

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...?

VERSION FOR KOREAN, JAPANESE AND CHINESE NATIVE SPEAKERS

100 LESSONS

THE MOST INCORRECTLY USED
WORDS IN ENGLISH

Dear English Learners,

Welcome to a sample of the book “What’s the Difference Between...?” My goal with this book is to help you understand the difference between complicated words in English that students often misunderstand and get confused about, such as “either vs. neither”, “in time vs. on time”, and “even if vs. even though”.

In this sample, you can find the following parts:

- The table of contents pages, which describe the contents of the book
- 2 sample lessons: “Fun vs. Funny” and “So vs. Such”

Each lesson has exercises to test your knowledge of the lessons with answers included, as well as additional exercises to practice with.

I hope you enjoy the book and feel free to contact me for any questions!

Sincerely,

Blake Howe
Accelerate English

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Fun/Funny

Common Mistake

- *"That party last night was so ~~funny~~ fun."*
- *"That looks like a ~~funny~~ fun event."*

Funny

Something is "funny" only if it makes you laugh. You can say a person is funny if that person often makes you laugh. You can also say that a movie is funny or a story is funny because the movie or story makes you laugh. Things that involve humour are usually described as "funny":

- *That guy we met last night was really funny. I laughed a lot when he told his stories.*
- *I feel like watching a funny movie tonight.*
- *Watching her try to skate for the first time was so funny. I couldn't stop laughing.*

A common mistake is when students use "funny" as an adjective for things that don't directly involve humour or don't cause you to laugh. For example, "funny" is not a suitable adjective for a ride at an amusement park. It might cause a lot of emotions like excitement and fear and cause people to smile, but we don't expect rides to make us laugh, and it doesn't involve humour directly.

Common Use: telling someone about something that makes you laugh: *"tell everyone your story about the time when you tried to use chopsticks for the first time. That story is really funny."*

It's important to note that the word "funny" has more than one meaning. It can also mean that something is strange or unusual. For example, if you are thinking about something and then someone else mentions what you are thinking about, you can say: *"that's funny, I was thinking about that, too"*. In this case, it doesn't mean that you are laughing; it means you find this situation unusual because it's like the person can read your mind.

- *Don't you think it's funny that Mia didn't talk to anybody at the office today.* – this is strange behaviour for her
- *The door is locked. It's always unlocked. That's funny.* – it means this is strange, not humorous
- *I thought it was funny that all of my students came to class when there was a huge snowstorm but the next day only half of them came.* – this is unusual because you expect less student during a snowstorm than a regular day

Fun

Something is "fun" when it gives you enjoyment. The focus of "fun" is not about laughing; it's about enjoying something and having a good time. When you say that an event is fun, it means that you enjoyed it. If you describe a person as "fun", it means they create a positive and happy environment for everyone.

For example, a "fun person" could be someone who comes to a party with a positive attitude and encourages everyone to dance or organizes a game for everyone to play at the party. This person isn't making you laugh, but she is creating enjoyment, so you can say she is "fun".

Remember that someone or something is only "funny" if you laugh. If you smile and feel happy but don't laugh, that person or thing is "fun":

- *That was a really fun trip. We should do it again.* – a trip doesn't make you laugh
- *My new art class is fun. We learn how to do many interesting styles.* – you enjoy it, but it doesn't cause laughter
- *I went to the party, but I left early because it wasn't fun.* – it wasn't enjoyable

Common Use: describing an event that you enjoyed: *"thanks for organizing our camping trip. It was really fun."*

Key Points

- Use “funny” to describe something that makes you laugh
- Use “funny” to describe situations that are strange or unusual
- Use “fun” to describe something that you enjoy

Circle the Correct Answer

1. I love being a tour guide. It's (*fun/funny*) because I can meet a lot of new people and show them my city.
2. Your new boyfriend is really (*fun/funny*). You must laugh all the time.
3. I'll go with you to the club, but if it isn't (*fun/funny*), I'm going to leave.
4. She has a lot of (*fun/funny*) stories. She could be a comedian!
5. People always like to attend your events. How do you make them so (*fun/funny*)?
6. I watched my husband try to skate for the first time. We couldn't stop laughing. It was so (*fun/funny*).
7. They ate all the food except nobody touched the cheese. That's (*fun/funny*).

What's the Difference?

- a) We played a really funny card game.
- b) We played a really fun card game.

Answers

Choose the Correct Word

1. Fun
2. Funny
3. Fun
4. Funny
5. Fun
6. Funny
7. Funny (it means “strange/unusual” in this case)

What's the Difference?

- a) The game caused us to laugh. The game involved humour
- b) Everyone enjoyed the card game, but we didn't laugh a lot. It wasn't involving humour

Additional Practice

1. Do you know any *fun* games or activities that you enjoy playing?
ex. “*Poker is a fun game (that I enjoy playing).*”
2. What are *funniest* movies that you've ever seen?
3. Are there any *funny* celebrities that you like?
4. Use “fun” or “funny” to describe the following words:
 - Actor: ex. “*He's a very funny actor.*”
 - A trip
 - A story
 - A joke
 - A party
 - A movie
 - A job
 - A concert

So/Such

Common Mistake

- *"Yesterday was ~~a~~ so such a cold day."*

So

We use "so" to connect with two types of words:

Adjectives

You can use "so" to make an adjective stronger. The adjective used with "so" can describe the subject of the clause: *"she is so smart"*. However, "so" is not used with an adjective to describe other nouns in a clause, so you cannot say: *"she is a so smart girl."* In the first example, "so" is possible to describe the subject "she" but in the second example, "so" cannot be used to describe "girl".

As another example, if you want to use "so" with the adjective "expensive" to describe a restaurant, then you can only put "restaurant" in the subject position: *"that restaurant is so expensive"*. On the other hand, it's *incorrect* to use "so expensive" before the word "restaurant": *"it's a so expensive restaurant."*

The examples below are correct because the word "so" is used with an adjective to describe the subject:

- *I tried Korean food for the first time yesterday. It was so spicy that I couldn't eat it!*
- *He was so tired that he couldn't keep his eyes open.*
- *The test was so difficult that most students failed it.*

Quantifiers

These are words that tells us the amount of something, such as "many", "much", "few", and "little". The word "so" can be combined with these quantifiers before a noun to make the quantifier stronger: *"I ate so much food!"*

With *countable* nouns, use "many" for a high quantity and "few" for a low quantity. With *uncountable* nouns, use "much" for a high quantity and "little" for a low quantity:

- *I was surprised that so many people came.* – "people" is a countable noun, so use "many"
- *These days I have so little free time that I never see my friends.* – "time" is uncountable, so use "much"
- *It took 8 hours from Toronto to Montreal because there was so much traffic.* – "traffic" is uncountable

Common Use: giving introducing an adjective or quantity that causes a result (the result clause starts with "that"): *"I was so hungry that I ate four hamburgers."*

Such

As you learned in the previous lesson, you cannot use "so" with an adjective before a noun, but you *can* use "such" with an adjective before a noun. It is incorrect to say: *"it is a so expensive restaurant"*, but it is correct to say: *"it is such an expensive restaurant."*

It's also important to remember that when you use "such" with an adjective and a noun, the article "a" or "an" is before the adjective. For example, if you want to say: *"a good song"*, these words should stay together and add "such" at the beginning: *"such a good song."* (Remember that it's incorrect to say: *"a so good song"*).

- *It was such a beautiful day last Sunday that I spent the whole day outside.*
- *I had fun, but it was such an expensive trip. I definitely went over my budget.*
- *Jenny is such a beautiful woman. She should be a model!*

We can also use "such" with only a noun if the noun already has a strong positive or negative meaning. For example, the noun "disaster" is a negative word that means "a terrible failure". If you want to emphasize that your job interview was a disaster, you can just say: *"such a disaster"* without any adjective: *"My job interview was such a disaster!"*.

In the examples below, the word “such” is connected with a noun to make the noun stronger:

- *He's such a jerk.* – a “jerk” is a bad person, so “such a jerk” makes it even stronger
- *This room is such a mess.* – the noun “mess” already has a negative meaning
- *The car accident was terrible, but nobody was hurt. It was such a miracle.* – “miracle” is a positive noun

Common Use: emphasizing an adjective and noun together: “*you have such nice parents. It was really kind of them to drive us to the airport.*”

To learn more about different types of intensifiers like “so” and “such” and how to use them correctly, read Lesson #39 in “Grammar Essentials”

Key Points

- Use “so” with an adjective to describe the subject of the clause
- Use “so” with quantifiers (*many, much, few, little*) to emphasize the quantity of a noun
- Use “such” before an adjective + noun combination
- Use “such” with nouns alone when the noun has a strong positive or negative meaning

Choose the Correct Answer:

1. There were (*so/such*) many people there that we couldn't move.
2. He's (*so/such*) a good friend – he always gives me good advice when I need it.
3. Last Friday's meeting was (*such a/a such/a so*) waste of time. We didn't talk about anything important.
4. It was (*so/such*) cold that our car wouldn't start because it was frozen.
5. I loved that movie. It was (*so/such*) an interesting story!
6. He's an amazing writer, but (*so/such*) few people know about him.
7. My house is (*so/such*) far from the school. It takes me one hour to get there on the bus.
8. How did he finish the test so fast? He is (*so/such*) a genius.

What's the Difference?

- a) He was such a good friend.
- b) He has so many friends.
- c) He is so friendly.

Answers

Choose the Correct Word

1. So
2. Such
3. Such a
4. So
5. Such
6. So
7. So
8. Such

What's the Difference?

- a) He helps his friends a lot
- b) He is very popular and knows many people
- c) He is very kind to other people

Additional Practice

Use "so" or "such" with the following words:

- A hot day: ex. *"It was such a hot day."*
- Hot
- A sad song
- Sad
- Independent
- An independent child
- Funny
- Funny story
- A convenience
- Convenient
- Disappointment
- Disappointing