

Example: *The letter was written by John.*

263) তুলনাসমূহে *Before*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'd never seen such a thing.*

✓ *I'd never seen such a thing before.*

একটি বস্তুর সাথে, একই প্রকারের অন্য সকল বস্তুর তুলনা করতে *Before* word-টি বাদ দেওয়া উচিত নয়।

264) *Everybody* ইত্যাদির পরে *else*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *She is stronger than everybody.*

✓ *She is stronger than everybody else.*

একটি ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর সাথে, একই প্রকারের অন্য সকল ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর তুলনা করতে,

*Everybody, anybody, anything* এত্যাতির পরে *else, word*-টি অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে।

265) *Demonstrative pronoun: one*-এর উহ্যতা (*omission*) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *This is the only that I like.*

✓ *This is the only one that I like.*

পূর্বোল্লিখিত Noun-এর স্থলে, demonstrative pronoun one (plural: ones) ব্যবহৃত হয়।

266) Infinitive-এর পূর্বে personal pronoun-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I want to tell me the truth.

✓ I want you to tell me the truth.

Want, like, wish ইত্যাদির মত verb-গুলোর সাথে, infinitive-টির subject-টি প্রকাশিত হয়, যদি এটি প্রধান verb-টির subject-টি হতে ভিন্ন হয়।

267) Impersonal verb-এর subject হিসেবে it-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Is very hot in the Sudan.

✓ It's very hot in the Sudan.

Impersonal verb-এর subject হিসেবে it-pronoun-টি প্রকাশিত হওয়া উচিত।

268) Principal (প্রধান) clause হতে pronoun subject-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ When he saw the teacher, stood up.

✓ When he saw the teacher, he stood up.

কোন বাক্য Adverbial clause সহযোগে শুরু হলে, principal clause-টির subject হিসেবে personal pronoun-টি অবশ্যই প্রকাশিত হবে।

269) কোন Quotation (উক্তি)-এর পরে personal pronoun-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ 'I'm learning English,' said.

✓ 'I'm learning English,' he said.

একটি Quotation-এর পরে, reporting verb-এর subject হিসেবে personal pronoun-টি অবশ্যই প্রকাশিত হবে।

270) Transitive verb-এর object-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I asked her for some paper, but she had not.

✓ I asked her for some paper, but she had none/didn't have any.

সাধারণত, প্রতিটি Transitive verb-এর একটি প্রকাশিত object থাকে, এখানে, none (not any এর সমতুল্য) হল had-এর object.

271) Direct object-টির উহ্যতা, যখন দুটি object থাকেঃ

✗ I asked him for some ink, and he gave me.

✓ I asked him for some ink, and he gave me some.

Give, bring, send, tell, buy, show ইত্যাদির মত কিছু Transitive verb-এর অবশ্যই দুটি প্রকাশিত object থাকবে, একটি direct এবং অন্যটি indirect object. এখানে some হল gave verb-টির direct object.

272) 'Enjoy' verb-এর object-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I enjoyed during the holidays.

✓ *I enjoyed myself during the holidays.*

Or: *I enjoyed my holidays.*

Enjoy verb-টির পরে preposition বসতে পারে না, এর পরে সবসময় অবশ্যই একটি object বসবে। object হতে পারে একটি reflexive pronoun বা একটি noun.

👉 **Note:** আমরা বলে থাকি, *I had a good time (I enjoyed myself)*; তবে *enjoyed my time* নয়।

273) Adjective-এর পরে noun-এর উহ্যতা (omitted) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The unfortunate was shot dead.*

✓ *The unfortunate man was shot dead.*

Adjective-টির পরে আসা noun-টি ছাড়া বাক্যের বক্তব্যটি বোঝা যায় না, তাই noun-টি অবশ্যই প্রকাশিত হবে।

👉 **Note:** যখন কোন adjective, plural noun হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয়, কেবল তখনই adjective-টির পরবর্তী noun-টি উহ্য থাকে। যেমনঃ *The poor envy the rich.*

274) Number-গুলোর সাথে 'and' word-এর উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Eight thousand thirty-seven.*

✓ *Eight thousand and thirty-seven.*

একক ও দশকের সংখ্যাগুলোর সাথে Hundred, thousand, million ইত্যাদির সংযোগ স্থাপন করতে and conjunction-টি ব্যবহৃত হবে।

275) Number-গুলোর মধ্যে 'or' word-টির উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I've only two, three friends.*

✓ *I've only two or three friends.*

ব্যবহৃত Number-গুলোর মাঝে আমরা সবসময় 'or' conjunction-টি স্থাপন করব, সুতরাং *two or three men, five or six pages, eight or ten days.*

276) 'বয়স' হতে 'old' word-টির উহ্যতা (omission) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *My sister is fifteen years.*

✓ *My sister is fifteen years old.*

👉 **Note:** আমরা আরো বলতে পারি, *My sister is fifteen years of age*, অথবা সাধারণভাবে, *My sister is fifteen.*

277) For this reason-এর পরিবর্তে for this ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *For this he wants to leave.*

✓ *For this reason he wants to leave.*

For this, phrase-টি অশুদ্ধ, বলতে হবে, for this reason অথবা for that reason; এও বলা যায়, owing to that বা because of that.

278) Had better-এর পরিবর্তে better ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Better go home at once.*

✓ *You'd better go home at once.*

Correct(শুদ্ধ) phrase-টি হল *had better: You had better go* অর্থ হলঃ তোমার বরং যাওয়া উচিত/ভালো হবে।

279) *Upstairs* এবং *downstairs*-এর পরিবর্তে *up* এবং *down* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He's up, he's down.*

✓ *He's upstairs, he's downstairs.*

*He's up* মানে হল 'তিনি শয়্যাভাগী'। *He's upstairs (downstairs)* মানে হল 'তিনি ভবনটির উপর (lower) তলায়।

280) *Throw it away*-এর পরিবর্তে *throw it* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *It's dirty, throw it.*

✓ *It's dirty, throw it away.*

*Throw it* মানে হল, কোন একটি বস্তু কারো প্রতি নিক্ষেপ করা, যেমন- একটি বল। *Throw it away* অর্থ হল, কোন এক পাশে ছুঁড়ে ফেলার মাধ্যমে এটা হতে রেহাই পাওয়া।

281) *I don't think so*-এর পরিবর্তে *I don't thik* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I don't think.*

✓ *I don't think so.*

*I don't think* অর্থ হল, আমি আমার মাথা খাটাই না; পক্ষান্তরে, *I don't think so* অর্থ হল, 'আমি তা মনে করি না বা আমি এই/ঐ মত পোষণ করি না'।

282) *The day before yesterday*-এর পরিবর্তে *before yesterday* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Lynne arrived before yesterday.*

✓ *Lynne arrived the day before yesterday.*

*Before yesterday, after tomorrow, after next week* ইত্যাদি phrase-গুলো *incorrect* (অশুদ্ধ)। এদের পরিবর্তে বলুন, *the day before yesterday, the day after tomorrow, the week after next.*

## Unnecessary Words ⇒ Unnecessary

### Prepositions

নিচের Word-গুলোর সাথে কোন *preposition*-এর প্রয়োজন পড়ে না। কারণ এদের অর্থের মাঝে *preposition*-এর অর্থ নিহিত রয়েছে।

284) *Answer (=reply to; উত্তর/জবাব দেওয়া)*

✗ *Please answer to my question.*

✓ *Please answer my question.*

👉 **Note:** *Answer, noun*-টি *to* গ্রহণ করে। যেমনঃ *His answer to my question was wrong.*

285) *Approach (=come near to; নিকটবর্তী/দ্বারস্থ হওয়া)*

✗ *Don't approach to that house.*

✓ *Don't approach that house.*

286) Ask (=put a question to; প্রশ্ন করা)

✗ I asked to the teacher about it.

✓ I asked the teacher about it.

287) Attack (=go and fight against; আক্রমণ করা)

✗ They attacked against the enemy.

✓ They attacked the enemy.

👉 **Note:** আমরা বলি, to make an attack on, যেমনঃ They made an attack on the enemy.

288) Comprise (=consist of; গঠিত হওয়া)

✗ The book comprises of five chapters.

✓ The book comprises five chapters.

Or: The book is comprised of five chapters.

289) Enter (=go into; ভেতরে প্রবেশ করা)

✗ We entered into the classroom.

✓ We entered the classroom.

👉 **Note:** আমরা enter into দিয়ে একটি কথোপকথন, বিতর্ক বা আলাপ-আলোচনা শুরু করি।

290) Finish (=come to the end of; শেষ/সম্পূর্ণ করা)

✗ I've finished from my work.

✓ I've finished my work.

291) Leave (=depart from; চলে যাওয়া/বিদায় নেওয়া)

✗ Brian left from England last week.

✓ Brian left England last week.

292) Obey (=act according to; আজ্ঞানুবর্তী হওয়া/মান্য করা)

✗ We should obey to our teachers.

✓ We should obey our teachers.

293) Allow (to) or let (=give permission to; অনুমতি প্রদান করা)

✗ The driver allowed/let to John (to) sit in the front seat.

✓ The driver allowed/let John (to) sit in the front seat.

👉 **Note:** Allow-এরও permit-এর সদৃশ্য অর্থ এবং ব্যবহার রয়েছে। যেমনঃ The teacher doesn't permit us to talk in class.

294) Reach (=arrive at; পৌঁছানো)

✗ We reached at the school early.

✓ We reached the school early.

295) Resemble (=be similar to; সদৃশ্য মিল হওয়া)

✗ Does she resemble to her father?

✓ Does she resemble her father?

👉 **Note:** Resemblance (সদৃশ্য) to বা between গ্রহণ করে, যেমনঃ She bears no resemblance to her father. There is no resemblance between them.

296) Tell (=say to; বলা)

✗ I told to him to come at once.

✓ I told him to come at once.

297) Behind (=at the back of; পিছনে/পশ্চাতে)

✗ Edward hid behind of a large tree.

✓ Edward hid behind a large tree.

298) Inside (=on the inner side of; ভিতরের অংশে)

✗ The boys went inside of the room.

✓ The boys went inside the room.

299) Outside (=on the exterior of; বাইরের অংশে)

✗ They stood outside of the door.

✓ They stood outside the door.

300) Round (=on all sides of; চারপাশে)

✗ The earth goes round of the sun.

✓ The earth goes round the sun.

👉 **Note:** Around এবং round-এর সদৃশ্য। অর্থ এবং ব্যবহার একই রকম।

(See Exercise 86 and 87)

**ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুক বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!**

**প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!**



**কোন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ**

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারে সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👉 ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

👉 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে।

অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

👉 যতোবার ইবুক পড়বে ততোবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

👉 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👉 বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

### আমাদের ই-বুকের মার্কেটিং স্ট্রাটেজি

- 🌐 ব্লগের (www.tanbircox.blogspot.com) ⇒ ভিজিটর সংখ্যা 75 লাখ,
- 📘 পেইজের (www.facebook.com/tanbir.ebooks) ⇒ ফ্যান সংখ্যা ৭.৮ লাখ,
- 👥 গ্রুপের (www.facebook.com/groups/tanbir.ebooks) ⇒ মেম্বর সংখ্যা ৬০ হাজার,
- 👤 ব্যক্তিগত (www.facebook.com/tanbir.cox) ⇒ অনুসারি ৫০ হাজার,
- 📄 অনলাইনে বই (www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular) ⇒ পড়ার সংখ্যা ১.৫ লাখ,
- 👉 বইঘর অ্যাপ ⇒ ব্যবহারকারী ৭০ হাজার,  
(https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cgd.ebook.boighor)

নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছে মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

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## Unnecessary Words ⇒ Unnecessary Articles

301) Proper nouns-এর সাথে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The Sarah will go to the England.

✓ Sarah will go to England.

নিয়মস্বরূপ, Proper nouns-এর সাথে definite article ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

📌 **Note:** The সাধারণত নদী, সাগর, সমুদ্র, মহাসাগর, উপসাগর, ভূ-মধ্যসাগর, পর্বতমালা, দ্বীপপুঞ্জ এবং দেশ বা প্রদেশ (একটি adjective এবং একটি noun নিয়ে গঠিত) ইত্যাদির

নামগুলোর পূর্বে বসে। সুতরাং আমরা বলিঃ The Nile, the Mediterranean, the

Atlantic, the bay of Biscay, the Persian Gulf, the Alps, the Dodecanese, the United States, the Central Provinces of India.

302) Possessive-এ proper noun-এর সাথে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The Euripides' tragedies are famous.

✓ Euripides' tragedies are famous.

অবশ্যই Possessive case-এ proper nouns-এর সাথে Definite article ব্যবহৃত হবে না।

👉 **Note:** যদি নামটি শেষ হয় 's' অথবা 'x' দিয়ে তখন এটি খুব কষ্টসাধ্য হয় উচ্চারণের জন্য। কারণ তখন অতিরিক্ত syllable 's' থাকে। সুতরাং আপনি শেষ 's'-টি বাদ দিয়ে দিবেন।

যেমনঃ *Maria callas' voice is divine.*

303) *Abstract nouns*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The bravery is a great virtue.*

✓ *Bravery is a great virtue.*

*Abstract nouns* যদি সাধারণ ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত হয়, তখন এটি *article* গ্রহণ করতে পারে না।

👉 **Note:** লক্ষণীয়, যদি *abstract nouns* কোন নির্দিষ্ট ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত হয়, তখন এরা *article*-এর প্রয়োজন অনুভব করে। যেমনঃ *The bravery of the Spartans was renowned.*

304) *Material nouns*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The gold is a precious metal.*

✓ *Gold is a precious metal.*

*Material nouns* যদি সাধারণ ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে এরা কোন *article* ব্যতীত ব্যবহৃত হয়।

👉 **Note:** যদি *Material nouns* কোন নির্দিষ্ট ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে *definite article* প্রয়োজন হয়। যেমনঃ *The coal from the Midland is exported to many countries.*

305) সাধারণ ধারণায় *Pural noun*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The dogs are faithful animals.*

✓ *Dogs are faithful animals.*

*Common noun*-এর *plural form* যদি সাধারণ ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে এদের পূর্বে *definite article* উহ্য থাকে।

306) ভাষার নামের পূর্বে *The*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Tim speaks the English very well.*

✓ *Tim speaks English very well.*

ভাষার নামের পূর্বে *Definite article* কখনও ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

👉 **Note:** আমরা বলতে পারি, *He speaks the English language very well.*

307) ভোজের (*meals*) নামের পূর্বে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *We'll start after the breakfast.*

✓ *We'll start after breakfast.*

ভোজের নামের (*breakfast, lunch, dinner* বা *supper*) পূর্বে *definite article* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়। যেমনঃ *The lunch they provided was excellent.*

308) খেলাধুলার নামের পূর্বে *The*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *My favourite game is the football.*

✓ My favourite game is football.

খেলা, যেমনঃ Football, hockey, tennis, cricket, volley-ball, basket-ball ইত্যাদির নামের পূর্বে কোন article ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

309) রোগ-ব্যাদিসমূহের (Diseases) নামের পূর্বে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The cholera is a dreadful disease.

✓ Cholera is a dreadful disease.

সাধারণত, রোগ-ব্যাদির নামের পূর্বে Definite article ব্যবহৃত হয় না। তবে রোগ-ব্যাদির সাধারণ (common) নামের পূর্বে article প্রয়োজন হয়। যেমনঃ I was suffering from a cold (a fever, a cough, a headache).

310) রঙের নামের পূর্বে The-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The green is a beautiful colour.

✓ Green is a beautiful color.

যখন রঙ-এর নাম Noun হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয়, তখন এদের পূর্বে definite article ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়।

311) পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রিয়ের (senses) ধারণা বা বোধের নামের পূর্বে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The sight is one of the five senses.

✓ Sight is one of the five senses.

পঞ্চ ইন্দ্রিয়ের নামগুলোঃ Sight, smell, hearing, taste এবং touch এদের পূর্বে article ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

312) দিন এবং মাসের পূর্বে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The Sunday can be a day of prayer/The December is the last month.

✓ Sunday can be a day of prayer./December is the last month.

দিন এবং মাসের নামগুলোর পূর্বে Definite article ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়।

📌 Note: আমরা বলি The Sunday before last, The December of 1980 ইত্যাদি।

313) মানব প্রজাতি নির্দেশক Man-এর সাথে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The man is born a sinner.

✓ Man is born a sinner.

Man মানব প্রজাতিকে (human race) নির্দেশ করলে, definite article ব্যতীত ব্যবহৃত হয়। তাই mankind-এর article প্রয়োজন পড়ে না। যেমনঃ Disease is the enemy of mankind.

314) School-এর সাথে the-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ My sister goes to the school.

✓ My sister goes to school.

To go to school মানে হল- একজন ছাত্র হওয়া, পক্ষান্তরে to go to the school মানে হল স্কুলটি পরিদর্শন করা।

👉 **Note:** এরূপভাবে *to leave school* মানে হল- ছাত্র জীবনের পরিসমাপ্তি ঘটানো এবং *to leave the school* স্কুলটি হতে চলে যাওয়া।

315) *Nature*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The nature is beautiful in spring.*

✓ *Nature is beautiful in spring.*

👉 **Note:** *Different article*-এ 'nature' ব্যবহৃত হয় অন্য অর্থে। *It is in the nature of a dog to be faithful.*

316) *Church*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *On Sunday I go to the church.*

✓ *On Sunday I go to church.*

*To go to church* বলতে বুঝায়- *to go and pray*, যখন চার্চের কাছে যাওয়া হবে- (*while to go to the church*) তখন বুঝাবে *to go and visit the church*.

👉 **Note:** অনুরূপ পার্থক্য হয় *go to bed* এবং *go to the bed*, *go to prison* এবং *go to the prison*, *go to market* এবং *go to the market*, *go to hospital* এবং *go to the hospital*, *sit at table* এবং *sit at the table* এর মাঝে।

317) *Society*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *A thief is a dange to the society.*

✓ *A thief is a danger to society.*

👉 **Note:** *Society* ব্যবহৃত হলে *definite article* ব্যবহার আপনি করতে পারেন। 1) *In a particular sense: The society of the Greeks was based on freedom;* 2) *In the sense of companionship: I enjoy the society of my friends.*

318) *Future (=from now on)*-এর সাথে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *You must be careful in the future.*

✓ *You must be careful in future.*

👉 **Note:** *In the future* অর্থ হল-আসন্ন প্রায় ভবিষ্যৎ (*in the time to come*), যেমনঃ *Nobody knows what will happen in the future.*

319) *Whose*-এর পরে *the*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The boy whose the father is ill has left.*

✓ *The boy whose father is ill has left.*

আপনি আপেক্ষিক নির্দেশক (*whose*)-এর পরে *article* ব্যবহার করবেন না, কারণ এটি *article*-এর স্থান নিয়ে নেয়।

320) *Work*-এর পূর্বে *indefinite article*-এর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Gillian has found a work at the bank.*

✓ *Gillian has found work at the bank.*

আপনি অনির্দিষ্টমূলক *Article* ব্যবহার করবেন না কিছু শব্দের পূর্বে, যেমনঃ *Work, fun, health, permission.*

(See Exercise 17)



# ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুক বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!

প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!



## কেন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারের সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👁️ ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

👤 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে। অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

👁️ যতবার ইবুক পড়বে ততবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

👁️ ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👁️ বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

### আমাদের ই-বুকের মার্কেটিং স্ট্রা

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  - 👁️ বইঘর অ্যাপ ⇒ ব্যবহারকারী ৭০ হাজার,
- (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cgd.ebook.boighor>)

নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছের মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

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অথবা ফেইসবুকে ম্যাসেজ করুনঃ [www.facebook.com/tanbir.cox](http://www.facebook.com/tanbir.cox)

## Unnecessary Words ⇒ Use Of The Infinitive

নিম্নোক্ত Verb-গুলো যাদের পরে *infinitive* চিহ্ন *to*-এর প্রয়োজন নেই, সে সকল *verb*-এর পরে *infinitive* চিহ্ন *to* ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে ভুলগুলো প্রায়ই তৈরি হয়।

321) *Can* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *My mother can to swim very well.*

✓ *My mother can swim very well.*

👤 **Note:** *Negative form*-টি সর্বদা একটি *word*-রূপে লেখা হয়ঃ *can't*.

322) *Could* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *I could not to see you yesterday.*

✓ *I could not/couldn't see you yesterday.*

323) *May* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *May I to visit you next weekend?*

✓ *May I visit you next weekend?*

324) *Might* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *He might to come in the morning.*

✓ *He might come in the morning.*

325) *Must* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *I must to see her at her office.*

✓ *I must see her at her office.*

326) *Let* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *Tom's father would not let him to go out.*

✓ *Tom's father would not let him go out.*

327) *Make* (to force=বান্ধ করা) + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *You can't make Emma to understand.*

✓ *You can't make Emma understand.*

328) *See* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *They saw him to leave the house.*

✓ *They saw him leave the house.*

👤 **Note:** *They saw him leaving the house*- এটিও সঠিক।

329) *Watch* + *infinitive* (to ব্যতীত)

✗ *I watched the girls to play hockey.*

✓ *I watched the girls play hockey.*

👤 **Note:** *I watched the girls playin hockey*- এটিও সঠিক।

*Have another look at...*

*Definite article*

নিয়মস্বরূপ, ইংরেজিতে **Noun** সাধারণত **article** গ্রহণ করে না। তবে যদি এরা কোন নির্দিষ্ট ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত হয় তাহলে **article** গ্রহণ করে। **article**-এর ব্যবহার এবং উহ্যতার (omission) পার্থক্যটি লক্ষ করুনঃ

1) **Plural nouns**-এর সাথেঃ

*Horses are strong animals.*

*The horses in the field belong to the farmer.*

2) **Abstract nouns**-এর সাথেঃ

*Wisdom is a great virtue.*

*The wisdom of Solomon was famous.*

3) **Material nouns**-এর সাথেঃ

*Water is necessary to life.*

*The water in the kitchen is hot.*

4) দিন, মাস এবং ঋতু-এর সাথেঃ

*Summer is a hot season.*

*The summer of '99 was very hot.*

5) ভাষার নামের সাথেঃ

*English is spoken all over the world.*

*The English she speaks is not correct.*

6) ভোজ (meals)-এর নামের সাথেঃ

*Breakfast is at eight o'clock.*

*The breakfast I had this morning was delicious.*

7) রঙ-এর নামের সাথেঃ

*Blue is my favourite colour.*

*The blue in that picture has faded.*

330) **Hear + infinitive (to ব্যতীত)**

✗ *We heard him to speak in English.*

✓ *We heard him speak in English.*

👉 **Note:** *We heard him speaking in English-* এটিও সঠিক।

331) **Feel + infinitive(to ব্যতীত)**

✗ *I could feel her heart to beat.*

✓ *I could feel her heart beat.*

Or: *I could feel her heart beating.*

👉 **Note:** যদি *make, see, watch, hear, feel*, এই verb-গুলো *passive (voice)*-এ ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে *to* অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে। যেমনঃ *He was seen to leave the house;*  
*He was heard to speak in English.*

(See Exercise 65)

## Unnecessary Words ⇒ Miscellaneous

### Examples

332) *Subject*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *My little brother he is at school.*

✓ *My little brother is at school.*

*Noun*-টির পরে একটি *pronoun* ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে *subject*-কে কখনও পুনরাবৃত্তি করবে না। *My little brother* এবং *he* একই ব্যক্তিকে নির্দেশ করছে, সুতরাং এদের যে কোন একটি *subject* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে, তবে উভয়টি নয়।

333) *Compound sentence* বা যৌগিক বাক্যে *subject*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I went to the market and I bought fruit.*

✓ *I went to the market and bought fruit.*

যৌগিক বাক্যে একই *Subject* কেবল একবার প্রকাশিত হয় এবং প্রত্যেক *verb*-এর পূর্বে পুনরাবৃত্তি হয় না, যদি না বাক্যটি দীর্ঘ এবং জটিল হয়।

334) *Adjective clause*-এর পরে *subject*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *David, who is a careless pupil, he lost his book.*

✓ *David, who is a careless pupil, lost his book.*

যদি *Subordinate clause*-টি *subject*-কে দীর্ঘায়িত করার কাজটি করে, তবে *principal clause*-এর *verb*-টির পূর্বে *subject*-টির *personal pronoun*-টি ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়।

335) *Non-finite verb phrase*-এর পরে *subject*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Karen and Tom, having signed the register, they left the church.*

✓ *Karen and Tom, having signed the register, left the church.*

336) *Relative clause*-এ *personal pronoun*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The book which I lost it was new.*

✓ *The book which I lost was new.*

একটি *Personal pronoun* এবং একটি *relative* একত্রে কোন *relative clause*-এ ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। যদি এরা উভয়ই একই অনুগামীকে নির্দেশ করে। প্রথম বাক্যটিতে *which* এবং *it* উভয়ই *book*-কে নির্দেশ করছে।

337) *Object*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The doctor I know him very well.*

✓ I know the doctor very well.

Sentence-টিতে প্রদত্ত *doctor* এবং *him-* word দুটি একজনকে নির্দেশ করেছে এবং এরা একই *object*, সুতরাং *doctor* অথবা *him* যে কোন একটি ব্যবহৃত হবে, কিন্তু একই বাক্যে একই সাথে উভয়টি নয়।

সাধারণত আপনি *Verb*-এর পূর্বে *object* বসাবেন না শব্দের *order* সঠিকের জন্য। যেমনঃ *The doctor I know him very well*-এটি ভুল।

338) *Infinitive*-এর সাথে *object*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I bought an English book to read it.

✓ I bought an English book to read.

যদি *Verb*-টি একটি *object* গ্রহণ করে থাকে, তবে উদ্দেশ্য প্রকাশক *infinitive*-এর সাথে *object*-টির পুনরাবৃত্তি হতে পারে না।

339) *Direct speech*-এ *that*-এর *repeation* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ She said that, 'I'm sure to pass.'

✓ She said, 'I'm sure to pass.'

*Direct speech*-এ আমরা *that* ব্যবহার করতে পারি না। অন্যদের বলা কথা (বক্তব্য) যখন কোন প্রকার পরিবর্তন ছাড়াই আমরা *repeat* (পুনরাবৃত্তি) করি।

✳️ *Note*: তবে *indirect speech*-এ আমরা বলিঃ *He said that he was sure to pass.*

340) *Double comparative* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ He's more stronger than John.

✓ He's stronger than John.

*Double comparatives* ব্যবহার করা অশুদ্ধ; *more stronger*-এর বদলে হওয়া উচিত কেবল *stronger*. অবশ্য আমরা বলতে পারিঃ *much stronger*.

341) যে *Adjective*-গুলো তুলনা করা যায় না, সেগুলোর অপব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ My work is more perfect than his.

✓ My work is superior to his.

সুনির্দিষ্ট *Adjectives* যেমনঃ *perfect, unique, preferable, supreme, right, correct* ইত্যাদিকে তুলনা করা যায় না।

342) *Return*-এর পরিবর্তে *Return back* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ She has returned back to school.

✓ She has returned to school.

'Back' word-টি *return*-এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না, কারণ *return* অর্থ হচ্ছে ফিরে আসা (*to come back*).

343) *Begin*-এর পরিবর্তে *begin from* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Exams begin from Thursday.*

✓ *Exams begin on Thursday.*

একটি বিষয় কেবল সময়ের একটি মুহূর্তে শুরু হতে পারে। এমন কোন *Word* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না, যা কোন কিছু করার পুরো সময়টির বেলায় প্রাসঙ্গিক হয়।

344) *Consider*-এর পরিবর্তে *consider as* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Robert considers me as his best friend.*

✓ *Robert considers me his best friend.*

*Consider* word-টি *as* দ্বারা অনুসৃত হয় না। তবে আমরা বলি, *He regards me as his best friend* or *Robert considers me to be his best friend.*

345) *To*-এর পরিবর্তে '*for to*' ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I came here for to learn English.*

✓ *I came here to learn English.*

*Infinitive*-এর চিহ্ন *to*-এর পূর্বে কখনও *preposition* '*for*' বসানো উচিত নয়।

346) *Where*-এর পরিবর্তে *from where* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *From where can I buy a good watch?*

✓ *Where can I buy a good watch?*

*Where* মানে 'কোন স্থানে' বা 'কোথায়', পক্ষান্তরে *from where* উৎপত্তি বা সূত্রপাতের স্থান নির্দেশ করে। যেমনঃ *From where do tourists come?*

347) *Etc.*-এর পরিবর্তে *and etc.* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I, you, we, and etc. are pronouns.*

✓ *I, you, we, etc. are pronouns.*

*Etc.* হল '*et cetera*'-এর সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপ এবং একটি ল্যাটিন *phrase*, অর্থ যার এবং অন্যান্য বস্তুগুলো বা ইত্যাদি। *and etc.* হল অশুদ্ধ বা অযৌক্তিক কারণ এটি হচ্ছে, 'এবং অন্যান্য বস্তুগুলো' অর্থ নির্দেশ করবে।

📌 **Note:** অবশ্য, রচনাদিতে *etc.* ব্যবহার করা থেকে বিরত থাকার জন্য ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে পরামর্শ দেওয়া হয় এবং এর পরিবর্তে এর *phrase*-গুলোকে ব্যবহার করতে বলা হয়। যেমনঃ *and other things, and so on instead.*

348) *So... that*-এর পরিবর্তে *so... so that* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'm so tired so that I can't go.*

✓ *I'm so tired that I can't go.*

যখন ফলাফল প্রকাশক Clause-টি দ্বারা so বা such পরিপূর্ণ হয়, তখন clause-টি that দ্বারা শুরু হয় so that দ্বারা নয়।

349) From now on-এর পরিবর্তে from now and on ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ From now and on I'll study hard.

✓ From now on I'll study hard.

From now and on, phrase-টি অশুদ্ধ, বনুন, from now on.

350) Although/though-এর পরিবর্তে although/though... yet ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Although it's raining, yet he'll go.

✓ Although it's raining, he'll go.

Although (though) conjunction-টি যখন subordinate clause-এর সূচনা করে তখন দ্বিতীয়টির (yet or still) প্রয়োজন পড়ে না।

351) Go home-এর পরিবর্তে go to home-এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ When school is over I go to home.

✓ When school is over I go home.

I go to home-এই অভিব্যক্তিটি ভুল। সঠিক হবেঃ I go home.

352) Using far with a phrase of definite distance

✗ Mary lives two miles far from here.

✓ Mary lives two miles from here.

যখন নির্দিষ্ট দূরত্ব প্রকাশক কোন Phrase বাক্যে ব্যবহৃত হয় তখন far word-টি ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না তবে আমরা বলতে পারিঃ He lives two miles away, Mary lives two miles, away

**ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুকে বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!**

**প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!**



**কেবল আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ**

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারে সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👉 ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

👉 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে।

অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

👉 যতোবার ইবুক পড়বে ততোবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

👉 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমান্বয়ে অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👉 বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ।

মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

### আমাদের ই-বুকের মার্কেটিং ক্ষেত্র

🌐 ব্লগের ([www.tanbircox.blogspot.com](http://www.tanbircox.blogspot.com)) ⇒ ভিজিটর সংখ্যা 75 লাখ,

📘 পেইজের ([www.facebook.com/tanbir.ebooks](http://www.facebook.com/tanbir.ebooks)) ⇒ ফ্যান সংখ্যা ৭.৮ লাখ,

👥 গ্রুপের ([www.facebook.com/groups/tanbir.ebooks](http://www.facebook.com/groups/tanbir.ebooks)) ⇒ মেম্বার সংখ্যা ৬০ হাজার,

👤 ব্যক্তিগত ([www.facebook.com/tanbir.cox](http://www.facebook.com/tanbir.cox)) ⇒ অনুসারি ৫০ হাজার,

📖 অনলাইনে বই ([www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular](http://www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular))

⇒ পড়ার সংখ্যা ১.৫ লাখ,

👉 বইঘর অ্যাপ ⇒ ব্যবহারকারী ৭০ হাজার,

(<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cgd.ebook.boighor>)

নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছের মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

অথবা ই-মেইল করুনঃ **[tanbir.cox@gmail.com](mailto:tanbir.cox@gmail.com)**

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## Misplaced Words ⇒ Wrong Preposition Of Adverbs

353) নির্দিষ্ট সময় প্রকাশক *Adverb*-এর অশুদ্ধ প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *I last night went to the cinema.*

✓ *I went to the cinema last night.*

নির্দিষ্ট সময় প্রকাশক *Adverb* বা *adverb phrase*-গুলো, (যেমন- *yesterday, today, tomorrow, last week, two months ago* সাধারণত বাক্যের শেষে বসে, তবে আমরা যদি সময়ের উপর জোর দিতে চাই, সেক্ষেত্রে এদেরকে বাক্যের শুরুতেও বসানো যায়। যেমনঃ

*Yesterday I was very busy.*

👉 **Note:** নির্দিষ্ট সময় প্রকাশক একাধিক *adverb* যদি একই বাক্যে ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে আমরা অপেক্ষাকৃত যথার্থ অভিব্যক্তিটিকে অপেক্ষাকৃত সাধারণ অভিব্যক্তিটির পূর্বে বসাই। যেমনঃ *He was born at two o'clock in the morning on April 12th 1942.*

354) অনির্দিষ্ট সময় প্রকাশক *Adverb*-এর অশুদ্ধ প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *They come always to school by bus.*

✓ *They always come to school by bus.*

অনির্দিষ্ট সময় প্রকাশক *Adverbs* গুলো; যেমন- *ever, never, always, often, seldom, soon, sometime* এবং *almost, scarcely, hardly, nearly, even* এই *adverb*-গুলো *principal verb*-এর পূর্বে বসে।

📌 **Note:** *To be principal verb* হলে, অনির্দিষ্ট সময় প্রকাশক *adverb* গুলো *verb*-এর পরে বসে। যেমনঃ *They are always beautifully dressed.*

355) সময় প্রকাশক *Adverb* গুলো, স্থান নির্দেশক *adverb*-গুলোর পূর্বে বসেঃ

✗ *The builders will be tomorrow here.*

✓ *The builders will be here tomorrow.*

যদি সময় প্রকাশক *Adverb* এবং স্থান নির্দেশক *adverb* একত্রে কোন বাক্যে ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে স্থান নির্দেশক *adverb*-টি প্রথমে বসে

356) *Transitive verb*-এর সাথে *adverb*-এর ভুল প্রয়োগঃ

✗ *Janet wrote carefully her essay.*

✓ *Janet wrote her essay carefully.*

*Transitive verb*-এর সাথে *adverb* ব্যবহার করলে *adverb* সাধারণত *object*-এর পরে বসে।

📌 **Note:** অবশ্য, যদি *object*-টি দীর্ঘ হয়, তবে *adverb*-টি *Transitive verb*-এর পরে বসতে পারে। যেমনঃ *She wrote carefully all the essays she had to do.*

357) *Enough adverb*-টির অশুদ্ধ (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *Is the room enough large for, you?*

✓ *Is the room large enough for you?*

*Enough adverb*-টি যে *word*-কে বিশেষিত করে তার পরে বসে, পূর্বে নয়।

📌 **Note:** লক্ষণীয় *enough adverb*-টি *noun*-এর পূর্বে বা পরে বসতে পারে। যেমনঃ *We have enough food for six people.*

358) *Compound verb*-এর সাথে *not*-এর অশুদ্ধ (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *I should have not gone.....*

✓ *I should not have gone.....*

*Compound verb*-এর *not*, প্রথম *auxiliary*-এর পরে বসে।

📌 **Note:** লক্ষণীয় *present* বা *perfect participle*-এর সাথে *not* শুরুতে বসে। যেমনঃ *Not having set the alarm, he was late for work, Not being rich, he couldn't afford it.*

359) *Negative infinitive*-এর সাথে *not*-এর ভুল প্রয়োগঃ

✗ *I told Liz to not come on Monday.*

✓ I told Liz not to come on Monday.

Negative infinitive-এ not-এর অবস্থানটি হল to-এর ঠিক পূর্বে, পরে নয়।

(See Exercises 66 and 67)



# ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুক বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!

প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!



## কেন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারে সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👁️ ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

📄 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে। অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

📅 যতবার ইবুক পড়বে ততবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

📄 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👉 বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

### আমাদের ই-বুকের মার্কেটিং স্ট্রা

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- 📄 অনলাইনে বই ([www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular](http://www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular)) ⇒ পড়ার সংখ্যা ১.৫ লাখ,
- 📱 বইঘর অ্যাপ ⇒ ব্যবহারকারী ৭০ হাজার,  
(<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cgd.ebook.boighor>)

নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছের মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

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## Misplaced Words ⇒ Miscellaneous

### Examples

360) বাক্য *Subject*-এর অশুদ্ধ (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *Last week visited our school a man.*

✓ *A man visited our school last week.*

অধিকাংশ *English* বাক্যের প্রথমে *subject*, এর পরে *verb*, র পরে *object* এবং পরবর্তীতে অবশিষ্টাংশ বসে।

361) প্রশ্নবোধক বাক্যে *Subject*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *You were at the cinema yesterday?/They'll come with us tomorrow?*

✓ *Were you at the cinema yesterday?/Will they come with us tomorrow?*

*Interrogative sentence*-এ *subject* সাধারণত *verb*-এর পরে বসে। যদি *tense*-টি (যৌগিক) হয়, তবে *subject*-টি *auxilliary verb*-এর পরে বসে এবং এর পরে বাকি অংশ বসে।

📌 *Note*: *Spoken English*-এর ক্ষেত্রে এই নিয়মটি প্রায়শ ব্যতিক্রম ঘটে, তবে নিয়মটি মেনে চলতে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের পরামর্শ দেওয়া হয়।

362) *Interrogative word* দ্বারা শুরু প্রশ্নবোধক বাক্যে *subject*-এর ভুল প্রয়োগঃ

✗ *Why you were absent last Friday?*

✓ *Why were you absent last Friday?*

যেসব প্রশ্ন *Interrogative word* দ্বারা শুরু হয় (*What, when, where, how*) তখন *subject verb*-এর পরে বসে, বাকি অংশ অন্যান্য প্রশ্নবোধক বাক্যের মত ঠিক থাকবে।

(For Sections 361-362 see Exercise 35)

363) *Never*-এর পরে *subject*-এর ভুল প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *Never I have heard of such a thing.*

✓ *Never have I heard of such a thing.*

যখন *Never, seldom, rarely, neither, nor, not only, no sooner*-এরা একটি পূর্ণাঙ্গ *clause*-এর শুরুতে বসে, তখন প্রশ্নবোধক বাক্যের মত *verb*-টি *subject*-এর পূর্বে বসে।

364) *Not all*-এর পরিবর্তে *all... not*-এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *All people are not hard-working.*

✓ *Not all people are hard-working.*

প্রথম বাক্যটি অযৌক্তিক, এটি 'সব লোক অলস' (*all people lazy*) এমন ভাব প্রকাশ করেছে।

📌 *Note*: অনুরূপভাবে *Everybody doesn't like dancing* এটি হওয়া উচিত: *Not everybody likes dancing.*

365) *Indirect questions* (পরোক্ষ প্রশ্নগুলো)-এ *subject*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) অবস্থানঃ

✗ *The teacher asked me what games did I play?*

✓ *The teacher asked me what games I played.*

*Indirect questions* (পরোক্ষ প্রশ্নগুলোতে) *word*-গুলোর সাধারণ ক্রম হল- প্রথমে *subject* এবং পরে *verb* বসে।

(See Exercise 37)

366) *Direct object*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) অবস্থানঃ

✗ *He touched with his hand the ball.*

✓ *He touched the ball with his hand.*

*Transitive verb*-এর *object* সাধারণত সরাসরি *verb*-এর পরেই বসে।

367) *Qualifying adjective*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) অবস্থানঃ

✗ *My uncle has a garden very large.*

✓ *My uncle has a very large garden.*

*Qualifying adjective*-টি যে *noun*-টিকে বিশেষিত করে, সাধারণত তার ঠিক পূর্বেই বসে।

*Have another look at...*

*Questions*

তিন উপায়ে প্রশ্ন গঠিত হতে পারেঃ

1) *Subject*-এর পূর্বে *verb* বসিয়ে, এই পদ্ধতিটি কেবল একুশটি *verb*-এর ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয়ে থাকে। এখানে এদের তালিকা দেওয়া হলঃ

*Am, is, are, was, were; have, has, had; shall, should; will, would; can, could; may, might; must; need; dare; ought; used.*

*Examples:*

a. *Are you ready? Can you write well?*

b. *Will he come tomorrow? May I go now?*

2) *Do, does, did*-এর পরে *subject* এবং পরে *to* ব্যতীত *infinitive* ব্যবহার করে। এই পদ্ধতিটি উপরিউক্ত একুশটি *verb* ব্যতীত অন্যান্য সব *verb*-এর ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয়। এই

নিয়মের *word-order* হলঃ

*Do (does, did) + Subject + Infinitive*

*Examples: Do you come here every day? Does the child learn English? Did they go to the theatre?*

3) প্রশ্নবোধক *Word* দিয়ে বাক্য গঠন করলে, *question* (প্রশ্ন) *word*-গুলো সর্বদা বাক্যটির শুরুতে বসে। তবে *verb*-টিকে অবশ্যই 1) ) নং এবং (2) নং প্রশ্নগুলোর মত *subject*-এর পূর্বে বসাতে হবে।

*Examples: Why are you late? When did you come? Where is it? Whom did you see? Which book do you want?*

যদি *Question* (প্রশ্ন) *word*-টি বাক্যের *subject* হয়, তবে *verb*-টি *subject*-টির পরে বসে।

*যেমনঃ Who wrote the letter? Whose dog bit the man?*

368) *Indirect object*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) অবস্থানঃ

✗ *I showed to her some of my stamps.*

✓ *I showed some of my stamps to her.*

যদি *Indirect object*-টির পূর্বে একটি *preposition* থাকে তবে তা *direct object*-টির পরে বসে।

📌 **Note:** তবে *indirect object*-টি *preposition* ব্যতীত হলে সাধারণত প্রথমে বসে।

যেমনঃ *I showed him some of my stamps.*

369) *Past participle*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *The ordered goods haven't arrived.*

✓ *The goods ordered haven't arrived.*

'*The goods ordered*' হল '*The goods which have been ordered*'-এর সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপ।

370) *Relative clause*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *A girl has a pony who is in our class.*

✓ *A girl who is in our class has a pony.*

*Relative clause*-টি যে *noun*-টিকে নির্দেশ করে অবশ্যই তার ঠিক পরেই বসে।

📌 **Note:** একটি *relative clause* (যেটি উহ্য থাকতে পারে), কমা দ্বারা আবদ্ধ হতে পারে।

যেমনঃ '*My brother George, who is in another class, has a new bicycle*'. একটি

*Relative clause* (যেটি উহ্য থাকতে পারে না) কমা দ্বারা আবদ্ধ হয় না। যেমনঃ *The boy who spoke to me is my brother.*

371) সময় প্রকাশক *Clause*-এ *conjunction*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *Emma when she arrived the boat had already gone.*

✓ *When Emma arrived the boat had already gone.*

*Conjunction* যখন সময় প্রকাশক কোন *adverbial clause*-এর সূত্রপাত ঘটায়, তখন তা অবশ্যই *clause*-এর শুরুতে বসে।

372) *Correlative conjunctions*-এর ভুল প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *Paul neither speaks English nor French.*

✓ *Paul speaks neither English nor French.*

*Correlative conjunctions* (যে *conjunctions* জোড়ায় জোড়ায় ব্যবহার হয়, যেমনঃ *neither... nor, not only... but also* ইত্যাদি) একই ধরনের *part of speech*-এর *word*-এর পূর্বে বসা উচিত।

373) *Ordinal numeral*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) প্রয়োগ/অবস্থানঃ

✗ *I've read the two first chapters.*

✓ *I've read the first two chapters.*

*Ordinal numeral* অবস্থানসূচক সংখ্যাগুলো, *cardinal numeral* ক্রমসংখ্যাগুলোর পূর্বে বসানো উচিত। দুটি প্রথম (*two first*) হতে পারে না, কেবল একটি হয়। আমরা অবশ্যই বলবো *The last two (three, etc.) the two (three, etc.) last* নয়।

374) *Such* বা *so*-এর সাথে *indefinite article*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) অবস্থানঃ

✗ *I never met a such good man before.*

✓ *I never met such a good man before.*

*Indefinite article*- *a* বা *an*, *such*-এর পরে বসানো উচিত। যেমনঃ *such a good man, so good a man.*

375) *Half*-এর সাথে *definite article*-এর ভুল (*misplaced*) অবস্থানঃ

✗ *The half year is nearly finished.*

✓ *Half the year is nearly finished.*

'*Half the year*' হল '*half of the year*'-এর সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপ।

376) *Most of the*-এর পরিবর্তে *the most of* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The most of girls are not present.*

✓ *Most of the girls are not present.*

*The most of* phrase-টি সঠিক নয়। বলুন, *most of the*.

377) সংক্ষিপ্তরূপগুলোতে *Apostrophe* (')-এর অবস্থান জনিত ভুলঃ

*Don't write: Did'nt, has'nt, is'nt, are'nt, etc.*

*Write: Didn't, hasn't, isn't, aren't, etc.*

সংক্ষিপ্ত *Word*-এ, উহ্য হওয়া *letter*-এর *apostrophe*(') বসানো উচিত। *not* টিকে প্রায়ই সংক্ষিপ্ত করা হয় এবং একটি ছোট *word*-এর শেষে 'n' 't' রূপটি যুক্ত করা হয়। সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপগুলো কেবল কথোপকথনে উপযুক্ত।

📌 **Note:** পরবর্তী সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপগুলো অনিয়মিতঃ *shan't* (= *shall not*), *won't* (= *will not*), *can't* (= *can not*).

(See exercises 39 and 40)

378) প্রারম্ভে নিজেকে উল্লেখ করা জনিত ভুল (*Mentioning oneself first*):

✗ *Only I and my mother are present.*

✓ *Only my mother and I are present.*

ইংরেজি *Ideam*-এ (বাগরীতিতে), যখন কোন ব্যক্তি একই সাথে নিজের এবং অন্যদের (*himself/herself & others*) কথা বলে, তখন অবশ্যই অন্য ব্যক্তি বা ব্যক্তিবর্গকে প্রথমে এবং পরে নিজেকে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

📌 **Note:** তবে দোষ স্বীকার করতে প্রথমে নিজেকে উল্লেখ করতে হবে। যেমনঃ '*I and my brother broke the window*'.

*Have another look at...*

**Correct order of words**

1) *Subject* 2) *Verb* 3) *Object*

1) সাধারণত *verb*-এর পরে *object*-টি বসে।

*Example: I speak English very well.*

2) *Indirect object* সাধারণত *direct object*-টির পূর্বে বসে, যদি তা *preposition* ব্যতীত হয়।

*Example: I gave him the money.*

3) সময় প্রকাশক অভিব্যক্তি (*expression*)-টি স্থান নির্দেশক অভিব্যক্তি (*expression*)-টির পরে বসে।

*Example: We stayed there all day.*

4) সময় (*time*) এবং মাত্রা (*degree*) প্রকাশক *adverb*-গুলো, যেমনঃ *always, often, never, nearly, hardly, scarcely* ইত্যাদি, *verb*-এর পূর্বে বা *auxiliary* এবং *verb*-এর মাঝে বসে।

*Example: I never see that man; or I have never seen that man.*

📌 **Note:** লক্ষণীয় *to be verb*-এর পরে *adverb* বসে। যেমনঃ *He is never late.*

5) পরোক্ষ প্রশ্নগুলোতে (*Indirect questions*) প্রথমে *subject* বসে, পরে *verb* বসে।

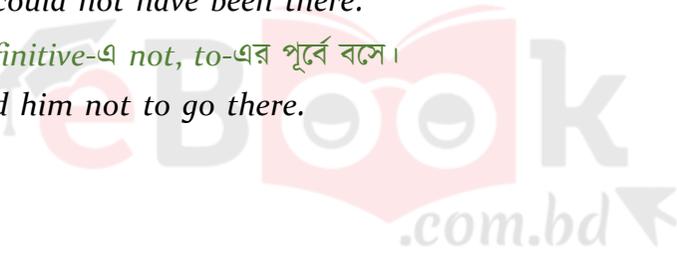
*Example: I want to know where they went.*

6) দুটি *auxiliary* বিশিষ্ট একটি *compound* (যৌগিক) *verb*-এ, *not* প্রথমটির পরে বসে।

*Example: She could not have been there.*

7) *Negative infinitive*-এ *not, to*-এর পূর্বে বসে।

*Example: I told him not to go there.*



## Confusing Words ⇒ Prepositions Often Confused

379) To এবং at

a) To

✗ We come at school every morning.

✓ We come to school every morning.

b) At

✗ Someone is standing to the door.

✓ Someone is standing at the door.

এক স্থান হতে অন্য স্থানে গতি বা চলন বোঝাতে To ব্যবহৃত হয়; পক্ষান্তরে, অবস্থান বা স্থিতি বোঝাতে at ব্যবহৃত হয়।

(See Exercise 77)

380) To এবং Till

a) To

✗ We walked till the river and back.

✓ We walked to the river and back.

b) Till

✗ I'll stay here to next month.

✓ I'll stay here till next month.

দূরত্ব বোঝাতে To এবং সময় বোঝাতে till (until) ব্যবহৃত হয়।

381) In এবং At

a) In

✗ Liam has a flat at Paris.

✓ Liam has a flat in Paris.

In সাধারণত দেশের নাম, বড় শহরের নাম বা প্রসিদ্ধ স্থানের পূর্বে বসে। At ছোট শহর এবং গ্রামের নামের পূর্বে বা দূরবর্তী স্থানের কথা বলে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

b) At

✗ My mother is staying in 66 Argyle Street.

✓ My mother is staying at 66 Argyle Steet.

আমরা At ব্যবহার করি যখন আমরা ঠিকানা, public place অথবা বিল্ডিং (a bus stop, the post office, the library etc.) এর কথা বলি এবং সেসব স্থানে যেখানে কি হয় আমরা তা জানি (school, the dentist, dance class ইত্যাদি)।

(See Exercise 78)

382) In এবং into

a) In

✗ Gemma spent all the day into her room.

✓ Gemma spent all the day in her room.

b) Into

✗ Richard came in the room and sat down.

✓ Richard came into the room and sat down.

কোন কিছুর অভ্যন্তরে অবস্থান বা স্থিতি নির্দেশ করতে *in*, পক্ষান্তরে কোন কিছুর অভ্যন্তরে অভিমুখে চলন বা গতিপথ নির্দেশ করতে *into* ব্যবহৃত হয়।

🌟 **Note:** *into*, *preposition*-টি সর্বদা একটি *word* হিসেবে লেখা হয়।

(See Exercise 79)

383) *On, At, In.* (Time- সময় প্রকাশ করতে)

a) On

✗ My uncle will arrive at Saturday.

✓ My uncle will arrive on Saturday.

b) At

✗ I usually get up on seven o'clock.

✓ I usually get up at seven o'clock.

c) In

✗ She goes for a walk at the afternoon.

✓ She goes for a walk in the afternoon.

1) সপ্তাহ বা মাসের দিনের সাথে *On* ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *on Friday, on March 25, on New Year's Day*, 2) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের সাথে *at* ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *at four o'clock, at dawn, at noon, at sunset, at midnight*. 3) সময়ের ব্যাপ্তিকালের সাথে *in* ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *In April, in winter, in 1945, in the morning*, তবে *at night* এবং *by day* হয়।

(See Exercise 80)

384) *For* এবং *At.* (Price- মূল্য প্রকাশ করতে)

a) For

✗ I bought a book at fifty tk.

✓ I bought a book for fifty tk.

b) At

✗ I can't buy it for such a high price.

✓ I can't buy it at such a high price.

লক্ষণীয় যদি, প্রকৃত (নির্দিষ্ট) অঙ্ক নির্দেশিত হলে *For* ব্যবহৃত হয়। প্রকৃত (নির্দিষ্ট) অঙ্ক প্রদত্ত না হলে *at* ব্যবহৃত হয়।

🌟 **Note:** তবে যদি প্রকৃত অঙ্কটির পরে, ওজন বা পরিমাপ বসে, তবে প্রকৃত অঙ্কটির সাথেও *at* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। যেমনঃ *That velvet is available at \$5 a metre.*

### 385) *Between* এবং *Among*

#### a) *Between*

- ✗ *There was a fight among two boys.*  
✓ *There was a fight between two boys.*

#### b) *Among*

- ✗ *Divide the apple between you three.*  
✓ *Divide the apple among you three.*

কেবল দু'য়ের মধ্যে বোঝালে *Between* বুঝিত হয়; পক্ষান্তরে দু'য়ের অধিক বোঝালে *among* ব্যবহৃত হয়।

(See Exercise 81)

### 386) *Beside* এবং *Besides*

#### a) *Beside*

- ✗ *Charlie was standing just besides me.*  
✓ *Charlie was standing just beside me.*

#### b) *Besides*

- ✗ *We study French beside English.*  
✓ *We study French besides English.*

*Beside* অর্থ হল পাশে (*by the side of*) এবং *besides* অর্থ হল (*in addition to*)।

### 387) *Besides/As well as* এর পরিবর্তে *Except* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

- ✗ *I have other books except these.*  
✓ *I have other books besides/as well as these.*

👉 **Note:** *Except* অর্থ ছাড়া/ব্যতীত, যেমনঃ *Everyone was present except John.*

### 388) *With* এর পরিবর্তে *by* ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

- ✗ *The man shot the bird by a gun.*  
✓ *The man shot the bird with a gun.*

যে উপায়ে বা যন্ত্রপাতির সাহায্যে আমরা কোন কাজ করি, তখন তা নির্দেশ করতে আমরা *With* ব্যবহার করি। কাজটি যে করে তাকে নির্দেশ করতে *by* ব্যবহৃত হয়। যেমনঃ *The bird was shot by the man.*

👉 **Note:** তবে পরবর্তী ক্ষেত্রগুলোতে *by* গৃহীত হয়, *with* নয়, *by (electric) light, by stream, by hand, by post, by telephone, by one's watch, by the day, by the dozen, by the yard.*

### 389) *By* এর পরিবর্তে *from* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

- ✗ *Mary was punished from her father.*  
✓ *Mary was punished by her father.*

যে কাজটি করে তা নির্দেশ করতে *Passive voice*-এ *by (from নয়)* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত।

390) *Of* বা *In* এর পরিবর্তে *from* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He's the tallest from all the boys.*

✓ *He's the tallest of all the boys.*

Or: *He's the tallest boy in the class.*

Superlative degree-তে adjective (বা adverb)-গুলোর পরে *of* বা *in* বসে।

391) *About* এর পরিবর্তে *for* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The teacher spoke for bad habits.*

✓ *The teacher spoke about bad habits.*

'সম্বন্ধে (about)' ধারণাটিতে *for* ব্যবহার হতে পারে না। কোন অস্তিত্বের অনুকূলে বা কোন কিছুর অভিমুখে- এই ধারণাটি নির্দেশ করতে, '*for*' প্রধানত ব্যবহৃত হয়। সুতরাং যদি আমরা বলি যে, *The teacher 'spoke for bad habits'* তবে এটি প্রকাশ করেছে যে, তিনি মন্দ অভ্যাসগুলোর অনুকূলে/পক্ষে বলেছিলেন/বললেন।

392) *For* এর পরিবর্তে *since* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *She's lived here since two years.*

✓ *She's lived here for two years.*

সময়ের ব্যাপ্তিকাল নির্দেশক Word বা phrase-গুলোর পূর্বে *for*, preposition-টি বসে, যেমনঃ *for three days, for six weeks, for two years, for a few minutes, for a long time.* এটি Simple present ব্যতীত যে কোন tense-এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে।

👉 **Note:** *For* প্রায়ই উহ্য থাকে, আমরা বলি- *I've been here for two years.* বা *I've been here two years.*

393) *Since* এর পরিবর্তে *from* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Lan's been ill from last Friday.*

✓ *Lan's been ill since last Friday.*

কাল বা সময়ের অবস্থান বিন্দু বা মুহূর্ত নির্দেশকারী Word বা phrase-গুলোর পূর্বে *since*, preposition-টি বসে, যেমনঃ *since Monday, since yesterday, since eight o'clock, since Christmas.* যখন *since* ব্যবহৃত হয়, verb-টি সাধারণত present perfect tense-এ হয়। তবে এটি past perfect tense-এও ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে, যেমনঃ *I was glad to see Tom. I hadn't seen him since last Christmas.*

👉 **Note:** *From*-ও সময়ের অবস্থান বিন্দু বা মুহূর্ত নির্দেশ করতে পারে, তবে এর পরে অবশ্যই *to* বা *till* বসবে, যেমনঃ *He works from eight o'clock till one o'clock without a break.*

*Have another look at...*

*Use of certain prepositions*

*Prepositions of place*

**To এবং At**

*To* ব্যবহৃত হয় এক স্থান থেকে অন্য স্থানে চলমানতার জন্য।

Example: I walk to school every day.

At ব্যবহৃত হয় অবস্থান বা স্থিতি নির্দেশ করতে।

Example: He's waiting at the door.

### In এবং Into

In কোন কিছুর অভ্যন্তরে অবস্থান বা স্থিতি নির্দেশ করতে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

Example: The pencil is in the box.

Into ব্যবহৃত হয় কোন কিছুর অভ্যন্তর অভিমুখে চলমানতা নির্দেশ করতে।

Example: They walk into the room.

### Prepositions of time At, On, In

At ব্যবহৃত হয় নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের সাথে।

Example: She arrived at 8 o'clock in the morning.

On ব্যবহৃত হয় দিন এবং তারিখের সাথে।

Example: On Sunday we go to church. My birthday is on the third of December.

In ব্যবহৃত হয় কালের ব্যাপ্তির সাথে।

Example: In summer the weather is warm.

394) In এর পরিবর্তে after এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I may be able to go after a week.

✓ I may be able to go in a week.

Or: I may be able to go in a week's time.

যখন আমরা ভবিষ্যতের সময়ের ব্যবধান সম্বন্ধে কথা বলি তখন আমরা অবশ্যই In ব্যবহার করবো, after নয়। এখানে in (=after the end of) শেষ সীমার পরে অর্থটি নির্দেশ করে।

395) Within এর পরিবর্তে in এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I'll come back in an hour (যদি আপনি এক ঘন্টা শেষ হওয়ার পূর্বে অর্থ নির্দেশ করেন)।

✓ I'll come back within an hour.

In শেষ সীমার পরে (after the end) এবং within শেষ সীমার পূর্বে- অর্থটি নির্দেশ করে (before the end of)।

(See Exercises 82 and 83)

## Confusing Words ⇒ Verbs Often Confused

396) Shall এবং Will

a) সাধারণ ভবিষ্যৎ প্রকাশ করতেঃ

First person-এ

✗ I will go tomorrow if it's fine.

✓ I shall go tomorrow if it's fine.

Second person-এ

✗ She tells me you shall go tomorrow.

✓ She tells me you will/'ll go tomorrow.

Third person-এ

✗ He shall go if he has permission.

✓ He will/'ll go if he has permission.

b) সাধারণ ভবিষ্যৎ-এর চেয়ে বেশি কিছু প্রকাশ করতেঃ

First person-এ

✗ I have determined that I shall go.

✓ I have determined that I will/'ll go.

Second person-এ

✗ You will/'ll go out if you are good.

✓ You shall go out if you are good.

Third person-এ

✗ My mind is made up: he will/'ll go.

✓ My mind is made up: he shall go.

সাধারণ ভবিষ্যৎ গঠন করতে আমরা First person-এর সাথে shall এবং second ও third person-এর সাথে will ব্যবহার করি। কিন্তু দৃড়তা বা ব্যক্তিগত সংকল্প নির্দেশ করতে first person-এর সাথে will এবং আদেশ বা প্রতিজ্ঞা নির্দেশ করতে second এবং third person-এর সাথে shall ব্যবহৃত হয়।

👉 **Note:** Should হল shall-এর past tense এবং would হল will-এর past tense.

Present form: shall এবং will-এর মতো অর্থ এবং ব্যবহারের ক্ষেত্রে should এবং would-মধ্যে একই পার্থক্য বিদ্যমান। যেমনঃ I was afraid that I should fail; I promised that I would help him.

(See Exercise 41)

397) Shall এবং May এর মধ্যকার পার্থক্যঃ

a) May I shut the door? And

b) Shall I shut the door?

May I shut the door?-এর অর্থ হল যে, আমি দরজাটা বন্ধ করতে চাই; আর এজন্য আপনার অনুমতি চাই, Shall I shut the door?-এর অর্থ হল যে, আমি জানতে চাই আপনি দরজাটা বন্ধ করতে চান কি না?

398) Say এবং Tell

a) Say

✗ He told, 'I will/'ll go home.'/He told that he'd go home.'

✓ He said, 'I will/'ll go home.'/He said that he'd go home.'

b) Tell

✗ He said to me that he would go home.

✓ He told me that he would go home.

To say ব্যবহৃত হয় 1) একজন ব্যক্তির প্রকৃত বক্তব্যটি নির্দেশ করতে এবং 2) *Indirect speech*-এ যদি বাক্যটি কোন *Indirect object* ধারণ না করে। *To tell* ব্যবহৃত হয় *Indirect speech*-এ, যখন বাক্যটি একটি *Indirect object* ধারণ করে। বাক্য (b)-এ *Indirect object* হচ্ছে *me*.

👉 **Note:** Say এবং tell সমেত common idiom (প্রচলিত বাগধারা)-গুলোঃ a) *To say one's prayers, to say grace, to say 'Good morning', to say something or nothing, to say no more, to say a good word for, to say so.* b) *to tell the truth, to tell a lie, to tell a story, to tell the time, to tell a secret, to tell the price, to tell one's fortune, to tell one's name.*

(See Exercise 42)

### 399) Make এবং Do

a) Make

✗ *The carpenter did a large table.*

✓ *The carpenter made a large table.*

b) Do

✗ *You must make your work carefully.*

✓ *You must do your work carefully.*

*To make* প্রথমত (কোন কিছু) নির্মাণ বা উৎপাদন করা অর্থ নির্দেশ করে; পক্ষান্তরে *to do* কোন কিছু করা/সুসম্পন্ন করা অর্থ নির্দেশ করে।

👉 **Note:** Make এবং do সমেত প্রচলিত বাগধারা (common idiom)-গুলো হলঃ a) *To make a mistake, to make a promise, to make a speech, to make an excuse, to make haste, to make fun of, to make a bed (=ঘুমামানোর জন্য বিছানা প্রস্তুত করা)* b) *To do good, to do evil, to do one's best, to do one a favour, to do wrong, to do a lesson, to do problem, to do business, to do away with, to do gymnastics, to do exercises.*

(See Exercise 43)

### 400) Lie এবং Lay

a) Lie

✗ *I'm going to lay down for an hour.*

✓ *I'm going to lie down for an hour.*

b) Lay

✗ *Please lie the exam papers on the desk.*

✓ *Please lay out the exam papers on the desk.*

*Lie* (to rest= বিশ্রাম করা/শোয়া) হল একটি *Intransitive verb* এবং এটি কোন *object* গ্রহণ করে না। *Lay* (to put=রাখা/শোয়ানো) হল একটি *transitive verb* এবং সর্বদা একটি *object* গ্রহণ করে। এদের প্রধান রূপগুলো হল যথাক্রমে *lie-lay-lain* এবং *lay-laid-laid*.

🌟 **Note:** *Lie* (*lied, lied*) হল অসত্য বলা বা মিথ্যা বলা, যেমনঃ *He has lied to me.*

*Lay* (*laid, laid*) হল ডিম উৎপাদন করা (ডিম পাড়া), যেমনঃ *The hen has laid an egg* (*idiom-বাগধারা*): *Lay the table* বা *lay the cloth* অর্থ হল 'ভোজের জন্য টেবিল প্রস্তুত করা।)

(See Exercise 44)

#### 401) *Sit* এবং *Seat*

a) *Sit*

✗ *We seat at a desk to write a letter.*

✓ *We sit at a desk to write a letter.*

b) *Seat*

✗ *He sat the passengers one by one.*

✓ *He seated the passengers one by one.*

*Sit* সর্বাধিক ব্যবহৃত হয় কেবল *intransitive verb* হিসেবে। *Seat* একটি *transitive verb* এবং এর একটি *object*-এর প্রয়োজন পড়ে। বেশির ভাগ ক্ষেত্রে *object*-টি হয় একটি *reflexive pronoun*: যেমন- *He seated himself near the fire.* এই *Verb* দুটির প্রধান রূপগুলো হল যথাক্রমে *sit-sat-sat* এবং *seat-seated-seated*.

**Note-1:** *Set*-এর সাথে *sit* গুলিয়ে ফেলবেন না। *Set* একটি *transitive verb*, এর অর্থ হল, 'কোন বস্তু বা জিনিস স্থাপন করা বা বসানো। যেমনঃ *Set the lamp on the table.* *set*, *Intransitive verb* হিসেবে অর্থ হল, অস্ত্র যাওয়া বা ডোবা (সূর্য, চন্দ্র বা তারকারাজির জন্য), যেমনঃ *The sun has set.*

**Note-2:** *Set* সমেত *common idioms* (প্রচলিত বাগধারাগুলো) হলঃ *To set the table* (=থালায় পরিবেশনের জন্য সবকিছু প্রস্তুত রাখা/খানা লাগানো), *to set on fire*, *to set off* (*out*), *to set in order*, *to set a trap*, *to set a clock*, *to set a price*, *to set your heart on*, *to set free*, *to set an example*, *to set a broken bone*, *to set to work* (=কাজ শুরু করা)।

(See Exercise 45)

#### 402) *Rise* এবং *Raise*

a) *Rise*

✗ *Val raises very early in the morning.*

✓ *Val rises very early in the morning.*

b) *Raise*

✗ *She rose their salaries too often.*

✓ *She raised their salaries too often.*

*Rise* একটি *intransitive verb* এবং যার অর্থ হচ্ছে 'উপরে/উপরিভাগে ওঠা', দাঁড়ানো বা ঘুম/বিছানা থেকে ওঠা' (*to go up, stand up or get out of bed*)-এর কোন *object*-এর প্রয়োজন পড়ে না। *Raise* হল একটি *Transitive verb* এবং অর্থ হল (কোন কিছু) উঠানো বা উত্তোলন করা (*to lift up something*)। এদের প্রধান রূপগুলো হল যথাক্রমেঃ *rise-rose-risen* এবং *raise-raised-raised*.

📌 **Note:** *Raise*-এর ক্ষেত্রে *arise* প্রায়ই ব্যবহৃত হয়, তবে *rise* ব্যবহার করা ভালো কেবল *begin* 'আবির্ভূত হওয়া' বা 'শুরু হওয়া' (*sense of begin*) অর্থে, যেমনঃ *A quarrel (a discussion, an argument, a difficulty, etc.) may arise.*

(See Exercise 46)

#### 403) *Like* এবং *Love*

##### a) *Like*

✗ *I like you! Will you marry me?*

✓ *I love you! Will you marry me?*

##### b) *Love*

✗ *Parents like their children.*

✓ *Parents love their children.*

*Persons* বা *things* (ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর জন্য) *verb* দুটির যে কোনটি ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। এদের মধ্যে কেবল একটিমাত্র পার্থক্য রয়েছে, তা হল মাত্রার (*degree*): *to like*-এর চেয়ে *to love* খুব বেশি শক্তিশালী/জোরালো। অবশ্য এদের যে কোন *verb*-টির ব্যবহারই শুদ্ধ, তবে এটা বক্তার উপরই নির্ভর করে, যেমনঃ এক ব্যক্তি সঙ্গীত পছন্দ করতে (*to like*) পারে, পক্ষান্তরে অন্য একজন সঙ্গীত ভালোবাসতে (*to love*) পারে।

#### 404) *Hanged* এবং *Hung*

##### a) *Hanged*

✗ *No-one has been hung in Britain since 1964.*

✓ *No-one has been hanged in Britain since 1964.*

##### b) *Hung*

✗ *We hanged the picture on the wall.*

✓ *We hung the picture on the wall.*

যখন কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রাণীকে (ফাঁসিতে) ঝুলিয়ে (*hanging*) মারা- অর্থাৎ নির্দেশিত হয়, তখন আমরা *hanged from*-টি ব্যবহার করি। অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে *form*-টি হয় *hung*। এই *verb*-দুটির প্রধান রূপগুলো হল যথাক্রমেঃ *hang-hanged-hanged* এবং *hang-hung-hung*.

(See Exercise 50)

#### 405) *Stay* এবং *Remain*

##### a) *Stay*

✗ *We remained in a very good hotel.*

✓ *We stayed in a very good hotel.*

b) Remain

✗ *Not many figs have stayed on the tree.*

✓ *Not many figs have remained on the tree.*

এখানে *To stay* অর্থ হল (অধিতি বা পরিদর্শক হিসেবে কোথাও) স্বল্প সময়ের জন্য অবস্থান করা/বাস করা/থাকা এবং *to remain* অর্থ হল (কোন কিছু গৃহিত বা ধ্বংসপ্রাপ্ত হওয়ার পরে কিছু) অবশিষ্ট থাকা বা পরিত্যক্ত হওয়া।

🌟 **Note:** যখন একই অবস্থানে বা শর্তে অর্থটি বহাল থাকে, তখন *verb* দুটির যে কোনটিই ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে, যেমনঃ *I shall stay (or remain) at home till tomorrow.*

406) *Wear* এবং *Put on*

a) *Wear*

✗ *Kathy always puts on black shoes.*

✓ *Kathy always wears black shoes.*

b) *Put on*

✗ *I wear my clothes in the morning.*

✓ *I put on my clothes in the morning.*

*Wear* অর্থ হল (পোশাক বা অলঙ্কার হিসেবে) পরিধান করা বা সঙ্গে ধারণ করা। *To put on* (কাপড় পরা) একটি সাধারণ কাজকে নির্দেশ করে।

🌟 **Note:** *To dress*-এর, *to put on*-এর মত একই অর্থ রয়েছে, তবে *dress*-এর *object* হল ব্যক্তি, কোন বস্তু নয়, যেমনঃ *He dressed himself and went out. The mother dressed her baby.*

(See Exercise 47)

407) *Tear* এবং *Tear up*

a) *Tear*

✗ *John tore up his coat on a nail.*

✓ *John tore his coat on a nail.*

b) *Tear up*

✗ *Philip was angry and tore the letter.*

✓ *Philip was angry and tore up the letter.*

*To tear* অর্থ হলঃ সোজা বা আঁকা-বাঁকা রেখা বরাবর ভাগ করা বা ছিন্ন করা (কখনও কখনও দুর্ঘটনার মাধ্যমে); *to tear up* অর্থ হল। ক্ষুদ্র ক্ষুদ্র অংশে ভাগ করার মাধ্যমে ধ্বংস করা।

🌟 **Note:** অপেক্ষাকৃত বেশি পরিপূর্ণতার ধারণাটি প্রকাশ করতে *verb*-গুলোর সাথে *up word*-টি প্রায়ই ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *burn up, drink up, dry up, cut up, eat up, shut up, use up.*

408) *Grow* এবং *Grow up*

a) *Grow*

✗ *These flowers grow up very quickly.*

✓ These flowers grow very quickly.

b) Grow up

✗ When I grow I'll be a doctor.

✓ When I grow up I'll be a doctor.

To grow অর্থ হল- বড় হওয়া, to grow up অর্থ হল- প্রাপ্তবয়স্ক/পরিপক্ব হওয়া।

🌟 **Note:** Grow-এর অন্যান্য অর্থগুলো হল- 1) উৎপাদিত হওয়া/ফলা, যেমনঃ *Rice grows in Egypt*, 2) উৎপাদন করা/জন্মানো, যেমনঃ *We grow flowers in our garden*, 3) জন্মাতে দেওয়া, যেমনঃ *He grew a beard*, 4) হওয়া, যেমনঃ *The nights grow cold in winter*.

409) Pick এবং Pick up

a) Pick

✗ We picked up flowers in the garden.

✓ We picked flowers in the garden.

b) Pick up

✗ The naughty boy picked a stone.

✓ The naughty boy picked up a stone.

To pick fruit or flowers অর্থ হল- আঙ্গুলের সাহায্যে এদের টেনে তোলা বা ছেঁড়া, to pick up অর্থ হল- (কোন বস্তু/জিনিস) জমি থেকে উপরে তোলা/তুলে ছুঁড়ে ফেলা)।

410) Deal with এবং Deal in

a) Deal with

✗ This book deals in common errors.

✓ This book deals with common errors.

b) Deal in

✗ A bookseller deals with books.

✓ A bookseller deals in books.

To deal with অর্থ হল- উপজীব্য করা/সম্পর্ক রক্ষা করা, to deal in অর্থ হল- কেনা-বেচা করা।

🌟 **Note:** To deal with আরো অর্থ নির্দেশ করেঃ 1) লেনদেন করা, যেমনঃ *I will not deal with that shopkeeper again*, 2) কোন বিষয়ে ব্যবস্থা/বিহিত করা, যেমনঃ *The headmaster deal with the question*.

411) Interfere in এবং Interfere with

a) Interfere in

✗ Don't interfere with my private business!

✓ Don't interfere in my private business!

b) Interfere with

✗ Paul is always interfering in the equipment.

✓ Paul is always interfering with the equipment.

*Interfere in* অর্থ হল- বাধা হওয়া, *to interfere in* অর্থ হল- অনাধিকার চর্চা করা বা নাক গলানো।

#### 412) Borrow এবং Lend

##### a) Borrow

✗ *I want to lend a book from you.*

✓ *I want to borrow a book from you.*

##### b) Lend

✗ *Will you please borrow me a book?*

✓ *Will you please lend me a book?*

*To borrow* অর্থ হল- ঋণ/ধার করা এবং *to lend* অর্থ হল- ঋণ/ধার দেওয়া।

(See Exercise 51)

#### 413) Steal এবং Rob

##### a) Steal

✗ *Someone has robbed all her money.*

✓ *Someone has stolen all her money.*

##### b) Rob

✗ *Some men stole a bank last night.*

✓ *Some men robbed a bank last night.*

*Steal* (চুরি করা)-এর *object* হল এমন একটি বস্তু, যা চোরের দ্বারা গৃহিত হয় বা চোর চুরি করে, যেমনঃ টাকা, ঘড়ি, সাইকেল ইত্যাদি। পক্ষান্তরে *rob* (ডাকাতি করা)-এর *object* হল এমন একজন ব্যক্তি বা একটি স্থান, যার নিকট থেকে (বা যেখান থেকে চুরি করা) বস্তুটি নেয়া হয়, যেমনঃ একজন মানুষ, একটি ঘোড়া বা একটি ব্যাংক (*a man, a house or a bank*).

(See Exercise 52)

#### 414) Revenge এবং Avenge

##### a) Revenge

✗ *I avenged myself for the insult.*

✓ *I revenged myself for the insult.*

##### b) Avenge

✗ *He now revenged his son's murder.*

✓ *He now avenged his son's murder.*

*To revenge* (প্রতিশোধ গ্রহণ করা) *onself* হল-ভুল কৃতকর্মের জন্য কাউকে শাস্তি দেওয়া, পক্ষান্তরে *to avenged* (প্রতিশোধ নেওয়া) হল অন্যের (সাধারণত নিরীহ বা দুর্বলের) পক্ষে শাস্তি দেওয়া।

📌 **Note:** *Revenge*, noun-টি *to take a revenge on* এবং *to get or have one's revenge* এই *expression*-গুলোতে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *He took revenge on the boy who had struck him, He could not rest until he had his revenge.*

#### 415) Convince এবং Persuade

##### a) Convince

✗ I am now persuaded of his honesty.

✓ I am now convinced of his honesty.

##### b) Persuade

✗ We could not convince him to play.

✓ We could not persuade him to play.

To convince হল- কাউকে বিশ্বাস করা বা বোঝানো। পক্ষান্তরে to persuade অর্থ হল- কাউকে কিছু করতে রাজি করানো বা বোঝানো।

📌 **Note:** Pursued-এর সাথে persuade-কে গুলিয়ে না ফেলার বিষয়ে সতর্ক থাকতে হবে।

Pursued হল- pursue (To follow=অনুসরণ করা)- এর Past tense.

#### 416) Refuse এবং Deny

##### a) Refuse

✗ Sarah denied to take the money.

✓ Sarah refused to take the money.

##### b) Deny

✗ John refused that he'd done it.

✓ John denied that he'd done it.

To refuse অর্থ- প্রস্তাবিত বা অনুরোধকৃত কোন কিছু করতে বা নিতে সম্মত হওয়া। to deny অর্থ হল- নেতিবাচক উত্তর দেওয়া বা সত্য বলে স্বীকার না করা।

(See Exercise 53)

#### 417) Discover এবং Invent

##### a) Discover

✗ America was invented by Columbus.

✓ America was discovered by Columbus.

##### b) Invent

✗ Edison discovered the gramophone.

✓ Edison invented the gramophone.

To discover হল- অস্তিত্ববান, কিন্তু অজানা কোন কিছুকে খুঁজে পাওয়া বা আবিষ্কার করা বা জ্ঞানের মধ্যে আনা এবং to invent হল- অস্তিত্বহীন কোন কিছুকে তৈরি করা বা আবিষ্কার করা।

#### 418) Take place এবং Take part

##### a) Take place

✗ The meeting will take part soon.

✓ The meeting will take place soon.

##### b) Take part

✗ I'll take place in the meeting.

✓ I'll take part in the meeting.

To take place অর্থ হল- ঘটনা বা অনুষ্ঠিত হওয়া, পক্ষান্তরে to take part অর্থ হল- কোন কিছুতে অংশ নেওয়া।

419) Made from এবং Made of

a) Made from

✗ The bowl is made of glass.

✓ The bowl is made from glass.

b) Made of

✗ The statue is made from marble.

✓ The statue is made of marble.

Made of ব্যবহৃত হয়, যদি কোন বস্তু তৈরি হবার পরও এর উপাদানগুলোর স্ববৈশিষ্ট্য চেনা যায় এবং made from ব্যবহৃত হয়, যদি কোন বস্তু তৈরি হবার পর এর উপাদানগুলোকে স্ববৈশিষ্ট্যে আর চেনা/দেখা না যায়।

420) Rent এর পরিবর্তে Let এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

a) Rent

✗ I let the house from Mr Jones.

✓ I rent the house from Mr Jones.

b) Hire

✗ I hired out a surf board when I was in America.

✓ I hired a surf board when I was in America.

A land lord = জমির/বাড়ির মালিক, জমি/বাড়ি ইত্যাদি ভাড়া দেয় (let বা rent) কিন্তু

Tenant (ভাড়াটে) বাড়ি ভাড়া নেয় (rent)। কেবল মালিক বাড়ি ভাড়া দিতে (let) অর্থাৎ let কেবল মালিক প্রসঙ্গে এবং rent ভাড়াটে এবং মালিক উভয় প্রসঙ্গে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

👉 Note: To hire হল অল্প সময়ের জন্য কোন কিছু ব্যবহার করার জন্য টাকা দেয়া বা ভাড়া করা, যেমনঃ to hire a house, a bicycle, a car, a rowing-boat বা a concert hall for one evening. To hire out হল- অর্থ গ্রহণের বিনিময়ে কাউকে কিছু ব্যবহারের অনুমতি দেয়া বা ভাড়া দেওয়া, যেমনঃ He hires out bicycles by the hour.

421) Earn এর পরিবর্তে Win এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ She wins her living by hard work.

✓ She earns her living by hard work.

To earn অর্থ হল- কাজের বিনিময়ে (কোন কিছু) অর্জন করা বা উপার্জন করা, to win হল- প্রতিযোগীতা, লড়াই, জুয়া খেলা ইত্যাদির ফলাফল হিসেবে (কোন কিছু) অর্জন বা জয় করা।

👉 Note: To gain, verb-টি দুয়ের যে কোন অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারেঃ to gain one's living (জীবিকা উপার্জন করা) বা to gain a victory, a prize, etc. (বিজয়, পুরস্কার ইত্যাদি লাভ বা অর্জন করা)।

422) *Replace with* এর পরিবর্তে *Substitute with* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *They substituted gold with paper money.*

✓ *They replaced gold with paper money.*

আমরা একটির বদলে অন্যটিকে সরবরাহ করি (*replace by*), কিন্তু আমরা একটির বিকল্প হিসেবে অন্য একটি ব্যবহার করি (*substitute for*), যেমনঃ *You replace gold with paper money, They substitute paper money for gold.*

423) *Repair* বা *Mend* এর পরিবর্তে *Correct* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Some men are correcting the road.*

✓ *Some men are repairing the road.*

*To correct* হল কোন কিছু সঠিক করা বা যৌক্তিক করাঃ *to correct mistakes* (ভুল-ত্রুটি), *a composition* (একটি রচনা), *a translation*. *Repair* বা *to mend* হল- নষ্ট হওয়ার পরে ভাল অবস্থায় ফিরিয়ে আনা। *to repair* বা *to mend*- (একটি রাস্তা), *clothes* (পোশাক), *shoes* (জুতা) ইত্যাদি।

📌 **Note:** *To repair a watch* হল এটিকে পুনরায় ভাল অবস্থানে ফিরিয়ে আনা। তবে *to correct a watch* হল এটিতে সঠিক সময় *set* করা।

424) *Cover with dust* এর পরিবর্তে *Dust* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *A sandstorm dusted our clothes.*

✓ *A sandstorm covered our clothes with dust.*

*To dust* ধুলায় আচ্ছাদিত করা বা ঢেকে ফেলা অর্থ নির্দেশ করে না, কিন্তু (কোন কিছুকে) ধুলামুক্ত করা- অর্থ নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *After sweeping, she dusted the furniture.*

425) *Ask* বা *Thank* এর পরিবর্তে *Please* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I pleased him to do me a favor.*

Or: *I pleased him for his lovely present.*

✓ *I asked him to do me a favor.*

Or: *I thanked him for his lovely present.*

*To please* অর্থ হল- আনন্দ দেওয়া, যেমনঃ *I worked hard to please my teacher.*

426) *Was able to* এর পরিবর্তে *Could* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Because Laura worked hard she could finish the job in time.*

✓ *Because Laura worked hard she was able to finish the job in time.*

যদি অর্থটি হয় কোন কিছু নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা বা করতে সফল হওয়া, তবে *Was able to* ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত, *could* নয়।

427) *Teach* এর পরিবর্তে *Learn* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Graham learned us how to play hockey.*

✓ *Graham taught us how to play hockey.*

Teach অর্থ হল- শিক্ষা বা নির্দেশ দেওয়া, learn অর্থ হল- শেখা বা শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করা, যেমনঃ

He taught me English, and I learned it quickly.

(See Exercise 54)

428) Beat এর পরিবর্তে Win এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ We've always won your team.

✓ We've always beaten your team.

To win হল কোন কিছু অর্জন করা, যার জন্য আপনি চেষ্টা করেন; to beat হল প্রতিপক্ষকে দমন/পরাজিত/পরাজিত করা, যেমনঃ The girls beat the boys, and won the prize.

মনে রাখুনঃ এই Verb-গুলোর প্রধান রূপগুলো যথাক্রমেঃ beat-beat-beaten এবং win-won-won.

(See Exercise 55)

429) Agree এর পরিবর্তে Accept এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The teacher accepted to go with us.

✓ The teacher agreed to go with us.

Accept 'প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করা' অর্থ নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ I accepted his invitation, agree (কোন কিছু করতে) রাজি/সম্মত হওয়া অর্থ নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ He agreed to play.

Accept-এর পরে infinitive বসানো যাবে না।

👉 Note: ব্যক্তি বোঝালে agree with এবং বস্তু বোঝালে agree to হবে, যেমনঃ I agree with Mr A.S, but I cannot agree to this plan.

430) Let এর পরিবর্তে Leave এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Penny didn't leave me to get my book.

✓ Penny didn't let me get my book.

Let অর্থ নির্দেশ করে কিছু করতে অনুমতি দেওয়া, leave অর্থ পরিত্যাগ করা বা একেবারে চলে যাওয়া, যেমনঃ Do you leave your books at school?

(See also Sections 436 and 447)

431) Take এর পরিবর্তে Bring এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The astronauts are bringing plants to the moon.

✓ The astronauts are taking plants to the moon.

Bring or take-এর ব্যবহার নির্ভর করে speaker অথবা doer-এর উপর। যখন আপনি কোন কিছু সাথে নিয়ে ফিরে আসেন তখন bring হবে এবং আপনি কোন কিছু সাথে নিয়ে বাইরে যান, তখন take ব্যবহৃত হবে। যেমনঃ Take these cakes to your grandmother and bring (back) some flowers from her garden.

👉 Note: To fetch হল কোন কিছু গিয়ে নিয়ে আসা, যেমনঃ Please fetch me a glass of water (=go and come back with a glass of water: যাও এবং এক গ্লাস পানি নিয়ে ফিরে এসো)।

432) Sink এর পরিবর্তে Drown এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The ship drowned in the ocean.

✓ The ship sank in the ocean.

To be drowned কেবল জীবন্ত বস্তুর ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং to sink ব্যক্তি বা বস্তু উভয়ের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

433) Look এর পরিবর্তে see এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Neil was seeing out of the window.

✓ Neil was looking out of the window.

To see হল- 'চোখের সাহায্যে' লক্ষ্য করা বা দেখা, কিন্তু to look হল দেখার উদ্দেশ্যে দৃষ্টি ফেরানো বা তাকানো, যেমনঃ I looked up and saw the aeroplane.

(See Exercise 56)

434) Listen এর পরিবর্তে Hear এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I was hearing her CDs.

✓ I was hearing to her CDs.

To listen মনোযোগ/দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে কোনকিছু শোনা বুঝায়, to hear অর্থ- সাদামাটা কোন কিছু শ্রবণ করা বোঝায়, যেমনঃ I heard them talking but I did not listen to what they said. To listen প্রস্তাব বা অনুরোধে রাজি হওয়া বা উপদেশ গ্রহণ করা- অর্থও নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ Oeny always listens to his mother.

(See Exercise 57)

435) Remind এর পরিবর্তে Remember এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Please remember me to give it back.

✓ Please remind me to give it back.

To remember হল- মনে রাখা বা থাকা, যেমনঃ I remember what you told me. To remind হল- (কাউকে কিছু) স্মরণ বা মনে করিয়ে দেয়া।

436) Let go এর পরিবর্তে Leave এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Leave the other end of the string.

✓ Let go of the other end of the string.

Leave অর্থ হল- ছেড়ে যাওয়া, let go অর্থ হল- ছেড়ে দেওয়া।

(See also sections 430 and 447)

437) Go to bed এর পরিবর্তে Sleep এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I'll sleep early tonight.

✓ I'll go to bed early tonight.

To go to bed হল ঘুমানোর প্রস্তুতি স্বরূপ বিছানায় শোয়া। সুতরাং আমরা বলতে পারি যে, A person went to bed at nine o'clock, but he did not sleep until eleven o'clock. Then he slept soundly.

👉 **Note:** Go to sleep হল ঘুমে আচ্ছন্ন হওয়া, যেমনঃ He went to sleep while he was in the cinema.

438) Be এর পরিবর্তে be found এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The man was found in his office.

✓ The man was in his office.

ইংরেজিতে Verb, be found সাধারণত 'আবিষ্কৃত হওয়া' অর্থ নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ

Diamonds are found in Africa and in India. সুতরাং ঐ হিসেবে He was found in his office মানে হল- লোকটি তার অফিসে লুকিয়ে ছিলো এবং পরে তাকে খুঁজে পাওয়া গিয়েছিল।

439) Have এর পরিবর্তে be with এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ My English book is with my brother.

✓ My brother has my English book.

Have ধারণাটিতে to be with ব্যবহার করা পরিহার করুন। Be with অর্থ হল- একত্রিত হওয়া বা সঙ্গে থাকা, যেমনঃ He is with his parents.

440) Get বা receive-এর পরিবর্তে Take এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Clare took a good mark in chemistry.

✓ Clare got a good mark in chemistry.

To take অর্থ হল- ইচ্ছাকৃতভাবে বা শক্তি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে কোন কিছু পাওয়া বা অর্জন করা, যেমনঃ I took a book from the library. The army took the city. To get বা to receive অর্থ হল প্রদত্ত কোন কিছু পাওয়া বা অর্জন করা, যেমনঃ a letter, money or a mark in an exam.

441) Want এর পরিবর্তে Like এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Do you like to see my collection?

✓ Do you want to see my collection?

Do you like to do something? অর্থ হল- তুমি কি এটা করা উপভোগ কর? (একটি অভ্যাসগত কাজ হিসেবে)। Do you want to do something? অর্থ হল- তুমি কি এটা এখন করতে চাও?

👉 **Note:** তবে I would like অর্থ হল- আমি চাই (I want), যেমনঃ I would like to play tennis today, Would you like (=তুমি কি চাও) to go for a walk with me? (See Exercise 58)

442) Learn এর পরিবর্তে Know এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Dan went to school to know English.

✓ Dan went to school to learn English.

Know ব্যবহৃত হয় যখন 'শেখা' হয়, যেমনঃ She knows how to swim. একইভাবে Find out (খুঁজে বের করা) বা realize (উপলব্ধি করা) অর্থে know ব্যবহার করা পরিহার করুন।

443) Study এর পরিবর্তে Read এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Lucy is reading algebra in her room.

✓ Lucy is studying algebra in her room.

To study অর্থ হল- শিখতে চেষ্টা করা, to read কোন এরূপ প্রচেষ্টাকে ইঙ্গিত করে না।

সুতরাং একজন ছাত্র শিখতে চেষ্টা করে ইংরেজি, গণিত, ইতিহাস এবং অন্যান্য বিষয়গুলো; কিন্তু

তিনি পড়েন একটি গল্প, একটি চিঠি বা একটি সংবাদপত্র। তবে She is reading for a

degree in commerce-এটি শুদ্ধ।

(See Exercise 59)

444) Study এর পরিবর্তে Learn এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Kevin is learning at Gordon College.

✓ Kevin is studying at Gordon College.

I learn at (Gordon College, etc.) হল অশুদ্ধ, বলতে হবেঃ I study at (Gordon

College, etc.) বা I am a student at (Gordon College, etc.)

445) Buy এর পরিবর্তে Take এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I went to the baker's to take bread.

✓ I went to the baker's to buy bread.

(ক্রয় করা) অর্থে কখনও Take ব্যবহার করবেন না।

446) Take off এর পরিবর্তে Take out এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Chris took out his hat and coat.

✓ Chris took off his hat and coat.

Put on (পরিধান করা)-এর বিপরীত হল- take off (খুলে ফেলা), take out (অপসারণ করা) নয়।

447) Give up এর পরিবর্তে Leave এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I've now left football.

✓ I've now given up football.

Or: I've now stopped playing football.

পরিত্যাগ করা বা ছেড়ে দেওয়া (give up) অথবা ছেড়ে/বিরতি দেওয়া (stop) অর্থে leave

(স্থান ত্যাগ করা) কখনও ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়।

(For sections 430, 436 and 447 see Exercise 48)

448) Like এর পরিবর্তে Sympathise এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I don't sympathise him very much.

✓ I don't like him very much.

Sympathise, like-এর সমার্থক নয়। To sympathise with অর্থ হল- অন্য কারো সাথে

অনুভূতি (সাধারণ দুঃখ/বেদনা) ভাগ করে নেওয়া, অর্থাৎ কারো প্রতি সমবেদনা প্রকাশ করা,

যেমনঃ I sympathise with you in your sorrow.

449) *Keep* এর পরিবর্তে *Put* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Do you put your money in the bank?*

✓ *Do you keep your money in the bank?*

প্রায় স্থায়ীভাবে গচ্ছিত রাখা বোঝাতে *Keep* এবং অস্থায়ী অবস্থানে বোঝাতে *put* ব্যবহার করা অপেক্ষাকৃত ভাল।

450) *Take care* এর পরিবর্তে *care about, care for* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Oliver cares about (cares for) his brother's investments.*

✓ *Oliver takes care of his brother's investments.*

*Care about* অর্থ হলঃ কারো প্রতি বা কোন জিনিসের প্রতি পছন্দ করা বা মনোনিবেশ করা।

*Take care* অর্থ হলঃ কারো দেখভাল করা। *You should take care of your children, or do something to remedy a problem I think/should take care of that broken pane of glass. Care for means to look after: I cared for you when you were ill. Care for can also mean to be fond of someone or something.*

*William really care for geraniums, though this use is rather old-fashioned.*

👉 **Note:** সর্বদা এমন অভিব্যক্তিগুলোও পরিহার করুন, যেমনঃ 1) *He doesn't care for my advice,* 2) *He doesn't care for his work,* 3) *He took no care of him,* 4) *No one cared for him during his illness.* বলুন, 1) *He pays no attention to my advice,* 2) *He takes no care over his work,* 3) *He took no notice of him,* 4) *No one took care of him during his illness.*

451) *Make (to force=বাধ্য করা)* এর পরিবর্তে *Let* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The examiner let me sit quietly until everyone had finished.*

✓ *The examiner made me sit quietly until everyone had finished.*

*Make* অর্থ বাধ্য করা; এই ধারণাটিতে *let* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

452) *Flowed* এর পরিবর্তে *Flown* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The river has flown over its banks.*

✓ *The river has flowed over its banks.*

*Flown* হল- *fly* (উড়া)-এর *Past participle*; *flow (to move as water)* প্রবাহিত হওয়া-এর *Past participle*-টি হল *flowed*, *verb* দুটির প্রধান রূপগুলো যথাক্রমেঃ *fly-flew-flown* এবং *flow-flowed-flowed*.

👉 **Note:** *Flee (fled, fled)* অর্থ- দৌড়ে পালানো, যেমনঃ *We flee from danger. Float (floated, floated)* অর্থ হল- পানি বা অন্যান্য তরল পদার্থের উপরিতলে ভেসে থাকা বা ভেসে ভেসে চলা, যেমনঃ *Ships float on the water.*

(See Exercise 49)

454) *Find* এর পরিবর্তে *Found* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Rosie tried to found her lost book.*

✓ *Rosie tried to find her lost book.*

To find হল বেশ প্রচলিত একটি verb যার অর্থ হারানো জিনিস ফিরে পাওয়া। এর প্রধান রূপগুলো হলঃ find-found-found.

👉 **Note:** অবশ্য অন্য একটি verb আছে to found; যার অর্থ- establish or প্রতিষ্ঠা করা/স্থাপন করা, যেমনঃ He founded the school fifty years ago.

## Confusing Words ⇒ Adverbs Often

### Confused

455) Very এবং Too

a) Very

✗ It's too hot in Rome in the summer.

✓ It's very hot in Rome in the summer.

b) Too

✗ It's now very hot to play football.

✓ It's now too hot to play football.

Very সাধারণত adjective বা adverb-কে অপেক্ষাকৃত শক্তিশালী করে। Too অর্থ হল- 'প্রয়োজনের তুলনায় বেশি পরিমাণে বা অত্যাধিক যা কোন কিছুর উপরস্থ ফলাফল হিসেবে ঘটে'।

It is too hot in the summer-বাক্যটি সম্পূর্ণ নয়ঃ too hot for what? Too hot to play football. তবে কখনও কখনও অসম্পূর্ণ phrase-টি কথ্য ইংরেজিতে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

(See Exercise 68)

456) Very এবং Much

a) Very

✗ He's a much strong man./It's a much interesting book.

✓ He's a very strong man./It's a very interesting book.

b) Much

✗ He's very stronger than I am.

✓ He's much stronger than I am.

Positive degree তে adjectives বা adverb-এর সাথে এবং adjective হিসেবে Present participle (যেমনঃ interesting)-এর সাথে very ব্যবহৃত হয়। Comparative degree-তে adjective বা adverb-এর সাথে এবং past participle-এর সাথে much ব্যবহৃত হয়।

👉 **Note:** Adjective-এর ধারণায় ব্যবহৃত অল্প কিছু past participle নিজেদের পূর্বে very-কে গ্রহণ করতে পারে, যেমনঃ I am very pleased (=আনন্দিত) to see you; I am very tired; The accomodation is very limited, তবে I was much (very নয়) afraid of falling.

(See Exercise 69)

457) Very much এর পরিবর্তে Too much এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ She likes the cinema too much./He's too much stronger than I am.

✓ She likes the cinema very much./He's very much stronger than I am.

Very much- much-এর পরিবর্তে অপেক্ষাকৃত বেশি জোর দিয়ে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। *Too much* একটি অতিরিক্ত পরিমাণ বা মাত্রা নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *She ate too much, and felt ill.*

👉 **Note:** *Word, try, rain, think, to be hurt, to be injured-* এদের মতো সুনির্দিষ্ট verb গুলোর সাথে *much* এবং *very much* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। সুতরাং আমরা বলতে পারিঃ *He worked very hard; He was badly hurt; he was seriously injured.*

(See Exercise 70)

458) *Ago* এর পরিবর্তে *Before* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I saw your friend before two weeks.*

✓ *I saw your friend two weeks ago.*

কথা বলার সময় থেকে অতীতে একটি অবস্থান বিন্দুর দিকে সময় হিসাব করতে আমরা *Ago* ব্যবহার করি, যেমনঃ *half an hour ago, three days ago, four months ago, five years ago, a long time ago.* অতীতে একটি নিকটতর অবস্থান বিন্দুর দিকে দূরত্ব হিসাব করতে *Before* ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *Napoleon died in 1821, he has lost the battle of waterloo six years before.*

👉 **Note:** যখন *ago* ব্যবহৃত হয়, তখন verb-টি *past tense*-এ হয়, যেমনঃ *He came five minutes ago.*

459) *Hard* এর পরিবর্তে *Hardly* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *She rubbed her eyes hardly.*

✓ *She rubbed her eyes hard.*

*Hard* অর্থ হল- কঠোরভাবে। *Hardly* অর্থ হল- 'পরিপূর্ণভাবে না' বা 'নামে মাত্র', যেমনঃ *The baby can hardly walk.*

(See Exercise 71)

460) *Not very* এর পরিবর্তে *No/so* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I hear that he's not so rich.*

✓ *I hear that he's not very rich.*

*Not very* (অতি/অত্যন্ত) ধারণাটিতে *so* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। *He is not so rich-* এই অভিব্যক্তিটি একটি তুলনা ইঙ্গিত করছে, যেমনঃ *He is not so rich as you are.*

461) *Presently* এর পরিবর্তে *just now* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *The messenger will arrive just now.*

✓ *The messenger will arrive presently.*

আমরা যদি নিকট ভবিষ্যতের কথা বলি, তবে আমরা অবশ্যই *Presently, immediately* বা *soon* ব্যবহার করব। *Just now* বর্তমান ও অতীত সময়কে নির্দেশ করে, ভবিষ্যতকে নয়, যেমনঃ *He's not at home just now (=এই মুহূর্তে); He left just now (=অল্প সময় আগে)।*

462) *At present* এর পরিবর্তে *presently* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *His uncle is in London presently.*

✓ *His uncle is in London at present.*

*At present* এবং *presently* একে অপরের সমর্থক নয়। *At present* অর্থ হল- এখন, কিন্তু *presently* অর্থ হল- শীঘ্র, যেমনঃ *She will come back presently (soon=শীঘ্র)।*

463) *Rarely* এর পরিবর্তে *scarcely* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Zoe scarcely comes to see me now.*

✓ *Zoe rarely comes to see me now.*

*Scarcely, rarely*-এর সমর্থক নয়। *Rarely* অর্থ হল- প্রায়ই নয় বা মাঝে মাঝে; *scarcely* অর্থ হল- সম্পূর্ণভাবে নয় বা নামে মাত্র, যেমনঃ *I had scarcely finished when he came.*

464) *Late* এর পরিবর্তে *lately* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Last night I went to bed lately.*

✓ *Last night I went to bed late.*

*Early*-এর বিপরীত হল- *late, lately* নয়। *Lately* অর্থ হল- সম্প্রতি বা অধুনা, যেমনঃ *I haven't been there lately.*



## Confusing Words ⇒ Adjectives Often

### Confused

465) Many এবং Much

a) Many

✗ My brother hasn't much books.

✓ My brother hasn't many books.

b) Much

✗ Is there many dust in the room?

✓ Is there much dust in the room?

Many, plural nouns- এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ many books বা many boys, much; Singular noun (যাদের কোন plural নেই)-এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ much water বা much bread.

📌 **Note:** Affirmative বাক্যে many এবং much সাধারণত a lot (of), a great deal (of), plenty (of), a good deal (of), a good many (of), a great number (of), a large quantity (of) ইত্যাদি দ্বারা replaced হয়।

(See Exercise 9)

466) Few এবং A few

a) Few

✗ Although the question was easy, a few boys were able to answer it.

✓ Although the question was easy, few boys were able to answer it.

b) A few

✗ Although the question was difficult, few boys were able to answer it.

✓ Although the question was difficult, a few boys were able to answer it.

Few অর্থ হল- বেশি (সংখ্যক) নয় এবং সংখ্যার স্বল্পতার উপর জোর প্রদান করে। এটি a few হতে স্বতন্ত্র। a few অর্থ হল- কমপক্ষে কিছু সংখ্যক বা স্বল্প সংখ্যক।

467) Little এবং A little

a) Little

✗ He took a little exercise and wasn't very fit.

✓ He took little exercise and wasn't very fit.

b) A little

✗ She took little exercise and felt much better.

✓ She took a little exercise and felt much better.

Little অর্থ হল- বেশি (পরিমাণ) নয় এবং পরিমাণের স্বল্পতার উপর জোর প্রদান করে। এটি a little হতে স্বতন্ত্র। A little অর্থ হল- কমপক্ষে কিছু (পরিমাণে)।

(For sections 466-467 see Exercise 10)

#### 468) Each এবং Every

a) Each

✗ She gave an apple to every of the children.

✓ She gave an apple to each of the children.

b) Every

✗ Each child had an apple.

✓ Every child had an apple.

Each দুই বা ততোধিক বস্তু বা ব্যক্তির জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং এক এক করে প্রত্যেককে বোঝায়। Every কখনও দুই ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয় না, সর্বদা দুয়ের অধিক ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং একটি দলকে বোঝায়। সুতরাং each অপেক্ষাকৃত বেশি স্বতন্ত্র এবং সুনির্দিষ্ট, তবে every অপেক্ষাকৃত জোরালো word.

📌 **Note:** Each এবং every- এরা হল সর্বদাই singular, যেমনঃ Each (or every) one of the twenty boys has a book.

#### 469) His এবং Her

a) His

✗ John visits her aunt every Sunday.

✓ John visits his aunt every Sunday.

b) Her

✗ Ann visits his uncle every Sunday.

✓ Ann visits her uncle every Sunday.

ইংরেজিতে Possessive adjectives (এবং pronoun)-এর সমন্বয় ঘটে স্বত্বাধিকারী ব্যক্তির সাথে অধিকৃত ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুটির সাথে নয়। স্বত্বাধিকারী ব্যক্তিটি পুরুষ হলে his এবং মহিলা হলে her ব্যবহার করতে হয়।

(See Exercise 13)

#### 470) Older (oldest) এবং Elder (eldest)

a) Older (oldest)

✗ This girl is elder than that one./ This girl is the eldest of all.

✓ This girl is older than that one./This girl is the oldest of all.

b) Elder (eldest)

✗ My older brother is called John./My oldest brother is not here.

✓ My elder brother is called John./My eldest brother is not here.

Older এবং oldest ব্যক্তি বা বস্তু- উভয়ের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয়, পক্ষান্তরে elder এবং eldest কেবল ব্যক্তিদের ক্ষেত্রে এবং প্রধানত আত্মীয় শ্রেণির ব্যক্তিদের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

👉 **Note:** সতর্কতামূলকঃ Elder-এর পরে *than* বসে না, যেমনঃ *Jane is not older (not elder) than her sister.*

(See Exercise 8 and Exercise 15)

#### 471) *Interesting* এবং *Interested*

a) *Interesting*

- ✗ *I've read an interested story.*
- ✓ *I've read an interesting story.*

b) *Interested*

- ✗ *Are you interesting in your work?*
- ✓ *Are you interested in your work?*

*Interesting* এমন কিছুকে নির্দেশ করে, যা 'আগ্রহ' জাগায়, পক্ষান্তরে *Interested* ব্যক্তিকে নির্দেশ করে, যে কোন কিছুতে 'আগ্রহী' হয়।

(See Exercise 14)

#### 472) *Wounded* এবং *Injured* বা *Hurt*

a) *Wounded*

- ✗ *Thousands were injured in the war.*
- ✓ *Thousands were wounded in the war.*

b) *Injured* বা *Hurt*

- ✗ *Jack was wounded in a car accident.*
- ✓ *Jack was injured in a car accident.*

লোকজন দুর্ঘটনার ফলস্বরূপ *Injured* বা *hurt* (আহত) হয় এবং যুদ্ধে *wounded* (আহত) হয়। (এদের *noun*-গুলো হল *injury* এবং *wound*)।

#### 473) *Farther* এবং *Further*

a) *Farther*

- ✗ *New York is further than London.*
- ✓ *New York is farther than London.*

b) *Further*

- ✗ *I shall get farther information.*
- ✓ *I shall get further information.*

👉 **Note:** word দুটির মধ্যকার পার্থক্যটি হল, *farther*, 'অপেক্ষাকৃত দূরবর্তী', অর্থ নির্দেশ করে এবং *further* 'অতিরিক্ত' অর্থ নির্দেশ করে। অবশ্য সাম্প্রতিক বা প্রচলিত ব্যবহার সকল অরথে *further*-কে শ্রেয় মনে করে।

474) *An* এর পরিবর্তে *A* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *A animal, a orange, a hour.*

✓ *An animal, an orange, an hour.*

*An, vowel* বা উহ্য *h* (যেমন- *hour, heir, honest* এগুলোতে)-এর পূর্বে *a*-এর পরিবর্তে ব্যবহৃত হয়। *u*-এর দীর্ঘ উচ্চারণ বা *you*-এর উচ্চারণ যুক্ত *syllable*-এর পূর্বে, আমরা *a* (*an* নয়) ব্যবহার করি। যেমনঃ *a European* (কিন্তু *an uncle*)।

475) *A (n)* এর পরিবর্তে *One* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Adam found one ring in the street.*

✓ *Ada found a ring in the street.*

*One, numeral*-টি *indefinite article: a* বা *an*-এর পরিবর্তে ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়। *One* কেবল সংখ্যার উপর জোর প্রদত্ত হলে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *He gave me one book instead of two.*

476) *Any* এর পরিবর্তে *Some* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Have you some lesson to prepare?/I haven't some lessons to prepare.*

✓ *Have you ay lesson to prepare?/I haven't any lessons to prepare.*

*Some* সাধারণত *affirmative* বাক্যে ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং '*Any*' *interrogative* এবং *negative* বাক্যে ব্যবহৃত হয়। আমরা মাঝে মাঝে প্রশ্নেও *some* ব্যবহার করি। যেমনঃ *Would you like some soup?*

(See Exercise 12)

477) *Less* এর পরিবর্তে *Fewer* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *They have less books than I have.*

✓ *They have fewer books than I have.*

*Less* পরিমাণ, মূল্য বা মাত্রা নির্দেশ করে, *fewer* সংখ্যা নির্দেশ করে। সুতরাং আমাদের থাকতে পারে *less water, less food, less money, less education.*

👉 **Note:** আমরা বলি *less than (five, six etc.) tk* কারণ *tk* অর্থের পরিমাণ হিসেবে বিবেচ্য হয়।

478) *That* এর পরিবর্তে *This* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Look at this dog across the street!*

✓ *Look at that dog across the street!*

*This* ব্যবহার করা হয় যখন কোন কিছু আপনার দ্বারা সংস্পর্শিত হয়। *Abstract things*- এর ক্ষেত্রে আপনি *this* ব্যবহার করতে পারেন যদি তা খুব সমসাময়িক হয়। আপনি যখন একের অধিক নিয়ে কথা বলবেন তখন *this* ব্যবহার করবেন ঘনিষ্ঠ অথবা খুব তাৎক্ষণিক কিছু বোঝাতে এবং *that* ব্যবহার করবেন দূরবর্তী অথবা দূরবর্তী সময়ের জন্য (*more remote in time*)।

আপনি যদি শুধুমাত্র একটি বিষয় (thing) বোঝাতে চান সেক্ষেত্রে সাধারণত *that* ব্যবহার করবেন।

479) *Later* এর পরিবর্তে *Latter* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *She got to school latter than I did.*

✓ *She got to school later than I did.*

*Later* সময় নির্দেশ করে, *Latter* ক্রম নির্দেশ করে এবং দুটি বস্তু (বা ব্যক্তির) মধ্যে পরে উল্লিখিত (দ্বিতীয়টি)-কে নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *Alexandria and Cairo are large cities; the latter has a population of over a million.* *Later*-এর বিপরীত হল *former*.

480) *Latter* এর পরিবর্তে *Last* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens are bothe excellent writers, but I prefer the last.*

✓ *Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens are both excellent writers, but I prefer the latter.*

*The latter* অর্থ হল- দুইজন ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর মধ্যে দ্বিতীয়টি। *the last* দুয়ের অধিক ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর সারি বা ক্রম নির্দেশ করে। 480) *Latter* এর পরিবর্তে *Last* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens are bothe excellent writers, but I prefer the last.*

✓ *Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens are both excellent writers, but I prefer the latter.*

*The latter* অর্থ হল- দুইজন ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর মধ্যে দ্বিতীয়টি। *the last* দুয়ের অধিক ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর সারি বা ক্রম নির্দেশ করে।

481) *Latest* এর পরিবর্তে *Last* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *What's the last news from the Palace?*

✓ *What's the latest news from the Palace?*

*Latest* অর্থ হল- হালনাগাদ। *Last* হল শেষেরটি, যেমনঃ *Z is the last letter of the alphabet.*

482) *Young, Old* এর পরিবর্তে *Small, Big* এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I'm two years smaller than you./She's three years bigger than me.*

✓ *I'm two years younger than you./She's three years older than me.*

বয়সের উল্লেখ হলে বলুন *Young* বা *old*. *Small* এবং *big* সাধারণত আকার নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *He is big (or small) for his age.*

📌 **Note:** *Great* ব্যক্তি বা বস্তুর গুরুত্ব নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *Napoleon was a great man, Homer's Iliad is a great book. Distance, height, length, depth-* এদের

মত word- গুলোর সাথেও great ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *There is a great distance between the earth and the moon.*

483) Tall এর পরিবর্তে High এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *My elder brother is six feet high.*

✓ *My elder brother is six feet tall.*

Tall সাধারণত ব্যক্তির জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং এটি short-এর বিপরীত। High ব্যবহৃত হয় গাছ (tree), ভবন (building) বা পর্বত (mountain) এদের বেলায় এবং এটি low-এর বিপরীত।

484) Handsome বা Good-looking এর পরিবর্তে Beautiful এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He's grown into a beautiful young man.*

✓ *He's grown into a handsome young man.*

সাধারণত, একজন পুরুষ Handsome বা good-looking হয় এবং একজন মহিলা beautiful lovely, good looking বা pretty হয়।

485) Ill এর পরিবর্তে Sick এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *He's been sick for over a year.*

✓ *He's been ill for over a year.*

To be ill মানে হল- পীড়িত বা রোগাক্রান্ত হওয়া- To be sick সাধারণত বমি করার প্রবণতা হওয়া বা সাময়িকভাবে অসুস্থ হওয়া- অর্থ নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *The smell made me sick.*

📌 **Note:** Sick একটি noun-এর পূর্বে অথবা plural অর্থে noun হিসেবেও ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। যেমনঃ *The sick man is lying in bed, we visit the sick;* কিন্তু ill এভাবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

(See Exercise 11)

486) Clean এর পরিবর্তে Clear এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *You should keep your hands clear.*

✓ *You should keep your hands clean.*

Clean-এর বিপরীত হল dirty. Clear অর্থ হল- স্বচ্ছ বা উজ্জ্বল, যেমনঃ *clear water, a clear sky.*

488) Angry এর পরিবর্তে Nervous এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Our teacher is very nervous today.*

✓ *Our teacher is very angry today.*

Nervous মানে হল- সহজে আন্দোলিত বা ভীত হওয়া। এই শব্দটি angry (ক্রুদ্ধ) অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। Angry শুধুমাত্র অস্থায়ী অবস্থাকে নির্দেশ করে।



# ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুকে বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!

প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!



## কেন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারে সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👁️ ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

📄 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে। অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

📅 যতবার ইবুক পড়বে ততবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

📄 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👉 বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

### আমাদের ই-বুকের মার্কেটিং স্ট্রা

- 🌐 ব্লগের ([www.tanbircox.blogspot.com](http://www.tanbircox.blogspot.com)) ⇒ ভিজিটর সংখ্যা 75 লাখ,
  - 📘 পেইজের ([www.facebook.com/tanbir.ebooks](http://www.facebook.com/tanbir.ebooks)) ⇒ ফ্যান সংখ্যা ৭.৮ লাখ,
  - 👥 গ্রুপের ([www.facebook.com/groups/tanbir.ebooks](http://www.facebook.com/groups/tanbir.ebooks)) ⇒ মেম্বার সংখ্যা ৬০ হাজার,
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  - 📄 অনলাইনে বই ([www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular](http://www.slideshare.net/tanbircox/documents?order=popular)) ⇒ পড়ার সংখ্যা ১.৫ লাখ,
  - 📱 বইঘর অ্যাপ ⇒ ব্যবহারকারী ৭০ হাজার,
- (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cgd.ebook.boighor>)

নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছের মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

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## Confusing Words ⇒ Nouns Often Confused

### 489) House এবং Home

#### a) House

✗ *Many new homes have been built.*

✓ *Many new houses have been built.*

#### b) Home

✗ *You should go to your house now.*

✓ *You should go home now.*

*My house, his house* বা *your house* ইত্যাদি না বলার জন্য সতর্ক হোন, আপনার বরং *home* বলা উচিত। *A house* হল, যে কোন ভবন (*building*) যা বসবাসের জন্য ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং *home* হল একটি নির্দিষ্ট বাড়ি (বা ভবন) যেখানে কেউ বাস করে।

📌 **Note:** *Home* কারো নিজের দেশকেও নির্দেশ করতে পারে। যখন কোন ইংরেজ বলেন, *I'm going home this summer.* তখন তা তিনি ইংল্যান্ডে যাচ্ছেন- এমন অর্থ নির্দেশ করে।

### 490) Story এবং History

#### a) Story

✗ *She told me an interesting history.*

✓ *She told me an interesting story.*

#### b) History

✗ *We study the story of the Romans.*

✓ *We study the history of the Romans.*

*Story* হল ঘটনাবলির একটি বিবরণ, যেগুলো সত্য হতে পারে বা নাও হতে পারে। *History* হল অতীত ঘটনাবলির একটি প্রথাগত দলিল।

### 491) Habit এবং Custom

#### a) Habit

✗ *Telling lies is a very bad custom.*

✓ *Telling lies is a very bad habit.*

#### b) Custom

✗ *The Chinese have strange habits.*

✓ *The Chinese have strange customs.*

*Habit* ব্যক্তির আচরণ বা অভ্যাস নির্দেশ করে, কিন্তু *custom* একটি সমাজ, জাতি বা দেশের অধীন হয়।

(See Exercise 5)

### 492) Cause of এবং Reason for

#### a) Cause of

✗ *What's the reason for a sandstorm?*

✓ *What's the cause of a sandstorm?*

b) Reason for

✗ *You have a good cause of coming.*

✓ *You have a good reason for coming.*

*Cause* হল একটি বিষয় যা একটি ফলাফল উপস্থাপন করে, *reason* হল একটি বিষয় যা একটি ফলাফল ব্যাখ্যা করে বা বিবেচনা করে।

493) *Scene* এবং *Scenery*

a) *Scene*

✗ *The TV crew arrived at the scenery.*

✓ *The TV crew arrived at the scene.*

b) *Scenery*

✗ *The scene in Cyprus is beautiful.*

✓ *The scenery in Cyprus is beautiful.*

*Scene* একটি নির্দিষ্ট স্থানকে নির্দেশ করে, অন্যদিকে *scenery* একটি দেশের প্রাকৃতিক সৌন্দর্যের সাধারণ উপস্থিতিকে নির্দেশ করে। *Scenery*; plural অর্থে ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

494) *Centre* এবং *Middle*

a) *Centre*

✗ *Stand in the middle of the circle.*

✓ *Stand in the centre of the circle.*

b) *Middle*

✗ *He was in the centre of the street.*

✓ *He was in the middle of the street.*

*Centre* হল একটি নির্দিষ্ট অবস্থান বিন্দু; পক্ষান্তরে *middle* হল (*centre*) কেন্দ্রের চারপাশের বা নিকটবর্তী অনির্দিষ্ট স্থান।

495) *Shade* এবং *Shadow*

a) *Shade*

✗ *I like to sit in the shadow.*

✓ *I like to sit in the shade.*

b) *Shadow*

✗ *The dog saw his shade in the water.*

✓ *The dog saw his shadow in the water.*

*Shade* হল রৌদ্র হতে আড়াল করা একটি স্থান; *Shadow* হল একটি স্বতন্ত্র ব্যক্তি বা বস্তু ছায়া। যেমনঃ *a tree* (একটি গাছের), *a man* (একজন মানুষের), *a dog* (একটি কুকুরের) ইত্যাদি।

496) *Customer* এবং *Client*

a) *Customer*

✗ *That grocer has plenty of clients.*

✓ *That grocer has plenty of customers.*

b) Client

✗ *That lawyer has plenty of customers.*

✓ *That lawyer has plenty of clients.*

একজন ব্যক্তি একটি দোকানের Customer হতে পারেন। লক্ষণীয়- একজন আইনজীবী, একটি ব্যাংক ইত্যাদির client হয়।

497) Guest এর পরিবর্তে Stranger এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *They had some strangers last night.*

✓ *They had some guests last night.*

Guest হচ্ছে আমাদের পরিচিত বা বন্ধু শ্রেণীর কেউ, যিনি আমাদের বাড়িতে বেড়াতে এসেছেন। Stranger হচ্ছেন আমাদের অপরিচিত একজন ব্যক্তি।

👉 **Note:** Foreigner এমন একজন ব্যক্তি- যিনি অন্য দেশে জন্মগ্রহণ করেছেন এবং বিদেশি ভাষায় কথা বলেন।

498) Journey এর পরিবর্তে Travel এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *Our travel to Wales was lovely.*

✓ *Our journey to Wales was lovely.*

Travel হল ক্রিয়া, যা একস্থান থেকে অন্যস্থানে যাতায়াত অর্থে বোঝায়। Journey হল- বিশেষ, কিন্তু আমরা (take a trip ব্যবহার করি সংক্ষিপ্ত journey-এর ক্ষেত্রে; We took a trip to the seaside last Sunday. আমরা Travelling-কে বিশেষ্য হিসেবেও ব্যবহার করতে পারি।

👉 **Note:** Travel-কে noun হিসেবে ব্যবহার করা হয়। 1) সাধারণ ধারণায়, যেমনঃ She loves travel, 2) Plural-এ, যেমনঃ He has written a book about this travels.

499) Leg এর পরিবর্তে Foot এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I hurt my foot- if the injury is anywhere above the ankle.*

✓ *I hurt my leg.*

Leg হল- কটির নিচ হতে গোড়ালির গাঁট পর্যন্ত শরীরের অংশটুকু এবং foot হল- গাঁটের নিচের অংশটুকু (hand- কে arm হতে এইভাবে অবশ্যই স্বতন্ত্র রাখতে হবে।)

👉 **Note:** চেয়ার, টেবিল, খাট ইত্যাদির leg (পায়া) হয়; তবে পাহাড়, দেয়াল, মই, পৃষ্ঠা ইত্যাদির foot (পাদদেশ বা তলা) হয়।

500) Toe এর পরিবর্তে Finger এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I hurt a finger of my right foot.*

✓ *I hurt a toe of my right foot.*

হাতের আঙ্গুলগুলো হল- Fingers এবং পায়ের আঙ্গুলগুলো হল toes.

501) Poem এর পরিবর্তে Poetry এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ *I have a poetry to learn by heart.*

✓ I have a poem to learn by heart.

কবিতাগুচ্ছের সাহিত্যিক রূপ হল- Poetry; একটি কবিতা হল poem বুঝায়।

502) Play এর পরিবর্তে Theatre এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Sarah is going to see a theatre tonight.

✓ Sarah is going to see a play tonight.

একটি Theatre হল- এমন একটি ভবন, যেখানে নাটক মঞ্চস্থ বা অভিনীত হয়, এটি নিজেই play (নাটক) নয়।

503) Game এর পরিবর্তে Play এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ They had a nice play of football.

✓ They had a nice game of football.

ক্রীড়া অর্থে Play ব্যবহার করা পরিহার করুন। Play হাস্যকৌতুক বা নাটক অর্থ নির্দেশ করে।

যেমনঃ He is fond of play.

504) Suit এর পরিবর্তে Dress এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ My elder brother has a new dress.

✓ My elder brother has a new suit.

মেয়ে এবং মহিলারা Dress পরে, ছেলে এবং পুরুষেরা suit পরে। Clothes, dress বা suit যে কোনটিকে নির্দেশ করতে পারে। যেমনঃ John (or Mary) is wearing new clothes.

✳️ Note: কিন্তু আমরা বলতে পারি, A man in full evening dress বা morning dress ইত্যাদি।

505) Person/People এর পরিবর্তে Individual এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ There were five individuals in the shop.

✓ There were five people in the shop.

একজন ব্যক্তির ক্ষেত্রে Individual ব্যবহার হয়। The individual must act for the good of the community.

506) People এর পরিবর্তে Men এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ All the streets were full of men.

✓ All the streets were full of people.

Use people and not men when the reference is to human beings in general.

(সাধারণত মানব জাতিকে নির্দেশ করতে People ব্যবহার হয়, men নয়।)

507) Wife এর পরিবর্তে Woman এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The man took his woman with him.

✓ The man took his wife with him.

508) Price এর পরিবর্তে Cost এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ What's the cost of this watch?

✓ What's the price of this watch?

Price is the amount of money paid by the customer. Cost is the amount paid by the shopkeeper. We can ✓ How much does it cost?

👉 **Note:** Value কোন কিছুর গুরুত্ব বা উপযোগিতা বুঝায়। Milk-এর value খাদ্য হিসেবে, শিক্ষার value- education হিসেবে, যেমনঃ Face value is the amount printed on a piece of-paper-money or on a postage stamp.

509) Wind এর পরিবর্তে Air এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ The strong air blew her hat away.

✓ The strong wind blew her hat away.

Air is what we breathe and wind is what makes the leaves of the trees move.

510) Floor এর পরিবর্তে Ground এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ When I entered the room, I saw a book on the ground.

✓ When I entered the room, I saw a book on the floor.

The floor is the part of the room on which we walk. The ground is outside the house.

511) Room এর পরিবর্তে Place এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ Is there place for me on the bus?

✓ Is there room for me on the bus?

রুমের যায়গায় Place ব্যবহৃত হবে না, যেটা এখানে unoccupied space বোঝায়।

512) Instrument এর পরিবর্তে Organ এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ What other organ can you play?

✓ What other instrument can you play?

The organ is a particular musical instrument used in some churches to accompany the singing of hymns. Don't use organ to denote any other musical instrument.

513) Desire এর পরিবর্তে Appetite এর ব্যবহার জনিত ভুলঃ

✗ I've no appetite at all to study.

✓ I've no desire at all to study.

Appetite is generally used with food. For study, work or play we use such words as desire, disposition and inclination.

(See Exercise 6)

## Confusing Words ⇒ Confusion Of Number

নিম্নোক্ত Noun-গুলো plural-এ ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে নাঃ

514) Advice

✗ Nick gave me some good advices.

✓ Nick gave me some good advice.

👉 **Note:** যখন কেবল একটি উপদেশ নির্দেশিত হয়, তখন আমরা বলিঃ *a piece of advice*, যেমনঃ *Let me give you a piece of advice.*

### 515) Information

✗ Can you give me any informations?

✓ Can you give me any information?

👉 **Note:** যখন কেবল একটি তথ্য নির্দেশিত হয়, তখন আমরা বলিঃ *an item or a bit of information*, যেমনঃ *He gave me a useful item of information.*

### 516) Furniture

✗ Furnitures are often made of wood.

✓ Furniture is often made of wood.

👉 **Note:** Furniture হল- একটি *noun*, যা সর্বদা *singular verb* এবং *pronoun* গ্রহণ করে, *A piece of furniture* কেবল একটি মাত্র বস্তুকে নির্দেশ করে।

### 517) Luggage

✗ Her luggages are at the station.

✓ Her luggage is at the station.

👉 **Note:** Luggage-এর জন্য ব্যবহৃত অন্য একটি শব্দ হল *baggage*. এদের কোনটিই *plural* হতে পারে না, যেমনঃ *The baggage is ready for the tram.*

### 518) Damage

✗ The fire caused many damages.

✓ The fire caused much damage.

👉 **Note:** *Plural form, damages* ক্ষতিপূরণের জন্য অর্থ দণ্ড দেওয়া নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *The insurance company paid the man damages.*

### 519) Work

✗ Today I've many works to do.

✓ Today I've a lot of work to do.

👉 **Note:** *Plural form, works*- একটি কারখানা বা একজন লেখকের সাহিত্যকর্মকে নির্দেশ করে, যেমনঃ *The works of Shakespeare are many, I visited the steel works.*

### 520) Character

✗ The school builds good characters.

✓ The school builds good character.

👉 **Note:** *Plural form 'characters'* বর্ণমালার বর্ণগুলোকে, উপন্যাস বা নাটকের চরিত্রগুলোকে নির্দেশ করে।

### 521) Hair

✗ That man has long hairs.

✓ *That man has long hair.*

✖ **Note:** কিন্তু যখন *hair* একক চুলকে নির্দেশ করতে ব্যবহৃত হয় তখন *plural form*-টি হয় *hairs*. **যেমনঃ** *I found two long hairs in my food.*

#### 522) Bread

✖ *Breads are sold at the baker's.*

✓ *Bread is sold at the baker's.*

✖ **Note:** তবে আমরা বলতে পারি *a loaf of bread* এবং *loaves of bread*, **যেমনঃ** *I bought a loaf (two, three etc. loaves) of bread.*

#### 523) Fish

✖ *Yesterday we had fishes for dinner.*

✓ *Yesterday we had fish for dinner.*

✖ **Note:** *Fish* খাদ্য হিসেবে বা প্রচুর পরিমাণে বুঝালে সর্বদা *singular* হয়। *Plural form*-টি (*fishes*) বর্তমানে কদাচিৎ ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং মাছকে স্বতন্ত্রভাবে নির্দেশ করে। **যেমনঃ** *I caught three small fishes.*

#### 524) Fruit

✖ *We didn't have many fruits this summer.*

✓ *We didn't have much fruit this summer.*

✖ **Note:** *Plural form 'fruits'* কদাচিৎ ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং বিভিন্ন প্রকার ফল-কে বোঝায়, **যেমনঃ** *Cyprus produces oranges, apricots and other fruits.*

#### 525) Grass

✖ *The dog lay down on the grasses.*

✓ *The dog lay down on the grass.*

#### 526) Dozen

✖ *I want to buy three dozens eggs.*

✓ *I want to buy three dozen eggs.*

#### 527) Hundred

✖ *The town has fifty thousands people.*

✓ *The town has fifty thousand people.*

✖ **Note:** *Hundred, thousand* এবং *million* ইত্যাদির *plural* রূপ ধারণ করে, যদি এদের পূর্বে কোন *numeral* বা *a* না থাকে। **যেমনঃ** *Thousands of people were present.*

#### 528) Sheep

✖ *Ten sheeps are grazing the field.*

✓ *Ten sheep are grazing in the field.*

🐾 **Note:** *Sheep, deer, salmon* এবং স্বল্প সংখ্যক অন্যান্য *noun*-গুলোর *singular* এবং *plural*- এর জন্য একই *form* রয়েছে। সুতরাং আমরা বলি, *one sheep* বা *ten sheep*.

### 529) Knowledge

✗ *Karen has good knowledges of history.*

✓ *Karen has a good knowledge of history.*

### 530) Progress

✗ *Tom has made great progresses.*

✓ *Tom has made great progress.*

### 531) Thunder এবং Lightning

✗ *There were thunders and lightnings.*

✓ *There was thunder and lightning.*

🐾 **Note:** যখন কেবল একটিমাত্র বস্তুকে বুঝানো হয়, আমরা বলি- *a clap of thunder* এবং *a flash or bolt of lightning*.

### 532) Machinery

✗ *They're now using new machinerics.*

✓ *They're now using new machinery.*

🐾 **Note:** *Machinery* হল- একটি *singular noun* এবং সর্বদা *singular verb* এবং *pronoun* গ্রহণ করে। তবে আমরা বলতে পারি, *a piece of machinery* বা *pieces of machinery*.

### 533) Mathematics +singular verb

✗ *Mathematics are not easy to learn.*

✓ *Mathematics is not easy to learn.*

🐾 **Note:** শব্দের শেষে *-ics* যুক্ত বিষয়সমূহ (*mathematics, physics, politics, gymnastics*- এর মত) সাধারণত একটি *singular verb* গ্রহণ করে।

### 534) Money+singular verb

✗ *All her money are kept in the bank.*

✓ *All her money is kept in the bank.*

🐾 **Note:** *Money* হল একটি *singular noun* এবং সর্বদা একটি *singular verb* ও *pronoun* গ্রহণ করে।

### 535) News+singular verb

✗ *I'm glad that the news are good.*

✓ *I'm glad that the news is good.*

🐾 **Note:** *News* যদিও *plural form*, তথাপি সর্বদা *singular verb* গ্রহণ করে। যদি কেবল একটি মাত্র সংবাদকে বুঝায়, তবে আমরা বলিঃ *a piece or an item of news*, যেমনঃ *This is a good piece of news.*

নিম্নোক্ত Noun-গুলো *singular* রূপে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে নাঃ

536) *Scissors + plural verb*

✗ *The scissor is lying on the table.*

✓ *The scissors are lying on the table.*

👉 **Note:** দুটি অক্ষ বিশিষ্ট বস্তুগুলো (*scissors, trousers, spectacles, shears, pliers* এদের মত) *plural verb* গ্রহণ করে। তবে আমরা বলতে পারি, *a pair of (scissors etc.) is...*

537) *People + plural verb*

✗ *There is lots of people in the cinema.*

✓ *There are lots of people in the cinema.*

👉 **Note:** *People* অর্থ জাতি, এটি হল *singular*; *plural* রূপটি হল *peoples*, যেমনঃ *The Greeks are a brave people. The peoples of Europe are often engaged in war.*

538) *Clothes+plural verb*

✗ *Your cloth is very fashionable.*

✓ *Your clothes are very fashionable.*

👉 **Note:** *Cloth* অর্থ কাপড় (উপাদান), যা হতে পোশাক তৈরি হয়, এটির *singular* এবং *plural* রূপ হল, *cloths* (s-এর পূর্বে e ব্যতীত), যেমনঃ *She cleaned the table with a cloth; Merchants sell different kinds of cloths.*

539) *Riches + plural verb*

✗ *All her riches was stolen.*

✓ *All her riches were stolen.*

👉 **Note:** *Riches* হল একটি *plural noun* এবং সর্বদা *plural verb* গ্রহণ করে।

540) *Wages + plural verb*

✗ *Keith complains that his wage is low.*

✓ *Keith complains that his wages are low.*

👉 **Note:** *Wages* হল একটি *plural noun* এবং সর্বদা *plural verb* গ্রহণ করে, তবে আমরা বলি, *a living wage.*

541) *Billiards*

✗ *Billiard is a very difficult game.*

✓ *Billiards is a very difficult game.*

👉 **Note:** *Billiards, draughts, darts*-এরা সর্বদা *plural*, কিন্তু এদের পরে *singular verb* বসে।

542) *Plural* এর সাথে *adjective* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *The rich have a duty to help the poors.*

✓ *The rich have a duty to help the poor.*

📌 **Note:** বিশেষণ বহুবচক হতে পারে না, যদিও তারা বহুবচকে বিশেষ্য স=হিসেব ব্যবহার হয়। (Adjectives can't take the plural form, even when they're used as nouns in the plural.)

543) *Plural verb* এর সাথে *as well as* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Tom as well as Mark are coming.*

✓ *Tom as well as Mark is coming.*

*Singular nouns, as well as* দ্বারা যুক্ত হলে এদের পরে *verb*-টি *singular* হয়।

544) *Plural verb* এর সাথে *all (=everything)* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Nothing's left; all are lost.*

✓ *Nothing's left; all is lost.*

*All* অর্থ সবকিছু (*everything*), এটি একটি *singular verb* গ্রহণ করে, আবার *all* অর্থ-প্রত্যেক ব্যক্তি (*everybody*), এটি একটি *plural verb* গ্রহণ করে। যেমনঃ *All of us are present.*

545) *Plural* এর অপকারিতা *kind of sort* এর পূর্বেঃ

✗ *I don't like these kind of games.*

✓ *I don't like this kind of game.*

Or: *I don't like games of this kind.*

📌 **Note:** নির্দেশমূলক (*demonstrative*) শব্দ অবশ্যই বিশেষ্যের সাথে একমত হবে।

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546) ভাষা (*Language*)-এর নামের সাথে *Plural (verb)* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *English are easier than German.*

✓ *English is easier than German.*

ভাষার নামগুলো হল *Singular* এবং সর্বদা গ্রহণ করে একটি *singular verb*.

547) *Singular* এর সাথে *one* এবং *one* এর রূপগুলোর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I read it in one and a half hour.*

✓ *I read it in one and a half hours.*

ইংরেজিতে, *One* এর চেয়ে বৃহৎ কোন কিছুর সাথে অবশ্যই *plural* ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেটা *two* এর চেয়ে ছোট হলেও।

548) *Plural collective* এর সাথে *singular (verb)* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *The class was divided in its opinion.*

✓ *The class were divided in their opinions.*

একটি *Collective noun* সাধারণত একটি *singular verb* গ্রহণ করে। তবে যখন এটি একটি *group*-এর স্বতন্ত্র (স্বাধীন) সদস্যবর্গকে নির্দেশ করে এবং অবিভক্ত *group* হিসেবে বিবেচ্য হয় না, তখন অবশ্যই ব্যবহৃত হবে একটি *plural verb*।

549) *The number* এবং *A number*

a) *The number*

✗ *The number of pupils are increasing.*

✓ *The number of pupils is increasing.*

b) *A number*

✗ *A number of pupils is absent today.*

✓ *A number of pupils are absent today.*

যখন *Number* এর পূর্বে *the* বসে, তখন এটি একটি একককে নির্দেশ করে এবং *singular* হয়। যখন *number*-এর পূর্বে *a* বসে, তখন এটি কতিপয় বা অনেক অর্থ নির্দেশ করে এবং *plural* হয়।

550) *These* এর জন্য *This* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *This errors are sometimes made by foreigners.*

✓ *These errors are sometimes made by foreigners.*

👉 *Note:* ব্যক্তিব্যবহারে সর্বনাম (*pronoun*)-এর ক্ষেত্রে *this* এর ব্যবহার এড়িয়ে চলতে হবে।

551) *There are* এর জন্য *There is* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *There is some girls waiting outside.*

✓ *There are some girls waiting outside.*

*There is* এর পরের *noun* টি *plural number*-এ হলে এটি *there are* এ পরিবর্তিত হয়।

552) *You were* এর জন্য *You was* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *You was very foolish to do that.*

✓ *You were very foolish to do that.*

*Was* হল- *singular* এবং *were* হল- *plural*, তবে 'you' *Pronoun*-টির সাথে আমরা সর্বদা *were* ব্যবহার করি, এমনকি এর অর্থ *singular* হলেও।

👉 *Note:* তবে শর্তগুলোতে এবং ইচ্ছা প্রকাশের ক্ষেত্রে *were*; *singular* এর সাথেও ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে। **যেমনঃ** *If I were you, I'd go, I wish I were rich.*

553) *Lives* এর জন্য *life* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Many people lost their life at sea.*

✓ *Many people lost their lives at sea.*

ইংরেজিতে *Life, heart, soul, body, mind* এদের মত *word*-গুলো যখন একাধিক ব্যক্তিকে নির্দেশ করে তখন এরা *plural* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

554) *Agreement of number*-এ *noun* এবং *verb*-এর মতানৈক্যঃ

✗ *A large supply of toys are expected.*

✓ *A large supply of toys is expected.*

যখন *Subject*-টি *singular* হয় তখন *verb*-টি অবশ্যই *singular* হবে এবং কোন *subject*, *plural* হলে *verb*-টি অবশ্যই *plural* হবে। উপরের উদাহরণটির মতো, যখন কোন *plural noun*, একটি *singular subject* এবং *verb*-এর মাঝে বসে, তখন অবশ্যই সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করতে হবে।

(See Exercises 1 and 2)



# ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুক বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!

প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!



## কেন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারে সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👤 ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

👤 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে। অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

👤 যতবার ইবুক পড়বে ততবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

👤 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👤 বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

### আমাদের ই-বুকের মার্কেটিং স্ট্রা

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নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছের মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

অথবা ই-মেইল করুনঃ [tanbir.cox@gmail.com](mailto:tanbir.cox@gmail.com)

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## Confusing Words ⇒ Confusion Of Parts Of Speech

As এবং Like

555) As এবং Like

a) As

✗ You do not play the game like I do.

✓ You do not play the game as I do.

b) Like

✗ You don't look as your mother.

✓ You don't look like your mother.

As হল- একটি conjunction এবং nominative case-এ, এর পরে সাধারণত noun বা pronoun বসে। Like একটি conjunction নয়, তবে একটি adjective, যা objective case-এ একটি noun বা pronoun দ্বারা অনুসৃত হয়ে একটি preposition এর মতো আচরণ করে।(See Exercise 89)

556) So এবং Such

a) So

✗ It's such small that you can't see it.

✓ It's so small that you can't see it.

b) Such

✗ I've never seen a so large animal before.

✓ I've never seen such a large animal before.

So হল একটি adverb এবং অবশ্যই একটি adjective বা অন্য একটি adverb-কে বিশেষিত করবে। Such হল একটি adjective এবং অবশ্যই একটি noun-কে বিশেষিত করবে।

557) No এবং Not

a) No

✗ I've not made any mistakes in dictation.

✓ I've made no mistakes in dictation.

b) Not

✗ I have made no any mistakes in dictation.

✓ I have not made any mistakes in dictation.

No অর্থ- কোনটি নয়, যা noun-কে বিশেষিত করে adjective হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয়। কিন্তু যদি noun-টি any, much, enough এদের মত adjective দ্বারা ইতোমধ্যে বিশেষায়িত হয়ে থাকে, তবে অবশ্যই not ব্যবহৃত হবে।

📌 **Note:** 'No' adverb হিসেবে কেবল একটি তুলনার পূর্বে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ I have no more to say.(See Exercise 90)

Have another look at...

Singular and plural

1) *Noun* এর *singular form* এর শেষে *s* বা *es* যোগ করে *plural form* গঠন করা

হয়ঃ *Book-books* *Church-churches* *Knife-knives* *City-cities* *Journey-journeys*

2) নিম্নোক্ত *Noun* গুলোর রয়েছে *irregular plural*: *Man-men* *Child-children* *Tooth-teeth* *Goose-geese* *Woman-women* *Ox-oxen* *Foot-feet* *Mouse-mice*

3) কিছু *Noun*, *plural* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয় না, যেমনঃ *advice*, *information*, *knowledge*, *news*, *progress*, *work*, *money*, *luggage*, *furniture*, *scenery*, *machinery* ইত্যাদি।

👉 *Note*: যখন কেবল একটি মাত্র বস্তু বুঝায়, তখন আমরা বলি, *a piece of advice* (*information*, *news*, *work*, *money*, *furniture*, *luggage*, *machinery*).

4) কিছু *Noun*, *singular* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয় না, যেমনঃ *people*, *riches*, *clothes*, *wages*, *trousers*, *scissors*.

👉 *Note*: দুটি অংশ বিশিষ্ট বস্তুগুলোর নামগুলো প্রায়ই ‘*pair*’ *word*-টির সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যেমনঃ *a pair of trousers* (*scissors*, *spectacles* etc.)

5) কিছু *Noun* এর *singular* এবং *plural* উভয়ের জন্য একই *form* রয়েছে, যেমনঃ *sheep*, *deer*, *salmon* ইত্যাদি।

558) *Fool* এবং *Foolish*

a) *Fool*

✗ *Anne said to me, ‘You’re fool.’*

✓ *Anne said to me, ‘You’re a fool.’*

b) *Foolish*

✗ *Anne said to me, ‘You’re a foolish.’*

✓ *Anne said to me, ‘You’re foolish.’*

*Fool* হল একটি *noun* এবং এর পূর্বে একটি *article* প্রয়োজন হয়, তখন এটি *to be verb* এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়। *Foolish* হল একটি *adjective* এবং *to be verb* এর পরে *article* এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

👉 *Note*: *A fool* বা *a foolish person* ‘একজন উন্মাদ ব্যক্তি’ অর্থ নির্দেশ করে না, তবে একজন ব্যক্তি, যে অবিবেচকের মত কাজ করে, তাকে নির্দেশ করে।

559) *Preposition* হিসেবে *due to* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *William came late due to an accident.*

✓ *William came late because of an accident.*

*Due to* একটি *preposition* হিসেবে- ‘জন্য বা দরুণ’ অর্থে কখনও ব্যবহৃত হওয়া উচিত নয়।

*Due* একটি *adjective* হিসেবে, সঠিকভাবে ব্যবহৃত হয়, কেবল যখন এটি কোন *noun*- কে বিশেষিত করে। যেমনঃ *His delay was due to an accident.*

560) *Adjective* হিসেবে *rest* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I spent the rest day at home.*

✓ *I spent the rest of the day at home.*

এখানে *Rest* হল একটি *noun* এবং যা অবশিষ্ট এই অর্থে একটি *adjective* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

561) *Adjective* হিসেবে *miser* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Jill loved money; she was miser.*

✓ *Jill loved money; she was a miser.*

*Miser* হল একটি *noun* এবং *adjective* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না। এর *adjective* হল *miserly*, যেমনঃ *He was miserly.*

562) *Adjective* হিসেবে *opened* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I found all the window opened.*

✓ *I found all the windows open.*

*Open* হল *adjective*, যার *past participle* হল *opened*, যেমনঃ *somebody has opened all the windows.*

563) *Adverb* হিসেবে *friendly* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Andrew behaves friendly.*

✓ *Andrew behaves in a friendly way.*

*Adverbial phrase*-টি হল- *in a friendly way*. *Friendly* হল- একটি *adjective*, যেমনঃ *friendly game, to have friendly relations with one's neighbours* ইত্যাদি।

564) *Adjective* হিসেবে *truth* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Is it truth that Diana's very ill?*

✓ *Is it true that Diana's very ill?*

*Truth* একটি *adjective* নয়, একটি *noun*. *Adjective*-টি হল *true*.

565) *Adjective* হিসেবে *plenty* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *Mike had plenty work to do.*

✓ *Mike had plenty of work to do.*

*Plenty* একটি *adjective* নয়, একটি *noun*- যার অর্থ হল 'একটি বৃহৎ সংখ্যা বা পরিমাণ। *Adjective*-টি হল *plentiful*, যেমনঃ *Oranges are cheap now because they are plentiful.*

566) *Adjective* হিসেবে *coward* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *She said, 'You are a coward boy.'*

✓ *She said, 'You are a coward.'*

*Coward* (ভীরু) হল *noun*; *adjective*-টি হল *cowardly*.

567) *Adjective* হিসেবে *others* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *The others boys aren't here.*

✓ *The other boys aren't here.*

*Others* একটি *adjective* নয়, একটি *pronoun*; *Adjective*-টি হল *other* (s ব্যতীত), তবে আমরা বলতে পারিঃ *The others aren't here.* এখানে *Boys noun*-টিকে উহ্য রাখা হল।

568) *Dead* এর জন্য *died* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I think his grandfather is died.*

✓ *I think his grandfather is dead.*

*Died* হল *die* এর *past tense*, *adjective*-টি হল *dead*.(See Exercise 91)

569) *Shot* এর জন্য *shoot* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I had a good shoot at the goal.*

✓ *I had a good shot at the goal.*

*Shoot* (football-এ) হল একটি *verb* এবং *noun*-টি হল *shot*.

570) *Its* এর জন্য *it's* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *The bird was feeding it's young.*

✓ *The bird was feeding its young.*

*Possessive adjective*, *its* সঠিকভাবে *apostrophe*-টি ব্যতীত লেখা হয়। *Hers*, *ours*, *yours*, *theirs* এরাও কোন *apostrophe* গ্রহণ করে না।(See Exercise 92)

571) *Noun* হিসেবে *hot* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *There's much hot this summer.*

✓ *it's very hot this summer.*

*Hot* হল একটি *adjective* এবং *noun* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয় না। *noun*-টি হল *heat*.

572) *Verb* হিসেবে *pain* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I pain my leg or My leg is paining.*

✓ *There's (or I've got) a pain in my leg.*

*Pain* সাধারণত *noun* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয় এবং *have* বা *feel* এর অনুগামী হয়।

573) *Verb* হিসেবে *worth* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *My bicycle worths 8000 tk.*

✓ *My bicycle is worth 8000 tk.*

*Worth* *verb* নয়, কিন্তু একটি *adjective*.

574) *Verb* হিসেবে *able* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *The poor man doesn't able to pay.*

✓ *The poor man isn't able to pay.*

*Able* একটি *adjective* এবং *verb* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

574) *Verb* হিসেবে *able* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *The poor man doesn't able to pay.*

✓ *The poor man isn't able to pay.*

*Able* একটি *adjective* এবং *verb* হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

575) *Verb* হিসেবে *afraid* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *John doesn't afraid of anyboddy.*

✓ *John's not afraid of anybody.*

Afraid একটি verb নয়, কিন্তু এটি adjective এবং সাধারণত verb to be এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হয়।

576) Verb হিসেবে weight এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ Have you weighted the letter?

✓ Have you weighed the letter?

Weight একটি noun এবং এটি verb হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হয় না। verb-টি হল weigh (t ব্যতীত)।

577) Well এর জন্য good এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ The goalkeeper plays very good.

✓ The goalkeeper plays very well.

Good একটি adjective মাত্র এবং adverb হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।(See Exercise 93)

578) Adverb এর জন্য adjective এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ The little girl sang beautiful.

✓ The little girl sang beautifully.

We use an adverb and not an adjective, to qualify a verb.

579) Afterwards এর জন্য after এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ After we went home for dinner.

✓ Afterwards we went home for dinner.

After একটি preposition এবং একটি object এর সাথে ব্যবহৃত হবে। Afterwards, then, after than এরা হল- সময় প্রকাশক adverb এবং একাকী ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে।

580) Both এর জন্য and the two এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ I've seen and the two of them.

✓ I've seen both of them.

কখনও Both-এর পরিবর্তে and the two বলবেন না। And the three, four ইত্যাদি বলাও পরিহার করুন। বলুন, all three, four ইত্যাদি।

581) Also বা too এর জন্য and এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ Let me do and the next exercise.

✓ Let's also do the next exercise.

Or: Let me do the next exercise too.

And হল একটি conjunction এবং বাক্যের সদৃশ form গুলো কেবল যুক্ত করতে পারে, যেমনঃ He came and sat down. এটি Also এবং too, adverb দুটির পরিবর্তে ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে না।

582) Even এর জন্য and এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ She doesn't trust and her friends.

✓ She doesn't trust even her friends.

And একটি conjunction মাত্র এবং 'even' adverb-টির পরিবর্তে ব্যবহৃত হয় না।

584) *Passed* এর জন্য *past* এর অপব্যবহারঃ

✗ *I past by your house yesterday.*

✓ *I passed by your house yesterday.*

*Past* কোন *verb* নয়। *To pass*-এর *past tense* এবং *past participle*-টি হল *passed*.

👉 **Note:** লক্ষণীয়, *past* ব্যবহৃত হতে পারে একটি *noun* হিসেবেঃ *Don't think of the past.* একটি *Adjective* হিসেবেঃ *The past week was warm.* *Preposotion* হিসেবেঃ *We walked past the church,* অথবা একটি *adverb* হিসেবেঃ *The train went past.*

## Some Common Mistakes In English

\* *Anxious = Troubled*

*Inc : She is anxious for her health*

*Cor : She is anxious about her health.*

*Inc: Parents are anxious about their children's success.*

*Cor: Parents are anxious for their children's success.*

\* *Believe = To have faith*

*Inc : Muslims believe to /at Allah.*

*Cor : Muslims believe in Allah.*

*Inc : I don't believe at astrology.*

*Cor : I don't believe in astrology.*

\* *Benefit*

*The word can be used both as a noun and a verb.*

*Inc : She got a lot of benefit with this change.*

*Cor : She got a lot of benefit from this change.*

*Inc :Who is lkely to benefit for his death?*

*Cor : Who is lkely to benefit from/by his death?*

\* *Cover with*

*Inc:We covered the body by a sheet.*

*Cor : We covered the body with a sheet.*

*Inc:The mountains were covered by snow.*

*Cor : The mountains were covered with snow.*

\**Deprive=take away*

*Inc:He was deprived from his paternal property.*

*Cor: He was deprived for his paternal property.*

*Inc:This law will deprive us from our basic rights.*

*Cor: This law will deprive us of our basic rights.*

\* *Exception:*

*Inc:This is an exception of the rule.*

Cor: This is an exception to the rule.

 **Note:** there is an phrase namely 'with the exception of' to mean 'except'

Inc: I enjoy every subject with the exception to Chemistry.

Cor: I enjoy every subject with the exception of or except Chemistry.

\*Get rid = free oneself

Inc: I m trying to get rid from her.

Cor: I m trying to get rid of her.

 **Note:** The word Rid can also be used as a verb and then also it takes the same Preposition after it. For example:

One day we shall be able to rid the world of this terrible disease

\*Jealous = envious

Inc: He is very jealous with me.

Cor: He is very jealous of me.

Inc: They are jealous for my success.

Cor: They are jealous of my success.

\*Prefer

Inc: I prefer coffee from/ than tea.

Cor: I prefer coffee to tea

 **Note:** Preferable also takes 'to' after it.

Inc: Death is preferable than dishonour.

Cor: Death is preferable to dishonour.

\*Proud

Inc: He is very proud for his new car.

Cor: He is very proud of his new car.

 **Note:** The noun from 'pride' is followed by 'in'.

For example:

He takes great pride in his son.

\*popular:

Inc: He is very popular among this people.

Cor: He is very popular with this people.

\*Does + bare infinitive

Inc: Does he takes a bath everyday?

Cor: Does he take a bath everyday?

Inc: It does not rains here regularly.

Cor: It does not rain here regularly.

\*Did + bare infinitive

Inc: Did u finished the work yesterday?

Cor: Did u finish the work yesterday?

Inc:He did not went there.

Cor:He did not go there.

\*Can,willetec has no s/es form

Inc:He cans walk now.

Cor:He can work now.

\*Modal+infinitive

Inc:It may to rain tonight.

Cor: It may rain tonight.

Inc:You should to obey your parents.

Cor: You should obey your parents.

Inc:He used visit me regularly.

Cor:He used to visit me regularly.

\* Modal+infinitive

Inc:He can speaks English fluently.

Cor: He can speak English fluently.

Inc:They could not finished the work yesterday.

Cor: They could not finish the work yesterday.

\*Modal+perfect infinitive

Inc:You should do it yesterday.

Cor: You should have done it yesterday.

Inc:It might rain last night.

Cor: It might have rained last night.

\*'Had to' for past obligation

Inc:I must go there yesterday.

Cor: I must to go there yesterday.

\*Past tense for past action

Inc:I have visited him yesterday.

Cor: I visited him yesterday.

\*Present simple

Inc:I am taking a walk every morning.

Cor: I take a walk every morning.

\*Wish+Past simple

Inc:I would wish to be a bird.

Cor: I wish I were/was a bird a bird.

\*As if+Past simple

Inc:She spends if she is very rich.

Cor: She spends if she were very rich.

\*Taller/Harder

Inc: Zinia is taller from her mother.

Cor: Zinia is taller than her mother.

Inc: He works harder from me.

Cor: He works harder than me.

\*Superior + To

Inc: This book is superior than that.

Cor: This book is superior to that.

\*Double negatives

Inc: He is not afraid of nobody.

Cor: He is not afraid of anybody.

Or

He is afraid of nobody.

\*Glasses

Inc: He wears glass for reading.

Cor: He wears glasses for reading.

Inc: Where is my glass?

Cor: Where is my glasses?

\*Listened to something

Inc: I was listening his song.

Cor: I was listening to his song.

Inc: She never listens my advice.

Cor: She never listens to my advice.

\*Verb + s/es

Inc: He speak English very fluently.

Cor: He speaks English very fluently.

Inc: Nilu go to school regularly.

Cor: Nilu goes to school regularly.

\*Do + s/es

Inc: Do Tipu plays cricket?

Cor: Does Tipu play cricket?

\*Possessives for comparisoion

Inc: A man's dress is different from a women.

Cor: A man's dress is different from a women's.

Inc: My pen is better than your.

Cor: My pen is better than yours.

*\*The English*

*Inc:English are fond of sports.*

*Cor:The English are fond of sports.*

*Inc:Japanese are very diligent.*

*Cor:The Japanese are very diligent.*

*\*Be+Present participle*

*Inc:Belal watching television now.*

*Cor:Belal is watching television now.*

*Inc:He sleeping then.*

*Cor:He was sleeping then.*

*\*Do(Auxiliary)+do(main verb)*

*Inc:Do they their work regularly?*

*Cor: Do they do their work regularly?*

*\*Had better*

*Inc:You better go home now.*

*Cor: You had better go home now.*

*\*Enter+object*

*Inc:We entered into the building.*

*Cor: We entered the building.*

 **Note:**But when “enter” means ‘take part in’,you need a preposition after it.For example:

*He entered into a debate with us.*

*\*Despite+noun*

*Inc:He came to the meeting despite of his illness.*

*Cor: He came to the meeting despite his illness.*

*\*Abstract noun*

*Inc:The honesty is the best policy.*

*Cor: The honesty is the best policy.*

*\*Material noun*

*Inc:The gold is a precious metal.*

*Cor:Gold is a precious metal.*

*\*Name of the language*

*Inc:He speaks the English very fluently.*

*Cor: He speaks English very fluently.*

*\*To school,to the school*

*Inc:My son goes to the school.*

*Cor:My son goes to school.*

*Inc:He goes to the mosque on Friday.*

*Cor:He goes to mosque on Friday.*

*\*Can+bareinfinitive*

*Inc:He can to swim well.*

*Cor: He can swim well.*

*Inc:She can not to dance well.*

*Cor:She cannot dance well.*

*\*Let+bare infinitive*

*Inc:Please let me to go out.*

*Cor: Please let me go out.*

*\*Subject need not be repeated*

*Inc:I went to market and I bought fruit.*

*Cor: I went to market and bought fruit.*

*\*"Return"="come back"*

*Inc:She has returned back home.*

*Cor: She has returned home.*

*\*Adverbial of time come*

*Inc:We last night went to the cinema.*

*Cor: We went to the cinema last night.*

*Inc:I two months ago went home.*

*Cor:We went home two months ago.*

*\*Always,neveretcbefore principle verb*

*Inc:He speaks the truth always.*

*Cor:He always speaks the truth.*

*Inc:She tells a lie never.*

*Cor:She never tells a lie.*

*\*In and into(place)*

*Inc:We were sitting into his bedroom.*

*Cor:We were sitting in his bedroom.*

*Inc:We went in his bedroom.*

*Cor: We went into his bedroom.*

*\*Beside and Besides*

*Inc:The lady sat besides me.*

*Cor:The lady sat beside me.*

*Inc:We studied French beside English.*

*Cor: We studied French besides English.*

*\*Between and Among*

*Inc: There was a quarrel among the two girls.*

*Cor: There was a quarrel between the two girls.*

*Inc: She was lost between the crowd.*

*Cor: She was lost among the crowd.*

*\*For and Since*

*Inc: He has been ill since four days.*

*Cor: He has been ill for four days.*

*Inc: He has been ill for Sunday last.*

*Cor: He has been ill since Sunday last.*

*\*From And Since*

*Inc: It has been raining from morning.*

*Cor: It has been raining since morning.*

*Inc: They will work since Monday.*

*Cor: They will work from Monday.*

*\*Say and tell*

*Inc: He said me a story.*

*Cor: He told me a story.*

*Inc: She told that she would go home.*

*Cor: She said that she would go home.*

*\*Speak and Tell*

*Inc: He spoke a lie.*

*Cor: He told a lie.*

*Inc: Do u tell English?*

*Cor: Do u speak English?*

*\*Smoke and Drink*

*Inc: He drinks 20 cigarettes a day.*

*Cor: He smokes 20 cigarettes a day.*

*Inc: She smokes a lot of tea.*

*Cor: She drinks a lot of tea.*

*\*Lie and Lay*

*Inc: I am going to lay down for an hour.*

*Cor: I am going to lie down for an hour.*

*Inc: Please lie the book on the table.*

*Cor: Please lay the book on the table.*

*\*Sit and Seat*

*Inc: Please take your sit.*

*Cor: Please take your seat.*

*Inc: We sat at a desk to write a letter.*

*Cor: We sit at a desk to write a letter.*

*\*Hanged and Hung*

*Inc: The criminal was hung last night.*

*Cor: The criminal was hanged last night.*

*Inc: We have hanged a picture on the wall.*

*Cor: We have hung a picture on the wall.*

*\*See and look at*

*Inc: I looked at him crossing the road.*

*Cor: I saw him crossing the road.*

*Inc: He was seeing me again and again.*

*Cor: He was looking at me again and again.*

*\*Remember and remind*

*Inc: I shall always remind that day.*

*Cor: I shall always remember that day.*

*Inc: I have forgotten his name. Will you remember me?*

*Cor: I have forgotten his name. Will you remind me of it?*

*\*Study and read*

*Inc: Read French before you go to French.*

*Cor: Study French before you go to French.*

*Inc: He is studying a newspaper.*

*Cor: He is reading a newspaper.*

*\*Hard and hardly*

*Inc: It is raining hardly.*

*Cor: It is raining hard.*

*\*Many and much*

*Inc: He does not have much work.*

*Cor: He does not have many work.*

*Inc: I don't have many money.*

*Cor: I don't have much money.*

*\*Few and a few*

*Inc: Though the test was easy, a few boys passed it.*

*Cor: Though the test was easy, few boys passed it.*

*Inc: Though the test was tough, few boys passed it.*

*Cor: Though the test was tough, a few boys passed it.*

*\*A little and Little*

*Inc: I ate a little food and felt very bad.*

*Cor: I ate little food and felt very bad.*

*Inc:I ate little food and felt better.*

*Cor: I ate a little food and felt better.*

*\*Older and Elder*

*Inc:The building is elder that that one.*

*Cor: The building is older that that one.*

*Inc:My older broher is a doctor.*

*Cor: My elder broher is a doctor.*

*\*Interesting and interested*

*Inc:This is a very interested book.*

*Cor:This is a very interesting book.*

*Inc:I am interesting in music.*

*Cor: I am interested in music.*

*\*Ill and Sick*

*Inc:He has been sick for about a month.*

*Cor: He has been ill for about a month.*

*Inc:The bad smell is made me ill.*

*Cor: The bad smell is made me sick.*

*\*Hot and Warm*

*Inc:The handle is too warm to touch.*

*Cor: The handle is too hot to touch.*

*Inc:It's a lovely hot room.*

*Cor: It's a lovely warm room.*

*\*Play and Game*

*Inc:Let's have a play of cards.*

*Cor: Let's have a game of cards.*

*Inc:Football is a popular play.*

*Cor: Football is a popular game.*

*\*Men and People*

*Inc:The streets were full of men.*

*Cor: The streets were full of people.*

*Inc:People are physically stronger than women.*

*Cor: Men are physically stronger than women.*

*\*Advice*

*Inc:He gave me some good advices.*

*Cor: He gave me some good advice*

*\*News*

*Inc:I have some newses for you.*

*Cor:I have some news for you.*

*Inc:All the newses are false.*

*Cor: All the news are false.*

*\*Information*

*Inc:Could you give me some informations about flights to Delhi?*

*Cor: Could you give me some information about flights to Delhi?*

*\*Furniture*

*Inc:There are many furnitures in his room.*

*Cor: There are many furniture in his room.*

*\*Cattle*

*Inc:Thecattles are in the shed.*

*Cor: The cattle are in the shed.*

*Inc:He has twenty heads of cattle on his farm.*

*Cor: He has twenty head of cattle on his farm.*

*\*Deer*

*Inc:I saw ten deers in the zoo.*

*Cor: I saw ten deer in the zoo.*

*\*Glasses/spectacles*

*Inc:Where is my glass/spectacle?*

*Cor: Where is my glasses/spectacles?*

*\*Riches*

*Inc:Rich has wings.*

*Cor: Riches have wings.*

*Inc:Hard work brought him vast rich.*

*Cor: Hard work brought him vast riches.*

*\*News*

*Inc:The news are very sad.*

*Cor: The news is very sad.*

*\*The rich*

*Inc:The rich is helping the flood affected people.*

*Cor: The rich are helping the flood affected people.*

*\*Miles*

*Inc:Fifty miles are a long distance.*

*Cor: Fifty miles is a long distance.*

*\*The English*

*Inc:The English is famous for his liking tea.*

*Cor: The English are famous for his likig tea.*

*\*Measles*

*Inc:Measles are infectious.*

*Cor: Measles is an infectious disease.*

*\*One of*

*Inc:One of the girls were absent from the class.*

*Cor: One of the girls was absent from the class.*

*\*Everybody*

*Inc:Everybody were present there.*

*Cor:Everybody was present there.*

*\*Fool and Foolosh*

*Inc:I said that he was a foolish.*

*Cor:I said that he was a fool.*

*Inc;He was absolutely fool.*

*Cor: He was absolutely foolish.*



# Exercise For Common Mistakes

## Confusion of number

### Exercise 1:

Give the correct number, is or are, in the following:

1. The news I've received \_\_\_ good.
2. Where \_\_\_ the money?
3. His trainers \_\_\_ worn out.
4. Maths \_\_\_ my poorest subject.
5. Riches \_\_\_ sought after by all.
6. Our furniture \_\_\_ getting old.
7. This pair of scissors \_\_\_ not sharp.
8. Eating fish \_\_\_ very healthy.
9. The number of mobile phones \_\_\_ increasing.
10. The sheep \_\_\_ grazing in the field.

### Exercise 2:

Correct the following sentences, giving reasons for your corrections:

1. Her advices were very wise.
2. You was the first to do it.
3. The class wasn't able to agree.
4. I've many works to do this morning.
5. The thunders and lightnings frightened the little girl.
6. I've more than two dozens of books at home.
7. The poors say that riches does not make a man happy.
8. She waited at the terminal for her luggages.
9. You should go and have your hairs cut, they're too long.
10. I'm waiting for more informations about this matter.

### Exercise 3:

Write sentences showing whether the following nouns can be used in the singular or in the plural:

1. News
2. Money
3. Advice
4. Riches
5. Dozen
6. Knowledge
7. Spectacles

8. Gymnastics

9. Furniture

10. Damage

### **Nouns often confused**

#### **Exercise 4:**

Use house or home in these sentences:

1. I live in a \_\_\_\_.
2. My \_\_\_\_ is in Cyprus.
3. Many \_\_\_\_ are being built this year.
4. East or West, \_\_\_\_ is best.
5. The \_\_\_\_ was sold for 150,000 tk.
6. Let us go inside the \_\_\_\_.

#### **Exercise 5:**

Use habit or custom in these sentences:

1. You should get into the \_\_\_\_ of brushing your teeth after meals.
2. It's the \_\_\_\_ of many people to pray for rain.
3. He has a \_\_\_\_ of biting his nails.
4. Smoking isn't a good \_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_ of showing hospitality to strangers is ancient.

#### **Exercise 6:**

Fill in the blanks with one of the nouns in brackets:

1. The ancient \_\_\_\_ of Greece is an interesting subject (story, history).
2. His \_\_\_\_ was swollen and he couldn't get his shoe on (foot, leg).
3. The strong \_\_\_\_ spoilt the game (wind, air).
4. Mr Brown is my lawyer and I've been his \_\_\_\_ for many years (customer, client).
5. We've been given a long \_\_\_\_ to learn by heart (poem, poetry).
6. She can play the violin and other \_\_\_\_ (organs, instruments).
7. The \_\_\_\_ of Switzerland is very beautiful (scene, scenery).
8. There wasn't much \_\_\_\_ anywhere (shade, shadow).
9. The ship was sunk in the \_\_\_\_ of the Atlantic (middle, centre).
10. The students will do a \_\_\_\_ at the end of the year (theatre, play).

### **Comparative or superlative**

#### **Exercise 7:**

Rewrite the following with the correct adjectives in brackets:

1. He's the (strong) boy in the whole school.
2. Of the two sisters, Mary is the (beautiful).

3. Ann is the (young) of four sisters.
4. John is the (old) of all my friends.
5. This is the (good) novel I've ever read.
6. Which do you think is (good), tea or coffee?
7. Iron is the (useful) of all metals.
8. The Nile is the (long) river in Africa.
9. Which of the two girls is (tall)?
10. David is (bad) than his brother.

### **Exercise 8:**

Correct the following, giving reasons for your corrections:

1. Alexandria is smaller from Cairo.
2. New York is the largest city in the United States.
3. He's the better student from all.
4. John is more stronger than his brother.
5. My handwriting is more bad than my sister's.
6. Which is the heaviest you or I?
7. Which of these three girls is the elder?
8. This boy's manners are more good than his brother's.
9. Which of the girls is the taller in the class?
10. Mount Everest is the higher mountain of the world.

### **Adjectives often confused**

### **Exercise 9:**

Use many or much in these sentences:

1. He hasn't \_\_\_\_ money.
2. Have they \_\_\_\_ books?
3. There isn't \_\_\_\_ food in the house.
4. Does she take \_\_\_\_ interest in it?
5. I haven't \_\_\_\_ time.
6. Are there \_\_\_\_ pupils absent today?
7. How \_\_\_\_ does this book cost?
8. \_\_\_\_ rain has fallen on the mountains.
9. He doesn't know \_\_\_\_ English.
10. \_\_\_\_ too people went to the concert.

### **Exercise 10:**

Use few or a few, little or a little in these sentences:

1. As he has \_\_\_\_ books, he isn't able to study.
2. Will you have \_\_\_\_ tea?

3. He's very ill, there's \_\_\_\_ hope for him.
4. There are \_\_\_\_ apples in the bowl, help yourself to some.
5. \_\_\_\_ people study Latin nowadays.
6. He can't afford it as he only has \_\_\_\_ money left.
7. As she didn't speak clearly, \_\_\_\_ people understood what she said.
8. \_\_\_\_ people will admit their faults.
9. We must save \_\_\_\_ money for our journey home.
10. I have \_\_\_\_ friends in London who will help me.

### Exercise 11:

Use ill or sick in these sentences:

1. She was suddenly taken \_\_\_\_.
2. The meat was bad, and made everybody \_\_\_\_.
3. He went to the hospital to visit the \_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_ man died yesterday.
5. When we're \_\_\_\_ we go to the doctor.
6. Those who are in bad health are said to be \_\_\_\_.
7. The \_\_\_\_ and the wounded were taken to hospital.
8. He's with \_\_\_\_ a bad cold.
9. When I travel by boat I'm always \_\_\_\_.
10. She felt \_\_\_\_ and left in the middle of the game.

### Exercise 12:

Use some or any in these sentences:

1. I've got \_\_\_\_ new CDs at home.
2. There aren't \_\_\_\_ flowers in the garden.
3. Have you \_\_\_\_ brothers in this school?
4. Did you buy \_\_\_\_ stamps at the post office?
5. Have I \_\_\_\_ got e-mails this morning?

### Exercise 13:

Use his or her in these sentences:

1. The father told \_\_\_\_ daughter to come back.
2. She gave the money to \_\_\_\_ uncle's neighbour.
3. He sent a letter to \_\_\_\_ niece.
4. The woman lost \_\_\_\_ son.
5. The grandfather gave a nice gift to \_\_\_\_ daughter's eldest son.

### Exercise 14:

Use interesting or interested in these sentences:

1. I'm \_\_\_\_ in English.

2. Was the film \_\_\_\_ last night?
3. The book is \_\_\_\_ from beginning to end.
4. She's a most \_\_\_\_ lady.
5. Are you \_\_\_\_ in computers?

### Exercise 15:

Fill in the blanks with one of the adjectives in brackets:

1. He sat down and said nothing \_\_\_\_ . (farther, further)
2. Is that the \_\_\_\_ edition of The Times? (last, latest)
3. Wash your hands if they're not \_\_\_\_ . (clean, clear)
4. A prize was given to \_\_\_\_ one of the two best pupils. (each, every)
5. She knows \_\_\_\_ words than her brother. (less, fewer)
6. Several people were \_\_\_\_ when the train ran off the track. (wounded, injured)
7. Jane is \_\_\_\_ than her cousin. (higher, taller)
8. Tom is three years old, he's too \_\_\_\_ to go to school. (small, young)
9. James is my \_\_\_\_ brother. (older, elder)
10. My sister Emma is \_\_\_\_ than I am. (older, elder)

### The ARTICLES

#### Exercise 16:

Fill in the blanks with a or an where necessary:

1. Swimming is \_\_\_\_ great fun.
2. The plane made \_\_\_\_ terrible noise.
3. What sort of \_\_\_\_ man is he?
4. My aunt made \_\_\_\_ fortune in America.
5. He saved up more than \_\_\_\_ thousand pounds.
6. The train left half \_\_\_\_ hour ago.
7. She's made \_\_\_\_ great progress in English.
8. She's \_\_\_\_ clever girl.
9. He tried without success to find \_\_\_\_ work.
10. Vitamins are necessary for \_\_\_\_ good health.

#### Exercise 17:

Fill in the blanks with the where necessary:

1. My little brother will go to \_\_\_\_ school next year.
2. My father left \_\_\_\_ school many years ago.
3. \_\_\_\_ red, \_\_\_\_ blue and \_\_\_\_ green are beautiful colours.
4. \_\_\_\_ cotton of Egypt is exported to many countries.
5. \_\_\_\_ Nile flows into Mediterranean.

6. What time is \_\_\_\_ lunch.
7. She can speak \_\_\_\_ French.
8. She speaks \_\_\_\_ German better than \_\_\_\_ English.
9. \_\_\_\_ flies are harmful insects.
10. The boy was sent to \_\_\_\_ post office to post a letter.

### **Relative pronouns**

#### **Exercise 18:**

Put relative pronouns in each of the following:

1. That's the boy \_\_\_\_ came yesterday.
2. The man to \_\_\_\_ I spoke is my brother.
3. The girl \_\_\_\_ mother is ill has left school.
4. This is the pen \_\_\_\_ I bought.
5. I can't repeat all \_\_\_\_ I heard.
6. He's a boy \_\_\_\_ I know you can trust.
7. She's the girl \_\_\_\_ we thought had been ill.
8. He's the tallest man \_\_\_\_ I ever saw.
9. She's the same \_\_\_\_ she's always been.
10. I like to help those \_\_\_\_ I love and \_\_\_\_ I know love me.

### **Interrogative pronouns**

#### **Exercise 19:**

Put interrogative pronouns in each of the following:

1. \_\_\_\_ do you find easier to learn, English or French?
2. \_\_\_\_ were you talking about? (the cinema)
3. \_\_\_\_ is this book? (my uncle's)
4. \_\_\_\_ of the two players do you like better?
5. \_\_\_\_ do you think I wanted? (your brother)
6. \_\_\_\_ of the three boys spoke?
7. \_\_\_\_ did you say won the prize?
8. \_\_\_\_ is he, do you suppose? (a lawyer)
9. \_\_\_\_ of your brothers works in the bank?
10. \_\_\_\_ is the number of your house?

### **Repetition of subject or object**

#### **Exercise 20:**

Rewrite the following sentences, leaving out unnecessary pronouns and making other necessary changes:

1. The prizes they were given to the boys.
2. The girl she said nothing.

3. *The teacher gave us an exercise to do it.*
4. *He went home and he got his book.*
5. *The book which it is on the table is mine.*
6. *Students who are good at their lessons they get good marks.*
7. *She gave us a football to play with it.*
8. *The people, having seen the game, they went away.*
9. *The headmaster I have seen him just now.*
10. *The scorpion it has a sting in its tail.*

### **Miscellaneous examples**

#### **Exercise 21:**

*Correct the following sentences, giving reasons for your corrections:*

1. *One should mind his own business.*
2. *The most of the people are fond of the cinema.*
3. *This is the boy which is always late.*
4. *I speak English better than him.*
5. *She told her mother all what had been said.*
6. *This cake is for you and myself.*
7. *I want to give me your book, please.*
8. *Is a very good girl*
9. *It is them.*
10. *I and Stephen are friends.*

### **Sequence of tenses**

#### **Exercise 22:**

*Put the verbs in brackets into the tenses required:*

1. *I thought that he (can) run much faster.*
2. *The boy said that he (begin) his work tomorrow.*
3. *She says she (understand) French very well.*
4. *The teacher said, 'London (be) the largest city in the world.'*
5. *The teacher said that London (be) the capital of England.*
6. *I was sure that he (will) succeed.*
7. *I asked her if she (want) anything.*
8. *They say that he (will) pass the exam.*
9. *She told me that she (feel) very tired.*
10. *The boy worked hard so that he (may) not fail in the exam.*

#### **Exercise 23:**

*Complete the following, using a verb in the required tense:*

1. *Laura told me that she \_\_\_\_\_ .*
2. *I asked him whether he \_\_\_\_\_ .*

3. James said that he \_\_\_\_ .
4. Our teacher taught us that \_\_\_\_ .
5. Sarah gave me a promise that she \_\_\_\_ .
6. The boys said that \_\_\_\_ .
7. I knew that she \_\_\_\_ .
8. I asked him to wait until \_\_\_\_ .
9. I thought that she \_\_\_\_ .
10. He didn't come when \_\_\_\_ .

### **Use of the wrong tense**

#### **Exercise 24:**

Supply the correct tense, Simple Present or Present Continuous, in the following:

1. I (to go) to school every day.
2. He (to go) to the school now.
3. Look! They (to come) towards us.
4. Now I (to hear) her clearly.
5. Every morning I (to take) a walk by the river.
6. The sun (to rise) in the east and (to set) in the west.
7. The teacher (to watch) me when I (to write).
8. We (to go) to the cinema this evening.
9. I (to read) English now.
10. People (to use) umbrellas when it (to rain).

#### **Exercise 25:**

Supply the correct tense, Simple Past Tense or Past Continuous, in the following:

1. When I (come) in, it (rain).
2. Many years ago people (travel) on horseback.
3. I (meet) him as I (go) home.
4. He (go) to another school last year.
5. My father (play) football in his youth.
6. We (eat) our dinner when he (come) to visit us.
7. In the past he (smoke) a great deal.
8. They (shout) when the teacher (enter) the room.
9. Last year he (study) very hard.
10. While he (play) football he (lose) his watch.

### **Exercise 26:**

Supply the correct tense, Simple Past Tense or Present Perfect, in the following:

1. He (come) back last week.
2. I just (finish) my work.
3. I (live) in London last year.
4. The bell (ring) five minutes ago.
5. I (see) the Pyramids of Egypt.
6. He (write) the book in 1936.
7. She (be) ill with fever since last Saturday.
8. The ship (arrive) yesterday.
9. I (stay) at my uncle's last night.
10. I (deposit) the money in the bank.

### **Exercise 27:**

Supply the correct tense, Simple Past Tense or Past Perfect, in the following:

1. I (want) to see you yesterday.
2. He (tell) me that he (see) me the day before yesterday.
3. There (be) a strong wind last night.
4. The girl (find) the book which she (lose).
5. When I (run) a mile, I (be) very tired.
6. The tourist (talk) about the countries she (visit).
7. When I (be) a boy I (study) music.
8. The Romans (speak) Latin.
9. After he (finish) his work he (go) to bed.
10. She (sleep) an hour when I (wake) her.

### **Exercise 28:**

Complete the following, using the correct tense:

1. We'll go for a picnic, if \_\_\_\_.
2. I'll visit the Pyramids when \_\_\_\_.
3. Some people talk as if \_\_\_\_.
4. Since he came her \_\_\_\_.
5. You would have passed if \_\_\_\_.

### **Exercise 29:**

Rewrite the following with the verbs in brackets in the correct tense:

1. After he (finish) his work he (go) home.
2. I (study) English for two years.

3. I (finish) my work this morning.
4. I (do) my homework before Tom (call) for me.
5. He said he (will) go to the cinema.
6. I not (see) her since Wednesday.
7. I (speak) to her five minutes ago.
8. I (study) grammar last year.
9. She always (whisper) during the lesson.
10. The courier (come) back.

### **Exercise 30:**

Correct the following sentences, giving reasons for your corrections:

1. Richard said that he is working hard.
2. How long did you waited for me yesterday?
3. She speaks English very well, but I'm not sure whether she can speaks French too.
4. He is on the team for two years.
5. I have seen her yesterday at church.
6. What do you do now? - I do my project.
7. I use to get up early.
8. Paul acts as if he is a rich man.
9. I'll speak to him as soon as he will come.
10. I told Jill to come with us, but she says that she isn't feeling well.

### **Third person singular**

#### **Exercise 31:**

Put the following into the third person singular, present tense:

1. I always do my homework carefully, but Mike never \_\_\_\_.
2. Karen's friends often go fishing, but she never \_\_\_\_.
3. I haven't got a new computer, but Rosie \_\_\_\_.
4. Simon has tickets for the match, but Bruce \_\_\_\_.
5. She walks to work every day, but her husband \_\_\_\_.
6. We comb and brush our hair, but our sister \_\_\_\_.
7. Robin has a broken arm, but Carol \_\_\_\_.
8. I haven't got time for breakfast, but my sister \_\_\_\_.
9. I sit and talk to my friends, but my mother \_\_\_\_.
10. I go to school by bike, but my friend \_\_\_\_.

#### **Exercise 32:**

Fill the blanks with the right word, don't or doesn't, in the following:

1. I \_\_\_ think so.
2. John \_\_\_ know how to swim.

3. He \_\_\_\_ play football well/
4. It \_\_\_\_ matter what they say.
5. Some pupils \_\_\_\_ take good care of their books.
6. \_\_\_\_ you know where I live?
7. Why \_\_\_\_ you try?
8. Teachers \_\_\_\_ like lazy pupils.
9. Lucy \_\_\_\_ speak English very well.
10. \_\_\_\_ be afraid of the dog!

### **Questions and negations**

#### **Exercise 33:**

Rewrite the following sentences (a) as questions, (b) as negative sentences:

1. He went home.
2. You told me to wait.
3. I made a mistake.
4. She broke the window.
5. She opened the document.
6. He speaks English.
7. He bought a new calculator.
8. She found her disk.
9. Mary came late.
10. He knew the answer.

#### **Exercise 34:**

Answer the following questions (a) in the affirmative, (b) in the negative, using complete sentences:

1. Did you buy a new printer?
2. Does John often swim across the river?
3. Did you find the book that you lost?
4. Does she always ring the bell?
5. Did he go to London last year?
6. Did she teach you anything?
7. Did you know the answer to the problem?
8. Does he speak many languages?
9. Do you think it will rain?
10. Did they catch the thief?

#### **Exercise 35:**

Correct whatever is wrong with the following questions:

1. You were at the cinema last night?

2. *At what time did she came yesterday?*
3. *You will go home next week?*
4. *He has returned from leave?*
5. *Does she speaks French?*
6. *You have some good news for me?*
7. *He can drive a car?*
8. *You heard about the accident?*
9. *Why she comes here every day?*
10. *When the post will come?*

### **Question phrases**

#### **Exercise 36:**

*Complete the following, adding question phrases:*

1. *She sings well, \_\_\_\_?*
2. *He can't swim, \_\_\_\_?*
3. *You play the piano, \_\_\_\_?*
4. *It's cool today, \_\_\_\_?*
5. *It isn't warm today, \_\_\_\_?*

### **Indirect questions**

#### **Exercise 37:**

*Change the following into indirect questions:*

1. *I asked him, 'How much did you pay for your bicycle?' I asked him how much he...*
2. *She asked her guest, 'Do you want tea or coffee?' She asked her guest if she...*
3. *I asked him, 'What's your idea?' I asked him what his...*
4. *We asked them, 'Where are you going?' We asked them where...*
5. *They asked the assistant, 'What's the price of this PC?' They asked the assistant what...*
6. *He asked me, 'Did you ring the bell?' He asked me if...*
7. *The tourist asked us, 'Which is the way to the airport?' The tourist asked us which...*
8. *The teacher asked me, 'Why are you crying?' The teacher asked me why...*
9. *My father asked me, 'Why are you so late?' My father asked me why...*
10. *She asked me, 'How long does it take to get there?' She asked me how...*

### **Double negative**

#### **Exercise 38:**

*Rewrite the following sentences correctly:*

1. *I couldn't find him nowhere*
2. *There isn't no one here who knows her name.*
3. *I didn't see nobody there.*
4. *He didn't tell me nothing.*
5. *He isn't neither wise nor good.*
6. *You will find the box nowhere.*
7. *We didn't give him nothing.*
8. *I don't know nothing.*
9. *He didn't speak to no one in the room.*
10. *Nobody never saw him without his stick.*

### **Contractions**

#### **Exercise 39:**

*Write the words which each of the following contractions stand for:*

1. *Don't*
2. *Doesn't*
3. *Aren't*
4. *Isn't*
5. *Wasn't*
6. *Can't*
7. *Couldn't*
8. *Haven't*
9. *We'll*
10. *You've*



#### **Exercise 40:**

*Write contractions for the following:*

1. *Would not*
2. *I am*
3. *I have*
4. *I will*
5. *Had not*
6. *He is*
7. *It is*
8. *Will not*
9. *Shall not*
10. *Must not*

### **Verbs often confused**

**Exercise 41:**

Put shall or will in the following:

1. Tomorrow \_\_\_\_ be Sunday.
2. All right, I \_\_\_\_ come.
3. You \_\_\_\_ not leave this room until you finish your work.
4. You \_\_\_\_ find your books on the table.
5. \_\_\_\_ I bring my books with me?
6. He \_\_\_\_ go to school this year.
7. No! I \_\_\_\_ never do that.
8. I \_\_\_\_ write a few letters tomorrow.
9. I \_\_\_\_ do it whether they like it or not.
10. 'We \_\_\_\_ be as quiet as mice,' promised the children.

**Exercise 42:**

Use the correct form of say or tell in the following:

1. He always \_\_\_\_ the truth.
2. Simon \_\_\_\_, I shall go tomorrow.
3. She \_\_\_\_ nothing.
4. They \_\_\_\_ that she is ill.
5. He \_\_\_\_ that he'd go the next day.
6. I \_\_\_\_ him that I'd go with him.
7. She \_\_\_\_ to me, 'I'm not feeling well.'
8. What's he \_\_\_\_ing?
9. Don't \_\_\_\_ lies.
10. Amy \_\_\_\_ me that she would go home.

**Exercise 43:**

Use the correct form of make or do in the following:

1. Some of the best cheeses are \_\_\_\_ in France.
2. He \_\_\_\_ his best to help me.
3. Have you \_\_\_\_ your homework?
4. I have only \_\_\_\_ one mistake.
5. If you take this medicine, it'll \_\_\_\_ you good.
6. \_\_\_\_ whatever you like.
7. What were you \_\_\_\_ing when I came in?
8. Did you \_\_\_\_ your homework carefully?
9. Don't \_\_\_\_ a noise.
10. They often \_\_\_\_ fun of her at school.

**Exercise 44:**

Use the correct form of lie or lay in the following:

1. I'll go and \_\_\_\_ down.
2. The book was \_\_\_\_ing on the floor.
3. He \_\_\_\_ down to rest.
4. She told the dog to \_\_\_\_ down.
5. The hen has \_\_\_\_ an egg.
6. How long have you \_\_\_\_ in bed?
7. She \_\_\_\_ to the teacher.
8. He ordered his troops to \_\_\_\_ down.
9. I \_\_\_\_ the book on the table.
10. Yesterday she \_\_\_\_ in bed until midday.

#### **Exercise 45:**

Use the correct form of sit, seat or set in the following:

1. Please \_\_\_\_ down.
2. Please \_\_\_\_ yourself.
3. Please be \_\_\_\_ .
4. The sun \_\_\_\_ in the west.
5. The boat will \_\_\_\_ twelve people.
6. The old man was \_\_\_\_ ing by the fire.
7. \_\_\_\_ the vase on the table.
8. The dog was \_\_\_\_ ing on the chair.
9. The teacher \_\_\_\_ the boys as they came in.
10. I once in \_\_\_\_ that famous chair.

#### **Exercise 46:**

Use the correct form of rise or raise in the following:

1. Prices \_\_\_\_ during the war.
2. He promised to \_\_\_\_ her salary.
3. The balloon \_\_\_\_ in the sky.
4. The sun \_\_\_\_ at six o'clock.
5. He \_\_\_\_ his hat to the teacher.
6. The box is too heavy, I can't \_\_\_\_ it.
7. She \_\_\_\_ from her seat and left the room.
8. I \_\_\_\_ very early in the morning.
9. The teacher told him not to \_\_\_\_ his voice.
10. We had \_\_\_\_ from table before she came in.

#### **Exercise 47:**

Use the correct form of wear, put on or dress in the following:

1. She often \_\_\_\_ a green coat.
2. I \_\_\_\_ my coat and went out.

3. The mother \_\_\_\_ the child.
4. She \_\_\_\_ a beautiful dress at the dance
5. It takes him a long time to \_\_\_\_ his clothes.
6. He \_\_\_\_ a red tie yesterday.
7. She never \_\_\_\_ brown shoes.
8. Mary \_\_\_\_ herself and went to the party.
9. I'll \_\_\_\_ my new dress at the wedding.
10. When he came in he was \_\_\_\_ ing his coat.

**Exercise 48:**

Use the correct form of let, let go, leave or give up in the following:

1. \_\_\_\_ your books here.
2. Does your father \_\_\_\_ you go swimming?
3. Please \_\_\_\_ my room.
4. I have \_\_\_\_ music lessons.
5. Where have you \_\_\_\_ your pen?
6. Mother will not \_\_\_\_ me go.
7. His old friends \_\_\_\_ him.
8. Please \_\_\_\_ of my hand.
9. Someone always \_\_\_\_ the door open.
10. \_\_\_\_ me go, too.

**Exercise 49:**

Use a correct form of fly, flow or flee in the following:

1. The plane \_\_\_\_ over the city.
2. The birds have \_\_\_\_ north for the summer.
3. He \_\_\_\_ from danger.
4. The water \_\_\_\_ all day.
5. The flies \_\_\_\_ through the window.
6. The Nile \_\_\_\_ into the Mediterranean.
7. He \_\_\_\_ from London to New York.
8. The prisoner has \_\_\_\_ from his guard.
9. Birds \_\_\_\_ .
10. The wild horses \_\_\_\_ from the men.

**Exercise 50:**

Use hung or hanged in the following:

1. He was found guilty and \_\_\_\_ .
2. Mother \_\_\_\_ the clothes up to dry.
3. The picture \_\_\_\_ on the wall.

4. The criminal was \_\_\_\_ .

5. She \_\_\_\_ his jacket up.

**Exercise 51:**

Use the correct form of borrow or lend in the following:

1. May I \_\_\_\_ your pen?

2. Please \_\_\_\_ me your book.

3. From whom did you \_\_\_\_ the money?

4. He'll \_\_\_\_ you his knife.

5. You should avoid \_\_\_\_ ing things from others.

**Exercise 52:**

Use the correct form of steal or rob in the following:

1. They \_\_\_\_ the house and fled.

2. Someone has \_\_\_\_ his money.

3. 'I've been \_\_\_\_,' cried the lady.

4. When the bank was \_\_\_\_, the thieves escaped.

5. The cat will \_\_\_\_ the dog's food.

**Exercise 53:**

Use a correct form of refuse or deny in the following:

1. He \_\_\_\_ to do the work.

2. Clare \_\_\_\_ that she'd seen him.

3. Do you \_\_\_\_ that you broke the window?

4. I \_\_\_\_ to take the money.

5. I asked her to come with us, but she \_\_\_\_.

**Exercise 54:**

Use a correct form of learn or teach in the following:

1. She \_\_\_\_ her friends the new game.

2. Will you \_\_\_\_ me how to swim?

3. He \_\_\_\_ his lessons quickly.

4. My teacher \_\_\_\_ me English.

5. Susan wanted to \_\_\_\_ to drive.

**Exercise 55:**

Use the correct form of win or beat in the following:

1. We were sure to \_\_\_\_.

2. I can \_\_\_\_ him at chess.

3. The trophy was \_\_\_\_ by our school.

4. We've \_\_\_\_ your team several times.

5. We've always \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exercise 56:**

Use the correct form of see or look in the following:

1. We can't \_\_\_\_\_ in the dark.
2. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ out of the window.
3. Did you \_\_\_\_\_ that film?
4. When he \_\_\_\_\_ through the open window, he \_\_\_\_\_ it on the table.
5. The blind can't \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exercise 57:**

Use a correct form of hear or listen in the following:

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ carefully but \_\_\_\_\_ nothing.
2. He can't \_\_\_\_\_ very well.
3. I was \_\_\_\_\_ing to the music.
4. The deaf can't \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Let's \_\_\_\_\_ to my new CD.

**Exercise 58:**

Use the correct form of like or want in the following:

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ to go to Athens next year.
2. Children \_\_\_\_\_to play computer games.
3. Do you \_\_\_\_\_to come with me for a drive?
4. She always \_\_\_\_\_ to get up early.
5. Do you \_\_\_\_\_to play tennis this afternoon?

**Exercise 59:**

Use a correct form of read or study in the following:

1. My father \_\_\_\_\_ The times.
2. The boy is \_\_\_\_\_ing for the exam.
3. When I finish \_\_\_\_\_ing geography, I'll \_\_\_\_\_the letter.
4. She \_\_\_\_\_ a lot, but she doent \_\_\_\_\_for her exams.
5. When the students had \_\_\_\_\_the exam paper, they were advised to \_\_\_\_\_ the questions again.

**Exercise 60:**

Use fall or fell in the following:

1. Did the child \_\_\_\_\_ from the chair?
2. The plane \_\_\_\_\_ into the sea.
3. He \_\_\_\_\_down and broke his leg.
4. In winter the leaves \_\_\_\_\_from the trees.

5. You'll \_\_\_\_ if you're not careful.

### Exercise 61:

In the following sentences, choose the correct word from those in brackets:

1. Who (discovered, invented) the telephone?
2. The judge was (persuaded, convinced) that the man was guilty.
3. When will the meeting (take place, take part)?
4. He (took, received) a prize for his success.
5. It's not wise to (interfere with, interfere in) family quarrels.
6. He (is, is found) at the school in the morning.
7. At what time do you (sleep, go to bed)?
8. She didn't (accept, agree) to go.
9. How does that man (win, earn) his living?
10. Please (remember, remind) me to give you the change.

### Un-English expressions

#### Exercise 62:

Correct the following sentences, giving the correct idiom:

1. Few people will admit that they have wrong.
2. Every day I put my watch with the school clock.
3. Will, there be a game today afternoon?
4. He brought a good example.
5. Slowly, slowly, don't make a noise.
6. The teacher didn't put us a new lesson.
7. Come down from the bicycle.
8. When do you make your bath?
9. I have much work, I need an hour to finish it.
10. Many young people drink cigarettes.

### Misuse of the infinitive

#### Exercise 63:

Put a suitable gerund in the following:

1. Do this without \_\_\_\_ any mistakes.
2. We don't enjoy \_\_\_\_ .
3. He succeeded in \_\_\_\_ the door.
4. I can't prevent you from \_\_\_\_ .
5. It's no use \_\_\_\_ about everything.
6. She stopped \_\_\_\_ in class.
7. I was busy \_\_\_\_ ready for dinner.
8. It's worth \_\_\_\_ well.

9. I'm thinking of \_\_\_\_ to London next year.

10. It's no use \_\_\_\_ over spilt milk.

**Exercise 64:**

Make sentences of your own, using a gerund after each of the following:

1. Avoid
2. Instead of
3. Stop
4. Finish
5. Tired
6. Prevent
7. Interested
8. Worth
9. Insist
10. Can't help

**The infinitive without to**

**Exercise 65:**

Make sentences of your own, using an infinitive after each of the following verbs:

1. Can
2. Could
3. May
4. Might
5. Must
6. Let
7. Make
8. See
9. Hear
10. feel

**Wrong position of adverbs**

**Exercise 66:**

Rewrite the following sentences, placing the adverbs or adverbial phrases in the right position:

1. I can speak very well English.
2. I like very much music.
3. A beginner can't speak correctly English.
4. The teacher explained very well the problem.
5. Michael recorded with his video camera the concert.

6. He put into his pocket the money.
7. He likes very much tea.
8. She learnt by heart the poem.
9. I received from my aunt a nice present.
10. He shut quickly the book.

**Exercise 67:**

Correct the following sentences, giving reasons for your corrections:

1. I always am on time.
2. It rains seldom in the desert.
3. We went yesterday there.
4. I'm not enough tall.
5. He begged the teacher to not punish him.
6. I could have not arrived sooner.
7. She will have not finished her work by tomorrow.
8. I prefer usually coffee to tea.
9. They are leaving for London this evening at seven o'clock.
10. Peter yesterday did not come to school.

**Adverbs often confused**

**Exercise 68:**

Give the correct adverb, very or too, in these sentences:

1. It's \_\_\_ cold today.
2. He's \_\_\_ old to work.
3. I can't drink that coffee, it's \_\_\_ strong.
4. Sugar is \_\_\_ sweet.
5. These trainers are \_\_\_ small for me.
6. The Eiffel Tower is \_\_\_ high.
7. Concorde flies \_\_\_ fast.
8. My little brother is \_\_\_ young to go to school.
9. I felt \_\_\_ tired to study.
10. He's \_\_\_ rich, he's a millionaire.

**Exercise 69:**

Give the correct adverb, very or much, in these sentences:

1. I'm \_\_\_ sorry that you can't come.
2. I was \_\_\_ pleased to meet him.
3. She was \_\_\_ frightened of failing in English.
4. It was a \_\_\_ amusing game.
5. I feel \_\_\_ tired.

6. He plays better \_\_\_\_ than his brother.
7. Her essay is \_\_\_\_ worse than yours.
8. It's a \_\_\_\_ interesting book.
9. I was \_\_\_\_ interested to hear what Becky said.
10. We're \_\_\_\_ surprised at the news.

### **Exercise 70:**

Give the correct adverb, very much or too much, in these sentences:

1. I like oranges \_\_\_\_.
2. Thank you \_\_\_\_.
3. I can't study here, there's \_\_\_\_ noise.
4. Tk. 100 is \_\_\_\_ for that book.
5. He ate \_\_\_\_ and felt sick.
6. I was \_\_\_\_ awake when the baby started crying.
7. She talks \_\_\_\_ she's a chatterbox.
8. I'm \_\_\_\_ obliged to you.
9. She was \_\_\_\_ interested in the subject.
10. She helped us \_\_\_\_.

### **Exercise 71:**

Give the correct adverb, hard or hardly, in these sentences:

1. The country was hit very \_\_\_\_ by the drought.
2. I \_\_\_\_ know how to thank you for your kindness.
3. He's \_\_\_\_ recovered from his illness.
4. If you work \_\_\_\_ perhaps you'll succeed.
5. Think \_\_\_\_ before you come to a decision.

### **Exercise 72:**

Make five sentences of your own, using the word ago.

### **Using the wrong preposition**

### **Exercise 73:**

Fill in the blanks with suitable prepositions:

1. I wasn't pleased \_\_\_\_ her.
2. Cats are afraid \_\_\_\_ dogs.
3. Look \_\_\_\_ this new book.
4. We're proud \_\_\_\_ our country.
5. He feels ashamed \_\_\_\_ his low marks.
6. We arrived \_\_\_\_ the station late.
7. She's very different \_\_\_\_ her sister.
8. Are you satisfied \_\_\_\_ your bicycle?

9. I'm not accustomed \_\_\_\_ life in a hotel.
10. Many people complain \_\_\_\_ their low wages.

**Exercise 74:**

Rewrite the following sentences, using the correct prepositions:

1. He was accused for lying.
2. I'm surprised from the news.
3. I'm interested for football.
4. Water is composed from oxygen and hydrogen.
5. Are you sure for his honesty.
6. She's very good in English.
7. When is he leaving to England?
8. That depends entirely from you.
9. She was dressed with a yellow dress.
10. He did his best to comply to the requirements.

**Exercise 75:**

Write sentences, using the following words with suitable prepositions:

Aim, boast, insist, marry, deprive, die, different, fail, repent, succeed, good, interested, afraid, used, look, satisfied, pleased, ashamed, depend, prefer.

**Exercise 76:**

Make sentences of your own, showing clearly the difference between the following:

1. Arrive at/ arrive in
2. Angry with/ angry at
3. Pleased with/ pleased at
4. Look at/ look for
5. Write with/ write in
6. Divide in/ divide into
7. Die of/ die from
8. Disappointed in/ disappointed of
9. Sit at/ sit on
10. Tired of/ tired with

**Prepositions often confused**

**Exercise 77:**

Use to or at in these sentences:

1. He goes \_\_\_\_ the supermarket every morning.
2. Anne stood \_\_\_\_ the window.
3. Simon is \_\_\_\_ school.
4. I met him \_\_\_\_ the airport.
5. I'm going \_\_\_\_ a party tonight.
6. I enjoyed myself \_\_\_\_ the party.

7. The tourist stayed \_\_\_\_ the Palace Hotel?
8. After his illness, he returned \_\_\_\_ work.
9. I saw Lucy \_\_\_\_ the cinema.
10. Please wait for me \_\_\_\_ the gate.

**Exercise 78:**

Use in or at in these sentences:

1. There are skyscrapers \_\_\_\_ New York.
2. I live \_\_\_\_ a small village.
3. I spent my childhood \_\_\_\_ Greece.
4. My friend was born \_\_\_\_ Ceylon.
5. He studied \_\_\_\_ oxford.6. She lives \_\_\_\_ Luxor \_\_\_\_ Egypt.
7. It's more expensive living \_\_\_\_ London than \_\_\_\_ Brighton.
8. He lives \_\_\_\_ Paris.
9. Diamonds are found \_\_\_\_ Kimberley \_\_\_\_ South Africa.
10. He lives here \_\_\_\_ Hong Kong.

**Exercise 79:**

Use in or into in these sentences:

1. The fish swim \_\_\_\_ the river.
2. The man jumped \_\_\_\_ the pool.
3. They were standing \_\_\_\_ the room.
4. We're \_\_\_\_ the classroom now.
5. There's a bird \_\_\_\_ the cage.
6. We walked \_\_\_\_ the next room.
7. The children are playing \_\_\_\_ the field.
8. He poured the water \_\_\_\_ the jug.
9. She drived \_\_\_\_ the sea.
10. The river flows \_\_\_\_ the sea.

**Exercise 80:**

Use at, in or on in these sentences:

1. He was born \_\_\_\_ 1978.
2. \_\_\_\_ winter the weather is cold.
3. \_\_\_\_ Christmas Day I received a lot of presences.
4. We reached Cairo \_\_\_\_ nine o'clock.
5. The train arrived \_\_\_\_ night.
6. There's a holiday \_\_\_\_ the 11th of December.
7. People return from work \_\_\_\_ five o'clock.
8. \_\_\_\_ July the weather is warm.

9. \_\_\_\_ the afternoon I went for a walk.
10. The train will arrive \_\_\_\_ Tuesday \_\_\_\_ eleven o'clock \_\_\_\_ the morning.

### Exercise 81:

Use *between* or *among* in these sentences:

1. The work was shared all \_\_\_\_ of them.
2. He divided the money \_\_\_\_ his three children.
3. He did \_\_\_\_ the trees.
4. The President walked \_\_\_\_ the two lines of soldiers.
5. \_\_\_\_ all those children, he didn't have a single friend.
6. There was a fight \_\_\_\_ the two gangs.
7. The ball passed \_\_\_\_ the goal posts.
8. We are \_\_\_\_ friends.
9. His subject was 'Life \_\_\_\_ the Eskimos.
10. The cake was divided \_\_\_\_ the two girls.

### Exercise 82:

In the following sentences, choose the correct preposition in brackets:

1. He's been ill (from, since) last Friday.
2. You've sold your car (at, for) a good price.
3. I sold my bicycle (at, for) seven thousands tk.
4. I expect to return (after, in) a week.
5. I can wait (to, till) next Tuesday.
6. We draw lines (by, with) a ruler.
7. She's been absent (since, for) a month.
8. They spoke (for, about) the weather.
9. He worked (with, by) candle light.
10. You can send the parcel (with, by) post.

### Exercise 83:

Write sentences of your own to show clearly the difference between the following pairs of prepositions:

1. Between/among
2. To/till
3. In/into
4. To/at
5. For/at (piece)
6. With/by
7. For/since

8. *For/about*

9. *In/within*

10. *At/in*

### **Omission of prepositions**

#### **Exercise 84:**

*Supply the prepositions omitted in the following:*

1. *Somebody is knocking the door.*
2. *I'm searching my lost book.*
3. *He said me, 'I won't come.*
4. *She explained the difficult words him.*
5. *She never listens her mother.*
6. *I replied his letter at once.*
7. *Would you like me to send it you?*
8. *I'm too busy, I can't wait you.*
9. *I asked his phone number.*
10. *She pointed the ship in the distance.*

#### **Exercise 85:**

*Make sentences of your own, using suitable prepositions after the following:*

1. *Ask*
2. *Explain*
3. *Knock*
4. *Listen*
5. *Remind*
6. *Say*
7. *Search*
8. *Speak*
9. *Wait*
10. *Wish*

### **Unnecessary prepositions**

#### **Exercise 86:**

*Use each of the following in a separate sentence:*

1. *Answer*
2. *Attack*
3. *Approach*
4. *Enter*
5. *Resemble*

6. Tell
7. Behind
8. Inside
9. Outside.
10. Around.

**Exercise 87:**

Fill in the blanks with the prepositions where necessary:

1. Let's play outside \_\_\_\_ the house.
2. She's searching \_\_\_\_ her walkman.
3. I waited \_\_\_\_ him outside the cinema.
4. We entered \_\_\_\_ a long discussion.
5. I taught my dog to obey \_\_\_\_ me.
6. He entered \_\_\_\_ the house by the back door.
7. Twins resemble \_\_\_\_ each other.
8. The poor always wish \_\_\_\_ riches.
9. I told \_\_\_\_ him the truth.
10. I promised to write \_\_\_\_ my mother.

**Miscellaneous examples**

**Exercise 88:**

Correct the following sentences, giving reasons for your corrections:

1. The book is neither green or red.
2. He can't speak English and French.
3. It costs two, three tk.
4. She not only spoke loudly, but also clear.
5. He ate and the three oranges.
6. I counted one hundred seven people.
7. She wants to learn and French.
8. He said that, 'You'll be sorry for it.
9. I don't know if I'll be able to go.
10. From now and on I will work hard.

**Confusion of parts of speech**

**Exercise 89:**

Fill each blank with the correct word: as or like.

1. Act \_\_\_\_ a gentleman!
2. He does \_\_\_\_ he pleases.
3. She behaved \_\_\_\_ a baby.
4. She looks \_\_\_\_ her mother.

5. Do \_\_\_\_ he does.
6. Play the game \_\_\_\_ she does.
7. He dances \_\_\_\_ Fred Astaire.
8. You walk \_\_\_\_ she does.
9. He acted just \_\_\_\_ the rest.
10. He speaks \_\_\_\_ an Englishman.

**Exercise 90:**

Fill each blank with the correct word: no or not

1. I have \_\_\_\_ time to play.
2. She has \_\_\_\_ a good memory.
3. He had \_\_\_\_ reason to be angry.
4. There is \_\_\_\_ enough furniture in this room.
5. Your plan is \_\_\_\_ different from mine.
6. I had \_\_\_\_ patience with him.
7. There were \_\_\_\_ fewer than a thousand people.
8. There is \_\_\_\_ furniture in this room.
9. She has \_\_\_\_ enough money.
10. I want \_\_\_\_ more, thank you.

**Exercise 91:**

Fill in the blanks with the correct word: died or dead.

1. Her grandfather is \_\_\_\_.
2. She \_\_\_\_ of old age.
3. The \_\_\_\_ leaves fell from the trees.
4. Her aunt is \_\_\_\_ she \_\_\_\_ many years ago.
5. The soldier \_\_\_\_ for his country.
6. The \_\_\_\_ horse is lying in the field.
7. They \_\_\_\_ a cruel death.
8. The flowers have \_\_\_\_.
9. The soldier \_\_\_\_ from his wounds.
10. Dinosaurs out millions of \_\_\_\_ years ago.

**Exercise 92:**

Fill each blank with the correct word: it's or its.

1. The bird has broken \_\_\_\_ wing.
2. I fear \_\_\_\_ going to rain.
3. \_\_\_\_ almost nine o'clock.
4. I think \_\_\_\_ yours.
5. The tree will soon lose \_\_\_\_ leaves.

6. \_\_\_ time to go home.
7. Every river has \_\_\_ source.
8. \_\_\_ a long time until Christmas.
9. An animal will often die for \_\_\_ young.
10. \_\_\_ too late to go now.

**Exercise 93:**

Fill each blank with the correct word: good or well.

1. Mary did her work \_\_\_.
2. She speaks \_\_\_ English.
3. I did \_\_\_ in the exam.
4. She looks \_\_\_ today.
5. It's \_\_\_ to be with friends.
6. He did \_\_\_ work.
7. She didn't see \_\_\_.
8. He has done \_\_\_ in his training?
9. I'm quite \_\_\_.
10. She speaks very \_\_\_.

**Exercise 94:**

Fill each blank with the correct word: past or passed.

1. The \_\_\_ month was wet.
2. He \_\_\_ his exam.
3. The ball \_\_\_ between the goal-posts.
4. The bullet whistled \_\_\_ my ear.
5. Several months have \_\_\_ since he left.
6. Forget the \_\_\_.
7. The plane flew \_\_\_.
8. It's half \_\_\_ eight.
9. She \_\_\_ the salt to the guest.
10. The door was open when I walked \_\_\_.

**Exercise 95:**

Rewrite these sentences, choosing the correct word in brackets:

1. This thing (is, does) not worth more than five tk.
2. (After, then) he shut the door and went to bed.
3. He (is, does) not able to speak English correctly.
4. Don't be (fool, foolish).
5. He's a (fool, foolish).
6. Flowers smell (sweet, sweetly).she's so proud that she doesn't (and, even) greet her friends.

7. *The mother (weighed, weighted) her baby.*
8. *I want to learn (and) other languages (too).*
9. *Is it (truth, true)?*

### **General Exercise**

*The numbers in the brackets refer to the sections in which the mistakes are explained. The numbers in the brackets refer to the sections in which the mistakes are explained. Correct whatever is wrong in the following:*

1. *Why you are studying the English? (362, 306)*
2. *John reads good, isn't it? (577, 164). Why you not say the truth? (362, 206)*
4. *Will I go at the post-office? (396, 379)*
5. *How to make this problem, sir? (132, 399)*
6. *Is she more better than me? (340, 153, 137)*
7. *I've written him last week. (114, 241)*
8. *I past my time too well to the hotel. (584, 455, 379)*
9. *Let me to try to do this and me. (326, 581)*
10. *I have never seen a so good film. (374, 556, 263)*
11. *He's not ate nothing these two days. (112, 167)*
12. *When I sleep I take out my shoes. (437, 446)*
13. *He didn't obeyed to their advices. (104, 292, 514)*
14. *She's going each morning to the school. (121, 468, 315)*
15. *He works in the office since five years. (117, 392)*
16. *How you are going with your piano lessons? (362, 218)*
17. *Can you to come for dinner today evening? (321, 219)*
18. *My brother he's found in the first class. (332, 438)*
19. *It does not worth to say lies about it. (573, 97, 398)*
20. *I made all which I could for helping him. (399, 145, 165)*
21. *It's two years now since she left from England. (118, 291)*
22. *Please return back to shut the light. (342, 208)*
23. *Avoid to make these sort of mistakes. (86, 545)*
24. *Myself and my sister will not be present. (141, 378)*
25. *He got down from his bicycle and spoke me. (193, 236)*
26. *He travelled with the train from the Alexandria. (13, 301)*
27. *She wouldn't take fewer than hundred tk. (477, 250)*
28. *The two first pages of my book has been lost. (373, 554)*
29. *The knife was laying on the table where I lay it. (400)*
30. *That punishment will learn him to do not do it again. (427, 359)*
31. *You neither work at school or at your house. (181, 372, 489)*
32. *I can't understand because he don't speak clear. (243, 578)*
33. *The man which you saw him yesterday is very rich. (144, 336)*

34. *She said that she's never not gone at London.* (107, 167, 379)
35. *I think to go to home for to spend the holidays.* (83, 351, 345)
36. *The office is open on the morning at Saturday.* (383)
37. *It's two years since I began to study the English.* (117, 306)
38. *She told that she was at Englad before three years.* (398, 381, 458)
39. *He was angry at me because I said him he has wrong.* (6, 398, 107, 187)
40. *When I went to home I found that the money was disappeared.* (351, 160)
41. *He said to me that he is not satisfied from his teacher.* (398, 107, 59)
42. *She told that she can't remember nothing about it.* (398, 107, 167)
43. *I and he intend to leave to England after two weeks.* (378, 44, 394)
44. *I am knowing the answer but cannot say it in the English.* (120, 306)
45. *I rang two times, but I could not make no one to hear.* (168, 167, 327)
46. *They bought a new house when the baby was born which it cost all their savings.* (370, 336)
47. *When he will return back, I shall say him everything.* (126, 342, 398)
48. *I am much pleased to inform you that I have reached to this station yesterday.* (456, 114, 294)
49. *The British Isles are consisted from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.* (301, 19)
50. *The English is not only difficult to write it, but also to speak it.* (306, 372, 338)

# ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুকে বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!

প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!



## কেন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারের সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👁️ ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

👤 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে।  
অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

👤 যতবার ইবুক পড়বে ততবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

👤 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

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আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

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ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

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# Common Translation Errors

## Errors in Nouns

- ৗ আমাকে একটু জায়গা দিন তো ⇒ Please make a little **room** for me. (**place** নয়)
- ৗ আমার একটি জরুরি কাজ আছে ⇒ I have **an urgent piece of business**. (**an urgent business** নয়)
- ৗ আমার চুল কোঁকড়ানো ⇒ I have curly **hair**. (**hairs** নয়)
- ৗ আমার ধন্যবাদ গ্রহণ করুন ⇒ Please accept my **thanks**. (**thank** নয়)
- ৗ আমি ফল খাই না ⇒ I do not take **fruit**. (**fruits** নয়)
- ৗ তুমি কখন আহার কর - When do you take your **meals**. (**meal** নয়)
- ৗ তুমি পড়াশুনায় অবহেলা কর কেন? ⇒ Why do you neglect your **studies**? (**study** নয়)
- ৗ বাংলাদেশের দৃশ্যাবলী অতি মনোহর ⇒ The **scenery** of Bangladesh is very charming (**sceneries** নয়)
- ৗ বাবা আমাকে অনেক উপদেশ দিলেন ⇒ Father gave me **much advice**. (**many** নয়, **advices** নয়)
- ৗ লোকটির নৈতিক চরিত্র ভাল নয় ⇒ He is a man of very low **morals**. (**moral** নয়)
- ৗ সে আড়াইটার গাড়িতে গিয়েছিল ⇒ He went by the **2:30** train. (**2:30 o'clock** নয়)
- ৗ সে বোর্ডিং এ থাকে ⇒ He lives in a **boarding-house**. (**শুধু boarding** নয়)
- ৗ মাসুদের পাঁচ জোড়া বলদ আছে ⇒ Masud has five **yoke** of oxen. (**yokes** নয়)

## Errors In Pronoun

- ৗ আমাদের কেউ উপস্থিত ছিল না ⇒ Neither of us **was** present. (**not were**)
- ৗ আমাদের মধ্যে কেউই ফরসা নয় ⇒ **None of us** are fair-complexioned. (**not is**)
- ৗ এসো তুমি আর আমি কাজটা করি ⇒ Let you and **me** do it. (**not I**)
- ৗ আমি তাকে বিশ্বস্ত লোক বলে জানি ⇒ He is a man **who** I know is trust-worthy. (**not whom**)
- ৗ প্রত্যেকেরই দেশকে ভালোবাসা উচিত ⇒ One should love **one's** country. (**not his**)
- ৗ রহিম ও আমি এটা করেছি ⇒ Rahim and **I** have done it. (**not myself**)
- ৗ সে আমার কাছ থেকে বিদায় নিল ⇒ He took leave of **me**. (**not my**)

## Errors in adjective

- ৗ অর্থের চেয়ে বিদ্যা শ্রেষ্ঠ ⇒ Learning is **preferable to** wealth. (**more preferable ও to এর জায়গায় than হবে না**)
- ৗ এ জিনিসটি ঐটির চেয়ে নিকৃষ্ট ⇒ This thing is inferior **to** that. (**not than**)
- ৗ কেউই কাজটা করল না ⇒ **No one could** do it. (**anybody could not** নয়)
- ৗ মানুষ অমর নয় ⇒ **Man** is not immortal. (**a man** নয়)
- ৗ শক্ত মাংস আমি খেতে পারি না ⇒ I cannot eat **rough** meat. (**hard বা stiff** নয়)
- ৗ সে কী রকমের মানুষ? ⇒ What kind of **man** he is? (**a man** নয়)

## Errors in verb

- ১) আমার কথা শোন ⇒ **Listen** to me. (**hear** নয়)
- ২) এই পেনসিলটা কাট - Please **sharpen** this pencil. (**mend** নয়)
- ৩) চাঁদের দিকে তাকাও ⇒ **Look at** the moon. (**see** নয়)
- ৪) আমি তাকে চোর বলে জানি ⇒ I knew him **to be** a thief. (**to be** বাদ হবে না)
- ৫) তিনি আমাকে অপেক্ষা করতে বললেন ⇒ He **told** me to wait. (**said** নয়)
- ৬) পুরস্কারটা লাভ করা কঠিন ⇒ The prize is hard **to** win. (**to be** নয়)
- ৭) ব্যাপারটা আমাকে জানানো হয়েছিল ⇒ I was informed of the matter.
- ৮) মনে হয় রোগী মারা যাবে ⇒ I am **afraid** the patient will die. (**think or hope** নয়)
- ৯) সে কেবল ঘুমাত আর কেছুই করত না ⇒ He did nothing but sleep.
- ১০) সে আমাকে মিথ্যাবাদী বলল- He **called** me a liar. (**told** নয়)
- ১১) সে কখনও মিথ্যা কথা বলেনা ⇒ He never **tells** lies. (**speak or says** নয়)
- ১২) সে সত্য কথা বলেছিল ⇒ He **spoke** the truth. (**said** নয়)
- ১৩) রাকিব আমার হাত ধরল ⇒ Rakib took **hold of** my hand. (**caught** নয়)

## Errors in adverb

- ১) আমি এখনই আসছি ⇒ I am coming **presently**. (**just now** নয়)
- ২) এটা কিছু পরিমাণে সত্য ⇒ This is **partly** true. (**somewhat** নয়)
- ৩) ঘরটি আমাদের জন্য নিতান্তই ছোট - The room is **much too** small for us. (**too much** নয়)
- ৪) তুমি কি সিনেমায় যাচ্ছ ⇒ Are you going to cinema? **Certainly!** (**Of course** নয়)
- ৫) প্রবন্ধটি সংক্ষেপে লিখ ⇒ Write the essay **briefly**. (**shortly** নয়)

## Errors in preposition

- ১) আপনি কার কথা বলেছেন? ⇒ **Whom** are you speaking of? (**of whom** নয়)
- ২) আমার মুখ বাবার মুখের মত দেখতে ⇒ My face resembles **my fathers**. (**to my father** নয়)
- ৩) আমি তাকে এ বিষয়ে সতর্ক করেছিলাম ⇒ I warned him **of** this. (**against or about** নয়)
- ৪) আমি খেলার চেয়ে পড়তে ভালোবাসি ⇒ I prefer **reading to writing**. (**to read than to write** নয়)
- ৫) এতে কোন সন্দেহ নাই ⇒ It admits **of** no doubt. (**of** বাদ হবে না)
- ৬) তুমি কি বইখানা পড়ে শেষ করেছ ⇒ Have you finished **reading** the book. (**to read** নয়)
- ৭) তুমি কোথায় গিয়েছিলে? ⇒ Where **had** you been? (**to** নয়)
- ৮) তোমার উপদেশে আমার উপকার হলো ⇒ I profited **by** your advice. (**from** নয়)
- ৯) তোমার উপরে আমার কোন বিশ্বাস নাই ⇒ I have no confidence **in** you. (**on or upon** নয়)
- ১০) রাজশাহী কি জন্য প্রসিদ্ধ? ⇒ What is Rajshashi noted for?
- ১১) সাফল্যের জন্য তোমাকে অভিনন্দন জানাচ্ছি ⇒ I congratulate you **on** your success. (**for** নয়)

ওঁ সে দশখানা বইয়ের অর্ডার দিয়েছে ⇒ *He has **ordered** ten books. (**ordered for** নয়)*

ওঁ হেডমাস্টারের কাছে আমার হয়ে একটু সুপারিশ করে দেবেন ⇒ *Please recommend **me** to the headmaster. (**for me** নয়)*

ওঁ ২৯ মে পরীক্ষা আরম্ভ হবে- *The examination will begin **on** the 29th May. (**from** নয়)*

ওঁ সন্ন্যাসীর কাছে রাজা ও ফকির সমান ⇒ *To a hermit a king and a beggar are alike. (**equal** নয়)*

## Errors in conjunctions

ওঁ চেষ্টা না করলে সফল হবে না ⇒ *Unless you try, you will **never** succeed. (**unless you do not try** হবে না)*

ওঁ তুমি যতক্ষণ না ফের, ততক্ষণ আমি অপেক্ষা করব ⇒ *I shall wait until **you** come back. (**until you do not** নয়)*

ওঁ সে আমার মত ইংরেজি বলতে পারে না ⇒ *He cannot speak English **as** I can. (**like I** হবে না)*

ওঁ সে কোন দেশের লোক? ⇒ *What country does he **belong** to. (**belongs** নয়)*

## Miscellaneous Errors

ওঁ আমার যখন পাঁচ বছর তখন আমার বাবা মারা যান ⇒ *My father died when I was a child five years old. (**of** হবে না)*

ওঁ কখন যাবে বল ⇒ *Tell me when you are going.*

ওঁ গতকাল আমি তাকে লিখেছিলাম ⇒ *I wrote **to** him yesterday or I wrote him a **letter** yesterday. (**I wrote him yesterday** হবে না)*

ওঁ তার নাম কি আমি জানি না ⇒ *I don't know what **his name is**. (**What is his name** হবে না)*

ওঁ তোমার মত মারুফও বুদ্ধিমান ⇒ *Maruf as well as you **is** intelligent. (**are** নয়)*

ওঁ পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকা তো অনেক টাকা ⇒ *Fifty thousand taka **is** a large sum. (**are** নয়)*

ওঁ বারটার মধ্যে কাজ শেষ করবে ⇒ *You must finish your work **by** 12 o'clock. (**within** নয়)*

ওঁ ভাত ও তরকারি আমাদের খাদ্য ⇒ *Rice and curry **is** our food. (**are** নয়)*

# ডিজিটাল বই বা ই-বুক বিজ্ঞাপন! বেস্ট মার্কেটিং!!

প্রথমে পড়ুন, এরপর বুঝুন, সবশেষে সিদ্ধান্ত নিন!



## কেন আমাদের ই-বুক সমূহে বিজ্ঞাপন দিবেনঃ

এই মুহূর্তে গড়ে ১ লাখের বেশি মানুষ আমাদের তৈরি বাংলা বই বা ই-বুক ডাউনলোড করেন এবং পড়েন। তাদের টার্গেট করেই আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের প্রচার ও প্রসারে সফল মার্কেটিং করতে পারেন।

👁️ ইবুকে বিজ্ঞাপন স্কিপ করার কোন সুযোগ নেই তাকে নেক্সট পেইজে যেতে হলে অবশ্যই বিজ্ঞাপন পেইজ স্ক্রল করেই যেতে হবে ( বিজ্ঞাপনটি তার দৃষ্টিগোচর হতে বাধ্য। )

📄 ইবুকে আপনার ক্লায়েন্ট লাইফটাইমের জন্য বিজ্ঞাপন ডাউনলোড করে নিবে। অর্থাৎ আল্লা খরচে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী বিজ্ঞাপন বা প্রচার...

📅 যতবার ইবুক পড়বে ততবার বিজ্ঞাপন চোখে পড়বে।

📄 ডাউনলোড ইবুক দ্বিগুণ বা জ্যামিতিক হারে ক্রমাগত অফলাইন ইউজারের কাছে শেয়ার হয়।

👉 বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রয়োজনীয় লিংক যুক্ত করতে পারবেন !!

আমাদের এই ইবুক পাবলিকেশন কোন ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠানও নয় এইটা জনসেবামূলক উদ্যোগ। মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় অনেক ইবুক প্রকাশ করে বিগত দিনগুলোতে লাখ লাখ পাঠকের মন জয় করেছে। আমাদের উদ্যোগ ও কাজকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে আপনিও হতে পারেন আমাদের পথ চলার একান্ত সহযোগী।

**নিচে লিংক সহ আমাদের বইয়ের ভিজিটর ও ডাউনলোড সংখ্যা দেখানো হলঃ**

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নোটঃ আমাদের ইবুক যাদের ভালোলাগে এবং যারা এই ফ্রি প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক গুলো থেকে প্রতিনিয়ত উপকৃত হচ্ছেন! তারা আমাদের হেল্পের জন্য... আপনাদের কাছের মানুষদের (যারা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বা পণ্যের প্রচার করতে চায়) উৎসাহিত করুন এবং মার্কেটিং এর এই নতুন আইডিয়া দিন। আপনার এই সহযোগিতা আমাদের এই ইবুক প্রকাশের উদ্যোগকে সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সহযোগিতা করবে। এতে আপনার মত আরও লাখো মানুষের উপকার হবে। আমরা আরও মানসম্মত ও প্রয়োজনীয় ইবুক আপনাদের জন্য প্রকাশ করতে পারবো।

ইবুকে আপনার পণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে যোগাযোগ করুনঃ **01738359555**

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# Common Errors in English

## Usage by Paul Brians

👉 **A / an** ⇒ If the word following begins with a vowel sound, the word you want is “an”: “Have an apple, Adam.” If the word following begins with a consonant, but begins with a vowel sound, you still need “an”: “An X-ray will show whether there’s a worm in it.” It is nonstandard and often considered sloppy speech to utter an “uh” sound in such cases.

The same rule applies to initialisms like “NGO” (for “non-governmental organization”). Because the letter N is pronounced “en,” it’s “an NGO” but when the phrase is spoken instead of the abbreviation, it’s “a non-governmental organization.”

When the following word definitely begins with a consonant sound, you need “a”: “A snake told me apples enhance mental abilities.”

Note that the letter Y can be either a vowel or a consonant. Although it is sounded as a vowel in words like “pretty,” at the beginning of words it is usually sounded as a consonant, as in “a yolk.”

Words beginning with the letter U which start with a Y consonant sound like “university” and “utensil” also take an “a”: “a university” and “a utensil.” But when an initial U has a vowel sound, the word is preceded by “an”: it’s “an umpire,” “an umbrella,” and “an understanding.”

See also “an historic.”

👉 **A whole ’nother** ⇒ A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

It is one thing to use the expression “a whole ’nother” as a consciously slangy phrase suggesting rustic charm and a completely different matter to use it mistakenly. The A at the beginning of the phrase is the common article “a” but is here treated as if it were simultaneously the first letter of “another,” interrupted by “whole.”

👉 **A.D.** ⇒ “A.D.” does not mean “after death,” as many people suppose. “B.C.” stands for the English phrase “before Christ,” but “A.D.” stands confusingly for a Latin phrase: anno domini (“in the year of the Lord”—the year Jesus was born). If the calendar actually changed with Jesus’ death, then what would we do with the years during which he lived? Since Jesus was probably actually born around 6 B.C. or so, the connection of the calendar with him can be misleading. Many Biblical scholars, historians, and archeologists prefer the less sectarian designations “before the Common Era” (B.C.E.) and “the Common Era” (C.E.). Traditionally “A.D.” was placed before the year number and “B.C.” after, but many people now prefer to put both abbreviations after the numbers.

All of these abbreviations can also be spelled without their periods.

👉 **Abject** ⇒ “Abject” is always negative—it means “hopeless,” not “extreme.” You can’t experience “abject joy” unless you’re being deliberately paradoxical.

👉 **Able to** ⇒ People are able to do things, but things are not able to be done: you should not say, “the budget shortfall was able to be solved by selling brownies.”

👉 **About** ⇒ ABOUT

“This isn’t about you.” What a great rebuke! But conservatives sniff at this sort of abstract use of “about,” as in “I’m all about good taste” or “successful truffle-making is about temperature control”; so it’s better to avoid it in very formal English.

### 👉 **Absorbtion** ⇒ ABSORPTION

Although it’s “absorbed” and “absorbing,” the correct spelling of the noun is “absorption.”

But note that scientists distinguish between “absorption” as the process of swallowing up or sucking in something and “adsorption” as the process by which something adheres to the surface of something else without being assimilated into it. Even technical writers often confuse these two.

👉 **Abstruse / obtuse** ⇒ Most people first encounter “obtuse” in geometry class, where it labels an angle of more than 90 degrees and less than 180. Imagine what sort of blunt arrowhead that kind of angle would make and you will understand why it also has a figurative meaning of “dull, stupid.” But people often mix the word up with “abstruse,” which means “difficult to understand.” When you mean to criticize something for being needlessly complex or baffling, the word you need is not “obtuse,” but “abstruse.”

👉 **Academia** ⇒ Although some academics are undoubtedly nuts, the usual English-language pronunciation of “academia” does not rhyme with “macadamia.” The third syllable is pronounced “deem.” Just say “academe” and add “ee-yuh.” However, there’s an interesting possibility if you go with “ack-uh-DAME-ee-yuh: although some people will sneer at your lack of sophistication, others will assume you’re using the Latin pronunciation and being learned.

### 👉 **Acapella, a capella** ⇒ A CAPPELLA

In referring to singing unaccompanied by instruments, the traditional spelling is the Italian one, a cappella: two words, two Ps, two Ls. The Latin spelling a capella is learned, but in the realm of musical terminology, we usually stick with Italian. The one-word spelling “acapella” is widely used by Americans, including by some performing groups, but this is generally regarded by musical experts as an error.

👉 **Accede / exceed** ⇒ If you drive too fast, you exceed the speed limit. “Accede” is a much rarer word meaning “give in,” “agree.”

👉 **Accent marks** ⇒ In what follows, “accent mark” will be used in a loose sense to include all diacritical marks that guide pronunciation. Operating systems and programs differ in how they produce accent marks, but it’s worth learning how yours works. Writing them in by hand afterwards looks amateurish.

Words adopted from foreign languages sometimes carry their accent marks with them, as in “fiancé,” “protégé,” and “cliché.” As words become more at home in English, they tend to shed the marks: “Café” is often spelled “cafe.” Unfortunately, “résumé” seems to be losing its marks one at a time (see under “vita/vitae”).

Many computer users have not learned their systems well enough to understand how to produce the desired accent and often insert an apostrophe (curled) or foot mark (straight) after the accented letter instead: “cafe’.” This is both ugly and incorrect. The same error is commonly seen on storefront signs.

So far we’ve used examples containing acute (right-leaning) accent marks. French and Italian (but not Spanish) words often contain grave (left-leaning) accents; in Italian it’s a caffè. It is important not to substitute one kind of accent for the other.

The diaeresis over a letter signifies that it is to be pronounced as a separate syllable: “noël” and “naïve” are sometimes spelled with a diaeresis, for instance. The umlaut, which looks identical, modifies the sound of a vowel, as in German *Fräulein* (girl), where the accent mark changes the “frow” sound of *Frau* (woman) to “froy.” Rock groups like “Blue Öyster Cult” scattered umlauts about nonsensically to create an exotic look.

Spanish words not completely assimilated into English like *piñata* and *niño* retain the tilde, which tells you that an “N” is to be pronounced with a “Y” sound after it.

In English-language publications accent marks are often discarded, but the acute and grave accents are the ones most often retained.

👉 **Accept / except** ⇒ If you offer me Godiva chocolates I will gladly accept them—except for the candied violet ones. Just remember that the “X” in “except” excludes things—they tend to stand out, be different. In contrast, just look at those two cozy “c’s” snuggling up together. Very accepting. And be careful; when typing “except” it often comes out “expect.”

👉 **Access** ⇒ GET ACCESS TO

“Access” is one of many nouns that’s been turned into a verb in recent years. Conservatives object to phrases like “you can access your account online.” Substitute “use,” “reach,” or “get access to” if you want to please them.

👉 **Accessory** ⇒ ACCESSORY

There’s an “ack” sound at the beginning of this word, though some mispronounce it as if the two “c’s” were to be sounded the same as the two “SS’s.”

👉 **Accidentally** ⇒ ACCIDENTALLY

You can remember this one by remembering how to spell “accidental.” There are quite a few words with -ally suffixes (like “incidentally”) which are not to be confused with words that have -ly suffixes (like “independently”). “Incidental” is a word, but “independental” is not.

👉 **Accurate / precise** ⇒ In ordinary usage, “accurate” and “precise” are often used as rough synonyms, but scientists like to distinguish between them. Accurate measurements reflect true values; but precise measurements are close to each other, even if all of them are wrong in the same way. The same distinction applies in scientific contexts to the related words “accuracy” and “precision.”

This distinction is not likely to come up outside of contexts where it is understood, but science writers might want to be aware that the general public will not understand this distinction unless it’s explained.

👉 **Acronyms and apostrophes** ⇒ One unusual modern use of the apostrophe is in plural acronyms, like “ICBM’s” “NGO’s” and “CD’s”. Since this pattern violates the rule that apostrophes are not used before an S indicating a plural, many people object to it. It is also perfectly legitimate to write “cds,” etc. See also “50’s.” But the use of apostrophes with initialisms like “learn your ABC’s” and “mind your P’s and q’s” is now so universal as to be acceptable in almost any context.

Note that “acronym” was used originally only to label pronounceable abbreviations like “NATO,” but is now generally applied to all sorts of initialisms. Be aware that some people consider this extended definition of “acronym” to be an error.

👉 **Acrossed** ⇒ ACROSS

The chicken may have crossed the road, but did so by walking across it.

👉 **Actionable / doable** ⇒ “Actionable” is a technical term referring to something that provides grounds for a legal action or lawsuit. People in the business world have begun using it as a fancy synonym for “doable” or “feasible.” This is both pretentious and confusing.

👉 **Actual fact / actually** ⇒ ACTUALLY

“In actual fact” is an unnecessarily complicated way of saying “actually.”

👉 **Ad / add** ⇒ AD

“Advertisement” is abbreviated “ad,” not “add.”

👉 **Ad nauseum** ⇒ AD NAUSEAM

Seeing how often ad nauseam is misspelled makes some people want to throw up. English writers also often mistakenly half-translate the phrase as ad nausea. This Latin phrase comes from a term in logic, the argumentum ad nauseam, in which debaters wear out the opposition by just repeating arguments until they get sick of the whole thing and give in.

👉 **Adapt / adopt** ⇒ You can adopt a child or a custom or a law; in all of these cases you are making the object of the adoption your own, accepting it. If you adapt something, however, you are changing it.

👉 **Added bonus** ⇒ BONUS

People who avoid redundancies tend to object to the extremely popular phrase “added bonus” because a bonus is already something additional. Speakers who use this phrase probably think of “bonus” as meaning something vaguely like “benefit.” The phrase is so common that it’s unlikely to cause you real problems. More people frown on the similarly redundant “and plus”: “I was fired, and plus I never got my last paycheck.” Just say “and” or “plus.”

👉 **Addicting** ⇒ Do you find beer nuts addicting or addictive? “Addicting” is a perfectly legitimate word, but much less common than “addictive,” and some people will scowl at you if you use it.

👉 **Administer / minister** ⇒ You can minister to someone by administering first aid. Note how the “ad” in “administer” resembles “aid” in order to remember the correct form of the latter phrase. “Minister” as a verb always requires “to” following it.

👉 **Administrate** ⇒ ADMINISTER

Although it is very popular with administrators and others, many people scorn “administrate” as an unnecessary substitute for the more common verb form “administer.”

👉 **Admission / admittance** ⇒ “Admission” is a much more common word than “admittance” and is a good choice for almost all contexts. You may gain admission or admittance to a college, but you’ll probably be dealing with its admissions office. When “admittance” is used, it’s most likely to refer to physical entry into some place or other, as is indicated by signs saying “No Admittance.”

In electronics, admittance is the opposite of impedance.

👉 **Adopted / adoptive** ⇒ Some people seem to think that “adoptive” is just a more fancy word than “adopted” and write about “the adoptive child.” But the two words have different meanings. Parents who do the adopting are adoptive, children are adopted.

Don’t call people adopting children “adaptive,” though. Adaptive parents would be parents that could adapt themselves to changing circumstances.

When a city, club, or other organization adopts, it also is adoptive.

👉 **Adultry** ⇒ ADULTERY

“Adultery” is often misspelled “adultry,” as if it were something every adult should try. This spelling error is likely to get you snickered at. The term does not refer to all sorts of illicit sex: at least one of the partners involved has to be married for the relationship to be adulterous.

👉 **Advance / advanced** ⇒ When you hear about something in advance, earlier than other people, you get advance notice or information. “Advanced” means “complex, sophisticated” and doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with the revealing of secrets.

👉 **Adverse / averse** ⇒ The word “adverse” turns up most frequently in the phrase “adverse circumstances,” meaning difficult circumstances, circumstances which act as an adversary; but people often confuse this word with “averse,” a much rarer word, meaning having a strong feeling against, or aversion toward.

👉 **Advice / advise** ⇒ “Advice” is the noun, “advise” the verb. When a columnist advises people, she gives them advice.

👉 **Adviser / advisor** ⇒ “Adviser” and “advisor” are equally fine spellings. There is no distinction between them.

👉 **Advocate for** ⇒ ADVOCATE

When they are acting as advocates for a cause, people often say they are “advocating for”—say—traffic safety. This is not as widely accepted as “campaigning for” or “working toward.” Saying you are “advocating for the blind” leaves a lot of listeners wondering what it is you advocate for them. If you can substitute “advocate” for “advocate for,” you should do so: “I advocate for higher pay for teachers” becomes “I advocate higher pay for teachers.”

👉 **Aesthetic / ascetic** ⇒ People often encounter these two words first in college, and may confuse one with the other although they have almost opposite connotations. “Aesthetic” (also spelled “esthetic”) has to do with beauty, whereas “ascetic” has to do with avoiding pleasure, including presumably the pleasure of looking at beautiful things.

St. Francis had an ascetic attitude toward life, whereas Oscar Wilde had an esthetic attitude toward life.

👉 **Affect / effect** ⇒ There are five distinct words here. When “affect” is accented on the final syllable (a-FECT), it is usually a verb meaning “have an influence on”: “The million-dollar donation from the industrialist did not affect my vote against the Clean Air Act.”

Occasionally a pretentious person is said to affect an artificial air of sophistication. Speaking with a borrowed French accent or ostentatiously wearing a large diamond ear stud might be an affectation. In this sort of context, “affect” means “to make a display of or deliberately cultivate.”

Another unusual meaning is indicated when the word is accented on the first syllable (AFF-ect), meaning “emotion.” In this case the word is used mostly by psychiatrists and social scientists—people who normally know how to spell it. The real problem arises when people confuse the first spelling with the second: “effect.” This too can be two different words. The more common one is a noun: “When I left the stove on, the effect was that the house filled with smoke.” When you affect a situation, you have an effect on it.

Less common is a verb meaning “to create”: “I’m trying to effect a change in the way we purchase widgets.” No wonder people are confused. Note especially that the proper expression is not “take affect” but “take effect”—become effective. Hey, nobody ever said English was logical: just memorize it and get on with your life.

The stuff in your purse? Your personal effects.

The stuff in movies? Sound effects and special effects.

“Affective” is a technical term having to do with emotions; the vast majority of the time the spelling you want is “effective.”

👉 **Affluence / effluence** ⇒ Wealth brings affluence; sewage is effluence.

👉 **Afghan / Afghani** ⇒ The citizens of Afghanistan are Afghans. Similarly, it's Afghan food, Afghan politics, and Afghan afghans. The only time to use “Afghani” is in reference to the unit of Afghan currency by that name. Afghans spend Afghanis.

👉 **African-American** ⇒ There have been several polite terms used in the US to refer to persons of African descent: “colored,” “negro,” “Black,” “Afro-American,” and “African American.” “Colored” is definitely dated, though “people of color” is now widely used with a broader meaning, including anyone with non-European ancestry, sometimes even when their skin is not discernibly darker than that of a typical European. A few contemporary writers like to defy convention by referring to themselves as “negro.” “Black,” formerly a proudly assertive label claimed by young radicals in the 1960s, is now seen by some people as a racist insult. Some people insist on capitalizing “Black,” but others prefer “black.” The safest and most common neutral term is “African American,” but Americans sometimes misuse it to label people of African descent living in other countries or even actual Africans. To qualify as an “African American” you have to be an American.

Although it is traditional to hyphenate “African-American,” “Irish-American,” “Cuban-American,” etc., there is a recent trend toward omitting the hyphen, possibly in reaction to the belittling phrase “hyphenated Americans.” However, some styles still call for the hyphen when the phrase is used adjectivally, so that you might be an African American who enjoys African-American writers. Omitting the hyphen may puzzle some readers, but it's not likely to offend anyone.

👉 **Afterall** ⇒ AFTER ALL

“After all” is always two words.

👉 **Afterwards / afterwords** ⇒ Like “towards,” “forwards,” and “homewards,” “afterwards” ends with -wards. “Afterwords” are sometimes the explanatory essays at the ends of books or speeches uttered at the end of plays or other works. They are made up of words.

👉 **Agnostic / atheist** ⇒ Both agnostics and atheists are regularly criticized as illogical by people who don't understand the meaning of these terms. An agnostic is a person who believes that the existence of a god or gods cannot be proven or known. Agnosticism is a statement about the limits of human knowledge. It is an error to suppose that agnostics perpetually hesitate between faith and doubt: they are confident they cannot know the ultimate truth. Similarly, atheists believe there are no gods. Atheists need not be able to disprove the existence of gods to be consistent just as believers do not need to be able to prove that gods do exist in order to be regarded as religious. Both attitudes have to do with beliefs, not knowledge.

“Agnostic” is often used metaphorically of any refusal to make a judgment, usually on the basis of a lack of evidence; people can be agnostic about acupuncture, for instance, if they believe there is not enough evidence one way or another to decide its effectiveness.

👉 **Agreeance / agreement** ⇒ AGREEMENT

When you agree with someone you are in agreement.

👉 **Ahold / hold** ⇒ HOLD

In standard English you just “get hold” of something or somebody.

👉 **Aid / aide** ⇒ In American English, a personal assistant is usually an aide (nurse’s aide, presidential aide) but an inanimate object or process is always an aid (hearing aid, first aid).

👉 **Ain’t** ⇒ AM NOT, ISN’T, AREN’T

“Ain’t” has a long and vital history as a substitute for “isn’t,” “aren’t” and so on. It was originally formed from a contraction of “am not” and is still commonly used in that sense. Even though it has been universally condemned as the classic “mistake” in English, everyone uses it occasionally as part of a joking phrase or to convey a down-to-earth quality. But if you always use it instead of the more “proper” contractions you’re sure to be branded as uneducated.

👉 **Aisle / isle** ⇒ An aisle is a narrow passageway, especially in a church or store; an isle is an island. Propose to the person you’re stranded on a desert isle with and maybe you’ll march down the aisle together after you’re rescued.

👉 **Ala** ⇒ À LA

If you offer pie à la mode on your menu, be careful not to spell it “ala mode” or—worse—“alamode.” The accent over the first “a” is optional in English, although this is an adaptation of the French phrase à la mode de meaning “in the manner of.” The one-word spelling used to be common, but as people became more sensitive to preserving the spelling of originally French phrases, it fell out of favor. In whose manner is it to plop ice cream on your pie? Nobody really knows, but it’s yummy. Stick with the two-word spelling in all other uses of the phrase “à la” as well.

👉 **All** ⇒ Put this word where it belongs in the sentence. In negative statements, don’t write “All the pictures didn’t show her dimples” when you mean “The pictures didn’t all show her dimples.”

👉 **All and all** ⇒ ALL IN ALL

“The dog got into the fried chicken, we forgot the sunscreen, and the kids started whining at the end, but all in all the picnic was a success.” “All in all” is a traditional phrase which can mean “all things considered,” “after all,” or “nevertheless.” People unfamiliar with the traditional wording often change it to “all and all,” but this is nonstandard.

👉 **All be it** ⇒ ALBEIT

“Albeit” is a single word meaning “although”: “Rani’s recipe called for a tablespoon of saffron, which made it very tasty, albeit rather expensive.” It should not be broken up into three separate words as “all be it,” just as “although” is not broken up into “all though.”

👉 **All for not** ⇒ ALL FOR NAUGHT

“Naught” means “nothing,” and the phrase “all for naught” means “all for nothing.” This is often misspelled “all for not” and occasionally “all for knot.”

👉 **All goes well / augurs well** ⇒ AUGURS WELL

Some folks who don’t understand the word “augur” (to foretell based on omens) try to make sense of the common phrase “augurs well” by mangling it into “all goes well.” “Augurs well” is synonymous with “bodes well.”

👉 **All of the sudden** ⇒ ALL OF A SUDDEN

An unexpected event happens not “all of the sudden” but “all of a sudden.”

👉 **All the farther** ⇒ AS FAR AS

In some American dialects it is not uncommon to hear sentences such as “Abilene is all the farther the rustlers got before the posse caught up with them.”

The strangely constructed expression “all the farther” should be replaced with the much more straightforward “as far as.”

👉 **Alleged, allegedly** ⇒ Seeking to avoid prejudging the facts in a crime and protect the rights of the accused, reporters sometimes over-use “alleged” and “allegedly.” If it is clear that someone has been robbed at gunpoint, it’s not necessary to describe it as an alleged robbery nor the victim as an alleged victim. This practice insultingly casts doubt on the honesty of the victim and protects no one. An accused perpetrator is one whose guilt is not yet established, so it is redundant to speak of an “alleged accused.” If the perpetrator has not yet been identified, it’s pointless to speak of the search for an “alleged perpetrator.”

👉 **Alliterate / illiterate** ⇒ Pairs of words which begin with the same sound are said to alliterate, like “wild and wooly.” Those who can’t read are illiterate.

👉 **Alls** ⇒ ALL “Alls I know is . . .” May result from anticipating the “S” in “is,” but the standard expression is “All I know is. . . .”

👉 **Allude / elude** ⇒ You can allude (refer) to your daughter’s membership in the honor society when boasting about her, but a criminal tries to elude (escape) captivity.

See also illude.

👉 **Allude / refer** ⇒ To allude to something is to refer to it indirectly, by suggestion. If you are being direct and unambiguous, you refer to the subject rather than alluding to it.

👉 **Allusion / illusion** ⇒ An allusion is a reference, something you allude to: “Her allusion to flowers reminded me that Valentine’s Day was coming.” In that English paper, don’t write “literary illusions” when you mean “allusions.” A mirage, hallucination, or a magic trick is an illusion. (Doesn’t being fooled just make you ill?)

👉 **Allusive / elusive / illusive** ⇒ When a lawyer alludes to his client’s poor mother, he is being allusive. When the mole keeps eluding the traps you’ve set in the garden, it’s being elusive. We also speak of matters that are difficult to understand, identify, or remember as elusive. Illusions can be illusive, but we more often refer to them as illusory.

👉 **Almost** ⇒ Like “only,” “almost” must come immediately before the word or phrase it modifies: “She almost gave a million dollars to the museum” means something quite different from “She gave almost a million dollars to the museum.” Right? So you shouldn’t write, “There was almost a riotous reaction when the will was read” when what you mean is “There was an almost riotous reaction.”

👉 **Along the same vein** ⇒ IN THE SAME VEIN, ALONG THE SAME LINE  
The expressions “in the same vein” and “along the same line” mean the same thing (“on the same subject”), but those who cross-pollinate them to create the hybrid “along the same vein” sound a little odd to those who are used to the standard expressions.

👉 **Alot** ⇒ A LOT

Perhaps this common spelling error began because there does exist in English a word spelled “allot” which is a verb meaning to apportion or grant. The correct form, with “a” and “lot” separated by a space is perhaps not often encountered in print because formal writers usually use other expressions such as “a great deal,” “often,” etc.

You shouldn’t write “alittle” either. It’s “a little.”

👉 **Aloud / allowed** ⇒ If you think Grandma allowed the kids to eat too much ice cream, you'd better not say so aloud, or her feelings will be hurt. "Aloud" means "out loud" and refers to sounds (most often speech) that can be heard by others. But this word is often misused when people mean "allowed," meaning "permitted."

👉 **Already / all ready** ⇒ "All ready" is a phrase meaning "completely prepared," as in "As soon as I put my coat on, I'll be all ready." "Already," however, is an adverb used to describe something that has happened before a certain time, as in "What do you mean you'd rather stay home? I've already got my coat on."

👉 **Alright** ⇒ ALL RIGHT

The traditional form of this phrase has become so rare in the popular press that many readers have probably never noticed that it is actually two words. But if you want to avoid irritating traditionalists you'd better tell them that you feel "all right" rather than "alright."

👉 **Altar / alter** ⇒ An altar is that platform at the front of a church or in a temple; to alter something is to change it.

👉 **Alterior** ⇒ ULTERIOR

When you have a concealed reason for doing something, it's an ulterior motive.

👉 **Alternate / alternative** ⇒ Although UK authorities disapprove, in US usage, "alternate" is frequently an adjective, substituted for the older "alternative": "an alternate route." "Alternate" can also be a noun; a substitute delegate is, for instance, called an "alternate." But when you're speaking of "every other" as in "our club meets on alternate Tuesdays," you can't substitute "alternative."

👉 **Altho, tho** ⇒ ALTHOUGH

The casual spellings "altho" and "tho" are not acceptable in formal or edited English. Stick with "although" and "though."

👉 **Altogether / all together** ⇒ "Altogether" is an adverb meaning "completely," "entirely." For example: "When he first saw the examination questions, he was altogether baffled." "All together," in contrast, is a phrase meaning "in a group." For example: "The wedding guests were gathered all together in the garden." Undressed people are said in informal speech to be "in the altogether" (perhaps a shortening of the phrase "altogether naked").

👉 **Alumnus / alumni** ⇒ We used to have "alumnus" (male singular), "alumni" (male plural), "alumna" (female singular) and "alumnae" (female plural); but the latter two are now popular only among older female graduates, with the first two terms becoming unisex. However, it is still important to distinguish between one alumnus and a stadium full of alumni. Never say, "I am an alumni" if you don't want to cast discredit on your school. Many avoid the whole problem by resorting to the informal abbreviation "alum."

👉 **AM / PM** ⇒ "AM" stands for the Latin phrase Ante Meridiem—which means "before noon"—and "PM" stands for Post Meridiem: "after noon." Although digital clocks routinely label noon "12:00 PM" you should avoid this expression not only because it is incorrect, but because many people will imagine you are talking about midnight instead. The same goes for "12:00 AM." You can say or write "twelve noon," "noon sharp," or "exactly at noon" when you want to designate a precise time.

It is now rare to see periods placed after these abbreviations as in “A.M.”; but in formal writing it is still preferable to capitalize them, though the lower-case “am” and “pm” are now so popular they are not likely to get you into trouble. Occasionally computer programs encourage you to write “AM” and “PM” without a space before them, but others will misread your data if you omit the space. The nonstandard habit of omitting the space is spreading rapidly, and should be avoided in formal writing.

🌀 **Amature** ⇒ AMATEUR

Most of the words we’ve borrowed from the French that have retained their “-eur” endings are pretty sophisticated, like “restaurateur” (notice, no “N”) and “auteur” (in film criticism), but “amateur” attracts amateurish spelling.

🌀 **Ambiguous / ambivalent** ⇒ Even though the prefix “ambi-” means “both,” “ambiguous” has come to mean “unclear,” “undefined,” while “ambivalent” means “torn between two opposing feelings or views.” If your attitude cannot be defined into two polarized alternatives, then you’re ambiguous, not ambivalent.

🌀 **Ambivalent / indifferent** ⇒ If you feel pulled in two directions about some issue, you’re ambivalent about it; but if you have no particular feelings about it, you’re indifferent.

🌀 **American** ⇒ Some Canadians and more Latin Americans are understandably irritated when US citizens refer to themselves simply as “Americans.” Canadians (and only Canadians) use the term “North American” to include themselves in a two-member group with their neighbor to the south, though geographers usually include Mexico in North America. When addressing an international audience composed largely of people from the Americas, it is wise to consider their sensitivities.

However, it is pointless to try to ban this usage in all contexts. Outside of the Americas, “American” is universally understood to refer to things relating to the US. There is no good substitute. Brazilians, Argentineans, and Canadians all have unique terms to refer to themselves. None of them refer routinely to themselves as “Americans” outside of contexts like the “Organization of American States.” Frank Lloyd Wright promoted “Usonian,” but it never caught on. For better or worse, “American” is standard English for “citizen or resident of the United States of America.”

🌀 **Amongst / among** ⇒ Although in America “amongst” has not dated nearly as badly as “whilst,” it is still less common in standard speech than “among.” The -st forms are still widely used in the UK.

🌀 **Amoral / immoral** ⇒ “Amoral” is a rather technical word meaning “unrelated to morality” or “indifferent to morality.” When you mean to denounce someone’s behavior, call it “immoral.”

🌀 **Amount / number** ⇒ This is a vast subject. I will try to limit the number of words I expend on it so as not to use up too great an amount of space. The confusion between the two categories of words relating to amount and number is so pervasive that those of us who still distinguish between them constitute an endangered species; but if you want to avoid our ire, learn the difference. Amount words relate to quantities of things that are measured in bulk; number to things that can be counted.

In the second sentence above, it would have been improper to write “the amount of words” because words are discrete entities which can be counted, or numbered.

Here is a handy chart to distinguish the two categories of words:  
amount number quantity number little few less fewer much many

You can eat fewer cookies, but you drink less milk. If you eat too many cookies, people would probably think you've had too much dessert. If the thing being measured is being considered in countable units, then use number words. Even a substance which is considered in bulk can also be measured by number of units. For instance, you shouldn't drink too much wine, but you should also avoid drinking too many glasses of wine. Note that here you are counting glasses. They can be numbered.

The most common mistake of this kind is to refer to an "amount" of people instead of a "number" of people.

Just to confuse things, "more" can be used either way: you can eat more cookies and drink more milk.

Exceptions to the less/fewer pattern are references to units of time and money, which are usually treated as amounts: less than an hour, less than five dollars. Only when you are referring to specific coins or bills would you use fewer: "I have fewer than five state quarters to go to make my collection complete."

👉 **Ampitheater** ⇒ AMPHITHEATER

The classy way to pronounce the first syllable of this word is "amf-," but if you choose the more popular "amp-" remember that you still have to include the H after the P when spelling it. UK-standard writers spell it "amphitheatre," of course.

👉 **An / and** ⇒ It's easy to type "and" when you mean "an." A spelling checker won't catch the mistake.

👉 **An historic** ⇒ A HISTORIC

You should use "an" before a word beginning with an "H" only if the "H" is not pronounced: "an honest effort"; it's properly "a historic event" though many sophisticated speakers somehow prefer the sound of "an historic," so that version is not likely to get you into any real trouble.

👉 **Analogous** ⇒ Even though "analogy" is spoken with a soft G, use a hard G in pronouncing "analogous" so that it sounds like the beginning of the word "gust." Many people mistakenly use a soft G, which sounds like the beginning of the word "just."

👉 **Ancestor** ⇒ When Albus Dumbledore said that Lord Voldemort was "the last remaining ancestor of Salazar Slytherin," more than one person noted that he had made a serious verbal bumble; and in later printings of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets author J. K. Rowling corrected that to "last remaining descendant." People surprisingly often confuse these two terms with each other. Your great-grandmother is your ancestor; you are her descendant.

👉 **And / or** ⇒ The legal phrase "and/or," indicating that you can either choose between two alternatives or choose both of them, has proved irresistible in other contexts and is now widely acceptable though it irritates some readers as jargon. However, you can logically use it only when you are discussing choices which may or may not both be done: "Bring chips and/or beer." It's very much overused where simple "or" would do, and it would be wrong to say, "you can get to the campus for this morning's meeting on a bike and/or in a car." Choosing one eliminates the possibility of the other, so this isn't an and/or situation.

👉 **And also** ⇒ AND, ALSO

"And also" is redundant; say just "and" or "also."

👉 **Anecdote / antidote** ⇒ A humorist relates "anecdotes." The doctor prescribes "antidotes" for children who have swallowed poison. Laughter may be the best medicine, but that's no reason to confuse these two with each other.

👉 **Angel / angle** ⇒ People who want to write about winged beings from Heaven often miscall them “angles.” A triangle has three angles. The Heavenly Host is made of angels. Just remember the adjectival form: “angelic.” If you pronounce it aloud you’ll be reminded that the E comes before the L.

👉 **Another words** ⇒ IN OTHER WORDS

When you reword a statement, you can preface it by saying “in other words.” The phrase is not “another words.”

👉 **Anteclimax** ⇒ ANTICLIMAX

When an exciting build-up leads to a disappointing end, the result is an anticlimax—the opposite of a climax. The prefix “anti-” is used to indicate opposition whereas the prefix “ante-” is used to indicate that something precedes something else; so be careful not to misspell this word “anteclimax.”

👉 **Antihero** ⇒ In literature, theater, and film, an antihero is a central character who is not very admirable: weak, lazy, incompetent, or mean-spirited. However, antiheroes are rarely actually evil, and you should not use this word as a synonym for “villain” if you want to get a good grade on your English lit paper.

👉 **Anxious / eager** ⇒ Most people use “anxious” interchangeably with “eager,” but its original meaning had to do with worrying, being full of anxiety. Perfectly correct phrases like, “anxious to please” obscure the nervous tension implicit in this word and lead people to say less correct things like “I’m anxious for Christmas morning to come so I can open my presents.” Traditionalists frown on anxiety-free anxiousness. Say instead you are eager for or looking forward to a happy event.

👉 **Any more** ⇒ ANY MORE

In the first place, the traditional (though now uncommon) spelling is as two words: “any more” as in “We do not sell bananas any more.” In the second place, it should not be used at the beginning of a sentence as a synonym for “nowadays.” In certain dialects of English it is common to utter phrases like “anymore you have to grow your own if you want really ripe tomatoes,” but this is guaranteed to jolt listeners who aren’t used to it. Even if they can’t quite figure out what’s wrong, they’ll feel that your speech is vaguely clunky and awkward. “Any more” always needs to be used as part of an expression of negation except in questions like “Do you have any more bananas?” Now you won’t make that mistake any more, will you?

Some Americans now distinguish between the one-word and two-word versions. “Anymore” is recommended for uses meaning “nowadays,” and “any more” for other uses. Examples: “I don’t bet on horses anymore” vs. “I don’t want any more neckties.” This distinction is not universally observed by any means. In the UK, the two-word spelling is still preferred.

👉 **Any other number** ⇒ ANY NUMBER OF OTHER

When there are a lot of possible alternatives, we may say there are any number of them: “There are any number of colors I would have preferred to this sickening lime green.”

This expression often gets scrambled into “any other number of.”

👉 **Anyone / any one** ⇒ When it means “anybody,” “anyone” is spelled as a single word: “anyone can enter the drawing.”

But when it means “any single one,” “any one” is spelled as two words: “any one of the tickets may win.”

👉 **Anytime** ⇒ ANY TIME

Though it is often compressed into a single word by analogy with “anywhere” and similar words, “any time” is traditionally a two-word phrase.

👉 **Anyways** ⇒ ANYWAY

“Anyways” at the beginning of a sentence usually indicates that the speaker has resumed a narrative thread: “Anyways, I told Matilda that guy was a lazy bum before she ever married him.” It also occurs at the end of phrases and sentences, meaning “in any case”: “He wasn’t all that good-looking anyways.” A slightly less rustic quality can be imparted to these sentences by substituting the more formal *anyway*. Neither expression is a good idea in formal written English. The two-word phrase “any way” has many legitimate uses, however: “Is there any way to prevent the impending disaster?”

👉 **Anywhere** ⇒ ANYWHERE

“Anywhere,” like “somewhere” and “nowhere,” is always one word.

👉 **Anywheres** ⇒ ANYWHERE “Anywheres” is a dialectal variation on the standard English word “anywhere.”

👉 **Apart / a part** ⇒ Paradoxically, the one-word form implies separation while the two-word form implies union. Feuding roommates decide to live apart. Their time together may be a part of their life they will remember with some bitterness.

👉 **Apiece / a piece** ⇒ When you mean “each” the expression is “apiece”: these pizzas are really cheap—only ten dollars apiece.” But when “piece” actually refers to a piece of something, the required two-word expression is “a piece”: “This pizza is really expensive—they sell it by the slice for ten dollars a piece.” Despite misspellings in popular music lyrics, the expression is not “down the road apiece”; it’s “down the road a piece.”

👉 **Apostrophes** ⇒ First let’s all join in a hearty curse of the grammarians who inserted the wretched apostrophe into possessives in the first place. It may well have been a mistake. In Medieval English possessive nouns ended with an -ES or -YS. Eventually the vowel before the S disappeared, and we were left with forms like “Johns hat.” Some 17th-century writers took the result to be an abbreviation and decided that the simple “s” of possession in a phrase like “Johns hat” must have been formed out of a contraction of the more “proper” “John his hat.” One theory is that since in English we mark contractions with an apostrophe, some scholars did so, and we were stuck with “John’s hat.” Their purported error can be a handy reminder: if you’re not sure whether a noun ending in S should be followed by an apostrophe, ask yourself whether you could plausibly substitute “his” or “her” for the S.

The exception to this pattern involves personal pronouns indicating possession like “his,” “hers,” and “its.” For more on this point, see “its/it’s.”

Get this straight once and for all: when the S is added to a word simply to make it a plural, no apostrophe is used (except in expressions where letters or numerals are treated like words, like “mind your P’s and q’s” and “learn your ABC’s”).

Apostrophes are also used to indicate omitted letters in real contractions: “do not” becomes “don’t.”

Why can’t we all agree to do away with the wretched apostrophe? Because its two uses—contraction and possession—have people so thoroughly confused that they are always putting in apostrophes where they don’t belong, in simple plurals (“cucumber’s for sale”) and family names when they are referred to collectively (“the Smith’s”).

The practice of putting improper apostrophes in family names on signs in front yards is an endless source of confusion. “The Brown’s” is just plain wrong. (If you wanted to suggest “the residence of the Browns” you would have to write “The Browns’,” with the apostrophe after the S, which is there to indicate a plural number, not as an indication of possession.) If you simply want to indicate that a family named Brown lives here, the sign out front should read simply “The Browns.” When a name ends in an S you need to add an ES to make it plural: “The Adamses.”

No apostrophes for simple plural names or names ending in S, OK? I get irritated when people address me as “Mr. Brian’s.”

What about when plural names are used to indicate possession? “The Browns’ cat” is standard (the second S is “understood”), though some prefer “the Browns’s cat.” The pattern is the same with names ending in S: “the Adamses’ cat” or—theoretically—“the Adamses’s cat.” However, because these standard forms can seem awkward, “the Adams’ cat” is widely accepted, with one S indicating both plural number and possession.

Apostrophes are often mistakenly omitted in common expressions such as “at arm’s length” and “at wits’ end.” Note that the position of the apostrophe before or after the S depends on whether the word is a plural form ending in S. You hold someone at the length of your arm (singular), but are at the end of your wits (plural).

Other examples: “the people’s choice,” “for old times’ sake,” and “for heaven’s sake.” Why is the place name in England “Land’s End” but the American corporation “Lands’ End”? It was just a mistake, and now the company is stuck with its misplaced apostrophe.

Apostrophes are also misplaced in common plural nouns on signs: “Restrooms are for customer’s use only.” Who is this privileged customer to deserve a private bathroom? The sign should read “for customers’ use.”

For ordinary nouns, the pattern for adding an apostrophe to express possession is straightforward. For singular nouns, add an apostrophe plus an S: “the duck’s bill.” If the singular noun happens to end in one S or even two, you still just add an apostrophe and an S: “the boss’s desk.”

For plural nouns which end in S, however, add only the apostrophe: “the ducks’ bills.” But if a plural noun does not end in S, then you follow the same pattern as for singular nouns by adding an apostrophe and an S: “the children’s menu.” In names which end in S the possessive plural is usually formed by simply adding an apostrophe: “the Joneses’ house” It’s most often “in Jesus’ name.” “In Jesus’s name” is acceptable, but those three syllables ending in S next to each other sound awkward.

It is not uncommon to see the “S” wrongly apostrophized even in verbs, as in the mistaken “He complain’s a lot.”

Unfortunately, some character sets do not include proper curled apostrophes, including basic HTML and ASCII. If you do not turn off the “smart quotes” feature in your word processor, the result will be ugly gibberish in your writing which will make it hard to read.

But if you wish to create a true apostrophe in HTML ['] instead of a straight “foot mark” [’], you can write this code: **&rsquo;**;

Another problem involving smart quotes arises when you need to begin a word with an apostrophe, as in “the roaring ’20s” or “give ’em a break.” Smart quotes will curl those opening apostrophes the wrong way.

There’s more than one way to solve this problem, but here are the easiest ones in Microsoft Word: 1) for Windows users, hold down the CTRL key and hit the

apostrophe key twice, 2) for Mac users, hold down the option and shift keys and hit the right square bracket key. If all else fails, you can type a pair of single quotation marks and delete the first one.

See also “acronyms and apostrophes.”

👉 **Appaled** ⇒ APPALLED

Those of us named Paul are appalled at the misspelling of this word. No U, two L's please. And it's certainly not “uphauled”!

👉 **Appose / oppose** ⇒ These two spellings originally meant the same thing, but now “appose” is a rare word having to do with placing one thing close to or on something else (compare with juxtapose). It mainly occurs today as an error spelling-checkers won't catch when the word intended is “oppose,” meaning to be against something. If you object to a proposed course of action, you are opposed (not “apposed”) to it.

👉 **Appraise / apprise** ⇒ When you estimate the value of something, you appraise it. When you inform people of a situation, you apprise them of it.

👉 **Apropos / appropriate** ⇒ “Apropos,” (anglicized from the French phrase “à propos”) means relevant, connected with what has gone before; it should not be used as an all-purpose substitute for “appropriate.” It would be inappropriate, for example, to say “Your tuxedo was perfectly apropos for the opera gala.” Even though it's not pronounced, be careful not to omit the final “S” in spelling “apropos.”

👉 **Arab / Arabic / Arabian** ⇒ Arabs are a people whose place of ethnic origin is the Arabian Peninsula.

The language which they speak, and which has spread widely to other areas, is Arabic. “Arabic” is not generally used as an adjective except when referring to the language or in a few traditional phrases such as “gum arabic” and “arabic numerals.” Note that in these few phrases the word is not capitalized. Otherwise it is “Arab customs,” “Arab groups,” “Arab countries,” etc.

A group of Arab individuals is made of Arabs, not “Arabics” or “Arabians.” The noun “Arabian” by itself normally refers to Arabian horses. The other main use of the word is in referring to the collection of stories known as The Arabian Nights.

However, the phrase “Saudi Arabian” may be used in referring to citizens of the country of Saudi Arabia, and to aspects of the culture of that country. But it is important to remember that there are many Arabs in other lands, and that this phrase does not refer properly to them. Citizens of Saudi Arabia are often referred to instead as “Saudis,” although strictly speaking this term refers to members of the Saudi royal family and is usually journalistic shorthand for “Saudi Arabian government.”

It is also important not to treat the term “Arab” as interchangeable with “Muslim.” There are many Arabs who are not Muslims, and the majority of Muslims are not Arab. “Arab” refers to an ethnic identity, “Muslim” to a religious identity.

The standard pronunciation of “Arab” in American English is “AIR-rub.” Unless you are referring to the character in West Side Story called “A-rab” (with the second syllable rhyming with “cab”), you'll sound better educated if you stick with the standard version.

👉 **Architected** ⇒ DESIGNED, BUILT

Turning nouns into verbs is a normal process in English. Stabbed in the back? You've been knifed. Worked to the point of exhaustion? You've been hammered.

But when a noun gets verbed in a particular language community it's also normal for outsiders to be annoyed or indignant. In the world of digital design "architected" has become a popular term. The example given by the Oxford Dictionaries Website is "an architected information interface."

Various uses of "architect" as a verb have been around for a long time, but technical writers should be aware when writing for general audiences that many readers find this usage annoying. In such contexts, it's better to use "designed" or "built" when those words convey the same meaning.

👉 **Around / about** ⇒ ABOUT

Lots of people think it's just nifty to say things like "We're having ongoing discussions around the proposed merger." This strikes some of us as irritating jargon. We feel it should be "discussions about" rather than "around."

👉 **Arrant / errant** ⇒ In modern English "arrant" is usually used to describe someone notorious, thoroughly shameless: an arrant villain, an arrant thief. It has a rather old-fashioned air to it, and is often used in antique phrases like "an arrant knave."

"Errant" is also an antique word, now used exclusively to mean "wandering," especially in the phrase "a knight errant" (a wandering knight). As here, it usually follows the noun it modifies. Although you can argue that "arrant" also used to have this meaning, most readers will regard its use in this sense today not as learned, but as mistaken.

👉 **Arthrititis** ⇒ ARTHRITIS

If there were such a word as "arthrititis" it might mean the overwhelming desire to pull swords out of stones, but that ache in your joints is caused by "arthritis."

👉 **Artic** ⇒ ARCTIC

Although some brand names have incorporated this popular error, remember that the Arctic Circle is an arc. By the way, Ralph Vaughan Williams called his suite drawn from the score of the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, the *Sinfonia Antartica*, but that's Italian, not English.

👉 **Artisanal / artesian** ⇒ For the past half-century foodies have referred to foods and drinks made in small batches by hand using traditional methods as artisanal—made by artisans: workers in handicrafts. It has also been extended to a wide variety of other handmade products. Dictionaries agree that the word should be pronounced "ARR-tizz-uh-nul" with the accent on the first syllable and the second syllable rhyming with "fizz." Just say "artisan" and add "-ul."

Diners and restaurant workers alike commonly confuse the pronunciation of its first three syllables with that of "artesian"—"arr-TEE-zhun"—which is an adjective to describe water which spurts out of the earth under natural pressure. In this word the accent falls on the second syllable, pronounced like "tea." A spring such as this is called an "artesian spring" or "artesian well."

If you hand-bottle water from a natural spring in your back yard I suppose you could label the result artisanal artesian water.

👉 **As** ⇒ THAT, WHO

In some American dialects it is common to say things like "I see lots of folks as hasn't got the sense to come in out out of the rain." In standard English, the expression would be "folks that" or "folks who."

👉 **As best as** ⇒ AS BEST

You can try to be as good as you can be, but it's not standard to say that you do something "as best as you can." You need to eliminate the second "as" when "good" changes to "best." You can try to do something as best you can. You can also do the best that you can (or even better, the best you can).

Unlike asbestos removal, “as best as” removal is easy, and you don’t have to wear a hazmat suit.

👉 **As far as** ⇒ AS FAR AS \*\*\* IS CONCERNED

Originally people used to say things like “As far as music is concerned, I especially love Baroque opera.” Recently they have begun to drop the “is concerned” part of the phrase. Perhaps this shift was influenced by confusion with a similar phrase, “as for.” “As for money, I don’t have any,” is fine; “As far as money, I don’t have any,” is clumsy.

👉 **As follow** ⇒ AS FOLLOWS

“My birthday requests are as follows.” This standard phrase doesn’t change number when the items to follow grow from one to many. It’s never correct to say “as follow.”

👉 **As less as possible** ⇒ AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE

The expression is not “as less as possible,” but “as little as possible.”

👉 **As of yet** ⇒ YET

“As of yet” is a windy and pretentious substitute for plain old English “yet” or “as yet,” an unjustified extension of the pattern in sentences like “as of Friday the 27th of May.”

👉 **As per** ⇒ IN ACCORDANCE WITH

“Enclosed is the shipment of #2 toggle bolts as per your order of June 14” writes the businessman, unaware that not only is the “as” redundant, he is sounding very old-fashioned and pretentious. The meaning is “in accordance with,” or “in response to the request made”; but it is better to avoid these cumbersome substitutes altogether: “Enclosed is the shipment of bolts you ordered June 14.”

👉 **As such** ⇒ The expression “as such” has to refer to some status mentioned earlier. “The CEO was a former drill sergeant, and as such expected everyone to obey his orders instantly.” In this case “such” refers back to “former drill sergeant.” But often people only imply that which is referred to, as in “The CEO had a high opinion of himself and as such expected everyone to obey his orders instantly.” Here the “such” cannot logically refer back to “opinion.” Replace “as such” with “therefore.”

👉 **As time progressed** ⇒ AS TIME PASSED

Events may progress in time, but time itself does not progress—it just passes.

👉 **Ascared** ⇒ SCARED

The misspelling “ascared” is probably influenced by the spelling of the synonym “afraid,” but the standard English word is “scared.”

👉 **Ascent / assent** ⇒ “Assent” is a verb meaning “agreement,” “consent.” “Ascent” is a noun meaning “climb.” When you get people to agree with you, you gain their assent. When you climb a mountain, you make an ascent.

👉 **Ascribe / subscribe** ⇒ If you agree with a theory or belief, you subscribe to it, just as you subscribe to a magazine. Ascribe is a very different word. If you ascribe a belief to someone, you are attributing the belief to that person, perhaps wrongly.

👉 **Ashamed / a shame** ⇒ A SHAME

It’s unfortunate that many people mistakenly say and write that it’s “ashamed” that something is so when what they really mean is that it’s “a shame.”

👉 **Asocial** ⇒ Someone who doesn’t enjoy socializing at parties might be described as either “asocial” or “antisocial,” but “asocial” is too mild a term to describe someone who commits an antisocial act like planting a bomb. “Asocial”

suggests indifference to or separation from society, whereas “antisocial” more often suggests active hostility toward society.

👉 **Aspect / respect** ⇒ When used to refer to different elements of or perspectives on a thing or idea, these words are closely related, but not interchangeable. It’s “in all respects,” not “in all aspects.” Similarly, one can say “in some respects” but not “in some aspects.” One says “in this respect,” not “in this aspect.” One looks at all “aspects” of an issue, not at all “respects.”

👉 **Assess** ⇒ “Assess” is a transitive verb; it needs an object. You can assess your team’s chances of winning the bowl game, but you cannot assess that they are playing better than last year. “Assess” is not an all-purpose synonym of “judge” or “estimate.” Most of the time if you write “assess that” you are making a mistake. The errors arise when “that” is being used as a conjunction. Exceptions arise when “that” is a pronoun or adverb: “How do you assess that?” “I assess that team’s chances as good.”

👉 **Assure / ensure / insure** ⇒ To “assure” a person of something is to make him or her confident of it. According to Associated Press style, to “ensure” that something happens is to make certain that it does, and to “insure” is to issue an insurance policy. Other authorities, however, consider “ensure” and “insure” interchangeable. To please conservatives, make the distinction. However, it is worth noting that in older usage these spellings were not clearly distinguished. European “life assurance” companies take the position that all policy-holders are mortal and someone will definitely collect, thus assuring heirs of some income. American companies tend to go with “insurance” for coverage of life as well as of fire, theft, etc.

👉 **Asterick** ⇒ ASTERISK  
Some people not only spell this word without its second S, they say it that way too. It comes from Greek asteriskos: “little star.” Tisk, tisk, remember the “-isk”; “asterick” is icky.

In countries where the Asterix comics are popular, that spelling gets wrongly used for “asterisk” as well.

👉 **Astrology / astronomy** ⇒ Modern astronomers consider astrology an outdated superstition. You’ll embarrass yourself if you use the term “astrology” to label the scientific study of the cosmos. In writing about history, however, you may have occasion to note that ancient astrologers, whose main goal was to peer into the future, incidentally did some sound astronomy as they studied the positions and movements of celestial objects.

👉 **Aswell** ⇒ AS WELL  
No matter how you use it, the expression “as well” is always two words, despite the fact that many people seem to think it should be spelled “aswell.” Examples: “I don’t like plastic trees as well as real ones for Christmas.” “Now that we’ve opened our stockings, let’s open our other presents as well.”

👉 **At all** ⇒ Some of us are irritated when a grocery checker asks “Do you want any help out with that at all?” “At all” is traditionally used in negative contexts: “Can’t you give me any help at all?” The current pattern of using the phrase in positive offers of help unintentionally suggests aid reluctantly given or minimal in extent. As a way of making yourself sound less polite than you intend, it ranks right up there with “no problem” instead of “you’re welcome.”

👉 **Athiest** ⇒ ATHEIST  
An atheist is the opposite of a theist. Theos is Greek for “god.” Make sure the “TH” is followed immediately by an “E.”

👉 **Athlete** ⇒ Tired of people stereotyping you as a dummy just because you're a jock? One way to impress them is to pronounce "athlete" properly, with just two syllables, as "ATH-leet" instead of using the common mispronunciation "ATH-uh-leet."

👉 **ATM machine** ⇒ ATM

"ATM" means "Automated Teller Machine," so if you say "ATM machine" you are really saying, "Automated Teller Machine machine."

👉 **Attain / obtain** ⇒ "Attain" means "reach" and "obtain" means "get." You attain a mountaintop, but obtain a rare baseball card. "Attain" usually implies a required amount of labor or difficulty; nothing is necessarily implied about the difficulty of obtaining that card. Maybe you just found it in your brother's dresser drawer.

Some things you obtain can also be attained. If you want to emphasize how hard you worked in college, you might say you attained your degree; but if you want to emphasize that you have a valid degree that qualifies you for a certain job, you might say you obtained it. If you just bought it from a diploma mill for fifty bucks, you definitely only obtained it.

👉 **Attribute / contribute** ⇒ When trying to give credit to someone, say that you attribute your success to their help, not contribute. (Of course, a politician may attribute his success to those who contribute to his campaign fund, but probably only in private.)

👉 **Auger / augur** ⇒ An augur was an ancient Roman prophet, and as a verb the word means "foretell"—"their love augurs well for a successful marriage." Don't mix this word up with "auger," a tool for boring holes. Some people mishear the phrase "augurs well" as "all goes well" and mistakenly use that instead.

👉 **Aural / oral** ⇒ "Aural" has to do with things you hear, "oral" with things you say, or relating to your mouth.

👉 **Autobiography / biography** ⇒ When you write the story of your own life, you write an autobiography; but when you write the story of someone else's life, it's just a plain old biography.

👉 **Avaidable** ⇒ AVAILABLE

Many people mispronounce and misspell "available" as "avaidable," whose peculiar spelling seems to be influenced by "avoidable," a word that has opposite connotations.

"Avaidable" is avoidable; avoid it.

👉 **Avenge / revenge** ⇒ When you try to get vengeance for people who've been wronged, you want to avenge them. You can also avenge a wrong itself: "He avenged the murder by taking vengeance on the killer." Substituting "revenge" for "avenge" in such contexts is very common, but frowned on by some people. They feel that if you seek revenge in the pursuit of justice you want to avenge wrongs: not revenge them.

👉 **Avocation / vocation** ⇒ Your avocation is just your hobby; don't mix it up with your job: your vocation.

👉 **Away / a way** ⇒ "Jessica commented on my haircut in a way that made me think maybe I shouldn't have let my little sister do it for me." In this sort of context, "a way" should always be two distinct words, though many people use the single word "away" instead. If you're uncertain, try substituting another word for "way": "in a manner that," "in a style that." If the result makes sense, you need the two-word phrase. Then you can tell Jessica to just go away.

👉 **Awe, shucks** ⇒ AW, SHUCKS

“Aw, shucks,” is a traditional folksy expression of modesty. An “aw-shucks” kind of person declines to accept compliments. “Aw” is an interjection roughly synonymous with “oh.” “Awe” is a noun which most often means “amazed admiration.” So many people have begun to misspell the familiar phrase “awe, shucks,” that some writers think they are being clever when they link it to the expression “shock and awe.” Instead, they reveal their confusion.

👉 **Awhile / a while** ⇒ When “awhile” is spelled as a single word, it is an adverb meaning “for a time” (“stay awhile”); but when “while” is the object of a prepositional phrase, like “Lend me your monkey wrench for a while” the “while” must be separated from the “a.” (But if the preposition “for” were lacking in this sentence, “awhile” could be used in this way: “Lend me your monkey wrench awhile.”)

👉 **Ax** ⇒ ASK

The dialectal pronunciation of “ask” as “ax” suggests to most people that the speaker has a substandard education. You should avoid it in formal speaking situations.

👉 **Axel / axle** ⇒ The centers of wheels are connected by axles. An axel is a tricky jump in figure skating named after Axel Paulsen.

👉 **-ed / -t** ⇒ You have learnt your lessons only in UK-influenced countries; you’ve learned them in the US. There are several common verbs that often have “T” endings in Britain which seem a little quaint and poetic in American English, where we prefer “-ED.” Other examples: “dreamt/dreamed,” “dwelt/dwelled,” “leant/leaned,” “leapt/leaped,” and “spelt/spelled.” However, the following alternatives are both common in the US: “burned/burnt” and “kneeled/knelt.”

👉 **-er / -est** ⇒ The suffix “-est” is normally used only when comparing three or more items. If I have three pigs, I say “This is the fattest one.” But when only two items are involved, it is traditional to use the suffix “-er.” If I have two pigs, then I say “This is the fatter one.”

In casual English it is very common to use “-est” for comparisons involving only two items, but it is good to remember the pattern when writing or speaking formal English.

👉 **-es** ⇒ Latin-derived terms whose singular form ends in “-is” and whose plurals are made by changing the “-is” to “-es” such as “thesis” (plural: “theses”) have their final syllables pronounced “eez.” This pattern causes some people to do the same in other words without a Latin singular “-is” form, like “processes” whose last syllable should sound like “says.”

👉 **-eth** ⇒ In older English “-eth” performed the same function as S in the third person singular present of verbs, as in “my cup runneth over.” People jokingly trying to make speech sound antique often add “-eth” randomly to plurals, tenses, and person with which it never belonged. Unless you are trying to make your characters sound stupid, don’t have them say things like “my cookies crumbleth,” “the window broketh,” or “you charmeth me.”

👉 **-fuls / -ful** ⇒ It’s one cupful, but two cupfuls, not “two cupsful.” The same goes for “spoonfuls” and “glassfuls.”

👉 **-ic** ⇒ In the Cold War era, anti-socialists often accused their enemies of being “socialistic” by which they meant that although they were not actually socialists, some of their beliefs were like those of socialists. But the “-ic” suffix is recklessly used in all kinds of settings, often without understanding its implications. Karl Marx was not “socialistic,” he was actually socialist.

👉 **-ing** ⇒ What's the point of urging people to pronounce the G in words ending in “-ing” when all manner of public leaders proudly proclaim they are “runnin’ for office” and “savin’ the planet”? Well, some people still care and think dropping the G sounds sloppy and unsophisticated.

👉 **-ly adjectives** ⇒ A standard way to turn an adjective into an adverb is to add “-ly”: “glad” becomes “gladly” and “huge” becomes “hugely.” But when the adjectival form itself already ends in “-ly” it often feels awkward to create an adverbial form. If someone acts in a friendly manner do they behave “friendly” or “friendlily”? Did your daughter perform her dance solo “lovely” or “lovelily”? Most of us sense that these forms, though legitimate, are awkward, and try to avoid constructions that seem to require them. There are a variety of ways to do this: someone is friendly, a daughter gives a lovely performance.

👉 **-wise** ⇒ In political and business jargon it is common to append “-wise” to nouns to create novel adverbs: “Revenue-wise, last quarter was a disaster.” Critics of language are united in objecting to this pattern, and it is often used in fiction to satirize less than eloquent speakers.

👉 **100s** ⇒ hundreds

It looks cheesy to spell “hundreds” as “100’s”; and it isn’t really logical because “100” doesn’t mean “hundred”—it means specifically “one hundred.”

👉 **360 degrees** ⇒ When you turn 360 degrees you’ve completed a circle and are back where you started. So if you want to describe a position that’s diametrically opposed to another, the expression you want is not “360 degrees away” but “180 degrees away.”

👉 **50’s** ⇒ There’s no requirement for the apostrophe before the “S” in decade names like 50s and 60s, since there are no omitted letters, though it’s also acceptable to include one. The term may be written “50s” since “19” is being omitted, but “50s” is fine too. Logically one should be able to use both apostrophes, writing “50’s,” but this looks awkward and is seldom done. Personally I prefer to omit both apostrophes.

Writers who wish to have their references to decades clearly understood in the twenty-first century would be well advised not to omit the first two digits.

Note that you may have to turn off “smart quotes” in your word processor to get a leading apostrophe like the one in “50s” to curl correctly unless you know how to type the character directly. Or you can just type two and delete the first one.

👉 **Back / forward / up in time** ⇒ For most people you move an event forward by scheduling it to happen sooner, but other people imagine the event being moved forward into the future, postponed. This is what most—but not all—people mean by saying they want to move an event back—later. Usage is also split on whether moving an event up means making it happen sooner (most common) or later (less common). The result is widespread confusion. When using these expressions make clear your meaning by the context in which you use them. “We need to move the meeting forward” is ambiguous; “we need to move the meeting forward to an earlier date” is not.

Just to confuse things further, when you move the clock ahead in the spring for daylight saving time, you make it later; but when you move a meeting ahead, you make it sooner. Isn’t English wonderful?

👉 **Backseat / back seat** ⇒ Although you will often see people writing about the “backseat” of a car, the standard and still most common spelling of the noun form is as two words: “back seat.” “Small children should ride in the back seat.” “In a crisis, planning takes a back seat to immediate action.”

The one-word adjective “backseat” is appropriate when it describes where something is. “The backseat area is cramped in this model” “Don’t be a backseat driver.” Conservatives prefer the hyphenated spelling “back-seat” for this sort of use: the back-seat area, a back-seat driver.

👉 **Backslash / slash** ⇒ SLASH

This is a slash: /. Because the top of it leans forward, it is sometimes called a “forward slash.”

This is a backslash: \. Notice the way it leans back, distinguishing it from the regular slash.

Slashes are often used to indicate directories and subdirectories in computer systems such as Unix and in World Wide Web addresses. Unfortunately, many people, assuming “backslash” is some sort of technical term for the regular slash, use the term incorrectly, which risks confusing those who know enough to distinguish between the two but not enough to realize that Web addresses rarely contain backslashes.

👉 **Backup / back up** ⇒ To “back up” is an activity; “back up your computer regularly”; “back up the truck to the garden plot and unload the compost.”

A “backup” is a thing: “keep your backup copies in a safe place.” Other examples: a traffic backup, sewage backup, backup plan, backup forces.

Older writers often hyphenated this latter form (“back-up”), but this is now rare.

👉 **Backward / backwards** ⇒ As an adverb, either word will do: “put the shirt on backward” or “put the shirt on backwards.” However, as an adjective, only “backward” will do: “a backward glance.” When in doubt, use “backward.”

👉 **Backyard / back yard** ⇒ The thing itself is a two-word phrase: you grow vegetables in your back yard. The adjective form that describes the location of something behind your house is a single word: you have a backyard vegetable garden.

👉 **Bad** ⇒ BADLY

In informal speech “bad” is sometimes used as an adverb: “the toilet was leaking pretty bad” or “my arm hurt so bad I thought it was broken.” In formal writing, “badly” is preferred in both contexts.

👉 **Bail / bale** ⇒ You bail the boat and bale the hay.

In the expression “bail out,” meaning to abandon a position or situation, it is nonstandard in America to use “bale,” though that spelling is widely accepted in the UK. The metaphor in the US is to compare oneself when jumping out of a plane to a bucket of water being tossed out of a boat, though that is probably not the origin of the phrase.

👉 **Bailout / bail out** ⇒ Whether you are bailing out a rowboat or a bank, use the two-word spelling to describe the action of doing it (the verb form): “we need to bail out the boat before we can go fishing.”

But to label the activity itself (the noun form), use the one-word spelling: “this bailout is going to be expensive.”

👉 **Baited breath** ⇒ BATED BREATH

Although the odor of the chocolate truffle you just ate may be irresistible bait to your beloved, the proper expression is “bated breath.” “Bated” here means “held, abated.” You do something with bated breath when you’re so tense you’re holding your breath.

👉 **Baldfaced, boldfaced** ⇒ BAREFACED

The only one of these spellings recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary as meaning “shameless” is “barefaced.” Etymologies often refer to the prevalence of beards among Renaissance Englishmen, but beards were probably too

common to be considered as deceptively concealing. It seems more likely that the term derived from the widespread custom at that time among the upper classes of wearing masks to social occasions where one would rather not be recognized.

👉 **Ball / bawl** ⇒ To “bawl” is to cry out loudly, so when you break down in tears you bawl like a baby and when you reprimand people severely you bawl them out. Don’t use “ball” in these sorts of expressions. It has a number of meanings, but none of them have to do with shouting and wailing unless you’re shouting “play ball!”

👉 **BAR-B-Q, barbeque** ⇒ BARBECUE

Casual restaurants like to advertise “BAR-B-Q” and you often see the spelling “barbeque” and variations like “barbaque,” but the standard form is “barbecue.”

👉 **Barb wire, bob wire** ⇒ BARBED WIRE

In some parts of the country this prickly stuff is commonly called “barb wire” or even “bob wire.” When writing for a general audience, stick with the standard “barbed wire.”

👉 **Bare / bear** ⇒ There are actually three words here. The simple one is the big growly creature (unless you prefer the Winnie-the-Pooh type). Hardly anyone past the age of ten gets that one wrong. The problem is the other two. Stevedores bear burdens on their backs and mothers bear children. Both mean “carry” (in the case of mothers, the meaning has been extended from carrying the child during pregnancy to actually giving birth). But strippers bare their bodies—sometimes bare-naked. The confusion between this latter verb and “bear” creates many unintentionally amusing sentences; so if you want to entertain your readers while convincing them that you are a dolt, by all means mix them up. “Bear with me,” the standard expression, is a request for forbearance or patience.

“Bare with me” would be an invitation to undress. “Bare” has an adjectival form: “The pioneers stripped the forest bare.”

👉 **Barter / haggle** ⇒ When you offer to trade your vintage jeans for a handwoven shirt in Guatemala, you are engaged in barter—no money is involved. One thing (or service) is traded for another.

But when you offer to buy that shirt for less money than the vendor is asking, you are engaged in haggling or bargaining, not bartering.

👉 **Base** ⇒ Like Billy the singing bass, things musical are usually “bass”: bass guitars, bass drums, bass clefs. Don’t use the more common word “base” in such contexts.

👉 **Based around, based off of** ⇒ BASED ON

You can build a structure around a center, but bases go on the bottom of things, so you can’t base something around something else.

Similarly, you can build something off of a starting point, but you can’t base anything off of anything. Something is always based on something else.

👉 **Basically** ⇒ BASICALLY

There are “-ly” words and “-ally” words, and you basically just have to memorize which is which. But “basically” is very much overused and is often better avoided in favor of such expressions as “essentially,” “fundamentally,” or “at heart.”

👉 **Basises** ⇒ BASES

The plural of “basis” is “bases,” pronounced “BAY-sees” (not to be confused with Baywatch).

👉 **Bazaar / bizarre** ⇒ A “bazaar” is a market where miscellaneous goods are sold. “Bizarre,” in contrast, is an adjective meaning “strange,” “weird.”

👉 **Beat / bead** ⇒ In American English when you focus narrowly on something or define it carefully you “get a bead” or “draw a bead” on it. In this expression the term “bead” comes from the former name for the little metal bump on the end of a gun barrel which helped the shooter aim precisely at a target. “Beat” is often mistakenly substituted for “bead” by people who imagine that the expression has something to do with matching the timing of the person or activity being observed, catching up with it.

👉 **Beaurocracy** ⇒ BUREAUCRACY

The French bureaucrats from whom we get this word worked at their bureaus (desks, spelled bureaux in French) in what came to be known as bureaucracies.

👉 **Beckon call** ⇒ BECK AND CALL

This is a fine example of what linguists call “popular etymology.” People don’t understand the origins of a word or expression and make one up based on what seems logical to them. “Beck” is just an old shortened version of “beckon.” If you are at people’s beck and call it means they can summon you whenever they want: either by gesture (beck) or speech (call).

👉 **Began / begun** ⇒ In modern English “began” is the simple past tense of “begin”: “he began to study for the test at midnight.”

But the past participle form—preceded by a helping verb—is “begun”: “By morning, he had begun to forget everything he’d studied that night.”

👉 **Begs belief** ⇒ BEGGARS BELIEF

You beggar people by impoverishing them, reducing them to beggary. This term now survives mainly in metaphorical expressions such as “it beggars description” (exhausts my ability to describe it) or “it beggars belief” (exhausts my ability to believe it).

People who aren’t familiar with this meaning of the word “beggar” often substitute “beg,” saying of something implausible that it “begs belief.” This makes no sense, for it implies that the story is trying to persuade you to believe it.

👉 **Begs the question** ⇒ An argument that improperly assumes as true the very point the speaker is trying to argue for is said in formal logic to “beg the question.” Here is an example of a question-begging argument: “This painting is trash because it is obviously worthless.” The speaker is simply asserting the worthlessness of the work, not presenting any evidence to demonstrate that this is in fact the case. Since we never use “begs” with this odd meaning (“to improperly take for granted”) in any other phrase, most people now suppose the phrase implies something quite different: that the argument demands that a question about it be asked—raises the question. Although using the expression in its original sense is now rare, using it in the newer sense will cause irritation among traditionalists.

👉 **Behaviors** ⇒ “Behavior” has always referred to patterns of action, including multiple actions, and did not have a separate plural form until social scientists created it. Unless you are writing in psychology, sociology, anthropology, or a related field, it is better to avoid the use of “behaviors” in your writing. See also peoples.

👉 **Being that** ⇒ BECAUSE

Using “being that” to mean “because” is nonstandard, as in “Being that the bank robber was fairly experienced, it was surprising that he showed the teller his ID

card when she asked for it.” “Being as how” is even worse. If “because” or “since” are too simple for your taste, you could use “given that” or “in that” instead.

👉 **Belief / believe** ⇒ People can't have religious “believes”; they have religious beliefs. If you have it, it's a belief; if you do it, you believe.

👉 **Belief toward** ⇒ BELIEF IN

You may have a positive attitude toward an idea, but you have a belief in it.

👉 **Below table** ⇒ TABLE BELOW

When calling your readers' attention to an illustration or table further on in a text, the proper word order is not “the below table” but “the table below.”

👉 **Bemuse** ⇒ When you bemuse someone, you confuse them, and not necessarily in an entertaining way. Don't confuse this word with “amuse.”

👉 **Benefactor / beneficiary** ⇒ Benefactors give benefits; beneficiaries receive them. We expect to hear of generous benefactors and grateful beneficiaries.

👉 **Beside / besides** ⇒ “Besides” can mean “in addition to” as in “besides the puppy chow, Spot scarfed up the filet mignon I was going to serve for dinner.” “Beside,” in contrast, usually means “next to.” “I sat beside Cheryl all evening, but she kept talking to Jerry instead.” Using “beside” for “besides,” won't usually get you in trouble, but using “besides” when you mean “next to” will.

👉 **Better** ⇒ When Chuck says “I better get my research started; the paper's due tomorrow,” he means “I had better,” abbreviated in speech to “I'd better.” The same pattern is followed for “he'd better,” “she'd better,” and “they'd better.”

👉 **Between** ⇒ “Between 1939 to 1945” is obviously incorrect to most people—it should be “between 1939 and 1945”—but the error is not so obvious when it is written thus: “between 1939-1945.” In this case, the “between” should be dropped altogether. Also incorrect are expressions like “there were between 15 to 20 people at the party.” This should read “between 15 and 20 people.”

👉 **Between you and I** ⇒ BETWEEN YOU AND ME

“Between you and me” is preferred in standard English.

See “I/me/myself.”

👉 **Beyond the pail** ⇒ BEYOND THE PALE

A pale is originally a stake of the kind which might make up a palisade, or enclosure. The uncontrolled territory outside was then “beyond the pale.” The expression “beyond the pale” came to mean “bizarre, beyond proper limits”; but people who don't understand the phrase often alter the last word to “pail.”

The area of Ireland called “the Pale” inside the Dublin region formerly controlled by the English is often said to have been the inspiration for this expression, but many authorities challenge that explanation.

👉 **Bias / biased** ⇒ A person who is influenced by a bias is biased. The expression is not “they're bias,” but “they're biased.” Also, many people say someone is “biased toward” something or someone when they mean biased against. To have a bias toward something is to be biased in its favor. See also “prejudice/prejudiced.”

👉 **Bible** ⇒ Whether you are referring to the Jewish Bible (the Torah plus the Prophets and the Writings) or the Protestant Bible (the Jewish Bible plus the New Testament), or the Catholic Bible (which contains everything in the Jewish and Protestant Bibles plus several other books and passages mostly written in Greek in its Old Testament), the word “Bible” must be capitalized. Remember that it is the title of a book, and book titles are normally capitalized. An oddity in English usage is, however, that “Bible” and the names of the various parts of the Bible are not italicized or placed between quotation marks.

Even when used metaphorically of other sacred books, as in “The Qur’an is the Bible of the Muslims,” the word is usually capitalized; although in secular contexts it is not: “Physicians’ Desk Reference is the pharmacists’ bible.” “Biblical” may be capitalized or not, as you choose (or as your editor chooses). Those who wish to be sensitive to the Jewish authorship of the Jewish Bible may wish to use “Hebrew Bible” and “Christian Scriptures” instead of the traditionally Christian nomenclature: “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” Modern Jewish scholars sometimes use the Hebrew acronym “Tanakh” to refer to their Bible, but this term is not generally understood by others.

### 👉 **Bicep** ⇒ BICEPS

A biceps is a single muscle with two attaching tendons at one end. Although “bicep” without the *S* is often used in casual speech, this spelling is frowned on in medical and anatomical contexts.

### 👉 **Bit / bitten** ⇒ BITTEN

When Walter Brennan in *To Have and Have Not* asks “Was you ever bit by a dead bee?” The effect is to illustrate his folksy, semiliterate way of speaking. The traditional way to phrase this question would be “Were you ever stung by a dead bee?”

The simple past form of “bite” is “bit,” as in “Their dog bit the paper carrier.” But the past participle is “bitten,” as in “The paper carrier was bitten by their dog.” In common expressions about becoming enthusiastic about something, like “bit by the genealogy bug” the verb should technically be “bitten,” but “bit” is so common that it’s not likely to be noticed. In other contexts where you are not sure which one works best, try “bitten.” If it sounds OK, go with it.

👉 **Biweekly / semiweekly** ⇒ Technically, a biweekly meeting occurs every two weeks and a semiweekly one occurs twice a week; but so few people get this straight that your club is liable to disintegrate unless you avoid these words in the newsletter and stick with “every other week” or “twice weekly.” The same is true of “bimonthly” and “semimonthly,” though “biennial” and “semi-annual” are less often confused with each other.

👉 **Blatant** ⇒ The classic meaning of “blatant” is “noisily conspicuous,” but it has long been extended to any objectionable obviousness. A person engaging in blatant behavior is usually behaving in a highly objectionable manner, being brazen. Unfortunately, many people nowadays think that “blatant” simply means “obvious” and use it in a positive sense, as in “Kim wrote a blatantly brilliant paper.” Use “blatant” or “blatantly” only when you think the people you are talking about should be ashamed of themselves.

### 👉 **Blindsighted / blindsided** ⇒ BLINDSIDED

When you are struck by surprise from an unexpected direction, you are blindsided, as if from your blind side. Do not be confused by the many punning titles using the deliberate misspelling “blindsighted” into using the latter spelling for this meaning.

👉 **Block / bloc** ⇒ “Block” has a host of uses, including as the spelling in the phrase “block of time.” But for groups of people and nations, use the French spelling bloc: “bloc of young voters,” “Cold War-era Eastern bloc of nations.” Don’t be confused by punning names for groups and Web sites like “Writer’s Bloc.”

### 👉 **Blog / post** ⇒ POST

Ships used to chart their progress by heaving overboard a chunk of wood (the “log”) trailing a line and measuring how much of it unspooled in a given length of time. This allowed them to record the rate of the ship’s progress through the

water. The resulting figures were recorded in a “log-book,” which was later abbreviated to “log.” The word’s meaning shifted from the device floating in the water to the book in which progress was recorded. “Log” also became a verb, referring to the process of making entries in a log-book. In modern times the word drifted away from seafaring matters to refer to any record of progress created out of periodic entries.

Around the turn of the millennium, keepers of journals on the World Wide Web began to shorten the term “Web log” to “blog,” and to refer to the activity of keeping a blog as “blogging.” The common term referring to a single entry in a blog is “post” (short for “posting”). But “post” is also a verb: you post an entry to your blog. Amidst all this overlapping terminology many confused people have begun to refer to the individual entries as “blogs,” writing “I made a new blog today” when they mean “I put a new post on my blog today.”

🌀 **Blonde / blond** ⇒ Few people will care which spelling you use, but there are some interesting points to observe about “blonde” and “blond.”

In the original French and in traditional English usage, “blonde” is female and “blond” is male: it’s “a blonde woman” and “a blond man.”

Hair itself has no gender in English, but we usually use the female spelling in the phrase “blonde hair.” Similarly, furniture made of light-colored wood is most often referred to as “blonde.”

When someone is referred to as “a blonde” we almost always think of a woman, even if the spelling used is “a blond.” Feminists point out that typically only women are reduced to their hair color in this way, and that it can be offensive. Note that there is a whole category of “blonde jokes” stereotyping these women as air-headed. However, when the word refers specifically to hair color in a useful way, no one is likely to object: “She is a blonde with very light skin, so she has to use a lot of sunscreen.”

Oddly, we rarely use the French masculine spelling brunet. Anyone can have brunette hair, although “brunettes” like “blondes” are usually assumed to be women.

🌀 **Blunt / brunt** ⇒ Some people mistakenly substitute the adjective “blunt” for the noun “brunt” in standard expressions like “bear the brunt.” “Brunt” means “main force.”

🌀 **Boarders / borders** ⇒ Boarders are residents in a boarding house or school paying for their room and board (food), fighters who board ships, or more recently, people who go snowboarding a lot. You can also board animals, though usually only people are called “boarders.” All of these have some connection with boards: hunks of wood (the planks of a table, the deck of a ship, a snowboard).

All uses having to do with boundaries and edges are spelled “border”: border collies, Doctors Without Borders, borderline disorders, border guard.

🌀 **Boast your confidence** ⇒ BOLSTER YOUR CONFIDENCE

A bolster is a large pillow, and when you bolster something you support it as if you were propping it up with a pillow. Thus the expression is “bolster your confidence.” People unfamiliar with the word sometimes say instead “boast your confidence.” They may also be confusing this saying with “boost your confidence.”

🌀 **Bologna / baloney** ⇒ “Bologna” is the name of a city in Italy, pronounced “boh-LOAN-ya.” But although the sausage named after the city in English is spelled the same, it is pronounced “buh-LOAN-ee” and is often spelled “baloney.” Either spelling is acceptable for the sliced meat product.

Then there is the expression “a bunch of baloney.” “Baloney” in this case probably originated as a euphemism for “BS.” When it means “nonsense,” the standard spelling is “baloney.” People who write “bunch of bologna” are making a pun or are just being pretentious.

### 👉 **Bon a petite** ⇒ BON APPÉTIT

The traditional French phrase to utter when you serve the food is *bon appétit*: “good appetite” (and pronounced “bone ah-puh-TEE”). It implies “may you enjoy your food with a good appetite.” (For some reason I think this is fine but get irritated when a waiter tells me “enjoy!”)

You see all sorts of misspellings of this phrase: “bon a petite,” “bon à petite,” “bon á petite,” “bona petite,” “bonapetite,” “bon a petit,” etc. All of these are *bon à rien*—good for nothing.

### 👉 **Bonafied** ⇒ BONA FIDE

*Bona fide* is a Latin phrase meaning “in good faith,” most often used to mean “genuine” today. It is often misspelled as if it were the past tense of an imaginary verb: “bonafy.”

### 👉 **Bonds / bounds** ⇒ BONDS/BOUNDS

In expressions like “beyond the bounds of credibility” and “beyond the bounds of decency” the word “bounds” is short for “boundaries,” and means “limits.” Many people transform these sayings by substituting “bonds” for “bounds,” evidently thinking of people straining against restraints, even going so far as to speak of the bonds of credibility being stretched or broken. This usage makes a sort of sense, but it is not traditional.

### 👉 **Boost in the arm** ⇒ SHOT IN THE ARM

Early in the 20th century it used to be common for people feeling a bit run-down to go to the doctor to be injected with a stimulant. By 1916 this remedy had led to a saying according to which a positive stimulation of almost any kind could be called “a real shot in the arm.”

We still use this expression in a wide variety of ways. It can refer to an increase of business in a company, a stimulus administered to the economy, to the hopes of a sports franchise or a politician running for office.

A simpler way of expressing the idea is to refer to a stimulus as a “boost.” Examples: “the flowers on my birthday gave my spirits a real boost,” “the large donation by the pharmaceutical company gave his campaign a major boost,” “the President is looking for ways to boost the economy.”

It’s easy to understand how these two expressions came to be confused with each other in the popular form “a boost in the arm.” After all, we go to the doctor for a booster shot. But the boost in this expression is a shove from underneath to raise the whole body, not a needle in the biceps. It makes more sense to stick with the traditional expression “a shot in the arm” or to simply use “boost.”

### 👉 **Bored of** ⇒ BORED WITH

When you get tired of something you are bored with it (not of it).

👉 **Born / borne** ⇒ This distinction is a bit tricky. When birth is being discussed, the past participle of “bear” is usually “born”: “I was born in a trailer—but it was an Airstream.” Note that the form used here is passive: you are the one somebody else—your mother—bore. But if the form is active, you need an “E” on the end, as in “Midnight has borne another litter of kittens in Dad’s old fishing hat” (Midnight did the bearing).

But in other meanings not having to do with birth, “borne” is always the past participle of “bear”: “My brother’s constant teasing about my green hair was more than could be borne.”

The simple past tense of “bear” when no helping verb is involved is of course “bore”: “Yesterday my wife bore twins.”

The dialectical form “borned” is not standard English.

👉 **Born out of** ⇒ BORN OF

Write “my love of dance was born of my viewing old Ginger Rogers-Fred Astaire movies,” not “born out of.” The latter expression is probably substituted because of confusion with the expression “borne out” as in “my concerns about having another office party were borne out when Mr. Peabody spilled his beer into the fax machine.” The only correct (if antiquated) use of “born out of” is in the phrase “born out of wedlock.”

See also born/borne.

👉 **Borrow / loan** ⇒ In some dialects it is common to substitute “borrow” for “loan” or “lend,” as in “borrow me that hammer of yours, will you, Jeb?” In standard English the person providing an item can loan it, but the person receiving it borrows it. For “loan” vs. “lend, see “Non-Errors.”

👉 **Borrow off** ⇒ BORROW FROM

In some dialects you can borrow five dollars off a friend, but in standard English you borrow the money from a friend.

👉 **Both** ⇒ “Both” refers to two items only. It is easy in speech to absent-mindedly add items to an initial pair and wind up saying things like “I like both mangos and papayas and Asian pears.” Try to avoid this when writing.

How do you use “both” in a possessive construction? It’s not easy. “It’s both of our home town” sounds awkward. Better to restructure the sentence and say “it’s the home town of both of us.”

People occasionally say things like “I phoned both them,” when they mean “I phoned both of them,” or “I phoned them both.”

👉 **Both / each** ⇒ There are times when it is important to use “each” instead of “both.” Few people will be confused if you say “I gave both of the boys a baseball glove,” meaning “I gave both of the boys baseball gloves” because it is unlikely that two boys would be expected to share one glove; but you risk confusion if you say “I gave both of the boys \$50.” It is possible to construe this sentence as meaning that the boys shared the same \$50 gift. “I gave each of the boys \$50” is clearer.

👉 **Bought / brought** ⇒ If you pay for something, you’ve bought it; if you bring something you’ve brought it. These two words are probably interchanged most often out of mere carelessness. A spelling checker won’t catch the switch, so watch out for it.

👉 **Boughten** ⇒ BOUGHT

“Bought, ” not “boughten,” is the past tense of “buy.” “Store-bought,” a colloquial expression for “not home-made,” is already not formal English, but it is not improved by being turned into “store-boughten.”

👉 **Bounce / bounds** ⇒ BOUNDS

A leaky ball may be out of bounce, but when it crosses the boundary line off the basketball court or football field it goes out of bounds. Similarly, any action or speech that goes beyond proper limits can be called “out of bounds”: “Mark thought that it was out of bounds for his wife to go spelunking with Tristan, her old boyfriend.”

👉 **Bourgeois** ⇒ In the original French, a bourgeois was originally merely a free inhabitant of a bourg, or town. Through a natural evolution it became the label for members of the property-owning class, then of the middle class. As an

adjective it is used with contempt by bohemians and Marxists to label conservatives whose views are not sufficiently revolutionary.

The class made up of bourgeois (which is both the singular and the plural form) is the bourgeoisie. Shaky spellers are prone to leave out the E from the middle because “eoi” is not a natural combination in English, but these words have remarkably enough retained their French pronunciation: boorzhwah and boorzhwazee. The feminine form, “bourgeoise,” is rarely encountered in English.

🌀 **Bouyant** ⇒ BUOYANT

Buoys are buoyant. In the older pronunciation of “buoyant” as “bwoyant” this unusual spelling made more sense. Now that the pronunciation has shifted to “boyant” we have to keep reminding ourselves that the U comes before the O. The root noun, however, though often pronounced “boy” is more traditionally pronounced “BOO-ee.”

🌀 **Bow** ⇒ When it shoots arrows, plays your violin, or secures your shoelaces, “bow” rhymes with “go.” When it’s a respectful bending of the body or the front end of a ship, it rhymes with “cow” and sounds just like the “bough” on a tree.

🌀 **Brainchild** ⇒ Some people misuse “brainchild,” as in “Steve Jobs is the brainchild behind the iPhone.” A brainchild is not a person, but the child (product) of someone’s brain. So the iPhone is the brainchild of Steve Jobs.

🌀 **Brake / break** ⇒ You brake to slow down; if your brakes fail and you drive through a plate-glass window, you will break it.

🌀 **Brand names** ⇒ Popular usage frequently converts brand names into generic ones, with the generic name falling into disuse. Few people call gelatin dessert mix anything other than “Jell-O,” which helps to explain why it’s hard to find Royal Gelatin on the grocery shelves. All facial tissues are “Kleenex” to the masses, all photocopies “Xeroxes.” Such commercial fame is, however, a two-edged sword: sales may be lost as well as gained from such over-familiarity. Few people care whether their “Frisbee” is the genuine Wham-O brand original or an imitation. Some of these terms lack staying power: “Hoover” used to be synonymous with “vacuum cleaner,” and the brand name was even transmuted into a verb: “to Hoover” (these uses are still common in the UK). Most of the time this sort of thing is fairly harmless, but if you are a motel operator offering a different brand of whirlpool bath in your rooms, better not call it a “Jacuzzi.”

🌀 **Brang, brung** ⇒ BROUGHT

In some dialects the past tense of “bring” is “brang,” and “brung” is the past participle; but in standard English both are “brought.”

🌀 **Breach / breech** ⇒ Substitute a K for the CH in “breach” to remind you that the word has to do with breakage: you can breach (break through) a dam or breach (violate the terms of) a contract. As a noun, a breach is something broken off or open, as in a breach in a military line during combat.

“Breech” however, refers to rear ends, as in “breeches” (slang spelling “britches”). Thus “breech cloth,” “breech birth,” or “breech-loading gun.”

“Once more unto the breach, dear friends,” means “let’s charge into the gap in the enemy’s defenses,” not “let’s reach into our pants again.”

🌀 **Breakup / break up** ⇒ A breakup is what happens when two people break up. The one-word form is the result, whereas the two-word form is the action that leads to it.

🌀 **Breath / breathe** ⇒ When you need to breathe, you take a breath. “Breathe” is the verb, “breath” the noun.

👉 **Breeches** ⇒ The most common pronunciation of this word referring to pants rhymes with “itches.” The more phonetic spelling “britches” is perfectly acceptable.

👉 **Bring / take** ⇒ When you are viewing the movement of something from the point of arrival, use “bring”: “When you come to the potluck, please bring a green salad.” Viewing things from the point of departure, you should use “take”: “When you go to the potluck, take a bottle of wine.”

👉 **Britain / Briton** ⇒ A British person is a Briton; only the country can be referred to as “Britain.”

👉 **Broach / brooch** ⇒ A decorative pin is a “brooch” even though it sounds like “broach”—a quite different word. Although some dictionaries now accept the latter spelling for jewelry, you risk looking ignorant to many readers if you use it.

👉 **Broke / broken** ⇒ BROKEN

When you break something, it’s broken, not “broke,” though a person or organization which has run out of money can be said in informal speech to be “broke.” Otherwise, use “broke” only as the simple past tense of “break,” without a helping verb: “Azfar broke the record,” but “The record was broken by Azfar.”

👉 **Brunt / butt** ⇒ A person who is the target of jokers is the butt of their humor (from an old meaning of the word “butt”: target for shooting at). But the object of this joking has to bear the brunt of the mockery (from an old word meaning a sharp blow or attack). A person is never a brunt. The person being attacked receives the brunt of it.

👉 **Brussel sprout** ⇒ BRUSSELS SPROUT

These tiny cabbage-like vegetables are named after the Belgian city of Brussels, which has an “S” on the end. The correct spelling is “Brussels sprout.”

👉 **Build off of** ⇒ BUILD ON

You build on your earlier achievements, you don’t build off of them.

👉 **Bullion / bouillon** ⇒ Gold bricks are bullion. Boil down meat stock to get bouillon. It’s an expensive mistake to confuse bouillon with bullion in a recipe.

👉 **Bully pulpit** ⇒ We occasionally still use the old positive meaning of the word “bully” when congratulating somebody (sincerely or sarcastically) by saying “Bully for you!” A century ago “bully” meant “good,” “great.”

That’s why Theodore Roosevelt called the American presidency a “bully pulpit,” meaning that it provided him an outstanding platform from which to preach his ideas. The expression is often misused by writers who mistakenly think it has something to do with preaching at people in a bullying way.

👉 **Bumrush** ⇒ BUM’S RUSH

A 1987 recording by the rap group Public Enemy popularized the slang term “bumrush” as a verb meaning “to crash into a show hoping to see it for free,” evidently by analogy with an earlier usage in which it meant “a police raid.” In the hip-hop world to be “bumrushed” (also spelled as two words) has evolved a secondary meaning, “to get beaten up by a group of lowlifes, or ‘bums.’” However, older people are likely to take all of these as mistakes for the traditional expression “bum’s rush,” as in “Give that guy the bum’s rush,” i.e. Throw him out unceremoniously, treating him like an unwanted bum. It was traditionally the bum being rushed, whereas in the newer expressions the bums are doing the rushing. It’s good to be aware of your audience when you use slang expressions like this, to avoid baffling listeners.

Side note: Britons laughed themselves silly when they saw Americans wandering around in sportswear with “B.U.M.” plastered in huge letters across their chests. “Bum” means “rear end” in the UK

👉 **But . . . However** ⇒ BUT, HOWEVER

Since “but” and “however” perform the same function in a sentence, it’s not appropriate to use them together. Suppose you have written “but the cake he made for my birthday, however, was his old girlfriend’s favorite flavor, not mine.” Revise this to use just one or the other. For instance: “but the cake he made for my birthday was . . .” Or “the cake he made made for my birthday, however, was. . . .”

👉 **Butt naked** ⇒ BUCK NAKED

The standard expression is “buck naked,” and the contemporary “butt naked” is an error that will get you laughed at in some circles. However, it might be just as well if the new form were to triumph. Originally a “buck” was a dandy, a pretentious, overdressed show-off of a man. Condescendingly applied in the US to Native Americans and black slaves, it quickly acquired negative connotations. To the historically aware speaker, “buck naked” conjures up stereotypical images of naked “savages” or—worse—slaves laboring naked on plantations. Consider using the alternative expression “stark naked.”

👉 **Buttload** ⇒ BOATLOAD

The original expression (meaning “a lot”), both more polite and more logical, is “boatload.”

👉 **Buttox** ⇒ BUTTOCKS

The popular phonetic spelling “buttox” ignores the fact that “buttocks” (the traditional spelling) is a plural: one buttock, two buttocks.

👉 **By / 'bye / buy** ⇒ These are probably confused with each other more often through haste than through actual ignorance, but “by” is the common preposition in phrases like “you should know by now.” It can also serve a number of other functions, but the main point here is not to confuse “by” with the other two spellings: “bye” is an abbreviated form of “goodbye” (preferably with an apostrophe before it to indicate the missing syllable), and “buy” is the verb meaning “purchase.” “Buy” can also be a noun, as in “that was a great buy.” The term for the position of a competitor who advances to the next level of a tournament without playing is a “bye.” All others are “by.”

👉 **By far and away** ⇒ BY FAR, FAR AND AWAY

You could say that Halloween is by far your favorite holiday, or you can say that it’s far and away your favorite holiday; but if you combine the two expressions and say “by far and away” you’ll annoy some people and puzzle others who can’t figure out why it doesn’t sound quite right.

👉 **Cacao / cocoa** ⇒ Technically speaking, the plant is called a “cacao tree” and the seeds and the chocolate powder made from them are called “cocoa.” These spellings are often swapped, but in contexts where botanical names matter, it’s better to stick with “cacao tree.”

Neither of these should be confused with “coca,” the source of cocaine.

👉 **Cache / cachet** ⇒ “Cache” comes from the French verb cacher, meaning “to hide,” and in English is pronounced exactly like the word “cash.” But reporters speaking of a cache (hidden hoard) of weapons or drugs often mispronounce it to sound like cachet—“ca-SHAY”—a word with a very different meaning: originally a seal affixed to a document, now a quality attributed to anything with authority or prestige. Rolex watches have cachet.

👉 **Caddy-corner** ⇒ CATTY-CORNER, CATER-CORNER, KITTY-CORNER

This expression, meaning “diagonally opposite,” was formed from a misspelling in English of the French word *quatre* (“four”) prefixed to “corner.” Although the word has nothing to do with cats or kittens, in various dialects all three spellings are acceptable: “catty,” “cater” or “kitty.”

But unless you have somebody holding your golf clubs permanently stationed in the corner of your room, you shouldn't use the spelling “caddy corner.”

👉 **Call the question** ⇒ This is more a matter of parliamentary procedure than of correct English, but people are generally confused about what “calling the question” means. They often suppose that it means simply “let's vote!” And some even imagine that it is necessary to call for the question before a vote may be taken. You even see deferential meeting chairs pleading, “Would someone like to call for the question?”

But “calling the question” when done properly should be a rare occurrence. If debate has dragged on longer than you feel is really warranted, you can “call the question,” at which time the chair has to immediately ask those assembled to vote to determine whether or not debate should be cut off or continue. The motion to call the question is itself not debatable. If two-thirds of those voting agree that the discussion should have died some time ago, they will support the call. Then, and only then, will the vote be taken on the question itself.

Potentially this parliamentary maneuver would be a great way to shut down windy speakers who insist on prolonging a discussion when a clear consensus has already been arrived at, but since so few people understand what it means, it rarely works as intended.

Chairs: when someone “calls the question,” explain what the phrase means and ask if that is what's intended. Other folks: you'll get further most of the time just saying “Let's vote!”

👉 **Callous / callused** ⇒ Calling someone “callous” is a way of metaphorically suggesting a lack of feeling similar to that caused by calluses on the skin, but if you are speaking literally of the tough build-up on a person's hand or feet, the word you need is “callused.”

👉 **Calm, cool, and collective** ⇒ CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED

Unless you're living in an unusually tranquil commune, you wouldn't be “calm, cool, and collective.” The last word in this traditional phrase is “collected,” in the sense of such phrases as “let me sit down a minute and collect my thoughts.” If you leave out “cool” the last word still has to be “collected.”

👉 **Calvary / cavalry** ⇒ “Calvary,” always capitalized, is the hill on which Jesus was crucified. It means “hill of skulls.” Soldiers mounted on horseback are cavalry.

👉 **Can goods** ⇒ CANNED GOODS

Is there a sign at your grocery store that says “can goods”? It should say “canned goods.”

👉 **Can't... Too** ⇒ In many contexts, “can't” followed by “too” can be confusing. “You can't put too much garlic in this stew” could mean “be careful not to put too much garlic in this soup” or “there's no limit to how much garlic you could put in this soup—use lots!”

👉 **Canadian geese** ⇒ “Canadian geese” would be any old geese that happen to be in Canada. What people usually mean to refer to when they use this phrase is the specific species properly called “Canada geese.”

👉 **Cannot / can not** ⇒ These two spellings are largely interchangeable, but by far the more common is “cannot” and you should probably use it except when you want to be emphatic: “No, you can not wash the dog in the Maytag.”

See also “may/might.”

👉 **Canon / cannon** ⇒ “Canon” used to be such a rare word that there was no temptation to confuse it with “cannon”: a large piece of artillery. The debate over the literary canon (a list of officially-approved works) and the popularity of Pachelbel’s Canon (an imitative musical form related to the common “round”) have changed all that—confusion is rampant. Just remember that the big gun is a “cannon.” All the rest are “canons.” Note that there are metaphorical uses of “cannon” for objects shaped like large guns, such as a horse’s “cannon bone.”

👉 **Canvas / canvass** ⇒ Heavy cloth, whether in the frame of a painting or on the floor of a boxing ring, is canvas, with one S.

To survey ballots or voters is to canvass them, with two s’s.

👉 **Capeesh** ⇒ CAPISCE

“Capisce?” Is American pseudo-Italian slang for “understand?” And functions rather like “know what I mean?” In Italian this form would be used only in a formal setting; the typically casual American-style contexts would require capischi.

Since American slang uses the wrong spelling by Italian standards anyway, it probably doesn’t matter that it’s often misspelled as “capeesh”; but “kapeesh” is really uncool: there’s no K in Italian.

In formal Italian, capisce is pronounced “cah-PEE-shay,” but in slangy Italian and English it’s “cah-PEESH.”

👉 **Capital / capitol** ⇒ A “capitol” is almost always a building. Cities which serve as seats of government are capitals spelled with an A in the last syllable, as are most other uses of the word as a common noun. The only exceptions are place names alluding to capitol buildings in some way or other, like “Capitol Hill” in DC, Denver, or Seattle (the latter named either after the hill in Denver or in hopes of attracting the Washington State capitol building). Would it help to remember that Congress with an O meets in the Capitol with another O?

👉 **Caramel / carmel** ⇒ Take Highway 1 south from Monterey to reach the charming seaside town of Carmel, of which Clint Eastwood was formerly mayor. Dissolve sugar in a little water and cook it down until the sugar turns brown to create caramel. A nationwide chain uses the illiterate spelling “karmelkorntm,” which helps to perpetuate the confusion between these two words.

👉 **Carat / caret / carrot / karat** ⇒ “Carrots” are those crunchy orange vegetables Bugs Bunny is so fond of, but this spelling gets misused for the less familiar words which are pronounced the same but have very different meanings. Precious stones like diamonds are weighed in carats. The same word is used to express the proportion of pure gold in an alloy, though in this usage it is sometimes spelled “karat” (hence the abbreviation “20K gold”). A caret is a proofreader’s mark showing where something needs to be inserted, shaped like a tiny pitched roof. It looks rather like a French circumflex, but is usually distinct from it on modern computer keyboards. Carets are extensively used in computer programming. Just remember, if you can’t eat it, it’s not a carrot.

👉 **Careen / career** ⇒ A truck careening down the road is swerving from side to side as it races along, whereas a truck careering down the road may be simply traveling very fast. But because it is not often clear which meaning a person intends, confusing these two words is not likely to get you into trouble.

👉 **Caring** ⇒ Most people are comfortable referring to “caring parents,” but speaking of a “caring environment” is jargon, not acceptable in formal English. The environment may contain caring people, but it does not itself do the caring.

See also “may/might.”

🌀 **Carousal / carousel** ⇒ A carousal is a wild drunken party.

When you encounter a “carousal horse,” a “baggage carousal,” or a “carousal CD player,” what is meant is “carousel.”

If you’ve been invited to a “carousal party” don’t head for the liquor store until you’re sure you haven’t just been invited to ride on a merry-go-round.

🌀 **Catch 22** ⇒ People familiar with Joseph Heller’s novel are irritated when they see “Catch-22” used to label any simple hitch or problem rather than this sort of circular predicament: you can’t get published until you have an agent, and you can’t get an agent until you’ve been published. “There’s a catch” will do fine for most other situations.

🌀 **Caught / caught** ⇒ CAUGHT

The standard past tense form of “catch” in modern English is not “caught,” but “caught.”

🌀 **Caucasian** ⇒ “Caucasian” is an outdated term originally used to refer to some or all of the people of Europe, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Central and South Asia. It was invented in the early 19th century by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who felt the Caucasian “race” was best exemplified by people living in the Caucasus mountains of Georgia. It is widely misused today as a synonym for “white.” Although the concept of “race” is still widely popular, contemporary scientists have generally rejected the concept as simplistic and misleading.

The term is better avoided except in reference to people actually from the Caucasus.

🌀 **CD-ROM disk** ⇒ CD-ROM

“CD-ROM” stands for “compact disc, read-only memory,” so adding another “disc” or “disk” is redundant. The same goes for “DVD” (from “Digital Video Disc” or “Digital Versatile Disc”)—there are non-video versions). Don’t say “give me that DVD disk,” just “give me that DVD.”

🌀 **Cesar** ⇒ CAESAR

Did you know that German “Kaiser” is derived from the Latin “Caesar” and is pronounced a lot more like it than the English version? We’re stuck with our illogical pronunciation, so we have to memorize the correct spelling. (The Russians messed up the pronunciation as thoroughly as the English, with their “Czar.”) Thousands of menus are littered with “Cesar salads” throughout America which should be “Caesar salads”—named after a restaurateur, not the Roman ruler (but they both spelled their names the same way).

🌀 **Cease the day / seize the day** ⇒ SEIZE THE DAY

The classical Latin phrase *carpe diem*—usually translated as “seize the day”—means “act now,” “there’s no time like the present.”

It has to do not with ceasing, but with acting.

🌀 **Celibate / chaste** ⇒ Believe it or not, you can be celibate without being chaste, and chaste without being celibate. A celibate person is merely unmarried, usually (but not always) because of a vow of celibacy. The traditional assumption is that such a person is not having sex with anyone, which leads many to confuse the word with “chaste,” denoting someone who does not have illicit sex. A woman could have wild sex twice a day with her lawful husband and technically still be chaste, though the word is more often used to imply a general abstemiousness from sex and sexuality. You can always amuse your readers by misspelling the latter word as “chased.”

🌀 **Celtic** ⇒ Because the Boston Celtics basketball team pronounces its name as if it began with an S, Americans are prone to use this pronunciation of the

word as it applies to the Bretons, Cornish, Welsh, Irish and Scots; but the dominant pronunciation among sophisticated US speakers is “keltik.” Just remember: “Celts in kilts.”

Interestingly, the Scots themselves often use the “S” pronunciation, notably in referring to the Glasgow soccer team, the “Celtic Football Club.”

👉 **Cement / concrete** ⇒ People in the building trades distinguish cement (the gray powder that comes in bags) from concrete (the combination of cement, water, sand, and gravel which becomes hard enough in your driveway to drive your car on). In contexts where technical precision matters, it’s probably better to speak of a “concrete sidewalk” rather than of a “cement sidewalk.”

See also “may/might.”

👉 **Censor / censure / sensor / censer** ⇒ To censor somebody’s speech or writing is to try to suppress it by preventing it from reaching the public. When guests on network TV utter obscenities, broadcasters practice censorship by bleeping them.

To censure someone, however, is to officially denounce an offender. You can be censured as much for actions as for words. A lawyer who destroyed evidence which would have been unfavorable to his client might be censured by the bar association.

A device which senses any change like changes in light or electrical output is a sensor. Your car and your digital camera contain sensors.

A censer is a church incense burner.

👉 **Center around** ⇒ CENTER ON, REVOLVE AROUND

Two perfectly good expressions—“center on” and “revolve around”—get conflated in this nonsensical neologism. When a speaker says his address will “center around the topic of” whatever, my interest level plummets.

👉 **Center of attraction** ⇒ CENTER OF ATTENTION

“Center of attraction” makes perfect sense, but the standard phrase is “center of attention.”

👉 **Cents** ⇒ On a sign displaying a cost of twenty-nine cents for something the price can be written as “.29,” as “\$.29,” or as “29¢,” but don’t combine the two forms. “.29¢” makes no sense, and “\$.29¢” is worse.

👉 **Ceremonial / ceremonious** ⇒ “Ceremonial” and “ceremonious” are often considered synonyms, and can indeed be used interchangeably in many contexts. But there are some cases in which one is better than the other.

If you are talking about the performance of a ceremony, the word you will usually want is “ceremonial” as in “ceremonial offering,” “ceremonial garb,” or “ceremonial dance.” Sikhs traditionally wear ceremonial daggers.

“Ceremonious” is mostly used to describe formal behavior which often has little or no connection with a literal ceremony: “ceremonious manners,” “ceremonious welcome,” or “ceremonious speech.”

👉 **Chai tea** ⇒ CHAI

Chai is simply the word for “tea” in Hindi and several other Asian languages. The spicy, milky variety known in India as masala chai is called “chai” in the US. Since Americans likely to be attracted by the word “chai” already know it’s a tea-based drink, it’s both redundant and pointless to call the product “chai tea.”

👉 **Chaise longue** ⇒ When English speakers want to be elegant they commonly resort to French, often mangling it in the process. The entrée, the dish served before the plat, usurped the latter’s position as main dish. And how in the world did French lingerie (originally meaning linen goods of all sorts, later narrowed to underwear only) pronounced—roughly—“lanzheree” come to be American

“lawnzheray”? Quelle horreur! “Chaise longue” (literally “long chair”), pronounced—roughly—“shezz lohng” with a hard G on the end became in English “shayz long.” Many speakers, however, confuse French chaise with English “chase” and French longue with English “lounge” (understandable since the article in question is a sort of couch or lounge), resulting in the mispronunciation “chase lounge.” We may imagine the French as chasing each other around their lounges, but a chaise is just a chair.

👉 **Chalk-full** ⇒ CHOCK-FULL, CHUCK-FULL

Originally a person or thing stuffed to the point of choking was “choke-full.” In modern speech this expression has become “chock-full,” or in less formal American English, “chuck-full.” Chalk has nothing to do with it.

👉 **Champaign / Champagne** ⇒ Champaign is the name of a city and county in Illinois. Champagne is a region of France that produces the sparkling wine of this name.

👉 **Chauvinist** ⇒ MALE CHAUVINIST, SEXIST

Nicolas Chauvin of Rochefort became a laughingstock in Napoleon’s army for his exaggerated nationalism, and his name gave rise to the term “chauvinism,” which characterizes people who wildly overestimate the excellence and importance of their own countries while denigrating others. The word was then broadened to cover an exaggerated belief in the superiority of one’s own kind in other respects. Following this pattern, feminists in the 1970s invented the term “male chauvinist” to label people who considered women inferior to men. Unfortunately, this was the context in which many people first encountered “chauvinism” and not understanding that it had a broader meaning, dropped the “male,” thinking that “chauvinist” was a synonym for “sexist.” This misunderstanding is so widespread that only occasionally will you encounter someone who knows better, but in formal writing it is wise to avoid the abbreviated form in this restricted meaning. However, if you do intend the older meaning of the word, it’s also a good idea to make that clear from your context, for a great many of your readers will assume you are talking about sexism.

👉 **Check** ⇒ CZECH

Pronounce the name of the country which broke away from the former Czechoslovakia to form the Czech Republic as “check,” but don’t spell it that way. Its citizens are Czechs.

👉 **Chemicals** ⇒ Markets offering “organic” produce claim it has been raised “without chemicals.” News stories fret about “chemicals in our water supply.” This common error in usage indicates quite clearly the lamentable level of scientific literacy in our population. Everything on earth save a few stray subatomic particles and various kinds of energy (and—if you believe in it—pure spirit) is composed of chemicals. Pure water consists of the chemical dihydrogen oxide. Vitamins and minerals are chemicals. In the broadest sense, even simple elements like nitrogen can be called chemicals. Writers who use this term sloppily contribute to the obfuscation of public debate over such serious issues as pollution and malnutrition.

👉 **Chicano / Latino / Hispanic** ⇒ “Chicano” means “Mexican-American,” and not all the people denoted by this term like it. When speaking of people living in the US from various other Spanish-speaking countries, “Chicano” is an error for “Latino” or “Hispanic.” Only “Hispanic” can include people with a Spanish as well as with a Latin American heritage; and some people of Latin American heritage object to it as ignoring the Native American element in that

population. Only “Latino” could logically include Portuguese-speaking Brazilians, though that is rarely done.

☞ **Chock it up** ⇒ CHALK IT UP

“Chalk it up” is a very old expression that goes back to the custom of writing a customer’s outstanding charges on a chalkboard, especially in a bar. Today it means to give credit in a more general sense, as in the expression “chalk it up to experience” (credit it to experience, add it to your account of experiences).” A successful team may chalk up another win.

You chock a vehicle parked on a slope by slipping a wedge called a “chock” behind its wheels.

☞ **Chose / choose** ⇒ You chose tequila last night; you choose aspirin this morning. “Chose” is the past tense, “choose” the present.

☞ **Chrispy** ⇒ CRISPY There are a lot of menus, signs, and recipes out there featuring “chrispy chicken.” Is this misspelling influenced by the “CH” in “chicken” or the pattern in other common words like “Christmas”? At any rate, the proper spelling is “crispy.”

☞ **Chuck / chunk** ⇒ CHUCK

In casual conversation, you may get by with saying “Chuck [throw] me that monkey wrench, will you?” But you will mark yourself as illiterate beyond mere casualness by saying instead “Chunk me that wrench.” This is a fairly common substitution in some dialects of American English.

☞ **Church** ⇒ Catholics routinely refer to their church as the Church, with a capital “C.” This irritates the members of other churches, but is standard usage. When “Church” stands by itself (that is, not as part of a name like “First Methodist Church”) you should normally capitalize it only to mean “Roman Catholic Church.” Note that protestant theologians and other specialists in religion do refer to the whole body of Christians as “the Church,” but this professional usage is not common in ordinary writing.

☞ **Chute/shoot** ⇒ It is not uncommon to see people writing “down the shoot” when they mean “down the chute.”

A chute is a sloping channel things move down along. It comes from the French word for “to fall.”

But if you are a shipper of Chinese groceries you could shoot cans of bamboo shoots down a chute to the loading dock.

“Chute” is also short for “parachute,” but people rarely misspell it in that sense.

☞ **Cite / site / sight** ⇒ You cite the author in an endnote; you visit a Web site or the site of the crime, and you sight your beloved running toward you in slow motion on the beach (a sight for sore eyes!).

You travel to see the sights. It’s called not “siteseeing” but sightseeing.

☞ **Clamor / clamor** ⇒ CLAMBER

To clamor for something is to loudly demand it. An enthusiastic audience may clamor for an encore; and an angry populace may clamor for a leader’s resignation.

As its spelling hints, “clamber” is related to “climb.” To clamber is to climb strenuously. You can clamber up the steep bank of a river, or up a tower.

☞ **Classic / classical** ⇒ “Classical” usually describes things from ancient Greece or Rome, or things from analogous ancient periods like classical Sanskrit poetry. The exception is classical music, which in the narrow sense is late 18th- and 19th-century music by the likes of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, and in the broader sense formal concert music of any period in the West or traditional formal music from other cultures, like classical ragas.

“Classic” has a much looser meaning, describing things that are outstanding examples of their kind, like a classic car or even a classic blunder.

🌀 **Cleanup / clean up** ⇒ “Cleanup” is usually a noun: “the cleanup of the toxic waste site will cost billions of dollars.” “Clean” is a verb in the phrase “clean up”: “You can go to the mall after you clean up your room.”

🌀 **Clench / clinch** ⇒ “Clench” and “clinch” are related words, but they are not interchangeable.

You clench a fist or teeth.

You clinch a deal or a victory. A reliable person comes through in the clinch.

Bent-over nails are sometimes said to be clenched, but are more often clinched.

🌀 **Cliché / clichéd** ⇒ One often hears young people say “That movie was so cliché!” The standard expression is clichéd.

🌀 **Click / clique** ⇒ CLIQUE

Students lamenting the division of their schools into snobbish factions often misspell “clique” as “click.” In the original French, “clique” was synonymous with “claque”—an organized group of supporters at a theatrical event who tried to prompt positive audience response by clapping enthusiastically.

🌀 **Climactic / climatic** ⇒ “Climactic” and “anticlimactic” have to do with climaxes, “climatic” with climate. There is no such word as “anticlimatic.”

🌀 **Close / clothes** ⇒ Because the TH in “clothes” is seldom pronounced distinctly, it is often misspelled “close.” Just remember the TH in “clothing,” where it is obvious. Clothes are made of cloth. Rags can also be cloths (without an E).

🌀 **Close proximity** ⇒ CLOSE, IN PROXIMITY TO

A redundancy: “in proximity to” means “close to.”

🌀 **Closed-minded** ⇒ CLOSE-MINDED

“Closed-minded” might seem logical, but the traditional spelling of this expression is “close-minded.” The same is true for “close-lipped” and “close-mouthed.”

🌀 **Coarse / course** ⇒ “Coarse” is always an adjective meaning “rough, crude.” Unfortunately, this spelling is often mistakenly used for a quite different word, “course,” which can be either a verb or a noun (with several different meanings).

🌀 **Coat strings** ⇒ COAT TAILS, APRON STRINGS

A person deriving unearned benefits by being attached to another is riding on his or her coat tails. This expression derives from the long tails on men’s old-fashioned coats.

A person clinging to another’s apron strings is excessively dependent on him or her, like a small child hanging on to its mother’s clothing.

These two expressions are often mistakenly blended. The result is statements such as “she hoped to succeed by clinging to her boss’s coat strings” and “he is still clinging to his mother’s coat strings.” Some coats have strings, but “coat strings” is not standard usage in either of these sorts of expressions.

🌀 **Coffee clutch** ⇒ COFFEE KLATSCH, COFFEE KLATCH

“Coffee klatsch” comes from German Kaffeeklatsch meaning “coffee chat.” This is a compound word of which only one element has been translated, with the other being left in its original German spelling.

Many people anglicize the spelling further to “coffee klatch” or “coffee clutch.” Either one is less sophisticated than “coffee klatsch,” but not too likely to cause raised eyebrows.

“Coffee clutch” is just a mistake except when used as a deliberate pun to label certain brands of coffee-cup sleeves or to name a cafe.

👉 **Coiffeur / coiffure** ⇒ The guy who does your hair is a “coiffeur,” just as the person who drives a car is a “chauffeur,” and a restaurant owner is a “restaurateur.” The -eur suffix occurs regularly in occupation names which we have borrowed from the French. In French all of these would be male, though Americans often refer to female restaurateurs and chauffeurs. But it is less acceptable to refer to a female hairdresser as a coiffeur.

When the coiffeur has finished, the end product—your hairdo—is your “coiffure.”

👉 **Cold slaw** ⇒ COLE SLAW

The popular salad made of shredded cabbage was originally “cole slaw,” from the Dutch for “cabbage salad.” Because it is served cold, Americans have long supposed the correct spelling to be “cold slaw”; but if you want to sound more sophisticated go with the original.

👉 **Coliseum / Colosseum** ⇒ The standard spelling for an outdoor stadium is “coliseum”, but the one in Rome is called the “Colosseum.” Also note that the name of the specific construction in Rome is capitalized.

👉 **Collaborate / corroborate** ⇒ People who work together on a project collaborate (share their labor); people who support your testimony as a witness corroborate (strengthen by confirming) it.

👉 **Collage / college** ⇒ You can paste together bits of paper to make a collage, but the institution of higher education is a college.

👉 **Collective plural** ⇒ In UK English it is common to see statements like “Parliament have raised many questions about the proposal” in which because Parliament is made up of many individuals, several of whom are raising questions, the word is treated as if it were plural in form and given a plural verb. This is the proper-noun form of what is called the “collective plural.” Many UK authorities object when this pattern is applied to organization names if the organization is being discussed as a whole and not as a collection of individuals. According to them, “The BBC have been filming in Papua New Guinea” should be “The BBC has been filming. . . .”

This sort of collective plural applied to the names of organizations is almost unheard of in the US, and in fact strikes most Americans as distinctly weird, with an exception being the occasional sports team with a singular-form name like the Utah Jazz, the Miami Heat, the Orlando Magic, or the Seattle Storm. There’s a sarcastic saying, “The Utah Jazz are to basketball what Utah is to jazz.”

Another occasional exception is singular performing group names which are sometimes treated as plural, like The Who and The Clash, though such groups are also often referred to the singular. It’s almost as common to say “The Who rule” as “The Who rules.”

👉 **Colombia / Columbia** ⇒ Although both are named after Columbus, the US capital is the District of Columbia, whereas the South American country is Colombia.

👉 **Colons / semicolons** ⇒ Colons have a host of uses, but they mostly have in common that the colon acts to connect what precedes it with what follows. Think of the two dots of a colon as if they were stretched out to form an equal sign, so that you get cases like this: “he provided all the ingredients: sugar, flour, butter, and vanilla.” There are a few exceptions to this pattern, however. One unusual use of colons is in between the chapter and verses of a Biblical citation,

for instance, “Matthew 6:5.” In bibliographic citation a colon separates the city from the publisher: “New York: New Directions, 1979.” It also separates minutes from hours in times of day when given in figures: “8:35.”

It is incorrect to substitute a semicolon in any of these cases. Think of the semicolon as erecting a little barrier with that dug-in comma under the dot; semicolons always imply separation rather than connection. A sentence made up of two distinct parts whose separation needs to be emphasized may do so with a semicolon: “Mary moved to Seattle; she was sick of getting sunburned in Los Angeles.” When a compound sentence contains commas within one or more of its clauses, you have to escalate to a semicolon to separate the clauses themselves: “It was a mild, deliciously warm spring day; and Mary decided to walk to the fair.” The other main use of semicolons is to separate one series of items from another—a series within a series, if you will: “The issues discussed by the board of directors were many: the loud, acrimonious complaints of the stockholders; the abrupt, devastating departure of the director; and the startling, humiliating discovery that he had absconded with half the company’s assets.” Any time the phrases which make up a series contain commas, for whatever reason, they need to be separated by semicolons.

Many people are so terrified of making the wrong choice that they try to avoid colons and semicolons altogether; but formal writing often requires their use, and it’s wise for serious writers to learn the correct patterns.

👉 **Colorado** ➔ “Colorado” is one of three states whose names are commonly mispronounced by non-Westerners. The third syllable should sound like “rad,” not “rod.”

See also Oregon and Nevada.

👉 **Coma / comma** ➔ Some people write of patients languishing in a comma, and others refer to inserting a coma into a sentence. A long-term unconscious state is a coma; the punctuation mark is a comma.

👉 **Come with** ➔ In some American dialects it is common to use the phrase “come with” without specifying with whom, as in “We’re going to the bar. Want to come with?” This sounds distinctly odd to the majority of people, who would expect “come with us.”

👉 **Commas** ➔ What follows is not a comprehensive guide to the many uses of commas, but a quick tour of the most common errors involving them.

The first thing to note is that the comma often marks a brief pause in the flow of a sentence, and helpfully marks off one phrase from another. If you write “I plan to see Shirley and Fred will go shopping while we visit” your readers are naturally going to think the announced visit will be to both Shirley and Fred until the second half surprises them into realizing that Fred is not involved in this visit at all. A simple comma makes everything clear: “I plan to see Shirley, and Fred will go shopping while we visit.” People who read and write little have trouble with commas if they deal with English primarily as a spoken language, where emphasis and rhythm mark out phrases. It takes a conscious effort to translate the rhythm of a sentence into writing using punctuation.

Not many people other than creative writers have the occasion to write dialogue, but it is surprising how few understand that introductory words and phrases have to be separated from the main body of speech in direct address: “Well, what did you think of that?” “Good evening, Mr. Nightingale.”

Commas often help set off interrupting matter within sentences. The proper term for this sort of word or phrase is “parenthetical.” There are three ways to handle parenthetical matter. For asides sharply interrupting the flow of the

sentence (think of your own examples) use parentheses. For many other kinds of fairly strong interjections, dashes—if you know how to type them properly—work best. Milder interruptions, like this, are nicely set off with commas. Many writers don't realize that they are setting off a phrase, so they begin with the first comma but omit the second, which should conclude the parenthetical matter. Check for this sort of thing in your proofreading.

A standard use for commas is to separate the items in a series: “cats, dogs, and gerbils.” Authorities differ as to whether that final comma before the “and” is required. Follow the style recommended by your teacher, editor, or boss when you have to please them; but if you are on your own, I suggest you use the final comma. It often removes ambiguities.

A different kind of series has to do with a string of adjectives modifying a single noun: “He was a tall, strong, handsome, but stupid man.” But when the adjective becomes an adverb modifying another adjective instead of the noun, then no comma is used: “He was wearing a garish bright green tie.” A simple test: if you could logically insert “and” between the adjectives in a series like this, you need commas.

English teachers refer to sentences where clauses requiring some stronger punctuation are instead lightly pasted together with a comma as “comma splices.” Here's an example: “He brought her a dozen roses, he had forgotten she was allergic to them.” In this sentence the reader needs to be brought up sharply and reoriented mid-sentence with a semicolon; a comma is too weak to do the trick. Here's a worse example of a comma splice: “It was a beautiful day outside, she remembered just in time to grab the coffee mug.” There is no obvious logical connection between the two parts of this sentence. They don't belong in the same sentence at all. The comma should be a period, with the rest being turned into a separate sentence.

Some writers insert commas seemingly at random: “The unabridged dictionary, was used mainly to press flowers.” When you're not certain a comma is required, read your sentence aloud. If it doesn't seem natural to insert a slight pause or hesitation at the point marked by the comma, it should probably be omitted.

See also colons/semicolons and hyphens & dashes.

👉 **Company names with apostrophes** ⇒ Some company names which have a possessive form use an apostrophe before the S and some don't: “mcdonald's” does and “Starbucks” doesn't. “Macy's” idiosyncratically uses a star for its apostrophe. Logo designers often feel omitting the apostrophe leads to a cleaner look, and there's nothing you can do about it except to remember which is standard for a particular company. But people sometimes informally add an S to company names with which they are on familiar terms: “I work down at the Safeway's now” (though in writing, the apostrophe is likely to be omitted). This is not standard usage.

👉 **Compare and contrast** ⇒ COMPARE

Hey kids, here's a chance to catch your English teacher in a redundancy! To compare two things is to note their similarities and their differences. There's no need to add “and contrast.”

👉 **Compare to / compare with** ⇒ These are sometimes interchangeable, but when you are stressing similarities between the items compared, the most common word is “to”: “She compared his home-made wine to toxic waste.” If you are examining both similarities and differences, use “with”: “The teacher compared Steve's exam with Robert's to see whether they had cheated.”

👉 **Complement / compliment** ⇒ Originally these two spellings were used interchangeably, but they have come to be distinguished from each other in modern times. Most of the time the word people intend is “compliment”: nice things said about someone (“She paid me the compliment of admiring the way I shined my shoes”). “Complement,” much less common, has a number of meanings associated with matching or completing. Complements supplement each other, each adding something the others lack, so we can say that “Alice’s love for entertaining and Mike’s love for washing dishes complement each other.” Remember, if you’re not making nice to someone, the word is “complement.”

A complement can also be the full number of something needed to make it complete: “my computer has a full complement of video-editing programs.” If it is preceded by “full” the word you want is almost certainly “complement.”

See also complementary/complimentary

👉 **Complementary / complimentary** ⇒ When paying someone a compliment like “I love what you’ve done with the kitchen!” You’re being complimentary. A free bonus item is also a complimentary gift. But items or people that go well with each other are complementary. In geometry, complementary angles add up to 90°, whereas supplementary ones add up to 180°.

👉 **Comprised of** ⇒ COMPOSED OF

Although “comprise” is used primarily to mean “to include,” it is also often stretched to mean “is made up of”—a meaning that some critics object to. The most cautious route is to avoid using “of” after any form of “comprise” and substitute “is composed of” in sentences like this: “Jimmy’s paper on Marxism was composed entirely of sentences copied off the Marx Brothers Home Page.” There’s a lot of disagreement about the proper use of “comprise,” but most authorities agree that the whole comprises the parts: “Our pets comprise one dog, two cats, and a turtle.” The whole comes first, then “comprise” followed by the parts. But there’s so much confusion surrounding the usage of this word that it may be better to avoid it altogether.

👉 **Concensus** ⇒ CONSENSUS

You might suppose that this word had to do with taking a census of the participants in a discussion, but it doesn’t. It is a good old Latin word that has to do with arriving at a common sense of the meeting, and the fourth letter is an “S.”

Speaking of a “general consensus” is extremely common, though strictly speaking it’s a redundant expression since a consensus is by definition a general agreement.

👉 **Concerning** ⇒ WORRISOME, TROUBLING

People commonly say of things that are a cause for concern that they are “concerning”: “My boyfriend’s affection for his pet rattlesnake is concerning.” This is not standard English. There are many better words that mean the same thing including “worrisome,” “troubling,” and “alarming.”

👉 **Concerted effort** ⇒ One cannot make a “concerted effort” all by one’s self. To work “in concert” is to work together with others. One can, however, make a concentrated effort. The prefix “con-” means “with.”

👉 **Confident / confidant / confidante** ⇒ In modern English “confident” is almost always an adjective. Having studied for a test you feel confident about passing it. You’re in a confident frame of mind. This spelling is often misused as

a noun meaning “person you confide in,” especially in the misspelled phrase “close confident.”

The spelling “confidante” suggests that such a close friend might be a female, and conservatives prefer to confine its use to refer to women. But this spelling is also very common for males, and the spelling “confidant” is also used of both males and females. Either one will do in most contexts, but the person you trust with your deep secrets is not your “confident.”

👉 **Conflicted / conflicting feelings** ⇒ CONFLICTING FEELINGS

Phrases like “conflicted feelings” or “I feel conflicted” are considered jargon by many, and out of place in formal writing. Use “I have conflicting feelings” instead, or write “I feel ambivalent.”

👉 **Confusionism** ⇒ CONFUCIANISM

Confucius is the founder of Confucianism. His name is not spelled “Confucious,” and his philosophy is not called “Confusionism.” When you spot the confusion in the latter term, change it quickly to “Confucianism.”

👉 **Congradulations** ⇒ CONGRATULATIONS

I fear that all too many seniors are being “congradulated” for graduating from high school who don’t know that this word should be spelled “congratulations.” Try a search for this misspelling on your favorite Web search engine and be prepared to be astonished.

👉 **Connote / denote** ⇒ The literal meaning of a word is its denotation; the broader associations we have with a word are its connotations. People who depend on a thesaurus or a computer translation engine to find synonyms often choose a word with the right denotation but the wrong connotations.

“Determined” and “pig-headed” both denote stubbornness, but the first connotes a wise adherence to purpose and the second connotes foolish rigidity. “Boss” and “Chief Executive Officer” (CEO) can refer to the same office, but the first is less admiring and likely to connote the view of employees lower down in the company—nobody wants to be thought of as “bossy.” Higher executives would be more likely to speak admiringly of a “CEO.”

I often write “insufficiently complex” at the bottom of student papers instead of “simple-minded.” Although they denote essentially the same quality, the connotations of the first are less insulting.

👉 **Conscience, conscious, consciousness** ⇒ Your conscience makes you feel guilty when you do bad things, but your consciousness is your awareness. If you are awake, you are conscious. Although it is possible to speak of your “conscious mind,” you can’t use “conscious” all by itself to mean “consciousness.” See unconscious.

👉 **Conservativism** ⇒ CONSERVATISM

The conservative spelling of this word is “conservatism.”

👉 **Contaminates / contaminants** ⇒ When run-off from a chemical plant enters the river it contaminates the water, but the goo itself consists of contaminants.

👉 **Continual / continuous** ⇒ “Continuous” refers to actions which are uninterrupted: “My upstairs neighbor played his stereo continuously from 6:00 PM to 3:30 AM.” Continual actions, however, need not be uninterrupted, only repeated: “My father continually urges me to get a job.”

👉 **Contrary / contrast** ⇒ The phrases “on the contrary” and “to the contrary” are used to reply to an opposing point. Your friend tells you she is moving to New York and you express surprise because you thought she hated big cities. She replies, “On the contrary, I’ve always wanted to live in an urban area.”

When a distinction is being made that does not involve opposition of this sort, “in contrast” is appropriate. “In New York, you don’t need a car. In Los Angeles, in contrast, you can’t really get along without one, though you won’t need a snow shovel.”

Here’s a simple test: if you could possibly substitute “that’s wrong” the phrase you want is “on the contrary” or “to the contrary.” If not, then use “in contrast.”

👉 **Contrasts / contrasts with** ⇒ “With” must not be omitted in sentences like this: “Julia’s enthusiasm for rugby contrasts with Cheryl’s devotion to chess.”

👉 **Conversate** ⇒ CONVERSE

“Conversate” is what is called a “back-formation” based on the noun “conversation.” But the verb for this sort of thing is “converse.”

👉 **Copywrite / copyright** ⇒ COPYRIGHT

You can copyright writing, but you can also copyright a photograph or song. The word has to do with securing rights. Thus, there is no such word as “copywritten”; it’s “copyrighted.”

👉 **Core / corps / corpse** ⇒ Apples have cores. A corps is an organization, like the Peace Corps. A corpse is a dead body, a carcass.

👉 **Coronate** ⇒ CROWN

A person is crowned, not coronated. “Coronate” is improperly derived from “coronation,” but “crown” is the original and still standard form of the verb. But don’t be in too big a hurry to declare that there is “no such word”: “coronate” means “crown-shaped,” and has various uses in biology.

👉 **Costumer / customer** ⇒ CUSTOMER

Just what would a “costumer service” do? Supply extra-shiny spangles for a Broadway diva’s outfit? But this phrase is almost always a typographical error for “customer service,” and it appears on an enormous number of Web pages. Be careful not to swap the U and O when you type “customer.”

👉 **Could care less** ⇒ COULD NOT CARE LESS

Clichés are especially prone to scrambling because they become meaningless through overuse. In this case an expression which originally meant “it would be impossible for me to care less than I do because I do not care at all” is rendered senseless by being transformed into the now-common “I could care less.” Think about it: if you could care less, that means you care some. The original already drips sarcasm, so it’s pointless to argue that the newer version is “ironic.” People who misuse this phrase are just being careless. Still not convinced? Click here.

👉 **Could give a damn** ⇒ COULDN’T GIVE A DAMN

If you don’t care at all about something, the standard popular expression is “I couldn’t give a damn.” People often say instead “I could give a damn,” which should logically mean they care. Note that we say “I don’t give a damn,” not “I give a damn” unless it’s set in some kind of negative context such as “do you really think I give a damn?” Or “do I look like I give a damn?”

The same goes for parallel expressions where the last word is “darn” or some other expletive.

Just remember that in *Gone with the Wind* Clark Gable told Vivien Leigh, “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn.”

See also could care less.

👉 **Could of / should of / would of** ⇒ COULD HAVE, SHOULD HAVE, WOULD HAVE

This is one of those errors typically made by a person more familiar with the spoken than the written form of English. A sentence like “I would have gone if anyone had given me free tickets” is normally spoken in a slurred way so that

the two words “would have” are not distinctly separated, but blended together into what is properly rendered “would’ve.” Seeing that “V” tips you off right away that “would’ve” is a contraction of “would have.” But many people hear “would of” and that’s how they write it. Wrong.

Note that “must of” is similarly an error for “must have.”

👉 **Council / counsel / consul** ⇒ The first two words are pronounced the same but have distinct meanings. An official group that deliberates, like the Council on Foreign Relations, is a “council”; all the rest are “counsels”: your lawyer, advice, etc. A consul is a local representative of a foreign government.

👉 **Couple / couple of** ⇒ COUPLE OF

Instead of “she went with a couple sleazy guys before she met me,” write “a couple of guys” if you are trying to sound a bit more formal. Leaving the “of” out is a casual, slangy pattern.

👉 **Cowered / coward** ⇒ “Coward” and “cower” may seem logically connected. But “coward”—a noun used to scornfully label a fearful person—is derived from a French root, and “cower”—a verb meaning to crouch down, often fearfully—is derived from an entirely different Nordic one. “Cowered” is just the past tense of “cower” and should not be used as a spelling for the label given to a timid person. “It’s always “a coward” and “the coward.”

“Cowered” is also occasionally used improperly when “cowed”—meaning “intimidated”—is meant. It is not related etymologically to either “coward” or “cowered.”

👉 **Cowtow** ⇒ KOWTOW

You can tow a cow to water, but you can’t make it drink. But the word that means bowing worshipfully before someone comes from the Chinese words for knocking one’s head on the ground, and is spelled kowtow.

👉 **Crackerjacks** ⇒ CRACKER JACK

“Crackerjack” is an old slang expression meaning “excellent,” and the official name of the popcorn confection is also singular: “Cracker Jack.” People don’t pluralize its rival Poppycock as “Poppycocks,” but they seem to think of the individual popped kernels as the “jacks.” A similarly named candy is “Good and Plenty.” All three have descriptive names describing qualities and shouldn’t be pluralized. A way to remember this: in “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” “Cracker Jack” rhymes with “back.”

👉 **Crafts** ⇒ When referring to vehicles, “craft” is both singular and plural. Two aircraft, many watercraft, etc. Do not add an “S.”

But when referring to hobbies and skills such as “woodcrafts” or “arts and crafts” adding an “S” in the plural form is standard.

👉 **Crape/crepe** ⇒ In modern English “crape” refers to thin, crinkled paper or cloth. Black crape was traditionally associated with mourning. A crepe is a thin flat French pancake. Most Americans pronounce the two words the same, to rhyme with “ape.” If you want to spell it the French way, you’ll need to add a circumflex over the first E: crêpe, and pronounce it to rhyme with “step.” Even if you use the French form you’re likely to sound the final S in plural crêpes, though a real French speaker would leave it silent.

👉 **Credible / credulous** ⇒ “Credible” means “believable” or “trustworthy.” It is also used in a more abstract sense, meaning something like “worthy”: “She made a credible lyric soprano.” Don’t confuse “credible” with “credulous,” a much rarer word which means “gullible.” “He was incredulous” means “he didn’t believe it” whereas “he was incredible” means “he was wonderful” (but use the latter expression only in casual speech).

Although you will commonly see it said of some far-fetched story either that “it strains credulity” or that “it strains credibility,” the latter is more traditional. Something that strains credulity would be beyond the powers of even a very gullible person to believe. This form of the saying isn’t very effective because a credulous person isn’t straining to believe things anyway. Such a person believes easily without thinking. It makes more sense to say that something too weird or wild to be credible “strains credibility.”

See also “incredible” and “begs belief.”

👉 **Creeped / crept** ⇒ The standard past tense of “creep” is “crept.” “Creeped” is used mostly in the slang expression “creeped out” to describe the reaction of someone to something weird or disgusting.

👉 **Crescendo / climax** ⇒ When something is growing louder or more intense, it is going through a crescendo (from an Italian word meaning “growing”). Traditionalists object to its use when you mean “climax.” A crescendo of cheers by an enthusiastic audience grows until it reaches a climax, or peak. “Crescendo” as a verb is common, but also disapproved of by many authorities. Instead of “the orchestra crescendos,” write “the orchestra plays a crescendo.”

👉 **Crevice / crevasse** ⇒ Crevices are by definition tiny, like that little crevice between your teeth where the popcorn hulls always get caught. A huge crack in a glacier is given the French spelling: crevasse.

👉 **Crick / creek** ⇒ CREEK

The dialectal pronunciation and spelling of “creek” as “crick” is very popular in some parts of the US, but the standard pronunciation of the word is the same as that of “creek.”

👉 **Criteria / criterion** ⇒ There are several words with Latin or Greek roots whose plural forms ending in A are constantly mistaken for singular ones. See, for instance, data and media. You can have one criterion or many criteria. Don’t confuse them.

👉 **Criticism** ⇒ Beginning literature or art history students are often surprised to learn that in such contexts “criticism” can be a neutral term meaning simply “evaluating a work of literature or art.” A critical article about *The Color Purple* can be entirely positive about Alice Walker’s novel. Movie critics write about films they like as well as about films they dislike: writing of both kinds is called “criticism.”

👉 **Critique / criticize** ⇒ A critique is a detailed evaluation of something. The formal way to request one is “give me your critique,” though people often say informally “critique this”—meaning “evaluate it thoroughly.” But “critique” as a verb is not synonymous with “criticize” and should not be routinely substituted for it. “Josh critiqued my backhand” means Josh evaluated your tennis technique but not necessarily that he found it lacking. “Josh criticized my backhand” means that he had a low opinion of it.

You can write criticism on a subject, but you don’t criticize on something, you just criticize it.

👉 **Crochet / crotchet / crotchety** ⇒ CROCHET/CROTCHET/CROTCHETY Although all of these words derive from a common ancestor meaning “hook” and are related to “crook,” they have taken on different meanings in modern English. Those who do needlework with a crochet hook crochet. Your peculiar notions are your crotchets. And a crabby old person like Bob Cratchit’s boss is crotchety. There are various other technical uses for “crotchet,” but people who use them usually know the correct spelling. Just remember that “crochet” goes only with goods made with a crochet hook.

🌀 **Croissant** ⇒ The fanciful legend which attributes the creation of the croissant to Christian bakers celebrating a 17th-century victory over the Turks is widely recounted but almost certainly untrue, since there is no trace of the pastry until a century later. Although its form was probably not influenced by the Islamic crescent, the word *croissant* most definitely is French for “crescent.” Pastries formed from the same dough into different shapes should not be called “croissants.” If a customer in your bakery asks for a *pain au chocolat* (PAN oh-show-co-LA), reach for that rectangular pastry usually mislabeled in the US a “chocolate croissant.”

🌀 **Crowbar / wrecking bar** ⇒ A crowbar is a straight bar with one end only slightly bent and sharpened into a beak. Often the beak is split, giving the tool its name from its resemblance to a crow’s foot.

The tool with the much more pronounced hook on the end—designed for prying loose boards and drawing nails— may be considered a type of crowbar, but in among people in construction and the hardware trade it is called a “wrecking bar.”

🌀 **Crucifixion** ⇒ CRUCIFIXION

One might suppose that this common misspelling was a product of skepticism were it not for the fact that it most often occurs in the writings of believers. The word should make clear that Jesus was affixed to the cross, not imply that his killing is regarded as a fiction.

🌀 **Crucifix / cross** ⇒ A crucifix is a cross with an image of the crucified Christ affixed to it. Reporters often mistakenly refer to someone wearing a “crucifix” when the object involved is an empty cross. Crucifixes are most often associated with Catholics, empty crosses with Protestants.

🌀 **Cue / queue** ⇒ “Cue” has a variety of meanings, but all uses of “queue” relate to its original French meaning of “tail,” which becomes a metaphor for a line (beware, however: in French *queue* is also rude slang for the male sex organ). Although a few dictionaries accept “cue” as an alternative spelling for the braided tail some people make of their hair or a waiting line, traditionally both are queues: “Sun Yat Sen ordered that all Chinese men should cut off their queues,” “I have over 300 movies in my Netflix queue.”

🌀 **Currant / current** ⇒ “Current” is an adjective having to do with the present time, and can also be a noun naming a thing that, like time, flows: electrical current, currents of public opinion. “Currant” refers only to little fruits.

🌀 **Cursing through veins** ⇒ COURSING THROUGH VEINS

To course is to run. The most familiar use of this meaning of the word is in “racecourse”: a place where races are run. When the blood runs strongly through your veins, it courses through them. Metaphorically we speak of strong emotions like fear, exhilaration, and passion as coursing through our veins.

Some people mistakenly substitute “curse” and think these feelings are cursing through their veins. This might make some sort of sense with negative emotions, but note that the expression is also used of positive ones. Stick with coursing.

🌀 **Curve your appetite** ⇒ CURB YOUR APPETITE

A “curb” was originally a device used to control an unruly horse. Already in the 18th century people were speaking by analogy of controlling their appetites as “curbing” them. You do not “curve” your hunger, appetite, desires, etc. You curb them.

🌀 **Cut and dry** ⇒ CUT AND DRIED

Many people mishear the standard expression meaning “set,” “not open to change,” as “cut and dry.” Although this form is listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, it is definitely less common in sophisticated writing. The dominant modern usage is “cut and dried.” When used to modify a noun, it must be hyphenated: “cut-and-dried plan.”

👉 **Cut and paste / copy and paste** ⇒ Because “cut and paste” is a familiar phrase, many people say it when they mean “copy and paste” in a computer context. This can lead to disastrous results if followed literally by an inexperienced person. If you mean to tell someone to duplicate something rather than move it, say “copy.” And when you are moving bits of computer information from one place to another the safest sequence is often to copy the original, paste the copy elsewhere, and only then delete (cut) the original.

👉 **Cut of tea** ⇒ CUP OF TEA

An astounding number of people write “cut of tea” when they mean “cup of tea,” especially in phrases like “not my cut of tea” instead of “not my cup of tea.” This saying is not about fine distinctions between different ways the tea’s been harvested; it just refers to the ordinary vessel from which you drink the stuff. Is this mistake influenced by the expression “the cut of his jib” or is it just a goofy typo?

👉 **Dairy / diary** ⇒ A common typo that won’t be caught by your spelling checker is swapping “dairy” and “diary.” Butter and cream are dairy products; your journal is your diary.

👉 **Damp squid** ⇒ DAMP SQUIB

Squid are indeed usually damp in their natural environment, but the popular British expression describing a less than spectacular explosion is a “damp squib” (soggy firecracker).

👉 **Damped / dampened** ⇒ When the vibration of a wheel is reduced it is damped, but when you drive through a puddle your tire is dampened. “Dampened” always has to do with wetting, if only metaphorically: “The announcement that Bob’s parents were staying home after all dampened the spirits of the party-goers.” The parents are being a wet blanket.

👉 **Dangling and misplaced modifiers** ⇒ Dangling and misplaced modifiers are discussed at length in usage guides partly because they are very common and partly because there are many different kinds of them. But it is not necessary to understand the grammatical details involved to grasp the basic principle: words or phrases which modify some other word or phrase in a sentence should be clearly, firmly joined to them and not dangle off forlornly on their own.

Sometimes the dangling phrase is simply too far removed from the word it modifies, as in “Sizzling on the grill, Theo smelled the Copper River salmon.” This makes it sound like Theo is being barbecued, because his name is the nearest noun to “sizzling on the grill.” We need to move the dangling modifier closer to the word it really modifies: “salmon.” “Theo smelled the Copper River salmon sizzling on the grill.”

Sometimes it’s not clear which of two possible words a modifier modifies: “Felicia is allergic to raw apples and almonds.” Is she allergic only to raw almonds, or all almonds—even roasted ones? This could be matter of life and death. Here’s a much clearer version: “Felicia is allergic to almonds and raw apples.” “Raw” now clearly modifies only “apples.” Dangling modifiers involving verbs are especially common and sometimes difficult to spot. For instance, consider this sentence: “Having bought the harpsichord, it now needed tuning.”

There is no one mentioned in the sentence who did the buying. One way to fix this is to insert the name of someone and make the two halves of the sentence parallel in form: “Wei Chi, having bought the harpsichord, now needed to tune it.” If you have a person in mind, it is easy to forget the reader needs to be told about that person; but he or she can't be just “understood.”

Here's another sentence with a dangling modifier, in this case at the end of a sentence: “The retirement party was a disaster, not having realized that Arthur had been jailed the previous week.” There is nobody here doing the realizing. One fix: “The retirement party was a disaster because we had not realized that Arthur had been jailed the previous week.”

Using passive verbs will often trip you up: “In reviewing Gareth's computer records, hundreds of hours spent playing online games were identified.” This sort of thing looks fine to a lot of people and in fact is common in professional writing, but technically somebody specific needs to be mentioned in the sentence as doing the identifying. Inserting a doer and shifting to the active voice will fix the problem. While we're at it, let's make clear that Gareth was doing the playing: “The auditor, in checking Gareth's computer records, identified hundreds of hours that he had spent playing online games.”

Adverbs like “almost,” “even,” “hardly,” “just,” “only,” and “nearly” are especially likely to get stuck in the wrong spot in a sentence. “Romeo almost kissed Juliet as soon as he met her” means he didn't kiss her—he only held her hand. True, but you might want to say something quite different: “Romeo kissed Juliet almost as soon as he met her.” The placement of the modifier is crucial.

See also only.

👉 **Daring-do** ⇒ DERRING-DO

The expression logically should be “feats of daring-do” because that's just what it means: deeds of extreme daring. But through a chain of misunderstandings explained in the Oxford English Dictionary, the standard form evolved with the unusual spelling “derring-do,” and “daring-do” is an error.

👉 **Data** ⇒ There are several words with Latin or Greek roots whose plural forms ending in A are constantly mistaken for singular ones. See, for instance, criteria and media. “Datum” is so rare now in English that people may assume “data” has no singular form. Many American usage communities, however, use “data” as a singular and some have even gone so far as to invent “datums” as a new plural. This is a case where you need to know the patterns of your context. An engineer or scientist used to writing “the data is” may well find that the editors of a journal or publishing house insist on changing this phrase to “the data are.” Usage is so evenly split in this case that there is no automatic way of determining which is right, but writers addressing an international audience of nonspecialists would probably be safer treating “data” as plural.

👉 **Dateline / deadline** ⇒ The word “dateline” is used today mainly to label the bit of text at the top of a printed news story that indicates where and—often, but not always—when it was written. For instance, after a headline about events in Kenya, the dateline might read “NAIROBI, Kenya, June 2, 2010.”

Probably because this rather obscure word has been popularized by its use for the name of an NBC television news show, some people confuse it with “deadline,” which is most often the date by which something must be accomplished. You can miss deadlines, meet deadlines, or have to deal with short deadlines— but not datelines.

👉 **Day in age** ⇒ DAY AND AGE

The expression is “in this day and age; but it’s a worn-out expression, so you’d be better off writing “these days.”

☞ **Daylight savings time** ⇒ DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

The official term is “daylight saving time,” not “savings time.”

☞ **De rigueur** ⇒ The French phrase *de rigueur* means “required,” “mandatory” (usually according to custom, etiquette, or fashion). It’s one of those tricky words like “liqueur” with a U before the E and another one after it. It is misspelled in a host of ways (*de rigneur, de rigor, derigor, etc.*) It is pronounced *duh-ree-GUHR*. Like other incompletely adopted foreign phrases, it is usually italicized in print.

☞ **Deal** ⇒ Popular expressions like “not that big a deal” and “what’s the deal?” In which “deal” stands vaguely for something like “situation” are fine in casual spoken English, but inappropriate in formal writing.

Even in casual speech, it’s better to leave out the “of” in “not that big of a deal.”

☞ **Dealed** ⇒ DEALT

The standard past tense of “deal” is not “dealed” but “dealt.” The only exception is the rhyming expression “wheeled and dealed,” which is not formal English.

☞ **Death nail** ⇒ DEATH KNELL, NAIL IN THE COFFIN

“Death nail” is a result of confusing two expressions with similar meanings.

The first is “death knell.” When a large bell (like a church bell) rings—or tolls—it knells. When a bell is rung slowly to mark the death of someone, it is said to sound the death knell. But “death knell” is more often used figuratively, as in “his arrest for embezzlement sounded the death knell for Rob’s campaign to be state treasurer.”

Another way to describe the final blow that finishes someone or something off is “put the last nail in the coffin,” as in “a huge budget cut put the last nail in the coffin of the city’s plan to erect a statue of the mayor’s dog.” Something not yet fatal but seriously damaging can be said to “drive another nail” in its coffin.

☞ **Debrief** ⇒ “Debrief” has leaked out of the military and national security realms into the business world, where people seem pretty confused about it. When you send people out on missions, you brief them—give them information they’ll need. You give them a briefing. When they come back, you debrief them by asking them what they did and found out. Note that in both cases it’s not the person doing the actual work but the boss or audience that does the briefing and debriefing. But people commonly use “debrief” when they mean “report.”

The verb “brief” comes originally from law, where someone being given a legal brief (instructions on handling a case) can be said to have been briefed. Debriefing has nothing to do with underwear.

☞ **Deceptively** ⇒ If you say of a soldier that he is “deceptively brave” you might be understood to mean that although he appears cowardly he is actually brave, or that although he appears brave he is actually cowardly. This ambiguity should cause you to be very careful about using “deceptive” and “deceptively” to make clear which meaning you intend.

☞ **Decimate** ⇒ ANNIHILATE, SLAUGHTER, ETC.

This comes under the heading of the truly picky. Despite the fact that most dictionaries have caved in, some of us still remember that when the Romans killed one out of every ten (*decem*) soldiers in a rebellious group as an example to the others, they decimated them. People sensitive to the roots of words are uncomfortably reminded of that ten percent figure when they see the word used instead to mean “annihilate,” “obliterate,” etc. You can usually get away with

using “decimate” to mean “drastically reduce in numbers,” but you’re taking a bigger risk when you use it to mean “utterly wipe out.”

### 👉 **Deep-seeded** ⇨ DEEP-SEATED

Those who pine for the oral cultures of *Ye Olden Dayes* can rejoice as we enter an era where many people are unfamiliar with common expressions in print and know them only by hearsay. The result is mistakes like “deep seeded.” The expression has nothing to do with a feeling being planted deep within one, but instead refers to its being seated firmly within one’s breast: “My aversion to anchovies is deep-seated.” Compounding their error, most people who misuse this phrase leave the hyphen out. Tennis players may be seeded, but not feelings. The notion that English should be spelled as it is pronounced is widespread, but history is against the reformers in most cases. Pronunciation is often a poor guide to spelling. The veneration of certain political movements for the teaching of reading through phonics is nicely caricatured by a t-shirt slogan i’ve seen: “Hukt awn fonix.”

👉 **Defence** ⇨ If you are writing for a British publication, use “defence,” but the American “defense” has the advantages of greater antiquity, similarity to the words from which it was derived, and consistency with words like “defensible.” The pronunciation used in sports which accents the first syllable (“DEE-fense”) should not be used when discussing military, legal, or other sorts of defense. People in sports use “defense” as a verb meaning “defend against,” as in “the team couldn’t defense that strategy.” Outside of sports talk, “defense” is never a verb.

See also offence/offense.

### 👉 **Definate** ⇨ DEFINITE

Any vowel in an unstressed position can sometimes have the sound linguists call a “schwa:” “uh.” The result is that many people tend to guess when they hear this sound, but “definite” is definitely the right spelling. Also common are various misspellings of “definitely,” including the bizarre “defiantly.”

👉 **Deformation / defamation** ⇨ Someone who defames you, seeking to destroy your reputation (making you ill-famed), is engaging in defamation of character. Only if someone succeeded in actually making you a worse person could you claim that they had deformed your character.

👉 **Defuse / diffuse** ⇨ You defuse a dangerous situation by treating it like a bomb and removing its fuse; to diffuse, in contrast, is to spread something out: “Bob’s cheap cologne diffused throughout the room, wrecking the wine-tasting.”

👉 **Degrade / denigrate / downgrade** ⇨ Many people use “downgrade” instead of “denigrate” to mean “defame, slander.” “Downgrade” is entirely different in meaning. When something is downgraded, it is lowered in grade (usually made worse), not just considered worse. “When the president of the company fled to Rio with fifteen million dollars, its bonds were downgraded to junk bond status.” “Degrade” is much more flexible in meaning. It can mean to lower in status or rank (like “downgrade”) or to corrupt or make contemptible; but it always has to do with actual reduction in value rather than mere insult, like “denigrate.” Most of the time when people use “downgrade” they would be better off instead using “insult,” “belittle,” or “sneer at.”

While we’re at it, let’s distinguish between “deprecate,” meaning “disapprove,” and “depreciate,” which, like “downgrade” is not a mere matter of approval or opinion but signifies an actual lowering of value.

👉 **Degree names** ⇨ When you are writing phrases like “bachelor’s degree,” “master of arts degree” and “doctor of philosophy degree” use all lower-case

spelling. Less formally, these are often abbreviated to “bachelor’s,” “master’s,” and “doctorate”: “I earned my master’s at Washington State University.”

The only time to capitalize the spelled-out forms of degree names is when you are specifying a particular degree’s name: “Master of English Composition.” However, the abbreviations BA, MA, and phd are all capitalized. In modern usage periods are not usually added.

Be careful not to omit the apostrophes where needed. Some schools have adopted a spelling of “Masters” without an apostrophe, and if you work for one of them you may have to adopt this non-standard form for institutional work; but usage guides uniformly recommend the apostrophe.

🌀 **Deja vu** ⇒ In French déjà vu means literally “already seen” and usually refers to something excessively familiar. However the phrase, sans accent marks, was introduced into English mainly as a psychological term indicating the sensation one experiences when feeling that something has been experienced before when this is in fact not the case. If you feel strongly that you have been previously in a place where you know for a fact you have never before been, you are experiencing a sensation of *deja vu*. English usage is rapidly sliding back toward the French meaning, confusing listeners who expect the phrase to refer to a false sensation rather than a factual familiarity, as in “Congress is in session and talking about campaign finance reform, creating a sense of *deja vu*.” In this relatively new sense, the phrase has the same associations as the colloquial “same old, same old” (increasingly often misspelled “sameo, sameo” by illiterates).

“It seems like it’s *deja vu* all over again,” is a redundantly mangled saying usually attributed to baseball player Yogi Berra. Over the ensuing decades clever writers would allude to this blunder in their prose by repeating the phrase “*deja vu* all over again,” assuming that their readers would catch the allusion and share a chuckle with them. Unfortunately, recently the phrase has been worn to a frazzle and become all but substituted for the original, so that not only has it become a very tired joke indeed—a whole generation has grown up thinking that the mangled version is the correct form of the expression. Give it a rest, folks!

🌀 **Democrat / democratic** ⇒ DEMOCRATIC

Certain Republican members of Congress have played the childish game in recent years of referring to the opposition as the “Democrat Party,” hoping to imply that Democrats are not truly democratic. They succeed only in making themselves sound ignorant, and so will you if you imitate them. The name is “Democratic Party.” After all, we don’t say “Republic Party.”

🌀 **Demure / demur** ⇒ DEMURE/DEMUR

A quiet, reserved person is demure. Its second syllable begins with a kittenish “mew”: “de-MYURE.”

The verb demur has several meanings, but is now used in a sense derived from law to describe the action of someone who resists acting as requested or answering a question. Its second syllable sounds like the “mur” in “murmur”: “duh-MURR.” Note that it is not spelled with a final E. It is used mainly in legal contexts and in journalism, and is unfamiliar enough to many people that they mix it up with the adjective demure. An example of correct use: “If they ask me to make Danish pastries again, I’m going to demur.” Demurs are usually mild, not loud, vehement refusals.

🌀 **Denied of** ⇒ DENIED

If you are deprived of your rights you are denied them, but that's no reason to confuse these two expressions with each other. You can't be "denied of" anything.

👉 **Depends** ⇒ **DEPENDS ON**

In casual speech, we say "it depends who plays the best defense," but in writing follow "depends" with "on."

👉 **Depravation / deprivation** ⇒ There is a rare word spelled "depravation" which has to do with something being depraved, corrupted, perverted.

But the spelling you're more likely to need is "deprivation," which has to do with being deprived of desirable things like sleep or chocolate.

👉 **Depreciate / deprecate** ⇒ To depreciate something is to actually make it worse, whereas to deprecate something is simply to speak or think of it in a manner that demonstrates your low opinion of it. People who make unflattering jokes or comments about themselves are self-deprecating.

👉 **Derisory / derisive** ⇒ Although "derisory" and "derisive" can both mean "laughable," there are sometimes subtle distinctions made between them. "Derisory" is most often used to mean "worthy of being laughed at," especially in the sense "laughably inadequate": "Ethan made a derisory effort to clean the cat box while talking on his cell phone." Sneering laughter is usually described as "derisive."

You might more unusually speak of an effort as "derisive," but most people would think it odd to use "derisory" to describe the tone of someone's laughter.

👉 **Desert / dessert** ⇒ Perhaps these two words are confused partly because "dessert" is one of the few words in English with a double "S" pronounced like "Z" ("brassiere" is another). That impoverished stretch of sand called a desert can only afford one "S." In contrast, that rich gooey extra thing at the end of the meal called a dessert indulges in two of them. The word in the phrase "he got his just deserts" is confusingly pronounced just like "desserts."

👉 **Desirable / desirous** ⇒ When you desire something, you are desirous of it. The thing you desire is desirable.

👉 **Deviant / deviate** ⇒ The technical term used by professionals to label someone whose behavior deviates from the norm is "deviate," but if you want to tease a perv friend you may as well call him a "deviant"—that's what almost everybody else says. In your sociology class, however, you might want to stick with "deviate."

👉 **Device / devise** ⇒ "Device" is a noun. A can-opener is a device. "Devise" is a verb. You can devise a plan for opening a can with a sharp rock instead. Only in law is "devise" properly used as a noun, meaning something deeded in a will.

👉 **Devote/devout** ⇒ **DEVOTE, DEVOUT**

If you are devoted to a particular religion, you are devout, not devote. You may be a devout Christian, a devout Catholic, a devout Jew, a devout Buddhist, etc. "Devote" (with no final D) is a verb, something you do rather than something you are. You may devote a lot of your time to working at a food bank, or building model airplanes, for instance.

If you are enthusiastically dedicated to an activity, a cause or person, you are devoted to it. You can be devoted to your gardening, to collecting money for Unicef, or to your pet. You can be a devoted father, husband, or a devoted runner or knitter. You can be a devoted fan of the Seattle Storm. If you have a lot of fans, you may have a devoted following. The devotion involved need not be religious.

👉 **Dew / do / doo / due** ⇒ The original pronunciation of “dew” and “due” rhymed with “pew”, but American pronunciation has shifted toward sounding all of these words alike, and the result is much confusion in standard phrases. On a damp morning there is dew on the grass. Doo on the grass is the result of failing to pick up after your dog. The most common confusion is substituting “do” for “due” (owing) in phrases like “credit is due,” “due to circumstances,” and “bill is due.”

“Do” is normally a verb, but it can be a noun with meanings like “party,” “hairdo,” and “dos and don’ts.” Note that in the last phrase it is not necessary to insert an apostrophe before the “S,” and that if you choose to do so you’ll wind up with two apostrophes awkwardly close together: “don’t’s.”

👉 **Dialogue / discuss** ⇒ DISCUSS

“Dialogue” as a verb in sentences like “the Math Department will dialogue with the Dean about funding” is commonly used jargon in business and education settings, but abhorred by traditionalists. Say “have a dialogue” or “discuss” instead.

👉 **Dieties** ⇒ DEITIES

This one is always good for a laugh. The gods are deities, after the Latin deus, meaning “god.”

👉 **Differ / vary** ⇒ “Vary” can mean “differ,” but saying “our opinions vary” makes it sound as if they were changing all the time when what you really mean is “our opinions differ.” Pay attention to context when choosing one of these words.

👉 **Different than** ⇒ DIFFERENT FROM/TO

Americans say “Scuba-diving is different from snorkeling,” the British often say “different to” (though most UK style guides disapprove), and many say “different than,” though to some of us this sounds weird. However, though certain conservatives object, you can usually get away with “different than” if a full clause follows: “Your pashmina shawl looks different than it used to since the cat slept on it.”

👉 **Differently abled, physically challenged** ⇒ DISABLED

These rather awkward euphemisms for “disabled” have attracted widespread scorn and mockery. They have achieved some limited currency, but it’s generally safer to use “disabled.”

👉 **Digestive track** ⇒ DIGESTIVE TRACT

It may seem logical to think of your guts as forming a track through your body, but the correct spelling is “digestive tract.”

👉 **Dike / dyke** ⇒ In the US the barrier preventing a flood is called a “dike.” “Dyke” is a term for a type of lesbian, generally considered insulting but adopted as a label for themselves by some lesbians.

👉 **Dilemma / difficulty** ⇒ DIFFICULTY

A dilemma is a difficult choice, not just any difficulty or problem. Whether to invite your son’s mother to his high school graduation when your current wife hates her is a dilemma. Cleaning up after a hurricane is just a problem, though a difficult one.

“Dilemna” is a common misspelling of “dilemma.”

👉 **Dire straits** ⇒ DIRE STRAITS

When you are threading your way through troubles as if you were traversing a dangerously narrow passage you are in “dire straits.” The expression and the

band by that name are often transformed by those who don't understand the word "strait" into "dire straights."

See also *straightjacket/straitjacket*.

🌀 **Directions** ⇒ Compass points like "north," "east," "south," and "west" are not capitalized when they are mere directions: *the geese fly south for the winter and the sun sets in the west.*

Capitalize these words only in the names of specific places identifiable on a map: *Alabama is in the Deep South (the region which includes the Southern States) and Santa Claus lives at the North Pole.*

The same pattern holds for the adjectival forms. It's a southern exposure, but Southern hospitality. Note that "The Westward Movement" (now often called the "Westward Expansion") refers to a specific series of migrations toward a specific region in the western part of the US.

🌀 **Disasterous** ⇒ DISASTROUS

"Disastrous" has only three syllables, and is pronounced *diz-ASS-truss*. Because of its relationship to the word "disaster" many people insert an extra second syllable when speaking the word aloud, or even when writing it, resulting in "disasterous." Not a disastrous error, but it can be an embarrassing one.

🌀 **Disburse / disperse** ⇒ You disburse money by taking it out of your purse (French "bourse") and distributing it. If you refuse to hand out any money, the eager mob of beggars before you may disperse (scatter).

🌀 **Disc / disk** ⇒ "Compact disc" is spelled with a "C" because that's how its inventors decided it should be rendered, but a computer hard disk is spelled with a "K" In modern technological contexts, "disks" usually reproduce data magnetically, while "discs" (CD-roms, DVDs, etc.) reproduce it "optically," with lasers.

🌀 **Disconcerting** ⇒ CONCERNING, DISCERNING

This odd word looks like it might be an error for "disconcerting," but people who use it seem mostly to mean something like "discerning" (perceiving) or "concerning" (in the sense of "being of concern," itself widely considered an error).

See "concerning"

🌀 **Discreet / discrete** ⇒ The more common word is "discreet," meaning "prudent, circumspect": "When arranging the party for Agnes, be sure to be discreet; we want her to be surprised." "Discrete" means "separate, distinct": "He arranged the guest list into two discrete groups: meat-eaters and vegetarians." Note how the T separates the two Es in "discrete."

🌀 **Discretion is the better part of valor** ⇒ In Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I* when Prince Hal finds the cowardly Falstaff pretending to be dead on the battlefield, the prince assumes he has been killed. After the prince leaves the stage, Falstaff rationalizes "The better part of Valour, is Discretion; in the which better part, I haue saued my life" (spelling and punctuation from the First Folio, Act 5, Scene 3, lines 3085–3086).

Falstaff is saying that the best part of courage is caution, which we are to take as a joke. Truly courageous people may be cautious, but caution is not the most important characteristic of courage.

This passage is loosely alluded to in the saying "discretion is the better part of valor," which is usually taken to mean that caution is better than rash courage or that discretion is the best kind of courage. Only Shakespeare scholars are likely to be annoyed by this usage.

However, those who take “discretion” in this context to mean the quality of being discreet—cautiously quiet—are more likely to annoy their readers.

Much more of a problem are misspellings like “descretion,” “disgression,” “digression,” and “deseccration.” Unless you are deliberately punning, stick with “discretion.”

🌀 **Discussed / disgust** ⇒ “Discussed” is the past tense of the verb “discuss.” Don’t substitute for it the noun “disgust” in such sentences as “The couple’s wedding plans were thoroughly discussed.”

🌀 **Disease names** ⇒ The medical profession has urged since the 1970s the dropping of the possessive *S* at the end of disease names which were originally named after their discoverers (“eponymous disease names”). The possessive is thought to confuse people by implying that the persons named actually had the disease. Thus “Ménière’s syndrome” became “Ménière syndrome,” “Bright’s disease” became “Bright disease” and “Asperger’s syndrome” became “Asperger syndrome.”

But the public has not always followed this rule. “Alzheimer disease” is still widely called “Alzheimer’s disease” or just “Alzheimer’s.” Only among professionals is this really considered a mistake.

“Down syndrome,” named after John Langdon Down—originally written “Down’s syndrome”—has been so often mistakenly written without its apostrophe as “Downs syndrome” that many people conclude that the syndrome’s discoverer must have been named “Downs.”

Although some professionals write “Huntington disease”—originally “Huntington’s chorea”—many still write “Huntington’s.” But another popular name for this illness is “Woody Guthrie’s disease” because the folksinger actually had it, though one also occasionally sees “Woody Guthrie disease.”

Lou Gehrig’s disease, named after its most famous sufferer, always bears an apostrophe-*S* because professionals prefer the rather more cumbersome but nonpossessive “amyotrophic lateral sclerosis” (ALS).

The best practice is to follow the pattern prevalent in your social context. If you are a medical professional, you’ll probably want to avoid the possessive forms.

“Legionnaires’ disease” has its apostrophe at the end of the first word because it was first recognized among a group of American Legion members celebrating the American Bicentennial. Specialists consider it a severe form of Legionellosis, caused by the bacterium *Legionella pneumophila*.

Lyme disease should never be written “Lyme’s disease” because it is not named after a person at all, but after the village of Lyme, Connecticut.

🌀 **Disembark the vessel** ⇒ DISEMBARK

Announcements on many boats and ships tell passengers when to “disembark the vessel.” This wording makes some of those listening wince.

To “disembark” is to get off a marine vessel or put something or someone off a vessel. The crew disembarks the passengers. On a cargo vessel they may disembark the cargo. It’s the stuff on the ship, not the ship itself, which gets disembarked.

People sensitive to the history of words know that a “bark” is a boat or ship. The word is related etymologically to “barge.”

It would be better to simply tell the passengers to get off the vessel, leave it, or go ashore. But “disembark the vessel” is so well established in the industry that it’s not likely to go away any time soon. Meantime, it can bother you too.

🌀 **Disgression** ⇒ DISCRETION

Discretion has to do with being discreet or with making choices. A lot of people hear it and get influenced by the quite different word “digression” which is used to label instances of people wandering off the point. The result is the nonword “disgression.” The expression is “you can do it at your own discretion.”

Also wrong but less common—and pretty funny—is “at your own desecration.”

👉 **Disinterested / uninterested** ⇒ A bored person is uninterested. Do not confuse this word with the much rarer *disinterested*, which means “objective, neutral.”

👉 **Dispose / dispose of** ⇒ DISPOSE OF

If you want to get rid of your stuff you may dispose of it on Freecycle or Craigslist. A great many people mistakenly dispose of the “of” in this phrase, writing sentences like “Dispose your unwanted mail in the recycling bin.” You can also use “dispose of” to mean “deal with” (“you can dispose of your royalties as you see fit”) or “demolish an opposing argument” (“the defense attorney disposed of the prosecutor’s case in less than five minutes”).

“Dispose” without “of” works differently, depending on the meaning. Whereas to dispose of your toy soldiers you might take them to a pawnshop, to dispose your toy soldiers you would arrange them for battle. Most politicians are disposed to talk at length.

👉 **Disremember** ⇒ FORGET

“Disremember” is an old synonym for “forget,” but it is often considered dialectal today, not standard English.

👉 **Disrespect** ⇒ The hip-hop subculture revived the use of “disrespect” as a verb. In the meaning to have or show disrespect, this usage has been long established, if unusual. However, the street meaning of the term, ordinarily abbreviated to “dis,” is slightly but significantly different: to act disrespectfully, or—more frequently—insultingly toward someone. In some neighborhoods “dissing” is defined as merely failing to show sufficient terror in the face of intimidation. In those neighborhoods, it is wise to know how the term is used, but an applicant for a job who complains about having been “disrespected” elsewhere is likely to incur further disrespect . . . And no job. Street slang has its uses, but this is one instance that has not become generally accepted.

👉 **Dissemble / disassemble** ⇒ People who dissemble are being dishonest, trying to hide what they are really up to. This is an uncommon word, often misused when “disassemble” is meant. People who disassemble something take it apart—they are doing the opposite of assembling it.

👉 **Divide by half** ⇒ DIVIDE IN HALF

If you are talking about dividing numbers or objects into two equal parts, the expression to use is “divide in half,” not “divide by half.”

Technically, to divide a number by  $1/2$  is the same as to multiply it by 2.

See also “multiply by double.”

👉 **Do respect** ⇒ DUE RESPECT

When you preface your critical comments by telling people “with all due respect” you are claiming to give them the respect they are due—that which is owed them. Many folks misunderstand this phrase and misspell it “all do respect” or even “all-do respect.” You shouldn’t use this expression unless you really do intend to be as polite as possible; all too often it’s used merely to preface a deliberate insult.

👉 **Do’s and don’ts** ⇒ DOS AND DON’TS

One unusual use of apostrophes is to mark plurals of words when they are being treated as words, as in “pro’s and con’s,” although plain old “pros and cons”

without apostrophes is fine. But “don’t” already has one apostrophe in it, and adding another looks awkward in the phrase “do’s and don’t’s,” so people wind up being inconsistent and writing “do’s and don’ts.” This makes no logical sense. You can also skip the extra apostrophes and write “dos and don’ts,” unless you’re afraid that “dos” will remind your readers of MS-DOS (but that unlamented operating system is now only a distant memory).

👉 **Doctorial / doctoral** ⇒ DOCTORAL

“Doctorial” is occasionally misspelled—and often mispronounced—“doctorial.”

👉 **Doesn’t supposed to** ⇒ ISN’T SUPPOSED TO

You aren’t supposed to say “doesn’t supposed to.” The expression is “isn’t supposed to.”

👉 **Dogma, doctrine** ⇒ Although in many contexts “dogma” and “doctrine” are used interchangeably, in technical theological contexts “dogma” has a narrower meaning: a doctrine which has been given official status by a religious body. Especially in the Catholic Church dogmas are required beliefs whereas many other less firmly established beliefs are only doctrines.

Nonspecialists writing about religion often ignore the distinction, and call a doctrine which has not received such official status a “dogma.” Since only some doctrines are dogmas but all dogmas are doctrines and since “dogma” often has negative connotations, it’s safer in non-technical religious contexts to stick with “doctrine.”

👉 **Dolly / handcart** ⇒ A dolly is a flat platform with wheels on it, often used to make heavy objects mobile, or by an auto mechanic lying on one under a car body. Many people mistakenly use this word to designate the vertically oriented two-wheeled device with upright handles and horizontal lip. This latter device is more properly called a “handcart” or “hand truck.”

👉 **Dominate / dominant** ⇒ The verb is “dominate” the adjective is “dominant.” The dominant chimpanzee tends to dominate the others.

👉 **Don’t / doesn’t** ⇒ The opposite of “do” is “do not,” usually contracted to “don’t.”

The opposite of “does” is “does not,” usually contracted to “doesn’t.”

“I do,” “you do,” “we do,” “they do,” “the birds do.” “It does,” “she does,” “he does,” “the flock does.”

So in standard English it’s “I don’t,” “you don’t,” “we don’t,” “the birds don’t” and “it doesn’t,” “he doesn’t,” and “the flock doesn’t.”

But in many American dialects, “don’t” is used in contexts where “doesn’t” is standard: “she don’t drive,” “it don’t make no sense,” “the boss don’t treat us right.”

This is one of those patterns which is likely to make you sound less well educated and less sophisticated than standard English speakers. If you’re trying to shake off your dialect, learning when to use “doesn’t” is important.

You can usually tell when “doesn’t” is more appropriate by expanding the contracted form to two words: “does not.” It’s not “she do not appreciate my singing,” but “she does not appreciate it,” so it should be “she doesn’t appreciate it.”

But in popular song lyrics “don’t” prevails: “she don’t like the lights,” “he don’t love you like I love you,” “it don’t come easy.”

👉 **Done / did** ⇒ DID

The past participle of “do” is “done,” so it’s not “they have did what they promised not to do” but “they have done. . . .” But without a helping verb, the word is “did.” Nonstandard: “I done good on the test.” Standard: “I did well on

the test.” Using “done” itself as a helping verb is also a nonstandard dialectal pattern: “he done give us Christmas tree” in standard English would be “he gave us a Christmas tree.”

👉 **Donut** ⇒ DOUGHNUT

“Donut” is popular in advertising, but for most purposes spell it “doughnut.”

👉 **Double negatives** ⇒ It is not true, as some assert, that double negatives are always wrong, but the pattern in formal speech and writing is that two negatives equal a mild positive: “he is a not untalented guitarist” means he has some talent. In informal speech, however, double negatives are intended as negatives: “he ain’t got no talent” means he is a lousy musician. People are rarely confused about the meaning of either pattern, but you do need to take your audience into account when deciding which pattern to follow.

One of the funniest uses of the literary double negative is Douglas Adams’ description of a machine dispensing “a substance almost, but not quite, entirely unlike tea.”

👉 **Double possessive** ⇒ In “that dog of Bob’s is ugly,” there are two indicators of possession: “of” and “Bob’s.” Although this sort of expression is common in casual speech, in formal writing it’s better to stick with just one: “Bob’s dog is ugly.”

👉 **Doubt that / doubt whether / doubt if** ⇒ If you really doubt that something is true (suspect that it’s false), use “doubt that”: “I doubt that Fred has really lost 25 pounds.” If you want to express uncertainty, use “whether”: “I doubt whether we’ll see the comet if the clouds don’t clear soon.” “Doubt if” can be substituted for “doubt whether,” though it’s considered somewhat more casual, but don’t use it when you mean “doubt that.”

👉 **Doubtlessly / doubtless** ⇒ DOUBTLESS  
Leave off the unnecessary “-ly” in “doubtless.”

👉 **Douse/dowse** ⇒ You douse a fire with water; you dowse for water with a dowsing rod. Unless you are discussing the latter practice, the word you want is “douse.”

👉 **Dove / dived** ⇒ DIVED

Although “dove” is a common form of the past tense of “dive,” a few authorities consider “dived” preferable in formal writing.

👉 **Downfall / drawback** ⇒ A downfall is something that causes a person’s destruction, either literal or figurative: “expensive cars were Fred’s downfall: he spent his entire inheritance on them and went bankrupt.” A drawback is not nearly so drastic, just a flaw or problem of some kind, and is normally applied to plans and activities, not to people: “Gloria’s plan to camp on Mosquito Island had just one drawback: she had forgotten to bring her insect repellent.” Also, “downfall” should not be used when the more moderate “decline” is meant; reserve it for ruin, not to designate simple deterioration.

👉 **Download / upload** ⇒ Most people do far more downloading (transferring files to their computers) than uploading (transferring files from their computers), so it’s not surprising that they often use the first word for the second word’s meaning. You don’t download the video of your birthday party to youtube—you upload it.

👉 **Dozed / dosed** ⇒ DOZED/DOSED

You can be dosed with a drug (given a dose of it), but if it makes you drowsy you may find you have dozed off.

👉 **Dozen of** ⇒ DOZEN

Why isn't it "a dozen of eggs" when it's standard to say "a couple of eggs"? The answer is that "dozen" is a precise number word, like "two" or "hundred"; we say "two eggs," "a hundred eggs," and "a dozen eggs."

"Couple" is often used less precisely, to mean "a few," so it isn't treated grammatically as an exact number. "A couple eggs" is less standard than "a couple of eggs."

"Dozens of eggs" is standard because you're not specifying how many dozens you're talking about.

👉 **Drank / drunk** ⇒ Many common verbs in English change form when their past tense is preceded by an auxiliary ("helping") verb: "I ran, I have run." The same is true of "drink." Don't say "i've drank the beer" unless you want people to think you are drunk. An even more common error is "I drunk all the milk." It's "i've drunk the beer" and "I drank all the milk."

👉 **Drastic / dramatic** ⇒ "Drastic" means "severe" and generally has negative or frightening associations. Drastic measures are not just extreme, they are likely to have harmful side-effects. Don't use this word or "drastically" in a positive or neutral sense. A drastic rise in temperature should be seen as downright dangerous, not just surprisingly large. Often when people use phrases like "drastic improvement," they mean "dramatic" instead.

👉 **Dredge / drudge / trudge** ⇒ You use machinery to scoop stuff up from underwater—called a dredge—to dredge up gunk or debris from the bottom of a river or lake. Metaphorically, you also dredge up old memories, the past, or objects buried in the mess in your room.

To drudge is to do hard, annoying work; and a person who does such work can also be called a "drudge." If you find yourself saying "drudge up" about anything you're trying to uncover you almost certainly should be using "dredge up" instead.

When you slog laboriously up a hill, you trudge up it. Trudging may be drudgery, but the act of walking a difficult path is not drudging, but trudging. And you cooks wondering whether dredging a chicken breast with flour has anything to do with river-bottom dredging will be relieved to know it does not. The two words have completely different origins ("sprinkling" vs. "scooping").

👉 **Dribble / drivel** ⇒ DRIVEL

"Dribble" and "drivel" originally meant the same thing: drool. But the two words have become differentiated. When you mean to criticize someone else's speech as stupid or pointless, the word you want is "drivel."

👉 **Drier / dryer** ⇒ A clothes dryer makes the clothes drier.

👉 **Drips and drabs** ⇒ DRIBS AND DRABS

Something doled out in miserly amounts is provided in "drips and drabs." A drib is a smaller relative of a dribble. Nobody seems to be sure what a drab is in this sense, except that it's a tiny bit larger than a drib.

Since the origin of the phrase is obscure, people try to substitute a more familiar word for the unusual word "drib" by writing "drips and drabs." But that's not the traditional formula.

👉 **Drive / disk** ⇒ A hard drive and a hard disk are much the same thing, but when it comes to removable computer media, the drive is the machinery that turns and reads the disk. Be sure not to ask for a drive when all you need is a disk.

👉 **Drug / dragged** ⇒ DRAGGED

“Well, look what the cat drug in!” Unless you are trying to render dialectal speech to convey a sense of down-home rusticity, use “dragged” as the past tense of “drag.”

👉 **Dual / duel** ⇒ “Dual” is an adjective describing the two-ness of something—dual carburetors, for instance. A “duel” is a formal battle intended to settle a dispute.

👉 **Duck tape** ⇒ DUCT TAPE

A commercial firm has named its product “Duck Tape,” harking back to the original name for an adhesive tape made of “duck” linen or cotton (a sort of a light canvas fabric).

It is now usually called “duct tape,” for its supposed use in connecting ventilation and other ducts (which match its current silver color). Note that modern building codes consider duct tape unsafe for sealing ducts, particularly those that convey hot air.

👉 **Due to the fact that** ⇒ BECAUSE

Although “due to” is now a generally acceptable synonym for “because,” “due to the fact that” is a clumsy and wordy substitute that should be avoided in formal writing. “Due to” is often misspelled “do to.”

👉 **Duly / dully** ⇒ To do something “dully” is to do it in a dull manner. Too often people use this word when they mean “duly,” which means “properly.” Something duly done is done properly; something done dully is just a bore.

👉 **Dyeing / dying** ⇒ If you are using dye to change your favorite t-shirt from white to blue you are dyeing it, but if you don’t breathe for so long that your face turns blue, you may be dying.

👉 **E.g. / i.e.** ⇒ When you mean “for example,” use e.g. It is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *exempli gratia*. When you mean “that is,” use “i.e.” It is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *id est*. Either can be used to clarify a preceding statement, the first by example, the second by restating the idea more clearly or expanding upon it. Because these uses are so similar, the two abbreviations are easily confused. If you just stick with good old English “for example” and “that is” you won’t give anyone a chance to sneer at you. If you insist on using the abbreviation, perhaps “example given” will remind you to use “e.g.,” while “in effect” suggests “i.e.”

Since e.g. Indicates a partial list, it is redundant to add “etc.” At the end of a list introduced by this abbreviation.

👉 **Each** ⇒ “Each” as a subject is always singular: think of it as equivalent to “every one.” The verb whose subject it is must also be singular. Some uses, like “to keep them from fighting, each dog has been given its own bowl,” cause no problem. No one is tempted to say “have been given.” But when a prepositional phrase with a plural object intervenes between subject and verb, we are likely to be misled into saying things like “Each of the children have to memorize their own locker combinations.” The subject is “each,” not “children.” The tendency to avoid specifying gender by using “their” adds to pressure toward plurality, but the correct version of this sentence is “Each of the children has to memorize his or her own locker combination.” One can avoid the entire problem by pluralizing throughout: “All the children have to memorize their own locker combinations” (but see the entry on singular “they” for more on this point). In many uses, however, “each” is not the subject, as in “We each have our own favorite flavor of ice cream” which is correct because “we” and not “each” is the subject of the verb “have.”

“Each other” cannot be a subject, so the question of verb number does not arise, but the number of the possessive creates a problem for some writers. “They gazed into each other’s eyes” is correct and “each others” is incorrect because “each other” is singular. Reword to “each gazed into the other’s eyes” to see the logic behind this rule. “Each other” is always two distinct words separated by a space although it functions grammatically as a sort of compound word.

### 👉 **Early adapter** ⇒ EARLY ADOPTER

An “early adopter” is a person who quickly adopts something new—usually a technological innovation. If you just have to rush out and buy the latest and coolest gadget, you’re an early adopter. If it meant anything, an “early adapter” would be someone who reworked something first for his or her own purposes, but most of the time this version of the phrase is just a mistake.

### 👉 **Earmarks / hallmark** ⇒ EARMARKS/HALLMARK

The distinguishing cuts made into an animal’s ear are its earmarks. They work like brands to mark ownership. Originally gold and silver articles assayed at Goldsmith’s Hall in London received a “Hall-Mark” to certify them as genuine. In modern usage “earmarks” and “hallmark” are used in many other contexts and mean pretty much the same thing, except that we say “it has all the earmarks” of someone or something, and a certain characteristic is “the hallmark” of someone or something. Although a great many people pluralize this expression too, traditionally an item can have only one hallmark.

We speak today of parts of bills being earmarked when legislators set aside certain expenditures in them for particular purposes which benefit the legislators’ own constituency. They lay claim to public resources just as a shepherd would earmark a sheep to lay claim to it. Note that no one hallmarks a bill. If we said a bill bore Senator Blowhard’s hallmark, we would mean that it bore some characteristic pattern by which we could recognize his influence on it.

👉 **Earth, moon** ⇒ Soil is lower-case “earth.” And in most uses even the planet itself remains humbly in lower-case letters: “peace on earth.” But in astronomical contexts, the Earth comes into its own with a proud initial capital, and in science fiction it drops the introductory article and becomes “Earth,” just like Mars and Venus. A similar pattern applies to Earth’s satellite: “a beautiful harvest moon,” but “the craters of the Moon.” Because other planets also have moons “the Moon” retains its article, unlike “Earth.”

### 👉 **Easedrop** ⇒ EAVESDROP

The area under the eaves right next to the front of a building used to be called the “eavesdrop,” and somebody listening in secretively from such a position came to be called an “eavesdropper.” Unfortunately, so few people distinctly pronounce the V in “eavesdrop” that many are misled into misspelling it “easedrop.”

👉 **Ecology / environment** ⇒ “Ecology” is the study of living things in relationship to their environment. The word can also be used to describe the totality of such relationships, but it should not be substituted for “environment” in statements like “improperly discarded lead batteries harm the ecology.” It’s not the relationships that are being harmed, but nature itself: the batteries are harming the environment.

👉 **Economic / economical** ⇒ Something is economical if it saves you money, but if you’re talking about the effect of some measure on the world’s economy, it’s an economic effect.

👉 **Ecstatic** ⇒ Pronounced “eck-sta-tic,” not “ess-ta-tic.”

👉 **Ect.** ⇒ ETC.

“Etc.” Is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *et cetera*, meaning “and the rest.” (Et means “and” in French too.) Just say “et cetera” out loud to yourself to remind yourself of the correct order of the “T” and “C.” Also to be avoided is the common mispronunciation “excetera.” “And etc.” Is a redundancy.

👉 **Edge on** ⇒ EGG ON

When you egg people on to do something you are inciting them to do something, often something risky. So why isn’t the expression “to edge”? After all, you’re pushing them toward the edge—trying to get them to do something edgy.

In fact the people who use “edge” in this way have both logic and history on their side. The oldest spelling of this verb meaning “incite” is “egge” pronounced “edge,” and the spellings “edge” and “egg” coexisted for a long time before “egg” edged out its rival. Now, however, saying someone is edged on to do something is likely to be regarded as a mistake.

👉 **Eek / eke** ⇒ If you’re startled by a snake that sneaks past you in a creek, you might squeak “eek!” “Eek” is just a noise you make when frightened.

But if you are barely squeaking by on a slim salary, you’re trying to eke out a living. The original meaning of “eke” was “increase,” but today it is used mainly in phrases having to do with supplementing or stretching resources or otherwise obtaining with difficulty: lost campers eke out their food until they are found, in a down market a few stocks eke out gains, and struggling athletic teams eke out narrow victories.

👉 **Efforting** ⇒ TRYING

Among the new verbs created out of nouns, “efforting” is one of the most bizarre and unnecessary, and has been met with a chorus of objections. You are not “efforting” to get your report in on time; you are trying to do so. Instead of saying “we are efforting a new vendor,” say “we are trying to find a new vendor.”

👉 **Ei / ie** ⇒ The familiar rule is that English words are spelled with the “I” before the “E” unless they follow a “C,” as in “receive.” But it is important to add that words in which the vowel sound is an “A” like “neighbor” and “weigh” are also spelled with the “E” first. And there are a few exceptions like “counterfeit,” “either,” “neither,” “forfeit,” “height,” “leisure,” “seize,” “seizure,” and “weird.” See also “neice/niece.”

👉 **Eighteen hundreds / nineteenth century** ⇒ “Eighteen hundreds,” “sixteen hundreds” and so forth are not exactly errors; the problem is that they are used almost exclusively by people who are nervous about saying “nineteenth century” when, after all, the years in that century begin with the number eighteen. This should be simple: few people are unclear about the fact that this is the twenty-first century even though our dates begin with twenty. For most dates you can just add one to the third digit from the right in a year and you’ve got the number of its century. It took a hundred years to get to the year 100, so the next hundred years, which are named “101,” “102,” etc. Were in the second century.

This also works BC. The four hundreds BC are the fifth century BC. Using phrases like “eighteen hundreds” is a signal to your readers that you are weak in math and history alike.

👉 **Either / or, neither / nor** ⇒ When making comparisons, “either” goes with “or” and “neither” with “nor”: “I want to buy either a new desktop computer or a laptop, but I have neither the cash nor the credit I need.”

“Either” often gets misplaced in a sentence: “He either wanted to build a gambling casino or a convent” should be “He wanted to build either a gambling

casino or a convent.” In this example, both things are wanted, so “either” comes after the verb.

But if the action is different in regard to the things compared, the “either” has to come before the verb: “He wanted either to build a casino or remodel a convent.” Here two different actions are being compared, so the “either” has to precede both actions.

👉 **Either are / either is** ⇒ As a subject, “either” is singular. It’s the opposite of “both,” and refers to one at a time: “Either ketchup or mustard is good on a hot dog.” But if “either” is modifying a subject in an “either . . . Or” phrase, then the number of the verb is determined by the number of the second noun: “Either the puppy or the twins seem to need my attention every other minute.”

👉 **Electrocute** ⇒ To electrocute is to kill using electricity. If you live to tell the tale, you’ve been shocked, but not electrocuted. For the same reason, the phrase “electrocuted to death” is a redundancy.

👉 **Elegy / eulogy** ⇒ A speech praising the deceased person at a funeral is a eulogy. An elegy is a poetic form, usually with a sad or thoughtful subject. It can also be a poem on any subject written in the form called “elegaic couplets.” Unless it’s in verse, the speech at a funeral isn’t an elegy.

👉 **Elicit / illicit** ⇒ The lawyer tries to elicit a description of the attacker from the witness. “Elicit” is always a verb. “Illicit,” in contrast, is always an adjective describing something illegal or naughty.

👉 **Ellipses** ⇒ Those dots that come in the middle of a quotation to indicate something omitted are called an “ellipsis” (plural “ellipses”): “Tex told Sam to get the . . . Cow out of the bunk house.” Here Tex’s language has been censored, but you are more likely to have a use for ellipses when quoting some source in a paper: “Ishmael remarks at the beginning of *Moby Dick*, ‘some years ago . . . I thought I would sail about a little’—a very understated way to begin a novel of high adventure.” The three dots stand for a considerable stretch of prose that has been omitted. If the ellipsis ends your sentence, some editorial styles require four dots, the first of which is a period: From the same paragraph in *Moby Dick*: “almost all men . . . Cherish very nearly the same feelings. . . .” Note that the period in the second ellipsis has to be snug up against the last word quoted, with spaces between the other dots.

Some modern styles do not call for ellipses at the beginning and ending of quoted matter unless not doing so would be genuinely misleading, so check with your teacher or editor if you’re uncertain whether to use one in those positions. It is never correct to surround a quoted single word or short phrase with ellipses: “Romeo tells Juliet that by kissing her again his ‘sin is purged’” (note, by the way, that I began the quotation after the first word in the phrase “my sin is purged” in order to make it work grammatically in the context of the sentence).

When text is typeset, the spaces are often but not always omitted between the dots in an ellipsis. Since modern computer printer output looks much more like typeset writing than old-fashioned typewriting, you may be tempted to omit the spaces, but it is better to include them and let the publisher decide whether they should be eliminated.

An ellipsis that works perfectly well on your computer may “break” when your text is transferred to another if it comes at the end of a line, with one or more of the dots wrapping around to the next line. To avoid this, learn how to type “non-breaking spaces” between the dots of ellipses: in Word for Windows it’s Control-Shift-Spacebar; on a Mac, it’s Option-Spacebar.

When writing HTML code to create a Web page, make a nonbreaking space with this code:

&nbsp;

Or you can create an ellipsis with this code:

👉 **Email** ⇒ E-MAIL

Although the spelling “email” is extremely popular, some people prefer “e-mail,” which follows the same pattern as “e-commerce.” The “E” stands for “electronic.”

👉 **Embaress** ⇒ EMBARRASS

You can pronounce the last two syllables as two distinct words as a jog to memory, except that then the word may be misspelled “embareass,” which isn’t right either. You also have to remember the double R.

👉 **Emergent / emergency** ⇒ The error of considering “emergent” to be the adjectival form of “emergency” is common only in medical writing, but it is becoming widespread. “Emergent” properly means “emerging” and normally refers to events that are just beginning—barely noticeable rather than catastrophic. “Emergency” is an adjective as well as a noun, so rather than writing “emergent care,” use the homely “emergency care.”

👉 **Emigrate / immigrate** ⇒ To “emigrate” is to leave a country. The E at the beginning of the word is related to the E in other words having to do with going out, such as “exit.” “Immigrate,” in contrast, looks as if it might have something to do with going in, and indeed it does: it means to move into a new country. The same distinction applies to “emigration” and “immigration.” Note the double M in the second form. A migrant is someone who continually moves about.

👉 **Eminent / imminent / immanent** ⇒ By far the most common of these words is “eminent,” meaning “prominent, famous.” “Imminent,” in phrases like “facing imminent disaster,” means “threatening.” It comes from Latin *minere*, meaning “to project or overhang.” Think of a mine threatening to cave in. Positive events can also be imminent: they just need to be coming soon. The rarest of the three is “immanent,” used by philosophers to mean “inherent” and by theologians to mean “present throughout the universe” when referring to God. It comes from Latin *manere*, “remain.” Think of God creating man in his own image.

When a government exercises its power over private property it is drawing on its eminent status in society, so the proper legal phrase is “eminent domain.”

👉 **Empathy / sympathy** ⇒ If you think you feel just like another person, you are feeling empathy. If you just feel sorry for another person, you’re feeling sympathy.

Sometimes people say they “emphasize” with someone when they mean they “empathize” with him or her.

👉 **Emphasize on** ⇒ EMPHASIZE

You can place emphasis on something, or you can emphasize it, but you can’t emphasize on it or stress on it, though you can place stress on it.

👉 **Emulate / imitate** ⇒ People generally know what “imitate” means, but they sometimes don’t understand that “emulate” is a more specialized word with a purely positive function, meaning to try to equal or match. Thus if you try to climb the same mountain your big brother did, you’re emulating him; but if you copy his habit of sticking peas up his nose, you’re just imitating him.

👉 **Enamored by** ⇒ ENAMORED OF

If you're crazy about ferrets, you're enamored of them. It is less common but still acceptable to say "enamored with"; but if you say you are enamored by ferrets, you're saying that ferrets are crazy about you.

👉 **End result** ⇒ Usually a redundancy. Most of the time plain "result" will do fine.

👉 **Endemic / epidemic** ⇒ "Endemic" is in danger of losing its core meaning through confusion with "epidemic." An endemic condition is one characteristic of a particular region, population, or environment: "sore thumbs are endemic among teen text-messagers." A condition need not affect a majority or even a very large number of people in a population to be endemic. In biology, an endemic disease is one that is maintained locally without the need for outside influence: "Cholera is endemic in Kolkata." It keeps recurring there, but still only a small minority of the population gets cholera.

An epidemic condition is widespread, rampant: "Overindulgence in fatty foods is epidemic throughout the world." The dominance of the noun "epidemic" ("the threat of a flu epidemic") may make people reluctant to use it as an adjective ("flu may become epidemic") but both uses are legitimate. It's best to stick with "epidemic" unless you have a specific need for the technical term "endemic."

👉 **Engine / motor** ⇒ People who work on them distinguish between the electrically powered unit called the "motor" and the engine which it starts; but even in auto-parts stores the stuff which by that logic should be called "engine oil" is marketed as "motor oil." Similarly, the English go motoring on motorways. In everyday American discourse, the terms are often interchangeable (you can buy a powerful engine for your motorboat), but you may embarrass yourself if you don't make the distinction when talking to your mechanic.

👉 **English / British** ⇒ Americans tend to use the terms "British" and "English" interchangeably, but Great Britain is made up of England plus Scotland and Wales. If you are referring to this larger entity, the word you want is "British." Britons not from England resent being referred to as "English."

👉 **Enjoy to** ⇒ ENJOY -ING

The expression "enjoy to" (or "enjoyed to") is nonstandard, influenced by "like to." You don't enjoy to jog; you either enjoy jogging or like to jog.

👉 **Enormity / enormousness** ⇒ Originally these two words were synonymous, but "enormity" for a time got whittled down to meaning something monstrous or outrageous. That meaning has largely vanished from contemporary usage, with the two words both meaning "hugeness." But some of us wish you wouldn't refer to the "enormity" of the Palace of Versailles unless you wish to express horror at this embodiment of Louis XIV's ego.

👉 **Enquire / inquire** ⇒ These are alternative spellings of the same word. "Enquire" is perhaps slightly more common in the UK, but either is acceptable in the US.

👉 **Ensuite** ⇒ Americans who have wandered chilly London hallways in the middle of the night in search of a toilet will appreciate learning the peculiar British meaning of the word "ensuite."

In French, a set of two rooms or more forming a single accommodation can be advertised as rooms en suite (forming a suite). But the single word French word ensuite means something entirely different: "then, later." Around the middle of the 20th century English landlords and hoteliers began to anglicize the phrase, placing it before the noun, so that traditional "rooms en suite" became "en suite rooms," Ads read "bath ensuite" or "toilet ensuite" as if the phrase meant "in the

suite.” The phrase “en suite” came to be used solely to designate bathrooms attached to a bedroom.

Following standard English patterns, they hyphenated the phrase as “en-suite bath” and often made the phrase into a single word: “ensuite bath.” These have become standard British usage, but hoteliers often go a step further by writing “all rooms ensuite” (Americans would write “all rooms with bath”).

It is clearly nonstandard to use “ensuite” as if it were a noun synonymous with “toilet” or “bathroom”: “I went to the ensuite to take a shower.” You may puke on your suit, but not into “the ensuite.”

👉 **Ensure / insure** ⇒ To “assure” a person of something is to make him or her confident of it. According to Associated Press style, to “ensure” that something happens is to make certain that it does, and to “insure” is to issue an insurance policy. Other authorities, however, consider “ensure” and “insure” interchangeable. To please conservatives, make the distinction. However, it is worth noting that in older usage these spellings were not clearly distinguished. European “life assurance” companies take the position that all policy-holders are mortal and someone will definitely collect, thus assuring heirs of some income. American companies tend to go with “insurance” for coverage of life as well as of fire, theft, etc.

👉 **Enthuse** ⇒ STATE ENTHUSIASTICALLY

“Enthuse” is a handy word and “state enthusiastically” is not nearly so striking, but unfortunately “enthuse” is not acceptable in the most formal contexts.

👉 **Entomology / etymology** ⇒ Entomology is the study of insects, like ants (“ant” looks like “ent-”) but etymology is the study of the history of words (from Greek, originally meaning “the true meaning of words”).

👉 **Envelop / envelope** ⇒ To wrap something up in a covering is to envelop it (pronounced “envellup”). The specific wrapping you put around a letter is an envelope (pronounced variously, but with the accent on the first syllable).

👉 **Envious / jealous** ⇒ Although these are often treated as synonyms, there is a difference. You are envious of what others have that you lack. Jealousy, on the other hand, involves wanting to hold on to what you do have. You can be jealous of your boyfriend’s attraction to other women, but you’re envious of your boyfriend’s CD collection.

👉 **Enviroment** ⇒ ENVIRONMENT

The second N in “environment” is seldom pronounced distinctly, so it’s not surprising that is often omitted in writing. If you know the related word “environs” it may help remind you.

👉 **Epic / epoch** ⇒ An “epoch” is a long period of time, like the Pleistocene Epoch. It often gets mixed up with “epic” in the sense of “large-scale.” Something really big has “epic proportions,” not “epoch proportions.”

👉 **Epicenter** ⇒ The precise location where the earth slips beneath the surface in an earthquake is its hypocenter (or focus) and the spot up on the surface where people feel the quake is its epicenter. Geologists get upset when people use the latter word, designating a point rather removed from the main action, as if it were a synonym of “epitome” and meant something like “most important center.” The British spell it “epicentre.”

👉 **Epigram / epigraph / epitaph / epithet** ⇒ An epigram is a pithy saying, usually humorous. Mark Twain was responsible for many striking, mostly cynical epigrams, such as “Always do right. That will gratify some of the people, and astonish the rest.” Unfortunately, he was also responsible for an even more famous one that has been confusing people ever since: “Everyone is a moon, and

has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.” It’s true that the moon keeps one side away from the earth, but—if you don’t count the faint glow reflected from the earth—it is not any darker than the side that faces us. In fact, over time, the side facing us is darkened slightly more often because it is occasionally eclipsed by the shadow of the earth.

An epigraph is a brief quotation used to introduce a piece of writing (see this example from Shakespeare) or the inscription on a statue or building.

An epitaph is the inscription on a tombstone or some other tribute to a dead person. A collection of epitaphs.

In literature, an epithet is a term that replaces or is added to the name of a person, like “clear-eyed Athena,” in which “clear-eyed” is the epithet. You are more likely to encounter the term in its negative sense, as a term of insult or abuse: “the shoplifter hurled epithets at the guard who had arrested her.”

### 👉 **Epitomy** ⇒ EPITOME

Nothing makes you look quite so foolish as spelling a sophisticated word incorrectly. Taken directly from Greek, where it means “abridgement,” “epitome” is now most often used to designate an extremely representative example of the general class: “Snow White is the epitome of a Disney cartoon feature.” Those who don’t misspell this word often mispronounce it, misled by its spelling, as “EP-i-tohm,” but the proper pronunciation is “ee-PIT-o-mee.” The word means “essence,” not “climax,” so instead of writing “the market had reached the epitome of frenzied selling at noon,” use “peak” or a similar word.

👉 **Eponymous** ⇒ It has become popular among certain critics to call recordings named after their performing artists “eponymous.” Thus the album by the Beatles titled *The Beatles* would be an eponymous album. (Don’t remember it? It’s the one most people call *The White Album*; the title was embossed on the cover rather than printed on it.) This pretentious term is not only so obscure as to be almost useless, these writers are not using it in its original sense; it was the person who was eponymous, not the thing named after the person. I prefer the usage of critics who call such recordings “self-titled.” It’s an awkward phrase, but at least it’s easy for the reader to figure out what is meant.

### 👉 **Equally as** ⇒ EQUALLY, AS

It is redundant to follow “equally” with “as.” If you have written “using a tanning bed is equally as harmful as sunbathing” you should drop the “equally”: “using a tanning bed is as harmful as sunbathing.” If you’ve written “equally as delicious is their dulce de leche ice cream,” drop the “as”: “equally delicious is their dulce de leche ice cream.”

👉 **Equivocate / equal** ⇒ Some people mistakenly use “equivocate” when they mean “equate,” “She equivocates rock to popular music generally” should be “equates rock to popular music generally” (though there are many kinds of popular music that are not rock). When something is being compared to something else as its equal, the word you want is “equate.”

In modern English “equivocate” usually refers to the action of speaking misleadingly, privately meaning one thing but intentionally giving a different impression to listeners. It is also used in a broader sense of being evasive in speech. Politicians who say “I am not planning to run” while privately thinking “If I get enough encouragement I will definitely run” are equivocating.

When Shakespeare’s witches assure Macbeth that he can not be killed by any man “born of woman” they are equivocating because they know he will be killed by Macduff, who technically was not “born” but torn from his dying mother’s

womb in a crude cesarean section. Use this term only when deception or evasion is involved.

Conversely, to be “unequivocal” is to be straightforward, unambiguously saying what you mean.

👉 **Error / err** ⇒ When you commit an error you err. The expression is “to err is human.”

👉 **Espouse / expound / expand** ⇒ The core meaning of “espouse” is “marry.” When you espouse an idea or cause in public you are proclaiming that you are wed to it, you are promoting it as yours.

When you expound an idea you are explaining it. Theoretically you could expound an idea that you don’t personally espouse. “Expound” was traditionally used mainly to refer to detailed examinations of complex or obscure systems of thought, but it is most often used today to mean “to speak at length about” and frequently occurs in the phrase “expound on&rdquo;: “the senator expounded on his love for the traditional family farm.”

Sometimes in such contexts it would be more appropriate to use “expand on,” which means “to speak at further length about.” “Expand” in this sense lacks the systematic analytical connotations of “expound.”

You never “espouse on” an idea; you just espouse it.

👉 **Et al.** ⇒ “Et al.” Is a scholarly abbreviation of the Latin phrase *et alia*, which means “and others.” It is commonly used when you don’t want to name all the people or things in a list, and works in roughly the same way as “etc.” “The reorganization plan was designed by Alfred E. Newman, General Halftrack, Zippy the Pinhead, et al.; and it was pretty useless.” The “al.” In this phrase needs a period after it to indicate it is an abbreviation of *alia*, but it is incorrect to put a period after “et.”

👉 **Ethics / morals / morale** ⇒ Strictly speaking, ethics are beliefs: if you have poor ethics, you have lax standards; but your morals are your behavior: if you have poor morals, you behave badly. You can have high standards but still fail to follow them: strong ethics and weak morals. “Morale” formerly had both these meanings and you will find them attached to the word in some dictionaries, but you would be wise to avoid it in either of these senses in modern writing. By far the most common current use of “morale” is to label your state of mind, particularly how contented you are with life. A person with low morals is bad, but a person with low morale may be merely depressed.

👉 **Ethnic** ⇒ It’s misleading to refer to minority groups as “ethnics” since everyone has ethnicity, even a dominant majority.

👉 **Ever so often** ⇒ EVERY SO OFTEN

In UK English people sometimes speak of something that happens frequently as happening “ever so often.”

But when something happens only occasionally, it happens every so often.

👉 **Every** ⇒ “Every,” “everybody” and “everyone” and related expressions are normally treated as singular in American English: “Every woman I ask out tells me she already has plans for Saturday night.” However, constructions like “everyone brought their own lunch” are widely accepted now because of a desire to avoid specifying “his” or “her.”

See “they/their (singular).”

👉 **Every since** ⇒ EVER SINCE

The expression is not “every since” but “ever since.”

👉 **Everyday** ⇒ “Everyday” is a perfectly good adjective, as in “I’m most comfortable in my everyday clothes.” The problem comes when people turn the

adverbial phrase “every day” into a single word. It is incorrect to write “I take a shower everyday.” It should be “I take a shower every day.”

👉 **Everyone / every one** ⇒ “Everyone” means “everybody” and is used when you want to refer to all the people in a group: “Everyone in my family likes spaghetti carbonara.”

But if you’re referring to the individuals who make up a group, then the phrase is “every one.” Examples: “God bless us, every one” (may each individual in the group be blessed). “We wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas” (every single one of you). In the phrase “each and every one” you should never substitute “everyone”.

For “everyone” as singular or plural, see “every.”

👉 **Everytime** ⇒ EVERY TIME

“Every time” is always two separate words.

👉 **Evidence to** ⇒ You can provide evidence to a court, even enough evidence to convict someone; but the standard expression “is evidence of” requires “of” rather than “to” in sentences like this: “Driving through the front entrance of the Burger King is evidence of Todd’s inexperience in driving.” You can also omit the pronoun altogether by using “evidences” or “evidenced”: “his driving evidences (or evidenced) his inexperience.”

👉 **Evoke** ⇒ “Evoke” and “invoke” are close together in meaning, and are often confused with each other.

The action of “invoking” is usually more direct and active. It originally involved calling upon or summoning up a god or spirit. An invocation calls upon whatever is invoked to do something or serve a function. “Invoke” now can also be used to mean “to appeal to, to cite”: “in his closing argument, the lawyer invoked the principle of self-defense.”

“Evoke” is usually less purposefully active, more indirect, often used to mean “suggest.” If you invoke the spirit of Picasso, you’re trying to summon his soul up from the grave; but if your paintings evoke the spirit of Picasso, it means their style reminds viewers of that artist’s work.

👉 **Exact same** ⇒ EXACTLY THE SAME

In casual speech we often say things like, “The fruitcake he gave me was the exact same one I’d given him last Christmas,” but in formal English the phrase is “exactly the same.”

👉 **Exalt / exult** ⇒ When you celebrate joyfully, you exult. When you raise something high (even if only in your opinion), you exalt it. Neither word has an “H” in it.

👉 **Exasperate / exacerbate** ⇒ People get exasperated (irritated); situations get exacerbated (made worse).

👉 **Excape / escape** ⇒ ESCAPE

The proper spelling is “escape.” Say it that way too.

👉 **Exception proves the rule** ⇒ The Latin original of this saying dates back over two millennia to Cicero. It means if you make an exception to a rule, a rule must exist. If you say “in case of fire students may use the emergency exits” it is clear that the rule is that normally students are not supposed to use those exits. Few people understand this point and they misuse the phrase “the exception proves the rule” to mean that a rule is not really a rule unless there is an exception to it. This makes no sense. It’s better to simply avoid this misleading phrase.

👉 **Exceptional / exceptionable** ⇒ If you take exception (object) to something, you find it “exceptionable.” The more common word is “exceptional,” applied to things that are out of the ordinary, usually in a positive way: “these are exceptional Buffalo wings.”

👉 **Excrable** ⇒ EXECRABLE

When you execrate (detest) something, you find it excrable. The second syllable is not often clearly pronounced, but that’s no excuse for leaving it out when you spell the word.

👉 **Execute on** ⇒ EXECUTE

In the business world you’ll see statements like “we need to execute on the strategy we planned.” “Execute” all by itself can mean “carry out.” The “on” is completely unnecessary.

Perhaps these people are influenced by another meaning of the word “execute”: to carry out a sentence of death. Are they thinking there is something too final about “execute” unless they add “on” to make it active?

Most of the time “act on” or “carry out” would be better than “execute on.”

👉 **Exhilaration** ⇒ EXHILARATION

“Exhilaration” is closely related to “hilarious,” whose strongly accented A should help remind you of the correct spelling.

👉 **Exited/excited** ⇒ EXCITED

A lot of people get so excited when they’re typing that they mistakenly write they are “exited,” and their spelling checkers don’t tell them they’ve made an error because “exited” is actually a word, meaning “went out of an exit.” Excitement makes you excited.

👉 **Exorcise / Exercise** ⇒ You can try to exorcise evil spirits using an exorcist, but when you give your body a workout, it’s exercise.

👉 **Expatriot** ⇒ An expatriot would be somebody who used to be a patriot, but that’s not how people use the term. Instead, it is a common misspelling of “expatriate,” meaning someone who chooses to live abroad.

👉 **Expensive, cheap** ⇒ A costly item is expensive, but the price itself is not expensive; neither does a cheap item have a cheap price. Prices are high or low, not expensive or cheap.

👉 **Explicitly, implicitly** ⇒ To be explicit about something is to be clearer than to merely imply it, so it’s not surprising that people wanting to make clear that they really trust someone often mistakenly say that they trust the person “explicitly.” But the traditional expression is that you trust someone “implicitly” because your trust is so strong that you don’t need to say anything explicitly—it goes without saying.

👉 **Exponential** ⇒ Something grows exponentially when it repeatedly grows by multiples of some factor in a rapidly accelerating fashion. Don’t use the word loosely to refer to an ordinary rapid, but steady, rate of growth. See also “orders of magnitude.”

👉 **Expressed / express** ⇒ One of the meanings of “express” is “explicit”: “Izaak claimed that his old boss had given him express permission to shop on ebay for fishing rods during work hours.” Some people feel the word should be “expressed,” and that form is not likely to get anyone into trouble; but if you use it you should not presume to correct others who stick with the traditional form: “express permission” (or orders, or mandate, or whatever).

👉 **Expresses that / says that** ⇒ SAYS THAT

“In her letter Jane expresses that she is getting irritated with me for not writing” should be corrected to “In her letter Jane says that. ” You can express an idea or a thought, but you can’t ever express that. In technical terms, “express” is a transitive verb and requires an object.

☞ **Espresso** ⇒ ESPRESSO

I’ve read several explanations of the origin of this word: the coffee is made expressly for you upon your order, or the steam is expressed through the grounds, or (as most people suppose—and certainly wrongly) the coffee is made at express speed. One thing is certain: the word is “espresso,” not “expresso.”

While you’re at an American espresso stand, you might muse on the fact that both “biscotti” and “panini” are plural forms, but you’re likely to baffle the barista if you ask in correct Italian for a biscotto or a panino.

☞ **Extend / extent** ⇒ People often write “to a great extend” or “to a lesser extend.” “Extend” is a verb only, and should not be used as a noun. It’s “to a great extent,” and “to a lesser extent.”

☞ **Extended, extensive** ⇒ “Extended” has to do with time, “extensive” with space. An extended tour lasts a long time; an extensive tour covers a lot of territory.

☞ **Extract revenge** ⇒ EXACT REVENGE

The use of a rare sense of “exact” confuses people, but the traditional phrase is “exact revenge”, not the seemingly more logical “extract revenge” or “enact revenge.”

☞ **Exulted / exalted** ⇒ To exult is to be extremely joyful whereas to exalt is to raise something in esteem or power or to intensify something. The adjectival forms are “exultant” and “exalted.”

Something supremely admirable has exalted status.

People who have celebrated with great joy about an event have exulted in it. The spelling “exulted” should be used only for the past tense of the verb “exult”: “The candidate exulted in her victory.”

☞ **Factoid** ⇒ The “-oid” ending in English is normally added to a word to indicate that an item is not the real thing. A humanoid is not quite human. Originally “factoid” was an ironic term indicating that the “fact” being offered was not actually factual. However, CNN and other sources took to treating the “-oid” as if it were a mere diminutive, and using the term to mean “trivial but true fact.” As a result, the definition of “factoid” is hopelessly confused and it’s probably better to avoid using the term altogether.

☞ **Fair / fare** ⇒ When you send your daughter off to camp, you hope she’ll fare well. That’s why you bid her a fond farewell. When you want to see how something will work out, you want to see how it fares. “Fair” as a verb is a rare word meaning “to smooth a surface to prepare it for being joined to another.”

☞ **Faithful / fateful** ⇒ That decisive, highly significant day is not “faithful” but “fateful.” Although the phrase “fateful day” can refer to a day significant in a positive way (“the fateful day that I first met my lovely wife”), “fatal” is always negative (“the fatal day that I first tried to ride my bike ‘no hands’”).

☞ **Far be it for me** ⇒ FAR BE IT FROM ME

The mangled expression “far be it for me” is probably influenced by a similar saying: “it’s not for me to say.” The standard expression is “far be it from me” (may this possibility be far away from me).

☞ **Farther / further** ⇒ Some authorities (like the Associated Press) insist on “farther” to refer to physical distance and on “further” to refer to an extent of

time or degree, but others treat the two words as interchangeable except for insisting on “further” for “in addition,” and “moreover.” You’ll always be safe in making the distinction; some people get really testy about this.

👉 **Fastly** ⇒ FAST

“Fastly” is an old form that has died out in English. Interest in soccer is growing fast, not “fastly.”

👉 **Fatal / fateful** ⇒ A “fatal” event is a deadly one; a “fateful” one is determined by fate. If there are no casualties left lying at the scene—whether mangled corpses or failed negotiations—the word you are seeking is “fateful.” The latter word also has many positive uses, such as “George fondly remembered that fateful night in which he first met the woman he was to love to his dying day.”

👉 **Faun / fawn** ⇒ A faun is a part-goat, part-human mythological being. The most famous faun in modern literature is Mr. Tumnus in C.S. Lewis’ Narnia novels.

A fawn is a young deer; and to fawn over someone is to show exaggerated affection or admiration for someone, usually to gain some advantage.

👉 **Faze / phase** ⇒ “Faze” means to embarrass or disturb, but is almost always used in the negative sense, as in “the fact that the overhead projector bulb was burned out didn’t faze her.” “Phase” is a noun or verb having to do with an aspect of something. “He’s just going through a temperamental phase.” “They’re going to phase in the new accounting procedures gradually.” Unfortunately, Star Trek has confused matters by calling its ray pistols phasers. Too bad they aren’t fazers instead.

Indignant Star Trek fans should read my blog entry on the subject.

👉 **Fearful / fearsome** ⇒ To be “fearful” is to be afraid. To be “fearsome” is to cause fear in others. Remember that someone who is fierce is fearsome rather than fearful.

👉 **Febuary** ⇒ FEBRUARY

Few people pronounce the first R in “February” distinctly, so it is not surprising that it is often omitted in spelling. This poor month is short on days; don’t further impoverish it by robbing it of one of its letters.

👉 **Federal (capitalization)** ⇒ Some governmental style guidelines call for “federal” to be capitalized whenever it refers to a function or part of the federal government of the United States. However, in most contexts it is capitalized only in the titles of agencies like the “Federal Bureau of Investigation” and the “Federal Reserve.” If you are not required to follow governmental guidelines it’s “the federal budget,” “federal courts,” and “federal employees.” Of course, in the titles of publications the word is capitalized like any other noun; and if the source you are quoting capitalizes it, you should preserve the capitalization.

👉 **Feelings for / feelings about** ⇒ When someone says “I’m developing feelings for you,” the message is “I’m falling in love with you.” Feelings for are always positive feelings. In contrast, feelings about something or someone can be either positive or negative: “i’ve got a bad feeling about this.”

👉 **Feint / faint** ⇒ A feint—whether in chess, boxing, fencing, or on the battlefield—is a maneuver designed to divert the opponent’s attention from the real center of attack. A feint is a daring move. Do not use this very specialized word in the expression “faint of heart” (or “faint at heart”), which implies timidity.

👉 **Fellow classmate** ⇒ CLASSMATE

Some redundancies are so common that few people notice them, but it's worthwhile to be aware of them. A good example is "fellow classmate." "Fellow" and "-mate" perform the same function. It's better to say simply "classmate." The same is true of the equally redundant "fellow shipmate," "fellow roommate," "fellow co-worker," "fellow comrade," and "fellow colleague." Even worse is "fellow peer." Your fellows are your peers: same thing. The only people who should speak of fellow peers are members of the British peerage referring to others of their social class.

👉 **Female / woman** ⇨ When referring to an adult female of the human species it sounds weird and may even be considered insulting to use the noun "female" instead of "woman." "The female pointed the gun at the cop" should be "the woman pointed the gun at the cop."

In the case of the related adjectives some people argue that since we say—for instance—"male doctor" we should always say "female doctor" rather than "woman doctor." It may be inconsistent, but the pattern of referring to females as women performers, professionals, etc. is very traditional, dating back at least to the 14th century. People who do this cannot be accused of committing an error.

Technical adjectival uses defining gender like "female genes" are fine (but don't confuse them with "women's jeans").

👉 **Fiance / fiancée** ⇨ Your fiance is the man you plan to marry; your fiancée (or fiancée) is the woman you plan to marry.

👉 **Film** ⇨ In this digital age we rarely use actual "film" to make movies or videos. Yet we still refer to movies as "films." Events where new productions are played via DVDs or other disc-based media are referred to as "film festivals." Language often lags behind technical changes like this. Modern phones have no dials, but we still "dial" numbers. It's usually useless to complain about this sort of thing, but to speak of "filming" an event when you are actually making a video of it seems wrong to me; but then if you are using a modern digital camera you are likely to say you are "taping" it, which is technically not right either—though it is widely accepted usage despite the fact that most dictionaries do not recognize it.

See also tape.

👉 **Finalize** ⇨ FINISH, PUT INTO FINAL FORM

"Finalize" is very popular among bureaucrats, but many people hate it. Avoid it unless you know that everyone in your environment uses it too.

👉 **Fine toothcomb** ⇨ FINE-TOOTH COMB

Brush your teeth, but don't comb them. Although the spelling "fine toothcomb" is common enough to be listed as a variant in dictionaries, it looks pretty silly to people who prefer the traditional expression used to describe examining a territory or subject minutely: going over it with a "fine-tooth comb"—a comb with fine teeth. Some people prefer "fine-toothed comb."

👉 **Firey** ⇨ FIERY

It's "fire," so why isn't it "firey"? If you listen closely, you hear that "fire" has two distinct vowel sounds in it: "fi-er." Spelling the adjective "fiery" helps to preserve that double sound.

👉 **First annual** ⇨ Some people get upset when the "first annual" occurrence of some event is announced, arguing that it doesn't become annual until it's been repeated. But "first annual" simply means "the first of what is planned to be an annual series of events"—it's a fine expression.

👉 **First floor / ground floor** ⇒ In the US, the first floor of a building is also the ground floor, but in Europe the first floor is the floor above the ground floor, and the second floor is the one above that. This is important information for novice American travelers trying to find their hotel rooms.

👉 **Firstable** ⇒ FIRST OF ALL

The odd word “firstable” seems to be based on a mishearing of the expression “first of all.”

👉 **Fiscal / physical** ⇒ The middle syllable of “physical” is often omitted in pronunciation, making it sound like the unrelated word “fiscal.” Sound that unaccented “I” distinctly.

👉 **Fit the bill** ⇒ FILL THE BILL

Originally a “bill” was any piece of writing, especially a legal document (we still speak of bills being introduced into Congress in this sense). More narrowly, it also came to mean a list such as a restaurant “bill of fare” (menu) or an advertisement listing attractions in a theatrical variety show such as might be posted on a “billboard.” In nineteenth-century America, when producers found short acts to supplement the main attractions, nicely filling out an evening’s entertainment, they were said in a rhyming phrase to “fill the bill.” People who associate bills principally with shipping invoices frequently transform this expression, meaning “to meet requirements or desires,” into “fit the bill.” They are thinking of bills as if they were orders, lists of requirements. It is both more logical and more traditional to say “fill the bill.”

👉 **Fits to a tee** ⇒ FITS TO A T

A t-shirt can be called a “tee,” so it makes a sort of sense that a properly fitting garment could be said to “fit to a tee,” but the original expression is actually “fit to a t.” The “t” may refer to a drafting t-square, though that is uncertain.

👉 **Fittest** ⇒ In evolutionary terms, “the survival of the fittest” refers not to physical fitness in the sense of vigor and strength, but to the ability to reproduce successfully. Rabbits and ants are fitter to survive than lions: that’s why there are so many more of them. If you use the phrase “survival of the fittest” as if it referred to a contest of brute strength, you will annoy biologists and some editors, who will judge your usage as unfit to survive.

👉 **Fixing** ⇒ PREPARING “Fixing” as a synonym of “getting ready” is a feature of several dialects of U.S. English, especially rural and Southern ones: “I’m fixin’ to take this pie over to the parsonage.” Using it outside of these dialects risks making you sound unsophisticated.

👉 **Flair / flare** ⇒ “Flair” is conspicuous talent: “She has a flair for organization.” “Flare” is either a noun meaning “flame” or a verb meaning to blaze with light, to burst into anger, or gradually become wider at one end.

👉 **Flak / flack** ⇒ “Flak” is WW II airman’s slang for shells being fired at you in the air, so to catch a lot of flak is to feel in danger of being shot down. However, most civilians these days have never heard of “flak,” so they use “flack” instead, which originally meant “salesman” or “huckster.” You need to worry about this only if you’re among old-time veterans.

You’re more likely to embarrass yourself if you mix up the expression “catch a lot of flak” with “give a lot of slack,” which has almost the opposite meaning. You can’t catch slack.

👉 **Flaunt / flout** ⇒ To flaunt is to show off: you flaunt your new necklace by wearing it to work. “Flout” has a more negative connotation; it means to treat with contempt some rule or standard. The cliché is “to flout convention.”

Flaunting may be in bad taste because it's ostentatious, but it is not a violation of standards.

👉 **Flesh out / flush out** ⇒ To “flesh out” an idea is to give it substance, as a sculptor adds clay flesh to a skeletal armature. To “flush out” a criminal is to drive him or her out into the open. The latter term is derived from bird-hunting, in which one flushes out a covey of quail. If you are trying to develop something further, use “flesh”; but if you are trying to reveal something hitherto concealed, use “flush.”

👉 **Floe/flow** ⇒ Only ice floating on water produces a floe. Volcanoes produce lava flows.

👉 **Floppy disk / hard disk** ⇒ Floppy disks have just about disappeared from the computer world, but even when they were common it was only in the early years that they were literally floppy. The fact that a 3 1/2" diskette is enclosed in a hard plastic case should not lead you to call it a “hard disk.” That's a high-capacity storage medium like the main disk inside your computer on which your programs, operating system, and data are stored.

See also drive/disk.

👉 **Flounder / founder** ⇒ As a verb, “founder” means “to fill with water and sink.” It is also used metaphorically of various kinds of equally catastrophic failures. In contrast, to flounder is to thrash about in the water (like a flounder), struggling to stay alive. “Flounder” is also often used metaphorically to indicate various sorts of desperate struggle. If you're sunk, you've foundered. If you're still struggling, you're floundering.

👉 **Fluke** ⇒ A fluke was originally a lucky stroke in billiards, and it still means a fortunate chance event. It is nonstandard to use the word to label an unfortunate chance event. There are lucky flukes, but no unlucky ones.

👉 **Frustrated, fustrated** ⇒ FRUSTRATED

People often get flustered and mispronounce (and sometimes misspell) “frustrated” as “fustrated.” Another common mispronunciation is “fustrated.”

👉 **Flys** ⇒ FLIES

“Flys” is a misspelling of “flies” except when the word is being deliberately changed from its traditional spelling as in the name of the popular music group, “The Flys.”

👉 **Focus around** ⇒ FOCUS ON

The popular expression “focus around” makes little sense. An example: “Next quarter's advertising will focus around our line of computer games.” It is presumably meant to convey something like “concentrate on a number of different items in a single category.” But “focus on” better conveys the idea of a sharp focus. “Focus around” suggests a jittery, shifting view rather than determined concentration.

👉 **Followup** ⇒ FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW-UP

A doctor can follow up with a patient during a follow-up visit (note that the adjectival form requires a hyphen). Neither phrase should be turned into a single hyphenless word.

👉 **Font / typeface** ⇒ Although “font” has largely replaced “typeface” in common usage, professionals who deal with type prefer to distinguish between the two. “Typeface” refers to letter design; Times, Helvetica, and Garamond are all typefaces. Typefaces are usually made up of a number of fonts: complete sets of characters in that style, like Times Roman, Times Italic, and Times Bold. The distinction is important only when dealing with such professionals.

☞ **Foot / feet** ⇒ You can use eight-foot boards to side a house, but “foot” conveys a plural sense only in this sort of adjectival phrase combined with a number (and usually hyphenated). The boards are eight feet (not foot) long. It’s always X feet per second and X feet away.

☞ **Footnotes / endnotes** ⇒ About the time that computers began to make the creation and printing of footnotes extremely simple and cheap, style manuals began to urge a shift away from them to endnotes printed at the ends of chapters or at the end of a book or paper rather than at the foot of the page. I happen to think this was a big mistake; but in any case, if you are using endnotes, don’t call them “footnotes.”

☞ **For** ⇒ Sentences like “I want for you to weed the garden” and “I asked for you to bring a dessert” are not formal English. You can improve either sort of expression by leaving out the “for.”

☞ **For / fore / four** ⇒ The most common member of this trio is the preposition “for,” which is not a problem for most people. “Fore” always has to do with the front of something (it’s what you shout to warn someone when you’ve sent a golf ball their way). “Four” is just the number “4.”

☞ **For all intensive purposes** ⇒ FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES  
Another example of the oral transformation of language by people who don’t read much. “For all intents and purposes” is an old cliché which won’t thrill anyone, but using the mistaken alternative is likely to elicit guffaws.

☞ **For free** ⇒ Some people object to “for free” because any sentence containing the phrase will read just as well without the “for,” but it is standard English.

☞ **For goodness’ sakes** ⇒ FOR GOODNESS’ SAKE  
Picky folks point out that since the mild expletive “for goodness’ sake” is a euphemism for “for God’s sake” the second word should not be pluralized to “sakes”; but heavens to Betsy, if little things like that are going to bother you, you’ll have your dander up all the time.

☞ **For one / for one thing** ⇒ FOR ONE THING  
People often say “for one” when they mean “for one thing”: “I really want to go to the movie. For one, Kevin Spacey is my favorite actor.” (One what?) The only time you should use “for one” by itself to give an example of something is when you have earlier mentioned a class to which the example belongs: “There are a lot of reasons I don’t want your old car. For one, there are squirrels living in the upholstery.” (One reason.)

☞ **For sale / on sale** ⇒ If you’re selling something, it’s for sale; but if you lower the price, it goes on sale.

☞ **For sell** ⇒ FOR SALE  
If you have things to sell, they are for sale. Nothing is ever “for sell.”

☞ **For sure / sure** ⇒ In casual speech, when you agree with somebody’s statement, you may say “for sure.” Your date says “That was outstanding tiramisu.” And you, wanting to show how in tune you are, reply “For sure!” You can also use the phrase to mean “for certain,” as in “I couldn’t tell for sure that the bench was wet until I sat on it.”

But people often substitute this phrase when they should use plain old “sure,” as in “I couldn’t be for sure.” That should be “I couldn’t be sure.”

☞ **Forbidding / foreboding / formidable** ⇒ “Foreboding” means “ominous,” as in “The sky was a foreboding shade of gray” (i.e. Predictive of a storm). The prefix “fore-” with an E, often indicates futurity, e. G. “forecast,” “foreshadowing” and “foreword” (a prefatory bit of writing at the beginning of a

book, often misspelled “forword”). A forbidding person or task is hostile or dangerous: “The trek across the desert to the nearest latte stand was forbidding.” The two are easily confused because some things, like storms, can be both foreboding and forbidding.

“Formidable,” which originally meant “fear-inducing” (“Mike Tyson is a formidable opponent”) has come to be used primarily as a compliment meaning “awe-inducing” (“Gary Kasparov’s formidable skills as a chess player were of no avail against Deep Blue”).

See also fearful/fearsome.

👉 **Forceful / forcible / forced** ⇒ These words sometimes overlap, but generally “forceful” means “powerful” (“he imposed his forceful personality on the lions”) while “forcible” must be used instead to describe the use of force (“the burglar made a forcible entry into the apartment”). “Forced” is often used for the latter purpose, but some prefer to reserve this word to describe something that is done or decided upon as a result of outside causes without necessarily being violent: “a forced landing,” “a forced smile,” “forced labor.”

👉 **Forego / forgo** ⇒ The E in “forego” tells you it has to do with going before. It occurs mainly in the expression “foregone conclusion,” a conclusion arrived at in advance. “Forgo” means to abstain from or do without. “After finishing his steak, he decided to forgo the blueberry cheesecake.”

👉 **Foresee / forsee** ⇒ FORESEE

This word means “to see into the future.” There are lots of words with the prefix “fore-” which are future-oriented, including “foresight,” “foretell,” “forethought,” and “foreword,” all of which are often misspelled by people who omit the E. Just remember: what golfers shout when they are warning people ahead of them about the shot they are about to make is “fore!”

👉 **Forever / for ever** ⇒ UK writers most often use the two-word phrase “for ever,” whereas Americans strongly prefer the one-word form “forever.” Each nationality is liable to think the other is making a mistake.

👉 **Formally / formerly** ⇒ These two are often mixed up in speech. If you are doing something in a formal manner, you are behaving formally; but if you previously behaved differently, you did so formerly.

👉 **Fortuitous / fortunate** ⇒ “Fortuitous” events happen by chance; they need not be fortunate events, only random ones: “It was purely fortuitous that the meter reader came along five minutes before I returned to my car.” Although fortunate events may be fortuitous, when you mean “lucky,” use “fortunate.”

👉 **Forward / forwards** ⇒ Although some style books prefer “forward” and “toward” to “forwards” and “towards,” none of these forms is really incorrect, though the forms without the final S are perhaps a smidgen more formal. The same generally applies to “backward” and “backwards.” There are a few expressions in which only one of the two forms works: step forward, forward motion, a backward child. The spelling “foreword” applies exclusively to the introductory matter in a book.

👉 **Foul / fowl** ⇒ A chicken is a fowl. A poke in the eye is a foul.

👉 **Fourty** ⇒ FORTY

“Four” loses its U when it changes to “forty.”

👉 **Fowl swoop** ⇒ FELL SWOOP

Poor Macduff, learning that Macbeth has had his wife and children murdered, cries “What, all my pretty chickens and their dam/At one fell swoop?” Thus

enters the language a popular phrase meaning “terrible blow” (the image is of a ruthless hawk swooping down to slaughter helpless chicks).

The old meaning of “fell” to mean “savage,” “cruel,” or “ruthless” has otherwise pretty much died out, so that many people mistakenly substitute “foul” or “fowl” for “fell.” “Fell” in this sense is related to words like “felon” and “felony.”

The mangled form “swell foop” is a popular bit of humor which should at least remind you that the first word in the phrase has to rhyme with “swell.”

👉 **Framework / groundwork** ⇒ You lay groundwork; you erect, build, or construct a framework.

👉 **Frankenstein** ⇒ “Frankenstein” is the name of the scientist who creates the monster in Mary Shelley’s novel. The monster itself has no name, but is referred to popularly as “Frankenstein’s monster.”

👉 **Frankly** ⇒ Sentences beginning with this word are properly admissions of something shocking or unflattering to the speaker, but when a public spokesperson for a business or government is speaking, it almost always precedes a self-serving statement. “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn” is correct, but “Frankly, I think the American people can make their own decisions about health care” is an abuse of language. The same contortion of meaning is common in related phrases. When you hear a public figure say, “to be completely honest with you,” expect a lie.

👉 **French dip with au jus** ⇒ FRENCH DIP

This diner classic consists of sliced roast beef on a more or less firm bun, with a side dish of broth in which to dip it. “Au jus” means “with broth” so adding “with” to “au jus” is redundant. In fancier restaurants, items are listed entirely in French with the English translation underneath:

Tête de cochon avec ses tripes farcies  
Pig’s head stuffed with tripe

Mixing the languages is hazardous if you don’t know what the original means. “With au jus broth” is also seen from time to time. People generally know what a French dip sandwich is, and they’ll see the broth when it comes. Why not just call it a “French dip?”

👉 **Freshman / freshmen** ⇒ “Freshman” is the singular noun: “Birgitta is a freshman at Yale.” “Freshmen” is the plural: “Patricia and Patrick are freshmen at Stanford.” But the adjective is always singular: “Megan had an interesting freshman seminar on Romanesque architecture at Sarah Lawrence.”

👉 **From . . . To** ⇒ “From soup to nuts” makes sense because soup was the traditional first course in a formal meal, nuts the last. Similarly “from A to Z” makes sense because these are the first and last letters of the alphabet. But this construction which identifies the extremes of a spectrum or range is often improperly used when no such extremes are being identified, as in “She tried everything from penicillin to sulfa drugs.” These are not extremes, just examples of different sorts of drugs. Even worse is “he gave his daughter everything from a bicycle to lawn darts to a teddy bear.” A range can’t have more than two extremes. “He gave his daughter everything from paper dolls to a Cadillac” conveys the notion of a spectrum from very cheap to very expensive, and is fine. Often when people are tempted to use “from . . . To” they would be better off using a different expression, as, for example, in this sentence: “She tried all sorts of medicines, including penicillin and sulfa drugs.”

👉 **From the beginning of time** ⇒ ANYTHING MORE SPECIFIC

Stephen Hawking writes about the beginning of time, but few other people do. People who write “from the beginning of time” or “since time began” are usually

being lazy. Their grasp of history is vague, so they resort to these broad, sweeping phrases. Almost never is this usage literally accurate: people have not fallen in love since time began, for instance, because people arrived relatively late on the scene in the cosmic scheme of things. When I visited Ferrara several years ago I was interested to see that the whole population of the old city seemed to use bicycles for transportation, cars being banned from the central area. I asked how long this had been the custom and was told “We’ve ridden bicycles for centuries.” Since the bicycle was invented only in the 1860s, I strongly doubted this (no, Leonardo da Vinci did not invent the bicycle—he just drew a picture of what one might look like—and some people think that picture is a modern forgery). If you really don’t know the appropriate period from which your subject dates, you could substitute a less silly but still vague phrase such as “for many years,” or “for centuries”; but it’s better simply to avoid historical statements if you don’t know your history. See “today’s modern society.”

👉 **Full proof / foolproof** ⇒ If you want to get credit for solving a complicated mathematical problem, you will have to provide a full proof. But if you’re trying to make something as easy as possible, you want to make it foolproof—so simple even a fool couldn’t screw it up.

👉 **Fully well** ⇒ FULL WELL

Back in the Middle Ages and Renaissance it was common for “full” to modify adverbs. The only instance in which this continues today is the traditional phrase “full well,” mostly in “knowing full well.” People who “correct” this to “knowing fully well” may have modern grammar on their side, but they sound as if they aren’t acquainted with the standard idiom.

👉 **Fulsome** ⇒ In modern usage, “fulsome” has two inconsistent meanings. To some people it means “offensive, overdone,” so “fulsome praise” to them would be disgustingly exaggerated praise.

To other people it means “abundant,” and for them “fulsome praise” is glowingly warm praise.

The first group tends to look down on the second group, and the second group tends to be baffled by the first. Best to just avoid the word altogether.

👉 **Functionality** ⇒ You’ll find “functionality” in dictionaries, but it’s almost always used as a pretentious and inaccurate substitute for “function” or “usefulness.”

👉 **Furl / furrow** ⇒ When you concentrate really hard so that furrows appear in your forehead, you furrow your brow—an expression that means “worry, puzzle over.” When you lower a sail and wrap it tightly around the mast to secure it you furl it. If you can furl your brow you belong in a sideshow.

👉 **Fushia** ⇒ FUCHSIA

The flowers known as “fuchsias” are named after German Renaissance botanist Leonhard Fuchs. Although the word is pronounced “FYOO-sha” in English, it should not be misspelled “fushia.”

👉 **Gaff / gaffe** ⇒ “Gaffe” means “embarrassing mistake,” and should not be mixed up with “gaff”: a large hook.

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👉 **Gamut / gauntlet** ⇒ To “run a gamut” is to go through the whole scale or spectrum of something. To “run the gauntlet” (also gantlet) is to run between two lines of people who are trying to beat you. And don’t confuse “gamut” with “gambit,” a play in chess, and by extension, a tricky maneuver of any kind.

👉 **Gander / dander** ⇒ When you get really angry you “get your dander up.” The derivation of “dander” in this expression is uncertain, but you can’t replace it with “dandruff” or “gander.” The only way to get a gander up is to awaken a male goose.

👉 **Gardener snake / garter snake** ⇒ GARTER SNAKE

“Garter snake” is a traditional American term for small harmless snakes with stripes running lengthwise along their bodies, resembling old-fashioned garters. It is more broadly used for all manner of small non-venomous snakes. Many folks don’t get the allusion, and call them “gardener snakes” instead. Although you may find these little critters in your yard, they are unlikely to do much gardening. For that you need earthworms.

👉 **Garnish / garner** ⇒ A garner was originally a granary, and to garner something is to gather it in. Today the word rarely has to do with agriculture: we garner attention, praise, awards, evidence, and sympathy.

To garnish something is to decorate it. You can garnish a pork chop by placing a sprig of rosemary next to it. Quite a few people use “garnish” when they should be using “garner.”

👉 **Gauge / gouge** ⇒ “Gauge” is an unusual spelling in English, and the word frequently gets misspelled. Your spelling-checker will catch “gague” (believe it!), but won’t catch “gouge,” which occurs more often than you might think. It’s pretty easy to find a “tire pressure gouge” for sale on the Web. If the word you want has an A sound in it, the spelling you want is “gauge.”

👉 **Gaurd** ⇒ GUARD

Too bad the Elizabethan “guard” won out over the earlier, French-derived spelling “garde” but the word was never spelled “gaurd.” The standard spelling is related to Italian and Spanish “guarda,” pronounced “gwarda.”

👉 **Gender** ⇒ When discussing males and females, feminists wanting to remove references to sexuality from contexts which don’t involve mating or reproduction revived an older meaning of “gender” which had come to refer in modern times chiefly to language, as a synonym for “sex” in phrases such as “Our goal is to achieve gender equality.” Americans, always nervous about sex, eagerly embraced this usage, which is now standard. In some scholarly fields, “sex” is used to label biologically determined aspects of maleness and femaleness (reproduction, etc.) While “gender” refers to their socially determined aspects (behavior, attitudes, etc.), but in ordinary speech this distinction is not always maintained. It is disingenuous to pretend that people who use “gender” in the new senses are making an error, just as it is disingenuous to maintain that “Ms.” Means “manuscript” (that’s “MS” ). Nevertheless, I must admit I was startled to discover that the tag on my new trousers describes not only their size and color, but their “gender.”

👉 **Genius** ⇒ BRILLIANT

In standard English “genius” is a noun, but not an adjective. In slang, people often say things like “Telling Mom your English teacher is requiring the class to get HBO was genius!” The standard way to say this is “was brilliant.”

👉 **Genuine** ⇒ The pronunciation of “genuine” with the last syllable rhyming with “wine” is generally considered less classy than the more common pronunciation in which the last syllable rhymes with “won.”

👉 **Gerunds & pronouns** ⇒ This is a subtle point, and hard to explain without using the sort of technical language I usually try to avoid; but if you can learn how to precede gerunds with possessive pronouns, your writing will definitely improve in the eyes of many readers. Verb forms ending in “-ing” can function

as nouns and are sometimes preceded by pronouns. Such verb/noun forms are called “gerunds.” You’ll often see sentences like this: “I didn’t appreciate him returning the car with the gas tank empty.” But “returning” is a gerund, so it should be preceded by a possessive pronoun: “I didn’t appreciate his returning the car. . . .” Other examples of standard usage: “Their coming to my birthday party was a nice surprise.” “I didn’t like his being rude to his teacher.” “They weeded the garden without our having to tell them to.” “Coming,” “being,” and “having” are all gerunds, and require preceding possessive pronouns (“their,” “his,” and “our”). If a person’s name appears just before the gerund, that too needs to be in the possessive form: “We’re excited about Bob’s winning the tournament.”

Not all verb forms ending in “-ing” are gerunds. Some are present participles, and function as adjectives: “a sailing ship,” “a running joke,” “aching back.” These can be preceded by possessive pronouns (“my aching back”), but few people are tempted to use a non-possessive pronoun in this context except in certain dialects (“me aching back”).

Confused? Try this simple rule of thumb: if you have to put a pronoun or noun in front of an “-ing” word, try a possessive one first. If the “-ing” word seems like a thing or an action that could be possessed, it’s probably a gerund. If using a possessive form makes sense, go with it.

👉 **Get me** ⇒ GET MYSELF

“I gotta get me a new carburetor,” says Joe-Bob. Translated into standard English, this would be “I have to get myself a new carburetor.” Even better: leave out the “myself.”

👉 **Ghandi** ⇒ GANDHI

Mohandas K. Gandhi’s name has an H after the D, not after the G. Note that “Mahatma” (“great soul”) is an honorific title, not actually part of his birth name. The proper pronunciation of the first syllable should rhyme more with “gone” than “can.” Among Indians, his name is usually given a respectful suffix and rendered as Gandhiji, but adding Mahatma to that form would be honorific overkill.

👉 **Gibe / jibe / jive** ⇒ “Gibe” is a now rare term meaning “to tease.” “Jibe” means “to agree,” but is usually used negatively, as in “the alibis of the two crooks didn’t jibe.” The latter word is often confused with “jive,” which derives from slang which originally meant to treat in a jazzy manner (“Jivin’ the Blues Away”) but also came to be associated with deception (“Don’t give me any of that jive”).

👉 **Gift / give** ⇒ Conservatives are annoyed by the use of “gift” as a verb. If the ad says “gift her with jewelry this Valentine’s Day,” she might prefer that you give it to her.

👉 **Gig / jig** ⇒ “The jig is up” is an old slang expression meaning “the game is over—we’re caught.” A musician’s job is a gig.

👉 **Gild / guild** ⇒ You gild an object by covering it with gold; you can join an organization like the Theatre Guild.

👉 **Goal / gaol** ⇒ UK writers are increasingly using the American spelling “jail” instead of “gaol.” This should be helpful for those who sometimes absentmindedly type “goal” when they mean to write “gaol.”

👉 **Goal / objective** ⇒ Most language authorities consider “goal” to be a synonym of “objective,” and some dismiss the popular bureaucratic phrase “goals and objectives” as a meaningless redundancy.

However, if you have to deal with people who insist there is a distinction, here is their usual argument: goals are general, objectives are more specific. If your goal is to create a safer work environment, your objective might be to remove the potted poison ivy plant from your desk. In education, a typical example would be that if your goal is to improve your French, one objective might be to master the subjunctive.

👉 **God** ⇒ When “God” is the name of a god, as in Judaism, Christianity and Islam (“Allah” is just Arabic for “God,” and many modern Muslims translate the name when writing in English), it needs to be capitalized like any other name. When it is used as a generic term, as in “He looks like a Greek god,” it is not capitalized.

If you see the word rendered “G\*d” or “G-d” it’s not an error, but a Jewish writer reverently following the Orthodox prohibition against spelling out the name of the deity in full.

👉 **Goes** ⇒ “So he goes, “I thought your birthday was tomorrow,” and i’m— like— ”well, duh!” Perhaps this bizarre pattern developed in analogy to childish phrases such as “the cow goes “moo” ” and “the piggy goes ” oink, oink.” Is there any young person unaware that the use of “go” to mean “say” drives most adults crazy? Granted, it’s deliberate slang rather than an involuntary error, but if you get into the habit of using it all the time, you may embarrass yourself in front of a class by saying something witless like “So then Juliet goes ‘A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.’”

👉 **Going forward** ⇒ Speakers in the business world and in government are fond of saying “going forward” to mean “from now on,” “in the future,” or even “now.” It gives a sense of action, purpose, and direction that appeals to many people.

However many other people find it pretentious and annoying, especially when it is used simply to indicate that the future is being talked about. Since in English our verbs do this job nicely, “going forward” is often superfluous. In a statement like “Going forward, we’re going to have to budget more for advertising,” the sentence would be just as clear and less cluttered if the first two words were dropped.

👉 **Gone / went** ⇒ This is one of those cases in which a common word has a past participle which is not formed by the simple addition of -ED and which often trip people up. “I should have went to the business meeting, but the game was tied in the ninth” should be “I should have gone. . . .” The same problem crops up with the two forms of the verb “to do.” Say “I should have done my taxes before the IRS called” rather than “I should have did. . . .”

See “drank/drank.”

👉 **Gonna** ⇒ GOING TO

How do you pronounce “going to” in phrases like “going to walk the dog”? “Gonna,” right? Almost everyone uses this slurred pronunciation, but it’s not acceptable in formal writing except when you’re deliberately trying to convey the popular pronunciation. In very formal spoken contexts you might want to (not “wanna”) pronounce the phrase distinctly.

👉 **Good / well** ⇒ You do something well, but a thing is good. The exception is verbs of sensation in phrases such as “the pie smells good,” or “I feel good.” Despite the arguments of nigglers, this is standard usage. Saying “the pie smells well” would imply that the pastry in question had a nose. Similarly, “I feel well” is also acceptable, especially when discussing health, but it is not the only correct usage.

☞ **Good-by / good-bye / goodby / goodbye** ⇒ All of these spellings are legitimate, but if you want to go with the most popular one, it's "goodbye." This spelling has the advantage of recalling the word's origins in phrases like "God be with ye."

☞ **Got / gotten** ⇒ In the UK, the old word "gotten" dropped out of use except in such stock phrases as "ill-gotten" and "gotten up," but in the US it is frequently used as the past participle of "get." Sometimes the two are interchangeable, however, "got" implies current possession, as in "i've got just five dollars to buy my dinner with." "Gotten," in contrast, often implies the process of getting hold of something: "i've gotten five dollars for cleaning out Mrs. Quimby's shed" emphasizing the earning of the money rather than its possession.

Phrases that involve some sort of process usually involve "gotten": "My grades have gotten better since I moved out of the fraternity." When you have to leave, you've got to go. If you say you've "gotten to go" you're implying someone gave you permission to go.

☞ **Got to** ⇒ HAVE GOT TO

"Gotta go now. Bye!" This is a common casual way to end a phone conversation. But it's good to remember that it's a slangy abbreviation of the more formal "I have got to go now." In writing, at least, remember the "have" before the "got" in this phrase meaning "have to." In fact, you can omit the "got" altogether and say simply "I have to go." For a slightly less formal effect, contract "have" thus: "i've got to go."

☞ **Government** ⇒ Be careful to pronounce the first "N" in "government."

☞ **GP practice** ⇒ GENERAL PRACTICE

"GP" stands for "general practitioner," so a "GP practice is a "general practitioner practice," which isn't exactly redundant, but strikes some people as awkward. However, if you don't want to spell the phrase out, there doesn't seem to be a good substitute for "GP practice"—it won't bother many people.

☞ **Graduate** ⇒ GRADUATE FROM

In certain dialects (notably that of New York City) it is common to say "he is going to graduate high school in June" rather than the more standard "graduate from." When writing for a national or international audience, use the "from."

☞ **Graffiti** ⇒ Graffiti is an Italian plural form. One scrawl on a wall is a graffito. But few English speakers are aware of this distinction and say things like "there's a graffiti on the storefront." This is not usually considered incorrect, but people who know Italian may disapprove, so you might want to use the word only in the plural.

☞ **Grammer** ⇒ GRAMMAR

It's amazing how many people write to thank me for helping them with their "grammer." It's "grammar." The word is often incorrectly used to label patterns of spelling and usage that have nothing to do with the structure of language, the proper subject of grammar in the most conservative sense. Not all bad writing is due to bad grammar.

☞ **Grasping for straws** ⇒ GRASPING AT STRAWS

To grasp at straws is to make desperate but futile attempts to escape from a problem. The image is of a drowning person wildly thrashing about trying to find something to keep afloat with, madly grasping even a wisp of straw which is plainly incapable of doing the job. "Grasping for straws" suggests that the person is deliberately trying to find straws rather than blindly grabbing them.

👉 **Gratis / gratuitous** ⇒ If you do something nice without being paid, you do it “gratis.” Technically, such a deed can also be “gratuitous”; but if you do or say something obnoxious and uncalled for, it’s always “gratuitous,” not “gratis.”

👉 **Gray / grey** ⇒ “Gray” is the American spelling, “grey” the British spelling of this color/colour. When it’s part of a British name—like Tarzan’s title, “Lord Greystoke”—or part of a place name—like “Greyfriars”—it should retain its original spelling even if an American is doing the writing.

👉 **Greatful** ⇒ GRATEFUL

Your appreciation may be great, but you express gratitude by being grateful.

👉 **Greivous** ⇒ GRIEVOUS

There are just two syllables in “grievous,” and it’s pronounced “grieve-us.”

👉 **Grill / grille** ⇒ You cook on a grill (perhaps in a “bar and grill”), but the word for a metal framework over the front of an opening is most often grille. When speaking of intensive questioning “grill” is used because the process is being compared to roasting somebody over hot coals: “whenever I came in late, my parents would grill me about where I’d been.”

👉 **Grill cheese** ⇒ GRILLED CHEESE

The popular fried sandwich is properly called “grilled cheese.”

👉 **Grisly / grizzly** ⇒ “Grisly” means “horrible”; a “grizzly” is a bear. “The grizzly left behind the grisly remains of his victim.” “Grizzled,” means “having gray hairs,” not to be confused with “gristly,” full of gristle.

👉 **Ground zero** ⇒ “Ground zero” refers to the point at the center of the impact of a nuclear bomb, so it is improper to talk about “building from ground zero” as if it were a place of new beginnings. You can start from scratch, or begin at zero, but if you’re at ground zero, you’re at the end.

The metaphorical extension of this term to the site of the destruction of the World Trade Center towers is, however, perfectly legitimate, but because in this case it is a place name it needs to be capitalized: “Ground Zero.”

👉 **Group (singular vs. Plural)** ⇒ When the group is being considered as a whole, it can be treated as a single entity: “the group was ready to go on stage.” But when the individuality of its members is being emphasized, “group” is plural: “the group were in disagreement about where to go for dinner.”

👉 **Grow** ⇒ We used to grow our hair long or grow tomatoes in the yard, but now we are being urged to “grow the economy” or “grow your investments.” Business and government speakers have extended this usage widely, but it irritates traditionalists. Use “build,” “increase,” “expand,” “develop,” or “cause to grow” instead in formal writing.

👉 **Guess who?** ⇒ GUESS WHO!

Since “Guess who” is a command rather than a real question, technically it should not be followed by a question mark. A period or exclamation point will do fine. Similarly, there should be no question mark after the simple command “Guess!”

👉 **Gull / gall** ⇒ GALL

“How could you have the nerve, the chutzpah, the effrontery, the unmitigated gall to claim you didn’t cheat because it was your girlfriend who copied from the Web when she wrote your paper for you?”

This sense of “gall” has nothing to do with seabirds, so don’t say “How could you have the gull?”

👉 **Gut-rending/heart-wrenching** ⇒ GUT-WRENCHING, HEART-RENDING

To wrench is to twist, to rend is to tear. Upsetting events can be stomach- or gut-wrenching (agonizing) or heart-rending (heartbreaking, making you feel terribly sad), but many people confuse the two and come up with “heart-wrenching.” “Gut-rending” is also occasionally seen.

👉 **Gyp** ⇒ Gypsies complain that “gyp” (“cheat”) reflects bias, but the word is so well entrenched and its origin so obscure to most users that there is little hope of eliminating it from standard use any time soon.

Note that the people commonly called “Gypsies” strongly prefer the name Rom (plural form Roma or Romanies).

👉 **Had ought** ⇒ OUGHT

Just say “she ought to come in before she drowns,” not “had ought.”

👉 **Hadn't have** ⇒ HADNT

Many people throw in an extra “have” when they talk about things that might have happened otherwise: “If he hadn't have checked inside the truck first he wouldn't have realized that the floorboards were rusted out.” This is often rendered “hadn't of” and pronounced “hadn'ta.” In standard English, omit the second word: “If he hadn't checked inside the truck. . . .”

👉 **Hail / hale** ⇒ One old meaning of the word “hale” is “to drag,” especially by force. In modern usage it has been replaced with “haul” except in the standard phrase “hale into court.” People who can't make sense of this form often misspell the phrase as “hail into court.” To be hailed is to be greeted enthusiastically, with praise. People haled into court normally go reluctantly, not expecting any such warm reception.

👉 **Hairbrained** ⇒ HAREBRAINED

Although “hairbrained” is common, the original word “harebrained” means “silly as a hare” (the little rabbit-like creature) and is preferred in writing.

👉 **Hand and hand** ⇒ HAND IN HAND

“Poverty goes hand in hand with malnutrition.” The image here is of the two subjects holding hands, one hand in the other. The phrase is very frequently misspelled “hand and hand,” which does not convey the same sort of intimate connection.

👉 **Handicap / disability** ⇒ In normal usage, a handicap is a drawback you can easily remedy, but a disability is much worse: you're just unable to do something. But many people with disabilities and those who work with them strongly prefer “disability” to “handicap,” which they consider an insulting term. Their argument is that a disability can be compensated for by—for instance—a wheelchair, so that the disabled person is not handicapped. Only the person truly unable by any means to accomplish tasks because of a disability is handicapped. The fact that this goes directly counter to ordinary English usage may help to explain why the general public has been slow to adopt it, but if you want to avoid offending anyone, you're safer using “disability” than “handicap.” Many of the people involved also resent being called “disabled people”; they prefer “people with disabilities.”

👉 **Hangar / hanger** ⇒ You park your plane in a hangar but hang up your slacks on a hanger.

👉 **Hanged / hung** ⇒ Originally these words were pretty much interchangeable, but “hanged” eventually came to be used pretty exclusively to mean “executed by hanging.” Does nervousness about the existence of an indelicate adjectival form of the word prompt people to avoid the correct word in such sentences as “Lady Wrothley saw to it that her ancestors' portraits were

properly hung”? Nevertheless, “hung” is correct except when capital punishment is being imposed or someone commits suicide.

👉 **Hanging indents** ⇒ Bibliographies are normally written using hanging indents, where the first line extends out to the left-hand margin, but the rest of the entry is indented. Recently this sort of thing is also being called an “outdent.” Twain, Mark. *Mark Twain at the Buffalo Express: Articles and Sketches by America’s Favorite Humorist*, edited by Joseph B. McCullough and Janice McIntire-Strasburg (dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000).

These are extremely easy to create on a word processor, but many people have never mastered the technique. Normally the left-hand margin marker at the top of the page consists of two small arrows. Drag the top one to the right to make a normal indent, the bottom one to create a hanging indent. In most programs, you have to hold down the Shift key while dragging the bottom marker to leave the top part behind. Don’t get into the habit of substituting a carriage return and a tab or spaces to create hanging indents because when your work is transferred to a different computer the result may look quite different—and wrong.

To create a paragraph with an overhang indent in HTML code as in the example above, use the following code:

```
<p style="margin-left:.5in;text-indent:-.5in">
```

👉 **Hanukkah, Chanukah** ⇒ This Jewish holiday is misspelled in a host of ways, but the two standard spellings are “Hanukkah” (most common) and “Chanukah” (for those who want to remind people that the word begins with a guttural throat-clearing sound).

👉 **Happy Belated Birthday** ⇒ BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY

When someone has forgotten your birthday, they’re likely to send you a card reading “Happy Belated Birthday.” But this is a mistake. The birthday isn’t belated; the wishes are.

Better-phrased cards read “Belated Happy Birthday.” This form treats “Happy Birthday” as a phrase equivalent to something like “Late Congratulations.” (If you sent out your holiday cards in early January you might wish someone a “Belated Merry Christmas.”) Even clearer would be “Belated Happy Birthday Wishes,” but most people seem to consider this too wordy.

👉 **Hardly** ⇒ When Bill says “I can’t hardly bend over with this backache,” he means he can hardly bend over, and that’s what he should say. Similarly, when Jane says “you can feed the cat without hardly bending over” she means “almost without bending over.”

👉 **Hardly never** ⇒ HARDLY EVER

The expression is “hardly ever” or “almost never.”

👉 **Hardy / hearty** ⇒ These two words overlap somewhat, but usually the word you want is “hearty.” The standard expressions are “a hearty appetite,” “a hearty meal,” a “hearty handshake,” “a hearty welcome,” and “hearty applause.” “Hardy” turns up in “hale and hardy,” but should not be substituted for “hearty” in the other expressions. “Party hearty” and “party hardy” are both common renderings of a common youth saying, but the first makes more sense.

👉 **Hark / harken** ⇒ One old use of the word “hark” was in hunting with hounds, meaning to turn the dogs back on their course, reverse direction. It was this use that gave rise to the expression “hark back.” It refers to returning in thought to an earlier time or returning to an earlier discussion: “That tie-died shirt harks back to the days we used to go to rock festivals together.”

The expression is not “hearkens back.” Although “hark” and “hearken” can both mean “listen,” only “hark” can mean “go back.”

👉 **Hay day** ⇒ HEYDAY

The period when something is in its prime is its “heyday.” Your spell checker should catch it if you misspell this word “hayday,” but if you write “hay day,” it won’t.

👉 **He don’t** ⇒ HE DOESN’T

In formal English, “don’t” is not used in the third person singular. “I don’t like avocado ice cream” is correct, and so is “they don’t have their passports yet” and “they don’t have the sense to come in out of the rain”; but “he don’t have no money,” though common in certain dialects, is nonstandard on two counts: it should be “he doesn’t” and “any money.” The same is true of other forms: “she don’t” and “it don’t” should be “she doesn’t” and “it doesn’t.”

👉 **Heading / bound** ⇒ If you’re reporting on traffic conditions, it’s redundant to say “heading northbound on I-5.” It’s either “heading north” or “northbound.”

👉 **Heal / heel** ⇒ Heal is what you do when you get better. Your heel is the back part of your foot. Achilles’ heel was the only place the great warrior could be wounded in such a way that the injury wouldn’t heal. Thus any striking weakness can be called an “Achilles’ heel.” To remember the meaning of “heal,” note that it is the beginning of the word “health.”

👉 **Hear / here** ⇒ If you find yourself writing sentences like “I know I left my wallet hear!” You should note that “hear” has the word “ear” buried in it and let that remind you that it refers only to hearing and is always a verb (except when you are giving the British cheer “Hear! Hear!”). “I left my wallet here” is the correct expression. “Here” is where you are, never something you do.

👉 **Hearing** ⇒ DEAF

“Hearing-impaired” is not an all-purpose substitute for “deaf” since it strongly implies some residual ability to hear.

👉 **Heavily** ⇒ STRONGLY

“Heavily” is not an all-purpose synonym for “strongly.” It should be reserved for expressions in which literal or metaphorical weight or density is implied, like “heavily underlined,” “heavily influenced,” “heavily armed,” or “heavily traveled.” Not standard are expressions like “heavily admired” or “heavily characteristic of.” People sometimes use “heavily” when they mean “heartily,” as in “heavily praised.”

👉 **Heighth** ⇒ HEIGHT

“Width” has a TH at the end, so why doesn’t “height”? In fact it used to, but the standard pronunciation today ends in a plain “T” sound. People who use the obsolete form misspell it as well, so pronunciation is no guide. By the way, this is one of those pesky exceptions to the rule, “I before E except after C,” but the vowels are seldom switched, perhaps because we see it printed on so many forms along with “age” and “weight.”

👉 **Help the problem** ⇒ HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM

People say they want to help the problem of poverty when what they really mean is that they want to help solve the problem of poverty. Poverty flourishes without any extra help, thank you. I guess I know what a “suicide help line” is, but I’d rather it were a “suicide prevention help line.” I suppose it’s too late to ask people to rename alcoholism support groups as sobriety support groups, but it’s a shoddy use of language.

👉 **Hence why** ⇒ HENCE

Shakespeare and the Bible keep alive one meaning of the old word “hence”: “away from here” (“get thee hence”). There’s no need to add “from” to the word, though you often see “from hence” in pretentious writing, and it’s not likely to bother many readers.

But another sense of the word “hence” (“therefore”) causes more trouble because writers often add “why” to it: “I got tired of mowing the lawn, hence why I bought the goat.” “Hence” and “why” serve the same function in a sentence like this; use just one or the other, not both: “hence I bought the goat” or “that’s why I bought the goat.”

👉 **Herbs / spices** ⇒ People not seriously into cooking often mix up herbs and spices. Generally, flavorings made up of stems, leaves, and flowers are herbs; and those made of bark, roots, and seeds and dried buds are spices. An exception is saffron, which is made of flower stamens but is a spice. When no distinction is intended, the more generic term is “spice”; you have a spice cabinet, not a spice-and-herb cabinet, and you spice your food, even when you are adding herbs as well. The British pronounce the H in “herb” but Americans follow the French in dropping it.

👉 **Here’s / here are** ⇒ Sentences like “here’s the gerbil” are shortened ways of saying “here is the gerbil.” But “here’s the gerbils” is wrong because “here’s” is not a contraction of “here are.” In speaking we might say “here’re the gerbils,” but we probably would not use the contracted form in writing unless we were trying to convey the effect of spoken English. Instead write “here are the gerbils.” See also THERE’S.

👉 **Hero / protagonist** ⇒ In ordinary usage “hero” has two meanings: “leading character in a story” and “brave, admirable person.” In simple tales the two meanings may work together, but in modern literature and film the leading character or “protagonist” (a technical term common in literary criticism) may behave in a very unheroic fashion. Students who express shock that the “hero” of a play or novel behaves despicably reveal their inexperience. In literature classes avoid the word unless you mean to stress a character’s heroic qualities. However, if you are discussing the main character in a traditional opera, where values are often simple, you may get by with referring to the male lead as the “hero”—but is Don Giovanni really a hero? See also “heroin/heroine.”

👉 **Heroin / heroine** ⇒ Heroin is a highly addictive opium derivative; the main female character in a narrative is a heroine.

👉 **Hew and cry** ⇒ HUE AND CRY

If you were to accidentally whack your leg with a hatchet you might be said to hew it, and you would certainly be justified in crying.

But in the expression “hue and cry” “hue” means “shout” and is derived from an Old French verb huer, designating the shouts that soldiers or hunters make when they are on the assault. It’s a bit redundant, like “screaming and shouting”; but the spelling in this expression is definitely the same as that of the word meaning “color”: hue.

👉 **Highbred / hybrid** ⇒ HIGHBRED/HYBRID

“Highbred” (often spelled “high-bred”) is occasionally used to label animals with superior ancestry. Snobs used to refer to members of the nobility as “highbred.” But this rare word is often confused with “hybrid,” which describes plants, animals, and people that are the product of mixed heritage.

The offspring of a line of prize-winning dogs would be “highbred,” but a dog could be called “hybrid” if its ancestry were mixed. It might be a prizewinner,

but it might also be a mutt. Except in a context where “highbred” is routinely used in this technical context, stick with “hybrid.” It’s almost certain to be the word you need.

👉 **Highly looked upon / highly regarded** ⇒ HIGHLY REGARDED

Many people, struggling to remember the phrase “highly regarded,” come up with the awkward “highly looked upon” instead; which suggests that the looker is placed in a high position, looking down, when what is meant is that the looker is looking up to someone or something admirable.

👉 **Him, her / he, she** ⇒ There is a group of personal pronouns to be used as subjects in a sentence, including “he,” “she,” “I,” and “we.” Then there is a separate group of object pronouns, including “him,” “her,” “me,” and “us.” The problem is that the folks who tend to mix up the two sets often don’t find the subject/object distinction clear or helpful, and say things like “Her and me went to the movies.”

A simple test is to substitute “us” for “her and me.” Would you say “us went to the movies”? Obviously not. You’d normally say “we went to the movies,” so when “we” is broken into the two persons involved it becomes “she and I went to the movies.”

But you would say “the murder scene scared us,” so it’s correct to say “the murder scene scared her and me.”

If you aren’t involved, use “they” and “them” as test words instead of “we” and “us.” “They won the lottery” becomes “he and she won the lottery,” and “the check was mailed to them” becomes “the check was mailed to him and her.” See also “I/me/myself.”

👉 **Hindi / Hindu** ⇒ Hindi is a language. Hinduism is a religion, and its believers are called “Hindus.” Not all Hindus speak Hindi, and many Hindi-speakers are not Hindus.

👉 **Hippie / hippy** ⇒ A long-haired 60s flower child was a “hippie.” “Hippy” is an adjective describing someone with wide hips. The IE is not caused by a Y changing to IE in the plural as in “puppy” and “puppies.” It is rather a dismissive diminutive, invented by older, more sophisticated hipsters looking down on the new kids as mere “hippies.” Confusing these two is definitely unhip.

👉 **His and her’s** ⇒ HIS AND HERS

Possessive pronouns don’t take apostrophes. It’s not “hi’s” (but you knew that), and it’s not “her’s,” even in the popular phrase “his and hers.”

👉 **Hisself** ⇒ HIMSELF

In some dialects people say “hisself” for “himself,” but this is nonstandard.

👉 **Historic / historical** ⇒ The meaning of “historic” has been narrowed down to “famous in history.” One should not call a building, site, district, or event “historical.” Sites may be of historical interest if historians are interested in them, but not just because they are old. In America “historic” is grossly overused as a synonym for “older than my father’s day.”

👉 **Hit and miss** ⇒ HIT OR MISS

Something done in a careless, haphazard way is done in a hit-or-miss fashion. The person acting doesn’t seem to care whether the action is successful (a “hit”) or unsuccessful (a “miss”).

The variation “hit and miss” is very popular, but makes less sense. This form of the phrase has traditionally been used to describe certain mechanical devices; but that meaning is rare and antiquated. In almost all contexts, the better form is “hit or miss.”

👉 **HIV virus** ⇒ “HIV” stands for “human immunodeficiency virus,” so adding the word “virus” to the acronym creates a redundancy. “HIV” is the name of the organism that is the cause of AIDS, not a name for the disease itself. A person may be HIV-positive (a test shows the person to be infected with the virus) without having yet developed AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). HIV is the cause, AIDS the result.

👉 **Hoard / horde** ⇒ A greedily hoarded treasure is a hoard. A herd of wildebeests or a mob of people is a horde.

👉 **Hock / hawk** ⇒ People who pawn goods at a pawnshop hock them. That’s why such places are sometimes called “hock shops.”

Vendors who proclaim aloud the availability of their goods on the street hawk them. Such people are called “hawkers.”

The latter word is used metaphorically of people or businesses aggressively promoting anything for sale. They are not “hocking their wares” (or worse, “hocking their wears”), but “hawking their wares.”

👉 **Hoi polloi** ⇒ Hoi polloi is Greek for “the common people,” but it is often misused to mean “the upper class” (does “hoi” make speakers think of “high” or “hoity-toity”?). Some urge that since “hoi” is the article “the hoi polloi” is redundant, but the general rule is that articles such as “the” and “a” in foreign language phrases cease to function as such in place names, brands, and catch phrases except for some of the most familiar ones in French and Spanish, where everyone recognizes “la”—for instance—as meaning “the.” “The El Nino” is redundant, but “the hoi polloi” is standard English.

👉 **Hold your peace / say your piece** ⇒ Some folks imagine that since these expressions are opposites, the last word in each should be the same, but in fact they are unrelated expressions. The first means “maintain your silence,” and the other means literally “speak aloud a piece of writing” but is used to express the idea of making a statement.

👉 **Hole / whole** ⇒ “Hole” and “whole” have almost opposite meanings. A hole is a lack of something, like the hole in a doughnut (despite the confusing fact that the little nubbins of fried dough are called “doughnut holes”). “Whole” means things like entire, complete, and healthy and is used in expressions like “the whole thing,” “whole milk,” “whole wheat,” and “with a whole heart.”

👉 **Holocaust** ⇒ “Holocaust” is a Greek-derived translation of the Hebrew term olah, which denotes a sort of ritual sacrifice in which the food offered is completely burnt up rather than being merely dedicated to God and then eaten. It was applied with bitter irony by Jews to the destruction of millions of their number in the Nazi death camps. Although phrases like “nuclear holocaust” and “Cambodian holocaust” have become common, you risk giving serious offense by using the word in less severe circumstances, such as calling a precipitous decline in stock prices a “sell-off holocaust.”

👉 **Home page** ⇒ On the World Wide Web, a “home page” is normally the first page a person entering a site encounters, often functioning as a sort of table of contents for the other pages. People sometimes create special pages within their sites introducing a particular topic, and these are also informally called “home pages” (as in “The Emily Dickinson Home Page”); but it is a sure sign of a Web novice to refer to all Web pages as home pages. Spelling “homepage” as a single word is common on the Web, but distinctly more casual than “home page.”

👉 **Homophobic** ⇒ Some object to this word—arguing that it literally means “man-fearing,” but the “homo” in “homosexual” and in this word does not refer to the Latin word for “man,” but is derived from a Greek root meaning “same”

while the “-phobic” means literally “having a fear of,” but in English has come to mean “hating.” “Homophobic” is now an established term for “prejudiced against homosexuals.”

👉 **Hone in** ⇒ HOME IN

You home in on a target (the center of the target is “home”). “Honing” has to do with sharpening knives, not aim.

👉 **Hors d'oeuvres** ⇒ If you knew only a little French, you might interpret this phrase as meaning “out of work,” but in fact it means little snack foods served before or outside of (hors) the main dishes of a meal (the oeuvres). English speakers have trouble mastering the sounds in this phrase, but it is normally rendered “or-DERVES,” in a rough approximation of the original. Mangled spellings like “hors’dourves” are not uncommon. Actually, many modern food writers have decided we needn’t try to wrap our tongues around this peculiar foreign phrase and now prefer “starters.” They are also commonly called “appetizers.”

👉 **How to** ⇒ HOW CAN I

You can ask someone how to publish a novel, but when you do, don’t write “How to publish a novel?” Instead ask “How can I publish a novel?” Or “How does someone publish a novel?” If you’re in luck, the person you’ve asked will tell you how to do it. “How to” belongs in statements, not questions.

👉 **Humanism / humanist** ⇒ People today often use “humanist” to refer to non-religious attitudes or even to atheism, but scholars know that the term originated to describe Renaissance writers who were often Catholic, rarely atheists, and that there is such a thing as humanistic religion. Careful writers avoid using this term loosely, remembering that in historical contexts it does not usually refer to a lack of religion. Renaissance humanists emphasized human abilities and achievements, but they often praised God for them.

👉 **Humanity** ⇒ When radio reporter Herb Morrison saw the airship Hindenberg burst into flames in 1937, he blurted “Oh, the humanity!” Meaning something like “what terrible human suffering!” Writers who use this phrase today—usually jokingly—are referring back to this famous incident. Just be aware of this context if you’re tempted to use the word “humanity” in this way yourself.

👉 **Humus / hummus** ⇒ The rotted plant matter you spread on your garden to enrich it is humus.

The chickpea spread you dip your pita into is hummus (or hoummos). Turks call it humus, but that spelling of the word is better avoided in English: your guests might suspect you are serving them dirt.

👉 **Hundreds / century** ⇒ “Eighteen hundreds,” “sixteen hundreds” and so forth are not exactly errors; the problem is that they are used almost exclusively by people who are nervous about saying “nineteenth century” when, after all, the years in that century begin with the number eighteen. This should be simple: few people are unclear about the fact that this is the twenty-first century even though our dates begin with twenty. For most dates you can just add one to the third digit from the right in a year and you’ve got the number of its century. It took a hundred years to get to the year 100, so the next hundred years, which are named “101,” “102,” etc. Were in the second century.

This also works BC. The four hundreds BC are the fifth century BC. Using phrases like “eighteen hundreds” is a signal to your readers that you are weak in math and history alike.

👉 **Hyperdermic** ⇒ HYPODERMIC

Do you get a little hyper when you have to go to the doctor for a shot? The injection is made with a hypodermic needle. The prefix hypo- means “under,” and the needle slides under your skin (your epidermis).

🌟 **Hyphenation** ⇒ The Chicago Manual of Style contains a huge chart listing various sorts of phrases that are or are not to be hyphenated. Consult such a reference source for a thorough-going account of this matter, but you may be able to get by with a few basic rules. An adverb/adjective combination in which the adverb ends in “-LY” is never hyphenated: “His necktie reflected his generally grotesque taste.” Other sorts of adverbs are followed by a hyphen when combined with an adjective: “His long-suffering wife finally snapped and fed it through the office shredder.” The point here is that “long” modifies “suffering,” not “wife.” When both words modify the same noun, they are not hyphenated. A “light-green suitcase” is pale in color, but a “light green suitcase” is not heavy. In the latter example “light” and “green” both modify “suitcase,” so no hyphen is used.

Adjectives combined with nouns having an “-ED” suffix are hyphenated: “Frank was a hot-headed cop.”

Hyphenate ages when they are adjective phrases involving a unit of measurement: “Her ten-year-old car is beginning to give her trouble.” A girl can be a “ten-year-old” (“child” is implied). But there are no hyphens in such an adjectival phrase as “Her car is ten years old.” In fact, hyphens are generally omitted when such phrases follow the noun they modify except in phrases involving “all” or “self” such as “all-knowing” or “self-confident.” Fractions are almost always hyphenated when they are adjectives: “He is one-quarter Irish and three-quarters Nigerian.” But when the numerator is already hyphenated, the fraction itself is not, as in “ninety-nine and forty-four one hundredths.” Fractions treated as nouns are not hyphenated: “He ate one quarter of the turkey.”

A phrase composed of a noun and a present participle (“-ing” word) must be hyphenated: “The antenna had been climbed by thrill-seeking teenagers who didn’t realize the top of it was electrified.”

These are the main cases in which people are prone to misuse hyphens. If you can master them, you will have eliminated the vast majority of such mistakes in your writing. Some styles call for space around dashes (a practice of which I strongly disapprove), but it is never proper to surround hyphens with spaces, though in the following sort of pattern you may need to follow a hyphen with a space: “Stacy’s pre- and post-haircut moods.”

🌟 **Hyphens & dashes** ⇒ Dashes are longer than hyphens, but since older browsers do not reliably interpret the code for dashes, they are usually rendered on the Web as they were on old-fashioned typewriters, as double hyphens--like that. Dashes tend to separate elements and hyphens to link them. Few people would substitute a dash for a hyphen in an expression like “a quick-witted scoundrel,” but the opposite is common. In a sentence like “Astrid—unlike Inger—enjoyed vacations in Spain rather than England,” one often sees hyphens incorrectly substituted for dashes.

When you are typing for photocopying or direct printing, it is a good idea to learn how to type a true dash instead of the double hyphen (computers differ). In old-fashioned styles, dashes (but never hyphens) are surrounded by spaces — like this. With modern computer output which emulates professional printing, this makes little sense. Skip the spaces unless your editor or teacher insists on them.

There are actually two kinds of dashes. The most common is the “em dash” (theoretically the width of a letter “M”—but this is often not the case). To connect numbers, it is traditional to use an “en dash” which is somewhat shorter, but not as short as a hyphen: “cocktails 5–7 pm.” All modern computers can produce en dashes, but few people know how to type them. For most purposes you don’t have to worry about them, but if you are preparing material for print, you should learn how to use them.

In HTML, the code for an em-dash is **&mdash;** and **&ndash;** is the code for an en-dash.

👉 **Hypocritical** ⇨ “Hypocritical” has a narrow, very specific meaning. It describes behavior or speech that is intended to make one look better or more pious than one really is. It is often wrongly used to label people who are merely narrow-minded or genuinely pious. Do not confuse this word with “hypercritical,” which describes people who are picky.

👉 **Hysterical / hilarious** ⇨ People say of a bit of humor or a comical situation that it was “hysterical”—shorthand for “hysterically funny”—meaning “hilarious.” But when you speak of a man being “hysterical” it means he is having a fit of hysteria, and that may not be funny at all.

👉 **I me myself** ⇨ In the old days when people studied traditional grammar, we could simply say, “The first person singular pronoun is ‘I’ when it’s a subject and ‘me’ when it’s an object,” but now few people know what that means. Let’s see if we can apply some common sense here. The misuse of “I” and “myself” for “me” is caused by nervousness about “me.” Educated people know that “Jim and me are goin’ down to slop the hogs,” is not elegant speech, not “correct.” It should be “Jim and I” because if I were slopping the hogs alone I would never say “Me is going. . . .” If you refer to yourself first, the same rule applies: It’s not “Me and Jim are going” but “I and Jim are going.”

So far so good. But the notion that there is something wrong with “me” leads people to overcorrect and avoid it where it is perfectly appropriate. People will say “The document had to be signed by both Susan and I” when the correct statement would be, “The document had to be signed by both Susan and me.”

All this confusion can easily be avoided if you just remove the second party from the sentences where you feel tempted to use “myself” as an object or feel nervous about “me.” You wouldn’t say, “The IRS sent the refund check to I,” so you shouldn’t say “The IRS sent the refund check to my wife and I” either.

Trying even harder to avoid the lowly “me,” many people will substitute “myself,” as in “the suspect uttered epithets at Officer O’Leary and myself.” Conservatives often object to this sort of use of “myself” when “me” or “I” would do. It’s usually appropriate to use “myself” when you have used “I” earlier in the same sentence: “I am not particularly fond of goat cheese myself.” “I kept half the loot for myself.” “Myself” is also fine in expressions like “young people like myself” or “a picture of my boyfriend and myself.” In informal English, beginning a sentence with “myself” to express an opinion is widely accepted: “Myself, I can’t stand dried parmesan cheese.” In all of these instances you are emphasizing your own role in the sentence, and “myself” helps do that.

On a related point, those who continue to announce “It is I” have traditional grammatical correctness on their side, but they are vastly outnumbered by those who proudly boast “it’s me!” There’s not much that can be done about this now. Similarly, if a caller asks for Susan and Susan answers “This is she,” her somewhat antiquated correctness may startle the questioner into confusion.

👉 **Ice tea** ⇨ ICED TEA

Iced tea is not literally made of ice, it simply is “iced”: has ice put into it.

👉 **Idea / ideal** ⇒ Any thought can be an idea, but only the best ideas worth pursuing are ideals.

👉 **Idle / idol** ⇒ Something or someone inactive is idle. The word can also mean “lazy” (“the idle rich”). Unemployed workers are said to be idle, fired ones to have been idled. A car engine can idle.

Someone you admire or something you worship is an idol. But no matter how much you admire the former Monty Python actor, Eric Idle’s name should not be misspelled “Eric Idol.”

👉 **If / whether** ⇒ “If” is used frequently in casual speech and writing where some others would prefer “whether”: “I wonder if you would be willing to dress up as a giant turnip for the parade?” Revise to “I wonder whether. . . .” “If” can’t really be called an error, but when you are discussing two alternative possibilities, “whether” sounds more polished. (The two possibilities in this example are: 1) you would be willing or 2) you wouldn’t. In sentences using “whether” “or not” is often understood.) Don’t substitute the very different word “whither,” which means “where.”

👉 **If I was / if I were** ⇒ The subjunctive mood, always weak in English, has been dwindling away for centuries until it has almost vanished. According to traditional thought, statements about the conditional future such as “If I were a carpenter. . . .” Require the subjunctive “were,” but “was” is certainly much more common. Still, if you want to impress those in the know with your usage, use “were” when writing of something hypothetical, unlikely, or contrary to fact. The same goes for other pronouns: “you,” “she,” “he,” and “it.” In the case of the plural pronouns “we” and “they” the form “was” is definitely nonstandard, of course, because it is a singular form.

👉 **If not** ⇒ “He was smart if not exactly brilliant.” In this sort of expression, “if not” links a weaker with a stronger word with a related meaning. Other examples: “unattractive if not downright ugly,” “reasonably priced if not exactly cheap,” “interested if not actually excited.”

But this sort of “if not” is often misused to link words that don’t form a weaker/stronger pair: “obscure if not boring,” “happy if not entertained,” “anxious if not afraid.” The linked terms in these examples do have some logical relationship, but they do not form a weaker/stronger pair.

👉 **Ignorant** ⇒ STUPID

A person can be ignorant (not knowing some fact or idea) without being stupid (incapable of learning because of a basic mental deficiency). And those who say, “That’s an ignorant idea” when they mean “stupid idea” are expressing their own ignorance.

👉 **Illinois** ⇒ It annoys people from this state when people pronounce the final syllable in “Illinois” to rhyme with “noise.” The final S in “Illinois” is silent.

👉 **Immaculate conception / virgin birth** ⇒ The doctrine of “immaculate conception” (the belief that Mary was conceived without inheriting original sin) is often confused with the doctrine of the “virgin birth” (the belief that Mary gave birth to Jesus while remaining a virgin).

👉 **Impact** ⇒ One (very large) group of people thinks that using “impact” as a verb is just nifty: “The announcement of yet another bug in the software will strongly impact the price of the company’s stock.” Another (very passionate) group of people thinks that “impact” should be used only as a noun and considers the first group to be barbarians. Although the first group may well be winning the usage struggle, you risk offending more people by using “impact”

as a verb than you will by substituting more traditional words like “affect” or “influence.”

👉 **Impactful** ⇒ INFLUENTIAL

Many people in business and education like to speak of things that have an impact as being “impactful,” but this term does not appear in most dictionaries and is not well thought of by traditionalists. Use “influential” or “effective” instead.

👉 **Impassible / impassable** ⇒ “Impassible” is an unusual word meaning “incapable of suffering” or “unfeeling.” The normal word for the latter meaning is “impassive.” But “impassible” is most often a spelling error for “impassable” referring to mountain ranges, blocked roads, etc.

👉 **Impeach** ⇒ To impeach a public official is to bring formal charges against him or her. It is not, as many people suppose, to remove the charged official from office. Impeachment must be followed by a formal trial and conviction to achieve that result.

A source you would never think of accusing of any wrongdoing is “unimpeachable.”

👉 **Impertinent / irrelevant** ⇒ “Impertinent” looks as if it ought to mean the opposite of “pertinent,” and indeed it once did; but for centuries now its meaning in ordinary speech has been narrowed to “impudent,” specifically in regard to actions or speech toward someone regarded as socially superior. Only snobs and very old-fashioned people use “impertinent” correctly; most people would be well advised to forget it and use “irrelevant” instead to mean the opposite of “pertinent.”

👉 **Imply / infer** ⇒ These two words, which originally had quite distinct meanings, have become so blended together that most people no longer distinguish between them. If you want to avoid irritating the rest of us, use “imply” when something is being suggested without being explicitly stated and “infer” when someone is trying to arrive at a conclusion based on evidence. “Imply” is more assertive, active: I imply that you need to revise your paper; and, based on my hints, you infer that I didn’t think highly of your first draft.

👉 **In mass** ⇒ EN MASSE

We borrowed the phrase *en masse* from the French: “The mob marched *en masse* to the Bastille.” It does indeed mean “in a mass,” and you can use that English expression if you prefer, but “in mass” is an error.

👉 **In memorial** ⇒ IMMEMORIAL

The word “immemorial” means “longer than anyone can remember.” It occurs in modern English almost exclusively in the phrase “from time immemorial.” People often hear the phrase as “in memorial,” and that’s how they misspell it.

👉 **In regards to** ⇒ WITH REGARD TO

Business English is deadly enough without scrambling it. “As regards your downsizing plan . . .” Is acceptable, if stiff. “In regard to” and “with regard to” are also correct. But “in regards to” is nonstandard. You can also convey the same idea with “in respect to” or “with respect to,” or—simplest of all—just plain “regarding.”

👉 **In route** ⇒ EN ROUTE

*En route* is a French phrase meaning “on the way,” as in “*En route* to the gallows, Lucky was struck by lightning.” Don’t anglicize this expression as “in route.”

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👉 **In shambles** ⇒ A SHAMBLES

Your clothes are in tatters, your plans are in ruins, but you can console yourself that your room cannot be “in shambles.”

The expression meaning “like a wreck” is “a shambles”: “Your room is a shambles! It looks like a cyclone hit it.”

A shambles used to be the counter in a meat stall and later, a bloody butchery floor. Settings like the throne room at the end of Hamlet or a disastrous battlefield strewn with body parts can be called “a shambles” in the traditional sense. Now the phrase usually means just “a mess.”

👉 **In spite of / despite** ⇒ Although “in spite of” is perfectly standard English, some people prefer “despite” because it is shorter. Be careful not to mix the two together by saying “despite of” except as part of the phrase “in despite of” meaning “in defiance of.”

And note that unlike “despite,” “in spite” should always be spelled as two separate words.

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👉 **In store** ⇒ Some people say things like “he is in store for a surprise on his birthday” when they mean he is in line for a surprise. The metaphor is not based on the image of going shopping in a store but of encountering something awaiting you—stored up for you—so the correct form would be “a surprise is in store for him on his birthday.”

👉 **In tact** ⇒ INTACT

Often common two-word phrases are smooshed into a single word (“anymore,” “alot,” “everytime,” “incase,” “infact”). Here’s an example where some people err in the other direction. When something survives undamaged, whole, it is not “in tact” but “intact”—one word, unbroken.

👉 **In terms of** ⇒ Originally this expression was used to explain precise quantifiable relationships: “We prefer to measure our football team’s success in terms of the number of fans attending rather than the number of games won.” But it has for a long time now been greatly overused in all kinds of vague ways, often clumsily.

Here are some awkward uses followed by recommended alternatives:

“We have to plan soon what to do in terms of Thanksgiving.” (for)

“What are we going to do in terms of paying these bills?” (about)

“A little chili powder goes a long way in terms of spicing up any dish.” (toward).

“What do you like in terms of movies?” (What kind of movies do you like?)

👉 **In the fact that** ⇒ BY THE FACT THAT

Many people mistakenly write “in the fact that” when they mean simply “in that” in sentences like “It seemed wiser not to go to work in the fact that the boss had discovered the company picnic money was missing.” Omit “the fact.” While we’re at it, “infact” is not a word; “in fact” is always a two-word phrase.

👉 **In the mist** ⇒ IN THE MIDST

When you are surrounded by something, you’re in the midst of it—its middle. If you’re in a mist, you’re just in a fog.

### 👉 **Incase** ⇒ IN CASE

Just in case you haven't figured this out already: the expression "in case" is two words, not one. There is a brand of equipment covers sold under the incase brand, but that's a very different matter, to be used only when you need something in which to encase your ipad.

### 👉 **Incent, incentivize** ⇒ ENCOURAGE

Business folks sometimes use "incent" to mean "create an incentive," but it's not standard English. "Incentivize" is even more widely used but strikes many people as ugly.

👉 **Incidences / incidents / instances** ⇒ These three overlap in meaning just enough to confuse a lot of people. Few of us have a need for "incidence," which most often refers to degree or extent of the occurrence of something: "The incidence of measles in Whitman County has dropped markedly since the vaccine has been provided free." "Incidents," which is pronounced identically, is merely the plural of "incident," meaning "occurrences": "Police reported damage to three different outhouses in separate incidents last Halloween". Instances (not "incidences") are examples: "Semicolons are not required in the first three instances given in your query." Incidents can be used as instances only if someone is using them as examples.

👉 **Incidentally** ⇒ "Incidentally" is an unusual spelling of "incidentally" and is liable to be considered a spelling error by many people and all spelling checkers.

👉 **Includes** ⇒ When listing members of a group, use "includes" only if your list is incomplete. A baseball team includes a pitcher, a right fielder, and a catcher. If you are going to list every single member of a group, you can say it consists of, is composed of, or is made up of them—but not that it includes them.

👉 **Incredible** ⇒ The other day I heard a film reviewer praise a director because he created "incredible characters," which would literally mean unbelievable characters. What the reviewer meant to say, of course, was precisely the opposite: characters so lifelike as to seem like real people. Intensifiers and superlatives tend to get worn down quickly through overuse and become almost meaningless, but it is wise to be aware of their root meanings so that you don't unintentionally utter absurdities. "Fantastic" means "as in a fantasy" just as "fabulous" means "as in a fable." A "wonderful" sight should make you pause in wonder. Some of these words are worn down beyond redemption, however. For instance, who now expects a "terrific" sight to terrify? And the most overused of all these words—"awesome"—now rarely conveys a sense of awe.

👉 **Incredulous / incredible** ⇒ "When Jessica said that my performance at the karaoke bar had been incredible, I was incredulous." I hope Jessica was using "incredible" in the casual sense of "unbelievably good" but I knew I used "incredulous" to mean "unbelieving, skeptical," which is the only standard usage for this word.

### 👉 **Indepth** ⇒ IN DEPTH

You can make an "in-depth" study of a subject by studying it "in depth," but never "indepth." Like "a lot" this expression consists of two words often mistaken for one. The first, adjectival, use of the phrase given above is commonly hyphenated, which may lead some people to splice the words even more closely together. "IndePTH" is usually used as an adverb by people of limited vocabulary who would be better off saying "profoundly" or "thoroughly." Some of them go so far as to say that they have studied a subject "indepthly." Avoid this one if you don't want to be snickered at.

👉 **Indian / Native American** ⇒ Although academics have long promoted “Native American” as a more accurate label than “Indian,” most of the people so labeled continue to refer to themselves as “Indians” and prefer that term. In Canada, there is a move to refer to descendants of the original inhabitants as “First Nations” or “First Peoples,” but so far that has not spread to the US

👉 **Indite / indict** ⇒ INDICT

“Indite” is a rare word meaning “to write down.”

Authorities indict a person charged with a crime. This act is called an “indictment.” The C is not pronounced in these words, so that “indict” sounds exactly like “indite,” but don’t let that cause you to misspell them.

👉 **Individual** ⇒ PERSON

Law-enforcement officers often use “individual” as a simple synonym for “person” when they don’t particularly mean to stress individuality: “I pursued the individual who had fired the weapon at me for three blocks.” This sort of use of “individual” lends an oddly formal air to your writing. When “person” works as well, use it.

👉 **Infact** ⇒ IN FACT

“In fact” is always two words.

👉 **Infamous / notorious** ⇒ “Infamous” means famous in a bad way. It is related to the word “infamy.” Humorists have for a couple of centuries jokingly used the word in a positive sense, but the effectiveness of the joke depends on the listener knowing that this is a misuse of the term. Because this is a very old joke indeed you should stick to using “infamous” only of people like Hitler and Billy the Kid. “Notorious” means the same thing as “infamous” and should also only be used in a negative sense.

👉 **Infinite** ⇒ When Shakespeare’s Enobarbus said of Cleopatra that “age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety,” he was obviously exaggerating. So few are the literal uses of “infinite” that almost every use of it is metaphorical. There is not an infinite number of possible positions on a chessboard, nor number of stars in the known universe. Things can be innumerable (in one sense of the word) without being infinite; in other words, things which are beyond the human capacity to count can still be limited in number. “Infinite” has its uses as a loose synonym for “a very great many,” but it is all too often lazily used when one doesn’t want to do the work to discover the order of magnitude involved. When you are making quasi-scientific statements you do a disservice to your reader by implying infinity when mere billions are involved.

👉 **Inflammable** ⇒ “Inflammable” means the same thing as “flammable”: burnable, capable of being ignited or inflamed. So many people mistake the “in-” prefix as a negative, however, that it has been largely abandoned as a warning label.

👉 **Influential** ⇒ INFLUENTIAL

If you have influence, you are “influential,” not “influencial.”

👉 **Ink pen** ⇒ If there were any danger of confusing pens for writing with other kinds of pens (light-, sea-, pig-) the phrase “ink pen” might be useful, but it seems to be mainly a way of saying “not a pencil.” Plain old “pen” will do fine.

👉 **Input** ⇒ Some people object to “input” as computer jargon that’s proliferated unjustifiably in the business world. Be aware that it’s not welcome in all settings, but whatever you do, don’t misspell it “imput.”

👉 **Insight / incite** ⇒ An insight is something you have: an understanding of something, a bright idea about something.

To incite is to do something: to stimulate some action or other to be taken. You can never have an incite.

👉 **Install / instill** ⇒ People conjure up visions of themselves as upgradable robots when they write things like “My Aunt Tillie tried to install the spirit of giving in my heart.” The word they are searching for is “instill.” You install equipment, you instill feelings or attitudes.

👉 **Instances / instants** ⇒ Brief moments are “instants,” and examples of anything are “instances.”

👉 **Insundry** ⇒ AND SUNDRY

“Sundry” means “various” in modern English, so strictly speaking expressions like “various and sundry” and “all and sundry” are redundant; but many redundant expressions are standard in English, as are these. “Sundry” used to mean “different from each,” which explains why the expressions weren’t redundant when they first evolved. They were a little like “each and every”: each single individual and all of them collectively.

The fact that “and sundry” now doesn’t really add anything except a rhetorical flourish to the expression may help to explain why some folks mishear this phrase as “insundry.”

👉 **Intend on** ⇒ INTEND TO

You can plan on doing something, but you intend to do it. Many people confuse these two expressions with each other and mistakenly say “intend on.” Of course if you are really determined, you can be intent on doing something.

👉 **Intense / intensive** ⇒ If you are putting forth an intense effort, your work is “intense”: “My intense study of Plato convinced me that I would make a good leader.” But when the intensity stems not so much from your effort as it does from outside forces, the usual word is “intensive”: “the village endured intensive bombing.”

👉 **Intensifiers** ⇒ People are always looking for ways to emphasize how really, really special the subject under discussion is. (The use of “really” is one of the weakest and least effective of these.) A host of words have been worn down in this service to near-meaninglessness. It is good to remember the etymological roots of such words to avoid such absurdities as “fantastically realistic,” “absolutely relative,” and “incredibly convincing.” When you are tempted to use one of these vague intensifiers consider rewriting your prose to explain more precisely and vividly what you mean: “Fred’s cooking was incredibly bad” could be changed to “When I tasted Fred’s cooking I almost thought I was back in the middle-school cafeteria.”

See also “Incredible”

👉 **Intercession** ⇒ In theology, “intercession” is a prayer on behalf of someone else, but an alarming number of colleges use the word to label the period between regular academic sessions. Such a period is properly an intersession.

👉 **Interesting** ⇒ The second syllable is normally silent in “interesting.” It’s nonstandard to go out of your way to pronounce the “ter,” and definitely substandard to say “innaresting.”

👉 **Interface** ⇒ INTERACT

The use of the computer term “interface” as a verb, substituting for “interact,” is widely objected to.

👉 **Intergrate** ⇒ INTEGRATE

There are lots of words that begin with “inter-” but this is not one of them. The word is “integrate” with just one R.

🌀 **Interment / internment** ⇒ Interment is burial; internment is merely imprisonment.

🌀 **Intermural / intramural / extramural** ⇒ “Intramural” means literally “within the walls” and refers to activities that take place entirely within an institution. When at Macbeth State University the Glamis Hall soccer team plays against the one from Dunsinane Hall, that’s an intramural game. But when MSU’s Fighting Scots travel to go up against Cawdor U. In the Porter’s Bowl, the game is “extramural” (“outside the walls”)—though the perfectly correct “intercollegiate” is more often used instead. “Intermural,” a rare word that means “between the walls,” is constantly both said and written when “intramural” is meant.

🌀 **Internet / intranet** ⇒ “Internet” is the proper name of the network most people connect to, and the word needs to be capitalized. However “intranet,” a network confined to a smaller group, is a generic term which does not deserve capitalization. In advertising, we often read things like “unlimited Internet, \$35.” It would be more accurate to refer in this sort of context to “Internet access.”

🌀 **Interpretate** ⇒ INTERPRET

“Interpretate” is mistakenly formed from “interpretation,” but the verb form is simply “interpret.” See also “orientate.”

🌀 **Into / in to** ⇒ “Into” is a preposition which often answers the question, “where?” For example, “Tom and Becky had gone far into the cave before they realized they were lost.” Sometimes the “where” is metaphorical, as in, “He went into the army” or “She went into business.” It can also refer by analogy to time: “The snow lingered on the ground well into April.” In old-fashioned math talk, it could be used to refer to division: “Two into six is three.” In other instances where the words “in” and “to” just happen to find themselves neighbors, they must remain separate words. For instance, “Rachel dived back in to rescue the struggling boy.” Here “to” belongs with “rescue” and means “in order to,” not “where.” (If the phrase had been “dived back into the water,” “into” would be required.) Try speaking the sentence concerned aloud, pausing distinctly between “in” and “to.” If the result sounds wrong, you probably need “into.”

Then there is the 60s colloquialism which lingers on in which “into” means “deeply interested or involved in”: “Kevin is into baseball cards.” This is derived from usages like “the committee is looking into the fund-raising scandal.” The abbreviated form is not acceptable formal English, but is quite common in informal communications. See also turn into.

🌀 **Intricate / integral** ⇒ INTEGRAL

An integral part of a machine, organization, or idea is a necessary, inseparable part of it. Many people mistakenly substitute “intricate” for “integral” in the phrase “an integral part.”

A very simple bit of metal can be an integral part of an intricate machine.

🌀 **Intrigue** ⇒ Something fascinating or alluring can be called “intriguing,” but “intrigue” as a noun means something rather different: scheming and plotting. Don’t say people or situations are full of intrigue when you mean they are intriguing. The name of the Oldsmobile car model called the Intrigue is probably based on this common confusion.

🌀 **Invested interest** ⇒ VESTED INTEREST

If you have a personal stake in something which causes you to be biased toward it, you have a vested interest in it. People discussing financial investment

sometimes pun on this phrase by writing “invested interest,” but most of the time when you see the latter spelling, it’s just a mistake.

👉 **Invite / invitation** ⇒ “Invite” (accent on the second syllable) is perfectly standard as a verb: “Invite me to the birthday party and i’ll jump out of the cake.” But “invite” (accent on the first syllable) as a noun meaning “invitation” is less acceptable: “I got an invite to my ex-wife’s wedding.” Though this form has become extremely popular, even in fairly formal contexts, it is safer to use the traditional “invitation.”

👉 **Iraq** ⇒ Want to sound like a good old boy who doesn’t give a hoot what foreigners think? Say “EYE-rack.” But if you want to sound knowledgeable, say “ear-ROCK.” Politicians who know better sometimes adopt the popular mispronunciation in order to sound more folksy and down to earth.

Similarly in standard English, Iran is not pronounced “eye-RAN” but “ear-RON.” On a related matter, the first syllable of “Italian” is pronounced just like the first syllable in “Italy,” with an “it” sound. “Eye-talian” sounds distinctly uneducated.

👉 **Ironically** ⇒ An event that is strikingly different from or the opposite of what one would have expected, usually producing a sense of incongruity, is ironic: “The sheriff proclaimed a zero-tolerance policy on drugs, but ironically flunked his own test.” Other striking comings-together of events lacking these qualities are merely coincidental: “the lovers leapt off the tower just as a hay wagon coincidentally happened to be passing below.”

👉 **Irregardless** ⇒ REGARDLESS

Regardless of what you have heard, “irregardless” is a redundancy. The suffix “-less” on the end of the word already makes the word negative. It doesn’t need the negative prefix “ir-” added to make it even more negative.

👉 **Is, is** ⇒ In speech, people often lose track in the middle of a sentence and repeat “is” instead of saying “that”: “The problem with the conflict in the Balkans is, is the ethnic tensions seem exacerbated by everything we do.” This is just a nervous tic, worth being alert against when you’re speaking publicly.

However, when you begin a sentence with the phrase “What it is,” it’s normal, though awkward, to follow the phrase with another “is”: “What it is, is a disaster.” This colloquialism is probably derived from expressions like this: “i’ll tell you what it is; it is a disaster.” In this case, each “is” has its own proper “it,” whereas the condensed version sounds like a verbal stumble. If you would rather avoid this sort of “is, is” you can avoid using “what it is” and say something simple like “It’s a disaster,” or “The point is that it’s a disaster.”

Of course, I suppose it all depends on what you think the meaning of “is” is.

👉 **Islams** ⇒ MUSLIMS

Followers of Islam are called “Muslims,” not “Islams.” Muslim is now widely preferred over the older and less phonetically accurate Moslem.

The S in “Islam” and “Muslim” is unvoiced like the S in “saint.” It should not be pronounced with a Z sound.

👉 **Isn’t it, innit** ⇒ In South Asia you often hear people end sentences with “isn’t it?” In contexts where traditional English would require “doesn’t it,” “won’t it,” “aren’t you,” and related expressions. In Britain and among American Indians, among others, this “invariant isn’t” is reduced to “innit,” and may be used even more broadly as a general emphatic exclamation at the end of almost any statement.

This interesting pattern is liable to puzzle, amuse, or annoy those who aren’t used to it, isn’t it?

👉 **Israelite / Israeli** ⇒ In modern English the term “Israelite” is usually confined to the people of ancient Israel, either of the kingdom of that name or—more broadly—any Jew of the Biblical era. Only modern citizens of the state of Israel are called “Israelis.” Although the term most often refers to Jewish citizens of that state, it can also refer to Arab, Muslim, or Christian citizens of Israel.

👉 **Isreal** ⇒ ISRAEL

To remember how to spell “Israel” properly, try pronouncing it the way Israelis do when they’re speaking English: “ISS-rah-el.”

👉 **Issues** ⇒ PROBLEMS

An “issue” used to be a matter for consideration or discussion. For instance, a group might discuss the issue of how best to raise funds for its scholarship program. But people could also disagree with each other by saying “I take issue [disagree] with you on that point.”

But then mental health professionals began to talk about “child-rearing issues” and “relationship issues,” and such. In this context the meaning of “issues” began to blur into that of “problems” and cross-pollinate with “take issue,” leading ordinary folks to begin saying things like “I have tendonitis issues.” Or “I have issues with telemarketing.” This very popular sort of expression is viewed with contempt or amusement by many traditionalists, who are truly appalled when it’s extended to the inanimate world: “these laptops have issues with some wireless cards.”

👉 **It’s / its** ⇒ The exception to the general rule that one should use an apostrophe to indicate possession is in possessive pronouns. Some of them are not a problem. “Mine” has no misleading “s” at the end to invite an apostrophe. And few people are tempted to write “hi’s,” though the equally erroneous “her’s” is fairly common, as are “our’s” and “their’s”—all wrong, wrong, wrong. The problem with avoiding “it’s” as a possessive is that this spelling is perfectly correct as a contraction meaning “it is.” Just remember one point and you’ll never make this mistake again: “it’s” always means “it is” or “it has” and nothing else.

There is one personal pronoun—uncommon in American English—which takes an apostrophe in its possessive form: “one,” as in the title of Virginia Woolf’s famous book, *A Room of One’s Own*.

See also apostrophes.

👉 **Itch / scratch** ⇒ Strictly speaking, you scratch an itch. If you’re trying to get rid of a tingly feeling on your back scratch it, don’t itch it.

👉 **Jack / plug** ⇒ In electronics, a jack is a female part into which one inserts a plug, the male part. People get confused because “Jack” is a male name. The cyberpunk term (from William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*) “jack in” should logically be “plug in,” but we’re stuck with this form in the science fiction realm.

👉 **Jam / jamb** ⇒ The only common use for the word “jamb” is to label the vertical part of the frame of a door or window. It comes from the French word for “leg”; think of the two side pieces of the frame as legs on either side of the opening.

For all other uses, it’s “jam”: stuck in a jam, traffic jam, logjam, jam session, etc.

👉 **Jerry-built / jury-rigged** ⇒ Although their etymologies are obscure and their meanings overlap, these are two distinct expressions. Something poorly built is “jerry-built.” Something rigged up temporarily in a makeshift manner with materials at hand, often in an ingenious manner, is “jury-rigged.” “Jerry-built” always has a negative connotation, whereas one can be impressed by the

cleverness of a jury-rigged solution. Many people cross-pollinate these two expressions and mistakenly say “jerry-rigged” or “jury-built.”

🕒 **Jew / Hebrew** ⇒ These terms overlap but are often distinguished in usage. In the older portions of the Bible the descendants of Abraham and Sarah are referred to as “Hebrews.” Since the 6th century BCE Babylonian captivity and the return from exile, they have been known as “Jews,” a name derived from the dominant remaining tribe of Judah. Modern Jews are seldom referred to as “Hebrews” but the language spoken in the state of Israel today, based on ancient Hebrew, is “Modern Hebrew.” Although “Hebrew” has sometimes been used in a condescending or insulting manner to refer to modern Jews, it is not in itself an insulting term. However, it is normal when you have a choice to use “Jew” to refer both to people of the Jewish faith and to ethnic Jews, religious or not. “Hewbrew” is a common misspelling of “Hebrew.” If you’re in the habit of ignoring names when they are flagged by your spelling checker, don’t ignore this one.

🕒 **Jew / Jewish** ⇒ “Jew” as an adjective (“Jew lawyer”) is an ethnic insult; the word is “Jewish.” But people who object to “Jew” as a noun are being oversensitive. Most Jews are proud to be called Jews. The expression “to Jew someone down”—an expression meaning “to bargain for a lower price”—reflects a grossly insulting stereotype and should be avoided in all contexts.

🕒 **Jewelry** ⇒ Often mispronounced “joolereee.” To remember the standard pronunciation, just say “jewel” and add “-ree” on the end. The British spelling is much fancier: “jewellery.”

🕒 **Job titles** ⇒ The general rule is to capitalize a title like “President” only when it is prefixed to a particular president’s name: “It is notable that President Grover Cleveland was the first Democratic president elected after the Civil War.” Similar patterns apply for titles like “principal,” “senator,” “supervisor,” etc.

But often the American president’s title is used as a sort of substitute for his name, and routinely capitalized despite the objections of some style manuals: “The President pardoned the White House Thanksgiving turkey yesterday.” And the British would never write anything other than “The Queen ate strawberries in the Royal Enclosure.” The Pope is also usually referred to with a capital P when the specific individual is meant: “The Pope announced that he will visit Andorra next month.” Following these common patterns is not likely to get you in trouble unless your editor has adopted a contrary rule.

If no specific individual is meant, then definitely use lower case: “We need to elect a homecoming queen”; “The next president will inherit a terrible budget deficit.”

🕒 **John Henry** ⇒ JOHN HANCOCK

John Hancock signed the Declaration of Independence so flamboyantly that his name became a synonym for “signature.” Don’t mix him up with John Henry, who was a steel-drivin’ man.

🕒 **John Hopkins** ⇒ JOHNS HOPKINS

The famous university and hospital named Johns Hopkins derive their peculiar name from their founder. “Johns” was his great-grandmother’s maiden name. It is an error to call these institutions “John Hopkins.”

🕒 **Joint possessives** ⇒ When writing about jointly owned objects, people often fret about where to place apostrophes. The standard pattern is to treat the two partners as a single unit—a couple—and put an apostrophe only after the last name: “John and Jane’s villa,” “Ben & Jerry’s ice cream.” Add more owners and

you still use only one apostrophe: “Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice’s party.” If each person owns his or her own item, then each owner gets an apostrophe: “John’s and Jane’s cars” (each of them separately owns a car).

But when you begin to introduce pronouns the situation becomes much murkier. “Jane and his villa” doesn’t sound right because it sounds like Jane and the villa make a pair. The most common solution—“Jane’s and his villa”—violates the rule about using the possessive form only on the last partner in the ownership. However, most people don’t care and using this form won’t raise too many eyebrows.

How about when you have two pronouns? “She and his villa” definitely won’t work. “Her and his villa” might get by, but if you say “his and her villa” you inevitably remind people of the common phrase “his and hers” with a very different meaning: male and female, as in a sale on “his and hers scarves.”

If you have time to think ahead, especially when writing, the best solution is to avoid this sort of construction altogether by rewording: “Jane and John have a villa outside Florence. Their villa is beautiful.” “The villa owned by Jane and him is beautiful.” “The villa is Jane’s and his.” “The villa that he and she own is beautiful.”

Things get tricky when using personal pronouns instead of names. Note that “i’s” is not an acceptable substitute for “my.” It’s not “directions to my wife and I’s house,” but if you say “directions to my wife and my house” it sounds as if you were providing directions to your wife plus directions to your house. Stick with simpler constructions like “our house.”

Other awkward examples you might want to avoid: “your and my shares” (better: “your share and mine”), “their and our shares” (better: their share and ours”), and “his and her shares” (not too bad, but “his share and hers” is better).

### 👉 **Judgement** ⇨ JUDGMENT

In Great Britain and many of its former colonies, “judgement” is still the correct spelling, but ever since Noah Webster decreed the first E superfluous, Americans have omitted it. Many of Webster’s crotchets have faded away (each year fewer people use the spelling “theater,” for instance), but even the producers of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* chose the traditional American spelling. If you write “judgement” you should also write “colour.”

👉 **Junta** ⇨ The original and most sophisticated pronunciation of this Spanish-derived word for an unelected military government is “HOON-tah.” Those who prefer an anglicized pronunciation say “JUNN-tuh.” Those who give it a French accent by saying “ZHOON-tuh” are just plain wrong.

### 👉 **Just** ⇨ GIST

“Gist” means “essence,” “main part.” But expressions like “the gist of it” are most often used in modern speech to more vaguely refer to the general sense of a matter: “I didn’t understand everything in the chapter, but I got the gist of it.” This broadened sense will offend few people, but it’s more of a problem if you replace this unusual word with a more familiar one like “just” or “jest.”

👉 **Just assume** ⇨ JUST AS SOON People sometimes write, “I’d just assume stay home and watch TV.” The expression is “just as soon.”

👉 **Just so happens** ⇨ Traditionally the expression “just so happens” is used only with the subject “it,” with the word “so” providing emphasis: “Thank you for inviting me to your softball game, but it just so happens to be on the same date as my wedding, as you very well know since you are supposed to be my best man.” Expressions such as the following are popular but non-traditional: “I just

so happen,” “she just so happens,” “they just so happen,” etc. In each of these cases, the “so” should be omitted.

### 👉 **Jutebox** ⇒ JUKEBOX

The word “juke” originated in southern black dialect, where it came to be associated with roadside drinking establishments, especially those which provided music for dancing. They were called “juke joints.”

Coin-operated record players which replaced the live musicians were called “juke-boxes.” The word is still in widespread use—often spelled without the hyphen—though classic jukeboxes are now rare.

“Jute” is a tough fiber derived from the bark of various plants, originally exported from Bengal. It is used in the manufacture of gunny sacks, canvas, ropes, floor mats, etc. It is not suitable for the construction of boxes.

👉 **Key** ⇒ “Deceptive marketing is key to their success as a company.” “Careful folding of the egg whites is key.” This very popular sort of use of “key” as an adjective by itself to mean “crucial” sets the teeth of some of us on edge. It derives from an older usage of “key” as a metaphorical noun: “The key to true happiness is an abundant supply of chocolate.” “Key” as an adjective modifying a noun is also traditional: “Key evidence in the case was mislaid by the police.” But adjectival “key” without a noun to modify it is not so traditional. If this sort of thing bothers you (as it does me), you’ll have to grit your teeth and sigh. It’s not going away.

### 👉 **Kick-start** ⇒ JUMP-START

You revive a dead battery by jolting it to life with a jumper cable: an extraordinary measure used in an emergency. So if you hope to stimulate a foundering economy, you want to jump-start it. Kick-starting is an old-fashioned and difficult way of starting a motorcycle, so it is logically an inappropriate label for a shortcut method of getting something going. But the popularity of Kickstarter.com has probably made this a hopeless cause.

### 👉 **Killed after** ⇒ KILLED BY, KILLED IN, DIED AFTER

Reporters often claim that accident victims have been killed after a collision with car or after some other catastrophe. What they really mean is that they were killed in the accident (if death was instantaneous), or by it, or that they died after it (if they lingered); and that’s what they should say.

### 👉 **Kindergarden** ⇒ KINDERGARTEN

The original German spelling of the word “kindergarten” is standard in English.

👉 **Kindly** ⇒ Long ago you might have heard someone asking for a favor in this manner: “Would you be so kind as to fetch my shawl from the hall closet, dear? It’s a bit chilly today.”

In modern speech this formula has been abbreviated to “would you kindly, ” as in “would you kindly text me when you get there?”

In the shortened version it’s not obvious to some people who is supposed to be kind. The person speaking is asking the other person to do something kind.

When you scramble this expression by saying instead “may I kindly ask you to text me” you are calling yourself kind. It’s up to the other person to decide whether you are being kind in asking for a favor.

“I would like to kindly ask you to bring some flowers to the party” may seem polite at first glance, but the more logical version would be “Would you kindly bring flowers?”

### 👉 **Knots per hour** ⇒ KNOTS

A knot equals one nautical mile per hour, so it makes no sense to speak of “knots per hour.” Leave off “per hour” when reporting the speed of a vessel in knots.

### 👉 **Koala bear** ⇒ KOALA

A koala is not a bear. People who know their marsupials refer to them simply as “koalas.” Recent research, however, indicates that pandas are related to other bears.

👉 **L / 1** ⇒ People who learned to type in the pre-computer era sometimes type a lower-case letter “l” when they need a number “1.” Depending on the font being used, these may look interchangeable, but there are usually subtle differences between the two. For instance, the top of a letter l is usually flat, whereas the top of a number 1 often slopes down to the left. If your writing is to be reproduced electronically or in print, it’s important to hit that number key at the top left of your keyboard to produce a true number 1.

👉 **L / ll** ⇒ There are quite a few words spelled with a double L in UK English which are spelled in the US with a single L. Examples include “woollen” (US “woolen”), “counsellor” (US “counselor”), “medallist” (US “medalist”), “jeweller” (US “jeweler”), “initialled” (US “initialed”), “labelled” (US “labeled”), “signalled” (US “signaled”), “totalled” (US “totaled”).

Most of these won’t cause Americans serious problems if they use the UK spelling, and a good spelling checker set to US English will catch them. But “chilli” looks distinctly odd to Americans who are used to spelling it “chili” when it turns up in the UK-influenced English of South Asian cookbooks. (Of course Spanish speakers think it should be chile.)

👉 **Laissez-faire** ⇒ The mispronunciation “lazy-fare” is almost irresistible in English, but this is a French expression meaning “let it be” or, more precisely, “the economic doctrine of avoiding state regulation of the economy,” and it has retained its French pronunciation (though with an English R): “lessay fare.” It is most properly used as an adjective, as in “laissez-faire capitalism,” but is also commonly used as if it were a noun phrase: “the Republican party advocates laissez-faire.”

👉 **Lama / llama** ⇒ A Tibetan monk is a “lama” and the Andean animal is a “llama.” Although both are pronounced the same in English, those who speak Castillian Spanish pronounce the animal’s name “YAH-muh.”

### 👉 **Land lover** ⇒ LANDLUBBER

“Lubber” is an old term for a clumsy person, and beginning in the 18th century sailors used it to describe a person who was not a good seaman. So the pirate expression of scorn for those who don’t go to sea is not “land lover” but “landlubber.”

👉 **Languish / luxuriate** ⇒ To languish is to wilt, pine away, become feeble. It always indicates an undesirable state. If you’re looking for a nice long soak in the tub, what you want is not to languish in the bath but to luxuriate in it.

The word “languid” (drooping, listless) often occurs in contexts that might lead people to think of relaxation. Even more confusing, the related word “languorous” does describe dreamy self-indulgent relaxation. No wonder people mistakenly think they want to “languish” in the bath.

### 👉 **Large** ⇒ IMPORTANT

In colloquial speech it’s perfectly normal to refer to something as a “big problem,” but when people create analogous expressions in writing, the result is awkward. Don’t write “this is a large issue for our firm” when what you mean is “this is an important issue for our firm.” Size and intensity are not synonymous.

👉 **Last name / family name** ⇒ Now that few people know what a “surname” is, we usually use the term “last name” to designate a family name, but in a host

of languages the family name comes first. For instance, “Kawabata” was the family name of author Kawabata Yasunari. For Asians, this situation is complicated because publishers and immigrants often switch names to conform to Western practice, so you’ll find most of Kawabata’s books in an American bookstore by looking under “Yasunari Kawabata.” It’s safer with international names to write “given name” and “family name” rather than “first name” and “last name.”

Note that in a multicultural society the old-fashioned term “Christian name” (for “given name”) is both inaccurate and offensive.

👉 **Late / former** ⇒ If you want to refer to your former husband, don’t call him your “late husband” unless he’s dead.

👉 **Later / latter** ⇒ Except in the expression “latter-day” (modern), the word “latter” usually refers back to the last-mentioned of a set of alternatives. “We gave the kids a choice of a vacation in Paris, Rome, or Disney World. Of course the latter was their choice.” In other contexts not referring back to such a list, the word you want is “later.”

Conservatives prefer to reserve “latter” for the last-named of no more than two items.

👉 **Laundry mat** ⇒ LAUNDROMAT

“Laundromat” was coined in the 1950s by analogy with “automat”—an automated self-service restaurant—to label an automated self-service laundry. People unaware of this history often mistakenly deconstruct the word into “laundry mat” or “laundrymat.”

👉 **Laxadaisical/lackadaisical** ⇒ LACKADAISICAL

“Alack!” Originally meant something like “Alas!” It bore connotations of dissatisfaction or shame. “Alack the day!” Meant at first “may the day be shamed in which this awful thing has happened.” Later, it came to be abbreviated “lack-a-day” and used to express mere surprise.

The expression was gradually weakened, shifting from expressions of anguish to resigned despair, to languid indifference. The end result is the modern form “lackadaisical,” which conveys a lack of enthusiasm—a casual, perfunctory way of doing things.

This final meaning suggests “laxness” to some people who then misspell the word “laxadaisical,” but this is nonstandard.

👉 **Lay / lie** ⇒ You lay down the book you’ve been reading, but you lie down when you go to bed. In the present tense, if the subject is acting on some other object, it’s “lay.” If the subject is lying down, then it’s “lie.” This distinction is often not made in informal speech, partly because in the past tense the words sound much more alike: “He lay down for a nap,” but “He laid down the law.” If the subject is already at rest, you might “let it lie.” If a helping verb is involved, you need the past participle forms. “Lie” becomes “lain” and “lay” becomes “laid”: “He had just lain down for a nap,” and “His daughter had laid the gerbil on his nose.”

👉 **Layed/laid** ⇒ Although “layed” is an extremely popular variant spelling of the past tense of transitive “lay,” “laid” is the traditional spelling in all contexts. If your boss decides to lay you off, you are laid off. The hen laid an egg. You laid down the law.

👉 **LCD Display** ⇒ LCD

“LCD” stands for “liquid crystal display,” so some argue it is redundant to write “LCD display” and argue you should use just “LCD” or “LCD screen” instead. But some in the industry argue that “LCD display” is the generic term for the

category which comprises both LCD screens and LCD projectors. However, if you want to avoid the redundancy in wording you can still refer more precisely to your laptop or TV as having an LCD screen.

Many people confuse this abbreviation with “LED,” which stands for “light-emitting diode”—a much earlier technology. You will often see explanations even in technical contexts in which “LCD” is incorrectly defined as “liquid crystal diode.” And it is misleading to call an LCD television screen which has LED backlighting an “LED screen.”

👉 **Leach / leech** ⇒ Water leaches chemicals out of soil or color out of cloth, your brother-in-law leeches off the family by constantly borrowing money to pay his gambling debts (he behaves like a bloodsucking leech).

👉 **Lead / led** ⇒ When you're hit over the head, the instrument could be a “lead” pipe. But when it's a verb, “lead” is the present and “led” is the past tense. The problem is that the past tense is pronounced exactly like the above-mentioned plumbing material (“plumb” comes from a word meaning “lead”), so people confuse the two. In a sentence like “She led us to the scene of the crime,” always use the three-letter spelling.

👉 **Least / lest** ⇒ LEST

American English keeps alive the old word “lest” in phrases like “lest we forget,” referring to something to be avoided or prevented. Many people mistakenly substitute the more familiar word “least” in these phrases.

👉 **Leave / let** ⇒ LET

The colloquial use of “leave” to mean “let” in phrases like “leave me be” is not standard. “Leave me alone” is fine, though.

👉 **Legend / myth** ⇒ Myths are generally considered to be traditional stories whose importance lies in their significance, like the myth of the Fall in Eden; whereas legends can be merely famous deeds, like the legend of Davy Crockett. In common usage “myth” usually implies fantasy. Enrico Caruso was a legendary tenor, but Hogwarts is a mythical school. Legends may or may not be true. But be cautious about using “myth” to mean “untrue story” in a mythology, theology, or literature class, where teachers can be quite touchy about insisting that the true significance of a myth lies not in its factuality but in its meaning for the culture which produces or adopts it.

👉 **Lense** ⇒ LENS

Although the variant spelling “lense” is listed in some dictionaries, the standard spelling for those little disks that focus light is “lens.”

👉 **Lentil / lintel** ⇒ Lentils are legumes—food.

Lintels are horizontal load-bearing members over doors, windows & fireplaces—architecture.

👉 **Less / fewer** ⇒ This is a vast subject. I will try to limit the number of words I expend on it so as not to use up too great an amount of space. The confusion between the two categories of words relating to amount and number is so pervasive that those of us who still distinguish between them constitute an endangered species; but if you want to avoid our ire, learn the difference. Amount words relate to quantities of things that are measured in bulk; number to things that can be counted.

In the second sentence above, it would have been improper to write “the amount of words” because words are discrete entities which can be counted, or numbered.

Here is a handy chart to distinguish the two categories of words:  
amount number quantity number little few less fewer much many

You can eat fewer cookies, but you drink less milk. If you eat too many cookies, people would probably think you've had too much dessert. If the thing being measured is being considered in countable units, then use number words. Even a substance which is considered in bulk can also be measured by number of units. For instance, you shouldn't drink too much wine, but you should also avoid drinking too many glasses of wine. Note that here you are counting glasses. They can be numbered.

The most common mistake of this kind is to refer to an "amount" of people instead of a "number" of people.

Just to confuse things, "more" can be used either way: you can eat more cookies and drink more milk.

Exceptions to the less/fewer pattern are references to units of time and money, which are usually treated as amounts: less than an hour, less than five dollars. Only when you are referring to specific coins or bills would you use fewer: "I have fewer than five state quarters to go to make my collection complete."

👉 **Less painless** ⇒ LESS PAINFUL, MORE PAINLESS

Quite a few people accidentally say they want to make some process "less painless" when they mean "less painful." "Less painless" would be more painful.

👉 **Lessen / lesson** ⇒ Although not many people try to teach someone a "lessen," many people try to "lesson" their risks by taking precautions.

"Lessen" is something you do—a verb—and means to make smaller. "Lesson" is a noun, something you learn or teach. Remember this lesson and it will lessen your chances of making a mistake.

👉 **Let alone** ⇒ "I can't remember the title of the book we were supposed to read, let alone the details of the story." In sentences like these you give a lesser example of something first, followed by "let alone" and then the greater example. But people often get this backwards, and put the greater example first. The same pattern is followed when the expression is "much less": "I can't change the oil in my car, much less tune the engine." The speaker can much less well tune the engine than he or she can change the oil.

Another common expression which follows the same pattern uses "never mind," as in "I can't afford to build a tool shed, never mind a new house." See also "little own."

👉 **Lets / let's** ⇒ The only time you should spell "let's" with an apostrophe is when it means "let us": "Let's go to the mall."

If the word you want means "allows" or "permits," no apostrophe should be used: "My mom lets me use her car if I fill the tank."

👉 **Liabile, libel** ⇒ If you are likely to do something you are liable to do it; and if a debt can legitimately be charged to you, you are liable for it. A person who defames you with a false accusation libels you. There is no such word as "lible."

👉 **Liaise** ⇒ The verb "liaise," meaning to act as a liaison (intermediary between one group and another), has been around in military contexts since early in the 20th century; but recently it has broken out into more general use, especially in business, where it bothers a lot of people. Although dictionaries generally consider it standard English, you may want to avoid it around people irritated by business jargon.

👉 **Library** ⇒ LIBRARY

The first R in "library" is often slurred or omitted in speech, and it sometimes drops out in writing as well; and "librarian" is often turned into "libarian."

👉 **Licence / license** ⇒ In the UK, the noun is “licence”: “here is my driving licence.” But when it is a verb, the spelling is “license”: “she is licensed to drive a lorry.”

In contrast, Americans use the spelling “license” in all contexts and the spelling “licence” is considered a spelling error.

👉 **Light-year** ⇒ “Light-year” is always a measure of distance rather than of time; in fact it is the distance that light travels in a year. “Parsec” is also a measure of distance, equaling 3.26 light-years, though the term was used incorrectly as a measure of time by Han Solo in Star Wars.

Please, Star Wars fans, don’t bother sending me elaborate explanations of why Solo’s speech makes sense; I personally heard George Lucas admit in a TV interview that it was just a mistake.

👉 **Lighted / lit** ⇒ Don’t fret over the difference between these two words; they’re interchangeable.

👉 **Lightening / lightning** ⇒ Those bright flashes in the storm clouds indeed used to be referred to as “lightening,” later as “light’ning,” but now they are simply “lightning.”

“Lightening” has a quite different meaning in modern English: making lighter, as in lightening your load or lightening the color of your hair.

👉 **Like** ⇒ Since the 1950s, when it was especially associated with hipsters, “like” as a sort of meaningless verbal hiccup has been common in speech. The earliest uses had a sort of sense to them in which “like” introduced feelings or perceptions which were then specified: “When I learned my poem had been rejected I was, like, devastated.” However, “like” quickly migrated elsewhere in sentences: “I was like, just going down the road, when, like, I saw this cop, like, hiding behind the billboard.” This habit has spread throughout American society, affecting people of all ages. Those who have the irritating “like” habit are usually unaware of it, even if they use it once or twice in every sentence: but if your job involves much speaking with others, it’s a habit worth breaking.

Recently young people have extended its uses by using “like” to introduce thoughts and speeches: “When he tells me his car broke down on the way to my party I’m like, ” I know you were with Cheryl because she told me so.” To be reacted to as a grown-up, avoid this pattern.

(See also “goes.”)

Some stodgy conservatives still object to the use of “like” to mean “as,” “as though” or “as if.” Examples: “Treat other people like you want them to treat you” (they prefer: “as you would want them to treat you”). “She treats her dog like a baby” (they prefer “she treats her dog as if it were a baby”). In expressions where the verb is implied rather than expressed, “like” is standard rather than “as”: “she took to gymnastics like a duck to water.”

In informal contexts, “like” often sounds more natural than “as if,” especially with verbs involving perception, like “look,” “feel,” “sound,” “seem,” or “taste”: “It looks like it’s getting ready to rain” or “It feels like spring.”

So nervous do some people get about “like” that they try to avoid it even in its core meaning of “such as”: “ice cream flavors like vanilla and strawberry always sell well” (they prefer “such as vanilla . . .”). The most fanatical even avoid “like” where it is definitely standard, in such phrases as “behaved like a slob” (“behaved as a slob” is their odd preference).

Like you care.

👉 **Like for** ⇒ LIKE

I would like you to remember that saying “I’d like for you to take out the garbage” is not formal English. The “for” is unnecessary.

👉 **Likeliness / likeness** ⇒ Your portrait is your likeness, not your “likeliness.” The probability of something is its likeliness.

👉 **Likker** ⇒ LIQUOR

Although it may be pronounced “likker,” you shouldn’t spell it that way, and it’s important to remember to include the “U” when writing the word.

👉 **Lion’s share** ⇒ Even though the original meaning of this phrase reflected the idea that the lion can take whatever he wants—typically all of the slaughtered game, leaving nothing for anyone else—in modern usage the meaning has shifted to “the largest share.” This makes great sense if you consider the way hyenas and vultures swarm onto the leftovers from a typical lion’s kill.

👉 **Lip-sing** ⇒ LIP-SYNCH

When you pretend you are singing by synchronizing your lip movements to a recording, you lip-synch—the vocal equivalent of playing “air guitar.” Some people mistakenly think the expression is “lip-sing,” and they often omit the required hyphen as well. Note that you can lip-synch to speech as well as singing.

Many writers use the spelling “sync” rather than “synch.” Users of each form tend to regard the other as weird, but in contemporary writing “sync” clearly prevails.

👉 **Listserv** ⇒ “LISTSERV” is the brand name of one kind of electronic mail-handling software for distributing messages to a list of subscribers. Other common brand names are “Majordomo” and “Listproc”. You can subscribe to the poodle-fluffing list, but not the LISTSERV. People at my university, where only Listproc is used, often (and erroneously) refer to themselves as managers of “listservs.” English teachers are frequently tripped up when typing “listserv” as part of a computer command; they naturally want to append an E on the end of the word. According to L-Soft, the manufacturer of LISTSERV, the name of their software should always be capitalized. See their Web site for the details.

👉 **Literally** ⇒ Like “incredible,” “literally” has been so overused as a sort of vague intensifier that it is in danger of losing its literal meaning. It should be used to distinguish between a figurative and a literal meaning of a phrase. It should not be used as a synonym for “actually” or “really.” Don’t say of someone that he “literally blew up” unless he swallowed a stick of dynamite.

👉 **Literature** ⇒ Businesspeople like to refer to advertising brochures and instructional manuals as “literature.” This drives writers and literary scholars nuts, but who else cares? If you should happen to be trying to sell a product to a bunch of English majors, don’t offer them “literature” about it unless it was written by a distinguished author.

👉 **Lite spelling** ⇒ Attempts to “reform” English spelling to render it more phonetic have mostly been doomed to failure—luckily for us. These proposed changes, if widely adopted, would make old books difficult to read and obscure etymological roots which are often a useful guide to meaning. A few, like “lite” for “light,” “nite” for “night,” and “thru” for “through” have attained a degree of popular acceptance, but none of these should be used in formal writing. “Catalog” has become an accepted substitute for “catalogue,” but I don’t like it and refuse to use it. “Analog” has triumphed in technical contexts, but humanists are still more likely to write “analogue.”

👉 **Little own** ⇒ LET ALONE

When Tom writes “I don’t even understand what you’re saying, little own agree with it” he is misunderstanding the standard phrase “let alone.” In the same context many people would say “never mind.”

👉 **Little to none** ⇒ LITTLE OR NONE

The expression “little or none” is meant to describe a very narrow distinction, between hardly any and none at all: “The store’s tomatoes had little or none of the flavor I get from eating what I grow in my garden.” The mistaken variation “little to none” blunts this expression’s force by implying a range of amounts between two extremes.

👉 **Lived** ⇒ In expressions like “long-lived” pronouncing the last part to rhyme with “dived” is more traditional, but rhyming it with “sieved” is so common that it’s now widely acceptable.

👉 **Loath / loathe** ⇒ “Loath” is a rather formal adjective meaning reluctant and rhymes with “both,” whereas “loathe” is a common verb meaning to dislike intensely, and rhymes with “clothe.” Kenji is loath to go to the conference at Kilauea because he loathes volcanos.

👉 **Login** ⇒ There is a strong tendency in American English to smooch the halves of hyphenated word and phrases together and drop the hyphen, so we commonly see phrases such as “enter your login and password.” This is a misuse of “login” since logging in involves entering both your ID and password, and “login” is not a proper synonym for “ID” alone, or “user name”—commonly abbreviated to the ugly “username”. Such mash-ups are influenced by the world of computer programming, where hyphens and spaces are avoided.

If you would prefer to use more standard English, it would be appropriate to use “log-in” as the adjectival phrase: “Follow the correct log-in procedure.” But the verb-plus-adverb combination should not be hyphenated: “Before viewing the picture of Britney you’ll need to log in.”

“Log on” and “log-on” mean the same thing as “log in” and “log-in” but are less common now.

👉 **Logon** ⇒ VISIT

You log on to a Web site by entering your ID and password. If you are merely encouraging people to visit a site which has no such requirement, it is misleading to ask them to “log on” to it. News reporters often get this wrong by reporting how many people “logged on” to a particular site when they mean “visited.” “Visit” or just “go to” will do just fine.

👉 **Lol** ⇒ The common Internet abbreviation “lol” (for “laughing out loud”) began as an expression of amusement or satirical contempt: “My brother-in-law thought the hollandaise sauce was gravy and poured it all over his mashed potatoes (lol).” It has become much overused, often to indicate mere surprise or emphasis with no suggestion of humor: “The boss just told us we have to redo the budget this afternoon (lol).” And some people drop it into their prose almost at random, like a verbal hiccup. It is no longer considered hip or sophisticated, and you won’t impress or entertain anyone by using it.

Note that this initialism has had two earlier meanings: “Little Old Lady” and “Lots Of Love.”

👉 **Long story short** ⇒ TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT

The traditional expression “to make (or cut) a long story short” is now commonly abbreviated by omitting the first phrase: “Long story short, I missed my plane.” Although there’s a certain appeal to the notion of abbreviating an expression about abbreviation, the shorter form sounds odd to people not used to it.

👉 **Lookit** ⇒ LOOK

“Lookit”—meaning “listen,” “pay attention to what I’m going to say”—is casual slang, and is associated by many people with the speech of small children. Preceding a statement with “look” is not formal usage either, but it sounds more grown-up.

👉 **Loose / lose** ⇒ This confusion can easily be avoided if you pronounce the word intended aloud. If it has a voiced Z sound, then it’s “lose.” If it has a hissy S sound, then it’s “loose.” Here are examples of correct usage: “He tends to lose his keys.” “She lets her dog run loose.” Note that when “lose” turns into “losing” it loses its “E.”

👉 **Loser / looser** ⇒ A person who’s a failure is a loser, often a “real loser.” If something is loosened, it becomes looser.

👉 **Lot, plenty, load (number)** ⇒ The expression “a lot” takes a singular verb when it refers to an amount of something that can’t be counted: “a lot of water has gone over the dam.” But it takes a plural verb when it refers to a countable number of things: “there are a lot of fish in the sea.” “Lots” works the same way: “there is lots of room left in the theater, but for some reason lots of us are still waiting to be seated.” Remember that “there’s” is a contraction of “there is”; so instead of “there’s a lot of flowers in the garden,” say “there are a lot of flowers.” The same rule applies to “plenty” and “load.” “There is plenty of turkey left,” but “there are plenty of pecans in the pie.” “Loads of dirty dishes are in the sink,” so “there is loads of washing up to do.”

👉 **Lozenger** ⇒ LOZENGE

“Lozenger” is an archaic spelling still in use in a few American dialects. It is occasionally mistaken for a singular form of “lozenges.” The standard spelling is “lozenge.”

👉 **Lustful / lusty** ⇒ “Lusty” means “brimming with vigor and good health” or “enthusiastic.” Don’t confuse it with “lustful,” which means “filled with sexual desire.”

👉 **Luxuriant / luxurious** ⇒ The word meaning “abundant” is “luxuriant,” as in “luxuriant hair.” “Luxurious” refers to luxury.

👉 **MAC / Mac** ⇒ Apple’s Macintosh computers are usually referred to as “Macs” for short. Windows users unfamiliar with the usual way of rendering the name often write it as if it were an acronym, in all caps: “MAC.”

But a MAC is something quite different. Every computer on a network has a Media Access Control number; so when your IT support person asks you for your “MAC address,” don’t say you don’t have one just because you use Windows. Don’t ask me how to find the MAC address for your Windows computer though; I’m a Mac user.

👉 **Macabre** ⇒ “Macabre” is a French-derived word which in its original language has the final “ruh” sound lightly pronounced. Those who know this are likely to scorn those who pronounce the word “muh-COB.” But this latter pronunciation is very popular and blessed by some American dictionaries, and those who prefer it sometimes view the French-derived pronunciation as pretentious. It’s up to you whether you want to risk being considered ignorant or snooty.

👉 **Maddening crowd** ⇒ MADDING CROWD

When Thomas Hardy titled one of his novels *Far from the Madding Crowd* he was quoting a phrase from Thomas Gray’s 1750 poem “Elegy on a Country Churchyard” which used the archaic spelling “madding.” The only reason to

refer to “madding crowds” is to show how sophisticated you are, but if you update the spelling to “maddening” it will have the opposite effect: you’ll look ignorant.

🌀 **Magic bullet / silver bullet** ⇒ In modern English there are a number of specialized uses for the phrase “magic bullet,” but the traditional term for a quick, effective solution to a difficult problem is “silver bullet.” It is derived from the folk belief that bullets made of silver were especially effective against werewolves, vampires, and other supernatural monsters.

🌀 **Majority are / majority is** ⇒ “Majority” is one of those words that can be either singular or plural. Common sense works pretty well in deciding which. If you mean the word to describe a collection of individuals, then the word should be treated as plural: “The majority of e-mail users are upset about the increase in spam.” If the word is used to describe a collective group, then consider it singular: “A 90% majority is opposed to scheduling the next meeting at 6:00 A.M.” If you are uncertain which you mean, then choose whatever form sounds best to you; it’s not likely to bother many people.

“Majority” should be used only with countable nouns: “he ate the majority of the cookies,” but not “he ate the majority of the pie.” Instead say, “he ate most of the pie.”

🌀 **Majorly** ⇒ EXTREMELY

“Majorly,” meaning “extremely” is slang and should not be used in formal writing, or even speech if you want to impress someone. “Brad was extremely [not ‘majorly’] worried about the course final until he got around to reading the syllabus and found out there wasn’t one.”

🌀 **Make due** ⇒ MAKE DO

When you try to get by with what you have, you make do.

🌀 **Make pretend** ⇒ MAKE BELIEVE

When you pretend to do something in a game of fantasy, you make believe.

🌀 **Mantle / mantel** ⇒ Though they stem from the same word, a “mantle” today is usually a cloak, while the shelf over a fireplace is most often spelled “mantel.”

🌀 **Manufacture** ⇒ When your company makes stuff, it manufactures it, but the company itself is a manufacturer. Both in speech and writing the final R is often omitted from the latter word.

🌀 **Marinate on** ⇒ MEDITATE ON

To add flavor and moisture to meats or other raw ingredients, you can soak them for a while in a flavored liquid marinade (note that the word for the liquid is spelled with a D). You marinate it (note that the word for the action is spelled with a T). You would rarely have a legitimate reason to use the phrase “marinate on.” An example would be: “leave the chicken to marinate on the counter while you prepare the other ingredients.”

When you ponder a subject thoughtfully, you meditate on it. So many people are misusing “marinate” when they mean “meditate” that some have concluded that they are related words with overlapping meanings. They urge people to think carefully about a subject by telling them to “marinate and meditate” on it. Letting thoughts soak into your consciousness has nothing to do with marinades.

🌀 **Marital / martial** ⇒ “Marital” refers to marriage, “martial” to war, whose ancient god was Mars. These two are often swapped, with comical results.

🌀 **Marshall** ⇒ MARSHAL

You may write “the Field Marshal marshalled his troops,” but you cannot spell his title with a double L. A marshal is always a marshal, never a marshall.

🌀 **Marshmallow** ⇒ MARSHMALLOW

Your s’mores may taste mellow, but that gooey confection you use in them is not “marshmellow,” but “marshmallow.” It was originally made from the root of a mallow plant which grew in marshes.

🌀 **Mash potatoes** ⇒ MASHED POTATOES

You mash the potatoes until they become mashed potatoes.

🌀 **Mass** ⇒ MASSIVE

When the dumb Coneheads on Saturday Night Live talked about consuming “mass quantities” of food they didn’t know any better, but native Earth humans wanting an adjective rather than a noun should stick with “massive” unless they are trying to allude to SNL. “Mass” is often used by young people in expressions where “many” or even the informal “a lot of” would be more appropriate.

Expressions in which the noun “mass” can modify another noun, as in “mass migrations,” are fine; but when you can use “massive” instead you should do so.

🌀 **Masseuse / masseur** ⇒ “Masseuse” is a strictly female term; Monsieur Philippe, who gives back rubs down at the men’s gym, is a masseur. Because of the unsavory associations that have gathered around the term “masseuse,” serious practitioners generally prefer to be called “massage therapists.”

🌀 **Material / materiel** ⇒ “Material” is a very common word, so it’s not surprising that when people encounter the French-derived spelling “materiel” in military contexts (“supplying men and materiel”), they think it’s a mistake and “correct” it to the more familiar “material.” The equipment and supplies used by armies and other organizations are “materiel,” which is never spelled with an S on the end.

🌀 **May / might** ⇒ Most of the time “might” and “may” are almost interchangeable, with “might” suggesting a somewhat lower probability. You’re more likely to get wet if the forecaster says it may rain than if she says it might rain, but substituting one for the other is unlikely to get you into trouble—so long as you stay in the present tense.

But “might” is also the past tense of the auxiliary verb “may,” and is required in sentences like “Chuck might have avoided arrest for the robbery if he hadn’t given the teller his business card before asking for the money.” When speculating that events might have been other than they were, don’t substitute “may” for “might.”

When you are uncertain what has happened and are making a guess, then you may want to use “may”: “I think he may have thought I would really like an oil change for my birthday.”

As an aside: if you are an old-fashioned child, you will ask, “May I go out to play?” Rather than “Can I go out to play?” Despite the prevalence of the latter pattern, some adults still feel strongly that “may” has to do with permission whereas “can” implies only physical ability. But then if you have a parent like this you’ve had this pattern drilled into your head long before you encountered this page.

🌀 **Maybe / may be** ⇒ “Maybe” is an adverb meaning “perhaps,” so if you are uncertain whether to use this word or the phrase “may be,” try substituting “perhaps”: “Maybe she forgot I said I’d meet her at six o’clock” becomes “Perhaps she forgot. . . .” When the substitution makes sense, go with one word: “maybe.” When you are wondering whether you may be waiting in the wrong cafe, you’re dealing with a verb and its auxiliary: “may be.” Two words.

☞ **Me either** ⇒ Inside a longer sentence, “me either” can be perfectly legitimate: “whole-wheat pie crust doesn’t appeal to me either.” But by itself, meaning “neither do I,” in reply to previous negative statement, it has to be “me neither”: “I don’t like whole-wheat pie crust.” “Me neither.”

☞ **Mean / median** ⇒ To find the mean (or average) of a series of numbers, for example 1,2,3,4,5 & 6, add them all together for a total of 21; then divide by the number of numbers (6) to give the mean (or average) of 3.5.

In contrast, when half the data of a set are above a point and half below, that point is the median. The difference between mean and median can be quite significant, but one often sees the terms used wrongly even in technical contexts.

☞ **Mean for** ⇒ MEAN

“I didn’t mean for you to see your present until I’d wrapped it.” This sort of use of “mean for” is a casual pattern inappropriate in written or formal English. Instead, say “I didn’t mean you to see your present. . . .”

☞ **Meantime / meanwhile** ⇒ Although most authorities now consider these words interchangeable, some people still prefer to use “meanwhile” when it stands alone at the beginning of a sentence: “Meanwhile the dog buried the baby’s pacifier in the garden.” They prefer “meantime” to be used only in the expression “in the meantime”: “In the meantime, the dog chewed up my last tennis ball.”

☞ **Medal / metal / meddle / mettle** ⇒ METTLE

A person who proves his or her mettle displays courage or stamina. The word “mettle” is seldom used outside of this expression, so people constantly confuse it with other similar-sounding words.

☞ **Media** ⇒ There are several words with Latin or Greek roots whose plural forms ending in A are constantly mistaken for singular ones. See, for instance, criteria and data. Radio is a broadcast medium. Television is another broadcast medium. Newspapers are a print medium. Together they are media. Following the tendency of Americans to abbreviate phrases, with “transistor radio” becoming “transistor,” (now fortunately obsolete) and “videotape” becoming “video,” “news media” and “communications media” have been abbreviated to “media.” Remember that watercolor on paper and oil on black velvet are also media, though they have nothing to do with the news. When you want to get a message from your late Uncle Fred, you may consult a medium. The word means a vehicle between some source of information and the recipient of it. The “media” are the transmitters of the news; they are not the news itself.

☞ **Medieval Ages** ⇒ MIDDLE AGES

The “eval” of “Medieval” means “age” so by saying “Medieval Ages” you are saying “Middle Ages Ages.” Medievalists also greatly resent the common misspelling “Midevil.”

☞ **Mediocre** ⇒ Although some dictionaries accept the meaning of this word as “medium” or “average,” in fact its connotations are almost always more negative. When something is distinctly not as good as it could be, it is mediocre. If you want to say that you are an average student, don’t proclaim yourself mediocre, or you’ll convey a worse impression of yourself than you intend.

☞ **Medium / median** ⇒ That strip of grass separating the lanes going opposite directions in the middle of a freeway is a median. But if you’re trying to achieve a balance between extremes, you’re trying to strike a happy medium.

☞ **Meet up** ⇒ MEET

“Meet up with” and similar expressions (as in “let’s meet up with them at the diner”) is casual and slangy. In standard English, omit the “up with”: “Let’s meet them at the diner.”

👉 **Memorium** ⇒ MEMORIAM

The correct spelling of the Latin phrase is “in memoriam.”

👉 **Meteor / meterorite / meteoroid** ⇒ A chunk of rock out in space is a “meteoroid.” If it plummets down through the earth’s atmosphere, the resulting streak of light is called a “meteor.” And if it lands on the ground, the chunk of stone is called a “meteorite.”

Don’t confuse meteors with comets, which are masses of ice and dust whose tails are produced not inside our atmosphere, but out in space. When a comet gets too close to the Sun its warmth and the pressure of the solar wind cause some of the comet to evaporate and stream out to form a tail.

👉 **Methodology / method** ⇒ METHOD

A fondness for big words isn’t always accompanied by the knowledge of their proper use. Methodology is about the methods of doing something; it is not the methods themselves. It is both pretentious and erroneous to write “The architect is trying to determine a methodology for reinforcing the foundation now that the hotel on top of it has begun to sink.”

👉 **Mfr. / mfg.** ⇒ “Mfr.” Is the abbreviation for “manufacturer” and “mfg.” Is the abbreviation for “manufacturing.” Acme Mfg. Co. Is a mfr. Of roadrunner traps.

👉 **Mic** ⇒ MIKE

Until recently the casual term for a microphone was “mike,” not “mic.” Young people now mostly imitate the technicians who prefer the shorter “mic” label on their soundboards, but it looks distinctly odd to those used to the traditional term. There are no other words in English in which “-ic” is pronounced to rhyme with “bike”—that’s the reason for the traditional “mike” spelling in the first place. Although the new spelling has largely triumphed in casual usage, editors may ask you to use the older spelling in publication.

👉 **Middleaged** ⇒ MIDDLE-AGED

When you’re in your teens, you’re a teenager, but when you get older, you earn a hyphen: you become “middle-aged.”

👉 **Midrift** ⇒ MIDRIFF

“Midriff” derives from “mid-” and a very old word for the belly. Fashions which bare the belly expose the midriff. People think of the gap being created by scanty tops and bottoms as a rift, and mistakenly call it a “midrift” instead. In earlier centuries, before belly-baring was in, the midriff was also the piece of cloth which covered the area.

👉 **Might could** ⇒ MIGHT, COULD

In some American dialects it is common to say things like “I might could pick up some pizza on the way to the party.” In standard English, “might” or “could” are used by themselves, not together.

“Had ought,” “hadn’t ought,” “shouldn’t ought,” and “might can” are similarly nonstandard.

👉 **Might has well** ⇒ MIGHT AS WELL

You might as well get this one right: the expression is not “might has well” but “might as well.”

👉 **Might ought** ⇒ MIGHT, OUGHT

In some dialects it’s common to say things like “you might ought to [pronounced oughta] turn off the engine before changing the spark plugs.” If

you want to sound educated, you might want to avoid this combination. If you want to sound sophisticated you definitely ought to.

🌀 **Militate / mitigate** ⇒ These are not very common words, but people who use them—especially lawyers—tend to mix them up. “Militate” is usually followed by “against” in a phrase that means “works against”: “His enthusiasm for spectacular collisions militates against his becoming a really effective air traffic controller.”

“Mitigate” means almost the opposite: to make easier, to moderate. “His pain at leaving was mitigated by her passionate kiss.” It should not be followed by “against.”

🌀 **Mind of information** ⇒ MINE OF INFORMATION

A book, a person, or any other source stuffed with gems of useful knowledge is a mine of information, a metaphorical treasure trove of learning. The information involved may or may not be in someone’s mind.

🌀 **Miner / minor** ⇒ Children are minors, but unless they are violating child-labor laws, those who work in mines are miners.

🌀 **Miniscule** ⇒ MINUSCULE

The preferred spelling is “minuscule.”

🌀 **Minority** ⇒ In the US the term “minority” frequently refers to racial minorities, and is used not only for groups, but also for individuals. But many authorities object to calling a single person a minority, as in “We hired a minority for the job.” Even phrases like “women and minorities” bother some people. They think it should be “members of minorities.”

🌀 **Minuet / minute** ⇒ Shakespeare’s colleague and popular comic actor Will Kemp was famous for his stunt of dancing the jig from London to Norwich (about 80 miles). That’s what I think of when I see real estate ads boasting “only five minuets from downtown!”

This is one of those silly typos that your spelling checker won’t catch, because “minuet” is a real word.

🌀 **Minus** ⇒ HYPHEN

When baffled computer users phone Support they may say they have a Model AB “minus” 231. In the model name “AB-231” the linking character is a hyphen, though “dash” will do. “Minus” makes no sense in such contexts, but is so common that support personnel have begun to adopt it too.

🌀 **Minus well** ⇒ MIGHT AS WELL

When you see the way some people misspell common phrases you sometimes feel you might as well give up. It’s simply amazing how many people think the standard phrase “might as well” is “minus well.”

🌀 **Mischievous** ⇒ MISCHIEVOUS

The correct pronunciation of this word is “MISS-chuh-vuss,” not “miss-CHEE-vee-uss.” Don’t let that mischievous extra I sneak into the word.

🌀 **Mislead / misled** ⇒ “Mislead” is the present tense form of this verb, but the past tense and past participle forms are “misled.” When you mislead someone you have misled them. The spelling error most often occurs in the phrase “don’t be misled,” especially in advertising. Although this phrase refers to the future, the helping verb “be” requires the participle “misled”: “don’t be misled.”

🌀 **Misnomer** ⇒ A misnomer is a mistake in naming a thing; calling a debit card a “credit card” is a misnomer. Do not use the term more generally to designate other sorts of confusion, misunderstood concepts, or fallacies, and above all do not render this word as “misnamer.”

### 👉 **Mispell** ⇒ MISSPELL

Your spelling checker should catch this one, but judging by the popularity of “mispell,” “mispelled,” and “mispelling” on the Web, it slips by many people. These words need two s’s: one to end “mis-” and another to begin “-spell.” So the words are “misspell,” “misspelled,” and “misspelling.” This ranks as an embarrassing spelling mistake right up there with “writting.”

👉 **Misplaced stress** ⇒ “We will be descending shortly into Denver,” says the flight attendant, sounding very weird. People who have to repeat announcements by rote—including radio station-break announcers and others—often try to avoid sounding like monotonous robots by raising and lowering the pitch of their voices at random and stressing words not normally stressed: mostly prepositions and auxiliary verbs. One has to sympathize; imagine having to repeatedly lecture a plane full of people on seat-belt use when you know for a fact the only adults on board likely not to know already how to fasten a buckle are too demented to understand what you’re saying. But the absurd sing-song into which many of these folks fall is both distracting and irritating, making them sound like malfunctioning robots. Those who speak in natural voices, stressing main nouns, verbs, and adjectives where it makes sense, are much easier to listen to.

👉 **Mixed-up media** ⇒ Mixed media can be great; mixed-up media not so much. Books are published, movies and musical recordings released, and plays and TV shows premiered.

Movies are shown, plays staged, and TV shows broadcast.

Technically recordings get deleted (from catalogues) or withdrawn rather than going out of print like books (which may also be remaindered: sold at discount, or worse—pulped). However, there is a strong tendency to use “out of print” for all kinds of media: cds, DVDs, etc. Movies and stage shows close or end their runs, but only stage shows fold.

👉 **Molten/melted** ⇒ “Molten” is now usually used of hard materials liquified by very high heat, like lava, glass, and lead. Most other substances are “melted,” though some people like to refer to “molten cheese” and a popular dessert is called “molten chocolate cake,” perhaps to emphasize its gooey, lava-like character.

👉 **Money is no option** ⇒ MONEY IS NO OBJECT

The expression “money is no object” means that cost is no obstacle: you’re willing to pay whatever is required to get what you want.

People who don’t understand this unusual meaning of “object” often substitute “option,” saying “money is no option,” which makes no sense at all.

👉 **Mongoloid** ⇒ “Mongoloid” is an outdated anthropological term referring to certain peoples from central and eastern Asia. Its use to label people with Down Syndrome is also dated and highly offensive. Avoid the term entirely. If you have cause to refer to people from Mongolia the proper term is “Mongolian.”

👉 **Mono e mono** ⇒ MANO A MANO

“Mono e mono” is an error caused by mishearing the Spanish expression *mano a mano* which means not “man-to-man” but “hand-to-hand,” as in hand-to-hand combat: one on one.

👉 **Moral / morale** ⇒ If you are trying to make people behave properly, you are policing their morals; if you are just trying to keep their spirits up, you are trying to maintain their morale. “Moral” is accented on the first syllable, “morale” on the second.

👉 **Morays** ⇒ MORES

The customs of a people are its mores. These may include its morals (ethics), but the word “mores” is not synonymous with “morals.” Some eels are morays, but they aren’t known particularly for their social customs, though both words are pronounced the same.

👉 **More / most** ⇒ It is traditional to use “most” when comparing three or more things and “more” when comparing only two. “This more powerful of the two vacuum cleaners.” “This is the most delicious entree on the menu.” In casual speech this pattern is often ignored, but it’s good to keep the distinction in mind when writing or speaking formally.

👉 **More importantly** ⇒ MORE IMPORTANT

When speakers are trying to impress audiences with their rhetoric, they often seem to feel that the extra syllable in “importantly” lends weight to their remarks: “and more importantly, I have an abiding love for the American people.” However, these pompous speakers are wrong. It is rarely correct to use this form of the phrase because it is seldom adverbial in intention. Say “more important” instead. The same applies to “most importantly”; it should be “most important.”

👉 **Moreso** ⇒ MORE SO

“More so” should always be spelled as two distinct words. It is also overused and misused. Wherever possible, stick with plain “more.”

👉 **Most always** ⇒ ALMOST ALWAYS

“Most always” is a casual, slangy way of saying “almost always.” The latter expression is better in writing. The same is true of “most every,” “most all” and related expressions where the standard first word is “almost.”

👉 **Motherload** ⇒ MOTHER LODE

Although you may dig a load of ore out of a mother lode, the spelling “motherload” is a mistake which is probably influenced by people thinking it means something like “the mother of all loads.” A “lode” was originally a stream of water, but by analogy it became a vein of metal ore. Miners of precious metals dream of finding a really rich vein, which they refer to as a “mother lode,” most often spelled as two words, though you also commonly see it spelled as one.

👉 **Motion / move** ⇒ When you make a motion in a meeting, say simply “I move,” as in “I move to adjourn”; and if you’re taking the minutes, write “Barbara moved,” not “Barbara motioned” (unless Barbara was making wild arm-waving gestures to summon the servers to bring in the lunch). Instead of “I want to make a motion . . .” It’s simpler and more direct to say “I move. . . .”

👉 **Mount Fujiyama** ⇒ FUJIYAMA

“Yama” means “mountain” in Japanese, so when you say “Mount Fujiyama” you are saying “Mount Fuji Mountain.” The Japanese usually say “Fujisan,” but “Fujiyama,” or “Mount Fuji” is standard in English—just be aware that both sound “foreign” to Japanese native speakers.

👉 **Much differently** ⇒ VERY DIFFERENTLY

Say “We consistently vote very differently,” not “much differently.” But you can say “My opinion doesn’t much differ from yours.”

👉 **Muchly** ⇒ MUCH

Drop the nonstandard “-ly” ending from “much,” or substitute the word “very” when appropriate.

👉 **Mucus / mucous** ⇒ Mucous membranes secrete mucus. “Mucus” is the noun and “mucous” is the adjective. It’s not only snotty biologists who insist on distinguishing between these two words.

👉 **Multipart names** ⇒ In many European languages family names are often preceded by a preposition (*de, da, di, von, and van* all mean “of”), an article (*le and la* mean “the”) or both (*du, des, del, de la, della and van der* all mean “of the”). Such prefixes often originated as designators of nobility—or pretensions to it—but today they are just incidental parts of certain names.

In their original languages the two parts of the name are usually separated by a space, and the prefixed preposition or article is not capitalized unless it begins a sentence. If you take a college course involving famous European names you will be expected to follow this pattern. It’s not “De Beauvoir” but “de Beauvoir”; not “Van Gogh” but “van Gogh.” The only exception is when the name begins a sentence: “De Gaulle led the Free French,” but “Charles de Gaulle had a big nose.”

Some European names evolved into one-word spellings early on (*Dupont, Lamartine, Dallapiccola*), but they are not likely to cause problems because English speakers are usually unaware of the significance of their initial syllables. When families bearing prefixed names move to the US, they often adapt their spelling to a one-word form. A well-known example is “dicaprio.” French *le Blanc* becomes *leblanc* in America, and Italian *di Franco* becomes *difranco*. The name “de Vries” is spelled in English by various people bearing that name “De Vries,” “devries,” and “Devries.” You have to check carefully to determine how a particular person prefers the name to be spelled. Library reference tools like *Who’s Who* are more reliable than most Web sources.

The practice of retaining the capital letter inside the fused form is one peculiar to American English. Early books by famed science-fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin rendered her name “leguin” though later reprints go with the separated form, which we may assume is her preference. The fused form has the advantage of being easier for computers to sort into alphabetized lists. You will find many Web pages in which the names of Europeans are adapted to the one-word form, but this is a sign of a lack of sophistication.

Once you learn to properly separate the parts of a last name, you need to know how to alphabetize it. Put *van Gogh* under *V*, but *Van Morrison* under *M* (“*Van*” is his given name, not part of his family name). *Ludwig van Beethoven*, however, is under *B*, not *V*.

College students also need to know that most Medieval and many Renaissance names consist of a single given name linked to a place name to indicate where the person came from. *Marie de France* means simply “*Marie of France*,” and she should never be referred to as simply “*de France*.” After introducing her full name, refer to her as “*Marie*.” Forget *The Da Vinci Code*; scholars refer to him as “*Leonardo*,” never as “*da Vinci*.”

👉 **Multiply by double** ⇒ DOUBLE, MULTIPLY BY 2

If you are talking about making a number twice as large, the expression is “double” or “multiply by 2”: “double your sales to multiply your income by 2.” You could properly say “increase by a 100%” to mean the same thing, but lots of people won’t understand that.

And definitely do not confuse people by saying “multiply by double.”

See also “divide by half.”

👉 **Mumble jumbo, mumbo jumble** ⇒ MUMBO JUMBO, MUMBLE JUMBLE

The original and by far the most common form of this expression referring to superstitions or needlessly complex and obscure language is “mumbo jumbo.” “Mumble jumble” is far less common, but still accepted by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a variant.

But the hybrid forms “mumble jumbo” and “mumbo jumble” are just mistakes.

👉 **Music / singing** ⇒ After my wife—an accomplished soprano—reported indignantly that a friend of hers had stated that her church had “no music, only singing,” I began to notice the same tendency among my students to equate music strictly with instrumental music. I was told by one that “the singing interfered with the music” (i.e., the accompaniment). In the classical realm most listeners seem to prefer instrumental to vocal performances, which is odd given the distinct unpopularity of strictly instrumental popular music. People rejoice at the sound of choral works at Christmas but seldom seek them out at other times of the year. Serious music lovers rightly object to the linguistic sloppiness that denies the label “music” to works by such composers as Palestrina, Schubert, and Verdi. From the Middle Ages to the late eighteenth century, vocal music reigned supreme, and instrumentalists strove to achieve the prized compliment of “sounding like the human voice.” The dominance of orchestral works is a comparatively recent phenomenon.

In contrast, my students often call instrumental works “songs,” being unfamiliar with the terms “composition” and “piece.” All singing is music, but not all music is singing.

👉 **Must of** ⇒ MUST HAVE

“Must of” is an error for “must have.”  
See “could of/should of/would of.”

👉 **Mute point** ⇒ MOOT POINT

“Moot” is a very old word related to “meeting,” specifically a meeting where serious matters are discussed. Oddly enough, a moot point can be a point worth discussing at a meeting (or in court)—an unresolved question—or it can be the opposite: a point already settled and not worth discussing further. At any rate, “mute point” is simply wrong, as is the less common “mood point.”

👉 **Myriad of** ⇒ MYRIAD

Some traditionalists object to the word “of” after “myriad” or an “a” before, though both are fairly common in formal writing. The word is originally Greek, meaning 10,000, but now usually means “a great many.” Its main function is as a noun, and the adjective derived from it shows its origins by being reluctant to behave like other nouns expressing amount, like “ton” as in “i’ve got a ton of work to do.” In contrast: “I have myriad tasks to complete at work.”

👉 **Myself** ⇒ In the old days when people studied traditional grammar, we could simply say, “The first person singular pronoun is ‘I’ when it’s a subject and ‘me’ when it’s an object,” but now few people know what that means. Let’s see if we can apply some common sense here. The misuse of “I” and “myself” for “me” is caused by nervousness about “me.” Educated people know that “Jim and me are goin’ down to slop the hogs,” is not elegant speech, not “correct.” It should be “Jim and I” because if I were slopping the hogs alone I would never say “Me is going. . . .” If you refer to yourself first, the same rule applies: It’s not “Me and Jim are going” but “I and Jim are going.”

So far so good. But the notion that there is something wrong with “me” leads people to overcorrect and avoid it where it is perfectly appropriate. People will say “The document had to be signed by both Susan and I” when the correct statement would be, “The document had to be signed by both Susan and me.” All this confusion can easily be avoided if you just remove the second party from the sentences where you feel tempted to use “myself” as an object or feel nervous about “me.” You wouldn’t say, “The IRS sent the refund check to I,” so you shouldn’t say “The IRS sent the refund check to my wife and I” either.

Trying even harder to avoid the lowly “me,” many people will substitute “myself,” as in “the suspect uttered epithets at Officer O’Leary and myself.” Conservatives often object to this sort of use of “myself” when “me” or “I” would do. It’s usually appropriate to use “myself” when you have used “I” earlier in the same sentence: “I am not particularly fond of goat cheese myself.” “I kept half the loot for myself.” “Myself” is also fine in expressions like “young people like myself” or “a picture of my boyfriend and myself.” In informal English, beginning a sentence with “myself” to express an opinion is widely accepted: “Myself, I can’t stand dried parmesan cheese.” In all of these instances you are emphasizing your own role in the sentence, and “myself” helps do that.

On a related point, those who continue to announce “It is I” have traditional grammatical correctness on their side, but they are vastly outnumbered by those who proudly boast “it’s me!” There’s not much that can be done about this now. Similarly, if a caller asks for Susan and Susan answers “This is she,” her somewhat antiquated correctness may startle the questioner into confusion.

🌀 **N’** ⇨ ’N’

In your restaurant’s ad for “Big n’ Juicy Burgers,” remember that the apostrophes substitute for both omitted letters in “and”—the A and the D—so strictly speaking it’s not enough to use just one, as in “Big n’ Juicy.”

By so doing, you’ll improve on the usage of mcdonald’s, which has actually created the registered trademark “Big N’ Tasty.”

🌀 **Name, pronoun** ⇨ In old English ballads, it is common to follow the name of someone with a pronoun referring to the same person. For instance: “Sweet William, he died the morrow.” The extra syllable “he” helps fill out the rhythm of the line.

Though this pattern is rare in written prose it is fairly common in speech. If you say things like “Nancy, she writes for the local paper” people are less likely to think your speech poetic than they are to think you’ve made a verbal stumble. Leave out the “she.”

The same pattern applies to common nouns followed by pronouns as in “the cops, they’ve set up a speed trap” (should be “the cops have set up a speed trap”).

🌀 **Nauseated / nauseous** ⇨ Many people say, when sick to their stomachs, that they feel “nauseous” (pronounced “NOSH-uss” or “NOZH-uss”) but traditionalists insist that this word should be used to describe something that makes you want to throw up: something nauseating. They hear you as saying that you make people want to vomit, and it tempers their sympathy for your plight. Better to say you are “nauseated,” or simply that you feel like throwing up.

🌀 **Naval / navel** ⇨ Your belly button is your navel, and navel oranges look like they have one; all terms having to do with ships and sailing require “naval.”

🌀 **Near** ⇨ NEARLY

Some dialects substitute “near” for standard “nearly” in statements like “There weren’t nearly enough screws in the kit to finish assembling the cabinet.”

🌀 **Neck in neck** ⇨ NECK AND NECK

When a race is very tight, it’s described not as “neck in neck” but “neck and neck.”

🌀 **Needs -ed / -ing** ⇨ In some dialects it is common to say “my shoes need shined” instead of the standard “my shoes need shining” or “my shoes need to be shined.”

🌀 **Neice** ⇨ NIECE

Despite the fact that the rule “I before E except after C” holds true most of the time, many people have trouble believing that words with the “ee” sound in them should be spelled with an “IE.” The problem is that in English (and only in English), the letter I sounds like “aye” rather than “ee,” as it does in the several European languages from which we have borrowed a host of words. If you had studied French in high school you would have learned that this word is pronounced “knee-YES” in that language, and it would be easier to remember. Americans in particular misspell a host of German-Jewish names because they have trouble remembering that in that language IE is pronounced “ee” and EI is pronounced “aye.” The possessors of such names are inconsistent about this matter in English. “Wein” changes from “vine” to “ween,” but “Klein” remains “kline.”

🌀 **Nevada** ⇒ “Nuh-VAH-duh” is a little closer to the original Spanish pronunciation than the way Nevadans pronounce the name of their home state, but the correct middle syllable is the same “A” sound as in “sad.” When East Coast broadcasters use the first pronunciation, they mark themselves as outsiders.

🌀 **Nevermind** ⇒ NEVER MIND

The standard spelling of this phrase is as two words: “never mind.” The popularity of the alternative one-word form “nevermind” was certainly enhanced by its use in 1991 as the title of a bestselling Nirvana album. “Nevermind” can look immature or slangy to some readers. You can still be cool by imitating the vocabulary choice in the title of another famous album: Never Mind the Bollocks: Here’s the Sex Pistols.

In expressions like “pay him no nevermind” where the word means “attention” it’s always one word, but those expressions are both slangy and old-fashioned.

🌀 **New lease of life** ⇒ NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Reinvigorated people are traditionally said to have been granted not a “new lease of life” but a “new lease on life.” After all, you take out a lease on a house, right? Same thing.

🌀 **Next store** ⇒ NEXT DOOR

You can adore the boy next door, but not “next store.”

🌀 **Next, this** ⇒ If I tell you that the company picnic is next Saturday it would be wise to ask whether I mean this coming Saturday or the Saturday after that. People differ in how they use “next” in this sort of context, and there’s no standard pattern; so it’s worth making an extra effort to be clear.

In the UK the distinction is made clear by saying “Saturday next” or “Saturday week.”

🌀 **Nicety / niceness** ⇒ “Nicety” is a noun meaning “fine detail” and is usually used in the plural. You may observe the niceties of etiquette or of English grammar. It is not a word describing someone who is nice. That is “niceness.”

🌀 **Nickle** ⇒ NICKEL

Although some dictionaries list “nickle” as an alternative spelling, by far the more common and more widely accepted spelling is “nickel.”

🌀 **Nieve** ⇒ NAIVE

People who spell this French-derived word “nieve” make themselves look naive. In French there is also a masculine form: “naif”; and both words can be nouns meaning “naive person” as well as adjectives. “Nieve” is actually the Spanish word for “snow.” “Naïveté” is the French spelling of the related noun in English. If you prefer more nativized spelling, “naivety” is also acceptable.

👉 **Niggard** ⇒ “Niggard” is a very old word in English meaning “miser” or “stingy person.” Americans often mistakenly assume it is a variant on the most common insulting term for dark-skinned people. You may embarrass yourself by attacking a writer for racism when you see it in print; but since so many people are confused about this it might be better to use “miser” and “stingy” instead of “niggard” and “niggardly.”

👉 **Ninty** ⇒ NINETY

“Nine” keeps its E when it changes to “ninety.”

👉 **Nip it in the butt** ⇒ NIP IT IN THE BUD

To nip a process in the bud is to stop it from flowering completely. The hilariously mistaken “nip it in the butt” suggests stimulation to action rather than stopping it.

👉 **No sooner when** ⇒ NO SOONER THAN

The phrase, “No sooner had Paula stopped petting the cat when it began to yowl” should be instead “No sooner had Paula stopped petting the cat than it began to yowl.”

👉 **No such a thing** ⇒ NO SUCH THING

Some say “there’s no such thing as bad publicity,” but in phrases like this it’s much less common to insert an “a” after “such” so that the phrase becomes “no such a thing.”

This variation followed by a phrase beginning with “as” will probably not be noticed in most contexts, but it tends to sound more obviously nonstandard when the phrase stands by itself as a simple negation: “Eric told me the grocery store was handing out free steaks. No such a thing.” It sounds better to most people to say instead “no such thing.”

👉 **Noble Prize** ⇒ NOBEL PRIZE

Nobel laureates may indeed be intellectual nobility, but the award they get is not the “Noble Prize” but the “Nobel Prize,” named after founder Alfred Nobel.

👉 **None** ⇒ There’s a lot of disagreement about this one. “None” can be either singular or plural, depending on the meaning you intend and its context in the sentence. “None of the pie is left” is clearly singular. But “None of the chocolates is left” is widely accepted, as is “None of the chocolates are left.” If it’s not obvious to you which it should be, don’t worry; few of your readers will be certain either.

👉 **Nonplussed** ⇒ “Nonplussed” means to be stuck, often in a puzzling or embarrassing way, unable to go further (“non” = “no” + “plus” = “further”). It does not mean, as many people seem to think, “calm, in control.”

👉 **Noone** ⇒ NO ONE

Shall we meet at Ye Olde Sandwyche Shoppe at noone? “No one” is always two separate words, unlike “anyone” and “someone.”

👉 **Not** ⇒ You need to put “not” in the right spot in a sentence to make it say what you intend. “Not all fraternity members are drunks” means some are, but “All fraternity members are not drunks” means none of them is.

👉 **Not all** ⇒ The combination of “not” and “all” can be confusing if you’re not careful about placement. “All politicians are not corrupt” could theoretically mean that no politician is corrupt, but what you probably mean to say is “Not all politicians are corrupt.” When “not all is a minority, it’s sometimes better to replace “not all” with “some.” “The widescreen version is not available in all video stores” can be made clearer by saying “The widescreen version is not available in some stores.”

👉 **Not all that** ⇒ NOT VERY

The slangy phrase “not all that” as in “the dessert was not all that tasty” doesn’t belong in formal writing. “Not very” would work, but something more specific would be even better: “the pudding tasted like library paste.”

👉 **Not hardly** ⇒ NOT AT ALL

“Not hardly” is slang, fine when you want to be casual—but in a formal document? Not hardly!

👉 **Notate / note** ⇒ To notate a text is to write annotations about it. This technical term should not be used as a synonym for the simple verb “note.” It is both pretentious and incorrect to write “notate the time you arrived in your log.”

👉 **Nothing (singular)** ⇒ In formal English, “nothing” is always singular, even when it’s followed by a phrase stating an exception which contains a plural noun: “Nothing but weeds grows [not grow] in my yard” and “nothing except desserts appeals [not appeal] to Jennifer.” This pattern is seldom followed in more casual speech and writing, but you can see its logic if you move “nothing” to immediately precede its verb: “Nothing appeals to Jennifer except desserts.”

👉 **Notorious** ⇒ “Notorious” means famous in a bad way, as in “Nero was notorious for giving long recitals of his tedious poetry.” Occasionally writers deliberately use it in a positive sense to suggest irony or wit, but this is a very feeble and tired device. Nothing admirable should be called “notorious.” The same goes for “notoriety,” which also indicates a bad reputation. See also “infamous.”

👉 **Now and days** ⇒ NOWADAYS

Although it used to be hyphenated on occasion as “now-a-days,” this expression is nowadays usually rendered as a single unhyphenated word. Some folks mistakenly think the expression is “now and days,” which makes no sense.

👉 **Nowheres** ⇒ NOWHERE

“Nowheres” is a common dialectal variant. In standard English the word is “nowhere.”

👉 **Nuclear** ⇒ This isn’t a writing problem, but a pronunciation error. President Eisenhower used to consistently insert a “U” sound between the first and second syllables, leading many journalists to imitate him and say “nuk-yuh-lar” instead of the correct “nuk-lee-ar.” The confusion extends also to “nucleus.” Many people can’t even hear the mistake when they make it, and only scientists and a few others will catch the mispronunciation; but you lose credibility if you are an anti-nuclear protester who doesn’t know how to pronounce “nuclear.” Here’s one way to remember: we need a new, clear understanding of the issues; let’s stop saying “Nuke you!”

👉 **Number of verb** ⇒ In long, complicated sentences, people often lose track of whether the subject is singular or plural and use the wrong sort of verb. “The ultimate effect of all of these phone calls to the detectives were to make them suspicious of the callers” is an error because “effect,” which is singular, is the subject. If you are uncertain about whether to go with singular or plural, condense the sentence down to its skeleton: “The effect . . . Was to make them suspicious.”

Another situation that creates confusion is the use of interjections like “along with,” “as well as,” and “together with,” where they are often treated improperly as if they meant simply “and.” “Aunt Hilda, as well as her pet dachshund, is coming to the party” (not “are coming”).

A compound subject requires a plural verb even if the words which make it up are themselves singular in form: “widespread mold and mildew damage [not damages] the resale value of your house.”

If the title of a work is in the plural, you still use a singular verb because it is just one work: “My copy of *Great Expectations* has the original illustrations in it.” That much seems obvious, but it might not seem quite so obvious that *Plutarch’s Lives* is a single work, or that *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* is. Of course if you are not referring to the book as a whole but to the individual poems they are “Shakespeare’s sonnets,” and take a plural verb.

Amounts of money and periods of time are usually considered singular: ten dollars is not a lot of money to lend someone, and five years is a long time to wait to be repaid.

🌀 **Numbers** ⇒ If your writing contains numbers, the general rule is to spell out in letters all the numbers from zero to nine and use numerals for larger numbers, but there are exceptions. If what you’re writing is full of numbers and you’re doing math with them, stick with numerals. Approximations like “about thirty days ago” and catch-phrases like “his first thousand days” are spelled out. Large round numbers are often rendered thus: “50 billion sold.” With measurements, use numerals: “4 inches long.” Never start a sentence with a numeral. Either spell out the number involved or rearrange the sentence to move the number to a later position.

Many style manuals apply the same rule to what are called “ordinal” numbers, like “first,” “second,” “fifth.” Following this pattern, higher numbers spelled as numerals begin with “10th” and go on through numbers like “22nd” and “114th.” But dates are usually rendered in numerals even if they are small. It’s normally “July 4th” and “the 4th of July,” though few people would object to “Fourth of July.” The only reason to worry about this is if you are writing for an editor or teacher who has a particular preference for one of these patterns. You are more likely to get in trouble if you use numerals for small numbers than if you use spelled-out forms for large numbers: “my 1st trip to France” looks bad to more people than “the seventy-fifth time i’ve told you to take out the trash.” And large round ordinal numbers are almost always spelled out: “the hundredth issue published,” “the thousandth ticket sold,” “the millionth visitor to the park.” See also “50’s.”

🌀 **Numerous of** ⇒ NUMEROUS, NUMBERS OF

“Numerous customers returned the garlic-flavored toothpaste.” “Numbers of customers returned the toothpaste.” “Many of the customers.” Any of these is fine.

But “numerous of the customers”? Yuck.

🌀 **Nuptial** ⇒ NUPTIAL

“Nuptial” is usually a pretentious substitute for “wedding,” but if you’re going to use it, be sure to spell it properly. For the noun, the plural form “nuptials” is more traditional.

🌀 **O / zero** ⇒ When reciting a string of numbers such as your credit card number it is common and perfectly acceptable to pronounce zero as “oh.” But when dealing with a registration code or other such string of characters which mixes letters and numbers, it is important to distinguish between the number 0 and the letter O. In most typefaces a capital O is rounder, fatter, than a zero, but that is not always the case. What looks unambiguous when you type it may come out very unclear on the other end on a computer that renders your message in a different typeface.

In technical contexts, the distinction is often made by using zeros with slashes through them, but this can create as many problems as it solves: those unfamiliar with the convention will be confused by it, numbers using such characters may not sort properly, and slashed zeros created in some fonts change to normal zeros in other fonts.

If you work for a company that requires registration codes you do a disservice to your customers and yourself by including either zeros or O's in your codes where there is any possibility of confusion.

### 👉 **Object d'art** ⇒ OBJET D'ART

The French-derived word for an object of artistic value or a curio is *objet d'art* pronounced “ahb-ZHAY darr,” (first syllable rhymes with “job”). It is often anglicized mistakenly to *object d'art*. People also mispronounce and misspell it *ojet d'art*, omitting the B. The correct plural form is *objets d'art*.

👉 **Obsolescent / obsolete** ⇒ Many people assume the word “obsolescent” must be a fancy form of “obsolete,” but something obsolescent is technically something in the process of becoming obsolete. Therefore it's an error to describe something as “becoming obsolescent.”

### 👉 **Octopi** ⇒ OCTOPUSES

“Octopi” is a slangy plural form of “octopus,” but it's not the form used by marine biologists. Although some prefer “octopodes,” this form is rare. The standard plural form is “octopuses.”

👉 **Odd** ⇒ Expressions like “twenty-odd years,” “a dozen-odd people,” and “two hundred-odd mistakes” are usually written with a hyphen before the “odd” to indicate that the exact number is unknown—perhaps a bit higher than the stated number. If you omit the hyphen, as in “a dozen odd people attended my birthday party,” you risk giving the impression that the people who came were odd rather than that you can't be sure of the precise number of your guests.

👉 **Oeuvre** ⇒ In French *oeuvre* means “work” in many different ways. In English we use the word only in the specialized sense “the body of work produced by an individual creator.” Unfortunately, “oeuvre” begins with a vowel sound we don't have in English and ends in a French R that also does not correspond to any English sound. The result is often grotesque mispronunciations like “oove.” It's better to avoid foreign words like this if you haven't mastered the accent. “Body of work” or “output” will do fine.

👉 **Of** ⇒ “Of” is often shoved in where it doesn't belong in phrases like “not that big of a deal,” and “not that great of a writer.” Just leave it out.

👉 **Of \_\_\_'s** ⇒ Phrases combining “of” with a noun followed by “S” may seem redundant, since both indicate possession; nevertheless, “a friend of Karen's” is standard English, just as “a friend of Karen” and “Karen's friend” are.

### 👉 **Ofcourse** ⇒ OF COURSE

The misspelling of the two-word phrase “of course” as “ofcourse” should be caught by any good spelling-checker, but it seems to be extremely common.

👉 **Offense** ⇒ In the US “offense” is standard; in the UK use “offence.” The sports pronunciation accenting the first syllable should not be used when discussing military, legal, or other sorts of offense.

See also defence/offense.

👉 **Offline** ⇒ When your computer is connected to the Internet, you are online. When you disconnect from the Internet, you are offline.

People who don't understand this often say of things they get from the Internet that they downloaded them “offline,” evidently thinking that the word means

“off of the Internet.” Nothing can be uploaded or downloaded to a site when you are offline.

👉 **Offt chance / off chance** ⇒ “Offt” is just short for “often.” Something that happens on an off chance is something that happens rarely, not often; so the expression is not “on the oft chance” but “on the off chance.”

👉 **Often** ⇒ People striving for sophistication often pronounce the T in this word, but true sophisticates know that the masses are correct in saying “offen.”

👉 **Oggle** ⇒ OGLE

If you’re being leered at lustfully you’re being ogled (first vowel sounds like “OH”)—not “ogged,” even if you’re being ogled through goggles. The word is probably related to the German word äugeln, meaning “to eye,” from Auge (“eye”).

👉 **OK** ⇒ This may be the most universal word in existence; it seems to have spread to most of the world’s languages. Etymologists now generally agree that it began as a humorous misspelling of “all correct”: “oll korrekt.” “OK” without periods is the most common form in written American English now, though “okay” is not incorrect.

👉 **Old English** ⇒ Many people refer to any older form of English as “Old English,” but this is properly a technical term for Anglo-Saxon, the original language in which Beowulf was written. Norman French combined with Old English to create Middle English, one form of which was used by Geoffrey Chaucer to write *The Canterbury Tales*. By Shakespeare’s time the language is modern English, though it may seem antique to modern readers who aren’t used to it.

There are many “Old English” typefaces which have nothing to do with the Old English language.

👉 **Old fashion** ⇒ OLD-FASHIONED

Although “old fashion” appears in advertising a good deal, the traditional spelling is “old-fashioned.”

👉 **Old wise tale** ⇒ OLD WIVES’ TALE

An absurd superstition is an “old wives’ tale”: according to sexist tradition a story popular among credulous old ladies. It’s not an “old wise tale” or—even worse—an “old wives’ tail.”

👉 **Old-timer’s disease** ⇒ ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

i’ve always thought that “old-timer’s disease” was a clever if tasteless pun on “Alzheimer’s Disease,” but many people have assured me that this is a common and quite unintentional error.

Some medical authorities prefer the form “Alzheimer Disease,” though that is seldom used by nonprofessionals.

👉 **On accident** ⇒ BY ACCIDENT

Although you can do things on purpose, you do them by accident.

👉 **On the contraire** ⇒ AU CONTRAIRE, ON THE CONTRARY, TO THE CONTRARY

People who like to show off their French sometimes use the expression au contraire when they mean “on the contrary” or “to the contrary.” People who don’t know any better mix up French and English by saying “on the contraire.” “On the contrary” is the earliest form. It means “it’s the opposite”: “I thought you liked sweet pickles.” “On the contrary, I prefer dills.”

“To the contrary” means “to the opposite effect,” “in opposition”: “No matter what my neighbor says to the contrary, I think it’s his dog that’s been pooping on my petunias.”

👉 **On the lamb** ⇒ ON THE LAMB

When a criminal hides out, he’s on the lam. He wouldn’t get far on a lamb.

👉 **On the same token** ⇒ BY THE SAME TOKEN

When we compare things with each other, we often say “on the one hand” and “on the other hand.” These phrases mean “on this side” and “on the other side.” But it is a mistake to say “on the same token,” meaning “in the same regard.” The standard expression is “by the same token.”

👉 **On tomorrow** ⇒ TOMORROW

You can meet on Monday or on the 21st of March, but it’s an error to say “on tomorrow,” “on yesterday” or “on today” Just leave “on” out (except, of course, in phrases like “let’s meet later on today” using the phrase “later on”).

👉 **Once** ⇒ “Once” always has to do with time and answers the questions, “how many times?” Or “when?” For instance: “I only played handball once.” “Once I got my boot off, I saw my sock had a hole in it.”

In contrast, “ones” have to do with things. In your tool collection, the ones you should keep handy are the ones you use most.

👉 **Once and a while** ⇒ ONCE IN A WHILE

The expression is “once in a while.”

👉 **One in the same** ⇒ ONE AND THE SAME

The old expression “they are one and the same” is now often mangled into the roughly phonetic equivalent “one in the same.” The use of “one” here to mean “identical with each other” is familiar from phrases like “Jane and John act as one.” They are one; they are the same.

👉 **One of the (singular)** ⇒ In phrases like “pistachio is one of the few flavors that appeals to me,” formal grammar would require the verb to be plural (“appeal”) rather than singular (“appeals”) because “that” acts as the subject for the verb, and “that” in this sentence refers to “flavors.” However, many sophisticated users of English allow for the singular verb in this case, though I would caution against the singular verb if you are taking a test on English grammar.

This is one of those occasions in English usage that lets you follow your ear to determine what works best. If you thought “let” would have worked better in that previous sentence, you would have formal grammar on your side, but using “lets” should not get you into trouble, either.

👉 **One of the only** ⇒ ONE OF THE FEW

Although it has recently become much more popular, the phrase “one of the only” bothers some of us in contexts in which “one of the few” would traditionally be used. Be aware that it strikes some readers as odd. “One of only three groups that played in tune” is fine, but “one of the only groups that played in tune” is more likely to cause raised eyebrows.

👉 **One-dimensional** ⇒ TWO-DIMENSIONAL

Once upon a time most folks knew that “three-dimensional” characters or ideas were rounded, fleshed out, and complex and “two-dimensional” ones were flat and uninteresting. It seems that the knowledge of basic geometry has declined in recent years, because today we hear uninteresting characters and ideas described as “one-dimensional.” According to Euclid, no physical object can be one-dimensional (of course, according to modern physics, even two-

dimensionality is only an abstract concept). If you are still bothered by the notion that two dimensions are one too many, just use “flat.”

👉 **Ones / one's** ⇒ The possessive pronoun “one’s” requires an apostrophe before the S, unlike “its,” “hers,” and other personal pronouns. Examples: “pull oneself up by one’s own bootstraps,” “a jury of one’s peers,” “minding one’s own business.”

A simple test: try inserting “anyone’s” in place of “one’s.” If it works grammatically, you need the apostrophe in “one’s” too. When “one’s” is a contraction of “one is” it also requires an apostrophe: “no one’s listening,” “this one’s for you.”

The only times “ones” has no apostrophe are when it is being used to mean “examples” or “people” as in “ripe ones” or “loved ones,” or in the informal arithmetical expression “the ones column.”

👉 **Ongoingly** ⇒ CURRENTLY, CONTINUOUSLY

“Ongoingly” is not standard English. When something is occurring in an ongoing manner, you can speak of it as happening “currently” or “continuously.”

👉 **Online / on line / in line** ⇒ The common adjective used to label Internet activities is usually written as one word: “online”: “The online site selling banana cream pies was a failure.” But it makes more sense when using it as an adverbial phrase to write two separate words: “When the teacher took her class to the library, most of them used it to go on line.” The hyphenated form “on-line” is not widely used, but would be proper only for the adjectival function. However, you are unlikely to get into trouble for using “online” for all computer-related purposes.

As for real physical lines, New Yorkers and Bostonians wait “on line” (in queues), but most Americans wait “in line.”

👉 **Only** ⇒ Writers often inadvertently create confusion by placing “only” incorrectly in a sentence. It should go immediately before the word or phrase it modifies. “I lost my only shirt” means that I had but one to begin with. “I lost only my shirt” means I didn’t lose anything else. “Only I lost my shirt” means that I was the only person in my group to lose a shirt. Strictly speaking, “I only lost my shirt” should mean I didn’t destroy it or have it stolen—I just lost it, but in common speech this is usually understood as being identical with “I lost only my shirt.” Scrutinize your uses of “only” to make sure you are not creating unwanted ambiguities.

👉 **Onto / on to** ⇒ “Onto” and “on to” are often interchangeable, but not always. Consider the effect created by wrongly using “onto” in the following sentence when “on to” is meant: “We’re having hors d’oeuvres in the garden, and for dinner moving onto the house.” If the “on” is part of an expression like “moving on” it can’t be shoved together with a “to” that just happens to follow it.

👉 **Op-ed** ⇒ Although it looks like it might mean “opinion of the editor” the “op-ed” page is actually a page written by columnists or outside contributors to a newspaper, printed opposite the editorial page.

👉 **Open** ⇒ Many people refer to doors as being “open” when they mean to say they are merely unlocked. Telling people to leave a house open may mislead them into making the place more inviting to casual intruders than you intend if you really only want it to be unlocked. And you may unnecessarily alarm the driver if you report from the back seat of a car that one of the doors is open when you mean that it is merely unlatched.

👉 **Opportunist** ⇒ When applied to people, the label “opportunist” usually has negative connotations. It implies that the people so labeled take unprincipled, unfair advantage of opportunities for selfish ends. Opportunistic people are often also regarded as exploitative. The term is often used to label unscrupulous politicians who seek to manipulate voters in their favor by exploiting certain issues or opportunities in an unethical way.

Sports commentators who call the skillful interceptor of a pass in football an “opportunist” are misusing the word.

If you want to praise people for taking legitimate and skilled advantage of opportunities that spring up, it is better to call them “enterprising” or “quick-witted.”

The specialized meaning of “opportunistic” in biology does not cause problems because the people who use the word in this sense know what it describes: the ability of a species to exploit a previously unexploited ecological niche.

👉 **Oppose to** ⇒ OPPOSED TO, SUPPOSED TO

Just as some people say “suppose to” when they mean “supposed to,” others say “oppose to” when they mean “opposed to.” You may be opposed to laugh tracks on TV comedy shows or wearing flip-flops at a wedding reception.

Some people go even further and get “oppose” and “suppose” all mixed up, saying things like “You’re oppose to get the oil changed in the car every 5,000 miles.” That should be “supposed to.”

See also “use to.”

👉 **Oppress / repress** ⇒ Dictators commonly oppress their citizens and repress dissent, but these words don’t mean exactly the same thing. “Repress” just means “keep under control.” Sometimes repression is a good thing: “During the job interview, repress the temptation to tell Mr. Brown that he has toilet paper stuck to his shoe.” Oppression is always bad, and implies serious persecution.

👉 **Oral / verbal** ⇒ Some people insist that “verbal” refers to anything expressed in words, whether written or spoken, while “oral” refers exclusively to speech, but in common usage “verbal” has become widely accepted for the latter meaning. However, in legal contexts, an unwritten agreement is still an “oral contract,” not a “verbal contract.”

👉 **Orders of magnitude** ⇒ Many pretentious writers have begun to use the expression “orders of magnitude” without understanding what it means. The concept derives from the scientific notation of very large numbers in which each order of magnitude is ten times the previous one. When the bacteria in a flask have multiplied from some hundreds to some thousands, it is very handy to say that their numbers have increased by an order of magnitude, and when they have increased to some millions, that their numbers have increased by four orders of magnitude.

Number language generally confuses people. Many seem to suppose that a 100% increase must be pretty much the same as an increase by an order of magnitude, but in fact such an increase represents merely a doubling of quantity. A “hundredfold increase” is even bigger: one hundred times as much. If you don’t have a firm grasp on such concepts, it’s best to avoid the expression altogether. After all, “Our audience is ten times as big now as when the show opened” makes the same point more clearly than “Our audience has increased by an order of magnitude.”

Compare with “quantum leap.”

👉 **Ordinance / ordnance** ⇒ A law is an ordinance, but a gun is a piece of ordnance.

👉 **Oregon** ⇒ Oregon natives and other Westerners pronounce the state name's last syllable to sound like "gun," not "gone."

👉 **Organic** ⇒ The word "organic" is used in all sorts of contexts, often in a highly metaphorical manner; the subject here is its use in the phrase "organic foods" in claims of superior healthfulness. Different jurisdictions have various standards for "organic" food, but generally the label is applied to foods that have been grown without artificial chemicals or pesticides. Literally, of course, the term is a redundancy: all food is composed of organic chemicals (complex chemicals containing carbon). There is no such thing as an inorganic food (unless you count water and salt as foods). Natural fertilizers and pesticides may or may not be superior to artificial ones, but the proper distinction is not between organic and inorganic.

When it comes to nutrition, people tend to generalize rashly from a narrow scientific basis. After a few preservatives were revealed to have harmful effects in some consumers, many products were proudly labeled "No Preservatives!" I don't want harmful preservatives in my food, but that label suggests to me a warning: "Deteriorates quickly! May contain mold and other kinds of rot!" Salt is a preservative.

👉 **Oriental** ⇒ ASIAN

In North America, "Oriental" when it refers to people is now generally considered old-fashioned, and many find it offensive. "Asian" is preferred, but not "Asiatic." It's better to write the nationality involved, for example "Chinese" or "Indian," if you know it. "Asian" is often taken to mean exclusively "East Asian," which irritates South Asian and Central Asian people.

In the UK, "Asian" usually refers exclusively to people of South Asian descent (from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, etc.).

👉 **Orientate** ⇒ ORIENT

Although it is standard in British English "orientate" is widely considered an error in the US, with simple "orient" being preferred.

The same pattern applies to "disorientate" vs. "disorient."

See also "interpretate."

👉 **Ostensively** ⇒ OSTENSIBLY

This word, meaning "apparently," is spelled "ostensibly."

👉 **Ourn** ⇒ OURS

"Ourn" is dialectal; "ours" is standard English. "Well, shoot!" Says Jeb, "That may be the way some folks talk, but it ain't urn."

👉 **Outcast/outcaste** ⇒ Believe it or not, these two similar words have very different origins. An "outcast" is someone who has been cast (thrown) out of a group, and may be used loosely of all kinds of loners.

An "outcaste" is technically a South Asian person who has been expelled from his or her caste, or a person who lacks a caste identification. Although this spelling can be used metaphorically, it is probably better to confine it to discussions of social relations in Hinduism and other South Asian contexts.

👉 **Over and out** ⇒ OUT

There is an old tradition in two-way radio communication of saying "over" to indicate that the speaker is through talking and inviting the other person to speak. You are turning the air over to the person you're speaking with. When you're done speaking, you terminate the conversation by saying "out."

For some reason, Hollywood and radio scriptwriters thought it was neat to conclude radio conversations with "over and out," but this would technically mean "You can talk now if you want, but I'm not going to be listening."

Today “over and out” lives on mostly as an ill-remembered allusion to those old movies and shows in song lyrics and punning headlines. Radio communication buffs, however, cringe when they hear it.

👉 **Over-exaggerated** ⇒ EXAGGERATED

“Over-exaggerated” is a redundancy. If something is exaggerated, it’s already overstressed.

👉 **Oversee / overlook** ⇒ When you oversee the preparation of dinner, you take control and manage the operation closely. But if you overlook the preparation of dinner you forget to prepare the meal entirely—better order pizza.

Adding to the confusion: “oversight” is what you do when you take control (“he assumed oversight of meal preparation”) and also what you neglect to do (“forgetting to add the butter was a serious oversight”).

👉 **Overtake / take over** ⇒ When you catch up with the runners ahead of you in a marathon, you overtake them; but when you seize power, you take over the government.

👉 **Owness** ⇒ ONUS

In Latin onus means “burden.” In English it came to mean “responsibility”: “the onus is on the defense attorney to convince the jury of the defendant’s innocence.” It is often used to mean “blame”: “he bears the onus of having lost the key to the vacation house.”

People sometimes mishear this word and turn it into “owness.” This form is also used by some to refer to the opposite of otherness, but that would be “ownness,” with two n’s.

👉 **Page / site** ⇒ In the early days of the Internet, it became customary to refer to Web sites as “pages” though they might in fact consist of many different pages. The Jane Austen Page, for instance, incorporates entire books, and is organized into a very large number of distinct Web pages. This nomenclature is illogical, but too well established to be called erroneous. However, it is not wise to write someone who has created a large and complex site and call it a “page.” Not everyone appreciates having their work diminished in this way.

👉 **Pair (number)** ⇒ “This is a left-handed pair of scissors.” “There is a pair of glasses on the mantelpiece.” “Pair” is singular in this sort of expression. Note that we say “that is a nice pair of pants” even though we also say “those are nice pants.”

👉 **Pair / pare / pear** ⇒ When you peel an apple, you pare it. The resultant apple peelings are called “parings.” “Pare” is also used metaphorically in phrases having to do with removing portions of something, such as “pare down the budget” or “pare your wish list to the three most important items.” Many people overlook the meaning of this word and write instead “pair” or even “pear.” You can pair apples with pears in a dessert, but to peel them you have to pare them. Although it’s not too surprising that cooks should mix up these spellings, it’s astounding how often medical and scientific writers refer to substances that are “pared” with each other. A couple of medicines or treatments are paired with each other.

👉 **Palate / palette / pallet** ⇒ Your “palate” is the roof of your mouth, and by extension, your sense of taste. A “palette” is the flat board an artist mixes paint on (or by extension, a range of colors). A “pallet” is either a bed (now rare) or a flat platform onto which goods are loaded.

👉 **Par excellence** ⇒ PAR EXCELLENCE

Photoshop is the picture-editing software par excellence. We often italicize this phrase—meaning roughly “finest or most characteristic of its type,” “exemplary”—to indicate it is French. The French pronounce the final syllable “-ahnss” (with a nasalized N which is hard for English-speakers to master), but that is no justification for misspelling the word as “excellance.” Although they pronounce it differently, they spell “excellence” the same way we do.

### 👉 **Parallel** ⇒ SYMBOL

Beginning literature students often write sentences like this: “He uses the rose as a parallel for her beauty” when they mean “a symbol of her beauty.” If you are taking a literature class, it’s good to master the distinctions between several related terms relating to symbolism. An eagle clutching a bundle of arrows and an olive branch is a symbol of the US government in war and peace.

Students often misuse the word “analogy” in the same way. An analogy has to be specifically spelled out by the writer, not simply referred to: “My mother’s attempts to find her keys in the morning were like early expeditions to the South Pole: prolonged and mostly futile.”

A metaphor is a kind of symbolism common in literature. When Shakespeare writes “That time of year thou mayst in me behold/When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang/Upon those boughs which shake against the cold” he is comparing his aging self to a tree in late autumn, perhaps even specifically suggesting that he is going bald by referring to the tree shedding its leaves. This autumnal tree is a metaphor for the human aging process.

A simile resembles a metaphor except that “like” or “as” or something similar is used to make the comparison explicitly. Byron admires a dark-haired woman by saying of her, “She walks in beauty, like the night/Of cloudless climes and starry skies.” Her darkness is said to be like that of the night.

An allegory is a symbolic narrative in which characters may stand for abstract ideas, and the story conveys a philosophy. Allegories are no longer popular, but the most commonly read one in school is Dante’s *Divine Comedy* in which the poet Virgil is a symbol for human wisdom, Dante’s beloved Beatrice is a symbol of divine grace, and the whole poem tries to teach the reader how to avoid damnation. Aslan in C. S. Lewis’ *Narnia tales* is an allegorical figure meant to symbolize Christ: dying to save others and rising again (aslan is Turkish for “lion”).

👉 **Parallelism in a series** ⇒ Phrases in a series separated by commas or conjunctions must all have the same grammatical form. “They loved mountain-climbing, to gather wild mushrooms, and first aid practice” should be corrected to something like this: “They loved to climb mountains, gather wild mushrooms, and practice first aid” (all three verbs are dependent on that initial “to”). Fear of being repetitious often leads writers into awkward inconsistencies when creating such series.

### 👉 **Paralleled / paralleled** ⇒ PARALLELED

The spelling of the past tense of “parallel” is “paralleled.”

### 👉 **Paralyzation** ⇒ PARALYSIS

Some people derive the noun “paralyzation” from the verb “paralyze,” but the proper term is “paralysis.”

👉 **Parameters / perimeters** ⇒ When parameters were spoken of only by mathematicians and scientists, the term caused few problems; but now that it has become widely adopted by other speakers, it is constantly confused with “perimeters.” A parameter is most commonly a numerical factor, a set of physical properties, or a characteristic of something. But the perimeter of

something is its boundary. The two words shade into each other because we often speak of factors of an issue or problem being parameters, simultaneously thinking of them as limits; but this is to confuse two distinct, if related ideas. A safe rule is to avoid using “parameters” altogether unless you are confident you know what it means.

👉 **Paramount / tantamount** ⇒ “Paramount” means “best,” “top.” Think of Paramount Pictures’ trademark of a majestic mountain peak encircled with stars.

“Tantamount” means “equivalent.”

“The committee’s paramount concern is to get at the truth; your continued insistence that you don’t remember any of the meetings you attended is tantamount to a confession of incompetence.”

👉 **Paranoid** ⇒ The most common meaning of “paranoid” has to do with irrational fears of persecution, especially the unjustified fear that people are plotting against you. More generally it is applied to irrational fears of other kinds, but it is often misused of rational fears, as in “I know my Mom has been reading my blog, so I’m paranoid that she’s found out what Jason and I did last Saturday night.” That’s not paranoia, but fully justifiable fear. It also doesn’t make sense to use “paranoid” about mild worries and fears. When you say you are paranoid, you should be conveying your own irrationality, not the risks you feel you are running.

👉 **Parentheses** ⇒ The most common error in using parenthesis marks (besides using them too much) is to forget to enclose the parenthetical material with a final, closing parenthesis mark. The second most common is to place concluding punctuation incorrectly. The simplest sort of example is one in which the entire sentence is enclosed in parentheses. (Most people understand that the final punctuation must remain inside the closing parenthesis mark, like this.) More troublesome are sentences in which only a clause or phrase is enclosed in parentheses. Normally a sentence’s final punctuation mark—whether period, exclamation point, or question mark—goes outside such a parenthesis (like this). However, if the material inside the parenthesis requires a concluding punctuation mark like an exclamation point or question mark (but not a period!), that mark is placed inside the closing mark even though another mark is outside it. This latter sort of thing is awkward, however, and best avoided if you can help it.

For some reason, many writers have begun to omit the space before a parenthetical page citation, like this:(p. 17). Always preserve the space, like this: (p. 17).

👉 **Parliment** ⇒ PARLIAMENT

Americans unfamiliar with parliamentary systems often mistakenly leave the second “A” out of “parliament” and “parliamentary.”

👉 **Partake / participate** ⇒ “Partake” looks like it might mean “take part,” and that’s how many people mistakenly use it where they should say “participate.” The main modern meaning of “partake” is “consume,” especially in relation to food. One can partake of the refreshments at a party, but one can also partake of Twinkies at home alone, without any thought of sharing.

So don’t ask people to “partake” in a planning process when you mean to ask them to participate.

👉 **Pass the muster** ⇒ PASS MUSTER

When military troops are assembled for a review, they are mustered. A soldier who passes inspection is said to “pass muster.” We use this phrase for all kinds

of things and processes that must be approved, meet a certain standard. It is most often used in a negative sense, as in a flawed business plan than “doesn’t pass muster.”

The nonstandard form “pass the muster” may be influenced by the unrelated term “cut the mustard,” which has a similar meaning. Don’t believe those who insist that the latter phrase is a mistake for “cut the muster.” And the expression is definitely not “pass the mustard.”

See “cut the muster” on the Non-Errors page.

👉 **Passed / past** ⇒ If you are referring to a distance or a period of time before now, use “past”: “the police car drove past the suspect’s house” (distance) or “the team performed well in the past” (time). If you are describing the action of passing, however, you need to use “passed”: “when John passed the gravy, he spilled it on his lap,” “the teacher was astonished that none of the students had passed the test,” “after a brief illness, he passed away.” Remember that no matter however you have “passed the time” you have never “past the time,” not even in the distant past.

“Past” can be an adjective, a noun, a preposition, or an adverb, but never a verb. If you need to write the past tense of the verb “to pass,” use “passed.”

👉 **Passive voice** ⇒ There are legitimate uses for the passive voice: “this absurd regulation was of course written by a committee.” But it’s true that you can make your prose more lively and readable by using the active voice much more often. “The victim was attacked by three men in ski masks” isn’t nearly as striking as “three men in ski masks attacked the victim.” The passive voice is often used to avoid taking responsibility for an action: “my term paper was accidentally deleted” avoids stating the truth: “I accidentally deleted my term paper.” Over-use of passive constructions is irritating, though not necessarily erroneous. But it does lead to real clumsiness when passive constructions get piled on top of each other: “no exception to the no-pets rule was sought to be created so that angora rabbits could be raised in the apartment” can be made clearer by shifting to the active voice: “the landlord refused to make an exception to the no-pets rule to allow Eliza to raise angora rabbits in the apartment.”

👉 **Past time** ⇒ PASTIME

An agreeable activity like knitting with which you pass the time is your pastime. Spell it as one word, with one “S” and one “T.”

👉 **Pastorial** ⇒ PASTORAL

Whether you are referring to poetry or art about the countryside or the duties of a pastor, the word you want is “pastoral.” “Pastorial” is a common misspelling.

👉 **Patience / patients** ⇒ Doctors have patients, but while you’re waiting to see them you have to have patience.

👉 **Pause for concern** ⇒ CAUSE FOR CONCERN, PAUSE

Something worrisome can give you pause, or cause for concern. But some people confuse these two expressions and say they have “pause for concern.”

👉 **Pawn off / palm off** ⇒ PALM OFF

Somebody defrauds you by using sleight of hand (literal or figurative) to “palm” the object you wanted and give you something inferior instead. The expression is not “to pawn off,” but “to palm off.”

👉 **Payed / paid** ⇒ If you paid attention in school, you know that the past tense of “pay” is “paid” except in the special sense that has to do with ropes: “He payed out the line to the smuggler in the rowboat.”

### 👉 **PC computer** ⇒ PC

The phrase “PC computer” is a bit awkward and redundant since “PC” stands for “personal computer.” The problem is that originally the label “PC” meant not personal computers generally, but computers compatible with the IBM PC introduced in 1981. By the time IBM adopted the abbreviation for a specific model there had been many earlier personal computers like the Commodore PET and the Apple II. Now IBM doesn't make pcs and none of today's popular personal computers is compatible with the original PC. The label is still used to distinguish between computers running some version of Microsoft's Windows operating system and the Macintosh computers made by Apple, even though Macs are certainly personal computers and the newer ones can also run Windows. No wonder people forget what “PC” stands for. If you want to use the abbreviation to indicate that your computer is not a Mac, “PC” alone will do, despite its literal inaccuracy.

👉 **Peace / piece** ⇒ It's hard to believe many people really confuse the meaning of these words, but the spellings are frequently swapped, probably out of sheer carelessness. “Piece” has the word “pie” buried in it, which should remind you of the familiar phrase, “a piece of pie.” You can meditate to find peace of mind, or you can get angry and give someone a piece of your mind. Classical scholars will note that pax is the Latin word for peace, suggesting the need for an “A” in the latter word.

👉 **Peak / peek / pique** ⇒ It is tempting to think that your attention might be aroused to a high point by “peaking” your curiosity; but in fact, “pique” is a French word meaning “prick,” in the sense of “stimulate.” The expression has nothing to do with “peek,” either. Therefore the expression is “my curiosity was piqued.”

An amazing number of people write about “mountain peeks.” A peak is a summit; a peek is a glimpse.

👉 **Peal out / peel out** ⇒ Bells and thunderclaps peal out; but if your car “lays down rubber” in a squealing departure, the expression is “peel out” because you are literally peeling a layer of rubber off your tires.

👉 **Peasant / pheasant** ⇒ When I visited the former Soviet Union I was astonished to learn that farmworkers were still called “peasants” there. In English-speaking countries we tend to think of the term as belonging strictly to the feudal era. However you use it, don't confuse it with “pheasant,” a favorite game bird. Use the sound of the beginning consonants to remind you of the difference: pheasants are food, peasants are people.

👉 **Pedal / peddle** ⇒ If you are delivering newspapers from a bike you can pedal it around the neighborhood (perhaps wearing “pedal-pushers”), but when you sell them from a newsstand you peddle them.

👉 **Pedal to the metal** ⇒ PEDAL TO THE METAL

When you depress the accelerator all the way so that it presses against the metal of the floorboards you put the pedal to the metal. You get no medals for speeding.

👉 **Pen / pin** ⇒ In the dialect of many Texans and some of their neighbors “pen” is pronounced almost exactly like “pin.” When speaking to an audience outside this zone, it's worth learning to make the distinction to avoid confusion.

👉 **Penultimate / next to last** ⇒ To confuse your readers, use the term “penultimate,” which means “next to last,” but which most people assume means “the very last.” And if you really want to baffle them, use “antepenultimate” to mean “third from the end.”

Many people also mistakenly use “penultimate” when they mean “quintessential” or “archetypical.”

👉 **Peoples** ⇒ In the Middle Ages “peoples” was not an uncommon word, but later writers grew wary of it because “people” has a collective, plural meaning which seemed to make “peoples” superfluous. It lived on in the sense of “nations” (“the peoples of the world”) and from this social scientists (anthropologists in particular) derived the extended meaning “ethnic groups” (“the peoples of the upper Amazon Basin”). However, in ordinary usage “people” is usually understood to be plural, so much so that in the bad old days when dialect humor was popular having a speaker refer to “you peoples” indicated illiteracy. If you are not referring to national or ethnic groups, it is better to avoid “peoples” and use “people.”

The possessive form “people’s” is of course fine in sentences like “If elected, I will do the people’s will.”

See also behaviors.

👉 **Per** ⇒ ACCORDING TO

Using “per” to mean “according to” as in “ship the widgets as per the instructions of the customer” is rather old-fashioned business jargon, and is not welcome in other contexts. “Per” is fine when used in phrases involving figures like “miles per gallon.”

👉 **Percent decrease** ⇒ When something has been reduced by one hundred percent, it’s all gone (or if the reduction was in its price, it’s free). You can’t properly speak of reducing anything by more than a hundred percent (unless it’s a deficit or debt, in which case you wind up with a surplus).

👉 **Percent, per cent** ⇒ In the US the two-word spelling “per cent” is considered rather old-fashioned and is rarely used; but in the UK and countries influenced by it, the two-word form is still standard, though use of “percent” is spreading fast even there.

👉 **Percipitation** ⇒ PRECIPITATION

Rain, snow, hail, etc. Are all forms of precipitation. This word is often misspelled and mispronounced as “percipitation.”

👉 **Peripheral** ⇒ The third syllable in “peripheral” does not sound like “free.” It should be pronounced like “fur.”

👉 **Pernickety / persnickety** ⇒ The original Scottish dialect form was “pernickety,” but Americans changed it to “persnickety” a century ago. “Pernickety” is generally unknown in the US though it’s still in wide use across the Atlantic.

👉 **Perogative / prerogative** ⇒ “Prerogative” is frequently both mispronounced and misspelled as “perogative.” It may help to remember that the word is associated with privileges of precedence.

👉 **Perpetrate / perpetuate** ⇒ “Perpetrate” is something criminals do (criminals are sometimes called “perps” in cop slang). When you seek to continue something you are trying to perpetuate it.

👉 **Persay** ⇒ PER SE

This legal term (meaning “in, of, or by itself”) is a bit pretentious, but you gain little respect if you misspell “per se” as a single word. Worse is the mistaken “per say.”

👉 **Persecute / prosecute** ⇒ When you persecute someone, you’re treating them badly, whether they deserve it or not, but only legal officers can prosecute someone for a crime.

👉 **Personal / personnel** ⇒ Employees are personnel, but private individuals considered separately from their jobs have personal lives.

👉 **Personality** ⇒ In show business personalities are people famous for being famous (mostly popular actors and singers); people with more substantial accomplishments like distinguished heads of state and Nobel Prize winners should not be referred to as “personalities” even when they appear on the Tonight Show.

👉 **Perspective / prospective** ⇒ “Perspective” has to do with sight, as in painting, and is usually a noun. “Prospective” generally has to do with the future (compare with “What are your prospects, young man?”) And is usually an adjective. But beware: there is also a rather old-fashioned but fairly common meaning of the word “prospect” that has to do with sight: “as he climbed the mountain, a vast prospect opened up before him.”

👉 **Peruse** ⇒ This word, which means “examine thoroughly” is often misused to mean “glance over hastily.” Although some dictionaries accept the latter meaning, it is not traditional.

When it is used to mean “look through” it is not standard to add “through” to “peruse.” It’s not “peruse through the records” but “peruse the records.”

👉 **Perverse / perverted** ⇒ The sex-related meanings of words tend to drive out all other meanings. Most people think of both “perverse” and “perverted” only in contexts having to do with desire, but “perverse” properly has the function of signifying “stubborn,” “wrong-headed.” Nothing erotic is suggested by this sort of thing: “Josh perversely insisted on carving wooden replacement parts for his 1958 Ford’s engine.” It’s better to use “perverted” in relation to abnormal sexual desires, but this word also has non-sexual functions, as in “The bake-sale was perverted by Gladys into a fundraiser for her poker habit.” People sometimes mispronounce “pervert” as “PREE-vert.”

👉 **Phantom / fathom** ⇒ Brianna exclaims confusedly, “I can’t phantom why he thought I’d want a coupon for an oil change for Valentine’s Day!” A phantom is a ghost, but a fathom is a nautical measure of depth. When you can’t understand something—being unable to get to the bottom of it—you should say “I can’t fathom it.” “Phantom” is not a verb.

👉 **Phenomena / phenomenon** ⇒ There are several words with Latin or Greek roots whose plural forms ending in A are constantly mistaken for singular ones. See, for instance, criteria and media and data. It’s “this phenomenon,” but “these phenomena.”

👉 **Philippines / Filipinos** ⇒ The people of the Philippines are called “Filipinos.” Don’t switch the initial letters of these two words.

👉 **Phoney / phony** ⇒ The usual spelling in the US is “phony”; the usual spelling in the UK and in some countries influenced by it is “phoney.”

👉 **Phrasal verbs vs. Nouns** ⇒ PHRASAL VERBS VS. NOUNS

Phrasal verbs make up a huge category of expressions in English that careless users often misspell by substituting one-word noun forms for the standard two-word phrasal verb; for instance: it would have been a mistake for me to have written “Phrasal verbs makeup a huge category.” It is fine to write “I didn’t want to put on my makeup” (“makeup” is a noun) or “I had to take the makeup exam.” (In this example “makeup” is a noun acting like an adjective modifying another noun—“exam”. What kind of exam was it? A makeup exam.) Such nouns are often hyphenated, at least early in their history (it used to be common to write “make-up exam,” and that is still fine); but there is a strong tendency for such

hyphenated forms to evolve into single words. If both versions are current, the hyphenated form is usually the more formal one.

Most phrasal verbs consist of a verb and adverb combined. Note that some of the adverbs involved can also function as prepositions, but don't let this confuse you. In the phrase "cool down the broth" "down" is an adverb. Some do actually consist of a verb and a preposition, but these rarely cause problems. You aren't likely to write "would you lookafter my cat while I'm gone?"

All of this is of little use if you're not clear about what a noun is and what a verb or an adverb is. What follows is a long list of phrasal verbs (first) and their related one-word noun forms (second) with examples that may help you understand what the differences are in standard English. I've also included some examples in which the one-word form is an adjectival form rather than a noun. There are some insulting phrases that I'm not including here because filters might balk at them, but if you write something like "he's a real \_\_\_\_\_ because he tends to \_\_\_\_\_" the second blank should be filled in with a two-word non-hyphenated phrasal verb.

If the word involved is immediately preceded by "a," "an," or "the," you probably need the one-word noun form. If it's immediately preceded by "to," you probably need the two-word phrasal verb. If you're tempted to use a one-word spelling elsewhere, try using a two-word or hyphenated form instead. If it looks better, it probably is.

**Note:** What follows is not meant to be exhaustive. It does not cover every possible meaning of these expressions. The entries are just sample two-word and one-word forms in context to give you an idea of what might be suitable. Many one-word entries listed below are used in the UK mainly in hyphenated form, but i've followed general US patterns.

### **Back down vs. Backdown**

Don't let him make you back down. The result would be a humiliating backdown.

### **Back up vs. Backup**

Back up your data regularly; then you'll have a backup when your hard disk crashes.

### **Bail out vs. Bailout**

If the government has to bail out a bank it may have to pass a bailout bill. The result is a government bailout.

### **Beat up vs. Beat-up**

The thugs beat up the weaker kids. He drove a beat-up truck.

### **Blast off vs. Blastoff**

The spaceship was ready to blast off. Blastoff occurred at dawn.

### **Blow out vs. Blowout**

Blow out the candle. The party was a blowout.

### **Blow up vs. Blow-up, blowup**

Blow up the building. A storm may blow up. A blow-up Santa Claus. Their disagreement led to a blowup. The blowup of the photo showed spinach between her teeth.

### **Boil over vs. Boilover**

Don't let the milk boil over. You have to watch carefully to avoid a boilover.

### **Break away vs. Breakaway**

Some states wanted to break away from the Union. The breakaway group decided to meet separately

### **break down vs. Breakdown**

*Break down this wall. Break down the argument so I can understand it. The problems in the company led to a complete breakdown.*

**Break out vs. Breakout**

*Escapes break out of prison. The guards try to prevent a breakout.*

**Lift off vs. Liftoff**

*The rocket is ready to lift off. We have achieved liftoff.*

**Break up vs. Breakup**

*I hope we don't break up over this. A breakup always hurts.*

**Brush off vs. Brushoff**

*Brush off the cat hair. Don't listen to that guy; give him the brushoff.*

**Build up vs. Buildup**

*Build up your bank account. Avoid bathtub scum buildup.*

**Burn off vs. Burnoff**

*Hoping that the fog will burn off. Burn off the fat. The shrubs were destroyed in the area of the burnoff.*

**Buy in vs. Buy-in**

*To raise the money, we had to get several investors to buy in. We needed to get buy-in from all the parties concerned.*

**Buy off vs. Buyoff**

*The gangsters tried to buy off the cops. The extra health insurance benefit was a buyoff for early retirees.*

**Buy out vs. Buyout**

*The big corporation intended to buy out its small competitors. The company offered a buyout to get some of its employees to quit.*

**Call back vs. Callback**

*Call back your dogs. If no one answers the first time a callback is required.*

**Carry on vs. Carry-on**

*You can carry on one small bag. We have to inspect your carry-on. Carry-on luggage has to fit in the overhead bin.*

**Cash in vs. Cash-in**

*After working for 48 years, he decided to cash in. A cash-in refinance.*

**Cash out vs. Cashout**

*Close down the business and cash out. A lump-sum cashout. A cashout poker tournament.*

**Catch up vs. Catch-up**

*Wait for me to catch up. We're not getting anywhere; we're just playing catch-up.*

**Cave in vs. Cave-in**

*The kids kept begging to go to Disney World until they got me to cave in. The miners were trapped by a cave-in.*

**Change over vs. Changeover**

*We want to change over to a Web-based billing system. Accounting will be in charge of the changeover.*

**Check in vs. Check-in**

*You must check in before boarding the plane. You must complete check-in before participating in the meeting. The check-in procedures have been simplified.*

**Check out vs. Checkout**

*Check out the book from the library. Check out the cute lifeguard. Wait in the checkout line. Checkout is at 10:00 AM.*

**Check up vs. Checkup**

*I thought I'd check up on how she was doing. Go to the doctor for a checkup.*

**Chill out vs. Chill-out, chillout**

*Relax, man; chill out! This is my chill-out time. Chillout music.*

**Clamp down vs. Clampdown**

*The city is going to clamp down on illegal parking. I've gotten five tickets since the clampdown began.*

**Claw back vs. Clawback**

*The government needs to claw back some of the revenues it lost last quarter. The clawback will hit the incomes of some poor families especially hard.*

**Clean out vs. Cleanout**

*Clean out the refrigerator. Remove the cleanout to clear the clogged sink drain.*

**Click through vs. Clickthrough**

*Click through to claim your free ipod. The ad had a high clickthrough rate.*

**Close in vs. Close-in**

*The officers began to close in on the suspect. I hate commuting; I'd rather live close-in.*

**Close out vs. Closeout**

*Let's close out our stock of vcrs. We can get rid of them in a closeout sale. I bought this sweater cheap on closeout.*

**Close up vs. Close-up, closeup**

*The car doesn't look so good close up. We're going to close up the beach house for the season. High-definition video shows wrinkles clearly in a close-up (or closeup).*

**Come down vs. Comedown**

*Come down and see us in Baja this winter. From CEO to janitor: what a comedown!*

**Come on vs. Come-on**

*He tried to come on to me. Come on, you know you really like washing the car. The enticing offer was just a come-on.*

**Cool down vs. Cool-down, cooldown**

*Cool down in the shade for a while. Allow some time for a cool-down period after running. Before working out, do a warmup; and afterward, a cooldown.*

**Cop out vs. Cop-out, copout**

*When it was his turn to wash the dishes he would always cop out. That lame excuse was a real cop-out (or copout).*

**Crack down vs. Crackdown**

*The coach is going to crack down on players using steroids. Management insisted on a crackdown.*

**Cut back vs. Cutback**

*I'm trying to cut back on French fries. A government cutback.*

**Cut out vs. Cut-out, cutout**

*Cut out the fat. He put a cut-out (or cutout) in the exhaust pipe. A cut-out valentine.*

**Die off vs. Die-off**

*The honeybees began to die off. When the meteor struck the earth it caused a huge die-off.*

**Draw back vs. Drawback**

*The threat of a beating caused him to draw back. The drawback of the plan was they they didn't have a car for the getaway.*

**Draw down vs. Drawdown**

*Draw down your savings to invest in my company. After the drawdown it wasn't clear that there was enough water left in the reservoir to supply the town for the summer.*

**Dress up vs. Dress-up, dressup**

We'll dress up for the party. The girls like to play dress-up (or dressup).

**Drive by vs. Drive-by**

Drive by the house to see whether it looks occupied. It was a drive-by shooting.

**Drop off vs. drop-off**

Drop off the cleaning on your way to work. A drop-off in attendance. Cell phone drop-off locations. A steep drop-off in attendance.

**Drop out vs. Dropout**

If you drop out of school, you'll regret it later. You don't want to be a dropout.

**Face off vs. Face-off**

They will face off against each other on the talk show. A hockey game begins with a face-off.

**Fall back vs. Fallback**

The soldiers had to fall back and regroup. Just in case we need a fallback (or a fallback alternative).

**Fall off vs. Falloff**

Quality began to fall off. There was a falloff in quality.

**Fill out vs. Fill-out** Fill out the forms to apply for the scholarship. The fill-out forms are available on the Web site.

**Fix up vs. Fix-up**

Fix up the basement as a home theater. The only date he could get was a fix-up. A novel made up of related short stories is sometimes called a "fix-up."

**Flame out vs. Flameout**

When they entered the tournament I knew their team would flame out. The jet suffered a flameout. Their career ended in spectacular flameout.

**Flare up vs. Flare-up, flareup**

Dripping fat causes the charcoal to flare up. The conflict will flare up. A flare-up (or flareup) of flu.

**Fly by vs. Flyby**

In this fascinating class time will just fly by. The space probe was designed for a flyby of the Planet Mongo.

**Fly over vs. Flyover**

You'll fly over our house on your way to the airport. The Air Force Blue Angels staged a flyover to mark the beginning of Seafair. In the UK, an overpass is a flyover.

**Fold up vs. Fold-up**

Fold up the sheets before you put them away. We have a fold-up treadmill.

**Follow through vs. Follow-through**

He invited everybody to the birthday party but he failed to follow through by ordering a cake. The secret to a good golf swing is the follow-through.

**Freak out vs. Freakout**

Calm down, don't freak out. It was wild: a real freakout.

**Freeze out vs. Freeze-out**

The large investors tried to freeze out the small ones. Victim of a freeze-out. A freeze-out plug.

**Gad about vs. Gadabout**

I like to gad about to different parties. My friends say that makes me a real gadabout.

**Get away vs. Getaway**

We want to get away for the winter. A trip to New Zealand seems like a good getaway.

**Give away vs. Give-away, giveaway**

I'm trying to give away my old VCR. The bank promised every new customer a giveaway. Unfortunately their giveaway gifts turned out to be shares of their worthless stock. Her expression was a dead give-away (or giveaway).

**Give back vs. Giveback**

He had to give back the comic book. Management insisted on a health benefit giveback when it negotiated with the union.

**Go ahead vs. Go-ahead**

We decided to go ahead with the project. The city permit office gave us the go-ahead.

**Go by vs. Go-by**

How time does go by. He lost interest in her and gave her the go-by.

**Goof off vs. Goof-off**

I don't feel like working today; let's just goof off. That guy is a lazy goof-off.

**Hand out vs. Handout**

Hand out the cookies at snack time. He was begging for a handout. On every street-corner there's someboy distributing handouts.

**Hang out vs. Hangout**

We don't have to go any place special; let's just hang out together. The Harbor Pub is a popular Island hangout.

**Hang up vs. Hangup**

Hang up your coat. I have a real hangup about robocalls; I just hang up on them.

**Hold back vs. Holdback**

She couldn't hold back her tears. The lender insisted on a 20% holdback until the project was done.

**Hold out vs. Holdout**

Hold out for a better deal. Most of the partners agreed to the merger, but there was one holdout.

**Hook up vs. Hook-up, hookup**

Go out and see who you can hook up with. I wasn't really interested in him, he was just a casual hookup. We just had a hookup.

**Keep away vs. Keepaway**

I try to keep away from cheeseburgers. They were playing keepaway with with his backpack.

**Kiss off vs. Kiss-off**

Just kiss off the ones you don't like. Give them the kiss-off.

**Knock down vs. Knock-down**

Knock down the furniture for shipping. I got it at a knock-down price. It was a knock-down, drag-out fight.

**Knock off vs. Knockoff** Knock off the arguing with your sister. That isn't a real Coach bag; it's just a cheap knockoff.

**Lay off vs. Layoff**

The company wants to lay off more works. This will be a devastating layoff.

**Lay out vs. Layout**

Lay out the body for the funeral. You'll have to lay out some serious money for that granite countertop. We need a more efficient kitchen layout.

**Let down vs. Letdown**

Let down your hair on your birthday. The bad review my boss gave me was a real letdown.

**Lie down vs. Lie-down**

Take your shoes off before you lie down on the bed. Why don't you have a good lie-down?

**Lift off vs. Liftoff**

The rocket is ready to lift off. We have achieved liftoff.

**Live in vs. Live-in**

They want a nanny to live in: a live-in nanny.

**Lock down vs. Lockdown**

Lock down the prison. The prison reacted to the riot with a lockdown.

**Lock up vs. Lockup** Lock up the house when you go on vacation. Throw the mugger in the lockup.

**Log in vs. Log-in, login**

Log in to your account. Enter your log-in ID. Your log-in (or login) is complete.

**Log off vs. Log-off or logoff**

Log off when you leave the bank site. Complete your log-off (or logoff) by clicking here.

**Look in vs. Look-in**

Look in on me when you come by the hospital. The nurse gave me a quick look-in during her rounds.

**Look up vs. Lookup**

You can look up the name of the first owner of your house in the local library. You can do a zip code lookup on the USPS site. The spreadsheet provides a useful lookup function.

**Look out vs. Look-out**

Look out for falling rocks. Pull over onto the look-out and admire the mountains. The bank robbers were caught because they forgot to use a look-out. If you don't want to use a password to secure your laptop, that's your look-out.

**Make do vs. Make-do**

Since we can't afford to buy a new car right now, we'll just have to make do with the old one. The tarp works as a make-do tent.

**Make up vs. Make-up, makeup**

Make up your mind. Take the make-up exam. Put on makeup.

**Mark down vs. Markdown**

If they mark down the sweaters, i'll buy one. There was a big markdown on last year's model.

**Mark up vs. Markup**

Mark up the document. Mark up the merchandise. The markup on this face-cream is about 500%.

**Mash up vs. Mashup**

Mash up the carrots with the potatoes. Her recording is more a mashup than a remix of those songs.

**Mix up vs. Mix-up**

Mix up the paint for the doghouse. There had been a mix-up at the bank.

**Mop up vs. Mop-up**

Mop up the spilled milk. It was a mop-up operation.

**Opt out vs. Opt-out**

Opt out of the mailing list. The Direct Marketing Association offers an opt-out service.

**Pass through vs. Pass-through** Can ultraviolet light pass through the lenses? There was a pass-through between the kitchen and dining room. What is the pass-through rate?

**Pay back vs. Payback**

Pay back the loan. The water baloon was payback for the wedgie.

**Pay off vs. Pay-off, payoff**

We hope to pay off our mortgage soon. Our investments are beginning to pay off. His gamble had a disappointing payoff (or pay-off).

**Phase out vs. Phase-out**

Let's phase out the old models next month. The phase-out is just about complete.

**Pick up vs. Pickup**

Pick up the trash and throw it in your pickup.

**Pig out vs. Pig-out, pigout**

Try not to pig out at the buffet. After last night's pigout (or pig-out) I need to go on a diet.

**Pin up vs. Pin-up**

Pin up the hem. A photo of Betty Grable in a swimsuit was a famous WWII pin-up (or pinup). She was a pin-up girl.

**Play back vs. Playback**

Play back the recording. On old tape recorders the record head was usually to the left of the playback head. We listened to the playback. Asha Bhosle is a famous playback singer in Bollywood movies.

**Plug in vs. Plugin**

Plug in the vacuum cleaner. This is a cool Photoshop plugin (or plug-in).

**Pop out vs. Pop-out**

The zits began to pop out all over her chin. The car has a pop-out windshield.

**Press on vs. Press-on**

If we're going to make base camp by sundown we need to press on. Before pagemaker, we used to create the headlines in our newsletter with press-on type.

**Pull apart vs. Pull-apart**

The teacher had to pull apart the two kids who were fighting. Our bakery makes really good pull-apart rolls. They make a whole-wheat pull-apart.

**Pull down vs. Pull-down**

Pull down the shades. Make your selection from the pull-down menu.

**Pull off vs. Pull-off**

Can the team pull off an upset next Saturday? You can get a great view from the next pull-off on the highway.

**Pull over vs. Pullover**

Pull over and let me drive for a while. Would you rather I knitted you a cardigan or a pullover? It was a pullover shirt.

**Push up vs. Push-up**

We got ready for the last push up the mountain. She did a one-handed push-up. She wore a push-up bra. She ate a push-up pop.

**Put down vs. Put-down**

Put down the gun. It was an insulting remark, a real put-down.

**Put on vs. Put-on**

Put on the kettle for tea. His pretence of indifference was just a put-on. It was a put-on expression.

**Ring back vs. Ring-back**

When you get my message, please ring back immediately. After dialing, you hear the ring-back tone.

**Rip off vs. Rip-off, ripoff**

Rip off the plastic wrapping to get at the game. They tried to rip off our design. Their version was a total rip-off. They charge rip-off prices.

**Roll back vs. Roll-back, rollback**

Roll back the prices. The store announced a price roll-back (or rollback).

**Roll over vs. Rollover** The vans tended to roll over. Roll over your IRA into a Roth. Yesterday on the highway there were two collisions and a roll-over (or rollover). They put a rollover at the top of their home page.

**Rub down vs. Rubdown**

Rub down the beef with an herb mixture. After the game you need a rubdown.

**Run about vs. Runabout**

These lamps will run about \$100 each. This kind of little car is called a runabout.

**Run around vs. Runaround**

I had to run around all morning to get everything ready for the party. When I asked him for a straight answer, he gave me the runaround.

**Run off vs. Runoff**

Run off with the circus; catch the runoff from the gutters.

**Run up vs. Run-up**

Run up the stairs. The scandal broke out during the run-up to the election.

**Screw up vs. Screw-up, screwup**

Screw up your courage. Try not to screw up. It was a terrible screwup (or screw-up). He was a notorious screwup (or screw-up).

**Sell off vs. Sell-off**

Sell off the rest of the stock. Concerns about the economy triggered a sell-off on Wall Street today.

**Send up vs. Send-up**

She wanted to send up typical romance novels. Her book was a send-up of the kind she liked least.

**Set aside vs. Set-aside**

Set aside some money for your vacation. To get the agricultural subsidy we made the old cornfield a set-aside.

**Set back vs. Setback**

The late spring snows set back our camping trip for several weeks. The loss of the grant was a real setback. The zoning ordinance prescribes a ten-foot setback.

**Set up vs. Setup**

You can set up your iphone account at the store. Bring your own bottle and the restaurant will provide a setup for you. This was just a setup to trap unwary consumers.

**Shake down vs. Shakedown**

The gangsters tried to shake down the merchants for protection money. Some refused to give in to the shakedown.

**Show off vs. Show-off**

Let me show off our new kitchen. She's a real show-off.

**Shut in vs. Shut-in**

The dog was shut in all day. He was a sickly shut-in.

**Sign in vs. Sign-in**

Sign in at the registration desk. Here's the sign-in sheet.

**Sign on vs. Sign-on**

Sign on to the project. Television stations used to display a test pattern for fifteen minutes before sign-on.

**Sit down vs. Sit-down**

Sit down and have a cold one. Go to a sit-down restaurant.

**Sit in vs. Sit-in**

Sit in this chair. The students staged a sit-in protest. The college president denounced the sit-in.

**Sleep over vs. Sleepover**

*If it gets too late, you can sleep over here. Their daughter invited six friends for a sleepover.*

**Spin off vs. Spin-off**

*You can spin off a new TV series from an old one, like Frasier from Cheers. Crankshaft is a spin-off from Funky Winkerbean.*

**Spin out vs. Spinout**

*Don't let your car spin out on the ice. The spinout sent the car into the ditch.*

**Spit up vs. Spitmap**

*The baby spit up most of its lunch. My blouse was covered with spit-up.*

**Start up vs. Startup**

*Start up the engine. We need investors to fund our startup. They got a start-up grant.*

**Stand out vs. Standout**

*Mindy tends to stand out on the basketball court. She's a real standout.*

**Stick up vs. Stickup**

*Stick up these posters around town. This is a stickup!*

**Strike out vs. Strikeout**

*Strike out the first paragraph. There were three strikeouts in the first fifteen minutes of the game.*

**Tag along vs. Tagalong**

*Her little brother always wanted to tag along. She thought he was an irritating little tagalong.*

**Take off vs. Takeoff, take-off**

*Well, I think it's time for us to take off. Fasten your seatbelt before takeoff (or take-off).*

**Take out vs. Takeout**

*Take out the garbage. Let's eat takeout Thai food tonight.*

**Take over vs. Takeover**

*The vice president of the club will take over while Patricia is on vacation. That corporation staged a takeover of ours.*

**Tear down vs. Teardown**

*Tear down the old barn. We bought the place just for the lot; the house was a teardown.*

**Tip off vs. Tipoff, tip-off**

*He tried to tip off the police about the planned robbery. The police ignored the tip-off (or tipoff). I was busy buying a hotdog and missed the tip-off.*

**Touch down vs. Touchdown**

*The astronauts reported they would soon touch down on the moon. The plane skidded slightly on touchdown. The quarterback scored a touchdown.*

**Touch up vs. Touch-up**

*Touch up your make-up. She gave her make-up a quick touch-up.*

**Trade in vs. Trade-in**

*Let's trade in the old car. We should get a pretty good trade-in price.*

**Trickle down vs. Trickle-down**

*They hoped the money would trickle down to the people who needed it the most. But many people are skeptical about the trickle-down theory.*

**Try out vs. Tryout**

*They want to try out for field hockey. The tryout is tomorrow.*

**Turn down vs. Turndown**

*Turn down the covers on the bed. Turn down the offer. The economy went into a turndown (also known as a downturn).*

**Turn on vs. Turn-on**

Turn on the lights. A pet chimpanzee can turn on you. She found his accent to be a real turn-on.

### **Turn over vs. Turnover**

The engine wouldn't turn over. I like to have an apple turnover with my morning coffee. The bomb squad had a high turnover rate of personnel. There was just one turnover in the game's last quarter.

### **Wake up vs. Wake-up**

I need to wake up early tomorrow to catch a plane. I need a wake-up call.

### **Walk in vs. Walk-in**

I prefer to take a very short walk in the rain. Between appointments I manage to squeeze in the occasional walk-in. Our bedroom has a walk-in closet.

### **Warm up vs. Warm-up**

Before playing, we need to warm up. Come early to give time for the warm-up. Wear a warm-up suit.

### **Wash out vs. Washout**

I couldn't wash out the stain. You can't get here on the old road; there's been a washout at the first curve. The initially enthusiastic candidate turned out to be a real washout.

### **Weigh in vs. Weigh-in**

All jockeys have to weigh in before the race. I'll see you at the weigh-in.

### **White out vs. Whiteout, white-out**

In the days before personal computers we used to white out our mistakes. We used a lot of liquid white-out. The huge snowstorm caused a total whiteout (or white-out).

### **Wind up vs. Windup**

Wind up the kite string. Here's the windup, and the pitch—it's a strike!

### **Work out vs. Workout**

Go to the gym to work out. Do your workout every day.

### **Write down vs. Writedown**

Write down the telephone number. Our accountant said the property was overvalued and recommended a writedown.

### **Write off vs. Write-off**

We had to write off the bad debts. We took a write-off on the loss.

### **Write up vs. Write-up**

He said he would write up an account of the meeting. That was a great write-up about you in the paper.

🌀 **Physical** ⇨ FISCAL In budget matters, it's the fiscal year, relating to finances with an "F."

🌀 **Pianist** ⇨ The standard pronunciations of "pianist" are "peeanist" and "pee-anist." The latter is especially popular among musicians. The pronunciations of "piano" and "pianist" in which the first syllable sounds like "pie" are nonstandard.

🌀 **Picaresque / picturesque** ⇨ "Picaresque" is a technical literary term you are unlikely to have a use for. It labels a sort of literature involving a picaro (Spanish), a lovable rogue who roams the land having colorful adventures. A landscape that looks as lovely as a picture is picturesque.

🌀 **Pickup / pick up** ⇨ The noun is spelled "pickup" as in "drive your pickup" or "that coffee gave me a pickup," or "we didn't have a real date; it was just a pickup." If it's a thing, use the single-word form. But if it's an action (verb-plus-adverb phrase) then spell it as two words: "pick up your dirty underwear."

There's also the adjectival form, which has to be hyphenated: "Jeremy tried out one of his corny pick-up lines on me at the bar." According to this rule, it should be a "pick-up game" but you're unlikely to get into trouble for writing "pickup game."

👉 **Picture** ⇒ The pronunciation of "picture" as if it were "pitcher" is common in some dialects, but not standard. The first syllable should sound like "pick."

👉 **Pigeon English** ⇒ PIDGIN ENGLISH

"Pidgin" evolved from a Chinese mispronunciation of "business," and the original pidgin English developed as a simplified blend of Chinese and English used to facilitate international trade. Other similarly artificial blended languages have since also been called "pidgins." Although the spelling "pigeon" often occurred early on, the standard spelling today is "pidgin."

👉 **PIN number** ⇒ PIN

Those who object to "PIN number" on the grounds that the N in "PIN" stands for "number" in the phrase "personal identification number" are quite right, but it may be difficult to get people to say anything else. "PIN" was invented to meet the objection that a "password" consisting of nothing but numbers is not a word. Pronouncing each letter of the acronym as "P-I-N" blunts its efficiency. Saying just "PIN" reminds us of another common English word, though few people are likely to think when they are told to "enter PIN" that they should shove a steel pin into the terminal they are operating. In writing, anyway, "PIN" is unambiguous and is better used without the redundant "number."

The same goes for "VIN number"; "VIN" stands for "Vehicle Identification Number." And "UPC code" is redundant because "UPC" stands for "Universal Product Code."

Similarly, "ISBN number" would logically mean "International Standard Book Number number." It's fine to say just "ISBN," and that's what most professionals in the book trade do.

👉 **Pinned up** ⇒ PENT UP

If you wear your heart on your sleeve I suppose you might be said to have "pinned up" emotions, but the phrase you want when you are suppressing your feelings is "pent-up emotions." Similarly, it's "pent-up demand." "Pent" is a rare word, but don't replace it with "penned" in such phrases either.

👉 **Pit in my stomach** ⇒ IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH

Just as you can love someone from the bottom of your heart, you can also experience a sensation of dread in the pit (bottom) of your stomach. I don't know whether people who mangle this common expression into "pit in my stomach" envision an ulcer, an irritating peach pit they've swallowed or are thinking of the pyloric sphincter; but they've got it wrong.

👉 **Pith and vinegar** ⇒ PISS AND VINEGAR

To say that people are "full of piss and vinegar" is to say that they are brimming with energy. Although many speakers assume the phrase must have a negative connotation, this expression is more often used as a compliment, "vinegar" being an old slang term for enthusiastic energy.

Some try to make this expression more polite by substituting "pith" for "piss," but this change robs it of the imagery of acrid, energetically boiling fluids and conjures up instead a sodden, vinegar-soaked mass of pith. Many people who use the "polite" version are unaware of the original.

👉 **Plain / plane** ⇒ Both of these words have to do with flatness. A flat prairie is a plain, and you use a plane to smooth flat a piece of wood.

“Plain” is also an adjective which can describe things that are ordinary, simple, or unattractive.

But whether you go the airport to catch a plane or meditate to achieve a higher plane of consciousness, the meanings that have to do with things high up are spelled “plane.”

👉 **Plays a factor** ⇒ PLAYS A ROLE

Some people say that an influential force “plays a factor” in a decision or change. They are mixing up two different expressions: “is a factor” and “plays a role.”

👉 **Playwrite** ⇒ PLAYWRIGHT

It might seem as if a person who writes plays should be called a “playwrite” but in fact a playwright is a person who has wrought words into a dramatic form, just as a wheelwright has wrought wheels out of wood and iron. All the other words ending in “-wright” are archaic, or we’d be constantly reminded of the correct pattern.

👉 **Plead innocent** ⇒ Lawyers frown on the phrase “plead innocent” (it’s “plead guilty” or “plead not guilty”), but outside of legal contexts the phrase is standard English.

👉 **Pleaded / pleated** ⇒ A pleat is a sharp fold, so it’s a pleated skirt, no matter how much your husband has pleaded that you wear it.

👉 **Please RSVP** ⇒ PLEASE REPLY

RSVP stands for the French phrase Répondez s’il vous plaît (“reply, please”), so it doesn’t need an added “please.” However, since few people seem to know its literal meaning, and fewer still take it seriously, it’s best to use plain English: “Please reply.” It is a mistake to think that this phrase invites people to respond only if they are planning to attend; it is at least as important to notify the person doing the inviting if you cannot go. And no, you can’t bring along the kids or other uninvited guests.

👉 **Plug-in** ⇒ OUTLET

That thing on the end of an electrical cord is a plug, which goes into the socket of the wall outlet.

👉 **Plus / add** ⇒ Some people continue a pattern picked up in childhood of using “plus” as a verb to mean “add,” as in “You plus the 3 and the 4 and you get 7.” “Plus” is not a verb; use “add” instead.

👉 **Podium / lectern** ⇒ Strictly speaking, a podium is a raised platform on which you stand to give a speech; the piece of furniture on which you place your notes and behind which you stand is a lectern.

👉 **Poinsetta** ⇒ POINSETTIA

Those showy plants that appear in the stores around Christmas are “poinsettias,” named after American diplomat John R. Poinsett who introduced them into the US from Mexico. The Latin ending “-ia” is seldom pronounced as spelled, but that’s no justification for misspelling the word as “poinsetta.”

👉 **Point being is that** ⇒ POINT IS THAT

“The point being is that” is redundant; say just “the point is that” or “the point being that.”

👉 **Point in time** ⇒ POINT, TIME

This redundancy became popular because it was used by astronauts seeking to distinguish precisely between a point in time and a point in space. Since most people use the expression in contexts where there is no ambiguity, it makes more sense to say simply “at this point” or “at this time.”

👉 **Point of you** ⇒ POINT OF VIEW

Your viewpoint on a subject is your “point of view,” not your “point of you.” “Your” and “of you” mean the same thing, and combining the two makes little sense; but the expression really gets weird when it turns into “my point of you,” “her point of you,” “their point of you,” etc.

☞ **Poisonous / venomous** ⇒ Snakes and insects that inject poisonous venom into their victims are venomous, but a snake or tarantula is not itself poisonous because if you eat one it won't poison you. A blowfish will kill you if you eat it, so it is poisonous, but it is not venomous.

☞ **Pole / poll** ⇒ A pole is a long stick. You could take a “poll” (survey or ballot) to determine whether voters want lower taxes or better education.

☞ **Pompom / pompon** ⇒ To most people that fuzzy ball on the top of a knit hat and the implement wielded by a cheerleader are both “pompoms,” but to traditionalists they are “pompons,” spelled the way the French—who gave us the word—spell it. A pompom, say these purists, is only a sort of large gun. Though you're unlikely to bother many people by falling into the common confusion, you can show off your education by observing the distinction.

☞ **Poo-poo** ⇒ The toddler with a soggy diaper proudly announces “I go poo-poo”!

The skeptic is inclined to pooh-pooh outlandish ideas. Don't mix up matter for skepticism with material for the septic system.

A selection of snacks served on a wooden platter in a Chinese restaurant is called a “pupu platter”—a custom and word that made its way to the US mainland from Hawaii.

☞ **Populace / populous** ⇒ The population of a country may be referred to as its populace, but a crowded country is populous.

☞ **Pore / pour** ⇒ When used as a verb, “pore” has the unusual sense of “scrutinize,” as in “She pored over her receipts.” If it's coffee or rain, the stuff pours.

☞ **Possessed of, by, with** ⇒ If you own a yacht, you're possessed of it. If a demon takes over your body, you're possessed by it. If that which possesses you is more metaphorical, like an executive determined to get ahead, he or she can be possessed by or with the desire to win.

☞ **Practicable/practical** ⇒ “Practical” and “practicable” overlap a bit in meaning; but by far the most common word, and the one you will have the most use for, is “practical.” The safest course is to save “practicable” for use only in describing something that it is possible to accomplish. If you're not sure which to use, stick with “practical.”

Something impractical is not smart or efficient, but something impracticable is just plain impossible to do.

☞ **Practice / practise** ⇒ In the United Kingdom, “practice” is the noun, “practise” the verb; but in the US the spelling “practice” is commonly used for both, though the distinction is sometimes observed. “Practise” as a noun is, however, always wrong in both places: a doctor always has a “practice,” never a “practise.”

☞ **Practicle** ⇒ PRACTICAL

Some words end in “-icle” and others in “-ical” without the result being any difference in pronunciation. But when you want somebody really practical, call on good old AL.

🕊️ **Pray / prey** ⇒ If you want a miracle, pray to God. If you're a criminal you prey on your victims. Incidentally, it's "praying mantis," not "preying mantis." The insect holds its forefeet in a position suggesting prayer.

🕊️ **Pre-Madonna** ⇒ PRIMA DONNA

The leading soprano in an opera is the prima donna (Italian for "leading lady"). As an insult, "prima donna" implies that the person under discussion is egotistical, demanding, and doesn't work well as part of a team.

Don't write "pre-Madonna" unless you intend to discuss the era before the singer Madonna became popular.

🕊️ **Precede / proceed** ⇒ "Precede" means "to go before." "Proceed" means to go on. Let your companion precede you through the door, then proceed to follow her. Interestingly, the second E is missing in "procedure."

🕊️ **Precedence / precedents** ⇒ Although these words sound the same, they work differently. The pop star is given precedence over the factory worker at the entrance to the dance club. "Precedents" is just the plural of "precedent": "If we let the kids adopt that rattlesnake as a pet and agree to let them take it for a walk in Death Valley, we'll be setting some bad precedents."

🕊️ **Precipitate / precipitous** ⇒ Both of these adjectives are based on the image of plunging over the brink of a precipice, but "precipitate" emphasizes the suddenness of the plunge, "precipitous," the steepness of it. If you make a "precipitate" decision, you are making a hasty and probably unwise one. If the stock market declines "precipitously," it goes down sharply.

🕊️ **Precurse** ⇒ FORETELL, FORESHADOW, PREFACE, ANTICIPATE, PRECEDE

Tempted to "precurse" that guy who looks like he might be going to cut into the lane ahead of you? Until recently "precurse" as a verb was a rare archaic word, but lately people have been using it to mean "be a precursor to." Use a more ordinary and precise word like "foretell," "foreshadow," "preface," "anticipate," or "precede."

🕊️ **Predominant / predominate** ⇒ "Predominate" is a verb: "In the royal throne room, the color red predominates." "Predominant" is an adjective: "The predominant view among the touts is that Fancy Dancer is the best bet in the third race." See also predominately.

🕊️ **Predominately** ⇒ PREDOMINANTLY

"Predominantly" is formed on the adjective "predominant," not the verb "predominate"; so though both forms are widely accepted, "predominantly" makes more sense.

See predominate/predominant.

🕊️ **Preemptory** ⇒ PEREMPTORY

"Preemptory" (meaning "imperative") is often misspelled and mispronounced "preemptory" through confusion caused by the influence of the verb "preempt," whose adjectival form is actually "preemptive."

🕊️ **Preferably** ⇒ Although some US dictionaries now recognize the pronunciation of "preferably" with the first two syllables pronounced just like "prefer"—first "E" long and the stress on the second syllable—the standard pronunciation is "prefferablee," with the first syllable stressed, just like in "preference." The alternative pronunciation sounds awkward to some people.

🕊️ **Prejudice / prejudiced** ⇒ People not only misspell "prejudice" in a number of ways, they sometimes say "he's prejudice" when they mean "he's prejudiced." See also "bias/biased."

👉 **Premier / premiere** ⇒ These words are, respectively, the masculine and feminine forms of the word for “first” in French; but they have become differentiated in English. Only the masculine form is used as an adjective, as in “Tidy-Pool is the premier pool-cleaning firm in Orange County.” The confusion arises when these words are used as nouns. The prime minister of a parliamentary government is known as a “premier.” The opening night of a film or play is its “premiere.”

“Premiere” as a verb is common in the arts and in show business (“the show premiered on PBS”), but it is less acceptable in other contexts (“the state government premiered its new welfare system”). Use “introduced,” or, if real innovation is involved, “pioneered.”

👉 **Premise / premises** ⇒ Some people suppose that since “premises” has a plural form, a single house or other piece of property must be a “premise,” but that word is reserved for use as a term in logic meaning something assumed or taken as given in making an argument. Your lowly one-room shack is still your premises.

👉 **Prepone** ⇒ South Asian speakers have evolved the logical word “prepone” to mean the opposite of “postpone”: to move forward in time. It’s a handy word, but users of it should be aware that those unfamiliar with their dialect will be baffled by this word.

👉 **Prepositions (repeated)** ⇒ In the sentence “Alex liked Nancy, with whom he shared his Snickers bar with” only one “with” is needed—eliminate either one. Look out for similarly duplicated prepositions.

Incidentally, an often-cited example of this pattern is from Paul McCartney’s Live and Let Die: “this ever-changing world in which we live in,” but if you listen closely, you’ll hear instead a quite correct “this ever-changing world in which we’re livin’.” Americans have a hard time hearing the soft British “R” in “we’re.”

👉 **Prepositions (wrong)** ⇒ One of the clearest indications that a person reads little and doesn’t hear much formal English is a failure to use the standard preposition in a common expression. You aren’t ignorant to a fact; you’re ignorant of it. Things don’t happen on accident, but by accident (though they do happen “on purpose”). There are no simple rules governing preposition usage: you just have to immerse yourself in standard English in order to write it naturally.

See also *different than/different from/to*.

👉 **Prescribe / proscribe** ⇒ You recommend something when you prescribe it, but you forbid it when you proscribe it. The usually positive function of “pro-” confuses many people.

👉 **Present writer** ⇒ I

Formal writers used to avoid writing “I” when referring to themselves by using instead the phrase “the present writer.” This practice is generally discouraged by modern editors, and is considered awkward and old-fashioned. Simple “I” works fine and calls less attention to itself so long as it’s not repeated too often.

👉 **Presently** ⇒ Some argue that “presently” doesn’t mean “in the present.” It means “soon.” If you want to talk about something that’s happening right now, they urge you to say it’s going on currently.

👉 **Prespiration** ⇒ PERSPIRATION

“Perspiration” is often mispronounced and even misspelled “prespiration.” The first syllable should sound like “purse.”

👉 **Pretty** ⇒ SOMEWHAT

It's pretty common to use "pretty" to mean "somewhat" in ordinary speech, but it should be avoided in formal writing, where sometimes "very" is more appropriate. The temptation to use "pretty" usually indicates the writer is being vague, so changing to something more specific may be an even better solution: "a pretty bad mess" might be "chocolate syrup spilled all over the pizza which had been dumped upside down on the carpet."

👉 **Primer** ⇒ When this word is used in the US to mean "elementary textbook" it is pronounced with a short "I": "primer" (rhymes with "dimmer"). All other meanings are pronounced with a long "I": "prymer" (rhymes with "timer").

👉 **Primevil** ⇒ PRIMEVAL

The existence of a music group and a comic book using the deliberately punning misspelling "Primevil" helps to further confusion about this word. Something ancient and primitive is "primeval." The "-eval" sequence comes from a root having to do with ages, as in "medieval." It has nothing to do with the concept of evil. The word can also be spelled "primaeval."

👉 **Principal / principle** ⇒ Generations of teachers have tried to drill this one into students' heads by reminding them, "The principal is your pal." Many don't seem convinced. "Principal" is a noun and adjective referring to someone or something which is highest in rank or importance. (In a loan, the principal is the more substantial part of the money, the interest is—or should be—the lesser.) "Principle" is only a noun, and has to do with law or doctrine: "The workers fought hard for the principle of collective bargaining."

👉 **Prioritize** ⇒ MAKE A PRIORITY

Many people disdain "prioritize" as bureaucratic jargon for "rank" or "make a priority."

👉 **Priority** ⇒ It is common to proclaim "in our business, customer service is a priority," but it would be better to say "a high priority," since priorities can also be low.

👉 **Proactive** ⇒ Many people incorrectly use "reactionary" to mean "acting in response to some outside stimulus." That's reactive. "Reactionary" actually has a very narrow meaning; it is a noun or adjective describing a form of looking backward that goes beyond conservatism (wanting to prevent change and maintain present conditions) to reaction—wanting to recreate a lost past. The advocates of restoring Czarist rule in Russia are reactionaries. While we're on the subject, the term "proactive" formed by analogy with "reactive" seems superfluous to many of us. Use "active," "assertive," or "positive" whenever you can instead.

👉 **Probably** ⇒ The two Bs in this word are particularly difficult to pronounce in sequence, so the word often comes out as "probly" and is even occasionally misspelled that way. When even the last B disappears, the pronunciation "proolly" suggests drunken slurring or, at best, an attempt at humor.

👉 **Problematic** ⇒ "Problematic" has various traditional meanings: "presenting a problem," "difficult to resolve," "doubtful." But among academics it has become a sort of all-purpose negative expressing disapproval: "the depiction of married women in early American comic strips such as Maggie in Bringing Up Father is problematic," (i.e., I have a problem with this, I object to it). Not only is this not a traditional function of the word; it transfers a political or personal objection into the Platonic realm of Truth, allowing the speaker to avoid personal responsibility for the objection being made. Similarly, "problematize" means "to make into a problem," not "to consider as a problem."

👉 **Prodigy, progeny, protégé** ⇒ Your progeny are your kids, though it would be pretty pretentious to refer to them as such. If your child is a brilliantly outstanding person he or she may be a child prodigy. In fact, anything amazingly admirable can be a prodigy. But a person that you take under your wing in order to help promote his or her career is your protégé. Avoid misspelling or mispronouncing “prodigy” as “progidy.”

👉 **Program** ⇒ “Program” is the spelling for all uses in the US, but in the UK the spelling “programme” is used for broadcasts and schedules of various kinds (musical programme, programme of studies, theatre programme). However, in all computer-related contexts, the UK standard spelling is like the US one: “program.”

👉 **Prone** ⇒ “Prone” (face down) is often confused with “supine” (face up). Some people use the phrase “soup in navel” to help them remember the meaning of the latter word. “Prostrate” technically also means “face down,” but is often used to mean simply “devastated.” See also “prostate/prostrate.”

👉 **Pronunciation** ⇒ PRONUNCIATION

“Pronounce” is the verb, but the O is omitted for the noun: “pronunciation.” This mistake ranks right up there in incongruity with “writting.”

👉 **Proof is in the pudding** ⇒ THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING

This common truncated version of an old saying conjures up visions of poking around in your dessert looking for prizes, but “the proof of the pudding is in the eating” means that you don’t really know that your dessert has come out right until you taste it.

👉 **Prophecy / prophesy** ⇒ “Prophecy,” the noun, (pronounced “PROF-a-see”) is a prediction. The verb “to prophesy” (pronounced “PROF-a-sigh”) means to predict something. When a prophet prophesies he or she utters prophecies. Outside of Bob Dylan’s lyrics, writers and critics do not “prophesize.” They prophesy.

👉 **Prosperity / posterity** ⇒ Your descendants—those who come after you—are posterity. Your posterior comes behind your front, right? Your posterity comes along behind you in time. In contrast, prosperity is financial well-being. But some people mix these up by saying “I am taking photos of our house construction for prosperity” when they mean “for posterity.”

👉 **Prostate / prostrate** ⇒ The gland men have is called the prostate. “Prostrate” is an adjective meaning “lying face downward.”

👉 **Protagonist / proponent** ⇒ People have been using “protagonist” to mean “proponent” for a long time, but people who know the word’s origin—including most English teachers—object that “protagonist” refers to the main character of a work of fiction. An advocate of a certain course of action, they feel, should be called a “proponent.”

👉 **Protray** ⇒ PORTRAY

There are a lot of words in English that begin in “pro-.” This is not one of them. When you make a portrait, you portray someone.

👉 **Proved / proven** ⇒ For most purposes either form is a fine past participle of “prove,” though in a phrase like “a proven talent” where the word is an adjective preceding a noun, “proven” is standard.

👉 **PSS** ⇒ PPS

In the old days before personal computers, when people wanted to add something to a letter they had already ended, they would add a “postscript” (from Latin post scriptum, meaning “that which comes after the writing”). These postscripts were introduced with the label “PS” or “P.S.”

When they wanted to add something else after the postscript, it was labelled “PPS” for “post postscript.” But many people trying to follow this pattern today mistakenly write “PSS” instead.

Since modern technology makes it so easy to revise and add to texts, in most cases it’s better to just go back and insert the additional material at an appropriate point in the main body of the writing. “PSS” makes you look not only ignorant, but lazy.

👉 **Psychologist / psychiatrist / psychotherapist / psychoanalyst** ⇒ A psychologist is a person who has studied the mind and earned a Ph.D. Or Psy.D. Although some definitions state that psychologists have undergone clinical training but cannot prescribe medicines, there are research psychologists who are not engaged in clinical work at all, but merely do experiments to discover how our minds work. Some of their work can concern animal rather than human minds.

A psychiatrist is technically an M.D. specializing in the treatment of mental problems who can prescribe medicines. They are licensed medical doctors, and get irritated when they are called “psychologists” and when psychologists are called “psychiatrists.”

Psychotherapist is not a technical term, and may be used by anyone claiming to offer therapy for mental problems. That someone is called a “psychotherapist” tells you nothing about his or her qualifications. But qualified clinical psychologists and psychiatrists can be properly called “psychotherapists.” A psychoanalyst is a very specific kind of psychotherapist: a licensed practitioner of the methods of Sigmund Freud.

👉 **Pundit** ⇒ PUNDIT

“Pundit” is one of those words we get from India, like “bungalow” and “thug.” It comes from pandit, meaning “scholar,” “learned person.” The first premier of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was often referred to respectfully as “Pandit Nehru.” In English it has come to refer to opinionated commentators on public affairs, but it is often mispronounced and misspelled “pundint” or “pundant.”

👉 **Purposely / purposefully** ⇒ If you do something on purpose (not by accident), you do it purposely. But if you have a specific purpose in mind, you are acting purposefully.

👉 **Q / G** ⇒ Lower-case “q” strongly resembles lower-case “g” in many typefaces, and the two are often confused with each other and the resulting misspelling missed in proofreading, for instance “quilt” when “guilt” is intended.

👉 **Quantum leap** ⇒ The thing about quantum leaps is that they mark an abrupt change from one state to a distinctly different one, with no in-between transitional states being possible. It makes sense to use “quantum leap” to refer to an abrupt, radical qualitative change, but less sense for a simple large increase. It’s probably better to leave “quantum leap” to the subatomic physicists unless you know what you’re talking about.

👉 **Quay / cay / key** ⇒ You tie your boat up at a quay built next to the shore; you can take your boat out to explore a cay or key—a small island or reef. Cays and keys are natural; quays are always built by human beings.

👉 **Question / ask** ⇒ When you question someone, you may ask a series of questions trying to arrive at the truth: “The police questioned Tom for five hours

before he admitted to having stolen the pig.” “Question” can also mean “challenge”: “His mother questioned Timmy’s claim that the cat had eaten all the chocolate chip cookies.” But if you are simply asking a question to get a bit of information, it is not appropriate to say “I questioned whether he had brought the anchovies” when what you really mean is “I asked whether he had brought the anchovies.”

👉 **Queue** ⇒ If you’re standing in a queue you’ll have plenty of time to ponder the unusual spelling of this word. Remember, it contains two “U’s.”

👉 **Quick claim** ⇒ QUITCLAIM

The term for a legal document relinquishing a legal claim to some property is a “quitclaim deed.” It is not a “quick claim,” and “quitclaim” is a single word.

👉 **Quiet / quite** ⇒ This is probably caused by a slip of the fingers more often than by a slip of the mental gears, but one often sees “quite” (very) substituted for “quiet” (shhh!). This is one of those common errors your spelling checker will not catch, so look out for it.

👉 **Quotation marks** ⇒ The examples below are set off in order to avoid confusion over the use of single and double quotation marks.

There are many ways to go wrong with quotation marks. They are often used ironically:

*She ran around with a bunch of “intellectuals.”*

The quotation marks around “intellectuals” indicate that the writer believes that these are in fact so-called intellectuals, not real intellectuals at all. The ironic use of quotation marks is very much overdone, and is usually a sign of laziness indicating that the writer has not bothered to find the precise word or expression necessary.

Advertisers unfortunately tend to use quotation marks merely for emphasis: “FRESH” TOMATOES

59 CENTS A POUND

The influence of the more common ironic usage tends to make the reader question whether these tomatoes are really fresh. Underlining, bold lettering, all caps—there are several less ambiguous ways to emphasize words than placing them between quotation marks.

In American usage, single quotation marks are used normally only for quoted words and phrases within quotations.

Angela had the nerve to tell me “When I saw ‘BYOB’ on your invitation, I assumed it meant ‘Bring Your Old Boyfriend.’”

British usage changed during the last century to reverse this relationship, with single quotation marks being standard and double ones being used only for quotations within quotations. (The English also call quotation marks “inverted commas,” though only the opening quotation mark is actually inverted—and flipped, as well.) However, usage in the UK is shifting toward the US pattern, (see, for instance, *The Times of London*); though the printing of fiction tends to adhere to the older British pattern, where US students are most likely to encounter it.

Single quotation marks are also used in linguistic, phonetic, and philosophical studies to surround words and phrases under discussion; but the common practice of using single quotation marks for short phrases and words and double ones for complete sentences is otherwise an error.

Block quotations like this should not be surrounded by any quotation marks at all. (A passage this short should not be rendered as a block quotation; you need

at least three lines of verse or five lines of prose to justify a block quotation.) Normally you should leave extra space above and below a block quotation.

When quoting a long passage involving more than one paragraph, quotation marks go at the beginning of each paragraph, but at the end of only the final one. Dialogue in which the speaker changes with each paragraph has each speech enclosed in its own quotation marks.

Titles of books and other long works that might be printed as books are usually italicized (except, for some reason, in newspapers); but the titles of short poems, stories, essays, and other works that would be more commonly printed within larger works (anthologies, collections, periodicals, etc.) are enclosed in quotation marks.

There are different patterns for regulating how quotation marks relate to other punctuation. Find out which one your teacher or editor prefers and use it, or choose one of your own liking, but stick to it consistently. One widely accepted authority in America is the Chicago Manual of Style, whose guidelines are outlined below. English, Canadian, Australian and other writers in British-influenced countries should be aware that their national patterns will be quite different, and variable.

In standard American practice, commas are placed inside quotation marks:

I spent the morning reading Faulkner's "Barn Burning," which seemed to be about a pyromaniac.

Periods are also normally placed inside quotation marks (with the exception of terms being defined, see above). Colons and semicolons, however, are preceded by quotation marks.

If the quoted matter ends with a question mark or exclamation point, it is placed inside the quotation marks:

John asked, "When's dinner?"

But if it is the enclosing sentence which asks the question, then the question mark comes after the quotation marks:

What did she mean, John wondered, by saying "as soon as you make it"?

Similarly:

Fred shouted, "Look out for the bull!"

But when I was subsequently gored, all Timmy said was, "This is kinda boring"! It is unfortunately true that many standard character sets—including ASCII and basic HTML—lack true quotation marks which curl to enclose the quoted matter, substituting instead ugly "inch" or "ditto" marks. If you are writing HTML for the Web, you need to turn off the "smart quotes" feature in your word processor which curls quotation marks and apostrophes. Leaving curled quotation marks and apostrophes in text intended for the Web causes ugly gibberish which will make your writing hard to read.

If you would like to include proper curled quotation marks and apostrophes in your HTML code you can write **&ldquo;** (curled double open quote), **&rdquo;** (curled double close quote), **&lsquo;** (curled single open quote), and **&rsquo;** (curled close quote). Most contemporary browsers can properly interpret these codes, though they used to cause trouble for people using older browser versions.

See also apostrophes.

 **Quote** ⇨ A passage doesn't become a quote (or—better—"quotation") until you've quoted it. The only time to refer to a "quote" is when you are referring to someone quoting something. When referring to the original words, simply call it a passage.

🌀 **Racism** ⇒ The “C” in “racism” and “racist” is pronounced as a simple “S” sound, Don’t confuse it with the “SH” sound in “racial.”

🌀 **Rack / wrack** ⇒ If you are racked with pain or you feel nerve-racked, you are feeling as if you were being stretched on that Medieval instrument of torture, the rack. You rack your brains when you stretch them vigorously to search out the truth like a torturer. “Wrack” has to do with ruinous accidents, so if the stock market is wracked by rumors of imminent recession, it’s wrecked. If things are wrecked, they go to “wrack and ruin.”

🌀 **Raise / raze** ⇒ RAZE

To raze a building is to demolish it so thoroughly that it looks like it’s been scraped right off the ground with a razor. To raise a building is just the opposite: to erect it from the ground up.

🌀 **Rampant / rampant** ⇒ “Rampant” is an adjective which originally meant a posture seen in animals on coats of arms: rearing up on their hind legs, but in modern times it mainly means “wild” or “very widespread.” Some people confuse this word with “rampart,” a noun denoting a barricade or fortification.

Crime, disease, and greed may all be rampant, but not “rampart.”

🌀 **Ran / run** ⇒ Computer programmers have been heard to say “the program’s been ran,” when what they mean is “the program’s been run.”

🌀 **Random** ⇒ Kyle can choose the shirt he’ll wear for the day at random—they’re all orange. This sort of use of “at random” to mean “by chance,” is perfectly standard. (Kyle should get some new shirts, though.)

Less widely accepted are a couple of slangy uses of the word, mostly by young people. In the first, “random” means “unknown,” “unidentified” as in “some random guy told me at the party that I reminded him of his old girlfriend.”

The other is to use random to mean “weird,” “strange,” as in “The party at Jessica’s was so random, not what I was expecting at all!” Evidently in this expression randomness is being narrowed down to unlikelihood and that is in turn being connected with strangeness, though randomness in real life is usually quite ordinary and boring.

Use of either of these two expressions in formal speech or writing is likely to annoy or confuse your audience.

🌀 **Rapport** ⇒ Many more people hear this word, meaning “affinity,” than read it, judging by the popularity of various misspellings such as “rapore” and “rapoire.” If you get along really well with someone, the two of you have rapport.

🌀 **Rate of speed** ⇒ RATE, SPEED

Lots of people like to say things like “traveling at a high rate of speed.” This is a redundancy. Say instead “traveling at a high rate” or “traveling at high speed.”

🌀 **Ratio** ⇒ A ratio is a way of expressing the relationship between one quantity and another. If there is one teacher to fifty students, the teacher/student ratio is one to fifty, and the student/teacher ratio fifty to one. If a very dense but wealthy prince were being tutored by fifty teachers, the teacher/student ratio would be fifty to one, and the student/teacher ratio would be one to fifty. As you can see, the order in which the numbers are compared is important.

If you are campaigning for more individual attention in the classroom, you want a higher number of teachers, but a lower student/teacher ratio.

🌀 **Rational / rationale** ⇒ “Rational” is an adjective meaning “reasonable” or “logical”: “Ivan made a rational decision to sell his old car when he moved to New York.” “Rational” rhymes with “national.”

“Rationale” is a noun which most often means “underlying reason”: “His rationale for this decision was that it would cost more to pay for parking than the car was worth.” “Rationale” rhymes with “passion pal.”

👉 **Rationale / rationalization** ⇒ When you’re explaining the reasoning behind your position, you’re presenting your rationale. But if you’re just making up some lame excuse to make your position appear better—whether to yourself or others—you’re engaging in rationalization.

👉 **Ravaging / ravishing / ravenous** ⇒ To ravage is to pillage, sack, or devastate. The only time “ravaging” is properly used is in phrases like “when the pirates had finished ravaging the town, they turned to ravishing the women.” Which brings us to “ravish”: meaning to rape, or rob violently. A trailer court can be ravaged by a storm (nothing is stolen, but a lot of damage is done) but not ravished. The crown jewels of Ruritania can be ravished (stolen using violence) without being ravaged (damaged).

To confuse matters, people began back in the fourteenth century to speak metaphorically of their souls being “ravished” by intense spiritual or esthetic experiences. Thus we speak of a “ravishing woman” (the term is rarely applied to men) today not because she literally rapes men who look at her but because her devastating beauty penetrates their hearts in an almost violent fashion. Despite contemporary society’s heightened sensitivity about rape, we still remain (perhaps fortunately) unconscious of many of the transformations of the root meaning in words with positive connotations such as “rapturous.”

Originally, “raven” as a verb was synonymous with “ravish” in the sense of “to steal by force.” One of its specialized meanings became “devour,” as in “the lion ravened her prey.” By analogy, hungry people became “ravenous” (as hungry as beasts), and that remains the only common use of the word today.

If a woman smashes your apartment up, she ravages it. If she looks stunningly beautiful, she is ravishing. If she eats the whole platter of hors d’oeuvres you’ve set out for the party before the other guests come, she’s ravenous.

👉 **Rbis** ⇒ rbis

Some people reason that since “RBI” stands for “runs batted in,” there is no need for an additional “S” to indicate a plural, and speak of “120 RBI.” However, though somewhat illogical, it is standard to treat the initialism as a word and say “rbis.” In writing, one can add an optional apostrophe: “RBI’s.” Definitely nonstandard is the logical but weird “rsbi.”

The same pattern applies to other such plural initialisms as “wmds” (“weapons of mass destruction”), “pows” (“prisoners of war”), and “mres” (“meals ready to eat”); but “rpms” (“revolutions per minute”) is less widely accepted.

👉 **Reactionary / reactive** ⇒ Many people incorrectly use “reactionary” to mean “acting in response to some outside stimulus.” That’s reactive. “Reactionary” actually has a very narrow meaning; it is a noun or adjective describing a form of looking backward that goes beyond conservatism (wanting to prevent change and maintain present conditions) to reaction—wanting to recreate a lost past. The advocates of restoring Czarist rule in Russia are reactionaries. While we’re on the subject, the term “proactive” formed by analogy with “reactive” seems superfluous to many of us. Use “active,” “assertive,” or “positive” whenever you can instead.

👉 **Readably** ⇒ READILY

Some people mistakenly say of something easily available that it is “readably available.” The original expression has nothing to do with reading; it is “readily available,” ready at hand.

👉 **Real / really** ⇒ The correct adverbial form is “really” rather than “real,” but even that form is generally confined to casual speech, as in “When you complimented me on my speech I felt really great!” To say “real great” instead moves the speaker several steps downscale socially. However “really” is a feeble qualifier. “Wonderful” is an acceptable substitute for “really great” and you can give a definite upscale slant to your speech by adopting the British “really quite wonderful.” Usually, however, it is better to replace the expression altogether with something more precise: “almost seven feet tall” is better than “really tall.” To strive for intensity by repeating “really” as in “that dessert you made was really, really good” demonstrates an impoverished vocabulary.

👉 **Realize / realise** ⇒ “Realize” is the dominant spelling in the US, and “realise” in the UK. Spelling checkers often try to enforce these patterns by labeling the other spelling as an error, but it is good to know that most dictionaries list these as acceptable spelling variants.

👉 **Realms of possibility** ⇒ REALM OF POSSIBILITY We say of something that is not impossible that it is “within the realm of possibility,” or “within the realm of the possible.” The plural form “realms” is so popular in the worlds of fantasy fiction and gaming that it is understandable that many people would refer to “realms of possibility,” but the realm of the possible contains everything that is possible. That’s what its name means. The idea of plural possibilities is already inherent in the word “realm.”

When even serious physicists speculate about multiple “universes” the concept of multiple realms of possibility may sound all right, but it’s neither logical nor traditional.

👉 **Realtor** ⇒ For some reason, this word is often mispronounced as “real-ater” instead of the proper “ree-ul-ter.” Incidentally, realtors insist that this is a term originally trademarked by the National Association of Real Estate Boards (now renamed the “National Association of Realtors”), that it must be capitalized, and that all non-members of that association are mere “real estate associates.” Common usage, however, calls both “real estate agents,” despite their protests.

👉 **Reap what you sow** ⇒ REAP WHAT YOU SOW

When you plant seeds you sow them. Galatians 6:7 says “A man reaps what he sows” (harvests what he plants, gets what he deserves). This agricultural metaphor gets mangled frequently into “you reap what you sew.” At best, you might rip what you sew, but you probably wouldn’t want to tell people about it.

👉 **Reason because** ⇒ We often hear people say things like, “the reason there’s a hole in the screen door is because I tripped over the cat on my way out.” The phrase “is because” should be “is that.” If you wanted to use “because,” the sentence should be phrased, “There’s a hole in the screen door because I tripped over the cat.” “The reason being is” should be simply “the reason being.” The similarly redundant common expression “the reason why” is generally regarded as standard now, although some people still object to it.

👉 **Rebelling / revolting** ⇒ Even though “rebel” and “revolt” mean more or less the same thing, in modern English people who are revolting are usually disgusting, rather than taking up arms against the government. To prevent incongruous associations, use “rebelling” to label the actions of those who conduct uprisings and save “revolting” to label things that make you want to upchuck.

👉 **Rebut / refute** ⇒ When you rebut someone's argument you argue against it. To refute someone's argument is to prove it incorrect. Unless you are certain you have achieved success, use "rebut."

👉 **Recent / resent** ⇒ There are actually three words to distinguish here. "Recent," always pronounced with an unvoiced hissy S and with the accent on the first syllable, means "not long ago," as in, "I appreciated your recent encouragement." "Resent" has two different meanings with two different pronunciations, both with the accent on the second syllable. In the most common case, where "resent" means "feel annoyed at," the word is pronounced with a voiced Z sound: "I resent your implication that I gave you the chocolates only because I was hoping you'd share them with me." In the less common case, the word means "to send again," and is pronounced with an unvoiced hissy S sound: "The e-mail message bounced, so I resent it." So say the intended word aloud. If the accent is on the second syllable, "resent" is the spelling you need.

👉 **Recreate** ⇒ REINVENT

The expression "no need to reinvent the wheel" loses much of its wit when "recreate" is substituted for the original verb. While we're at it, "recreate" does not mean "to engage in recreation." If you play basketball, you may be exercising, but you're not recreating.

👉 **Ridiculous** ⇒ RIDICULOUS

You may ridicule ideas because you find them ridiculous, but not ridiculous.

👉 **Redo it over** ⇒ REDO IT, DO IT OVER

"Redo it over" is redundant; say either "redo it" or "do it over." The only time this phrase makes sense is in the phrase "redo it over and over again."

👉 **Redundancies** ⇒ There are many examples of redundancies in these pages: phrases which say twice what needs to be said only once, like "past history." Advertisers are particularly liable to redundancy in hyping their offers: "as an added bonus" (as a bonus), "preplan" (plan), and "free gift" (but look out for the shipping charges!). Two other common redundancies which are clearly errors are "and plus" (plus) and "end result" (result). But some other redundancies are contained in phrases sanctioned by tradition: "safe haven," "hot water heater," "new beginning," and "tuna fish."

👉 **Reeking havoc** ⇒ WREAKING HAVOC

"Reeking" means "smelling strongly," so that can't be right. The phrase simply means "working great destruction." "Havoc" has always referred to general destruction in English, but one very old phrase incorporating the word was "cry havoc," which meant to give an army the signal for pillage. To "play havoc with" means the same thing as to "wreak havoc." Avoid as well the mistaken "wreck havoc."

👉 **Refrain / restrain** ⇒ "Restrain" is a transitive verb: it needs an object. Although "refrain" was once a synonym for "restrain" it is now an intransitive verb: it should not have an object. Here are examples of correct modern usage: "When I pass the doughnut shop I have to restrain myself" ("myself" is the object). "When I feel like throwing something at my boss, I usually refrain from doing so." You can't refrain yourself or anyone else.

👉 **Refridgerator** ⇒ REFRIGERATOR

Although "fridge" is short for "refrigerator," there is no "D" in the longer word.

👉 **Refute / reject** ⇒ To refute someone's argument is to prove it incorrect. If you attempt no such proof but simply disagree with an argument the word you want is "reject."

👉 **Regard / regards** ⇒ Business English is deadly enough without scrambling it. “As regards your downsizing plan . . .” Is acceptable, if stiff. “In regard to” and “with regard to” are also correct. But “in regards to” is nonstandard. You can also convey the same idea with “in respect to” or “with respect to,” or—simplest of all—just plain “regarding.”

👉 **Regime / regimen / regiment** ⇒ Some people insist that “regime” should be used only in reference to governments, and that people who say they are following a dietary regime should instead use “regimen”; but “regime” has been a synonym of “regimen” for over a century, and is widely accepted in that sense. However “regiment” is an error in this sense. The only way you could follow a strict regiment would be to march behind a highly disciplined military unit. Your diet or exercise routine is not a “regiment.”

👉 **Regretfully / regrettably** ⇒ Either word can be used as an adverb to introduce an expression of regret, though conservatives prefer “regrettably” in sentences like “Regrettably, it rained on the 4th of July.” Within the body of a sentence, however, “regretfully” may be used only to describe the manner in which someone does something: “John had to regretfully decline his beloved’s invitation to go hang-gliding because he was terrified of heights.” If no specified person in the sentence is doing the regretting, but the speaker is simply asserting “it is to be regretted,” the word is “regrettably”: “Their boss is regrettably stubborn.”

👉 **Reign / rein** ⇒ A king or queen reigns, but you rein in a horse. The expression “to give rein” means to give in to an impulse as a spirited horse gives in to its impulse to gallop when you slacken the reins. Similarly, the correct expression is “free rein,” not “free reign.”

👉 **Reknown** ⇒ RENOWN

When you won the national spelling bee you achieved great renown (fame). Now you are a renowned speller (notice the -ed ending on the adjectival form).

Many people mistakenly suppose that because “renown” has to do with being well known the word should be spelled “reknown,” but in fact it is derived from the French word *nom* and has to do with gaining a name. In French, fame is *renomé*.

👉 **Religion** ⇒ Protestants often refer to “the Catholic religion.” Catholicism is a faith or a church. (Only Protestants belong to “denominations.”) Both Catholics and Protestants follow the Christian religion.

👉 **Religion believes** ⇒ RELIGION TEACHES

People often write things like “Buddhism believes” when they mean to say “Buddhism teaches,” or “Buddhists believe.” Religions do not believe, they are the objects of belief.

👉 **Religiosity** ⇒ The main modern use of “religiosity” is to describe exaggerated or ostentatious showing off of one’s religiousness. A better word to label the quality of being truly religious is “piety.”

👉 **Reluctant / reticent** ⇒ “Reticent” denotes only reluctance to speak; do not use it for any other form of reluctance.

👉 **Remotely close** ⇒ “Not even remotely close” is a fine example of an oxymoron. An idea can be “not even remotely correct,” but closeness and remoteness are opposites; and it doesn’t make sense to have one modify the other. There are lots of lists of oxymorons on the Web, but they mostly mix jokey editorializing (“military intelligence” and “Microsoft Works”) with true oxymorons. Good for a laugh, but not providing much guidance to writers.

Wikipedia has a good discussion of oxymorons at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxymoron>.

👉 **Remuneration / renumeration** ⇒ Although “remuneration” looks as if it might mean “repayment” it usually means simply “payment.” In speech it is often confused with “renumeration,” which would mean re-counting (counting again).

👉 **Reoccurring** ⇒ RECURRING

It might seem logical to form this word from “occurring” by simply adding a RE- prefix— but the most common form is “recurring.” The root form is “recur” rather than “reoccur.” Although the forms with an O are legitimate, many style guides recommend against them. For some reason “recurrent” is seldom transformed into “reoccurrent.”

👉 **Repel / repulse** ⇒ In most of their meanings these are synonyms, but if you are disgusted by someone, you are repelled, not repulsed. The confusion is compounded by the fact that “repellent” and “repulsive” mean the same thing. Go figure.

👉 **Replete / complete** ⇒ “Replete” usually means “stuffed,” “full to overflowing.” After eating a complete ten-course meal, you are replete. Although it has been used as a simple synonym for “complete,” this is now an unusual usage, and it is better to stick with the more common word “complete” when you have a choice.

👉 **Reply back** ⇒ REPLY

“Reply back” is redundant because “reply” already conveys the idea of getting back to someone. The same is true of “answer back” except in the rather old-fashioned use of the phrase to describe the behavior of a lippy kid rudely refusing to submit to the wishes of parents or teachers.

👉 **Report into** ⇒ REPORT ON

You can conduct an investigation into a matter, like a scandal or a crime; but the result is a report on or of your findings. You don’t make a report into anything. You could eliminate “into” altogether by using the simpler “investigate” instead.

👉 **Repungent** ⇒ REPUGNANT, PUNGENT

“Repungent” is an amusing mash-up of “repugnant” (disgusting) and “pungent” (strong, especially used of smells). It is used for repulsive smells; and though it is vivid, it’s not standard English and may get you laughed at.

👉 **Request / ask** ⇒ If you want something you can request it or you can ask for it. Many people like “request” because it sounds more formal, more elegant; but to other people it just sounds pretentious. There are many instances in which plain old “ask” works better: “I’m asking my buddies to go camping with me.” “She asked him to walk the dog.” Except on wedding invitations, try to avoid “request” where “ask” will do as well.

👉 **Resign / re-sign** ⇒ Athletes who renew their contracts re-sign with their teams (note the hyphen). If they were to resign they would do the opposite—leave.

👉 **Resignate** ⇒ RESONATE

When an idea gives you good vibes it resonates with you: “His call for better schools resonates with the voters.” Not resignates—resonates.

👉 **Resister / resistor** ⇒ A resistor is part of an electrical circuit; a person who resists something is a “resister.”

🌀 **Respiratory** ⇒ Even health professionals tend to mispronounce this word by smooching the second and third syllables into one. This word has several possible pronunciations, but “resp-uh-tory” is not one of them. However you say it, try to at least hint at all five syllables.

🌀 **Respond back** ⇒ RESPOND, REPLY

It’s possible that some people think they have to write “respond back” to distinguish a reply from other kinds of responses, like groaning and cursing, or chucking a request in the wastebasket; but most of the time the context makes perfectly clear that “respond” means “answer” and the “back” is redundant. Or you can just say “reply.”

🌀 **Restauranter** ⇒ RESTAURATEUR

In standard English, the title for the owner of a restaurant is “restaurateur” (note: no N).

🌀 **Restive** ⇒ “Restive” can mean “stubborn,” “impatient,” or “restless,” but never “relaxed” or “rested.”

🌀 **Retch / wretch** ⇒ If you vomit, you retch; if you behave in a wretched manner or fall into wretched circumstances, you are a wretch.

🌀 **Reticent / hesitant** ⇒ “Reticent” most often means “reluctant to speak.” It can also mean “reserved,” “restrained,” though conservatives prefer to use it to apply only to speech. If you’re feeling nervous about doing something, you’re hesitant: “I’m hesitant about trying to ride a unicycle in public.” “Hesitant” is by far the more common word; so if you hesitate to choose between the two, go with “hesitant.”

🌀 **Retrospective / retroactive** ⇒ “Retrospective” has to do with looking back, as is shown by the similarity of its middle syllable to words like “spectacles.” A retrospective exhibit looks back at the earlier work of an artist.

“Retroactive,” on the other hand, refers to actions, and is about making a current change applicable to the past, especially in law. Retroactive punishment is generally considered unjust. For instance, the city council can’t pass an ordinance retroactively punishing you for having sung off-key in the karaoke bar on Main Street last Saturday night.

🌀 **Return back** ⇒ RETURN

A redundancy. Use just “return,” unless you mean to say instead “turn back.” Also redundant: “reply back,” “respond back,” and “revert back.”

🌀 **Revelant** ⇒ RELEVANT

“Revelant” is both spoken and written frequently when “relevant” is intended.

🌀 **Revert / reply** ⇒ REPLY

The most common meaning of “revert” is “to return to an earlier condition, time, or subject.” When Dr. Jekyll drank the potion he reverted to the brutish behavior of Mr. Hyde. But in South Asia it has become common to use “revert” instead of “reply,” writing when people want you to get back to them about something: “revert to me at this address.” In standard English this would literally mean they are asking you to become them, so it is best to stick with “reply” when dealing with non-South Asian correspondents. Even some South Asians disapprove of this use of “revert.”

🌀 **Revert back** ⇒ REVERT

Since “revert” means “go back,” many people feel that “revert back” is a pointless redundancy. “Revert” all by itself is better.

🌀 **Revolve / rotate** ⇒ In ordinary speech these two words are often treated as interchangeable, though it’s “revolving credit account” and “rotating crops.”

Scientists make a sharp distinction between the two: the earth revolves (orbits) around the sun but rotates (spins) around its axis.

👉 **Revue / review** ⇒ You can attend a musical revue in a theatre, but when you write up your reactions for a newspaper, you're writing a review.

👉 **Rhetorical questions** ⇒ A rhetorical question implies its own answer; it's a way of making a point. Examples: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" "What business is it of yours?" "How did that idiot ever get elected?" "What is so rare as a day in June?" These aren't questions in the usual sense, but statements in the form of a question.

Many people mistakenly suppose that any nonsensical question, or one which cannot be answered, can be called a rhetorical question. The following are not proper rhetorical questions: "What was the best thing before sliced bread?" "If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, does it make a sound?" "Who let the dogs out?"

Sometimes speakers ask questions so they can then proceed to answer them: "Do we have enough troops to win the war? It all depends on how you define victory." The speaker is engaging in rhetoric, but the question asked is not a rhetorical question in the technical sense. Instead this is a mock-dialogue, with the speaker taking both roles.

👉 **Ridged/rigid** ⇒ Only things with ridges are ridged, like mountain ranges or a plowed field. Backs lifting heavy loads, strict regulations, and things or ideas which are stiff, inflexible, or uncompromising are rigid.

👉 **Riffle / rifle** ⇒ To rifle something is to steal it. The word also originally had the sense of "to search thoroughly," often with intent to steal. But if you are casually flipping through some papers, you riffle through them.

👉 **Right / rite / write** ⇒ "Write" has to do with writing, whether on a piece of paper or to a hard drive.

A "rite" is a ritual.

Everything else is "right," right?

👉 **Right of passage** ⇒ RITE OF PASSAGE

The more common phrase is "rite of passage"—a ritual one goes through to move on to the next stage of life. Learning how to work the combination on a locker is a rite of passage for many entering middle school students. A "right of passage" would be the right to travel through a certain territory, but you are unlikely to have any use for the phrase.

👉 **Ring its neck** ⇒ WRING ITS NECK

Wring the chicken's neck; and after you've cooked it, ring the dinner bell.

👉 **Ringer / wringer** ⇒ WRINGER

Old-fashioned washing machines lacked a spin cycle. Instead, you fed each piece of wet clothing between two rotating cylinders which would wring the excess water out of the cloth. This led to the metaphorical saying according to which someone put through an ordeal is said to have been put "through the wringer." Few people remember those old wringer washers, and many of them now mistakenly suppose the spelling of the expression should be "through the ringer." This error has been reinforced by the title of a popular album by the band Catch 22: *Washed Up and Through the Ringer*.

👉 **Rio Grande River** ⇒ RIO GRANDE

Rio is Spanish for "river," so "Rio Grande River" is a redundancy. Just write "Rio Grande." Non-Hispanic Americans have traditionally failed to pronounce the final "E" in "Grande", but they've learned to do it to designate the large size of latte, so perhaps it's time to start saying it the proper Spanish way: "REE-oh

GRAHN-day.” Or to be really international we could switch to the Mexican name: “Rio Bravo.”

### 👉 **Ripe with / rife with** ⇒ RIFE WITH

Some people say “ripe with” where traditional speakers would say “rife with.” “Rife” meaning “abundant” was originally a word which could have positive, negative, or neutral meanings but when followed by “with” its use gradually narrowed to mostly negative meanings: “the town is rife with nasty rumors.” “Ripe” meaning “ready” is more often followed by “for” and is most frequently used in positive contexts: “this area is ripe for development.” The image is of a fruit ripe for picking.

“Ripe with opportunity” can pass without notice and “rife” would be wrong in this context, but “ripe with” sounds odd to most of us in more negative contexts such as “the government was ripe with corruption.”

👉 **Risky / risqué** ⇒ People unfamiliar with the French-derived word “risqué” (‘slightly indecent’) often write “risky” by mistake. Bungee-jumping is risky, but nude bungee-jumping is risqué.

### 👉 **Road to hoe** ⇒ ROW TO HOE

Out in the cotton patch you have a tough row to hoe. This saying has nothing to do with road construction.

👉 **Rob / steal** ⇒ When you rob a bank, you steal its money. You can’t rob the money itself. The stuff taken in a robbery is always stolen, not “robbed.”

### 👉 **Rod iron, rot iron** ⇒ WROUGHT IRON

Wrought iron has been worked (wrought) by hammering and bending, often into elaborate shapes. It is distinguished from cast iron, where the iron takes on the shape of the mold the molten metal was poured into.

There is such a thing as “rod iron”—iron shaped into rods—but this is a rare specialized term. Most instances of this form are erroneous spellings of “wrought iron,” as are all instances of “rot iron.”

👉 **Role / roll** ⇒ An actor plays a role. Bill Gates is the entrepreneur’s role model. But you eat a sausage on a roll and roll out the barrel. To take attendance, you call the roll.

👉 **Rollover / roll over** ⇒ A rollover used to be only a serious highway accident, but in the computer world this spelling has also been used to label a feature on a Web page which reacts in some way when you roll the ball inside a mouse or a trackball over it without having to click. It also became an adjective, as in “rollover feature.” However, when giving users instructions, the correct verb form is “roll over”—two words: “roll over the photo of our dog to see his name pop up.”

Since most people now use either optical mice or trackpads the term “rollover” has become technically obsolete, but it persists.

### 👉 **Romainian** ⇒ ROMANIAN

The ancient Romans called what we refer to as “the Roman Empire” as Romania (roh-MAHN-ee-ya). The country north of Bulgaria borrowed this ancient name for itself. Older spellings—now obsolete—include “Roumania” and “Rumania.” But although in English we pronounce “Romania” roh-MAIN-ee-ya, it is never correct to spell the country’s name as “Romainia,” and the people and language are referred to not as “Romainian” but as “Romanian.”

Ancient Romans were citizens of the Roman empire, and today they are inhabitants of the city of Rome (which in Italian is Roma). Don’t confuse Romans with Romanians.

👉 **Romantic** ⇒ If you are studying the arts, it's important to know that the word "romantic" is used in such contexts to mean much more than "having to do with romantic love." It originated in the Middle Ages to label sensational narratives written in romance languages—rather than Latin—depicting events like the fall of King Arthur's Round Table (in French, novels are still called romans whether they depict love affairs or not). In literature and art it often refers to materials that are horrifying, exotic, enthralling, or otherwise emotionally stimulating to an extreme degree. A romantic art song is as likely to be about death as about love.

👉 **Rondezvous** ⇒ RENDEZVOUS

The first syllable of "rendezvous" rhymes with "pond" but is not spelled like it. It comes from a word related to English "render" and is hyphenated in French: "rendez-vous." In English the two elements are smooshed together into one: "rendezvous."

👉 **Root / rout / route** ⇒ You can root for your team (cheer them on) and hope that they utterly smash their opponents (create a rout), then come back in triumph on Route 27 (a road).

👉 **Rouge / rogue** ⇒ ROGUE

You can create an artificial blush by using rouge, but a scoundrel who deserves to be called a rogue is unlikely to blush naturally. Many people write about "rouge software" when they mean "rogue software."

👉 **Rpms** ⇒ RPM

"RPM" means "revolutions per minute," so it is redundant to add an S at the end of the abbreviation—it's already plural. Adding the S is so common among people working with engines that it's not likely to get you into trouble, but you will impress some by avoiding it.

👉 **Rubbage** ⇒ Although the generally obsolete form "rubbage" persists in some dialects, many people will assume if you use it that you are confusing "rubbish" with "garbage."

👉 **Rueben** ⇒ REUBEN

Diner owners who put "Rueben sandwiches" on their menus may rue the day they did so when they encounter a customer who cares about the correct spelling of this classic American concoction of corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese and Russian dressing on rye bread. Although the origin of the sandwich is obscure, being credited to several different restaurateurs, all of them spelled their name "Reuben," with the E before the U.

👉 **Ruff** ⇒ ROUGH

The slangy spelling "ruff" for "rough" is not appropriate in formal writing, but your spelling-checker won't flag it because "ruff" has a traditional meaning of its own, denoting a frilled collar.

👉 **Rural** ⇒ In some US dialects, the second R in "rural" is not pronounced, so that it sounds like "ROO-ull" or even "rull." The dominant standard pronunciation sounds both r's, to rhyme with "plural."

👉 **Rye / wry** ⇒ WRY

"Wry" means "bent, twisted." Even if you don't have a wry sense of humor you may crack a wry smile. No rye is involved.

👉 **Sacred / scared** ⇒ This is one of those silly typos which your spelling checker won't catch: gods are sacred, the damned in Hell are scared.

👉 **Sacreigious** ⇒ SACRILEGIOUS

Doing something sacrilegious involves committing sacrilege. Don't let the related word "religious" trick you into misspelling the word as "sacreligious."

👉 **Safety deposit box** ⇒ SAFE DEPOSIT BOX

Those who prefer "safe deposit box" feel that the box in question is a container for the safe deposit of goods; it is not a box in which to deposit your safety. But manufacturers and dealers in this kind of safe are split in their usage. Just be aware that some people feel that "safety deposit" is an error whereas no one is likely to look down on you for saying "safe deposit box."

👉 **Sail / sale / sell** ⇒ These simple and familiar words are surprisingly often confused in writing. You sail a boat which has a sail of canvas. You sell your old fondue pot at a yard sale.

👉 **Salsa sauce** ⇒ SALSAS

"Salsa" is Spanish for "sauce," so "salsa sauce" is redundant. Here in the US, where people now spend more on salsa than on ketchup (or catsup, if you prefer), few people are unaware that it's a sauce. Anyone so sheltered as not to be aware of that fact will need a fuller explanation: "chopped tomatoes, onions, chilies and cilantro."

👉 **Same difference** ⇒ This is a jokey, deliberately illogical slang expression that doesn't belong in formal writing.

👉 **Sameo sameo** ⇒ SAME OLD SAME OLD

Many people who don't understand the expression "same old same old" (meaning "the same old thing") misspell it as "sameo sameo" or "same-o same-o."

👉 **Samwich / sandwich** ⇒ SANDWICH

In some dialects, "sandwich" is pronounced "samwich." In standard English the first syllable is pronounced exactly the way it's spelled, like the word for sand at a beach.

👉 **Sang / sung** ⇒ In modern English the normal past tense form of "sing" is "sang." It's not "she sung the anthem" but "she sang the anthem." "Sung" is the past participle, used only after a helping verb: "She has sung the anthem. Play ball!"

👉 **Sarcastic / ironic** ⇒ Not all ironic comments are sarcastic. Sarcasm is meant to mock or wound. Irony can be amusing without being maliciously aimed at hurting anyone.

👉 **Satellite** ⇒ Originally a satellite was a follower. Astronomers applied the term to smaller bodies orbiting about planets, like our moon. Then we began launching artificial satellites. Since few people were familiar with the term in its technical meaning, the adjective "artificial" was quickly dropped in popular usage. So far so bad. Then television began to be broadcast via satellite. Much if not all television now wends its way through a satellite at some point, but in the popular imagination only broadcasts received at the viewing site via a dish antenna aimed at a satellite qualify to be called "satellite television." Thus we see motel signs boasting:

AIR CONDITIONING,\*

SATELLITE

People say things like "the fight's going to be shown on satellite." The word has become a pathetic fragment of its former self. The technologically literate speaker will avoid these slovenly abbreviations.

\*At least motels have not yet adopted the automobile industry's truncation of "air conditioning" to "air."

👉 **Say / tell** ⇒ You say “Hello, Mr. Chips” to the teacher, and then tell him about what you did last summer. You can’t “tell that” except in expressions like “go tell that to your old girlfriend.”

👉 **Scarcely** ⇒ “Scarcely” is a negative adverb and shouldn’t have another negative word used with it. “She couldn’t scarcely afford the bus fare” should be “She could scarcely afford the bus fare.”

👉 **Sceptic / skeptic** ⇒ Believe it or not, the British spellings are “sceptic” and “scepticism”; the American spellings are “skeptic” and “skepticism.”

👉 **Schizophrenic** ⇒ In popular usage, “schizophrenic” (and the more slangy and now dated “schizoid”) indicates “split between two attitudes.” This drives people with training in psychiatry crazy. “Schizo-” does indeed mean “split,” but it is used here to mean “split off from reality.” Someone with a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality is suffering from “multiple personality disorder” (or, more recently “dissociative identity disorder”), not “schizophrenia.”

👉 **Sci-fi** ⇒ SCIENCE FICTION, SF

“Sci-fi,” the widely used abbreviation for “science fiction,” is objectionable to most professional science fiction writers, scholars, and many fans. Some of them scornfully designate alien monster movies and other trivial entertainments “sci-fi” (which they pronounce “skiffy”) to distinguish them from true science fiction. The preferred abbreviation in these circles is “SF.” The problem with this abbreviation is that to the general public “SF” means “San Francisco.” “The Sci-Fi Channel” has exacerbated the conflict over this term. If you are a reporter approaching a science fiction writer or expert you immediately mark yourself as an outsider by using the term “sci-fi.”

👉 **Scone / sconce** ⇒ If you fling a jam-covered biscuit at the wall and it sticks, the result may be a “wall scone”; but if you are describing a wall-mounted light fixture, the word you want is sconce.

👉 **Scotch** ⇒ Scottish people generally refer to themselves as “Scots” or “Scottish” rather than “Scotch.” “Scotch” is whisky (or in the US, “whiskey.”)

👉 **Scotch free** ⇒ SCOT FREE

Getting away with something “scot free” has nothing to do with the Scots (or Scotch). The scot was a medieval tax; if you evaded paying it you got off scot free. Some people wrongly suppose this phrase alludes to Dred Scott, the American slave who unsuccessfully sued for his freedom. The phrase is “scot free”: no H, one T.

👉 **Scramble eggs** ⇒ SCRAMBLED EGGS

When you scramble eggs they become scrambled eggs.

👉 **Scrapegoat** ⇒ SCAPEGOAT

Leviticus 16: 5-10 describes an ancient ritual in which a goat was symbolically laden with the sins of the people and driven out into the desert to the demon Azazel. In early English translations confusion led to this goat being called a “scapegoat” (for “escaped goat”). A person or cause being sacrificed as a victim to spare others is therefore referred to as a scapegoat. You load the burdens on; you don’t scrape them off.

👉 **Sea change** ⇒ In Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, Ariel deceitfully sings to Ferdinand: Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

This rich language has so captivated the ears of generations of writers that they feel compelled to describe as “sea changes” not only alterations that are “rich and strange,” but, less appropriately, those that are simply large or sudden. Always popular, this cliché has recently become so pervasive as to make “sea” an almost inextricable companion to “change,” whatever its meaning. In its original context, it meant nothing more complex than “a change caused by the sea.” Since the phrase is almost always improperly used and is greatly over-used, it has suffered a swamp change into something dull and tiresome. Avoid the phrase; otherwise you will irritate those who know it and puzzle those who do not.

👉 **Seam / seem** ⇒ “Seem” is the verb, “seam” the noun. Use “seam” only for things like the line produced when two pieces of cloth are sewn together or a thread of coal in a geological formation.

👉 **Seasonable / seasonal / unseasonable / unseasonal** ⇒ “Seasonable” means “appropriate to the season.” In North America hot summer days are seasonable. Untypical weather is unseasonable. “Seasonal” is used to label something that changes with the season. Holiday sales in December and visits to water parks are seasonal, not seasonable. However, “Unseasonal” is not a standard form. When it is used, the writer usually means “unseasonable.”

👉 **Second of all** ⇒ SECOND

“First of all” makes sense when you want to emphasize the primacy of the first item in a series, but it should not be followed by “second of all,” where the expression serves no such function. And “secondly” is an adverbial form that makes no sense at all in enumeration (neither does “firstly”). As you go through your list, say simply “second,” “third,” “fourth,” etc.

👉 **Seen / saw** ⇒ In standard English, it’s “i’ve seen” not “i’ve saw.” The helping verb “have” (abbreviated here to “ve”) requires “seen.” In the simple past (no helping verb), the expression is “I saw,” not “I seen.” “i’ve seen a lot of ugly cars, but when I saw that old beat-up Rambler I couldn’t believe my eyes.”

👉 **Segway** ⇒ SEGUE

When you shift to a new topic or activity, you segue. Many people unfamiliar with the unusual Italian spelling of the word misspell it as “segway.” This error is being encouraged by the deliberately punning name used by the manufacturers of the Segway Human Transporter.

👉 **Select / selected** ⇒ “Select” means “special, chosen because of its outstanding qualities.” If you are writing an ad for a furniture store offering low prices on some of its recliners, call them “selected recliners,” not “select recliners,” unless they are truly outstanding and not just leftovers you’re trying to move out of the store.

👉 **Self-steam** ⇒ SELF ESTEEM

If you bask in the sauna, you may self-steam. But the expression labeling people’s opinions of their own worth is “self-esteem.”

“Self-esteem” is also sometimes misspelled “self of steam.”

👉 **Self-worth** ⇒ SELF-ESTEEM

To say that a person has a low sense of self-worth makes sense, though it’s inelegant; but people commonly truncate the phrase, saying instead, “He has low self-worth.” This would literally mean that he isn’t worth much rather than that he has a low opinion of himself. “Self-esteem” sounds much more literate.

👉 **Sense / since** ⇒ “Sense” is a verb meaning “feel” (“I sense you near me”) or a noun meaning “intelligence” (“have some common sense!”). Don’t use it when

you need the adverb “since” (“since you went away,” “since you’re up anyway, would you please let the cat out?”).

👉 **Sense of false hope** ⇒ FALSE SENSE OF HOPE

If you’re trying to lull someone into hopefulness you don’t want to give them a sense of false hope. Rather, you want to make them feel really hopeful, although such hope is unjustified. So what you should say is “a false sense of hope.”

The same goes for similar expressions such as “false sense of security,” “false sense of confidence,” and “false sense of privacy.”

👉 **Sensual / sensuous** ⇒ “Sensual” usually relates to physical desires and experiences, and often means “sexy.” But “sensuous” is more often used for esthetic pleasures, like “sensuous music.” The two words do overlap a good deal. The leather seats in your new car may be sensuous; but if they turn you on, they might be sensual. “Sensual” often has a slightly racy or even judgmental tone lacking in “sensuous.”

👉 **Sentence fragments** ⇒ There are actually many fine uses for sentence fragments. Here’s a brief scene from an imaginary Greek tragedy composed entirely of fragments:

**Menelaus:** Aha! Helen!

**Helen** (startled): Beloved husband!

**Menelaus:** Slut!

**Paris** (entering, seeing Menelaus): Oops. ‘Bye.

**Menelaus:** Not so fast! (stabs Paris).

**Paris:** Arrggh!

Some people get into trouble by breaking a perfectly good sentence in two: “We did some research in newspapers. Like the National Enquirer.” The second phrase belongs in the same sentence with the first, not dangling off on its own. A more common kind of troublesome fragment is a would-be sentence introduced by a word or phrase that suggests it’s part of some other sentence: “By picking up the garbage the fraternity had strewn around the street the weekend before got the group a favorable story in the paper.” Just lop off “by” to convert this into a proper complete sentence.

👉 **Sergeant of arms** ⇒ SERGEANT AT ARMS

The officer charged with maintaining order in a meeting is the “sergeant at arms,” not “of arms.”

👉 **Service / serve** ⇒ A mechanic services your car and a stallion services a mare; but most of the time when you want to talk about the goods or services you supply, the word you want is “serve”: “Our firm serves the hotel industry.”

👉 **Set / sit** ⇒ SIT

In some dialects people say “come on in and set a spell,” but in standard English the word is “sit.” You set down an object or a child you happen to be carrying, but those seating themselves sit. If you mix these two up it will not sit well with some people.

👉 **Setup / set up** ⇒ Technical writers sometimes confuse “setup” as a noun (“check the setup”) with the phrase “set up” (“set up the experiment”).

👉 **Shall / will** ⇒ “Will” has almost entirely replaced “shall” in American English except in legal documents and in questions like “Shall we have red wine with the duck?”

👉 **Shan’t / shall not** ⇒ The use of the contraction “shan’t” for “shall not” is more common in the UK than in the US, where it may strike readers as a bit old-fashioned. Americans are more likely to say “will not” in the same contexts.

🌀 **Shear / sheer** ⇒ You can cut through cloth with a pair of shears, but if the cloth is translucent it's sheer. People who write about a "shear blouse" do so out of sheer ignorance.

🌀 **Sheath / sheaf** ⇒ If you take your knife out of its sheath (case) you can use it to cut a sheaf (bundle) of wheat to serve as a centerpiece.

🌀 **Sherbert** ⇒ SHERBET

The name for these icy desserts is derived from Turkish/Persian sorbet, but the R in the first syllable seems to seduce many speakers into adding one in the second, where it doesn't belong. A California chain called "Herbert's Sherbets" had me confused on this point for years when I was growing up.

🌀 **Shimmy / shinny** ⇒ You shinny—or shin (climb)—up a tree or pole, but on the dance floor or in a vibrating vehicle you shimmy (shake).

🌀 **Shined / shone** ⇒ The transitive form of the verb "shine" is "shined." If the context describes something shining on something else, use "shined": "He shined his flashlight on the skunk eating from the dog dish." You can remember this because another sense of the word meaning "polished" obviously requires "shined": "I shined your shoes for you."

When the shining is less active, many people would use "shone": "The sun shone on the tomato plants all afternoon." But some authorities prefer "shined" even in this sort of context: "The sun shined on the tomato plants all afternoon."

If the verb is intransitive (lacks an object) and the context merely speaks of the act of shining, the past tense is definitely "shone": "The sun shone all afternoon" (note that nothing is said here about the sun shining on anything).

🌀 **Shoe-in** ⇒ SHOO-IN

This expression purportedly comes from the practice of corrupt jockeys holding their horses back and shooing a preselected winner across the finish line to guarantee that it will win. A "shoo-in" is now an easy winner, with no connotation of dishonesty. "Shoe-in" is a common misspelling.

🌀 **Shone / shown** ⇒ "Shone" is the past tense of "shine": "long after sunset, the moon still shone brightly in the sky."

"Shown" is a past participle of "show": "foreign films are rarely shown at our local theater."

🌀 **Shook / shaken** ⇒ SHAKEN

Elvis Presley couldn't have very well sung "I'm all shaken up," but that is the grammatically correct form. "Shook" is the simple past tense of "shake," and quite correct in sentences like "I shook my piggy bank but all that came out was a paper clip." But in sentences with a helping verb, you need "shaken": "The quarterback had shaken the champagne bottle before emptying it on the coach."

🌀 **Should / would** ⇒ Where a British person might say "I should like an apple" an American would be more likely to say "I would like an apple." In the US, "should" is largely confined to the meaning "ought to."

🌀 **Shoulder on / soldier on** ⇒ SOLDIER ON

Soldiers are expected to do their duty despite all obstacles, and that's why we say that a person who perseveres soldiers on. But because "soldier" is rarely used as a verb in modern English, many people mix this expression up with a more common one involving pushing through crowds: to shoulder through. People shouldering are being pushy, usually in an obnoxious way. People who soldier on are admirably determined to carry on despite difficulties.

🌀 **Show-stopper** ⇒ DEAL-BREAKER

Originally a “show-stopper” (now often spelled without the hyphen as one or two words) was a sensational musical number which created so much applause that the show had to be temporarily halted. By extension, anything making a sensationally positive impact could be called “show-stopping.”

Computer programmers flipped the meaning by labeling a bug that brings a program to a halt a “showstopper.” Now the word is commonly used as a synonym for “deal-breaker” in government and business. The negative meaning is now so pervasive that it can’t be called an error, but be aware that those who know only the show-business meaning may regard you as ignorant if you use it in this way.

👉 **Shrunk / shrank** ⇒ The simple past tense form of “shrink” is “shrank” and the past participle is “shrunk”; it should be “Honey, I Shrank the Kids,” not “Honey, I Shrunk the Kids.” (Thanks a lot, Disney.)

“Honey, i’ve shrunk the kids” would be standard, and also grammatically acceptable is “Honey, i’ve shrunken the kids” (though deplorable from a child-rearing point of view).

👉 **Shutter to think** ⇒ SHUDDER TO THINK

When you are so horrified by a thought that you tremble at it, you shudder to think it.

👉 **Sick / sic** ⇒ The command given to a dog, “sic ’em,” derives from the word “seek.” The 1992 punk rock album titled “Sick ’Em” has helped popularize the common misspelling of this phrase. Unless you want to tell how you incited your pit bull to vomit on someone’s shoes, don’t write “sick ’em” or “sick the dog.”

The standard spelling of the -ing form of the word is “sicking.”

In a different context, the Latin word sic (“thus”) inserted into a quotation is an editorial comment calling attention to a misspelling or other error in the original which you do not want to be blamed for but are accurately reproducing: “She acted like a real pre-Madonna (sic).” When commenting on someone else’s faulty writing, you really want to avoid misspelling this word as sick.

Although it’s occasionally useful in preventing misunderstanding, sic is usually just a way of being snotty about someone else’s mistake, largely replaced now by “lol.” Sometimes it’s appropriate to correct the mistakes in writing you’re quoting; and when errors abound, you needn’t mark each one with a sic—your readers will notice.

See “lol.”

👉 **Sierra Nevada Mountains** ⇒ SIERRA NEVADAS

Sierra is Spanish for “sawtooth mountain range,” so knowledgeable Westerners usually avoid a redundancy by simply referring to “the Sierra Nevadas” or simply “the Sierras.” Transplanted weather forecasters often get this wrong.

Some object to the familiar abbreviation “Sierras,” but this form, like “Rockies” and “Smokies” is too well established to be considered erroneous.

👉 **Signaled out** ⇒ SINGLED OUT

When a single individual is separated out from a larger group, usually by being especially noticed or treated differently, that individual is being “singled out.” This expression has nothing to do with signalling.

👉 **Silicon / silicone** ⇒ Silicon is a chemical element, the basic stuff of which microchips are made. Silicones are plastics and other materials containing silicon, the most commonly discussed example being silicone breast implants. Less used by the general public is “silica”: an oxide of silicon.

🌀 **Simplistic** ⇒ “Simplistic” means “overly simple,” and is always used negatively. Don’t substitute it when you just mean to say “simple” or even “very simple.”

🌀 **Single quotes** ⇒ In standard American writing, the only use for single quotation marks is to designate a quotation within a quotation. Students are exposed by Penguin Books and other publishers to the British practice of using single quotes for normal quotations and become confused. Some strange folkloric process has convinced many people that while entire sentences and long phrases are surrounded by conventional double quotation marks, single words and short phrases take single quotation marks. “Wrong,” I insist.

🌀 **Sir / Dame** ⇒ The English titles “Sir” and “Dame” should never be used with a last name only. It’s “Sir Paul mccartney” or “Sir Paul,” but never “Sir mccartney.” Similarly, it’s “Dame Helen Mirren” or “Dame Helen,” but not “Dame Mirren.”

🌀 **Sister-in-laws** ⇒ SISTERS-IN-LAW

Your spouse’s female siblings are not your sister-in-laws, but your sisters-in-law. The same pattern applies to brothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, and mothers-in-law.

🌀 **Skiddish** ⇒ SKITTISH

If you nervously avoid something you are not “skiddish” about it; the word is “skittish.”

🌀 **Slight of hand** ⇒ SLEIGHT OF HAND

“Sleight” is an old word meaning “cleverness, skill,” and the proper expression is “sleight of hand.” It’s easy to understand why it’s confused with “slight” since the two words are pronounced in exactly the same way.

🌀 **Slog it out** ⇒ SLUG IT OUT

Slogging is a slow, messy business, typically tramping through sticky mud or metaphorically struggling with other difficult tasks. You might slog through a pile of receipts to do your taxes. If you are engaged in a fierce battle with an adversary, however, you slug it out, like boxers slugging each other. There is no such expression as “slog it out.”

🌀 **Slow gin** ⇒ SLOE GIN

A small European plum named a “sloe” is used to flavor the liqueur called “sloe gin.” You should probably sip it slowly, but that has nothing to do with its name.

🌀 **Sluff off** ⇒ SLOUGH OFF

You use a loofah to slough off dead skin.

🌀 **Snuck** ⇒ SNEAKED

In American English “snuck” has become increasingly common as the past tense of “sneak.” This is one of many cases in which people’s humorously self-conscious use of dialect has influenced others to adopt it as standard and it is now often seen even in sophisticated writing in the US. But it is safer to use the traditional form: “sneaked.”

🌀 **So / very** ⇒ VERY

Originally people said things like, “I was so delighted with the wrapping that I couldn’t bring myself to open the package.” But then they began to lazily say “You made me so happy,” no longer explaining just how happy that was. This pattern of using “so” as a simple intensifier meaning “very” is now standard in casual speech, but is out of place in formal writing, where “very” or another intensifier works better. Without vocal emphasis, the “so” conveys little in print.

🌀 **So fun** ⇒ SO MUCH FUN

Strictly a young person's usage: "That party was so fun!" If you don't want to be perceived as a gum-chewing airhead, say "so much fun."

👉 **Soar / sore** ⇒ By far the more common word is "sore" which refers to aches, pains and wounds: sore feet, sore backs, sores on your skin. The more unusual word used to describe the act of gliding through the air or swooping up toward the heavens is spelled "soar." This second word is often used metaphorically: eagles, spirits, and prices can all soar. If you know your parts of speech, just keep in mind that "soar" is always a verb, and "sore" can be either a noun ("running sore") or an adjective ("sore loser") but never a verb. In archaic English "sore" could also be an adverb meaning "sorely" or "severely": "they were sore afraid."

👉 **Social / societal** ⇒ "Societal" as an adjective has been in existence for a couple of centuries, but has become widely used only in the recent past. People who imagine that "social" has too many frivolous connotations of mere partying often resort to it to make their language more serious and impressive. It is best used by social scientists and others in referring to the influence of societies: "societal patterns among the Ibo of eastern Nigeria." Used in place of "social" in ordinary speech and writing it sounds pretentious.

👉 **Socialize** ⇒ People socialize at a party or on Facebook. Socialist governments socialize their economies. Sociologists speak of people being socialized into particular customs or groups. Animals can also be socialized. These are the main standard uses of "socialize."

But people in the business world have developed a new meaning for "socialize": to get people to agree with. Examples: "have them socialize the material with their work groups," "we need to socialize the idea." To nonspeakers of business jargon this sounds pretentious and silly.

👉 **Sojourn / journey** ⇒ JOURNEY

Although the spelling of this word confuses many people into thinking it means "journey," a sojourn is actually a temporary stay in one place. If you're constantly on the move, you're not engaged in a sojourn.

👉 **Sole / soul** ⇒ The bottom of your foot is your sole; your spirit is your soul.

👉 **Somebody / someone** ⇒ Can "somebody" or "someone" be plural nouns? No. They are always singular.

A sentence like "When somebody runs a red light, they risk causing an accident" is just an example of "singular "they." See "they/their (singular)."

👉 **Somebody's else** ⇒ SOMEBODY ELSE'S

The expression is not "somebody's else," but "somebody else's."

👉 **Sometime / some time** ⇒ "Let's get together sometime." When you use the one-word form, it suggests some indefinite time in the future. "Some time" is not wrong in this sort of context, but it is required when being more specific: "Choose some time that fits in your schedule." "Some" is an adjective here modifying "time." The same pattern applies to "someday" (vague) and "some day" (specific).

👉 **Sometimes not always** ⇒ SOMETIMES/NOT ALWAYS

Expressions like "not always," "don't always," and "aren't always" overlap in meaning with "sometimes," but don't belong in the same phrase with this word—they're redundant.

"Sometimes I don't always feel like jogging" doesn't make any sense. Say either "sometimes I don't feel like jogging" or "I don't always feel like jogging."

👉 **Someways** ⇒ **SOMEHOW**

“Someways” Mark managed to catch his beard in his jacket zipper.” “Someways” in this sense is slangy. “Somehow” is standard.

👉 **Somewhat of a** ⇒ **SOMEWHAT, SOMETHING OF A**

An “a” is most commonly inserted after “something” rather than after “somewhat”: “She is somewhat awkward,” and “He is something of a klutz.” “Somewhat of a” will strike some readers as a little odd.

👉 **Somewheres** ⇒ **SOMEWHERE**

You may hear someone say things like “the yeast is somewheres in the baking aisle.” The spelling “somewheres” is not standard; use “somewhere” instead.

👉 **Song / work or composition** ⇒ When you’re writing that cultural event report based on last night’s symphony concert, don’t call the music performed “songs.” Songs are strictly pieces of music which are sung—by singers. Instrumental numbers may be called “works,” “compositions,” or even “pieces.” Be careful, though: a single piece may have several different movements; and it would be wrong to refer to the Adagio of Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata as a “piece.” It’s just a piece of a piece.

See also music/singing.

👉 **Sooner** ⇒ **RATHER**

“I’d sooner starve than eat what they serve in the cafeteria” is less formal than “I’d rather starve.”

👉 **Sooner than later** ⇒ **SOONER RATHER THAN LATER**

The traditional expression “sooner rather than later” is now commonly abbreviated to the less logical “sooner than later.” The shorter form is very popular, but is more likely to cause raised eyebrows than the similarly abbreviated expression “long story short.”

See “long story short.”

👉 **Sort after** ⇒ **SOUGHT AFTER**

Something popular which many people are searching for is “sought after”. If you are sorting a thing, you’ve presumably already found it. When this phrase precedes a noun or noun phrase which it modifies, it has to be hyphenated: “Action Comics #1 is a much sought-after comic book because it was the first to feature Superman.”

👉 **Sort of** ⇒ **RATHER, SOMEWHAT**

“Sort of” is not only slangy, it is often vague. “Dinner was sort of expensive” does not convey nearly as much as “the bill for dinner came to more than he earned in a week.” The same applies to the similarly vague “kind of.”

👉 **Sorta speak** ⇒ **SO TO SPEAK**

The expression “sorta speak” seems to be quite common. Some people will “correct” you by saying it should be pronounced and written “sort of speak.”

But neither form is standard. When you use an expression that is not meant entirely literally, or is slang or informal, you may follow it with “so to speak” or “in a manner of speaking.” It is most appropriately used to acknowledge that you have just expressed an idea in an unusual fashion.

Some people use it to label statements that are simply untrue, but that is stretching the expression too far.

Examples of standard usage: “They had money to burn, so to speak.” “He went ballistic, so to speak.” “In my college years I was an academic nomad, so to speak.”

Other similar expressions are “as it were,” “in a manner of speaking,” and “figuratively speaking.”

A much less common but more amusing misspelling than “sorta speak” is “soda speak.”

👉 **Sound byte** ⇒ SOUND BITE

A “sound bite” is a brief snippet of recorded speech, usually used in the context of news reporting. The term originated around 1980, long before the recording of such snippets on personal computers was common; so those who argue that the correct spelling is “sound bite” are mistaken.

👉 **Soup du jour of the day** ⇒ SOUP OF THE DAY

Soupe du jour (note the E on the end of soupe) means “soup of the day.” If you’re going to use French to be pretentious on a menu, it’s important to learn the meaning of the words you’re using. Often what is offered is potage, anyway. Keep it simple, keep it in English, and you can’t go wrong.

👉 **Sour grapes** ⇒ In a famous fable by Aesop, a fox declared that he didn’t care that he could not reach an attractive bunch of grapes because he imagined they were probably sour anyway. You express sour grapes when you put down something you can’t get: “winning the lottery is just a big headache anyway.” The phrase is misused in all sorts of ways by people who don’t know the original story and imagine it means something more general like “bitterness” or “resentment.”

👉 **Souse chef** ⇒ SOUS CHEF

What’s a “souse chef”? Is it the fellow who adds a dash of brandy to your dessert? No, it’s just a misspelling of sous chef, a French phrase meaning “assistant chef.” The first word is pronounced just like “sue.”

👉 **Sowcow** ⇒ SALCHOW

There’s a fancy turning jump in ice skating named after Swedish figure skater Ulrich Salchow, but every Winter Olympics millions of people think they hear the commentators saying “sowcow” and that’s how they proceed to misspell it.

👉 **Spaces after a period** ⇒ In the old days of typewriters using only monospaced fonts in which a period occupied as much horizontal space as any other letter, it was standard to double-space after each one to clearly separate each sentence from the following one. However, when justified variable-width type is set for printing, it has been standard since the mid-20th century to use only one space between sentences. Modern computers produce type that is more like print, and most modern styles call for only one space after a period. This is especially important if you are preparing a text for publication which will be laid out from your electronic copy. If you find it difficult to adopt the one-space pattern, when you are finished writing you can do a global search-and-replace to find all double spaces and replace them with single spaces.

👉 **Spaces in names** ⇒ In many European languages family names are often preceded by a preposition (“de,” “da,” “di,” “von,” and “van” all mean “of”), an article (“le” and “la” mean “the”) or both (“du,” “des,” “del,” “de la,” “della” and “van der” all mean “of the”). Such prefixes often originated as designators of nobility—or pretensions to it—but today they are just incidental parts of certain names.

In their original languages the two parts of the name are usually separated by a space, and the prefixed preposition or article is not capitalized unless it begins a sentence. If you take a college course involving famous European names you will be expected to follow this pattern. It’s not “De Beauvoir” but “de Beauvoir”; not “Van Gogh” but “van Gogh.” The only exception is when the name begins a sentence: “De Gaulle led the Free French,” but “Charles de Gaulle had a big nose.”

Some European names evolved into one-word spellings early on (Dupont, Lamartine, Dallapiccola), but they are not likely to cause problems because English speakers are usually unaware of the significance of their initial syllables. When families bearing prefixed names move to the US, they often adapt their spelling to a one-word form. A well-known example is “dicaprio.” French le Blanc becomes leblanc in America, and Italian di Franco becomes difranco. The name “de Vries” is spelled in English by various people bearing that name “De Vries,” “devries,” and “Devries.” You have to check carefully to determine how a particular person prefers the name to be spelled. Library reference tools like Who’s Who are more reliable than most Web sources.

The practice of retaining the capital letter inside the fused form is one peculiar to American English. Early books by famed science-fiction author Ursula Le Guin rendered her name “leguin” though later reprints go with the separated form, which we may assume is her preference. The fused form has the advantage of being easier for computers to sort into alphabetized lists. You will find many Web pages in which the names of Europeans are adapted to the one-word form, but this is a sign of a lack of sophistication.

Once you learn to properly separate the parts of a last name, you need to know how to alphabetize it. Put van Gogh under V, but Van Morrison under M (“Van” is his given name, not part of his family name). Ludwig van Beethoven, however, is under B, not V.

College students also need to know that most Medieval and many Renaissance names consist of a single given name linked to a place name to indicate where the person came from. Marie de France means simply “Marie of France,” and she should never be referred to as simply “de France.” After introducing her full name, refer to her as “Marie.” Forget The Da Vinci Code; scholars refer to him as “Leonardo,” never as “da Vinci.”

👉 **Spaded / spayed** ⇒ If you’ve had your dog surgically sterilized, you’ve spayed it; save the spading until it dies.

👉 **Span** ⇒ SPUN

Don’t say “the demon span her head around.” The past tense of “spin” in this sense is spun.

👉 **Spare of the moment** ⇒ SPUR OF THE MOMENT

You don’t see people wearing spurs much any more, which may explain why some are vague about the significance of metaphorical spurs. Anything that prompts you to do something can be a spur to action. We say of people that are prompted in this way that they are “spurred on” by fear, ambition, greed, or some other cause.

So a momentary impulse which causes you to act without advance planning can result in a decision made “on the spur of the moment.”

Then there is the expression “spare moment”: “When I was getting the kids ready for school I couldn’t spare a moment to clean up the mess the dog made in the kitchen; would you please do it?”

This latter pattern seems to lead some people to mistakenly imagine that the expression is “on the spare of the moment.”

👉 **Speak / talk** ⇒ “Speak” and “talk” are often interchangeable, but when you refer to using a particular language, the word you want is “speak.” You can speak English, Arabic or Urdu.

“Speak” is a little more formal than “talk,” so if you want to be especially polite you should ask to speak with people rather than ask to talk to them.

You speak Turkish, but you “talk turkey.”

👉 **Specially / especially** ⇒ In most contexts “specially” is more common than “especially,” but when you mean “particularly” “especially” works better: “I am not especially excited about inheriting my grandmother’s neurotic Siamese cat.” “Especial” in the place of “special” is very formal and rather old-fashioned.

👉 **Specie / species** ⇒ In both the original Latin and in English “species” is the spelling of both the singular and plural forms. Amphiprion ocellaris is one species of clownfish. Many species of fish are endangered by overfishing. Specie is a technical term referring to the physical form of money, particularly coins.

👉 **Spicket** ⇒ SPIGOT

A faucet is a “spigot,” not a “spicket.”

👉 **Spiritualism** ⇒ The most common meaning of “spiritualism” is belief in the possibility of communication with the spirits of the dead.

A better term for other religious beliefs and activities is “spirituality,” as in “I’m going to the ashram to explore my spirituality.”

👉 **Spoke / said** ⇒ Novice writers of fictional dialogue sometimes become wary of repeating “said” too often, resulting in odd constructions like this: “You’ve got gravy on your shirt,’ she spoke.”

You can speak a language or speak with someone, but you can’t speak a speech. If you get tired of “said” you could have your characters whisper, shout, hiss, or grumble; but you shouldn’t be afraid of having them simply say things. It won’t bore your readers; they won’t even notice.

👉 **Sprain / strain** ⇒ So did you sprain your leg or strain it? It will take someone with medical training to say for sure. Technically, a sprain is a ligament injury and a strain is tendon or muscle injury. But don’t fret about the distinction if you’re trying to explain to your friends why you may not be able to finish a hike; they won’t hold it against you if your “sprain” turns out to be a “strain.”

👉 **Spree** ⇒ It used to be that a spree was mainly understood as a wild drinking carouse, with the emphasis on spontaneity and abandon. Then it was used metaphorically, as in a “shopping spree.”

American journalists began to write of “killing sprees” by murderers recklessly killing people at random (“spree” fits so nicely in headlines).

But they go too far when they refer to terrorist bombing sprees. Targeted, purposeful acts like these lack the element of spontaneity and disorder that characterize a spree. Do they mean perhaps a spate?

👉 **Squash / quash** ⇒ You can squash a spider or a tomato; but when the meaning you intend is “to suppress,” as in rebellions or (especially) legal motions, the more sophisticated term is “quash.”

👉 **Squoze** ⇒ SQUEEZED

The standard past tense of “squeeze” is not “squoze” but “squeezed.” Even most people who write “squoze” know this, and use it jokingly.

👉 **Staid / stayed** ⇒ “Staid” is an adjective often used to label somebody who is rather stodgy and dull, a stick-in-the-mud. But in modern English the past tense of the verb “stay” is “stayed”: “I stayed at the office late hoping to impress my boss.”

👉 **Stain glass** ⇒ STAINED GLASS

The proper spelling is “stained.”

👉 **Stalactites / stalagmites** ⇒ There’s an old joke that will help you keep these straight. Remember “ants in the pants”: the mites go up and the tights come down.

👉 **Stand / stance** ⇒ When you courageously resist opposing forces, you take—or make—a stand. The metaphor is a military one, with the defending forces refusing to flee from the attacker. Your stance, on the other hand, is just your position—literal or figurative—which may not be particularly militant. A golfer wanting to improve her drives may adopt a different stance, or your stance on cojack may be that it doesn't belong on a gourmet cheese platter; but if you organize a group to force the neighbors to get rid of the hippo they've tethered in their front yard, you're taking a stand.

👉 **Standalone** ⇒ STAND-ALONE

Despite the fact that it's been slow to appear in traditional dictionaries, the adjective “standalone”—meaning “independent”—has become hugely popular in recent years. There are standalone electronic devices, standalone computer applications, and standalone businesses. Authors known mainly for writing books in a series who decide to write a single work unconnected with any series are said to have written a standalone novel.

You're more likely to find what you're looking for in dictionaries under the hyphenated spelling “stand-alone.” Formal edited English still usually prefers this version. There is a strong tendency for such hyphenated forms as “on-line” to get smooshed together into one-word spellings (for instance, “online” is now standard as an adjective). That process is clearly happening with “stand-alone,” but it's safer to use the hyphen unless you know for sure that the audience you are writing for prefers the unhyphenated form: write “stand-alone device,” etc. Rendering this adjectival form as two unhyphenated words (“a stand alone device”) is just a mistake.

👉 **States / countries** ⇒ Citizens of the United States, where states are smaller subdivisions of the country, are sometimes surprised to see “states” referring instead to foreign countries. Note that the US Department of State deals with foreign affairs, not those of US states. Clearly distinguish these two uses of “state” in your writing.

👉 **Stationary / stationery** ⇒ When something is standing still, it's stationary. That piece of paper you write a letter on is stationery. Let the “E” in “stationery” remind you of “envelope.”

👉 **Statue of limitations** ⇒ STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

What would a statue of limitations look like? A cop stopping traffic? The Venus de Milo? Her missing arms would definitely limit her ability to scratch what itches. The legal phrase limiting the period after which an offense can no longer be prosecuted is the statute (law) of limitations.

👉 **Staunch/stanch** ⇒ Some people—and not a few usage guides—insist that although you can be a staunch friend you stanch the flow of blood from a wound. But “staunch” has been a standard spelling for word with the latter meaning from its origin in the 14th century, and is today more popular than “stanch.”

The two words spelled “staunch” are logically related through a root meaning “watertight”: you are tight with your allies and friends, clinging firmly to them; and you close a wound tightly to halt the bleeding. Even people who write “stanch” often pronounce it “stawnch.”

👉 **Steak / stake** ⇒ “Stake” has many meanings, but the only time to use “steak” is when you are talking about a hunk of meat.

👉 **Step foot** ⇒ SET FOOT

When you want to say that you refuse to enter some location, the traditional expression is not “step foot,” but “set foot”: “I refuse to set foot in my brother-in-law’s house while he lets his vicious pit bull run around inside.”

👉 **Stereo** ⇒ In the world of audio “stereo” refers properly to a means of reproducing sound in two or more discrete channels to create a solid, apparently three-dimensional sound. Because in the early days only fanciers of high fidelity (or hi-fi) equipment could afford stereophonic sound, “stereo” came to be used as a substitute for “high fidelity,” and even “record player.” Stereo equipment (for instance a cheap portable cassette player) is not necessarily high fidelity equipment. Visual technology creating a sense of depth by using two different lenses can also use the root “stereo” as in “stereoscope.”

👉 **Stint / stent** ⇒ When the time to work comes, you’ve got to do your stint; but the medical device installed to keep an artery open is a “stent.” Even people in the medical profession who should know better often use “stint” when they mean “stent.”

👉 **Stock and trade** ⇒ STOCK IN TRADE

In this context, “trade” means “business.” The items a business trades in are its stock in trade. Metaphorically, the stuff needed by people to carry on their activities can also be called their stock in trade: “Bushy eyebrows, cigars, and quips were Groucho’s stock in trade.” This expression has nothing to do with trading stock, as on a stock exchange, and it should not be transformed into “stock and trade.”

👉 **Stoled** ⇒ STOLE

The past tense of “steal” is “stole.” Tom stole the pig. The only time you can be stoled is when someone drapes a stole on you.

👉 **Stomp** ⇒ STAMP

“Stomp” is colloquial, casual. A professional wrestler stomps his opponent. In more formal contexts “stamp” is preferred. But you will probably not be able to stamp out the spread of “stomp.”

👉 **Stood / stayed** ⇒ In standard English, “stayed” is the past tense of “stay,” and “stood” is the past tense of “stand.” If you speak a dialect which uses “stood” for the past tense of “stayed” and want to switch to standard usage, try changing your sentence to the present tense to check: “I stood still” becomes “I stand still.” But “I stood up past midnight” becomes “I stay up,” not “I stand up.” So you should say “I stayed up past midnight” and “I stayed in the best hotel in town.” The popular saying “I shoulda stood in bed” conjures up an amusing image, but it’s not a model for standard usage.

👉 **Straddled with / saddled with** ⇒ SADDLED WITH

To straddle is to stand or sit with legs spread. Sometimes “straddle” is used figuratively of someone who avoids taking a firm stand on an issue: the cautious politician straddled the issue of immigration.

To be burdened with something is to be saddled with it. You straddle your horse, and it is in turn saddled with the burden of carrying you.

👉 **Straight / strait** ⇒ If something is not crooked or curved it’s straight.

If it is a narrow passageway between two bodies of water, it’s a strait. Place names like “Bering Strait” are almost always spelled “strait.”

👉 **Straight-laced** ⇒ STRAITJACKET

The old word “strait” (“narrow, tight”) has survived only as a noun in geography referring to a narrow body of water (“the Bering Strait”) and in a few adjectival uses such as “straitjacket” (a narrowly confining garment) and “strait-laced” (literally laced up tightly, but usually meaning narrow-minded). Its

unfamiliarity causes many people to mistakenly substitute the more common “straight.”

See also “dire straights.”

👉 **Strightened / straitened** ⇒ STRAITENED

When things get tight and your options are narrowed down, you may have to live in straitened circumstances or on a straitened budget.

Many people mistakenly use “strightened” in such expressions.

See also “straightjacket” and “dire straights.”

👉 **Straightjacket** ⇒ STRAITJACKET

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See also “dire straights.”

👉 **Strength** ⇒ It is nonstandard to pronounce “strength” as if it were spelled “strenth.” The same goes for “length.” Make sure to sound the “eng” in the middle of these words.

👉 **Stress on** ⇒ FEEL STRESS

“Stress on” is commonly misused to mean “to experience stress” as in “I’m stressing on the term paper I have to do.” Still informal, but better, is “I’m stressed about. . . .” In a more formal context you could express the same idea by saying “I’m anxious about. . . .”

It is perfectly fine, however, to say that you place stress on something, with “stress” being a noun rather than a verb.

👉 **Stricken / struck** ⇒ Most of the time the past participle of “strike” is “struck.” The exceptions are that you can be stricken with guilt, a misfortune, a wound or a disease; and a passage in a document can be stricken out. The rest of the time, stick with “struck.”

👉 **Strike a cord** ⇒ STRIKE A CHORD

Something that strikes a chord with you catches your attention because something about it corresponds to something in yourself. The metaphor refers to a chord played on a piano, with one note in yourself harmonizing nicely with a note in that which you are experiencing to create a pleasing chord.

The objects being struck are piano strings, not cords.

👉 **Striped / stripped** ⇒ Naked people are stripped. Walls whose paint has been removed are stripped. When the thread of a screw is damaged, it is stripped. Zebras and skunks are striped.

If you object to wearing formal striped trousers, they may be stripped off.

👉 **Strong suite** ⇒ STRONG SUIT

“Strong suit” is an expression derived from card-playing, in which hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades are the suits. When you put your best foot forward you play your strong suit.

👉 **Subject to / subjected to** ⇒ “I was told I could board the airplane subject to a security scan.”

“At the airport I was subjected to a humiliating search.”

Does it help you to distinguish between these expressions to know that “subject” in the first example is an adverb and “subjected” in the second example is a verb? Didn’t think so.

Although these two expressions can sometimes be switched with only a slight change in meaning, they are not equivalent. To be subjected to some sort of treatment is to actually be treated in that way, usually in an objectionable way. But to be subject to a regulation, to taxes, to discussion, to inspection, to any sort of condition, is to be liable to it. In some contexts, the conditional action is mandatory: "Shipment will be made subject to approval of your charge card." In others, the conditional action may be theoretical, not uniformly enforced: "This Web page is subject to change." Many people mistakenly use "subjected to" in this sort of context.

🌀 **Submittal / submission** ⇒ "Submittal" is the act of submitting; it should not be used to describe the thing being submitted, as in "clip a five-dollar bill to your submittal and it will receive our earliest attention." In almost all cases "submission" is clearer and more traditional than "submittal."

🌀 **Substance-free** ⇒ An administrator at our university once announced that his goal was a "substance-free" campus, which I suppose fit in with the fad of the period for "virtual education." What he really meant was, of course, a campus free of illegal drugs and alcohol, designated "controlled substances" in the law. This is a very silly expression, but if he'd just said "sober and straight" he would have sounded too censorious. How about "drug- and alcohol-free"?

🌀 **Substitute with** ⇒ SUBSTITUTE FOR

You can substitute pecans for the walnuts in a brownie recipe, but many people mistakenly say "substitute with" instead, perhaps influenced by the related expression "replace with." It's always "substitute for."

🌀 **Succeed / secede** ⇒ If you advocate withdrawing formally from a nation or other organization, you want to secede.

If you're successful at this or anything else, you succeed.

🌀 **Suffer with** ⇒ SUFFER FROM

Although technical medical usage sometimes differs, in normal speech we say that a person suffers from a disease rather than suffering with it.

🌀 **Sufficeth** ⇒ "Sufficeth" is just an old spelling of "suffices," commonly used in the King James translation of the Bible and other Renaissance religious texts. People often use it in a joking manner to give their writing a semi-Biblical air, especially in the phrase "it sufficeth to say." But they sound clumsy rather than clever when they omit the "it" and begin the phrase thus "Sufficeth to say. . . ." "Sufficeth" is a verb; it requires a subject.

🌀 **Suit / suite** ⇒ Your bedroom suite consists of the bed, the nightstand, and whatever other furniture goes with it. Your pajamas would be your bedroom suit.

🌀 **Sulking / skulking** ⇒ That guy sneaking furtively around the neighborhood is skulking around; that teenager brooding in his bedroom because he got grounded is sulking. "Sulking around" is not a traditional phrase.

🌀 **Summary / summery** ⇒ When the weather is warm and summery and you don't feel like spending a lot of time reading that long report from the restructuring committee, just read the summary.

🌀 **Summersault** ⇒ SOMERSAULT

"Summersault" is a common variant, but the standard spelling is "somersault."

🌀 **Suped up** ⇒ SOUPED UP

The car you've souped up may be super, but it's not "suped up."

🌀 **Supercede** ⇒ SUPERSEDE

This word, meaning to replace, originally meant “to sit higher” than, from Latin *sedere*, “to sit.” In the 18th century, rich people were often carried about as they sat in sedan chairs. Don’t be misled by the fact that this word rhymes with words having quite different roots, such as *intercede*.

👉 **Supposably, supposingly, suppositively** ⇨ SUPPOSEDLY

“Supposedly” is the standard form. “Supposably” can be used only when the meaning is “capable of being supposed,” and then only in the US. You won’t get into trouble if you stick with “supposedly.”

👉 **Suppose to** ⇨ SUPPOSED TO

Because the D and the T are blended into a single consonant when this phrase is pronounced, many writers are unaware that the D is even present and omit it in writing. You’re supposed to get this one right if you want to earn the respect of your readers. See also “use to.”

👉 **Supremist** ⇨ SUPREMACIST

A neo-Nazi is a white supremacist, not “supremist.”

👉 **Surfing the Internet** ⇨ “Channel-surfing” developed as an ironic term to denote the very unathletic activity of randomly changing channels on a television set with a remote control. Its only similarity to surfing on real surf has to do with the esthetic of “going with the flow.” The Internet could be a fearsomely difficult place to navigate until the World Wide Web was invented; casual clicking on Web links was naturally quickly compared to channel-surfing, so the expression “surfing the Web” was a natural extension of the earlier expression. But the Web is only one aspect of the Internet, and you label yourself as terminally uncool if you say “surfing the Internet.” (Cool people say “Net” anyway.) It makes no sense to refer to targeted, purposeful searches for information as “surfing”; for that reason I call my classes on Internet research techniques “scuba-diving the Internet.”

However, Jean Armour Polly, who claims to have originated the phrase “surfing the Internet” in 1992, maintains that she intended it to have exactly the connotations it now has. See her page on the history of the term.

👉 **Surplus neckline** ⇨ SURPLICE NECKLINE

Medieval priests in chilly Northern European churches wore an extra-large cassock over a fur-lined gown. This garment came to be known as a surplice (from Latin *super pelliceum*: “over fur”).

Even those few who might have heard of the priestly garment are not likely to make the connection when discussing the surplice neckline on women’s clothing because the secular women’s garment has an overlapping V-neck whereas most most surplices worn in churches today have square or rounded necklines.

So it’s not surprising that a large number of people mistakenly refer to the women’s garment style as a “surplus neckline.” The only surplus involved in these items is the amount of flesh revealed by them.

👉 **Suspect / suspicious** ⇨ If your boss thinks you may have dipped into petty cash to pay your gambling debts, you may be suspect (or “a suspect”). But if you think somebody else did it, you are suspicious of them. Confusingly, if the police suspect you of a crime, you can be described as a “suspicious person” and if you constantly suspect others of crimes, you can also be called “suspicious.”

But “suspect” is not so flexible. A suspect is a person somebody is suspicious of, never the person who is doing the suspecting. It never makes sense to say “I am suspect that. . . .”

👉 **Suspicion / suspect** ⇨ SUSPECT

When you have a suspicion about someone or something, you suspect them. It is not standard to say you “suspicion” them. “Suspicion” is only a noun, never a verb.

👉 **Swam / swum** ⇒ The regular past tense of “swim” is “swam”: “I swam to the island.” However, when the word is preceded by a helping verb, it changes to “swum”: “I’ve swum to the island every day.” The “ve” stands for “have,” a helping verb.

👉 **Systematic / systemic** ⇒ By far the more common word and the one you should use if you are in doubt is “systematic.” It refers to things that are arranged or dealt with according to some system or organized method. “Gerry systematically sorts his socks into piles: those that are still wearable and those that are too smelly.”

Often “systematic” and “systematically” are used metaphorically to imply that something is done so consistently that it almost seems there must be a system behind it: “Tom systematically leaves the toilet seat up.” If you need a synonym for “consistent,” the word you need is “systematic.”

“Systemic” is a much rarer scientific and technical term referring to parts of a body or system. It is frequently used in medicine and biology. A systemic disease affects many parts of the body. A systemic herbicide may be sprayed on the leaves of a weed, but it spreads down to its roots to kill the whole plant. A systemic problem in banking affects many parts of the banking system.

If you’re talking about how something is done according to a system, the word you want is “systematic.”

If you’re talking about something happening to or inside of a system, the word you want is “systemic.”

👉 **Table** ⇒ In the UK if you table an issue you place it on the table for discussion, but in the US the phrase means the opposite: you indefinitely postpone discussing the issue.

👉 **Tad bit** ⇒ TAD, BIT

A “tad” was originally a small boy, but this word evolved into the expression “a tad” meaning “very small” or “very slightly”: “The movie was a tad long for my taste.”

Some people combine this with the equivalent expression “a bit” and say “a tad bit.” This is redundant. Just say “a bit” or “a tad.”

👉 **Take a different tact** ⇒ TAKE A DIFFERENT TACK

This expression has nothing to do with tactfulness and everything to do with sailing, in which it is a direction taken as one tacks—abruptly turns—a boat. To “take a different tack” is to try another approach.

👉 **Take and** ⇒ In some dialects, it’s common to emphasize an action by preceding the verb with “take and” (past tense “took and”): “When he got mad he would take and pound his fist into the wall.” This expression is not used in formal English, and usually occurs in writing only when the author is trying to convey an impression of unsophisticated speech. The same goes for “went and”: “After I told him I didn’t get a bicycle for my birthday he went and bought me a unicycle instead.”

👉 **Taken back / taken aback** ⇒ When you’re startled by something, you’re taken aback by it. When you’re reminded of something from your past, you’re taken back to that time.

👉 **Tape, record** ⇒ As time goes on, we are less and less likely to record sound or video onto a physical electromagnetic tape. More and more often, such recordings are made onto computer hard drives or solid-state devices. Yet the

word “tape” lives on to label the activity involved. We say we are going to tape an interview, tape a dance recital, or tape a new greeting for our voice mail, even when no tape is involved. The problem is that the word “record” is a little too unspecific to be substituted in all contexts for “tape,” so we fall back on this obsolete but handy word instead.

I'm not sure what can be done about this, but it bothers me. Now it can bother you too.

See also film.

👉 **Tattle-tail** ⇒ TATTLE-TALE

Somebody who reveals secrets—tattling, telling tales—is a tattle-tale, often spelled as one word: “tattletale.”

👉 **Taught / taut** ⇒ Students are taught, ropes are pulled taut.

👉 **Taunt / taut / tout** ⇒ I am told that medical personnel often mistakenly refer to a patient's abdomen as “taunt” rather than the correct “taut.” “Taunt” (“tease” or “mock”) can be a verb or noun, but never an adjective. “Taut” means “tight, distended,” and is always an adjective. “Taut” is also occasionally misspelled “taught.”

Don't confuse “taunt” with “tout,” which means “promote,” as in “Senator Bilgewater has been touted as a Presidential candidate.” You tout somebody you admire and taunt someone that you don't.

👉 **Teeth** ⇒ TEETHE

When your baby's teeth are just beginning to come in, you can say she has begun to “teethe” (rhymes with “breathe”). Don't spell this verb form as “teeth” (rhymes with “wreath”). That's the noun form, the word for what emerges during teething.

👉 **Tempera / tempura** ⇒ A sort of paint used in art—traditionally including eggs as an ingredient—is tempera.

Eggs are also sometimes used in tempura, a batter which is used to coat fried ingredients in Japanese cooking.

But don't be tempted to feed your friends tempera.

👉 **Tenant / tenet** ⇒ These two words come from the same Latin root, tenere, meaning “to hold” but they have very different meanings. “Tenet” is the rarer of the two, meaning a belief that a person holds: “Avoiding pork is a tenet of the Muslim faith.” In contrast, the person leasing an apartment from you is your tenant. (She holds the lease.)

👉 **Tender hooks** ⇒ TENTERHOOKS

A “tenter” is a canvas-stretcher, and to be “on tenterhooks” means to be as tense with anticipation as a canvas stretched on one.

👉 **Tentative** ⇒ Often all-too-tentatively pronounced “tennative.” Sound all three “t's.”

👉 **Than / then** ⇒ When comparing one thing with another you may find that one is more appealing “than” another. “Than” is the word you want when doing comparisons. But if you are talking about time, choose “then”: “First you separate the eggs; then you beat the whites.” Alexis is smarter than I, not “then I.”

👉 **Thanks God** ⇒ I suppose if you wanted to express your gratitude directly to the deity you might appropriately say “Thanks, God, for helping our team win the big game.” More appropriate is something more formal, like “Thank you, God” or “Thanks be to God.” In any case, the general expression when it's not

specifically meant as a prayer is not “thanks God,” but “thank God.” Not “Thanks God Emily hit a homer in the last inning,” but “thank God” she did.

👉 **Thankyou** ⇒ THANK YOU, THANK-YOU

When you are grateful to someone, tell them “thank you.” Thanks are often called “thank-yous,” and you can write “thank-you notes.” But the expression should never be written as a single unhyphenated word.

👉 **That / than** ⇒ People surprisingly often write “that” when they mean “than” in various standard phrases. Examples: “harder that I thought,” “better safe that sorry,” and “closer that they appear.” In all these cases, “that” should be “than.”

👉 **That / which** ⇒ I must confess that I do not myself observe the distinction between “that” and “which.” Furthermore, there is little evidence that this distinction is or has ever been regularly made in past centuries by careful writers of English. However, a small but impassioned group of authorities has urged the distinction; so here is the information you will need to pacify them.

If you are defining something by distinguishing it from a larger class of which it is a member, use “that”: “I chose the lettuce that had the fewest wilted leaves.” When the general class is not being limited or defined in some way, then “which” is appropriate: “He made an iceberg Caesar salad, which didn’t taste quite right.” Note that “which” is normally preceded by a comma, but “that” is not. Comments on this issue by Jack Lynch.

👉 **That kind** ⇒ THAT KIND OF

Although expressions like “that kind thing” are common in some dialects, standard English requires “of” in this kind of phrase.

👉 **The quick and the dead** ⇒ The earliest meaning of the word “quick” in English is “alive.” When a baby was first felt to move in its mother’s womb it was considered to have come to life, and this moment was called “quicken.” This original meaning of the word “quick” has now died out except in the phrase “the quick and the dead,” kept alive by the King James translation of Acts 10:42, which speaks of Jesus as judge “of quick and dead,” but even more by the continued recitation of the Apostles’ Creed, which says of Jesus that “he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

People who use this phrase to imply that speed is involved—liveliness rather than aliveness—sometimes get credit for creating a clever pun but more often come off as ignorant.

👉 **The Ukraine** ⇒ UKRAINE

Some country names are preceded by an article—like “The United States” and “La France”—but most are not. Sometimes it depends on what language you are speaking: in English we call the latter country simply “France” and “La República Argentina” is just “Argentina” although in the nineteenth century the British often referred to it as “The Argentine.” When the region formerly known as “The Ukraine” split off from the old Soviet Union, it declared its preference for dropping the article, and the country is now properly called simply “Ukraine.”

👉 **Their’s** ⇒ THEIRS

Like the related possessive pronouns “ours,” “his” and “hers” “theirs” does not take an apostrophe.

👉 **Theirselves** ⇒ THEMSELVES

There is no such word as “theirselves” (and you certainly can’t spell it “theirselves” or “thierselves”); it’s “themselves.” And there is no correct singular form of this non-word; instead of “theirsself” use “himself” or “herself.”

👉 **Them** ⇒ THOSE

One use of “them” for “those” has become a standard catch phrase: “how do you like them apples?” This is deliberate dialectical humor. But “I like them little canapes with the shrimp on top” is gauche; say instead “I like those little canapes.”

👉 **Theory** ⇒ In ordinary speech, a theory is just a speculation. The police inspector in a Miss Marple mystery always has a theory about who committed the murder which turns out to be wrong.

But in science the word “theory” plays a very different role. What most of us call “theories” are termed “hypotheses” until enough evidence has been accumulated to validate them and allow them to assume the status of theories: scientifically acceptable explanations of phenomena. Examples: the theory of gravity, the wave theory of light, chaos theory.

Foes of evolutionary science often insist that the theory of evolution is invalid because it is “only a theory.” This merely demonstrates their lack of knowledge of scientific usage and hence will not impress any scientifically literate person. More on “theory” vs. “fact.”

👉 **There’s** ⇒ People often forget that “there’s” is a contraction of “there is” and mistakenly say “there’s three burrs caught in your hair” when they mean “there’re” (“there are”). Use “there’s” only when referring to one item. “There’s” can also be a contraction of “there has,” as in “There’s been some mistake in this bill, clerk!”

Remember if you don’t contract “there is” that it also can only be used with something singular following. It’s not “There is many mistakes in this paper” but “there are many mistakes in this paper.”

See also [HERE’S](#).

👉 **Therefor / therefore** ⇒ The form without a final “E” is an archaic bit of legal terminology meaning “for.” The word most people want is “therefore.”

👉 **These are them** ⇒ Although only the pickiest listeners will cringe when you say “these are them,” the traditionally correct phrase is “these are they,” because “they” is the predicate nominative of “these.” However, if people around you seem more comfortable with “it’s me” than “it’s I,” you might as well stick with “these are them.”

👉 **These kind** ⇒ THIS KIND

In a sentence like “I love this kind of chocolates,” “this” modifies “kind” (singular) and not “chocolates” (plural), so it would be incorrect to change it to “I love these kind of chocolates.” Only if “kind” itself is pluralized into “kinds” should “this” shift to “these”: “You keep making these kinds of mistakes!”

👉 **These ones** ⇒ THESE

By itself, there’s nothing wrong with the word “ones” as a plural: “surrounded by her loved ones.” However, “this one” should not be pluralized to “these ones.” Just say “these.”

👉 **They / their (singular)** ⇒ Using the plural pronoun to refer to a single person of unspecified gender is an old and honorable pattern in English, not a newfangled bit of degeneracy or a politically correct plot to avoid sexism (though it often serves the latter purpose). People who insist that “Everyone has brought his own lunch” is the only correct form do not reflect the usage of centuries of fine writers. A good general rule is that only when the singular noun does not specify an individual can it be replaced plausibly with a plural pronoun: “Everybody” is a good example. We know that “everybody” is singular because we say “everybody is here,” not “everybody are here”; yet we tend to think of

“everybody” as a group of individuals, so we usually say “everybody brought their own grievances to the bargaining table.” “Anybody” is treated similarly. However, in many written sentences the use of singular “their” and “they” creates an irritating clash even when it passes unnoticed in speech. It is wise to shun this popular pattern in formal writing. Often expressions can be pluralized to make the “they” or “their” indisputably proper: “All of them have brought their own lunches.” “People” can often be substituted for “each.” Americans seldom avail themselves of the otherwise very handy British “one” to avoid specifying gender because it sounds to our ears rather pretentious: “One’s hound should retrieve only one’s own grouse.” If you decide to try “one,” don’t switch to “they” in mid-sentence: “One has to be careful about how they speak” sounds absurd because the word “one” so emphatically calls attention to its singleness. The British also quite sensibly treat collective bodies like governmental units and corporations as plural (“Parliament have approved their agenda”) whereas Americans insist on treating them as singular.

👉 **They’re / their / there** ⇒ Many people are so spooked by apostrophes that a word like “they’re” seems to them as if it might mean almost anything. In fact, it’s always a contraction of “they are.” If you’ve written “they’re,” ask yourself whether you can substitute “they are.” If not, you’ve made a mistake. “Their” is a possessive pronoun like “her” or “our” “They eat their hotdogs with sauerkraut.”

Everything else is “there.” “There goes the ball, out of the park! See it? Right there! There aren’t very many home runs like that.” “Thier” is a common misspelling, but you can avoid it by remembering that “they” and “their” begin with the same three letters. Another hint: “there” has “here” buried inside it to remind you it refers to place, while “their” has “heir” buried in it to remind you that it has to do with possession.

Although “there’s” is a standard abbreviation of “there is” it is nonstandard to use “ther’re” as a written abbreviation of “there are.” People who use this nonstandard form often mistakenly use “they’re” (“they’re a lot of people coming to the party”) or even “their” (“their a lot of people”).

👉 **Think on** ⇒ THINK ABOUT

An archaic form that persists in some dialects is seen in statements like “i’ll think on it” when most people would say “i’ll think about it.”

👉 **This here/that there** ⇒ THIS, THAT

The expressions “this here” and “that there” immediately before a noun are nonstandard. In standard English it’s not “this here dog” or “that there cat,” but “this dog” and “that cat.” Less casual is “this dog here” when you are emphasizing the exact item you are indicating as contrasted with others.

Of course “this here” and “that there” have standard uses when they are not followed by a noun: “put that there,” “I left this here on purpose,” “i’ll say this here and now,” “there’s a space for this here.”

👉 **Though / thought / through** ⇒ Although most of us know the differences between these words people often type one of them when they mean another. Spelling checkers won’t catch this sort of slip, so look out for it.

👉 **Threw / through** ⇒ “Threw” is the past tense of the verb “throw”: “The pitcher threw a curve ball.” “Through” is never a verb: “The ball came through my living room window.” Unless your sentence involves someone throwing something—even figuratively, as in “she threw out the idea casually”—the word you want is “through.”

👉 **Throne / thrown** ⇒ A throne is that chair a king sits on, at least until he gets thrown out of office.

👉 **Through a mirror, darkly** ⇒ IN A MIRROR, DARKLY

Here's an error with a very distinguished heritage.

When in 1 Corinthians 13:12 Paul tries to express the imperfection of mortal understanding, he compares our earthly vision to the dim and wavery view reflected by a typical Roman-era polished bronze mirror. Unfortunately, the classic King James translation rendered his metaphor rather confusingly as "For now we see through a glass, darkly." By the time of the Renaissance, mirrors were made of glass and so it was natural for the translators to call the mirror a "glass," though by so doing they obscured Paul's point. Why they should have used "through" rather than the more logical "in" is unclear, but it has made many people think that the image is of looking through some kind of magical glass mirror like that in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*.

Although most other translations use more accurate phrasing ("as in a mirror," "a blurred image in a mirror," etc.), the King James is so influential that its misleading rendering of the verse is overwhelmingly more popular than the more accurate ones. It's not really an error to quote the KJV, but if you use the image, don't make the mistake of suggesting it has to do with a dirty window rather than a dim mirror.

👉 **Throws of passion** ⇒ THROES OF PASSION

A dying person's final agony can be called "death throes." The only other common use for this word is "throes of passion." Throws are wrestling moves or those little blankets you drape on the furniture.

👉 **Thusfar** ⇒ THUS FAR

Some common phrases get fused in people's minds into single words. The phrase "thus far" is frequently misspelled "thusfar." Hardly anybody writes "sofar" instead of "so far"—just treat "thus far" in the same way.

👉 **Thusly** ⇒ THUS

"Thusly" has been around for a long time, but it is widely viewed as nonstandard. It's safer to go with plain old "thus."

👉 **Tick / tic** ⇒ The word for a spasmodic twitch or habitual quirk of speech or behavior is spelled the French way: "tic." You may have to worry about Lyme disease if you get a bite from a tick on your face, but that spasm in your left cheek whenever the teacher calls on you is a facial tic.

👉 **Timber / timbre** ⇒ You can build a house out of timber, but that quality which distinguishes the sound produced by one instrument or voice from others is timbre, so the common expression is "vocal timbre."

👉 **Time period** ⇒ TIME, PERIOD

The only kinds of periods meant by people who use this phrase are periods of time, so it's a redundancy. Simply say "time" or "period."

👉 **Times / multiply** ⇒ MULTIPLY

School children struggling with their times tables often say that they "times" one number by another. It's "2 times 2," but the mathematical operation being performed is not "timesing."

Some unfortunate folks carry this childish vocabulary into adulthood, continuing to use "times" as a verb meaning "multiply." If you're old enough to handle three-syllable words you can manage this one.

👉 **Times smaller** ⇒ Mathematically literate folks object to expressions like "my paycheck is three times smaller than it used to be" because when used with

whole numbers “times” indicates multiplication and should logically apply only to increases in size. Say “one third as large” instead.

### ☞ **Tirimisù** ⇒ TIRAMISÙ

Tiramisù is Italian for “pick me up,” and is the name of a popular modern Italian dessert, commonly misspelled as tirimisù, which gives it a slightly Japanese air. The Japanese love tiramisù, but although they sometimes make it with green tea rather than coffee this misspelling isn’t their fault.

☞ **To / too / two** ⇒ People seldom mix “two” up with the other two; it obviously belongs with words that also begin with TW, like “twice” and “twenty” that involve the number 2. But the other two are confused all the time. Just remember that the only meanings of “too” are “also” (“I want some ice cream too.”) And “in excess” (“Your ipod is playing too loudly.”). Note that extra O. It should remind you that this word has to do with adding more on to something. “To” is the proper spelling for all the other uses.

### ☞ **To home** ⇒ AT HOME

In some dialects people say “I stayed to home to wait for the mail,” but in standard English the expression is “stayed at home.”

### ☞ **To the manor born** ⇒ TO THE MANNER BORN

Hamlet complains of the drunken carousing at Elsinore to his friend Horatio, who asks “Is it a custom?” Hamlet replies that it is and adds, “but to my mind,—though I am native here and to the manner born,—it is a custom more honour’d in the breach than the observance.”

“As if to the manner born” is used to praise someone’s skill: “Reginald drives the Maserati as if to the manner born” (as if he were born with that skill).

“To the Manor Born” was the punning title of a popular BBC comedy, which greatly increased the number of people who mistakenly supposed the original expression had something to do with being born on a manor. Perhaps because of the poetically inverted word order in “manner born” the expression tends to occur in rather snooty contexts. Nevertheless, the correct expression is “to the manner born.”

### ☞ **To where** ⇒ SO MUCH THAT, TO THE POINT THAT

Complains Fred, “Mac kept borrowing my tools to where I couldn’t finish fixing the front porch.” This sort of use of “to where” to mean “so much that” or “to the point that” is not standard English. The meaning is more about when than where.

### ☞ **Today’s day and age** ⇒ THIS DAY AND AGE

The traditional expression is “in this day and age,” meaning “right at this moment and during a considerable stretch of time around this moment.” “Today’s day” is redundant: “today” already has “day” in it.

### ☞ **Today’s modern society** ⇒ TODAY

People seeking to be up-to-the-minute often indulge in such redundancies as “in today’s modern society” or “in the modern society of today.” This is empty arm-waving which says nothing more than “now” or “today.” A reasonable substitute is “contemporary society.” Such phrases are usually indulged in by people with a weak grasp of history to substitute for such more precise expressions as “for the past five years” or “this month.”

See “from the beginning of time.”

### ☞ **Toe a fine line** ⇒ TREAD A FINE LINE, TOE THE LINE

When you tread (or walk) a fine line, you are trying to keep your balance between two alternatives, rather as if you were walking carefully along a narrow tightrope. Neighbors have to tread a fine line between being friendly and being

nosy. A related expression is “there is a fine line between” two alternatives: “there’s a fine line between enthusiasm and fanaticism.” In this case you aren’t traveling along the line, but crossing over it. The fineness of the line suggests how subtly the two alternatives blend into each other. The first expression is used when you’re being cautious; the second is used when you’re observing how close two alternatives are to each other.

The expression “toe the line” means something rather different. It describes toes obediently and conscientiously lined up for review, military style. It refers to situations in which you are trying to be very careful to follow the rules, do precisely the right thing. Strict parents make their children toe the line.

It does not involve the emphasis on alternatives referred to by the other expressions. Envision yourself standing in front of a line like the starting line for a race. Such a line need not be particularly fine. What is emphasized here is the straightness of the line. But many people confuse “tread a fine line” with “toe the line” and use the mangled expression “toe a fine line.”

See also *tow the line*

👉 **Toe-headed** ⇒ TOW-HEADED

Certain light-colored fabrics are called “tow” and someone with very blond hair is called a “tow-head.” Tow-headed children are cute, but a toe-headed one would be seriously deformed.

👉 **Tolled / told** ⇒ Some people imagine that the expression should be “all tolled” as if items were being ticked off to the tolling of a bell, or involved the paying of a toll; but in fact this goes back to an old meaning of “tell”: “to count.” You could “tell over” your beads if you were counting them in a rosary. “All told” means “all counted.”

This older meaning of “tell” is the reason that people who count money out behind bank windows are called “tellers.”

👉 **Tongue and cheek** ⇒ TONGUE IN CHEEK

When people want to show they are kidding or have just knowingly uttered a falsehood, they stick their tongues in their cheeks, so it’s “tongue in cheek,” not “tongue and cheek.”

👉 **Tooken / took / taken** ⇒ “Hey, Tricia! Ted couldn’t find his parrot so he’s tooken your toucan to show and tell!” “Tooken” is a non-standard form of “taken.”

In fact, there are two past-tense forms of “take” which shouldn’t be mixed up with each other. For the simple past you need “took”: “Beau took a course in acoustics.” But if a helping verb precedes it, the word you need is “taken”: “he has taken some other courses too.”

👉 **Torchiere** ⇒ TORCHÈRE

Consumers and dealers who call tall floor lamps torchieres undoubtedly think they’re being sophisticated, but the French word is simple torchère (originally meaning “torch-holder”). Because of widespread confusion about this word you’ll have to search for both spellings on the Web when you’re shopping.

👉 **Tore / torn** ⇒ Is the road in front of your house “all tore up”? In some dialects that’s what people say. But for standard English speakers what happens to stuff is that it gets torn up. That guy who tore up your love letter left you feeling torn up.

👉 **Torturous / tortuous** ⇒ A path with a confusing proliferation of turns is tortuous (from a French root meaning “twisted”). But “torturous” (meaning painful or unpleasant, like torture) is very frequently confused with it. So often has “tortuous logic” (tangled, twisted logic) been misspelled as “torturous logic”

that it has given rise to a now independent form with its own meaning, “tortured logic.” Few people object to the latter, but if you want to describe your slow progress along a twisting path, the word you want is “tortuous.”

👉 **Touch bases** ⇨ TOUCH BASE

Although in baseball a home-run hitter has to touch all four bases while whizzing past, when you propose to linger with someone long enough to compare notes you do all your chatting at a single base. The expression is “let’s touch base.”

👉 **Touche** ⇨ In formal fencing matches, when someone is hit by an opponent’s sword it is traditional for the person hit to cry out touché (French for “touched”) to acknowledge that fact. In other contexts, we may say touché when somebody scores a point against us in an argument, or otherwise skewers us verbally. It is inappropriate to cry touché when you think you are the one who has skewered your opponent. Touché is not a synonym for “gotcha!”

👉 **Tounge** ⇨ TONGUE

“Tounge” is a common misspelling of “tongue.”

👉 **Tow the line** ⇨ TOE THE LINE

“Toe the line” has to do with lining your toes up on a precise mark, not with pulling on a rope.

However if you have to take your kids along when you visit friends, you have them not in toe, but in tow.

👉 **Toward / towards** ⇨ These two words are interchangeable, but “toward” is more common in the US and “towards” in the UK.

Some people, probably influenced by “forwards,” write “towards” instead of the correct “towards.”

👉 **Track home** ⇨ TRACT HOME

Commuters from a tract home may well feel that they are engaged in a rat race, but that does not justify them in describing their housing development as a “track.” “Tract” here means an area of land on which inexpensive and uniform houses have been built. Incidentally, note that the phrase is “digestive tract,” not “digestive track.”

👉 **Tradegy** ⇨ TRAGEDY

Not only do people often misspell “tragedy” as “tradegy,” they mispronounce it that way too. Just remember that the adjective is “tragic” to recall that it’s the G that comes after the A. Also common is the misspelling “tradgedy.”

👉 **Tragedy / travesty** ⇨ “Travesty” has farcical connotations; it’s actually related to “transvestite.” A disaster that could be described as a farce or a degraded imitation may be called a travesty: “The trial—since the defense lawyer slept through most of it—was a travesty of justice.” A tragedy is an altogether more serious matter.

👉 **Transition** ⇨ People in business, politics, and education love to turn nouns into verbs; but many of their transformations irritate a good number of listeners. High on the list of disliked terms is “transition” as a verb: “Over the next month we are going to transition our payroll system from cash to pizza discount coupons.” You can say “make the transition,” but often plain “change” works fine.

👉 **Translucent / transparent / opaque** ⇨ Although technically anything that light can shine through is translucent, most writers now reserve this word for substances that don’t clearly display what is on the other side. A frosted window-pane, a thin rice-paper screen, or a sheet of tissue paper may be called

“translucent.” A clear window or camera lens is transparent. “Sheer” fabric can be either translucent or transparent. Better check before you go out in public. “Opaque” is the opposite of “translucent.” Anything solid through which light cannot pass is opaque.

👉 **Tremblor** ⇒ TEMBLOR

Earthquake experts call each vibration produced by an earthquake a “temblor,” derived from the Spanish word for “tremble.” It’s not surprising that many people turn this word into “tremblor,” but journalists and others who may have experts among their readers would be wise to stick with “temblor.”

👉 **Tripple** ⇒ TRIPLE

Don’t double the P in “triple.” Don’t be confused by the fact that Triple Sec is a tippie (alcoholic drink).

👉 **Trite and true** ⇒ TRIED AND TRUE

Ideas that are trite may well be true, but the expression is “tried and true”: ideas that have been tried and turned out to be valid.

👉 **Troop / troupe** ⇒ A group of performers is a troupe. A gung-ho worker is a real trouper. But any other group of people—military or otherwise—is a troop. A police officer, member of a mounted military group or similar person is a trooper.

Troops are normally groups, despite the current vogue among journalists of saying things like “two troops were wounded in the battle” when they mean “two soldiers.” “Two troops” would be two groups of soldiers, not two individuals.

The popularity of this use of “troop” is encouraged by the fact that the various branches of the US military services insist that only members of the Army should be called “soldiers.” Marines, Air Force personnel, and Navy sailors all object to being called “soldiers” but there is no other traditional generic term for an unspecified military person. When the branch of the service is known the writer would do better to refer to an individual by the appropriate branch label. “Troops” is more justifiable when referring to a mixed group—say, of Marines and Army personnel: “the President ordered 15,000 more troops into the region.”

👉 **Trustee/trusty** ⇒ A member of an organizational board is a trustee; a trusted convict is a trusty.

👉 **Try and** ⇒ TRY TO

Although “try and” is common in colloquial speech and will usually pass unremarked there, in writing try to remember to use “try to” instead of “try and.”

👉 **Turn into/turn in to** ⇒ Probably out of simple absentmindedness, an amazing number of Web pages of educational institutions call for people to fill out a form and “turn it into” some office or official. “Turn into” means “transform into.” Your fairy godmother can turn a pumpkin into a coach.

The way to instruct someone to submit a document is “turn in to,” with a space between the “in” and the “to”: “turn your application in to the registrar.”

Once you have your coach, you can turn into a driveway; but you cannot turn a form into a registrar unless you have very advanced origami skills.

👉 **Tussled / tousled** ⇒ TOUSLED

Even if your hair gets messed up in a tussle with a friend, it gets tousled, not tussled.

👉 **Two to tangle** ⇒ TWO TO TANGO

A 1952 song popularized the phrase “it takes two to tango”; and it was quickly applied to everything that required two parties, from romance to fighting. Later, people baffled by hearing the phrase used of conflicts imagined that the proper word must be “tangle.” Perhaps if they had thought of the fierce choreography

of Parisian apache dancing they would not have been so confused. "It takes two to tangle" will seem the normal phrase to some people, a clever variation to a few, and an embarrassing mistake to many people you might want to impress.

🌀 **UFO** ⇒ "UFO" stands for "Unidentified Flying Object," so if you're sure that silvery disk is an alien spacecraft, there's no point in calling it a "UFO." I love the sign I once saw in a Seattle bookstore labeling the alien-invasion section: "Incorrectly Identified Flying Objects."

🌀 **Ugly American** ⇒ The term "ugly American"—used to describe boorish people from the US insensitive to those in other countries—bothers fans of the 1958 novel *The Ugly American*, whose title character was actually sensitive and thoughtful—he just looked ugly. The popularizers of this phrase hadn't read the book, and judged its message too quickly by its title.

🌀 **Unchartered / uncharted** ⇒ "Unchartered" means "lacking a charter," and is a word most people have little use for. "Uncharted" means "unmapped" or "unexplored," so the expression meaning "to explore a new subject or area" is "enter uncharted territory." Similarly, it's uncharted regions, waters, and paths.

🌀 **Unconscience** ⇒ UNCONSCIOUS

Do people confuse the unconscious with conscience because the stuff fermenting in one's unconscious is often stuff that bothers one's conscience? Whatever the cause, there is no such word as "unconscience." And while we're on the subject, "subconscious" is not used in Freudian psychology; it implies something that is merely not consciously thought of, rather than something that is suppressed. The term is, however, used by Jungians.

See conscience, conscious, consciousness.

🌀 **Under the guise that** ⇒ UNDER THE GUISE OF

Phishing e-mails try to extract valuable information from you so they can rob you under the guise of protecting your online security. They are disguising their theft as protection. There are other related phrases, mostly ending in "that," such as "under the pretext that" and "with the excuse that"; but "under the guise" requires "of," usually followed by a gerund ending in "-ing."

🌀 **Under weigh** ⇒ UNDER WAY

The original expression for getting a boat moving has nothing to do with weighing anchor and is "getting under way," but so many sophisticated writers get this wrong that you're not likely to get into trouble if you imitate them.

When "underway" is used elsewhere as an adjective or adverb, by far the most common spelling is as a single word, as in "our plans are underway"; though some authorities argue that the adverbial form should be spelled as two words: "under way."

🌀 **Underestimated** ⇒ Enthusiastic sportscasters often say of a surprisingly talented team that "they cannot be underestimated" when what they mean is "they should not be underestimated."

🌀 **Underlining** ⇒ You can stress points by underlining them, but it's "underlying" in expressions like "underlying story," "underlying motive," and "underlying principle."

🌀 **Undermind** ⇒ UNDERMINED

Some people believe in a mystical overmind, but not even they believe in an "undermind." The word is "undermined." If you dig under a castle wall to prepare to breach its defenses, you are undermining it, digging a mine under it. The metaphor applies to all sorts of weakening of opposing positions, most often in arguments.

👉 **Undo / undue** ⇒ The verb “undo” is the opposite of “do.” You undo your typing errors on a computer or undo your shoelaces to go wading. The adjective “undue” is the opposite of “due” and means “unwarranted” or “improper.” It is used in phrases like “undue influence,” “undue burdens,” and “undue expense.”

👉 **Undoubtedly** ⇒ UNDOUBTEDLY

Doubtless the spelling of “presumably” influences the misspelling “undoubtedly.” The word is “undoubtedly.” When something is undoubtedly true, it is undoubted.

👉 **University of Indiana** ⇒ INDIANA UNIVERSITY

There is no such place as “the University of Indiana”; it’s “Indiana University.” I should know; I went there.

👉 **Unkept** ⇒ UNKEMPT

“Unkempt” is an old version of “uncombed.” The standard expression for a sloppy-looking person is not “unkept,” but “unkempt.”

👉 **Unlike** ⇒ When you’re linking two phrases with “unlike” you need to keep them in grammatically parallel forms: “Unlike Cecile, Gareth likes persimmons.” This sentence parallels two people: Cecile and Gareth. But “unlike at home, my boss won’t let me wear sandals” is incorrect because “at home” and “my boss” aren’t grammatically parallel. You’d have to change this to “at home” and “at work” or something similar.

👉 **Unpleased** ⇒ DISPLEASED

“Unpleased” is considered archaic; the standard modern word for your reaction to something you don’t like is “displeased.”

However “unpleasing” is still current to describe something that fails to please: “the arrangement of ‘Silent Night’ for truck air horns was unpleasing.” But “displeasing” is more common.

👉 **Unrest** ⇒ Journalists often use this mild term to describe all manner of civil disorders, but it’s silly to call mayhem or chaos merely “unrest” when there are bullets flying about and bodies lying in the streets.

👉 **Unthaw** ⇒ THAW

“Unthaw” is another illogical negative. Use “thaw.”

👉 **Untracked** ⇒ ON TRACK

When things begin running smoothly and successfully, they get “on track.” Some people substitute “untracked” for this expression, perhaps thinking that to be “tracked” is to be stuck in a rut.

“Untracked” in a positive sense can be traced back a century or more, mainly in sports writing; but it is liable to confuse readers who are used to “on track.” After all, if a train gets off track it gets derailed—wrecked—and to get off one track and onto another is to switch tracks, not get “untracked.”

👉 **Upmost** ⇒ UTMOST

“Upmost” can mean “uppermost,” referring to something on top. But usually this word is a mistake for “utmost,” meaning “most extreme.” “Utmost” is related to words like “utter,” as in “The birthday party was utter chaos.”

👉 **Upto** ⇒ UP TO

Not upto alot lately? You might use some of your spare time memorizing the fact that “up to” is a two-word phrase, as is “a lot.”

👉 **Urine analysis** ⇒ URINALYSIS

The technical term for the test you use to kick the druggies off the team is not “urine analysis” but “urinalysis.”

👉 **Us / we** ⇒ “We” is a subject form, “us” an object. We do things; things are done to or for us.

If this doesn't help, you can try a couple of simple tests. If you are clear about the difference between “I” and “me,” try making your sentence singular. “We” becomes “I” in the singular and “us” becomes “me.”

“Our mothers and us are going shopping” becomes “my mother and me are going shopping”—which is wrong. So the sentences should read “My mother and I are going shopping” and “Our mothers and we are going shopping.”

But if that doesn't seem obvious, try eliminating everything but the pronoun and the verb: “Us are going shopping” should be “we are going shopping.”

Test a sentence like “us girls have sold more calendars than the guys” by reducing it to “us have sold.” This sounds wrong. It should be “We girls have sold.”

But “they gave us girls the prize” is correct because “they gave us the prize” is also correct.

👉 **Use / usage** ⇒ “Use” and “usage” overlap somewhat, but they are not entirely synonymous. Many people treat “usage” as if it were just a fancier form of “use” in phrases like “make usage of,” where “make use of” is the standard expression. As a rule of thumb, if either “use” or “usage” seems appropriate, go with “use.”

👉 **Use to** ⇒ USED TO

Because the D and the T are blended into a single consonant when this phrase is pronounced, many writers are unaware that the D is even present and omit it in writing. See also “suppose to.”

👉 **Used to could** ⇒ USED TO BE ABLE

“I used to could lift a hay-bale with my teeth,” says Jeb, meaning “I used to be able to.”

👉 **Utilize** ⇒ The best use for “utilize” is to mean “make use of”: “Ryan utilized his laptop in the library mainly as a pillow to rest his head on.” In most contexts, “use” is simpler and clearer. Many readers consider “utilize” pretentious.

👉 **Vague reference** ⇒ Vague reference is a common problem in sentences where “this,” “it,” “which” or other such words don't refer back to any one specific word or phrase, but a whole situation. “I hitchhiked back to town, got picked up by an alien spacecraft and was subjected to humiliating medical experiments, which is why I didn't get my paper done on time.” In conversation this sort of thing goes unnoticed, but more care needs to be taken in writing. There are lots of ways to reorganize this sentence to avoid the vague reference. You could replace “which is why” with “so,” for instance.

Sometimes the referent is only understood and not directly expressed at all: “Changing your oil regularly is important, which is one reason your engine burned up.” The “which” refers to an implied failure to change oil regularly, but doesn't actually refer back to any of the specific words used earlier in the sentence.

Sometimes there is no logical referent: “In the book it says that Shakespeare was in love with some “dark lady” .” This is a casual way of using “it” that is not acceptable in formal written English. Write instead “Arthur O. Williams says in The Sonnets that Shakespeare. . . .”

A reference may be ambiguous because it's not clear which of two referents is meant: “Most women are attracted to guys with a good sense of humor unless they are into practical jokes.” Does “they” refer to “women” or “guys”? It would be clearer if the sentence said “Most women are attracted to guys with a good sense of humor, though not usually to practical jokers.”

👉 **Vain / vane / vein** ⇒ When you have vanity you are conceited: you are vain. “You’re so vain you probably think this song is about you.” This spelling can also mean “futile,” as in “All my love’s in vain” (fruitless). Note that when Ecclesiastes says that “all is vanity” it doesn’t mean that everything is conceited, but that everything is pointless.

A vane is a blade designed to move or be moved by gases or liquid, like a weathervane.

A vein is a slender thread of something, like blood in a body or gold in a mine. It can also be a line of thought, as in “After describing his dog’s habit of chewing on the sofa, Carlos went on in the same vein for several minutes.”

👉 **Valance** ⇒ A decorative hanging cloth is a valance. Unless you are a chemist or someone else dealing with the technical aspects of combining things you’re unlikely to have a need for the word “valence.”

👉 **Vapid / vacuous** ⇒ “Vapid” is used to describe something flavorless, weak, flat. Many people confuse this word with “vacuous,” which describes things which are unintelligent, lacking serious content. A boring speech may be vapid even though it’s learned, and a lively speech may be vacuous even though it’s exciting. A dull person may be vapid, but it is not standard usage to refer to a person as vacuous—only their speech, thoughts, etc., can be so described. To avoid the most common error involving these words, just remember that something vapid isn’t stupid, it’s bland.

👉 **Various** ⇒ Many people say “she heard from various of the committee members that they wanted to cancel the next meeting.” “Several of the committee members” would be better.

👉 **Vary / very** ⇒ “Vary” means “to change.” Don’t substitute it for “very” in phrases like “very nice” or “very happy.”

👉 **Veil of tears** ⇒ VALE OF TEARS

The expression “vale of tears” goes back to pious sentiments that consider life on earth to be a series of sorrows to be left behind when we go on to a better world in Heaven. It conjures up an image of a suffering traveler laboring through a valley (“vale”) of troubles and sorrow. “Veil of tears” is poetic sounding, but it’s a mistake.

👉 **Vendor** ⇒ Some writers are turning “vendor” into a verb meaning “to sell,” writing things like, “he was vendoring comic books on ebay.” Since “vend” is already a verb meaning “sell” and “vendor” is normally a noun, this sounds very odd to many readers.

Other people use forms of the word to mean “to be certified as a vendor”: “Persons wishing to be vendored must complete the appropriate form.” This process is also referred to as “vendorization.”

This pattern is probably inspired by the widespread use of “vendor” to label suppliers on commercial Web sites. Instead of thinking of vendors as mere merchants, dealers, or sellers, some special quality is being attributed to them. None of this is standard English.

👉 **Veracious / voracious** ⇒ If you are extremely hungry, you may have a “voracious” appetite (think of the O as an open mouth, ready to devour anything). “Veracious” is an unusual word meaning “truthful, honest” (think about the E in “verify”). A truthful person has “veracity.” “Voracity,” meaning “extreme appetite” is a rare word you are unlikely to have a use for; “voraciousness” is more common.

👉 **Verb tense** ⇒ If the situation being described is an ongoing or current one, the present tense is needed, even in a past-tense context: “Last week she admitted that she is really a brunette” (not “was”).

Pairs of verbs that go together logically have to be kept in the same tense. “Patricia described her trip to China and writes that the Great Wall really impressed her.” Since “described” is in the past tense, and the writing contains her descriptions, “writes” should be “wrote.”

Lots of people get into trouble with sentences that describe a hypothetical situation in the past: “If he would have packed his own suitcase, he would have noticed that the cat was in it.” That first “would have” should be a simple “had”: “If he had packed his own suitcase he would have noticed that the cat was in it.” Also “The game would have been more fun if we had [not “would have”] won.” This sort of construction consists of two parts: a hypothetical cause in the past and its logical effect. The hypothetical cause needs to be put into the past tense: “had.” Only the effect is made conditional: “would have.” Note that in the second example above the effect is referred to before the cause.

Students summarizing the plot of a play, movie, or novel are often unfamiliar with the tradition of doing so in the present tense: “Hester embroiders an ‘A’ on her dress.” Think of the events in a piece of fiction as happening whenever you read them—they exist in an eternal present even if they are narrated in the past tense. Even those who are familiar with this pattern get tripped up when they begin to discuss the historical or biographical context of a work, properly using the past tense, and forget to shift back to the present when they return to plot summary. Here’s how it’s done correctly: “Mark Twain’s days on the Mississippi were long past when he wrote *Huckleberry Finn*, but Huck’s love for life on the river clearly reflects his youthful experience as a steamboat pilot.” The verb “reflects” is in the present tense. Often the author’s activity in writing is rendered in the present tense as well: “Twain depicts Pap as a disgusting drunk.” What about when you are comparing events that occur at two different times in the same narrative? You still have to stick to the present: “Tom puts Jim through a lot of unnecessary misery before telling him that he is free.” Just remember when you go from English to your history class that you have to shift back to the past tense for narrating historical events: “Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo.”

👉 **Verbage** ⇒ VERBIAGE

“Verbage” is an insulting term usually meant to disparage needlessly wordy prose. Don’t use it to mean simply “wording.” There is no such word as “verbage.”

👉 **Verses / versus** ⇒ The “vs.” In a law case like “Brown vs. The Board of Education” stands for Latin *versus* (meaning “against”). Don’t confuse it with the word for lines of poetry—“verses”—when describing other conflicts, like the upcoming football game featuring Oakesdale versus Pinewood.

Note that in formal legal contexts the abbreviation is usually just “v.,” as in “Brown v. The Board of Education.”

👉 **Very sort of, very kind of** ⇒ “He’s very sort of buffed.” Wha . . . ? He can’t be very buffed and only sort of buffed at the same time. It’s an error to follow the phrase “very sort of” with an adjective (a quality, such as “rich,” “happy,” “conscientious”).

It’s all right to say “very sort of” when “very” means “exact, precise,” and the phrase is followed by a noun (a thing or person): “the very sort of pastry I can’t resist,” “the very sort of boss I can’t stand.”

Less common is the equally confused expression “very kind of” as in “he’s very kind of charming when he’s trying to impress women.”

Of course “very kind of” is fine in appreciative comments where “kind” is an adjective meaning “generous,” “helpful,” like “it was very kind of you to shovel Mrs. Mukherjee’s front walk.”

🌀 **Very unique** ⇒ UNIQUE

“Unique” singles out one of a kind. That “un” at the beginning is a form of “one.” A thing is unique (the only one of its kind) or it is not. Something may be almost unique (there are very few like it), but technically nothing is “very unique,” though this expression is commonly used to mean “highly unusual.”

🌀 **Vice-like / vise-like** ⇒ In the US and Canada the clamp fastened to a workbench is a vise, but a vice is a moral flaw or bad habit. So in North America a person with an overly firm handshake has a vice-like grip. Writing of a “vice-like” grip invites racy jokes at your expense.

However “vice” is the spelling of both words in UK English, and the Oxford English Dictionary defines “vice-like” as “firmly tenacious or compressive.”

🌀 **Vichyssoise** ⇒ Waiters in restaurants offering this potato-leek cream soup often mispronounce it “vish-ee-SWAH” in a mistaken attempt to sound authentically French. Setting aside the fact that this soup was invented in New York, French final consonants are not silent when they are followed by an E. The correct pronunciation is “vee-shee-SWAHZ.”

🌀 **Vicious / viscous circle / cycle** ⇒ The term “vicious circle” was invented by logicians to describe a form of fallacious circular argument in which each term of the argument draws on the other: “Democracy is the best form of government because democratic elections produce the best governments.” The phrase has been extended in popular usage to all kinds of self-exacerbating processes such as this: poor people often find themselves borrowing money to pay off their debts, but in the process create even more onerous debts which in their turn will need to be financed by further borrowing. Sensing vaguely that such destructive spirals are not closed loops, people have transmuted “vicious circle” into “vicious cycle.” The problem with this perfectly logical change is that a lot of people know what the original “correct” phrase was and are likely to scorn users of the new one. They go beyond scorn to contempt however toward those poor souls who render the phrase as “viscous cycle.” Don’t use this expression unless you are discussing a Harley-Davidson in dire need of an oil change.

🌀 **Video** ⇒ Many of us can remember when portable transistorized radios were ignorantly called “transistors.” We have a tendency to abbreviate the names of various sorts of electronic technology (see stereo and satellite), often in the process confusing the medium with the content. Video is the electronic reproduction of images, and applies to broadcast and cable television, prerecorded videocassette recordings (made on a videocassette recorder, or VCR), and related technologies. MTV appropriated this broad term for a very narrow meaning: “videotaped productions of visual material meant to accompany popular music recordings.” This is now what most people mean when they speak of “a video,” unless they are “renting a video,” in which case they mean a videocassette or DVD recording of a film. One also hears people referring to theatrical films that they happened to have viewed in videotaped reproduction as “videos.” This is simply wrong. A film is a film (or movie), whether it is projected on a screen from 35 or 70 mm film or broadcast via the NTSC, SECAM or PAL standard. Orson Welles’ Citizen Kane is not now and never will be a “video.”

👉 **Vinegarette** ⇒ VINAIGRETTE

Naive diners and restaurant workers alike commonly mispronounce the classic French dressing called “vinaigrette” as if it were “vinegarette.” To be more sophisticated, say “veen-uh-GRETT” (the first syllable rhymes with “seen”).

👉 **Vintage point** ⇒ VANTAGE POINT

The spot from which you have a good view is a vantage point.

👉 **Viola / voila** ⇒ A viola is a flower (“VI-ola”) or a musical instrument (“vee-OH-la”). The expression which means “behold!” Is voila. It comes from a French expression literally meaning “look there!” In French it is spelled with a grave accent over the A, as voilà, but when it was adopted into English, it lost its accent. Such barbarous misspellings as “vwala” are even worse, caused by the reluctance of English speakers to believe that OI can represent the sound “wah,” as it usually does in French.

“Wallah” is a Hindi word for a worker, and “Walla” is half of the name of the Washington State city of Walla Walla.

👉 **Virii** ⇒ VIRUSES

Hackers like to use “virii” as the plural form of “virus,” but Latin scholars object that this invented term does not follow standard patterns in that language, and that there is already a perfectly good plural in English: “viruses.”

👉 **Visually impaired / blind** ⇒ Many people mistakenly suppose that “visually impaired” is a more polite term than “blind.” But the distinction between these two is simpler: a person without eyesight is blind; a person with vision problems stopping short of total or legal blindness is visually impaired.

👉 **Vitae** ⇒ VITA

Unless you are going to claim credit for accomplishments in previous incarnations, you should refer to your “vita,” not your “vitae.” All kidding aside, the “ae” in “vitae” supposedly indicates the genitive rather than the plural (that is, vitae in this case works like a possessive form to modify “curriculum”); but the derivation of vita from curriculum vitae is purely speculative (see the Oxford English Dictionary), and vitae on its own makes no sense grammatically.

“Résumé,” by the way, is a French word with both “Es” accented, and literally means “summary.” In English one often sees it without the accents, or with only the second accent, neither of which is a serious error. But if you’re trying to show how multilingual you are, remember the first accent.

👉 **Voluptuous** ⇒ VOLUPTUOUS

Given the current mania for slim, taut bodies, it is understandable—if amusing—that some folks should confuse voluptuousness with lumpiness. In fact, “voluptuous” is derived from Latin voluptas, which refers to sensual pleasure and not to shape at all. A voluptuous body is a luxurious body.

👉 **Wail / whale** ⇒ One informal meaning of “whale” is “to beat.” Huck Finn says of Pap that “He used to always whale me when he was sober.”

Although the vocalist in a band may wail a song, the drummer whales on the drums; and lead guitarists when they thrash their instruments wildly whale on them.

Although this usage dates back to the 18th century and used to be common in Britain and America, it is now confined mostly to the US, and even there people often mistakenly use “wail” for this meaning.

👉 **Wait on** ⇒ WAIT FOR

In some dialects it’s common to say that you’re waiting on people or events when in standard English we would say you’re waiting for them. Waiters wait on people, so it’s all right to say “I’m tired of waiting on you hand and foot,” but

you shouldn't say "I'm waiting on you down here at the police station; bring the bail money so I can come home."

👉 **Wake** ⇒ In the US the reception following a funeral is now often called a "wake" although traditionally that term was applied to the period of staying up at night watching over the dead body before the funeral. Since historically "wake" has been used in many broad senses involving celebration—not always necessarily at night—it's not surprising to find it being extended even further in this way. But if you want to sound more sophisticated, use the term "reception" for the gathering after a funeral.

Urban legend has it that the term has some connection with the possibility that the deceased might "wake up." To the contrary, it's the mourners who do the waking at a wake, not the corpse.

👉 **Walk the talk** ⇒ WALK THE WALK

Aristotle's followers are said to have discussed philosophy while walking about with him—hence their name: "peripatetics." I suppose they could have been said to "walk the talk."

For the rest of us, the saying is "if you're going to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk"—a modern version of old sayings like "actions speak louder than words" and "practice what you preach." Another early form of the expression was "walk it like you talk it."

Many people now condense this to "walk the talk," which makes a sort of sense (act on your speech), but strikes those who are more familiar with the original form as confused.

👉 **Wander / wonder** ⇒ If you idly travel around, you wander. If you realize you're lost, you wonder where you are.

👉 **Want that . . . Should** ⇒ WANT . . . TO

When someone wants someone else to do something, the expression is not "she wants that you should do it" but "she wants you to do it." Similarly, it's "I want you to do it," "we want you to do it," etc.

👉 **Warmonger** ⇒ WARMONGER

"Monger" is a very old word for "dealer." An ironmonger sells metal or hardware, and a fishmonger sells fish. Warmongers do not literally sell wars, but they advocate and promote them. For some reason lots of people tack an unneeded extra "-er" onto the end of this word. Why would you say "mongerer" when you don't say "dealerer"?

👉 **Warrantee / warranty** ⇒ Confused by the spelling of "guarantee," people often misspell the related word "warrantee" rather than the correct "warranty." "Warrantee" is a rare legal term that means "the person to whom a warrant is made." Although "guarantee" can be a verb ("we guarantee your satisfaction"), "warranty" is not. The rarely used verb form is "to warrant."

👉 **Wary / weary / leery** ⇒ People sometimes write "weary" (tired) when they mean "wary" (cautious) which is a close synonym with "leery" which in the psychedelic era was often misspelled "leary," but since Timothy Leary faded from public consciousness, the correct spelling has prevailed.

👉 **Was / were** ⇒ In phrases beginning with "there" many people overlook the need to choose a plural or singular form of the verb "to be" depending on what follows. "There were several good-looking guys at the party" [plural]. "There was one of them who asked for my phone number" [singular].

See also there's.

👉 **Wash** ⇒ In my mother's Oklahoma dialect, "wash" was pronounced "warsh," and I was embarrassed to discover in school that the inclusion of the

superfluous “R” sound was considered ignorant. This has made me all the more sensitive now that I live in Washington to the mispronunciation “Warshington.” Some people tell you that after you “warsh” you should “wrench” (“rinse”).

👉 **Waver / waiver** ⇒ Wave bye-bye. Ride the wave. Do the wave. We all know what a wave is, right? The verb “waive,” whose root meaning is “abandon,” is less familiar. When you give up a legal right, you waive it; and the document you sign to do so is called not a “waver” but a “waiver.”

👉 **Wax** ⇒ An unusual use of the word “wax” is “to change manner of speaking,” as in “she waxed eloquent on the charms of New Jersey” or “he waxed poetic on virtues of tube amplifiers.” These expressions mean that she became eloquent and he became poetic. It is an error to say instead “she waxed eloquently” or “he waxed poetically.”

👉 **Way** ⇒ FAR, MUCH MORE

Young people frequently use phrases like “way better” to mean “far better” or “very much better.” In formal writing, it would be gauche to say that Impressionism is “way more popular” than Cubism instead of “much more popular.”

👉 **Ways** ⇒ WAY

In some dialects it’s common to say “you’ve got a ways to go before you’ve saved enough to buy a Miata,” but in standard English it’s “a way to go.”

👉 **We’re / were** ⇒ “We’re” is a contraction of the phrase “we are”: the apostrophe stands for the omitted letter A. “Were” is simply a plural past-tense form of the verb “are.” To talk about something happening now or in the future, use “we’re”; but to talk about something in the past, use “were.” If you can’t substitute “we are” for the word you’ve written, omit the apostrophe.

“We were going to go to the party as a prince and princess, but Derek cut himself shaving, so we’re going instead as a vampire and her victim.”

👉 **Weak / week** ⇒ People often absentmindedly write “last weak” or “next weak.” Less often they write “I feel week.” These mistakes will not be caught by a spelling checker.

“Weak” is the opposite of “strong.” A week is made up of seven days.

👉 **Weather / wether / whether** ⇒ The climate is made up of “weather”; whether it is nice out depends on whether it is raining or not. A wether is just a castrated sheep. Such a sheep wearing a bell is a “bellwether,” and that’s the correct spelling for the same word when it means “an indicator of change.”

👉 **Weather forecast calls for** ⇒ WEATHER FORECAST PREDICTS

**Glendower:**

I can call spirits from the vasty deep. **Hotspur:** Why, so can I, or so can any man;

But will they come when you do call for them? Shakespeare: Henry IV, Part 1  
Newspeople constantly joke that the weather service is to blame for the weather, so we shouldn’t be surprised when they tell us that the forecast “calls for” rain when what they mean is that it “predicts” rain. Remember, wherever you live, the weather is uncalled for.

👉 **Weiner** ⇒ WIENER

The Vienna sausage from the city the Austrians call Wien inspired the American hot dog, or wiener. Americans aren’t used to the European pronunciation of IE as “ee” and often misspell the word as “weiner.”

👉 **Wench / winch** ⇒ “Wench” began as a general term for a girl or woman, and over the centuries acquired a variety of meanings, including female servant, lower-class female, and prostitute. It is mostly used today as a jokingly affectionate archaic allusion to Shakespearean ribaldry.

The hoisting or hauling mechanism attached to a tow truck is a winch (and it’s not on a “toe truck”).

If a woman can lift your car, she’s not a wench—she’s an Amazon!

👉 **Wednesday** ⇒ WEDNESDAY

Wednesday was named after the Germanic god “Woden” (or “Wotan”). Almost no one pronounces this word’s middle syllable distinctly, but it’s important to remember the correct spelling in writing.

👉 **Went / gone** ⇒ GONE

The past participle of “go” is “gone” so it’s not “I should have went to the party” but “I should have gone to the party.”

👉 **Were / where** ⇒ Sloppy typists frequently leave the H out of “where.” Spelling checkers do not catch this sort of error, of course, so look for it as you proofread.

👉 **Wet your appetite** ⇒ WHET YOUR APPETITE

It is natural to think that something mouth-watering “wets your appetite,” but actually the expression is “whet your appetite”—sharpen your appetite, as a whetstone sharpens a knife.

👉 **Whacky / wacky** ⇒ Although the original spelling of this word meaning “crazy” was “whacky,” the current dominant spelling is “wacky.” If you use the older form, some readers will think you’ve made a spelling error.

👉 **What** ⇒ THAT

In some dialects it is common to substitute “what” for “that,” as in “You should dance with him what brought you.” This is not standard usage.

👉 **Wheat** ⇒ WHOLE WHEAT

Waiters routinely ask “Wheat or white?” When bread is ordered, but the white bread is also made of wheat. The correct term is “whole wheat,” in which the whole grain, including the bran and germ, has been used to make the flour. “Whole wheat” does not necessarily imply that no white flour has been used in the bread; most whole wheat breads incorporate some white flour.

👉 **Wheelbarrel** ⇒ WHEELBARROW

One very old meaning of the word “barrow” is an open container for carrying people or goods. The earliest barrows were carried by two people holding handles on either end. Add a wheel to one end and you have a wheelbarrow which can be handled by a single person. The word is also sometimes applied to two-wheeled versions.

The word has nothing to do with barrels.

👉 **Whenever / when** ⇒ “Whenever” has two main functions. It can refer to repeated events: “Whenever I put the baby down for a nap the phone rings and wakes her up.” Or it can refer to events of whose date or time you are uncertain: “Whenever it was that I first wore my new cashmere sweater, I remember the baby spit up on it.” In some dialects (notably in Northern Ireland and Texas) it is common to substitute “whenever” for “when” in statements about specific events occurring only once and whose date is known: “Whenever we got married, John was so nervous he dropped the ring down my décolletage.” This is nonstandard. If an event is unique and its date or time known, use “when.”

👉 **Where (and prepositions)** ⇒ When you are asking about a location someone is coming from you need to use the preposition “from” with “where”: “Where are you coming from?” But when you are discussing a destination instead of a point of departure, don’t add a preposition. It’s not “Where are you going to?” But “Where are you going?”

Similarly, when asking about the location of a place, “at” should not be used after “where.” It’s not “Where is the movie theater at?” But “Where is the movie theater?”

👉 **Where it’s at** ⇒ This slang expression gained widespread currency in the sixties as a hip way of stating that the speaker understood the essential truth of a situation: “I know where it’s at.” Or more commonly: “You don’t know where it’s at.” It is still heard from time to time with that meaning, but the user risks being labeled as a quaint old Boomer. However, standard usage never accepted the literal sense of the phrase. Don’t say, “I put my purse down and now I don’t know where it’s at” unless you want to be regarded as uneducated. “Where it is” will do fine; the “at” is redundant.

👉 **Whereabouts are** ⇒ Despite the deceptive S on the end of the word, “whereabouts” is normally singular in meaning, not plural, because it means “location.” However, it is commonly used with a plural verb: “Its whereabouts are unknown.” But the Associated Press prefers a singular verb: “Its whereabouts is unknown.” Many authorities disagree, and most will accept either form. Of course if you were simultaneously referring to two or more persons having separate whereabouts it would require a plural verb: “The whereabouts of several members of the team were unknown.”

👉 **Wherefore** ⇒ When Juliet says “Wherefore art thou Romeo?” she means “Why do you have to be Romeo—why couldn’t you have a name belonging to some family my folks are friendly with?” She is not asking where Romeo is. So if you misuse the word in sentences like “Wherefore art thou, Stevie Wonder?” (you wish he’d make another great album like he used to), you make yourself sound illiterate rather than sophisticated.

👉 **Whether / whether or not** ⇒ “Whether” works fine on its own in most contexts: “I wonder whether I forgot to turn off the stove?” But when you mean “regardless of whether” it has to be followed by “or not” somewhere in the sentence: “We need to leave for the airport in five minutes whether you’ve found your teddy bear or not.”

See also “if/whether.”

👉 **Whilst / while** ⇒ Although “whilst” is a perfectly good traditional synonym of “while,” in American usage it is considered pretentious and old-fashioned.

👉 **Whim and a prayer** ⇒ WING AND A PRAYER

A 1943 hit song depicted a bomber pilot just barely managing to bring his shot-up plane back to base, “comin’ in on a wing and a prayer” (lyrics by Harold Adamson, music by Jimmy McHugh). Some people who don’t get the allusion mangle this expression as “a whim and a prayer.” Whimsicality and fervent prayerfulness don’t go together.

👉 **Whimp** ⇒ WIMP

The original and still by far the most common spelling of this common bit of slang meaning “weakling, coward,” is “wimp.” If you use the much less common “whimp” instead people may regard you as a little wimpy.

👉 **Whip cream** ⇒ WHIPPED CREAM

You whip cream until it becomes whipped cream; and that’s what you should write on the menu.

👉 **Whisky / whiskey** ⇒ Scots prefer the spelling “whisky”; Americans follow instead the Irish spelling, so Kentucky bourbon is “whiskey.”

👉 **Who / that** ⇒ There are many instances in which the most conservative usage is to refer to a person using “that”: “All the politicians that were at the party later denied even knowing the host” is actually somewhat more traditional than the more popular “politicians who.” An aversion to “that” referring to human beings as somehow diminishing their humanity may be praiseworthy sensitive, but it cannot claim the authority of tradition. In some sentences, “that” is clearly preferable to “who”: “She is the only person I know of that prefers whipped cream on her granola.” In the following example, to exchange “that” for “who” would be awkward: “Who was it that said, ‘A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle?’”\*

\*Commonly attributed to Gloria Steinem, but she attributes it to Irina Dunn.

👉 **Who / whom** ⇒ “Whom” has been dying an agonizing death for decades—you’ll notice there are no Whoms in Dr. Seuss’s Whoville. Many people never use the word in speech at all. However, in formal writing, critical readers still expect it to be used when appropriate. The distinction between “who” and “whom” is basically simple: “who” is the subject form of this pronoun and “whom” is the object form. “Who was wearing that awful dress at the Academy Awards banquet?” Is correct because “who” is the subject of the sentence. “The MC was so startled by the neckline that he forgot to whom he was supposed to give the Oscar” is correct because “whom” is the object of the preposition “to.” So far so good.

Now consider this sort of question: “Who are you staring at?” Although strictly speaking the pronoun should be “whom,” nobody who wants to be taken seriously would use it in this case, though it is the object of the preposition “at.” (Bothered by ending the sentence with a preposition? See my “Non-Errors” page.) “Whom” is very rarely used even by careful speakers as the first word in a question, and many authorities have now conceded the point.

There is another sort of question in which “whom” appears later in the sentence: “I wonder whom he bribed to get the contract?” Here an old gender-biased but effective test for “whom” can be used. Try rewriting the sentence using “he” or “him.” Clearly “He bribed he” is incorrect; you would say “he bribed him.” Where “him” is the proper word in the paraphrased sentence, use “whom.”

Instances in which the direct object appears at the beginning of a sentence are tricky because we are used to having subjects in that position and are strongly tempted to use “who”: “Whomever Susan admired most was likely to get the job.” (Test: “She admired him.” Right?)

Where things get really messy is in statements in which the object or subject status of the pronoun is not immediately obvious. Example: “The police gave tickets to whoever had parked in front of the fire hydrant.” The object of the preposition “to” is the entire noun clause, “whoever had parked in front of the fire hydrant,” but “whoever” is the subject of that clause, the subject of the verb “had parked.” Here’s a case where the temptation to use “whomever” should be resisted.

Confused? Just try the “he or him” test, and if it’s still not clear, go with “who.” You’ll bother fewer people and have a fair chance of being right.

👉 **Who’s / whose** ⇒ This is one of those cases where it is important to remember that possessive pronouns never take apostrophes, even though possessive nouns do (see it’s/its). “Who’s” always and forever means only “who is,” as in “Who’s that guy with the droopy mustache?” Or “who has,” as in

“Who’s been eating my porridge?” “Whose” is the possessive form of “who” and is used as follows: “Whose dirty socks are these on the breakfast table?”

👉 **Whole-hardily** ⇒ WHOLEHEARTEDLY

If you want to convey your hearty congratulations to someone, you do so not “whole-hardily” but “wholeheartedly”—with your whole heart.

👉 **Whose-ever** ⇒ WHOEVER’S

In speech people sometimes try to treat the word “whoever” as two words when it’s used in the possessive form: “Whose-ever delicious plums those were in the refrigerator, I ate them.” Occasionally it’s even misspelled as “whoseever.” The standard form is “whoever’s,” as in “Whoever’s plums those were. . . .”

👉 **Wile away** ⇒ WHILE AWAY

“Waiting for my physical at the doctor’s office, I whiled away the time reading the dessert recipes in an old copy of *Gourmet* magazine.” The expression “while away the time” is the only surviving context for a very old use of “while” as a verb meaning “to spend time.” Many people substitute “wile,” but to wile people is to lure or trick them into doing something—quite different from simply idling away the time. Even though dictionaries accept “wile away” as an alternative, it makes more sense to stick with the original expression.

👉 **Wit / whit** ⇒ WHIT

If you still have all your wits about you, could it be said that your mental powers have diminished “not a wit”? No, for the traditional expression is “not a whit.” “Whit” is an old word meaning “bit,” surviving only in this and similar expressions like “not one whit.”

👉 **Within / among** ⇒ “Within” means literally “inside of,” but when you want to compare similarities or differences between things you may need “among” instead. It’s not “There are some entertaining movies within the current releases,” but “among the current releases.” But you can use “within” by rewriting the sentence to lump the movies together into a single entity: “There are some entertaining movies within the current batch of releases.” A batch is a single thing, and the individual films that make it up are within it.

👉 **Woman / women** ⇒ The singular “woman” probably gets mixed up with the plural “women” because although both are spelled with an O in the first syllable; only the pronunciation of the O really differentiates them. Just remember that this word is treated no differently than “man” (one person) and “men” (more than one person). A woman is a woman—never a women.

👉 **Wonderkind** ⇒ WUNDERKIND

We borrowed the term “wunderkind,” meaning “child prodigy,” from the Germans. We don’t capitalize it the way they do, but we use the same spelling. When writing in English, don’t half-translate it as “wonderkind.”

👉 **Wont / won’t** ⇒ People often leave the apostrophe out of “won’t,” meaning “will not.” “Wont” is a completely different and rarely used word meaning “habitual custom.” Perhaps people are reluctant to believe this is a contraction because it doesn’t make obvious sense like “cannot” being contracted to “can’t.” The Oxford English Dictionary suggests that “won’t” is a contraction of a nonstandard form: “woll not.”

Quite a few confused folks substitute “want” for “wont,” leading to mangled expressions such as “such is my want.”

👉 **Working progress** ⇒ WORK IN PROGRESS

If your project isn’t finished yet, it’s not a “working progress” but a “work in progress.”

👉 **World Wide Web** ⇒ “World Wide Web” is a name that some of us feel needs to be capitalized, like “Internet.” It is made up of Web pages and Web sites (or, less formally, Websites).

👉 **Worse comes to worse** ⇒ WORST COMES TO WORST  
The traditional idiom is “if worst comes to worst.” The modern variation “worse comes to worst” is a little more logical. “Worse comes to worse” is just a mistake.

👉 **Worser** ⇒ WORSE  
If you look “worser” up in a dictionary, you’re likely to find it labelled “archaic,” which means that although Shakespeare and many other writers once used it, the word is no longer a part of standard English. Just use “worse” instead: “It just keeps getting worse and worse.”

👉 **Would have** ⇒ HAD  
People are often confused about how to discuss something that didn’t happen in the past. It’s standard usage to say “If I had remembered where I parked the car, I would have gotten home sooner.” Notice that in the part of the sentence containing “if” the helping verb is “had” but in the other part of the sentence, which depends logically on the first, the verb “gotten” is preceded by “would have.”

The same pattern applies when the “if” is in a later part of the sentence: “I would have gotten home sooner if I had remembered where I parked the car.” Plain old “had” stays with the “if” clause (the second one) and “would have” goes in the other clause (the first one).

The problem is that people used to thinking of “would have” as marking non-events in the past often replace a correct “had” with an incorrect “would have”: “If I would have remembered where I parked the car. . . .” This is nonstandard. Even worse, the same mistake is made in sentences where no “if” is involved: “The robber wished he would have given the bank clerk a fake ID when she asked for one.” This should be “The robber wished he had given.”

One reminder of the correct pattern is that “had” all by itself can replace “if. . . Had”: “Had I remembered where I parked the car. . . .” “Would have” clearly can’t be used in this way, so you need to stick with plain old “had.”

👉 **Wrangle / wangle** ⇒ If you deviously manage to obtain something you wangle it: “I wangled an invitation to Jessica’s party by hinting that I would be inviting her to our house on the lake this summer.” But if you argue with someone, you wrangle with them: “Once I got to the party, Jessica’s attitude irritated me so much that we wound up wrangling constantly during it.” Of course cowboys wrangle cattle, and specialists wrangle other animal species in films.

👉 **Wrapped / rapt** ⇒ When you get deeply involved in a project, you may say you’re wrapped up in it; but if you are entranced or enraptured by something you are “rapt,” not “wrapped.” The word means “carried away” and is used in expressions like “listening with rapt attention,” “rapt expression,” and “rapt in conversation.”

👉 **Wreath / wreaths / wreathe / wreathes** ⇒ One circle of greens is a wreath (rhymes with “teeth”). The plural is “wreaths” (rhymes with “heaths”). In both cases the TH is unvoiced (like the TH in “both”). To decorate something with wreaths is to wreathe it (rhymes with “breathe” with a voiced TH like the one at the end of “bathe”). He or she wreathes it (also with a voiced TH).

👉 **Wreckless** ⇒ RECKLESS

This word has nothing to do with creating the potential for a wreck. Rather it involves not reckoning carefully all the hazards involved in an action. The correct spelling is therefore “reckless.”

👉 **Write me** ⇒ Many UK English speakers and some American authorities object strongly to the common American expression “write me,” insisting that the correct expression is “write to me.” But “write me” is so common in US English that I think few Americans will judge you harshly for using it. After all, we say “call me”—why not “write me”? But if you’re an American trying to please foreigners or particularly picky readers, you might keep the “write me” phobia in mind.

If you disagree, please don’t write me.

👉 **Writting** ⇒ WRITING

One of the comments English teachers dread to see on their evaluations is “The professor really helped me improve my writting.” When “-ing” is added to a word which ends in a short vowel followed only by a single consonant, that consonant is normally doubled, but “write” has a silent E on the end to ensure the long I sound in the word. Doubling the T in this case would make the word rhyme with “flitting.”

👉 **Xmas / Christmas** ⇒ “Xmas” is not originally an attempt to exclude Christ from Christmas, but uses an abbreviation of the Greek spelling of the word “Christ” with the “X” representing the Greek letter chi. However, so few people know this that it is probably better not to use this popular abbreviation in religious contexts.

👉 **Ya’ll** ⇒ Y’ALL

“How y’all doin’?” If you are rendering this common Southernism in print, be careful where you place the apostrophe, which stands for the second and third letters in “you.”

Note that “y’all” stands for “you all” and is properly a plural form, though some southern speakers treat it as a singular form and resort to “all y’all” for the plural. Most southerners reserve “all y’all” to mean “each and every one of you.” Then there is the occasional case in which the speaker is addressing someone representing a store or other institution composed of several people: “Do y’all sell shop vacs?”

👉 **Ye** ⇒ THE

Those who study the history of English know that the word often misread as “ye” in Middle English is good old “the” spelled with an unfamiliar character called a thorn which looks vaguely like a “Y” but which is pronounced “TH.” So all those quaint shop names beginning “Ye Olde” are based on a confusion: people never said “ye” to mean “the.” However, if you’d rather be cute than historically accurate, go ahead. Very few people will know any better.

👉 **Yea / yeah / yay** ⇒ “Yea” is a very old-fashioned formal way of saying “yes,” used mainly in voting. It’s the opposite of—and rhymes with—“nay.” When you want to write the common casual version of “yes,” the correct spelling is “yeah” (sounds like “yeh”). When the third grade teacher announced a class trip to the zoo, we all yelled “yay!” (the opposite of “boo!”). That was back when I was only yay big.

👉 **Year end and year out** ⇒ YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT

When something goes on continually, it is traditional to say it happens “year in and year out,” meaning “from the beginning of the year to its end—and so on year after year.”

The mistaken form “year end and year out” doesn’t make sense because “year end” and “year out” both refer to the same part of the year, so no time span is being described.

☞ **Ying and yang** ⇒ YIN AND YANG

The pair of female and male terms in Chinese thought consists of “yin and yang,” not “ying and yang.”

☞ **Yoke / yolk** ⇒ The yellow center of an egg is its yolk. The link that holds two oxen together is a yoke; they are yoked.

☞ **You** ⇒ The second person has perfectly legitimate uses, even when you are not directly addressing another specific person as I am doing in this sentence (I am addressing you, the reader). One example is the giving of directions: “to reach the Pegasus Coffee House, you drive west on Winslow Way to Madison, turn left to the end of Madison, then turn right onto Parfitt Way, and you’ll see Pegasus on your left.”

It is also commonly used in an indefinite way, where a more formal writer might use “one”: “You can eat all you want at Tiny’s salad bar.”

It can be disorienting to switch from first person to second: “I always order pizza with extra cheese because you know that otherwise they’re not going to give you enough.” But sometimes such a switch works well to broaden the context of a sentence. For example: “I hate living in the dorm because other people always want to party when you’re trying to study.” The first part of the sentence is specifically about feelings of the speaker, but the second part is about a general pattern which affects many other people who can plausibly be referred to as “you.”

Because the use of the second person conveys an intimate, casual tone, many teachers discourage its use in class essays, feeling that it gives an unsophisticated air to student prose. Be careful about using it in such essays unless you know that your teacher approves.

☞ **You better** ⇒ YOU HAD BETTER

In casual speech, it’s common to say things like “you better make your bed before Mom comes home.” But in writing and in formal speech, the expression is “you had better.” Slightly less formal but still fine is the contracted version: “you’d better.”

☞ **You can’t have your cake and eat it too** ⇒ YOU CAN’T EAT YOUR CAKE AND HAVE IT TOO

The most popular form of this saying—“You can’t have your cake and eat it too”—confuses many people because they mistakenly suppose the word “have” means “eat,” as in “Have a piece of cake for dessert.” A more logical version of this saying is “You can’t eat your cake and have it too,” meaning that if you eat your cake you won’t have it any more. The point is that if you eat your cake right now you won’t have it to eat later. “Have” means “possess” in this context, not “eat.”

☞ **You know / know what I’m sayin’?** ⇒ In casual speech it’s fine to say things like “You know, I really liked that blouse you were wearing yesterday.” But some people fall into the habit of punctuating their speech with “you know” so frequently that it becomes irritating to the listener. Most people do this unconsciously, not meaning anything by it. If you become aware that you have this habit your friends and colleagues will be grateful if you try to overcome it. Hip-hop popularized a similar formula—“know what I’m sayin’?”—frequently used when there is little or no doubt about what is being said. It means

something like “right?” It’s time to retire this worn-out phrase—know what I’m sayin’?

👉 **You was** ⇒ YOU WERE

“I just knew you was here when I seed your truck outside.” “You” followed by “was” is nonstandard, and occurs in print mainly when the writer is trying to make the speaker sound uneducated. The standard verb to follow “you” is “were”: “I knew you were here.”

👉 **You’ve got another thing coming** ⇒ YOU’VE GOT ANOTHER THING COMING

Here’s a case in which eagerness to avoid error leads to error. The original expression is the last part of a deliberately ungrammatical joke: “If that’s what you think, you’ve got another think coming.”

👉 **Your / you** ⇒ “I appreciate your cleaning the toilet” is more formal than “I appreciate you cleaning the toilet.”

👉 **Your / you’re** ⇒ “You’re” is always a contraction of “you are.” If you’ve written “you’re,” try substituting “you are.” If it doesn’t work, the word you want is “your.” Your writing will improve if you’re careful about this.

If someone thanks you, write back “you’re welcome” for “you are welcome.”

👉 **Your guys’s** ⇒ YOUR

Many languages have separate singular and plural forms for the second person (ways of saying “you”), but standard English does not. “You” can be addressed to an individual or a whole room full of people.

In casual speech, Americans have evolved the slangy expression “you guys” to function as a second-person plural, formerly used of males only but now extended to both sexes, but this is not appropriate in formal contexts. Diners in fine restaurants are often irritated by clueless waiters who ask “Can I get you guys anything?”

The problem is much more serious when extended to the possessive: “You guys’s dessert will be ready in a minute.” Some people even create a double possessive by saying “your guys’s dessert. . . .” This is extremely clumsy. When dealing with people you don’t know intimately, it’s best to stick with “you” and “your” no matter how many people you’re addressing.

👉 **Yourself** ⇒ In formal English it’s safest to use “yourself” only after having earlier in the same sentence used “you.” When the British reply to a query like “How are you?” With “Fine, and yourself?” They are actually pointing back to the “you” in the query.

It used to be common to address someone in British English as “Your good self” and some people have continued this tradition by creating the word “goodself,” common especially in South Asia, but this is nonstandard.

👉 **Youse** ⇒ YOU

The plural form of “you” pronounced as “youse” is heard mainly in satire on the speech of folks from Brooklyn. It’s not standard English, since “you” can be either singular or plural without any change in spelling or pronunciation.

👉 **Zero-sum gain** ⇒ ZERO-SUM GAME

The concept of a zero-sum game was developed first in game theory: what one side gains the other loses. When applied to economics it is often contrasted with a “win-win” situation in which both sides can make gains without anyone losing. People who are unaware of the phrase’s origins often mistakenly substitute “gain” for “game.”

👉 **Zeroscape** ⇒ XERISCAPE

If you nuke your front lawn I suppose you might call it a “zeroscape,” but the term for an arid-climate garden requiring little or no watering is “xeriscape” (xeri- is a Greek root meaning “dry”).

👉 **Zoology** ⇒ Both O’s in “zoo” are needed to create the “oo” sound in this word, but the same is not true of words like “zoology” and “zoologist.” Here each O has its own sound: oh followed by ah. The first two syllables rhyme with “boa.” Then there is a whole class of technical words like “zooplankton” where both O’s are pronounced “oh,” though the second “oh” is pronounced so weakly it comes out more like “uh.” But if you need to speak such words, you probably know how to pronounce them already.

মুদ্রা: নেটের বিভিন্ন উৎস থেকে সংগৃহীত।

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আমার আট বছরে সংগ্রহ করা বাংলা ই-বুক বা পিডিএফ বই, সফটওয়্যার ও টিউটোরিয়াল কালেকশন..! আমার এই বিশাল কালেকশনের আপনাদের জন্য খুব ইম্পরট্যান্ট কিছু সংগ্রহ ক্যাটাগরি আকারে সাজিয়ে আপনাদের জন্য উপস্থাপন করলাম ... আপনাদের জন্য করা আমার কালেকশনের ক্ষেত্রে একটাই কথা বলতে পারি ... আপনি এখানে ডিলিট করার মত কোন ফাইল খুজে পাবেন না ... অর্থাৎ প্রত্যেকটি ফাইলই আপনার প্রয়োজন হবে ... এবং প্রত্যেকটি ফাইল সংগ্রহে রাখতে বাধ্য হবেন কারণ প্রত্যেকটি ফাইল আপনার কাজে লাগবে... আপনার কম্পিউটার ও তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি নির্ভর জীবনের সব চাহিদা পূর্ণ করবে এই ফাইলগুলো।

এত সময় ব্যয় করে করা এই বিশাল সংগ্রহ দিয়ে আমি কি করব? আমি মরে গেলেই সব শেষ আমার কাছে কিছু মানুষ তা পাবে...! তাই চিন্তা করলাম এই সংগ্রহ গুলো সাধারণ মানুষের কাছে শেয়ার করে দিতে হবে ... এই জন্য অপেক্ষাকৃত ছোট সাইজের ফাইল গুলো আপলোড করে আমার [শুপেইজে](#), [শুক্রপে](#) ও [ওয়েবসাইটে](#) শেয়ার করে দিচ্ছি। কিন্তু বড় সাইজের ইম্পরট্যান্ট ফাইল গুলো কি করব? আমি কষ্ট করে আপলোড করে দিলেও বাংলাদেশের ধীর গতির ইন্টারনেট সার্ভিসের জন্য সবার পক্ষে এই ফাইল গুলো ডাউনলোড করা প্রায় অসম্ভব ...!!

তাই বাংলাদেশের সব একালার মানুষের কথা চিন্তা করে এই সংগ্রহ গুলো ক্যাটাগরি আকারে ডিভিডি (DVD) করে সবার মাঝে ছড়িয়ে দেওয়ার চিন্তা করলাম ... এতে করে সবার কষ্ট, সময় ও মেগাবাইট বাঁচবে ... এবং গোছানো আকারে পাবে ... সবচেয়ে বড় কথা হলো এই গুলো আপনাদের অনেক উপকারেও আসবে ... একটা কথা মনে রাখবেন

“আমার করা বাংলা ই-বুক গুলো বাদে অন্য সব ফাইল হতো আপনি নেটে খোঁজা খুঁজি করে পাবেন, কিন্তু আপনাকেও আমার মত সময় ও নেট এমবি নষ্ট করতে হবে কিন্তু আপনাদের সেই সময় ও সুযোগ নাও থাকতে পারে ”

আপনারা সামান্য একটু সময় ব্যয় করে, শুধু এক বার নিচের লিংকে ক্লিক করে এই DVD গুলোর মধ্যে অবস্থিত বই ও সফটওয়্যার এর নাম সমূহের উপর চোখ বুলিয়ে নিন।” তাহলেই বুঝে যাবেন কেন এই DVD গুলো আপনার কালেকশনে রাখা দরকার! আপনার আজকের এই ব্যয়কৃত সামান্য সময় ভবিষ্যতে আপনার অনেক কষ্ট লাঘব করবে ও আপনার অনেকে সময় বাঁচিয়ে দিবে।

বিশ্বাস করুন আর নাই করুনঃ- “বিভিন্ন ক্যাটাগরির এই DVD গুলোর মধ্যে দেওয়া বাংলা ও ইংলিশ বই, সফটওয়্যার ও টিউটোরিয়াল এর কালেকশন দেখে আপনি হতবাক হয়ে যাবেন !”

আপনি যদি বর্তমানে কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার করেন ও ভবিষ্যতেও কম্পিউটার সাথে যুক্ত থাকবেন তাহলে এই ডিভিডি গুলো আপনার অবশ্যই আপনার কালেকশনে রাখা দরকার.....

মোট কথা আপনাদের কম্পিউটারের বিভিন্ন সমস্যার চিরস্থায়ী সমাধান ও কম্পিউটারের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সব বই, সফটওয়্যার ও টিউটোরিয়াল এর সার্বিক সাপোর্ট দিতে আমার খুব কার্যকর একটা উদ্যোগ হচ্ছে এই ডিভিডি প্যাকেজ গুলো ...

কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইল এইডেড লার্নিং ডিভিডি কার্যক্রম এর মাধ্যমে সফটওয়্যার, টিউটোরিয়াল ও এইচডি পিকচার নির্ভর ই-বুকের সহযোগিতায় পাঠ্য বিষয়কে সহজ এবং পাঠদান প্রক্রিয়াকে অংশগ্রহণমূলক ও আনন্দদায়ক করা। কিছু বিষয়ের পাঠ্যপুস্তকের বেশ কিছু অধ্যায়/পাঠ্য শিক্ষার্থীর বুঝার জন্য বেশ কঠিন। এমনকি এ ধরনের বিষয়ে শিক্ষার্থীদের ধারণা স্পষ্ট করতে শিক্ষকদেরও শত চেষ্টাসত্ত্বেও সম্ভব হয় না। এমন পরিস্থিতিতে শিক্ষাদান প্রক্রিয়ায় শিক্ষকদের এবং শিক্ষার্থীদের সহায়তা করতে আমি কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইলকে কে শিক্ষার সাথে সম্পৃক্ত করে ২০১১ সাল থেকে এই ডিভিডি কার্যক্রম শুরু করি। এই ডিভিডি এর শিক্ষাসফটওয়্যার ও ই-বুক গুলো শিক্ষকদের পাঠদান সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি এবং শিক্ষার্থীদের শিক্ষালাভ অধিকতর আনন্দদায়ক হিসাবে গড়ে তোলাই আমার একমাত্র উদ্দেশ্য।

এই ডিভিডি ফাইল গুলো শ্রেণিকক্ষে পাঠদান ও স্ব-শিক্ষণ উভয় ক্ষেত্রেই ব্যবহার উপযোগী ও কার্যকর। এই বই ও সফটওয়্যার সমূহ শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য জটিল বিষয়কে সহজে বোধগম্য করতে সহায়তা করে। এবং পড়ালেখায় অধিকতর আনন্দদায়ক মনোযোগ-আকর্ষণ করে ।

আমার আসল উদ্দেশ্য হল সকল স্টুডেন্ট ও টিচারকে কম্পিউটার ও মোবাইল প্রযুক্তির সম্পৃক্তকরণ এবং গ্রামের শিক্ষার্থী ও শিক্ষকদের প্রযুক্তিবান্ধব করা এবং একটা বিষয় ক্লিয়ার করে বুঝিয়ে দেওয়া যে প্রযুক্তি শিক্ষাকে আনন্দদায়ক করে এবং জ্ঞান অর্জনের প্রতি আকর্ষণ বৃদ্ধি করে ...

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E-Edu 06 Educational Soft v2 (শিক্ষামূলক সফটওয়্যার)

E-Educational Disc Spoken English & English Grammar Tutorial with Bangla(

এইচডি এনিমেশন নির্ভর বাংলা টিটোরিয়াল) বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য: এখানে ক্লিক করুন অথবা এখানে ক্লিক

করুন

E-Edu 07 Learn to Speak English with Bangla(বাংলা অডিও ও ভিডিও টিটোরিয়াল)

E-Edu 08 Spoken English Video (এক্সকলুসিভ স্পোকেন ইংলিশ টিটোরিয়াল)

E-Edu 09 English Grammar Video (সহজে ইংলিশ গ্রামার শিখার টিটোরিয়াল)

E-Edu 10 English Today 26 DVD (এইচডি এনিমেশন নির্ভর টিটোরিয়াল)

E-Edu 14 eBooks with Audio (অডিও নির্ভর বই)

E-Edu 22 Excercises & Fitness (ব্যায়াম এর বই ও টিটোরিয়াল)

E-education Disc 3D Visual eBooks with full HD Picture (স্টুডেন্টদের জন্য মাল্টিমিডিয়া

নির্ভর এইচডি পিকচার বই ও সফটওয়্যার) বিস্তারিত:- এখানে ক্লিক করুন অথবা এখানে ক্লিক করুন

এই ৩ডি বইগুলো পড়া লাগবে না জাস্ট চোখ বুলালেই অনেক কিছু শিখতে পারবে...এই বই ও সফটওয়্যার গুলো কেমন তা জানতে বেশি কিছু করা লাগবে না জাস্ট ফাইলের নাম কপি করে গুগলে পিকচার সার্চ দিন সব উত্তর পেয়ে যাবেন ... অথবা google গিয়ে DK Publication লিখে Image সার্চ দিন ...

আপনার ছেলেদের মোবাইলে, ট্যাবে বা ল্যাপটপে এই বই গুলো ওপেন করে দিয়ে তাকে ছবি দেখতে বলুন তাতেই সে অনেক কিছু শিখতে পারবে ... আর সফটওয়্যার গুলো তো গেইমের মত করে পড়ালেখা করাবে ...

এই বইগুলো পড়ার জন্য আপনাকে ভালো ইংলিশ জানা লাগবে না ... কারণ এই বই গুলোতে সবকিছু 3D কালার ছবি ও ইনডিকেটর দিয়ে বুঝিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে এই গুলোকে বলা হয় ভিজুয়াল ই-বুক, উন্নত দেশ গুলতে বাচ্চাদের এই বইগুলো পড়ানো হয় যাতে যে কোন বিষয় সম্পর্কে খুব ভালো ভাবে জানতে পারে ...আর শিক্ষকদের তো এই বইগুলো সবচেয়ে বেশি প্রয়োজন কারণ ক্লাস প্রেজেন্টেশনের সব ছবি এখান থেকে সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন ...

E-Edu 11 Cheldrian & student (স্টুডেন্টদের জন্য মাল্টিমিডিয়া নির্ভর বই ও সফটওয়্যার)

E-Edu 12 3D Visual eBooks with full HD Picture (এইচডি ছবি নির্ভর বই)

E-Edu 13 important e-Books (গুরুত্বপূর্ণ শিক্ষামূলক বাংলা বই)

E-Edu 20 Britannica v15 ultimate (ব্রিটানিকা বিশ্বকোষ সফটওয়্যার)

E-Edu 21 Microsoft Encarta 9 (এনকার্টা বিশ্বকোষ সফটওয়্যার)

বাংলাদেশের বিখ্যাত লেখকদের জনপ্রিয় বাংলা গল্প ও উপন্যাস সমগ্র [৩০০০+ বাংলা ই-বুক কালেকশন]

+বাংলা অনুবাদকৃত বই +সব সমগ্র কালেকশন বিস্তারিত: এখানে ক্লিক করুন অথবা এখানে ক্লিক করুন

E-Edu 15 Best Bangla eBooks (পৃথিবীর বিখ্যাত সব বাংলা বই ও সমগ্র কালেকশন)

E-Edu 16 Islamic ebooks & soft (ইসলামিক সফটওয়্যার ও ই-বুক)

E-Edu 17 Bangla 2000+ eBooks v 1 (২০০০+ বাংলা উপন্যাস)

E-Edu 18 Bangla Thriller & Comic eBooks (বাংলা রহস্য উপন্যাস সিরিজ)

Genuine -Windows Xp Sp3 & Windows 7, 8.1, 10 Pro & Ultimate 64 &32 bit ও

Driver Pack Solution 16 এর DVD+৩০০ টি বাংলা বই

(প্যাচ ও এক্টিভেটর বিহীন কোর উইন্ডোজ , জেনুইন এর মত সিকুরিটি সার্ভিস পাবেন + এর সাথে উইন্ডোজ এর জন্য খুব গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সব সফটওয়্যার আলাদা ফোল্ডার আকারে ডিভিডি তে দেওয়া আছে )

বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য: এখানে ক্লিক করুন অথবা এখানে ক্লিক করুন

OS 01 (Windows XP sp3 Genuine) (এক্সপি সার্ভিস প্যাক ৩)

OS 02 (Windows 7 Ultimate 32 & 64 bit Genuine) উইন্ডোজ ৭ ৩২ ও ৬৪ একসাথে

OS 03 (Windows 8.1 Pro) (উইন্ডোজ ৮.১ প্রো কোর এডিশন)

OS 04 (Windows 10 Home, Enterprise & Pro-Core 32 & 64 bit )

OS 05 (All windows Driver Pack Solution v15.4)সব পিসি এর সব ড্রাইবার প্যাক

OS 06 (All Live OS - Xp, Zorin 9, Ubuntu 14.4 & Linux) লাইব ওএস

OS 07 (Zorin Live 9 Ultimate 64) লাইব এক্সকলুসিভ অপারেটিং সিস্টেম

100% Computer Security & Speed up [আপনার কম্পিউটারকে রাখুন ১০০% ভাইরাস মুক্ত ও বৃদ্ধি করুন আপনার কম্পিউটারের গতি ] বিস্তারিত: [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

Office & Documents Software Collection DVD [আপনার আফিসিয়াল যাবতীয় কাজের জন্য দরকারি সব সফটওয়্যার ] বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য: [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

Design , Graphics & Photo Editing DVD[ হয়ে যান সেরা ডিজাইনার ]প্রয়োজনীয় ফুল ভার্সন সফটওয়্যার , ভিডিও টিউটোরিয়াল ও বাংলা ] বিস্তারিত:-[এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

Internet & Web programming DVD[প্রয়োজনীয় ফুল ভার্সন সফটওয়্যার , ভিডিও টিউটোরিয়াল ও বাংলা বই ] বিস্তারিত:-[এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

Mobile Utility soft & Application DVD [মোবাইল জন্য (1000+) বাংলা শিক্ষণীয় অ্যাপ্লিকেশান ও ৩০০+ মোবাইল ভার্সন বাংলা বই ] বিস্তারিত:-[এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

Multimedia & Windows Style[কম্পিউটার এর জন্য দরকারি সব মাল্টিমিডিয়া সফটওয়্যার ও উইডোজ কে সুন্দর দেখানোর জন্য সব সফটওয়্যার ] বিস্তারিত:-[এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

A-Z Bangla & English Complete Video Tutorial (200 জিবি সম্পূর্ণ টিউটোরিয়াল, ৫০০০ ভিডিও ক্যাটাগরি আকারে সাজানো) বিস্তারিত:-[এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#) অথবা [এখানে ক্লিক করুন](#)

Educational Bangla & English Video Tutorial Folders: 149; Files: 3168; Size: 54 GB

Graphics Bangla & English Tutorial Size: 22.67 GB , 214 folders

MS Office Bangla & English Tutorial Size: 13.14 GB , 266 folders

Autocad & 3D Max bangla & English Tutorial Size: 17.40 GB , 129 folders

Computer Hardware Bangla & english Tutorial Size: 2.78 GB ,12 folders

Networking & CCNA Bangla & English Tutorial Size: 2.18 GB ,15 folders

Online Income & SEO Size: 8.07 GB ,Contents: 308 files, 53 folders

Programming Bangla & english Tutorial Size: 23 GB , 1,105 folders

Web Programming Bangla & English Tutorial Size: 42.18 GB , 1,792 folders

Web Programming Bangla Tutorial Size: 8.74 GB PHP A-Z Bangla Tuutorial Size: 7.04 GB

WordPress Complete Bangla Tuutorial Size: 1.15 GB A-Z PHP English Essential Training Size: 6.24 GB

A-Z Wordpress English Essential Training Size: 4.28 GB Complete Web Developer Course Size: 7 GB

Web Programming English Tutorial Advance Size: 6.78 GB