

# 4

# Confusing Words

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the nuances of confusable words
- Approaching questions based on them accurately

Mark Twain said, “The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug”.

Confusing words questions have been designed to check primarily for mental alertness – differentiating between two similar words.

To excel in this chapter, having a good vocabulary only may not be sufficient. A good vocabulary can be useful when used to trigger a word already in your vocabulary bank. But simply plucking out a near-synonym can result in some disastrous situation because the word may not fit the context of the question. And there comes the need of understanding the usage of words and having mental alertness to identify the minor differences between/among them.

Specially, in today’s time, when students have got access to computer/MS Word/T9 in mobiles, which prompt predictive typing or suggested right word for every wrong word, at a very early stage mental alertness is of much more importance.

We start this chapter by providing a list of Commonly Mistaken Word followed by exercises. Though, needless to say, any such list cannot be exhaustive and students are advised to keep looking for such words in their day-to-day reading too.

## LIST OF COMMONLY MISTAKEN WORD

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1. Emigrant | A person who leaves one country to move to another.<br><br>The Bangladeshi emigrants got on to the boat at Chittagong. |
| Immigrant   | A person who enters one country from another.<br><br>The immigrants to India got off the boat in Howrah.               |

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 2. Eminent   | Well-known<br>Newton is an eminent scientist.  |
| Imminent     | About to happen<br>Dam999, A documentary movie, predicted that a flood was imminent.       |
| 3. Feign     | To give a false appearance of<br>To feign ignorance  |
| Faint        | To lose consciousness briefly<br>Some people often faint at the sight of a mouse.          |
| 4. Farther   | At a greater distance<br>I can see him going farther.                                      |
| Further      | More<br>I have nothing further to tell you.  |
| 5. Flaunt    | To make a gaudy display<br>Paris likes to flaunt her wealth.                               |
| Flout        | To defy<br>Flouting traffic rules may put you in problem.                                  |
| 6. Ideal     | Perfect<br>There is no ideal solution to the poverty problem in India.                     |
| Idol         | Object of worship<br>Idol worship has made him blind to his coach’s faults.                |
| 7. Ingenious | Clever, imaginative<br>Ingenious minds dream ambitious plans.                              |
| Ingenuous    | Frank and open<br>Deenanath Chauhan has an ingenious way of believing everything he hears. |

8.	Moral	Having high moral values as prescribed in religious books. Immorality has permeated in the lives of politicians to a great extent.	Reign	The rule of a sovereign It happened in the reign of Lord Mountbatten.
	Morale	State of mind in terms of confidence and courage. The morale of our troops is high.	15. Raise	To lift something Police ordered the thief to raise both the hands and surrender.
9.	Ordinance	Rule of order A new ordinance has been issued regarding the economic policy.	Raze	To demolish The wreckers began to raze the illegal complex.
	Ordnance	Arms, arsenal The ordnance factory at army HQ is quite old.	16. Septic	A bacterial infection The wound developed into a septic because of negligence.
10.	Precede	To go in advance of A precedes B in the alphabet.	Skeptic	A person who always doubts Fake placement records of B-schools make students skeptical.
	Proceed	To go on or go forward If there are no doubts, I will proceed with the next concept.	17. Simulate	To imitate or pretend Nowadays, drivers can get themselves trained on simulators.
11.	Prescribe	To recommend or set down a rule to be followed. The doctor prescribed complete rest for the patient.	Stimulate	Excite, provoke, inspire Anna's speech could stimulate the whole nation.
	Proscribe	To ban something Doctor proscribed curd for the patient.	18. Sore	Unhappy, bitter He was quite sore over his defeat.
12.	Principal	(1) Major, capital as opposed to interest. Carelessness is a principal cause of highway accidents. The principal was Rs 10,000 and the interest was 5% a year.	Sour	Not sweet, pungent The grapes were quite sour.
		(2) Head of a school or college. The principal of the school attended our concert.	Soar	To rise high His spirits soared when he got the call letter.
	Principle	A general rule or truth A principled life is required to lead a happy life.	19. Stationary	Static, Motionless The car rammed into the stationary truck.
13.	Quiet	Calm, Still, silent Keep quiet, you might alert the birds.	Stationery	Writing material Mr Randhir owns the best stationery shop in town.
	Quit	To stop doing something People who quit smoking has the higher chances of survival in case of heart attack.	20. Straight	Not curved or crooked A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.
	Quite	Entirely, Really, Noticeably Preeti felt quite ill during dinner.	Strait	A narrow passage of water connecting two large bodies of water, a distressing situation. We passed through the Strait of Gibraltar.
14.	Rain	Liquid Precipitation There will be rain today – as per MET forecast.		Our next door neighbour is in dire financial straits.
	Rein	A device used to guide a horse. Adjust the saddle and reins.	21. Suit	A coat with matching trousers or skirt, a proceeding in a law court. Grandfather still wears a blue suit every Sunday.

		Ram Bikemalani argued his suit eloquently.		You're	'You are'
	Suite	A set of rooms, of matching furniture They reserved the bridal suite at The Taj.			You're late for work.
22.	Tamper	To meddle with Ask children not to tamper with the equipments.	30.	Can	Capable Despite the warning, hooligans can create problems.
	Temper	Disposition, Nature He has a bad temper and that is why he is not very popular.		May	Permission May I go out Sir?
23.	Urban	Belonging to the city or town. The villagers are fastly migrating to urban areas.	31.	Able	Power or strength in general Despite going through Chemotherapy, Yuvraj is able to play cricket.
	Urbane	Refined, Polished, Cultured Having an urbane personality is desirable for all the sales people.		Capable	Power or strength in particular He is capable of running for 2 hours continuously.
24.	Vain	Conceited, useless That model is an unusually vain girl. He made several vain attempts to get a job.	32.	Advice	Suggestion (Noun) People who give unsolicited advice are not respected in the society.
	Vane	A direction pointer The weekend farmers bought a new weather vane for the barn.		Advise	Counsel (Verb) I advise you to try to stay in the hostel.
	Vein	A blood vessel In today's medical class, we were told about veins and arteries.	33.	Beside	Adjacent, nearby My house is beside church.
25.	Venal	Evil, corrupt, immoral The venal acts of bureaucrats have damaged the nation.		Besides	Also, as well as Besides getting a technical know-how, doing MBA will also give me practical exposure.
	Venial	Something that can be pardoned The venial mischief of the child were often overlooked.	34.	Decent	Suitable; respectable Ram is a decent boy.
26.	Waist	The narrow part of the body above the hips. He has a 34 inch waist.		Descent	(1) Act of coming down (2) Persons origin or nationality The pilot informed us that we were about to begin our descent. What is the descent of Mother Terrara?
	Waste	Needless consumption or destruction Facebook is a total waste of time.		Dissent	To differ BJP and congress parties holds dissent views on many issues.
27.	Weather	Day-to-day climate What is the weather forecast for today?	35.	Desert	(1) Waterless land Sahara is one of the biggest desert in the world. (2) to abandon
	Whether	If it be the case that I do not know whether she would marry me or not?		Dessert	The course at the end of the dinner The dessert was just as good as was the dinner.
28.	Whose	The possessive of the pronoun Who Whose book is this?	36.	Dual	Double All long range aircrafts have dual engine.
	Who's	'Who is' Who's going to dinner with me?		Duel	Contest between two people Duel between MSD and VS for captaincy is detrimental for Team performance.
29.	Your	The possessive of the pronoun You. Is this your book?			

## PRACTICE EXERCISES

### PRACTICE EXERCISE 1

**Direction for questions 1 to 10:** *Each question contains one sentence. Each sentence has a pair of words/phrases that are italicized/highlighted. From the italicized/highlighted word(s)/phrase(s), select the most appropriate word(s)/phrase(s) to form correct sentences. Then choose the best option.*

- Q.1** Lawyer's *spacious* [A]/*specious* [B] argument was lengthy but it could not convince the judge.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.2** Agencies have informed us that he was one of those *whom* [A]/*who* [B] they arrested last month.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.3** Usually it is junior managers who are not able to *conform* [A]/*confirm* [B] to the prevailing pattern of thinking and norms.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.4** Trends in consumer behaviour and the individual's preference for one brand name *affect* [A]/*effect* [B] the situation.  
Answer = A/B

- Q.5** Persistent questioning by the lawyer failed to *elicit* [A]/*illicit* [B] a clear answer from the respondent.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.6** Frustration is *implicit* [A]/*explicit* [B] in any attempt to express the deepest self.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.7** In this invoice *is* [A]/*are* [B] included the charges for the past billing cycle.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.8** With our granting of this credit *go* [A]/*goes* [B] our best wishes for the success in your business venture.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.9** The judge warned the prisoner that he will *counter-mand* [A]/*countervail* [B] the bail of the offender if he misbehaved in the court.  
Answer = A/B
- Q.10** It is important to *cite* [A]/*site* [B] as many examples as possible in your answer to fetch good marks.  
Answer = A/B

### PRACTICE EXERCISE 2

**Direction for questions 1 to 25:** *There are few sentences in each question. Each sentence has pairs of words/phrases that are italicized/highlighted. From the italicized/highlighted word(s)/phrase(s), select the most appropriate word(s)/phrase(s) to form correct sentences. Then choose the best option.*

- Q.1**
- Several pages of the book have come *loose* [A]/*lose* [B].
  - I am totally *uninterested* [A]/*disinterested* [B] in grammar.  
(a) AA (b) AB  
(c) BA (d) BB
- Q.2**
- Almost every decade someone or the other comes out with the *prophecy* [A]/*prophecy* [B] that the world is going to end.
  - I *loath* [A]/*loathe* [B] to admit that I was totally jealous.  
(a) AB (b) BA  
(c) BB (d) AA
- Q.3**
- The storm *wreaked* [A]/*wrecked* [B] havoc along the coast.

- Accessory* [A]/*Excess* [B] minerals are disregarded by petrologists while classifying rocks.
  - I hope we have good *whether* [A]/*weather* [B] during our trip.  
(a) AAB (b) ABB  
(c) BAB (d) BAA
- Q.4**
- Though the story was focused on *historic* [A]/*historical* [B] figures, it was mainly fiction.
  - The accused made a passionate effort before the judge to *ensure* [A]/*assert* [B] his innocence.  
(a) AB (b) BB  
(c) BA (d) AA
- Q.5**
- The authorities *complemented* [A]/*complimented* [B] her for completing the project ahead of schedule.
  - The invasion was *preceded* [A]/*proceeded* [B] by a massive mobilization of armed forces at the site.  
(a) AB (b) BA  
(c) AA (d) BB

- Q.6**
- We had to offer our house as a *guarantee [A]/warranty [B]* for getting loan.
  - The golfer *waddled [A]/waggled [B]* the club before hitting the ball.
  - I was so *ticked [A]/pickled [B]* at the party that I sat down.
  - Everything in the room was covered *by [A]/with [B]* dust.
  - I cannot *tolerate [A]/endure [B]* your laziness any more.
    - BBBBA
    - ABABA
    - ABBBA
    - BBABB
- Q.7**
- I do not think I can proceed with the matter without your expert *advise [A]/advice [B]*.
  - Election dates in Uttarakhand were decided after taking into account the *climatic [A]/climactic [B]* conditions.
  - Did he ever *prophecy [A]/prophecy [B]* anything but bad news for me?
  - The poor nations are finding it difficult to reconcile concerns about the environment with *economic [A]/economical [B]* growth.
    - ABBA
    - BBAA
    - BABA
    - BAAA
- Q.8**
- Malaria is *pandemic [A]/endemic [B]* to the areas where mosquitoes breed.
  - The cleaner *scunged [A]/scrunched [B]* the trash cans for reuse.
  - His work consists *in [A]/of [B]* dealing with people.
  - The child *tumbled [A]/stumbled [B]* over the stone.
  - He and I intend to leave *to [A]/for [B]* USA after two days.
    - BBABB
    - ABABB
    - BBABA
    - BAABB
- Q.9**
- Daily wagers pay *continuous [A]/constant [B]* attention to the weather.
  - This year's rains that persisted *continuously [A]/continually [B]* in winter are attributed to climate change.
  - She has a habit of talking to her *imaginative [A]/imaginary [B]* friend.
  - The General declared that the victory came with the *minimum [A]/minimal [B]* loss of lives.
    - ABAB
    - ABBB
    - BBBB
    - BBBA
- Q.10**
- He hired several *aids [A]/aides [B]* to help him in his work.
  - Her *masterful [A]/masterly [B]* personality soon dominated the movement.
  - The chartered accountant went through the *maize [A]/maze [B]* of papers to file tax return.
- Q.11**
- The college *affected [A]/effected [B]* a new policy on leave encashment by teachers.
  - The *rationale [A]/rational [B]* behind current curricula is that students need to learn language and thinking skills, not specific information.
    - AA
    - BB
    - BA
    - BAAB
- Q.12**
- All the bickering and noise we witness in the legislature over petty politics is pure *bathos [A]/pathos [B]*.
  - After the accident the victim went into *coma [A]/coma [B]* for several days.
    - BB
    - AB
    - BA
    - AA
- Q.13**
- Our confidence in cricket has been seriously *undermined [A]/underrated [B]* by the recent match fixing scandal.
  - His *valid [A]/vapid [B]* talk failed to impress the investors.
  - It was so hot that he walked in the *shade [A]/shadow [B]* of the tree.
    - BBA
    - ABA
    - ABB
    - BAB
- Q.14**
- The messenger gave him a letter written in a hurried *scroll [A]/scrawl [B]*.
  - You are *deflecting [A]/detracting [B]* from the agenda of discussion.
  - The receptionist *scowled [A]/screamed [B]* at me when I made a vacuous inquiry.
  - The items I liked most were the rosewood carvings and the teak wood *furnitures [A]/furniture* of Gothic style.
    - BABB
    - BAAB
    - BBAB
    - BAAB
- Q.15**
- The *warp [A]/woof [B]* of India's economic structure is still agriculture.
  - My friend always does the opposite of *[A]/to [B]* what I advise him.
  - Compact disks with *prurient [A]/prudish [B]* content are secretly in circulation in the assembly.
  - He believed that the existence of God cannot be proved; he was not an *atheist [A]/agnostic [B]*.
    - AAAA
    - ABAA
    - ABBB
    - BAAB
- Q.16**
- I have kept the book *besides [A]/beside [B]* the computer on the table.
  - You can attempt 20 questions from *among [A]/between [B]* 30 questions.

- iii. It was so hot in the sun that they moved into the *shadow [A]/shade [B]*.
- iv. *Although [A]/Despite [B]* his having known her for years, he behaved like a stranger.  
 (a) ABAB (b) ABBA  
 (c) BAAA (d) BABB
- Q.17** i. I do not know who *discovered [A]/invented [B]* the computer.  
 ii. You should get your car's *breaks [A]/brakes [B]* repaired before the long drive to Ladakh.  
 iii. *As long as [A]/As far as [B]* my opinion is concerned, I will not say anything against the case.  
 iv. Lack of awareness of environmental policies of the government has led the company *tangle [A]/dangle [B]* into the legal problems.  
 (a) ABAB (b) BBBA  
 (c) BABB (d) BAAB
- Q.18** i. Within a short time span, she became his trusted *confident [A]/confidant [B]*.  
 ii. We were required to make a *custom [A]/costume [B]* design for the online shop.  
 iii. He was declared *illegible [A]/eligible [B]* for the post despite not having required work experience.  
 iv. Several *eminent [A]/imminent [B]* academicians are expected to be present for the seminar.  
 (a) ABAB (b) ABBA  
 (c) BABA (d) BAAB
- Q.19** i. On television, we have been witnessing the *baneful [A]/baleful [B]* results of war as Syrian army attacks civilians.  
 ii. The wrestler appeared to be tall and *burly [A]/burley [B]* as he stood by the referee.  
 iii. Clouds smoke *billowed [A]/bellowed [B]* into the air as the fire engulfed the building.  
 iv. The old patriarch uttered a *malediction [A]/benediction [B]* against the rival clan.  
 (a) BAAA (b) AAAA  
 (c) ABAB (d) AAAB
- Q.20** i. The English poem has been *translated [A]/transliterated [B]* in Devanagari script.  
 ii. The *valuation [A]/evaluation [B]* of a building is made by a team of engineers and MBAs.  
 iii. No sooner did he start talking about his personal achievements, *then [A]/than [B]* his students began to yawn.  
 iv. He has a great *zeal [A]/zest [B]* to go to America for a pleasure trip.  
 (a) BABB (b) BBBB  
 (c) BAAB (d) BABA
- Q.21** i. The boy told his mother that he would agree to go to school only if she *took [A]/takes [B]* him by a cab.  
 ii. She *cried [A]/wailed [B]* over her sudden elevation to headmistress.  
 (a) AA (b) AB  
 (c) BB (d) BA
- Q.22** i. It is *ingenuous [A]/ingenious [B]* to suppose that money did not play a part in his decision.  
 ii. A *luxuriant [A]/luxurious [B]* growth of grass makes the park attractive.  
 iii. Moral *transgression [A]/violation [B]* is sinful.  
 (a) AAB (b) AAA  
 (c) BAB (d) BAA
- Q.23** i. Gates *beneficent [A]/beneficial [B]* activities have resulted in many organizations that help the poor.  
 ii. She could not think of any *earthly [A]/earthy [B]* reason to go out with him in such heavy rain.  
 iii. His *egoism [A]/egotism [B]* prevented him from making practical decisions.  
 iv. To go out of the building, you are requested to use the *egress [A]/ingress [B]* behind the building.  
 (a) AABA (b) BBBA  
 (c) BABB (d) BBAA
- Q.24** i. She demonstrated *immanent [A]/imminent [B]* good sense in her dress and behaviour.  
 ii. The thunder was heard *immediately [A]/imminently [B]* after they saw lighting.  
 iii. Her nervousness was obvious with her forehead *damp [A]/dank [B]* with perspiration.  
 (a) ABA (b) BBA  
 (c) AAA (d) BBB
- Q.25** i. To confirm the reason of death, the body was *exhumed [A]/exuded [B]* after three months.  
 ii. Neither of these letters *contains [A]/contain [B]* information about the exact model number and the date when he purchased the equipment.  
 iii. This is one of those unfortunate errors which commonly *occurs [A]/occur [B]* in bulk mailing.  
 iv. Mohan Singh is Boss of the organization in *virtuality [A]/virtuosity [B]* only.  
 (a) AABA (b) BABA  
 (c) AABB (d) AABA

## ANSWER KEYS

### PRACTICE EXERCISE 1

---

1. (b)      2. (b)      3. (a)      4. (a)      5. (a)      6. (b)      7. (b)      8. (a)      9. (a)      10. (a)

### PRACTICE EXERCISE 2

---

1. (a)      2. (a)      3. (a)      4. (b)      5. (b)      6. (c)      7. (d)      8. (a)      9. (c)      10. (c)  
11. (a)    12. (a)    13. (b)    14. (b)    15. (d)    16. (d)    17. (b)    18. (a)    19. (a)    20. (b)  
21. (d)    22. (b)    23. (a)    24. (c)    25. (a)