

## Student worksheet: **Similar words/confusable words/right or wrong words**

Time for your language health-check. Find out how *Grammar Scan* can help you achieve greater accuracy. First do the diagnostic tests to check your knowledge. Then look at the extracts from *Practical English Usage* to fill in any gaps.

### 1. **Lend, borrow or both?**

Can I ..... your bicycle to go to the shops?

### 2. **Broad, wide or both?**

A. The car is too ..... for the garage.

B. The river is about a kilometre .....

C. Everyone loves pandas: it's because of their beautiful ..... eyes.

D. We've reached ..... agreement on all the most important issues.

(Upper Intermediate Test 28)

### 3. **Right or wrong? (use of 'alike')**

A. He's **alike** his brother. [ ]

B. He's got two very **alike** daughters. [ ]

C. His two daughters are very much **alike**. [ ]

### 4. **Always, ever or both?**

A. I shall .....remember you.

B. I've loved you ..... since I met you.

(Advanced Test 29)

### 5. **Match the words with the definitions or comments.**

alone      lonely      lonesome      lone

A. suggests unhappiness (British and American English) .....

B. not generally used before nouns .....

C. rather literary .....

D. suggests unhappiness (more common in American English) .....

### 6. **South or southern?**

A. She's got a beautiful ..... accent.

B. My room's on the ..... side of the house.

C. What's the capital of ..... Africa?

D. Most of the country's population is concentrated in the ..... counties.

E. We spent our holiday on the ..... coast.

(Expert Test 28)



**Student answer sheet: *Similar words/ confusable words/right or wrong words***

**What are the results?**

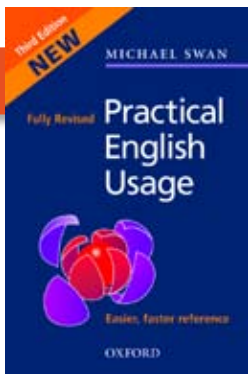
1. *borrow*  
(see PEU 109)
2. A. *wide*      B. *wide*      C. *wide*      D. *broad*  
(see PEU 115)
3. A. Wrong. *Alike* should be *like*  
B. Wrong *Alike* should be *similar-looking*  
C. Right  
(see PEU 34)
4. A. *always*      B. *ever*  
(see PEU 191.5)
5. A. *lonely*      B. *alone*      C. *lone*      D. *lonesome*  
(see PEU 44)
6. A. *southern*      B. *south*      C. *South*      D. *southern*      E. *south*  
(see PEU 172)

**What's the diagnosis?**

**0-2 correct.** It looks like you may still have a lot to learn. You will need to revise the basics in *Practical English Usage*.

**2-4 correct.** Not bad. You have a pretty high language level but there are some gaps. You will need to study some sections of *Practical English Usage*.

**4-6 correct.** Congratulations a very good command of English. Use *Grammar Scan* and *Practical English Usage* to check any tricky points that are still not clear.



## Here's the treatment!

### Similar words/confusable words/right or wrong words

#### 1. borrow and lend

**Borrowing** is **taking** (for a time).

*Can I **borrow** your bicycle?* (NOT ~~Can I lend your bicycle?~~)

You borrow something **from** somebody.

*I **borrowed** a pound **from** my brother.* (NOT ~~I borrowed my brother a pound.~~)

**Lending** (AmE also *loaning*) is **giving** (for a time). You **lend** something **to** somebody, or **lend somebody** something.

*I **lent** my coat to Steve, and I never saw it again.*

***Lend me** your comb for a minute, will you?* (NOT ~~Borrow me your ...~~)

For *lend* in passive structures, see 415.

#### 2. broad and wide

##### 1 physical distance

To talk about the physical distance from one side of something to the other, we more often use **wide**.

*We live in a very **wide** street. The car's too **wide** for the garage.*

**Broad** can also be used in this physical sense, especially in more formal descriptions.

*Across the **broad** valley, the mountains rose blue and mysterious.*

*She wore a simple green dress with a **broad** black belt*

Note also: **broad** shoulders; a **broad** back; **wide** eyes; a **wide** mouth.

*Wide* is used in expressions of measurement: note the word order.

*The river is about **half a mile wide**.* (NOT ~~... wide half a mile.~~)

##### 2 abstract meanings

Both words can express more abstract meanings. Common expressions:

**broad** agreement (= agreement on most important points)

**broad-minded** (= tolerant)      **broad daylight** (= full, bright daylight)

a **wide** variety/range (of opinions etc)

For other common expressions with *broad* and *wide*, see a good dictionary.

#### 3 alike

The adjective *alike* means 'like each other'. Compare:

*The two boys are **alike** in looks, but not in personality.*

*He's **like** his brother.* (NOT ~~He's alike his brother.~~)

*Alike* is not often used before a noun (see 12). Compare:

*His two daughters are very much **alike**.*

*He's got two very **similar-looking** daughters.* (NOT ~~... alike daughters.~~)

## 4 191 ever

### 5 ever meaning 'always'

Ever is not normally used to mean 'always'.

*I shall always remember you. (NOT I shall ever remember you.)*

But ever is sometimes used to mean 'always' in compound expressions with adjectives and participles.

his **ever-open** mouth                      an **ever-increasing** debt

**evergreen** trees                              his **ever-loving** wife

Ever also means 'always' in *forever* (or *for ever*) and *ever since*, and in a few other expressions like *ever after* and *Yours ever* (used at the end of letters).

*I shall love you forever.                      I've loved you ever since I met you.*

## 5. 44 alone, lonely, lonesome and lone

*Alone* means 'without others around'. *Lonely* (and informal AmE *lonesome*) means 'alone and unhappy because of it'. Compare:

*I like to be alone for short periods.*

*But after a few days I start getting lonely/lonesome.*

*Alone* can be emphasised by *all*.

*After her husband died she was all alone.*

*Alone* is not used before a noun (see 12.3). *Lone* and *solitary* can be used instead; *lone* is rather literary.

*The only green thing was a lone/solitary pine tree.*

## 6 172 east and eastern, north and northern etc

### 1 adjectives: the difference

We often prefer *eastern*, *northern* etc when we are talking about vague, indefinite or larger areas, and *east*, *north* etc for more clearly defined places (e.g. the names of countries or states). Compare:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| – the <b>northern</b> part of the country | – <b>southern</b> Africa (an area)  |
| the <b>north</b> side of the house        | <b>South</b> Africa (a country)     |
| – the <b>southern</b> counties of Britain | – the <b>northern</b> United States |
| the <b>south</b> coast                    | <b>North</b> Carolina               |

However, place names do not always follow this rule. Note the following:

**Northern** Ireland

**North/East/West** Africa

**North/South** America

**East/South** etc Asia BUT: **Western/Eastern** etc Europe

**South** Australia BUT: **Western** Australia; the **Northern** Territory

the **North/South** Atlantic/Pacific

the **Northern/Southern** hemisphere

### 2 'belonging to'

We use *eastern*, *northern* etc to mean 'belonging to' or 'typical of'.

a **southern** accent

a group of **northern** poets

### 3 capital letters

Capital letters are used at the beginning of *East, Eastern, North, Northern* etc when these come in official or well-established place names.

**North** Carolina

**Western** Australia the Far East

unemployment in the **North** (place name meaning 'the North of England')

In other cases, adjectives, nouns and adverbs begin with small letters.

We spent the winter in **southern** California.

I live in **north** London.

There's a strong **north** wind.

The sun rises in the **east**.

By sunrise we were driving **south**.

### 4 prepositions

Note the difference between *in the east* etc of . . . and *to the east* etc of . . .

I live **in the east of** Scotland.

Denmark is about 500 km **to the east of** Scotland.