HISTORIC VS. HISTORICAL:

- **Historic:** *Adjective*—Well-known, or important in history, monumental

  The Eiffel Tower is one of the most *historic* landmarks in France.

- **Historical:** *Adjective*—Relating to the past or to history, but not necessarily of great significance

  The textbook was full of *historical* facts.

IMITATED VS. INTIMATED:

- **Imitated:** *Verb*—Copied or mimicked something

  The unoriginal artist's style *imitated* Van Gogh's.

- **Intimated:** *Verb*—Hinted at, implied, or made known in an indirect manner

  The CEO *intimated* that there would be layoffs when he said that the company was going to have to make difficult budget cuts.

IMPLY VS. INFER:

- **Imply:** *Verb*—To suggest or indicate (without being stated outright)

  She *implied* that she wasn't planning on taking the job when she said she was keeping her options open.

- **Infer:** *Verb*—To conclude or guess something based on reasoning

  He *inferred* that his friend wasn't going to come to the party based on his uninterested response.

ITS VS. IT'S:

- **Its:** The possessive form of *it*, belonging to *it*.

  Polishing the silverware gave it back *its* shine.

- **It's:** The contraction of *it is*

  It's nice to have good friends to count on.

Note: Contractions (such as *it's*) are not appropriate for formal or academic writing.

LEAD VS. LED:

- **Lead** (rhymes with red): *Noun*—A heavy, malleable metal, as in graphite

  The pipe was made of *lead*.

- **Led:** *Verb*—The past tense form of lead (rhymes with seed), to have guided the way

  The tour guide *led* them through the museum.

LAY VS. LIE:

- **Lay:** *Verb*—To place something down; the past tense form of *lie* (in the above context)

  > *Lay* your coat on this chair.
  > The baby *lay* in its crib all day yesterday.

- **Lie:** *Verb*—To recline or get into a reclining position

  > I think I'll *lie* down for a few minutes.

Note: *Lay* and *lie* are sometimes used interchangeably, especially in everyday conversation. However, they are most acceptably used in the above contexts.

LOOSE VS. LOSE:

- **Lose:** *Verb*—To come to be without something; The opposite of win

  > Did you *lose* your keys?
  > She hated to see her favourite team *lose* to their rivals.

- Loose: *Adjective*—Free, unbound, or not tightly fastened

  > Your shoelaces are *loose*, you should tie them tighter.

PASSED VS. PAST:

- Passed: *Verb*—Having completed the act of passing; Received a passing grade on an evaluation

  > She *passed* the store on her way to work.
  > He *passed* the exam on the first try.

- Past: *Noun*—Time gone by, or history; *Adjective*—Gone by or just passed; *Adverb*—So as to pass by

  > He recalled events from his *past* with great detail.
  > I've been very busy these *past* few months.
  > She walked *past* her neighbour's house.

PEACE VS. PIECE:

- **Peace:** *Noun*—A state of ease, harmony, or tranquility

  > The war had ended many years ago, and they were now at *peace* with one another.

- **Piece:** *Noun*—An isolated part of something; *Verb*—to repair something

  > The last *piece* of the puzzle was still missing.
  > He tried to *piece* together the broken vase with glue.

PEDAL VS. PEDDLE VS. PETAL:

- **Pedal:** *Noun*—A foot-operated lever as found on a bicycle or piano; *Verb*—To operate a piece of equipment with one's feet

  > The toddler's legs were too short to reach the *pedals* on her tricycle.
  > She *pedaled* her bike down the lane.

- **Peddle:** *Verb*—To sell small articles

  > The old man *peddled* his wares at the market.

- **Petal:** *Noun*—Part of a flower

  > She only picked the flowers with the brightest *petals*.

PERFORM VS. PREFORM:

- **Performed:** *Verb*—To have carried out; Enacted, as in a play

  > He *performed* his tasks dutifully.
  > They *performed* in front of a live audience.

- **Preformed:** *Adjective*—Already made (as in premade or prefabricated)

  > She had a *preformed* opinion of the book before she read it.

PERSONAL VS. PERSONNEL:

- **Personal:** *Adjective*—Relating to an individual; Private; Referring to another in an offensive manner

  > She paid using her *personal* bank account.
  > You should never share important *personal* information with strangers.
  > His remarks during the debate were highly *personal* and unprofessional.

- **Personnel:** *Noun*—People hired for a company, staff

  > The office threw a party for all of its *personnel*.

POOR VS. POUR VS. PORE:

- **Poor:** *Adjective*—Deficient in money or resources; Unsatisfactory

  > Growing up, her family had been very *poor*.
  > The employee was criticized for *poor* behaviour.

- **Pour:** *Verb*—To send a liquid falling or flowing

  > He *poured* her a cup of coffee.

- **Pore:** *Noun*—A small opening, as on the surface of one's skin; *Verb*—To read or study with intensity

  > Leaving makeup on overnight can clog your facial *pores*.
  > He *pored* over the textbook in preparation for the exam.

PRAY VS. PREY:

- **Pray:** *Verb*—To offer a prayer, devotion, or petition

  > They *prayed* in their church.

- **Prey:** *Noun*—A small animal hunted for food; *Verb*—To hunt a small animal

  > The gazelle is *prey* to the lion.
  > The cat *preyed* on the mouse.

PREPOSITION VS. PROPOSITION:

- **Preposition:** *Noun*—A word that is placed before nouns and pronouns to modify nouns, verbs, or adjectives.

  The word "before" is a *preposition*.

- **Proposition:** *Noun*—The act of offering or suggesting something to be considered

  Have you considered my *proposition* to expand the company?

PRINCIPAL VS. PRINCIPLE:

- **Principal:** *Adjective*—Highest in rank, first and foremost; *Noun*—The chief, head, or director of an institution such as a school

  Our *principal* concern should be reducing our environmental impact.
  His mother had to meet with the school's *principal* after he was suspended.

- **Principle:** *Noun*—A fundamental or generally accepted rule that guides one's conduct; *Noun*—A law or truth (as in math or science)

  He was a well-behaved man with good *principles*.
  The artistic composition adheres to the basic *principles* of design.

QUIET VS. QUITE:

- **Quiet:** *Adjective*—Silent, an absence of noise

  The room was very *quiet* during the exam.

- **Quite:** *Adverb*—Completely, wholly, very

  Despite its poor reviews, the book was *quite* interesting.

RIGHT VS. RITE VS. WRITE:

- **Right:** *Adjective*—Correct, not wrong; *Noun*—A just claim to something; *Noun*—Direction opposite to left; *Adverb*—Directly, straight; *Adverb*—Completely

  I had the *right* answer for every question except the last one.
  Freedom of speech is a human *right*.
  Turn to the *right* when you reach the traffic lights.
  Come *right* home when you are finished school.
  The top of the bottle should come *right* off when you twist it.

- **Rite:** *Noun*—A ceremonial act

  Graduation is a *rite* of passage for students.

- **Write:** *Verb*—To express an idea in writing, to transcribe words

  Write your answers to the questions in the space given below.

STATIONARY VS. STATIONERY:

- **Stationary:** *Adjective*—Still, not moving

  The car was *stationary* because it was in park.

- **Stationery:** *Noun*—Supplies used for writing (particularly paper)

  The assistant picked up *stationery* for the office.

THAN VS. THEN:

- **Than:** *Conjunction*—Used to introduce the second object in an unequal comparison; Used to introduce a rejected option; Except

  > The cheetah is faster *than* the lion.
  > I would rather eat in a restaurant *than* prepare my own meal.
  > She had no choice other *than* to find a new job.

- **Then:** *Adverb*—At that time; *Adverb*—Next; *Noun*—That time

  > She had more free time back *then*.
  > We ate dinner. *Then* we went to a movie.
  > Since *then*, he hasn't seen his parents.

THAT VS. WHICH:

The words *that* and *which* are used very similarly. In many cases, either word be used in the same place to form a grammatically correct sentence; however, the meaning of the sentence changes slightly depending on which word is used.

- **That:** Introduces a **restrictive clause**—a clause that is essential to the sentence and cannot be removed.

  > She
  > Here, _____ is exclusive

- **Which:** Introduces a **non-restrictive clause**—a clause that contains supplementary information and can be removed from the sentence without changing its meaning.

  > Example
  > Here, _____ is not necessarily exclusive to ___.

THEIR VS. THERE VS. THEY'RE:

- **Their:** *Pronoun*—Possessive form of *they*

  > *Their* house is larger than ours.

- **There:** *Adverb*—At, *in*, or *to* that place; *Pronoun*—That place; *Pronoun*—Introduces a clause in which the verb comes before the subject or has no complement

  > The event is being held *there*.
  > Have you been *there* yet?
  > *There* was no use.

- **They're:** Contraction of *they are*

  > They're coming to the party on Saturday.

Note: Contractions (such as *they're*) are not acceptable in formal or academic writing.

TO VS. TOO VS. TWO:

- **To:** *Preposition*—Expresses direction toward a destination; Expresses a limit; Expresses contact, on, against, upon

  > They went *to* school together.
  > The entire store is up *to* fifty percent off.
  > He applied a coat of paint *to* the fence.

- **Too:** *Adverb*—In addition, also; Excessively, to a higher degree than desired

  > The movie was interesting, funny, and heartfelt *too*.
  > Taxis are *too* expensive; we should walk.

- **Two:** *Noun*—Number following one; *Adverb*—Amounting to two of something

  > The answer to the problem is *two*.
  > There were *two* slices of pizza leftover.

TRACK VS. TRACT:

- **Track:** *Noun*—A structure consisting of rails or a path for sporting activities; *Noun*—A path made by a person or animal or the evidence of their passing; *Noun*—A path to follow or that is currently being followed; *Verb*—To follow a trail or pursue

> The running *track* is by the railroad *tracks*.
> The hunter followed the deer's *tracks* through the woods.
> You are on the right *track*.
> The detective *tracked* the criminal.

- **Tract:** *Noun*—Land or water area; *Noun*—A region of the body, a series of organs, or a system designed to perform a function

> Ecologists studied the wetland *tract* for evidence of pollution.
> The esophagus and stomach are parts of the digestive *tract*.

WHO'S VS. WHOSE: (box?)

- **Who's:** Contraction of *who is*

> Who's coming to dinner tonight?

Note: Contractions (such as *who's*) are not acceptable in formal or academic writing

- **Whose:** *Pronoun*—Possessive form of *who* or *which* used as an adjective

> *Whose* coat is this?
> "The Raven" is a poem *whose* name is well known.

WHO VS. WHOM:

Who is used to indicate the person or persons **performing** an action.

- **Who:** *Pronoun*—What person(s)?; *Pronoun*—Used in restrictive or non-restrictive clauses to refer to a previously mentioned item/person/event

> *Who* are teaching the courses this year?
>
> Here the *who* is the person teaching the course (i.e., performing the action of teaching).
>
> Charles Dickens is the man *who* wrote *Great Expectations*.
> Here, Charles Dickens is the person performing the action of writing *Great Expectations*.

Whom is used to indicate the person or persons **receiving** an action.

- **Whom:** *Pronoun*—Objective form of *who*

Whom is used with the prepositions *to, for, by,* and *from*

> *Whom* did you speak to this morning?
> To *whom* it may concern…
> For *whom* is this message intended**?**

Tip: Generally, if you can replace the word in the sentence with *they*, then *who* is the correct form. If you can replace the term with *them,* then *whom* should be used.

> _____ is teaching the course this year?
> → *They* are teaching the course this year.
> → Therefore, *who* is the correct form.
> *Who* is teaching the course this year?
>
> _____ did you speak to this morning?
> → You spoke to *them* this morning.
> → Therefore, *whom* is the correct form.
> *Whom* did you speak to this morning?

YOUR VS. YOU'RE:

- **Your:** *Pronoun*—The possessive form of *you.*

  Can I borrow *your* book?

- **You're:** Contraction of *you are.*

  You're going to do great on the test!

Note: Contractions (such as *you're*) are not acceptable in formal or academic writing

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