

USEFUL CONFUSING ENGLISH WORDS FOR ALL SSC EXAMS

1. Current / Present

Current and present refer to things happening now (not in the past or future). These two words are usually the same. Sometimes, **current is used in the sense of "generally now"** and **present is oftentimes more in the sense of "immediately now, in this place/moment."**

Example- My brother currently lives in New York, but he is in Los Angeles at present.
= in general, he is in New York, but at this very moment, he is in Los Angeles.

At present always means "now." And **presently, means "now" or "very soon."**

Example- She will be here presently.

= She will be here very soon.

Example- He is presently working on a new project.

= He is working on a new project right now.

2. Affect / Effect

Affect is a verb used for the process of **one thing causing another thing to change.** **Effect is a noun,** and it means **the end result of some change.**

Example- (a) This disease is affecting my ability to breathe.

(b) The medicine had an instant effect on the pain.

3. Allow / Let / Permit

These verbs all have the same meaning. **The difference is in their grammatical structure:**

LET + PERSON/THING + VERB (base form - without "to")

Examples:

(a) I don't let my kids watch violent movies.

(b) Don't let the advertising expenses surpass \$1000.

The simple past tense of let is also let; there is no change!

The verbs allow and permit are more formal ways to say "let."

However, with allow and permit, we use to + verb:

(a) I don't allow my kids to watch violent movies.

(b) Our boss doesn't permit us to eat lunch at our desk.

Permit is the most formal, let is the least formal, and allow is in the middle.



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4. Amoral / Immoral

The word immoral means something is against established moral principles:

Example- (a) Many religions consider lying and cheating to be immoral.

The word amoral means something is completely free from moral considerations - it is neither moral nor immoral.

Example- (a) Money itself is amoral - it is simply a tool that can be used for good or for evil.

5. Britain / England / the United Kingdom

These words are different because of their geography:

England is a single country. The capital of England is London.

Great Britain is an island that contains three countries:

England, Scotland, and Wales.

The United Kingdom is a political unit that includes four countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland

6. Change / Switch

The word change means for something to become different. The word switch is more specific - it means to stop using/doing one thing and start using/doing another.

Example- (a) I'm going to **change** a few things in my life this year.

(b) I wasn't happy with my Nokia cell phone, so I **switched** to a Samsung.

(I stopped using the Nokia and started using the Samsung)

7. Cloth / Clothes / Clothing

Clothes and clothing refer to the things you wear - shirts, pants, dresses, suits, etc.

Cloth is the material, the fabric. Cotton, wool, silk, etc. are different types of cloth.

Now there is a tiny difference between Clothes and Clothing.

Clothing is more formal, and usually refers to a general category: men's clothing, women's clothing etc.

while clothes refers to the individual items that you wear.

Example- You pack your clothes in your suitcase before going on a trip.

8. Criticism / Critique / Critical

The difference between criticism and a critique is as follows.

Criticism is negative comments - identifying faults or bad points. **A critique is simply an evaluation** - it can comment on the good points and/or the bad points.

Examples- (a) My project idea received a lot of criticism from my colleagues - they said it would never work.

(a) In his critique of the book, Johnson praises the excellent character development, but says the plot moves too slowly.

The word **critical** has two meanings. **When describing a person, it means the person is finding fault:**

Example- (a) My mother was always very critical of my work - she said I would never be a good writer.

When describing a thing or situation, critical means "essential" or "extremely important":

(a) Access to clean water is critical to the health of the population.

9. Deny / Refuse / Reject / Decline

To deny something is to say something is not true, or say that you DID NOT do something:

Example- (a) The teenager denied stealing the DVDs from the store.

To refuse is NOT to do something, or to say firmly that you WILL NOT do something:

(b) The employee was fired after he refused to do what the manager asked.

Note that after deny we use the -ing form or a noun, and after refuse we use the "to" form of the verb.

To reject something is to not accept it – often because it's not good enough, or because you don't believe in it.

(c) He asked her out to dinner, but she rejected him.

To decline is to say "no" politely to a proposal, invitation, or suggestion

(d) The president declined to comment on the political scandal.

10. Economic / Economical

The adjective economic describes things related to the economy:

Example- (a) The country is undergoing a period of strong economic growth.

The field of study of the economy is called economics (always plural):

(a) He is a specialist in economics.

The adjective economical refers to something that saves money; it is an efficient use of money.

(a) Short trips inside the country are more economical than traveling internationally.

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