

The Proof Angel Summary of

Confusable words: March 2014

Is it made of or made from?

OK, so this is a small worry, but it makes some people uncomfortable.

There isn't a rule to remember here, because it is much easier than that. It involves observation & logic.

The raw materials used to make into any item fall into two categories:

- Those that are still visible in the product, which is made **of** these materials.
- Those that have been transformed into something entirely different. The product is made **from** these materials.

So for example:

- My desk is made **of** wood.
- That bridge is made **of** stone.
- Glass is made **from** sand.
- Bread is made **from** flour.

Confused about amount and number?

The way to remember this one is:

- Use **amount** if you cannot **count**.

So that seems a large **amount** of wine for one party. What is an acceptable **number** of glasses per person these days?

Refuse, reject, decline, deny - what is the difference?

The words refuse, reject, decline and deny are often muddled up. Here is a post about keeping them straight:

<http://ow.ly/vQInW>



The Proof Angel is the trading name of Sarah Perkins, freelance editor and proofreader.

Confused about some time and sometime?

In most cases, this is going to be one word rather than two. But every now & then there is one to trip you up.

If you are unsure, there are some simple ways to check, either by looking at what is going on in the sentence just before or after the problem, or by seeing how it sounds.

This is what to do:

- Read it out loud & see where the natural stresses are in the context.
 - "I'll get round to it sometime next week" stresses the first syllable.
 - "It will take me some time" has equal stress on the some and the time.
- Some time can always be replaced with another expression, such as a short time ago, or ages ago. Sometime usually cannot.
- Some time is usually preceded by a preposition such as at or for, or followed by an adverb like ago.

Confused about lend and loan?

Unfortunately, some of us have mucked about so much with these two that we find it difficult to remember the difference.

Lend is the verb, so I lend you my book, for example.

Loan is a noun. You go to the bank to ask for a loan to invest in a new whatever, and they lend you the money.

- People will gr**oan** if you ask them to **loan**, but not if you ask for a loan.

On the other hand:

- People will **send** if you ask them to **lend**.

Are you using the right sort of breeches?

There are many words that get confused with each other, like there, their & they're.

Mostly they come in pairs, and mostly at least one of the pair is a common word.

Things get a little more confusing when the words are less frequently used, like breeches (trousers) & **breaches** (**break**). The key to remembering the difference is to remember that similarity with the word break.

Unless you are talking about a breech birth.

Read more about the origins here:

<http://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/word-roots-and-routes-time-and-tide>

Confused about continual and continuous?

Continuous describes something happening constantly without stopping. Like time passing.

Continual describes something happening over and over again. Like interruptions.

You might suffer from continual interruptions if every time you get settled the phone rings, but if the calls were continuous you would be talking all the time.

Remember which is which by looking at the last letters:

- Continuous**S** never stops.
- Continual**l** is when you are **a**ble to **l**eave off.