per. Acceptable for technical and business writing, per is considered colloquial in academic writing.

The paper was twelve dollars a (not per) roll. The minimum wage was raised to $3.10 an (not per) hour.

per. Sounds excessively technical where a or an would do: x twice per month, x fifty miles per hour. As per is bureaucratic for in accordance with: x as per your letter of the fifteenth. Don’t use per to mean by, as in x She sent it per first-class mail.

per. Per is acceptable in technical communications and certain common expressions (miles per hour, per diem), but should be avoided in general writing whenever possible:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awkward</th>
<th>Revised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As per your letter of May 2</td>
<td>Regarding your letter of May 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per. Use a: “He worked ten hours a day.” Per is jargonish, except in conventional Latin phrases: per diem, per capita (not italicized in your running prose).

POOR
This will cost us a manhour per machine per month a year from now.
As per your instructions

IMPROVED
A year from now, this will cost us a manhour a machine a month.
According to your instructions

per. Appropriate in business and technical writing (per diem, per capita, feet per second, pounds per square inch). In ordinary writing prefer a or an (ninety cents a dozen, twice a day).

per. Used especially in commercial writing. Many authors prefer to use per only in Latinisms (“per capita,” “per se,” or “per cent/percent”).

COMMERCIAL over $1.50 per gallon as per regulations
PREFERRED over $1.50 a gallon according to regulations

per. Except in technical writing, an English equivalent is usually preferable to the Latin per: $10 an (not per) hour; sent by (not per) parcel post; requested in (not per or as per) your letter.

per. An English equivalent is usually preferable to the Latin per. The firm pays $10 an (not per) hour. The plans were carried out according to (not per) Mary's instructions.
percent (per cent), percentage

Both percent (often spelled per cent) and percentage refer to numbers and should only be used in actual references to statistics. Avoid using them to replace the word part. The major part [not percent] of my trouble is caused by mismanagement.

Percent is always preceded by a number (sixty percent; 45 percent), and percentage follows an adjective (a major percentage). In formal writing percent should always be written out (not %).

percent (per cent), percentage

Both these terms refer to fractions of one hundred and should be avoided except when specifying actual statistics. Use an expression such as part of, a number of, or a high (or small) proportion of when you mean simply "part."

Percent always follows a numeral (40 percent of the voters), and the word should be used instead of the symbol (%) in formal writing. Percentage usually follows an adjective (a high percentage).

Percent (or per cent) Use after figures, as "50 percent." Do not use for percentage.

Only a small percentage (not percent) of the people had degrees.

Percent, percentage

Both percent (sometimes written per cent) and percentage mean rate per hundred. Percent should be used with numbers (whether written-out or numerals): twenty percent. Percentage appears without numbers: a high percentage.

Don't use either percent or percentage where you simply mean part. And don't assume that a percentage is always small, as in Only a percentage of them agreed. A percentage could be any part less than 100 percent.

Percent, percentage

Percent indicates a part of a hundred when a specific number is referred to: "10 percent of his weekly salary"; "5 percent of the monthly rent." Percentage is used when no specific number is referred to: "a percentage of the people"; "a percentage of next year's receipts." In technical and business writing it is permissible to use the % sign after percentages you are comparing. Write out percent in academic writing. But note that the number before percent is given in figures.

Percent, percent, percentage

Percent (one word) seems preferred, though percentage, without numbers, still carries polish: "A large percentage of non-voters attended"; "a significant percentage of the students." Use the % sign and numerals only when comparing percentages, and in technical reports. Otherwise, spell it out, along with the numbers: twenty-three percent, ten percent, a hundred percent (see Numbers).
phenomena The plural of phenomenon (meaning "perceivable fact" or "unusual occurrence"): We phoned the Center for Short-Lived Phenomena to find out whether the phenomenon we had witnessed might be a flying saucer.

phenomenon. Can be applied to any fact or occurrence that is observable. But in most instances, you can replace it with more exact or specific wording.

Not this: It was a strange natural phenomenon.
But this: It was the largest flood in twenty years.

And note that the plural of phenomenon is phenomena.

Phenomena. Frequently misused for the singular phenomenon:
"This is a striking phenomenon" (not phenomena).

phenomenon The only correct sing. form.
Don’t write this phenomena. The more common plu. is phenomena, not phenomenon.

phenomenon Phenomenon is singular; its plural is phenomena.
Many new phenomena [not phenomenon or phenomenons] were discovered with the new telescopes. Phenomenon is oral English for success, outstanding person or event: She is a success [not phenomenon] in the industry.

phenomena. The plural of phenomenon, a fact or event. If you use phenomena as the subject of a sentence, be sure to use a plural verb.

phenomenon, phenomena A phenomenon is a single observable fact or event. It can also refer to a rare or significant thing. Phenomena is the plural form.

Metamorphosis is a phenomenon that occurs in many insects, mollusks, amphibians, and fishes.

John Stuart Mill was a phenomenon. He could read classical Greek at the age of five.

Comets are celestial phenomena that have been regarded with awe and terror and were once taken as omens of unfavorable events.
plus as a conjunction  There are no usage restrictions involving plus as a preposition:

General: We invited all of Catherine's relatives to the wedding, plus Tom's family.

However, despite the fact that its use as a conjunction is becoming more widespread, substituting plus for and in a compound sentence is avoided in writing.

General: They spent a week on Oahu, and they took a tour to the other islands.

Casual: They spent a week on Oahu, plus they took a tour to the other islands.

Informal if used as a substitute for and between main clauses or if used as a conjunctive adverb (for moreover, besides, in addition) between main clauses or sentences. See also 12a and 14a.

INFORMAL  Barbara is taking five courses, plus she has to work three hours a day.

GENERAL  Barbara is taking five courses, and she has to work three hours a day.

INFORMAL  Barbara is taking five courses, plus, she has to work three hours a day. [Or . . . courses. Plus, she has to work. . . .]

GENERAL  Barbara is taking five courses; moreover, she has to work three hours a day. [Or . . . courses. Moreover, she has to work. . . .]

Plus

In formal writing, avoid using plus as a substitute for and.

NONSTANDARD: He had to walk the dog, wash the dishes, and take out the garbage, plus he had to write a book.

STANDARD: He had to walk the dog, wash the dishes, take out the garbage, and write his book.

Plus  Plus is standard as a preposition meaning in addition to: His income plus mine is sufficient. But plus is colloquial as a conjunctive adverb: Our organization is larger than theirs; moreover (not plus), we have more money.

Plus  Nonstandard for moreover. Bancroft Enterprises has a five economic future; moreover (not plus), it offers young executives many tax-free perquisites.

Plus  Avoid using for the conjunction and.

Plus  Plus is a preposition meaning “with the addition of”; its use as a conjunction (John plus Mary are going,) is disapproved of by many. A phrase using plus should not affect the number of the verb:

The old apartment complex, plus the new townhouse section, contains a total of 225 units.

Plus is also used as a noun (The new lights are a plus for the city), but many consider such use journalese or jargon.

Plus  Not a coord. conj. (x He was sleepy, plus he hadn't studied) or a conjunctive adv. (x She enjoyed her work; plus, the hours were good). Plus is also somewhat colloq. as a n.: x It was an important plus. Use it chiefly as a prep. with numbers: Two plus two is four.
Practicable/Practical

Practicable is an adjective applied to things that can be done. A tunnel under the English Channel is practicable, given today's machinery and engineering skills.

Practical means "sensible."

The English don't think such a tunnel is practical because they think of the English Channel as their first line of defense.

The sponsors are practical people. These plans are practicable.
pretty Colloquial and overused as an adverb meaning “somewhat, moderately” (pretty difficult, pretty sick). Use a more specific word.

pretty This adverb has been worked to death. Use “rather” or “somewhat” instead.

He was somewhat (not pretty) disappointed when he found out he would have to take summer classes.

pretty Overworked as an adverb meaning “rather” or “somewhat”: He was somewhat (not pretty) irked at the suggestion.

pretty Informal for very, somewhat, rather: We thought the work was very [not pretty] hard.

pretty Colloq. when it means rather, as in He was pretty fond of camping. Pretty nearly, as in He was pretty nearly exhausted, should be almost.
Principal, principle Use principal to mean "the chief" or "most important." Use principle to mean "a rule" or "a truth."
The principal reason for her delinquency was never discussed. The principal of Brookwood High School applauded.
To act without principle leads to delinquency.

principal, principle Distinguish between principal, an adjective or noun meaning "chief" or "chief official," and the noun principle, meaning "fundamental truth."

The principal reason for her delinquency was never discussed. The principal of Brookwood High School applauded.
To act without principle leads to delinquency.

Principal/Principle
Principal is an adjective meaning "chief" or "chief official." As an adjective principal means "foremost" or "major." As a noun principal means "the chief or main thing." The highest office in an organization. The principal is the principal administrative officer of a high school. The principal is the principal battle in a war, the principal sum of money (on which interest is earned). Principle refers to "ethics, theories, guidelines, or moral qualities": The principle of nonviolence is alien to most Americans.

A principal factor in his decision was his belief in the principle that men are born equal.

principal, principle. Principal, both as an adjective and a noun, means "chief": the principal of a school, the principal reason. A principle is a rule of conduct or action: the principle governing the operation of a windmill, principles for living.

Principle, principal. Often confused. Principle is a noun only, meaning an essential truth, or rule: "It works on the principle that hot air rises." The pal is the adjective: remember the a's, and the pal in the principal person at our schools. The high-school principal acts as a noun because usage has dropped the person the adjective once modified. Likewise principal is the principal amount of your money, which draws interest.

Our principal is a woman of principle.
If you withdraw your principal from the bank, you will lose some interest.
His principal motive was greed.
The committee formulated two basic principles.

principal, principle, principle. Principal is a noun meaning "chief official" or, in finance, "capital sum." As an adjective, principal means "foremost" or "major." Principle is a noun only, meaning "rule" or "axiom." Her principal reasons for confessing were her principles of right and wrong.

Principal, principle. These words sound alike, but they are spelled differently, and they have different meanings. Whether used as a noun or as an adjective, principal carries the meaning of "chief." The chief of a high school is the principal. The adjective that means "chief" is always principal (The principal is the principal administrative officer of a high school). The word principle is used only as a noun and means "rule," "law" (A manufacturer shouldn't ignore the basic principles of physics).

Principal, principal. As an adjective principal means "chief, main": as a noun it means "leader, chief officer," or, in finance, "a capital sum, as distinguished from interest or profit." The noun principle means "fundamental truth" or "basic law or doctrine." (What is my principal reason for being here? I am the principal of the local elementary school. That bank pays 5 percent interest on your principal. The textbook explained the underlying principle.)

Principal, principal. Distinguish between principal, an adjective or noun meaning "chief" or "most important," and the noun principle, meaning "fundamental truth."
principal, principle  As a noun, principal means "a sum of money (minus interest) invested or lent" or "a person in the leading position." As an adjective it means "most important."

If you cash the bond before maturity, a penalty can be subtracted from the principal as well as the interest.

The principal of the high school is a talented administrator who has instituted a number of changes.

Women are the principal wage earners in over 20 percent of American households.

A principle is "a rule of conduct" or "a basic truth."

The Constitution embodies the fundamental principles upon which the American republic is founded.
proceed, precede  To proceed is to go forward; to precede is to go ahead of. The king preceded his courtiers as they proceeded toward the castle. Proceed is pompous if all you mean is go: x He proceeded to the supermarket.

Use proceed only in the sense of a continued action.

precede, proceed  Proceed means "to go or come before." Proceed means "to go forward in an orderly way."

Robert Frost's North of Boston was preceded by another volume of poetry, A Boy's Will.

In 1532 Francisco Pizarro landed at Tumbez and proceeded south until he encountered the Incas.

proceed/precede  Proceed means "to go forward," in the sense of continued action; precede means "to go before."

The army proceeded to the enemy camps.
She preceded her husband down the aisle of the theater.

Caution: Watch the spelling—precede, not proceed!

Proceed, precede, procedure. Continually mixed up in spelling. Proceed is to go ahead; precede is to go before. Procedure is a way of doing. The only solution here is memorizing, after you get the three meanings clearly in mind.

precede, proceed. Precede means "to go before"; proceed means "to continue," "to move along."

The mayor's car preceded the governor's in the parade.
Let's proceed with the meeting.

proceed  Proceed means "to continue, to resume; or to march or move in procession." It is pretentious when the context requires go: She said we should go [not proceed] to the movie after dinner.

precede, proceed  The verb precede means "to come before": My name precedes yours in the alphabet. The verb proceed means "to move on": We were told to proceed to the waiting room.
Quote, quotation. Quote your quotations, and put them in quotation marks. Distinguish the verb from the noun. The best solution is to use quote only as a verb and to find synonyms for the noun: passage, remark, assertion. See "Punctuation," pp. 432-437, for further details.

**Wrong**

As the following quote from Milton shows: ....

**Right**

As the following passage from Milton shows: ....

quote Still considered chiefly informal for quotation (as in "a quote from Chaucer").

quote, quotation Quote is a verb. Quotation is a noun. Do not use quote when you mean quotation. The quotation [not quote] was inaccurately reported.

quote(s). In formal contexts, use quotation(s) instead of the colloquial contraction quote(s).

Quote A verb: prefer quotation as a noun.

quotation. Use quote as a verb, quotation as a noun. Quote as a noun ("Where are your quotes in this paper?") is a casualism.

quote (n.) Widely used to mean quotation, as in quotes for quotation marks. But this sounds colloq. to many readers, and you'd be safer using the longer forms in your writing.

quote, quotation Quote is a verb meaning "to speak or write a passage from another." Quotation is a noun meaning "something that is quoted."

Be sure to use a footnote when you quote one of your sources.

In "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell offers several quotations (not quotes) as examples of bad prose.

Be careful not to use quote as a noun instead of the correct form, quotation.

Incorrect The Hindu leader Gandhi was fond of using quotes from Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience."

Revised The Hindu leader Gandhi was fond of using quotations from Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience."

Don't use cite, which means to mention as an example, as a synonym for quote.

quote. Some readers regard quote as a colloquial form of quotation. You may want to use quotation in your formal writing.
raise, rise  As a v. raise is trans.: raise the arm. Rise is intrans.: rise and shave. Don't use these terms interchangeably.

As a n. raise is now accepted S.E.: a raise in pay.

raise, rise. Raise is a transitive verb, taking an object, meaning to cause (something) to move up; rise is an intransitive verb meaning to go up:

Every morning when I get up I raise the window shade.
Yeast causes bread dough to rise.

raise, rise (verbs). Raise means "to elevate, lift up, or increase." Rise means "to get up." Raise used to be condemned in the expression "raising children" or "raising a family," but this is considered acceptable usage nowadays.

raise, rise  Do not confuse. Raise (raised, raising) means "to lift or cause to move upward, to bring up or increase." Rise (rose, risen, rising) means "to get up, to move or extend upward, ascend." Raise (a transitive verb) takes an object; rise (an intransitive verb) does not.

Retailers raised prices. Retail prices rose sharply.

raise, rise  Raise is a transitive verb and takes a direct object, and rise is intransitive: The Bennetts have to rise at dawn because they raise cows.

raise, rise  Two commonly confused verbs. Raise (raising, raised, raised), meaning "force something to move upward," is a transitive verb and takes a direct object. Rise (rising, rose, risen), meaning "go up," is an intransitive verb. When the subject of the verb acts on something to force it upward, use a form of raise. Increasing the interest rate will raise monthly mortgage payments. When the subject of a verb is itself moving upward, use a form of rise. Unsteadily, the ailing man rose from the chair.

raise, rise  Raise is a transitive verb and rise is an intransitive verb. Thus raise takes an object and rise does not.

A famous photograph taken during World War II shows American Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima.

As Babe Ruth ran the bases after hitting a home run, he would raise his cap to the crowd.

The planet Venus is called the morning star because when it rises, it is brighter than any light in the sky except the sun or moon.

It was only sixty-six years from the time the Wright Brothers' plane first rose into the air until the first moon landing.

raise, rise  Raise, raised, raised is a transitive verb (They raised potatoes).
Rise, rose, risen is intransitive (They rose at daybreak).
**real, really.** Real is an adjective, really an adverb, although in speech real is often used as an adverb. In writing, though, you should distinguish between the two:

Their disagreement was real. You did a really fine job.

real, really Real is an adjective; really is an adverb. The linebacker was really tough to block.

real, really In formal speech and writing, real should not be used as an adverb; really is the adverb and real an adjective. Popular reaction to the announcement was really (not real) enthusiastic.

**Real/Really**

Avoid the use of real when you mean very.

The cake was very [not real] good.

It is grammatically correct to use really for the adverb very, but really is overworked nowadays and should be given a rest, especially because it rarely adds anything worthwhile to a sentence. The overuse of really makes you sound insincere, as if you were trying to convince somebody of something without having any evidence at your command. Any time you see a really, you are likely to think, “Really?”

real, really Real means “genuine” or “authentic.” Really means “actually.” Do not use real as an adjective meaning “very.”

With its ducklike bill, flat tail, and webbed feet, the platypus hardly looks real.

When news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor was first broadcast, many people did not believe that it had really happened.

Colloquial The planaria is a real flat worm that we studied in biology class.

Revision The planaria is a very flat worm that we studied in biology class.

Revision The planaria is a flat worm that we studied in biology class.
**Real** Informal or dialectal as an adverb meaning *really* or *very*.

**real** Colloquial for *really* or *very* (*real* cloudy, *real* economical).

**real** Nonstandard for *very*: Their data looked *very* [not *real*] interesting.

**real (adverb)** Should not be used as an adverb to mean "very." This is poor usage: "They did a *real* good job raising the ship from the ocean floor."

**real Colloq.** as an adv., as in *I am real* interested in finishing this book. Try *very*.

**Real**. Do not use for *very*. *Real* is an adjective meaning "actual":

**WRONG**
It was *real* good.

**RIGHT**
It was *very* good.
It was *really* good.

**real** Informal when used as an adverb meaning "very, extremely."

**INFORMAL**
The victorious team was *real* tired.

**GENERAL**
The victorious team was *extremely* tired.

**real (as intensifier)** *Real* is a popular substitute for *very* and *much* in spoken English; however, in writing, the latter two are preferred.

**General:** The trees are *very* pretty this time of year.
**Casual:** The trees are *real* pretty this time of year.
Reason ... is because. Knock out the reason ... is, and the reason why ... is, and you will have a good sentence.

[The reason] they have difficulty with languages [is] because they have no interest in them.

reason is that, reason is because Most authorities still insist that reason be used with that and not because. Because is redundant and should be avoided in academic writing.

The reason he moved out of the city is that (not because) property taxes rose sharply.

reason ... because Informal redundancy. Use that instead of because or recast the sentence.

INFORMAL The reason why he missed his class was because he overslept.

GENERAL The reason why he missed his class was that he overslept.

OR He missed his class because he overslept.

reason is because/reason is that In writing, the reason is because has been traditionally frowned upon as redundant, and the reason is that preferred. However, the reason is because in now widely used and accepted, even in scholarly writing. You need to realize, though, that some people still consider this usage unacceptable.

General: The reason he didn’t go is because his car broke down.

General: The reason he didn’t go is that his car broke down.

reason is because Mixed construction (faulty predication; see 15b). Although the expression is colloquially common, formal speech and writing require a that clause after reason is: The reason he is absent is that he is sick. Or: He is absent because he is sick.

reason is because Redundant: Later it was determined that the reason the bridge collapsed was that [not was because] unreinforced concrete had been used.

reason is because One of the most condemned expressions in written English, yet (oddly enough) it is at certain times useful. There are two objections to it: (1) It is wordy: “The reason they are deserting the Army is because they never get leave.” This can be shortened simply to: “They are deserting the Army because they never get leave.” (2) It is ungrammatical. “Because they never get leave” is technically an adverb clause, yet it is being used (in reason ... is because) as a noun clause. The grammatical clause here would be: “that they never get leave.”

Both objections carry some weight. But professional writers still occasionally use the expression because — at least, this is our guess — it employs two clear “signals” at the beginning of a statement about causation: reason and because. In a long or complex sentence, such signals can help a reader: “The reason the Meville Land Company did not move its cattle quickly from the area was, first, because it had no head rider to take charge and, second, because the company was demoralized by the several legal actions recently taken against it.”
**reason is because.** This phrasing constitutes an example of faulty predication (see section 40). Write "the reason is that..." 

reason is because The idea of because is already contained in reason; the phrase is therefore redt. Write the reason is that.

reason is because Use that instead of because in the phrase reason is because, or rewrite the sentence. The reason the MG stalled is that [not is because] the oil had leaked from the crankcase.

reason is because. A redundant phrase since because means "the reason that." The preferred phrase is "the reason is that."

The reason we are late is that an accident tied up traffic.

Reason is because
Don't use this redundant expression.
The reason he fell on the ice is that [not because] he cannot skate.
Regarding, in regard to. Redundant or inaccurate.

**POOR**

Regarding the banknote, Jones was perplexed. [Was he looking at it?]
He knew nothing regarding money.
She was careful in regard to the facts.

**IMPROVED**

Jones was perplexed by the banknote.
He knew nothing about money.
She respected the facts.

regarding, in regard to, with regard to, relating to, relative to, with respect to, respecting Stuffy substitutes for on, about, or concerning: Mr. McGee spoke about (not with regard to) the plans for the merger.

regarding, in regard to, with regard to, with respect to, relating to, relative to These are flourishing elements of bureaucracy. On, about, and concerning are almost always preferable. See also in terms of.

Note that regards is wrong in in regards to; keep to the sing. if you must use the phrase.

regarding, in regard to, with regard to Overused and wordy for on, about, or concerning (We have not decided on [not with regard to] your admission).
Regardless. Correct. See Irregardless for the confusion.

regardless, irregardless  Irregardless is a nonstandard version of regardless. The suffix "-less" means "without" or "free from," so the prefix "ir-" is unnecessary.

Slang Irregardless of what some people might think, drunk drivers kill more than twenty-five thousand people a year.

Revised Regardless of what some people might think, drunk drivers kill more than twenty-five thousand people a year.
Respectively, respectively. Redundant.

The armies retreated to their respective trenches.

Smith and Jones won the first and second prize respectively.

Smith won the first prize; Jones, the second.

respectively, respectfully, respectably
Respectively means "in the order given." Respectfully means "giving honor or deference." Respectably means "worthy of respect."

In this paper I will discuss "The Sisters" and "The Dead," which are, respectively, the first and last stories in James Joyce's collection Dubliners.

When being presented to Queen Elizabeth of England, foreigners are asked to bow respectfully.

Even though Abraham Lincoln ran a respectable campaign for the United States Senate, he was defeated by Stephen Douglas in 1858.

respectfully, respectively. Choose the correct adverb for what you want to say. Respectfully means "with respect" (She answered her mother respectfully). Respectively means "the previously mentioned items in the order in which they are listed" (Mary Sarton, Emily Doan, and Sarah Fowler were the first, second, and third presidents of the Guild, respectively).

Respectfully, respectively Respectfully means "with respect"; respectively means "each in the order given."

He respectfully thanked the president for his diploma.

Crossing the platform, he passed respectively by the speaker, the dean, and the registrar.

respectively, respectfully Do not confuse. Respectively means "in the order given." Respectfully means "in a courteous manner."

I considered becoming a farmer, a landscape artist, and a florist, respectively.

I considered the rabbi's suggestion respectfully.

respectfully, respectively Respectfully means "with respect" or "showing respect." Respectively means "each in the order given." He respectfully expressed his opposition to the plan. The Collector, The Optimist's Daughter, and The Human Comedy were written by John Fowles, Eudora Welty, and William Saroyan, respectively.

respectively, respectively Respectively means "in the order given."

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He respectfully expressed his opposition to the plan. The Collector, The Optimist's Daughter, and The Human Comedy were written by John Fowles, Eudora Welty, and William Saroyan, respectively.

respectively, respectively Respectively means "in the order given."

I considered becoming a farmer, a landscape artist, and a florist, respectively.

I considered the rabbi's suggestion respectfully.
Respectful, respective means "full of (or showing) respect": If you want respect, be respectful of other people. Respective means "separate": After a joint Christmas celebration, the French and the Germans returned to their respective trenches.

Respectful, respective. Respectful is an adjective meaning "considerate of" or "honoring"; respective is an adjective meaning "particular" or "in a certain order":

He is very respectful of his instructors.
Each application was placed in its respective file.
sensual, sensuous  Sensual refers to pleasures of the body, especially sexual pleasures. Sensuous refers to pleasures perceived by the senses. The poet's sensual desires led him to create the sensuous images reader find in his work.

sensual, sensuous  Sensual connotes the gratification of bodily pleasures; sensuous refers favorably to what is experienced through the senses.

sensual, sensuous  Sensual refers to the gratification of the physical appetites, particularly the sexual. Typical synonyms are carnal, voluptuous, and licentious. Sensuous means "appealing to the senses." Clearly, something can be sensuous without being sensual.

sensual, sensuous  Widely confused. Sensual means carnal, voluptuous, or having to do with sex: a sensual thrill. Sensuous means pertaining to the senses, showing a general receptivity of the senses: The baby was delighted by sensuous impressions.

sensual, sensuous  Sensual suggests sexuality; sensuous means "pleasing to the senses." Stirred by the sensuous scent of meadow grass and flowers, Cheryl and Paul found their thoughts growing increasingly sensual.
Set, sit. Frequently confused. You set something down; you yourself sit down. Confine sitting to people (sit, sat, sat), and keep it intransitive, taking no object. Set is the same in all tenses (set, set, set).

**CONFUSED**
The house **sets** too near the street.
The package **sat** where he left it.
He has **set** there all day.

**CLARIFIED**
The house **stands** too near the street.
The package **lay** where he left it.
He has **sat** there all day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>set, sit</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
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<th>Gerund</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>set</td>
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<td>sit</td>
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<td>sat</td>
<td>sitting</td>
<td>sitting</td>
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</table>

After rocking the baby, he set it down carefully in its crib.
Research has shown that many children sit in front of the television five to six hours a day.

**sit** Occasionally misused for set (put, place): NOT "to sit something" but "to set something." See also 7a(2).

set, sit Set is a transitive verb (principal parts set, set, set) that describes something a person does to an object: He set the pitcher down. Sit is an intransitive verb (principal parts sit, sat, sat) that describes something done by a person who is tired of standing: She **sits** on the sofa. See also 7b.

sit, set The verb sit (as in a chair) is intransitive, not taking an object: Sit down. The verb set, meaning to put something down, is transitive, and therefore does take an object: Set the plants on the balcony.

set, sit Two commonly confused verbs. Set (setting, set, set), meaning "put or place," is a transitive verb and takes a direct object. Sit (sitting, sat, sat), meaning "be seated," is an intransitive verb. When you mean "put something down," use a form of set. Ralph **set** the paint beyond the child's reach. When you refer to being seated, use a form of sit. Don't **sit** in the wet paint.

sit, set Sit means "to take a seat"; it is usually followed by a place expression and does not take an object: Sit down; sit in the chair. Set means "to put or place" and always takes an object. Set the books on the table. See 11d.
Set/Sit

*Set* is usually a transitive verb, taking a direct object. Its principal parts are *set, set, and set.*

DiMaggio *set* the standard of excellence in fielding. It is occasionally intransitive.

The concrete took a while to *set.*

*Sit* is always intransitive; it never takes a direct object except in the idiom *he sits his horse,* meaning that he sits *on* his horse — so some would argue that *horse* is not a true direct object. The principal parts of *sit* are *sit, sat,* and *sat.*

The dog *sat* on command.
shall, will. In current American usage, will is generally used with all persons in the verb for the future tense. In formal usage, however, shall is used in the first person for the simple future (I shall ask), will in the second and third persons (she will ask). For the emphatic future, the use is reversed: will is used in the first person (I will win), shall in the second and third (they shall leave). Shall is not a more elegant term than will.

shall, will. Will is swiftly replacing shall to express all future action.

shall, will. Shall, which was once used to form the simple future tense in the first person, has been replaced by will. I will deal with him later. In first-person questions that request an opinion, shall is the correct form to use: Shall I march? Shall we strike?

shall, will. There used to be a distinction made between these two verb auxiliaries or helpers, but authorities do not accept it now. To many writers, shall appears more dignified (or expresses a greater degree of determination), but such opinions are more a matter of tone and style than of grammar.

shall, will. Except in questions (Shall I come?), shall has been falling into disuse. You can still use shall in the first person (I shall go), but this makes a formal effect.

shall, will, should, would. Will is now commonly used for all persons (I, you he, she, it) except in the first person for questions (Shall I go?) and in formal contexts (We shall consider each of your reasons). Should is used for all persons when condition or obligation is being expressed (If he should stay. . . . We should go). Would is used for all persons to express a wish or customary action (Would that I had listened! I would ride the same bus every day.)

Shall, should, would. The older distinctions—shall and should reserved for I and we—have faded; will and would are usual: "I will go"; "I would if I could"; "he will try"; "they all would."

Shall in the third person expresses determination: "They shall not pass." Should, in formal usage, is actually ambiguous: We should be happy to comply, intended to mean "would be happy," seems to say "ought to be happy."

Shall/Will
Not long ago, shall was the standard first-person future of the verb to be when a simple statement of fact was intended; will was the future for the second and third person. But to say I will, you shall, she shall, or they shall implied a special determination to accomplish something.

I shall be forty-eight on my next birthday.

I will eat these cursed beets because they are good for me.

Now the distinction is blurred in the United States, although it is still observed in Britain. Most writers use will as the ordinary future tense for the first person.

We will come to New York next week.

Shall is still used in a few emphatic constructions in the second and third person.

They shall not pass.

You may take my life, but you shall not rob me of my dignity.
In strictly formal English, to indicate simple futurity, *shall* is conventional in the first person (I shall, we shall); *will*, in the second and third persons (you will, he will, they will). To indicate determination, duty, or necessity, *will* is formal in the first person (I will, we will); *shall*, in the second and third persons (you shall, he shall, they shall). These distinctions are weaker than they used to be, and *will* is increasingly used in all persons.

*shall, will*  
Will, originally reserved for the second and third persons, is now generally accepted as the future-tense auxiliary for all three persons: I will go, you will go, they will go. The main use of *shall* is for first-person questions requesting an opinion or consent: Shall I order a pizza? Shall we dance? (Questions that merely inquire about the future use will: When will I see you again?) Shall can also be used for the first person when a formal effect is desired: I shall expect you around three.
Situation. Usually jargon. Avoid it. Say what you mean: state, market, mess, quandary, conflict, predicament...

situation Often unnecessary, as in The situation is that we have to get some help (revise to We have to get some help) or The team was faced with a punting situation (revise to The team was faced with punting or The team had to punt).

situation. Avoid if it creates padding, as in the jargon of sports announcers: "Now we have a passing situation."

situation, position These words, useful in their place, tend to get inflated in bureaucratic prose, especially when urged on by the catchall connectives regarding, with respect to, etc. (see regarding). With respect to our position regarding the dangerous situation should be About our response to the danger. And don't use situation without naming particular circumstances.

situation Wordy and unnecessary in expressions like We have an examination situation.
So/so that So is often overused in spoken English as an intensifier for emphasis, but generally this practice is avoided in writing.

**General:** She looked very attractive in her new suit.

**Casual:** She looked so attractive in her new suit.

So is just as vague and overused as a conjunction; in writing, generally, substitute therefore, consequently, or thus, for so.

So that is a handy joiner, but you should make sure that it carries the meaning of "in order that," rather than merely substituting for so.

- The farmer plowed the new field in the late fall so that/in order that he could plant an early crop.

**So.** Should be followed by that in describing extent: "It was so foggy that traffic almost stopped." Avoid its incomplete form, the schoolgirl's intensive—so nice, so wonderful, so pretty—though occasionally this is effective.

so Often overworked as an intensive (as in "so very pleased") and as a connective between main clauses (see 24b).

**so, such.** Avoid the use of so or such as an unqualified intensifier, as in sentences like "She was so happy," "It was such a cold day." If you must use an intensifier, use such adverbs as very, exceedingly, unusually (She was very happy. It was an unusually cold day). If you use so or such to modify an adjective, your readers have a right to expect you to complete the structure with a that-clause of result (She was so happy that she clapped her hands for joy. It was so cold that we clapped our hands to keep warm).

So For the use of so in incomplete constructions, see pp. 88-89. The use of so for so that sometimes causes confusion.

so Overused conjunction between sentences. Formal writing requires precise connectives: We were tired from long hours of observation; therefore [not so] we postponed any additional sessions for one week. So is informal in the sense of "very": She thinks she is very [not so] smart. But note that so can be used in the formula so... that: He is so strong that he can do the work of two men.

So So is a loose and often imprecise conjunction. Avoid using it excessively to join independent clauses. For clauses of purpose, so that is preferable (They left so that [not so] I could study). Because is preferable when cause is clearly intended (Because it began to rain, we left [not It began to rain, so we left]).

so. Avoid using so alone as an intensifier:

It was so cold. She was so sad.

If possible, complete the expression by adding explanatory details:

It was so cold the well froze.
She was so sad that she depressed her whole family.
Some. Some is colloquial as an adverb meaning "somewhat" or "to some extent" and as an adjective meaning "remarkable": We'll have to hurry somewhat (not some) to get there in time. Those are remarkable (not some) photographs.

Some. Informal for remarkable, extraordinary and for somewhat, a little (as in "was some dog," "is some better," and "was talking some").

Some. Some used as an adverb (I was some tired) is colloquial; edited English would use somewhat or a more precise descriptive word. Some used as an adjective (That was some concert) is informal, and better avoided in writing.

Avoid the use of the adjective some in place of the adverb somewhat. He felt somewhat [NOT some] better after a good night's sleep.

Some. Colloquial and vague when used to mean "unusual, remarkable, exciting" (That was some party. This is some car). In writing use a more specific word.
sometime, sometimes, some time  Sometimes means "at an indefinite
time in the future." Why don't you come up and see me sometime? Some-
times means "now and then": I still see my old friend Joe sometimes. Some
time means "span of time": I need some time to make the payments.

sometime, sometimes, some time  Sometimes means "at some time in the fu­
ture." Sometimes means "now and then." Some time means "a period of time."

In his essay "The Case Against Man," Isaac
Asimov says that sometime, far in the fu­
ture, human beings will not be able to
produce enough food to sustain them­
selves.
All automobiles, no matter how well con­
structed, sometimes need repairs.
At the battle of Gettysburg, General
Meade's failure to counterattack gave Lee
some time to regroup his troops.

Sometime, some time  Sometimes is used adverbially to designate an in­
definite point of time. Some time refers to a period or duration of time.
I will see you sometime next week.
I have not seen him for some time.

sometime, some time  Use one word in the sense of a time not specified;
use two words in the sense of a period of time (Sometimes we shall spend some
time together).
somewhere/somewheres Somewheres is a colloquial variant of somewhere, following the same pattern as nowhere/nowheres of adding -s.

*General:* They were sure to find it somewhere.
*Casual:* They were sure to find it somewheres.

somewhere, somewheres Somewheres is nonstandard, so don't use it.

The new shopping center will be built somewhere (not somewheres) north of the city.

somewheres Nonstandard for somewhere.

Somewheres Don't use this nonstandard form for somewhere.

somewheres Nonstandard for somewhere.

somewheres Nonstandard for somewhere.
stationary, stationery  Stationary means "staying in one place." Stationery refers to "materials for writing" or "letter paper."

When viewed from the earth, a communications satellite traveling at the same speed as the earth appears to be stationary in the sky.

The secretaries are responsible for keeping departmental offices supplied with stationery.

Stationary, stationery. Sometimes confused. Remember that you get your stationery from a stationer.

stationary, stationery. Stationary is an adjective meaning "fixed in position," "immobile." Stationery is a noun referring to writing materials. One way to remember the difference is to recall that both stationery and letter contain er.

stationary, stationery  Stationary means "in a fixed position"; stationery means "writing paper and envelopes."
**such** Avoid using such as a vague intensifier: *It was such a cold winter.* Such should be followed by *that* and a clause that states a result: *It was such a cold winter that Napoleon's troops had to turn back.*

**such** When it precedes an adj. clause, such should be followed by *as,* not *that:* *He took such belongings as he could save from the fire.*
Don't use such as an unqualified intensifier: *x They had such a good time. Complete the idea with an adj. clause: They had such a good time that they decided to buy season tickets.*

**such.** Such, like so, is a vague intensifier and, consequently, should be avoided in most academic writing:

*It was such a tough exam!*

If you use such as an intensifier, supply explanatory details:

*It was such a tough exam that half the class failed it.*

**such.** Colloquial and overused as a vague intensifier (*It was a very [not such a] hot day).*
Sure. Too colloquial for writing: “It is sure a good plan.” Use certainly, or otherwise rephrase.

Sure Informal for surely or certainly.

INFORMAL The sunrise sure was beautiful.
GENERAL The sunrise certainly was beautiful.

Sure, surely. In conversation the adjective sure is often used in place of the adverb surely. Surely is the only adverb form:

We surely enjoyed the new exhibit at the museum.

Sure Informal for very or certainly. It was very [not sure] hot.

Sure Informal as an adverb for surely, certainly.

INFORMAL The speaker sure criticized his opponent.
FORMAL The speaker certainly criticized his opponent.

Sure Colloquial when used as an adverb for surely or certainly. Barnett surely [not sure] was correct in his cost estimate.

Sure Colloq. as an adv.: She sure likes muffins. But surely would sound too stiff; try certainly. Rand HH

Sure Avoid confusing the adjective sure with the adverb surely.
The hat she wore on the streetcar was surely [NOT sure] bizarre.

Sure Colloquial for surely, certainly (I was surely [not sure] sick). HH
than, then. Do not confuse the conjunction than, usually used in comparisons, with the adverb then:
I would rather get up early than sleep late.
Then I have more time to do all the things I want to do.

than, then Sometimes incorrectly used for than. See also pages 192-93. Unlike then, than does not relate to time.
Last summer, we paid more than that. [Compare "We paid more then."]
Other than a social-security check, they had no income.

than, then Than is a conjunction used in comparisons, then an adverb indicating time: Holmes knew then that Moriarty was wilier than he had thought.

than, then Don't confuse these. Than is a conjunction (younger than John). Then is an adverb indicating time (then, not now).

than, then Than functions as a conjunction used in comparisons, then as an adverb indicating time. I would rather be in class than [not then] at work.

Than, then Do not use one of these words for the other.
That, which, who. *That* defines and restricts; *which* is explanatory and nonrestrictive; *who* stands for people, and may be restrictive or nonrestrictive. See *Restrictive, nonrestrictive; see also Who, which, that.*

The faucet *that* drips is in the basement.
The faucet, *which* drips badly, needs attention.
Of all the Democrats *who* supported him at first, none was more ardent than Jones.
Of all the Democrats, *who* supported him at first, none was more ardent than Jones.

that, which, who. Use *that* or *which* when referring to a thing. Use *who* when referring to a person.

In *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis described the conditions that existed in working-class slums in nineteenth-century America.

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which was published in 1900, was originally entitled *From Kansas to Fairyland.*
Anyone *who* (not *that*) has ever visited Maine cannot help being impressed by the beauty of the scenery and the ruggedness of the landscape.

that, which, who. *That* always introduces restrictive clauses: *We should see the lettuce that Susan bought* (*that Susan bought* identifies the specific lettuce being referred to). *Which* can introduce both restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses, but many writers reserve *which* only for nonrestrictive clauses: *The leftover lettuce, which is in the refrigerator, would make a good salad* (*which is in the refrigerator* simply provides more information about the lettuce). See also 21c.

that, which, who. Much of the time these words take care of themselves, and no particular notice of them need be taken. Generally, you can rely on the old rule: *Which* refers to things, *who* to persons, and *that* to persons or things.

That/Which
A few writers use *that* as a restrictive pronoun to introduce restrictive clauses and *which* to introduce nonrestrictive clauses.

The bull *that* escaped ran through my china shop, *which* was located on the square.
Though such a distinction might be useful if generally adopted, it has never been so widely observed or respected that it can be considered a rule of grammar. The distinction offers no help for restrictive and nonrestrictive phrases or for *who* and *whom* clauses, which can be restrictive or nonrestrictive. The best rule is to set off the nonrestrictive elements with commas and to avoid setting off restrictive elements with commas.
that, which  (relative pros.)  That is always restrictive (pp. 294–295); which can be either restrictive or nonrestrictive. Many careful writers recognize this difference by keeping that for restrictive functions only and which for nonrestrictive functions only:

- This is the evidence that I mentioned.

- This evidence, which I mentioned yesterday, can now be presented.

Beware of using that as an unexplained demonstrative adj.: x He didn’t have that much to say. How much is that much?

Again, watch for unnecessary doubling of that: x She told him that, after all they had been through, that she would certainly keep his ring. The second that is redt.

that, which  That always introduces restrictive clauses; which may introduce either restrictive or nonrestrictive clauses. See 20c. Some writers and editors prefer to limit which entirely to nonrestrictive clauses (This is the car that I bought yesterday. This car, which I bought yesterday, is very economical.)
themselves, theirselves, theirself  Theirselves and theirself are nonstandard variants of themselves.

Pioneer families had to build their shelter and clear their land by themselves (not theirself or theirselves).

theirself, theirselves  Nonstandard for themselves.

themselves, theirselves. Themselves is a plural reflexive or intensive pronoun: They hurt themselves. Theirselves is not a standard English form.

theirself, theirselves, themself  Nonstandard for themselves.

themselves/theirselves; himself/hisself  The two reflexive pronouns themselves and himself, using the objective case, are often analogized in spoken English to others (herself, yourself, and ourselves) that use the possessive. This results in theirselves and hisself, forms that are usually considered nonstandard, even in spoken English.

Casual, General: They had only themselves to blame for the situation.
Avoid: They had only theirselves to blame for the situation.

theirself, theirselves, themself  Nonstandard for themselves.

theirself, theirselves  Nonstandard for themselves.
there, their, they're  Use there to indicate place and in the expressions there is and there are.

I have always wanted to visit the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, but I have never gotten there.

There is nothing that we can do to resurrect a species once it becomes extinct.

In the example above, there is is acceptable. Often, however, there is and there are are just space fillers. When they add nothing to your meaning, eliminate them.

Wordy  There are a number of advantages to buying tax-exempt bonds.

Revised  Tax-exempt bonds offer a number of advantages.

Wordy  There is something wrong with the nursing care in this hospital.

Revised  Something is wrong with the nursing care in this hospital.

Their is a possessive pronoun meaning “of or relating to them.”

James Watson and Francis Crick did their work on the molecular structure of DNA at the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University.

“They’re is a contraction of “they are.”

White sharks and Mako sharks are dangerous to human beings because they’re good swimmers and especially sensitive to the scent of blood.

their, there, they’re  Their is the possessive form of they: Give them their money. There indicates place (I saw her standing there) or functions as an expletive (There is a hole behind you). They’re is a contraction for they are: Get them now — they’re going fast.

their, there, they’re  Do not confuse. Their is the possessive form of they; there is ordinarily an adverb or an expletive; they’re is a contraction of they are.

There is no explanation for their refusal.

They’re installing a traffic light there.
	heir, there, they’re  Confusion of these three words is usually a spelling problem. Their is the possessive form of they: their house, their problems. There is used most often as an adverb or an anticipating subject: over there; There are five horses in the corral. They’re is the contracted form of they are: They’re happy; They’re certain.
	heir, there, they’re  All three words are pronounced alike.

The wrong one is chosen in a particular instance, not because the writer does not know better but because the writer has been careless or inattentive. There [their? they’re?] is no need to review the different meanings of these very common words.
there, their, they're  Don't confuse these. There is an adverb or an expletive (He walks there. There are six). Their is a pronoun (their rooms). They're is a contraction for they are (They're too eager).

Their/There/They're

Their is a possessive pronoun:
They gave their lives.
There is an adverb of place:
She was standing there.
They're is a contraction for they are:
They're reading more poetry than they once did.
**type** Colloq. in place of type of: *You are a headstrong type woman.* In technical contexts type is sometimes acceptable as part of a hyphenated compound: *a rotary-type engine.* But in all contexts type can usually be omitted with profit: *a headstrong woman, a rotary engine.* Don’t try to turn a n into an adj. by adding -type: *an athlete-type person.*

**Colloquial for type of** *(This type of [not type] research is expensive).* Often used, but usually in hyphenated compounds *(colonial-type architecture, tile-type floors, scholarly-type text).* Omit type for such expressions wherever possible.
**used to, used to** Be sure to add the -d to *use* unless the auxiliary is accompanied by *did* in questions or in negative constructions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT</th>
<th>BUT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our coins use to contain silver.</td>
<td>Our coins used to contain silver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did he used to smoke? He didn't used to smoke.</td>
<td>Did he use to smoke? He didn't use to smoke.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**used to/use to** *Use to* is a frequent misspelling of *used to* in statements like:

- He used to be the mayor of New York.

  Pronunciation is the problem; we drop the final *d* sound in *used*. Remember that it is the same *used* as in: *We used* two sheets of paper.

**used to** In writing be careful to preserve the *d* (*We used to [not use to] get up at six every morning*).

**used to, use to** *Used to* is the standard form; *use to* is not.

Before factories many women used to (not *use to*) be limited to work they could do at home.

**use to** In an affirmative past construction, be sure to write *used*, *not use*: *They used to think so.*

Past neg. constructions always sound awk: *x Didn't she use to take the bus? Try something like* *She used to take the bus, didn't she?*

**use to** Nonstandard for *used to*: *We used to [not use to] live on Maple Street.*

**use to, suppose to** Sometimes carelessly written for *used to* and *supposed to*.

**Use to.** A mistake for *used to.*
Use/Utilize

Utilize seldom says more than use, and simpler is almost always better.

We must learn how to use [NOT utilize] computers.

use, utilize  Utilize means “make use of”: We should utilize John’s talent for mimicry in our play. In most contexts, use is equally or more acceptable and much less stuffy.

use, utilize; use, utilization  Utilize and utilization are almost always bureaucratic for use. To utilize is to put to use or to turn a profit on, and it makes sense when coupled with an abstraction: to utilize resources. Because utilize and utilization have a depersonalizing effect, they sound especially odd when applied to people.

The underutilization of women, for example, was coined to give a name to sex discrimination in jobs, but it makes the writer or speaker sound exploitative.

Utilize, utilization. Wordy. Utilize means use (verb). Utilization means the use (noun). And the whole idea of “using”—a basic, universal concept—is frequently contained in the other words of your sentence.

POOR

He utilizes frequent dialogue to enliven his stories.
The utilization of a scapegoat eases their guilt.

IMPROVED

Frequent dialogue enlivens his stories.
A scapegoat eases their guilt.


use, utilize. Some readers object to utilize, preferring use:

How will they utilize their oil reserves?
How will they use their oil reserves?
Very. Spare the very and the quite, rather, pretty, and little. I would hate to admit (and don’t care to know) how many of these qualifiers I have cut from this text. You can do without them entirely, but they do ease a phrase now and then.

very. Very is an intensifier that has lost some of its power because it has been overused. It is often better to replace very with a detail or stronger word:

It was very cold.
It was -23°F.

very. Omit when superfluous (as in “very unique” or “very terrified”). If you tend to overuse very as an intensifier, try using more exact words; in place of “very strange,” for example, try outlandish, grotesque, or bizarre.
wait on  Colloquial when used to mean “wait for”; wait on means “to serve.
attend” (We waited for [not waited on] the clerk to wait on us).

Wait on  Unidiomatic for wait for. Wait on correctly means “to serve.”

wait on  Informal for wait for.

Informal  The taxi was waiting on him.
General  The taxi was waiting for him.

wait for, wait on  Wait for means “await.” Wait on means “serve.”

wait for, wait on  In formal speech and writing, wait for means “await”
(I’m waiting for Paul), and wait on means “serve” (The owner of the store
herself waited on us).

wait on. Common in some dialects in the sense of wait for, but
in writing should be used only in the sense of “serving a cus-
tomer.”

Wait for/Wait on
People wait on tables or customers; they wait for those who are late. Don’t
say, “Wait on me at the bus stop”; say, “Wait for me.”

wait for, wait on  To wait for means “to
defer action until something occurs.” To
wait on means “to act as a waiter.”

Colloquial  I am waiting on dinner.
Revised  I am waiting for dinner.
Correct  The captain waited on the head table
himself.
(a)wake, (a)waken  Like lie and lay, these two verbs are easily confused. As a transitive verb, wake means "to arouse from sleep," and as an intransitive verb it means "to cease sleeping." Waken is usually used as a transitive verb that means "to arouse from sleep."

Present  Past  Participle  Gerund
(a)wake  woke  waked  waking
(a)waken  wakened  wakened  wakened

The alarm clock wakes Jim up at 6:30 every morning.

Jane Pauley of the Today Show says that she wakes up at 3:30 every morning.
After entering the castle, the prince awakened Sleeping Beauty with a kiss.

Wake, waken (awake, awaken).  Wake, woke, waked (awake, awoke, awaked) are standard. Waken, wakened, wakened (awaken, awakened, awakened) are slightly different verbs meaning "to wake up" (intransitive) or "to cause to wake up" (transitive).

He wakes up early.  He woke him up yesterday.  He has waked them up every morning at seven.

Awake, awoke, awaked is usually intransitive:

She awakes easily.  They awoke with a start.  The birds have already awaked.

Waken and awaken are most frequently used transitively: "He wakened (awakened) his roommate." And they are more frequent in the passive voice. "He was awakened by loud knocking." Figurative usages prefer awake and awaken: He was awake to the risk; his fears were awakened.
ways Colloquial when used for way meaning "distance" (It is a long way [not ways] to Brownsville).

ways Informal for way: They drove a long way [not ways] into the country looking for strawberies.

ways Informal for way when referring to distance. 

INFORMAL It's a long ways to Chicago.
GENERAL It's a long way to Chicago.

ways Colloquial as a substitute for way: We have only a little way (not ways) to go.

ways Use way when referring to distance. The trout stream is only a little way [not ways] from here.

way, ways Ways is a colloquial variant of way.

Colloquial We have a ways to go before we can rest.
Revised We have a way to go before we can rest.

Ways Prefer way when designating a distance.
a long way
NOT
a long ways

way, ways Don't use ways in the sense of distance: x It was only a short ways. The correct form is way.

Ways. Avoid it. Means way: "He went a short way into the woods."
Weather, whether. Weather refers to atmospheric conditions such as rain, snow, wind, or hail. Whether can introduce an indirect question or mean "in either case."

Space shots are often postponed because of unfavorable weather conditions at the launch site.

Whether or not the country will have a tax increase is up to the Congress.

Weather, whether. Weather, which means storms or breezes, rain or shine, is sometimes mistakenly written for whether. Whether the reader will smile or wince is problematical.
Who, which, that. Relative pronouns, relating an additional and subordinate clause to some preceding noun or pronoun:

She who fails falls far.
The fall that hurts least is the last.
The fall, which was severe, was not serious.

Who may be either restrictive or nonrestrictive (see Restrictive): "The ones who win are lucky"; "The players, who are all outstanding, win often." Who refers only to persons:

FAULTY
The girl that so chooses may enter dentistry.
Some of the characters that wander around the stage....

REPAIRED
The girl who so chooses may enter dentistry.
Some of the characters who wander....

Use that for all other restrictives; which for all other nonrestrictives. See further discussion on pp. 419–420, "the of-and-which disease" (pp. 170–171), and pp. 143–144.

Avoid which in loose references to the whole idea preceding, rather than to a specific word, since you may be unclear:

FAULTY
He never wore the hat, which his wife hated.

IMPROVED
His wife hated his going bareheaded.
He never wore the hat his wife hated.

who, which, that In general, who refers to people, which refers to other living things and to objects, and that refers to inanimate objects. That frequently replaces which for restrictive clauses: The letter that [or which] they sent last week has not yet arrived. The dog that bit the mailman has been quarantined. That is also often used in place of who: the man that [or who] gave the order should be prosecuted. Avoid using who to refer to something other than a person: General Motors is a company that [not who] knows what it wants. I have a dog that [not who] can count to twelve. Avoid using which to refer to people: A person who [not which] has a cold should be avoided. She is a woman who [not which] knows her own mind.

which, who Never use which to refer to people. Use who or that to refer to people and which or that to refer to things.

Which/Who/Whose

Which is used for things, who and whose for people.
The plane, which was late, brought the team home from California.
My lost fountain pen was found by a man who had never seen one before, whose whole life had been spent with ballpoints.

But whose is increasingly being used for things in constructions where of which would be awkward.
The cathedral, whose towers could be seen from miles away, seemed to shelter its city.

Some writers, however, would insist on this form:
The cathedral, the towers of which could be seen from miles away, seemed to shelter its city.

which, who Which never refers to people. Use who or sometimes that for a person or persons and which or that for a thing or things: The baby, who was left behind, opened the door, which we had closed. See also 12f.

which, who Use who or that instead of which to refer to persons.
Whose, who’s. Whose is the possessive of who; who’s is a contraction of who is.

Who’s, whose. Sometimes confused in writing. Who’s means “who is?” in conversational questions: “Who’s going?” Never use it in writing (except in dialogue), and you can’t miss. Whose is the regular possessive of who: “The committee, whose work was finished, adjourned.”

who’s, whose. Use who’s when you mean who is.

Who’s going to take calculus?

Use whose when you want to indicate possession.

The writer whose book was in the window was autographing copies in the store.

who’s, whose. Who’s is the contraction of who is: Who’s at the door?

Whose is the possessive form of who: Whose book is that?

whose, who’s. Since the two words are pronounced alike, it is understandable that writers sometimes make the wrong choice. The word spelled with the apostrophe is the contraction of “who is” (Who’s the principal actor? Who’s playing the lead role?) Whose is (1) the interrogative pronoun (Whose hat is this?), (2) the possessive case of the relative pronoun who (John is the man whose son died last week), (3) an acceptable possessive form of the relative pronoun which (Our flag, whose broad stripes and bright stars we watched through the perilous fight, was gallantly streaming over the ramparts).
your, you’re. These terms are often confused. Your is a possessive form: Your house. You’re is a contraction for you are: You’re going to the game, aren’t you?

Your is the possessive form of you: Your dinner is ready. You’re is the contraction of you are: You’re bound to be late.

Do not confuse. You’re is a contraction: “You’re [You are] always right!” Your is the possessive form of you: “Your idea is a good one.”

Because these words are pronounced alike, they are often confused. Your indicates possession and you’re is the contraction of you are.

You can improve your writing skills by writing a thousand words a day. You’re certain to be impressed the first time you see the Golden Gate Bridge spanning San Francisco Bay.
Works Consulted


