

Vocabulary: Special Usage

Below are explanations of words that are often difficult to use.

Borrow / Lend

To borrow _____ from _____

To borrow something from a person or a company means to be given something temporarily.

Ex. Sally borrowed money from the bank to start a new restaurant.

To lend _____ to _____

To lend means to give something to someone temporarily.

Ex. I lent Alex my car for the weekend.

Speak / Talk

To speak and to talk both mean to communicate verbally when these verbs are not followed by a noun. To speak is sometimes used for formal situations.

Ex. Talk to me! OR Speak to me!

Alicia talked about the problems her company is facing.

I have spoken to the director about the proposal.

If to speak is followed by the name of a language, the verb means to communicate in a language.

Ex. Peter can speak German.

I wish I could speak French.

Wendy speaks three languages.

Affect / Effect

The verb to affect means to “make an impact” or “create a change.”

Ex. The increase in gas prices will affect airfares.

I was affected by the movie. It made me sad and introspective.

Effect is a noun, which means “a change” or “a result from an event.”

Ex. What is the effect of adding hydrogen to oxygen?

His boring speech made no effect on the audience.

Advice / Advise

Advice is a non-countable noun meaning information that benefits someone.

Ex. My career counsellor gave me a lot of advice on how to find a job.

To advise is a verb meaning to give advice or guidance.

Ex. My mother advised me to watch my investments closely.

Beat / Win

To beat means to be victorious over an opponent in a game or contest.

Ex. *Russia beat Finland in hockey last night.*

If to win is followed by a noun, it means to receive a prize, reward or trophy in a contest/game.

Ex. *I won \$ 1000 at the casino last night.*

My brother's team won the regional soccer championship.

If to win is not followed by a noun, it means to be victorious.

Ex. *I won!*

Sally always wins when she plays tennis.

Rob / Steal

To steal means to take something illegally or without permission.

Ex. *Alex stole the money from my dresser.*

My little nephew often steals cookies from his brother at the dinner table.

To rob means to steal something directly from a person, or to go inside a place and steal something.

Ex. *The young man robbed the old lady—he took her purse!*

I robbed the grocery store and ran off with \$150.

Forget / Leave

To forget something means not to have something because you did not remember to take it with you.

Ex. *Oh no! I forgot my wallet. I have to go back home to get it.*

To leave something means to not have something because you did not take it.

Ex. *I left my jacket at home because it really looks warm outside.*

Do / Make

A general guideline: do is used for actions involving work; make is for actions involving creativity.

Ex. *She made a drawing after she had done her homework.*

I can't make dessert if you don't do the dishes.

As far as / Until

As far as is used to explain a limit of distance (but not time).

Ex. *We will drive as far as Windsor, then we will stop to eat.*

I will read as far as page 150 tonight.

Until is used to explain a limit for time or distance.

Ex. *I will stay until 7 p.m., then I will go home.*

I will drive until Ottawa, then you can drive the rest of the way.

Pour / Spill

To pour means to transfer liquid into a container.

Ex. *The waiter poured coffee into our cups.*

To spill means to drop or spread liquid accidentally.

Ex. *She spilled red wine onto her blouse—she was very embarrassed.*

Spill suggests an accidental or unintentional action; pour suggests an intentional one.

Ex. *As I was pouring the beer into my glass, I spilled some on the table.*

Choose the appropriate verb (or, in one case, noun). Don't forget to conjugate your choices as necessary.

1. She (advise, advice) _____ him to consider a career in marine biology.
2. Her (advise, advice) _____ was to consider a career in marine biology.
3. I would (advise, advice) _____ you to reconsider that investment. A bunch of Harvard dropouts starting a software company? It'll never work!
4. Last night, the Toronto Blue Jays (win, beat) _____ the New York Yankees 4-2.
5. The Jays (win, beat) _____ 4-2.
6. The Jays (win, beat) _____ by scoring two runs in the ninth inning.
7. Give it to Maura. She (do, make) _____ a good job.
8. Don't (do, make) _____ trouble!
9. "(Do, Make) _____ love, not war."
10. Jack (rob, steal) _____ a bank.
11. He (rob, steal) _____ \$45,000 from the bank.
12. "Would you (pour, spill) _____ me a coffee?"
13. "Oh no! You've (pour, spill) _____ the coffee!"
14. Can you (speak, talk) _____ Spanish?
15. "You (speak, talk) _____ to her!"

Advanced 3 – Exercise 25 – Vocabulary: Special Usage

16. Paula works (as far as, until) _____ eight o'clock tonight.
17. I have never been to the east coast of Canada. I've only been (as far as, until) _____ Quebec.
18. It was a long speech. The Prime Minister (speak, talk) _____ for over an hour.
19. Our English teacher (learn, teach) _____ us everything about English grammar.
20. We (learn, teach) _____ everything our teacher _____ us.
21. I (borrow, lend) _____ the money from the bank. The bank _____ it to me.
22. Will a rainy day (affect, effect) _____ our vacation plans?
23. If the dollar goes up, that will (affect, effect) _____ our vacation plans.