Troublesome Words



There are many easily confused words in the English language.

Here's a few of the nasty little blighters.

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| their, they're or there | Their means belonging to them.  **I passed four residents coming out of their apartment.**They're is short for they are. **They announced they’re going to have another meeting….**There means “in, at or to that place” **Corfu looks like a nice place – I want to go there someday.**There can also mean can also be used to talk about the fact or existence of something**.****There are some serious questions involved in this issue.**https://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2012/04/24/there-their-or-theyre/ |
| than or then | Than means:1. Introducing the second element in a comparison.**He was much smaller than his son.****Our council tax is much higher than in larger towns.**2. Used in expressions introducing an exception or contrast.**He claims not to own anything other than his home.****They observe rather than act.**3. Used in expressions indicating one thing happening immediately after another.**No sooner was he seated than Lily sidled closer to him.**Then means1. At that time; at the time in question.**I was living in Cairo then.****Phoebe by then was exhausted.****He accepted a peerage from the then Prime Minister, Edward Heath.****2.** After that; next; afterwards.**There was silence for a moment and then the place erupted with cries of delight and amazement.**3. Also; in addition.***Work is mad at the moment, and then there are exams to think about as well.***4. In that case; therefore.**If you do what I tell you, then there's nothing to worry about.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/then |
| affect or effect | Affect means to make a difference to or change. **The dampness began to affect my health.** **Your attitude will affect how successful you are.**Effect means a result; to bring about a result. **The lethal effects of hard drugs.** **We could see low-lying islands in the Pacific totally disappear as a result of the** **effect of greenhouse gases.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/usage/commonly-confused-words |
| Miss, Ms or Mrs | Mrs means a married woman, **Mr and Mrs Patel.** Miss means an unmarried woman or girl, **Miss Smith.**Ms has been adopted ‘especially in formal and business contexts as an alternative to Mrs and Miss principally as a means to avoid having to specify a woman’s marital status (regarded as irrelevant, intrusive, or potentially discriminatory)’. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com |
| complement or compliment | Complement means 1. A thing that contributes extra features to something else in such a way as to improve or emphasize its quality.**Local ales provide the perfect complement to fine food.**2. A number or quantity of something, especially that required to make a group complete.**At the moment we have a full complement of staff.**Compliment means praise or admiration.**She paid me an enormous compliment.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com |
| practice or practise | Practice (noun) means1. The actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it. **The practice of teaching.**2. The carrying out or exercise of a profession, especially that of a doctor or lawyer.**He abandoned medical practice for the Church.**3. The business or premises of a doctor or lawyer.**Dr Apps has a practice in Neasham Road.**Practise (verb) means1. Perform (an activity) or exercise (a skill) repeatedly or regularly in order to acquire, improve or maintain proficiency in it.**I need to practise my French.****They were practising for the Olympics.**2. Actively pursue or be engaged in (a particular profession or occupation)**He began to practise law.****He practised as a barrister.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com |
| principal or principle | Principal1. First in order of importance; main.**The country's principal cities.**2. The head of a school, college, or other educational institution or the most senior person in an organisation.**I was appointed principal of the new school.**Principle or principles 1. A rule or belief governing one's behaviour.**Struggling to be true to their own principles.**2. A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning.**The basic principles of justice.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/principle |
| break or brake | Break means Separate into pieces as a result of a blow, shock, or strain.Sustain an injury involving the fracture of a bone.**The rope broke with a loud snap.****She had broken her leg in two places.**Brake means a device for slowing or stopping a moving vehicle, typically by applying pressure to the wheels.**He slammed on his brakes.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/usage/commonly-confused-words |
| stationary or stationery | Stationary means not moving or not intended to be moved.**A car collided with a stationary vehicle.**Stationery means writing and other office materials.**A range of stationery.**https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/usage/commonly-confused-words |
| ABOUT THIS GUIDEI worked as a teacher for eighteen years and I am now a study skills tutor working with university students. I am certainly not an expert on language and I struggle, along with the students, to get it right. Please contact me at davidlincoln560@gmail.com if you see any errors.David Lincoln |