UCD Writing Centre

Email: writing.centre@ucd.ie

Important Distinctions in Words:

Word:	Definition and Use:	Example
There	An adverb used to indicate the location of something.	Most studies can be found there . There are countless instances of this trend.
Their	A possessive pronoun used to indicate that something belongs to or is associated with a noun/subject that was previously mentioned, or which cannot be grammatically categorised as male or female.	Their arguments are very convincing. Scholars must ensure that their field of study is ethical.
They're	A contraction of "they are".	They're going to conduct the research in Autumn. Evidence suggests that they're unable to assimilate.
Then	An adverb used to denote time.	Then the group collected the data. The author was living in Dubai then .
Than	A conjunction used to introduce an exception or a contradiction.	Rather than passively listening, the student chose to take notes during the lecture. The study provides evidence, rather than mere summary.
	Also a preposition used for comparisons.	The second speaker was more convincing than the first.
Affect	A verb that demonstrates when a subject has an impact on an object.	Such policies greatly affect the cultural life of Dublin.
Effect	A noun that identifies the consequences of an action.	The effect of the patient's medication was measured over time.

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Who	A pronoun that identifies the subject that performs the verb of the sentence. "Who" usually introduces the next clause of a sentence. Tip: if you can replace the word with "he", "she", or "they", then you should probably be using "who".	Churchill, who was the Prime Minister between 1951 and 1955, won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953. Using the tip (left), this sentence could be: Churchill won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953, and he was the Prime Minister between 1951 and 1955
Whom	A pronoun that identifies the object that is impacted by the subject performing the verb of the sentence. Tip: if you can replace the word with "him", "her", or "them", then you should probably be using "whom".	It was unclear to whom the letter was address. Using the tip (left), this sentence could be: It was unclear whether the letter was addressed to him , to her , or to them .
Further	An adjective that indicates theoretical distance or time. Tip: think of further when you want to indicate "more".	Further time and analysis is required. The dissertation presented further evidence of the argument in Chapter 2.
Farther	An adverb that indicates physical distance. Tip: think of farther when you want to show how "far" away something is.	The journalist travelled farther than he thought he would. Geospatial data is used farther afield than initially thought.
Ensure	A verb that demonstrates certainty of outcome.	The student want to ensure that all bibliographic details were correct.
Insure	A verb that demonstrates protection against loss, damage, or injury.	The coach was insured in case of an accident.

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Enquire	A verb that demonstrates the asking of a general question. Used in everyday language.	The archaeologist enquired whether the site was ready for excavation.
Inquire	A verb that demonstrates a formal investigation, especially in legal or official matters.	The commissioner's report inquired whether the law had been followed throughout the trial.
Conscience	A noun that identifies an individual's sense of right and wrong.	The sociological study investigated the extent to which participants' consciences were impacted during the experiment.
Conscious	An adjective that describes an individual's awareness of/ response to stimuli.	The patient was not conscious of the visitors in the room.
Complement	A noun or verb that indicates the completion of something else.	The image is used as a complement to the text. The argument complements and develops existing theories.
Compliment	A noun or verb that expresses admiration.	One of the conference attendees offered a professional compliment to the main speaker. The lecturer complimented the student's extensive research.